

SOCIETAS IESU ANGLICANA

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus



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DOCUMENT I

Introduction and Orientation

For the Director, the Retreatant, and the Community

Introductio et Annotatio

“*The Spiritual Exercises are so called because they are a method of preparing and disposing the soul to free itself from all inordinate attachments, and of seeking and finding the will of God in the ordering of one’s life.*”

— St. Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, § 21

“*The Society is not a new gospel but a new way of living the one Gospel more completely.*”

— Pedro de Ribadeneira, S.J., on the spirit of Ignatius

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint

Anno Domini MMXXVI

FOREWORD

A Word Before the Beginning

These documents exist because two great streams of the one Spirit's work in the Church have been flowing toward each other for five centuries and have never quite been allowed to meet in the fullness they both deserve. The Ignatian stream — rising at Manresa, flowing through the sixteenth century's apostolic renewal, forming the great Jesuit tradition of education, mission, and spiritual direction — has shaped the Roman Catholic Church with a depth and breadth that few spiritual movements in Christian history have matched. The Anglican stream — rising in the crucible of the English Reformation, shaped by Cranmer's liturgical genius and Hooker's theological wisdom, deepened by the Caroline Divines and renewed by the Oxford Movement — has cultivated a form of Christian life uniquely capable of holding together the Catholic, Reformed, and evangelical dimensions of the Gospel in a single worshipping community.

These two streams have, of course, touched each other before. Individual Anglican clergy and laypeople have been formed by the Ignatian *Exercises* for generations; some of the finest modern directors of the *Exercises* in the English-speaking world have been Anglican. Jesuit scholars have engaged seriously with Anglican theology and liturgy. But the formal, institutional meeting of the two traditions — the creation of an Anglican community constituted by the Ignatian charism, governed by Episcopal Canon Law, formed by the *Book of Common Prayer*, and sent in the apostolic mission that Ignatius envisioned — is what the Anglican Society of Jesus represents, and what these *Exercises* are designed to serve.

The *Spiritual Exercises* of the Anglican Society of Jesus are not a replacement for Ignatius's original text, nor a mere adaptation of it for pastoral convenience. They are a synthesis: a sustained theological and spiritual engagement between the Ignatian method and the Anglican inheritance that takes both traditions with full seriousness and allows each to illuminate and enrich the other. The retreatant who receives these *Exercises* receives the full weight of the Ignatian tradition — the Foundation, the Four Weeks, the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* — and simultaneously receives it through the specific lens of a tradition that prays in the cadences of the *Book of Common Prayer*, is formed by the Caroline Divines and the Oxford Movement, and inhabits the particular theological temper of the Anglican *via media*.

This Introduction serves as the gateway to the seven documents of the series. It provides the historical, theological, and practical orientation that will allow the director and the retreatant to enter the *Exercises* with the full understanding of what they are undertaking, why the synthesis they embody is theologically coherent and spiritually fruitful, and how the specific forms and structures of the *Exercises* are ordered toward the single goal that Ignatius named as their purpose: the freedom to seek and find the will of God in the ordering of one's life.

Let these *Exercises* be read, not as a spiritual program to be completed, but as an encounter to be entered. The one who meets the retreatant in them is not Ignatius, and not the Anglican tradition, and not the directors who have labored to compose them, but the living God — who is, as Ignatius

knew and the Anglican tradition has always proclaimed, the real director of every soul who genuinely seeks him.



PART ONE

The Ignatian Inheritance: Manresa to the Present Day

The Cave at Manresa: The Origin of the Exercises

Inigo de Loyola was not, by any natural measure, a likely candidate for the role he eventually occupied in the history of Christian spirituality. He was a Basque nobleman, shaped by the culture of chivalry and the ambitions of a military career, who was seriously wounded at the Battle of Pamplona in 1521. During his long convalescence at the castle of Loyola, he was given, for lack of anything better, a life of Christ and a collection of saints' lives to read. What he found in those books, and what he began to notice in the movements of his own interior life as he read them, was the raw material of the *Exercises*.

He noticed that when he imagined a life of chivalric adventure and worldly success, he felt an initial pleasure that quickly faded into a residue of dryness and dissatisfaction. When he imagined following the example of the saints — Francis of Assisi, Dominic de Guzmán — he felt a different kind of interior movement: one that not only produced pleasure while the imagining was happening but left behind, when he turned to other things, a lasting trace of joy. This observation — so simple in its articulation, so revolutionary in its spiritual significance — is the germ of the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits and, through them, of the entire structure of the *Exercises*.

After his recovery, Inigo made a prolonged stay at the cave of Manresa, near the Benedictine monastery of Montserrat. This period — roughly a year of intense prayer, penance, and interior experience — was the furnace in which the *Exercises* were formed. Ignatius later described receiving, during this time, a series of mystical experiences that gave him a unified vision of the Trinity, of the Incarnation, and of the presence of God in all created things: the vision that would eventually find systematic expression in the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*. The *Exercises* are not a system invented in a study; they are a spiritual experience systematized for the benefit of others, tested and refined through decades of giving them to thousands of retreatants across every condition of human life.

The Text and Its Formation

Ignatius's original notes from Manresa were worked and reworked over more than twenty years before they reached the form in which the autograph text survives. The *Exercises* were given to individuals long before they were committed to a stable written form; and even the written form that Ignatius eventually submitted for papal approval in 1548 was always understood as a director's guide rather than a retreatant's workbook — a set of instructions for the one giving the *Exercises* rather than a program to be executed by the one receiving them.

This is a crucial point for understanding what the present series of documents is and is not. These seven documents are, in their deepest intention, a set of director's resources: richly developed, theologically grounded, and practically oriented guides for the director who is accompanying a retreatant through the *Exercises* in the Anglican context. They are not a program to be executed by

the retreatant working alone. The Anglican Society of Jesus is unequivocal on this point: the *Exercises* require a director, and the director's training and ongoing formation are as important as the retreatant's disposition (*Constitution*, Article 10).

The *Exercises* Ignatius composed are divided into four ‘Weeks’ — a term that refers to distinct phases of the retreat rather than to literal seven-day periods. The First Week addresses the retreatant’s experience of sin and God’s mercy. The Second Week presents the life of Jesus Christ for Contemplation, culminating in the election — the discernment of God’s specific will for the retreatant’s life. The Third Week accompanies the retreatant through the Passion, deepening and confirming the election through the experience of solidarity with the suffering Christ. The Fourth Week contemplates the Resurrection and concludes with the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* — a sustained meditation on finding God in all things that is designed to be the permanent orientation of the retreatant’s apostolic life. Prefixed to these four weeks is the Foundation, a brief but theologically dense statement of the creature’s nature and end.

The Society of Jesus and Its Apostolic Charism

The Society of Jesus, formally approved by Pope Paul III in 1540, grew directly from the *Exercises*: the small company of friends that Ignatius gathered at the University of Paris — Peter Faber, Francis Xavier, Diego Lainéz, and others — had been formed by the *Exercises*, and the Society's *Constitutions* were shaped by the spiritual method the *Exercises* had cultivated. The *Formula of the Institute* that defines the Society's purpose — the defense and propagation of the faith and the advancement of souls in Christian life and doctrine — is the *Exercises'* apostolic orientation institutionalized.

The great apostolic achievements of the Jesuit tradition — its schools and universities, its missions in Asia and the Americas, its contributions to theology, science, and the arts, its ministry of spiritual direction and the giving of the *Exercises* — all flow from the same source: the formation of individuals in the freedom and the fire of the direct encounter with God that the *Exercises* make possible. This is the inheritance that the Anglican Society of Jesus receives with gratitude and holds with responsibility.

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have witnessed a renewal of the Ignatian *Exercises* beyond the Roman Catholic tradition. The ecumenical movement's opening of the boundaries between Christian traditions, the recovery of contemplative practice across the churches, and the growing recognition that the *Exercises* belong not to a single institution but to the whole Church have created the conditions in which the Anglican Society of Jesus can emerge as a legitimate and creative inheritor of the Ignatian charism. The present series of *Exercises* is one fruit of this ecumenical and spiritual renewal.

“God is not far from any of us; for in him we live and move and have our being.”
— Acts 17:27–28 — the Pauline text that underlies Ignatius’s *Contemplatio ad Amorem*



PART TWO

The Anglican Inheritance: The Via Media as Spiritual Method

Cranmer and the Common Prayer

Thomas Cranmer's achievement in the *Book of Common Prayer* was, at its deepest level, a spiritual achievement as much as a liturgical one. He created, in English prose of extraordinary cadence and theological precision, a framework for the common prayer of an entire nation — a form in which the unlettered ploughman and the Oxford scholar, the penitent sinner and the newly baptized infant, could together approach the one God with a single voice. The General Confession that opens Morning Prayer, the Collect for Purity that opens the Eucharist, the prayers of the Burial Office, the cadences of the Psalter in the translation he bequeathed to the liturgical tradition — all these have shaped the interior life of English-speaking Christianity for nearly five centuries.

What Cranmer's prayer book provides for the Ignatian *Exercises*, in the Anglican context, is precisely what the *Exercises* need but do not itself supply: a liturgical framework within which the intense personal prayer of the *Exercises* can be held, sustained, and communally grounded. The *Exercises*, as Ignatius conceived them, are intensely personal; they can, at their extreme, tend toward a form of spiritual privatism in which the individual soul and God are the only relevant parties. The Anglican liturgical tradition corrects this tendency without displacing the *Exercises'* personal depth: the retreatant who prays Morning and Evening Prayer within the retreat is always already embedded in the communal prayer of the Church, always hearing the voice of the whole Body of Christ speaking the words of the Office alongside their own voice.

The Caroline Divines: The Interior Life in the Anglican Key

The seventeenth-century group of Anglican theologians known as the Caroline Divines — Lancelot Andrewes, George Herbert, Jeremy Taylor, Thomas Traherne, and their companions — represent the moment at which the Anglican tradition developed its most distinctive and most profound spirituality. Writing in the aftermath of the Reformation's bitter controversies and in the shadow of the Civil War's devastation of the English Church, they cultivated a spirituality that was simultaneously Catholic in its sacramental depth, Reformed in its Scriptural grounding, and distinctively Anglican in its liturgical texture.

Lancelot Andrewes's *Preces Privatae* — his private prayer book, compiled over decades and published posthumously from the working papers found at his death — is, of all Anglican texts, the one most directly comparable to the Ignatian *Exercises* in its method and its depth. Andrewes works through the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and a detailed examination of conscience with a thoroughness and a tenderness simultaneously that amounts to a form of the First Week's preparation; his prayers of praise and intercession, drawing on patristic sources in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, are a form of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* expressed in the language of liturgical doxology.

George Herbert's *The Temple* is the *Exercises* in poetic form: the soul's journey from its first awakening to its full consummation in God, mapped in the architectural metaphor of a church and expressed in poems of extraordinary psychological precision. Herbert's 'Love (III)' — in which the soul at the end of its journey is received to the heavenly feast by the Love who will not be refused — is the *Contemplatio's* Fourth Week in a single poem. His 'The Pulley' is the Foundation's theology of the creature's restlessness and God's love for it in fourteen lines. These texts are not decorations for the *Exercises*; they are alternative expressions of the same spiritual movements the *Exercises* traverse.

Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* are the *Exercises'* practical theology: the detailed, generous, practically oriented account of how the Christian life is to be lived and the Christian death to be prepared for, grounded in the same combination of Scripture, patristic tradition, and pastoral wisdom that characterizes the *Exercises* at their best. Taylor's account of the examination of conscience, his theology of confession and absolution, his insistence on the ordering of all activity toward the love of God — all these are natural companions to the Ignatian method.

Thomas Traherne stands apart from the others in his almost mystical intensity: his *Centuries of Meditation* is perhaps the most joyful spiritual text in the Anglican inheritance, and its central vision — of the world as God's gift flooding out toward the grateful soul, of the human person as the heir of all creation, of gratitude as the only adequate response to existence — is the closest Anglican equivalent to the *Contemplatio ad Amorem's* vision of God present and laboring in all things. Any director who has not read Traherne will be impoverished in their guidance of the Fourth Week.

The Oxford Movement: Catholic Depth Recovered

The Oxford Movement of the 1830s and 1840s represents a pivotal recovery in the history of Anglican spirituality. John Henry Newman, Edward Bouverie Pusey, John Keble, and their associates saw in the Anglican Church a tradition that possessed the fullness of Catholic order, sacramental theology, and the interior life but had allowed these riches to be obscured by centuries of Protestant minimalism and Enlightenment rationalism. Their project was not innovation but recovery: the retrieval of what had always been present in the Anglican inheritance but had not always been made available to ordinary worshippers.

The Oxford Movement's recovery of sacramental confession and absolution — the Reconciliation of a Penitent — as a regular and available practice for Anglican Christians is directly relevant to the *Exercises*. The First Week's natural conclusion is the general confession and absolution; the *Exercises* assume that sacramental confession is available and normative. In the period before the Oxford Movement, this assumption could not have been made for Anglican retreatants with any confidence. The Movement restored the practice, and the tradition of Anglican spiritual direction that grew from it provided the ecclesial context in which the Ignatian *Exercises* could be offered and received in the Anglican communion.

The twentieth century's great Anglican figures — Evelyn Underhill, Michael Ramsey, Rowan Williams — built on the Oxford Movement's foundation to produce a theology and spirituality fully adequate to the demands the *Exercises* place on their practitioners and directors. Underhill's account of the mystical life, Ramsey's theology of glory and resurrection, Williams's sustained engagement with the interior life and its relation to theology and action — all these form the intellectual and spiritual environment in which the Anglican Society of Jesus's *Exercises* have been composed.

On the Via Media: *The Anglican 'middle way' is often misunderstood as a policy of compromise — a splitting of the difference between Catholic and Protestant extremes for the sake of a quiet life. It is, at its best,*

something quite different: a theological conviction that the truth is large enough to hold in creative tension what smaller minds find necessary to choose between. The via media, applied to the synthesis these Exercises embody, does not compromise between Ignatius and Cranmer; it discovers that both are reaching toward a common depth that neither, alone, fully inhabits.



PART THREE

The Theological Case for the Synthesis

The Anglican Society of Jesus rests on a theological claim that deserves to be stated clearly and defended honestly: that the Ignatian and Anglican traditions are not merely compatible but mutually illuminating, and that their synthesis produces something that neither tradition produces alone. This claim could be questioned from both sides, and it is worth addressing those questions directly before the retreatant enters the *Exercises*.

The Apparent Tensions

From the Ignatian side, there may appear to be a tension between the *Exercises*' emphasis on personal, interior, direct encounter with God and the Anglican tradition's characteristic mediation of that encounter through liturgy, sacrament, and communal prayer. Does the *Book of Common Prayer*'s communal form of worship sit well with the *Exercises*' intensely personal method? Can the Anglican's habitual liturgical piety — formed by repetition, by the corporate voice of the Office, by the slow accumulation of years of Common Prayer — be opened to the more direct and individual encounter the *Exercises* require?

From the Anglican side, there may appear to be a tension between the tradition's characteristic theological openness — its willingness to hold questions in suspension, its resistance to premature systematization, its distrust of spiritual methods that appear to prescribe the form of God's communication — and the *Exercises*' apparently systematic character. Is the *Exercises*' progression through four defined weeks, with their specific graces and specific prayer forms, compatible with the Anglican instinct for liturgical freedom and theological provisionality?

These tensions are real, but they are productive rather than destructive. The Anglican's liturgical formation, far from inhibiting the *Exercises*' personal depth, provides its most natural context: the retreatant who has been shaped by the Psalter's full emotional range, by the Office's daily movement through praise and lament and intercession, by the Eucharist's enacted drama of offering and reception, is a retreatant whose interior life has already been schooled in exactly the movements the *Exercises* will intensify. The *Exercises* do not replace the Anglican liturgical formation; they personalize and deepen what that formation has been building for years.

