

# **St Mary's, Inverness**

The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]

## **The Year of St Ignatius**

**20 MAY 2021 >31 JULY 2022**

### **FORTY-FIRST IGNATIAN REFLECTION**

#### **INDIFFERENCE/DETACHMENT**



#### **THE FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION**

From the Spiritual Exercises [23] of Ignatius of Loyola

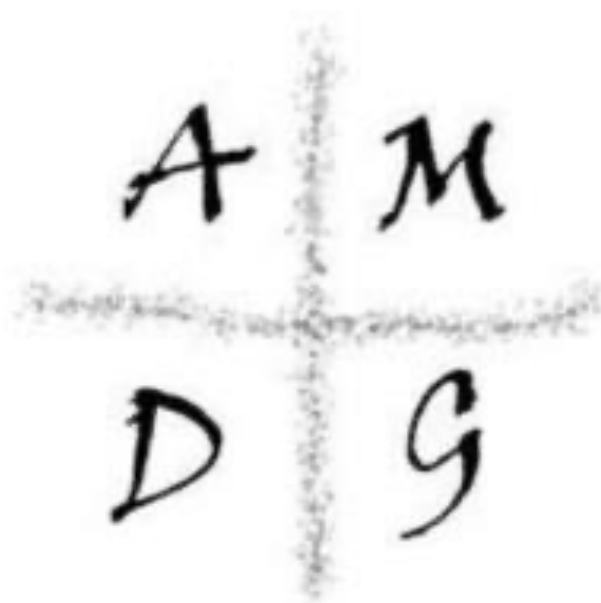
A LITERAL TRANSLATION by Elder Mullan, SJ

*God created human beings to praise, reverence, and serve God, and by doing this, to save their souls.*

*God created all other things on the face of the earth to help fulfil this purpose.*

*From this it follows that we are to use the things of this world only to the extent that they help us to this end, and we ought to rid ourselves of the things of this world to the extent that they get in the way of this end.*

*For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things as much as we are able, so that we do not necessarily want health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honour rather than dishonour, a long rather than a short life, and so in all the rest, so that we ultimately desire and choose only what is most conducive for us to the end for which God created us.*



AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM  
For the Greater Glory of God

For Ignatius, the only thing truly good is that which brings praise, reverence, and service to God our Creator.

Clearly the impulse of *'Ignatian indifference'* is conduct and attitudes that relate to the idea of *magis* 'more' for God, and also the key insight about *'finding God in all things'*. These things are complementary, enhancing and reinforcing our reverence for God and our brothers and sisters.

## Indifference...

- Key *Ignatian* spiritual concept meaning:
  - ▶ Not the idea of not caring...
  - ▶ It is unbiased and impartial...
  - ▶ Not bound to things...not living for the means, but rather for the **END GOAL!**



*'Ignatian indifference'* is a grace that enables us to grow in virtue, and it involves a *'loving deference'* towards 'the other'.

