



COMILLAS

UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA



FACULTAD DE TEOLOGÍA

**THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES: A GUIDE
TO BE BORN ANEW IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

Autor: Marshal Felix

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Fdo.

Madrid, _____

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Abbreviations

[MHSI general series numbers in parentheses]

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- Co *Constituciones* de la Compañía de Jesús. *Monumenta Constitutionum II Textus Hispanus*, Roma, 1936 (MHSI 64).
- CCC *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 1995.
- EPP *Cartas. Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Iesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones* (12 vols.). Madrid, 1903-1911[reimp. 1964-1968], (MHSI 22, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 36, 37, 38, 40, 42).
- GS *Gaudium et Spes*. In Concilio Ecuménico Vaticano II. Madrid: BAC, 1993.
- SD *The Spiritual Diary* of St. Ignatius. “Ephemeris S. P. N. Ignatii” In *Monumenta Constitutionum I*, 86-158. Roma, 1934 (MHSI 63); Iparraguirre, Ignacio, Candido de Dalmasas, Manuel Ruiz Jurado, eds. *Obras*. Madrid: BAC, 1991; Munitiz, A., Joseph. *Inigo Discernment Log-Book: The Spiritual Diary of Saint Ignatius Loyola*. London: Inigo

Enterprises, 1987.

- SE *The Spiritual Exercises. Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Excercitia Spiritualia*, Calveras, I y Candidus de Dalmases, (eds.), Romae, 1969 (MHSI 100); Ganss, George, E. *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. Bilbao: Mensajero-Grupo de Comunicación Loyola, 2021.

1.2 Other Ignatian Sources

- FN *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis*, (4 vols.), Roma, 1943-1965 (MHSI 66,73,85,93).
- MCo *Monumenta Constitutionum*, Roma, 1934-1938 (MHSI 63,64,65)
- MHSI *Monumenta Histórica Societatis Iesu*.

2. ARTICLES

- AHSI Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu. Roma
- CIS Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis. Roma.
- WS The Way Supplement, London

3. DICTIONARIES Y CONCORDANCIAS

- Concordancia* Echarte, I. (ed.). *Concordancia Ignaciana*. Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 1996.
- CEJ Worcester, Thomas. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits*. Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 2017.
- DAPT Abad, José Antonio. *Diccionario del agente de pastoral teológico enciclopédico*. Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2003.
- DAT Gerald O'Collins. *Diccionario abreviado Teología*. Pamplona: Verbo Divino, 2002.
- DCT Lacoste, Jean-Yves. *Diccionario crítico de teología*. Madrid: Akal, S.A, 2007.
- DEI Grupo de Espiritualidad Ignaciana (ed.). *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 2007.
- DE Ancilli, Ermano. *Diccionario de espiritualidad*. Barcelona: Herder S.A, 1975.
- DJN Ramos, Felipe, F. *Diccionario de Jesús de Nazaret*. Burgos: Verbo Divino, 2002.
- DHCJ O'Neill, Ch. E, y Domínguez, J. M. (dirs.). *Diccionario Histórico de la*

Compañía de Jesús (4 vols.). Roma-Madrid: IHSI-UPCo, 2001.

- DiccAut* *Diccionario de Autoridades* (3 vol.). Madrid: Gredos, 1990; La Real Academia Española. “Diccionario de Autoridades (1726-1739)”. <http://web.frl.es/DA.html>
- DM* Borriello, L. *Diccionario de Mística*. Madrid: San Pablo, 2002.
- DPAC* Di Bernardino, Angelo (dir.). *Diccionario patrístico y de la antigüedad cristiana* (2 vols.). Salamanca: Sígueme, 1991.
- DT* Izquierdo, César, Jutta Burggraf, Félix María Arocena. *Diccionario de teología*. Pamplona: Universidad de Navarra, 2002.
- DTE* Pacomio, Luciano, Vito Mancuso. *Diccionario teológica enciclopédico*. Pamplona: Verbo Divino, 1995.
- NDT* Tamayo, José. *Nueva diccionario de Teología*. Madrid: Trotta, 2005.

4. OTHERS

- BAC Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid
- ch. chapter.
- cf. Confer.
- dir. director.
- dirs. directors.
- ed. editor.
- eds. editores.
- Ibid. Ibidem.
- IHSI *Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu*. Roma.
- n. number.
- reimp reimprimido
- trans. translated.
- UPCo Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Madrid.
- vol. volume

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Introduction

All of us who are born on the earth have certain purposes to fulfill. Irrespective of the different state of life (married, single, religious, etc.), we are called to play some or other roles in our life in order to be productive for ourselves as well as for the society. Though all of us may not be able to identify the definite purpose or the goal in our life, yet this does not stop us from doing good works while we carry on with our daily life.

While understanding the purpose of human beings in the spiritual realm, St. Ignatius of Loyola offers through the *Spiritual Exercises* a specific purpose or goal or aim to achieve in our life. Through the Principle and Foundation (SE¹ 23), this goal becomes very clear: that is to praise, reverence and serve God. This is something noble,

¹ The abbreviation SE denotes a number of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola and all the English translations are taken from George. E. Ganss ed. *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. Bilbao: Grupo de Comunicación Loyola, 2021 and the original sources are from *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Exercitia Spiritualia*, Calveras, Candidus de Dalmases, (eds.), Romae, 1969 (MHSI 100).

extraordinary and fulfilling in one's life. Nevertheless, this process is not so easy. As Human beings, we potentially possess good and evil nature in us and as a consequence of it, there is a struggle within our hearts between two spirits that do not allow us to do what we desire to do and what we are supposed to do. And this conflicting nature resonates with the words of St. Paul which says, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rm 7,15)².

Nevertheless, in the process of our life on earth, we are called to minimize the evil nature in us by maximizing the goodness. *The Spiritual Exercises* are one such tool that would enhance us to do the same process of reducing evil and increasing goodness by overcoming ourselves and bringing order in our life (SE 21). The numerous meditations, contemplations and the guidelines in the *Spiritual Exercises* enhance us in such a way that they not only help us to purify our sinful past but also, they help us to purify our attitude and mold our behavior and finally they prepare us to be born anew in the Kingdom of God by possessing the nature of a child.

a) The Centre of Interest

How would anyone be born anew? This is the question which is planted as the centre of this work while trying to find a response in the light of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In search of looking for an answer, two more additional questions that would perhaps throw more light in our quest: what is the purpose of human beings to be born anew and what is the problem with the first birth itself? Pondering over these questions, while comparing the nature of the child with every one of us, they would perhaps give us the clarity on what aspects that we miss out that a child possesses. Moreover, analyzing the Exercises in the light of our spiritual renewal, each stage of the Exercises has specific purpose which help us towards our spiritual transformation (purification, lowering oneself, desire to imitate Christ in poverty and humility, discern the daily life, etc.) which eventually prepare us to be born anew or to be like a child to enter the kingdom of God.

² All the references from the Bible is taken from *The Didache Bible. With commentaries based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 1st ed., edited by Jeffrey Cole. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014.

b) Methodology and the structure of the Chapter

The composition of this investigation consists of three chapters based on the systematic method. That all the three chapters follow step-by-step instructions, and they are linked with one basic characteristic: to be born anew. While the first chapter focuses on the nature of the Kingdom of God and the requirement to be born anew to enter there, the second chapter gives the glimpse of how the spiritual experiences of Ignatius enhanced him to be born anew by allowing himself to be molded like a child. And the third and final chapter puts some sparks on how the *Spiritual Exercises* prepare the exercitants to be born anew in the Kingdom of God.

Analysing elaborately the first chapter, it opens with the scriptural foundation of knowing the nature of the Kingdom of God based on the synoptic gospel and the Pauline letters. And further, giving details on the nature of a child, the spiritual infancy and the mystery of creation, the relationship between God and humanity is highlighted. And further, through the interpretation of the Church Fathers (Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus of Lyon, Melito de Sardis, Origen of Alexandria, etc.) the communion between the Creator and the creatures emphasised all the more. Besides this, the writings of the Church doctrines such as the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and the writings of the modern theologians complement the same notion of communion between God and human beings.

Moving forward, the investigation carefully pays attention to the problem in the first birth and the human fragility. In this chapter, human failure is specifically highlighted through the original sin. And by explaining God's saving act through the sacrifice of Jesus and His descent to Hell, this chapter briefs how the strained relationship between God and human beings are stitched again.

In the light of the saving act of Christ (dying on the cross and descending to hell), every Christian is invited to humble oneself to be born anew in the kingdom of God (Mt 23,12). And the life of Ignatius in the second chapter is projected as an example of how to be born anew by humbling and surrendering oneself in the hands of God. Specifying the two stages of his life (in the time of *Manresa* and during the time when he was writing the *Spiritual Diary*) the investigation specifies how the life of Ignatius can be considered as a project plan to be inspired and to be followed in the process of being born anew like a child.

Moving forward, the third chapter in the investigation intends to solve the problem of how to be born anew. Exploring the exercises and the nature of the four weeks in a detailed way (in the chapter it is divided into the eight stages), it is aimed to look for the fruit of each stage to observe how and in what way one is prepared to be born anew.

CHAPTER 1.
The Kingdom of God Demands
Self-Denial and a New Birth Like a Child

In the Gospel of Saint John chapter 3, there is an interesting conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus about the concept of being born new to enter into the Kingdom of God. Perhaps, for Nicodemus, this conversation could be an eye opening or a self-examination on how he would be going to lead his rest of life in fullness and freedom from hurdles like scruples and guilt feelings of past life: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God”(Jn 3,3). And so, the condition of Jesus here “born anew” (Jn 3,3) is very clear. However, Nicodemus uses his reasoning and intellectual capacity to understand the notion of being born anew rather than considering it through the eyes of faith. And thus, he argues: “ How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” (Jn 3,5). Though his argument is valid from the scientific point of view, yet eschatologically, he fails to understand in which way Jesus wants him to look into: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn 3,6). Charles Kingsley Barret, while highlighting the notion of being born new, sees that it is not just

the notion of divine renewal but also it is an immediate and not negligible possibility of the partial experience of the kingdom of God, though it is not fully experienced in the present life³.

While understanding the condition of Jesus on being born anew and born of water and Spirit (Jn 3,6), the testimony of John the Baptist would help to understand what Jesus is referring to. John the Baptist, who was baptizing with water (Jn 1,33) says, “He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit” (Jn 1,33). And through this, it is clear that the baptism with Spirit that Jesus offers has a significance and it calls for something more. While comparing the baptism with Spirit with the baptism of John the Baptist, Charles Kingsley Barret asserts that the disciples of Jesus who are born of the Spirit, find themselves in a state that brings them closer to a deep understanding and contemplation about the entering into the kingdom of God, even though they have experienced it partially by receiving the gift of the Spirit⁴.

Like Charles Kingsley Barret, many theologians over the centuries have attempted to impart their theological thoughts on the notion of being born anew: Johannes Beutler while analyzing the notion of born anew, he connects with the idea of entering the kingdom of God, it is necessary to become a child⁵. And Henri Van Den Bussche also sees the notion of being born anew in connection with the mediation of the Holy Spirit that it is through the intervention of the Holy Spirit and through the vital grace, one is born anew⁶. While by emphasising the verse 5 of the gospel of John, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn 3,6), some theologians highlight the importance of the Sacrament of Baptism to enter into the kingdom of God, and some others comment about the description of baptism in eschatological sense⁷. According to Johannes Beutler, the water represents the new covenant that is mentioned in the Ezekiel 36, 25-27 where it mentions about the new heart and new spirit. And he mentions about the spirit in a literal sense that a man reborn

³ Cf. Charles Kingsley Barret. *El Evangelio según san Juan*. Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 2003, 304.

⁴ The baptism by Spirit became a reality after the resurrection and glorification of Jesus as St. John testifies in his gospel: “...the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified”: Jn 7, 39.

⁵ Cf. Johannes Beutler. *Comentario al Evangelio de Juan*. Pamplona: Verbo Divino, 2016, 98.

⁶ Cf. Henri Van Den Bussche. *El Evangelio Según San Juan*. Madrid: Stvdivm, 1972, 204.

⁷ Eschatology denotes the orientation towards the future of our whole present life or the doctrine of last things. It is the fulfilment of the creation and the history which aims for individual and universal salvation. Cf. Gisbert Greshake. “Escatología”. In *Diccionario Crítico de Teología*, edited by Jean-Yves Lacoste, 423. Madrid: Akal, S.A, 2007; see also. Gerald O’Collins, Edward G. Farrugia, “Escatología”. In *Diccionario abreviado de teología*, 133. Editorial Verbo Divino 2002.

signifies being born of Spirit⁸. In spite of different comments and opinions and arguments, there is a common thread that connects all understanding and commentaries of all theologians: that it is a change from the present state of life and a conversion of heart.

How is the process of the transformation or the conversion of heart understood in the life of an individual? Down the centuries, many thinkers in the Church, though they have different interpretations on conversion, yet all of them arrive at one common conclusion that a converted or a transformed person, never remains the same and the transformation invites him to move on for a conversion of his life. The traditional teaching of the Church describes the understanding of conversion as a passage from darkness to light, from the state of darkness to the state of grace, from the power and bondage of Satan to God and to the freedom of his true children, from life of flesh to the life according to Spirit, from the sense of being old self (old man) to new self (new man) and from death to life⁹. P. Siniscalco, while analysing the impact of conversion in one's life, affirms that the convert leaves his old sinful image and becomes a new person and his life is guided by the action of God¹⁰.

The explanation by the Vatican Council II on conversion which describes that conversion in a person takes on two essentials: i) to renounce sin and ii) to surrender to the obedience of faith¹¹. And further, these two basics take the converted person to incorporate himself in the contribution of social and moral welfare¹². Because, the transformation of a person not only enhances him to work for his own sanctity but also inspires him to know God's will in offering his life in service to God and humanity.

In the conversation, the demand from Jesus to Nathanael to being born new or having conversion of heart is the mandate or prerequisite for a person to enter into the Kingdom of God: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (Jn 3,3). And in order to fulfil this requirement to enter into the Kingdom of God, a human being has to rise above his current status of life and from his vulnerable human condition and from his limitations¹³. And to rise from his own limitations and fragility, it

⁸ Cf. Beutler, 99.

⁹ Cf. B. Marchetti. "Conversión". In *Diccionario de Espiritualidad*, edited by Ermanno Ancilli, 482. Barcelona: Herder S.A, 1975.

¹⁰ Cf. P. Siniscalco. "Conversión". In *Diccionario Patrístico*, edited by Angelo Di Bernardino, 492. Salamanca: Sigueme, 1991.

¹¹ Cf. D.L. Gelpi. "Conversión". In *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, edited by Grupo de Espiritualidad Ignaciana, 484. Bilbao: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 2007.

¹² Cf. Ibid. 484.

¹³ Cf. Van Den Bussche, 205.

is not possible for him to rise above his condition¹⁴. In other words, he needs to raise from his own condition of being born of flesh in order to be born new in spirit as Jesus points out to Nicodemus: "...which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (Jn 3,6) to enter into the Kingdom of God.

1.1 The nature of the kingdom of God

While understanding the nature of the Kingdom of God, the synoptic gospel is loaded with the examples that are connected with the daily life: that the Kingdom of God is compared to good seed in the field (Mt 13, 24-30; Mk 4, 26-29); as leaven (Mt 13, 33; Lk 13, 20-21); as a grain of mustard seed (Mt 13, 31; Mk 4, 30-32; Lk 13, 28); as treasure hidden in the field (Mt 13,44;); as fine pearls (Mt 13, 45); as a net thrown into the sea (Mt 13, 47).

Fig 1. The Comparison of Kingdom of God

Good seed in the field	•Mt 13, 24-30; Mk 4, 26-29
Leaven	•Mt 13,33; Lk 13, 20-21
Grain of mustard seed	•Mt 13, 31; Mk 4, 30-32; Lk 13, 28
A hidden treasure	•Mt 13,44
A net in the sea	•Mt 13, 47
A fine pearl	•Mt 13,45

To deepen the notion of the kingdom of God, a question could be asked: why is it mandatory to be born anew to enter into the kingdom of God? The analogy of a new born child might be helpful to understand the concept of being born anew to enter into the

¹⁴ Cf. Ibid. 205.

kingdom of God. A child, after coming out of its mother's womb, adopts to a new environment (from the womb of mother to a larger womb of the earth). In the process of adjusting to the new environment, it also learns the nature of the world: its advantages and limitations. Similarly, to be born anew for a person would simply mean to become aware of one's true state and to get rid of his limitations by finding ways and means to fill his shortcomings with the grace of God.

1.1.1 A prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of God: from the point of synoptic gospels

What could be the prerequisite to enter into the Kingdom of God? While the gospel of John highlights the change (a renewal of heart, and born new) to enter into the Kingdom of God, the synoptic gospels highlight how to enter the kingdom of God with a practical approach. In the gospel of Matthew, a clear-cut parameter is shown how to enter into the kingdom of God: firstly, it is the humility that puts the foundation to anyone desiring to enter into the Kingdom: "Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven"(Mt 18,4). Secondly, it is the openness to accept one's fault and believe in Jesus: that is to enter into one's true self and acknowledging one's limitations before God leads a way to enter into the Kingdom of God: "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you" (Mt 21,31; cf. Lk 7,29-30). The gospel of Mark shows a twofold mandate to enter into the Kingdom of God: Repentance and belief in the Gospel (Mk 1, 15).

1.1.2 A requirement to enter into the kingdom of God: from the point of Pauline Letters

St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, though does not explicitly mention about the prerequisite to enter in the Kingdom of God, he inherently invites the Christians to change their old way of life or for conversion of heart with a practical approach: "Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be new dough, as you really are unleavened" (1 Cor 5, 7). And the same message is emphasised in the second letter to the Corinthians: the shedding of old self and being born as new as he says, "... if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (2 Cor 5,17).

And further, in the letter to the Galatians, he wants the Christians to get rid of their false understanding of the importance given to the circumcision of flesh and invites them

to strive towards the circumcision of heart (a change within to grow as a new creation). And he says: “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation” (Gal 6,15). Besides this, in the letter to the Philippians, by highlighting the example of Jesus, he appeals the Christians to grow in humility like Him to enter into the Kingdom of God: “[Jesús] though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of God” (Ph 2,7).

1.2 Being childlike: a fundamental to enter into the kingdom of God

While analysing the importance of entering into the kingdom of God, all the synoptic gospels invariably emphasis on and invite everyone to follow: that is to become like a child (cf. Mt 18,3; Mc 10,15; Lk 18,16). What are the attributes or the characteristic approach that one must uphold to become like a child? Perhaps by observing the nature of the child and being inspired by its lifestyle one may adapt himself very naturally. First and foremost, by physiological nature, a child is fragile and vulnerable. It does not have energy to depend on its own power or status. E. M. Nieto, while confirming the nature of a child, says that a child is fragile, weak, insignificant, needy. It is always at the mercy of others¹⁵.

Secondly, a child is always available. Though the work may be laborious, it is always at the disposition and at the service of others without thinking much and because of this reason, E. M. Nieto describes child as a symbol of service¹⁶. Thirdly, the attitude and the action of the child makes him superior to others. Though it may appear to be paradoxical because the child does not have power and position in the society, yet the nature of sincerity and passivity of accepting everything as an offer without judgement or prejudice, it has the advantage over all others. Besides, it is content with little and it is amused by anything. Moreover, a child does not bear grudges but forgets everything easily and quickly. It excludes malice, malevolence, hypocrisy and contributes

¹⁵ Cf. E. M. Nieto. “Niños”. In *Diccionario de Jesús de Nazaret*, edited by Felipe F. Ramos, 868. Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 2001.

¹⁶ Cf. *Ibid.* 867-868.

generously without calculating¹⁷.

Fourthly, a child has no significant role in society. It has no power to make decisions but it does what he is told to do and what the adults want him to do¹⁸. About the rights of a child, Johannes Beutler says that a child is neither consulted nor it is a subject of rights and whatever is given to him is a pure gift. A child practises brotherhood and sincere friendship. And it is sincere in its approach. It manifests itself as it is and it does not put up an image of others. And above all, it practises the uprightness of heart¹⁹. And so, it is not surprising why Jesus praises the people of childlike in the Gospel of Matthew: “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to infants” (Mt 11, 25). And Johannes Beutler terms the infant as “nepioi”²⁰.

1.2.1 Spiritual infancy : an open invitation to taste the second birth

Very similar to the nature of a child, there are people “nepioi”²¹ with the attitude of children irrespective of their age. Perhaps, to this state of life, Jesus invites Nicodemus to become during the spiritual conversation with him: that is to be being “born anew” (Jn 3.3) or to be transformed from a physical being to a spiritual being. Could this state be also regarded as *spiritual infancy*? While commenting on the nature of the spiritual infancy, it is noted that people of this nature want to remain unrecognised or not wanting to be noticed. They do not go after ambitions or aspirations nor they think that they are worthy of anything or they feel entitled to do anything²². Secondly, the life of the people of this state is identified with Christ, like a living testimony to the word of St. Paul²³: “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Gal 2,20). E. M. Nieto, while highlighting about the spiritual infancy, he specifically identifies some distinguished characters of people who are of this particular state of life. He sees that the people who live like this are simple of heart. They do not have double tongues like the serpent. They walk in the

¹⁷ Cf. Ibid. 868.

¹⁸ Cf. Ibid. 868.

¹⁹ Cf. Ibid. 867-868.

²⁰ The “nepioi” are the little children who have not yet learned to speak and they are nursing children and are still in their infancy: Cf. Ibid. 866.

²¹ Cf. Ibid. 868.

²² Cf. Ibid. 868.

²³ Cf. Ibid. 868.

uprightness of heart. They think in themselves that they are incapable of entering into the kingdom of God. They hope for everything from God and whatever gifts he receives, they consider them as a grace from God. They grow gradually in their spiritual life and even if they become adults, they do not cease to remain as children²⁴. What is the advantage of growing in spiritual life? G. Colzani while describing the essence of the spiritual life, he says that the essence of the spiritual man is having a radical communication with the Spirit and through this Spirit the communication progresses towards the divine persons which ultimately is leading to God's love²⁵ which means the focus shifts from self-love to the identification of love of Christ²⁶.

Thirdly, the people who belong to the spiritual infancy care for others genuinely²⁷. They feel grateful to God for whatever has happened in their lives and this attitude of gratitude imposes them to care for the others in their day today life. In other words, they reach a state where they become everything to everybody through humility, by living authentically to the words of St. Paul: "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9, 22). And thus, the example of this type of people is a witness that the call and invitation of Jesus to be born anew is not something abstract. Though the spiritual infancy is difficult for everyone to reach, yet it is not impossible.

Down the centuries many saints have lived a life like children (of heart) and inspired others to be like them. Clement of Alexandria in his writing, by calling the people of this type as children and describes their nature: he says that they are people who recognise God as their only Father. They are simple, pure, lovers of unicorn²⁸. Moreover, they fulfil the precept of God (cf. Mt 6,34). And they remain the children of God. Though for the world, they are regarded as unintelligent and can easily be fooled but in the eyes of God they are objects of His love²⁹. Secondly, he compares allegorically the children of God with the animals like lambs (for simplicity), donkeys (as burden: normally, people of the world consider them as burden and use for nothing)³⁰. Thirdly, they are weak and delicate

²⁴ Cf. Ibid. 868.

²⁵ Cf. G. Colzani, "Hombre espiritual". In *Diccionario de Mística*, edited by L. Borriello et al., 843. San Pablo 2002.

²⁶ Cf. Ibid. 844.

²⁷ Cf. Ibid. 868.

²⁸ "Many cultures attribute unicorn to purity, freedom, health, magic, innocence, and mysticism. Unicorn also stands as a symbol of joy and life": [what do unicorns represent spiritually - Google Search](#), searched on 06/12/2022; cf. José Vives. *Los Padres de la Iglesia*. Barcelona: Herder, 2002, 240.

²⁹ Cf. Ibid. 240.

³⁰ Cf. Juan José Ayán Calvo, ed. *Fuentes Patrísticas I*. Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 1991, 105-107.

and therefore, they need help. They are also pleasant, sweet, and charming: and to such kind of people, God does not fail to give his help³¹.

1.2.2 Spiritual Infancy: a prerequisite to partake the heavenly banquet

There are a few references in the Gospel where Jesus mentions children. These references could be classified into two types. In the first type, Jesus refers children explicitly based on their age in a literal sense: A few examples for this type in the gospel narratives could be like where Jesus calling a child before everyone and showing it before others as an example to become a childlike to enter into the Kingdom of heaven (cf. Mt 18,2-5; Mk 9, 33-37; Lk 9, 46-48) or the event where Jesus encouraging the children to come to him and teaching his disciples about the nature of the Kingdom of God (cf. Mt 19, 13-15; Mk 10: 13-16; Lk 18, 15-17) or when children shouting and praising Jesus for cleansing the temple and healing the blind and the lame while the response of Jesus was like: ““Out of the mouths of the babies and infants you have brought perfect praise’?” (Mt 21,16; cf. Ps 8,2), all these examples are directly and explicitly dealing with the children based on their age.

The second type of reference to children mentioned in the gospels could be inherently and implicitly seen. This type of reference to children is not based on their age. Very often in the gospel, the second type of reference is attributed to the disciples of Jesus. Though the words immediately seem to refer to the children, in a wider context, it is referred to the vulnerable or the innocent people irrespective of their ages. A few examples testify the second type could be where Jesus refers in the gospel of Matthew: “So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish” (Mt 18,14). Or in the gospel of St. John: “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of the man, but of God” (Jn 1, 12-13), etc. In the narration of the gospel of Luke, it is observed that after the return of the Seventy disciples, Jesus rejoices in them and calling them infants: “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to infants” (Lk 10,21; cf. Mt 11,25).

And so, it is evident that the ultimate prerequisite to enter the kingdom of God is to

³¹ Cf. Ibid. 117.

become like a child. St. Teresa de Lisieux, offers some guidelines on how to continue to be a child irrespective of the age. She says that to remain a child, it is important to recognize one's own nothingness and to expect everything from God like the manner a child expects from its father³². In other words, it is a call to grow in trusting, abandonment in God's will and emptying oneself.

1.2.3 Spiritual infancy: a call to surrender oneself in the hands of God

By nature, the spiritual infancy invites anyone to be a new person. It demands a person to shed his falsehood, and invites him to grow in the providence of God and encourages him to grow in a simple faith that enhances his commitment towards his work by thinking about others. In other words, one who is in the spiritual infancy surrenders his whole being to God. E. M. Nieto, while describing the people of this type, says that a simple person surrenders himself in the arms of God and forgets himself completely in God's care. He entrusts his life to the Lord trusting in His marvelous work and not fearing about his future as he is certain about what God is going to do in his life³³.

What do simple people look for in their life? The question of perfection or acquiring virtues hardly becomes important to them. Because they think that they are not even capable of being virtuous³⁴; and they are unstable, fickle, and are moved by their instinct. Like the weather, they keep changing their mood. They laugh at the same time they cry. They obey at the same time they disobey. They lose their temper and suddenly they jump up and down with joy³⁵. At the same time, they commit everything in the hands of the Lord, and they believe that God will help them in their need (Ps 37,5) and they try to remain faithful to God in all the circumstances. Saint Teresa de Lisieux while explaining the doctrine of spiritual infancy from the viewpoint of fidelity to the Lord, she highlights two fundamental aspects: the trust in God and trust in His divine mercy. That when a person opens his weakness to God trusting in his divine mercy, the transformation takes place. This mediation of trust and surrendering himself paves way for the divine

³² Max Huot de Longchamp. "Infancia Espiritual". In *DCT*, 608.

³³ Cf. Nieto. "Niños". In *Diccionario de Jesús de Nazaret*. 868. Burgos: Verbo Divino, 2002.

³⁴ Virtue is a nature of admirable and praiseworthy character. According to society, virtue is judged to be important and desirable. And the traditions are the starting point for systematic moral reflection. Cf. Jean Porter. "Virtudes". In *DCT*, 1287.

³⁵ Cf. Nieto. "Niños". In *DJN*, 868.

intervention of God³⁶.

1.3 The significance and purpose of human beings

Having dwelt upon the notion of the spiritual infancy and while reflecting upon the mystery of the creation of human being, without doubt, it could be assumed that the original purpose of the creation of human being was to be in communion with God and to be in His everlasting love (cf. CCC 44-45): that when God created human beings, He created them in His love and in this love there emerges freedom. F. J Ruiz while describing the mystery of the nature of human beings, he sees that human being is the only creature that is explicitly in the image and likeness of God, and is prepared to subjugate, command, and use other species as food³⁷.

While prescribing the purpose and the manner in which God created the human beings, Gerald O'Collins says that in sovereign freedom and out of nothingness, God called the universe into existence and continues to maintain it³⁸. And along with other creatures, He created human beings. This creation is for a purpose in itself: that the world has been created for the glory of God³⁹. And further, to the man, a created image of God, He entrusted to care the world not as a haughty and an arrogant master but to be a steward and a manager from whom a responsible service is expected. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* sees the mystery of creation that God created human beings in His love and to be in communion with Him (cf. CCC 45). This love was perfect, complete in itself, and there was nothing more to be filled or it lacked anything. The outcome of the creation sees the richer sense of freedom, creativity, and capability of owning one's responsibility. R. Fisichella sees the image of human beings as a creature with dual dimension: body and

³⁶ Conrad de Meester. *Dinámica de la Confianza. Génesis y estructura del «camino de infancia espiritual» de santa Teresa de Lisieux*. Vol.2 Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 1995,168.

³⁷ Cf. F. J. Ruiz. "Creación y Ecología". In *Nuevo diccionario de Teología*, edited by José Tamayo, 182. Madrid: Trotta 2005.

³⁸ Cf. Gerald O'Collins. Edward G. Farrugia. "creación". In *Diccionario abreviado de teología*, 92. Editorial Verbo Divino 2002.

³⁹ Cf. J. MORALES. "Creación". In *Diccionario de Teología*, edited by César Izquierdo, Jutta Burggraf, Félix María Arocena 197. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2006.

spirit. That he is capable of exercising responsibility, both towards God and creation⁴⁰.

1.3.1 The nature of human beings through the eyes of Church Fathers

Down the centuries, numerous writings have described the mystery of creation, especially on the creation of human beings. While analysing the nature of humans from the Church point of view, it shows the depth of who a human being is with regard to his relationship with God. Clement of Alexandria sees the manner and the purpose of the creation of human being and his relationship with God and he interprets that it is natural that man should be the object of God's love, for he is His creature. That God made all other things by his mere command: but for man, God fashioned with His own hands, and breathed into him by his breath something peculiarly of his own⁴¹. Secondly, about the dignity of human beings, he narrates that man is worthy of being loved, and therefore he is the beloved of God⁴² and about the purpose of the creation he says that man is created to know God⁴³. Origen of Alexandria, while describing God's creation of man, defines that by creation, human beings received the dignity of God. However, the perfection of the likeness of God is reserved for total consummation until man himself attains it by his own diligent effort to imitate God⁴⁴. Secondly, about the notion of human being as the image of God he specifies that it is the inner self of the person which is renewed and he is naturally capable of being transformed into the image of the One who created him. This is what happens when he is made perfect like the heavenly Father who is perfect⁴⁵. Thirdly, about the nature of human beings, Origen says that every rational soul has the freedom of determination and will power to take up the fight against the devil and his angels and against evil powers⁴⁶.

