



# REFLECTION MANUAL

QUOTES, PRAYERS, GROUP REFLECTIONS  
FOR SERVICE TRIPS, IMMERSION  
GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERS

# *Format for Spring Break Reflections*

*Opening Prayer:* *Spontaneous, or from manual*

## *Experience*

### *Questions for discussion:*

- Check-in: how was your day?
- What was challenging for you? What was comforting?
- Was there a special grace you encountered today?

### *Suggestions for further reflection on experience:*

- Drawing: your experience, feelings or thoughts you had today
- Using clay, poetry, music to express your impressions of the day

## *Social Analysis*

### *Questions for discussion:*

- What justice issue did you encounter today?
- What structures are affecting those you met?

### *Suggestions for further reflection with social analysis:*

- Include information from social analysis section about structural injustice
- Name as many larger issues as possible that are at work: welfare, minimum wage, the health care system, public services (trash pick-up, etc) public education, United States government policy, media reporting (or unreporting,) military spending
- ASK: how do these issues affect those you've met today? Who benefits? Who pays?

## *Theological Reflection*

### *Questions for discussion:*

- In what way did you encounter God today?
- What experiences of connection did you have?

### *Suggestions for further theological reflection:*

- Draw different experiences of God
- Include a reading from theological reflection section of manual
- Use silence! 3-5 minutes reflecting silently on experience of God with optional sharing

## *Action*

### *Questions for discussion:*

- Wrap-up: How will you remember this day?
- What will tomorrow be like?

*Closing Prayer:* *Spontaneous or from manual*

# Opening/Closing Prayers

**We choose struggle  
Rather than indifference  
We choose to share the suffering  
Rather than ignore the pain  
We choose to make peace  
Rather than wait for war  
We choose to proclaim the Good News  
Rather than sit in silence.**

From the Isaiah Wall at the United Nations, 1983

**COME TOGETHER, TALK TOGETHER  
LET OUR MINDS BE IN HARMONY**

**COMMON BE OUR PRAYER  
COMMON BE OUR END  
COMMON BE OUR PURPOSE,  
COMMON BE OUR DELIBERATIONS,  
COMMON BE OUR DESIRES,  
UNITED BE OUR HEARTS,  
UNITED BE OUR INTENTIONS,  
PERFECT BE THE UNION AMONG US.  
RGVEDA X.191.2-4**



***Let us pray together:  
May our acceptance of our brokenness, of our healing,  
of our being called to serve,  
Be a sign of our faith  
In the ongoing goodness of a God who journeys with us;  
In the power and love to remove any barrier within and among us;  
In the mystery of the challenge given to each one here  
To make bread, and life, and beauty available to everyone.***

***Amen***

**I HAVE SEEN, AND BELIEVE, THAT GOD NEVER APPEARS TO YOU IN  
PERSON,  
BUT IN ACTION, WHICH CAN ONLY ACCOUNT FOR YOUR DELIVERANCE IN  
YOUR DARKEST HOUR.**

**-GANDHI**

1. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don't know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown?  
Will you let my name be known?  
Will you let my life be grown In you and you in me?
2. Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name? Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?  
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare?  
Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?
3. Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name? Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?  
Will you kiss the leper clean, and do such as this unseen?  
And admit to what I mean In you and you in me?
4. Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name? Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?  
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around, through my sight, and touch, and sound in you, and you in me?
5. Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name. Let me turn and follow you, and never be the same. In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show. Thus I'll move, and live, and grow in you, and you in me.

I am the 12-year old girl, refugee  
On a small boat,  
Who throws herself into the ocean after being raped by a sea pirate,  
And I am the pirate, my heart not yet capable of seeing and loving.  
Please, call me by my true names,  
So that I can hear all my cries and my laughs at once,  
So I can see that my joy and pain are one.  
Please, call me by my true names, so I can wake up,  
And so the door of my heart can be left open,  
The door of compassion.  
-Thich Nhat Hanh

***Teach us, Lord, to direct our lives toward what seems impossible, because behind the impossible there is your grace and your presence.***  
**Luis Espinal**

*Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes before suffering. Do not lose awareness of the existence of suffering in the life of the world. Find ways to be with those who are suffering, include personal contacts, visits, images, and sounds. By such means, awaken yourself and others to the reality of suffering in the world. - Thich Nhat Hanh*

