**Consolation-Desolation Exercise**

Here is a simple 3-part exercise where we invite you to 1) reflect on where you currently find yourself (in desolation or consolation); 2) consider the opposite state to where you find yourself; and 3) to share together as a group.

***Step 1: Consolation or Desolation: where are you?***

*If in consolation ...*

* Where has love for God been ignited?
* Where do you see God more fully in the created order?
* Where have you been moved to tears with respect to sin, the work of Christ, and other things related to God’s love?
* Where have increases in faith, hope and love occurred?
* What has joy surfaced, the kind that focuses your attention on God?

*If in desolation ...*

* What are the points of darkness and unrest?
* What are the false ideas/disturbing emotions you battle?
* How do you become agitated in temptation?
* What are the base things to which you get drawn (e.g., overeating, binge-watching tv, inordinate sexual impulses, trivial pursuits, etc.)
* Where has your confidence and hope been rattled?
* Where exactly is the loss of enthusiasm? What is the area of sadness and melancholy?
* Describe the way(s) in which God feels (more) absent.

***Step 2: Consider the Opposite State.*** Although it seems odd at first, Ignatius encourages us to think some about desolation when we’re in consolation and to think about consolation when we’re in desolation.

*If in consolation ...*

* Consider ways you can respond better the next time you're in desolation, drawing on the strength of your present consolation. Write these out: “I can / will ...”
* Remember and write down how weak you felt in your most recent period of desolation, how unable you were to access the grace and consolation you currently enjoy.

*If in desolation ...*

* What former commitment/resolution needs to stay unmoved? (“When you find yourself in desolation, don't change your plans. Stick to what you previously determined was good and what you set out to do when you were in consolation.”)
* How are you being invited to lean on the Lord *in a new way* in order to resist attacks?
* What prayer practice or exercise can you engage in that’s appropriate to the situation?

***Step 3: Share Your Narrative*** We encourage you to share their most pertinent observations with another brother or sister in the Lord. Take time to explain your position and then to bless one another specifically over what you sense the Lord is doing in drawing you closer, and setting you free.