

# “A Living Gospel: Reading God’s Story in Holy Lives”

Featuring Robert Ellsberg



## A Week of Reflection | Session 1: Stories, Spiritual Practice & Sacred Text

### Day 1:

Robert Ellsberg shares this definition of *discernment*: **A way of paying attention to how God speaks to us in the events of our daily lives, in the movements of our hearts.**

In what ways have you grown in experiencing *discernment* as a way to live your life? How have you come to understand the ‘movement of your heart’?

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### Day 2:

When Pope Francis was ordained as a priest, he composed his own personal creed. Ellsberg invites us to consider composing our own creed by interweaving our understanding of key tenets of faith with an understanding of our own lives and our personal mission.

Take some time to create your own creed.

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Day 3:

Jean-Pierre de Caussade said, ***“The Holy Spirit writes no more gospels except in our hearts. All we do from moment to moment is live this new gospel of the Holy Spirit. We, if we are holy, are the paper; our sufferings and our actions are the ink. The workings of the Holy Spirit are his pen, and with it he writes a living gospel.”***

Who are some of the people who have shown you a *living gospel*? What are the key truths you have witnessed in their lives? How will you open your life to ‘the workings of the Holy Spirit’?

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Day 4:

***“Conversion, it turns out, is not a once-and-for-all event—but an ongoing process of turning toward God. And often when we think we are finished or that we have reached the end, it is a sign that we have got lost along the way.”*** – Robert Ellsberg

Take some time to reflect on your spiritual life. Are there places where you feel stuck? What might it look like to invite a new conversion? How might you need to open or change your mind?

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## Day 5:

***“Henri Nouwen did not write these books to present himself as an ideal model, or someone to be imitated, but to try to share the story of God that was written in his own story, notwithstanding his own complex personality, with all his evident gifts and obvious wounds.”***

- Robert Ellsberg

What parts of your personality do you struggle with? How have these traits been written into your story? How has God met you when you've asked to have this "thorn removed"? In what ways have they been entryways to a deeper spiritual life?

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## Day 6:

Robert Ellsberg reminds us that seeing a "living gospel" in the lives of holy people means not just reflecting on their accomplishments, but on their search, their questions, their determination to be awake and alive and prepared to respond to the divine voice that speaks to their hearts, inviting them to find the meaning of their story in relation to the story that God is telling us through Jesus.

How would you describe the story that God is telling us through Jesus? How do you see this story reflected in your life?

How are you practicing staying 'awake and alive and prepared to respond' to God's presence and voice in your day-to-day life?

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