

Joy! FROM GRATITUDE *to* GROWTH

St. Simon Annual Retreat 2025

Session 1: Pillars of the Mind

Perspective Reflection Questions

- Where am I locked into a narrow view that may be stealing my joy?
- What would this situation look like from the perspective of Christ? Of someone who loves me? Of my future self?
- Can I name one “blessing in disguise” in my life—something painful that produced unexpected fruit?

Humility Reflection Questions

- What does it mean for me to be a “pencil in God’s hand”?
- Where do I resist being used by God because I want to write my own script?
- How can I “stay sharp” through prayer, learning, and humility?
- Who in my life models quiet humility that radiates joy?

Humor Reflection Questions

- When was the last time I laughed—really laughed? What gave rise to that joy?
- How does my sense of humor reflect my trust in God?
- Where have I taken myself too seriously? Can I invite joy and levity into that space?
- Do I bring joy into rooms I enter? If not, what’s holding me back?

Acceptance Reflection Questions

- What part of myself have I been resisting—my limitations, my age, my past, my grief?
- What would it mean to accept that this—right now—is where God meets me?
- How does God see me in truth today—not as I wish to be, but as I am?
- Where is God asking me to begin again, gently, from a place of acceptance?

Session 2: Pillars of the Heart

Forgiveness Reflection Questions

- Is there someone I have not yet forgiven? What keeps me locked in that prison?
- Have I allowed myself to receive the forgiveness Christ offers me daily?
- What relationship needs healing—not by forgetting, but by freeing?
- How might forgiveness sharpen me as an instrument of joy and peace?

Gratitude Reflection Questions

- What are three moments from today that I am grateful for—no matter how small?
- How has God loved me today—even in ways I didn't expect?
- Who is someone I take for granted? How can I express gratitude to them?
- How might I let gratitude transform my sorrow into insight?

Compassion Reflection Questions

- How does my gratitude overflow into compassion for others?
- Who in my life right now needs a compassionate presence more than advice?
- Have I allowed myself to become numb to suffering—my own or others'?
- What would it mean for me today to “become compassion”?

Generosity Reflection Questions

- Where is God asking me to give more freely—from my time, my energy, my gifts?
- What am I afraid to give away? What if that is where my joy is waiting?
- Can I imagine my life—and my death—as a gift to others and to God?
- How can I respond generously in one situation today?

Session 3: Tiny Habits of Joy: A Spiritual Pathway to Lasting Happiness

The Nature of Joy - From Science to Sacrament

Reflection + Dialogue

- What is one small habit I could add to my day that would open me to more joy?
- Where in my life am I tempted to wait for joy, instead of cultivating it?
- Who has been an instrument of joy for me recently?
- How could I become a pencil in God's hand today?

Session 4: Tiny Habits of Joy: Removing the Weeds - Obstacles to Joy

What Steals Our Joy and How to Reclaim It

Reflection + Dialogue:

- What is one "weed" that keeps creeping up in my spirit?
- What tiny practice could help me "starve" that weed gently?
- When have I allowed fear, envy, or despair to steal my joy?
- Where is God inviting me to cultivate joy instead?