

An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality



SAINT IGNATIUS

Cleveland • Jesuit • 1886



Session 1

God, help me to be
open to you in this
retreat and in my life.

COME AS YOU ARE

Come as you are
that's how I want you.

Come as you are
being quite at home.

Close to my heart
loved and forgiven.

Come as you are
why stand alone?

No need to fear
love sets no limits.

No need to fear
love never ends.

Don't run away
shamed and disheartened.

Rest in my love
trust me again.

I came to call sinners
not just the virtuous.

I came to bring peace
not to condemn.

Each time you fail
to live by my promise.

Why do you think
I'd love you the less?

Don't run away
shamed or disheartened.

Come as you are
why stand alone.

Come as you are
that's how I love you.

Come as you are
trust me again.

Nothing can change
the love that I bear you.

All will be well
Just come as you are.

by Paul Gurr, Carmelite



Week 1 – *Praying with St. Ignatius*

Jesuit Retreat House, Cleveland
www.jrh-cleveland.org

PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION

Lord my God,

When Your love spilled over Into creation

You thought of me.

I am From love

of love

for love.

Let my heart, O God, always

Recognize,

Cherish,

And enjoy

Your goodness in all of creation.

Direct all that is me toward Your praise.

Teach me reverence for every person, all things.

Energize me in your service.

Lord God may nothing ever distract me from Your love...

neither health nor sickness

wealth, nor poverty

honour nor dishonour

long life nor short life.

May I never seek nor choose to be

other than You intend or wish.

Amen

(Bergan and Schwan 1985)

SPA Library Information

Please feel free to visit and browse the SPA Library located in the basement of St. Mary's Chapel in room #8. There are a multitude of books on spirituality and prayer available to sign out for up to 30 days. Please feel free to contact our office to see if we have a book that you may be interested in reading.

Call Colleen Wyszynski at 216-961-2583, or email her at cwyszynski@ignatius.edu.

Ignatian Vocabulary

A.M.D.G. –*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* (Latin) - “For the greater glory of God.”
A.M.D.G. is the motto of the Society of Jesus.

Colloquy - A colloquy is an intimate conversation between you and God the Creator, between you and Jesus, or between you and Mary or one of the saints.

Spiritual Consolation – Experienced when our hearts are drawn towards God, away from ourselves, even if this happens in circumstances the world would regard as negative. We experience an increase in hope, faith, and love and feel in harmony with God.

Spiritual Desolation – Experienced when our hearts are drawn away from God and towards ourselves and we experience a decrease in hope, faith, and love.

Discernment (also “Discernment of spirits”) – A process for making choices, in a context of (Christian) faith, when the option is not between good and evil, but between several possible courses of action all of which are potentially good. For Ignatius the process involves prayer, reflection and consultation with others- all with honest attention not only to the rational (reasons pro and con) but also to the realm of one’s feelings, emotions and desires (what Ignatius called “movements” of the soul). A fundamental question in discernment becomes “Where is this impulse from- the good spirit (of God) or the evil spirit (leading one away from God)?” A key to answering this question, says Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises, is that, in the case of a person leading a basically good life, the good spirit gives “consolation”- acts quietly, gently and leads one to peace, joy and deeds of loving service- while the bad spirit brings “desolation”- agitates, disturbs the peace and injects fears and discouragement to keep one from doing good.

Encountering Christ- 8-week retreat – The name given the SIHS 8 Week Ignatian Prayer Retreat (based on Ignatius’s Spiritual Exercises) organized by the Spirituality Programs for Adults (SPA) department.

Ignatian Examen - A technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to become aware of God’s presence in them.

Finding God in All Things – Ignatian spirituality is summed up in this phrase. It invites a person to search for and find God in every circumstance of life, not just in explicitly religious situations or activities such as prayer in church (e.g. the Mass) or in private. It implies that God is present everywhere and, though invisible, can be “found” in any and all of the creatures which God has made. They reveal at least a little of what their Maker is like- often by arousing wonder in those who are able to look with the “eyes of faith.” After a long day of work, Ignatius used to open the French windows of his room, step out onto a little balcony, look up at the stars and be carried out of himself into the greatness of God.