And the *Exercises*' apparent systematism is, on careful examination, less prescriptive than it first appears. Ignatius was always insistent that the director must adapt the *Exercises* to the specific person receiving them: what is offered in these seven documents is not a rigid program but a generous provision of resources from which the director chooses and adapts according to the specific retreatant's needs, movements, and the Spirit's evident direction. The Anglican instinct for theological provisionality is, at its best, a form of the Ignatian indifference: neither tradition prescribes what God must do, and both trust the Spirit to do what is needed.

The Deeper Consonance

Beneath the apparent tensions lies a deeper consonance between the two traditions that the synthesis these *Exercises* embody is designed to make visible. Both Ignatius and the Anglican tradition are fundamentally Incarnational: both insist that God is met not in escape from the material world but in and through it, in the ordinary textures of human life and human community. Ignatius's principle of finding God in all things and the Anglican sacramental imagination's insistence that matter is the vehicle of grace are two formulations of the same theological conviction.

Both traditions are fundamentally apostolic: both resist the temptation to make the interior life an end in itself, and both insist that the contemplative life is ordered toward action and service in the world. The Ignatian 'contemplatives in action' and the Anglican tradition's theology of vocation as the ordering of every form of life toward the service of God and neighbor are two expressions of the same refusal to separate the spiritual from the practical.

Both traditions have a sophisticated understanding of the movements of the soul and the discernment of the Spirit. The Ignatian Rules for the Discernment of Spirits and the Anglican tradition of spiritual direction — as practiced by the Caroline Divines, recovered by the Oxford Movement, and developed by the twentieth century's directors — share a common conviction: that the interior life has a recognizable grammar, that consolation and desolation are indicators of the Spirit's movement that can be read and responded to, and that a trained and faithful human companion is an irreplaceable resource for the soul that is genuinely seeking God.

And both traditions are, at their best, fundamentally ecumenical: Ignatius sought always the greater good of the universal Church, never the advantage of one party within it; the Anglican *via media* is, in its deepest intention, a form of the same universality — the refusal to purchase clarity at the price of exclusion. The Anglican Society of Jesus's second motto — *Ut Omnes Unum Sint* — is the most explicit expression of this shared ecumenical conviction: the goal is not the victory of one tradition but the unity of all in the truth that each tradition, in its own way, is reaching toward.

"The whole world is a kind of mirror for the knowledge of God, and all things speak of him."
— St. Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Diary*

"All things are a kind of praise, a kind of prayer, a kind of offering to God, if they are received and used in the right spirit."
— Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditation* (adapted)



PART FOUR

The Seven Documents: Structure, Purpose, and Relationship

The *Spiritual Exercises* of the Anglican Society of Jesus are composed in seven documents, each complete in itself and each ordered toward the whole. This Introduction is the first; the Conclusion is the last; the five documents between them correspond to the Foundation and the Four Weeks of the Ignatian *Exercises*. What follows is an account of each document's purpose and its place in the series.

I. Introduction and Orientation — *the present document*

This document — the one you are reading — provides the historical, theological, and practical orientation for the entire series. It introduces the Ignatian and Anglican inheritances, makes the theological case for their synthesis, describes the structure of the series, explains the forms of the *Exercises* and the roles of the director and retreatant, and provides practical guidance for the conduct of the retreat in the Society's context. Every director who gives these *Exercises* and every retreatant who receives them should read this document in full before the retreat begins.

II. Foundation and First Principles — *Principium et Fundamentum*

The Foundation is the theological gateway to the *Exercises*: Ignatius's compressed account of the human person's nature and end, the right use of created things, and the disposition of indifference that enables genuine discernment. Document II develops the Foundation through sustained theological commentary drawing on the BCP's Catechism and General Thanksgiving, the Caroline Divines' theology of creation, and the Anglican via media's understanding of freedom. Five *Exercises* are provided, moving from 'The Gift of Existence' through 'The Election Horizon,' each with Scripture, BCP text, Ignatian point, and colloquy.

III. The First Week — *Sin, Mercy, and the Healing of the Soul*

The First Week is, despite its apparent darkness, an exercise in mercy: it exists to create the specific receptivity in which the enormity of God's love can be fully received. Document III provides seven days of *Exercises* moving through the triple sin meditation, personal sin, the First Week's unique grace of grief and consolation, and the colloquy before the Crucifix. It draws on the Anglican penitential tradition, the Caroline Divines' examination of conscience, the Oxford Movement's recovery of sacramental confession, and the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (First Set).

IV. The Second Week — *The Life of Christ and the Great Election*

The Second Week is the crown of the *Exercises*: fourteen days of Gospel Contemplation on the life of Jesus Christ, from the Incarnation through the public ministry, leading to the Three Discernment *Exercises* (Two Standards, Three Classes, Three Degrees of Humility) and the Election itself. Document IV is the longest in the series, drawing on the Anglican Incarnational theology of Andrewes and Traherne, the BCP's Baptismal Covenant, Michael Ramsey's theology of the Transfiguration, and a full treatment of the Ignatian election and its three times.

V. The Third Week — *The Passion, Death, and Burial of Our Lord Jesus Christ*

The Third Week confirms and deepens the election through seven days of Passion *Contemplation*, from the Last Supper through the Burial. Document V draws on F.D. Maurice's theology of solidarity, Hans Urs von Balthasar's Holy Saturday theology, Lancelot Andrewes's Passion sermons, Jeremy Taylor's Great Exemplar, and the full Anglican Holy Week liturgy. The Seven Last Words receive sustained contemplative treatment. A distinctive palette of charcoal, crimson, and iron reflects the Third Week's necessary gravity.

VI. The Fourth Week — *Resurrection, Consolation, and the Contemplation to Attain Love*

The Fourth Week is the light after the darkness: three to five days of Resurrection Contemplation, from Mary Magdalene in the garden through the Emmaus road, the Upper Room, Thomas, and the lakeside breakfast. Document VI culminates in the full treatment of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* — its four points developed through Traherne, Hooker, and Augustine — and the *Suscipe* as the *Exercises'* closing prayer. The Ascension and Pentecost complete the apostolic turning outward that the Fourth Week initiates.

VII. Conclusion and Sending Forth — *Contemplata aliis tradere*

The Conclusion gathers the whole arc of the *Exercises* into a retrospective theology, a practical guide for the ongoing life of prayer and apostolic service, and a sustained doxology. It articulates the bilateral gifts of the Ignatian-Anglican synthesis, develops the Society's four apostolic preferences as the natural expression of the *Exercises'* formation, surveys the cloud of witnesses from both traditions, revisits the Rule of Life as the *Exercises'* daily form, and concludes with an original doxological prayer that names each week's grace and each tradition's voice in a single act of praise.



PART FIVE

The Forms of the Exercises: Thirty Days, Everyday Life, and Adaptations

One of Ignatius's most pastorally insightful provisions was his recognition, articulated in the Nineteenth Annotation of the *Exercises*, that the full thirty-day retreat form was not available or appropriate for everyone. 'For those who are engaged in public affairs or necessary business,' he wrote, the *Exercises* could be given 'in the manner of the *Exercises* of the First Week, while they remain in their ordinary occupations.' This provision has, over the centuries, developed into what is now called the 'Exercises in Everyday Life' or 'Nineteenth Annotation Retreat' — a form of the *Exercises* extended over months, conducted in the midst of ordinary life under close director accompaniment. The Society's *Constitution* (Article 11) recognizes three forms of the *Exercises* as legitimate.

The Traditional Thirty-Day Retreat

The traditional thirty-day retreat — conducted in silence and solitude, with five prayer periods per day and daily meetings with the director — is the form Ignatius envisaged as primary. It is available to members of the Anglican Society of Jesus at all three stages of membership: to Novices as the formative retreat that constitutes the core of their novitiate, to Companions as a resource for deep formation, and to Professed Members in its shortened annual form. The Society commits itself (*Constitution*, Article 22) to maintaining a program of full thirty-day retreats as its primary apostolic offering.

The thirty-day retreat imposes significant demands on the retreatant: the willingness to withdraw from the ordinary life for an extended period, the availability of a suitable retreat house, and the spiritual and psychological readiness for a sustained encounter with the depths of the self and of God. Not every person is ready for the thirty-day retreat, and the director's initial assessment of the retreatant's readiness — including their psychological stability, their prior experience of extended prayer, and the quality of their desire — is an important safeguard for both parties.

Recommended Prerequisites: *Prior to undertaking the full thirty-day retreat, a prospective retreatant should ideally have: at least one year of regular spiritual direction with a trained director; some experience of extended silent retreat (at least five days); a stable prayer practice including the Daily Examen; and the readiness to engage honestly with the material of all four weeks. The director should assess these prerequisites and may recommend additional preparation if needed.*

The Nineteenth Annotation: Exercises in Everyday Life

For the majority of the Society's members and the majority of those to whom the Society ministers, the *Exercises* in Everyday Life will be the primary form. Extended over five to nine months of daily prayer, weekly director sessions, and gradual movement through the four weeks, this form preserves the essential content and method of the *Exercises* while making them accessible to persons whose ordinary commitments — family, work, ministry — do not permit extended withdrawal.

The Anglican context makes this form particularly natural. The Daily Office, which the Society's Rule requires of all members, provides the liturgical infrastructure within which the Nineteenth Annotation's daily prayer takes its place: the retreatant who prays Morning and Evening Prayer each day has already a settled framework of daily prayer into which the *Exercises*' specific prayer periods are inserted. The weekly Eucharist provides a rhythm of encounter with Christ that reinforces and deepens the Contemplations of whichever week the retreatant is in. The monthly meeting with a spiritual director — now extended to weekly during the Nineteenth Annotation retreat — provides the accompaniment without which the *Exercises* cannot safely proceed.

The Nineteenth Annotation form requires a director of exceptional patience and adaptability. The retreatant's progress through the weeks will not be smooth or linear: the demands of the ordinary life will interrupt, delay, and sometimes derail the retreat's movement, and the director must be prepared to hold the retreatant's commitment to the *Exercises* in the midst of these interruptions without either forcing the pace or allowing the retreat to dissolve entirely into the ordinary life's demands. The Society's training program for directors (*Constitution*, Article 22) gives particular attention to the specific skills the Nineteenth Annotation form requires.

Adapted Forms: Parish Missions, Day Retreats, and Online Accompaniment

The Society's *Constitution* (Article 11) recognizes adapted forms of the *Exercises* for particular contexts: parish missions, day retreats, and online accompaniment. These adaptations are not dilutions of the *Exercises* but genuine expressions of the Ignatian principle of flexibility in method: the same spirit and the same essential content, offered in forms appropriate to the specific context and the specific person.

A parish mission based on the *Exercises* might offer the Foundation and First Week's primary movements over an intensive weekend, with one or two *Exercises* from each week provided for private prayer during the following weeks. A day retreat might focus on a single week or a single Contemplation — the Nativity, the calling of the disciples, the Three Degrees of Humility — and offer a sustained experience of the Gospel Contemplation method with appropriate director guidance. Online accompaniment, increasingly important in the Society's ministry since the disruptions of the early 2020s, can provide the *Exercises* in Everyday Life form to persons for whom geographical distance or disability makes regular in-person direction impractical.

In all adapted forms, the director must hold two commitments simultaneously: fidelity to the essential Ignatian method — the Foundation, the structure of consolation and desolation, the movement toward election, the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* — and the pastoral wisdom to recognize what can and cannot be adequately served in a shortened or adapted form. The director who gives a weekend parish mission based on the First Week must be clear with the participants that they are receiving a foretaste of the *Exercises*, not the *Exercises* themselves; and must be prepared to offer the full form to those for whom the foretaste has awakened a genuine appetite.



PART SIX

The Director: Formation, Role, and the Art of Accompaniment

Ignatius's instructions for the director of the *Exercises* — spread through the Annotations that precede the *Exercises* proper and through the specific director's notes that accompany each week — describe an art that is as demanding as any in the Christian pastoral tradition. The director is not a teacher imparting information, not a therapist processing psychological material, not a spiritual authority prescribing the content of the retreatant's prayer. The director is an accompanist: a trained and faithful witness who creates the conditions in which God can act directly upon the retreatant's soul and who removes obstacles to that action without substituting their own preferences for the Spirit's movement.

The Essential Formation of the Director

The non-negotiable requirement for the director of these *Exercises* is that they themselves have made the full *Spiritual Exercises* — ideally in the thirty-day form, at minimum in the Nineteenth Annotation form with close accompaniment by a trained director. No amount of theoretical formation, no theological degree, no pastoral experience can substitute for the personal knowledge of what the Foundation's indifference feels like, what the First Week's mercy does to the defended soul, what the Second Week's election demands, what the Third Week's compassion costs, and what the Fourth Week's joy is like in the body of the specific person who has been through all that has preceded it.

Beyond the personal experience of the *Exercises*, the director needs a formation in the Ignatian method that combines theological understanding with supervised practice. The Society's program of director training (*Constitution*, Article 22) provides this formation in several stages: an introduction to the history and theology of the *Exercises*; supervised practice in giving abbreviated forms of the *Exercises* to individuals and groups; mentored accompaniment of retreatants through the full *Exercises* under the supervision of an experienced director; and ongoing formation through annual retreat, regular supervision, and the Society's community of practice.

The Anglican context adds specific requirements to this formation. The director of the Society's *Exercises* must be conversant with the Anglican liturgical and theological inheritance: they must be at home in the *Book of Common Prayer* and its spiritual theology, familiar with the Caroline Divines and their significance for the *Exercises*, and able to draw on the Anglican liturgical year as a resource for the retreatant's prayer. This does not require formal academic training in Anglican theology, but it does require the kind of living familiarity with the tradition that comes from inhabiting it over time.

The Role of the Director During the Retreat

Ignatius's most celebrated instruction about the director's role is contained in the fifteenth Annotation: the director must be impartial, like the balance of a scale, allowing the Creator to deal directly with the creature and the creature with the Creator. The director's art is the art of impartial

presence: available and attentive, but not directive; involved and caring, but not invasive; clear about the method, but not prescriptive about the content of God’s communication.

In practice, this means that the director’s primary task in the daily session is to receive what the retreatant brings from their prayer — the movements of consolation and desolation, the specific images and resistances and unexpected grace that have arisen — and to help the retreatant name, understand, and respond to these movements in the light of the Ignatian discernment tradition. The director does not tell the retreatant what they should have experienced; they help the retreatant to notice what they did experience, to test it against the criteria the tradition provides, and to respond to it with the appropriate interior movement.

The director also carries responsibility for the pace and timing of the retreat: knowing when to offer more material and when to invite the retreatant to remain in the prayer they are already in; knowing when to move to the next week and when to allow the current week more time; knowing when a specific Contemplation has produced its proper fruit and when it requires further dwelling. These judgments require the combination of Ignatian formation and Anglican pastoral wisdom that the Society’s training is designed to cultivate.

The Relationship Between Director and Confessor

The *Exercises* commend the availability of the Reconciliation of a Penitent as a gift the retreatant may wish to receive, particularly at the conclusion of the First Week. In the Anglican manner — ‘all may, none must, some should’ — the director offers this resource pastorally rather than prescribing it. Where a retreatant is drawn to receive absolution, the general principle is that the director and the confessor should be different persons: the director’s role is to accompany the interior movements of the prayer, while the confessor’s role is to pronounce the absolution that seals the First Week’s movement of contrition and mercy. The conflation of these two roles in a single person is possible but risks compromising the freedom of the direction relationship.

The director who has been formed in the BCP’s rite of the Reconciliation of a Penitent will find it a theologically rich and pastorally sensitive resource for the First Week’s conclusion. Where a retreatant is drawn toward it, the director may assist in preparation with care, ensuring the retreatant understands both the gift it offers and the freedom that is theirs — the Anglican tradition holds that ‘all may, none must, some should.’



