

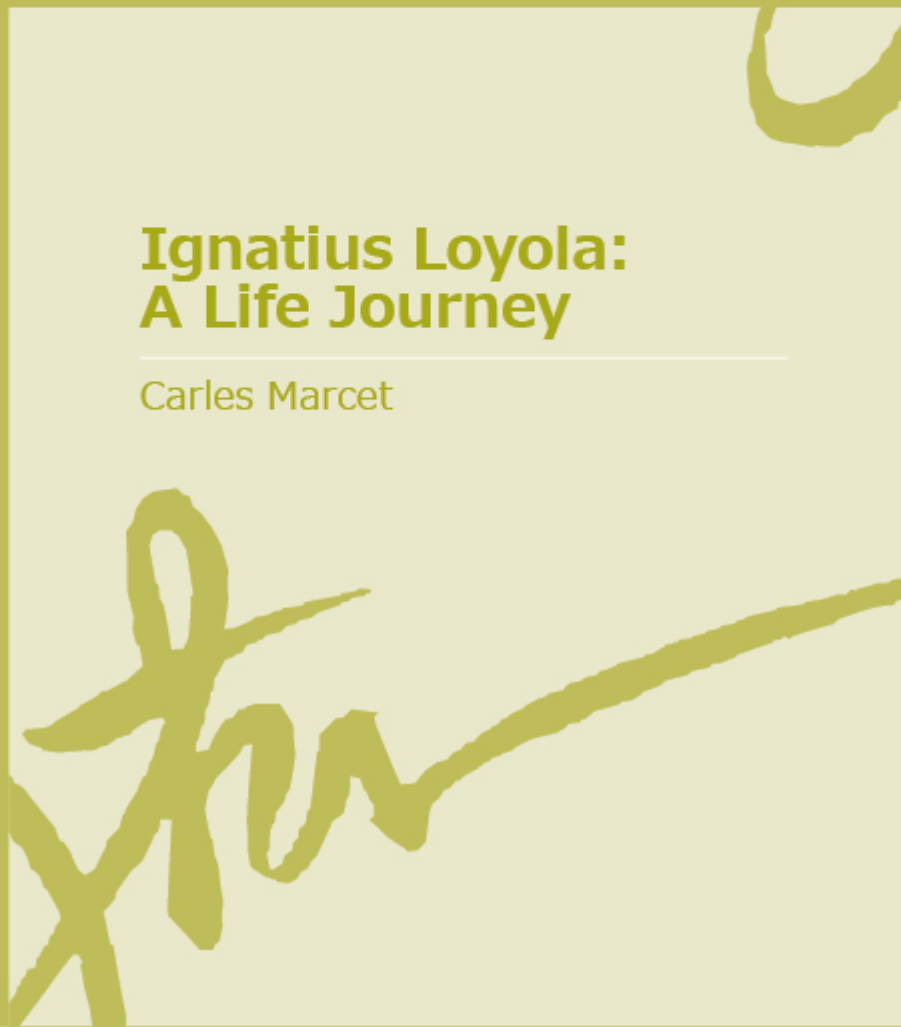
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Ignatius Loyola: A Life Journey

Carles Marcet



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Carles Marcet, sj. With a licentiate in theology, Carles Marcet has worked many years as pastor in the district of Bellvitge (L'Hospitalet del Llobregat). He also gives the Exercises in the base communities and accompanies individuals. He is on the team of the International Center of Spirituality at the Cova de Manresa, where he coordinates two courses: "Ignatian Immersion" and "Two Months of Theological Updating."

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Roger de Llúria 13, 08010 Barcelona (Spain)
+34 93 317 23 38
info@fespinal.com
www.cristianismeijusticia.net

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Translated by Joseph Owens
Layout: Pilar Rubio Tugas

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1. OUR AIM

The present booklet does not pretend to be an erudite study of Ignatius Loyola or his spirituality. Our aim is simply to help individuals and groups to reflect, to pray, and to share the spiritual experience of Ignatius, so that his exceptional interior journey can inspire our own efforts to follow Jesus Christ.

I sincerely believe that Ignatius's life journey presents us with something that is especially necessary today for all persons who wish to live "with spirit," that is, for all who long to experience their lives and everything in their lives as part of a profound personal experience of God –and to do so in a pluralist, globalized world. This is a world where God may no longer a reality that is "socially evident or natural," but it is the one where we as Christians aspire to live out our following of Jesus Christ, not dredging up musty, anecdotal relics from the past but trying to make a meaningful contribution to the present. Like Ignatius, we aspire to be able to say something believable on God's behalf –for God has first communicated it to us and we have experienced it personally– in order to help the persons with whom we live.

To that end, after a general presentation of the itinerary of the life –both interior and exterior– of Ignatius Loyola, we will offer a series of selections from his writings. Ignatius has left us a legacy of many familiar sayings, but his writings provide us an abundance of wisdom that is not so well known. So we offer here a small selection of the vast literature, which ranges from his Autobiography [*Auto.*] to the book of the Spiritual Exercises [*SpEx*] and the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus [*Const.*], and which includes selections from the thousands of letters addressed to many different people. The selections are ordered according to Ignatius's own personal itinerary.

Some of these texts were written when Ignatius was still a layman, others when he was a priest, and still others when he was Superior General of the Society of Jesus. I believe that all of them can help us today, whether we are laity or religious, to deepen our own personal experience of God.

2. INTRODUCTION: ITINERARY OF A LIFE

The itinerary of the life of Ignatius Loyola, as he himself explains to us in his autobiography, moves from being “a man given over to the vanities of the world” [*Auto.* 1]¹ to being a man “always growing in the ability to find God easily.” [*Auto.* 99]

2.1. A man given over to the vanities of the world

In his adolescence and his youth, Ignatius was educated in the courts of nobles, first in service to Juan Velázquez de Cuéllar, chief accountant of the kingdom of Castile and a close friend of the royal family, and subsequently to the Duke of Nájera, who was viceroy of Navarre. This youthful experience exposed Ignatius to the values characteristic of knights and aristocrats. Such values, described by Ignatius as “worldly vanities,” motivated young men like himself to seek to achieve the greatest success and to climb to the highest heights possible. Such strivers lived enthralled with themselves, always seeking “to be worth more,” “to be greatly esteemed,” “to be valued and taken into account.”