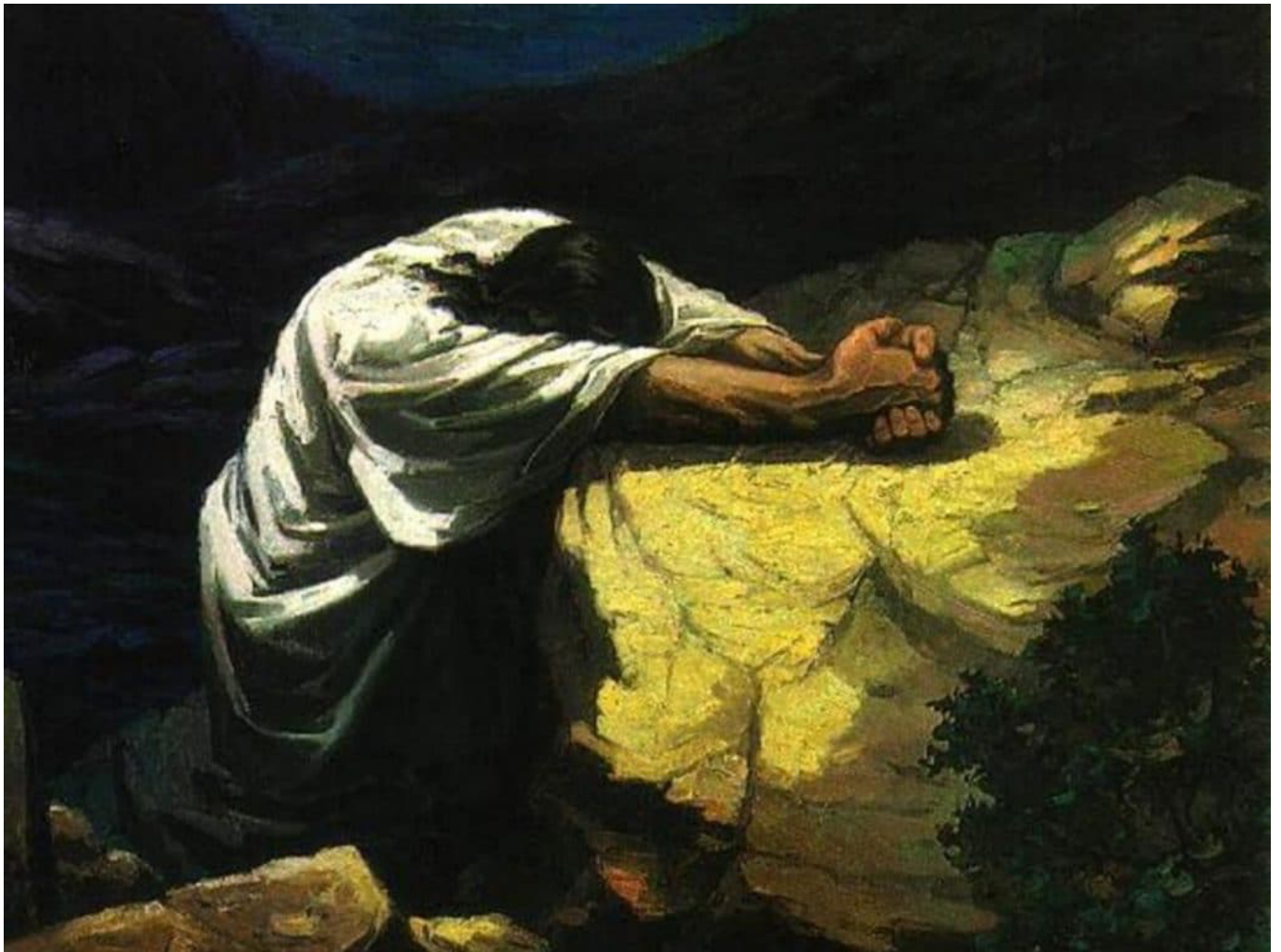
Deference towards the 'other' may be towards a task, a duty, or it may be in our relationships with other people.

In the working-out of such 'indifference/deference' it helps to have a degree of humour that may even enjoy a sense of the ridiculous.

Imagine the gifted cook who arrives in the kitchen all ready and expecting to be cooking the steaks, when he is asked to peel the potatoes. That task, however mundane, is the particular priority. The 'common good' requires the cook to be a kitchen worker. With a smile, with 'indifference', it is accepted that for the greater good an unanticipated turn of events is simply sustained with a generous heart, and perhaps with a rueful smile.



**'Ignatian indifference'** is in a sense a charism of 'selfless-ness', it is allied to 'obedience' – we recall the words of Jesus in Gethsemane when he is anxious and in prayer. Jesus places his thoughts and desires before his Father. He is open, obedient to the Will of the Father. He goes on to say , ***"My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."*** (Matthew 26:39)

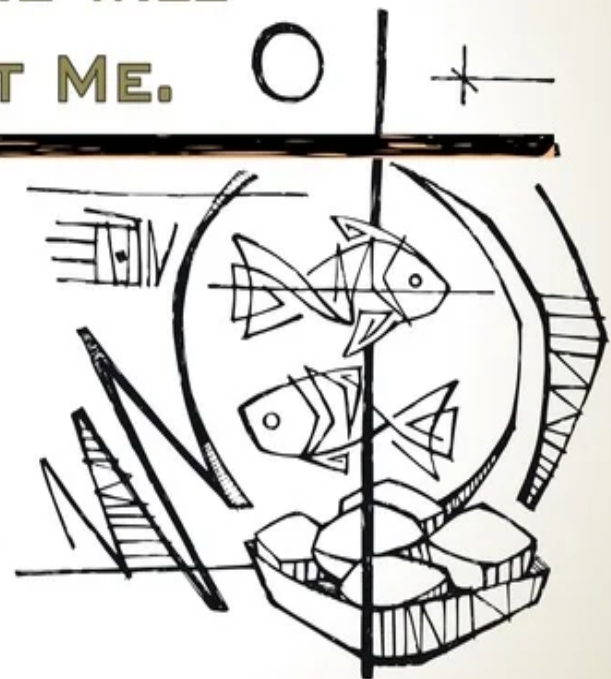


Jesus not only submitted himself in obedient prayer to God, this was expressed in the way that he lived.