**To believe in God is not just to love life, but to work so that there is life. *Jon Sobrino, SJ***

*I believe in God  
Who did not create an immutable world  
A thing incapable of change  
Who does not govern according to eternal laws  
That remain inviolate  
Or according to a natural order  
Of rich and poor  
Of the expert and the ignorant  
Of rulers and subjects  
I believe in God  
Who willed conflict in life and wanted us to change the status quo  
Through our works...  
Dorothee Soelle*

**God does not look so much at the grandeur of our works as to the love with which they are done.  
*St. Teresa of Avila***

*I know I shall pass this way but once. And if there is anything I can do, any kindness I show, any good thing I can do, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again.*

Etienne de Grellet

*How can I thank God, if God feeds only me?  
When my neighbor is hungry, how can I say  
Lord, thank you for this meal?*

*Must I praise God because God clothes my body only?  
And if only my family has a house to live in?*

*When my neighbor goes naked and must sleep in the open air  
how can I then say: praised be God's goodness?*

*Or must I praise God if only I am given health and freedom?  
When my neighbor is ill, lonely, or oppressed  
then how can I say: thank you God for this predilection?*

*And God answers:*

*'I do not, O child, give food and drink  
that only you may be satisfied  
and rejoice in all these gifts  
I give them that you may share.  
That everyone, because of what you do,  
may taste my goodness.*

*'I do not, O child, give you clothing and a dwelling  
that you alone may find shelter.  
I gave you clothes to warm you neighbor,  
your house as a refuge for many.  
Through you they must see my goodness  
and praise me everywhere.*

*My child, I have not chosen you to rest your laurels.  
I want you to work with me, to carry forth my love.  
Everyone will experience my presence.  
Darkness will turn to light and everyone will praise me.'*

*Johnson Gnabaranan*

**A person is a person by means  
of- because of- other people.  
~Zulu saying**

# Theological Reflections

## From Henri Nouwen:

*Love asks for a total disarmament. The encounter in love is an encounter without weapons. Perhaps the disarmament in the individual encounter is more difficult than international disarmament. We are very able to hide our guns and knives even in the most intimate relationship. An old bitter memory, a slight suspicion about motives, or a small doubt can be a sharp as a knife held behind our back as a weapon for defense in case of an attack...*

*New life is born in the state of total vulnerability- this is the mystery of love. Power kills. Weakness creates. It creates autonomy, self-awareness, and freedom. It creates openness to give and receive in mutuality...*

*If we are sensitive to the voice of nature, we might be able to hear sounds from a world where all of humanity and all of nature both find their shape. We will never fully understand the meaning of the sacramental signs of bread and wine when they do not make us realize that the whole of nature is a sacrament pointing to a reality far beyond itself... Bread is more than bread, wine is more than wine: it is God with us- not as an isolated event once a week but as the concentration of a mystery about which all of nature speaks day and night.*

What does it mean to care?... The friend who can be silent with us in a moment of despair or confusion, who can stay with us in an hour of grief and bereavement, who can tolerate not knowing, not curing, not healing, and face with us the reality of our own powerlessness, that is the friend who cares...

Our tendency is to run away from the painful realities or to try to change them as soon as possible. But cure without care makes us into rulers, controllers, manipulators, and prevents a real community from taking shape. Cure without care makes us preoccupied with quick changes, impatient and unwilling to share each other's burden. And so cure can often become offending instead of liberating...

***If you choose to enter into other people's suffering, or to love others, you have to consent in some way to the possible consequences.***

**- Ita Ford**

From Ivone Gebara:

*God is our hope because we want to go beyond the terror, violence, and fear that crush us. God is our hope because we often have no visible hope, because the haze of fear that envelops us seems terrifying. God is our hope as the ultimate cry for justice: a no to unjust killing, to arms and armies, and a yes to dignified life. God is our hope in our despair...For this reason, within the mystery of our lives, God is our hope.*

We would say that God is relatedness, and, as such, also personal...By analogy, God is a human person, the sap of human life, but also the sap of the life in trees, in flowers, in animals, and in all that exists. By analogy, too, God is man, woman, breeze, hurricane, tenderness, jealousy, compassion, mercy, Mystery.

God is not a pure essence existing in itself; rather, God is relationship...Within this perspective, the word "God" is the name we give to the extraordinary relationship that evokes ecstasy and leads us to see flashes of the greatness of the mystery of the Divine Body...To speak of God is to affirm the "something" that we are and that goes beyond us, based on human experience, and moving beyond it.

