**Exercise on Three Sins**

David L. Fleming, S.J., Draw Me into Your Friendship

This is a meditation about the reality of sin and its effects.

In this prayer I will need to spend time *thinking* through the matter.

Preparation

A.         First Consider

I always take a moment to call to mind the attitude of reverence with which I approach this privileged time with God.  I recollect everything up to this moment of my day – my thoughts and words, what I have done and what has happened to me – and ask that God may take and receive all of this is praised in service.

B.         Grace

There is an importance in my speaking out my desire for God’s grace according to the subject matter and my own dispositions during the retreat.  Perhaps expressing what I truly want from God may also act as a preparation of my inner being for openness to God’s entrance into particular area of my life.  In this exercise, the grace that desire is the gift of feeling of dismay, confusion and even horror before God as I consider the effects of even one sin as compared to my own sinful life. Taking a cue from my feelings, I may find it helpful to imagine myself as bound, helpless, and alienated as I enter into this exercise dealing with sin.

C.         Note

Whereas the grace I want and desire changes in accord with gifts already received, God’s own stirrings, and the subject matter of the prayer, the preparatory prayer never changes.  This prayer, which marks the beginning of each formal prayer,  not only reinforces the continuing petition for God’s gift of reverence in me, but also calls to mind how I must continue to beg that my total day is by grace more and more integrated and centered in God alone.

PART ONE        *the Angels will rebel against God*

It remains a part of our Christian heritage to understand that the first rejection of God’s love in creation is found among God’s special messengers, the Angels. Theologically and spiritually, the sin of the Angels exemplified at the radical choice of self before God, which is the essence of sin, and the terrifying but necessary consequence of rejecting the very source of all life and love.  Pure spirits a decisive knowledge and totalizing love, the Angels somehow were presented with the choice, which God continues to give to each person so lovingly made – whether we freely choose to respond to the love, and life forever which God offers us. Some Angels chose to reject God’s free offering of love and a sharing in divine life forever.  Immediately by closing themselves off from God, they changed from a life of grace to a death-hatred of God and found themselves in their own choice of hell.

I mull over this sin in my mind, letting its decisiveness strike deep into my heart, and then I look to my many rejections of God’s love.

PART TWO       the sin of Adam and Eve

In the biblical account of how sin entered into our world from the time of the first human beings, we again get a picture of a very simple but direct rejection of God’s love.  Adam and Eve want to be as God is, and so they are described as eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge.  Both tried to escape the responsibility of choice which each one has made by trying to shift the blame to someone or something else.  The effect of this one sin is not only the loss of God’s special sharing of divine life for all humankind, but also the continuing flow of evil perpetrated by people upon other people and even the various kinds of destruction inflicted by them upon God’s world.  We can follow one small slice of this sad human story as we read the book of Genesis.

I consider the effect of his first sin of man and woman for themselves and for all their posterity. I let the destructiveness of evil become fully present to my attention.  If one sin can wreak such havoc, what about my own sinfulness?

PART THREE    the person who goes to hell

There is the possibility of the person making a definitive “no” as a response to God’s love and ratifying that “no” even in death.  By the “no” response given to God, a person has chosen self and therefore closed off all the love and life offerings which have their source only in God.  By centering solely on itself, one has condemned oneself to the death of hell for all eternity.

How can I measure the number of “no’s” which I have spoken to God up to this time of my life?  What can I say to God about myself?

COLLOQUY

I put myself before Jesus Christ our Lord, present before him on the cross.  I talk to him about he how creates because he loves and then he is born one like us out of love, still NT himself as to pass from eternal life to death here in time, even death on a cross.  By his response of love for God his father, he dies for my sins.

I looked to myself and ask – just letting the questions penetrate mind being:

n       In the past, what response have I made to Christ?

n       How do I respond to Christ now?

n       What response should I make to Christ?

As I look upon Jesus as he hangs upon the cross, I ponder whatever God may bring to my attention.  I close with the Lord’s prayer.