

## ***Seminar in Ignatian Spirituality***

### ***Reflections from the Margins of Society***

Ignatian Spirituality offers a way to be aware of, and act upon, God's presence in our lives. This seminar will have four two-hour sessions that explore Ignatius of Loyola's conversion/transformation experience and the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises. Each session will consist of a didactic and reflective component. Questions are welcome throughout the seminar.

These sessions will emphasize Jesus of the gospel stories and view the Exercises through the lens of human suffering and social justice.

The following themes will be discussed:

- Session 1: Introduction - A Seminar (not a Retreat) ... in the 21st (not the 16th) Century  
    Ignatius of Loyola's Conversion/Transformation  
    Spiritual Exercises - Overview  
    Principle and Foundation - *A Vision of Reality*  
    Reflection - Examen of Consciousness
- Session 2: Week I - *Beloved Sinners*: human sinfulness vs. God's infinite love;  
    gratitude and the desire to return to God what has been received  
    Reflection - Call of Christ in the Kingdom  
    Week II - *Discipleship* (Faith in Action): to know, love, and follow Jesus in the  
    unfinished work of the kingdom of God
- Session 3: Week II - Reflection - Two Standards/Two Stances Towards Life  
    Three Kinds of People; Three Kinds of Humility/Love  
    Week III - *Cost of Discipleship*: solidarity with the Crucified People of History
- Session 4: Week IV - *Triumph of Love and Truth*: living as Resurrection People  
    Reflection - Contemplation to Attain Love  
    Conclusion - Summary; Reflections

## *Open My Eyes*

“O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the need of others.

Open my ears that I may hear their cries.

Open my heart so that they need not be without succor.

Let me not be afraid to defend the weak

because of the anger of the strong,

nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich.

Show me where love and hope and faith are needed,

and use me to bring them to these places.

Open my eyes and ears that I may, this coming day,

be able to do some work of peace for Thee.”

*Alan Paton (1903-1988)*  
*South African anti-apartheid activist*  
*Author, “Cry the Beloved Country”*

## Ignatius of Loyola and Transformation

- Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1551) - was a Basque nobleman, sometime warrior, and founder of the Society of Jesus. In the biography<sup>1</sup> he dictated at the end of his life he related that:

“up until his twenty-sixth year he was a man given over to the vanities of the world, and took a special delight in the exercise of arms, with a great and vain desire of winning glory” [1].

- Then, a cannonball shattered Ignatius’ right leg, and badly wounded his left, while defending a Spanish fortress in Pamplona against the French. His convalescence took place at his family’s home in Loyola, where he asked for books of fiction and knight errantry. The only literature available was a *Life of Christ* and the *Lives of the Saints*. Ignatius read them, pausing to reflect on the noble thoughts that came to his mind. However, at other times his thoughts returned to the exploits of his earlier life in which he also took great delight. He continued this practice for days on end, failing to recognize the significance of these different movements within his consciousness,

“until one day his eyes were opened a little ... learning from experience that one kind of thoughts left him sad and the other cheerful. Thus, step by step, he came to recognize the difference between the two spirits that moved him, the one being from the evil spirit, the other from God” [8].

- 1522 - Ignatius departed Loyola, renouncing the world of his day and resolving to imitate the penance practices of the Christian saints, including Francis and Dominic. He had also resolved during his convalescence to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he planned to live the remainder of his life in service to God [11-12]. As he began his journey, he stayed a night at the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat, keeping vigil at the altar of “our Lady” [18]. The following morning, he had his sword and dagger hung at the altar of his vigil and departed for Manresa, where he planned to stay only a few days to make some “notes in his book”<sup>2</sup> about his experience up to that time. In fact, he remained there for almost a year, experiencing first some dark days of spiritual anguish and then a multitude of graced insights that changed the course of his life. Eventually, Ignatius gave up his harsh penance practices, having achieved an *inner freedom (indifference)* that renounced self-interest and spiritual ambition, and allowed God to lead him to wherever God would have him go [21]. For the moment, at least, he still believed that meant Jerusalem.
- 1523 - Ignatius arrived in the Jerusalem and remained there about three weeks before being ordered to leave by the superior of the Franciscan Order who feared for his safety. Threatened with excommunication, he reluctantly obeyed.
- 1524 - Ignatius arrived in Venice from Jerusalem where he recognized the need to be better educated “to help souls” [50]. He departed soon thereafter for Barcelona and began instruction with children half his age.
- 1526 - Ignatius entered the University of Alcalá to begin philosophy studies. When not in classes, he instructed some of the local community in the catechism and his Spiritual Exercises [57]. He was soon accused of being an *alumbrado* (“enlightened one”), a group that believed it could attain spiritual perfection through internal illumination. The Inquisition imprisoned him for 42 days before