PART SEVEN

The Retreatant: Preparation, Disposition, and the Art of Receiving

The *Exercises* ask a great deal of the retreatant, and the director's art is partly the art of preparing the retreatant to receive what is being asked without either reducing the demand or overwhelming the person before the *Exercises* have had a chance to work. What follows is an account of the disposition and the practices that the retreatant needs to bring to the *Exercises*, and of the specific way of receiving what the *Exercises* offer that the Ignatian tradition has developed and the Anglican inheritance has shaped.

The Necessary Dispositions

Ignatius identifies in the First Annotation the essential disposition for the *Exercises*: the generous desire to serve God. Not perfection, not the absence of doubt, not an already-formed spiritual life, not even a clear sense of vocation — but the desire to give God whatever God asks. This desire is itself God's gift, and its presence in the retreatant is the primary indicator that the *Exercises* are appropriate for this person at this time.

The *Exercises* require honesty: the willingness to look at what is actually happening in one's interior life without the protective filters that keep the truth at a manageable distance. This is not the same as psychological self-analysis; it is the specific spiritual honesty of the person who has practiced the Daily Examen and learned, over time, to notice the movements of consolation and desolation without either inflating or suppressing them. The retreatant who has never practiced any form of interior examination will find the *Exercises'* demands in this area challenging; the director should assess the retreatant's current level of interior awareness and provide appropriate preparation.

The *Exercises* require humility: not the performance of self-deprecation but the genuine willingness to be moved, formed, and changed by what God does in the retreat. This is perhaps the most difficult requirement for educated and capable people who are accustomed to being the subjects, rather than the objects, of intellectual and spiritual processes. The Foundation's indifference is a form of this humility: the willingness to hold one's preferences and plans lightly enough that they can be placed in God's hands if God requires it.

The *Exercises* require generosity: the willingness to give the retreat the time, attention, and interior energy it deserves. In the thirty-day form, this means the literal withdrawal from ordinary life and the full commitment of each day to the prayer and the director session. In the Nineteenth Annotation form, it means the daily faithfulness to the prayer periods even when the ordinary life is pressing and the interior life feels dry. In any form, it means the refusal to treat the *Exercises* as a spiritual consumer product to be sampled and evaluated, and the willingness to be changed by what they offer rather than merely enriched by the experience.

The Practice of Prayer During the Exercises

The primary prayer form of the *Exercises* is the one Ignatius developed and the documents of this series provide in detail: the Gospel Contemplation, in which the retreatant places themselves within a scene from the Gospel narrative and allows the encounter it contains to happen to them; and the meditation, in which the retreatant reflects with all three powers of the soul — memory, understanding, and will — on a theological truth or a personal question. Both forms are supported by specific preludes (the composition of place and the prayer for a specific grace), points (the material for the prayer period), and a colloquy (a personal conversation with God, Christ, or Our Lady at the prayer period's close).

The Anglican retreatant brings to these prayer forms a specific richness: the Psalter's entire emotional range, the Gospel narratives heard week by week in the Office and the Eucharist, the Collects' compressed theological wisdom, and the liturgical year's annual movement through the mysteries of Christ's life. The director should encourage the retreatant to bring this liturgical formation explicitly into the *Exercises*' prayer periods: to use the Collect for the day as the prayer for the specific grace; to bring the Office psalm to the composition of place; to allow the Eucharist's enacted drama to interpret and deepen the Gospel Contemplation of the day.

The Examen — the brief review of the prayer period that closes each session and the more extended daily review that closes each day — is the essential instrument of the retreatant's self-knowledge during the *Exercises*. The director relies on the retreatant's honest reporting of what happened in the prayer — what moved, what resisted, what unexpectedly opened — in order to guide the retreat's progress. A retreatant who has not developed the capacity for honest interior observation will struggle to provide the director with the material they need; the development of this capacity is itself part of the *Exercises*' formation.

The Silence of the Exercises

The traditional thirty-day retreat is conducted in silence: the silence of the retreat house, the silence between prayer periods, the silence of the ordinary social life temporarily suspended. This silence is not an incidental feature of the retreat's logistics; it is a spiritual necessity. The interior movements of consolation and desolation that the *Exercises* are designed to surface and work with are quiet, easily drowned by the noise of ordinary social life. The silence creates the specific acoustic space in which those movements can be heard.

The Anglican tradition has a rich theology of silence, articulated most clearly in the tradition of religious life that the Oxford Movement's recovery made available to the Church of England: silence as the medium of God's speech, silence as the form of the creature's most attentive listening, silence as the space in which the liturgy's words can penetrate to the depths they are designed to reach. The retreatant who has practiced the lesser silence of the Daily Office — the moments of silence that punctuate the Office's formal structure, the silence before and after the readings, the extended silence of Compline's close — comes to the *Exercises*' silence with some preparation for its demands.



PART EIGHT

Practical Guidance for the Conduct of the Exercises

Before the Retreat Begins

The preparation for the *Exercises* should begin at least three months before the retreat's opening day. During this preparation period, the director and the retreatant should meet regularly — at least monthly — for the specific purpose of assessing readiness, addressing any significant personal or psychological issues that the *Exercises* might surface, and beginning the retreatant's formation in the basic prayer practices the *Exercises* require. The director should read this Introduction with the retreatant and discuss its account of the tradition, the synthesis, and the expectations of both parties.

The retreatant should, during the preparation period, establish or strengthen the daily prayer practices that the *Exercises* will intensify: Morning and Evening Prayer from the BCP; the Daily Examen; regular Eucharist; and regular reading in the theological and devotional tradition that the *Exercises* draw upon. A reading list is provided at the end of this document as a starting point.

The director should assess, before the retreat begins, whether the retreatant is presenting any significant psychological difficulties — untreated depression, active trauma, serious relationship distress — that might be exacerbated rather than helped by the *Exercises'* intensity. This is not to exclude persons with psychological difficulties from the *Exercises*, which are not therapy and should not be confused with it; but the *Exercises* can amplify existing pain, and the director needs to be prepared for this and to have appropriate referral resources available.

During the Retreat: The Daily Structure

In the full thirty-day form, the retreat day typically includes five prayer periods of approximately one hour each, with adequate silence between them. Morning and Evening Prayer are prayed at their proper hours, either communally in the retreat house or privately according to the retreatant's preference. The Examen is prayed twice daily — a brief form at midday and a more extended form in the evening. The daily session with the director is normally held in the morning, after the retreatant has had at least one prayer period on the day's material.

The director session should be focused on the retreatant's report of the previous day's prayer — what moved, what resisted, what was unexpected — and on the director's assessment of what this report indicates about the Spirit's movement and the retreat's appropriate next step. The director should not fill the session with theological commentary or pastoral counsel unless the retreatant's material specifically calls for it; the primary mode should be attentive listening and carefully chosen questions.

In the Nineteenth Annotation form, the daily structure adapts to the ordinary life: a single prayer period of forty-five to sixty minutes each day, the brief Examen at the end of the working day and the extended Examen before sleep, and the weekly director session. The retreatant in the Nineteenth

Annotation form should be encouraged to mark the boundaries of the prayer period clearly: a specific time and place, a brief ritual of preparation (the Sign of the Cross, a moment of silence, the prayer for the specific grace), and an unhurried close that allows the material to settle before the ordinary life resumes.

The Eucharist During the Exercises

The Eucharist is the natural center of the retreat's sacramental life. In retreat houses that celebrate the daily Eucharist, the retreatant should participate with full intention, bringing to each celebration the specific Contemplation of the day and allowing the Eucharistic action to illuminate and deepen what the morning's prayer has begun. Where the daily Eucharist is not available, the Sunday Eucharist provides the weekly sacramental anchor.

The director should help the retreatant to notice the specific resonances between the Eucharist's movements and the week's Contemplations: the Collect for Purity as the First Week's threshold prayer; the Collect of the Day as a providential commentary on the Foundation or the specific mystery being contemplated; the Peace as the Upper Room's gift; the post-communion prayer of oblation as the *Suscipe*. These resonances are not forced; they are the natural fruit of the Anglican sacramental formation that the retreatant brings to the *Exercises*.

The Society's Calendar of Observance

The Anglican Society of Jesus observes the liturgical calendar of The Episcopal Church, with particular attention to feasts significant for the Society's charism. Directors who give the *Exercises* within the context of the liturgical year should be attentive to the resonances between the week's position in the *Exercises* and its position in the liturgical calendar: the First Week given during Lent, the Second Week's Nativity Contemplations during Christmastide, the Third Week during Holy Week, the Fourth Week during Eastertide — these coincidences, when they occur, are gifts to be received and used rather than liturgical curiosities.

Feasts of Particular Significance for the Society: *St. Ignatius Loyola (July 31); the Blessed Peter Faber (August 1); St. Francis Xavier (December 3); The Annunciation (March 25); The Transfiguration (August 6); The Presentation (February 2); All Saints (November 1); St. Thomas the Apostle (December 21); The Baptism of our Lord (Epiphany I); and the Holy Innocents (December 28), as witnesses to the cost of fidelity.*



PART NINE

A Reading List for the Director and the Retreatant

The following texts are commended as preparation for and companions to the *Exercises*. They are not prerequisites — the *Exercises* are given to the specific person where they are, not to the person they would be after completing a reading program — but they constitute the intellectual and spiritual library from which these seven documents draw, and their familiarity will enrich the director's guidance and the retreatant's prayer.

Primary Sources: The Ignatian Tradition

St. Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises* (George Ganss S.J., trans., Loyola Press, 1992): the standard critical edition with full apparatus, essential for any director.

St. Ignatius Loyola, *The Autobiography* (Parmananda Divarkar S.J., trans.): the account of Ignatius's own spiritual journey, indispensable for understanding the *Exercises'* origin.

St. Ignatius Loyola, *Letters to Women* (Hugo Rahner S.J., ed.): the Ignatian charism in practice, directed to specific persons in specific circumstances.

David Fleming S.J., *Draw Me Into Your Friendship: The Spiritual Exercises — A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading*: the most useful parallel-text edition for directors working in the English-speaking world.

William Barry S.J. and William Connolly S.J., *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*: the standard modern account of the art of accompaniment in the Ignatian tradition.

Margaret Silf, *Inner Compass: An Invitation to Ignatian Spirituality*: an accessible introduction to the Ignatian tradition for retreatants approaching the *Exercises* for the first time.

Primary Sources: The Anglican Tradition

The *Book of Common Prayer* (1979, Episcopal Church; 1662, Church of England): the primary liturgical and devotional text of the Anglican tradition and the constant companion of these *Exercises*.

Lancelot Andrewes, *Preces Privatae* (F.E. Brightman, ed., Methuen, 1903): the most sustained Anglican form of the *Exercises'* method in the devotional literature; the director should know this text well.

George Herbert, *The Temple: The Complete English Works* (Everyman, 1995): the *Exercises* in poetic form; essential for any director who wishes to speak Anglican to the Anglican retreatant.

Jeremy Taylor, *Holy Living and Holy Dying* (P.G. Stanwood, ed., Oxford University Press, 1989): the practical theology of the apostolic life, directly usable in the Second and Third Week directions.

Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditation* (Dobell, 1908; many modern editions): the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*'s closest Anglican equivalent; the Fourth Week's essential companion text.

Richard Hooker, *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Books I–IV (Folger Library Edition): the theological ground of the Anglican synthesis, particularly relevant for the Foundation.

The Anglican Ignatian Synthesis: Secondary Sources

Michael Ramsey, *The Resurrection of Christ* (Fontana, 1961): essential theology for the Fourth Week and the Anglican theology of the Resurrection.

Michael Ramsey, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ* (Longmans, 1949): the theological ground of the Second Week's Transfiguration *Contemplation*.

Rowan Williams, *Resurrection* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1982): the most searching Anglican theology of the Resurrection appearances, essential for the Fourth Week.

Rowan Williams, *The Wound of Knowledge* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 1979): an account of the Christian mystical tradition that provides the theological context for the whole of the *Exercises*.

Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (Methuen, 1911): the classic account of the mystical life in the Western tradition, richly supplementary to all four weeks.

Evelyn Underhill, *Worship* (Harper and Row, 1936): the theology of worship that grounds the Anglican liturgical framework of these *Exercises*.

F.D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ* (SCM Press, 1958): the social and ecclesial theology that grounds the Society's apostolic preferences, particularly relevant for the Second Week.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* (T&T Clark, 1990): the theology of Holy Saturday and the descent into hell, essential for the Third Week.

Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Mind of the Maker* (Methuen, 1941): the theology of creativity and the apostolic life, supplementary to the Second and Fourth Weeks.

On the Discernment of Spirits and Spiritual Direction

Jules Toner S.J., *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits* (Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1982): the most thorough scholarly commentary on the Rules, essential for any director.

Timothy Gallagher O.M.V., *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living* (Crossroad, 2005): accessible and practically oriented, useful for both directors and retreatants.

Philip Sheldrake S.J., *Spirituality and History* (SPCK, 1991): the historical and theological framework for understanding both the Ignatian and Anglican traditions in relation.



A LETTER TO THE DIRECTOR AND THE RETREATANT

Before You Begin

You are about to undertake something that cannot be fully prepared for. The *Exercises* are, at their root, an encounter with the living God — and encounters with the living God have a way of exceeding every description of them. You will find in the seven documents that follow a rich provision: historical context, theological development, specific prayer materials, director's notes, liturgical guidance, and original prayers for every moment of transition. Use these resources freely and trust them without being bound by them. They exist to serve the encounter, not to replace it.

To the director: you are being entrusted with someone's soul at one of the most significant moments of their spiritual life. The retreatant who enters the *Exercises* with genuine desire and honest openness is the most vulnerable person you will ever be asked to accompany. This vulnerability is a gift, not a burden; it is the condition of the most significant work you will ever do. Hold it with the combination of care and freedom that Ignatius's fifteenth Annotation describes: be the balance of the scale, impartial and attentive, clearing the way for the Creator's own direct dealing with the creature.

You will, in the course of giving the *Exercises*, encounter the full range of what the human soul is capable of: profound consolation and acute desolation, creative insight and defensive resistance, unexpected grace and the specific darkness that precedes the deepest transformation. You will be tempted, at various points, to resolve what needs to remain open, to offer what needs to be withheld, and to withhold what needs to be offered. Trust your formation. Trust the method. Trust the God who formed you both.

To the retreatant: you are about to be given something that has formed the interior lives of thousands of people over five centuries — some of the greatest saints in the Church's history and thousands of ordinary faithful people who have gone home from the *Exercises* quieter, freer, and more fully themselves than they were when they arrived. The *Exercises* ask a great deal of you. They will ask for your honesty in the First Week, your attentiveness in the Second, your endurance in the Third, and your capacity for joy in the Fourth. Bring all of these, and bring as well your doubts, your distractions, your fatigue, your impatience, and your resistance. All of it is material. None of it disqualifies you. The God you are about to meet has met every version of the human condition, including yours.

One thing only is necessary: the genuine desire to seek and find the will of God in the ordering of your life. Ignatius says this in the twenty-first annotation of the *Exercises*, and the Anglican tradition says it in the Collect for Purity that opens every Eucharist: 'that we may perfectly love thee.' That desire — not its fulfilment, not its certainty, just its genuine presence — is sufficient. Everything else the *Exercises* will provide.

Go in peace. Go with God. Go as those who have been met by a love that will not let them go, and who are going, in the freedom of that love, to meet the world.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint



SOCIETAS IESU ANGLICANA

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus

DOCUMENT II

Foundation and First Principles

Principium et Fundamentum

“Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.”

— St. Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, § 23

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint

Anno Domini MMXXVI

PREFACE TO THE DIRECTOR

The Foundation and First Principles that follow are not an introduction to the *Spiritual Exercises* in the ordinary sense — a preliminary orientation before the real work begins. They are the *Exercises*. Everything else that the retreatant will undertake in the days and weeks ahead is an unfolding of what is here set forth: the nature of the human person before God, the ordering of desire, the freedom to choose, and the single, anchoring conviction that beneath all things lies a love that holds.