Ignatius’s desire to “stand out and excel” is well illustrated in his determination, while in service to the Spanish king and queen, to defend to the death the fortress at Pamplona against the attacks of the French army, even when everyone else thought the struggle was hopeless. During that battle a cannon ball badly damaged his legs, obliging him to return to his home in Loyola for a lengthy, solitary recuperation. There, to combat the solitude and boredom, he read about

1. Citations are taken from *Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writing*, ed. and trans. by Joseph Munitiz SJ. Penguin Classics, 1997. Note that Ignatius refers to himself in the third person.

the lives of the saints and the life of Jesus since the house had none of the books he loved, the ones that told of the feats of valiant knights. As he read the religious books, something inside him opened up, and his life took an unsuspected turn. Paying close heed to the movements within himself, he felt impelled to consider a new possibility for his life: he wanted to be a knight, but in the same way the saints were; he wanted to serve only Jesus Christ, the greatest lord and the only master who deserved to be served. Once he recovered from his wounds, he departed from Loyola with that strong desire to serve Jesus Christ and to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

2.2. The foundational experience of Manresa

Though it was not part of his plan, he had to spend nearly a year in Manresa. The interruption proved providential. As he viewed it in retrospect, while narrating his autobiography toward the end of his life, Ignatius recognized that in Manresa “God treated him in the same way that a school teacher treats a child, by teaching him.” [*Auto.* 27] At first Ignatius experienced a period of calm in Manresa, seeking to serve his new Lord in imitation of the saints. His style of life was austere and penitential, removed from the world. Subsequently he experienced a long spell of dryness and desolation as he contemplated his life project, something he had not felt previously. Slowly but surely he became aware what the problem was. Although he had decided to serve a new Lord, his interior pattern of behavior continued to be the same as before. He still wanted to be a knight who would distinguish himself by accomplishing great things in service to his Lord. He was still captivated by his own image, and it was this that motivated his desire to excel and gain merit in the eyes of his Lord. Certainly he possessed a strong spirit of generosity, but he was still blind and self-centered.

At that point the Lord proceeded to teach Ignatius a profound lesson, which he related in his autobiography many years later: “Looking back on the sixty-two years of his life, when he considers all the help God has given him and all the things he has learned, even if they were all joined together, he does not think that they would amount to as much as he was given in that short space of time.” [*Auto.* 30] Ignatius was here referring to the intense experience he had in Manresa known as the “enlightenment by the Cardoner River.” This experience emerged unexpectedly out of the dark clouds of desolation; suddenly a brightly light appears, and he “was illuminated.” Following as it did on four long months of anguish, this illumination or enlightenment made Ignatius understand that there was no need for him to “win over” his Lord with works or penances because his Lord was already on his side. What Ignatius realized was that it is not what we do that matters, but what we let the Lord do with us and for us. God is not a “lord” but a “Lover.” In our spiritual journey what comes first is not our love for God but the

love that God first has for us: God loves us with anticipation. Realizing this existentially is true enlightenment because it allows us to view all things in a totally new and organic manner.

The experience at Manresa made a strong impact on Ignatius's life journey, which in turn deepened that experience. Ignatius left Manresa not only with a new personal experience of God but also with a new personal experience of the world as a whole. That world from which Ignatius had retreated, shutting himself off in a cave as a penitent, now shone brightly as the place where God loved him, where God sought him, where God awaited him. Ignatius underwent a "conversion to the world." He discovered that the world, with all its ambiguities, with all its lights and shadows, was passionately loved by God, whose great desire was to redeem it. The world was depressed and desolate, but precisely for that reason, it was inviting us to embrace it as bearers of consolation and mercy. For Ignatius, the great mission was to serve the God of Life in the creatures intensely loved by God. In searching for a way to respond to God's "first act," to the "Love which goes before us," Ignatius realized that it was by giving thanks for it, praising it, and serving it in the world.

So from that moment in his pilgrimage, as we will see, Ignatius sought out ways to praise and serve God in order to show his gratitude for the love he received. That is what we will see him doing in the Holy Land, and when he cannot stay there, in Barcelona, in Alcalá, and also in Salamanca, where he began to study, for his great desire was to make known what he had experienced, and to do that he needed to study. While he was in the university later in Paris, he began to bring together the first group of companions.

In the Exercises, Ignatius follows the statement, "Human beings are created," with the words, "to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord." For someone who knows what it is to be bathed in the merciful love of God, the utterly spontaneous reaction is to give thanks, and the best way for us human beings to give thanks for "all we have received" is to place it at the service of the one who made us the gift.

2.3. "In All Things, to Love and to Serve"

Ignatius's great desire was to render that service of gratitude with "all his being" and not just a part of himself. He wanted to serve wholeheartedly and in all things. The Ignatian motto is well known: "In All Things, to Love and to Serve." And "all things" meant "all things." Thus, in his life journey we will see the pilgrim praising and serving for love of God in many places and many situations. Even when he was thrown in prison in Salamanca by order of the Inquisition, he declared: "Let me tell you: there are not enough shackles and chains in Salamanca that I would not desire more for love of God." [*Auto.* 69] And so we see him dedicating himself to his studies, desiring to live and serve in the hospitals, traveling long

distances alone and on foot, gathering together a community of companions, offering the experience of the Exercises, teaching catechism to children, proposing new decrees to the authorities to help people live more virtuously, or visiting the families of his companions when in Spain. After the founding of the Society, when Ignatius was the Superior General living in Rome, he was always busy, corresponding with the companions who had begun to go on missions all over the world, setting up the Casa de Santa Marta to care for the city's prostitutes, founding a fraternity to take charge of the work, creating a center for welcoming and catechizing converted Jews, or forming the novices that were entering the Congregation. The motto was always: In All Things, to Love and to Love!

2.4. "Reality" as "divine medium"

That same attitude is evident in the proposal made from the start of the Exercises. Once it is granted that "human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God," it follows that all other things "are created for human beings, to help them to achieve the end for which they are created." [*Auto.* 23] That "all" may be called simply "reality"—it includes sickness and health, wealth and poverty, success and failure, human relations, institutions, family, community, money, free time, etc. It is ambiguous because of the many forms it takes, but it comes to be a "divine medium," that is, the place, the manner, the venue where we can live in a loving, grateful, and obliging relations with the One who has loved us into being. In this way our pilgrim invites us to journey through this reality with a basic disposition of freedom. We should love everything since everything can be a divine medium and an occasion for a loving encounter with God. At the same time we should not let ourselves be possessed by anything, because no part of this reality is God. We should "choose and desire what best leads us to the end for which we are created." [*SpEx* 23]

The pilgrim spirituality of Ignatius thus allows us to become involved a variety of concrete works that are social, political, educational, or explicitly religious—in hospitals, schools, labor unions, and Christian communities; as catechists or architects; in neighborhoods or towns. What is essential is that in all things the aim is to love and to serve God and to help our neighbor. Some years ago Karl Rahner expressed it clearly in a little book, speaking through the mouth of Saint Ignatius: "You should constantly consider whether all your activity serves this end. If it is so, then one of you can perfectly be a biologist devoting your life to studying the habits of cockroaches."²

2. K. RAHNER and P. INHOF (1979), *Ignacio de Loyola*, Santander: Sal Terrae, p. 16. Although Rahner has Ignatius addressing Jesuits specifically, I believe that his words can be helpful to all who are interested in Ignatian spirituality, not just Jesuits.

2.5. In the style of Jesus

But the pilgrim did not want to love and to serve God in just any way. He sought out a concrete style, which was the style of Jesus. The intense passion he felt for Jesus began during those months of convalescence he spent in Loyola, where they gave him a Life of Christ since they had none of the books about chivalry that he liked so much. He began to entertain the idea of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the land of Jesus, his new Lord. In his autobiography Ignatius describes with emotion his stay in Jerusalem and his disappointment at not being able to stay there, as he had hoped to do. The monks of Montserrat, who had gotten to know Ignatius previously, said of him, “This pilgrim is crazy about our Lord Jesus Christ.” Later on, when the group of companions that had formed in Paris met in Venice, they debated about the name and the identity of the group, and they could find no better name than “companions of Jesus,” for Jesus was their only leader. It was Jesus who had brought them together into a community, and it was Jesus who was inspiring their style of life and way of proceeding.