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<sup>1</sup> W.J. Young, *St. Ignatius’ Own Story: As told to Luis Gonzalez de Camara* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1980). References to Ignatius’ biography are designated with the paragraph number placed inside brackets, ([1]).

<sup>2</sup> These “notes” would eventually become the Spiritual Exercises.

he was finally acquitted [62]. However, with his freedom also came the prohibition to do any further teaching until he had completed four years of theology studies.

- 1527 – Ignatius was disheartened by the Dominican verdict and departed Alcalá to continue his studies in Salamanca. There, he fared no better. The Dominican friars asked to review the “notes in his book.” He was imprisoned again, this time for 22 days, before being exonerated. Again, there was a proviso. While not forbidden to teach, the Dominicans restricted how he could do this [70].<sup>3</sup>
- 1528 – Uncomfortable with the restrictions placed upon him by the Dominicans, Ignatius departed for Paris [71] where he would eventually receive a Master of Arts degree in 1535. It was also there he would also begin his theology studies. During these same years Ignatius recruited a group of fellow students to become his “companions in the Lord.” Peter Favre and Francis Xavier were the first of these [82], but their number quickly grew to seven, including Ignatius.<sup>4</sup> They met regularly to share their mutual interest in serving God in this world.
- 1534 - Favre became the first of the group to be ordained a priest.<sup>5</sup> Then on the feast of the Assumption of Mary, the group, now numbering ten,<sup>6</sup> pronounced vows of poverty and chastity, and promised to go to Jerusalem upon the completion of their studies to offer themselves “for the good of souls.” However, they all agreed that if they were unable to reach Jerusalem within a year due to political unrest on the Mediterranean Sea at the time, they would be released from their vows and instead offer their services to the Pope in Rome [85].
- 1537 - The “companions,” finding themselves unable to set sail for Jerusalem [94], departed for Rome. Along the way, Ignatius experienced perhaps his most profound mystical experience in the small town of La Storta, just outside that city. There, he announced to some of his companion “that God, the Father, had placed him with Christ his Son” [96].
- 1540 - The Society of Jesus (Jesuits) was established by P. Paul III. Ignatius remained in Rome the final almost 20 years of his life directing the new-found Society, which by the time of his death numbered almost one-thousand men and had dispersed throughout much of the world of that day.

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<sup>3</sup> Ignatius was restricted from speaking about the difference between mortal and venial sin.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to Ignatius, Favre (Savoy) and Xavier (Basque), the other members included Diego Laienz (Spain), Alfonso Salmerón (Spain), Nicolás Bobadilla (Spain), and Simão Rodrigues (Portugal).

<sup>5</sup> All were ordained by 1537.

<sup>6</sup> Favre recruited the three additional companions. All were French: Claude Jay, Paschase Broë, and Jean Codure.

