

A MONASTIC NOVITIATE FOR THE JOYFUL SERVANTS OF THE CROSS COMPRISING OF THESE 12 CONFERENCES, ACCOMPANIED BY PRESCRIBED PRAYER AND REFLECTIVE EXERCISES

CONFERENCE NINE: Now that you have considered how your former way of life – before engaging in the monastic walk with Jesus - may have been in conflict with the everyday lives of other people – taking to heart Jesus’ admonition *to forgive or you will not be forgiven* – we carry that point to its logical conclusion: Jesus who also said: *Peace, I leave you; my peace is my gift to you* – would have you at least attempt to establish a relationship of peace with those you may have offended.

My dear brother(s), you have come a very long way since the beginning of this novitiate program, and now you have the opportunity to share the benefits that are coming to you, from it, with others. It is very difficult for any person to be in a completely right relationship with any other person or persons. Our fallen human natures cause us to disappoint ourselves, and others. We make mistakes. You make them. I make them. Others make them. Some of them can be quite serious. Others, less so. But, the good news of the redemption brought by Christ Jesus is that *we can reach higher and farther for real perfection than we thought possible, and we can affect a deeper and more lasting sense of peace between ourselves and others, if we plug ourselves into that redemption*, if we stand at the foot of the Cross of Christ and be bathed in the “rivers of life” that flow from his pierced side! If *he* can do *that* for us – then we can be not only tolerant, but *loving and peaceful with each other*. Brother, when you have become willing to set right what needs setting right, then you can actually go out and with the help of God, do it, with the only caution that it be done for the right reason of making true God-generated peace, and matters are not made worse by attempting to do so. This re-establishing, remaking and reconciling of strained, worn or even painful relationships, can take place among the living, and by prayer, meditation and spiritual conversation with the dead. A loving intention to make peace transcends even space and time.

The Spirit of God the Father is so very eager to help you initiate whatever peacemaking processes that you need to make, to complete your novitiate training. The Holy Spirit is the Peace of God, and so prayer to him will saturate the whole process with an intense sense of God’s presence and God’s strength and God’s calm. Be not afraid – be an instrument of peace in the hands of God! Rejoice, brother(s) – you are on the right path!

Conference Nine: Prayer/Action

O Holy Spirit, help me to believe that all I have to do is to ask you to help me with this process of forgiveness & peacemaking, and that you will do it, quickly and relatively effortlessly; *(quietly reflect on the reality of the very important recommendation by Jesus to be reconciled, as he has reconciled us with his Father)*

O Holy Spirit, help me to take the short-list that I made last week and set into motion a plan to carry this project out, among the living and the dead; *(ask the Spirit to gently bring to mind again some names and faces, beginning with the nearest and dearest who ought to be on such a list)*

O Holy Spirit, give me a grateful attitude for the tremendous gifts of purity of heart and strength of will that I now have received in asking to be a spiritually vibrant, good and holy Christian, disciple and monk. *(pray a heart-felt prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God who loves you so very much – and is pleased with every bit of effort you are making as you progress in the search for a more perfect way in which to live out the Gospel message)!*

Amen.

[It would be helpful to read the Conference and Pray the Prayer, with its accompanying exercises, each day until the next conference!]

Given: (Date)

Abbot Peter Anthony, jsc