The pilgrim’s passionate love for Jesus was confirmed in another intense spiritual experience he had in the chapel of La Storta, when he was traveling to Rome. In his autobiography Ignatius tells us: “He saw clearly how God the Father was placing him with Christ, his Son.” [*Auto.* 96] In Manresa he had experienced God as inviting him to seek, love, and serve him in all things, but now, as he neared Rome, he experienced a very concrete style of seeking, loving, and serving: the style of Jesus. With Jesus and like Jesus carrying his cross, Ignatius would accompany him in his mission of bring humanity closer to God.

Naturally, this passion for Jesus (in both meanings of the word: enthusiastic embrace and solidarity with his suffering) is present at the heart of the mystagogical experience of the Exercises, in which the exercitant is invited to contemplate the mysteries of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The exercitant ponders these mysteries with affection and reflection, asking that the life of Jesus be reflected in his own life so that “Christ lives in me and his life is made manifest in my body” (2Cor 4,10). The exercitant is therefore instructed to constantly request and desire “interior knowledge of the Lord, who for me became man, so that I may love him and follow him.” [*SpEx* 104]

A synthetic formulation of the Ignatian journey could be this: thanking, loving, and serving in all things the One who has come out to meet us with anticipatory love, and passionately following in the footsteps of Jesus. This is the way, Ignatius says, by which we are to “save our souls.” The goal of this pilgrimage is God himself: the Trinity, that community and communion of persons where humanity definitively finds healing and rest and fulfillment after a long journey. What Ignatius was seeking, in the midst of all things, was full communion in God. His center of vitality was therefore situated beyond all things and at the same time in all things. His living was sacramental: he was constantly seeking, loving, and

embracing the Lord's footsteps –which sometimes appear where one least expects to find them– but he did not seek to hold onto them or grasp them tight. He was pursuing the path they traced, toward full and definitive communion in God, where God will be all in all (1Cor 15,28).

2.6. “To sense the will of God”

We can glimpse something of this in the vital (not theoretical) formula with which Ignatius closed many of his letters. It reads thus: “I end by asking the Divine Goodness to give us plentiful grace so that we may discern his most holy will and fulfill it entirely.”³ First and foremost, the will of God is not that we do such and such a thing, but that we do what God wants, what God loves. And what God wants and loves above all is not our works but our persons and our whole being. That is why Ignatius urges us to ask for the grace that we may feel intensely God's love for us and in us; that we may feel that God loves us, wants us, and awaits us; that our journey through life is a pilgrimage toward full communion with him and in him, a communion in which we will most definitively delight. Thus, “doing God's will” is nothing more than allowing ourselves to be loved by him and to be led by him toward that full communion that is our goal and our destiny –“the salvation of our soul,” in the words of Ignatius. And that happens, we repeat, “in all things”: in our enjoyment and in our suffering, in our working and in our resting, in our moments of loneliness and in those of community, in our thinking and in our feeling, in our successes and in our failures, in our painful travail and in our vibrant passion, in our contemplation and in our action, whenever we exercise our freedom, memory, understanding, and will. For all those things are most definitely gifts of God, which will dispose of us in such a way that God and we become ever more closely related in communion. To that end, as the pilgrim prays at the end of the Exercises, all that we need is the love and the grace of God [*SpEx* 234]. May we feel God's grace interiorly and let ourselves be completely guided by it.

We present in the following pages some selected texts of Ignatius, along with some short introductory or explanatory notes when necessary. The texts are organized into sections that follow the order of the themes in the previous pages: 1) the love of God that brought us into being; 2) thanking, praising, and serving God; 3) in all things; 4) in the manner and style of Jesus; 5) toward full communion in God.

3. *Obras completas de san Ignacio de Loyola*, p. 623. Madrid: Ed. BAC. 1963. Hereafter cited simply as *Obras completas*.

3. SELECTION OF IGNATIAN TEXTS

Ignatius narrated his autobiography at the end of his life, evoking interior and exterior events of many years before. There are clearly many lacunae, but there are also many details Ignatius zealously preserved in his heart, and these details become very significant with the passage of time.

3.1. The anticipatory love of God

Ignatius recalled his time of solitude and convalescence in Loyola, when he felt consoled at being opened up to the Creator. Later, in telling about the harsher, more critical period in Manresa (suffering scruples, temptations to suicide, despair...), he remembered how he had prayed earnestly and spontaneously, realizing that only in the Creator could he sustain and ground himself. Once the crisis had passed, he recognized that he had experienced the love and mercy of God as liberating forces. He would then continue on his pilgrimage, but fully aware that he could do so only by placing his trust in God alone.

“The greatest consolation he used to receive was to look at the sky and the stars, which he did often and for a long time, because with this he used to feel in himself a great impetus towards serving Our Lord.” [*Aut.* 11]

“In the heat of this prayer he began to shout out loud to God, saying, ‘Help me, Lord: I can find no cure in human beings nor in any creature. If I thought I could find it, no struggle would be hard for me. You, Lord, show me where I am to find it. Even if I have to follow a little dog so that it can give me the cure, I’ll do it.’” [*Aut.* 23].

“Thus from that day onward he remained free of those scruples, holding it for certain that Our Lord in his mercy had willed to liberate him.” [Aut. 25]

“At this time God was dealing with him in the same way as a schoolteacher deals with a child, teaching him. ... It was his clear judgment then, and has always been his judgment, that God was dealing with him in this way.” [Aut. 27]

“He left for Barcelona in order to board ship. Although some people were offering to accompany him, he didn’t want to go except alone: his whole aim was to have God alone as a refuge. ... He told them that, even if it were the son or the brother of the Duke of Cardona, he wouldn’t go in his company. For he wanted to have three virtues: charity and faith and hope. And if he took a companion, whenever he was hungry, he would expect help from him, and when he fell, that he would help him get up, and thus he would be entrusting himself to him too, and attached to him, for these reasons; and he wanted to have this trust and attachment and hope with regard to God alone. What he was thus expressing here was just how he felt it in his heart.” [Aut. 35]

Ignatius expected everyone who entered the body of the Society to experience what he himself had experienced.

“To spend another month in making a pilgrimage without money ... in order to grow accustomed to discomfort in food and lodging. Thus too the candidate, through abandoning all the reliance which he could have in money or other created things, may with genuine faith and intense love place his reliance entirely in his Creator and Lord.”⁴ [Const. 67]

“The more one binds himself to God our Lord and shows himself more generous toward his Divine Majesty, the more will he find God more generous toward himself and the more disposed will he be to receive daily greater graces and spiritual gifts.” [Const. 282]

Ignatius’s own life experience taught him that the essential thing was not forming himself but letting himself be formed by the Mercy of God that he was offered from the very start. That life experience led him to acknowledge all the good he

4. The text refers to the pilgrimages that every Jesuit is expected to make during his novitiate. The provision is inspired by the various pilgrimages Ignatius himself undertook, often alone and on foot. On these pilgrimages he was confronted with uncertainty and bad weather, with loneliness and insecurity, with discomfort and ridicule, with little food and rest ... all so that he could put his trust completely in God.

had received from God in the course of his life. He therefore urged those who experienced the Spiritual Exercises to do the same thing while making the Exercises and especially when preparing to return to their day-to-day lives, so that their whole life might be a loving response to all the good they have received. Likewise, he invites us to be aware that even our consolations are possible thanks to God's "anticipatory love," which he makes known to us by his consolations. Ignatius assures us that our fears will dissipate when we open ourselves with confidence to God's love working within us.

