

St Mary's, Inverness

The RC Diocese of Aberdeen: SC005122]

The Year of St Ignatius

20 MAY 2021 >31 JULY 2022

FORTY-THIRD IGNATIAN REFLECTION

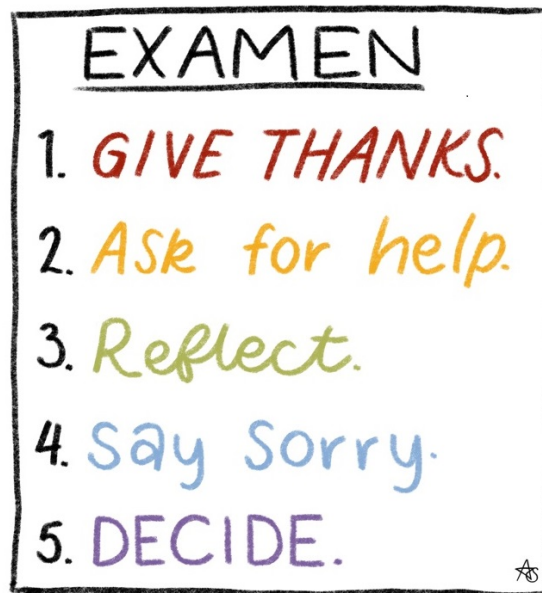
THE PRAYERS OF ST IGNATIUS LOYOLA



The journey, from a shattered life to a pilgrim for Christ with the Companionship of priests devoted to Jesus, was a series of insights and setbacks, new consolations and encouragements which culminated in the formation of the Society of Jesus. This close prayerful companionship initiated a wave of missionary journeys from Italy to the far east, to Europe and to the Americas. This enterprise began with a series of encounters within which Ignatius gathered spiritual friends by sharing his experience and insights. Eventually the method of his conversations, his dialogues with enquirers seeking to know Jesus took shape in *The Spiritual Exercises*.

Much of the Ignatian way in prayer and spirituality is derived from Ignatius' correspondence and *The Spiritual Exercises*.

1. One such component is the Daily Examination of our lives and consciences. It is called **The EXAMEN**



It is appropriate at this stage of our Ignatian Reflections to consider this in some detail. The EXAMEN is perhaps best done not at the very end of the day, but in late afternoon or early afternoon when we are not tired, but at a period when we can relax and recollect the last twenty-four hours. It becomes part of a daily programme.

As we begin the Examen it helps to be relaxed so that we can gently become aware of the presence of God in our lives, and in the moment.

We ask that the Holy Spirit may calm our memories, as we seek clarity so that we may be able to look back on our experiences and encounters.

GIVE THANKS.

1. We begin with gratitude- having a thankful heart, being able to see and acknowledge the graces and blessings in our lives, enables us to reach out, 'heart to heart' with God. We look at the simple things the basic gifts we take for granted, our homes, shelter, food, friends and colleagues. We are alive in God's world, and we can 'find God in all things', so we seek to identify and be thankful for the graces and blessings of life.

Ask for help.

2. Ask for help- as we open our hearts and minds to God we are mindful of the need of his grace to understand ourselves. Ignatius understood that the way we feel, our emotions, can help us to understand how God may be near to us. During most days we are likely to experience different feelings, with varying intensity : sometimes we are at peace, sometimes we may even be bored, sometimes all seems well, then just as likely we may feel resentment, or anger and a sense of frustration. It is good to pause and reflect on why we feel as we do. How do these feelings come about? It may be our interaction with others, it may be personal failings. God will move us to recognise our failures and our sins as well as our graces and favours. Addressing the sins by expression of sorrow and purposing to change that which is wrong is a beginning. Yet, there may be deeper reasons for our anxieties, and our frustrations. It may be that we are being called to a change in the pattern of our lives, perhaps more attention to those with whom we live or work, or perhaps even in a new direction to address a new challenge, a developing vocational impulse may need a new priority.

Reflect.

3. Reflect : this is where we ask the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts in the most significant matter that came from our request for God's assistance. We ask, we seek and God opens out to us : we trust Him to be with us as we let 'heart speak to heart' – it is the time and space we need to let our thoughts be open to the impulses, even the nudges that come to us. We ponder, we wonder, we express our sorrow, our gratitude, and we ask for God's continuing assistance in our lives

Say Sorry.