Irenaeus of Lyons, while highlighting the relationship between God and human, expresses that God moulded man with his own hands so that he would grow and mature⁴⁷. He sees that God is a giver and man is a receiver. In other words, God does benefit man,

⁴⁰ Cf. R. Fisichella. "creación". In *Diccionario Teológico Enciclopédico*, 196. Burgos: Monte Carmelo, 1995.

⁴¹ Cf. José Vives. *Los Padres de la Iglesia*. Barcelona: Herder, 2002. 231.

⁴² Cf. Ibid.232.

⁴³ Cf. Ibid.233.

⁴⁴ Cf. Ibid.274.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ibid.275.

⁴⁶ Cf. Ibid.276.

⁴⁷ Cf. Ibid.161.

and man receives it. And that God is perfect in everything and man on the other hand, progresses towards God. Just as God is always Himself, so man who is not so full in himself constantly he is in the process of progressing towards Him⁴⁸. And thus man remains grateful to the One who made him and at the same time he is recipient of his goodness and the instrument of his glorification⁴⁹. While arguing about human service, St. Irenaeus sees that serving God does not mean that human being is giving Him a benefit, nor does God need the attention of men. On the contrary, God allows the man to follow Him and serve his life trying to be in the uncorrupted state of life and for his eternal glory. In this process, God does not receive any benefit from him⁵⁰ rather, it is only humans who benefit from Him. Because God needs nothing from man but man needs to grow in perfection through the constant communication with Him⁵¹. Thus through the thoughts of the Church Fathers, it is vivid that God created human beings with freedom, with a purpose and with a responsibility. And so, it could be stated that the purpose of human communication or human contact with God is for his own perfection and glory.

The powerful message of human being created as the image of God enhances him to be capable of belonging to the race of God and saint Bernard values this capacity as “*celsa creatura, in capacitáte maiestatis*”⁵² which means to become capable of majesty and supreme majesty and excellence⁵³. While defining the nature of human life, St. Augustine sees that human life originates from the love of God and it finds its real destination in the same Love. Besides this, the *Lumen Gentium* of the Second Vatican Council, while valuing the importance of the creation of human beings, specifies that human beings are the only creatures made as the image of God that are willed by God for Himself (GS 24)⁵⁴. Thus, the Vatican Council, by highlighting the importance of the creation of human beings, confirms and restates the message of saint Augustin of Hippo: that the creation of human being is because of God’s love⁵⁵.

⁴⁸ Cf. Ibid.161.

⁴⁹ Cf. Ibid.161.

⁵⁰ Cf. Ibid.119.

⁵¹ Cf. Ibid.119.

⁵² Cf. J. Alonso. “Persona”. In *Diccionario de Teología*, edited by César Izquierdo, Jutta Burggraf, Félix María Arocena, 812. Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2006.

⁵³ Cf. Ibid.812.

⁵⁴ Cf. Rava. “Persona”. In *DTE*,196.

⁵⁵ Cf. Colzani. “Hombre espiritual”. In *DM*, 847.

1.3.2 The diversity in the creation in search of the fulfilment of its own goal

Anthropologically, shedding light on the purpose of the creation of human beings, it is seen that human beings have a special purpose and a goal: that by divine Will, they are made male and female. This sexual duplicity is not a reason for division, but for encounter, dialogue, and fruitfulness⁵⁶. While contributing to this point, Clement of Alexandria sees that man and woman are equal by virtue. Both have one Master (Jesus Christ), same Church, same wisdom, same modesty, same food. They share equally the family responsibility⁵⁷. And Tertullian calls the married partners as truly two in one flesh. There is no difference between them. They pray together, worship together, fast together, teach one other, encourage one another, and bear with one another. They are equal in the Church, and equal in the banquet of God. They share equally in the sorrows, in the persecutions, in their joy⁵⁸.

While pondering over the nature of creation of human beings as male and female, the purpose is not intended to bring division (gender discrimination) but a perfection in itself. The intention of God creating human beings “male and female” (Gen 1,27) was not to be seen as a threat to equality but to be seen in its completeness (male and female); not to be seen in the perception of independency but in compatibility (sharers of his mission); and not to be seen in the concept of lacking something individually but to be seen in the concept of fulfilling together: go and be fruitful and multiply (cf. Gen 1, 27). And thus, the understanding of the creation of human beings as male and female is to fulfil the purpose of God in their own way.

1.3.3 Human beings are called to grow in grace with God

J. Alonso, while expressing the uniqueness and dignity of the human being, designates human persons as ‘*nomen dignitatis*’⁵⁹. That he is invited to progress in two dimensions: firstly, he progresses towards God in search of his destiny and secondly, he progresses towards himself in the process of fulfilling his responsibility: in order to trace his origin

⁵⁶ Cf. Fisichella, 196.

⁵⁷ Cf. Vives, 247.

⁵⁸ Cf. Ibid. 411.

⁵⁹ Cf. Alonso, 811.

and to contribute to humanity through his service⁶⁰. That human being represents God in the creation. Based on the Christian faith and the Church teaching, it is seen that human beings are ambassadors of God's creation which means they are called to participate in the creation work of God as J. Morales interprets that human being is God's representative in creation and he is called to make his presence visible and effective in the created world⁶¹.

Moreover, a human being has an innate dignity in himself. This dignity is not gained by his own effort but it is freely given at the time of his creation. From the time of his birth, a human being has his own identity from God. And with this identity, he finds himself capable and worthy of receiving His love. Furthermore, *the Catechism of the Catholic Church* describes that because a human being is made in the image of God, he has the dignity of a person and that he is not something but someone. He is able to know himself, to possess himself, to give himself freely and to enter into the communion with other persons; and he is called by grace into a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other being can in his place (cf. CCE 357). In other words, human beings are called to remain in communion with God and it is possible only when he transforms himself to be a new creature, a childlike one.

1.4 The Original sin: an interruption to the dynamics of becoming a child

While analysing the creation art of God, Santiago Arzubialde defines that all creation is good and it has the glory of God as its end. That the creation has no independent destiny and it is ordered for a positive relationship of man to God in worshiping and serving Him. Everything came from God and returns to God in human freedom. And in the process of returning to God, human freedom plays a unique and fundamental role⁶². However, there is a dot or a strain in the relationship between God and humans when the latter goes against his own nature. J. Morales by interpreting the importance of the God-Human relationship he says that when man lives in harmony with God and with himself, the

⁶⁰ Cf. Ibid. 813.

⁶¹ Cf. Morales, 200.

⁶² Cf. Santiago Arzubialde. *Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio: Historia y Análisis*. Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 1991, 153.

whole of nature is a garden of peace (cf. Gen 2,18). But when a man misuses his own existence, his disharmony with God and himself is reflected in the accusation of his companion and making his relationship with his own dwelling place and with other humankind inhumane⁶³. As a result of it, the adorable creation of God is trapped by his own selfishness and greed and as a result he ends up in disharmony with God through sin. This disharmony not only snatches from him the position of sonship but also takes away the freedom and peace and innocence that he enjoyed in the company of his creator. Tony Catalá while describing the nature of selfishness of human being he says that when human being is in the state of selfishness, the “I” becomes his autonomous centre and he believes that he is the beacon and watchman of all reality and in the process, he turns away from God by finding his own satisfaction and happiness⁶⁴.

While mentioning the notion of sin, in the New Testament, sin does not merely refer to the sinful act but it highlights the condition in which the man finds himself astray from his original self which eventually leads him to sin⁶⁵. In other words, the state of being in sin could be considered as only the last stage but before reaching this, human beings go through many inner processes⁶⁶.

What makes one get rid of his sinful state? It is the purity of heart and action. And this is the reason Jesus emphasises in the gospel to watch over one’s external action and internal thinking. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus invites everyone to examine the purity of thought through the act of adultery: “I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart”(Mt 5,28). In the gospel of Luke, while interpreting another aspect of life, the interpersonal relationship, he teaches, “Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us”(Lk 11,3).

While Saint Augustine of Hippo speaks of the concept of sin, he says that sin is something which is done or said or desired against the eternal law (*factum vel dictum vel concupitum aliquid contra legem aeternam*)⁶⁷ and turning away from God and turning towards creatures (*aversio a Deo et conversio ad creaturas*)⁶⁸. In other words, any

⁶³ Cf. Morales, 200.

⁶⁴ Cf. Toni Catalá. “La mirada que nos descentra y reubica. Diálogo de misericordia ante el Cristo puesto en cruz”. *Manresa* vol. 87, nº.343 (2015):183.

⁶⁵ Cf. Rossi. “Pecado”. In *DTE*, 750.

⁶⁶ The internal process of sin begins when man begins to desire by his own will and this desire moves him to do it voluntarily and finally this desire is resulted into action externally. Cf. E. Molina. “Pecado”. En *Diccionario de Teología*, 789.

⁶⁷ Cf. Rossi, 750.

⁶⁸ Cf. Ibid. 750.

action, attitude or thought patterns that do not go in alliance with the eternal law⁶⁹ could be considered as sin. In the same line, T. Rossi explains three elements that characterise sin: firstly, the man acts in a peculiar way. Secondly, he is structurally disordered and thirdly, he has a negative moral qualification⁷⁰. As a consequence of sin, man begins to act differently. That he leaves his true self of being the image and likeness of God and he adapts himself to what he is not. This change happens to him because of the change in his system. That there is a disorder in his own being. And this change instigates him and disorients him to judge things wrongly. And that the good seems to be bad to him and the bad seems to be good to him. And further, the inability to discern between good and bad incites him to sin more: sin against individual and social, sin against God, against self and neighbour; sin against thought, word, and deed; sin against spiritual and carnal, against the intrinsic values. etc.,⁷¹. Antonio González sees that sin is not just a singular act or the expression of an individual evil that springs from human freedom and responsibility, but it is also a situation, an evil force, a diabolical environment that spreads, contaminates and destroys life⁷². And the result of sin is understood as rupture in the human which results in the division within himself: the rupture due to his instincts of possession and domination, and division through his selfishness⁷³. Sin also means for human beings the loss of immortality and the freedom that was granted to them at the beginning of creation⁷⁴.

1.4.1 Original sin: a primary cause to be separated from the original self

From the Church Father's point of view the original sin led humanity to break the loving relationship with God and as a result of it, they had to undergo the consequences. Theophilus of Antioch, while describing the sin of Adam, says that God wanted to test Adam to see (by commanding not to eat from the tree of knowledge) if he was obedient to His commandment, and He also wanted him to remain longer simple and innocent and childlike. For it is a holy thing not only with respect to God but even with respect to men

⁶⁹ Universal moral law given by God in the very act of the creation of human beings and capable of being known through reason. Cf. O'Collins, Farrugia. "Ley natural". In *Diccionario abreviado Teología*, 221; cf. GS 79.

⁷⁰ Cf. Rossi, 750.

⁷¹ Cf. Ibid. 750.

⁷² Cf. González, 716.

⁷³ Cf. Sanna. "Pecado original". In *DTE*, 752.

⁷⁴ Cf. González, 717.

that children submit to their parents in simplicity and innocence⁷⁵. St. Irenaeus of Lyon by describing the nature of God's command he says that His command of not eating the fruit of knowledge as a precaution of man not falling prey to pride and He wanted him to continue the loving relationship by putting certain limits and laws to observe the divine command and thus he would remain immortal. However, man did not observe His command and disobeyed God⁷⁶. Melito de Sardis, while responding to the consequences of the original sin, sees that the offspring of Adam and Eve have lost many things as their original and received other in return: they lost purity and gained lust; they lost immortality and gained corruption; they lost freedom and gained slavery; they lost honor and gained dishonour; they lost royalty and gained tyranny; they lost life and gained death; they lost salvation and gained damnation⁷⁷. More than above, the consequence of human fall resulted in the rupture of the beautiful harmony that was cherished between God and man. This harmony was dissolved.

Clement of Alexandria by giving a clarification about the benevolence of God and ingratitude of Adam and Eve says that the Lord came to the human beings because they had gone astray from Him in thoughts which were corrupted as a disobedience to the commands of the Lord, since they preferred pleasure. By comparing the action of Adam and Eve, he highlights how a grace has been turned into curse. By defending God's act against Adam and Eve, he says that it is possible that the first man anticipated the opportune moment for the human race and that before the time of gift of marriage, he yielded to desire and sinned⁷⁸. And Origen, while speaking about the concept of sin, clarifies that sin represents a rejection of God's will⁷⁹.

Based on all the interpretations, one thing is very clear that the temptation or the desire of Adam and Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (cf. Gen 3,2) made them to be away from their original self of being innocent and to be possessed by another identity: that is the desire of being proud and auto centric.

⁷⁵ Cf. Vives, *Los padres*, 96.

⁷⁶ Cf. *Ibid.* 104.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibid.* 104.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Ibid.* 234-235.

⁷⁹ Cf. P. Fernández "Pecado". In *Diccionario del Agente de Pastoral Teológico Enciclopédico*, edited by José Antonio Abad, 473. Burgos: Monte Camelo, 2003.

Fig 2. The Church Fathers on Original Sin

The understanding of the consequence of Original Sin by the Church Fathers	
Clement of Alexandria	A grace turned to curse.
Irenaeus of Lyon	A destruction and a disobedience against the divine plan.
Melito de Sardis	Loss of purity, immortality, freedom, honor, royalty, salvation and gain of lust, corruption, slavery, dishonor, tyranny, damnation.
Origen of Alexandria	Rejection of God's will
Theophilus of Antioch	An obstacle against innocence and childlikeness.

1.4.2 The Original Sin: a need for a Divine grace to embrace true self

The impact of original sin created in man a void, emptiness and he needed a saviour to be saved⁸⁰. The nature of sin is so malicious that it cannot be eliminated by a human power. And the fundamental structure of sin is something that humans cannot change by himself. Even if he tries to save himself, he would be locked into his own righteousness⁸¹. From the Scripture I. Sanna quotes two references about the notion of Original Sin⁸²: the first is from the book of Genesis 3 and the second from the letter to the Romans 5, 12-21⁸³. The narration of original sin aims to highlight two concepts: human misery and divine mercy. That the present misery of mankind had its origin in sin which is present in mankind from its beginnings; but this sin was also overcome from the beginning by God's forgiving⁸⁴. In the second reference, in Romans 5,1, I. Sanna echoes the concept of St. Paul regarding the analogy of Adam as a sinner and Jesus as a healer (cf. 1 Cor 15, 42-49). That it could be viewed that at the point of original sin, God's mercy meets the human

⁸⁰ Cf. González, 730.

⁸¹ Cf. Ibid. 730.

⁸² "La doctrina del pecado original es una doctrina sobre la historicidad de la salvación": Antonio González. "Pecado original". In *Nuevo diccionario de Teología*, 730. Madrid: Trotta, 2005.

⁸³ Cf. I. Sanna. "Pecado original". In *DTE*, 751. Pamplona: Verbo Divino, 1995.

⁸⁴ Cf. Ibid. 751.

fall.

From the Church Fathers point of view, while describing the nature of Adam and Eve, Irenaeus of Lyon sees that Adam and Eve were naked, and they were not ashamed of it. Because they had an innocent childlike mind, and could not represent themselves in spirit nor did they think any of the things were evil. They were in a state of integrity, preserving their nature in good order, for the breath that had been infused into their flesh was a breath of life⁸⁵. However, under the domination of evil, they succumbed to the lustful desires and shameful pleasures⁸⁶. In other words, they lost their innocence because of their greed.

Origen while commenting his thoughts about the after the fall of Adam and Eve, he says that it is not possible for human being to overcome his iniquities on his own: that he is not capable of attaining his finality through his own efforts; rather, it can only be achieved through God's help⁸⁷. Like the relation of a child that needs support from others, the weak and fallen humanity needs Divine help in order to be saved and liberated.

1.4.3 Human's fragility and God's saving nature

The analogy of the comparison established between sinful Adam and healing Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15, 42-49) manifests the reality of life and death. The wounded Adam brings before the reign of sin and death and merciful Christ brings before the sign of grace and life: "I have come that they might have life, and that they might have life it more abundantly" (cf. Jn 10,10). The parallel between the two Adams (Adam and Christ) has to be seen in terms of the efficacy of the reign of sin and the efficacy and saving superabundance of Christ. From the sinful condition, it is God alone who can help man to free himself⁸⁸. Because, the self-reliance and the independent nature of human beings will not make him a better person, rather would detach him from having communication or contact with the Lord resulting in failure of his own perfection and glory.

Melito of Sardis, while describing the state of human decline and God's help, says that the flesh of humans fell under sin and the body fell under death and every soul was cast out of its carnal abode. And thus, what had been taken from earth dissolved into the earth: that which had been given by God and was imprisoned in Hades. The beautiful

⁸⁵ Cf. Vives, *Los Padres*, 163.

⁸⁶ Cf. *Ibid.* 163.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Ibid.* 284.

⁸⁸ Cf. Sanna. "Pecado original". In *DTE*, 751.

harmony that was shared between God and humans was dissolved. And man was divided under the power of death. And the man was dragged as a prisoner by the shadow of death. And the image of the Father lay abandoned. And this is the reason the Mystery of the Passover has been fulfilled in the body of the Lord⁸⁹. A division that was created between God and human due to human fall was so void and vast that no human effort could heal the wound, rather it needed a saviour, a sanctifier.

Antonio Gonzales while describing the failure and disobedience of Adam, he sees that the wound inflicted by Adam cannot be cured by Adam himself. Because the cherubim and flaming sword in the garden of Eden prevent humanity from coming to the garden of Eden. And so, self-liberation would be not possible; rather, the fallen humanity through Adam needs a liberator. The concept of original sin leaves humanity along with the whole world crying for the helping hand of saviour⁹⁰.

God created human beings to be holy (cf. Lev 11,44). However, the rebellious nature of human beings and the desire of being independent and auto-centric, leads him to be plunged into sin. However, God does not leave him abandoned, rather He approaches the fallen human and brings him out of slavery to raise him to the condition of son of God, in Jesus Christ. Through the salvific act of Jesus, the broken humanity is transformed to a new creature: to be just and at the same time sinful⁹¹. In this need of salvation we perceive a sign of an infant needing a Saviour who is able to lower himself to rescue human beings from the sinful condition and for that reason Christ descended into hell.

1.4.4 The purpose of Christ's descending to the hell

The Christian faith affirms the purpose of Jesus descending to hell⁹² is “to announce the Good News of salvation to the just there”⁹³. In other words, to save human beings⁹⁴, God

⁸⁹ Cf. Vives, 104-105.

⁹⁰ Cf. González, 731.

⁹¹ Cf. Fernández “Pecado”. In *DAPT*, 475.

⁹² “This ‘hell’ is distinct from the Post-Resurrection concept of Hell, which designates the state of eternal separation from communion with God and the blessed in Heaven”: “An Apologetical Explanation of Christ’s Descent into Hell”. In *The Didache Bible. With commentaries based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 1st ed., edited by Jeffrey Cole, 918. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014.

⁹³ Ibid. 918; cf. 1 Pet 3,19.

⁹⁴ “By virtue of his descent into hell, Christ opened the gates of Heaven to the just who had been awaiting the fulfilment of God’s promise of Redemption. ‘It is precisely those holy souls, who awaited their Saviour in Abraham’s bosom, whom Christ the Lord delivered when he descended into hell’”: Ibid. 918; see also. CCC 635.

lowers His level and goes to hell and preaches “salvation to the souls who were there”⁹⁵. The paradoxical approach to observe here is that the desire of humans is to rise above his level (to be independent and to be desiring to know everything and being intoxicated by the malicious nature of pride) which led him to lower himself all the more. On the other hand, the lowering descent of Christ into hell for the sake of humanity meant paradoxically a rising in radicality. The testimony of St. John “For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3,16) is a loving relationship of God for the fallen humanity and at the same time it highlights the mystery of who God is: that He is merciful and love that sends His Son Jesus to be with the human who is wounded and broken by his pride and desiring to be somebody (cf. Gen 3,1-24) which resulted in losing his original identity as God’s beloved.

The numerous examples from the Scripture shows the dynamism of the human beings who wanted to climb up which resulted in being thrown down or going down to hell involuntarily. For instance, when Adam and Eve believed in the false promise of serpent that it could make them “wise” (Gen 3,6), they forgot the first command or covenant with God, (Gen 2,16), and they trusted in the words of serpent which forced them to leave the garden of Eden (cf. Gen 3,24). In other words, they had to leave their comfort, the momentum of equilibrium in their life. Another example “ the tower of Babel” (Gen 11,1-9) shows how a human being was brought down from his original status due to the desire of aiming to go high. The false desire to build a city and a tower with its top in the heaven (Cf. 11,4), resulted in being scattered and in a confused situation (cf. Gen 11,8-9). When the desire of humans goes against the will of God, they end up finding themselves even in the worst situation. Moreover, they are left in a helpless situation where it is impossible for them to save themselves.

While the dynamism of the human beings wanting to climb up results in the worst situation of being in hell, nevertheless the dynamism of God’s humbling and lowering Oneself to the extent of descending to hell in order to save the humans beings becomes so amazing that human beings find it difficult to grasp this attitude. This lowering comes with the result of humility, feeling one with humanity, and teaching the human being about the role of a servant: “...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God” (Phil 2,6). Secondly, this lowering Self has a salvific role: that Jesus, being the

⁹⁵ Ibid. 918.

Son of God, lowers His original self of being God and going to hell to raise the dead from hell and about this notion of descending to hell, St. Paul rhetorically answers in his letter to the Ephesians:

“When he [Jesus] ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men’. (In saying, ‘He ascended,’ what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)” (Eph 4,9).

The act of (Jesus) remaining in hell and feeling one with the dead in hell is an extreme act of lowering oneself and showing solidarity with humanity not only on earth but also in hell. Just like the example of Jonah, who was in the belly of the fish for three days, Jesus remaining in hell for three days has a purpose: liberation of humanity. The text of the Acts of the Apostles, 2,27 says: “For you will not abandon my soul to Hades, nor let you Holy One see corruption”, Jesus, by lowering Himself to hell, he goes in search of those just men who are trapped in hell. And only under this condition, Christ can possess the key to death and the residence of the dead⁹⁶. The Patristic literature says that the act of lowering Jesus into hell has a purpose: that descending to hell is a prerequisite for Jesus that by doing it he possesses the key to hell. Heinz says that the descent into hell enables Christ to meet all the dead humanity before the proclamation of the Gospel and to offer them the remission of their sins⁹⁷. And thus the humbling act of Jesus lowering Himself to hell (*kenosis*) is to have control over the forces of evil⁹⁸ and taking Adam and Eve in hand as a symbol of redemption of the whole human race as a fulfilment of the words of the prophet Isaiah: “He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed” (Is 53,5).

* * *

The narration of the gospel of John about the notion of being born new is an eye opening not just for Nicodemus, in fact, it is an invitation for every human being to examine one’s state of life and to explore the possibility of how to proceed in life to be

⁹⁶ Cf. Karl Heinz Neufeld. “Descenso a los infierno”. In *DCT*, 361.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Ibid.* 361.

⁹⁸ The action of Christ’s descending to hell and self-emptying, in any case does not presuppose the denial of the reality of hell. Moreover, it is the human freedom and capacity to say “no” to God as St. John says, “He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God”: Jn 3,18.

born anew. The baptism through water and spirit calls for a renewal of heart and in their being and in their action. Because, the baptism by Spirit does not allow the Christians to remain in the past state of life; rather, it invites them towards a transformation of life and a conversion of heart.

Through the teaching of the Church and the Church leaders one thing is highlighted in the life of every Christian that the conversion of heart is the prerequisite to enter into the kingdom of God. In other words, to be a participator in the kingdom of God, it is mandatory to be born again. The different gospel narrations that highlight the passage to enter the kingdom of God is to be like a child. The synoptic gospels and the Johannine gospel directly emphasize how to become like a child, meanwhile the Pauline letters indirectly offer guidelines on how to purify oneself in order to prepare oneself to enter into the kingdom of God.

The notion of spiritual infancy offers an open invitation to all sets of people irrespective of their ages, to enter into the kingdom of God. To enter into the kingdom, there are a few prerequisites to get rid of or to shed one's falsehood. This spiritual infancy calls to shed one's arrogance, pride, ego, self-interest etc., and invites to be shielded oneself by possessing the nature of a child. In other words, spiritual infancy invites one to become a child by humbling, serving and being faithful to God. The life of the disciples of Jesus is a typical example of how a spiritual person could be: that they were flexible, spontaneous, obedient, at the same time they were imperfect in their day today activities.

The creation of human beings reveals God's pure love. Many Church documents and the writings of many theologians starting from the history of the Church bear witness to it. The creation represents God's work, which means this creation comes with the responsibility of caring for others. However, through selfishness, human lost his original identity and as a result there emerged a disharmony in the relationship between God and human beings. The disobedience of Adam and Eve through the original sin paved the way to show how human can lose his original self through falling into self-centeredness. The desire of being someone other than his original self, degraded and strained his relationship with God, with his partner, and with other creatures. The writings of the Church Fathers on the original sin highlights how human beings were irresponsible and sinned and how God was sympathetic and showed his merciful hands to the fallen humanity.

God could not allow His lovable creature to remain in the stain of sin and to be separated from his love forever. God knew that it would be impossible for a man to return to the original path of his life and to be reconciled with Him on his own. For this reason,

He sent his only Son among human beings (cf. Jn 3,16) to teach the fallen race how to love, how to live and how to serve. Christ's descent to hell is the paradoxical approach of showing humanity how to humble oneself. The human tendency that always aims high and projects itself what it is not. Whereas the nature of God is projected from the letter to St. Paul is nothing but a pure humility (cf. Phil 2,8-11).

The act of Jesus by lowering oneself and finding equality with human beings not only on earth but also in hell teaches a great lesson to humanity about what it means to let go of oneself: one's false pride, ego, selfishness. His act of lowering to hell perhaps could be a lesson for humanity that the greater things do not lie in being proud but it is in the humbling act. And this humbling act indeed is a first step to be reborn and to enter into the kingdom of God.

The following chapter intends to focus on the life of Ignatius, his struggles, difficulties and the various obstacles that he undergoes in the process of being born anew. This also will try to see the God experience of Ignatius in the process of being moulded as a new creation in the light of his spiritual journey.

CHAPTER 2

The Experience of Ignatius in His Spiritual Journey of Being Born Anew

While reflecting over the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola in the light of the first chapter, it is obvious that there are certain aspects in him that cannot go unnoticed: such as, his conversion of heart⁹⁹, his feeling of helplessness situations, his desire to be united with God, the experience of surrendering himself in the hands of God, etc. Amidst all his many learnings throughout the different stages of his life, this chapter largely intends to highlight two important stages or phases of life [his stay at Manresa and the time he spent while writing the *Spiritual Diary*]. This chapter also intends to examine where, how and

⁹⁹ About the conversion of Ignatius, Donal L. Gelpi summarises in a few words that his conversion was acquired rather than innate; it was learned and moulded patiently than a spontaneous one: cf. Donald L. Gelpi. "Conversión". In *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana I*, Grupo de Espiritualidad Ignaciana (ed.), 473. Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 2007.

in what situations God opened his eyes to see the reality of life and how he experienced the divine nature of God and by surrendering himself to be born anew as a new person.

2.1 The initial process of conversion from world to God

Iñigo de Loyola who after giving his life to the “worldly vanities”¹⁰⁰ (A¹⁰¹ 1), suddenly experienced a remarkable change in his life after the battle at Pamplona. Having been severely wounded by a cannon ball, during his convalescence, in an unexpected way, he encountered a possibility of living a new and different way of life. While recuperating at the castle of Loyola, he experienced “the first movements of conversion”¹⁰² which inspired him to make a few resolutions though it was crude and not premeditated¹⁰³. And about this sudden conversion of heart and unexpected changes of Ignatius, Meissner describes,

“As he [Ignatius] lay on his bed of convalescence, began to experience the transformation of his own inner values. He found himself shifting from a narrower, narcissistic and even juvenile ideal and set of values, to a broader, higher, nobler and even juvenile ideal and set of values, to a broader, higher, nobler and more spiritual orientation”¹⁰⁴.

Besides this, the initial realization of his inner self not only inspired him to grow in his spiritual life but also encouraged him to leave his home to take on a new spiritual journey¹⁰⁵. This paradigm shift perhaps was an invitation for him to be open to “a new

¹⁰⁰ “...during the whole time he [Iñigo] led a far from spiritual life. As young men devoted to courtly and military study are often accustomed to do, he behaved pretty freely in his relationship with women, in his gambling and in his duels of honor”: Gerald Coleman. *Walking with Inigo: A Commentary on the Autobiography of St. Ignatius*. Gujarat: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2001, 2.

¹⁰¹ The abbreviation A denotes a number in the *Autobiography* of St. Ignatius of Loyola and all the English translations are taken from Joseph N. Tylenda. *A Pilgrim's Journey. The Autobiography of Ignatius*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001 and the original source is from “Acta Patris Ignatii Scripta a P. Lud. Gonzalez de Câmara 1553/1555”. In *FN I*, 354-507. Roma, 1943 (MHSI 66).

¹⁰² W.W. Meissner. *To the greater glory-A psychological study of Ignatian Spirituality*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999, 25-26.

¹⁰³ Basically, three things that come to Ignatius' mind after reading the two books given by his sister-in-law and the divine intervention of God. Though the resolutions were not so well meditated yet he was eager to fulfil them. That firstly, he desired “to imitate the saints” (A 9) secondly, “to go to Jerusalem” (A 9) and thirdly, “to observe the fasts and make use of the discipline as any generous soul on fire with God is accustomed to do” (A 9).

¹⁰⁴ Meissner, 33.

¹⁰⁵ Arturo Sosa, the Superior General of the Society of Jesus, while analysing the spiritual journey of Ignatius says, “ Amid Iñigo's injuries and fragility, he began to perceive a new horizon of unexpected

awareness and deeper understanding”¹⁰⁶ of the reality about his life¹⁰⁷. And this new insight and the new awareness was occurring in him not rapidly but in a slow process. While commenting about the process of conversion of Ignatius, Gerald Coleman says,

“As he [Ignatius] jogged along he pondered upon what had happened to him at Loyola. His conversion process was continuing slowly, but there was a strong element of his own self-will in his plans and action. He was imitating the external behaviour of the Saints, but without a proper appreciation of the interior virtue which these actions expressed. He was generous but blind; still captive to the vanity and arrogance of his past life”¹⁰⁸.

While emphasising the spiritual journey of Ignatius, though Ignatius felt the inner changes occurring in his heart after reading the two holy books¹⁰⁹, the role of God in the conversion process of Ignatius cannot be omitted or neutralized in any manner. It is because, it was God who took the initiative to guide and mould the physically and spiritually wounded Ignatius from the beginning of the battle at Pamplona (cf. A 5). Santiago Arzubialde and José García while describing the encounters of Ignatius with God, says,

“God took initiative in a way that led to a radical and unexpected turnabout of his innermost hopes and dreams. During his recuperation at Loyola, looking inward, he recognized the variety of spirits that were stirring within him and the question that Christ was directing to him”¹¹⁰.

