

Resurrectionist Spirituality Center

Congregation of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ

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Materials for monthly day of recollection

JANUARY A.D. 2010

Third Principle of the Resurrectionist Spirituality:

EVIL ATTRACTS US

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Preface

With fraternal greetings I share the next installment of “Materials for the Monthly Day of Recollection”. Similar to the previous ones, these materials propose 3 main tasks to perform during the monthly day of recollection:

1. morning prayer with half-hour meditation,
2. prayer meeting with conference,
3. house meeting.

I would only like to remind you that the topic for next months will be The Eight Principles of Resurrectionist Spirituality. I pray that the monthly days of recollection would contribute to our spiritual growth.

I would like to say ‘thank you’ to all the C.R. Fathers and Brothers for your collaboration and encouraging words. All comments are warmly welcomed. You can write to: cdz.rome@gmail.com.

We begin the New Year with hope. As you plan your calendars for the year, please remember February 17th (this year it falls on Ash Wednesday!), as well as the 170th anniversary of death of Servant of God Bogdan Janski (July 2nd). This year is going to be a time of Provincial Chapters. Let us pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to guide us and our Congregation and that we be open to His inspiration!

With best wishes for a blessed New Year 2010,

Fr. Wojciech Mleczo, C.R.

Director of the Resurrectionist Spirituality Center in Rome

PART I – Morning prayers with half-hour meditation

Outline

1. Morning prayer: Morning prayer with meditation.
2. After Reading – meditation (30 min).
Text for meditation: p. 2 (as well as ready-to-print handout at the end of the materials).
3. At the end: Beatification Prayer.

Preparations needed

1. Books for The Liturgy of the Hours.
2. Meditation handout (a copy for everybody - last page of the materials contains ready-to-print handout).

Text for meditation:

“We are attracted to evil” (CR’s Charism Statement)

Fr. Semenenko on original sin and its consequences:

“The original sin is first on the list of the great truths. It can be said that the whole of Christian religion turns on it as if on hinges. It is the key opening the way to all other mysteries. It removes difficulties and clarifies uncertainties. It is both the historical and dogmatic foundation on which the Christian religion rests, of itself demonstrating that this religion is true, holy, and divine – the one religion that offers salvation.”

(*Credo*, Lwów 1885, p. 242)

“As a result of the fall, the first person suffered a total loss of supernature; he lost the capacity to turn to God in a manner appropriate to the divine nature. He could no longer desire God, or know the Being who created him in such a supernatural fashion. Above all, the individual could no longer turn to his proper beginning and end, for, as a result of sin, the human person became an end unto self, and the will was turned away from its true beginning. (...)

As a result of sin the human person not only forfeited supernature, but also contaminated nature itself. Moreover, the sinner suffered the greatest loss in his own person, since in sinning he ceased to be a child of God and became a child of wrath, a child of doom: *Filius irae, filius perditionis*. His nature was corrupted. Thus, when he fell, and thereby broke the bond of union with God,

he also lost sight of his goal. The natural faculties were deprived of their mistress, that is, supernature, which was intended to direct them to their designated end, and so provide them with life and nourishment. These faculties then rebelled against the sinner, just as he had rebelled against God, and so gained dominion over him. As a result, the individual became a slave of his passions and natural life, without any capacity to raise himself up. There was nothing left for him but despair. And this is the end result to which a purely natural life deprived of God, leads.”

(The Interior Life, Lwów 1931, p. 10)

Beatification Prayer

O Risen Jesus, you called Bogdan Janski, Peter Semenenko and Jerome Kajsiewicz to proclaim your unconditional love for all people and witness to the Resurrection by dying to self in order to live a new life by the power of your Spirit. Glorify your servants by the way of beatification so that the example of their lives after conversion may bring the hope of Resurrection to all who continue to struggle with sin, error and their own human weakness. Amen

PART II – Prayer meeting with conference

Outline

1. Common prayer, e.g. part of the Liturgy of the Hours (suggested: *Midday Prayer*)
2. Prayer to the Holy Spirit (e.g. song, hymn, etc.)
3. Conference – to be read by the superior or a house member
4. Distribution of meditation handouts (could be used during adoration)
5. Exposition
6. Prayer at the beginning – John 1: 1-18.
7. Adoration in silence (1/2 h, occasion to reflect on the conference)
8. Prayer for vocations for our Congregation
9. Song of Praise
10. Benediction
11. Antiphon to Virgin Mary (e.g. song, hymn)

Duration: app. 1 hour 15 min.

