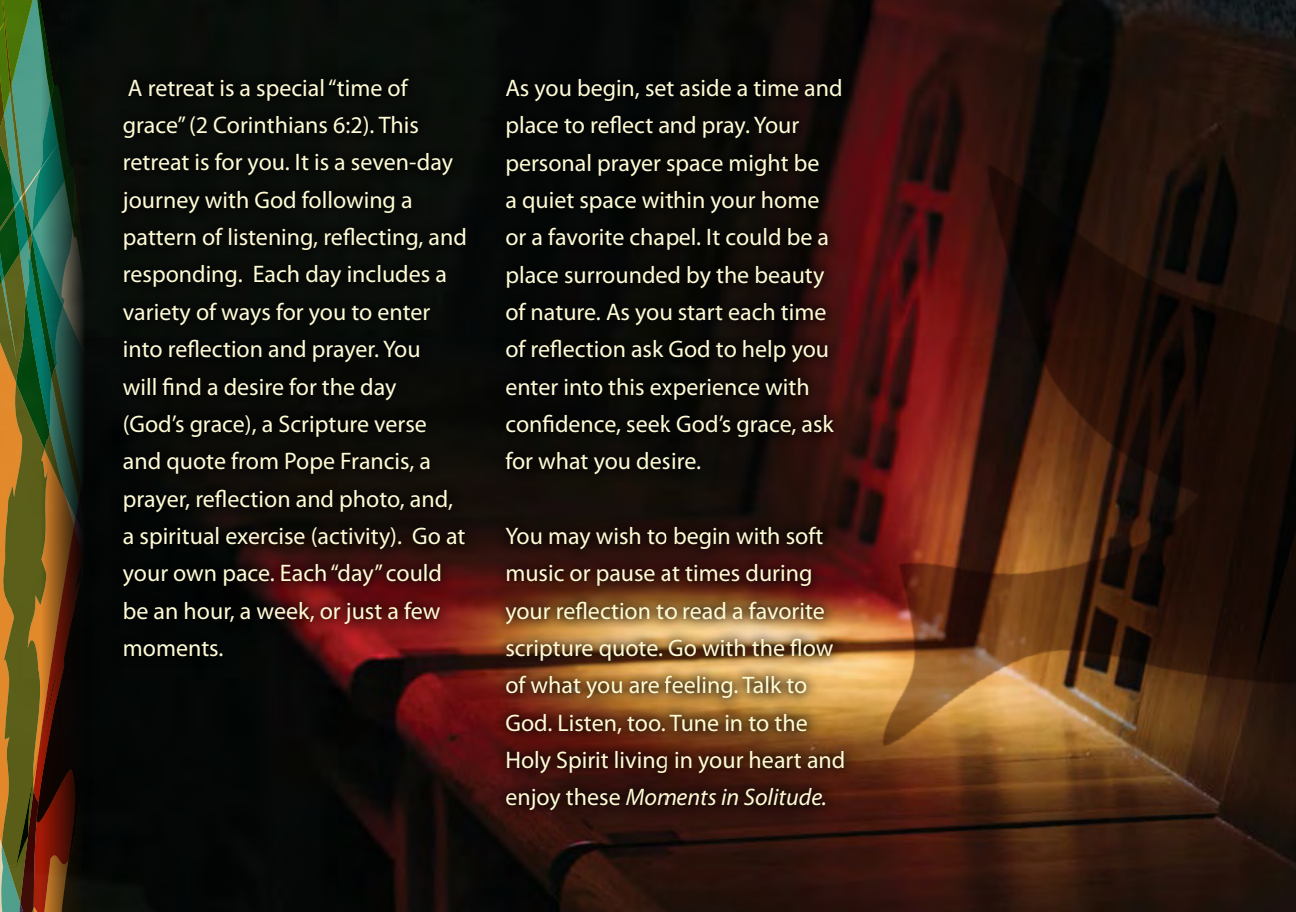




SISTERS OF BON SECOURS

# moments in solitude

your personal retreat



A retreat is a special “time of grace” (2 Corinthians 6:2). This retreat is for you. It is a seven-day journey with God following a pattern of listening, reflecting, and responding. Each day includes a variety of ways for you to enter into reflection and prayer. You will find a desire for the day (God’s grace), a Scripture verse and quote from Pope Francis, a prayer, reflection and photo, and, a spiritual exercise (activity). Go at your own pace. Each “day” could be an hour, a week, or just a few moments.

