

DAILY EXERCISES

WEEK FOUR/DAY ONE

Theme: The Principle of *Holy Indifference*

Week Four of The Exercises invites us to deepen and trust our deepest desires in spite of the fears that arise when we do so. Beneath The Exercises is a conviction that we are being 'momently' created in all the particulars of life. In theological language, 'God is not finished with me yet...' The invitation to recognize those places where fear can pull us away from spiritual freedom is essential to Ignatian spirituality.

The principle we explore this week is called Holy Indifference. This core concept in Ignatian spirituality refers to a state of internal freedom and detachment that allows individuals to choose what is most conducive *'to whatever is Greater.'* Holy Indifference is the ultimate state of freedom since it creates an interior space without being overly attached to any particular outcome or created thing. But such Indifference is not about apathy or lack of caring; rather it is about ordering one's desires in alignment with the Greater. This principle encourages individuals to be open to various paths and possibilities, recognizing that true fulfillment comes from aligning with Divine purpose.

In your journal time this week you are invited to explore the principle of Holy Allowing. Welcome rather than push away the inevitable gaps and contradictions which arise when we honor our desires and freedom. Today, consider the Questions for Discernment of your Morning Exercises as an invitation to more radical acceptance of where we are still incomplete.

MORNING EXERCISES

1. WISDOM FROM THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Take a few moments to quiet your mind and welcome the following teaching. Before starting your morning exercise, it is best to spend a few moments getting grounded through a favorite meditation practice or, consider using the simple breathing exercise described on R2 of your online site resources.

A prerequisite for healthy discernment is what Ignatius calls holy indifference. Indifference doesn't mean I don't care, it does mean that I remain open to going in the direct opposite of the direction in which I might really want to go this moment. This requires a spirit of openness. Indifference is a disposition that creates a state of heart that remains open to discernment especially in major life decisions. But the Exercises are not only about discerning big decisions, they are more interested in discerning our interior movements underneath our decisions and listening to which ones I trust. For example, do I trust (and therefore act on) the guilt that I'm feeling? Without making

any decisions, I can listen to what the guilt is telling me. So, a good question for discernment might be: From where does the guilt in this case arise? For example, someone who's grown up with being shamed all my life, discerning where the shame comes from and what does it do to me would be important. If decisions are made which are shame-based, discerning (catching) this predisposition can be liberating and will change my behavior even if it does not change the decisions I make.

Jack Kennedy

2. QUESTIONS FOR DISCERNMENT

Consider journaling for today by noting 'what arises in you' as you consider any of these questions for discernment:

-Consider what Ignatian 'holy indifference' would look like/feel like regarding a decision you are considering.

-Identify an 'interior movement' underneath a decision you are considering. How could The Exercises support you in exploring more unconscious dispositions like guilt, fear and shame?

-How might the teaching that "I am being momentarily created" speak to your experience in times when you are anxious and fearful?

3. ENNEAGRAM INSIGHT

Simply observe how the following Enneagram insight complements today's teachings.

In terms of discernment, the Enneagram asks, how can we maintain soulfulness in the presence of that which we seek to avoid? The Enneagram teaches that when we regularly notice our outer habits (also called: addictions or lenses) and recognize them as distortions of the Truth, we can become free to do something different. In this place we wait for God and encounter the spiritual freedom necessary in order to prepare for the discernment we seek.

George Gurdjieff

4. ENNEAGRAM AWARENESS

Spend a few minutes with today's Enneagram insights; consider making a journal entry which you could return to at the end of the day.

-Read both the AFFIRMATIONS and RELEASES of your Ennea-Style in Enneagram Transformations (cf. Enneagram References #3).

-Identify how both your strengths and weaknesses create who you are in specific life circumstances. Consider a particular situation where you are tempted towards self-hatred (as found in the RELEASES of your Enne-type. Then notice that you possess strengths and virtues equal to your challenge in the AFFIRMATIONS of your type.

5. DEVOTIONAL READINGS: *Deeply listening*

Choose one of the following passages and one of its points for reflection as a way to enter into a period of prayerful intention. This is not so much a time for analysis but for reflection. Choose whatever form of devotional prayer or meditation you like to complement the passages. Always end your reflection time with a moment of gratitude and 'savoring.'

SCRIPTURE OPTION A

From the Hebrew Scriptures: When my soul grows weary, lead me away from deceitful paths; may I come to know the ways that lead to freedom and peace.

Psalms 119: 29-30

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

- Recall a time when your soul was weary? What were the circumstances?
- Recall a time when choosing a 'deceitful path' caused you or another suffering?
- Offer gratitude for any place in you that is presently free and at peace; savor the experience.

POETRY OPTION

Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness. It took me years to understand that this too, was a gift.

The Uses of Sorrow, Mary Oliver

POINTS FOR REFLECTION:

- Recall a time when you received a 'box of sorrow' from someone you once loved.
- How/did you come to discover that the sorrow, too, was also a gift?
- Offer gratitude for a deep sorrow that also became a blessing. Savor the experience

6. INTENTION FOR THE DAY

Make an intention to notice when the voices of FEAR and SELF DOUBT arise. Though you may be tempted to judgment or self loathing, try just to notice and not judge.

MID DAY EXERCISES

(5-10 minutes)

1. MINI-EXAMEN: HOLY NOTICING

Take a few quiet moments to remember your intention for the day

- Is there an observation from the morning worth noting?
- Renew your intention for the remainder of the day:

Where can you detect the voices of judgment instead of Holy Indifference in your daily activities. Try just to notice and not judge.

2. GRATITUDE

Identify at least one experience so far today for which you are grateful

-Breathe a prayer of gratitude for a few minutes. Recall that it takes a moment of silence to hear the whisper of the Divine Voice within.

-You might try a traditional spiritual breath practice of inhaling on the count of three and breathing out on the count of six. Try this for about one minute.

END-OF-THE-DAY EXERCISES

(About 20 minutes)

1. THE EXAMEN

The daily Examen is the heart of the Spiritual Exercises. This is an opportunity to take a long, loving look back over your day where, 'We recognize the Beloved in the nitty gritty of life and we bring the nitty gritty back to the Beloved.' This exercise is an examination of consciousness (clear awareness) NOT an examination of conscience focused on faults and failings. By being faithful to this practice and journaling your insights, patterns will emerge over thirty days including awareness from your unconscious that would normally have been missed in everyday activity.

-The EXAMEN should take about fifteen minutes. During this reflection time, you can use the following five R's to help guide your time:

REQUEST the presence of Spirit (however you imagine it) to lead you through the review of the day

RELISH the moments that went well and gifts received today

REVIEW (walk back through your day) using the suggested focus questions as your guide. Consider what it would be like to talk with God about this or even a loved one who has died.

FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR TODAY'S EXAMEN:

- o Walk back through your day identifying emotion by emotion.
- o Choose the strongest emotion of your day and consider the way you responded to that emotion. Review the impact that emotion had on you. Did you even acknowledge the emotion at the time or were you unaware of it?

REPENT for any mistakes or failures by simply acknowledging them without drama or self-loathing. If you feel called to *at-one-ment* with another, the Beloved or yourself, note that desire for whenever an appropriate time arises.

RESOLVE with a concrete intention to live tomorrow consciously and freely.

2. DISCERNMENT JOURNAL

Without a daily journal it would not be possible to track the sometimes subtle spiritual movements in every day experiences. Spend a few minutes making entries that reflect today's experiences and learnings. Here everything belongs, both the gifts and the challenges.