Preparations needed

1. Books for The Liturgy of the Hours
2. Printed text of the conference (pp. 6-10)
3. Everything what is needed for Exposition

Course of the meeting

- 1. Common prayer: Liturgy of the Hours (Midday Prayer).**
- 2. Prayer to the Holy Spirit (e.g. song, hymn). (Proposal:)**

Come, Holy Spirit, fill my heart with Your holy gifts.
Let my weakness be penetrated with Your strength this very day
that I may fulfill all the duties of my state conscientiously,
that I may do what is right and just. Let my charity be such as to offend
no one, and hurt no one's feelings; so generous as to pardon sincerely
any wrong done to me. Assist me, O Holy Spirit, in all my trials of life,
enlighten me in my ignorance, advise me in my doubts, strengthen me
in my weakness, help me in all my needs, protect me in temptations
and console me in afflictions. Graciously hear me, O Holy Spirit, and
pour Your light into my heart, my soul, and my mind. Assist me to live
a holy life and to grow in goodness and grace.
Amen.

3. Conference:

Third Principle of the Resurrectionist Spirituality:***EVIL ATTRACTS US***

(Notice to reader: it would be worthy to read this text first in private as well as to pray to the Holy Spirit, that the text which will be proclaimed would find its way to the hearts, minds and will of the listeners.)

“The Law, of course, as we all know, is spiritual; but I am unspiritual; I have been sold as a slave to sin. I cannot understand my own behaviour, I fail to carry out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate. When I act against my own will that means that I have a self that acknowledges that the Law is good, and so the thing behaving in that way is not my self but sin living in me. The fact is, I know of nothing good living in me - living, that is in my unspiritual self - for though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance is not, with the result that instead of doing the good things I want to do, I carry out the sinful things I do not want. When I act against my will, then, it is not my true self doing it, but sin which lives in me. In fact it seems to be the rule, that every single time I want to do good it is something evil that comes to hand.”

(Romans 7: 14-21)

Original sin is not a topic that is widely discussed today and when it is, the explanations given differ greatly. Nevertheless, the concept itself is prominent in both Scripture and Church teaching. Peter Semenenko wrote extensively concerning its consequences and the dynamics surrounding the biblical account in *Genesis*. It was from his reflection on the effects of original sin that Semenenko moved to his analysis of the human person as he or she responds to daily life. Today such an analysis generally comes under the topic of psychology and often lacks completeness because the links to original sin and the human person’s relationship to God are ignored.

The aspect of original sin which we are concerned with here is the disorder that it has caused within the human person. Regardless of how one describes the exact nature of original sin, it is clear from our own experience, and from what we see in others, that our lives manifest a certain fragmentation; there is a lack of integration between our will, intellect, senses and emotions. On all levels we experience an attraction to evil and frequently succumb without really knowing why or fully desiring it. Semenenko used the term misery to describe this phenomenon and compares it to an illness. *“Illness, generally speaking, is the image of misery. A sick person is in a state of disorder, because he ought to be well. Illness humbles him externally; corporally it knocks him off his feet. In the body of the sick person, illness produces one general and three special effects. The general effect: weakness and inertia. The special effects: 1. During the time of his illness a person loses his sense of taste; he feels an aversion to healthy things and desires those that are unhealthy, his appetite is perverted; 2. his spirits are low, and his intellect is weakened; 3. he does not, and cannot, move about. He experiences a lack of energy and has no desire to move about.”* (*The Interior Life*, 322).