In the process of making a journey from the castle of Loyola and reaching Montserrat, Ignatius had many significant and memorable experiences. As a sign of showing desire for the conversion of heart and with an intention of starting a new and a transformed life, in Montserrat the penitent pilgrim (Ignatius) made some serious efforts on reflecting over

meaning and purpose. A few pious readings were sufficient to unleash interior movements that culminated in what we call ‘conversion’”: Santiago Arzubialde, José García de Castro, eds. *El Autógrafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*. Bilbao: Grupo de Comunicación Loyola, 2022, 14.

¹⁰⁶ Meissner, 33.

¹⁰⁷ Hugo Rahner while observing the concrete result during the period of the convalescence at Loyola is the discernment of the spirits. And says further that discernment of the spirits, led Ignatius to make a resolution and an election for his life decision. And these two things constitute the first nucleus of the Exercises: cf. Hugo Rahner. *Escritos Ignacianos*. Madrid: Didaskalos, 157.

¹⁰⁸ Coleman, 31.

¹⁰⁹ During the convalescence, Ignatius was offered two books by Magdalena de Araoz, his sister-in-law: 1. The life of Christ 2. The golden legend or The Flower of the Saints. The first book was of four volumes, written by Ludolph of Saxony, a Carthusian. The life of Christ had a big impact in the life of Ignatius in view of his spiritual practices offered in the book. And the golden legend was written by Jacobus de Voragine which is also popularly known as *Flos Sanctorum* which contained brief lives of saints: cf. Tylenda, 45; cf. Pablo Cervera Barranco. *The Pilgrim of Loyola: St. Ignatius’ Autobiography as a school of Spiritual Discernment*. Illinois: Midwest Theological Forum, 2022, 7; Arzubialde, García de Castro, eds. *El Autógrafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*, 38; cf. Rogelio García Mateo. “La ‘Gran mutación de Iñigo a la luz del Vita Christi Cartujano’”. *Manresa* 61 (1989): 43-44.

¹¹⁰ Arzubialde, García de Castro, eds. *El Autógrafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*, 46.

his past and desiring for a new life. And he took into account those moments of purification with seriousness that during those days in all honesty he immersed himself in preparing for a good confession. And as a sign of preparing for another way of life, he “determined to keep a night’s vigil over his arms”¹¹¹(A 17). About this process of confession, Mary Purcell describes, “The penitent records nothing of his reflections and sentiments during the three days preceeding [sic] March 25, save to state that he wrote out lists of his sins”¹¹².

After making his confession to a Benedictine¹¹³ Ignatius expressed his “resolution [to him] to become a knight of God”¹¹⁴. Though this desire was not fully conceived in his mind and heart that in what manner he would become a knight of God, yet he was certain that he was going to offer his life for God. And with this intense yet uncomprehending desire, he began his journey to Manresa. Though initially his intention was to “move on to Barcelona, and from there to embark for Jerusalem”¹¹⁵ he changed his plan because of not being able “to avoid acquaintances”¹¹⁶. And so, he remained “in Manresa from March 1522 until February 1523”¹¹⁷.

2.2 The Spiritual experience at Manresa towards a new life

What might be the experience that Ignatius would have thought of encountering in Manresa? Meissner, while describing about Ignatius’ stay at Manresa, he affirms the days that Ignatius spent over there in Manresa as “the most important months”¹¹⁸ of his entire

¹¹¹ Ignatius recalled from the fourth book of *Amadís de Gaula* how on the occasion of the consecration, Amadís’ son, Esplandián, made his vigil of arms before a statue of Blessed Virgin, Ignatius too decided to do the same: cf. Tylenda, 60; cf. Rogelio García Mateo. “La formación castellana de Ignacio de Loyola y su espiritualidad”. *Manresa* 58 (1986):138.

¹¹² Mary Purcell, 60.

¹¹³ The confessor of Ignatius is said to be Father Jean Chanon, a French secular priest who became a Benedictine monk. He helped Ignatius to prepare for the confession by perhaps offering him a copy of the Exercises of the Spiritual Life by Cisneros. It is believed that from the borrowed book, Ignatius was inspired to write a few ideas like the colloquy to the Christ on the Cross, the meditation on the Triple Sin and the meditation on Hell: cf. Coleman 39; see also. Tylenda, 61.

¹¹⁴ Purcell, 60.

¹¹⁵ Meissner, 90-91.

¹¹⁶ Ibid. 60.

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 91.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 90-91.

life and the crucial decision that he made was a “decisive for his remarkable conversion”¹¹⁹. And the period of his stay at Manresa enhanced him to have “a continuation and extension of the powerful psychological and spiritual transformation set in motion by the tragic and fateful meeting with the French cannonball on the ramparts of Pamplona”¹²⁰. Meanwhile, Hugo Rahner regards the experiences of Ignatius in Manresa as a unique imprint of a mystical grace¹²¹ and he describes further about the transformation that Ignatius had from Manresa to the rest of his life, a search for a genuine spirituality. And he says, “ It [the Manresa experience] was a long way from the pilgrim’s sackcloth to the ‘devotion to ordinary dress’ which, in his mature years, he called a characteristic of genuine spiritualization”¹²². Besides this, Enrique García Hernán with his detailed study explains the stay of Ignatius at Manresa: he says that during this stage of formation and the desire of imitating Christ, he dedicated himself doing many spiritual activities: spending almost a year in recollection, reading books from the library of the priest Antonio Pujol, composing the exercises (at least the meditation on the Two Standards), meeting with a visionary heiress of Savonarola’s ideas, Sister María de Santo Domingo, the Blessed of Barco de Ávila etc.,¹²³.

While critically analysing Ignatius’ stay at Manresa¹²⁴, the silent and the solitude atmosphere perhaps helped him to get rid of the external disturbances and to interiorize and to focus on healing of his past wounds. In Manresa, since nobody was aware of his background, Ignatius was able to submerge “his identity in the sea of humanity”¹²⁵ and could feel immersed in looking for the grace of God. And for this very reason, it also could be justified in saying that the choice of being in Manresa was more fruitful¹²⁶: that the solitude and quiet atmosphere¹²⁷ helped Ignatius to be with oneself and to be with the

¹¹⁹ Meissner, 90.

¹²⁰ Ibid. 90.

¹²¹ Rahner, *Escritos Ignacianos*, 161.

¹²² Hugo Rahner. “Ignatius of Loyola and Philip Neri”. In *Ignatius of Loyola and Spiritual Heritage 1556-1956*, edited by Friedrich Wulf, 48. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977.

¹²³ Cf. García Hernán, 120.

¹²⁴ About the stay of Ignatius in Manresa, Mary Purcell narrates, “...sometimes during the summer, searching for a spot where he could be alone, Inigo found a secluded cave about nine feet long and four feet wide some two hundred yards from the town on the same side of the rivers as the Santa Lucia hospital”: Purcell, 67.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 67.

¹²⁶ While analysing the stay of Ignatius in Manresa, Hugo Rahner explains that the outcome of the period of Manresa are “contuitus mysteriorum”, the Kingdom meditation and the meditation on the Two Standards: Rahner, *Escritos Ignacianos*, 161.

¹²⁷ In the 20th Annotation of the *Spiritual Exercises* where, Ignatius gives three principal advantages of being secluded or choosing a solitude atmosphere while making the exercises: firstly it is to

Almighty in solitude.

2.2.1 The three significant phases of Ignatius at Manresa

While pondering over the experience of Ignatius at Manresa in a panoramic view, one could witness the mixed experiences that he underwent during his stay¹²⁸: that

“he experienced the moments of tremendous consolation, bringing some kind of order in his Spiritual life, more clarity in his understanding, and more closeness with his Master, etc. However, at the same time, the Manresa experience also led him to face another extreme of his life: desolation, oscillation between the spirits, scruples about his past sinful life, physical illness, etc.,”¹²⁹.

To intensify the experiences of Ignatius at Manresa, they are constructed into three phases¹³⁰: a) the initial moments of happiness. b) The moments of trials and reconciliation. c) The moments of grace.

a) The initial moments of happiness and enriching experiences: “light”¹³¹

Ignatius after departing from Montserrat and reaching Manresa, he found himself in the ambience of peace and satisfaction “with great and constant joy”¹³². In his manifestation, Ignatius himself acknowledged in the *Autobiography* about the sense of consolation at this period. And he says,

“Estando en este hospital le acaeci6 muchas veces en d6a claro veer una cosa en el aire junto de s6, la qual le daba mucha consolaci6n, porque era muy hermosa en grande manera. No devisaba bien la especie de qu6 cosa era, mas en alguna manera le parec6a que ten6a forma de serpiente, y ten6a muchas cosas que resplandec6an como ojos, aunque no lo eran. El se deleitaba mucho y consolaba en ver esta cosa; y quanto m6s veces la ve6a, tanto m6s crec6a la consolaci6n; y quanto aquella cosa le desaparec6a, le desplac6a dello” (A 19).

merit much in the eyes of the Divine Majesty; secondly, to concentrate all the attention in the service of the Creator; thirdly, it is to unite oneself with the Lord and to receive graces and gifts (cf. A 20).

¹²⁸ Laynez, one of the first companions of Ignatius confirms in his writing that Ignatius stayed in Manresa about a year: Cf. *Epistola P. Laini*, in *FD I*, (C6ndido de Dalmases, ed.) IHSI, Roma 1977 (MHSI 44), n.10, 80; cf. Pierre Emonet. *Ignacio de Loyola: Leyenda y realidad*. Cantabria: Sal Terrae, 2014, 40.

¹²⁹ Marshal Felix. “The process of conversion in Ignatius of Loyola: Finding his true self”. Trabajo Fin de M6ster, Comillas, Madrid, 2022, 20.

¹³⁰ Fr. Jerome Nadal divides the Manresa experience of Ignatius into three phases. The first four months are considered as moments of great enthusiasm and spiritual serenity and the second phase witnesses the temptations and purification of Ignatius. The third phase consists of the spiritual gifts and illuminations: cf. Arzubialde, Garc6a de Castro, eds. *El Aut6grafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*, 48-50.

¹³¹ Coleman, 65.

¹³² Grogan, 64.

The continuous experience of consolation (upon seeing the shape of a serpent (cf. A 19,31) kept motivating Ignatius to remain in the state of pleasure. This pleasure reminded of the delight he had in the past life as Coleman describes this, “The pleasure it [the image of a serpent] gave him was similar to the pleasure he got from his exercise of arms (cf. A 1] and from his thoughts about the things of the world when he was convalescing [cf. A, 8]”¹³³. Nevertheless, he did not feel the need to discern if it was good or bad because he had not yet become mature in the spiritual matters nor did he have the spiritual gifts to discern his motions. And about the experience, Ignatius himself manifested that “up to this time he continued undisturbed in the same interior state of great and constant joy without knowing anything about internal spiritual matters” (A 20). And thus, it is evident that Ignatius needed to journey a lot from where he was at this moment. And about this long journey of the spiritual path, describes Javier Melloni that in order to understand the wisdom of internal things, Ignatius had to go down from the top of the mountain [Montserrat] to the cave [Manresa], to a hollow where he needed to die symbolically in order to be reborn. And though Ignatius might have thought that he left many things at Loyola yet the truth was that he was carrying many unwanted things with him. And so, he was left with an option that he needed to descend to his inner self to the depth of his soul¹³⁴ in order to undo the past packages and unwanted bundles.

While Mary Purcell describes the first phase the stay of Ignatius in Manresa as “a time of great spiritual peace”¹³⁵, Meissner views that the goal which Ignatius had at this moment was “nothing short of complete control and direction of all his energy towards his spiritual goal”¹³⁶: that with the profoundness, passion, and energy, Ignatius needed to achieve his new search. And the eagerness shown in the process of fulfilling his desire by undertaking the spiritual activities indeed had an impact on his physical body as well: that “he begged his food in the streets of the town and spent sleepless nights in his prayer vigils. He became known among the townsfolk as the ‘Holy Man’ who had become Christ’s fool”¹³⁷.

At this phase of life, Ignatius began to bring some regularity in his lifestyle in order

¹³³ Coleman, 47.

¹³⁴ Cf. Javier Melloni. *Éxodo y éxtasis en Ignacio de Loyola. Una aproximación a su Autobiografía*. Cantabria: Sal Terrae, 2019, 38.

¹³⁵ This spiritual peace implies in doing some pious activities such as spending so many hours of praying, visiting shrines, helping in the hospital, reading, and writing, speaking with certain souls who came to ask for help, etc.: Purcell, 68.

¹³⁶ Meissner, 92.

¹³⁷ Ibid. 92.

to achieve his goal of having complete control and directing all his energy towards his spiritual goal. And he regularised a few pious activities for his spiritual growth. About his spiritual practices, Ronald Modras points out,

“Morning Iñigo attended Mass and evenings vespers and compline. Each Sunday he would go to confession and receive Holy Communion. Frequent communion was unusual for the sixteenth century, but Iñigo had been recently introduced to Thomas á Kempis’s *Imitation of Christ*, which encouraged the practice. Most of his time Iñigo spent in a cave overlooking the river valley, where he could see Montserrat in a distance, the play of sun and cloud paintings soft grey and rose hues off its craggy heights”¹³⁸.

To summarise the first phase, whatever pious practices Ignatius embraced was to achieve his preliminary goal of imitating saints. However, up to this state of life, Ignatius was not discerning his activities whether they were helpful or not. Because his eyes are not yet opened fully (cf. A 8).

*b) The six temptations and the moments of reconciliation: “darkness”*¹³⁹

During the second phase of his life, Ignatius was confronted with “bitter trials and tribulations”¹⁴⁰. About the disturbing experience of Ignatius in this phase, Juan Alfonso de Polanco describes, “ In order to achieve greater inner purity and because the Lord wanted to test him well so that later he would serve as a good master of spiritual realities he suffered many and great temptations, afflictions and malaise and tormented by doubt”¹⁴¹. And Brian Grogan describes this stage of Ignatius as a confused phase: “he [Ignatius] was now a prey to confusion, knowing the abyss from anyone of what it means to be a human, deprived of moorings, and finding no relief from anyone or anything”¹⁴². Gerald Coleman categorizes the whole second phase of the experience in Manresa, as a period of “six trials or temptations”¹⁴³: the first temptation as self-talk (cf. A, 20); the second temptation as spiritual dryness; the third temptation as his reaction towards scruples of the past sins; the fourth temptation as the tendency to commit suicide; the fifth

¹³⁸ Ronald Modras. *Ignatian Humanism. A dynamic spirituality for the 21st century*. Chicago: Loyola Press, 2004, 14; cf. Brian Grogan. *Alone and on Foot*. Dublin: Veritas, 2008, 61; cf. A, 23; Fredrich Wulf, “ Ignatius as a Spiritual Guide”. In *Ignatius of Loyola and Spiritual Heritage 1556-1956*, edited by Friedrich Wulf, 10. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977.

¹³⁹ Coleman, 65.

¹⁴⁰ Segarra, 30.

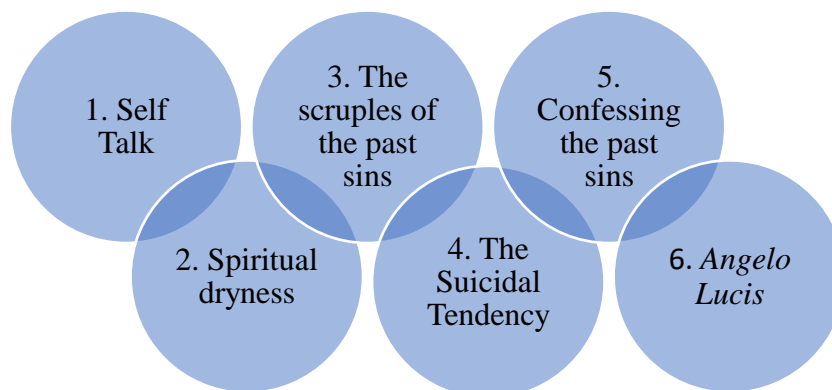
¹⁴¹ Ibid.30.

¹⁴² Grogan, 65.

¹⁴³ Coleman, 48.

temptation as to confess the sins again; the sixth temptation as inability to discern¹⁴⁴.

Fig.3 The Six Temptations of Ignatius



i) While analyzing the first temptation, it is observed that Ignatius was left with doubts and self-talk about the choice and the resolution that he made about his life. As a result, some unhealthy thoughts began to confuse him all the more, «¿Cómo podrás tú sufrir esta vida 70 años que has de vivir?»(A 20). Perhaps, it was a hard thought for Ignatius to digest at this moment. In other words, a thought like this would be really difficult for his spiritual progress as he had already decided to imitate the saints by choosing a life of rigorous penance(cf. A 9). Nevertheless, becoming aware that the thought was from the evil force, he challenged the spirit with the same question, «¿ !O miserable! puédesme tú prometer una hora de vida?» (A 20), and soon “the temptation vanished”¹⁴⁵ and he began to enjoy a sense of great tranquility.

ii) The second temptation of spiritual dryness led Ignatius to find himself in a situation of being perplexed. That the on and off experience of consolation and desolation left Ignatius wondering himself, «¿Qué nueva vida es esta, que agora comenzamos?» (A 21). During this period, Ignatius began to feel frustrated: the pious activities such as attending mass and the seven hours prayer¹⁴⁶ through which once he enjoyed and drew consolation, now became no more a means of solace for him, not even the penance and the austere life brought him any relief. And in the process of finding a remedy for his spiritual dryness, he ended up harming his health. Nevertheless, he found no amendment from his distress.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Ibid. 49-60.

¹⁴⁵ Tylanda, 66.

¹⁴⁶ Comerford, 23.

iii) In the third temptation of feeling scrupulous about his past sins, Ignatius was left wounded psychologically and emotionally. The scruples about his past life kept haunting him indeed. The act of confession that he made in Montserrat became questionable for him as if he had confessed them well completely. And “though he understood that these scruples were doing him much harm and it would be good to be free of them, still he could not cast them off”(A 22). And finally, he entered such a period of life (from July to October 1522)¹⁴⁷ to which Meissner calls it as ““darkness of soul, turmoil of spirit”¹⁴⁸. At this period Ignatius felt ““a sense of incompleteness and imperfections; brooding, depression, morbid introspection, and sense of sin; anxiety about the hereafter; distress over doubts, and the like”¹⁴⁹. The situation to which Ignatius is going through at present needs only one thing: a relief from his miserable situation. Nevertheless, he was pulled to another situation of moment of wretchedness: that he was led to the fourth temptation.

iv) The extreme spiritual dryness and a need for a change in his life pushed Ignatius from bad to worse situation: that he was tempted to commit suicide. Ignatius described in the *Autobiography* that the tendency to commit suicide arose in him “many times” (A 24). And not knowing how to overcome or to react his immoral tendency, he surrendered himself at the foot of the Lord asking for help: «Socórreme, Señor, que no hallo ningún remedio en los hombres, ni en ninguna criatura; que si yo pensase de poderlo hallar, ningún trabajo me sería grande» (A 23). Like the image of king David in the Psalms 18, 6 who cried to the Lord for help, “In my distress I called upon the Lord; to my God I cried for help”, Ignatius looked upon the door of mercy to be opened for him and the mercy of God to be showered upon him. Nevertheless, he found no remedy, no consolation instead he found only frustration and disappointment. Yet this frustration did not stop him from imploring the Lord for help, and he implored that Lord: «Muéstrame tú, Señor, dónde lo halle; que aunque sea menester ir en pos de un perrillo para que dé el remedio, yo lo haré»(A 23). Such was the painful agony; such was the inconsolable moments. While pondering over the thought of Ignatius along with him at this juncture, it can be noticed that the words of Ignatius were nothing but the deep experience of his heart and his inner feelings. At this point, there was a halt in his thinking and acting. Like a bird which is put in a cage, Ignatius was left with no further possibility to proceed but be stuck in the current position. He found no one to guide, nor he saw any consolation in any created

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Meissner, 93.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid. 93.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 26.

materials (cf. A 23). And in this stillness and helplessness situation, he looked for the grace of God. Finally, Ignatius arrived at a situation where he was ready to do anything in order to overcome his brokenness. In other words, perhaps, he was ready for anything even if it had to empty himself totally of his past pride, honor and fame.

At this stage, perhaps there was only one thing that Ignatius needed the most: a relief from his scruples. However, all the efforts went in vain. However, knowing that killing oneself is against the Christian teaching, and in order to respond to his suicidal tendency, he undertook another weapon to counterattack the evil force: that was clinging to the hands of the Lord firmly he implored the Lord: «Señor, no haré cosa que te ofenda» (A 24). He repeated the words “many times”(A 24). The act of repeating the words “many times” (A 24) indeed helped him to overcome the suicidal tendency.

Though the suicidal tendency subsided in him, yet the real problem of scruples did not allow Ignatius to be at peace. To find a remedy, he wanted to experiment another possible thing that he perhaps learnt through his reading: that he decided to go for a prolonged fasting and penance¹⁵⁰ with a hope of finding a cure for the moments of frustration. At this stage, Ignatius perhaps had the experience that could be experienced by the first type of person mentioned in the “rules for the discernment of the spirits”¹⁵¹ in the *Spiritual Exercises* that says: “In case of persons who are earnestly purging away from their sins, and who are progressing from good to better in the service of God our Lord,[...]the evil spirit [causes him][...]anxiety, to sadden, and to set up obstacles ” (SE 315). Indeed Ignatius was under the trickery of the evil forces which did not allow him to progress in his spiritual path.

While neither being comforted by the constant long hours of prayer nor by his holy intentions, Ignatius was pushed to a fifth temptation: the temptation to confess his sins again. And the moment when he expressed his thoughts and actions (about his fasting) to his confessor, “he ordered him to break off his fast” (A 25). The act of doing away with the fasting, brought him consolation for a temporary relief (two days). However, the miracle took place only when he decided not to confess again. That he was healed

¹⁵⁰ “He [Ignatius] recalled the incident from the story of a certain saint, who, to obtain a greatly desired favour from God, refrained from eating for many days until he got that which he asked. After thinking about this for a good while, he determined to do thus, saying to himself that he would neither eat nor drink until God gave him ease (of his scruples), or until he felt that death was near; in that case he would ask for bread and eat it”

¹⁵¹ George Ganss. *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. Bilbao: Mensajero-Grupo de Comunicación Loyola, 2021, 121.

permanently from his scruples once and for all and found a solace in his heart. To understand the reason for the relief from his scruples, a few questions may arise: would it be possible that his efforts (constant prayer, rigorous fast, etc.) brought him consolation? Would it be seen that the command of the confessor to stop his fast brought solace from his agony? Would it be seen that the decision that he made not to confess again brought him spiritual liberation?

A few writers tried to interpret what could have occurred to Ignatius that he was free from his scruples. While interpreting this, Joseph N. Tylanda says,

“It was this temptation[confessing his sins again] that awakened him, as if from a deep sleep, for he [Ignatius] now understood whence those scruples had come, and his decision never again to confess his past sins brought him the freedom he had sought for so long time. Ignatius does not attribute this freedom to anything that he himself may have done, but views it as a gift of God’s mercy”¹⁵².

And B. Comerford explains: “Relief came with a sudden illumination or inspiration, bringing with it a resolve never again to confess his past sins or to allow himself to be troubled by scruples”¹⁵³. Similar to the expression of an old proverb, “God writes straight with crooked lines”¹⁵⁴, Ignatius was not aware of the way the Lord was working in him. Because, when Ignatius was struggling to find solace from his agony through his own efforts, he felt only spiritual dryness and frustration. And so, along with a beautiful gift of freedom from his scruples, Ignatius would have learnt a big lesson that with the mere human effort it is not possible to achieve but only it is through the grace of God. And as a sign of gratitude to God, Ignatius recognised and gave credit to the marvellous work of God in his life saying, «Nuestro Señor le había querido librar por su misericordia» (A 25).

vi) The sixth and the last temptation that Ignatius had to undergo in the second phase of Manresa was the fight against the action of *angelus lucis*. Once he was freed from his own sins and barriers of life, Ignatius dedicated his time in “helping the souls”(A 26) and “thinking about the things of God”(A 26). However, in the process of doing so, he saw that he was getting “spiritual lights”(A 26) and “consolation”(A 26) when he was supposed to be sleeping. While pondering over the reason for the consolation during an odd hour, he arrived at the conclusion that it was neither from God, nor what he wanted;

¹⁵² Tylanda, 72.

¹⁵³ Comerford, 23.

¹⁵⁴ Roman Catholic Diocese of Thunder Bay, 14/02/2023. "[God Writes Straight with Crooked Lines](https://www.dotb.ca/God-Writes-Straight-with-Crooked-Lines)" - [Roman Catholic Diocese of Thunder Bay \(dotb.ca\)](https://www.dotb.ca)

rather, they were from the evil spirit¹⁵⁵. And something significant to observe here is that Ignatius slowly began to discern the movements of the spirits. And about this realization Gerald Coleman describes,

“He [Ignatius] had learned a far more subtle lesson about discernment—that even the evil spirit can prompt feelings of consolation. Feeling good does not necessarily mean we are under influence of the good spirit, for the evil one can take on the appearance of an ‘angel of light’”¹⁵⁶.

To conclude the phase two of Manresa, it could be noted that, the clarity on the discernment of spirits and the divine assistance from God helped Ignatius to bring some order in his life physically¹⁵⁷ and spiritually. And with this, he began to experience more lucidity, a lasting inner peace and a deep sense of calmness within himself. After a big commotion and disturbance in his heart, he slowly began to experience a profound serenity in him. And as a result of this, Ignatius was able to see things very clearly. Moreover, apart from spending time in prayer¹⁵⁸, he seriously meditated on caring for his health and giving time for sleep (cf. A 26). Besides this, the clarity on fasting and being abstinent “from eating meat” (A 27) and all other experiences that Ignatius had, he used them as tools in his *Spiritual Exercises* in order to help other souls.

c) The moments of grace: “glory”¹⁵⁹

The third phase of life at Manresa for Ignatius were the moments of grace, blessings, opportunities to learn the wisdom of life from God and also it was a period of “transition from darkness into mystical light”¹⁶⁰. While describing the relationship Ignatius had with God, he himself manifested in the *Autobiography* that “during this period God was dealing with him in the same way a schoolteacher deals with a child while instructing him”(A 27). That like a child, Ignatius was willing to learn the hidden mysteries from

¹⁵⁵ In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius talks of the consolation caused by both good angel and the evil angel. However, the purpose of the consolation caused by both are for contrary purposes. While the good angel acts for the progress of the soul, the evil angel causes consolation to its damnable intention and malice (cf. SE 331). He also talks of the nature of the evil angel that takes the appearance of an angel of light which entices the soul with its hidden deceits and intentions (SE 332).

¹⁵⁶ Coleman, 60.

¹⁵⁷ “It is noteworthy that during this period ‘at the school of God’, he began to cut his nails again and trimmed his hair and beard; ‘seeing how he was enabled to help other souls by means of the consolations God had given him, he ceased from this time forth, to practice such extremes of penance, and how he now kept his hair and nail cut.’”: Purcell, 72.

¹⁵⁸ Ignatius prayed seven hours a day: (cf. A 26)

¹⁵⁹ Coleman, 65.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid. 61.

God (cf. Mt 11,25). And by becoming like a child (*anawim*), he was making himself to be part of the kingdom of heaven (cf. Lk 18,16)¹⁶¹.

Brian Grogan describes the experience of Ignatius as a symbol of a “ dawn that followed the blackest of nights throws into relief his solitude, his spiritual immaturity, and, above all else, it focuses on the beginnings of his new course of training by God”¹⁶². And Meissner points out the third phase as moments of “prolonged consolations, many spiritual revelations [...] unprecedented states of grace and enlightenment”¹⁶³. Ignatius, after having gone through a continuous moments of scruples, failure in finding peace, suicidal tendency, looked for the merciful eyes of God for help and the Lord gracefully assisted him and besides this, perhaps He was desiring to take Ignatius where he himself probably would not have thought of: that “the Lord chose to awaken him [Ignatius] as from a dream”(A 25). Could it be that God wanted to awaken Ignatius from the dreamy life of his past, his sins, his attitude and was going to make him a new creature, a new person, a new image? True to the words of Jeremiah, “I will give them one heart and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for their own good and the good of their children after them”(Jer 32,38), God was working in Ignatius in transforming and reshaping his life. God moulded Ignatius to be a child to learn and understand from him. This moulding took Ignatius to another realm that was knowing the divine mysteries. And in the *Autobiography*, Ignatius recollected very clearly about the five divine learnings¹⁶⁴ or lucidity from God which in fact transformed his thinking pattern, moulded his behaviour, and oriented his actions in his day today life.

2.2.2 The “five special graces”¹⁶⁵ of Ignatius at Manresa

Modras, while describing the helping hand of God in the life of Ignatius, he confesses, “Whatever the divine reasons or design, Iñigo became convinced [that] God was indeed instructing him in the innermost center of his being. And he was sure that he would be

¹⁶¹ Melloni, 43.

¹⁶² Grogan, 65.

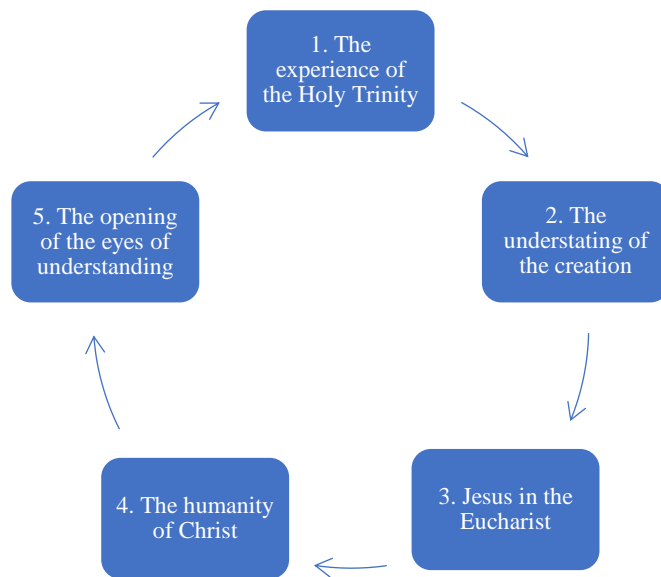
¹⁶³ Segarra, 30; cf. SE 330.

¹⁶⁴ “Of the many things that Ignatius learned under our Lord’s guidance, he calls attention five special graces, five privileged moments when the divine intruded into his life and touched him most intimately”: Tylanda, 75.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 75.

offending God if he were to doubt it”¹⁶⁶. Jerome Nadal while interpreting God’s intervention in the life of Ignatius, he exclaims, “God’s revelation to Ignatius in Manresa which so enriched his spirit that he saw things with a certain architectonic spirit of wisdom”¹⁶⁷. True to the Gospel where Jesus says, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed to the infants” (Mt 11, 25), God taught Ignatius many hidden mysteries that were special and unique to him.

Fig.4 The five special graces of Ignatius



While narrating the spiritually energised and emotionally overwhelmed experience of the first revelation and the understanding about the Most Holy Trinity, Ignatius recalled how he shed tears and this is how he shared his testimony,

«y estando un día rezando en las gradas del mismo monasterio las Horas de nuestra Señora, se le empezó a elevar el entendimiento, como que vía la santísima Trinidad en figura de tres teclas, y esto con tantas lágrimas y tantos sollozos, que no se podía valer» (A 28).