As you begin, set aside a time and place to reflect and pray. Your personal prayer space might be a quiet space within your home or a favorite chapel. It could be a place surrounded by the beauty of nature. As you start each time of reflection ask God to help you enter into this experience with confidence, seek God’s grace, ask for what you desire.

You may wish to begin with soft music or pause at times during your reflection to read a favorite scripture quote. Go with the flow of what you are feeling. Talk to God. Listen, too. Tune in to the Holy Spirit living in your heart and enjoy these *Moments in Solitude*.

# Day 1

*“Be still, and know I am God.” (Psalm 46:11)*

## POPE FRANCIS:

“Lord, grant us the awesome gift of meeting you.” @Pontifex

## MY DESIRE:

*I ask for the grace to be more aware of God’s presence.*

God is With Me

## PRAYER:

**God, you call me to relationship with you.**

**Give me the assurance that you are listening and encouraging me on my journey. Help me to become aware of your presence in this moment, and in my life.**

## REFLECTION:

In the quiet of your heart, listen. Allow God to touch your heart. Offer these moments of solitude to God. Open your heart and mind to allow God to speak to you in this moment. Linger wherever you experience God communicating with you. Speak to God from your heart.

***Spiritual Exercise: Find a few moments to prayerfully walk in nature today.***



# Day 2

*"We love because God first has loved us." (1 John 4:19)*

## POPE FRANCIS:

"God does not ask of us anything that he himself has not first given us. He is not aloof from us. Each one of us has a place in his heart. He knows us by name, he cares for us and he seeks us out whenever we turn away from him. He is interested in each of us; his love does not allow him to be indifferent to what happens to us."

## MY DESIRE:

*I ask for the grace to know God's love for me.*

God Loves Me

## PRAYER:

**God, you reveal yourself to me as Love. You are the source of all love and to you all love returns. Guide me to an awareness of your love for me. In return, help me to love you with all of my heart, all of my soul, all of my strength, and all of my mind (Luke 10:27). Be with me in this moment of love.**

## REFLECTION:

In the quiet of your soul, reflect on who God is to you. Take a moment to reflect on God who Christians believe revealed God's-self in Jesus of Nazareth. Empty yourself to receive God's guidance and love. What do you want to say to God today?

***Spiritual Exercise: At the end of the day, take a few moments to examine how God was present to you today.***





# Day 3

## My Need for God

*"Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgment, and show kindness and compassion toward each other. Do not oppress the widow or the orphan, the alien or the poor; do not plot evil against one another in your hearts." (Zechariah 7:9-10)*

### POPE FRANCIS:

"I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner."

### MY DESIRE:

*I ask for the grace to courageously look upon my sins and the sinfulness present in the world.*

### PRAYER:

**God, through your liberating presence you offer us mercy and hope. Trusting in your love, help me to discover where and how I need renewal in my life. Help me to discover where and how I need you in my life.**

### REFLECTION:

Pope Francis tells us, "Indifference to our neighbor and to God. . .represents a real temptation....  
...we need to hear once more the voice of the prophets who cry out and trouble our conscience."  
Acknowledging your weaknesses, ask God for interior awareness, renewal and healing. Ask how you can avoid becoming indifferent and withdrawing into yourself. Can I ask God for forgiveness today? What do I need to tell God?

***Spiritual Exercise: Take the time to read Matthew 5:1-12.***

***As you read, ask yourself: in what ways am I not living up to Jesus' desires for me?***



# Day 4

## Jesus Calls Me

*Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of [people]." Then they left their nets and followed him. (Mark 1: 17-18)*

### POPE FRANCIS:

In the Christian scriptures "Jesus did not say to Peter and to his Apostles "Know me"; he said, "Follow me!" And this following of Jesus makes us know Jesus. Following Jesus with our strength, but also with our sins, but always following Jesus. It is not a study of things that is necessary, but a life of a disciple." It takes "...a daily encounter with the Lord, every day, with our triumphs and our weaknesses."