"Finally, if you have given everything to God, let yourself be guided by God, and act not in your manner but in the manner of God."⁵

"It will be here to ask for interior knowledge of so great good received, in order that being entirely grateful, I may be able in all to love and serve His Divine Majesty. ... The First Point is, to bring to memory the benefits received, of Creation, Redemption, and particular gifts, pondering with much feeling how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He has, and then the same Lord desires to give me Himself as much as He can, according to His Divine ordination. And with this to reflect on myself, considering with much reason and justice, what I ought on my side to offer and give to His Divine Majesty, that is to say, everything that is mine, and myself with it, as one who makes an offering with much feeling. The second, to look how God dwells in creatures, ... and so in me, giving me being, animating me, giving me sensation and making me to understand; likewise making a temple of me, being created to the likeness and image of His Divine Majesty." [*SpEx* 233-235]

"It is not ours to get or keep great devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation, but that all is the gift and grace of God our Lord, and that we may not build a nest in a thing not ours, raising our intellect into some pride or vainglory, attributing to us devotion or the other things of the spiritual consolation." [*SpEx* 322]

5. Letter of Ignatius to Brother Juan Bautista (May 1556). *Obras completas*, p. 951. This Jesuit brother had a strong desire to study even though others realized that he had little aptitude for formal studies. Ignatius wrote to him near the end of his life, counseling him about the spiritual principle that had guided his own pilgrim journey: trust in God, and let God work in you before undertaking projects to your own liking.

“Do not fear the great undertaking when you look at the smallness of your strength, for all our sufficiency will come from the One who calls you for this work, and he will give you what you need for his service.”⁶

“For God our Lord is all-powerful. His grace is abundant, and he unbends out hearts. Your own desire for what is good means that something can still be hoped for where the human element gives little reason for hope.”⁷

For Ignatius the supreme and definitive expression of God’s merciful love was the life of Jesus and his surrender on the cross, showing that his love is completely given over to us. From the heart of Jesus suspended on the cross bursts forth his Spirit to help us: a new expression of God’s love precedes us so that we can follow in the footsteps of Jesus and serve him with gratitude. Ignatius did not say much about the Spirit, but the Spirit was very present in his life journey. He often referred to the Spirit when Jesuits sent on distant missions asked him for “clear and distinct” orders. Ignatius would tell them that the Spirit was the One who would guide them in the particulars.

“Imagining Christ our Lord present and placed on the Cross, let me make a Colloquy, how from Creator He is come to making Himself man, and from life eternal is come to temporal death, and so to die for my sins. Likewise, looking at myself, what I have done for Christ, what I am doing for Christ, what I ought to do for Christ. And so, seeing Him such, and so nailed on the Cross, to go over that which will present itself.” [*SpEx* 53]

“Regarding the instructions you request in order to proceed better in the divine service on this mission, I expect that the Holy Spirit will give them to you in full , along with his holy anointing and his gift of prudence, in view of the particular circumstances.”⁸

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6. Letter of Ignatius to Father Juan Nuñez Barreto (July 1554), *Obras completas*, p. 875. This letter was sent to Barreto after he had been commissioned to open a missionary front in Ethiopia. Barreto had been quite willing, but his abilities were not commensurate with such a huge undertaking. We can also find ourselves in such a situation, and when we do, the spiritual wisdom of Ignatius can help us: the capacity to carry out any task comes not from ourselves but from beyond us, even though it is within us.
 7. Letter of Ignatius to Father Antonio Soldevila (April 1556), *Obras completas*, p. 946. Soldevila was a complicated Jesuit, a rather independent and unusual person; he often caused problems wherever he was assigned. In this context, Ignatius’s words are eloquent: even when little is to be hoped for, humanly speaking, the love of God can work miracles.
 8. *Obras completas*, p. 876. This is also from the letter Ignatius sent Father Nuñez Barreto, who was sent to open the mission in Ethiopia. Barreto had asked for concrete instructions about how to proceed in the new mission, but Ignatius referred him to the Holy Spirit.

“This whole proposal should be offered as advice, and the Patriarch should not feel obliged to conform to it; rather, he should act according to the dictates of discreet charity, considering the concrete situation there and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who will do most to move things along the right path.”⁹

3.2. Responding to love: praising, serving, loving

After the pilgrim Ignatius discovered and experienced that love “from above” that precedes and grounds all that exists, he felt interiorly moved by God’s love. Reflecting on how best to respond, he devotedly and confidently disposed himself for whatever might befall him, even imprisonment. As that response of “serving and loving” became ever more concrete in the life of Ignatius, it gave rise to his well-known expression, “helping souls.” The expression appears many times in his Autobiography and in his letters: it appears also, in a slightly different form, in the Examen given to those wishing to enter the Society. One way of serving God that was especially favored by Ignatius was helping souls through spiritual conversation. His Autobiography makes constant mention of his own search for “spiritual persons” with whom he could converse and of his earnest efforts to converse with others about the things of God.

“Once the said pilgrim had understood that it was God’s will he should not be in Jerusalem, he had constantly had with him thoughts about what was to be done.” [*Aut.* 50]

“He for whose love I came in here will get me out if this will serve his purpose.” [*Aut.* 60]. “Well, I tell you: there are not so many fetters or chains in Salamanca that I don’t want more for the love of God” [*Aut.* 69].

“And in all these five trials and two imprisonments, by the grace of God, I never wanted to have, nor did I have, any other lawyer or procurator or advocate except God, in whom I have placed all my hope, present and to come, by his divine grace and favor.”¹⁰

9. *Obras completas*, p. 916. Writing again to Father Barreto, Ignatius indicated to him that he should look attentively at the reality and pay heed to God’s movements within himself, for those movements were what would lead him to do what was necessary to make love of God reach the people.

10. Letter of Ignatius to the John III, king of Portugal (March 1545). *Obras completas*, p. 662. Ignatius wrote this letter to the king to inform him of the reasons for the persecutions he (Ignatius) had suffered, lest the king have a distorted notion of his character. Ignatius made it clear that suffering imprisonment

“In their spiritual conversations they should strive to obtain the greater interior progress of their neighbor, to show what they know, and to stimulate those whom they can to do good, inasmuch as the Lord has given care of his neighbor to everyone” [*Const.* 115].

“Wherever you may find yourself, I would like you to remember to help the souls that cost Christ our Lord so dearly, even if it is only in private conversations and encouragements and in what you can easily do.”¹¹

During his convalescence in Loyola, “whenever he spoke with those in the house, he used to talk about the things of God, with which he did their souls good” [*Aut.* 11].

In Manresa “he still used to talk sometimes with spiritual people, who thought he was genuine and wanted to talk to him. ... There were many days when he was very eager to speak about spiritual matters, and to find people who were receptive to them” [*Aut.* 21 and 34].

