

St Mary's, Inverness

The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]

The Year of St Ignatius

20 MAY 2021 >31 JULY 2022

THIRTY-EIGHTH REFLECTION

Ignatius and the Way of Conversation

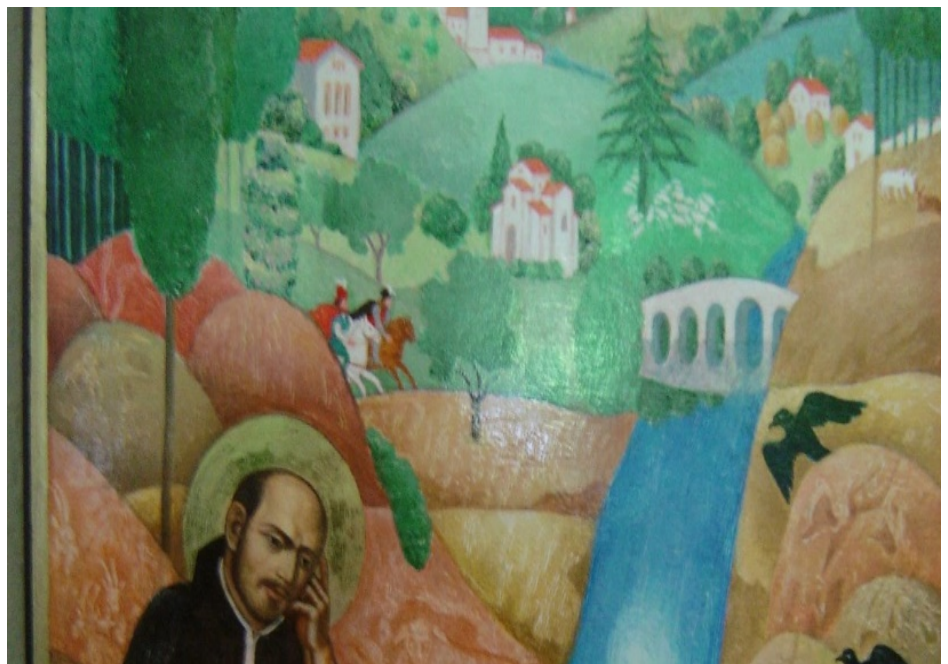


We recall the 'cannon-ball' that changed Ignatius' life at the Battle of Pamplona in 1521, and how afterwards in his period of recovery at his family home at Loyola he realised that his life as a courtier, a gentleman-at arms, was over. His attractions were changing.



The books given to him, a Life of Christ, and Lives of the Saints [particularly St Francis and St Dominic] made him feel better after he had read them. They gave him quite a different sense of consolation and encouragement than he received

from reading popular works of dering-do. This realisation that he found a hopeful desire, a good attraction was to lead Ignatius into further reflection, thinking prayerfully about his own experiences. After the self-surrender at the Shrine of Our Lady at Montserrat when Ignatius left behind his sword and military accoutrements, changed his gentleman's clothing for a pilgrim's habit, he went to Manresa where the profound 'illuminations' at the River Cardoner affirmed him in his dedication to the service of God.



The insights into his own psychology, his own feelings, prayerful reflections over the years matured and became a way of assisting others in the search for personal integrity in the way of Jesus. 'The Spiritual Exercises' took shape gradually, through use and further reflection.

We will recall that Ignatius was engaging in a prayerful way with those whom he met at Barcelona, Alcala and Salamanca. Wherever he went he attracted others to join him in the Pilgrimage with Jesus. This usually began with 'conversation', talking to those whom he met and with whom he lived or studied.

His 'conversational way' was the fruit of his experiences and insights, and his way of engaging in conversation is a gift that we might share and explore.

Ignatius was particularly mindful of, and encourages us to remember, that everyone we meet is, like ourselves, a 'child of God'. The unique particularity of that person deserves respect and we recognise the dignity of that person whatever opinion he or she may hold, or how we got to know him or her. 'Ignatian Conversation' starts from these premises.



Ignatius in the *Presupposition*, at the beginning of *'The Spiritual Exercises'* gives us the basis for 'Ignatian Conversations'. At the outset each of us "presupposes" the good in the other and the "goodness" of anything he or she might say. We begin with the disposition to believe that the other person is good and true-

'it should be presupposed that every good Christian ought to be more eager to put a good interpretation on a neighbour's statement than to condemn it. Further, if one cannot interpret it favourably, one should