Ignatius placed the *Principium et Fundamentum* at the gateway of the *Exercises* not as a theological prologue but as a contemplative threshold. The retreatant is asked not merely to understand these principles but to dwell in them, to let them settle into the bones, to feel their weight and their liberation. The director's task in presenting them is not to explain but to open — to create a space in which the retreatant may hear them as though for the first time.

In the Anglican tradition, this threshold work finds rich resonance. The General Thanksgiving of the *Book of Common Prayer* — “We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world” — is itself a Foundation in miniature: it names the source, it names the gift, it names the response. The Catechism's opening question — “What are we by nature?” — and its answer — “We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God” — opens the same terrain.

The director should present the Foundation in at least two distinct movements, with adequate time for prayer and silence between them. Many retreatants will find the first movement — creation and end — relatively accessible, and the second — indifference and election — profoundly demanding. The director should not hurry toward resolution. Ignatius intended this second movement to do its work slowly, like water finding the shape of the ground.

Throughout, the director may draw freely on the Anglican liturgical heritage: the Collects, the Psalms as encountered in the Daily Office, the language of the Eucharistic rites, and the theological inheritance of the Caroline Divines. These are not decorations. They are the native tongue in which Anglican retreatants hear the Gospel, and the Foundation should speak that tongue with fluency and love.

Director's Note: *The Foundation may be presented over one or two days at the opening of a thirty-day retreat, or across one to two weeks in the Nineteenth Annotation form. Allow generous periods of silence. The retreatant should be encouraged to sit with the text of § 23 as lectio before each prayer period.*



THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

On the Anglican Synthesis

The *Principium et Fundamentum* of Ignatius Loyola is one of the most concentrated pieces of spiritual writing in the Christian tradition. In four short paragraphs, it articulates a complete theology of the human person, a metaphysics of creation, a psychology of desire, and an ethics of freedom. It is Thomistic in its structure, Augustinian in its intensity, and Ignatian in its resolute orientation toward action — toward the making of the great choice that the *Exercises* exist to enable.

The Anglican inheritance brings to this text its own resources, not as a corrective but as an amplification. Where Ignatius, writing in the Counter-Reformation moment, tends toward precision and structure, the Anglican tradition tends toward doxology and poetry. Where Ignatius analyses the movements of the soul, George Herbert sings them. Where Ignatius describes ‘indifference’ as a rational achievement, Thomas Traherne describes it as an ecstatic seeing — the restored vision that perceives all things as gifts flooding out from the hand of God. These are not competing accounts. They are the same country seen from different altitudes.

The Anglican Theology of Creation

At the heart of the Anglican understanding of creation stands the conviction, expressed with particular force in the Caroline Divines, that the world is not merely the stage on which salvation is enacted but is itself shot through with the glory of God. Lancelot Andrewes, in his *Preces Privatae*, gives thanks for creation with a liturgical extravagance that no mere backdrop could warrant. Thomas Traherne, in his *Centuries of Meditation*, sees the whole creation as a treasury of delights prepared by God for the soul’s enjoyment: “You never enjoy the world aright, till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars.”

This is not romantic pantheism. It is the full weight of the doctrine of creation ex nihilo: that God brought all things into being from nothing, out of the overflow of divine love, and that every creature therefore carries within itself the mark of its Maker — not as a trace left behind but as an ongoing gift, a participation in being that is renewed at every moment. Richard Hooker, drawing on Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle alike, articulates this in the opening books of the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*: all things tend toward God as their end, and in that tending they find their perfection and their joy.

The *Spiritual Exercises* ground themselves in precisely this soil. The Contemplation to Attain Love at the close of the Fourth Week — which is the crown toward which the entire edifice aspires — is nothing other than the recovery of this original vision: to see God working in all things, laboring in all things, giving himself in all things, and to find in that vision the freedom and the love that transform the whole of life into praise.

The Ignatian Principle of Election

What distinguishes Ignatius from many other masters of the interior life is his insistence that prayer is ordered toward decision. The *Exercises* are not primarily about the cultivation of a contemplative state, however beautiful and necessary such states may be. They are about freedom — the freedom to choose what God is choosing, to will what Love wills, to order all things in one’s life around the single axis of the greater glory of God.

Anglican spirituality has not always foregrounded this dimension with equal clarity. The tradition of holy living associated with Jeremy Taylor, the mystical theology of Evelyn Underhill, the sacramental piety of the Oxford Movement — all these tend toward an emphasis on the transformation of the interior life within its given circumstances rather than the Ignatian readiness to restructure those circumstances in obedience to the divine call. The synthesis the Anglican Society of Jesus seeks holds both: the Ignatian urgency of election and the Anglican rootedness in a sacramental order that is already, in the worshipping community, a form of God’s governance.

Michael Ramsey’s insight that “the glory of God is the theme of Anglican worship” finds its Ignatian counterpart in the AMDG — *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* — that stamps every work and every hour. For both traditions, the human person is most fully themselves when most fully given over to that glory. The Foundation says this first.

“You never enjoy the world aright, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars, and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world.”
— Thomas Traherne, *Centuries of Meditation*, I.29

Indifference and the Via Media

Of all the concepts in the Foundation, ‘indifference’ (in Ignatius’s Latin, *indifferens*) is the most easily misunderstood. It does not mean apathy. It does not mean the suppression of feeling or the abandonment of particular loves. It means freedom — specifically, the freedom from inordinate attachment that would cause us to choose lesser goods over greater ones, or to prefer our own consolation to God’s will.

The Anglican *via media*, so often characterized as a polity or an ecclesiology, is at its deepest level a spirituality of this kind of freedom. Richard Hooker’s insistence that ‘in things doubtful, liberty’ is not mere tolerance of difference. It is a theological commitment to the sovereignty of God over every human attempt to fix and possess the divine. The Anglican willingness to hold things lightly, to resist the systematic closure that characterizes both Roman centralism and Protestant confessionalism at their extremes, is at its best a form of what Ignatius calls indifference: the posture of the soul that wants only what God wants, and is therefore free to find God in all things.

The Foundation calls the retreatant to this freedom. It does so gently but inexorably. By the time the retreatant has sat with it in prayer for several days, they will have begun to feel the places in their own life where that freedom is not yet present — the attachments, the fears, the preferences that shape their choices without their full knowledge. This is not a failure. It is the beginning of the work.



THE FOUNDATION AND FIRST PRINCIPLES

Principium et Fundamentum

Ignatius, § 23: *The following is the text of the Principium et Fundamentum as set forth by St. Ignatius Loyola in the autograph text of the Spiritual Exercises, rendered in a contemporary English translation suited to Anglican usage, with Anglican liturgical amplifications appended after each movement.*

First Movement: Creation and End

The Ignatian Text

The human person is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. The other things on the face of the earth are created for the human person to help in attaining the end for which he is created. Hence, the human person is to make use of them in as much as they help toward his end, and likewise must rid himself of them in so far as they prove a hindrance to his end.

Anglican Amplification

The *Book of Common Prayer* gives the First Movement its liturgical voice in the General Thanksgiving, which Cranmer's tradition placed in the mouths of ordinary worshippers as the first act of Morning Prayer. To render thanks 'for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life' before we have said anything else is to locate ourselves precisely where Ignatius would have us: as creatures, dependent, gifted, ordered toward a glory not our own.

The Catechism of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1979) deepens this foundation. Asked "What are we by nature?" it answers: "We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God." Asked what it means to be made in that image, it answers: "It means that we are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God." Freedom, love, reason, harmony: the four dimensions of the Catechism's answer are also the four dimensions of the Ignatian life at its most mature.

The Caroline Divines hear this movement in a particular key. Lancelot Andrewes, kneeling before dawn in his private oratory, begins the *Preces Privatae* with a long address of praise that enumerates the gifts of creation with almost overwhelming gratitude: light, warmth, the turning of the seasons, the body's senses, the mind's reach, the tongue's power of prayer. This is not catalogue; it is theology. Every gift named is a testimony to the Giver, and every testimony a small act of the praise for which the creature exists.

“Glory be to thee, O Lord, glory be to thee — for all the gifts of thy love poured forth in the overflowing vessel of creation.”

— Lancelot Andrewes, *Preces Privatae* (adapted)

George Herbert’s poem “The Pulley” meditates on precisely the tension Ignatius names in the First Movement: God bestows every good upon the human person at creation, but withholds rest — for ‘if I should bestow this jewel also on my creature, he would adore my gifts instead of me, and rest in Nature, not the God of Nature.’ Repining restlessness is the hook by which God draws the creature home. The Ignatian ‘end’ and the Herbertian ‘rest’ are the same thing in two voices: the creature’s homing in God.

Second Movement: Ordered Freedom and Holy Indifference

The Ignatian Text (continued)

For this reason, we must neither prefer health to sickness, long life to short life, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, but we should be utterly indifferent and free with respect to all these things, so that we are not more inclined or attached to one side rather than the other. Our one desire and our single choice must be what better leads to the end for which God created us.

Anglican Amplification

The language of holy indifference has always sat somewhat awkwardly in the Anglican sensibility, which prizes the particular, the concrete, and the embedded. Anglicanism at its best is a thoroughly incarnational spirituality: it tends to meet God not in abstraction but in the Eucharistic bread and wine, the weekly rhythms of the Office, the specific beauty of a particular church in a particular parish. The Ignatian call to indifference can appear to threaten this particularity with a dangerous detachment.

The resolution lies in understanding indifference not as the erasure of love for particular things but as the purification of that love. Jeremy Taylor, in *Holy Living*, describes what he calls ‘the purity of intention’ — the ordering of all acts, even the most mundane, to the glory of God. This is Ignatian indifference translated into the Anglican key of sacramental ordinariness: not the abandonment of health, wealth, honor, or long life, but the refusal to let them become the criterion of one’s choices. The Ignatian retreatant and the Taylorian holy liver are attempting the same re-ordering of desire.

Evelyn Underhill, writing from within the Anglican tradition but with deep sympathy for the Ignatian and Rhineland mystics, articulates this movement in terms of the ‘purification of the self’ — the stripping away of the ego’s compulsive grasping so that the soul becomes, as she puts it, a clean and swift channel for the work of God. This is not self-annihilation; it is the recovery of the self’s deepest nature, which is to be the vessel of divine love in the world.

The Collect for Purity that opens the Eucharistic rite in the *Book of Common Prayer* is perhaps the most perfect Anglican formulation of indifference as prayer: “Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name.” To have all desires known — not merely the virtuous ones — and to ask that those desires be cleansed rather than hidden: this is the movement of the Foundation in liturgical form.

*“Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid:
 Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit.”*
 — Collect for Purity, *Book of Common Prayer*



THE EXERCISES OF THE FOUNDATION

A Five-Day Movement for the Opening of the Retreat

The following *Exercises* are offered as a structured movement through the Foundation over five days. Each day contains a suggested Scripture passage, an Anglican liturgical text, a point of Ignatian Contemplation, and a colloquy. The director may adapt freely according to the needs and movements of the individual retreatant. Adequate silence should surround each period of prayer.

Exercise One: The Gift of Existence

Scripture: *Genesis 1:1–31 — “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.”*

BCP Text: *The General Thanksgiving — “We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life.”*

Begin by resting in silence for fifteen minutes, attending to the simple fact of your own existence. You need not have been. The universe need not have been. Everything that is, is a gift — the first and foundational gift of a love that wanted more love to exist.

Read slowly Genesis 1, attending not to its cosmological claims but to its theological rhythm: the repeated ‘and God saw that it was good.’ Notice that goodness here is not a moral judgment but an ontological one — being itself, as it comes from God’s hand, is good. You are good. Your existence is God’s pleasure.

Let the question arise quietly: If my existence is a gift, what does it mean to receive it well? What would it mean to spend it in praise? Sit with these questions without forcing an answer. Let God ask them.

Colloquy: *Speak to God as you would speak to a friend — directly and without performance — about what it feels like to be a creature. What in you resists this identity? What receives it with gratitude? End with the General Thanksgiving said slowly, phrase by phrase.*

Exercise Two: Created for a Purpose

Scripture: *Colossians 1:15–20 — “All things were created through him and for him.”*

BCP Text: *Catechism — “What is our end? To know God, and in that knowledge to love and serve him.”*

The Foundation’s claim that the human person is ‘created to praise, reverence, and serve’ is a claim about teleology — about the shape and direction of a life. In a culture that treats the individual as the sole author of their own meaning, it is a countercultural act to receive one’s end as a gift rather than a construction.

Read the Colossians text slowly, attending to its cosmic scope: all things created through Christ and for Christ. Notice that this is not a diminishment of the human person but an expansion. To be created for Christ is to be located in a love so vast that nothing in creation falls outside it. The Ignatian phrase ‘Greater Glory of God’ is another name for this scope: there is no situation, no relationship, no corner of the world where God’s glory does not reach, and where your praise cannot therefore find it.

Reflect on the shape of your own life as it currently stands. Where does it most fully enact the praise for which you were made? Where does it most resist that enactment? Bring both before God with equal honesty.

Colloquy: *Ask God to show you your end as God sees it — not as a burden but as the deepest truth about who you are. Then rest in the knowledge that the end for which you were created is already given, already held, already secure in God.*

Exercise Three: All Things as Means

Scripture: *Matthew 6:25–33 — “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”*

BCP Text: *Collect for Proper 25 — “Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with thy most gracious favor, and further us with thy continual help.”*

Ignatius’s formulation that ‘all other things on the face of the earth are created for the human person to help in attaining the end’ has been misread as a license for human domination of creation. The *Constitution of the Anglican Society of Jesus*, following the apostolic preference for care of the Common Home, firmly rejects this misreading.

The sense of Ignatius is rather this: no created thing has its ultimate meaning in itself. All things are relational — they point beyond themselves to their Source, and they are most fully themselves when received and used in that spirit. The Anglican sacramental imagination agrees: bread and wine do not become less bread and wine when they become the Body and Blood of Christ. They become more fully what they were always meant to be.

Spend time in this prayer reflecting on the things in your life — relationships, possessions, capacities, roles, pleasures — that you tend to treat as ends rather than means. This is not a catalogue of sins but a reconnaissance of the soul: where is your treasure? Where is your heart?

Thomas Traherne writes in his *Centuries* that until your spirit fills the whole world and the stars become your jewels, you do not yet see the world as God made it to be seen. Let this vision orient your prayer: not an acquisition of all things, but a grateful reception of all things as gift, pointing back to the Giver.

Colloquy: *Bring before God one thing in your life that has a tendency to become an end in itself rather than a means. Do not resolve to give it up. Simply show it to God. Let God look at it with you. Notice what that shared looking reveals.*

Exercise Four: Holy Indifference

Scripture: *Philippians 4:11–13* — “I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”

BCP Text: *Collect for Purity* — “Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee.”

This is the most demanding exercise of the Foundation, and the director should prepare the retreatant for its difficulty. Indifference in the Ignatian sense is not a neutral state but a dynamic freedom — the freedom of the person who wants nothing for its own sake, and therefore can want everything for God’s sake. It is the posture of the Collect for Purity: all desires known, all secrets open, and a request not for desires to be suppressed but for the heart to be cleansed so that it may love purely.

Sit for a time with the Philippians text. Paul writes from prison, and he says he has ‘learned’ to be content — this is not a natural disposition but an acquired freedom, a discipline of grace. The Ignatian retreatant is similarly not expected to arrive at indifference but to begin learning it. The *Exercises* are the school; the Holy Spirit is the teacher; and the curriculum is a lifetime.

The Anglican tradition at its best knows this schooling well. The martyrs of the Reformation on both sides of the confessional divide — commemorated in the Society’s liturgical calendar as witnesses to the cost of fidelity — are its most extreme instances. But indifference is not only for martyrs. It is for anyone who has had to choose between what God seems to be asking and what they most naturally prefer. Every vocation entails this choice.