In Barcelona, “before setting sail, he looked, as was his custom, for all the spiritual people in order to talk to them, even if they were in hermitages far out of the city” [*Aut.* 37].

When he returned to Barcelona from the Holy Land, he went in search of a monk he had known in Manresa: “Now the pilgrim had a monk in Manresa (I think a Cistercian), a very spiritual man. It was with this person that he wanted to be, so as to learn and to be able to give himself with more ease to the Spirit, and even to be of benefit to souls” [*Aut.* 54].

To the Franciscans who besieged him with questions in Salamanca he responded: “We ... don’t preach, but speak about things of God with certain people in an informal way, such as after a meal with some people who invite us.” [*Aut.* 65].

Upon returning to his native soil: “In that almshouse he began to talk about the things of God with many people who came to visit him, and through God’s grace quite some fruit was produced.” [*Aut.* 88].

and persecution for the loving service of God was possible only because God precedes us with his love and his grace.

11. Letter of Ignatius to Father Simón Rodríguez (October 1555). *Obras completas*, p. 936.

And in Venice “at that time, he occupied himself in giving the Exercises and in other spiritual conversations.” [Aut. 92]¹²

Ignatius taught that this “loving and serving” should be present in each and every activity we undertake (whether important or discreet, educational or social, contemplative or active, etc.) and in whatever situation of life we may find ourselves in (wealth or poverty, health or sickness, success or failure). It should become a guiding light that illumines and guides all our activity.

In educational work, “the masters should make it their special aim, both in their lectures when occasion is offered and outside of them too, to inspire the students to the love and service of God our Lord, and to a love of the virtues by which they will please him. They should urge the students to direct all their studies to this end.” [Const. 486]

In any temporal activity: “The weight of the soul –which is love– can become lighter when, even in lowly, earthly matters, one does not become earthly or lowly but loves them all for God our Lord.”¹³

In administrative and economic tasks: “When you are dealing with temporal things, even if in some way they appear to be and are in fact distracting, I have no doubt that your holy intention and direction of all that you manage for the divine glory are making it all spiritual and very pleasing to his infinite goodness.”¹⁴

During the time of studies and formation: “The aim of a scholastic in studies is to attain knowledge with which he can serve our Lord God for his greater glory, by helping his neighbor, a duty that requires the whole person; he will not give himself completely to studies if dedicates much time to prayer.”¹⁵

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12. For Ignatius the Exercises were an example of these “other types of spiritual conversation,” and certainly the most valued type. Accompanying someone in the Exercises does not involve preaching but rather consists in spiritual conversation whose purpose is to help the person “to seek and find God’s will” for his or her life. It is no surprise, then, that Ignatius wanted Jesuits to be skilled in the art of spiritual conversation [Const. 115].
 13. Letter of Ignatius to the bishop of Targa, Manuel Sanchez (May 1547). *Obras completas*, p. 690.
 14. Letter of Ignatius to Father Manuel Godinho (January 1552). *Obras completas*, p. 781. Godinho had dedicated himself to spiritual ministry, but when he was given the mission of administering the college in Coimbra, he found it difficult to adjust. In writing to him Ignatius insisted on his famous maxim: “To love and serve in all things.”
 15. Letter of Ignatius to Father Antonio Brandao (June 1551). *Obras completas*, p. 762. God is not served and loved more in prayer than in study. Both things are necessary, each in its proper moment.

In times of health and sickness: “I believe that a servant of God who is sick emerges as a quasi-doctor, able to correct and order his life for the glory and service of God our Lord.”¹⁶

“I have understood that God our Lord has visited you with a serious illness. I am quite convinced . . . that you will have managed to draw from it the fruit that God our Lord wishes to be drawn from such visitations, for his infinite wisdom and charity, no less with bitter medicines than with delightful consolations, seeks our greater good.”¹⁷

In success and in failure, in consolation and in desolation: “The heavenly Father, no less in adversity than in prosperity and as much in afflictions as in consolations, manifests his eternal love, by which he guides his chosen ones to perpetual happiness.”¹⁸

In view of so much good received, a person cannot fail to respond. That was what the pilgrim most regretted at a moment in his life when he was in danger of death, traveling by sea from Valencia to Italy during a tremendous storm. In his writings he encouraged others to be generous in handing over all the good they have received.

“Thoroughly examining himself at this time, and preparing himself to die, he couldn’t be afraid of his sins, nor of being damned, but he felt great confusion and sadness from judging that he had not used well the gifts and graces which God Our Lord had imparted to him.” [*Aut.* 33]

“Those with whom God our Lord has been so generous should not be miserly. We will find as much rest and goodness as we have granted to others in this life.”¹⁹

“May the divine Goodness be pleased to infuse his grace into us so that on earth we do not hide the mercies and graces that he always bestows on us.”²⁰

“[Our Lord,] desiring to come to our rescue, was vilified to glorify us and became poor to enrich us; he underwent an ignominious torment and death to give us blessed, immortal life. O how incredibly ungrateful and hard of

16. Letter of Ignatius to Isabel Roser (November 1532). *Obras completas*, p. 617.

17. Letter of Ignatius to Father Teutonio de Braganza (January 1554). *Obras completas*, p. 846.

18. Letter of Ignatius to Magdalena Domenech (June 1532). *Obras completas*, p. 847.

19. Letter of Ignatius to his brother Martín de Oñaz (June 1532). *Obras completas*, p. 615.

20. Letter of Ignatius to Juan Verdolay (July 1537). *Obras completas*, p. 739.

heart are those who do not acknowledge, with all this, that they are bound to serve Jesus Christ diligently and to procure him all honor!”²¹

“Beware of wanting to be humiliated so much that you yield to the spirit of pusillanimity. The gifts of God are not to be held in low esteem. ... Do not let yourself become depressed or downhearted, and know that we appreciate God’s gifts in you more than you seem to appreciate them yourself.”²²

“With works and truth show your love, and be of benefit to many persons, serving them at times spiritually and at times temporally.”²³

3.3. In all things

We return the love received by loving and serving in all things. We do this first and foremost by offering others something of our own spiritual experience through the Exercises. In this way those who wish to draw fruit from the experience will be willing to offer the whole of their being and to do so completely. The Exercises of Ignatius, as an integral and integrating experience, propose an existential (not theoretical) dialectic between the One (only God is God; only God is to be sought) and the whole (all things placed at the service of our search for God since God can be loved and served in all things). This dialectic is present in diverse moments of the process of the Exercises.

“As for the Exercises he had not produced them all at one time, rather that some things which he used to observe in his soul and find useful for himself it seemed to him could also be useful for others, and so he used to put them in writing.” [*Aut.* 99]

At the very start of the Exercises, Ignatius proposes a particular disposition: “The persons who make the Exercises will benefit greatly by entering upon them with great spirit and generosity toward their Creator and Lord, and by offering all their desires and freedom to him so that his Divine Majesty can make use of their persons and of all they possess in whatsoever way is in accord with his most holy will.” [*SpEx* 5]

21. Letter of Ignatius to the students of the college in Coimbra (May 1547). *Obras completas*, p. 684.

22. Letter of Ignatius to Father Felipe Leerno (December 1553). *Obras completas*, p. 842. Apparently Leerno was passing through a period of spiritual aridity and low self-esteem. Ignatius urged him to discover the gifts of God already present in his person.