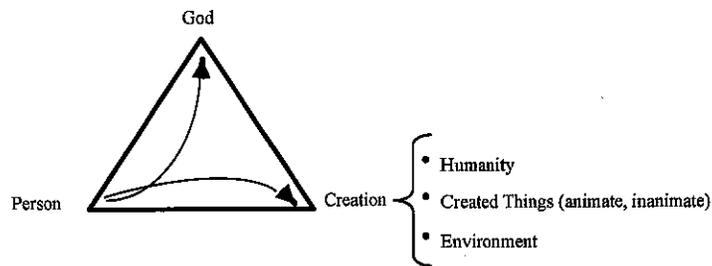
# A Vision of Reality

## Psalm 8

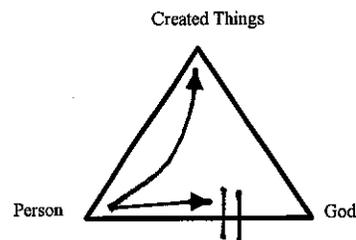
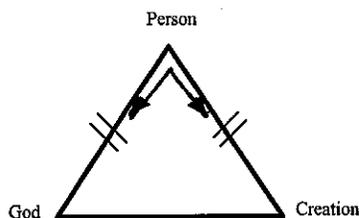
O Lord, our God, how glorious is your name over all the earth!  
You have exalted your majesty over all the heavens ...  
When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars which you set in place -  
What are human beings that you should be mindful of them ...  
You have made them little less than the angels,  
and crowned them with glory and honor.  
You have given them rule over the works of your hands,  
putting all things under their feet:  
All sheep and oxen,  
yes, and the beasts of the field,  
The birds of the air, the fishes of the sea,  
and whatever swims the path of the seas.  
O Lord, our God, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

## Reflection

### *Ordered Vision of Reality*



### *Disordered Visions of Reality*



- 1) In which triangle do you place yourself in these ordered/disordered visions of reality?
- 2) What change(s) do you need to make to guard against idolatry (you; money; possessions, etc.)?
- 3) Ask for what you desire. What is your deepest desire before God? Be specific.

## Principle and Foundation

### *16th century: Ignatius' Vision of Reality*

People are created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save their soul; the other things on the face of the earth are created for people to help them in attaining the end for which they are created. Hence, we are to make use of them in so far as they help us in the attainment of our end, and we must rid ourselves of them in so far as they prove a hindrance to them. Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. The same holds true for all other things. Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created. [23]<sup>7</sup>

### *21st century: A More Social Vision of Reality*

People and all that exists have been created by God's infinite love for the purpose of salvation. For this reason, human beings ought to recognize God's goodness and in response praise, reverence and serve God by becoming co-participators in God's ongoing plan for the creation and salvation of this world. It is from this commitment that personal salvation is attained. Consequently, we ought to use created things only in so far as they assist God's salvific plan for this world, and to avoid them wherever they become obstacles to this end. To do so, it is necessary to live with an inner freedom (Ignatian indifference) that accepts whatever befalls us (health or sickness, riches or poverty, honor or dishonor, a long life or a short life, etc.) within the state of life we will choose, or have already chosen, (i.e., married, single, religious, etc.), all the while putting aside self interest and choosing only God's will in all our thoughts, words, and actions, so that we might not only attain, but contribute to the salvation God desires for all that God has created. (adaptation - PWG)

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<sup>7</sup> L.J. Puhl, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951).

# Call of Christ in the Kingdom

## *The Call of a Temporal Leader*

I want to overcome all diseases, all poverty, all ignorance, all oppression and slavery - in short, all the evils which beset humankind. Whoever wishes to join me in this undertaking must be content with the same food, drink, clothing, and so on, that comes with following me. So, too, whoever is with me in the labor of the day's work and with me in the loneliness of the night watches will likewise have a part with me in the final victory. [93] (adapted from DL Fleming)<sup>8</sup>

## *The Call of the Eternal Leader*

It is my will to overcome the whole world, to overcome evil with good, to turn aside hatred with love, to conquer the forces of death - whatever obstacles there are that block the sharing of life between God and humankind. Whoever wishes to join me in this mission must be willing to labor with me, and so by following me in struggle and suffering may share with me in glory. [95] (adapted from DL Fleming)<sup>9</sup>

Ignatius suggests that those who are of great heart and are set on fire with zeal to follow Jesus will not only offer themselves entirely to labor for such a mission, but will act against anything which would make their response less than total. They would want to express themselves in words such as these:

*Eternal Lord and king of all creation, humbly I come before you. Knowing the support of Mary, your mother, and all your saints, I am moved by your grace to offer myself to you and to your work. I deeply desire to be with you in accepting all wrongs, all rejections, and all poverty, both actual and spiritual - and I deliberately choose this, if it is for your greater service and praise. If you, my Lord and king, would so call and choose me, then take and receive me into such a way of life. [98] (adapted from DL Fleming)<sup>10</sup>*

## Reflection

- 1) Discipleship with Jesus challenges us to leave behind self-interest and personal ambition to engage in a mission that will witness to the humanization and transformation of our suffering world into the growing presence of the kingdom of God. Have you moved beyond an intellectual ascent to faith to also desire to witness to the humanization and transformation of God's creation?
- 2) This contemplation reminds us that discipleship with Jesus will likely lead to conflict with the dominant societal, and sometimes ecclesial, narrative that so often preaches complacency and the passive acceptance of the *status quo*. How does this make you *feel* (mad, glad, scared, sad)?