### MY DESIRE:

*I ask for the grace to experience Jesus' invitation to follow him closely.*

### PRAYER:

**God, it is my deepest desire to love and serve you. Guide me in deepening my relationship with you so that I may hear your call more clearly. Help me to remain faithful to your call despite my stumbling and falling along the way.**

### REFLECTION:

Sit quietly. Discipleship often brings with it questions, doubt and uncertainty. In this moment of solitude offer these questions and doubts to God. Ask yourself: When have you experienced God's call in your life? In what ways has God filled you with good things? How can you use your gifts in service to God? Don't rush to an answer. Let God work in your heart.

***Spiritual Exercise: Take the time to read Luke 5:1-11. As you read use your imagination to place yourself in the scene. Use all of your senses to experience the story fully. What do you hear, see, touch, smell, and taste? Do not be afraid to let God speak to you through your imagination. Trust the Spirit.***



# Day 5

## Jesus Shows Me a Better Way

*Jesus unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord." (Luke 4:17-19)*

### POPE FRANCIS:

"A nation can be considered great when it defends liberty as Lincoln did, when it fosters a culture which enables people to "dream" of full rights for their brothers and sisters, as Martin Luther King thought to do; when it strives for justice and the cause of the oppressed as Dorothy Day did by her tireless work, the fruit of a faith which becomes dialogue and sows peace in the contemplative style of Thomas Merton."

### MY DESIRE:

*I ask for the grace to respond to the needs of the world as Jesus did.*

### PRAYER:

**Merciful God, lead me to a path of generosity of heart and mind. Lead me to use the gifts you have given me in support of our brothers and sisters who suffer in our world today. Lead me to follow Jesus' example of compassion, healing, and liberation.**

### REFLECTION:

In solitude today, contemplate the challenges facing our world. Recall Jesus' invitation to live in the Kingdom of God – a Kingdom of love, mercy, forgiveness, freedom, and wholeness. Can you help to bring wholeness to the broken areas of our world? What is God asking of you? What do you want to say to God?

**Spiritual Exercise: Challenge yourself to spend at least 10 minutes in complete silence today**





# Day 6

God is Love

*"The greatest love a person can have for his [and her] friends is to give his [or her] life for them." (John 15:13)*

## POPE FRANCIS:

"God is love. His is ... the love of the Father who is the origin of all life, the love of the Son who dies on the Cross and is raised, the love of the Spirit who renews human beings and the world. Thinking that God is love does us so much good, because it teaches us to love, to give ourselves to others as Jesus gave himself to us and walks with us. Jesus walks beside us on the road through life."

## MY DESIRE:

*I ask for the grace to see the possibilities before me to help create God's kingdom here on earth – in me, in my family, in my community and the world.*

## PRAYER:

**Compassionate God, you know what it means to suffer and you show me the depth of your love. You understand pain, anxiety, fear and loss. Help me to offer my pain and suffering to you. May I give myself in large ways and small ways in safeguarding all of creation.**

## REFLECTION:

Let yourself be still. Let yourself reflect on the sufferings present in your life and in the world. Allow God to open your heart to the pain in your life and in the world. Let yourself be moved. Reflect on how you can be a person of mercy and hope, welcoming, loving, forgiving, and encouraging.

***Spiritual Exercise: As you pray, have a heart to heart conversation with God; speak, listen and allow space for silence as you feel moved. Let your conversation naturally develop in your prayer.***



# Day 1

Proclaim God's Love

*Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord." (John 20:18)*

#### POPE FRANCIS:

"Jesus teaches us another way: Go out [into all the world]. Go! Go out and share your testimony, go out and interact with your brothers [and sisters], go out and share, go out and ask. Become the Word in body as well as spirit."

#### MY DESIRE:

*I ask for the grace to choose life.  
To reflect and rejoice in God's  
Love, sharing the Good News  
with all!*

#### PRAYER:

**God of Surpassing Joy, your promise of new life made real through Jesus frees me to go out and proclaim the joy of the gospel, "...something to be experienced, something to be known and lived only through giving it away, through giving ourselves away." —Pope Francis**  
**Hear my praises and gratitude this day.**

#### REFLECTION:

Our lives now free are full of joy, full of laughter, and full of hope. Take the time to bask in the joy of God's promise of life eternal. Ask the resurrected Christ to meet you in prayer. Tell him what is in your heart.

***Spiritual Exercise: Spend time today talking about your faith with a friend or loved one.***





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## moments in solitude

MOMENTS IN SOLITUDE IS DEDICATED TO ALL WHO SHARE GOD'S LOVE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

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