23. Letter of Ignatius to the Jesuits sent on mission (September 1549). *Obras completas*, p. 741.

“By being secluded in this way and not having our mind divided among many matters, but by concentrating instead all our attention on one alone, namely, the service of our Creator and our own spiritual progress, we enjoy a freer use of our natural faculties for seeking, diligently what we so ardently desire. . . . The more we keep ourselves alone and secluded, the more fit do we make ourselves to approach and attain to our Creator and Lord; and the more we unite ourselves to him in this way, the more do we dispose ourselves to receive graces and gifts from his divine and supreme goodness.” [*SpEx* 20]

In the preparatory prayers, we are urged to ask: “that all our intentions, actions, and operations may be ordered purely to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty.” [*SpEx* 46]

Preparing for a good election: “Accordingly, anything whatsoever that I elect ought to be chosen as an aid toward the end for which I am created. I ought not to order or drag the end into subjection to the means, but to order the means to the end. In this way it happens, for example, that many choose firstly to marry, which is the means, and secondly to serve God our Lord in marriage, although the service of God is the end. Similarly, there are others who first seek to possess benefices, and afterwards to serve God through them.” [*SpEx* 169]

The dialectic of the One and the whole is a way of being in the world that we might call “sacramental”; it puts us in a “permanent existential dialogue with God in all things.” The dialectic consists in a “loving search for the One who has first come in search of me” and in my “free response to the free Love I have received.” That is the dialectic to which Ignatius directs people, both in the Constitutions of the Society and in his correspondence.

“They should often be exhorted to seek God our Lord in all things, removing from themselves as far as possible love of all creatures in order to place it in the Creator of them, loving him in all creatures and all creatures in him, in conformity with his holy and divine will.” [*Const.* 288]

“We should practice seeking the presence of our Lord in all things, such as in conversing with others, in walking, seeing, tasting, hearing, understanding, and in whatever we do, for it is true that his Divine Majesty is in all things by his presence, his power, and his essence.”²⁴

24. Letter of Ignatius to Father Antonio Brandao (June 1551). *Obras completas*, p. 763. Brandao had posed some questions about the formation of Jesuit students. Ignatius answered one question by proposing to him this exercise of seeking God not only in prayer and the sacraments but in all things.

“It would therefore be good to establish hospitals for pilgrims and people suffering from curable and incurable diseases, to provide secret and public alms for the poor, to help young people to marry, to set up associations for redeeming captives, to care for foundlings, etc.”²⁵

“May it please our Lord in his infinite supreme goodness that you always grow in your love for him in all things, in everything placing not just some but all of your love and desire in the same Lord, and through him in all creatures.”²⁶

“Until now, by the goodness of God, we have always been well, experiencing more every day the truth of those words: ‘Like those who have nothing and yet possess all’ (2Cor 6,10) –all those things, I say, that the Lord promised to give in addition to whoever seeks first the Kingdom of God and its justice. ... And you especially should consider that, if you possess some good thing, you should not let yourself be trapped by it or by any temporal possession. You should direct all things for the service of the One from whom you have them.”²⁷

This way of being in the world requires us to be adept in the exercise of discernment so that we can discover what it is among “all things” that most leads us to the end for which we are created.

“Although many means and many pious works may be proposed for helping our neighbor, discretion [that is, discernment] will help us discover which of them should be embraced, since it is impossible to embrace all of them, keeping in mind always the greater service of God and the common good.”²⁸

“When there are many things to do, we need to choose the most important ones, that is, those that are of greater divine service, of greater spiritual utility for our neighbors, and of greater universal good.”²⁹

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25. Letter of Ignatius to Father Juan Nuñez (February 1555). *Obras completas*, p. 913. In this letter Ignatius proposed to Nuñez a series of instructions for the mission in Ethiopia. The letter as a whole demonstrates Ignatius’s desire to employ “every manner” of serving God for the benefit of souls. Especially noteworthy is what we would today call “social action,” which also forms part of that “every manner.”
 26. Letter of Ignatius to his sister Magdalena (May 1541). *Obras completas*, p. 641.
 27. Letter of Ignatius to Pedro Contarini (August 1541). *Obras completas*, p. 631.
 28. Letter of Ignatius to Father Juan Pelletier (June 1551). *Obras completas*, p. 774. The letter contains instructions about the Society’s way of proceeding in its ministries. Since many ministries are possible and not all can be undertaken, it is necessary to use discernment to engage in those that are most helpful.
 29. Letter of Ignatius to Father Fluvio Androzzi (July 1556). *Obras completas*, p. 957.

“May the Lord give us the lamp of his holy discretion [discernment] so that we make use of created things with the light of the Creator. Amen.”³⁰

3.4. Like Christ

Spellbound by Jesus Christ and passionately determined to follow him, Ignatius handed over both his external arms (at Montserrat) and his internal ones (at La Storta). In the chapel of La Storta, he experienced in an unmistakable way that God was granting him what he had long been seeking: to be placed with Jesus.

“He decided to keep a vigil of arms for a whole night, without sitting or lying down, but sometimes standing up, sometimes on his knees, before the altar of Our Lady of Montserrat, where he had resolved to abandon his clothes and clothe himself in the armor of Christ.” [*Aut.* 17]

“And being one day in a church some miles before arrival in Rome, and making prayer, he sensed such a change in his soul, and he saw so clearly that God the Father was putting him with Christ, his Son, that he would not have the willfulness to have any doubt about this: it could only be that God the Father was putting him with his Son.” [*Aut.* 96]

This is the experience Ignatius offers us at diverse moments of the Exercises, especially in the course of the Second Week. He invites us to hear Christ calling us to be with him, to live and work with him, and to struggle under his banner, through good times and bad, even when it means opprobrium and persecution, even when it is “not fashionable,” even when the world “doesn’t understand.” And once we have heard all that, we are invited to desire it and to ask for the grace to “be placed with Jesus” (not to place ourselves with him!).

First, hear the call: “To gaze upon Christ our Lord, the eternal king, and all the world assembled before him. He calls to them all, and to each person in particular he says: ‘My will is to conquer the whole world and all my enemies, and thus enter into the glory of my Father. Therefore, whoever wishes to come with me must labor with me, so that through following me in the pain he or she may follow me also in the glory.’” [*SpEx* 95]

Then pray to desire that grace: “Eternal Lord of all things, I make my offering, with your favor and help. I make it in the presence of your Infinite

30. Letter of Ignatius to Father Adrián Adriaenssens (May 1556). *Obras completas*, p. 949.

Goodness, and of your glorious Mother, and of all the holy men and women in your heavenly court. I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision, provided only that it is for your greater service and praise, to imitate you in bearing all injuries and affronts, and any poverty, actual as well as spiritual, if your Most Holy Majesty desires to choose and receive me into such a life and state.” [*SpEx* 98]

Also, express the desire in a prayerful, loving dialogue with the Lord: “A colloquy should be made with Our Lady. I beg her to obtain for me grace from her Son and Lord that I may be received under his standard.” [*SpEx* 147]

“In order to imitate Christ our Lord better and to be more like Him here and now, I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor rather than wealth; contempt with Christ laden with it rather than honors. Even further, I desire to be regarded as a useless fool for Christ, who before me was regarded as such, rather than as a wise or prudent person in this world.” [*SpEx* 167]

Likewise, Ignatius wanted those entering the Society –and Jesuits generally– to be disposed to undergo this experience that he often described as “putting on the raiment of Christ,” echoing the Pauline phrase “putting on Christ.” Living this way may appear in the eyes of the world³¹ as loss, but it is gain. The opposite of donning the “raiment of Christ” is desiring to possess (avarice) and to control (ambition). All other evils flow from these.

