

INTENTIONAL SEEKERS

FIND THE TIME



ALWAYS FIND
TIME FOR
THE THINGS
THAT MAKE
YOU FEEL
HAPPY TO BE
ALIVE.

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ST. DOMINIC'S SEPTEMBER 2014

*"Two books tell me what is important to you:
Your checkbook and your datebook. How you spend your
time and money tells me what you're invested in."*

Fr. Xavier Lavagetto, O.P.

INTENTIONAL SEEKERS

Overview

What do you mean by Intentional Seeker?

Last year at St. Dominic's we focused on Intentional Discipleship. It was an opportunity to explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, and to become more intentional about discipleship. Let's face it, before we can truly be disciples we must acknowledge and engage barriers that prevent us from starting the journey. We all have barriers! The question is not whether or not we have barriers, it is whether we are willing to seek ways to overcome those barriers. This series is a way we can all explore some of the most common barriers present in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

What is asked of me?

First, pick up a booklet at St. Dominic's each month and follow along. If you can, attend one of the *Explore* sessions (everyone is welcome) offered each month. If you want to go deeper, sign up for a *Small Christian Community*. Small communities will meet twice a month to discuss. We hope to be able to offer committed small communities and drop-in small communities as we get a better understanding of people's interests. Please see the back cover for specific dates.

When did the Intentional Seeker initiative start?

St. Dominic's kicked off the Intentional Seeker initiative in September 2014. We are gradually rolling it out to the whole parish. We hope to be able to connect people whenever they learn about the initiative or are ready to get involved.

What if I'm not sure how much of this I'm ready to do?

Pick up a booklet, and try it out. Pray about it.

I'm interested, but I just don't have the time.

We understand that this will not fit everyone's interest or schedule. We would like to ask you to pray for this initiative in the parish.

*Dear Jesus, grant your way to all who seek you,
your truth to all who want to know you,
and your life to all who share your love.*

Format

Each month we'll have a theme based around a common question or barrier. We'll pick scripture passages and other writings that will help us explore this theme. We'll spend the month going deeper and challenging ourselves. In September and October, we will roll this out to the parish. We will form several small communities. It is not too late to join one if you are interested (see the back cover). We plan to make this a yearlong initiative. Here's the planned format for each month:

WEEK 1 - EXPLORE

Break open the texts and explore the questions and barriers. Our goal here is to recognize that we not alone in our search. Many people today and many people throughout history have traveled this road. What are some of the answers that others have found? What insights speak to me? What difference would it mean in my life if I overcome this barrier? How can I help others who are struggling with this barrier?

You can explore the theme on your own through this book, or you can attend a presentation (see the upcoming schedule on the back cover).

WEEK 2 - SHARE

Consider joining a small community to discuss the themes and barriers in our lives. There is something powerful about gathering with others to explore our desires and our struggles.

If you can't join a small community, you can take time each day to pray the texts and reflect on your own journey.

WEEK 3 - ACT

This week we'll challenged ourselves to take some practical step in our daily lives. We'll do this on our own, so if you're part of a small community, there will not be a meeting this week.

WEEK 4 - SHARE

Gather again in your small community or reflect on your own.

INTENTIONAL SEEKERS FIND THE TIME

Starter

What are some of the things you seek?

What does it mean to seek God or seek faith?

Why is it difficult to seek faith (barriers, competing priorities)?

WEEK 1 - EXPLORE

*Our hearts were made for You, O Lord,
and they are restless until they rest in you.*

Saint Augustine of Hippo

We all have demands on our time. It is even easier in this age of smartphones and social media to fill every waking moment. In the midst of all of this, will we ever find time to explore big questions like:

- What is life really about?
- Why is there so much suffering and greed in the world?
- What is my purpose on this earth?
- Is there more to existence than this life?

There are many messages that surround us telling us not to bother, not to waste time exploring what is good, true, and beautiful:

- You'll never really get answers
- The one who dies with the most toys wins
- Religion is the opiate of the masses
- Religion is the root of all of the problems in the world

What if these voices are wrong? What if seeking God is the only path to happiness, fulfillment, and peace? If true, then the questions change:

- How can I find time for God?
- Can I find the time to answer questions and remove barriers?
- What time do I spend that is not bearing fruit?