How does one grow in this ability to find God everywhere? Howard Gray draws the following paradigm from what Ignatius wrote about spiritual development in the Jesuit *Constitutions*: (1) **practice attentiveness** to what is really there. “Let that person or that poem or that social injustice or that scientific experiment become (for you) as genuinely itself as it can be.” (2) Then **reverence** what you see and hear and feel; appreciate it in its uniqueness. “Before you judge or assess or respond, give yourself time to esteem and accept what is there in the other.” (3) If you learn to be attentive and reverent, “then you will **find devotion**, the singularly moving way in which God works in that situation, revealing goodness and fragility, beauty and truth, pain and anguish, wisdom and ingenuity.”

Ignatian - Adjective, from the noun Ignatius (of Loyola). Sometimes used in distinction to Jesuit, indicating aspects of spirituality that derive from Ignatius the lay person rather than from the later Ignatius and his religious order, the Society of Jesus.

Ignatian Decision Making – The Ignatian approach to decision-making that presupposes we want to choose that which will lead to a deeper relationship with God. Ignatian prayer and reflection helps us to achieve the detachment and balance necessary to choose freely.

Ignatian Gospel Contemplation – A method of prayerful reflection on oneself imaginatively inserted into the Gospel stories with Jesus in order to know, love and serve Him personally.

Ignatian/Jesuit Vision, Characteristics of the - Drawing on a variety of contemporary sources which tend to confirm one another, one can construct a list of rather commonly accepted characteristics of the Ignatian/ Jesuit vision. It...

- sees life and the whole universe as a gift calling forth wonder and gratefulness;
- gives ample scope to imagination and emotion as well as intellect;
- seeks to find the divine in all things- in all peoples and cultures, in all areas of study and learning, in every human experience, and (for the Christian) especially in the person of Jesus;
- cultivates critical awareness of personal and social evil, but points to God's love as more powerful than any evil;
- stresses freedom, need for discernment, and responsible action;
- empowers people to become leaders in service, "men and women for others," "whole persons of solidarity," building a more just and humane world.

The relative consensus about these should not be taken to indicate that the six characteristics exhaust the meaning of the living Ignatian tradition. Like the living tradition of Christian faith, of which it is a part, no number of thematic statements can adequately articulate it. At the heart of both traditions stands the living person of Jesus, who cannot be reduced to a series of ideas.

No one claims that any of these characteristics are uniquely Ignatian/ Jesuit. It is rather the combination of them all and the way they fit together that make the vision distinctive and so appropriate for an age in transition- whether from the medieval to the modern in Ignatius' time, or from the modern to the postmodern in ours.

IHS - The first three letters, in Greek, of the name Jesus. These letters appear as a symbol on the official seal of the Society of Jesus or Jesuits.

Magis (Latin for “more”) - The “Continuous Quality Improvement” term traditionally used by Ignatius of Loyola and the Jesuits, suggesting the spirit of generous excellence in which ministry should be carried on. (See A.M.D.G.- “For the greater glory of God.”)

SPA (Spirituality Program for Adults) – The Spirituality Program for Adults (SPA) was developed at Saint Ignatius High School decades ago by Jim Lewis, S.J. as he shared Ignatian Spirituality with faculty, staff, parents of students and alumni. It is now the Spirituality Programs for Adults which offers 1) Encountering Christ 8 Week Retreat, 2) Ignatian Spiritual Exercises made in Everyday Life (Ignatius’s 19th Annotation Retreat made over 32 weeks, 3) Spiritual Direction/Guidance, 4) Faith-Sharing Groups, 5) Ignatian Reflection Groups focused on an Ignatian topic, and 6) Peer Supervision and supports for those sharing Ignatian Spirituality with others.

spiritual exercises (small s and e) – Any of a variety of methods or activities for opening oneself to God’s spirit and allowing one’s whole being, not just the mind, to be affected. The methods- some of them more “active” and others more “passive”- might include vocal prayer (e.g., the Lord’s Prayer), meditation or contemplation, journaling or other kind of writing, reading of scripture or other great works of verbal art, drawing, painting or molding with clay, looking at works of visual art, playing or listening to music, working or walking in the midst of nature. All of these activities have the same goal in mind- discontinuing one’s usual productive activities and thus allowing God to “speak,” listening to what God may be “saying” through the medium employed.