Pray the Ignatian indifference prayer in its classical form, slowly and without forcing its meaning: ‘Lord, I wish neither long life nor short, health nor sickness, wealth nor poverty, honor nor dishonor — except as they serve the greater glory of God. Let me want only what you want, and want it as completely as you want it.’ Notice every place where this prayer generates resistance.

Colloquy: *Bring the resistances to God. Name them honestly: the health you are clinging to, the role you cannot imagine relinquishing, the relationship you have made the center of your existence. Ask God not to take these from you but to free you from their tyranny. Ask for the freedom to hold them as gifts rather than possessions.*

Exercise Five: The Election Horizon

Scripture: *Luke 1:38* — “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”

BCP Text: *Collect for Bible Sunday* — “Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life.”

The Foundation moves toward election — the great choice that is the goal of the whole retreat. This fifth exercise does not yet make that choice; it prepares the ground. It invites the retreatant to stand at the horizon of the *Exercises* and see what the Foundation has been building toward: a self free enough, a desire ordered enough, a love purified enough, to make the great choice with undivided heart.

The *Magnificat* — sung daily at Evening Prayer in the Anglican Office — is the supreme Anglican model of the elective posture. Mary’s *Fiat*, ‘let it be with me according to your word,’ is the fruit of the Foundation perfectly realized: a self so ordered to God’s purposes that its own interests and

God's will have become, in that moment, indistinguishable. This is the goal the Foundation sets before the retreatant.

The Collect for Bible Sunday in the Anglican tradition prays for the deep interior assimilation of Scripture: to hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. This is also the prayer for the Foundation itself: not to know it superficially as a theological proposition but to have it become the architecture of one's desiring. Let the retreatant pray for this digestion as the final movement of these five days.

Colloquy: *Speak to the Blessed Virgin Mary, as Ignatius often suggests at the close of exercises, asking her intercession for the freedom and openness that enabled her Fiat. Then speak to Christ, asking for the same ordering of desire that animated his life from Nazareth to Calvary. End in silence before the Father, in the knowledge that the Foundation you have been given is not your own achievement but God's prior gift.*



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Presenting the Foundation in the Anglican Context

On the Art of Presenting the Foundation

The director's primary task in presenting the Foundation is to create the conditions for God's self-communication, not to communicate God on God's behalf. This is always the case in the Ignatian tradition, but it is especially important in this opening movement, when the retreatant is still finding their bearings and the director is still learning the particular spiritual idiom of this particular soul.

In the Anglican context, the director has rich resources at hand. The Daily Office, if observed by the retreatant during the retreat, provides a liturgical framework that the director can reference in the sessions. The Psalms, encountered morning and evening, are an inexhaustible source of the Foundation's themes: praise, lament, trust, the ordering of desire, the homing of the soul in God. The director should encourage the retreatant to bring the Psalms of their Office into the prayer periods as a secondary text.

The Eucharist, where it is celebrated in the retreat context, enacts the Foundation liturgically every time it is offered: the Collect for Purity, the *Gloria*, the *Sanctus*, the prayer of self-oblation — all these are liturgical forms of the Foundation's movements. The director may help the retreatant to notice this, so that the Eucharist becomes not a break from the retreat but its intensification.

Common Movements in Retreatants

Directors working with Anglican retreatants through the Foundation should be prepared for several characteristic movements. The first is a sense of recognition — a feeling that what Ignatius is saying is, in some form, already known, already practiced. This is often genuine: Anglican formation, when it has been thorough, already tends in Ignatian directions. The director should honor this recognition while gently inviting the retreatant to go deeper than the familiar formulation.

The second common movement is resistance at the point of indifference, particularly around vocation. Anglican retreatants who are exploring a call to Holy Orders, to the religious life, or to a significant change of direction often find the Foundation's demand for freedom from predetermined outcomes deeply threatening. The director should not resolve this resistance prematurely. It is often the most important thing happening in the retreat.

The third movement is an encounter with consolation in the First Movement — a deep sense of gratitude and joy in the fact of creation and the gift of being. This is a genuine Ignatian consolation and should be received, noted, and savored. The director should invite the retreatant to return to it as a resource if desolation comes later in the retreat.

The fourth movement, often delayed until the third or fourth day of the Foundation, is a confrontation with disordered attachments — the places in the retreatant's life where the freedom

the Foundation calls for is manifestly absent. This is not a cause for discouragement but for honest prayer. The *Exercises* are designed precisely for this: to create the space in which disordered attachments can be seen, named, and brought to God.

The Question of Length

In the traditional thirty-day retreat, the Foundation occupies the first two to three days. In the Nineteenth Annotation form, adapted for the Anglican Society of Jesus, the Foundation may be extended over two to three weeks, with prayer periods integrated into the retreatant's daily life. In either case, the director should resist the temptation to rush toward the First Week. The Foundation is not merely a preparation; it is itself a profound experience of prayer, and many retreatants find that its fruits are among the most lasting of the whole retreat.

In adapted forms — parish missions, day retreats, online accompaniment — the Foundation may be offered in a single sustained session, with one or two of the *Exercises* given for private prayer. The director in these contexts should be particularly attentive to what cannot be covered, and should help participants identify which of the five movements most requires their attention in private prayer.



LITURGICAL INTEGRATION

The Foundation in the Anglican Office and Eucharist

One of the distinctive gifts the Anglican tradition brings to the Ignatian *Exercises* is its rich liturgical texture. The Society of Jesus in its Roman Catholic form has drawn on the Roman rite; the Anglican Society of Jesus draws on the *Book of Common Prayer* in its various expressions — Cranmer’s 1549 and 1662, the American 1979, and the contemporary supplemental rites — as the liturgical context within which the *Exercises* are given and received.

The Foundation is present in the BCP liturgy at multiple points. Directors and retreatants are encouraged to notice these resonances and to let the liturgy illuminate the *Exercises*, and the *Exercises* illuminate the liturgy.

Morning Prayer and the Foundation

Morning Prayer begins, in the traditional form, with an invitation to ‘draw near with penitence and faith.’ This dual movement — toward God with honesty and with trust — is itself a miniature Foundation. The opening sentences, particularly the great Advent sentence and the Lenten sentences, enact the Foundation’s logic of honest self-knowledge before God.

The General Confession of Morning Prayer — in the 1662 form, ‘We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep, we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts’ — names precisely the disorder of desire that the Foundation exists to address. The retreatant who has been sitting with the *Exercises* of holy indifference will hear this confession with new ears.

The canticles of Morning Prayer — the *Venite*, the *Benedictus*, and especially the *Benedicite, Omnia Opera* — are sustained enactments of the Foundation’s First Movement: the praise of the creature for the Creator. The *Benedicite*, with its vast liturgical catalogue of creation called to praise, is perhaps the most complete Anglican realization of the Foundation’s opening claim that the human person is ‘created to praise, reverence, and serve’ God.

Evening Prayer and the Foundation

Evening Prayer brings the Foundation’s themes into the register of gratitude and recollection that the Ignatian Examen occupies. The *Magnificat*, sung at every Evening Prayer, is Mary’s *Fiat* extended into song: the creature who has received the impossible gift of God’s presence in her body sings the praises of the God who has looked upon her lowliness. This is the Foundation from the other side: not the request for freedom, but the praise of the freedom God has given.

The *Nunc Dimittis*, which closes Evening Prayer, is perhaps the most concentrated expression of Ignatian indifference in the Anglican canon: Simeon, holding the child Jesus, can now let everything go — ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace’ — because he has seen the salvation God prepared. The retreatant who has worked through the Foundation’s five *Exercises* may come to this canticle with a new sense of what Simeon’s peace cost him to reach, and what it offers.

The Eucharist and the Foundation

The Eucharistic rite enacts the Foundation's complete arc in every celebration. The Collect for Purity is the request for indifference. The *Gloria* is the praise for which humanity was created. The *Sanctus* — 'Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory' — is the Foundation's cosmological claim in doxological form: all creation is charged with the glory of God. The prayer of self-oblation in the post-communion prayer — 'Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice' — is the Foundation's election in liturgical form: the total gift of the self to the God who gave it.

The director may, where possible, ensure that the retreatant celebrates the Eucharist during the Foundation period and brings to that celebration the particular movement of whichever exercise they are praying. The Eucharist does not replace the *Exercises*; it deepens them by lodging their movements in the body and in the worshipping community.



CLOSING PRAYER

For the Conclusion of the Foundation

The following prayer is composed for the Anglican Society of Jesus, to be offered by the director and retreatant together at the conclusion of the Foundation period, before moving into the First Week. It draws on the *Suscipe* of St. Ignatius, on the language of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and on the theological inheritance of the Caroline Divines.

*Almighty and eternal God,
in whom we live and move and have our being;
We have sat before thee as creatures before their Maker,
and we have heard again the word that was spoken before time:
that thou hast made us for thyself,
and our heart is restless until it rests in thee.*

*We have seen the world spread before us as thy gift,
every creature a word of thy speaking,
every moment a renewal of thy sustaining love.
We have heard the summons to freedom —
the holy indifference that is not coldness
but the white-hot love of those who want nothing
except what thou wantest for them.*

*Take, Lord, and receive:
take our liberty, that we may use it only in thy service;
take our memory, that we may remember chiefly thy mercies;
take our understanding, that it may dwell in thy wisdom;
take our entire will, that it may be conformed to thine.*

*All that we have is thine already;
we ask only to receive it back as a gift,
and to use it as givers, not possessors —
till the day when we return it wholly to thy hands,
and with Simeon say:
Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word.*

*Give us thy love and thy grace.
This is sufficient for us.
Amen.*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint



SOCIETAS IESU ANGLICANA

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus

DOCUMENT III

The First Week

Sin, Mercy, and the Healing of the Soul

Hebdomada Prima

“*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.*”

— Isaiah 1:18

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint

Anno Domini MMXXVI

PREFACE TO THE DIRECTOR

The First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* is the most misunderstood of the four. It has been caricatured as an exercise in spiritual terror, a Calvinist reckoning with damnation dressed in Counter-Reformation clothes. Nothing could be further from Ignatius's intention. The First Week is, from first to last, an exercise in mercy. Its meditations on sin, disorder, and consequence exist for a single purpose: to create in the retreatant the condition of receptivity in which the enormity and gratuitousness of God's love can be fully received. You cannot be overwhelmed by pardon if you have not first seen clearly what has been pardoned.

This is the movement the First Week enacts. It begins in the furthest reaches of the created order — the fall of the angels, the first human disobedience, the particular sins of a single soul — and it descends through these into the very ground of the retreatant's own life, asking: what in me has resisted the love that holds all things? Where am I lost? And then, having looked honestly at these questions, it turns — and this turning is the heart of the Week — to the crucified Christ, and asks: why are you still here?

In the Anglican context, the First Week finds natural resonance in several places. The penitential discipline of the Daily Office — the General Confession, the Kyrie, the Litany — creates a liturgical home for the Week's movements that no other tradition quite matches. The Anglican theology of sin, drawn from Augustine through the Reformation Articles and refined by the Caroline Divines into something that avoids both the Calvinist abyss and the Pelagian shallows, offers precisely the anthropological nuance the Week requires. And the Anglican tradition of sacramental confession, offered in the *Book of Common Prayer* as a gift rather than a command, may provide a natural conclusion for those whom the Spirit moves in that direction.

The director's central task in the First Week is to hold open the space between honest reckoning and consoling mercy, and not to close it prematurely in either direction. To rush the retreatant past the pain of self-knowledge is to deprive them of the Week's most important gift. To leave them in that pain without the turn toward mercy is to abandon them in a place Ignatius never intended them to remain. The director must attend with great care to the movements of consolation and desolation throughout, and must be prepared for the First Week to take longer than the nominal seven days if God is doing deep work.

Director's Note: *The First Week typically occupies Days 4–10 of the thirty-day retreat, following two to three days on the Foundation. In the Nineteenth Annotation form it may extend over four to six weeks of daily prayer. The director should meet the retreatant daily during this Week. Watch carefully for signs of scrupulosity — Ignatius has specific counsel for this (SpEx § 346–348) — and do not hesitate to move the retreatant gently forward if they are lodged in self-accusation rather than honest contrition.*



THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

Sin, Mercy, and the Anglican Synthesis

The First Week rests on a theology of sin that is both clear-eyed and ultimately doxological. Ignatius does not invite the retreatant to meditate on sin for sin's sake — as though the Contemplation of disorder were itself of spiritual value — but rather to see sin as the distorted background against which the brightness of mercy becomes visible. The logic is Pauline: where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. The First Week is the increase of sin meditated upon, so that the abundance of grace may be received at its full weight.

The Anglican Doctrine of Sin

The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, which form the doctrinal background of the Anglican tradition, describe original sin in Article IX as the fault and corruption of the nature of every person naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby humankind is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of its own nature inclined to evil. This is robust language, drawing directly from Augustine and Luther, and it takes sin with full seriousness.

Yet the Anglican tradition characteristically refuses to let this seriousness collapse into despair. Article X, immediately following, affirms that the condition of humankind after the Fall is not one of total incapacity for good, but of a diminishment that grace can restore. Richard Hooker, developing this Anglican middle way, insists that the image of God in the human person is wounded, not destroyed — darkened, not extinguished. The soul that the First Week invites to self-knowledge is therefore a soul that is wounded but not worthless, disordered but not damned, lost but capable of being found.

This is precisely the anthropological ground that Ignatius's First Week requires. The meditations on sin make no sense — are, in fact, spiritually dangerous — if they are conducted by a soul that believes itself to be beyond redemption. They make complete sense, and bear their proper fruit, in a soul that knows itself to be created in love, sustained in love, and now invited to see honestly the ways in which it has turned from that love — in the full confidence that turning again is possible, because the love has not turned from it.

The Caroline Divines and the Knowledge of Sin

Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Dying*, that great Anglican treatise on the preparation of the soul, approaches the examination of conscience with the same combination of thoroughness and tenderness that Ignatius brings to the First Week. Taylor insists that the examination must be particular — not vague acknowledgment of sinfulness in general, but honest attention to the specific choices, habits, and patterns of one's own life. This particularity is essential to the Ignatian method. The triple sin meditation (of the angels, of Adam and Eve, of one's own soul) is designed precisely to move from the general to the particular, from the cosmic to the individual.

Lancelot Andrewes, in his *Preces Privatae*, provides what is perhaps the most searching Anglican examination of conscience in the tradition. He works through the Ten Commandments, the Seven Deadly Sins, and the duties of his particular vocation with a thoroughness that rivals the most demanding Ignatian examen. But his method is always doxological: the examination begins and ends in praise, and the acknowledgment of failure is framed by the confidence that the God who knows all things also forgives all things, and that confession is itself a form of trust.

The Oxford Movement and Sacramental Confession

One of the signal contributions of the Oxford Movement to Anglican spiritual practice was the recovery of sacramental confession — the Reconciliation of a Penitent — as a regularly available gift for the interior life. The maxim attributed to the tradition — ‘all may, none must, some should’ — expresses the Anglican instinct precisely: confession is a gift, not a law. For those engaged in serious examination of conscience, it is a gift of profound importance; and the Society commends it warmly, while holding it as a matter of freedom rather than obligation, in accord with the Anglican discipline.

For many retreatants, the First Week naturally awakens a desire for this gift. Having seen one’s sins honestly, having sat with the weight of disorder and the marvel of continued mercy, the retreatant may find themselves moved toward a general confession — a confession covering the whole of one’s life, or a significant portion of it — and the receiving of absolution. The director of the *Exercises* in the Anglican Society of Jesus should ensure that this sacrament is available and presented to the retreatant as a gift for their consideration during the First Week, accompanying those who are drawn to it in their preparation with care.

Rowan Williams, writing on the theology of forgiveness, describes absolution not as a legal transaction but as a participation in the life of the risen Christ, who breathed on his disciples and said ‘receive the Holy Spirit; if you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven.’ This pneumatological grounding of reconciliation is deeply consonant with the Ignatian First Week: the mercy that meets the retreatant at the conclusion of their honest self-examination is not an impersonal juridical act but a personal encounter with the Risen One who holds all wounds in his own.

