

## For What Should I Be Grateful? Four Minute Retreat for May, 2025

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### Introduction:

At the conclusion of a retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius invites a person to pray the final meditation, titled, "The Contemplation of the Love of God." Ignatius makes two observations at the beginning of the contemplation: Love is found more in deeds than words; and love invites two lovers to share who they are and what they have. These observations set the stage for reflecting on how God loves us. Ignatius proposes four considerations: God has given me life and surrounded with creation; God gives of himself in gifting me; God labors on my behalf as the giver of good gifts: God continues daily to give and gift me. While reflecting on each consideration, the retreatant names the gifts received and responds to the question: How would a reasonable person respond to such a Lover? Anticipating a whole-hearted response, St. Ignatius proposes a total offering of oneself to God as a possible response. It is a prayer Ignatius composed. "Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will—all that I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me."

### Prayer Reflection:

- 1) Reflect on the many gifts of God has given to you during your lifetime and take time to cherish them: the gifts of your creation and creation around you, family, friends, the opportunities you have had in life, your education, faith, the gifts of Baptism and the Eucharist. How do you respond?
- 2) God not only gives gifts to me but literally gifts me with himself, His Spirit, the Holy Spirit as my advocate and guide so I can call out, "Abba, Father." God has created me in his own image and likeness so I can see my deepest desire to be a loving person is his presence rooted in my heart. How do I respond?
- 3) God labors for me. As a giver of gifts, God is a dynamic and active giver. He continues to pour out what I need to continue my life's journey, his constant forgiveness, his continual promises for eternal life. It is also shown in Jesus's passion, death, and resurrection. How do I respond?
- 4) God continually gives and gifts. God cannot do enough for me. He walks with me, he talks with me, keeps me alive, and instills the hope that the best is yet to come. "Eye has not seen, each has not heard what God has prepared for those who love him." (I Cor. 2.9) God is continually waiting for us to seek him and ask for what we need. "Ask and you shall receive." (Matt. 7.7) How do I respond?

**Action:** Pray the prayer of St. Ignatius given at the end of the Introduction above. "Take Lord and Receive."