



This original text is an English translation by Fr. Elder Mullan (*The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, Translated from the Autograph by Father Elder Mullen, S.J.* New York: P.J. Kennedy and Sons, 1914.). It is in the public domain and has been adapted by Kenneth Rolling.

First, here is the preface to the work in which Ignatius provides some insights into what the Exercises are and how they are to be used. This section is titled, "Annotations," which means simply "notes." Each one is then an idea to grasp in order to understand what is going on.

ANNOTATIONS

TO GIVE SOME UNDERSTANDING OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES WHICH FOLLOW, AND TO ENABLE HIM WHO IS TO GIVE AND HIM WHO IS TO RECEIVE THEM TO HELP THEMSELVES

1. First, by this name of *Spiritual Exercises* is meant every way of examining one's conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally, and of performing other spiritual actions, as will be said later. For as strolling, walking and running are bodily exercises, so every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies, and, after it is rid, to seek and find the Divine Will as to the management of one's life for the salvation of the soul, is called a *Spiritual Exercise*.
2. Second, the person who gives to another the way and order in which to meditate or contemplate, ought to relate faithfully the events of such Contemplation or Meditation, with only a short summary. For, if the person who is making the Contemplation, takes the true groundwork of the narrative, and, discussing and considering for himself, finds something which makes the events a little clearer or brings them a little more home to him—whether this comes through his own reasoning, or because his intellect is enlightened by the Divine power—he will get more spiritual relish and fruit, than if he who is giving the Exercises had much explained and amplified the meaning of the events. For it is not knowing much, but realising and relishing things interiorly, that contents and satisfies the soul.
3. Third, as in all the following *Spiritual Exercises*, we use acts of the intellect in reasoning, and acts of the will in movements of the feelings: let us remark that, in the acts of the will, when we are speaking vocally or mentally with God our Lord, or with His Saints, greater reverence is required on our part than when we are using the intellect in understanding.
4. Fourth, the *Exercises* are divided into four parts:
 - a. First, the consideration and contemplation on the sins;
 - b. Second, the life of Christ our Lord up to Palm Sunday inclusively;
 - c. Third, the Passion of Christ our Lord;
 - d. Fourth, the Resurrection and Ascension, with the three Methods of Prayer.

Though four weeks, to correspond to this division, are spent in the Exercises, it is not to be understood that each Week has, of necessity, seven or eight days. For, as it happens that in the First Week some are slower to find what they seek—namely, contrition, sorrow and tears for their sins—and in the same way some are more diligent than others, and more acted on or tried by different



spirits; it is necessary sometimes to shorten the Week, and at other times to lengthen it. The same is true of all the other subsequent Weeks, seeking out the things according to the subject matter. However, the *Exercises* will be finished in thirty days, a little more or less.

5. Fifth, it is very helpful to him who is receiving the *Exercises* to enter into them with great courage and generosity towards his Creator and Lord, offering Him all his will and liberty, that His Divine Majesty may make use of his person and of all he has according to His most Holy Will.

There are quite a few more annotations, most which have to do with the interactions between the director and the persons undergoing direction, but these first few give a good sense of what the Exercises are all about. We will jump ahead to a section from the second week of exercises that deals with making "elections," that is making choices about spiritual matters.

SECOND WEEK

6. PRELUDE FOR MAKING ELECTION

In every good election, as far as depends on us, the eye of our intention ought to be simple, only looking at what we are created for, namely, the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of our soul. And so I ought to choose whatever I do, that it may help me for the end for which I am created, not ordering or bringing the end to the means, but the means to the end: as it happens that many choose first to marry – which is a means – and secondarily to serve God our Lord in the married life – which service of God is the end. So, too, there are others who first want to have benefices, and then to serve God in them. So that those do not go straight to God, but want God to come straight to their disordered tendencies, and consequently they make a means of the end, and an end of the means. So that what they had to take first, they take last; because first we have to set as our aim the wanting to serve God, – which is the end, – and secondarily, to take a benefice, or to marry, if it is more suitable to us, – which is the means for the end. So, nothing ought to move me to take such means or to deprive myself of them, except only the service and praise of God our Lord and the eternal salvation of my soul.