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<sup>8</sup> D.L. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*.

<sup>10</sup> Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*.

## Three Meditations

### *Two Standards: Two Stances Towards Life*

#### The Way of this World

Let those who follow this path tempt people to covet whatever seems to make them rich, and next because they possess something, or things, they find themselves pursuing and basking in the honor and esteem of this world. Then getting such deference raises up the false sense of personal identity and value in which a blinding pride has its roots. The first step, then, will be riches (“this is mine”), the second honor (“look at me”), and the third pride (“I AM someone/something special”). From these three steps people will be led to all other vices. [142] (adapted from DL Fleming,<sup>11</sup>)

#### The Way of Jesus

The risen Christ sends people out into the world to help and free others, first by attracting them to the highest spiritual poverty, and should it please God, and should God draw them to want to choose it, even to a life of actual poverty. Being poor, they will then find themselves accepting and even desiring the insults and contempt of the world. In doing so, they will come to live a life of true humility. Thus, there will be three paradoxical steps: the first, poverty as opposed to riches. (If I have been graced by the gift of poverty, then I am rich.); the second, insults or contempt as opposed to the honor of this world. (If I have nothing of myself, I have no power and I am despised and receive the contempt of the world; if I have nothing, my only possession is Christ.); the third, humility as opposed to pride. (If I can be truly myself in Christ, I will have the humility of a person whose whole reality is grounded in being created and redeemed in Christ.) Through these three steps, let them lead other people to all other virtues. [146] (adapted from DL Fleming,<sup>12</sup>)

### Reflection

- 1) Ignatius presumes you will choose the way of Jesus. Are you willing to commit (or deepen your commitment) to spiritual, or even actual, poverty to do so?
- 2) Do you co-opt a Third Way - one that takes some of The Way of This World, and The Way of Jesus? Is so, you are not alone. How do you feel about this (mad, glad, sad, scared)?

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<sup>11</sup> Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*.

<sup>12</sup> Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*.

### *Three Kinds of People*

A group of people have new-found wealth that has not been acquired by entirely appropriate means. They respond in three different ways: Note: Ignatius does not say having wealth is bad.

The First Kind ... do nothing but talk about doing God's will with their new-found wealth.

They recognize the primacy of God in their lives but choose self-interest at the expense of self-transcendence (seeking God's will) and service on behalf of God's people.

The Second Kind ... rationalize/justify their own self-interest and do with their new-found wealth what they desire. Through rationalization they transform God's will into their own and model the human tendency towards self-deception by attempting to manipulate God's will.

Third Kind ... have inner freedom (Ignatian indifference).

They have put aside self-interest and seek God's will alone - the prerequisite for discipleship with Jesus. They discern and act upon God's will by doing what they believe God desires of them.

#### Reflection

- 1) Which kind of person are you? Are you more than one kind of people? Ignatius did not require inner freedom (indifference) to enter into the Exercises. Rather, he recognized it would develop with the graces of the four weeks.
- 2) Do you have the inner freedom to put aside self-interest and pursue God's will (spiritual poverty)?

### *Three Kinds of Humility/Love*

First Kind of Humility/Love ... observes the Ten Commandments

These people desire relationship with God and manifest it through fidelity to normative moral behavior. This kind of love leads to a "juridical relationship" with God that has only a superficial commitment to following Jesus in our world.

Second Kind of Humility/Love (in addition to the first) ... lives with inner freedom (indifference)

It is a disposition that is reminiscent of the Principle and Foundation and our call to right relationship with God and creation. Consequently, these people are vigilant in avoiding both serious (mortal) and lesser (venial) sin, so as not to hinder deepening relationship with God. They have put aside self-interest and seek God's will.