The Spiritual Exercises (capital S and E) – An organized series of spiritual exercises put together by Ignatius of Loyola out of his own personal spiritual experience and that of others to whom he listened. They invite the “retreatant” or “exercitant” to “meditate” on central aspects of Christian faith (e.g., creation, sin and forgiveness, calling and ministry) and especially to “contemplate” (i.e. imaginatively enter into) the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Ignatius set all of this down in the book of the *Spiritual Exercises* as a handbook to help the guide who coaches a person engaged in “making the Exercises.” After listening to that person and getting a sense for where he/she is, the guide selects from material and methods in the book of the *Exercises* and offers them in a way adapted to that unique individual. The goal of all this is the attainment of a kind of spiritual freedom, the power to act- not out of social pressure or personal compulsion and fear- but out of the promptings of God’s spirit in the deepest, truest core of one’s being- to act ultimately out of love.

As originally designed, the “full” Spiritual Exercises would occupy a person for four weeks full-time, but Ignatius realized that some people could not (today most people cannot) disengage from work and home obligations for that long a time, and so it is possible to make the “full” Exercises part-time over a period of six to nine or 10 months- the “Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life.” In that case, the “exercitant,” without withdrawing from home or work, devotes about an hour a day to prayer (but this, like nearly everything in the Exercises, is adaptable) and sees a guide every week or two to process what has been happening in prayer and in the rest of his/her life.

Most of the time people make not the “full” Spiritual Exercises but a retreat in the Ignatian spirit that might last anywhere from a weekend to a week. Such retreat usually includes either a daily individual conversation with a guide or several daily presentations to a group, as preparation for prayer/spiritual exercises.

Ignatius had composed and revised his little book over a period of 25 or more years before it was finally published in 1548. Subsequent editions and translations- according to a plausible estimate- numbered some 4,500 in 1948 or about one a month over four centuries, the total number of copies printed being around 4.5 million. It is largely on his *Exercises*- with their implications for teaching and learning in a holistic way- that Ignatius’ reputation as a major figure in the history of Western education rests.

Spiritual Guidance/Direction – People are often helped to integrate their faith and their life by talking on a regular basis (e.g., monthly) with someone they can trust. This person acts as a guide (sometimes also called a spiritual friend,

companion or director) for the journey, helping them to find the presence and call of God in the people and circumstances of their everyday lives.

The assumption is that God is already present there, and that another person, a guide, can help them to notice God's presence and also to find words for talking about that presence, because they are not used to doing so. The guide is often a specially trained listener skilled in discernment and therefore able to help them sort out the various voices within and around them. While he/she may suggest various kinds of spiritual exercises/ways of praying, the focus is much broader than that; it is upon the whole of a person's life experience as the place to meet God.

19th Annotation – In Saint Ignatius of Loyola's book of the Spiritual Exercises, written for directors guiding others, Ignatius writes 20 Annotations or helps. In the 19th Annotation, Ignatius notes that for those unable to go to a retreat house for 30 days of silent prayer, the Spiritual Exercises can be adapted and given over time for those who would be helped by them. The Spiritual Exercises are adapted over 32 weeks and involve daily prayer, review of prayer and weekly meetings with a spiritual director.

Hospitality, Welcome and Housekeeping Notes

o Parking

The best places to look for spaces are in the "Chapel Lot," which is located between

St. Mary's Chapel and the Fire Station, and in the Breen Center Lot, located on the south side of Lorain Avenue, just west of and - behind the Breen Center for the Performing Arts. This lot can be accessed off both Lorain and West 30th. Both these lots welcome visitors. In previous years parking in the student lot across from Sullivan Gym during school hours was not allowed. Students need a permit to park there, and the lot is usually full. This year security guards will allow you to park in an empty space if you tell them you are here for a SPA retreat. In the evening parking is discouraged on Carroll Ave. and on W. 30th between Carroll and Bridge Avenues. We strive to maintain good relations with our neighbors! During the morning retreats, you may park on any side streets South of Lorain Ave. or in St. Patrick's Church lot at 3602 Bridge Ave., a short walk to campus.