This month we'll focus on *time*. Even if you are already a disciple, you'll still recognize the need for more time. Maybe it's time to address ongoing barriers in your life, and maybe it is time to walk with our friends, family, and coworkers as they seek to satisfy their deepest hungers. Intentional Seekers find the time.

*"To fall in love with God is the greatest romance;
to seek him the greatest adventure;
to find him, the greatest human achievement."*

Saint Augustine of Hippo

Exercises

Take some time to reflect on how you spend your time:

1) fill in the list below

2) indicate your priorities on the left (1 = high, 5 = low)

3) estimate the average number of hours spent weekly (out of 168 hrs.)

	(1)		(2)		(3)	
Work	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Purpose/Mission	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Health & Fitness	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Relationships	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Hobbies	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Learning	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Media	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Sleep	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Life Maintenance	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Money & Finances	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Faith	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Service & Volunteering	1	2	3	4	5	_____
Silence & Reflection	1	2	3	4	5	_____
_____	1	2	3	4	5	_____
_____	1	2	3	4	5	_____
_____	1	2	3	4	5	_____

Are your priorities well reflected in the time you spend in various activities?

How do some activities influence others (e.g., a good night sleep makes me more productive at work, my work gives me the freedom to travel)?

How has time that you spend on your faith (getting questions answered, service, prayer, etc.) influenced other areas of your life?

What surprises come from this assessment?

Main Texts

Time For The Great Journey

"I have often put my faith journey on hold, recognizing that I don't have time to really develop my faith in my busy schedule. Once I made a commitment to my faith journey and have put in some time to develop my faith, I realized that I don't have time to not give some to God. Whatever I offer to Him, He always repays a million times over. The faith journey I am on is quite possibly the most transforming and enhancing journey I have been a part of." —*Del, Baptized Easter 2006 through St. Dominic's RCIA*

"To fall in love with God is the greatest romance; to seek him the greatest adventure; to find him, the greatest human achievement."

—*Saint Augustine of Hippo*

Read prayerfully: How do you view time that you dedicate (or might dedicate) to your faith (e.g., luxury, necessity, afterthought)? Have you ever had a "transforming" experience like Del describes?

Time To Let Go Of Anxiety

Matthew 6:24“No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. ²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds in the sky; they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? ²⁷Can any of you by worrying add a single moment to your life-span? ²⁸Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. ²⁹But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. ³⁰If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry and say, 'What are we to eat?' or 'What are we to drink?' or 'What are we to wear?' ³²All these things the pagans seek. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides. ³⁴Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.”

Read prayerfully: What anxieties do you experience in your life? How does/might seeking God answer your anxieties?

Time For Happiness

"Our hearts were made for You, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in you."
—*Saint Augustine of Hippo*

"It is Jesus that you seek when you dream of happiness; He is waiting for you when nothing else you find satisfies you; He is the beauty to which you are so attracted; it is He who provoked you with that thirst for fullness that will not let you settle for compromise; it is He who urges you to shed the masks of a false life; it is He who reads in your heart your most genuine choices, the choices that others try to stifle. It is Jesus who stirs in you the desire to do something great with your lives, the will to follow an ideal, the refusal to allow yourselves to be grounded down by mediocrity, the courage to commit yourselves humbly and patiently to improving yourselves and society, making the world more human and more fraternal."

—*Pope Saint John Paul II, August 19, 2000 at World Youth Day in Rome*

Read prayerfully: How is happiness connected with God? Do you seek happiness ways that don't fulfill you?

Time For What Bears Fruit

Matthew 7:7"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹Which one of you would hand his son a stone when he asks for a loaf of bread, ¹⁰or a snake when he asks for a fish? ¹¹If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him. ¹²"Do to others whatever you would have them do to you. This is the law and the prophets. ¹³"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road broad that leads to destruction, and those who enter through it are many. ¹⁴How narrow the gate and constricted the road that leads to life. And those who find it are few. ¹⁵"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Just so, every good tree bears good fruit, and a rotten tree bears bad fruit... ²⁰So by their fruits you will know them.

"It is always springtime in the heart that loves God" —*Saint John Vianney*

Read prayerfully: What activities in your life bear the most fruit? What activities do not bear good fruit?