The first grace of the understanding about the Trinity¹⁶⁸ not only for him was a moment of consolation but also was an opportunity to get clarity on his perception about

¹⁶⁶ Modras, 16-17.

¹⁶⁷ Segarra, 32.

¹⁶⁸ Brian Grogan claims that Ignatius had written an eighty pages of writing on the Trinity which accidentally had been lost”: cf. Grogan, 67.

praying to the Trinity¹⁶⁹. About the overwhelming experience of the first vision that Ignatius narrated to his companion was that “his understanding was raised on high, so as to see the Most Holy Trinity under the aspect three keys on a musical instrument”(A 28). And Joseph Tylanda, commenting on the first revelation of the Most Holy Trinity remarks,

“So powerful and overwhelming was this experience that it stayed with him[Ignatius] throughout that day. He could do nothing else but think of the Trinity, and when he spoke he had to speak of the Trinity. This was not a transitory grace, for it remained with him for the rest of his life, as his *Spiritual Journal* amply attests”¹⁷⁰.

And Javier Melloni while reflecting over the significance of the first special grace, he describes that Ignatius was immersed in the Trinitarian mystery and he captured the inseparable divine, human and cosmic reality¹⁷¹. The profound experience of the Blessed Trinity left a big mark in the devotion of Ignatius towards the Three Persons. To conclude the first grace, it could be said that the experience that Ignatius had towards the Blessed Trinity enhanced him in the manner of his praying and showing his devotion and reverence to the Trinity which is very well described throughout the *Spiritual Diary*¹⁷².

ii) The second grace on the understanding of the creation of God made Ignatius feel awe at the omnipotence of God. Ignatius “seemed to see a white object with rays stemming from it, from which God made light. He neither knew how to explain these things nor did he fully remember the spiritual lights that God had then imprinted on his soul” (A 29). Many writers believe that the second grace [understanding of the creation of God and seeing the white object (God) had a major impact in the “Principle and Foundation” (SE 23] that highlights the role of God and purpose of the creation of human beings. Moreover, in another meditation, in the “Contemplation to Attain love”(SE 237], Ignatius uses the analogy of comparing the descending of all created things from above (from God). Surprisingly, Ignatius uses the expression of the “rays”(SE 237] in the *Spiritual Exercises* which denotes God in the second vision where he saw the Creator as

¹⁶⁹ “The prayer book of the sixteenth century usually contained prayers to each of the three Persons of the Trinity, together with an added fourth prayer to the Triune God. Ignatius wondered about the need for this fourth prayer, but he also recognised that his question was of little moment. His reflections on the Trinity were soon to be resolved by an extraordinary grace”: Tylanda, 75.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 75-76.

¹⁷¹ Cf. Melloni, 46.

¹⁷² There are two booklets written by Ignatius (which is known as *Spiritual Diary*) between February 2, 1544, and February 27, 1545. The codex is measured to be 310×230 mm. and it consists of 56 leaves. And the autograph sheets measures 295×222mm: cf. José García De Castro Valdes. “El Diario Espiritual y el Epistolario de san Ignacio de Loyola. Aspectos Lingüísticos y léxicos”. Tesis doctoral, Universidad de Salamanca, 1999, 38.

the white ray with object (cf. A 29)¹⁷³. As Ignatius writes in the *Spiritual Exercises*,

«mirar cómo todos los bienes y dones descienden de arriba, así como la muy medida potencia de la summa y infinita de arriba, y así justicia, bondad, piedad, misericordia, etc.; así como del sol descienden los rayos, de la fuente las aguas, etc.» (SE 237).

Peter Du Brul, while describing the second grace he says, “Though Ignatius did not know how to explain it, nor did he remember too well the spiritual enlightenment that God was imprinting on his soul at that time, nevertheless, he experienced a great spiritual pleasure”¹⁷⁴ and Joseph Tylanda comments that

“the emphasis [about the second grace] is not on the created object, that is, the created world outside God, but one the burning source of that creation. God is all love, and as such, He has to show His love, and, thus, it bursts forth into creation”¹⁷⁵.

To conclude, the learning that Ignatius had from the creation not only reflects his knowledge on the creation but also emphasises on the Creator. Perhaps, the result of the second grace might have drawn him to a new understanding about the creation and the Creator.

iii) The third grace that Ignatius received from God is about the understanding of the presence of Jesus Christ in the Most Holy Sacrament (cf. A 29): that “he [Ignatius] saw with inward eyes, at the time of the elevation of the Body of the Lord, some white ray coming from above” (cf. A 29). What would Ignatius say about the amazing experience of Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament? While Joseph N. Tylanda concludes about the third grace that Ignatius perhaps could not offer any explanation to prove what he saw¹⁷⁶, Javier Melloni emphasises on the very action of seeing: that this seeing comes identifying Christ but without distinguishing; and that this seeing provokes an integral experience accompanied by the spiritual joy and consolation. And so to conclude, though Ignatius was not able to explain about the illumination which he had, he was sure of one thing: it is the “respect for the [Sacrament of] Eucharist”¹⁷⁷ and this awareness had a great impact for the rest of his life

iv) While analysing the fourth grace, Ignatius had a fortifying and a strengthening experience after receiving the fourth grace of seeing “with inward eyes the humanity of Christ” (A 29): that Ignatius saw an appearance of the white body. And he went on describing this experience in detail: that the appearance of the white body (the humanity

¹⁷³ Cf. Coleman, 63; see also: Melloni, 47- 48.

¹⁷⁴ Brul, 64.

¹⁷⁵ Tylanda, 76.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. Ibid. 77.

¹⁷⁷ Coleman, 64.

of Christ)¹⁷⁸ was neither large nor small and further, he could not make any differentiation of members (cf. A 29). While recounting the experience of what he saw, he was overwhelmed in confidence and exclaimed with conviction that «si no huviese Escripura que nos enseñase estas cosas de la fe, él se determinaría a morir por ellas, solamente por lo que ha visto» (A 29). What could be the outcome of the fourth grace in the life of Ignatius? Gerald Coleman emphasises on the importance of the fourth grace that it is an evidence how God was operating in the intelligence of Ignatius. And something more to be analysed with this personality that throughout the process of receiving graces, Ignatius maintained his humility¹⁷⁹. To conclude the fourth grace, like a child, Ignatius was just receiving the grace and wisdom from the Lord. He absorbed the significance of grace in his own life by showing willingness to defend the mystery of the same by giving his own life.

v) The fifth special grace that Ignatius received near the river Cardoner could be considered as the culmination of all the learning and the special spiritual graces that he experienced in Manresa. This was an experience that opened his eyes of understanding (cf. A 30) and being born new with the wisdom of God. This also brought to him a new understanding of God, human and oneself. About the significance of the fifth grace, Diego Laínez, one of the companions of Ignatius, narrated the experience of Ignatius that in one hour he learnt more from God than he could ever be taught by any doctors of the world¹⁸⁰. And Jerome Nadal, another companion saw how the fifth grace was substantial in the life of Ignatius and he testified,

“In almost all his decisions [Ignatius] customarily cited the outstanding illumination, even when he governed the Society in Rome, and he did so as though in Manresa he had seen the reasons for or causes for everything”¹⁸¹.

Joseph Tylenda perceives the experience of Ignatius in the fifth grace that

“ God flooded his soul with extraordinary light, giving him a profound insight into and a feeling for the mysteries of the faith. He now understood these truths with such a clarity that even though he had reflected in the past they were totally new to him”¹⁸².

¹⁷⁸ Joseph N. Tylenda while commenting on the vision of the humanity of Christ, he says that this particular vision was of rather frequent occurrences. He experienced the same vision not only in Manresa but also other moments such as while traveling to Padua (cf. A 41) and while he was in the Holy Land (cf. A 48): cf. Tylenda, 77.

¹⁷⁹ Coleman, 65.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Comerford, 24.

¹⁸¹ Ibid. 24.

¹⁸² Tylenda, 78.

And Peter Du Brul describes this grace as an experience which is “more comprehensive than all the previous visions and all the succeeding graces, although it was not strictly speaking a ‘vision’ that he had seen with ‘interior eyes’”¹⁸³.

Critically analysing, the fifth grace was different from other previous four graces. While recalling about his fifth vision, Ignatius narrated,

«[Ignacio] estando allí sentado se le empezaron abrir los ojos del entendimiento; y no que viese alguna visión sino entendiendo y conociendo muchas cosas, tanto de cosas espirituales, como de cosas de la fe y de letras; y esto con una ilustración tan grande, que le parecían todas las cosas nuevas. Y no se puede declarar los particulares que entendió entonces, aunque fueron muchos, sino que recibió una grande claridad en el entendimiento; de manera que en todo el discurso de su vida, hasta pasado sesenta y dos años, coligiendo todas quantas ayuda haya tenido de Dios, y todas quantas cosas ha sabido, aunque las ayunte todas en uno, no le parece haber alcanzado tanto, como de aquella vez sola» (A 30).

What could be the result of the grace at river Cardoner? The experience that Ignatius had at river Cardoner was an invitation for him to be receptive, passive in receiving the grace of newness in himself and getting rid of his old self (his past life). Through this experience, he was called to be a new image, a new person, a new creation of God and to shed his image as a scrupulous man and not to be a volatile but to be a stable person. Through this understanding, Ignatius was moulded to be a matured, renewed and spiritually filled with the matters of God and to enrich his understanding on God and human¹⁸⁴. True to the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face”(1 Cor, 13,12), in God, Ignatius experienced the clarity on spiritual matters, about his life and more than above, and in God, Ignatius experienced his new image, new creation, new birth as Brian Grogan confirms “his [Ignatius’] understanding became enlightened in so great a manner that it seemed to him that he was a different man and that he had a different intellect from the one he had had before”¹⁸⁵. The result of the illumination at Cardoner made Ignatius feel “freer, more the creator of his self-identity, open to others in a different way”¹⁸⁶. To conclude the fifth grace, the experience at river Cardoner led Ignatius to examine all those pious activities that he was

¹⁸³ Brul, 71.

¹⁸⁴ Santiago Arzubialde and José Garcia affirm that Ignatius had the understanding of human creation in the image of God very much from the Manresa experience especially from the mystical illumination at river Cardoner: Arzubialde, García de Castro, eds. *El Autógrafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*, 31.

¹⁸⁵ Grogan, 68.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. 68.

doing. Having done so, he was open to give up his “ascetic ‘extremes’”¹⁸⁷ and moderated his life by trimming his hair, paring his nails, etc.(cf. A 29). And having learnt the insights from God, in human freedom he responded to the call of Christ¹⁸⁸.

2.3 The significant experiences in the *Spiritual Diary*

After analyzing the experience of Ignatius in Manresa, if there is any phase of his life that perhaps would help the readers to understand how he was born anew, it is none other than the experiences of Ignatius jotted in the *Spiritual Diary*¹⁸⁹. What could be the speciality in the *Spiritual Diary*? From the *Spiritual Diary*, one could observe the different motions of Ignatius such as his experience of consolation, brokenness, spiritual dryness, his reluctant attitude, his submission to the will of God, his openness to experience God’s grace, his reaction towards the spiritual gifts and visions, etc. Nelson Barrientos, while describing the content of the *Spiritual Diary*, sees that the fascinating and the enigmatic notes that are found in the *Spiritual Diary* are not theology or mysticism, but they are pure practical content in making election¹⁹⁰.

Similar to the experience that Ignatius had in Manresa, the *Spiritual Diary* also communicates how his encounter took place with the Divinity. Through all the experiences, perhaps God wanted Ignatius to open his eyes completely to see the reality and to think the way He wanted him to think and act. And in order to comprehend the desire of God, Ignatius had to undergo many kinds of internal sufferings, painful and agonizing moments along with the experiences of consolation and feeling content and satisfaction in the Lord. Therefore, the following pages of this chapter aim to critically assess how and in what way Ignatius had to undergo many internal transformations and how he obtained the divine gifts from the Lord.

¹⁸⁷ Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle. *Loyola’s Acts. The Rhetoric of the Self*. London: University of California Press, 1997, 73.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Grogan, 68-69.

¹⁸⁹ “The *Spiritual Diary* of St. Ignatius Loyola is unique among his voluminous works as being one of the very few that survive in their original hand-written form, and that were written solely by the saint himself without the assistance of his secretary”: Joseph A. Munitiz. *Inigo: Discernment Log-book. The Spiritual Diary of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. London: Inigo Enterprises, 1987, 3.

¹⁹⁰ Nelson Barrientos. “El Diario Espiritual, lenguaje y experiencia de Dios”. *Manresa* 62 (1990): 308.

2.4 The initiation towards reconciliation with God

While understanding the purpose of the *Spiritual Diary*, Nelson Barrientos states that the purpose of the requests made in the *Spiritual Diary* largely was to get confirmation from the Trinity on the point of poverty with a certain sign and in order to understand the will of God¹⁹¹. And in the process of looking for assurance, he happened to experience a numerous mixed emotion. That the ups and down moments jotted in the *Spiritual Diary*¹⁹² is divided into three moments: firstly, it is the strengthening moments that portrays the spiritual progress and the conversation that Ignatius had with God, secondly, it is to highlight the struggling moments that describe the hurdles Ignatius faced and how he overcame them eventually and thirdly, it is the surrendering moments that explains the spiritual visitations and spiritual gifts through which Ignatius was molded to be born anew.

2.4.1 The strengthening moments: light

The *Spiritual Diary* shows that Ignatius encountered God through different ways and means. Nelson Barrientos describes the communication between God and Ignatius through the linguistic and extralinguistic signs¹⁹³. That the language used between the two cannot be just restricted to words alone, but it is something more and something beyond one's basic understanding. God communicated Ignatius through numerous ways: such as through the abundance of tears for numerous days, through provoking the remarkable burning sensation in every part of the body (cf. SD¹⁹⁴ 8), through generating

¹⁹¹ Ibid. 311-312.

¹⁹² Simon Decloux while summarising the journal written Ignatius, he sees that “the *Spiritual Journal* [also known as *Spiritual Diary*] comprises of two copybooks. The first, of fourteen folios, contains the account of the forty days, from February 2nd to March 12th, 1544, which he devoted to the election of the kind of poverty to be practised by churches of the Society. The second embraces his spiritual experiences from the following day, March 13th, to February 27th, of the ensuing year, 1545”: Simon Decloux. *The Spiritual Diary of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Text and Commentary*. Rome: CIS, 1990, 10.

¹⁹³ Barrientos. “El Diario Espiritual”, 310.

¹⁹⁴ The abbreviation SD denotes a number of the *Spiritual Diary* of St. Ignatius of Loyola and all the English translations are taken from Joseph A. Munitiz. *Inigo: Discernment Log-Book. The Spiritual*

the interior devotion (cf. SD 11,13,18,56,73), through offering great tranquility (cf. SD 19), through providing interior sweetness (SD 28,30), through causing the interior warmth and interior relish (SD 40), through granting spiritual devotion (SD 46), through bestowing peace (SD 51), through providing satisfaction (SD 59,98), through the interior quietness, peace and spiritual serenity (SD 94,108), through giving confidence of not worrying about the future (SD 73), through generating a sense of content with everything (cf. SD 136), through providing light-heartedness (SD 139), through creating a sense of consolation and satisfaction (SD 145), etc. The numerous experiences that Ignatius had indeed were signs that showed how God was close to him and how he communicated to him in the moments of trials and difficult situations. And something significant to pay attention in the communication between the two is that God communicated to Ignatius not whenever Ignatius wanted but it was when God wanted to do so. Could it be a lesson for Ignatius to grow in the process of humility and submission?

2.4.2 The tempting moments: darkness

Though the *Spiritual Diary* portrays the many significant and consoling moments of Ignatius (his profound experiences with the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit), this book also indirectly describes another weak, fragile, disturbed, stubborn and reluctance personification of Ignatius especially when he was intending to make the election process of complete poverty (SD 1-150). Ignatius, while seeking affirmation¹⁹⁵ concerning the “resolution fixed on poverty”(SD 7), he had to undergo many bitter experiences perhaps similar to the experiences that he had faced in Manresa. He became so sensitive interiorly that he was vehemently affected by the external disturbances. That his prayer life was affected even by the noise from the room close by (SD 64). Besides this, in the process of having confirmation on the election on poverty, he strains his relationship with Our Lady (SD 27,29), and with the Blessed Trinity (SD 57,64). The guilty feelings of “putting Our Lady to shame” (SD 27), feeling angry with the Blessed Trinity (SD 50), inability to find delight in the Divine Persons (SD 145), not finding satisfaction in anything, etc. are

Diary of St. Ignatius Loyola. London: Inigo Enterprises, 1987 and the Spanish version is from Iparraguirre, Ignacio, Candido de Dalmases, Manuel Ruiz Jurado, eds. *Obras*. Madrid: BAC, 1991

¹⁹⁵ Based on the analysis of George E. Ganss, a point to note here is that Ignatius already wrote the Deliberation on Poverty either while writing the first week of the *Spiritual Diary* or slightly before it. This is the reason he refers on the 8th of February, he mentions or giving reference to the Deliberation by “reading it’ and finding it well thought out”: George E. Ganss, ed. *Ignatius of Loyola: The Spiritual Exercises and Selected works*. New York: Paulist Press, 217-228.

just a resemblance or the mirror image of what he was experiencing in Manresa (cf. A 21-25). The self-talk that Ignatius had in Manresa, he seemed to repeat in the Diary in a similar fashion though the gravity of his suffering might be different. And he wrote, «qué quería hacer <Dios> *la santísima Trinidad* de mí» (SD 119). And to conclude the moment of temptation, Ignatius was left with only questions, doubts and confusion.

2.4.3 The surrendering and reconciling moments: glory

The frustration of not receiving what he looks for from the Trinity (confirmation about the election process), and after straining his relationship with the Trinity and keeping himself away from Them (SD 23-24), brought only more damage for Ignatius. Understanding the situation, he changed his pattern of argument with the Trinity: that is from being a stubborn and an impelling character to a pleading person. In other words, he became like a child and began to request the Father repeatedly: “Padre Eterno, ¿no me confirmaréis?” (SD 48). In another instance putting his total trust and hope in the Father, Ignatius literally regards him as a child before God and he manifests this during the prayer, “Ego sum puer” (SD 127).

In the process of his incessant pleading for more signs and confirmations, some interesting realization was also occurring in the heart of Ignatius: that after every phase of asking for a certain sign, Ignatius experienced that the language of God¹⁹⁶ causing his soul something profound and so, after going through a serious discernment of the process, perhaps he realized his foolishness and silliness. And so, now he was no more interested in looking for signs or confirmation from God regarding if having rent was correct or not; rather, he suddenly changed his entire approach: that he no longer asked for a sign from God; instead, he was interested in knowing what God wanted of him¹⁹⁷.

True to the words of Jesus, “Unless you turn and become little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven”(Mt 18,3). The demanding nature of Ignatius about the confirmation on the election on Poverty, took a drastic turn: he changed his approach from a demanding mode to a pleading note; from an insisting mode to a requesting mode;

¹⁹⁶ Nelson Barrientos describes the language of God as little signs that Ignatius encountered in the Spiritual Diary: like remarkable burning in every part of the body (SD 9), interior devotion (SD 11,13,56,73), the interior satisfaction (SD 98), the quietness, peace, the spiritual serenity (SD 94,108), the interior sweetness (SD 28,30,105), the warmth and interior relish (SD 40), the sense of feeling contentment and delightedness; cf. Santiago Thió. “La Experiencia de Dios en los Ejercicios y en el ‘Diario Espiritual de S. Ignacio’”. *Manresa* 61 (1989): 350-351.

¹⁹⁷ Barrientos. “El Diario Espiritual”, 312.

from an understanding of big man who is equal to God to a mode of a child that is weak, fragile, etc. Besides this, he now began to realize under what force he was behaving reluctantly and demanding the Trinity to confirm an election concerning poverty. His eyes are opened to see a little more clearly the evil force that is working on him (cf. SD 93-94).

And so, after having the clarity of the evil force and its tempting movements in him, he decided to give up the intention that he has to receive confirmation from the Trinity, rather what he seeks is reconciliation with Them (with the Divine Persons)(cf. SD 146-147). Now there is a great leap in his thinking in his goal. That once he was praying and demanding and pleading God's confirmation, now he began to feel satisfaction or "to be content with everything"(SD 136). That there was neither ambition in his approach nor any disappointment but a mere satisfaction and contentment. And about this change, he wrote in the Diary,

«Tandem mirando si debía proceder adelante, porque por una parte me parecía que quería buscar demasiadas señales, y en tiempo o en misas terminadas por mi satisfacción, siendo la cosa en sí clara, y no buscando la certinidad della, mas sólo que el de todo fuese a mi *gusto*; por otra parte me parecía que, si estando tanto desterrado, cesase en todo, que después no sería contento etc. Tandem considerando, pues en la cosa no había dificultad, cómo sería mayor placer a Dios nuestro Señor concluir sin más esperar ni buscar pruebas, o para ellas decir más misas, y para esto poniendo en elección, <juzgaba y> sentía que más placer sería a Dios nuestro Señor el concluir, y *sentía en mí volición* que quisiera que el Señor condescendiera a mi deseo, es a saber, finir en tiempo de hallarme mucho visitado, luego en sentir mi inclinación, y por otra parte el placer de Nuestro Señor, comencé luego a advertir y quererme llegar al placer de Dios nuestro Señor»(SD 146-147).

The moment Ignatius realized that ultimately what matters is, he shifted his attention: that he began to fix his eyes on God (Heb 13,8), and to look for ways and means to achieve his goal: that was "to follow the good pleasure of God Our Lord" (SD 147). And in order to fulfil this, he needed to put an end to the confirmation seeking process with the note "Finished" (SD 150) and to explore a greater transformation with himself: that is the act of total "submission and reverence" (SD 156) to God. Perhaps, this aspect of reverential submission to God was something new in him that probably Ignatius was not aware of in Manresa. Could it be the one thing or an obstacle that was lacking in Ignatius (cf. Mt 10,21) to be united with God unconditionally and offering him totally to God with the profound words of his own: Take Lord and receive all my memory, my intention and entire will, etc?

2.5 The experiences of the Spiritual Gifts

Ignatius, after having offered himself to God through the “submission and reverence” (SD 156), whatever he began to experience in his life was nothing but pure grace and blessings from God. Was there no difficulty in his life there after? Certainly not. However, whatever happened in his life subsequently either positively or negatively, he was not so disturbed personally. Because, the God experiences that he had both from Manresa and while seeking confirmation about the election process enhanced him to look for what God wanted of him and not of his own desire. Because the experiences made him a new person, a new being. And thus, in the process of surrendering, Ignatius received many mystical gifts and divine visitations from the Holy Trinity.

2.5.1 Lágrimas (Tears)

In the *Spiritual Diary*, there are numerous references about *lágrimas* (tears as spiritual gift) jotted by Ignatius. A study done by K.K. G. Panikulam about the tears of Ignatius in the *Spiritual Diary*, he says that “in total of 370 entries in the Diary, there are only 43 in which tears are not mentioned. There are 326 entries where the word ‘lágrimas’[tears] occurs and another 30 times in which the verbal form ‘lacrimar’ is used”¹⁹⁸. There are other manifestations registered about this mystical gift as well: while the letter of Laínez about the description says that Ignatius wept six or seven times a day¹⁹⁹. Luis Da Cámara, another companion whom Ignatius dictated his *Autobiography*, says that Ignatius used to have tears all the time and when he did not cry three times at mass, he was considered to be desolated²⁰⁰. And further, Father Joseph De Guibert describes about this particular mystical gift of Ignatius that “the first part of the manuscript speaks of tears 175 times over a period of 40 days, i.e., four or five time a day on the average”²⁰¹.

¹⁹⁸ G.Panikulam. 154-155.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. Epistola Patris Laynez de P. Ignatio (1547), in *FN I*, n.59, 140.

²⁰⁰ Cf. *Memoriale Seu Diarium P. Ludovici Gonzalez de Cámara*. In *FN I*, n. 182, 638-639.

²⁰¹ Cf. Decloux, 125; cf.Thió. “Lágrimas”. In *DEI I*, Grupo de Espiritualidad Ignaciana (ed.). Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 2007, 1102.

What could be the significance of the lágrimas (the gift of tears) for Ignatius in the *Spiritual Diary*? Ignatius gave so much importance to the tears about which he meticulously jotted down in his journal²⁰². Because the tears for Ignatius was a means of communication between God and himself. P. de Guibert describes that the notion of tears of Ignatius was “associated in his experience with the grace of infused contemplation and the spiritual and interior gifts that God communicated to him”²⁰³. Ignatius found the tears as the fruit of his devotion to the divine Persons and he affirmed it by jotting down,

«Antes de la misa, en toda ella y después de ella con muchas lágrimas, terminándose cuándo al Padre, cuándo al Hijo, cuándo, etc., y así a los santos, mas sin visión alguna, sino en cuanto la devoción a ratos se terminaba cuándo a uno, cuándo a otro» (SD 156).

Simon Decloux sees the tears of Ignatius as follows: “the fluid of God’s grace penetrates into him”²⁰⁴. This means

“for Ignatius tears evoke, in some symbolic way, the total passivity of his being, vis-à-vis the goodness, the sweetness, the force of God’s love, a passivity whose effects the physical organism itself feels, thereby being actually invaded by a sentiment in which his complete being is submerged, without being able to prevent it”²⁰⁵.

And thus, like a child, Ignatius remained a recipient who accepted all the graces and gifts from God without being selective nor having any control over the graces. Rather, in total passivity, he accepted them all.

2.5.2 Loquela

Another spiritual gift which is referred to in the “second part of the Diary”²⁰⁶ is the gift of loquela. The notion of loquela is mentioned in the *Spiritual Diary* between 11th May to 28th May²⁰⁷. About the significance of loquela, different authors attempt to give their opinions: According to Simon Decloux, loquela “is given by God”²⁰⁸ and “it is manifested interiorly and exteriorly”²⁰⁹ and it is compared to “heavenly music”²¹⁰, “a

²⁰² Cf. Decloux, 125.

²⁰³ Ibid. 125.

²⁰⁴ Ibid. 126.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. 125.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. 126.

²⁰⁷ Thió. “Locuela”. In *DEI*, 1141.

²⁰⁸ Cf. Decloux, 126.

²⁰⁹ Ibid. 126.

²¹⁰ Ibid. 126.

soothing feeling”²¹¹, and something that “contributes to instruct”²¹² about the divine mystery and it is part “of the experience of God”²¹³. While Iparraguirre defines loquela as a special mystical phenomenon²¹⁴, Santiago Thió calls loquela as “a divine gift”²¹⁵. And Futrell describes about loquela that it is a mystical experience which is characterised by the sound qualities (“music of heaven”[SD 224]) that descends to the depth of the soul²¹⁶. And according to Joseph A. Munitiz, Ignatius defined two kinds of loquela: “the external and the internal”²¹⁷. And George Panikulam, while studying the two kind of loquela he observes,

“Most of the references are to [sic] internal loquelas: (SD, 224,225,226, 229, 238, and 239, 240). But he [Ignatius] mentions also external loquelas (SD, 221, 222), though at times he leaves them unqualified: (SD, 222, 224, 228,231,233,234)”²¹⁸.

Though many authors and writers have attempted to express the meaning of loquela, they have failed to explain it with a clarity. Besides this, Ignatius though he experienced the loquela and found peace within himself, yet he himself could not explain it totally in his manifestation and he stated:

«Antes de la misa con lágrimas, y en ella con mucha abundancia dellas, y continuadas, y con loquela interna de la misa con parecerme más divinitus dada, habiendo demandado el mismo día porque *en* toda la semana cuándo hallaba la loquela externa, cuándo no hallaba, y la interna menos, aunque el sábado pasado hallaba un poco más apurado[...] Las de este día me parecían mucho, mucho diversas de *todas* otras pasadas, por venir tanto lentas, internas, suaves, sin estrépito o mociones grandes, que pare que venían tanto de dentro, sin saber explicar, y en la loquela interna y externa, todo moviéndome a amor divino y al don de la loquela divinitus conceso, con tanta armonía interior cerca la loquela interna, sin poderlo exprimir» (SD 221-222).

Very often, mystical experiences lack words to describe the nature of it. Ignatius had the mystical gift loquela which is very personal to him. It brought a sense of quietness in his heart yet he lacked words to describe what it was²¹⁹. Nevertheless, Ignatius never undervalued the importance of loquela, rather, he shared about this mystical gift with people whom he was assisting spiritually in the early days of his encounter with God. Sor Teresa Rejadell, one of the spiritual recipients of Ignatius testified that Ignatius did write

²¹¹ Ibid. 126.

²¹² Ibid. 126.

²¹³ Ibid. 126.

²¹⁴ Cf. Iparraguirre, Obras, 413; cf. Panikulam, 159.

²¹⁵ Thió. “Locuela”. In *DEI*, 1141.

²¹⁶ Ibid. 1142.

²¹⁷ Munitiz, 86.

²¹⁸ Panikulam, 158.

²¹⁹ Adolf Hass. “The mysticism of St. Ignatius according to his Spiritual Diary”. In *Ignatius of Loyola, His personality and Spiritual Heritage*, edited by Fredrich Wulf, 175. IJS: St. Luis, 1977.

to her about the impact of *loquela* that the Lord moved and forced the soul to one operation to the another and by doing this, the soul is opened to know, speaking within, without noise and raising all to the divine love²²⁰.

To conclude, the mystical gift of *loquela* though it did not have a specific definition or clarity, the peace that Ignatius experienced was something memorable, consoling, or in other words, Ignatius perhaps needed no words to explain the impact of *loquela*. Like the conversation of the infants that cannot be comprehended very easily, the gift of *loquela* perhaps took Ignatius to the state of spiritual infancy.

2.5.3 Contentamiento y satisfacción (Contentment and satisfaction)

The mystical grace of *contentamiento y satisfacción* was a life transforming grace for Ignatius. In the process of making election on poverty (SD 1-150), he was able to identify in himself the one thing that the Lord wanted of him and to discard the other external elements: that is to be content and satisfied with oneself in the Lord and not desiring for any other aspects. Joseph. A. Munitiz categorizes the word contentment in the *Spiritual Diary* with the different alternative words yet meaning the same : such as ““tranquillity (*tranquilidad*)””²²¹(SD 26,115), ““quiet (*quieta/quietud*)’ ‘peaceful (*reposada*)’ and gentle (*suave*)’ applied to devotion””²²²(SD 81,91,113,119), and ““rest of soul (*Descanso del ánima*)””²²³ (SD 115), ““repose (*reposo*)””²²⁴ (SD 116), ““serenity (*serenidad*)””²²⁵ (SD 118), ““contentment””²²⁶ (SD 81,140)²²⁷. And while analysing the term called satisfaction²²⁸, he highlights a few other dates in his *Spiritual Diary* where Ignatius happened to use the term with the same understanding (SD, 38, 91, 98, 100, 114, 134,) and another time, he uses as ““interior humble satisfaction””²²⁹ (SD 120).