Please refer to the parking map provided

- **Bad Weather**

For the morning retreat we follow the school schedule. If school is cancelled, (check our website) then SPA is cancelled. If school is scheduled for a delayed start, please check your email, as I will contact you. Colleen will attempt to call everyone in either situation.

For the evening retreat, we will determine if the session should be cancelled due to weather. Please check your email to find out if we are meeting that evening.

Colleen will also call retreatants if we decide to cancel the session.

- **Absentees**

Please call/email your small group director or Colleen Wyszynski (216-961-2583) **ahead of time**, if possible. Attendance and fidelity to your prayer commitment is vital to your own and the group's retreat experience.

- **Refreshments**

Coffee, tea and bottled water will be available during breaks

- **Restrooms**

Restrooms are located in the chapel basement. You can access them via the stairs or elevator located off the north end of the narthex.

- **Retreat Expenses**

We do not charge a fee for this retreat because we wish to make it available for all who are called to make it. We will, however, ask for a free will donation near the end of the sessions to help defray the costs associated with putting on the retreat. Our retreat program uses a very small percentage of the total Saint Ignatius High School budget. We use a small share of this building, the heating, cooling, office supplies, computer, resources, parking lot, security, lighting and so on. This cost is less than \$20 a week for each of you, about \$150 for the entire retreat.



GUIDELINES FOR FAITH SHARING GROUPS

1. Remember confidentiality.
2. Practice unconditional acceptance / non-judgmental listening.
3. Everyone is free to share from their unique life and prayer experience.
4. Listen reverently and prayerfully to each other.
5. Trust God's presence and the Spirit's guidance in the group.
6. Leave problem-solving and teaching to God.
7. Expect differences as your relationship within Sacred Mystery is unique. There's no wrong way to pray.
8. Silence is a part of the sharing process, full of God's Self-Communication.
9. Share the time so all may fully participate.
10. Practice loving one another as God loves.

Meet the Guide, by Margaret Silf

In my day job, I am writing a programmer's guide on how to overcome the problems in computer data management when we enter the next millennium. How come, then, I am sitting here reflecting on the ways in which the insights of a man who lived 450 years ago in a remote Basque village in northern Spain affect the way in which we relate to God today, on the threshold of the 21st century? I sometimes think that my PC will give a little shudder of culture shock when I expect it to process my thoughts on the problems of two-digit notation and the search for my deepest desire at the same time.

This coming together of two worlds apparently so far removed from each other is perhaps in itself a pointer to some of the treasures that are ours today through the legacy of Ignatius Loyola and the Society of Jesus, which he founded. If we can imagine his browsing through this book, or sitting among us as we explore these questions together, he would quite likely be smiling to himself and muttering something about "finding God in all things." He would find it completely normal and healthy that we should be searching to deepen our relationship with God in the midst of life as we really live it – up to our ears in work or lack of it, mortgages, children, and mess. He would be delighted to find that most of us are lay people, as he was when he made his own journey of discovery. He would surely welcome the fact that we come from many different church traditions or even from none at all. And he would be more than tolerant of the checkered histories we may have behind us, remembering the excesses of his own misspent youth. Most of all, he would recognize the love of God that is burning inside each of us, that is always leading us onward, like a beacon, toward deepening our relationship with Him, because this would reflect the experience of Ignatius' own heart and the source of his prodigious energy.

So who was this man whose life and discoveries are still affecting our own journeys so fruitfully? Before we begin our journey proper, let's indulge for a few minutes in a time shift that takes us back to the age when Europe was in a similar kind of between-age turmoil to the one we are experiencing now. This new age isn't just causing havoc to our computer systems but also seems to include a heightened awareness in people everywhere (whether they call themselves religious or not) that there is more to life than the mere management of our days to achieve comfort and security in the shifting landscapes of our lives.

Inigo Lopez lived at the time when the world was coming painfully and violently out of the Middle Ages. The mere facts of his life can be summed up in a few sentences; its content infinitely more far-reaching. He was born in 1491, the youngest of a family of 13, in Loyola, in the Basque region of northern Spain. When he was 14, he was sent away to train as a royal page to the king of Spain and was introduced to the ideals of chivalry and knightly service. As he grew older, he developed more than a passing interest in women, both those far away in his daydreams, and those who were temptingly accessible. The last thing on his mind during these years was his spiritual journey or the inner movements of his heart.