“*The penitent goes not to receive the sentence of a judge but the embrace of a father. The sacrament is the form of the prodigal’s return.*”
— Jeremy Taylor, *The Worthy Communicant* (adapted)



THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIRST WEEK

Seven Days of Sin, Mercy, and Conversion

Ignatius structures the First Week around five principal meditations, with an additional prayer form — the Five Additions — that governs the retreatant's entire manner of life during this period. The meditations are: (1) the triple sin, (2) personal sin, (3) hell, (4) a repetition, and (5) a further application of the senses. The First Week concludes with the Colloquy before the Crucifix, which is the emotional and spiritual center of the whole Week.

In the Anglican adaptation offered here, the structure is maintained but expanded across seven full days, with Anglican liturgical material integrated at each point. The Five Additions are reframed in terms of the Anglican Rule of Life as set forth in Article 12 of the Society's *Constitution*. The climactic Colloquy before the Crucifix is given additional resonance through the Anglican theology of the cross, drawing particularly on F.D. Maurice and Hans Urs von Balthasar.

The Five Additions

Before the meditations begin, the director should present the retreatant with what Ignatius calls the Five Additions (*SpEx* § 73–90): practical disciplines of the manner of life during the First Week. These are not mere external rules but spiritual postures that prepare the soul for the work of each meditation.

First Addition: *Upon awakening, bring to mind the subject of the meditation before allowing the mind to settle on anything else. In Anglican terms: rise with the Office. Let the morning psalms be the first words of the day, and within them, attend to whatever the Spirit surfaces in relation to the day's meditation.*

Second Addition: *Before entering the place of prayer, pause at the threshold and recollect that you are entering the presence of God. Andrewes calls this the 'recollection of the holy,' and performs it in the *Preces Privatae* with a prayer of approach: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. O Lord, open thou my lips.'*

Third Addition: *During the First Week, practice a modest bodily penitence as an outward sign of the interior disposition. Anglican tradition offers several forms: fasting on Fridays and in the Wednesday Litany; the use of the full penitential rite at the Eucharist; prostration during the Great Litany. The director should discern what is appropriate for each retreatant.*

Fourth Addition: *Maintain the disposition appropriate to the meditation throughout the day. In the First Week, this means a quietness and gravity that does not seek consolation before it has been given. Avoid unnecessary speech, entertainment, or distraction. The Constitution's Rule of Life — particularly the Daily Examen — sustains this disposition through the day.*

Fifth Addition: *As the day ends, before sleep, review the meditation of the day and give thanks for any consolation received, noting any point of particular fruit to which you may return tomorrow. This is the evening Examen, the Anglican Compline transposed into an Ignatian key.*



DAY ONE

The Sin of the Angels: Pride and the Refusal of Gift

Scripture: *Isaiah 14:12–15; Luke 10:18; Revelation 12:7–9*

BCP Text: *The Great Litany: “From pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice; and from all uncharitableness, Good Lord, deliver us.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 50–52 — The First Prelude: the history of the fall of the angels; the Second Prelude: a composition of place.*

The Composition of Place

The composition of place for this meditation is not a physical scene but a metaphysical one: the moment before creation as we know it became creation as we know it — the moment when beings of surpassing beauty and intelligence turned from their Source and fell. Ignatius asks the retreatant not to imagine this as a historical event occurring somewhere else, but to feel its logic in themselves: what is the shape of the turn away from God? What does it feel like, from the inside, to prefer oneself to Love?

The Anglican composer of this composition will do well to draw on Milton’s Satan — not as theology but as phenomenology. The great line of *Paradise Lost* — ‘Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven’ — names precisely the structure of sin as Ignatius understands it: the preference of autonomy over gift, of self-governance over the deeper freedom that comes from receiving one’s life as a dependent, grateful creature. The Satan of the First Week is not a figure of supernatural horror but a mirror.

The Three Points

First Point: The Beauty that Fell

Ignatius asks the retreatant to bring to memory the sin of the angels, noting that they were created in grace and yet, not wishing to make use of the freedom God gave them to show reverence and obedience to their Creator, turned to pride, fell from grace, and were cast into hell. Sit with the magnitude of what this means: beings of incomparable intelligence and beauty, closer to God by nature than anything in the created order, and yet capable of the fundamental refusal.

The Anglican tradition meditates on this through the lens of the doctrine of creation’s goodness. If all that God made was good — and the angelic hosts, by any reckoning, among the most good — then the fall of the angels is the first and most shocking testimony to the nature of free will: that even the highest gift can be turned against the Giver. Let the retreatant sit with this not as an abstract theological point but as an existential one: I, too, am a good creature; I, too, am capable of refusal.

Second Point: The Logic of Pride

Ignatius asks the retreatant to consider how the sin of the angels consisted in the preference of self over God — not a desire for something outside the divine order but a desire to be the center of the divine order, to receive homage rather than to give it. The Great Litany’s petition for deliverance from pride is not a petition against proper self-regard but against this specific distortion: the closing of the self upon itself, the refusal of the centrifugal love that God intends to flow through every creature outward toward others and upward toward God.

Dorothy L. Sayers, in *The Mind of the Maker*, describes pride as the sin of the artist who falls in love with their own creation rather than with the source of all creativity. The theological extension is clear: pride is the sin of any creature who mistakes itself for its own source — who says, in the words of the Litany’s negative, ‘I am the origin, I am the foundation, I need bow to no other.’ Sit with the forms this takes in your own life.

Third Point: The Consequence

The fallen angels ‘were cast into hell’ — and Ignatius is characteristically spare about what this means. The retreatant is not asked to dwell on the geography of damnation but on the logic of it: that the creature who turns definitively from the Source of being moves, by that very turning, away from being and toward its privation. Hell, in the Augustinian tradition that underlies both Ignatian and Anglican spirituality, is not a punishment imposed from outside but the natural consequence of the soul’s own choice — the condition of the self contracted around itself to the point of impenetrability.

The Anglican tradition is notably reticent about hell as a place of positive torment, tending instead toward the Augustinian privation theology. This reticence is appropriate for the *Exercises*. The point of the consequence is not to frighten but to clarify: sin has a direction, and that direction is away from life. The question for the retreatant is not ‘Am I going to hell?’ but ‘Where, in my own life, am I already moving away from life?’

The Colloquy

End the meditation in conversation with Our Lady, asking for her intercession that you may know more deeply the grace given you and the failures that have squandered it. Then speak to Christ, asking for the same self-knowledge. Then to the Father, asking for the same. Conclude with the Collect for Ash Wednesday: ‘Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we, worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness.’

Evening Examen: *What moved in me today? Where did I feel the pull of the First Point — pride, self-sufficiency, the closed heart? Where did I feel something opening? Bring both to God in Evening Prayer.*



DAY TWO

The Sin of Adam and Eve: Disobedience and the Wound of Nature

Scripture: *Genesis 3:1–24; Romans 5:12–21; 1 Corinthians 15:21–22*

BCP Text: *Burial Office, First Anthem: “We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.” Morning Prayer General Confession: “We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 51 — The sin of Adam and Eve, who were given great gifts and lost them by their disobedience.*

The Composition of Place

Ignatius directs the retreatant to imagine the garden of Eden — its beauty, its abundance, its two human inhabitants in the fullness of original grace. The Anglican sacramental imagination, schooled by Thomas Traherne’s vision of the world as God’s gift flooding out toward the grateful soul, can fill this composition with particular richness. Traherne’s image of the child who sees all things as made for their delight is itself an image of pre-lapsarian humanity: the state of pure receptivity, of loving gratitude, of created freedom existing in perfect harmony with the freedom that created it.

The Three Points

First Point: The Gift Before the Fall

Ignatius asks the retreatant to dwell first on what was given — the fullness of original grace, the harmony of human nature with itself and with God, the dignity of a creature made in the divine image and set in the midst of a garden of gifts. The Anglican tradition deepens this through its theology of the *imago Dei*. Richard Hooker’s account of the natural desire for God — the ineradicable orientation of the soul toward its Source — describes something that even the Fall has not entirely destroyed. The retreatant is asked to feel the goodness of what was given before they can fully feel the tragedy of its diminishment.

Second Point: The Nature of the Disobedience

The sin of Adam and Eve in the Ignatian reading is not primarily a sexual sin, nor a sin of disobedience to an arbitrary command, but a sin of the same structure as the angelic fall: the preference of the self’s own judgment over the relationship of trust that the creature’s condition requires. ‘You will be like God, knowing good and evil’ — the serpent’s promise is not for more than God’s gift but for the gift on different terms: not received but grasped, not held in gratitude but possessed in autonomy.

The *Book of Common Prayer*’s General Confession — ‘We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts’ — names this structure precisely. The devices and desires of our own

hearts are not bad in themselves; the problem is the word ‘too much,’ the excess that sets the self’s own perception above the relational wisdom that comes from living in covenant with God. Let the retreatant sit with this: where in my own life have I followed the devices and desires of my own heart too much, at the cost of the deeper wisdom?

Third Point: The Wound and Its Universality

Paul’s account in Romans 5 of the universality of the Adamic condition is not, in the Anglican reading, a mechanical transmission of guilt but a description of the solidarity of the human family in its characteristic turn from God. We are born into a world already disordered, a tradition already broken, a set of habits and structures already bent away from their proper end. The Burial Office’s ‘we brought nothing into this world’ is the austere Anglican statement of this condition: we arrive already embedded in a story whose first chapters we did not write.

But the Pauline passage does not end with Adam. It ends with Christ: as sin came through one, so grace came through one; as death reigned, so grace will reign through righteousness. The retreatant who meditates on the sin of Adam and Eve is already standing at the edge of the Gospel. The wound is named so that the physician can be recognized.

The Colloquy

Bring before God the ways in which you have participated in the Adamic condition — not as a unique sinner but as a member of a wounded humanity. Ask for the grace to see your own complicity clearly, without the defensiveness that comes from feeling uniquely blamed. Then receive the Collect for the Second Sunday in Lent, which the tradition has associated with the repair of the wound of sin: ‘Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: Keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls, that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul.’

Evening Examen: *Where today did I feel the weight of the Adamic wound in my own life — the compulsive return to the device or desire that I know is not aligned with God’s purpose for me? Where did I feel the pull of grace against that weight?*



DAY THREE

Personal Sin: The History of My Own Soul

Scripture: *Psalm 51; Luke 15:11–32; John 8:1–11*

BCP Text: *The Litany: “By thine agony and bloody sweat; by thy cross and passion; by thy precious death and burial; by thy glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, Good Lord, deliver us.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 55–61 — The meditation on personal sin, with the triple colloquy.*

Entering the Meditation

The third meditation of the First Week is the most intimate and most demanding. The first two meditations have established a theological framework — sin as cosmic reality, sin as the wound of the human family — within which the retreatant can now consider their own particular history. This movement from cosmic to personal is characteristically Ignatian: Ignatius does not want the retreatant to remain at a comfortable theological altitude. He wants them on the ground of their own specific life.

The Psalmist’s opening in Psalm 51 — ‘Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions’ — is the perfect threshold for this meditation. It begins with mercy, not with sin. The confession that follows in the Psalm is already inside the mercy, already surrounded by it. This is the posture Ignatius intends: the retreatant approaches their own sin history not as a prisoner approaching a judgment but as a prodigal son approaching a father who has already run out to meet them.

The Preparation for the Meditation

Before beginning the meditation proper, Ignatius directs the retreatant to a preparatory prayer asking God for grace, shame, and confusion at the sight of their sins — not the paralyzing shame of the scrupulous soul, but the honest shame of one who has seen a discrepancy between what they have been given and how they have used it. Lancelot Andrewes in his *Preces* provides a model for this preparation in his own examination of conscience, which is so searching and so tender simultaneously that it amounts to a small theological treatise on the nature of honest self-knowledge before God.

The Five Points

First Point: The Record of Sins

Ignatius directs the retreatant to bring to memory all the sins of their life, year by year, period by period, place by place — not to dwell upon them with morbid fascination but to see them honestly,

as you would see a medical history before treatment. Jeremy Taylor in *Holy Dying* provides detailed guidance on this process of examination, organized by the commandments and the duties of one's particular state of life. The director should help the retreatant to prepare for this review beforehand, perhaps over several sessions, so that when the meditation proper is given the material is already in hand.

The Anglican penitential tradition, especially as articulated in the exhortations of the *Book of Common Prayer* before Holy Communion, frames this review in exactly the right spirit: 'examine your lives and conversations by the rule of God's commandments, and whereinsoever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended, either by will, word, or deed, there to bewail your own sinfulness.' This is not legal scrutiny but pastoral invitation: come and see clearly, so that you can receive clearly.

Second Point: The Weight of the History

Having reviewed the record, Ignatius directs the retreatant to consider the weight of what they have seen — not by calculating its severity in some abstract scale, but by feeling it in relation to the gifts they have been given. To sin much when given much is not a different category of sin from sinning little when given little; but it has a different weight of ingratitude. The retreatant is asked to feel the disproportionality of their history of turning from God in proportion to God's history of turning toward them.

The prodigal son parable, which should be read alongside this point, enacts this precisely. The son does not merely calculate the wrong he has done; he feels it in the contrast between the far country and the father's house, between the husks he is eating and the bread of his father's servants. The Anglican spirituality of the Eucharist, where the soul comes to the table of the one it has offended and receives there the nourishment it has refused to receive from the relationship itself, gives this contrast its sacramental form.

Third Point: The Miracle of Continued Existence

Ignatius directs the retreatant to consider, in the light of their record of sins, the miracle that they are still alive — that the creation has not crushed them, that the angels have not destroyed them, that hell has not swallowed them. In the theological register of a merciful rather than a retributive God, this is not a note of terror but a note of astonishment: that the love which holds all things in being has continued to hold me in being through all my refusals of it. The General Thanksgiving again: 'for our preservation' — the word now carrying its full weight.

Fourth Point: Who God Is, Who I Am

Ignatius asks the retreatant to place side by side, in honest comparison, the attributes of God and the state of the self: God who is eternal, wise, good, omnipotent, and has created all things for the person's benefit; and the self who has used those benefits so poorly. This is not an exercise in self-laceration but in perspective. Richard Hooker's counsel that we should hold ourselves with neither more nor less esteem than the truth warrants applies here: the retreatant is asked to see themselves truthfully, which means neither inflating their condition by pride nor deflating it by scrupulosity.

Fifth Point: The Cry of Creation

The fifth point is among the most striking in all the *Exercises*: Ignatius asks the retreatant to consider how all creatures — the elements, the beasts, the very earth itself — have continued to serve and sustain the sinner, who has used them against their Maker. The Anglican apostolic preference for

care of the Common Home, grounded in the Society’s *Constitution* (Article 25), gives this point new urgency in the present age: we are sinners against creation itself, using its gifts in ways that wound the very body of the world God entrusted to our care. The retreat’s meditation on personal sin must include this ecological dimension.

The Triple Colloquy

Ignatius prescribes for the meditation on personal sin the Triple Colloquy: first to Our Lady, then to the Son, then to the Father. This colloquy structure, which recurs throughout the First Week, is one of the great gifts of Ignatian prayer. The retreatant speaks first to Mary, asking her to intercede with her Son for the grace to feel the disorder of sin and the desire for amendment; then to Christ, asking him to intercede with the Father; then to the Father directly, asking for the same grace.

In the Anglican context, this Marian element may require some pastoral sensitivity. The Society’s Anglican inheritance honors the Blessed Virgin Mary as *Theotokos* and model of the redeemed life, and the *Magnificat* sung at Evening Prayer is a daily invocation of her witness. The triple colloquy is offered in this spirit: not as a theological statement about Marian mediation but as a movement through the communion of saints that the Anglican tradition affirms, toward the Father who is the source and end of all prayer.