4. Saying sorry, being penitent, being honest with ourselves before God is the real prelude to our growth. In our weakness, humbly acknowledged, we can find strength. Ignatius is always encouraging us to be open-hearted to Jesus, speaking to Him as we do with our friends. Conversations need words that express our feelings. It is by speaking to Jesus that we find forgiveness, but also the grace to move on and live in the present and for the future. This conversational familiarity will encourage us graciously to be a forgiven sinner looking with generosity to a new day.

DECIDE.

5. Decide : yes, we have been in the presence of a healing and forgiving God, speaking 'heart to heart' gives us the responsibility for moving forward, We make decisions based on our prayers and insights. So we can think positively about the day ahead and trust to God's grace to be with us. We are better placed to remain 'recollected', savouring 'the sacrament of the present moment'.



Ignatius' Life of Prayer was nourished by his deep devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, as we see from his letters:

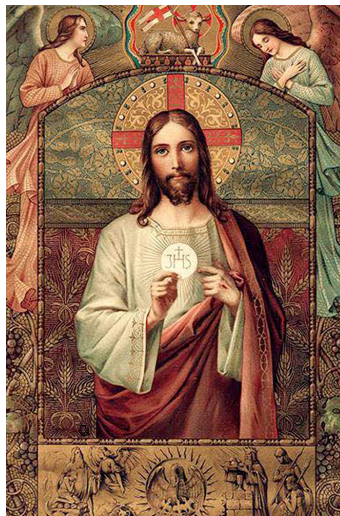
He sent a letter to the citizens of his home town, Azpeitia, reminding them of the reforms which had been achieved with them during his visit there in 1535 : ***"I close***

by asking, praying, and beseeching you, by the love and reverence you bear to God Our Lord, let me always partake in your devotions and chiefly in those of the most Holy Sacrament, as' you yourselves will always have a full share in mine, however poor and unworthy they may be."

For Ignatius, the Eucharist is "the greatest mark of [Christ's] love," (SE 289).

Reconciliation, recollection, being aware of finding God in all things is all part of the great 'participation' in the Life of Jesus.

At the beginning of *The Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius gives us a prayerful devotion which had been in use since about the twelfth century. The impetus that he gave it has resulted in the prayer being attributed to him. If not its author he was certainly its most ardent populariser. It is a heart-felt dialogue between the person praying and Jesus.



Soul of Christ, sanctify me.

Body of Christ, save me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

O Good Jesus, hear me.

Within your wounds hide me.

Permit me not to be separated from you.

*From the wicked foe, defend me.
At the hour of my death, call me
and bid me come to you
That with your saints I may praise you
For ever and ever. Amen.*

Father David Fleming of the Society of Jesus offers us a contemporary translation of the prayer :

*Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.
May your body and blood be my food and drink.
May your passion and death be my strength and life.
Jesus, with you at my side, enough has been given.
May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your Cross.
Let me not run from the love which you offer,
But hold me safe from the forces of evil.
On each of my dyings shed your light and your love.
Keep calling to me until the day comes when, with your saints,
I will praise you forever.*

