

**Order of Malta Retreat**  
**Gonzaga College High School; Washington, DC**  
**February 7-9, 2025**

*Peter Folan, S.J.*  
*Georgetown University*

“My dear Charles, that’s exactly what [Catholics are] not—particularly in this country, where they’re so few. It’s not just that they’re a clique—as a matter of fact, they’re at least four cliques all blackguarding each other half the time—but they’ve got an entirely different outlook on life; everything they think important is different from other people. They try and hide it as much as they can, but it comes out all the time” (Evelyn Waugh, *Brideshead Revisited*)

- “Freedom, meet manipulation...”
- Enter justice as an antidote to the poison of manipulation
- The way “justice” can be commonly understood
- Some biblical concepts of justice... that turn on its head common conceptions of it
  - The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
  - The New Testament
- Aquinas on justice
- How justice plays a role in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard
  - A candidate for the parable that is most troubling
  - The brutal conditions
  - Two basic understandings of justice competing with one another
  - This must be about more than the abundant generosity of God
  - “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD” (Isaiah 55:8)
- Some possible prayer directions for this afternoon
  - Ignatian contemplation: Matthew 20:1-16
  - *Lectio divina*: Matthew 5:1-12



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“The persons who make the Exercises will benefit greatly by entering upon them with great spirit and generosity toward their Creator and Lord, and by offering all their desires and freedom to him so that His Divine Majesty can make use of their persons and of all they possess in whatsoever way is in accord with his most holy will” (St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*)

- Beginning with freedom
- The way “freedom” can be commonly understood
- What freedom looks like in the reign of God and for St. Ignatius of Loyola
- The freedom that Jesus himself exhibits in his life
- A helpful both/and for us: freedom *from* and freedom *for*
- How freedom plays a role in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus
  - A set of stark contrasts
  - The peculiarity of so much dialogue
  - The potential imprisonment of wealth; the potential freedom of poverty
    - Both could be obstacles... both could be pathways... to the reign of God
  - A call to action
- Some possible prayer directions for the morning
  - Ignatian contemplation: Luke 16:19-31
  - Centering prayer: Galatians 5:1
  - Performing an act or acts of freedom

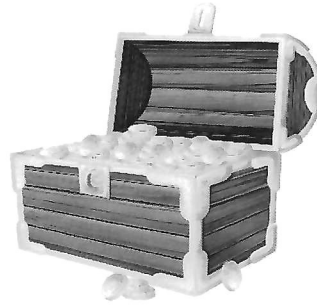


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“No one lives for himself alone. And so no one sins for himself alone” (Karl Rahner, “Forgotten Truths Concerning the Sacrament of Penance”)

- “Justice, meet violence...”
- Enter reconciliation as an antidote to the poison of violence
- The root of the word “reconciliation”—*cillia*
  - How this can play out physically... in all parts of the animal kingdom
- Reconciliation as a process
  - We Catholics and our synonyms...
  - Confession, penance, reconciliation
- How reconciliation plays a role in the parable of the unforgiving servant
  - The framing
  - Some cartoonishly large numbers
  - The first servant falling on his knees
  - Again, this parable must be about more than God’s profligate mercy
  - Our response to the reign of God must be working to reconcile the relationships of our lives
- Some possible prayer directions for the remainder of the day
  - Ignatian contemplation: Matthew 18:22-34
  - Initiating or furthering a process of reconciliation
  - Mirror time



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“Joy, which was the small publicity of the pagan, is the gigantic secret of the Christian” (G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*)

- “Reconciliation, meet hard-heartedness...”
- Enter joy as an antidote to the poison of hard-heartedness
- Distinguishing joy from giddiness... and other adjacent reactions
- Aquinas on joy
- Some biblical manifestations of joy
  - David dancing before the ark (2 Samuel 6:1-16)
  - The Visitation (Luke 1:39-56)
  - Peter and John healing a paralyzed man (Acts 3:1-10)
- Joy and the reign of God
- How joy plays a role in the parables of the treasure in the field and the pearl
  - Twin parables
  - People who might not be nominees for negotiator in chief...
  - How the parable challenges the logic of acquisitiveness (and brings us back to freedom)
  - What these stories say about Jesus himself... and potentially about us
- Some possible prayer directions for the morning
  - Ignatian contemplation: Matthew 13:44-46
  - Treating yourself to joy
  - An Ignatian Examen (LT3F: light, thanks, feelings, focus, future)