**...I am also grateful for the lives of the great number of anonymous women who cross my path daily. Most of them pass me by, rushing to work or walking slowly with heavy loads of laundry on their heads. They pass me as they pull their kids along by the hand or carry them in their wombs...And their lives silently challenge me. The violence in which they live violates me, and often I don't know what to do either to help them or to bear my own "cross" of privilege – because to eat and drink, to have friends, and to reflect on life are privileges on a planet where the number of those excluded from them increases daily. And this privilege opens up a historical responsibility, a responsibility in love, not only for my own life, but for the lives of so many persons...**

**...This...is an invitation to reflect together about ourselves and about new ways of expressing love, a love that is far broader than the defense of our own little slice in the larger pie of this world. It is a love that includes us all, because at bottom we are all part of this same pie, the one pie offered as "food and drink" for ourselves and for all living things.**

**"Take and eat, all of you: this is my body and this is my blood." We are food and drink for one another. We are one another's body and blood. We are one another's salvation...**

I just carry hope in my heart. Hope is not a feeling of certainty that everything ends well. Hope is just a feeling that life and work have a meaning.

*Vaclav Havel*

**Blessed are the poor**

**Not the penniless, but those whose heart is free.**

**Blessed are those who mourn**

**Not those who whimper, but those who raise their voices.**

**Blessed are the meek.**

**Not the soft, but those who are patient and tolerant**

**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice**

**Not those who whine, but those who struggle**

**Blessed are the merciful**

**Not those who forget, but those who forgive.**

**Blessed are the pure of heart**

**Not those who act like angels, but those whose life is transparent.**

**Blessed are the peacemakers**

**Not those who shun conflict, but those who face it squarely.**

**Blessed are those who are persecuted for justice**

**Not because they suffer, but because they love.**

*The Beatitudes- Padre Jacob, Santiago, Chile*

*Then God will say to those on the right, 'Come, you who are blessed by God, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer, God, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?...And God will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of my bretheren, you did for me'...Matthew 25*

**We see God as a liberating force who calls us to  
deliver people from oppression.**

**Jonathon Kozol**

*Often... churches have pronounced many discourses on the  
goodness of God, on spiritual joy and happiness, while our  
stomachs growled with hunger, and tears of distress  
burned on our faces, and while the weapons of war killed  
our children and our hopes... - Gebara*

*But why should we speak of the presence or the absence of  
God? If the good is absent or is not winning the day, then  
we speak of the absence of God. This is a different and  
perfect being, and thus one for whom it would be unworthy  
to get mixed up in the squalor of our lives... In the  
perspective we are developing, God is in all and all is in  
God - including suffering, dirt, and destruction... I affirm  
God's relatedness, the understanding of which surpasses  
us... - Gebara*

*He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows,  
familiar with suffering.*

*Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases,  
Yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted.*

*But he was wounded for our transgressions,  
crushed for our iniquities;*

*The punishment reconciling us fell on him,  
And by his wounds we are healed.*

Isaiah 5:20-23

**With our lives, we testify to believe in one  
of two Gods: either an omnipotent idol that  
controls and arranges everything,  
or the God of hope  
who works alongside us.**

**Dorothee Soelle**

## *Social Analysis*

To heal our society, our psyches must heal as well. The military, social, and environmental dangers that threaten us do not come from sources outside the human heart; they are reflections of it, mirroring the fears, greeds, and hostilities that separate us from ourselves and each other. For our sanity and our survival, therefore, it appears necessary to engage in spiritual as well as social change, to merge the inner with the outer paths.

*Joanna Macy*

War, and the preparation for war, are the two greatest obstacles to human progress. The poor of the world are crying out for schools and doctors, not guns and generals. -*Oscar Arias Sanchez, Costa Rica*

**The nobodies: nobody's children, owners of nothing. The nobodies: the no ones, the nobodied, running like rabbits, dying through life, screwed every which way.**

**Who are not, but could be.**

**Who don't speak languages, but dialects.**

**Who don't have religions, but superstitions.**

**Who don't create art, but handicrafts.**

**Who don't have culture, but folklore.**

**Who are not human beings, but human resources.**

**Who do not have faces, but arms.**

**Who do not have names, but numbers.**

**Who do not appear in the history of the world, but in the police blotter of the local paper.**

**The nobodies, who are not worth the bullet that kills them.**

**Eduardo Galeano**

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality. -*Archbishop Desmond Tutu*

THOMAS MERTON  
*Letter to a Young Activist*

*Do not depend on the hope of results. When you are doing the sort of work you have taken on, essentially an apostolic work, you may have to face the fact that your work will be apparently worthless and even achieve no result at all, if not perhaps results opposite to what you expect. As you get used to this idea, you start more and more to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the truth of the work it self. And there, too, a great deal has to be gone through, as gradually you struggle less and less for an idea and more and more for specific people. The range tends to narrow down but it gets much more real. In the end, it is the reality of personal relationships that saves everything.*