²²⁰ Cf. Theresia Rejadellae (18 Junii, 1536), in *EPP I*, Madrid,1903 (MHSI 22), 107-109; see also: Thió, “Loculea”. In *DEI*, 1142.

²²¹ Munitiz, 87.

²²² Ibid. 87.

²²³ Ibid. 87.

²²⁴ Ibid. 87.

²²⁵ Ibid. 87.

²²⁶ Ibid. 87.

²²⁷ Cf. Ibid. 87.

²²⁸ “The use of term ‘satisfaction’ is parallel to that of ‘contentment’”: Ibid. 88.

²²⁹ Ibid. 88.

While analysing the notion of contentment and satisfaction²³⁰ in the *Spiritual Diary*, this can be viewed in two levels: i) to be content when the spiritual gift is not given and ii) it is to be content by not desiring for spiritual gift. While focusing on the first level of contentment, Ignatius finds himself to be happy and satisfied even if there were no spiritual gifts (tears) (SD 139, 186), the second level of contentment and satisfaction goes one step further. It invites him to a process of self-emptying: that is not to have the intention or desiring for tears (SD 139, 186). And Ignatius regards when the spiritual gift of tears were absent at times as “equally content”(SD 189) and he writes,

«Comenzando la misa, y pasando por toda ella con mucha interna devoción y calor espiritual, y no sin lágrimas, y con un continuarme devoción y disposición para lacrimar. En estos entervalos de tiempos, *dado que iba para no alzar los ojos del entendimiento arriba, y para procurar de ser contento de todo, imo rogando que igual gloria divina no me visitase con lágrimas*, algunas veces que el entendimiento se me iba arriba inconsiderarte, me parecía ver alguna cosa del ser divino, que otras veces, queriendo, no es en mi facultad» (SD 136).

The spiritual gift of contentment and satisfaction invited Ignatius to live a life that was different from the life that the people of the world wish to live (ambitious and desiring to be popular). This learning was not so easy for Ignatius; rather, it took about 23 years (from the time of his convalescence at Loyola, 1521 to the moment he was writing the *Spiritual Diary*, 1544) to understand this mystery. About this profound and marvellous learning experience of Ignatius, George Panikulam describes, “It is through this painful struggle of learning to be content without tears and visitations and by subordinating everything else to the divine will alone, that Ignatius was taught the new manner of proceeding”²³¹. True to the words of St. Paul to the Philippians, “For I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content”(Ph 4,11), God was moulding Ignatius to be reborn through a purification of heart, reconciliation with God and himself and to be content in all circumstances. And about his learning from God, George Panikulam says,

“Thus step by step, the Lord led him to discover a profound truth about God-man relationship, namely, that it is more important to learn to be content with what God wants and leave all to the divine initiative than to have visitations or tears to one’s own satisfaction and contentment”²³².

To conclude, the mystical gift of *contentamiento y satisfacción* helped Ignatius to purify his inner desire and to orient his life towards the path of humility, being indifferent

²³⁰ “References to contentment and satisfaction often occur in passages specifically concerning the Election of Ignatius”: Ibid. 88.

²³¹ Panikulam, 146.

²³² Ibid. 146.

towards the spiritual grace and self-emptying oneself.

2.5.4 Acatamiento-Reverencia

Another important spiritual gift that Ignatius jotted down in his *Spiritual Diary* is the reverence (*reverencia*²³³) and submission (*acatamiento*²³⁴). Though the term *acatamiento* is translated as submission²³⁵ in English, it carries another interpretation as “a loving and reverential attitude”²³⁶. This mystical gift or grace was given to Ignatius seems to have a sense of deep feelings of unconditional loving acceptance of the divine will²³⁷. Rogelio García, while observing both the terms in the *Spiritual Diary* he says that the term *acatamiento* is used more than 30 times and about 20 times it is accompanied by the term *reverencia*, *reverencial* or *reverenciar*. Besides this, *acatamiento* is also linked to the idea of humility about 11 times and with the notion of love about 9 times²³⁸.

The learning experience of Ignatius with the mystical gift, slowly he began to distinguish the difference between the submission of love (*acatamiento amoroso*) (SD, 187) and submission of fear (*acatamiento temeroso*) (SD 187). As he writes, “When one does not achieve a lover’s reverence and submission, one must seek for the submission of one who fears, considering one’s own faults, in order to gain the submission of love”(SD 187). Perhaps, this gift of *acatamiento- reverencia* might have given him a breakthrough in his life to watch over his movements, his thoughts and his actions. In other words, he learnt to order his life by knowing how to progress in his life which indeed he was lacking at Manresa while he was struggling to find a remedy for the scruples about his past sins as he prayed to God in Manresa: «Socórreme, Señor, que no hallo ningún remedio en los hombres, ni en ninguna criatura; que si yo pensase de poderlo hallar, ningún trabajo me sería grande» (A 23).

However, in the *Spiritual Diary*, though the initial days of the diary show the

²³³ While etymologically viewing, the term *reverencia*, comes from the Latin word as *reverentiare*. This means the action of reverence, respect, veneration that a person has for the other person. This also implies the inclination of the body as a sign of respect and treatment of the people of dignity in religious sense as well as socially. Cf. García. “Acatameinto-Reverancia”. In *DEI I*, 77.

²³⁴ The term *acatamiento* is derived from the Latin verb *captare*. This means try to catch. Originally, *acatamiento* means to look with attention, to admire, and to contemplate. This has another significance: a symbol of paying homage of submission: *Ibid.* 77.

²³⁵ Panikulam, 139.

²³⁶ *Ibid.* 139.

²³⁷ Cf. García. “Acatameinto-Reverancia”. In *DEI I*, 78.

²³⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*78.

resemblance of his struggles that Ignatius had in Manresa, after receiving the gift of *acatamiento-reverencia*, there is a change in his thinking and action: that his behaviour before the Trinity changed from a man of demanding, insisting and feeling angry “with the Blessed Trinity ” (SD 50) to a man of humility who wanted to know the will of God. As George Panikulam describes the nature of Ignatius who is changed now says: “With this new gift [acatamiento], it began to strike him [Ignatius] more and more that [sic] what was more important was to confirm himself to the Divine Will, rather than seek signs that would be to his liking and satisfaction”²³⁹.

Finally, the mystical gift, *acatamiento-reverencia* opened a “new way”²⁴⁰ for Ignatius that he was looking for perhaps throughout his life. This new way brought in his life an order, a sense of satisfaction, a desire to do what God wanted of him not rather what he wanted to do. This new way also helped him to put an end and not looking for further confirmation from the Blessed Trinity about the election process on poverty (SD 1-150). This also opened a path before him to watch over his desires of having divine visitations. And about this, Ignatius himself manifested in his diary that once the mystical gift of acatamiento/ reverencia was given to him, all his spiritual visitations brought with him the feeling of submission²⁴¹(SD 160, 173, 177-178). Like the words of St. Paul goes, “It is not I who live, but Christ who lives in me”(Gal 2,20), acatamiento/ reverencia “created in Ignatius an attitudinal change, which lasted him all his life”²⁴². And throughout the processes of changes, the hands of the Lord were with him, guiding him and accompanying him to be a new being.

2.5.5 The divine visitations and the intimacy between Ignatius and the Divine Persons

Ignatius in his *Autobiography* gives numerous references how God was guiding him (A 7,25,27-30). Apart from this, in the Spiritual Diary, in a detailed manner, he remembered the unmemorable, significant experiences of the Blessed Trinity through the visitations. Munitiz, while describing the visitations of Ignatius, describes them as “the direct gift from God”²⁴³. While analysing this mystical experience of God in Spiritual Diary, very often Ignatius was left “spell bound, utterly unable to translate them into the

²³⁹ Panikulam, 139.

²⁴⁰ Ibid. 140.

²⁴¹ Cf. Munitiz, 80.

²⁴² Panikulam, 142.

²⁴³ Munitiz, 81.

human idiom”²⁴⁴. And further, Simon Decloux points out the significance of the mystical experience of Ignatius saying, “In his Diary, Ignatius tries to translate with the words at his command the unspeakable reality of God who gives himself to him and teaches him things without any personal study”²⁴⁵.

The intimacy that Ignatius experienced in the Spiritual Diary with the three different Persons describes the spiritual changes that Ignatius attained in comparison with the stage of life where once he gave himself to the world of vanity (A 1). While highlighting the mystical experience that Ignatius had with the first Person[Father], Ignatius described Him as Helper. That when Ignatius was going through the moments of dryness and desolation (cf. SD 20- 31), it was the Father who voluntarily made his presence visible to Ignatius as a source of love and mercy.

«Queriendo prepararme para la misa dubitando a quién me encomendar primero y cómo; me puse de rodillas con este dubio; mirando por dónde comenzar, me parecía que más se me descubría del Padre y me atraía *a sus misericordias*» (SD 32).

The revelation of the Father was very significant to Ignatius at this juncture. That his trust in the Father grew (cf. SD 32) because he felt God, the Father looking towards him “more friendly”(SD 32) and Ignatius himself revealed that he found “easy access to the Father”(SD 27) when took his name(cf. SD 27). Such was the experience Ignatius cherished with the Father.

Secondly, while analysing the mystical experience with the second Person, Jesus in the Spiritual Diary, it could be very firmly said that Ignatius changed his “perception of Jesus”²⁴⁶ after his encounter with him. He writes with devotion,

«Entrando en la capilla, en oración, un sentir, o más propiamente ver, fuera de las fuerzas naturales, a la santísima Trinidad y a Jesús, asimismo representándome o poniéndome, o seyendo medio junto la santísima Trinidad, para que aquella visión intelectual se me comunicase, y con este *sentir* y ver, un cubrirme de lágrimas y de amor, mas terminándose a Jesús; y a la santísima Trinidad un respecto de acatamiento y *más* allegado a amor reverencial que al contrario alguno» (SD 83).

And he writes further about the role of Jesus as mediator: «Después así mismo sentir a Jesús haciendo el mismo oficio, en el pensar de orar al Padre, pareciéndome y sintiendo dentro que él hacía todo delante del Padre y de la santísima Trinidad» (SD 84). Something to note here is that Ignatius receives visions from the Divine Persons at this phase of life, when he was going through a terrible time because he did not to get confirmation from

²⁴⁴ Panikulam, 102.

²⁴⁵ Decloux, 106.

²⁴⁶ Ibid. 116.

the Divine Persons in spite of the repeated demand (cf. SD 76-77).

Another aspect of Ignatius' experience of Jesus jotted in the Spiritual Diary is that Jesus was a good intercessor of Ignatius and a consoler at the time of desolation. And he jotted down:

«Conociendo haber mucho faltado en dejar *a las personas divinas* al tiempo de dar gracias el día pasado, y queriéndome abstener de decir la misa de la Trinidad, que pensaba decirla, y tomar por intercesores a la Madre y al Hijo, porque se me fuese perdonado y restituido a la primera gracia ...» (SD 23).

In another instance Ignatius narrated how his hope in Jesus and freedom in Him increased after encountering Him, he wrote: «Con una grande seguridad o esperanza de alcanzar lo perdido, sintiendo al Hijo muy propicio para interpelar, y los santos<juntos> en tal manera viendo...» (SD 27).

The experience of Ignatius with Jesus began to progress such a way that Ignatius felt no means would keep him separate from Jesus as he testifies in the journal,

«En el preparar del altar y del vestir, un representárame el nombre de Jesús con mucho amor, <con mucha> confirmación y *con crecida* voluntad de seguirle, y con lágrimas y sollozos [...] En estos tiempos era en mí tanto amor, sentir o ver a Jesús, que me parecía que adelante no podía venir cosa que me pudiese apartar dél ni hacerme dudar acerca las gracias o confirmación recibida» (SD 71-75).

Thirdly, the Spiritual Diary also gives the manifestation of the intimate relationship between Ignatius and the Holy Spirit. During the election process on poverty, it was the Spirit that gave “new insights”(SD 15). Besides this, Ignatius also mentioned in the *Diary* about the vision of the Holy Spirit in a “dense clarity or in the color of burning flame” (SD 15).

To conclude, Ignatius received the magnificent vision of the Divine Persons yet this aspect did not make him proud; rather, he surrendered and humbled himself before the Most Holy Trinity. True to the word of Jesus, “whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Mt 23, 12) , Ignatius in total submission humbled himself before God and in response he was exalted to be great and perhaps this paved way for him to enter into the kingdom of God: “ Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 18,4).

* * *

In the process of learning the life experience of Ignatius, there are two phases of his life (Manresa and the duration that Ignatius spent while writing the Spiritual Diary) that cannot go unnoticed. Both the phases are witnesses of how God formed and molded Ignatius to be born anew. While analyzing the initial stage of the life of Ignatius at Loyola during his convalescence, it is observed that after reading the two holy books [*La Vita Christi* and *Flos Sanctorum*] he is inspired to reinitiate, reenergize, and reform his life. And with this, he begins his spiritual journey with the three specific goals in mind (to imitate saints, to go to Jerusalem and do penances) (A 9) yet he was not sure of how he is going to achieve them.

The next level of his spiritual journey intensifies his desire of being transformed. He expresses his longing by offering himself at “the altar of Our Lady of Montserrat”(A 17) and making a well-prepared confession in Montserrat (A 17). And having done the memorable acts and drawing spiritual strength for his new life, he proceeds to Manresa where he wants to consolidate his spiritual call or to the new life he is called for. The life in Montserrat teaches him a simple lesson with a profound meaning: that he needs a lonely place to encounter his true self, to be born anew. That in this solitude, he might encounter the Divine.

The three significant phases of life that Ignatius goes through in Manresa signifies how his soul longs to look for the closeness with the Almighty and to overcome the obstacles that he faces. The first phase of his life at Manresa brings him moments of light, consolation. Yet at the same time, at this phase he lacks maturity to discern the changes and movements of what he goes through: such as looking at the image like a serpent being consoled by it (A 31).

The description of the six temptations in the second phase sees that Ignatius is just like any ordinary human being (at this level) who is susceptible to the weaknesses and failures. And in this failure and vulnerable position, he encounters the power of the Almighty which perhaps would make him realize that all his penances and pious activities may not be sufficient if the grace of God is not there. His grappling moments with the six temptations teach him not to depend on his penance and pious activities but to rely on the divine providence of God.

And the five special graces enhance Ignatius to see the magnanimity of God before his littleness, and to comprehend the amazing grace of God in his nothingness. While

receiving all the graces and gifts, Ignatius considers himself as a little child in front of the Master (A 27). In this fragility, susceptibility, God, the Master, makes the little child, Ignatius, to be strong in his faith by knowing the mystical things and above all grants him the understanding to see everything new and to comprehend whatever God wants of him.

While intending to comprehend the experiences that Ignatius undergoes, the magnanimity of God in the life of Ignatius could be observed. Ignatius is persistent in asking for the confirmation through signs on the election of poverty, but he is bestowed with another big learning for his life. And the mixed experiences that he goes through during the process of looking for more confirmation leave him with one undeniable and an indelible learning: that is to be submissive and to surrender oneself in the hands of the Lord.

Like the iron put in the furnace to be shaped, the three moments in the *Spiritual Diary* (the moments of strengthening, tempting and surrendering) that he faces during the process of confirmation shapes him to be a totally matured, transformed and a born anew person. Like the response that Jesus gave to the young man, “you lack one thing” (Mk 10,21), Ignatius perhaps identifies the one thing that he has been lacking to be reborn. While waiting to get more signs and confirmation for the election on poverty, he identifies the one thing that perhaps he needs the most: it is the total submission and surrender in the hands of the Lord. And in this surrendering, he experiences the total transformation.

And this action of surrendering in humility takes Ignatius to another level: a mystical realm. The spiritual gifts and the spiritual visitations that Ignatius experiences at this level is so extraordinary and they are not experienced by any ordinary person. Perhaps, at this stage, Ignatius would understand the meaning of losing oneself in the hands of God to find a new life (Mt 10,31) and be filled with the numerous graces that the Lord wants to communicate to him.

CHAPTER 3.

The Spiritual Exercises: A Call to Die to Oneself and to Rise in Christ

How do the *Spiritual Exercises* prepare the exercitants to be born anew? This is a question perhaps the third chapter intends to look for a response. While analysing the source of the *Spiritual Exercises*, it is observed that the spiritual experiences that Ignatius had through the different stages of his life (from Loyola to Venice- Rome), he gradually converted them into a text known as the *Spiritual Exercises*²⁴⁷. Santiago Arzubialde and José García de Castro while summarising the origin of the *Spiritual Exercises*, say:

“Since the day that Iñigo first tested his feelings and interior movements, which he called *mociones* [movements], in the family castle in his native Azpeitia, he began to take notes of that which was happening in his interior, without any cognizance at the time that he was putting the first stammering words to what would become his beloved *Spiritual Exercises*.

²⁴⁷ According to the studies by Santiago Arzubialde and José García de Castro, it is noted that in Spanish there are six manuscripts of the *Spiritual Exercises*: (*Autógrafo-A*, *Natalis-N*, *Exercita-E*, *Domenici-D*, *Burdigalensis-B*, *México-X*), and in Latin, there are eight manuscripts: three archetypal (*Versio prima-P1*, *Versio Prima-P2*, *Vulgate-V*) and six adopted copies (*Heyler-H*, *Ioannis-I*, *Coloniensis-C*, *Martinensis-M*, *Vallisoletanus-L*): Arzubialde, García de Castro, eds. *El Autógrafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*, 90-98.

Over the course of the next twenty-five years, Ignatius continued to expand, correct, and polish his manuscript. He enhanced it with reflections based on his personal experiences, or based on those of people with whom he was conversing”²⁴⁸.

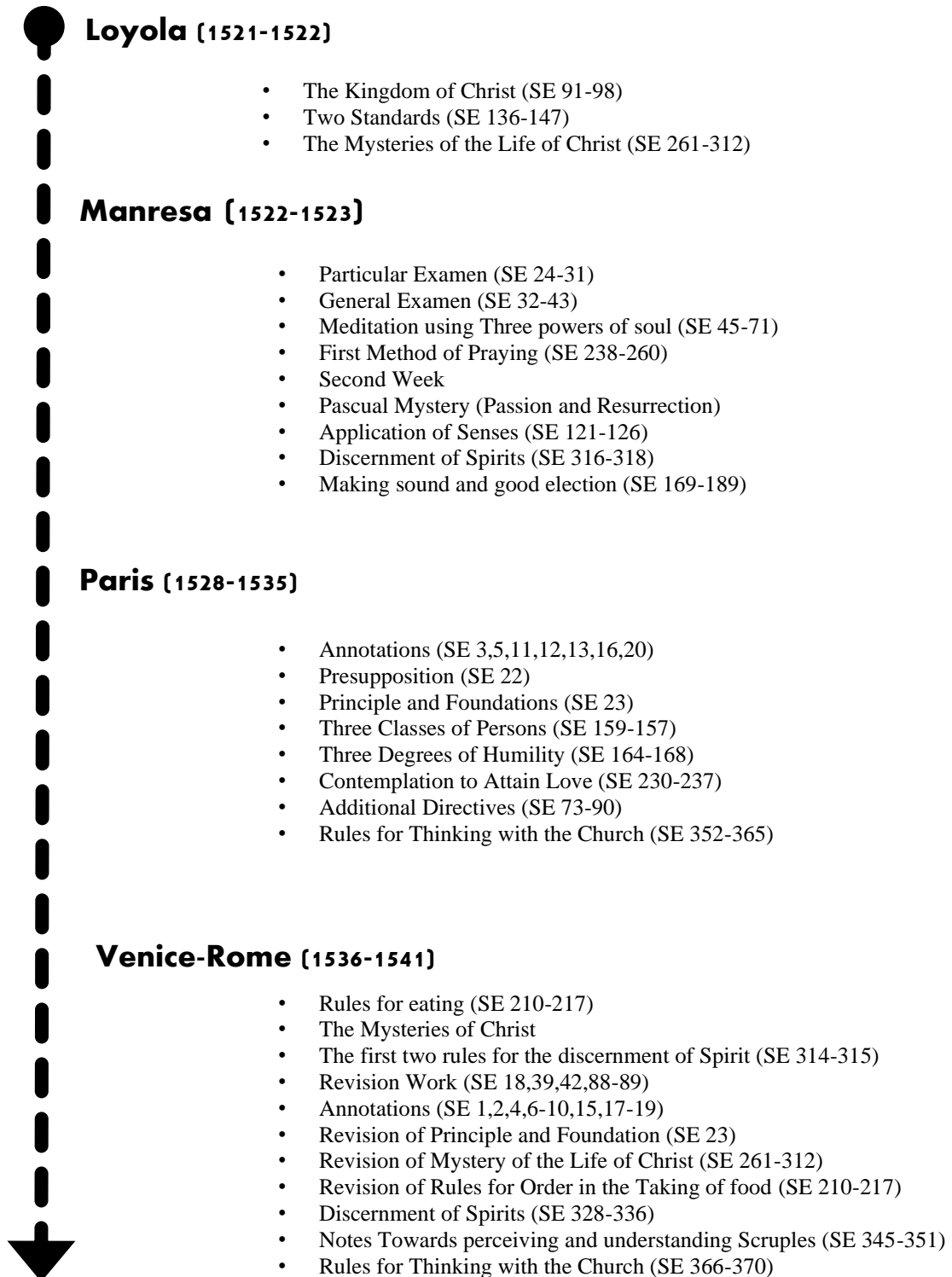
While commenting on the evolution of the text (*Spiritual Exercises*), there are four main stages of the life of Ignatius (Loyola, Manresa, Paris, Venice & Rome) that cannot go unnoticed. And these are the places where Ignatius seemed to have begun his experiences in writing. Through the influence of many Holy men and their writings (such as Ludolph of Saxony [*Vita Christi*], García Jiménez de Cisneros [*The Exercise book of the Spiritual Life*], Thomas á Kempis [*The Imitation of Christ*]) and his own experiences, Ignatius with much care and with the help of his companions, completed the text which was later formally approved by Pope Paul III on 31 July, 1548²⁴⁹. Though it is difficult to say with hundred percent precision about the exact origin of the text, yet through the observation of many scholars, the contribution of the origin of the *Spiritual Exercises* is shown in the following page²⁵⁰.

²⁴⁸ Ibid. 30; see also:46-62. Moreover C. de Dalmases and J. Escalera in detail explains about the composition of the text: cf. C. de Dalmases, J. Escalera. “Historia del texto de los *Ejercicios Espirituales*”. In *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* II, 1230-1231. Roma-Madrid: IHSI-UPCo, 2001.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Arzubialde, García de Castro, eds. *El Autógrafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*, 30-62.

²⁵⁰ Cf. Ibid. 28-61.

Fig. 5. The evolution of the text (*The Spiritual Exercises*)



While highlighting the nature and the purpose of the *Spiritual Exercises*, Santiago Arzubialde and José García de Castro observe the characteristics of the *Spiritual Exercises* in four aspects. Anthropologically, the *Spiritual Exercises* are regarded as tools

or efforts to attain the inner transformation. Secondly, based on the Christological approach, they help the exercitants to grow in the interior knowledge of Christ and to enhance their friendship with Him. Thirdly, from the point of true freedom, the Exercises help the exercitants to discern their state of life in the world by choosing God's will for them. Fourthly, analysing the pneumatological aspect, the exercitants are guided to be transformed through discovering the presence of God in the world and in all circumstances through the help of the Holy Spirit²⁵¹.

Ignacio Iparraguirre while analysing the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, he offers nine steps to achieve the goal that perhaps the exercitants wish to achieve in the process of being born anew by possessing the characteristics of a child. In fact those nine steps summarise the entire pattern of the *Spiritual Exercises*: firstly, it is through assuming the Principle and Foundation as template the exercitants are prepared to enter into the Exercises. Secondly, through the meditations of the First Week, exercitants purify their souls. Thirdly, it is through the encounter with Christ, they listen and respond to Him primarily through the Kingdom Meditation. Fourthly, through participating in the contemplations of the Second Week, they grow in knowledge and love for Christ.

Fifthly, through the three specific Exercises (Meditation of Two Standards [SE 136-147], Three Classes of Persons [SE 149-156], Three Ways of Being Humble [SE 165-168]), the exercitants are also inspired to ordinate their Understanding through the Meditation of Two Standards; and they direct their Will through the exercise of Three Classes of Persons; and they guide their Heart through the Three Ways of Being Humble. Sixthly, through the active participation in the Election or the choice of life they intend to bring a change of their past life or to lead a life better than before. Seventhly, through the participation of the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord, the exercitants confirm their desire of following Him. Eighthly, through the Contemplation to Attain Love, the exercitants are drawn to live a life of union and familiarity with God. And finally, through different practical exercises (methods of praying, Examen of Conscience²⁵², Confession, etc.) the exercitant are drawn to lead a life of sanctity which they experienced during the *Spiritual Exercises*²⁵³. All the eight steps function as a unifying thread which prepare the exercitants to be born anew by converting themselves to possess the nature of a child.

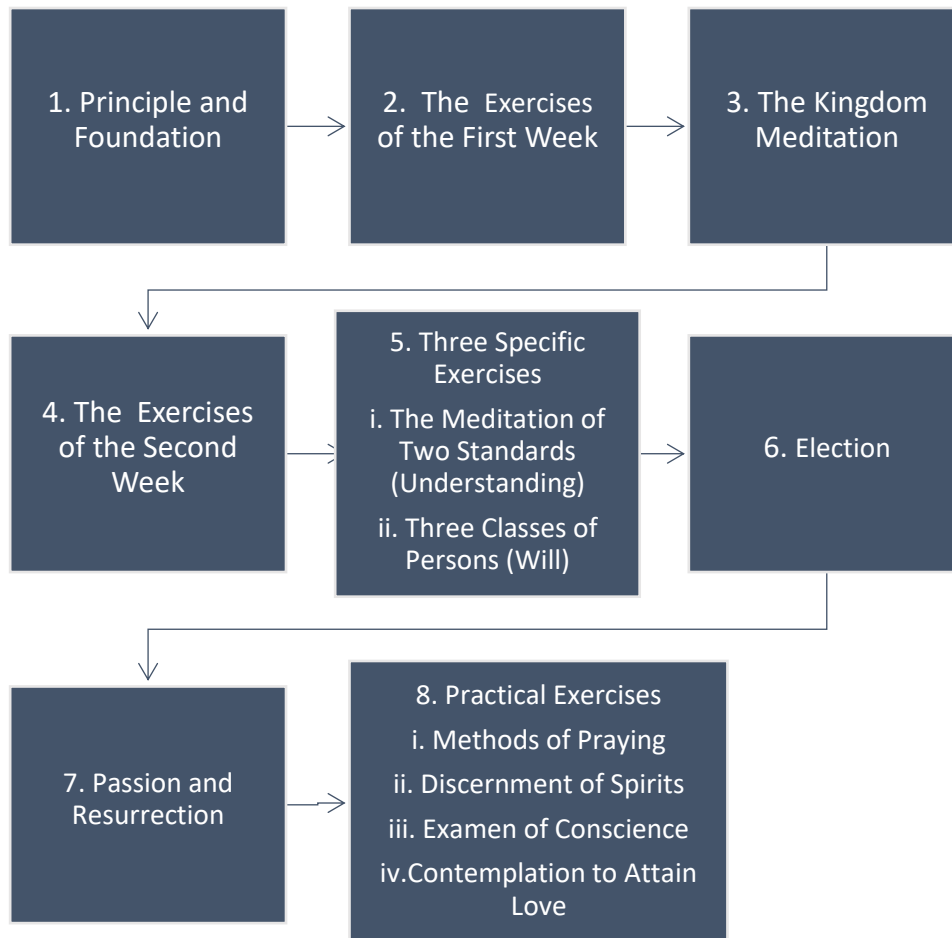
²⁵¹ Cf. Arzubialde, García de Castro, eds. *The Autograph Copy*, 62-68.

²⁵² Cf. M. Ruiz Jurado. "Examen de Conciencia". In *DCECH II*, 1345-1446; see also. Brian O'Leary. "Examen". In *CEJ*, 290-291.

²⁵³ Ignacio Iparraguirre. *Dirección de una tanda de Ejercicios*. Bilbao: El Mensajero de Corazón de Jesús, 1962, 41.

And the following eight points highlight what happens during the Exercises.

Fig. 6. The eight steps to grow like a child



3.1 The Principle and Foundation: a footpath to a new beginning

Before entering the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius through the Principle and Foundation orients the exercitants to achieve a purpose or goal to which they are created for: that “human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord; and by means of doing this to save their souls”(SE 23.1). This purpose is achieved only when the exercitants are born anew and acquire nature like a child. And so, the *Spiritual Exercises* from the very beginning offers a few instructions to follow. Moreover, George E. Ganss comprehends these instructions as four pillars for the exercitants which help

them in the process of becoming new creatures by putting them into practice: The first pillar, the goal that Principle and Foundation offers to the exercitants is oriented to God, by means of praise, reverence and service. A point to be noted here is that as we are not able of the gratuitousness of praise, we are invited to adopt an attitude of reverence which consists of accepting others and Other as he/she/ it is. And finally, we are invited to a humble service. The second pillar, the means that help the exercitants to achieve the goal: that all the created things on the earth “for the human beings, to help them in the pursuit of the end for which they are created” (SE 23.3).

The third pillar, being indifferent²⁵⁴, which enables the exercitants to set themselves to have interior freedom towards the means that they are offered: that they remain indifferent to all created things and are free from desiring for “health rather than sickness, wealth rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, a long life rather than a short one” (SE 23.4-6). And the fourth and the last pillar calls for the exercitants to choose a “more conducive”(SE 23.7) state of life through which they may be able to attain their end to which they are created for²⁵⁵. All the four pillars put a strong foundation in the exercitants to transform them to be new creatures by preparing themselves to enter into the First Week of Exercises. In these Exercises, there is a search within the exercitants to get rid of the inordinate self by lowering their pride (ego) and being purified from their sins. This search in a way leads to a nature of the child.

And so, the five Exercises of the First Week let the exercitants become very clearly aware to understand how the impact of sins (or imperfections) hinder them from being purified and eventually it prevents them from being born anew. Through the awareness of the consequences of sins, the exercitants are moved towards a transformed life (towards newness) to which they are called to live not only during the Exercises but also to live throughout the rest of their life²⁵⁶.

²⁵⁴ The indifference here means to be “entirely open to the will of God in an ever increasing attachment to Christ. It is a counterbalance which enables us little by little to overcome and to purify our human attachments to created things ”: Cusson, *Biblical Theology*, 282.

²⁵⁵ George E. Ganss, ed. *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. Bilbao: Mensajero-Grupo de Comunicación Loyola, 2021, 149.

²⁵⁶ Ibid. 148; See also. Elías Royón. “Principio y Fundamento”. In *DEI II*. 1490-1497.

3.2 The First Week of Exercises: a new birth through lowering self

Highlighting the First Week it is noted that the five meditations invite the exercitants to experience human's "rejection of God by sin and God's continuing response of mercy"²⁵⁷. The Exercises also draw the attention of the exercitants about the circumstances where human beings lost their original identity and how they have acquired those elements that they were not their own. Moreover, the Exercises inspire the exercitants to purify themselves from their sins and invite them to re-experience their lost identity as sons and daughters of God. And this realization would help them to look at the side of life which eventually molds them towards a new life. An important shift that David Fleming observes in the five meditations is that the exercitants move "from thinking and reasoning to a lessening of reflection with the head and more a responding with the heart"²⁵⁸. In other words, the exercitants are called to be connected to their heart to experience the newness in them through mercy and reconciliation from the Lord.