Time For Wonder

Among the many things that religious tradition holds in store for us is a legacy of wonder. The surest way to suppress our ability to understand the meaning of God and the importance of worship is to take things for granted. Indifference to the sublime wonder of living is the root of sin...As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such a decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Humanity will not perish for want of information but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder. Awareness of the divine begins with wonder. —*Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel*

"Without the Way there is no going; without the Truth there is no knowing; without the Life there is no living." —*Thomas A Kempis*

*Read prayerfully: How can you find ways to seek God in everyday life?
Where can you find more time to seek God?*

Key Insights

General

- Time matters!
- In Greek there are two words for time: *chronos* (sequential time) and *kairos* (significant time)
- We think in terms of *chronos*, but what if it is *kairos* that really matters?

Time For The Great Journey

- We often tell ourselves, “I don’t have time,” or “I’ll get to that later”
- What if time seeking God is time well spent?
- What if it is time that orders and enhances all of our other time?

Time To Let Go Of Anxiety

- We tend to worry about things, but worry seldom gets us where we want to go.
- Worry holds us back. It keeps us in *chronos*.
- Putting God first (seeking) is about *kairos*.

Time For Happiness

- Where will we find true happiness?
- There are plenty of things that offer us happiness, but they don’t really deliver (at least not lasting happiness).
- The only real happiness is found in relationship with God.

Time For What Bears Fruit

- We need to recognize the things we do that do not bear fruit.
- Sometimes we fill the emptiness, and do what is easiest
- We often need to cultivate silence and contemplation in our lives to even see clearly what bears fruit

Time For Wonder

- The true qualities of faith are things that lead us to God and to our neighbor
- Qualities like: wonder, thankfulness, joy, hope, beauty, goodness, love, peace, kindness, compassion
- What is time well spent?

Recap & Prepare for Week 2

- Reread the text for this week.
 - Underline phrases that speak to your heart
 - Pick a phrase each morning, and write it on a slip of paper
 - Hold that theme in your heart throughout the day
 - At the end of the day, pray an Examen (below)
- Reflection questions:

Do you believe that time spent on your faith journey is time well spent?

What time do you spend that is not fruitful?

Where do you find your greatest happiness?

A Daily Prayer - The Examen

The Examen is an extremely fruitful daily prayer (set aside 5-15 minutes):

1. Take a moment to recognize that you're in the presence of God
2. Thank God for the many gifts in your life
3. Invite the Spirit to walk back with you through your day, focusing on the specific theme of the day. Take the time to stop and really see that moment with new perspective.
4. Pray for God's guidance for tomorrow.

WEEK 2 - SHARE

Individual Option

- Find 20-30 minutes where you won't be interrupted.
- (10-15 minutes) Follow the prayer format (*Lectio Divina*) in the group exercise below.
- (10-20 minutes) Spend time reflecting on the questions outlined above.

Advice For Participating In Small Christian Communities

- The facilitator's role is to guide the flow of the meeting. They are not in the group to be experts. Help the facilitators by following their lead.
- During the discussion period, there will be multiple questions or topic for conversation. It is best to take them one at a time (i.e., let everyone share about one before moving to the next).
- Don't attempt to give the "right answer." Just share your experience, insights, and perspective.
- Please stay on topic (the questions asked).
- Pay attention to time. Keep your answers on the shorter side. You can always add more later.
- Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak (i.e., give others a chance to speak before sharing a second time).
- It's ok to not share if you don't feel comfortable, but challenge yourself to share occasionally.
- Give your attention to the person speaking. Please don't start side conversations.
- Avoid asking follow-up questions. Let people share what they want to share. It is always good to affirm others.
- Avoid answering other people's questions (i.e., taking on the role of expert).