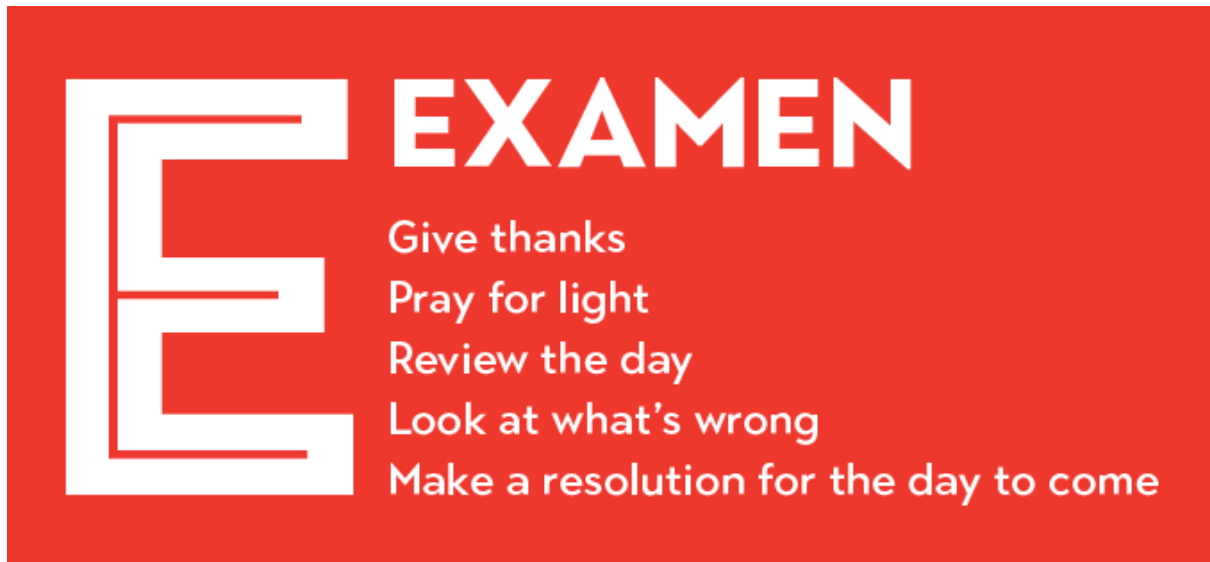
ask how the other means it. If that meaning is wrong, one should correct the person with love; and if this is not enough, one should search out every appropriate means through which, by understanding the statement in a good way, it may be saved'.

How might we begin, learning to be influenced in 'Ignatian Conversation'?

- Be slow to speak
- Listen attentively
- Seek the truth in what others are saying
- Disagree humbly, respectfully, and thoughtfully
- Allow the conversation the time it needs

'Ignatian Conversation' is a useful template for even everyday conversation. If we want to begin to attract others to Jesus then these basic principles should assist us. Ignatius himself was radiant with the love of God-in Christ that attracted and then persuaded. It was, of course, rooted and grounded in being alongside Jesus, nourished by the encounter with the living Word of the Gospel narratives.

Looking at ourselves:



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: St Mark Chapter 1. 21-39.

'on the Sabbath Jesus entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." ²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

²⁹ And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. ³¹ And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³² That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered together at the door. ³⁴ And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

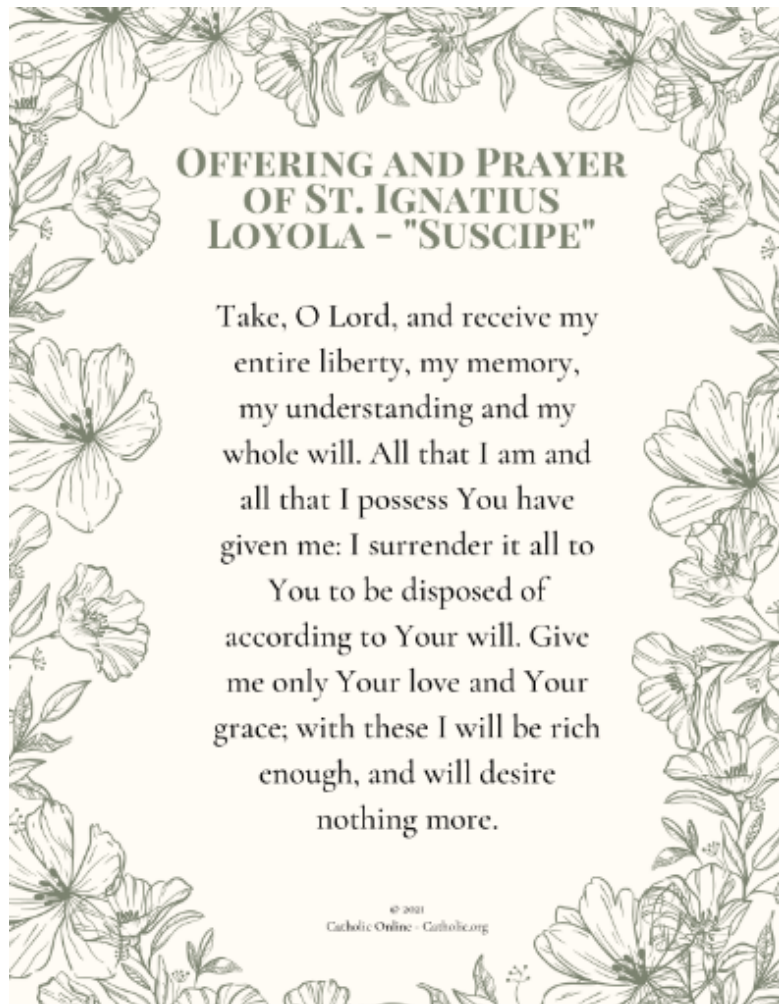
³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, ³⁷ and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." ³⁸ And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." ³⁹ And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.



Points to Reflect upon and Ponder :

- People recognise that Jesus teaches with authority- his teaching and his acts of healing come from the power of God
- Jesus rebukes 'evil'- demons the spiritual power of evil is always overcome with the goodness of God
- Notice how the news about Jesus spreads – people are speaking about him and many are searching for him.
- All disciples, you and me share with Simon and the others the task of bringing others to Jesus

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.



The Lord's Prayer

Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray



Thank God Always