*You are fed up with words, and I don't blame you. I am nauseated by them sometimes. I am also, to tell the truth, nauseated by ideals and causes. This sounds like heresy, but I think you will understand what I mean. It is so easy to get engrossed with ideas and slogans and myths that in the end one is left holding the bag, empty, with no trace of meaning left in it. And then the temptation is to yell louder than ever in order to make the meaning be there again by magic. Going through this kind of reaction helps you to guard against this. Your system is complaining of too much verbalizing, and it is right.*

*... the big results are not in your hands or mine, but they suddenly happen, and we can share in them; but there is no point in building our lives on this personal satisfaction, which may be denied us and which after all is not that important.*

*The next step in the process is for you to see that your own thinking about what you are doing is crucially important. You are probably striving to build yourself an identity in your work, out of your work and your witness. You are using it, so to speak, to protect yourself against nothingness, annihilation. That is not the right use of your work. All the good that you will do will come not from you but from the fact that you have allowed yourself, in the obedience of faith, to be used by God's love. Think of this more and gradually you will be free from the need to prove yourself, and you can be more open to the power that will work through you without your knowing it.*

*The great thing after all is to live, not to pour out your life in the service of a myth: and we turn the best things into myths. If you can get free from the domination of cause and just serve Christ's truth, you will be able to do more and will be less crushed by the inevitable disappointments. Because I see nothing whatever in sight but much disappointment, frustration, and confusion...*

*The real hope, then is not in something we think we can do, but in God who is making something good out of it in some way we cannot see. If we can do God's will, we will be helping in this process. But we will not necessarily know all about it beforehand...*

*Enough of this... it is at least a gesture... I will keep you in my prayers.*

*All the best, in Christ, Tom*

... When we read the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew's Gospel carefully, it becomes clear that the question of the coming of Christ is not directed to individuals alone but to nations as well. The story of the last judgment opens with the words, "When the Son of Humanity comes in his glory, escorted by all the angels, then he will take his seat on his throne of glory. All nations will be assembled before him."

(Matt 25:31-32). These words open a new perspective on the final question: "What have you done for the least of mine?" They make us wonder what it means that we will be judged not only as individuals, but as nations as well.

Often it seems that we have heard the invitation of Jesus to be humble, compassionate, and forgiving, to take the last place, to carry our cross and lose our life as an invitation for our individual lives, our family lives, or our lives within the communities of prayer and service...

But when it comes to the relationship among nations, when we are dealing with decisions that have implications for our nation's role in the world, when we are thinking about our national security and its political ramifications, then we suddenly *reverse our attitude completely* and consider the Gospel demands as utterly naïve. When it comes to politics, power is the issue, and those who suggest that the powerless way of Christ is also the way to which the nations are called find themselves quickly accused as betrayers of their country. As nations—so we hear—we cannot seriously listen to the question "What have you done for the least of mine?" Looking at small nations struggling to overcome their hunger, thirst, estrangement, nakedness, and imprisonment as the least of our brothers and sisters would require a radical change in the use of power, a change from using power to dominate to using power to serve. Many would consider such a change political suicide.

*Henri Nouwen*

# What is Violence?

Respond to each statement with Yes (violent) No (not violent) or Depends (circumstantial)

1. Bombing a city and killing civilians
2. The Death Penalty
3. Drunk Driving
4. Stereotyping people
5. Buying products from third world countries
6. Voting
7. Homelessness
8. Ignoring your conscience
9. Playing video games
10. Sanctions
11. Protesting unjust conditions
12. Inaccessible public places
13. Music videos
14. Unjust land distribution
15. Arguing with your family or roommate
16. Eating fast food
17. The minimum wage
18. Boeing
19. Apathy
20. Cheating on a test
21. Jobs without childcare
22. Getting high
23. Children fighting

## Discussion:

- What definition of violence have you synthesized?
- What examples of violence have you witnessed on your trip so far?

## ***Social Analysis of the United States Media***

### *Reading from Noam Chomsky's Manufacturing Consent:*

...Leaders of the media claim that their news choices rest on unbiased professional and objective criteria...However... it is a “guided market system,” with the guidance provided by the government, the leaders of the corporate community, the top media owners and executives... In most cases, the media leaders do similar things because they see the world through the same lenses, are subject to similar constraints and incentives, and thus feature stories or maintain silence together in tacit collective action and leader-follower behavior...