Each address should conclude with the *Pater Noster* — the prayer Jesus gave when the disciples asked him how to pray, and the prayer the BCP prescribes as the conclusion of every Office. The retreatant who has spent the day in honest reckoning with their own sin history will pray ‘forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us’ with a precision and a gratitude that transforms the familiar words into something new.

Evening Examen: *What specific memory or pattern emerged most clearly in the meditation today? Bring it to God in Compline without resolving it: simply hold it before God and let God hold it. Trust that clarity given in prayer is itself a form of mercy.*



DAY FOUR

The Meditation on Hell: The Seriousness of the Choice

Scripture: *Luke 16:19–31; Matthew 25:31–46; Revelation 20:11–15*

BCP Text: *The Burial Office: “In the midst of life we are in death: of whom may we seek for succor, but of thee, O Lord, who for our sins art justly displeased?” Psalm 88 (the darkest Psalm in the Psalter).*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 65–71 — The meditation on hell, using the five senses in imagination.*

A Note on This Meditation

The meditation on hell is the one most frequently misunderstood and misused in the history of the *Exercises*. It has been employed as an instrument of spiritual coercion, a technique for inducing fear that substitutes for genuine conversion. Ignatius’s intention, clearly stated in the preamble, is precisely the opposite: the meditation is given so that if the love of God is not sufficient to move the retreatant away from sin, the fear of its consequences may serve as a secondary motive, and so that in times of desolation the retreatant may draw consolation from the knowledge that whatever darkness they are passing through, they have been spared the final darkness.

The Anglican theological tradition approaches hell with considerable reticence, and this reticence is theologically grounded. The *via media* holds together the seriousness of God’s justice and the scope of God’s mercy without adjudicating between them in ways that Scripture itself refuses to adjudicate. The director of the Anglican Society of Jesus should present this meditation in its proper Ignatian spirit: not as a picture of inevitable doom for the retreatant, but as a meditation on the seriousness of the choices that the retreat is preparing the retreatant to make.

The Composition of Place: Applying the Senses

Ignatius directs the retreatant to apply the five senses to the image of hell — to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel the condition of the soul utterly separated from God. This is not an invitation to morbid fantasy but to a phenomenological exploration of the direction that disordered desire, if followed to its ultimate conclusion, necessarily leads.

For the Anglican retreatant, the meditation may be most productive when grounded in the experience of spiritual desolation that the Psalmist describes in Psalm 88 — the darkest Psalm in the Psalter, the only Psalm that ends without resolution, without a turn toward praise, hanging in the dark: ‘darkness is my nearest friend.’ This is not hell as a geographic location but hell as a spiritual condition: the condition of the soul that has pursued its own way so completely that it has arrived at a place where even the desire to return has been extinguished. The retreatant meditates on this not because they are there but because they have glimpsed its possibility in themselves.

The Gift of the Meditation

Having sat with the meditation on hell, Ignatius directs the retreatant to a colloquy of thanksgiving: ‘Thanks be to God, who has not allowed me to fall into this condition by reason of my past sins, but has always had such great pity and mercy on me.’ This note of gratitude is the point of the whole meditation. The hell meditation exists to produce not terror but thanksgiving — the specific, concrete, overwhelming gratitude of one who has stood at the edge and felt the mercy that pulled them back.

In the Anglican context, this gratitude finds its natural home in the *Te Deum*: ‘We praise thee, O God: we acknowledge thee to be the Lord. All the earth doth worship thee: the Father everlasting. To thee all Angels cry aloud: the Heavens, and all the Powers therein. To thee Cherubim and Seraphim: continually do cry, Holy, Holy, Holy: Lord God of Sabaoth; Heaven and earth are full of the Majesty: of thy glory.’ The soul that has looked honestly at where sin leads, and found itself alive and loved, sings the *Te Deum* as it was meant to be sung: not as a liturgical routine but as the cry of the rescued.

The Colloquy

Conclude in conversation with Christ crucified — the image that Ignatius places at the end of the first day of meditations and that will grow in importance through the remainder of the Week. Ask: if your mercy has held me back from this condition, what is the mercy asking of me? What does the love that has kept me alive want to do in me now? Sit in silence and listen.

Evening Examen: *Where today did I feel the pull of the darkness — not in a dramatic sense, but in the small daily choices that move me toward or away from God? Where did I feel rescued? Give thanks specifically, naming the moment.*



DAY FIVE

Repetition and Deepening: The Work of the Holy Spirit

Scripture: *Romans 8:1–17; Psalm 139; Ezekiel 36:24–28*

BCP Text: *The Comfortable Words (BCP Eucharist): “Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him...”; the Absolution from Morning Prayer.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 62–63 — The repetition of the first and second exercises, dwelling on points of consolation or desolation. The fourth exercise is another repetition, with application of the senses.*

On Repetition as a Spiritual Method

Repetition in the Ignatian *Exercises* is not a sign of failed imagination but a recognition of how the Spirit works. The retreatant returns not to cover the same ground more efficiently but to allow what was touched in the first meditation to be touched more deeply — to let the consolations of the earlier days settle into the bones, and the desolations be brought more fully into the light. Ignatius instructs the retreatant to return especially to the points where they felt most moved — whether in consolation or desolation — and to remain there.

In the Anglican tradition, this principle of repetition is encoded in the Daily Office itself: the same Psalms return, the same canticles are sung, the same Collects recur through the year. The Anglican soul is schooled in the conviction that liturgical repetition is not mere routine but a deepening spiral, each return to the same text making it new because the one praying it is new. The Ignatian repetition *Exercises* this same conviction in the concentrated context of the retreat.

Psalm 139 is offered as the central text for this day of repetition because it holds together the two movements that the First Week has been developing: the honest exposure of the self before God (‘thou hast searched me and known me’) and the overwhelming mercy of that exposure (‘how precious to me are thy thoughts, O God!’). The retreatant who has spent three days in examination of their own sin history comes to this Psalm as to a mirror that reflects not a condemned criminal but a searched and known and held beloved.

The Application of the Senses

Ignatius’s fourth exercise of the First Week introduces a form of contemplative prayer that will recur throughout the *Exercises*: the application of the five senses. The retreatant is invited to see, hear, smell, taste, and touch the scene of their meditation — not with the analytical mind but with the whole sensate body. This is a profoundly incarnational method of prayer, deeply consonant with the Anglican sacramental imagination that meets God not only in ideas but in the physical media of water, bread, wine, touch, sound, and smell.

On this day of repetition, the application of the senses returns the retreatant to the material of the first three days but through the body rather than the mind. Let the retreatant sit with the physical memory of the prodigal's return: the sound of the father's running feet, the smell of the feast prepared, the weight of the robe placed on tired shoulders, the ring on a hand that had forgotten what it meant to be given things. These sensory details are the sacramental medium through which the mercy of God enters not only the intellect but the whole person.

The Movement Toward Consolation

By the end of the repetition *Exercises*, the First Week typically produces a movement from desolation toward consolation that is one of the characteristic graces of this stage of the *Exercises*. The retreatant who has looked honestly at their sin history and found it met by mercy experiences a specific kind of consolation that Ignatius calls tears — not only literal weeping (though this is common and to be welcomed) but the interior softening that comes when a defended soul allows itself to be known and loved.

The Comfortable Words of the Anglican Eucharistic rite — ‘Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you’ — are the liturgical form of this consolation. The retreatant who has travailed through the self-knowledge of the First Week receives these words, perhaps for the first time in their full weight. They are not a general invitation to niceness; they are a specific word to the specific person who has just seen themselves clearly and found mercy waiting.

Evening Examen: *What, of all the material of this week, has most lodged in you? What are you carrying from the meditation on the angels, on Adam and Eve, on your own personal history? Bring it all to Evening Prayer and let the Magnificat sing over it: ‘He hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.’*



DAY SIX

The Colloquy Before the Crucifix: Why Are You Still Here?

Scripture: *John 19:16–30; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:5–11*

BCP Text: *The Reproaches (Good Friday Liturgy); the Solemn Collects for Good Friday; Hymn: ‘When I Survey the Wondrous Cross’ (Watts, adopted in Anglican hymnody).*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 53 — ‘Imagining Christ our Lord present and fixed to the Cross before me, make a Colloquy with Him.’ This colloquy is placed by Ignatius at the conclusion of the first exercise and is rightly understood as the emotional heart of the entire First Week.*

The Central Mystery

The Colloquy before the Crucifix is the moment toward which the whole First Week has been moving. Ignatius prescribes it in deceptively simple terms: the retreatant imagines Christ fixed to the cross before them, and asks three questions. These three questions are, in a real sense, the questions that the *Exercises* exist to enable the retreatant to ask honestly. They can only be asked honestly by someone who has passed through the self-knowledge of the first three days. They cannot be asked at all by someone who has not felt the mercy that has kept them alive through their own history of sin.

The Anglican tradition approaches the cross with its own characteristic depth. F.D. Maurice, whose theology of the atonement refuses the penal substitutionary framework in favor of a vision of Christ as the representative human who bears the totality of the human condition into the presence of God, provides an Anglican key for this colloquy: Christ on the cross is not receiving punishment in my place but entering, in his own person, the full consequences of the human condition that my sin has participated in creating. He is there because I am here.

Hans Urs von Balthasar, whose theology of Holy Saturday speaks of Christ’s descent into the condition of godforsakenness, enters this mystery from another angle: the one on the cross is experiencing, in some real sense, the darkness I have been meditating on in the meditation on hell — the condition of the soul that has taken upon itself the full weight of human separation from God. He is there not instead of me but for me: taking the direction of my sin and reversing it from within.

The Three Questions

What have I done for Christ?

Ignatius frames this question not as an accusation but as an invitation to honest accounting. Not ‘have you done nothing?’ — for even the most disordered soul has done something for love of Christ. But: is what you have done commensurate with what you have been given? Is the shape of

your life responsive to the love that is displayed before you on this cross? The retreatant sits with this question not to produce an answer but to feel its weight.

The Anglican Collect for All Saints — ‘that, following their good examples, we may be joined with them in the general assembly of the firstborn’ — gives this question its communal dimension. To ask what I have done for Christ is also to ask how I have lived in the company of those who have done far more. The communion of saints is not a gallery of the exceptional; it is the family to which the retreatant belongs and from which they draw both inspiration and honest challenge.

What am I doing for Christ?

The second question shifts from past to present: not what I have done in my history but what I am doing now, in this moment of my life, as I stand before the cross. This is the question the retreat itself is designed to help the retreatant answer honestly. The Foundation prepared the soil; the First Week has cleared it of the weeds of self-deception. Now, before the cross, the retreatant can look at their present life — their vocational commitments, their relationships, their use of time and resources, their apostolic works or the lack of them — and ask: is this what I was made for?

The Society’s Rule of Life, as set forth in Article 12 of the *Constitution*, provides the framework for this accounting: Daily Office, Examen, weekly Eucharist, monthly direction, annual retreat. These are not merely disciplines but the forms in which the present moment’s response to the cross takes shape. The retreatant is invited to see their Rule of Life not as a burden but as a love letter to the one on the cross: this is how I am spending myself for you, today.

What ought I to do for Christ?

The third question looks forward, and it is the question the entire retreat is building toward. Not ‘what would be nice’ or ‘what would be comfortable’ or even ‘what is possible’ — but what ought I to do? What is the full response that the love displayed on this cross calls forth from the specific person I am, with the specific gifts and history and calling I carry?

The Anglican tradition’s theology of vocation — articulated in the ordination rites, the marriage service, and the baptismal covenant of the BCP — insists that every baptized person is called: called to the apostolic life, to the priestly ministry of the royal priesthood, to be the church in the world. The colloquy before the cross is the moment in which that universal calling becomes particular: what is my form of the total response? What does it look like for this person, in this place, at this time, to answer the cross with their whole life?

Sitting with the Silence

Ignatius’s instruction after the three questions is simply: ‘reflecting upon oneself.’ No resolution. No program of action. Simply the retreatant with the crucified, in silence, after the questions have been asked. This silence is not empty; it is the most charged moment in the *Exercises*. Whatever God says in it — whether in words or in a movement of the will or simply in a deepened capacity to remain present to the one who remains present to them — should be noted and returned to.

The Good Friday liturgy of the Anglican tradition provides the perfect outer frame for this day: the Solemn Collects, praying for the whole world from which Christ died; the Reproaches, which voice the love that the cross expresses in the form of a tender accusation; the Veneration, where the body approaches what the soul has been contemplating. The director should encourage the retreatant who

is making the *Exercises* during the liturgical year to observe Good Friday with particular attentiveness this year as an extension of this meditation.

Evening Examen: *Stay with the image of the cross tonight. Let Compline's 'Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit' be the whole of your prayer. Nothing more is needed.*



DAY SEVEN

Reconciliation and New Beginning: The Grace of the First Week

Scripture: *2 Corinthians 5:17–21; John 20:19–23; Micah 7:18–20*

BCP Text: *The Reconciliation of a Penitent (BCP, pp. 447–452); the Post-Communion Prayer: “Almighty and everliving God, we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us, in these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious Body and Blood of thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 44 — Ignatius notes that the grace of the First Week is ‘shame and confusion’ transformed into the experience of mercy. The Week concludes not in desolation but in the awareness of forgiveness.*

The Grace of the First Week

Ignatius describes the characteristic grace of the First Week in terms of what the retreatant has been praying for throughout: ‘an increasing and intense sorrow and tears for my sins.’ But in the Ignatian system, sorrow and tears are not ends in themselves; they are the precondition for the experience of mercy that transforms them. The retreatant who ends the First Week in deep sorrow without the corresponding consolation of mercy has not completed the Week; they have stopped halfway through it.

The completing movement is what Ignatius describes as the experience of being a sinner who has found mercy — the specific joy of one who has looked at their own history honestly and found that God’s love has been greater than their sin at every point, and is still greater now. This joy is not a denial of the reality of sin; it is the specific joy of someone who has known that reality and been met in it. Paul’s cry in 2 Corinthians 5 — ‘if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation’ — is the First Week’s proper conclusion.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

The seventh day of the First Week is the natural occasion for the Sacrament of Reconciliation — the formal absolution of the sins whose weight the retreatant has been carrying through the week. The *Book of Common Prayer’s* form for the Reconciliation of a Penitent is one of the great liturgical gifts of the Anglican tradition: it is both thoroughly traditional, standing in the line of the Roman rite, and distinctively Anglican in its emphasis on the penitent’s own role as the agent of their reconciliation with God.

The minister’s words in the Anglican rite — ‘Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive you all your offenses; and by his authority committed to me, I absolve you from all your sins’ — name precisely the movement the retreatant has been making through the week: repentance, faith, and now absolution. The director of the *Exercises* is not necessarily the confessor (the two roles should

generally be kept distinct), but the director should prepare the retreatant for confession and ensure that a confessor is available.

After absolution, the Eucharist. The retreatant who has been reconciled receives the Body and Blood of Christ with a directness and a gratitude that is the proper fruit of the First Week. The post-communion prayer — ‘we most heartily thank thee for that thou dost feed us’ — is the conclusion of the First Week’s long movement from the desert of self-knowledge to the feast of mercy.

Looking Forward

The First Week does not end the *Exercises*; it opens them. What the retreatant has received — the honest self-knowledge, the encounter with mercy, the forgiveness sacramentally sealed — is the foundation on which the Second Week’s great meditations on the life of Christ will be built. The retreatant who has been through the First Week knows, at a level deeper than the intellect, that they need what Christ has to give. They are ready, in a way they were not before, to sit at his feet and hear.

The director should spend time with the retreatant at the end of the First Week reviewing what has happened: what graces were received, what resistances remained, what questions are alive as the retreat prepares to move into the Contemplation of the Incarnation. The transition to the Second Week should be made gently, with gratitude for the First Week’s gifts, and with a sense of the adventure that lies ahead.

“Who is a God like thee, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger for ever because he delights in steadfast love.”