Similarly, the effect of original sin is that it disorients our sense appetites by attracting us to what is evil rather than to what is good. Also, truth and falsehood become blurred for our intellect, and our will becomes focused on the human self rather than on God.

Thus on all levels (sense, intellect, will and their associated emotions) there is not only a lack of enthusiasm for what is good, but also a tendency toward a goal that is not in the person’s best interest. Of itself this has no moral value. However, this does not mean that such attraction can be ignored without moral and psychological harm. Quite the contrary, since the human person can be attracted to goals on the sensual, intellectual or volitional levels which are actually harmful to his welfare, he needs to evaluate all attractions which he experiences prior to making his response. For this he needs a standard other than his natural inclinations or disinclinations, to judge whether a particular action or omission is in his best interest.

In addition to our personal inclination to evil and personal disintegration as a consequence of original sin, there are also present in society structures and systems that attract us to evil. Janski was very aware of this when he began his work among the Polish emigrants in France. His first concern in bringing a compatriot back to the faith was to remove a man from an environment that pulled him away from the Lord. For this reason he set up houses for living and as meeting places. But the overall plan of Janski was not to run from the evils of society; it was to change society.

At the general level of entire societies we can detect similar disastrous consequences due to the human person's disorientation after original sin. Societies in which Resurrectionists live differ; but none escapes the consequences of original sin. In a society today this attraction to evil manifests itself in an overt and ever-present promotion of the pain-pleasure principle: avoid what causes pain, pursue what gives pleasure. In this context the pain and pleasure are primarily, although not necessarily, on the sense level. This has two noticeable effects on society: a) great attention and energy is directed toward the acquisition and enjoyment of material objects; b) activities that do not result in material acquisition, but demand hard work, devotedness and self-sacrifice are neglected or quickly abandoned.

The combination of these two effects of the pain-pleasure principle in the life of societies has resulted in an indiscriminate pursuit of material goods and a fierce defense of the goods attained, as well as to a lack of commitment to spiritual values. The results are an indifference toward virtuous living and a focus on a self-centered lifestyle. Frequently, there is a failure to live out any commitment when it becomes painful. As a result, abortions, marriage breakdowns, departures from religious life and priesthood, drug or alcohol abuse and crime in general abound.

So far we have focused on the senses and the emotions. The intellect and the will can also be deflected from their true objectives so that the person is attracted to evil and becomes fragmented. The intellect was created to seek the truth; the will is intended to choose freely what is good for the person. Original sin interferes with the intellect and the will pursuing their proper objects. Having lost direct contact with God's love, the person attempts to

use the intellect and will to create false and superficial experiences of self-worth and lovability. For example, through patterns of acting called defense mechanisms, the intellect is used to deny or mask over the truth rather than to discover it. Let us examine some of the ways in which this is done.

In the presentation of our first principle, God’s love for us, it was stated that the absence of an experience of being loved will cause a person to lack a proper love of self and to consider himself as worthless. All of this is a consequence of the disorder caused by original sin. To compensate for an absence of a sense of self-worth and lovability a person may use his intellect in any of the following ways:

- to exaggerate or to brag about himself in order to achieve recognition and a sense of worth;
- to rationalize his failures because he sees them as preventing him from being lovable;
- to be critical of others, projecting his weaknesses onto them, in an attempt to elevate himself;
- to depreciate his own person and talents so that others begin to feel sorry for him;
- to overly identify with a hero, imagining he possesses similar qualities.

In all of these cases and in others, the intellect has been sidetracked from searching out the truth, and focuses instead on mirages. In effect the person’s life is guided or tyrannized by an intellect controlled by illusions and falsehoods.

There are also ways in which our will has been weakened through original sin so that it does not readily respond to the truth and search out what is good for the person. We can be inclined to be over-achievers or perfectionists, convinced that accomplishments and possessions will bring us recognition and love. Or else, we may tend to be absolutely agreeable, totally docile with the hope that compliance, being the “*nice guy*”, will bring us friendship and love. A third possibility exists in the person who is such a loner that he shuns anything more than surface sociability, for fear of making improper decisions and losing acceptability from others.