...A constant focus on victims of communism helps convince the public of enemy evil and sets the stage for intervention, subversion, support for terrorist states, an endless arms race, and military conflict- all in a noble cause... The public does not notice the silence on victims in client states...It would have been very difficult for the Guatemalan government to murder tens of thousands over the past decade if the U.S. press had provided the kind of coverage they gave to the murder of Jerzy Popiewage in Poland.

|   | <u># of NY Times<br/>articles</u> | <u># of Time &amp; Newsweek<br/>articles</u> | <u># of CBS news<br/>programs</u> |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b><u>Jerzy Popiewage</u></b><br>(human rights activist in<br>Poland, priest, assassinated<br>in 1984)  | 78                                | 16   | 46                                |
| <b><u>Oscar Romero</u></b><br>(assassinated Archbishop<br>of El Salvador, assassinated<br>in 1980.)     | 16                                | 3  | 13                                |
| <b><u>4 U.S. churchwomen</u></b><br>(raped and murdered by<br>Salvadoran National<br>Guardsmen in 1980) | 26                                | 5  | 22                                |

*Source: Manufacturing Consent, Noam Chomsky & Edward Herman*

### **Time Warner selected holdings**

- The largest cable system in the United States, controlling 22 of the largest 100 markets;
- Several U.S. and global cable television channels, including **CNN**, **Headline News**, **CNNfn**, **TBS**, **TNT**, **Turner Classic Movies**, **The Cartoon Network** and **CNN-SI** (a cross-production with **Sports Illustrated**);
- Twenty-four magazines, including **Time**, **People** and **Sports Illustrated**;

### **NBC**

General Electric, owner of NBC, is one of the leading electronics and manufacturing firms in the world with nearly \$80 billion in sales in 1996. ...NBC is considered to be the core of GE's strategy for long-term global growth.

NBC owns 11 television stations. It now owns several cable channels outright, like **CNBC**, as well as shares in some 20 other channels, including the **A&E** network. *The most dramatic expression of GE's media-centered strategy is its 1996 alliance and joint investment with Microsoft to produce the cable news channel **MSNBC**, along with a complementary on-line service. Source: *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting Webpage.**

**Questions: Who benefits? Who pays? How does this affect the 'least of these?'**

# Social Analysis of United States Foreign Policy

## *From What Uncle Sam Really Wants ~Noam Chomsky*

George Kennan was one of the most intelligent and lucid of US planners, and a major figure in shaping the postwar world. His writings are an extremely interesting illustration of the dovish position. One document to look at if you want to understand your country is Policy Planning Study 23, written by Kennan for the State Department planning staff in 1948. Here's some of what it says:

**We have about 50% of the world's wealth, but only 6.3% of its population....In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to maintain this position of disparity....To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to be concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives....We should cease to talk about vague and...unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are then hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.**

PPS 23 was, of course, a top-secret document. To pacify the public, it was necessary to trumpet the "idealistic slogans" (as is still being done constantly), but here planners were talking to one another.

Along the same lines, in a briefing for US ambassadors to Latin American countries in 1950, Kennan observed that a major concern of US foreign policy must be "the protection of our [i.e. Latin America's] raw materials." We must therefore combat a dangerous heresy which, US intelligence reported, was spreading through Latin America: "the idea that the government has direct responsibility for the welfare of the people."

US planners call that idea Communism, whatever the actual political views of the people advocating it. They can be Church-based self-help groups or whatever, but if they support this heresy, they're Communists. This point is also made clear in the public record. For example, a high-level study group in 1955 stated that the essential threat of the Communist powers (the real meaning of the term Communism in practice) is their refusal to fulfill their service role -- that is, "to complement the industrial economies of the West." Kennan went on to explain the means we have to use against our enemies who fall prey to this heresy:

**The final answer might be an unpleasant one, but...we should not hesitate before police repression by the local government. This is not shameful since the Communists are essentially traitors....It is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by Communists.**

Policies like these didn't begin with postwar liberals like Kennan. As Woodrow Wilson's Secretary of State had already pointed out 30 years earlier, the operative meaning of the Monroe Doctrine is that "the United States considers its own interests. The integrity of other American nations is an incident, not an end." Wilson, the great apostle of self-determination, agreed that the argument was "unanswerable," though it would be "impolitic" to present it publicly.

### Questions:

- Who benefits from policies like this?
- Do you see examples of this policy?
- Who pays from policies like this?