
A Men's Group Reflection

by Nick Sharkey,
Men's Group facilitator and Warming Center staff person

When a group of men walk into a small conference room at the Warming Center every Monday morning, they are continuing an almost five centuries old Jesuit tradition of reflection and prayer.

Every meeting includes quiet time for reflection followed by a self-composed prayer. During the meeting the guests take part in the Ignatian Daily Exam which emphasizes being grateful for the many gifts we are given.

During the time for reflection the men walk through their lives for the past 24 hours. With gratitude to God, they recall from hour-to-hour, place-to-place and person-to-person the good parts of their lives.

As the men review their daily lives, they often thank God for the gift of life, for their health, for their families and for a place like the Warming Center where they can think about their lives today and where they want to go in the days ahead.

Then, they recall their feelings – positive and negative – that surfaced as they thought about their daily lives. They know that their feelings, the painful and the pleasing, signal where the action is in their day. By paying attention to the range of emotions they experience– rage, delight, shame, pride, optimism, depression, etc. – they discover the most important part of their day.

Emphasizing the emotions they experience in their daily lives unlocks the mystery of what makes them unique children of God. It helps them to find the hidden talents they have that make them distinct human beings. They often re-discover a passion for a vocation or a hobby that is hidden by the turmoil of their lives.

After this reflection time, most men offer up a simple prayer based on the strongest feelings they have just experienced. Prompted by their reflections, they often will ask for God's assistance in helping them to make changes in their lives.

As they file out of the conference room after one hour, the men are more peaceful with themselves and confident of their abilities to face the challenges in their daily lives.