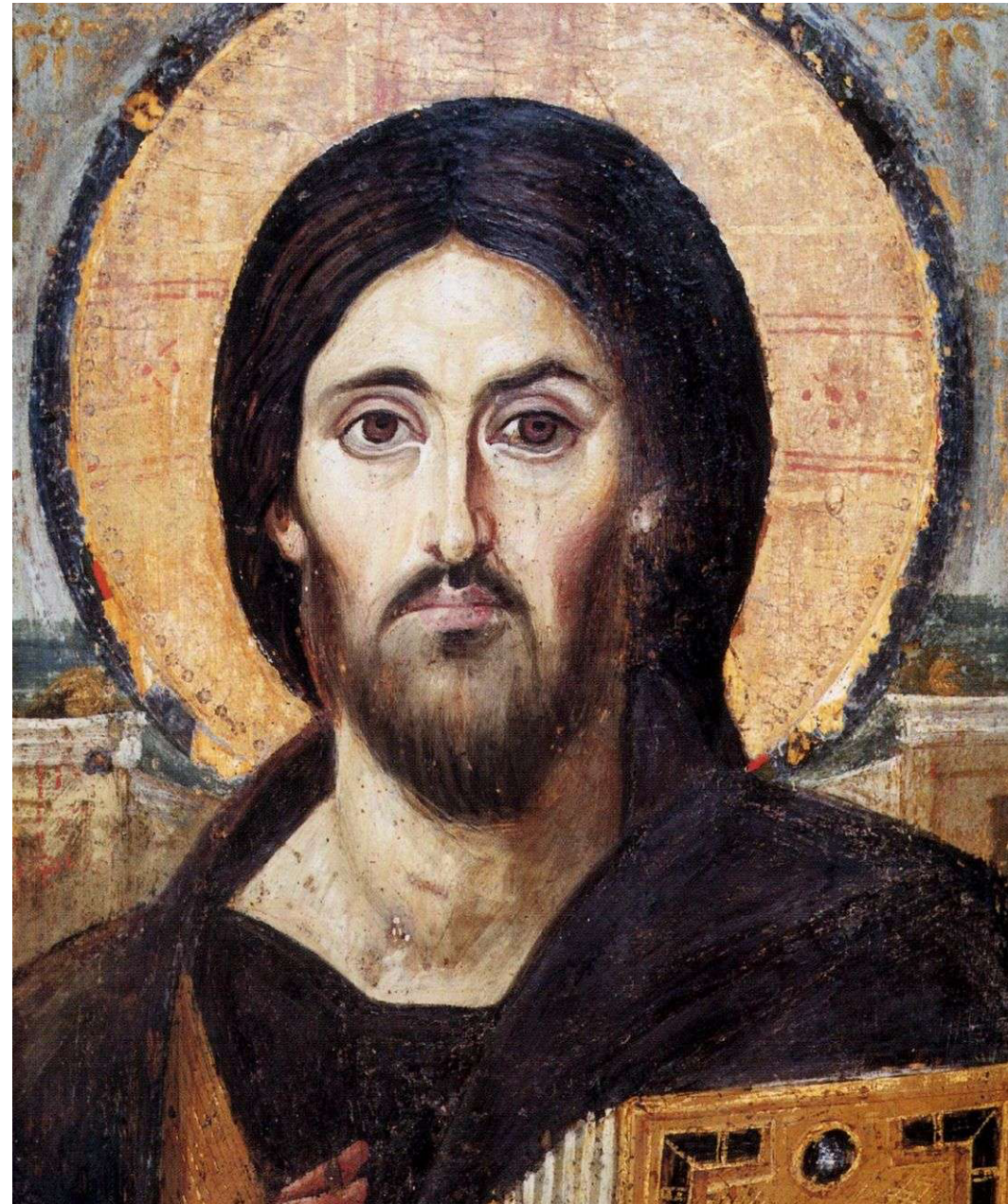


# The Spiritual Exercises and the Body

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# Aims of the day

The body in consolation

The body in the “Meditation on Hell”  
and the “Prayer of the Senses”