His life swerved around a big bend during his mid-twenties. The favor that his employer, Don Juan Velasquez, had enjoyed in the royal court came to an abrupt end at the death of the king. As a result, Inigo himself was unemployed, and chastened by his experience of how quickly and easily the power and riches and influence can disappear. With a parting gift of a few hundred crowns and two horses from the widow of his former employer, he had to set off into the unknown and start again.

The next phase of his life was in the household of the duke of Najera, who employed him as a gentleman-at-arms. Inigo learned to use weapons and helped to put down rebellions. His military training under the duke brought him, four years later, to a place called Pamplona, where he commanded a company defending the fortress there against a French invasion. The defense had become futile and defeat was a certainty, but Inigo was stubborn to the limits and absolutely refused to surrender. The price of his resistance came in the form of a cannonball which shattered his leg and broke his right knee. His days as a soldier ended on a stretcher; he was transported in agony and humiliation across the mountains to his family home in Loyola.

It must have seemed like the end of the line. Probably most of us can identify with that drained, empty feeling of being at the end of our dreams and our resources, or helpless in pain or immobility, either in

body or in mind. We can imagine how it might have been for this young man, in the prime of his life, to lie a helpless invalid, wracked by pain, with nothing but his broken dreams for company. So daydreaming is just what he did.

Having asked in vain for some lively romantic novels to read, Inigo had to make do with what the castle could offer, which turned out to be a *Life of Christ* and a *Lives of the Saints*. This stricken and disgruntled patient spent his time between reading and daydreaming of all that might have been, had his injury not robbed him, in a stroke, of both his future as a soldier and his attractiveness to women.

Daydreaming! Ironical that this man whose military skills and leadership potential were so remarkable should have come down to us, most powerfully, as a daydreamer. But Inigo's daydreams held a potent secret. They had, locked up inside them, the key to the gift of discernment. And how did Inigo discover for himself this key that was to open up a gold mine in his heart?

As the tedious, pain-ridden days passed, Inigo indulged in two kinds of daydreaming. On the one hand, he still dreamed of the battles he would command, the military glories he would achieve, the noble ladies he would woo and win. But they were the dreams of "what might have been," and though they raised his spirits for a while, he enjoyed the fantasy, they left him, in the longer term, feeling flat and disconsolate. On the other hand, fired by the books he had been given, he started to dream of a King whose service was potentially even more desirable than that of the king of Spain; he began to wonder how this Christ King might be served; he began to dream of outshining the saints in this great new quest that might be worth spending his life on. They were still daydreams, but he noticed an important difference in their aftereffects. These dreams left him feeling inspired, energized and eager. They were not about what might have been, but about something that still lay dormant in the depths of his own heart, like a seed that had been mysteriously germinated and was pushing its way to the surface of his life through all this heavy soil of pain and disappointment. These were dreams that didn't go away.

It was into this realization of the difference between daydreams and God-dreams (as we might call them) that the gift of discernment was given to Inigo. It was there that he discovered what we might call the "inner compass" of his heart, which was able to reveal to him which movements within him were capable of engaging his deepest, vital energy, and which were leading him only to fleeting satisfactions that left him unchanged and unfulfilled. As he lay there in his enforced stillness and solitude, he learned to notice his moods and feelings and reactions, and to measure them against this unseen compass. In his inner silence, he listened with fresh awareness to an invitation coming from deep inside himself to enlist in the adventure of the service of God.

As he ventured more and more deeply into the stories that were inspiring his new kind of daydreaming, he was also finding a new way of exercising his imagination. He began to find himself, in imagination, present in the scenes, conversations and stories of the Gospels, and he began to participate in the plots of these stories. It was the start, for him, of an adventure into imaginative prayer that was to become a most powerful catalyst for the growth of his personal relationship with God, a method of prayer that is just as vividly available to us today.