Third Kind of Humility/Love (in addition to the first two) ... seeks to imitate Jesus' life

These people desire and choose actual poverty with Jesus poor, rather than riches; insults with Jesus loaded with them, rather than honors; and to be treated as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in eyes of our world. While all may aspire to this degree of humility/love, not all will attain it, as it is an unmerited gift from God.

In truth, discipleship with Jesus involves more than seeking God's will and taking on Jesus' poverty, suffering, and humility. It also necessitates the courage to place ourselves in the midst of human suffering, and once there to act, both in word and action, on behalf of the unfinished work of the kingdom of God.

#### Reflection

- 1) Where would you classify your experience of humility/love for God?
- 2) Discipleship, as Ignatius described it, requires the Second Kind of Humility/Love. Do you have it? Do you dare to pray for and ask to imitate Jesus' life?

## The Contemplation to Attain Love<sup>13</sup>

Preliminary Notes:

- 1) Love ought to show itself more in deeds than words.
- 2) Love consists in a mutual sharing of goods.

Ask for the grace of an intimate knowledge of all the goods God lovingly shares with you. Filled with gratitude, you ought to desire to respond just as totally in love and service.

Four Points (that recapitulate the four weeks):

- 1) *God's gifts to you:* God creates you out of love and desires nothing more than a return of your love. So much does God love you that even though you turn away, this giver of all good gifts continues to offer you salvation. God shares divine life with you and wants to share evermore with you. Your consolation: who you are by the grace of God! Moved by God's love make the following response:  
*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. All is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace. That is enough for me.*
- 2) *God's self-giving to you:* God not only gives gifts to you, but literally gifts you with the fullness of divine life in Jesus. God's only Son is not only the Word in whom all things are created, but also the Word who became flesh and dwells among us. Moved by God's love, pray these words: *Take, Lord, and receive, ...*
- 3) *God labors for me:* God loves you so much, even entering into the very struggle of life. God labors to share divine life and love. God's labors are written large in Jesus' passion and death on a cross in order to bring forth the life of the Resurrection. Again, in response pray these words: *Take, Lord, and receive ...*
- 4) *God's unceasing giving and gifting:* God's love shines down upon you like light rays from the sun; God's love is poured forth lavishly like a fountain spilling forth its waters into an unending stream. Just as you see the sun in its rays and the fountain in its waters, so God pours forth a sharing in divine life in all the gifts showered upon you. God's delight and joy is to be with all God's people - to be with you. God cannot do enough to speak out and show love for you - ever calling and inviting you to a fuller and better life, a sharing in divine life. Again, in response pray these words: *Take, Lord, and receive ...*

### Reflection

Where there is love and truth, there also is the presence of the risen Christ in our midst. Despite human sinfulness, God's spirit lives among us and within us. God consoles, forgives, heals, and transforms us into resurrection people who are loved unconditionally and offered a renewed opportunity to collaborate in God's ongoing plan for the creation and salvation of this world. It is from this commitment that our salvation arises.

- 1) Have you experienced God's enduring love and truth in the midst of the hate and lies of this world? Where? In whom? How has that made you feel (mad, glad, scared, sad)?
- 2) Are you willing to respond to God's love for you by witnessing to the values of the kingdom of God (love ... compassion ... justice) as Jesus' disciples did despite the cost involved? How? Be specific.

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<sup>13</sup> Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship*, [230-237], adapted.

## Archbishop Oscar Romero Prayer: A Step Along The Way

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view.  
The kingdom of God is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision.  
We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction  
of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete,  
which is a way of saying that the kingdom of God always lies beyond us.  
No statement says all that could be said.  
No prayer fully expresses our faith.  
No confession brings perfection.  
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.  
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.  
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.  
We plant the seeds that one day will grow.  
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.  
We lay foundations that will need further development.  
We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.  
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.  
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.  
It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way,  
an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results,  
but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker.  
We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.  
We are prophets of a future not our own.

This prayer was composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, MI. It was first used in a homily by Cardinal John Dearden in Nov. 1979 for a celebration in memory of deceased priests. Bishop Untener later used it to commemorate the memory of Archbishop Oscar Romero.

*Discipleship with Jesus means taking seriously the gospel stories about him.*

**“Preach the gospel. If necessary, use words.”**

Francis of Assisi