3.2.1 The meditation on Three sins: an invitation to know the gravity of sins

What light or inspiration could the exercitants draw from the first Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*? While understanding the interconnection among the meditations of the First Week, Antonio Guillén sees that the exercises offered in the First Week are progressive and they form an inseparable unity. In the First Meditation of the First Week where Ignatius presents the meditation of three sins: sin of angels, sin of Adam and Eve, and a mortal sin of someone who is in hell (cf. SE 50-52). While describing the outcome of this meditation, Hervé Coathalem²⁵⁹ observes that the exercitants go through some significant moment within themselves while making the first meditation: such as the feeling of

²⁵⁷ David Fleming. "The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises: Understanding a Dynamic". In *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, edited by David Fleming, 6. St. Louis, Mo: Review for Religious, 1980.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. 9.

²⁵⁹ Antonio Guillén. "Directorio breve sobre la Cuarta Semana". *Manresa* 88, n.347 (2016):169.

personal unworthiness, shame and confusion before God²⁶⁰. And Darío López Tejada distinguishes the objective of this meditation as the experience of God's saving love in Christ and the insertion of every man in the great movement of salvation or if he rejects it, the experience of condemnation²⁶¹. Thus both experience of God's saving nature and human rejection invite the exercitants to lower themselves from the false identity and to connect themselves to their true identity by being born anew.

While critically analysing about the sin of the three different examples (sin of Angels, sin of Adam and a particular mortal sin), Santiago Arzubialde sees that there is a common thread that knits all three sins: that all three (Angel, Adam and Eve and a mortal sinner) go away from their original nature of being in the dependency of God by breaking the relationship with Him. This means the sin which is committed goes against the core of Principle and Foundation of refusing to praise, to bow and serve the Divine Majesty²⁶². The first example of the sin of angels²⁶³ projects the rejection of being their true selves by being rebellious in their pride and their unwillingness to be grateful to God and as a result they put themselves in their eternal stubbornness. And about this refusal of being true to their nature, Ignatius describes it in the first Point of the meditation (SE 50)²⁶⁴.

The second image of the sin of Adam and Eve is also a description of the violation of their original identity and the failure of being grateful and trustful obedience²⁶⁵. Lopez Azpitarte considers this particular sin as the disobedience to God's precept which as a consequence has led to the punishment of our mortality²⁶⁶ and the loss of one's original identity. St. Ignatius of Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises* describes this loss of the original identity of humanity as result and consequences of their own acts and he says:

«Digo traer a la memoria el 2º pecado, de nuestros padres, cómo después que Adán fue criado en el campo damasceno, y puesto en el paraíso terrenal y Eua ser criada de su costilla siendo bedados que no comiesen del árbol de la sciencia y ellos comiendo, y asimismo

²⁶⁰ Coathalem, 118.

²⁶¹ Cf. Darío López Tejada. *Los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio de Loyola: Comentarios y textos afines*. Madrid: Edibesa, 2002, 242.

²⁶²Cf. Arzubialde. *Ejercicios Espirituales*, 135.

²⁶³ "There is a long tradition in the Church that 'devils' are angels who refused to obey God, and were condemned to eternal punishment. This theory was an attempt to explain the existence of evil in the world...": Eduardo López Azpitarte. "Ignatius' Meditations on Sin: from Guilt to Gratitude". *The Way* 47 (2008): 99.

²⁶⁴ (SE 50): «Digo traer en memoria el pecado de los ángeles; cómo siendo ellos criados en gracia, no se queriendo ayudar con su libertad para hacer reuerencia y obediencia a su Criador y Señor, viniendo en superbia, fueron conuertidos de gracia en malicia, y lançados del çielo al infierno...».

²⁶⁵ cf. López Tejada, 257.

²⁶⁶ E. López Azpitarte. "El Pecado: experiencia de finitud y agradecimiento". *Manresa* 79 n.310 (2007): 24.

pecando y después vestidos de túnicas pelíceas y lançados del paráyso bibieron sin la iusticia original, que habían perdido, toda su vida en muchos trabajos y mucha penitencia» (SE 51).

And thus the exercitants are inspired through the second point to reflect over the fall of Adam with our own fall and invites us to journey towards acquiring the lost paradise by being born anew. And the third image of someone's mortal sin is also a symbol of refusal to be in the true nature of oneself and the rebellious act against one's Creator²⁶⁷. This rebellious action destroys the friendship with God and the one who commits the mortal sin²⁶⁸ not only harms his fellow human but also he destroys the image of God in man and by harming oneself being condemned forever²⁶⁹. In other words, the unwillingness to come out of one's fallen state becomes a hindrance in becoming a new and a transformed being.

Analysing the first meditation, the three sins mentioned here is not something abstract but it is designed as a first meditation for the exercitants to enter into the meditation in a serious note. This meditation is a tool to understand the goal of being united in the Lord by not losing one's original identity that is to praise, serve and revere God. Secondly, the colloquy of the first meditation (SE 53) genuinely invites the exercitants towards purification and conversion of heart like a child. This is the basis for one to be born again.

Two core fundamental aspects that perhaps could provoke the exercitants during the first meditation: firstly, it is the contrasting nature of the magnanimity of God and the smallness of human beings. In this contradicting reality, three questions are put before exercitants: «lo que he hecho por Xpo., lo que hago por Xpo., lo que deuo hazer por Xpo» (SE 53). These questions perhaps enhance the exercitants to ponder at what stage they have changed their original state of life and moreover, how he might be able to return to his own identity. By examining one's broken self before God, the exercitants are inspired to shed their inappropriate condition of life and to focus on a new image of themselves²⁷⁰.

To conclude, the consequence of pride, the sin of angels leads to self-centeredness; the sin of Adam and Eve finally turns our lives and the lives of our neighbors into hell. And on the contrary, the colloquy shows the different direction in crucified Christ: creator to a human being, and eternal life to death (cf. SE 53). This direction aims at lowering

²⁶⁷ López Tejada, 260.

²⁶⁸ (SE 52): «Digo hazer otro tanto sobre el 3º pecado particular, trayendo a la memoria la grauedad y malicia del pecado contra su Criador y Señor, discurrir con el entendimiento, cómo en el pecar y hazer contra la bondad infinita iustamente a sido condenado para siempre...» (SE 52).

²⁶⁹ Cf. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales*, 141.

²⁷⁰ García Domínguez. "La reconciliación consigo mismo", 41.

oneself from pride and becoming humble and others-centered.

3.2.2 The meditation on one's sins: an awareness of one's own fall and God's mercy

While the meditation on sin which primarily emphasizes on “the history of sin as an objective reality”²⁷¹, the second meditation “on our own sins”(SE 55) involves the exercitants more personally and intensely. And further, this meditation is ordered for the personal transformation of being unconditionally accepted by God and feeling grateful to Him because of His forgiveness²⁷². The aim of this meditation is to realize in what way one has gone astray from God. This meditation also calls for the exercitants to experience the grace of salvation which they have obtained disproportionately. Luis María García Domínguez while commenting on it, says that the exercitants go through shame because of the salvation they received undeservedly²⁷³.

The wisdom of Ignatius could be marveled here while analyzing the structure of the points of the second meditation (cf. SE 55-61). As the iron is put in the furnace to be shaped, the exercitants (with the help of the first point) are purified through a triple step. Firstly, the exercitants examine their living place; secondly, they call to mind all those with whom they lived their life and thirdly, they recall the occupation they have done in their lives (cf. SE 56). To summarize, the examination of the three states of life is a complete analysis of one's past life.

The second point invites the exercitants to examine the “foulness and evil”(SE 57) of the deadly mortal sins. Michael Ivens, while describing the nature of the mortal sins, regards that “the deadly sins are foul because they disfigure human life and conduct; and they have the quality of ‘malice’ because they are an offence against God and his goodness”²⁷⁴. And the five “examples”²⁷⁵(SE 58) that are presented by Ignatius in the third point, in fact invite the exercitants to leave their present state of life, to orient

²⁷¹ Michael Ivens. *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises. Text and Commentary*. Trowbridge: Cromwell Press, 55.

²⁷² Cf. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales*,147.

²⁷³ Cf. Luis María García Domínguez. “«Orar el pecado personal»”. *Manresa* 90, n^o. 354 (2008): 79.

²⁷⁴ Ivens, 57.

²⁷⁵ (SE 58): «Quánto soy yo en comparación de todos los hombre; 2º, qué cosa son los hombres en comparación de todos los ángeles y sanctos del paraíso; 3º, mirar qué cosa es todo lo criado en comparación de Dios; pues yo solo ¿qué puedo ser?; 4º, mirar toda my corrupción y fealdad corpórea; 5º, mirarme como vna llaga y postema de donde an salido tantos pecados y tantas maldades y ponzoña tan turpíssima».

towards a new life (2 Cor 5,17) like a child to grow in humility before God through self-knowledge²⁷⁶.

Analysing the five examples (SE 58), they are indeed a great help for the exercitants to perceive the gravity of their alienation through their own sins and they feel relief through forgiveness and eventually they can trace back to their own identity of feeling image and likeness of God²⁷⁷. At the same time, a question may arise if the act of examining sins will harm the exercitants psychologically²⁷⁸. Basically, this meditation is aimed to examine the lost track of one's life and so, looking positively at the image of God (as almighty and a merciful God), the exercitants in confidence in the Lord, can rely on the loving image of God in spite of his brokenness and failures²⁷⁹.

Ignatius' comparative analysis of God's omnipotence with one's own weaknesses (cf. SE 59) and being surprised at the fact that the life of exercitants is not destroyed in spite of their many sins (cf. SE 60) are signs of repentance and conversion of heart in the exercitants. Moreover, the further points of the second meditation ensures the exercitants that on this path of conversion, they are not left alone; rather, all the heavenly and the earthly beings are with them to support them to be transformed as new persons. The prayers of angels and the intercession of the saints and the all the creatures such as "the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the elements; the fruits, birds, fishes, and animals" (SE 60) and the earth, etc. all of them show sympathy along with God for the exercitants to be transformed as new persons. This thought is reflected later in the exercise of Contemplation to attain love where it is learnt that God's attributes are not just for Himself but He wants to share with us and He yearns to share His attributes with us (cf. SE 234). This awareness helps the exercitants not only to work for their own salvation but for the salvation of the whole creation which is groaning and is in pain (Rm 8,22).

²⁷⁶ Cf. José A. García. *Comentario a los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio*. Madrid: Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2018, 98.

²⁷⁷ Arzubialde. *Ejercicios Espirituales*, 149.

²⁷⁸ Regarding the psychological harm, Luis M^a. García Domínguez says that the pondering over one's sins could evoke the conceptions of smallness in the exercitants and it would arouse strong feelings of guilt and would generate unnecessary scruples and would provoke the dynamics of self-punishment (penance) or self-purifying justification; and further, it would produce anxieties: Luis Ma. García Domínguez. "La reconciliación consigo mismo en la Primera Semana de los Ejercicios". *Manresa* 79 (2007): 39.

²⁷⁹ Cf. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales*, 151.

3.2.3 The significance of the repetition of the meditation

The third meditation of the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* deals with the “repetition of the first and the second exercises”(SE 62). The purpose of the repetition of the meditation as Santiago Arzubialde describes is to recognize, thank, value, assume, penetrate, and shape the deepest feelings and desire for love and happiness²⁸⁰. And what possibly happens during the repetition of the meditation is that the exercitants re-read the points and they select the most intense points which could be of a greater affection, consolation or desolation²⁸¹.

David T. Asselin, as stressing the aim of the repetition of the meditation through the eyes of Ignatius says:

“Ignatius does not aim in his repetitions at expanding concepts, spiritual theology, or noetic faith, but rather at simplifying and intensifying an awareness of spiritual realities, especially personal presence to and service of the Lord.”²⁸².

And he adds further, “what counts in repetitions is not new content, but renewed encounter-not just repeating an old acquaintance with the things of God, but discovering deeper levels of friendship with Him”²⁸³. This emphasizes the importance of getting connected with one’s inner self more in order to do away with the inordinate bonds²⁸⁴ and to experience the newness in Christ. And the reason to choose those intense points is to internalize what is happening in themselves and to discern the meaning of what the exercitants have felt and tasted internally²⁸⁵. C. García Hirschfeld about the significance of meditation on repetition he says, the exercitants are free to choose the points or the content. Furthermore, the points could make them more personal and rational and thus they can be less dependent on the director who guides at this stage of the spiritual

²⁸⁰ Cf. Ibid. 162.

²⁸¹ Carlos Hirschfeld García. “Espiritualidad de la Pausa: la «repetición» en el texto de los Ejercicios”. *Manresa* 74 n. 291 (2002):158-159.

²⁸² David T. Asselin. “Notes on Adapting the Exercises of St. Ignatius”. In *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, edited by David L. Fleming, S.J., 293-294. St. Louis, Mo: Review for Religious, 1983.

²⁸³ Ibid. 294.

²⁸⁴ Here inordinate bonds could be seen as anything that blocks a person from growing closer to Christ.

²⁸⁵ Cf. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales*, 162.

progress²⁸⁶.

The three graces²⁸⁷ in the triple colloquy (to the Lady, to the Son, to the Father) of this meditation aims with a definite purpose and spiritual progress. The graces such as i) to feel the interior knowledge for one's sins and an abhorrence of them, ii) to perceive the disorder in one's actions, iii) to ask for the knowledge of the world to detest and to get rid of it (cf. SE 63), help the exercitants to become aware of their past life and to free themselves like a child in order to find true love in Christ.

While highlighting the purpose of the three graces, it is observed that all three have their own consequences: the first grace of interior knowledge enhances the exercitants to have a clarity about their state of life and to redirect their gaze towards God's mercy. The second grace of perception of one's disordered action invites the exercitants to work towards amending their way of life until they achieve it just becoming born anew like a child. The third grace of having knowledge of the world helps the exercitants to oppose the forces that are against Christ and kingdom values. In other words, the exercitants become aware of the obstacles that stop him from being born in the kingdom of God²⁸⁸.

3.2.4 The repetition of repetition: an intense focus on the goal

What could be the significance of this repetition? Etymologically, to meditate²⁸⁹ comes from the latin verb *meditari* which at the same time is a repetitive verb of *medeor* which means to heal²⁹⁰. And so, *meditari* means to heal again and again. Therefore, implied notion of the repetition means that the wound must be healed again and again.

Though Ignatius does not give any new material for this meditation, the exercitants depend totally on the divine providence of God and put themselves totally in the hands of God. In other words, in the fourth meditation, the exercitants receive an internalization of the language that comes from God²⁹¹ that would help them to listen to inner conscience. And the exercitants keep themselves more focused by eliminating the general points of

²⁸⁶ García Hirschfeld. "Espiritualidad de la Pausa", 159.

²⁸⁷ It is to note here that the grace also is written as petition with the same significance.

²⁸⁸ Cf. Michael Ivens. *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*. Trowbridge: Cromwell Press, 1998, 60.

²⁸⁹ Cf. Josep Giménez. *Lo Último desde los últimos. Esbozo de esperanza y escatología cristianas*. Maliaño (Cantabria): Sal Terrae-Grupo de Comunicación Loyola, 2018, 373, footnote 37.

²⁹⁰ Ibid. 373.

²⁹¹ Cf. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales*, 168.

the meditation and dwelling upon the points that helped them to enjoy the fruits in the third meditation. Santiago Arzubialde while highlighting the fourth meditation of the First Week, he sees that though the points for this meditation are as same as the previous meditation, yet the technique and the manner of doing meditation and the fruit which will be derived from this meditation varies²⁹².

3.2.5 Meditation on hell: an invitation to return to one's true self

Though no one in a real sense has experienced what hell is, Ignatius using his imagination and senses like seeing, hearing, perceiving, tasting, touching (cf. SE 66-70), helps the exercitants to enter into the meditation. While Herve Coathalem sees the purpose of the fifth meditation as nothing but to arouse a holy fear of God, as a safeguard of the order of the restored love, Santiago Arzubialde sees that the meditation on hell would enable the exercitants to understand the importance of being saved from the agony of hell to the love of the Father. In other words, by understanding the mystery of salvation, one may understand the mystery of the possibility of losing Christ, and in him, losing the love of the Father²⁹³. Irrespective of all the comments, the objective of the Exercise is clear: that is to do away with sinful life and to have a new life through the mercy of God: to be born again.

The second preamble of the meditation of the Exercises conveys this idea very clearly and it states, “if through my faults I should forget the love of the Eternal Lord, at least the fear of those pains will serve to keep me from falling into sin”(SE 65). And thus, the exercitants are called to become aware that the purpose of the creation of human beings is not to remain in sin, but to make efforts to live in holiness through new life in Christ.

St. Ignatius, through the meditation on hell, invites the exercitants to use five inner senses of imagination to comprehend the heart breaking rejection and the pain of being separated from God: that by entering a miserable experience of being separated from the love of God and experiencing the pain of being away from the love of God would help the exercitants to get back to their original identity of sonship by separating themselves from the clutches of the power of evil to be born anew in the Lord²⁹⁴.

After having provided sufficient points on the gravity and the consequence of hell,

²⁹²Cf. Ibid. 167.

²⁹³ Cf. Ibid. 179; cf. Coathalem, 125.

²⁹⁴ Cf. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales*, 179-181; cf. López Tejada, 310.

Ignatius in the colloquy (cf. SE 71) orients the exercitants to live with the virtue of hope. By comparing the exercitants with the three classes of persons [all those who died before Christ came, all those who were condemned during his lifetime, all those who died after his life in this world] (cf. SE 71), Ignatius draws the exercitants to receive the mercy of God and to experience His magnanimity. At this juncture, the exercitants are brought to a condition of lowering themselves by feeling nothing in front of God's magnanimity and to grow magnanimously²⁹⁵: that they are invited to shed their false ego, pride and all those elements that they have considered once as the important thing in their life, and they look for a substitution of those superficial values with the values of Christ. And furthermore, by lowering themselves from the attitude of righteousness, they are called to feel nothing before the magnanimity of God. And regarding this, Ignatius writes in the *Spiritual Exercises*,

“I will thank the Lord because he has not, by ending life, let me fall into any of these classes. I will also thank him because he has shown me, all through my life up to the present moment, so much pity and mercy”(SE 71).

To conclude, this moment of realization in the exercitants perhaps could be a starting point of looking for a new life and living a life which is conducive in the eyes of God.

3.2.6 The relevance of the First Week in the process of being born anew

Let us consider some of the key elements of the meditation of the First Week that could draw the attention of the exercitants, and which could perhaps inspire them to grow towards the process of being born anew.

i) The magnanimity of God: First of all, in all the meditations of the First Week, the mercy and the magnanimity of God are explicitly and implicitly emphasized. The colloquy of the first meditation expresses how God, the Creator, becomes a man out of love for humanity (cf. SE 53). The colloquy of the second meditation personalizes God's generosity by leading the exercitants to a new life (cf. SE 61). Although the third and the

²⁹⁵ “The magnanimous person is, literally, a great-souled individual, an expensive spirit. With appropriate self-esteem and a realistic sense of their talents, great-hearted individuals refuse to bow down in trivia. They think big. Unperturbed by minor grievances, indifferent to the ‘trinkets’ of wealth and status, they are spontaneously generous, even prodigal, the opposite of the stingy, shrunken soul”: Dean Brackley. “Expanding the Shrunken Soul: False Humility, Ressentiment, and Magnanimity”. *Studies In the Spirituality of Jesuits* 34 n.4 (2002), 19.

fourth meditations do not speak explicitly of God's mercy, the fifth meditation once again emphasizes how God has been merciful to the exercitants in sparing their lives despite their sinful state of life. And, this invites the exercitants to explore the possibility of being born again in the love and mercy of God.

ii) The realization of the purpose of one's life: The Principle and Foundation emphasises very clearly the true nature, purpose and attitude of human beings: that human beings are called to be indifferent towards one's life. And thus the aspect of being indifference becomes the foundation for the rest of the exercises to be born anew. And to put some flesh on the bones of the structure of the Principle and Foundation, the threefold colloquies of the third and fourth meditations (cf. SE 62-64) give the exercitants lucidity about the state of life of both for themselves and for others and enable them to have the experience of the God of true life.

iii) The awareness of one's past life and a desire for a new life: the five exercises of the First Week invite the exercitants to be a new creation. About this Luis M^a. García Dominguez describes that the First Week of *Spiritual Exercises* helps the exercitants to acquire a new knowledge of themselves, a deep knowledge and sense of their reality as sinners²⁹⁶. The meditations describe step by step that past life of the exercitants starting with the first meditation where the general ideas are given about the sin of others (sin of the Angels, Adam and Eve and a mortal sin of an unknown person:cf. SE 50-52) and then focuses on the particular sin of the exercitants in the second meditation (cf. SE 55-61) and later the same concept is emphasized in the third, fourth and the fifth meditations (cf. SE 62-72). The points of the meditations are arranged in such a way that the exercitants are guided with a proper goal to get rid of their vulnerable past life and to reorient themselves towards a new life which is fulfilling and fruit bearing.

vi. Purification, Reconciliation, and New Birth in Christ: Analyzing the exercises of the First Week, all the meditations are aimed at giving an experience to the exercitants that necessarily renews the previous and partial image that they have had of God²⁹⁷. This means that the exercitants after experiencing the mercy of God, they are moved to receive the Lord in their heart through "the increase of grace"(SE 44) as a result of "General confession"(SE 44). In other words, all the exercises of the First Week enhance the retreatants to examine their past life and to transform their life.

²⁹⁶ García Domínguez. "La reconciliación consigo mismo", 38.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. 45.

3.3 The Kingdom of Jesus demands a generous response to be born anew

Ignatius, in the Exercise on “The contemplation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ”(SE 91) invites the exercitants “not to be deaf to his call, but ready and diligent to accomplish his most holy will” (SE 91) and through this, he puts a platform and possibly an expectation from the exercitants: that is to work with Jesus after desiring to accept his principles. This is the primary step which prepares them to be born anew. And the comparison drawn in this Exercise between Christ the King with temporal king (SE 95), makes it clear about the expectation from the exercitants: that is to follow Christ the King with a big-hearted response.

Which could be sense of the parable of the earthly king? Shall we translate (adapt) it according to the parameter of the present time? In fact, this parable translated the innermost desire of Ignatius at the time of convalescence. That is why we could consider this parable as a means (for us) to be thrilled by an ideal just like children are: that is to yearn for something.

Charles J. Healy, while analysing this comparison he observes, “If the call of a good, brave, and charismatic human leader is worthy of a generous response, how much more is the call and invitation of Christ, Our Lord and King”²⁹⁸. And thus, this contemplation demands a reciprocal response to the invitation of Christ which is perhaps very personal to the exercitants as Ignatius writes about the call of Christ:

«My voluntad es de conquistar todo el mundo y todos los enemigos, y así entrar en la gloria de mi Padre; por tanto, quien quisiere venir conmigo, a de trabajar conmigo, porque siguiéndome en la pena, también me siga en la gloria» (SE 95).

At this point, the positive response of the exercitants comes with a sense of transformation: that they distinguish themselves from the rest of the world and to offer themselves entirely “in total service to their King and universal Lord”(SE 97). And further, in this process of transformation, they leave their old self of “carnal and world love”(SE 97) in order to embrace themselves to be a new being through their total self as

²⁹⁸ Charles J. Healy. *The Ignatian Way: Key Aspect of Jesuit Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1998, 32.

offering. And this offering comes as a noble desire to imitate and follow him deliberately like the way Christ, their leader lives (SE 98)²⁹⁹ which ultimately calls for a new birth in Christ (2 Cor 5,17).

3.4 The Second Week: a preparation to new birth through following Christ

The exercitants, after having spent a weeklong experience of the purification from their disordered life (especially on the sin aspects), are brought to the Second Week of Exercises to be born anew by experiencing, imitating and generously following the life of Christ. While critically analysing the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, Charles J. Healy sees that these exercises have “a strong Christological thrust”³⁰⁰. Moreover, all the Exercises in the Second Week are designed and they revolve around following Jesus Christ. And this following of Christ “concentrates on those aspects of Jesus’ person and words and actions”³⁰¹ by doing which the exercitants evaluate their “needs and strength”³⁰² to express their disposition of following Christ freely. And at this juncture, the exercitants value their cost of discipleship by pondering, analysing, discerning their strength and desire to respond to the call of Christ and to be “ruled by the Lord and His plan”³⁰³. In other words, the exercitants are inspired to place their hearts and minds in the person of Christ. And this steps leads them further to be born as new persons and to be the imitators of Christ.

The fundamental aspect to carry out this goal is to “trust in God and in Jesus’ vision of what God wants”³⁰⁴ and deepening the “spirit of gratitude to Christ”³⁰⁵. This demands a resistance to say no to the negative elements of the past life of the exercitants, and to

²⁹⁹ (SE 98): «Es my determinación deliberada, sólo que sea vuestro mayor seruitio y alabanza, de imitaros en pasar todas iniurias y todo vituperio y toda pobreza, así actual como espiritual, queriéndome vuestra sanctísima maiestad elegir y recibir en tal vida y estado».

³⁰⁰ Healy, 32.

³⁰¹ William A. Barry. “The Experience of the First and Second Weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises*”. In *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, edited by David L. Fleming, S.J, 100. St. Louis, Mo: Review for Religious, 1983.

³⁰² Ibid. 100.

³⁰³ Ibid. 101.

³⁰⁴ Ibid. 101.

³⁰⁵ Healy, 32.

have a sense of inner disposition of emptying themselves through indifference, and to have the desire to know what God wants of them in their life.

In summary, the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* guides the exercitants to forgo their self-love, self-will and self-interest and to die to oneself in order to “commit themselves generously to the person and [to] the service of the Lord”³⁰⁶ by desiring to know what God wants of them from their life³⁰⁷.

The Structure of the Second Week

Analysing the composition of the Exercises, George E. Ganss divides the Second Week into three periods. He observes that the first period consists of the first three days with the contemplations of Incarnation and the hidden life of Jesus (SE 101-134). And all the five contemplations of the first period directs the exercitants to follow Christ in humility and poverty. The second period though consists of only one day, yet it has a definite and a lasting consequence in the life of the exercitants. The meditations on the Two Standards (SE 136-147) and Three Classes of Persons (SE 149-156) and the Preamble on Consideration of States of life (SE 135) orient the exercitants towards a sound election by freeing themselves from the inordinate attachments and to be filled with the love of God. Like a child who lives a free life by not worrying about anything the exercitants are invited to lead a life of freedom in Christ.

The third and final period of Second Week consist of “days 5 to 8 or up to day 12”³⁰⁸. About the formation of the exercises, George E. Ganss sees that there are “two interacting series of exercises [that] will be carried on parallel to each other”³⁰⁹. The first series of exercises start with the Baptism of Christ up to the contemplation on Palm Sunday (cf. SE 158-168) and the other series focus on “making a good election “(cf. SE 169-189) beginning with the explanation of “Three Ways of Being Humble” (SE 165-168). Overall, the structure of the Second Week is designed in such a way that the exercitants are inspired to choose the path that the Lord wants of them³¹⁰.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. 32.

³⁰⁷ Cf. Barry. “The Experience of the First and Second Weeks”, 100-101.

³⁰⁸ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 163.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. 173.

³¹⁰ Cf. Ibid. 162-163.

The Purpose of the Second Week

While analyzing the Exercises of the Second Week, we realize that very remarkably they are put before the exercitants with some special purposes. First of all, the key element in the Second Week is to know the earthly life of Jesus. The contemplation on the exercises particularly the “mysteries of Christ”³¹¹ (cf. SE 101-117, 132-133,134,158,161) is an invitation for the exercitants to come closer to Christ and to grow in the interior knowledge³¹² and to experience the “ardent love of Christ”³¹³ which is also preparation for the exercitants to be born in Christ and imitate his life and the manner he lived on earth.

To conclude, without a doubt, the mysteries of Christ help the exercitants who want to progress spiritually and to understand what it means to be born anew by experiencing intensely the mystery of Christ (God becoming human and living along with the broken humanity) and following Him “in being insulted and humiliated”³¹⁴. Besides this, the contemplations on the mystery of Christ help the exercitants to imbibe the attitude of Christ to see God and human beings and the world like the way Christ wants the exercitants to see³¹⁵.

3.4.1 The Relevance of the Second Week of Exercises towards a new life

While the Exercises of the First Week which have elaboratively highlighted the “fall of Adam and his descendants”³¹⁶ the Exercises of the Second Week progress towards another important aspect of Christian life: “the history of salvation”³¹⁷. The contemplations such as the Incarnation, Nativity, the hidden life of Jesus, and other contemplations (starting from the Baptism up to the Palm Sunday) which emphasise the

³¹¹ Healy, 33.

³¹² The interior knowledge here means that “it is not limited to someone’s external features such as age, height, etc., but goes farther to items such as his or her scale of values, opinions on the meaning of life, ideals, and the like. It is intimate and easily becomes suffused with love”: Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 163.

³¹³ Healy, 33.

³¹⁴ Philip Endean. “On Poverty with Christ Poor”. *The Way* 47 n. 1 (2008): 62.

³¹⁵ Cf. Healy, 33-39.

³¹⁶ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 162.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.* 162.

nature and life of Jesus, are projected as examples for the exercitants to know and imitate Christ by answering his call and be ready and diligent to accomplish his will (cf. SE 91). All these contemplations are tools that help the exercitants to experience the life of a person and invite them to be converted to Him.

Secondly, through the election process in the Second Week, the exercitants, in total freedom choose a state of life which is acceptable to God and which is also suitable for the exercitants to achieve their goal of loving and serving God through finding a new life in Christ (cf. SE 23). Thirdly, in the process of choice of life, it is observed that the autonomy of human freedom³¹⁸ is immensely respected: that the exercitants are not called to choose a life out of compulsion before God rather, it is supposed to be a generous choice from the part of the exercitants to show response to the greater magnanimity which they have experienced in the First Week through the forgiveness of God.

Fourthly, a few “subtle temptations”³¹⁹ caused either by “the devil with his deceits”³²⁰ or the temptations through “human weakness, likes, dislikes, or self-deceit”³²¹ (cf. SE 322,325,326,327) do not allow the exercitants to make sufficient progress. And so, rules for the discernment of spirits³²² (SE 328-336) would enable the exercitants to be watchful through their own reasoning and through getting help from the one who guides³²³ and above all from God to carry on the Exercises towards the goal of overcoming oneself (one’s attachments, ego, etc.) and to become childlike.

³¹⁸ Regarding the role of human freedom while responding to the call of Christ, the autonomy of the exercitants is still maintained and about this Santiago Arzubialde and José de Castro state, “God always respects the autonomy of human beings, while waiting for their response. God offers, but He does not coerce. This gives rise to a typically Ignatian oxymoron, and paradoxical in the extreme: ‘Everything depends solely on God, and at the same time, everything gravitates toward, or is left exclusively to, the autonomy of free personal decision’”: Arzubialde, García de Castro, eds. *El Autógrafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*, 74.

