

My name is Tricia Lyon. I am a life-long Catholic. My faith has always been a big part of my life. I have spent a great deal of time over the recent years investing in my professional and academic life. I was looking for a way to similarly “invest” in my spiritual life. Along came the notice in the St. Mary and Joseph bulletin about the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* and I signed up for the 30-week program. It was an effort on my part to let Jesus know that I loved Him and cared about Him – that He was an important piece of my life. I think that is important – I tell my cynical, non-believing friends to just give Him a chance – make the invitation, allow Him into your life. It has to be a two way street.

The biggest takeaway for me from the Spiritual exercise was this: Despite having a strong faith and being a strong believer, despite the many times Jesus has been there for me I still perceived Him as being “up there” and me “down here.” My favorite vision had been the one where my life “here” has ended and Jesus and I would meet face to face for the first time. This vision, in fact, is what would inspire me throughout my life to make Jesus a part of my everyday life. However, through the Ignatian exercises Jesus showed me that He isn’t “up there” but rather He is “right here” with me every day – all day. I became intensely and overpoweringly aware that Jesus wants to be with me right now – He does not want to “wait ‘til the day we meet in Heaven.” He wants to be a part of my day today, this moment, right now! The intensity of His love, of His desire for intimacy, is there for all of us. We just have to make that room – spend the time for Him to let Him in. I cannot think of any better way to do that than through the Ignatian *Spiritual exercises*.

Through the *Spiritual Exercises* I was also seeking what the purpose of my life is and He answered me quite clearly a short time after the classes were over – He said to me “Bless others as I have blessed you.”

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