On his sickbed, Inigo experienced deep conversion. Gradually, after many setbacks, he limped his way back to life, but it was never again to be the life he had known before; the cannonball had blown that life to pieces. Now Inigo was a pilgrim to God, to whom he was ready to offer all his ideals of knightly service, courage and persistence. The next step was to tell his family...as for so many who have walked this path in their own personal ways since then (including, surely, many of you who are reading this book today), this wasn't easy! Against a backdrop of pressure to use his skills and gifts to bring honor to the family name and help maintain the family property, Inigo made his excuses and left, with neither he nor his family knowing with any certainty where he was headed. Inigo -the nobleman, the soldier, the fearless defender of Pamplona - had become Inigo the pilgrim.

The first stage of his pilgrimage -that search for the "I know not what" that was urging him onwards -- took Inigo to the Abbey of Montserrat, high on a jagged mountain peak overlooking the plain of Manresa. Here he desired to make a full confession of his earlier life and begin again. His confession is said to

have taken three days to make, and he received absolution from one of the monks there. He exchanged his nobleman's dress for the simple outfit of a poor pilgrim and made a night vigil of prayer. He gave his clothes to a beggar and his mule to the monks. He left his sword and dagger behind as an offering at the altar and as a sign that he had exchanged his life in the service of the world's values for one committed to the service of God.

As the new pilgrim made his way down the hill of Montserrat to the plain below, his mind must have been full of the experience of his conversation, his confession, his vigil, and the advice he had been given by the monks on the life of prayer. To all this new experience, he surely applied the ways of discernment that he had discovered in his dreams at Loyola. He felt the need to stay awhile, in quiet, to reflect on all that had passed and everything that God seemed to be showing him through it. He also made some notes on his reflections. And so it happened that, instead of going straight to Barcelona as he had intended, he settled in the nearby town of Manresa for "a few days," which stretched into 11 months. In Manresa, the next stage of his life took shape.

Determined to stay true to all he had promised God in Montserrat, the proud and self-willed Inigo now faced a life of begging for his daily food, while submitting to the relentless mockery of street urchins who were probably better dressed and cared for than he was. Living out the high dream of the mountain when he was down on the plain in the heat and dust of everyday reality proved to be, for him as for us, a constant struggle. He treated himself harshly, but he never forgot the agony of his own long sickness at Loyola, and he turned that memory into service by trying to help the sick in the hospitals of Manresa. He prayed until prayer became part of his every waking moment. At last he found a cave near the river where he made himself a desert home. That cave was to become a space where his love and understanding of God would deepen beyond anything he could have imagined, where he would receive insights that remain fresh and valid for us today, and where, very important for us, he was to capture the fruits of his conversion, his prayer and his reflections in written form. Perhaps inevitably, given what a good thing was gestating in his heart, Inigo also fell victim to the onslaught of negative movements, or "false spirits," as he would have called them. He suffered endless self-recrimination about his sins, real and imagined. He experienced dark depths of despair and came close to taking his own life. It was, perhaps, a black time, shot through with golden streaks of insight and passionate commitment to God, or it was a golden time of spiritual growth and maturing, shot through with the darkest shafts of doubt and despair. Either way of looking at it may find its parallels in our own experience -we have those times in our lives that are at once fraught with struggle and alight with the flame of our hearts' desires.

From Manresa came a man who had freely bound himself in joyful service to a king called Christ. He had been so opened to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit that he was able to interpret his own experience in a way that has universal validity and significance.

The fruit of this experience and the wisdom that it engendered is recorded in an unassuming little book called the *Spiritual Exercises*. Inigo's notebook was to become increasingly sensitive to God's action in our lives, how to discover and live true to the very deepest desires within us, how to make decisions that reflect God's indwelling presence in the innermost freedom of our hearts and how to join our lives consciously with the life of Jesus, God-made-man, through the living spirit of the Gospel.

It would be nice to record that Inigo went from strength to strength in his life of discipleship. Of course, it wasn't so. How could it be? We all know, too well, that things are never like that. Inigo's dream of serving God in the Holy Land was intractably vetoed by the authorities there. His travels were overtaken by ill health and near shipwreck. His attempts to help others by sharing his *Exercises* in spiritual conversations brought opposition from the Church, which eventually subjected him to the Inquisition, and the secular authorities, who among other things threatened him with a public birching. Injustice, humiliation and betrayal became his familiar companions, but they were carrying a hidden gift: through them he came to realize that his desire to

be with Christ was stronger than his desire to avoid the indignities and disgraces that the world and the Church meted out to him.

