



**METANOIA**  
LISTENING CENTER مرکز إصغاء

# Behold, I make all Things New

Revelation 21 :5

Spiritual Retreat 2022

## Week 1 : I Am loved

Monday 28/2/2022 - 1 Samuel 3 : 1 -10 The Lord calls Samuel

At the beginning of this spiritual retreat, we invite you to meditate the passage "The Lord calls Samuel". When God called Samuel, this latter responded saying "Here am I." God is calling me now for a personal meeting with him. Am I ready to tell him "Here am I" or am I still reluctant?

I consecrate this time to contemplate the obstacles (economical, familial, societal, spiritual, ...) which still prevent me from meeting the Lord. I name them, write them down and put them in front of the Lord.

What are my expectations from this spiritual retreat? What do I long to experience through this retreat? Name/Identify them and write them down.

Tuesday 1/3/2022 - 1 Samuel 3 : 1 -10 The Lord calls Samuel

On the second day, we pursue our retreat with the passage of "The Lord calls Samuel". In this passage the Lord initiated and called Samuel by his name. Samuel answered the call and met the Lord for the first time. I go back in time and remember my first encounter with the Lord. I pause at this incident and I meditate it. I try to remember the place, time, occasion (through a pastoral activity, through a personal prayer, during work, through reading a book or listening to a conference, through a meeting with a particular person, ...) I describe this meeting and its effect on me. I emphasize on the emotions I've experienced (happiness, sadness, amazement, ...). I hold on to this event throughout my meditation period and then I choose a particular feeling and a particular idea that crossed my mind through this meditation and I jot them down.

Wednesday 2/3/2022 - Psalm 136 : Give thanks to the Lord

The people of Israel, upon hearing the voice of the Lord like Samuel did, sing praise and thanks to the Lord who loved them and saved them through centuries and historical eras. The Lord is the good, the merciful, the capable, the protector, the provider, the master and the creator.

The Lord so loved to come to me and my personal history in so many ways. I meditate and write my personal psalm and remember what the Lord has done to me via some events, circumstances and people. I pause when these memories incite feelings and thoughts inside of me. I write them down. I take the time I need and chant my personal psalm and the realization I did about how the Lord has interfered in my life. I taste the words and verses I had written and stop at them, and then I allow my soul to be led by the love that will come to me.

We proceed with our meditation through Psalm 136. I dig deeper into understanding God's love to me through the chant that I have written. I consecrate this time to answer two or three of the questions that follow so I can perceive God's work in my life. I pause at the one question that attracted me the most. I try to jog my memory about the incident or the situation which led to God's interference in my life in whatever manner (I try to imagine the place and time, the state I was in, the people present, the discourses that were uttered, etc...). I jot down what I am feeling right now and after my meditation and I repeat: "His loving kindness endures forever."

1. Name the events you felt God interfered with.
2. Name the people who left a good impression in your life. Name the people you believe love you the most. Jot down their names in a decreasing order. What is it that shows you that you are loved by them? List the verses of love that have been reflected through their behaviour towards you or precise in what way their act of love has affected you?
3. Jot down the words you've heard and which have echoed inside in your heart.
4. What are the thoughts or images that stimulate a drive to love or a willingness to do good deeds?
5. List the essential positive appreciation remarks you have received throughout your life and which have had an impact on you.
6. Specify a positive and strong feeling you have experienced. Name it. What feeling does it arouse in you now?
7. Specify a positive behaviour/act you were subject to and which has impacted and changed you. Name it. What feeling does it arouse in you now?
8. Which written passage ignites your love further?
9. What impacts you more when you feel loved: service, empowering words, gifts, active listening and precious time, a touch, etc...? Organise these ideas according to your priorities.

John's first letter focuses on prioritizing my faith in God's love to me. Because I believe that "the Lord is love" and that He loves me, I should be able to love my neighbor in return. For I should give from what I take and love will give birth to a new human in me. Loving my neighbor is thus a result not a goal by itself. Love is based on giving myself to others. The Lord who dwells in me, perfects His love in me and through me. Being a son of God is therefore practicing the dynamics of His only son. This means receiving the spirit of love that comes from our heavenly Father and allowing this spirit to work, manifest and become apparent through me. Before this mystery of love, I ask myself: do I let the Lord love me or do I want to learn to love alone before that and use my personal power to achieve this? Do I truly believe in His "perfected" love to me. Is my love to others a spontaneous result to God's love to me or is it an effort and continuous and heavy task? Why? I jot down the obstacles that are preventing me from believing in God's unconditional love to me.

One of the most significant obstacles that prevent me from practicing my faith in how the Lord loves me unconditionally is fear. Fear is the main reason which leads to worrying. What is scaring me (God and His expectations from me? the punishment in the afterlife? the future? my weakness and my incapacity? etc...?) What do these verses mean to me: "that we will have confidence on the day of judgment;" "there is no fear in love"; I especially meditate verses 17-18 and I perceive them. What should I do to stop fearing things? I review my religious practices until now; I recognize and distinguish their negative or positive impact on the rise of fear inside of me or the increase of my faith. You can use the following table to help you organize your thoughts. Which new practice can root me and fix me in God's love to me? I write it in one specific and practical sentence.

| Religious and spiritual practice | Positive impact | Negative impact | Make the Change |
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# The way to meditate

*"Meditation is a friendly conversation we often do alone, with Him Who we know loves us. Through meditation, the soul gathers all its powers and enters to its depth accompanied by its Lord." (Theresa of Avila).*

**Before meditation:** Like any other meeting, for this meeting of love, one should take an appointment with the Lord. That's why; I should pick a calm and beautiful place during the retreat where I can be alone. If the place is not in nature, I can arrange it and organize it to my taste (a candle, a holy icon, a painting, a carpet, etc...). The place can be changed afterwards depending on the circumstances or if it is not helping me meditate. I specify the time I vow to use to meet the Lord during (between 15 to 30 minutes – 30 minutes for the persons who have a good expertise in meditation)

**During the meditation:** I sit in a comfortable manner, for I am my body, and I will use this body to pray through it, with it and in it. I start exercising relaxation: I gradually feel my body parts and move the parts I feel are stiff. I concentrate and carefully listen to the close or far sounds around me. I breath slowly (inhale, exhale), and I try to hear my breath and my heart beats. I then slowly read the biblical passage and reread it another time. In narrative passages, I employ my senses using my imagination. I try to imagine myself in the place that is mentioned in the passage; I relate to a character I know and I become an observer of the actions taking place. I listen to the noise, words, sounds, and speeches. I smell the odours; I taste; I touch... I then stop at the thing that moves me from the passage, and I let the Spirit guide me. Meditation is not based on a thorough thinking or abundance in talking, but it is rather based on putting our self in the presence of the Lord. The steps of meditations aim to help me and are by no means mandatory. I finish my meditation – in any personal way I want – and with respect to the time I have assigned earlier for my meditation.

**Post meditation:** I reiterate whatever I have experienced during my meeting with the Lord. I jot down the things that moved me and what I have experienced and I write my thoughts, feelings, and questions. I try to remember that throughout the day (holy icon, thought or image, etc...)



For inquiries and assistance with your meditations, don't hesitate to speak with your spiritual director or just call us on: 81/606091 – 07/201436