It is important to remember that these defense mechanisms by which a person's intellect or will create a fictitious world are not morally wrong in themselves. They are misguided attempts to attain that experience of being loved which is part of our nature. At least initially, they are unconscious drives within the person. Although morally neutral, they are still harmful and prevent psychological and spiritual growth. Generally the person needs assistance to recognize how and why he is responding in these ways so that he can discard them and arrive at an authentic experience of God's love, human love and his own self-worth.

Text taken from:
International Formation Commission,
Formation in Resurrectionist Spirituality,
Rome 1993, pp. 29-40.

4. Distribution of pages with points to reflect on

(Notice: After the conference reflection points should be distributed. They can be printed in needed amounts using the ready-to-print handouts, located at the end of the materials).

Points to reflect on after listening to the conference (to use e.g. during adoration)

*Kneel down and let us thank God together, very humbly and very fervently,
for he has saved us from so many and such serious dangers.
His special, holy and most loving care for us
should encourage us once again to fidelity and perseverance,
kindling within us the fire of most holy love and most perfect dedication.
(Bogdan Janski, 12th July 1839)*

1. "The Law, of course, as we all know, is spiritual; but I am unspiritual; I have been sold as a slave to sin. I cannot understand my own behaviour, I fail to carry out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate. When I act against my own will that means that I have a self that acknowledges that the Law is good, and so the thing behaving in that way is not my self but sin living in me. The fact is, I know of nothing good living in me - living, that is in my unspiritual self - for though the will to do what is good is in me, the performance is not, with the result that instead of doing the good things I want to do, I carry out the sinful things I do not want. When I act against my will, then, it is not my true self doing it, but sin which lives in me. In fact it seems to be the rule, that every single time I want to do good it is something evil that comes to hand."
(Romans 7: 14-21)

2. How do I find the truth about original sin and its consequences in me?

3. Do I notice that „evil attracts me“? Which temptations are particularly dangerous to me? During prayer I will show the Lord those dangers and ask for strength and protection in my struggle with evil.

4. How do I work on the formation of my conscience? How do I participate in the sacrament of reconciliation? Do I go to confession often and regularly, that means once in 2-3 weeks (as Church and our Congregation’s documents recommend)?

5. Exposition. Eucharistic Hymn.

6. Prayer at the beginning – John 1: 1-18

In the beginning was the Word:

the Word was with God and the Word was God.

He was with God in the beginning.

Through him all things came into being,

not one thing came into being except through him.

What has come into being in him was life,

life that was the light of men;

and light shines in darkness,

and darkness could not overpower it.

A man came, sent by God.

His name was John.

He came as a witness, to bear witness to the light,

so that everyone might believe through him.

He was not the light, he was to bear witness to the light.

The Word was the real light that gives light to everyone;

he was coming into the world.

He was in the world that had come into being through him,
and the world did not recognise him.

He came to his own and his own people did not accept him.

But to those who did accept him

he gave power to become children of God,

to those who believed in his name

who were born not from human stock or human desire
or human will but from God himself.

The Word became flesh, he lived among us,

and we saw his glory,

the glory that he has from the Father as only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.

John witnesses to him. He proclaims:

‘This is the one of whom I said:

He who comes after me has passed ahead of me
because he existed before me.’

Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us, received –
one gift replacing another,

for the Law was given through Moses,

grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God;

it is the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart,
who has made him known.

7. Half-hour adoration in silence.

8. Prayer for vocations to our Congregation:

(Translation from CR Prayer Book in Polish)

Lord we are deeply aware of your words to your disciples:

“The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few,

therefore ask the Lord of the harvest

to send laborers into his harvest” (Mt. 9:37).

We ask you at this time when we, your laborers,

are fewer and the harvest is more plentiful,

to inspire through your Holy Spirit

the men to whom you are calling to join

us in the Congregation of the Resurrection.

Also Lord inspire us, your present laborers,

to live out our charism and mission with the enthusiasm and joy

which will attract new laborers.