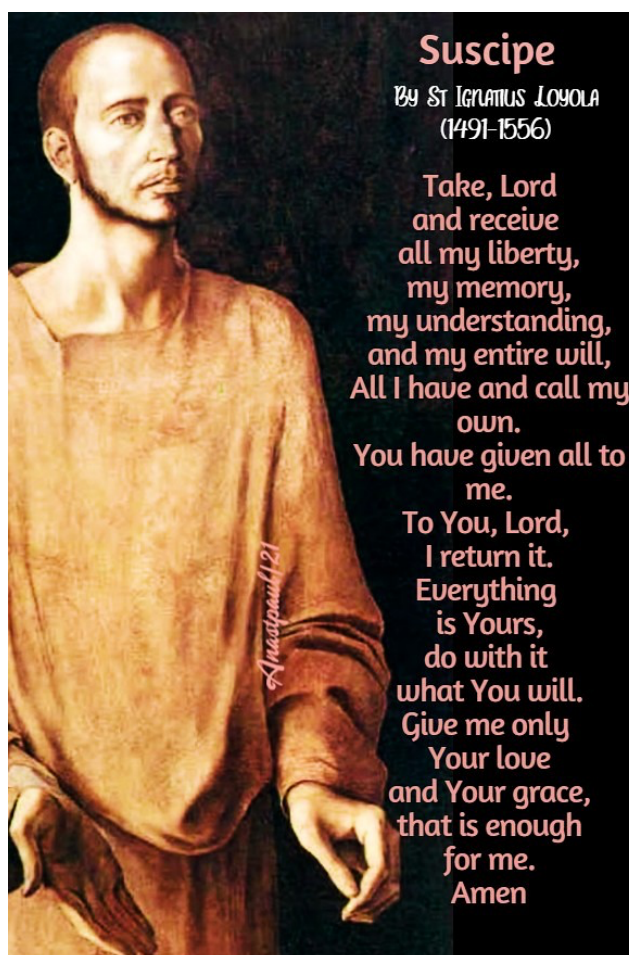


Praying the Scriptures Ignatius invites us to pray with the Scriptures.

We invite the Holy Spirit to be our guide as we enter into the scriptural reading. We might read a story from the Gospels, listening with our ears, sensing the situation with all its local colour. We use our imaginations creatively, being there

as much as we can, asking ourselves questions and listening to Jesus. In this type of imaginative, prayerful absorption of the Gospel we encounter Jesus. We are aware of him, as a teacher, healer, as the Suffering Servant of God who goes on forgiving through his Death and beyond it as he continues to reconcile the broken, and the lapsed, and always reassuring the doubtful. Getting to know Jesus is the task of prayer.

When we know someone, when we have a friend in Jesus, a companion, then we naturally communicate : conversation begins to flow. In The Spiritual Exercises Ignatius calls this prayerful conversation a '*colloquy*', simply being familiarly prayerful with Jesus. We speak in an open way. It is the practice of prayerful encounter in which we might also open out our prayerfulness to include God the Father or Our Lady Mary. Prayerfulness is being in communication, speaking-up with words, and sometimes without, in silent companionship. It is in this context of Love that we find ourselves wanting to give ourselves to God, and that can be done as a daily devotion, a Morning Offering, in the SUSCIPE



Suscipe

*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty,
my memory, my understanding,
and my entire will,
All I have and call my own.*

*You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.*

*Everything is yours; do with it what you will.
Give me only your love and your grace,
that is enough for me.*

Suscipe, Latin for "take," is a prayer of self-dedication, an offering of each of us in our totality. Ignatius introduces this prayer in *The Spiritual Exercises* in a section, '**Contemplation to Attain the Love of God**' in which he defines 'love'. He writes that 'love' is better portrayed in actions rather than words. Love involves what Ignatius calls a "mutual sharing of goods." 'Love' moves us to give to the One we love. So follows the **Suscipe** a prayer of complete self-giving, of following and walking with Jesus day by day.



Points to ponder :

- Ignatius reordered his life by a radical conversion to the Jesus of the Gospels. In this he was assisted by Scripture and 'The Imitation of Christ'. Do we have a programme?

- Examen & Suscipe : These are part of the daily routine, the programme of the Ignatian Way.
- Is there anything preventing us from walking more closely, following more dearly?

Preparation for Scriptural Reflection :

- *We place ourselves in the presence of God – short prayer of devotion: ‘My Lord, and my God’ and we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.*
- *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 24:13-35 [English Standard Version]
That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened.¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk? “And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” ¹⁹ And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to

him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people,²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning,²³ and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther,²⁹ but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.³² They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?"³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together,³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.



The Disciples and the Inn-keeper at table with Jesus, in Caravaggio's illustrative painting of the table-fellowship at Emmaus.

Points for Reflection :

- It was not just the first disciples who felt bewildered and lost- many have lost contact with the Word of God revealed in Holy Scripture. Do we use the Bible as a source of inspiration, insight, devotion and comfort?
- Hearts burning within us- the ardour of faith, when we discover Jesus? Are we still ardent disciples, wanting to share with others the truths of Catholic Faith?
- Recognising Jesus in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood- are we as devoted as once we were, or do we take these Sacred Mysteries for granted?

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.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all.

We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we shew forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory, world without end.

Laus Deo Semper : Thank God Always



The Lord's Prayer
Jesus Mercy, Mary Pray