Despite all this, the word companion became central to Indigo's life. In Manresa, Indigo had already begun to share his experiences with a few friends who showed interest in his *Exercises*. He used his own notes as a guide in helping them. This continues to be the way in which the *Exercises* are used: as a guide to a director, mentor or soul-friend in helping another person discover, through prayer and reflection, God's action in his or her life.

Inigo's ministry of companionship grew stronger when he became a student in Paris, belatedly trying to acquire the academic qualifications that would overcome the objections the Church raised against his speaking to others of spiritual matters without ecclesiastical authority. He was eventually ordained in 1536 at the age of 45 and adopted the name Ignatius. Before this; though, he and his friends in Paris, Francis Xavier and Peter Favre, were to deepen their friendship into a bond that forged them into the first Jesuits, as together they formed the Society of Jesus. By 1534, this little group of companions had grown to seven, and on August 15 of that year, they bound themselves into an embryonic religious order. On that day they · shared the Eucharist together, made their vows and then celebrated ... with a picnic!

Over 450 years separate us from that inconspicuous event on the outskirts of Paris. For the first seven Jesuits, there was surely no sense of disconnection between the deep seriousness of their commitment to God and to each other and the simple, exuberant joy of their celebratory picnic. Among the many riches

The Spiritual Exercises

Discovering who I really am

Directing myself toward God

Noticing God's action in my life

Responding to the movements in my heart

Discovering the nature of my deepest desire

Seeking God's will

Becoming free of all that distracts me from my deepest desire

Making choices in line with my truest self

Connecting my lived experience with the life, death and resurrection of Christ

Responding to God's love for me

Finding God in all things

that have come down to us from this small group of friends, we might focus on that coming together of all that makes us human: our searching and desiring, our failing and falling and fun loving, our shipwrecks and our picnics.

Just as my computer accepts all that comes, whether it be ancient spiritualities or problems of binary notation, so our journeys, surely, are about all of us, just as we are, with no arbitrary demarcations between work and prayer, both secular and spiritual, or between God and "real life." Ignatian spirituality is about finding God in our lived experience and allowing him to transform that experience, through His Spirit, for ourselves and for the whole human family.

The explorations in this book, like Ignatius' own, also began as a response to groups of friends who wanted to come together to share their search for God. Like his, they are carved out of personal experience – some of it joyful, some of it painful, all of it lived. They are offered in the spirit of Ignatius in the hope that they may provide a few landmarks in the mysterious and sometimes hazardous terrain of our hearts, as we make the journey toward the pearl of great price that lies both at our own deepest center and far beyond our wildest imaginings.

On a journey, we use landmarks to give us a point of recognition. We notice something we recognize - some feature of the landscape - and it locates our position: "Yes, I recognize that! So I must be somewhere around there."

They give us confidence that we are not completely lost. They help us to find our bearings and discern the direction for the next stage of the journey. When we are in unfamiliar terrain (and life, for all of us, as we move into the future, is unfamiliar terrain), landmarks help us to locate ourselves and keep walking. Something outside ourselves - something that everyone can see and recognize (even though they may see it from a different perspective and give it a different name) relates to precisely where we are. It places us, as individuals, within the wider landscape.

Maps and guidebooks would do just as well, you might say. And when it comes to the spiritual journey of our hearts, there is no shortage of maps and guidebooks, ranging from the "Go this way, or else!" variety of creed and catechism, to the "50 ways to climb the ladder of perfection" sort. The thing they all have in common is that they can be read in an armchair. They can all teach how to swim without getting wet.

Landmarks won't let you do that. They are of no use at all unless you are all on the road! They are effective only in that they connect where you are, in your lived experience, to a point of recognition and

orientation, to your own story and for the whole human story.

I remember once smiling over a particularly colorful description of a walk by the late A. Wainwright in one of his mountain walk guides, which included the bizarre instruction to "turn left at the third hawthorn tree." This unlikely piece of wisdom made a gentle mockery of all the intricately drawn maps in the book. The third hawthorn tree just had to be discovered. It was a clue on a treasure hunt, and it demanded not only that I do it now, before the number and arrangement of the hawthorn trees should change beyond recognition. It was information distilled from his own walking of the path, and gladly, exuberantly, shared with me, his reader and fellow walker. The excitement of his own discovery infected me with the desire to make my own. It felt both personal and universal, rich with the paradox of a season ticket valid only for the present moment.