³¹⁹ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 166.

³²⁰ Ibid. 166.

³²¹ Ibid. 166.

³²² Cf. Manuel Ruiz Jurado. *El discernimiento espiritual*. Vol.4. Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores, 2015, 220-251.

³²³ Cf. Ibid. 166; see also. Costa Maurizio. “Dos Banderas”. In *DEI I*. 211-221.

3.5 Tools to sustain one's understanding, will and heart for a transformation³²⁴

In the Second Week, Ignatius proposes three specific Exercises for three explicit reasons. Firstly, it is the meditation on Two Standards which help the exercitants to make a choice of life by understanding and knowing the values of Christ and Satan; secondly, through the Exercise on the Three Classes of persons, the exercitants are inspired to offer their will while making efforts to feel indifferent to the material things; thirdly, through the Exercise of the Three Ways of Being Humble, Ignatius invites the exercitants to offer their heart to the Lord while constantly making efforts to grow in the love of God by offering their hearts to the Lord. Thus, knowing Christ and offering to Him one's will and heart signify the total surrendering of self. That through the act of emptying one's inordinate attachments and filling one's heart and mind with the knowledge of Christ would enable them to progress towards the path of being born anew.

3.5.1 New life through the understanding of Christ through the meditation on two standards

The purpose of three special meditations offered by Ignatius along with the contemplations on Christ's mystery in the Second Week are to orient the exercitants to choose a state of life to which they are called for. The elaborate explanation by Ignatius in the meditation on Two Standards³²⁵ help the exercitants to examine carefully about of the "individual strategies of Christ and Lucifer"³²⁶(cf. SE 139). The clear-cut positions taken by both Lucifer and Christ in the meditation enhances the exercitants not only to choose the state of life but also to live out the chosen life by dying to themselves daily

³²⁴ Cf. Iparraguirre, *Dirección de una Tanda de Ejercicios*, 41.

³²⁵ Through the meditation of Two Standards, Ignatius seems to break the contemplation on the life of Christ after the third day. After the hidden life of Christ, Ignatius includes the meditation of Two Standards. David L. Fleming, while giving reason for this interruption, he says that "the hidden life of Jesus at Nazareth and the incident of his being found in the temple at the age of twelve[SE 134] as an indication of life direction which each person faces before God[SE 135]". And the hidden life of Christ indicates which life he is called for and likewise, the Exercise of Two Standards help the exercitants to find a state of life to which they are called to choose (SE 135): Fleming. *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises*, 12.

³²⁶ Healy, 34.

(cf. Lk 9, 23). While commenting on the two ways mentioned by Ignatius, Charles J. Healy observes that both ways are distinguished in their very nature, and he describes thus:

“The way of Lucifer seeks to lead a person from the covering of riches to a desire for worldly honors, and then to a deeply rooted pride. From these ascending steps of riches, honor, and pride, one can then be led on to other vices. The way of Christ Our Lord counteracts each of these steps. It seeks to attract a person first to spiritual poverty and even *actual* poverty³²⁷ if it is God’s will. It then seeks to lead a person to an attraction and desire to seek insult and the contempt of the world, for these lead to true humility³²⁸. From these three steps of poverty, insults, and humility one can be led on to all other virtues”³²⁹.

The significance of choosing poverty, insults, and humility over riches, honor, and pride calls for the exercitants to renounce their ego, anger, and above all, it calls for forgoing themselves totally and being flamed by the love for Jesus. And in order to embrace Christ and His values, it is a must to get rid of the inordinate attachments and to focus on the “interior detachment”³³⁰ or “total emptiness before God”³³¹ by putting their providence in Him alone. And these aspects orient them to be a free person and help them to know the nature of Christ. At this point, it is needed to be highlighted that the act of true freedom does not take place immediately; rather, it matures slowly and gradually. Therefore, detaching oneself and being born anew does not happen suddenly; rather it goes through a period of maturing and gradual progressing³³².

3.5.2 New Life through Submission of Will through the Meditation of Three classes of Persons

In accordance with the meditation of Two Standards, another meditation namely, “The

³²⁷ “Actual poverty is the lack of material goods; spiritual poverty is detachment from them whether one has them or not. It also includes our emptiness before God and need of him for spiritual progress”: Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 161.

³²⁸ To identify the difference between true and false humility, William A. McCormick offers some suggestions based on the life experience of Ignatius. In the letters to Teresa Rejadell, Ignatius seemed to have mentioned to her about false humility as the devil’s snare and it brings a hindrance in the spiritual life of people who intend to advance. Moreover, William sees that “ false humility leads one to doubt one’s very desire to serve God, because that desire itself appears as an arrogant, proud self-assertion. But if one doubts such desires, then one cannot cooperate with God, and thus one rejects the cornerstone of Ignatian spirituality”: William A. McCormick. “ A Continual Sacrifice to the Glory of God”: Ignatian Magnanimity as Cooperation with the Divine. *Studies In the Spirituality of Jesuits* 50 n.3 (2018), 18.

³²⁹ Healy, 35.

³³⁰ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 168.

³³¹ Ibid. 169.

³³² Maurice Giuliani. *La experiencia de los Ejercicios Espirituales en la vida*. Bilbao: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 2016, 99.

meditation on the Three Classes of Persons”(SE 149-156) invites the exercitants to be immersed by the teaching and to respond to the call of Christ. The goal and the aim of this meditation is “to help the exercitant toward embracing what is better for herself or himself”³³³ through election and “by confirming and perfecting the indifference acquired in the Foundation”³³⁴ (cf. SE 23). E. Iglesias, while explaining the purpose of the meditation he says that this meditation is not only to illustrate the understanding or to move one’s will, but it is also to illuminate, move, teach and impel the exercitants³³⁵. In other words, it is to examine one’s disposition and to follow Christ as a model “accompanied by a readiness and freedom of will”³³⁶.

And further, this meditation intends to create an intense desire for freedom, and not to listen to one’s own impulse but to listen to one’s own conscience in the light of God’s call in their life. Moreover, the exercitants are invited to work against their own compromise and insecurity, and to create a generous devotion to know the will of God, by getting rid of the inordinate affection and finding God in peace³³⁷.

Classifying the three types of people in the Exercise (cf. SE 149-157), P. Michael regards the first type as postponers, the second type as compromisers and the third type as wholeheartedly indifferent³³⁸. The wisdom of Ignatius in distinguishing the types of people in fact could be applicable to all humanity. The first class of the person sees one’s inordinate attachment very clearly, yet does nothing³³⁹. In other words, one desires a lot but does not let one’s desire result into action. That probably one does not want but one only desires³⁴⁰. And this kind of attitude becomes a hindrance for him to be born anew like the way Jesus wants of oneself.

The second type of person, even though, one wants to get rid of his attachment, finds it difficult to be at the state of peace and to be born new with this approach. Regarding

³³³ Ibid. 169.

³³⁴ Ibid. 169.

³³⁵ Cf. E. Iglesias. “Algunas consideraciones sobre el Libro de los Ejercicios”. *Manresa* 30 (1932): 97.

³³⁶ Healy, 35.

³³⁷ Cf. Michael. “Three Classes of Men”. *Ignis* 38 n.4 (2008):43-44

³³⁸ Ibid. 41.

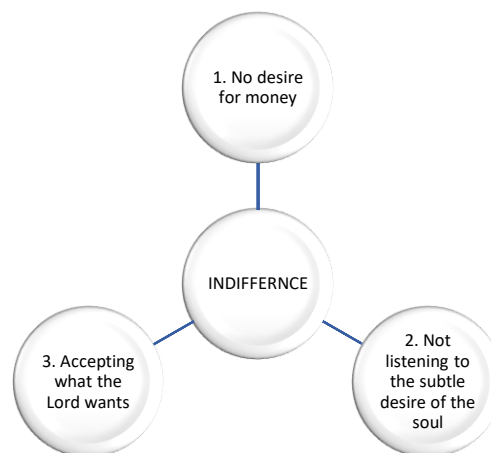
³³⁹ Iglesias. “Algunas consideraciones” 100.

³⁴⁰ Here, the wisdom of Ignatius is to be noted while commenting on the terms want and desire. E. Iglesias, looking through the understanding of Ignatius, he differentiates the terms want and desire. He says that the notion of want means a fully deliberate act of will, even when there is no favourable emotional impulse; and further, even when there are repugnance. Meanwhile, desire is seen as an affective impulse with or without action: Iglesias. “Algunas consideraciones”, 99.

the attitude of the second type Ignatius marks as the one who “also desires to get rid of the attachment, but in such a way that she or he will keep the acquired money; and that thus God will come to where this person desires”(SE 154). In other words, even though one does not differ from the choice of life or reformation one has made, yet one shows his limitation over God’s will³⁴¹. The danger here would be that the nature of this kind never would be available to be at the disposition of God; rather one would always want to compromise with God in whatever decision that he makes. The biblical reference about the response of the persons like “ Lord, let me go and bury my father”(Mt 8,21), “I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home” (Lk 9,61), the unwillingness of Nathan to go to the river Jordan to wash to be healed (cf. 2 Kg 5,12) are examples the nature of persons who though they know what the Lord wants of them yet they are bound by hindrances of the world and finally they are led to the rejection of inner transformation of being moulded in the spirit of Jesus.

While comparing the third type of persons with the other two types, three attitudinal transformations can be observed in their approach. Firstly, though initially this type of persons have desire to have money like the other two types of persons, yet the desire vanishes (cf. SE 155) because of their disposition. And there is a change in their attitude towards money or their attachment: that they will not consent to their attachment unless they are moved by God’s will. Secondly, they will not listen to the hidden and subtle desire of their soul which induces them to keep the money. Thirdly, they want to embrace what the Lord wants from them. And finally, they decide to serve God more(cf. SE 155).

Fig.7: The attitudinal change in the third type of person



³⁴¹Cf. M. A. Fiorito. *Buscar y hallar la Voluntad de Dios. Comentario práctico a los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio de Loyola*. Tome I & II. Ediciones Diego de Torres, 1998. 27.

A fundamental aspect that persons of the third type possess while making the decision: it is the state of indifference³⁴². As the Second Week of the Exercises emphasizes mainly on mysteries of the life Jesus, the life of Jesus could be considered as a fitting example for the notion of indifference. The preaching of Jesus (“seek first his kingdom and his righteousness”(Mt 6,33), His call, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.”(Lk 9,23-24), and the prayer to His Father in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Father, if you are willing, remove this chalice from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours, be done”(Lk 22,42), and His death on the cross, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit!”(Lk 23,46) are a few examples where Jesus not only preached about seeking God’s will, but also lived it accordingly. And thus the message is clear that to be in the service of Jesus the notion of indifference is a must and this aspect would make a person like someone who is ready and available to do the will of God by surrendering one’s will to the will of Jesus.

3.5.3 New life through surrendering one’s heart through three ways of humility

The third aspect which emphasises on “considering an election³⁴³ or a choice of life”³⁴⁴ along with the two meditations (Two Standards and Three Classes of Persons) is known as “Three Ways of Being Humble”(SE 165-168)³⁴⁵. The purpose of this Exercise is “to be identified with Christ as closely as possible”³⁴⁶. And so, in order to fulfil this purpose, the exercitants are inspired to express a “spirit of generosity and magnanimity”³⁴⁷ and to surrender their heart to Christ like that of a child seems to be ready to do everything even if it finds it difficult to do so. George E. Ganss while describing about the uniqueness of

³⁴² George E. Ganss, while describing the meaning of indifference, he says that indifference is something which is “undetermined to one thing or option rather than another; impartial; biased; with decision suspended until the reasons for a wise choice are learned; still undecided”: Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 151.

³⁴³ The purpose of election as Gilles Cusson describes is to be “truly associated with Christ in the accomplishment of his mission of salvation....[and] to prepare oneself conscientiously, with God’s grace, to live the Christian experience in a preeminent way, that of the paschal mystery”: Gilles Cusson. *Biblical Theology And The Spiritual Exercises*. Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994, 280; cf. Alfredo Sampaio Costa. “Elección”. In *DEI I*. 726-733.

³⁴⁴ Healy, 36.

³⁴⁵ “In the Autograph text, A, Ignatius used in 164 *tres maneras de humildad*, which can be translated accurately as ‘three kinds’ or ‘three manners’ of humility, or ‘three ways of being humble’. The Latin version used in Paris in 1534 calls them *tres species humilitatis*. ‘three species of humility’ and the Vulgate of 1548 *tres modos*, ‘kinds’ or ‘sorts’ of humility”: Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 174.

³⁴⁶ Healy, 36.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 36.

the Three Ways of Being Humble, he says:

“Ignatius’ concept of Three Ways of Being Lovingly Humble is an important characteristic of his spirituality. He presents it, not in the form of a meditation or contemplation, but as a consideration which is to pervade the exercises, and also the time between them, on all the coming days devoted to the election”³⁴⁸.

While analysing the points of the meditation on the three ways of humbling oneself, it is clear that each way makes one to progress towards their spiritual transformation. While the first way invites the exercitants to be pure of heart by not violating the commandment “either human or divine” (SE 166), the second way calls for bettering the previous way³⁴⁹ by keeping oneself free from venial sin (cf. SE 166). This way also calls for an attention of the “spirit of freedom and indifference”³⁵⁰ which is mentioned in the Principle and Foundation (cf. SE 23). This means the exercitants are called to orient their thought pattern while choosing what they want in their life in the light of following Christ.

And further, Ignatius, while commenting on this choice he says, “I do not desire or feel strongly attached to having wealth rather than poverty, or honor rather than dishonour, or a long life rather than a short one”(SE 166). Perhaps, the second way of humbling could lead the exercitants to look for the possibilities of dying themselves to their ego, and any small act that would harm the loving relationship with the Lord. And the choice made by the exercitants to go against the natural human tendency (such as going against wealth, honor and long life) makes them feel indifference and spiritual freedom. And these spiritual developments are nothing but an invitation to the exercitants to be dying to the untrue nature.

While comparing the Third Way of Humbling³⁵¹ [about which Ignatius describes as “most perfect” (SE 167)] with the previous two ways it is observed that the third way surpasses the other two previous ways³⁵². This way invites the exercitants to desire and to choose concretely what they want in their life in order “to be [as] closely identified with Christ as possible”³⁵³. And the choice that the exercitants are inspired to adhere is

³⁴⁸ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 174.

³⁴⁹ “Ignatius’ first and second degrees are concerned “with obedience to God’s laws”: Ibid. 175.

³⁵⁰ Healy, 36.

³⁵¹ George E. Ganss compares the degree of humility prescribed by Ignatius to the twelfth step of humility mentioned in the rule book of St. Benedict and both indicate rising “above law into love”: cf. Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 174.

³⁵² About the expectation of the people belonging to this type George E. Ganss describes them as people who have indifference like that of the second type, yet they surpass the second type through “speaking the language of love”: Ibid. 175.

³⁵³ Healy, 36.

very noble, praiseworthy, and satisfying and about this Ignatius describes,

«Quiero y elijo más pobreza con Xpo pobre que riqueza, oprobrios con Xpo lleno dellos que honores, y desear más de ser estimado por vano y loco por Xpo, que primero fue tenido por tal, que por sabio y prudente en este mundo»(SE 168).

To conclude, the Exercise of Three Ways of Humility is set before the exercitants to free themselves from their possession; and to be willing to be unrecognised and ready to be regarded as ‘*anawim*’. These are the characteristics that a child possesses (as it was dealt in the first chapter). And therefore, it is appropriate to say that the three special exercises make the exercitants to progress towards the path of being born anew.

3.6 Election³⁵⁴: a means to be fruitful in his kingdom

After having given the three “Special Exercises”³⁵⁵(Two Standards, Three Classes of Persons, Three Ways of Being Humble), Ignatius invites the exercitants to choose the means (the state of life: married life, religious life), in order to orient their life to achieve the end which is the service of God (SE 169). In this light, the exercitants are encouraged to choose a state of life through which they may serve the Lord in a better way.

The three times suitable for “making a sound and good election”(SE 175-177) that Ignatius offers to the exercitants brings them clarity to choose to which state of life God wants of them. While mentioning the first time of making an election, Ignatius says that “God our Lord moves and attracts the will” (SE 175) in such a way that there remains no

³⁵⁴ In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius uses only two states of life: 1. observing the commandments (life in the world) and search for evangelical perfection (religious life). And many modern thinkers believe that these two categories are not so convincing. George E. Ganss elaborates the state of life from two to four: firstly as married person; secondly, as single person in the world; thirdly, as a diocesan priest and fourthly as religious life as a priest, brother or sister: Cf. Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 166.

In the election, Ignatius speaks only about the state of life (cf. SE 135). But in our times, we can get broad glimpse of what election is. Through election we are exercising our freedom by saying no to what enslaves us which is sin (First Week) and to say yes to what liberates us (Jn 1,32) which is the truth and this truth is Christ (Jn 14,6) (Second Week: Contemplation of mysteries of the life of Christ as a means to come to an election). And by choosing the life in Christ we reshape our life through the passion of Christ (Third Week) and through the resurrection of Jesus (Fourth Week) just becoming more and more similar to Him.

³⁵⁵ Ibid. 34.

doubt in the person if he has taken the right decision or not³⁵⁶. By using the example of St. Paul (cf. Acts 9,15; 22,21; 26, 17-18) and St. Matthew (cf. Mt 9:9), Ignatius helps the exercitants to which direction, God calls them to serve (cf. SE 176).

In the second time of making election, Ignatius wants the exercitants to become aware of their experiences of consolations and desolations³⁵⁷, and the experience through discerning various spirits(cf. SE 176)³⁵⁸. Based on the experiences they receive adequate clarity and understanding to see in which direction the Lord wants the exercitants to proceed. And the attitude of the exercitants at this stage is to be “of constant openness and readiness to pick up the signals which the Lord is sending as regards God’s will”³⁵⁹. About the movement of spirits, George E. Ganss advises the exercitants to be careful of the “danger of illusion or self-deception”³⁶⁰. He says that during the experiences (illusion and self-deception), “the will often proceeds the intellect”³⁶¹.

The third time of making an election about which Ignatius refers as a time of “tranquillity”(SE 177). This tranquillity means that the soul is in a balanced state and not being inclined to any particular way. In this type, the exercitants use their “natural faculties in freedom and peace”(SE 177). And further, it is to be kept in mind that the state of life which is chosen by the exercitants is to be “within the limit of the Church”(SE 177). While critically evaluating the three ways, Alfredo Sampaio Costa regards the election during the third time as “safest path towards a good election”³⁶².

When the exercitants find it difficult to arrive at the conclusion during the first and second time, Ignatius offers two methods of “making a sound and good election” (SE

³⁵⁶ Alfredo Sampaio Costa suggests the “one giving the Exercises must check whether or not this first ‘time’ is happening. It is a matter, then, of something to be received from God as a gift, as grace”: Alfredo Sampaio Costa. “The ‘Times’ of Ignatian Election”. *The Way* 42 n. 4 (2003), 80.

³⁵⁷ “Authentic spiritual consolations are those that, from the beginning to the end of the feeling, and not including any decisions or conclusions that are subsequently drawn from that affective state once the state is over, encourage deeper love and trust in God. *Deceptive spiritual consolations* are those spiritual consolations that appear at the beginning to encourage deeper love for and trust in God but which, at some point during the occurrence of the feeling, start to include thoughts that encourage the person to turn away from God”: Brian O. McDermott. “Spiritual Consolation and its Role in the Second Time of Election”. *Studies In the Spirituality of Jesuits* 50 n.4 (2018), 16; see also. Michael J. Buckley. “Discernimiento”. In *DEI I*, 607-611.

³⁵⁸ Brian O. McDermott while pointing out the spiritual consolation and desolation he sees that such experiences are experienced by those “who are seriously invested in nurturing their relationship with God and collaborating with God’s project in the world”: Brian O. McDermott. “Spiritual Consolation and its Role in the Second Time of Election”. *Studies In the Spirituality of Jesuits* 50 n.4 (2018), 14.

³⁵⁹ Sampaio Costa. “The ‘Times’ of Ignatian Election”, 81.

³⁶⁰ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 177.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.* 177.

³⁶² Sampaio Costa. “The ‘Times’ of Ignatian Election”, 84.

178). In the first method, the exercitants ponder calmly over the matter about which they wish to make a decision. The essential aspect that demands from the exercitants in the first method of election is the disposition of being indifferent: that they are free from “any disordered affection” (SE 179) and they are not moved by their own desire. After carefully weighing the advantages³⁶³ and the disadvantages, or weighing the pros and cons of the matter the exercitants wish to arrive at a decision. Having completed the reasoning of both the sides (advantages and disadvantages) and making the decision, the exercitants bring it before the Lord to be received and confirmed by the Lord (cf. SE 183).

The second method of election invites the exercitants to use their imagination with three specific examples. Firstly, the exercitants imagine how they would give advice to a stranger for perfection in his life and they intend to practise the same advice for themselves. Secondly, the exercitants imagine themselves at their deathbed and consider their present decision with a future perspective. Thirdly, they imagine themselves on the judgement day and the decision they make would be based on the current state of life with an influence for the future. And thus they find “complete contentment and joy”(SE 187).

While critically analysing the election process, the goal of the Exercise is very clear that exercitants are called to serve the Lord through the means of choosing an appropriate life. Appropriating the election process in our time in the 21st century, perhaps the method could be applied in the daily life and to seek what the Lord wants of them (cf. Mt 6,33) and consequently, this practice prepares them to be born anew.

3.7 The Passion and Resurrection: transformation through “compassion”³⁶⁴ and “confirmation”³⁶⁵

How would anyone know how to be born anew in Christ and to imitate him? To understand this notion of being born in Christ, one must understand the person of Jesus not just through his ministry and public life (Second Week) but also through the Passion Mysteries. While deeply pondering over the Third Week, it is perceived that the exercises

³⁶³ The advantage here would signify that the exercitants consider that everything is for the praise of God and for the salvation of one’s soul (SE 181).

³⁶⁴ Ivens, 147.

³⁶⁵ Healy, 39.

draw the exercitants closer to Christ by journeying with him in his suffering. In other words, analysing the exercises of the Third Week in a broader sense, the exercises orient the exercitants to contemplate the Paschal Mystery³⁶⁶ of our Lord. By contemplating the passion, suffering, and death of Jesus, the exercitants are called to confirm their choice³⁶⁷ or the election that they have made in the Second Week and to live “as a genuine disciple of Christ”³⁶⁸. And at this level, the exercitants do not just stay at the level of “sympathy and sentiment”³⁶⁹; rather they are inspired to rise above this level to a “level of existential communion”³⁷⁰ by participating and experiencing His Passion.

What comparison could be drawn between the Second and Third Week of the Exercises? While assessing the Second and the Third week, Michael Ivens calls the phase between them as a period of “transition”³⁷¹. That there is a parallel shift in the exercises of the second and third week where the attention shifts “from the mysteries of the rest of Our Lord’s life to the culmination of that life in the Passion and Death”³⁷². That through the significant grace³⁷³ which is prayed in the third week directly orients the exercitants to focus from the “*external* graces of knowledge, love and committed relationship”³⁷⁴ to “graces of a more immediately participatory sort”³⁷⁵ like sharing interiorly the suffering of Christ³⁷⁶. This ultimately invites the exercitants to be the participators in his suffering. Meissner, while drawing parallel with “one’s death to the suffering and death of Christ³⁷⁷”, he connects the meditation of sin of the First Week (cf. SE 55-61) with the

³⁶⁶ “Ignatius did not use the term ‘paschal mystery’ but the reality it expresses is manifestly the very substance of what he proposes for contemplation in the Third and Fourth Week”: Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 180.

³⁶⁷ Michael Ivens while mentioning about the confirmation of choice he says that “*confirmation* being understood now not as a verifying of the choice but as a strengthening of the chooser [the exercitants]”: Ivens, 147.

³⁶⁸ Cusson, *Biblical Theology*, 282.

³⁶⁹ Gilles Cusson. *The Spiritual Exercises Made in Everyday Life: A Method and a Biblical Interpretation*. Gujarat: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1992, 108.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.* 108.

³⁷¹ Ivens, 146.

³⁷² Meissner, 226.

³⁷³ Basically Ignatius in the third week offers two special graces. Firstly, it is “to ask for sorrow, regret, and confusion, because the Lord is going to his Passion for my sins”(SE, 193). Secondly, the same grace is extended more personally and intensely: that the exercitants are encouraged to ask the grace of feeling “sorrow with Christ in sorrow; a broken spirit with Christ so broken; tears; and interior suffering because of the great suffering which Christ endured for me”(SE, 203).

³⁷⁴ Ivens, 146.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 146.

³⁷⁶ Cf. Healy, 39.

³⁷⁷ Meissner, 227. He sheds light on it further, “Christ’s suffering becomes our own, and only through union with his suffering does love deliver us from evil and make our sufferings redemptive. The

contemplation of Christ's death of the third week (cf. SE 208). This correlation would signify that "through union and identification with Christ's suffering and dying"³⁷⁸, the exercitants also share in "Christ's ultimate victory over death and sin"³⁷⁹. In other words, following Christ would signify being born anew by letting the old and impure self to die.

3.7.1 New life in Christ through suffering with Christ through the Third Week

Michael Ivens, while comparing the Exercises of the Third Week, he links them (cf. SE 190-208) to a "journey"³⁸⁰ of Jesus to his Passion with the journey where the pregnant Mary carried Jesus from Nazareth to Bethlehem (cf. SE 112). While Examining the grace of the first contemplation (of the Third Week), "to ask for sorrow, regret, and confusion, because the Lord is going to his Passion for my sins"(SE 193), it could be noted that the grace of this contemplation has a resonance with the second prelude of first meditation of the First Week³⁸¹ which says: "I in a contemplation on the Passion, I will ask for pain, tears, and suffering with Christ suffering"(SE 48)³⁸². Though there is a big difference in the attention given to the person: unlike the First Week, in the Third Week the attention is concentrated on Christ himself and therefore, the grief that the exercitants go through is not due to their own sins but due to the sufferings endured by Christ because of the sins of the exercitants.³⁸³

Moreover, the choice that Christ made to offer himself voluntarily to do the will of God through suffering shows His commitment and importance to the mission that He has been offered (to suffer for the sin of humanity [SE 197]). By stating how Christ carried

election itself involves a conversion, a turning from sin to grace, from self-absorption to love, from sinfulness to forgiveness": Ibid. 227.

³⁷⁸ Ibid. 227.

³⁷⁹ Ibid. 227.

³⁸⁰ "The exercitant prepares for the contemplation of Christ's journey through the Passion by imaginatively constructing two real roads, this and the road to the valley of Josaphat[202]. The language is reminiscent of the second prelude of the Nativity Contemplation at the beginning of the Second Week[112]": Ivens, 151.

³⁸¹ Michal Ivens, while comparing the grace of the first contemplation with that of first week, he does not fail to emphasise the difference in both and he sees that the grace of the first week "however, even while returning to that of the First Week, at the same time subtly develops it, in that attention now centres more upon Christ for himself, and the sentiments are more those of friendship. The cause of confusion, regret, and grief is not so much that my sins have merited my death, as that they are cause of Christ's death": Ibid. 151.

³⁸² Cf. Ivens, 151.

³⁸³ Ibid. 151.

out his mission by hiding his divinity (cf. SE 196) Ignatius perhaps communicates to the exercitants to choose a path which is not easy or comfort; rather, by contemplating the passion of Christ, one may draw inspiration from Him and to labour for Him³⁸⁴. And this correlates the invitation in Contemplation of the Kingdom Christ where Jesus recommends that whoever desires to come with him must labour with him in the pain in order to follow him in glory (cf. SE 95), and one such way to labour with him concretely is through choosing actual poverty, desire of reproaches and contempt as mentioned in the Two Standards (cf. SE 146)³⁸⁵. And thus, after having learnt and personalised Christ's suffering (for one's own sins), the exercitants are left with a choice: that is to follow Christ and to journey with Him in accomplishing His mission and on account of it they are prepared to accept and bear all sorrows and hardships. And this is perhaps the response that the exercitants give to themselves for the question they are inspired to ask themselves: "What ought I do to suffer for him?" (SE 197). After having gone through the process of election and desiring to live a life of self-emptying, the exercitants are made to desire to do something concrete for Christ.

The second contemplation (SE 200-207) invites the exercitants to carry on their journey in participating in the Passion of the Lord (from Mount Sion up to the arrest of Jesus). The purpose of this Exercise is the personalization of God's love and sacrifice. The petition concludes with the phrase "the great suffering which Christ endured for me"(SE 203). The personalization of Christ's sacrifice leads the exercitants to experience intensely the love of Jesus for them and orient them to focus their approach of labouring with Him. By using "the application of senses"³⁸⁶, Ignatius invites the exercitants "not only consider, but experience, with Christ the sense of lonesomeness and forsakenness that go with his separation from the Father who has abandoned him to suffer this agony"³⁸⁷ in the remaining Exercises of the contemplation of the Lord's Passion as well (cf. 208-209).

While contemplating the Exercises, the focus is shifted (like the previous Exercise) from the suffering of the exercitants to the suffering of Christ. And the grace of this particular contemplation "sorrow with Christ in sorrow"(SE 203) again reminds

³⁸⁴ Cf. Ibid. 152.

³⁸⁵ Cf. Ibid. 150-153.

³⁸⁶ George E. Ganss describes the method of application of the five senses (cf. SE, 121-126) as less fatiguing than meditation and contemplation. He also encourages to do this method in the evening when the exercitants are presumably tired : Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 164.

³⁸⁷ Meissner, 230

exercitants of the asking for “pain, tears, and suffering with Christ suffering”(SE 48) of the first Exercises of the First Week. And the personalization of suffering of Christ from the Third Week of Exercises inspires the Exercitants not only to feel sorry with Christ sorrowful but also motivates them what they ought to do for Christ. And this noble thought eventually enhances them to look for doing the will of God by dying to their own passion and desire.

3.7.2 Rising with Christ through the Fourth Week

The Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* takes a big shift from the Third Week of the exercises: that at the this stage, the transformation or the feelings of the exercitants changes from sorrow to joyful; from participating the suffering of Christ to rejoicing with the risen Christ³⁸⁸; from being identified with Christ who is contempt and humiliated to experiencing inseparable union with God; from meditating the hidden divinity of Christ during the Passion to meditating the divinity in the holy Resurrection (cf. SE 223)³⁸⁹. Antonio Guillén while describing the purpose of the Fourth Week he says that the objective of the exercitants is to come down from head to the heart, and from the heart to the life³⁹⁰. Meanwhile Gilles Cusson describes that the joy of Christ in the Fourth Week has a missiological approach and he states:

“His joy [Jesus’], which is essentially apostolic [and], it is about the Kingdom accomplished on this day, about the new life transmitted to the entire world, that has finally become capable, in principle at least, of accepting it and of communicating with God”.

Furthermore, in the Fourth Week, the exercitants experience the new life in Christ through realising oneself “bathed in the rays of Christ’s joy”³⁹¹ and their soul “ finds assurance of faith and confirmation of hope”³⁹².