The body in desolation

The presence of the spiritual director

# Prayer

# The Ignatian 'Day'

## First Week

1. First, Second, and Third Sin [45]  
*shame and confusion*

2. Personal Sin [55]  
*a growing and intense sorrow and tears for my sins → cry of wonder*

3. First Repetition [62]

4. Second Repetition [64]

5. Meditation on Hell [65]  
*a deep sense of the pain which the lost suffer → gratitude for loving kindness*

## Second Week

1. First Contemplation [101]  
*intimate knowledge of our Lord, who has become man for me, that I may love Him more, and follow Him more closely*

2. Second Contemplation [110]

3. First Repetition [118]

4. Second Repetition [120]

5. Prayer (aka 'Application) of the Senses [121]

## Movements

Scripture,  
memory, thinking,  
imagination,  
sensation

Then-and-there  
appreciation of  
sin and Jesus'  
life (head)

*Review [77]:*  
affective & faith  
responses;  
consolation and  
desolation

Grace rooted in  
the body

Here-and-now  
appropriation of  
the reality sin &  
the Life of God in  
me (heart &  
body)

# Prayer of the Senses / Meditation on Hell

What do you do to avoid God?

A time of consolation:

Open yourself and let it in

Where is this consolation in you?

Give it a home

Remember what you do to avoid God

Turn back to God

# The body and suffering

Awareness of physical and emotional pain

Memory of trauma held in the body

*Dukkha*: change, suffering, illness, mortality

Negativity: e.g. “I am not good enough.”

# Desolation

**Rule 1/2:** *Then it is characteristic of the evil spirit to harass with anxiety, to afflict with sadness, to raise obstacles backed by fallacious reasonings that disturb the soul. Thus he seeks to prevent the soul from advancing. [#315]*

Sadness = rumination about the past

Anxiety = obsessing about the future

God (and consolation) is in the present

# The Bright Field

*I have seen the sun break through  
to illuminate a small field  
for a while, and gone my way  
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl  
of great price, the one field that had  
the treasure in it. I realise now  
that I must give all that I have  
to possess it. Life is not hurrying*

*on to a receding future, nor hankering  
after  
an imagined past. It is the turning  
aside like Moses to the miracle  
of the lit bush, to a brightness  
that seemed as transitory as your youth  
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.*

R.S. Thomas, *Laboratories of the Spirit* (1975)



**Rule I/6:** *Though in desolation we must never change our former resolutions, it will be very advantageous to intensify our activity against the desolation. We can insist more upon prayer, upon meditation, and on much examination of ourselves. We can make an effort in a suitable way to do some penance. [#319]*

*Without pursuing all the anthropological and theological nuances of self-cruelty, let me suggest something very, very simple.*

*You know what tenderness is. We all have experiences of gentleness and kindness. Think of something that makes you feel that way: perhaps being with a loved one who is suffering, or seeing a small child asleep - whatever calls forth from you a feeling of warmth and tenderness or just simple caring.*

*Feel that feeling. You can do that, almost without trying. It is a very familiar feeling, well known to you.*

*Can you now, just for a moment, feel that way towards yourself?*

*Gerald May, Simply Sane, p.165-6*

# Being with desolation

Take an inventory: what is between you and feeling good?

Choose one

Enquiry

Kindness

# Spiritual direction session

## **Interventions:**

focused on the (non-verbal) body  
language of the directee

to deepen the process based on  
observations of their body

coming from what is happening in your  
own bodies

# Implications for the directee

Teaching people how to pray

‘Anchoring’ and revisiting = Repetition

Exx 121: Prayer of the senses

Exx 319: Rules for the Discernment of Spirits:  
being with desolation

First Week / Third Week: being with pain

# Implications for the director

Staying grounded, centred,  
and present

Noticing body-language

Self-supervision

[www.thisbody.info/resources/](http://www.thisbody.info/resources/)