We make this prayer in your name

our Risen Lord and Saviour.

Amen.

9. Song of Praise.

10. Benediction and Reposition.

11. Antiphon to Virgin Mary.

PART III – House meeting

Outline

1. Prayer for house meetings (see below).
2. Discuss and establish date for monthly day of recollection in February.
3. How are we going to celebrate the anniversary of the foundation of our Congregation (this year February 17th is Ash Wednesday!)? What can we do to promote our Community? How are we going to include lay people in our celebrations?
4. Current issues.
5. “Resurrection Prayer”.
6. At the end superior will bless the community.

Preparations Needed:

1. Coffee, tea, cookies, fruit, etc.
2. List of discussion points / agenda.

Prayer for house meetings

(Translation from CR Prayer Book in Polish)

Lord Jesus Christ, You promised that where two or three are gathered in your name, you will always be present. Allow us to feel your presence with us; surround us with hope, joy and peace, and fill us with truth and love. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

Risen Jesus, you brought us together into one family and you desire to fill our community with the life of God. May faith, hope and love be an expression of this community and grow in each of us. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

God our Father, fill all members of our community with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, so that we might zealously try to recognize your will and willingly work to fulfill its goal, making ourselves visible witnesses of the values of the gospel. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Monthly Day of Recollection – JANUARY A.D. 2010

Our monthly day of recollection
will take place on January 2010.



***Topic: Third Principle of Resurrectionist Spirituality –
Evil attracts us.***

I. Morning prayer with meditation:

time: place:

II. Prayer meeting with conference:

time: place:

III. House meeting:

time: place:

OUR DUTIES,

who is responsible for:

Morning prayer with meditation	
Leading the Liturgy of the Hours	
Conference will be read by	
Exposition of Eucharist + prayers during exposition	
Preparation of place for house meeting	

Points for morning meditation

Monthly day of recollection: January 2010

Evil attracts us

“We are attracted to evil.” (CR’s Charism Statment)

Fr. Semenenko on original sin and its consequences:

“The original sin is first on the list of the great truths. It can be said that the whole of Christian religion turns on it as if on hinges. It is the key opening the way to all other mysteries. It removes difficulties and clarifies uncertainties. It is both the historical and dogmatic foundation on which the Christian religion rests, of itself demonstrating that this religion is true, holy, and divine – the one religion that offers salvation.” (*Credo*, Lwów 1885, p. 242)

“As a result of the fall, the first person suffered a total loss of supernature; he lost the capacity to turn to God in a manner appropriate to the divine nature. He could no longer desire God, or know the Being who created him in such a supernatural fashion. Above all, the individual could no longer turn to his proper beginning and end, for, as a result of sin, the human person became an end unto self, and the will was turned away from its true beginning. (...) As a result of sin the human person not only forfeited supernature, but also contaminated nature itself. Moreover, the sinner suffered the greatest loss in his own person, since in sinning he ceased to be a child of God and became a child of wrath, a child of doom: *Filius irae, filius perditionis*. His nature was corrupted. Thus, when he fell, and thereby broke the bond of union with God, he also lost sight of his goal. The natural faculties were deprived of their mistress, that is, supernature, which was intended to direct them to their designated end, and so provide them with life and nourishment. These faculties then rebelled against the sinner, just as he had rebelled against God, and so gained dominion over him. As a result, the individual became a slave of his passions and natural life, without any capacity to raise himself up. There was nothing left for him but despair. And this is the end result to which a purely natural life deprived of God, leads.”

(*The Interior Life*, Lwów 1931, p. 10)

Points for morning meditation

Monthly day of recollection: January 2010

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Points to reflect on after listening to the conference

Kneel down and let us thank God together, very humbly and very fervently, for he has saved us from so many and such serious dangers.

His special, holy and most loving care for us should encourage us once again to fidelity and perseverance, kindling within us the fire of most holy love and most perfect dedication.

(Bogdan Janski, 12th July 1839)

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(Romans 7: 14-21)

2. How do I find the truth about original sin and its consequences in me?

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