What must be the prerequisite to enter into the joy of Risen Christ? During the contemplation on Resurrection of Christ, the exercitants are invited “to be present to the

³⁸⁸ Gilles Cusson, while referring the joy in the Fourth Week, he says that this joy is not merely psychological joy rather, it is like the joy of a convalescent person who is returning to health or like that of a person who has successfully completed a difficult task: Cusson, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 116.

³⁸⁹ Cf. Meissner, 232.

³⁹⁰ Cf. Antonio Guillén. “Directorio breve sobre la Charta Semana”. *Manresa* vol. 88, n.347 (2016):189.

³⁹¹ Cusson, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 117.

³⁹² Meissner, 232.

total victory of life and love in Jesus”³⁹³. This is possible when the exercitants die to their “self-love, self-will and self-interests” (SE 189) and rise with Christ in his love. The first contemplation of Christ appearing to our Lady first after the resurrection though it is “beyond theological considerations”³⁹⁴, yet it has a definitive significance. W.W. Meissner sees Christ’s appearance to Mary³⁹⁵ as the reunion between “the suffering son and the grieving mother”³⁹⁶. In the light of experiencing the bond of Jesus with Mary on His appearance, the exercitants also perhaps could personalize the resurrected experience of Jesus between themselves and the risen Christ. Like Mary who experienced the “joy of reunion”³⁹⁷, the exercitants are inspired to do the same by asking the grace: “to be glad and to rejoice intensely because of the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord” (SE 221). The exercitants who have truly gone through the Third Week of Exercises by experiencing sorrow with Christ sorrowful, would definitely personalize the resurrection experience of Christ in their life. And through this intense feeling, when they come out of the Exercises, they try to find ways and means living up the resurrection experience of peace, joy and love with themselves and with others.

Moreover, all the contemplations of the Fourth Week (all the mysteries of Resurrection up to the Ascension [SE 299-312]) invite the exercitants to transform the spiritual experiences into action. Like a child that grows gradually, the exercitants who after having identified their life with Christ during the 30 days of intense spiritual journey, they are motivated to convert the experiences into action by fulfilling the mission command of Christ which he gave before his ascension (cf. SE 307).

And Gilles Cusson while highlighting the mission of Christ, he says that mission inspires the exercitants “being sent forth to the humble, daily task of building up the Body in the Spirit, this Body which is the Church, the whole Christ living in the midst of the world”³⁹⁸. And so, at the end of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the expectation from the exercitants is to be transformed and liberated persons like a child which is newly reborn. And so, the transformed exercitants are invited to live their life like a child doing their daily task with sincerity and commitment and living up their life as Christ wants. This

³⁹³ Cusson, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 117.

³⁹⁴ Meissner, 233.

³⁹⁵ “Christ’s apparition to Mary is not found in Scripture, but it is an opinion prominent in a long tradition of Christian writers. It is found in ch. 70 of the Life of Christ by Ludolph, and Ignatius may have accepted it from him”: Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 182.

³⁹⁶ Meissner, 233.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. 234.

³⁹⁸ Cusson, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 119.

approach would eventually prepare them to be born anew in His Kingdom.

3.7.3 The relevance of the Third and Fourth Week

The Third and Fourth Week of the Exercises invite the exercitants to continue their spiritual journey with Christ and through the participation and rising with Him as new creatures. While analyzing the contemplations of the Third Week, the exercitants have an opportunity to journey with Christ and to participate in his Passion very closely. Secondly, through this participation of Christ's suffering, the exercitants are able to understand the mystery of the redemptive value and by knowing this mystery, they are encouraged to participate in the mission of Christ by labouring with him (cf. SE 95). Thirdly, the active participation in the sorrow with Christ sorrow makes the exercitants to be absorbed by the life of Christ which eventually inspires them to become like Christ.

Analysing the Fourth Week, the Exercises invite the exercitants to rise to a level of action. That the resurrection of Christ makes the exercitants to be absorbed in offering themselves in the service of God and His Kingdom. And in order to fulfil this, they discern all those aspects which prevent them "from total surrender to Christ, to love, and to eternal life"³⁹⁹. Secondly, the resurrection of Christ calls the exercitants to be committed and to be witnesses to Christ. Like the Samaritan woman who gave testimony to Christ that He is the Messiah, the exercitants who have experienced the risen Christ in their lives through the Fourth Week are invited to be transformed as his messengers through participating in His mission and labouring with Him (cf. SE 95) in total freedom.

3.8 Preparation to be born anew through Practical Exercises

What could the exercitants draw from the *Spiritual Exercises* during and after the Exercises? While analysing the Exercises of the book, it could be observed that the *Spiritual Exercises* are not supposed to be a finished project; rather, it is an on-going process in daily life. In this light, Ignatius offers a few methods to continue the spiritual nourishment which has been received during the *Spiritual Exercises* and for the sustenance of one's spiritual progress. Among many, I feel following four methods are

³⁹⁹ Cusson, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 117.

significant to be observed and to grow in one's life spiritually. Firstly, it is through the Examinations of Consciences to progress in the path of being born anew daily; secondly, it is through the Three Methods of praying, to draw many fruits based on one's ability⁴⁰⁰; thirdly, it is through the Discernment process to discern the will of God and to have the awareness of the spirits; fourthly, it is through the Contemplation to attain Love (SE 230) to find God in all things.

3.8.1 New life through praying

Highlighting the First Method of Praying which is also known as "light exercise"⁴⁰¹, it is seen that this Method is for the "simple and illiterate persons who are unqualified for the full Exercises"⁴⁰². And the Preparatory Prayer very clearly puts before the persons what they are expected to achieve in this method of praying and this is how they pray: that "I will ask our Lord that I may be able to know how I have failed against the ten commandments. Similarly I will ask for grace and aid to amend myself for the future"(SE 240). To say that the purpose of introducing the simple method (Ten Commandments, Capital Sins, Three Powers of the Soul, Five Senses of the Body: cf. SE 239-248) is to help the exercitants to make progress based on their capability as mentioned in the Annotations 18 and 19. Moreover, these prayers are helpful for the exercitants to make gradual progress in their life by carrying out their day today activities which eventually results into new creatures.

The Second Method of Praying which is comparatively advanced from the First Method of Praying. This method "consists in contemplating each word of a prayer"⁴⁰³. Along with the First Method, this method is prescribed with a few additional prayers (Hail Mary, Creed, Soul of Christ, Hail Holy Queen). The purpose of contemplating every word of the prescribed prayer is "not to hurry on to complete the prayer, but to savor and relish the significance of each individual word"⁴⁰⁴. Carlos Coupeau, commenting on the Second

⁴⁰⁰ Though these methods help the exercitants, yet Ignatius categorises these methods of prayer for different group of people (mainly both beginners and those who are in the advanced state). About this, Ignatius mentions in the 18th Annotation classifying the Exercises based on "age, education, and ability" (SE 18).

⁴⁰¹ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 186.

⁴⁰² *Ibid.* 186.

⁴⁰³ Healy, 54.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 55.

Method of Praying, says that the intention is not supposed to be on the repetition of the sentences, but it is supposed to be based on the three dimensions: understanding (mind), taste (body), and consolation (spirit)⁴⁰⁵.

The Third Method of Praying which is also known as “‘rhythmic’ prayer”⁴⁰⁶ through which Ignatius offers exercitants to make one’s breath as a means to pray. Besides the guidelines offered in the *Spiritual Exercises* on how to do this method of prayer (cf. SE 259-260), Ignatius iterates the importance of keeping oneself close to God by not going against His love. In other words, the exercitants reflect on the meaning of the word between each breath and “reflects especially on the meaning of that word, or on the person whom the prayer is being recited...”(SE 258). This method also pays attention to whom it is addressed (cf. SE 258).

To conclude, all the Three Methods of praying in some or other way help and prepare the exercitants to be in touch with oneself and to examine their day today activities by which they live a spontaneous life like a child.

3.8.2 New Life through discerning daily life activities

Ignatius, based on his very life experiences, offers a few key points in the *Spiritual Exercises* to perceive and to probe the different spirits that act in the persons. The early experiences that are noted in the *Autobiography* shows how Ignatius himself was moved by various motions⁴⁰⁷ while he was convalescing in Loyola and how later he was able to discern the difference of spirits (good and bad) and eventually he was able to master himself. Using his own experiences of the movement of the spirits in him, he systematically arranges the set of rules for the First (SE 313-327) and Second Week (SE 328-336)⁴⁰⁸.

While understanding the importance and the significance of the Rules for the First

⁴⁰⁵ Cf. Carlos Coupeau. “Una alternativa Ignaciana poco utilizada: Tres modos de orar”. *Manresa* 81 (2009):160.

⁴⁰⁶ Healy, 55.

⁴⁰⁷ “In Ignatius’ usage this word [motions] usually has a technical meaning: the interior experiences in the soul. They can be acts of the intellect (e.g., thoughts, lines of reasoning, imaginings, etc.); or of the will (such as love, hate, desire, fear, etc.); or of affective feelings, impulses, inclinations, or urges (such as peace, warm, coldness, consolation, desolation, etc.)”: Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 191.

⁴⁰⁸ Santiago Arzubialde and José García observe that Contemplation to attain love, Rules for thinking with the Church acts as “Rules being the kind of discernment that is proper to the Fourth Week”: Arzubialde, García de Castro, eds. *El Autógrafo de los Ejercicios espirituales*, 80.

Week, George E. Ganss observes that these rules “are concerned especially with the experience of spiritual desolation and way of coping with it to avoid deviation from pursuit of the end, salvation. They are particularly applicable to the purgative way”⁴⁰⁹. The fourteen sets of rules for discernment of the First Week help the exercitants to become aware of the tactics of the evil spirit and orient their lives by not falling in the snares of the evil power.

While analysing the significance of the Rules for the Second Week, George E. Ganss observes that the eight rules are set to identify the “emotions caused by the evil spirit using his deceptive tactics during the time of election”⁴¹⁰. He further says that “this set of rules [Rules for the Second Week] is applicable to the illuminative and unitive ways, and deals chiefly with demonic deceptions during the journey to the goal, the greater glory of God”⁴¹¹.

What could the Rules for Discernment offer to the exercitants in the process of being born anew? According to George E. Ganss, there are two basic aspects that the Rules for Discernment of both weeks propose to the exercitants: firstly, it is to discern the will of God and secondly, it is to discern the spirits. The first aspect of discerning the will of God involves the choice of life that has been chosen with the help of the Exercises of the Second Week (SE 135). The second aspect which enables the exercitants to become aware of the good and evil spirits not only in the process of election but also help them to carry on their lives by countering the malicious spirit progressing towards the new birth in Christ.

To conclude, the discernment process in the exercitants not only helps them to do the will of God but also it helps them to become aware of all the evil tendencies that try to keep them away from the presence of God.

3.8.3 New life through examining self

Another important guideline that Ignatius offers to the exercitants to progress in their life is the Examination of Conscience. Through the two types of examinations of conscience (Particular and General), Ignatius invites the exercitants to make advance in their spiritual

⁴⁰⁹ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 192.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.* 194.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.* 194.

life. Through the Particular Examination, the exercitants are invited to get rid of a specific negative element of their life. In other words, through this Exercise the exercitants are oriented to be more focused and to get rid of the faults of daily life. And another method known as General Examination (SE 32-44) that helps the exercitants to purify themselves daily and prepare them for confession. The five steps or the five points that are highlighted in the method of making this examination helps such a way that the exercitants are able to be aware of themselves and make a serious effort to connect their relationship with God and others.

To conclude, the purpose of both the methods of Examination of Conscience intends the exercitants to renew their life daily and draw themselves closer to Christ by cleansing themselves.

3.8.4 New life through living and loving

St. Ignatius offers the exercitants how to complete the aim of the Principle and Foundation of praising, serving and revering God (SE 23) through a special Exercise: it is the “Contemplation to attain⁴¹² love⁴¹³”(SE 230) . In other words, it is through finding God in all things⁴¹⁴, the exercitants fulfil the purpose of their creation. Moreover, through this Exercise, the understanding of Exercitants on loving God progresses towards loving all things without possessing anything. George E. Ganss while describing these changes in the exercitants of loving God, he says: “The idea which was common in most of the preludes in the Second Week, ‘to love Christ more’, now becomes to love God more ‘in all things’[cf. SE 233]-reminiscent of Ignatius’ constant concern to ‘find God in all

⁴¹² J. Antonio Garcia Rodriguez describes the term ‘attain’ in two senses: “that of ‘obtaining’, which places the emphasis on the giver, and that of ‘achieving’, which emphasizes the retreatant and the human effort that the gift requires. It seems clear that the expression ‘to attain love’ must, in the first instance, be understood in accordance with this second meaning,[...]On the other hand, it deals with a love that St. Ignatius does not leave to the free imagination of each, but describes in clear, realistic and strong terms leaving no room for error”: J. Antonio Garcia Rodriguez. “Love”. *The Way* 49 n.3 (2010), 122-123; see also. Michael J. Buckley. “Contemplación para alcanzar amor”. In *DEI I*, 452-456.

⁴¹³ “Approximately 25 times the words *amor* and *amar* (‘to love’) appear in the *Spiritual Exercises*”: Rodriguez. “Love”, 123.

⁴¹⁴ “ God is seen not merely as having gifted me with so many created objects, but even with himself-dwelling in all creatures, endowing them with their existence, life, sensation, understanding, making me a temple, created in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty”: Donald W. Reck. “The Limits of the Adaptability of the *Spiritual Exercises*”. In *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, edited by David L. Fleming, SJ, 328, St. Louis, Mo: St. Louis, Mo: Review for Religious, 1983.

things' of everyday life"⁴¹⁵. In a similar fashion, Emmanuel da Silva e Araújo sees this Exercise as the "bridge between the lived experience of the Exercises and daily life"⁴¹⁶.

It could be asked if it is possible to combine or bridge one's prayer life with the daily life activities? Ian Tomlinson, while comparing the action and prayer, he sees a "creative polarity"⁴¹⁷ in action and prayer as separate entity. And he says further that:

"for many people prayer is different from action; action is different from prayer. The tension arises when we combine the two activities. Finding God in a relationship, in our daily work or in any human endeavour can be an experience of tasting [*sic*] feeling God's presence (something usually presumed to take place in prayer), an opportunity 'to praise reverence and serve God' in the midst of life"⁴¹⁸.

Moreover, loving and serving God involves a participation of offering oneself totally as St. Ignatius surrendered himself with the total submission before God (cf. SD 159). Like a child that is helpless without the support of the parents, exercitants are inspired to feel by surrendering themselves in the hands of God that they are dependents of Him all the time. While analysing the ideas prescribed in the Exercise, two points highlight the nature of God and human: firstly, the immanence of God "in all the created world"⁴¹⁹ and secondly, the response of the exercitants. In other words, feeling grateful to the magnanimity of God and living one's life in an acceptable way to God through humbling oneself before Him.

In the contemplation, Ignatius clearly mentions that everything originates from God or "all good things and gifts descend from above"(SE 237) and is being "destined by God to return to himself"⁴²⁰. And the response of the creatures (here specifically the human beings) is to labour in such a way that through their participation and cooperation in the "plan of creation and redemption"⁴²¹, they are to return to Him as transformed creatures after having borne fruits in His vineyard through their actions. And therefore, without a doubt it could be said that by the end of the Fourth Week, the exercitants are transformed for the mission with a new manner of looking, with a new manner of acting, with a new way of operating⁴²², and with a new way of reaching out to the world⁴²³ by which they

⁴¹⁵ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 184.

⁴¹⁶ Emmanuel da Silva e Araújo. "Ignatian Spirituality as a Spirituality of Incarnation". *The Way* 47 n. 1 (2008):76.

⁴¹⁷ Ian Tomlinson. "The Contemplation to Attain Love". *The Way* 50 n.4 (2011), 75.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.* 76.

⁴¹⁹ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*,185.

⁴²⁰ *Ibid.* 185.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.* 185.

⁴²² Cf. Guillén. "Directorio breve", 192.

⁴²³ Cf. Emmanuel da Silva e Araújo. "Ignatian Spirituality", 72.

will be born new in the kingdom of God. This process of being born anew is gradual and the *Spiritual Exercises* prepare the exercitants to be matured in this process by living out the Exercises that have gained throughout the thirty days of retreat.

3.9 Four Weeks of Exercises: a guide to be born anew in the Kingdom of God

The fundamental and core truth of God's providence to human beings is granting them "physical life, spiritual life, and all other things on the face of the earth to sustain and maintain them"⁴²⁴. When human beings have this realization and through this awareness, they "imagine themselves as free creatures"⁴²⁵ who are called to fulfil the goal of "praise, reverence, and serve God"(SE 23). And the responsibility of human beings to carry on this task is possible only when they are moved by true freedom⁴²⁶. And in order to be free interiorly they are called to be born anew by dying to their old self and rising in Christ.

The Four Weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises* come as a great help for the exercitants to be born anew, to be new creatures on the earth. Ignacio Iparraguirre, while analysing the impact of the *Spiritual Exercises*, he sees that the Exercises are intended to achieve five goals. Firstly, it is to overcome oneself. Secondly, it is to naturalize the disordinate affection. Thirdly, it is to prepare and set the spirit for the future. Fourthly, it is to look for the divine will and fifthly, to be able to do everything in service and love of God⁴²⁷. In accordance with the insights of Ignacio Iparraguirre, all the outcome mentioned above leads the exercitants towards a new life or being born anew directly or indirectly and in a gradual way⁴²⁸. The following eight steps discussed above could be summarised below in a form of how the *Spiritual Exercises* prepare the life of the exercitants to be born anew after having gone through a series of Exercises during the thirty days.

⁴²⁴ John J. English. *Spiritual Freedom*. Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1995, 252.

⁴²⁵ Ibid. 252.

⁴²⁶ Cf. Ibid. 252.

⁴²⁷ Iparraguirre. *Dirección de una tanda*, 47.

⁴²⁸ Ignacio Iparraguirre states clearly that the Exercises do not give perfection. Rather, they prepare and dispose the soul to achieve it: Cf. Ibid. 48.

Fig.8 The gradual process and steps towards new life

No	Exercises	How they prepare to towards new life
1	Principle and Foundation - - - - ->	Knowing the goal of life
2	The First Week - - - - ->	Purification and lowering self
3	Kingdom Meditation - - - - ->	Desiring to follow Christ
4	The Second Week - - - - ->	To be like Christ (poverty, insults, humility)
5	Three Special Exercises - - - - ->	Overcoming oneself (detachment & surrender)
6	Election - - - - ->	Choosing a life to be fruitful
7	Passion and Resurrection - - - - ->	Dying and rising with Christ
8	The practical Exercises - - - - ->	Discerning and actualizing in one's daily life towards new birth

While analysing the First Week (the history of sin), the meditations help to purify one's heart by putting a first step to be born anew. In the First Week, the aspect of sin appears to be a dominant and a destructive image that goes against "God's plan of creation"⁴²⁹ ("praise, reverence, and serve God"[SE 23]). The meditations of the First Week which emphasise the impact on sins firstly in the general sense highlight the sins of Angels, Adam and Eve and later narrow down to personal and to experience the gravity of one's own sins.

The commonness highlighted in all the personalities (Angels, Adam and Eve, individual) prescribed in the First Week of meditation conveys that all have lost their original identity and their true nature due to the influence or falling prey to sins. The experience of being under sin is projected in the meditations in such a way that the exercitants look for a remedy at any cost. And on the other hand, the meditations draw the exercitants to experience the merciful and compassionate nature of God. Perhaps, the comparison of being a slave to sin and losing one's true identity makes them look for a possibility of amendment in their life.

And further, the colloquies of the First Week of the meditations make the desire of

⁴²⁹ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 154.

the exercitants (of being born anew) possible and practical by carrying the exercitants to experience the merciful heart of Christ and by helping them to experience the need for the light and grace like the tax collector who was pleading God with a genuine heart for His mercy: “[he] standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’”(Lk 18,13). And thus it is observed that the First Week of the Exercises prepare the exercitants to be born anew through the process of purifying and humbling themselves.

After having purified internally through the meditations on sins and making confession, the exercitants progress towards the path of being anew by identifying their life with Christ. “The Contemplation of the Kingdom of God”(SE 91-99) is an invitation from Christ to participate in His saving mission (cf. SE 95). In this act, surprisingly, it is not the exercitants who desire to follow first; rather, it is the Lord who wants the exercitants to follow him and to be fruitful in his mission (cf. Jn 15,16). Knowing one’s vulnerabilities, yet trusting in the mercy of God, the exercitants make a wish to follow Christ. And in order to fulfil this goal, the contemplations of the Second Week come as a source to help them to experience and express the “enthusiasm, generosity and desire to follow Christ [...] in his saving mission”⁴³⁰ by desiring to be like Christ by imitating him in the life of poverty and humility.

And the meditations on the three special Exercise in the Second Week [The Two Standards and the Three Classes of Persons (cf. SE 136-156)] help the exercitants to become aware of the tactics of the evil spirit when the exercitants desire to progress towards God. This awareness of the “deceits of the evil leader” (SE 139) helps to “clarify the call of Christ and deepen the retreatant’s response to it by contrasting it with a rival call which each human beings hear”⁴³¹. And the “Preamble to the consideration of the States of Life”(SE 135) lays a foundation for hearing the call of Christ by choosing a life to “bear fruit, thirtyfold, and sixtyfold and a hundredfold”(Mk, 4,20).

The contemplations of the Second Week (the public life of Jesus and the methods of making good election and the Three Ways of Being Humble) lead the exercitants “to great openness to God and to a loving desire to be as like to Christ as possible”⁴³². At this stage, the exercitants are inspired to die to oneself (one’s ego, selfish attitude, pride) and to find themselves in Christ (like the manner of being and behaving like him) through deliberate

⁴³⁰ Ibid. 159.

⁴³¹ Reck, 327.

⁴³² Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 174.

choice of embracing poverty and getting rid of their inordinate attachments. This act of emptying oneself enhances the exercitants to possess the nature like that of a child who has no material possession yet it is happy, and who does not have a special position in the society and yet it is content with its nature. And this attitude of having nothing gradually orients the exercitants to be born anew.

The exercitants after going through the contemplations of the salvation history in the Second Week (from the Incarnation up to the Public ministry of Jesus) by which they desire to follow Christ, progress towards another level: participation in the passion, suffering and the death of Jesus Christ (cf. SE 190-208). Through journeying and participating with Christ's paschal mysteries, the exercitants begin to experience a "profound and intimate association with Christ"⁴³³ through following Christ in his suffering because of His love for them by offering his life. And through this, perhaps, the decision that exercitants have made in the election process of the Second Week becomes a reality for them experiencing the pain and agony of the Eternal Christ who has called them to labour with Him in order to follow Him in the glory (cf. SE 95). This painful process invite the exercitants to get rid of the life of disorder and to bring an order in their life.

The Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* comes with a message to the exercitants: that of Christ "communicating his joy as well as his graces and spiritual consolations to humankind now redeemed"⁴³⁴. How would one know this joy? While describing the nature of joy Paul Legavre says,

"True joy signifies the gift of the Spirit of the Risen Christ. Those who live in the spirit of Ignatius learn to let themselves guided [*sic*] by the gentle will of God in their innermost act. They dare to trust in the intelligence of the heart, listening interiorly to what the Spirit is suggesting in the feelings that come and go"⁴³⁵.

And so, the exercitants as sharers of the "life-giving"⁴³⁶ grace of Christ through Resurrection become new beings. The understanding of this new being implies a new birth in Christ. Accompanying Christ in the spiritual journey of his salvation history (from the Incarnation to the Resurrection) and receiving grace from him make the exercitants as new beings resonating the words of St. Paul saying "Therefore, if any one in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come"(2 Cor 5, 17). And in the process of becoming a new self, they love God in all things. In this love there is no selfishness or desire to possess or destroy them; rather, this love consists of caring

⁴³³ Ibid. 179.

⁴³⁴ Ibid. 182.

⁴³⁵ Paul Legavre. "Discerning Joy: Ignatian Way". *The Way* 47 (2008), 149.

⁴³⁶ Ganss, *Spiritual Exercises*, 182.

them with the attitude of indifference. Moreover, in the process of loving God and the creatures, and progressing towards a new life, the exercitants do away with all the inordinate attachments and affections and offer their life totally to God by emptying themselves yet relying on the providence and the grace of God they are inspired to offer their life like the way Ignatius offered in the process of being born anew:

«Tomad, Señor, y recibid toda mi libertad, my memoria, my entendimiento, y toda my voluntad, todo my auer y my poseer; Vos me lo distes, a Vos, Señor, lo torno; todo es vuestro, disponed a toda vuestra voluntad; dadme vuestro amor y gracia, que está me basta» (SE 234).

CONCLUSION

The desire of every committed Christian is to be a participant in the Kingdom of God. However, the condition which is set to reach there is not an easy task. This condition demands one's will, one's desire, and one's entire being. In other words, this condition invites one to be born anew. In order to be born anew and to enter in to the kingdom of God, a few instructions are set before the aspirants: like practicing humility, acknowledging one's limitations (cf. Mt 21,31), believing in the mercy and compassion of Jesus (cf. Mk 1,15), getting rid of one's old self (cf. Gal 6,15) and having a conversion of heart (cf. 2 Cor 5,17), etc. All these good practices mentioned above are nothing but invitations to lead a life like a child.

What qualities does a child possess that it needs to be imitated to enter the kingdom of God? A child is fragile, available, serviceable, sincere and free from prejudice, malice, hypocrisy. And all those who aspire to be in the kingdom of God are supposed to practice these qualities in their daily life. In this process, they not only aim at having spiritual connectedness with God, but also they transform their spirituality into practice or action. A few noble and pious practises, such as desiring to remain unrecognised, not being ambitious but giving testimony to the Word of God, identifying one's life with Christ, hoping in God for everything, surrendering their life in the hands of God are a few characteristics through which one could be identified as pure in heart and moreover they

see God in their purity of heart (cf. Mt 5,4).

And the significance of the creation of human beings also reflects the same: that is to be in the communion with God and to be in His everlasting love. However, due to the sin of greed and disobedience human beings strained their communion and harmony with God. The example of original sin is one such illustration where the loss of freedom, peace and innocence are visualised very clearly. Moreover, the selfishness and the desire of being autonomous are seen as a cause for loss of original identity as children of God and to be slaves to sins (cf. Gal 5,1).

In this disorder and brokenness, God looks at the human beings with merciful eyes to save them from the snares of evil forces. In other words, the divine eyes meet human misery with compassion. And the New Adam (Jesus Christ) comes to help the Old Adam (cf. 1 Cor 15, 45-49; 1 Cor 5, 12-21) to enjoy the same identity of sons and daughters of God. And thus through the saving act, Jesus transforms the sinful creatures as new creatures and the creatures that are being justified through Him (cf. Rom 5,1). This saving act costs Jesus a big ransom: His very life itself (cf. 1 Col 1,13-14). All these efforts are intended to bring back the broken humanity to God.

Moreover, the humbling act of Christ's descent to hell is a hallmark for human beings to learn what humility means. The paradoxical and counteraction of Jesus (such as lowering himself as one with humanity, and descending to hell) shows how He shows solidarity with the broken humanity. The example of Jesus is indeed a great learning for the redeemed humanity to humble themselves and to be reborn in the kingdom of God. On the contrary, the human desire to rise above the level and desire to be independent results only in growing in pride and being separated from the loving communion with God. This tendency leaves an emptiness in the heart of human beings which needs to be filled, fortified, sustained and to be renewed. And to make progress in this aspect, one thing is demanded: to become like a child.

Down the centuries, many saints in the Church have made serious efforts to reach the level of being a child and they have successfully achieved it by allowing God to sail their lives. The life of Ignatius is one such example which would enable humanity to learn how to humble and surrender oneself in the hands of God. The emphasis on the two phases of life (during his stay at Manresa and during the days he wrote the *Spiritual Diary*) among many would be sufficient to experience how he desired to be born anew and how God helped him to reach this state of life.

The spiritual progress of Ignatius towards the new born experience

The experience of Ignatius leaving from Loyola with the holy desire of going to Jerusalem, and keeping fast and discipline (cf. A 9), shows the intensity that he wanted one thing in his life: it is a transformation from his past life. Though he did not have a proper or a well-planned idea of how he would carry on his initial goals, he allowed himself trusting in the providence of God by leaving everything including his attire in Montserrat (cf. A 16) as a preliminary step to his holy desires.

The decision to stay at Manresa in a solitude atmosphere with God was a remarkable moment in his life. In his stay, he experienced the moment of consolation through the helping hand of God, and also he was tortured by the scruples about the past sins, self-doubt, etc. All these describe how the vulnerable and broken Ignatius was and how he was desperate to find a remedy in his life. Perhaps, he is not aware that at these moments both consolations and desolations were preparing him to be born anew as a new creature.

The experiences of going through the six temptations made Ignatius like a child who is fragile and vulnerable. However, this fragility made him experience the abundant love and grace from the Lord. Like a child, Ignatius learns everything from the Master. Like an *anawim*, Ignatius offered his life in the hands of the Divine Master to be moulded and guided. In short, the experience of Manresa has been a life changing moment for Ignatius from being a wounded and sinful person to a transformed person with spiritually renewed experiences.

Secondly, while pondering over the experiences of Ignatius jotted in the *Spiritual Diary*, it is noted how God kept moulding and transforming his life towards a new life. The different motions mentioned in the diary such as his consolation, desolation, his reluctant attitude and his submission, his encounter with the Divine Persons on different occasions, and the spiritual gifts show how God has blessed the efforts of Ignatius in his transformation of becoming a new person.

The Spiritual Exercises for exercitants: a preparation to be born anew

The experiences of Ignatius with God not only helped him to progress in his spiritual life but also enabled him to be born as a new creature (cf. A 30) and to lead a life which is conducive to the Divine Majesty. Gathering all the fruits of the experiences that he has undergone in the form of writing the *Spiritual Exercises*, he invites all the exercitants to be born anew in the kingdom of God.

How do the *Spiritual Exercises* help the exercitants to be born anew? The elaborated eight steps (highlighted in the third chapter) based on the *Spiritual Exercises* come with an invitation to the exercitants which prepare them to change internally while making the retreat and how they must prepare themselves to reach the goal of being born anew. Through the Spiritual Exercises it could be observed that being born again is not a completed project but is an ongoing process to reach the state of becoming a new creature.

The eight fundamental ideas highlighted in the chapter three could be seen as concrete steps that the Spiritual Exercises offer to prepare the exercitants to be born anew and transformed creatures. Though it cannot be concretely said at what moment the exercitants are born anew like children (as being born anew is a gradual process), the fruit and the consequences of the eight steps are a few signs by which it could be confirmed that the Exercises orient and prepare the exercitants to be born anew. Are they not the signs of spiritual birth? How does one understand the words of Jesus “you will know them by their fruits”? (Mt 7,17).

Therefore, to conclude, being born anew is not a finished entity; rather it is an ongoing process. It is a steady process and it matures gradually. And the practical Exercises prescribed during and after the Exercises are nothing but constant support to continue the process of being born anew by upholding the values received through the retreat by dying to oneself spiritually daily (one’s ego, selfishness) and to rising in Christ as new creatures and bearing fruit in His mission resonating the words of Christ: unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone but if it dies, it bears much fruit (cf. Jn 12,24).

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