7. WHAT MATTERS AN ELECTION OUGHT TO BE MADE ABOUT

- a. First, it is necessary that everything about which we want to make an election should be indifferent, or good, in itself, and should be allowed within our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church, and not bad nor opposed to her.
- b. Second, there are some things which fall under unchangeable election, such as are the priesthood, marriage, etc. There are others which fall under an election that can be changed, such as are to take benefices or leave them, to take temporal goods or rid oneself of them.
- c. Third, in the unchangeable Election which has already been once made – such as marriage, the priesthood, etc. – there is nothing more to choose, because one cannot release himself; only it is to be seen to that if one have not made his election duly and ordinally and without disordered tendencies, repenting let him see to living a good life in his election. It does not appear that this



election is a Divine vocation, as being an election out of order and awry. Many err in this, setting up a perverse or bad election as a Divine vocation; for every Divine vocation is always pure and clear, without mixture of flesh, or of any other inordinate tendency.

- d. Fourth, if someone has duly and ordinally made election of things which are under election that can be changed, and has not yielded to flesh or world, there is no reason for his making election anew, but let him perfect himself as much as he can in that already chosen.

NOTE: It is to be remarked that if such election that can be changed was not made sincerely and well in order, then it helps to make the election duly, if one has a desire that fruits notable and very pleasing to God our Lord should come from him.

8. THREE WAYS OF MAKING A GOOD ELECTION

- a. The first way is, when God our Lord so moves and attracts the will, that without doubting, or being able to doubt, such devout soul follows what is shown it, as St. Paul and St. Matthew did in following Christ our Lord.
- b. The second way is when enough light and knowledge is received by experience of consolations and desolations, and by the experience of the discernment of various spirits.
- c. The third way is quiet, when one considers, first, for what man is born—namely, to praise God our Lord and save his soul—and desiring this chooses as means a life or state within the limits of the Church, in order that he may be helped in the service of his Lord and the salvation of his soul. said time of quiet, when the soul is not acted on by various spirits, and uses its natural powers freely and tranquilly. If election is not made in the first or the second time, two ways follow as to this third time for making it.

9. THE FIRST WAY TO MAKE A SOUND AND GOOD ELECTION

- a. First, I must put before me the thing on which I want to make election, such as an office or benefice, either to take or leave it; or any other thing whatever which falls under an election that can be changed.
- b. Second, it is necessary to keep as aim the end for which I am created, which is to praise God our Lord and save my soul, and, this supposed, to find myself indifferent, without any inordinate propensity; so that I be not more inclined or disposed to take the thing proposed than to leave it, nor more to leave it than to take it, but find myself as in the middle of a balance, to follow what I feel to be more for the glory and praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul.
- c. Third, to ask of God our Lord to be pleased to move my will and put in my soul what I ought to do regarding the thing proposed, so as to promote more His praise and glory; discussing well and faithfully with my intellect, and choosing agreeably to His most holy pleasure and will.
- d. Fourth, to consider, reckoning up, how many advantages and utilities follow for me from holding the proposed office or benefice for only the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul, and, to consider likewise, on the contrary, the disadvantages and dangers which there are in having it. Doing the same in the second part, that is, looking at the advantages and utilities



there are in not having it, and likewise, on the contrary, the disadvantages and dangers in not having the same.

- e. Fifth, after I have thus discussed and reckoned up on all sides about the thing proposed, to look where reason more inclines: and so, according to the greater inclination of reason, and not according to any inclination of sense, deliberation should be made on the thing proposed.
- f. Sixth, such election, or deliberation, made, the person who has made it ought to go with much diligence to prayer before God our Lord and offer Him such election, that His Divine Majesty may be pleased to receive and confirm it, if it is to His greater service and praise.

The other two ways of making a good election are covered, as well, but we will omit them from our reading. For our closing section, here is an excerpt from the section titled "RULES," given at the end of the main body of the text. There are sets of rules with a variety of goals in mind, there. Here is one set that is often highlighted for the way in which it speaks directly against the tendencies of the Protestant revolt.

RULES

10. TO HAVE THE TRUE SENTIMENT WHICH WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN THE CHURCH MILITANT

Let the following Rules be observed.