How To Pray The Scripture Using *Lectio Divina*

- Goal:
 - Engage one of the scriptures at a deeper level
 - Allow the Spirit to teach our hearts
 - Provide fruit to lead into the discussion and sharing
- Steps (Should take 10-15 minutes):
 - *Lectio* (Reading, 2-5 minutes)
 - A participant reads the scripture passage
 - 30-60 seconds of silence
 - A participant reads the scripture passage
 - As the scripture is being read, the participants are invited to find a word, phrase, image, or idea that resonates with them. We'll call this the *focus*.
 - Example: Imagine reading the Our Father text from Matthew 6. People might focus on: "Thy Kingdom Come," "Lead Us," "Our," the idea of fatherhood, an image of God's Kingdom, Do I forgive others? Etc.
 - *Meditatio* (Meditate, 5-10 minutes)
 - Stay with the focus from above.
 - There are different ways to do this: Why does it resonate? What does it mean in my life today? Repeat it as a mantra. Imagine it. How is this connected to seeking God?
 - *Oratio* (Pray, 1-2 minutes)
 - Whatever comes up in meditation, form into a silent prayer offered to God.
 - *Contemplatio* (Contemplate, 1-2 minutes)
 - After speaking a prayer to God, sit and listen or rest in God's love.
 - This leads into discussion and sharing.
 - Start with insights from the prayer.
 - Transition to sharing about seeking God.
- Tips
 - There is no "right way," do what works for you
 - Embrace the silence
 - Let God find you

Small Christian Community Process - First Meeting

(Suggested timing based on a 60/90 minute meeting)

- Welcome & Check In *(5/10 minutes)*
- Review Format *(5/5 minutes)*
 - Review the participant's advice (page 15)
 - Prayer will be about 15 minutes
 - Review the prayer format : *Lectio Divina* (page 16)
 - Discussion will follow based on the prayer and the questions (page 14).
- Prayer *(10/15 minutes)*
 - Transition Passage: "Our hearts were made for You, O Lord, and they are restless until they rest in you." (St. Augustine)
 - *Lectio Divina*: Matthew 6:24-34 (page 9)
- Discussion *(30/45 minutes)*
 - Begin with insights from the prayer experience
 - Discussing the reflection questions (page 14)
- Action/Request *(5/10 minutes)*
 - The practical exercise is listed on the next page
 - Participants can share thoughts and plans
 - Review date of the next group session
 - Participants can request prayers from the group

WEEK 3 - ACT

Make a list of the ways you might dedicate some time to God (small and large).

Make a list of ways you spend time (small and large) that do not bear fruit (i.e., what could you give up for awhile to find time for something you listed above).

Action: Pick something you can do, some time you can dedicate to God (praying, getting questions answered, serving others, etc.). Make it happen.

WEEK 4 - SHARE

Preparing

- Continue to use the phrases you highlighted when you prepared for Week 2:
 - Pick a phrase each morning, and write it on a slip of paper
 - Hold that theme in your heart throughout the day
 - At the end of the day, pray an Examen (page 14)
- Week 3 exercise:
 - Plan to share something about your Week 3 exercise
 - If you were not able to do it, plan to share your barriers.

Individual Option

- Find 20-30 minutes where you won't be interrupted.
- (10-15 minutes) Follow the prayer format (*Lectio Divina*) in the group exercise below.
- (10-20 minutes) Journal about the experience of the exercise from Week 3.

Small Christian Community Process - Second Meeting

(Suggested timing based on a 60/90 minute meeting)

- Welcome & Check In (5/10 minutes)
- Review Format (5/5 minutes)
 - Review the participant's advice (page 15)
 - Prayer will be about 15 minutes
 - Review the prayer format : *Lectio Divina* (page 16)
 - Discussion will follow based on the prayer the Act exercise (page 18)
- Prayer (10/15 minutes)
 - Transition Passage: "It is always springtime in the heart that loves God." (St. John Vianney)
 - *Lectio Divina*: Matthew 7:7-20 (page 11)
- Discussion (30/45 minutes)
 - Begin with insights from the prayer experience
 - Discussing insights from the Act exercise
- Action/Request (5/10 minutes)
 - Review date of the next Explore session
 - Participants can request prayers from the group

THREE WAYS TO GET INVOLVED WITH INTENTIONAL SEEKERS

1. Pick up a booklet, and explore on your own. -or-
2. Attend an “Explore” session to learn about this month’s scripture. Everyone is welcome. - or-
3. Check out a Small Christian Community to join with others to go deeper.



UPCOMING “EXPLORE” SESSIONS

Young Adults’ Session*, Wed., Sept. 3, 7:30-9 PM, Parish Hall

Other Explore Sessions will start in October

* The Young Adults group is a community of single and married Catholic adults in our 20s and 30s; to find out more, visit: <http://stdominics.org/youngadults>



CONNECT WITH A SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Contact Scott Moyer at scott@stdominics.org

Small Christian Community Meeting Dates

Sunday: On Break

Monday: September 15 & 29

YAG (Sunday): August 14 & 28

Thursday: On Break