*"For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me." (John 6:38 NIV)*

I HAVE COME DOWN FROM  
HEAVEN, NOT TO DO MY  
OWN WILL, BUT THE WILL  
OF HIM WHO SENT ME.

JOHN 6:38



Every day several times we say the Prayer given by Jesus to all his followers. It is a pattern not only for all prayer, but a template for living under the Sovereignty of God.

*" Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*  
(Matthew 6:10)

This Obedience, deference to the will of God induces 'indifference'. At the everyday level we accept that the claims of God-in-Christ open out

before us a different calculus : we esteem that which is lowly, a way of humility and generosity, not self-seeking and mean.

We are aware that for Jesus 'glory' was found in the Cross. 'Lifted-up' in that way He drew people from everywhere to find in Him the God who goes before us through dying and death to the Risen Life of Resurrection living, the New Life in which we live and move and have our being. This 'New Life' invites us to look at possessions, position and status with the perspectives of Jesus.

That we do with our minds, sifting and choosing, accepting and rejecting as seems best to us. Yet, the real sifting and moving is when we are truly graced by the knowledge, the experience of realising that each of us is uniquely loved by God.

We exist in an embrace of loving-kindness, and that Divine generosity enables each of us to accept that which is good for us and reject that which inhibits our own capacity to love and be kind. Ignatian detachment is our capacity to be open to Jesus, His love, his teaching in all its costly simplicity.

### **Points to ponder :**

- ***"Not wanting health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honour rather than dishonour."*** This seems to invite a sense of apathy, but when each part is examined 'health', a given that eventually in each of us breaks-down ; riches raises questions as to when is 'enough really enough', when is 'just enough'; really

desirable; our 'honour', our 'good name', our 'self-esteem', our sense of personal 'honour' seem to be important to human integrity and dignity. The hard core of this is that we examine just how 'free' we are to make choices that are for 'a good' greater than ourselves, the '*magis*' concept of whatever and wherever we are we can find God. This leads to a detachment that 'sets free'.

- Henri Nouwen spoke of what he called "downward mobility" a kind of detachment that can lead some away from a life of "worldliness" into a life worth choosing. Nouwen recognised that such a free choice "is the way to the Kingdom." How do we each respond to the choice of 'downward mobility' in a world that is constantly 'upwardly mobile' in regards to acquisitions, possessions and status?
- The importance of 'balance' – how far and no further. Do our attitudes and possessions tilt us towards God, or away from Him?
- Possessions, social position, education and physical attributes are all good in themselves> all can be used for 'the greater glory of God', or they can confine, limit and even demean. 'Indifference' enables us to make this world more kind, more just, more equitable, more healthy.
- "Ignatian indifference' enable us not to care less but to care more, a *magis* mindset in which we will surely "***find God in all things***"?

**Looking at ourselves:**





# EXAMEN

Give thanks

Pray for light

Review the day

Look at what's wrong

Make a resolution for the day to come

## Scriptural Reflection

### *Preparation for Scriptural Reflection :*

- *We place ourselves in the presence of God – short prayer of devotion: 'My Lord, and my God'*
- *We open up to God, expressing our sorrow for sin and our gratitude for our blessings*
- *We ask God to receive our lives, our hopes, our best intentions and our prayers*
- *We begin to read the passage of Scripture slowly. It helps to say the words, even silently.*

- *We think imaginatively trying to see ourselves in the scene of the Scripture : what we see, what we hear, what it feels like, what we smell, what we might taste.*

**Passage for Reflection :**

**Luke 12:15-21**

*Then Jesus said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."*

*And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'*

*"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"*

*"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'*

*"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."*



### Points for Reflection :

- Jesus in the teaching and parable is discussing 'greed' of possessions and self-regarding acquisitiveness. Ignatian detachment gives an insight into how we might respond to the circumstances of our own lives in a caring and prudent way
- Jesus reminds us that what we care about and where we place our values and our choices leads us to the critical times of judgment. Are we shaping our destiny day by day?
- ***God created human beings to praise, reverence, and serve God, and by doing this, to save their souls.***
- ***God created all other things on the face of the earth to help fulfil this purpose.***

How do these fundamental perspectives shape our reading and response to Scripture, and this Gospel passage?

- **A Period of Silence** in which we pray with St Ignatius, talking conversationally to God as Father : seeking understanding and insight, ever searching, ever finding, always willing, and Loving.



## **'Suscipe' : Prayer of St Ignatius**

*Take, O Lord, and receive my entire liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All that I am and all that I possess, Thou hast given me: I surrender it all to Thee to be disposed of according to Thy will. Give me only Thy love and Thy grace; with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more. Amen.*



**The Lord's Prayer**  
**Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray**  
**Thank God Always**