“It is likewise very important to bring to the attention of those who are being examined,³² emphasizing it and giving it great weight in the sight of our Creator and Lord, to how great a degree it helps and profits in the spiritual life to abhor in its totality and not in part whatever the world loves and embraces, and to accept and desire with all possible energy whatever Christ our Lord has loved and embraced. Just as the men of the world who follow the world love and seek with such great diligence honors, fame, and esteem for a great name on earth, as the world teaches them, so those who proceed spiritually and truly follow Christ our Lord love and intensely desire everything opposite. That is to say, they desire to clothe themselves with the same garb and uniform of their Lord because of the love and reverence owed to him.” [*Const.* 101]

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31. In the following texts Ignatius uses the word “world” in the same sense as the Gospel of John: it is the world that does not know or welcome Jesus; the disciples of Jesus are “not of the world.” The connotation is that of being “worldly,” that is, of being in the world in a superficial and ineffective manner.
32. The reference is to those who ask to enter the Society.

“Giving clear proof of themselves to the effect that they are completely giving up the world with its pomps and vanities, so that in everything they may serve their Creator and Lord, crucified for them.” [*Const.* 66]

“They³³ have gone forth feeling encouraged and consoled in the hope of employing their labors and their lives in the divine service and in helping the souls of your subject. They desire to imitate in some way the charity of Christ our Lord, and they go ready to give not only teaching, counsel, and spiritual aid for souls but also, if necessary, to lay down their lives for them.”³⁴

“The more we for our part, without offense to others, put on the raiment of Christ our Lord, which consists of opprobrium, false testimony, and all other offenses, the more we will advance in spirit, gaining spiritual riches.”³⁵

“It will be highly important for the preservation and growth of this whole body that every appearance of avarice should be banished. ... It will also be of the highest importance toward perpetuating the Society’s well-being to use great diligence in precluding from it ambition, the mother of all evils in any community or congregation.” [*Const.* 816-817]

Ignatius often described that “raiment of Christ” in terms of poverty and humility. His love of those virtues explains the special vows he wanted professed Jesuits to take, those by which they promised to teach “children and humble folk” and to refrain from modifying the precepts regarding poverty, unless it be to make them more rigorous. Ignatius also urged all Jesuits to embrace the poverty that Christ so loved and to love the poor, who are the friends of Christ. He considered this a grace much to be desired and welcomed; thanks were due when it was conceded. Experiencing poverty and friendship with the poor had to be expressed concretely, and it had real consequences. Such experience was founded on a sacramental perception of reality: every person was an image of God, a member of Christ. When experienced sacramentally, embracing poverty for Christ and as Christ did was prophetic and apostolic.

“The promise to instruct children and uneducated persons in conformity with the apostolic letters and the Constitutions does not induce a greater obligation than the other spiritual exercises by which the neighbor is aided, such as confessions, preaching, and the like.” [*Const.* 528]

33. The reference is to Jesuits sent to the mission in Ethiopia.

34. Letter of Ignatius to Claudius, emperor of Ethiopia (February 1555). *Obras completas*, p. 907.

35. *Obras completas*, p. 663. In this letter Ignatius informed Juan III of the reasons for the persecutions he had suffered for the sake of Jesus Christ, without seeking them or desiring them.

“All those who make profession in this Society should promise not to take part in altering what pertains to poverty in the Constitutions, unless it be in some manner to make it more strict.” [*Const.* 553]

“I call poverty grace because it is a special gift of God. ... It is much loved by God, as his only-begotten Son showed, for he, leaving his royal throne, desired to be born and grow up in poverty. And not only did he love poverty in life—suffering hunger and thirst, and not having any place to lay his head—but also in death, desiring to be stripped of his garments and deprived of all things, even water to quench his thirst. The Wisdom that cannot be deceived wanted to show the world the great value of the jewel of poverty, a value the world does not know. He chose poverty so that there would be no dissonance between his life and his teaching, namely, that “blessed are the poor, blessed are those who hunger and thirst, etc.” In the same way it is evident how much God esteems poverty, since his chosen friends were usually poor people. ... The poor have such grandeur in the divine presence that it was mainly for them that Jesus Christ was sent. ... [Thus,] friendship with the poor makes us friends of the eternal King ... (and poverty) frees human beings from servitude to the great ones in a world in which all things obey and serve money. ... Those who love poverty should love its consequences as far as they are able, such as eating, dressing, and sleeping poorly and in general being held for little. If, to the contrary, someone loves poverty but does not want to feel any discomfort or consequence of it, then he would be an excessively delicate poor person, and he would no doubt show that he loves the title more than the possession of poverty, or he would love it more in words than in his heart.”³⁶

“Various letters have made us understand that God our Lord has visited you with the effect of holy poverty, that is, discomfort and the lack of some material things which are necessary for the health and welfare of the body. It is no small grace that his Divine Goodness deigns to grant you a taste of what should always be our desire: to be conformed to our guide Jesus Christ. ... If we should compare ourselves with those brothers of ours in India—who despite great corporal and spiritual exertion are poorly provisioned with food, not eating bread in many places and even less wine, surviving with a little rice and water or a bit of food of that sort, poorly dressed, and suffering sore

36. Letter of Ignatius to Jesuits of the college in Padua (August 1547). *Obras completas*, pp. 701-4. Because of the precarious economic situation of this college, the Jesuits lived in great poverty. Ignatius encouraged them to experience the poverty as Christ would and for the love of Christ.

distress in external circumstances— it does not seem to me that our suffering is very hard.”³⁷

“I say that the goods of the Church which are not necessary for maintaining yourself in accord with the dignity of your state belong to the poor and to pious works, and that it would be a great injustice to deprive them of those goods. ... Please pardon me for speaking so clearly, but it is love that constrains me, ... and I judge that you need someone to remind you what is proper. ... Your job is not to give wealth to your relatives, who have more than enough for their state, nor is it to celebrate memorials with little spiritual fruit or help for the common good; it is to give to the poor and to pious works. ... Remember that you are not the owner of your assets but the steward and that you must give account of them.”³⁸

“Strive to view this or that person not as handsome or ugly but as an image of the Most Holy Trinity, as a member of Christ.”³⁹

“All who are under the obedience of the Society should remember that they ought to give gratuitously what they have gratuitously received without demanding or accepting any stipend or alms so that thus it may proceed in the divine service with greater liberty and greater edification of the neighbor.” [Const. 565]

This desire to be identified with Christ, to let Christ be reflected in us, requires us to “descend” to the depths of “interior knowledge” so that we may be lifted up again in the transparency of a new life which, like that of Jesus, consoles, encourages, uplifts, and befriends others.

