

Joy! FROM GRATITUDE *to* GROWTH

St. Simon Annual Retreat 2025

Session 1: Blessing for the Pillars of the Mind

A Blessing for the Quiet Shift

By Fr. Brendan McGuire © 2025

May your mind be a wide sky—
open to the shifting weather
of your days,
cloud and sun alike.

May you wear your perspective like a garment of light,
woven from threads of memory and mercy,
so you might see beyond this moment's edge.

May humility not lessen you,
but free you—
to stand unarmored in the truth
that you are enough
because you are loved.

May laughter loosen what has grown too tight,
and may acceptance arrive like rain
on the dry soil of resistance—
a soft surrender into deeper knowing.

And when you forget your way,
may you remember this:
The mind is not a cage but a candle—
and joy, the fire it was made to hold.

Session 2: Blessing for the Pillars of the Heart

A Blessing for the Open Heart

By Fr. Brendan McGuire © 2025

May your heart be broken
just enough
to let the river in.

May you walk through the narrow door of forgiveness
and find there not forgetting,
but freedom—
a way to breathe again.

May gratitude greet you
in unexpected corners—
a child's laugh,
a remembered name,
the feel of sunlight
on your back.

May compassion rise
not as obligation
but as the echo of love
you've already received.

And may generosity
become your unspoken language—
the giving that is simply
who you are becoming
in God's great unfolding.

Let your heart sway open—
it's the only way
joy can get out.

Session 3: Blessing for the Tiny Habits of Joy: The Nature of Joy

A Blessing for the Small Beginning

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May you trust the wisdom
of small beginning
of the seed—
small, unseen,
still sacred.

May your joy grow not from grand gestures,
but from
the yes you whispered before coffee,
the breath you took before worry,
the smile you offered no one saw.

May the daily become holy—
a sacrament made of socks, silence,
and the stubborn grace
of another ordinary morning.

May your life be rewoven
in the smallest stitches of love—
threaded through with God,
woven with presence.

And when it seems like nothing's changing,
may you remember:
Let go and let God,
Roots deepen in secret
before the bloom.

Session 4: Blessing for the Tiny Habits of Joy: Removing the Weeds

A Blessing for Clearing the Way

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May you have the courage
to name what no longer serves—
the fear that clings,
the anger that guards,
the sorrow that sinks.

May you pull the weeds not with shame,
but with tenderness—
honoring their roots
and how they once tried
to protect you.

May joy return not in thunder,
but in the soft, surprising green
that rises
after the storm has passed.

May you make room for grace
by removing
what clutters the light.

And when your hands are tired
and your soul worn thin,
may you rest in the One
who never tires
of tending you.

God's joy is your garden—
and it is not too late to let it grow wild again
for even the dandelion, once called a weed,
can become tea for healing.