Landmarks, like hawthorn trees, are also useful only when there is some light to see by. Even people who are on the way and committed to following the right path will encounter times of obscurity and darkness when the evidence is hidden or the signals are mixed. Inner Compass also explores ways of developing the skills and resources needed for those times when we walk by faith and not sight.

Perhaps the landmarks in this book share something of the quality of Wainwright's third hawthorn tree. You may recognize them, though you might not call them by the names I know them by. I hope they may help you find your own way to the greater treasure beyond the clues and encourage you to use your own inner compass with confidence and trust. But you won't find them until you take the risk of losing yourself, by setting out and by keeping going, in the timeless urgency of the present moment. This kind of journey is not for "pillars of the Church." It is for "people on the way."

Tips for Keeping a Prayer Notebook

Prayer Review

For St. Ignatius Loyola keeping a record of one's spiritual journey was essential. He kept his own record of thoughts, experiences, and ideas. It was hardly for public consumption. Single words, stream of consciousness and even drawings covered the pages. His notes existed for him; to give him a sense of his own journey. We encourage you to review and take note of what is occurring during your prayer.

Some options:

- Be open and honest. No one will ever see the contents of your notebook.
- Forget about rules of spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc. These notes are for you so let your thoughts flow as freely as possible.
- Experiment with different methods
 - Jot down how you felt during prayer
 - Use your writing as a prayer — a letter to God
 - Express strong emotions on paper
 - Use the notebook to jot down all your "worldly" concerns before you pray so you can focus better.
 - Note how well your prayer time went and why.
 - Refer to the concerns, issues and events of your life so there is context when you review your notes later
 - Write your thoughts in stream of consciousness, letting flow to paper whatever comes to mind in any order
 - Set a time limit for yourself and write whatever comes to mind for that time. (e.g. I will write something, anything for the next five minutes.)
 - Note what stirrings you had since your last prayer time
 - Did any part of your prayer come to mind later in the day?
 - Did someone else mention something that reminded you of your prayer time?
 - Do you recollect your prayer time as a time of peace, frustration, etc?
 - Did you do anything differently because of your prayer time?
- Review your past entries occasionally, maybe once per month. Look for changes in attitude, values, feelings, decisions, etc.

Writing these prayer notes, or, if you wish, keeping a prayer journal, is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. The process of writing and reviewing forces us to be reflective. If you have committed to five minutes a day for jotting notes about your prayer life you will soon find yourself thinking about what you might write today. Those reflections keep you in tune with how the Spirit is moving in your life. You are asking yourself, "where was God in my life today?" The more you listen, the more you will hear.

PRAYING WITH IGNATIUS-SAINT IGNATIUS HIGH SCHOOL

HOME PRAYER SELECTIONS

WEEK 1

PREPARE: Choose Place, Posture, Prayer Time, Prayer Passage, and become mindful of the Presence of God.

GRACE SOUGHT: God help me to be open to You in this retreat, and in my life.

Pray:

Psalm 46:10 “Be silent and know that I am God”

Jer 29, 11-14 “I know the plans I have for you”

Psalm 139:1-18 “Yahweh, You know me”

Select **no more than three** of the following to reflect upon this week. Take one per day and use these prompts as a starting point for your reflections. Use them to start writing notes in your prayer notebook.

1. What in your prayer life do you cherish? What are some limitations that you feel prevents you from a deeper life of prayer? Where would you like to grow?
2. To whom do you pray, and why? Father, Son, Spirit? Have you ever even thought about this? How do you image God?
3. Where have you met God in your life? Was there a time, or times, when His presence was palpable and real for you?
4. Think of representing your life on a graph or chart. The horizontal line is the years that have passed and the vertical is the good times (highs) and the bad times (lows). You can draw the graph if you wish. Consider your relationship with God, noticing when it's been in harmony or when it's been distant.
5. Have you ever been angry at God? If so, think of when and why.
6. Reflect on some of your companions on your life journey so far. Who were the mentors, friends, heroes that affected your path? How?