- a. All judgment laid aside, we ought to have our mind ready and prompt to obey, in all, the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our holy Mother the Church Hierarchical.
- b. To praise confession to a Priest, and the reception of the most Holy Sacrament of the Altar once in the year, and much more each month, and much better from week to week, with the conditions required and due.
- c. To praise the hearing of Mass often, likewise hymns, psalms, and long prayers, in the church and out of it; likewise the hours set at the time fixed for each Divine Office and for all prayer and all Canonical Hours.
- d. To praise much Religious Orders, virginity and continence, and not so much marriage as any of these.
- e. To praise vows of Religion, of obedience, of poverty, of chastity and of other perfections of supererogation. And it is to be noted that as the vow is about the things which approach to Evangelical perfection, a vow ought not to be made in the things which withdraw from it, such as to be a merchant, or to be married, etc.
- f. To praise relics of the Saints, giving veneration to them and praying to the Saints; and to praise Stations, pilgrimages, Indulgences, pardons, Cruzadas, and candles lighted in the churches.
- g. To praise Constitutions about fasts and abstinence, as of Lent, Ember Days, Vigils, Friday and Saturday; likewise penances, not only interior, but also exterior.
- h. To praise the ornaments and the buildings of churches; likewise images, and to venerate them according to what they represent.



- i. Finally, to praise all precepts of the Church, keeping the mind prompt to find reasons in their defence and in no manner against them.
- j. We ought to be more prompt to find good and praise as well the Constitutions and recommendations as the ways of our Superiors. Because, although some are not or have not been such, to speak against them, whether preaching in public or discoursing before the common people, would rather give rise to fault-finding and scandal than profit; and so the people would be incensed against their Superiors, whether temporal or spiritual. So that, as it does harm to speak evil to the common people of Superiors in their absence, so it can make profit to speak of the evil ways to the persons themselves who can remedy them.
- k. To praise positive and scholastic learning. Because, as it is more proper to the Positive Doctors, as St. Jerome, St. Augustine and St. Gregory, etc., to move the heart to love and serve God our Lord in everything; so it is more proper to the Scholastics, as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, and to the Master of the Sentences, etc., to define or explain for our times the things necessary for eternal salvation; and to combat and explain better all errors and all fallacies. For the Scholastic Doctors, as they are more modern, not only help themselves with the true understanding of the Sacred Scripture and of the Positive and holy Doctors, but also, they being enlightened and clarified by the Divine virtue, help themselves by the Councils, Canons and Constitutions of our holy Mother the Church.
- l. We ought to be on our guard in making comparison of those of us who are alive to the blessed passed away, because error is committed not a little in this; that is to say, in saying, this one knows more than St. Augustine; he is another, or greater than, St. Francis; he is another St. Paul in goodness, holiness, etc.
- m. To be right in everything, we ought always to hold that the white which I see, is black, if the Hierarchical Church so decides it, believing that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Bride, there is the same Spirit which governs and directs us for the salvation of our souls. Because by the same Spirit and our Lord Who gave the ten Commandments, our holy Mother the Church is directed and governed.
- n. Although there is much truth in the assertion that no one can save himself without being predestined and without having faith and grace; we must be very cautious in the manner of speaking and communicating with others about all these things.
- o. We ought not, by way of custom, to speak much of predestination; but if in some way and at some times one speaks, let him so speak that the common people may not come into any error, as sometimes happens, saying: Whether I have to be saved or condemned is already determined, and no other thing can now be, through my doing well or ill; and with this, growing lazy, they become negligent in the works which lead to the salvation and the spiritual profit of their souls.
- p. In the same way, we must be on our guard that by talking much and with much insistence of faith, without any distinction and explanation, occasion be not given to the people to be lazy and slothful in works, whether before faith is formed in charity or after.
- q. Likewise, we ought not to speak so much with insistence on grace that the poison of discarding liberty be engendered. So that of faith and grace one can speak as much as is possible with the



Divine help for the greater praise of His Divine Majesty, but not in such way, nor in such manners, especially in our so dangerous times, that works and free will receive any harm, or be held for nothing.

- r. Although serving God our Lord much out of pure love is to be esteemed above all; we ought to praise much the fear of His Divine Majesty, because not only filial fear is a thing pious and most holy, but even servile fear—when the man reaches nothing else better or more useful—helps much to get out of mortal sin. And when he is out, he easily comes to filial fear, which is all acceptable and grateful to God our Lord: as being at one with the Divine Love.