

Spiritual Exercises found online

For centuries, Catholics around the world have deepened their faith by partaking in the “Spiritual Exercises” of St. Ignatius of Loyola – a month-long series of prayerful meditations focused heavily on the life of Christ.

But in a fast-paced era when people are busy with jobs, family life and other activities, it can be difficult to set aside time for the retreat.

Creighton University, a Jesuit institution in Nebraska, is making the Spiritual Exercises more accessible to the modern world through an online version of the retreat on its Web site. Visitors can follow links that guide them through the program at their own pace. The site offers spiritual reflections, Bible readings and prayers that can be read online or printed for later use. Photos are posted for spiritual reflection and may be downloaded to be used as wallpaper on a personal computer. Users can even download “audio retreats” led by Jesuits that can be saved on MP3 players or burned to a CD. Participants also have the option to share their own spiritual observations with others going through the program.

The Creighton staff recommends that online retreat participants stick with the program and share their experiences with family and friends. The retreats may be made individually, in families or small groups.

“Just like with physical exercise, we don’t want to overdo it at first and then slough off after a brief attempt,” an online guide notes. “Good physical exercise is cumulative – we don’t feel stronger or have great endurance immediately. But if we persist at regular exercise, we soon find that there are real changes in our physical health and strength.”

St. Ignatius wrote the Spiritual Exercises in the 16th century, saying his purpose was to help each person who undertakes them to “conquer one’s self and regulate one’s life so that decisions will not be influenced by any inordinate attachment.”

The free online service is a ministry of Creighton’s Collaborative Ministry Office.

Visit <https://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/cmo-retreat.html>

for more information.