“To ask for what I desire: here it will be to ask for an interior knowledge of our Lord, who became human for me, that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely.” [SpEx 104]

“Consider the office of consoler which Christ our Lord carries out, and compare it with the way friends console one another.” [SpEx 224]

37. Letter of Ignatius to Jesuits in different parts of Europe (December 1552). *Obras completas*, p. 802.

38. Letter of Ignatius to Francisco Jiménez de Miranda (July 1555). *Obras completas*, pp. 929-30. Jiménez was the abbot of Salas, Burgos, Spain. Ignatius clearly and decisively admonished him for his misuse of the properties of the Church.

39. Letter of Ignatius to Father Emerio de Bonis (May 1556). *Obras completas*, p. 952.

3.5. Toward full communion with god

The Spiritual Exercises are a mystagogical method for entering actively and affectively into the Mystery of God, for the purpose of choosing God's will for our lives. The Exercises help us to enter into communion with God as lover and beloved, thus establishing a relationship by which we empty ourselves and so leave a space for the Other. The mystagogy of the Exercises helps us, first, to detect the evil spirit that wants to keep us off the path toward communing with God in all things and, second, to become aware of the good spirit that moves us along the right path.

“The name of spiritual exercises is given to any means of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God's will in the ordering our life for the salvation of our soul.” [*SpEx* 1]

“Everyone ought to reflect that in all spiritual matters, the more one divests oneself of self-love, self-will, and self-interests, the more progress one will make.” [*SpEx* 189]

“Love consists in a mutual communication between two persons. That is, the one who loves gives and communicates to the beloved what he or she has, ... and the beloved in return does the same to the lover.” [*SpEx* 231]

“Our ancient enemy [the evil spirit] throws up all possible obstacles to keep us from doing the good we have resolved to do. He harasses us greatly, often instilling in us sadness even though we know not why we are sad; he makes us unable to pray or contemplate with any devotion, or even to speak or hear of the things of God with any interior joy. Not only that, but if he finds us weak and given to futile thoughts, he tries to make us believe that we are totally abandoned by God our Lord. We come to think that we are far from our Lord and that all we have done and wanted to do is worth nothing at all. In this way he makes us distrust everyone and everything. ... Now it happens that our Lord often forcefully moves our soul toward one operation or another, opening our soul and speaking within it without any sound of voices, raising the whole of it up to his divine love. And we, even if we want to, are unable to resist his impulse.”⁴⁰

40. Letter of Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell (June 1536). *Obras completas*, pp. 625-27. Ignatius carried on considerable correspondence with Rejadell, a religious sister of the convent of Santa Clara in Barcelona.

The final and definitive “exodus” for entering into complete communion with God is produced at the moment of death. This exodus, when experienced in and with Christ, is a “paschal” event.

“I feel not sadness but joy in the Lord our God, who in dying freed us from the fear of death and in rising and ascending into heaven showed us that true life, which is reached only by passing through death, means participating in his glorious kingdom.”⁴¹

The progressive path toward communion with God can be experienced in all things but always from within. The capacity for interiority is required for perceiving the One who is present in all things. It is therefore an error to think that the inability to feel this communion is due to “external causes.” To the contrary, the problem is experiencing external things without interiority.

“You deceive yourself greatly when you think that particular places or superiors or brothers are the cause of your inability to achieve peace or bear fruit in the way of the Lord. This inability comes from within and not from without. . . . You can change places or superiors or brothers, but if you don’t change your interior being, you will not function well and you will be the same wherever you are. . . . So bring about this interior change and no other. I tell you, you will succeed in changing interiorly and becoming a servant of God, without any need for external change.”⁴²

Ignatius believed that each Jesuit’s loving communion with God was what would most foster true communion within the body of the whole Society. This communion would be a prophetic testimony in the world, anticipating the communion that awaits us and that we always seek. This is true not only for Jesuits but for any Christian community that wishes to bear prophetic testimony in our world today. Part of our mission is to help others enter into this affective relationship which is knowledge of the communion that God desires to have with each person. Ignatius expressed this conviction to various groups of Jesuits who were being sent out on missions.

“The chief bond to cement the union of the members among themselves and with their head is the love of God our Lord. For when the superior and the

41. Letter of Ignatius to the widow of Juan Boquet (August 1554). *Obras completas*, p. 884. Boquet had been a generous benefactor of Ignatius and the Society in Barcelona. In this letter Ignatius sends his condolences to his widow upon learning of his death.

42. Letter of Ignatius to Bartolomé Romano (January 1555). *Obras completas*, pp. 897-98. This Jesuit was disillusioned with the place to which he had been sent, and he believed that reasons for his disillusionment were “external.” Ignatius urges him to look within himself.

subjects are closely united to his Divine and Supreme Goodness, they will very easily be united among themselves, through that same love which will descend from the Divine Goodness and spread to all other persons, and particularly to the body of the Society.” [Const. 671]

“Be certain that we hold you –in whatever state you find yourself– close to our heart, treasuring our interior union all the more, the farther away you are from us physically.”⁴³

In their apostolic activities, Jesuits should seek to “move souls toward thorough self-knowledge and toward greater knowledge and love of their Creator and Lord, ... earnestly trying to inflame souls with the love of their Creator and Lord.”⁴⁴

“Let sermons or sacred readings be aimed at awakening emotions and forming customs rather than illuminating the understanding.”⁴⁵

43. Letter of Ignatius to Father Melchor Carneiro (February 1555). *Obras completas*, p. 918. Carneiro had recently been sent to the mission in Ethiopia, and Ignatius sent him these lines to show him his affection.

44. Letter of Ignatius to the Jesuits sent to the Council of Trent (January 1546). *Obras completas*, p. 669. In this letter Ignatius offered them a series of counsels about how to proceed during their time at the council.

45. Letter of Ignatius to Jesuits sent on the missions (September 1549). *Obras completas*, p. 743.

4. QUESTIONS TO PRAY OVER OR TO DISCUSS IN GROUPS

The love of God that goes before us

- The love of God is something concrete in our lives. Reflecting interiorly, recall situations or moments in your life where you have experienced that love.
- What sentiments or actions are awakened in you by the experience of God's love?

Responding to God's love by praising, serving, and loving in return

- Our response to God's love is also concrete. For what things are you thankful to God?
- What is your personal, specific way of "helping souls"?

The "all"

- In which of the many different elements that make up your reality (community, profession, economy, personal relations, work, study, leisure, volunteering, etc.) do you feel most free, and in which do you feel trapped?
- How do you experience in practice the dialectic between the One (God) and the "all" (all things)? In what ways does this dialectic seem problematic to you?

Being "like Jesus Christ"

- In what sense can you honestly say that you have been "placed with the Son"?
- How are you most concretely aware of that?

Full communion in God

- What interior and exterior realities make it difficult for you to feel that you are living in communion with God?
- How do you conduct your interior life so as to experience God's indwelling? How do you attend to your external activities so as not to pass through life superficially?

“Guides”, with this verb Ignatius Loyola modestly expresses his great desire to help others. It is under this motto connoting service and simplicity that the Ignatian School of Spirituality (*Escuela Ignaciana de Espiritualidad - EIDES*) offers these series of materials.

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Cristianisme i Justícia

Roger de Llúria, 13 - 08010 Barcelona
(+34) 93 317 23 38 - info@fespinal.com
www.cristianismeijusticia.net