— Micah 7:18



RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

First Set: For the First Week

Ignatius appends to the First Week his first set of Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (*SpEx* § 313–327), intended for use by retreatants who are beginning to emerge from serious sin and disorder. The director of the Anglican Society of Jesus should be familiar with these rules and should introduce them to the retreatant during the First Week, typically around the fourth or fifth day, when the retreatant has enough experiential material from the retreat to work with.

The Fundamental Distinction: Consolation and Desolation

Ignatius defines consolation as any interior movement of soul that inflames the person with love of God, or that produces tears of sorrow or love, or that brings increase of faith, hope, and love, or that brings interior peace and tranquility and the quiet of the soul. Desolation is the contrary: darkness of soul, disturbance of soul, a moving toward low and earthly things, disquiet from various agitations and temptations, a tendency toward loss of faith, hope, and love, and the soul utterly listless, tepid, sad, and as if separated from its Creator.

The Anglican director will recognize in this distinction the broad experiential map that the tradition of spiritual direction has always employed. Jeremy Taylor’s account of the spiritual life as a movement between ‘the feasts of the soul’ and its ‘fasting days,’ Evelyn Underhill’s description of the alternation between ‘the illuminated life’ and ‘the dark nights,’ and the Psalmist’s own movement through praise and lament — all these speak the same language in different keys.

Key Rules for the First Week

Rule 1: *In the case of those who go from mortal sin to mortal sin, the enemy uses pleasures and sensory delights to keep them settled in their vices. The good spirit uses the sting of conscience and produces remorse. This sting and remorse is itself a form of grace — the beginning of the First Week’s work.*

Rule 2: *In persons who are going earnestly about the amendment of their lives, the movement is reversed. The good spirit gives courage, strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and peace. The evil spirit causes biting of conscience, obstacles, disquiet, and sadness.*

Rule 5: *In time of desolation, never make a change. Hold to the resolutions and determinations made before the desolation. The enemy’s counsel in desolation always tends away from God. In consolation, consider how to behave in the coming desolation; store up strength against it.*

Rule 6: *Although in desolation we should not change our former determinations, it is very helpful intensely to change ourselves against the desolation itself: by insisting more on prayer, meditation, exams, and by increasing penance in some suitable way.*

Rule 8: *One who is in desolation should consider how the Lord has left him to his natural powers to resist the different agitations and temptations of the enemy. It is a trial. With the grace God always leaves sufficient, the*

soul can endure. This is the grace of the First Week: the retreat discovers that God is present even in the desolation, providing always more than is needed.

Rule 13: *In time of consolation, be humble and lowly; consider how little you can do in time of desolation. In time of desolation, remember that consolation will come again, and with it the resources for the work.*

An Anglican Note on Discernment

The Anglican tradition, shaped by its conciliar and dialogical character, has always understood spiritual discernment as an inherently communal process — tested not only in prayer but in conversation, in the wisdom of the director, and in the life of the community. Ignatius’s rules for discernment are given to the individual soul, but the Anglican director should ensure that they are also brought into the regular sessions of spiritual direction during the retreat, so that the retreatant’s experience of consolation and desolation is named, tested, and accompanied.

The Society’s *Constitution* (Article 14) articulates the ministry of discernment as central to the Society’s apostolic charism. The First Week is the retreatant’s first intensive schooling in this ministry — not offering discernment to others but receiving it for themselves, learning the grammar of interior movements that will eventually equip them to accompany others through the same terrain.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Accompanying the First Week in the Anglican Context

The Director's Own Formation

No director can accompany another person through the First Week without having passed through it themselves. This is a non-negotiable requirement: the director of the Anglican Society of Jesus must have made the full *Spiritual Exercises* — either in the thirty-day form or in the Nineteenth Annotation — before they can direct others. When constituted by the General Congregation, the Vicar for Spiritual Direction (*Constitution*, Article 17) bears responsibility for ensuring that all of the Society's directors have this formation and that it is maintained through annual retreat and regular supervision.

The particular challenges of the First Week — the risk of scrupulosity, the management of deep desolation, the timing of the movement toward consolation, the preparation for sacramental confession — require a director who has navigated this terrain in their own experience. No amount of theoretical training substitutes for the knowledge that comes from having wept before the crucifix and found mercy there.

On Scrupulosity

Ignatius's counsel on scrupulosity (*SpEx* § 346–351) is among the most pastorally wise passages in the whole text. He distinguishes between genuine compunction — the honest sorrow of a soul that has seen its sin and desires amendment — and scrupulosity, which is the compulsive repetition of self-accusation beyond what truth requires. The scruple, Ignatius says, comes from the enemy: it is a counterfeit of contrition that produces not conversion but paralysis.

The director should be alert to the signs of scrupulosity in the retreatant during the First Week: the return again and again to the same sin, the inability to believe that absolution has been given and received, the persistent sense that God's mercy cannot reach this particular history. When these signs appear, the director should gently but firmly redirect the retreatant: God has already dealt with this; our task now is to receive that dealing and move on. The Anglican rite of absolution's clear declarative formula — 'I absolve you from all your sins' — is specifically designed to cut through the fog of scrupulosity by the definitiveness of its language.

The Timing of Transitions

The First Week is notoriously difficult to time. Some retreatants move through it quickly, finding that the meditations produce their characteristic fruit within three or four days. Others — particularly those with complex personal histories, significant trauma, or patterns of deep self-concealment — may need the full seven days or more. The director's task is not to impose a schedule but to attend to the movements of the Spirit in the retreatant's specific soul.

The signal that the First Week has produced its grace and that it is time to move forward is not the absence of sorrow — the retreatant may carry some sorrow throughout the whole *Exercises* — but the presence of the specific consolation of mercy: the sense that one has been seen, known, and forgiven, and that the love of God is real and has not been exhausted by the record of one's life. When this consolation is present, however quietly, the Second Week is ready to begin.

Pastoral Care During the First Week

The director should be available for more frequent contact during the First Week than at other stages of the *Exercises*. Daily sessions, however brief, are strongly recommended. Between sessions, the retreatant should have a way to contact the director if the desolation becomes acute. The director should have particular resources at hand for retreatants who surface significant trauma during the examination of their personal history: not every trauma can or should be processed within the retreat context, and the director must be prepared to refer appropriately.

The Anglican tradition's practice of pastoral care — articulated in the BCP's rites for the Visitation of the Sick, the Reconciliation of a Penitent, and the Ministry at the Time of Death — provides a rich framework for this accompaniment. The director who is also a priest has particular resources; the lay director has the resource of their own experience and their close collaboration with the retreatant's confessor.



CLOSING PRAYER

For the Conclusion of the First Week

The following prayer is composed for the Anglican Society of Jesus, to be offered by the director and retreatant together at the conclusion of the First Week, before moving into the Second. It draws on the penitential heritage of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the *Suscipe* of St. Ignatius, and the language of the Absolution. It is intended to be spoken slowly, as a prayer of acceptance and surrender.

*Lord Jesus Christ,
we have looked at what we are,
and we have not looked away.
We have seen the long history of our turning:
the ways we have followed the devices and desires of our own hearts,
the times we have left undone what we ought to have done,
and done what we ought not to have done.*

*And we have found you there —
not as judge waiting with the reckoning,
but as the one fixed to the cross,
still here,
still loving,
still asking us the questions we have been too frightened to hear.*

*We receive the absolution we did not earn.
We receive the mercy we did not deserve.
We receive the new creation that begins, even now,
in the rubble of the old.*

*Take from us the sin you have forgiven.
Take from us the shame you have lifted.
Give us instead the freedom of the forgiven:
the lightness of those who carry nothing
because you have taken the weight.*

*Send us forward into your life:
ready to see you in all things,
ready to follow where you lead,*

*ready to spend ourselves
for the glory you have shown us on the cross.*

*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.
Amen.*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint



SOCIETAS IESU ANGLICANA

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus

DOCUMENT IV

The Second Week

The Life of Christ and the Great Election

Hebdomada Secunda

“*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*”

— John 1:14

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint

Anno Domini MMXXVI

PREFACE TO THE DIRECTOR

The Second Week is the crown of the *Spiritual Exercises*. It is longer than any other Week, richer in its range of Contemplations, and more demanding in what it asks of both retreatant and director. The First Week prepared the soil by clearing it of self-deception and lodging in the retreatant's memory the experience of mercy. The Second Week plants the seed: an encounter with Jesus Christ, his person, his way of life, his invitation to the retreatant to follow him, and the great election in which the retreatant responds to that invitation with whatever freedom the First Week has given them.

Ignatius designed the Second Week around two fundamental movements that interpenetrate throughout its fourteen days. The first is contemplative: the retreatant sits with the mysteries of Christ's life in the manner of the Gospel Contemplation, placing themselves within the scenes of the Nativity, the childhood, the public ministry, and allowing the person of Jesus to act upon them directly. The second movement is discerning: as the image of Christ is formed within them through Contemplation, the retreatant is led toward the specific question of their own vocation — what form of following is Christ calling them to? What is the election God desires for this particular life?

In the Anglican tradition, the Second Week inhabits ground that has been cultivated with particular care and richness. The liturgical year — Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, and the long Sundays of Ordinary Time — is itself a disciplined annual movement through the mysteries of Christ's life, so that the Anglican soul comes to the Second Week already shaped by years of liturgical Contemplation. The Daily Office, with its daily readings from the four Gospels in continuous course, and the Eucharist with its unceasing return to the words and actions of the Last Supper, have already formed in the retreatant a habitual attentiveness to the figure of Jesus. The Second Week takes this habitual formation and intensifies it to the point of personal encounter.

The director's task in the Second Week is, above all, to get out of the way. The First Week required active pastoral accompaniment: the director was holding a space that could become dangerous without careful attention. The Second Week requires a different art: the art of the obedient attendant, who watches what God is doing in the retreatant and clears obstacles without directing the encounter. The director should resist the temptation to teach during the Second Week. The teacher is Jesus himself; the director's task is to ensure the retreatant is truly sitting at his feet and not merely thinking about sitting at his feet.

Director's Note: *The Second Week typically occupies Days 11–24 of the thirty-day retreat, though Ignatius himself notes it may be shortened or extended according to the retreatant's progress. In the Nineteenth Annotation form it may extend over six to ten weeks of daily prayer. The election, which is the goal of the Second Week, should not be forced to a conclusion prematurely: it has its own organic timing, and the director should trust that timing even when the schedule is pressing.*



THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

Incarnation, Contemplation, and Election in the Anglican Synthesis

The Second Week rests on three theological convictions that the Anglican and Ignatian traditions hold in common, though they articulate them in different registers. The first is the absolute centrality of the Incarnation as the key to all Christian theology and spirituality. The second is the conviction that the life of Jesus Christ is not merely a historical record to be studied but a living reality to be entered through Contemplation. The third is the confidence that the risen Christ is active in the present, forming specific vocations in specific persons, and that the discernment of those vocations is a genuine and urgent spiritual work.

The Anglican Theology of the Incarnation

No theological conviction is more central to the Anglican spirit than the Incarnation. The via media's characteristic insistence on the sacramental mediation of grace — through water, bread, wine, oil, word, and human community — rests entirely on the conviction that matter has been permanently dignified by the Word's assumption of it. The Caroline Divines developed this Incarnational theology with a richness and precision that rivals any tradition in the Church. Lancelot Andrewes, in his Christmas sermons at the court of King James, meditates on the mystery of *'verbum infans'* — the Word made infant, the eternal Speech rendered speechless, the one who holds all things reduced to the helplessness of a child — with a theological exuberance that is itself a form of the Second Week's Contemplation.

Thomas Traherne's *Centuries of Meditation*, perhaps the most Ignatian of all Anglican spiritual texts in its method if not its source, approaches the Incarnation as the supreme expression of God's desire for the human person. For Traherne, the Word becoming flesh is God's own election — the decision of Love to be fully, unreservedly, bodily present to the creatures it has made. The retreatant who enters the Second Week's Contemplations of the Nativity is entering the same mystery Traherne meditates on: God's own 'election' of humanity, which grounds and enables the retreatant's election of God.

Michael Ramsey's insistence that the glory of God is the theme of Anglican worship finds its richest development in his theology of the Transfiguration. For Ramsey, the Transfiguration — which appears in the Second Week as one of the great contemplative scenes — is not an interruption of the Gospel narrative but its most luminous moment: the uncreated light that was always present in Jesus becoming briefly visible, so that the disciples (and through them, the retreatant) can see what they have been walking beside. The Second Week is, in one of its dimensions, a prolonged Transfiguration: an encounter with the one who is already present, whose glory has always been here, but whom the retreatant is only now beginning to see.

Gospel Contemplation: The Ignatian Method

The central prayer form of the Second Week is the Gospel Contemplation, one of Ignatius's most distinctive and most fruitful gifts to the Christian tradition. The retreatant is not asked to read the Gospel text analytically, nor to reflect on its theological meaning, nor to apply it to their situation by way of analogy. They are asked to enter it — to place themselves within the scene, to see its sights and hear its sounds and feel its temperatures, to take a role within it (not always as a named character — often as an unnamed bystander or servant), and to allow the encounter that the text narrates to happen to them.

This method is audacious and, to some theological temperaments, alarming. It appears to collapse the distinction between the past event of revelation and the present experience of the retreatant. But Ignatius's method is grounded in a theology of the risen Christ as permanently contemporary: Christ is not locked in the past, accessible only through historical reconstruction. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and the events of his earthly life are, in the light of the Resurrection, permanently present in a way that no ordinary historical event is. The Gospel Contemplation is the prayer form appropriate to this theology.

The Anglican tradition prepares its members for this form of prayer in ways it does not always consciously recognize. The liturgical recitation of the Gospel, received standing as the congregation turns toward the reader, is already an act of presence before the living Christ-in-the-text. The dramatic dialogues of the Passion narratives, read by the congregation on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, have always enacted the principle that the events of the Gospel are happening to the worshippers, not merely being reported to them. The Second Week simply makes explicit and intensive what the Anglican liturgical formation has been doing week by week throughout the retreatant's life.

The Election: Vocation and the Anglican Theology of Orders

The election toward which the Second Week moves is the most personal and most consequential act of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius defines it as the ordering of one's life to the greater glory of God — the specific decision, arrived at through the discernment of the Second Week's Contemplations, about the state of life or the significant choice that God is offering to the retreatant.

The Anglican theology of vocation, as expressed in the ordination rites, the marriage service, and the baptismal covenant, provides the Second Week's election with its ecclesial context. No Anglican election is purely individual: the call to a particular form of life is always tested in and through the community of the Church. The Society's *Constitution's* emphasis on discernment as a communal ministry (Article 14) reflects this: the election made in the Second Week is not a private transaction between the retreatant and God but the beginning of a conversation with the Body of Christ that will require ongoing testing and confirmation.

For members of the Anglican Society of Jesus specifically, the Second Week's election has a particular shape: the retreatant is discerning not only their general state of life but their specific vocation within the Society's apostolic mission. The *Constitution's* vows of Simplicity, Fidelity, and Obedience — professed at First Profession — and the fourth vow of mission and the protection of children professed at Final Profession (Article 8) represent the structure of the professed life; the Second Week is where the retreatant first hears, in the silence of Contemplation, whether and how that structure is being offered to them.

“The Word was made flesh not to show us how to escape the world but to show us how to inhabit it with love: to be in it as he was in it, with the whole of oneself given.”

— Rowan Williams, *The Dwelling of the Light* (adapted)



THE PARABLE OF THE KINGDOM

The Call of the Eternal King — Transitional Meditation

Scripture: *Matthew 4:17–22; Luke 4:14–21; Mark 1:14–20*

BCP Text: *The Collect for the Second Sunday of Epiphany: “Almighty God, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that thy people, illumined by thy Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ’s glory, that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed to the ends of the earth.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 91–100 — The Parable of the Kingdom: the meditation on the earthly king and the eternal King.*

The Purpose of the Transitional Meditation

Ignatius places the Parable of the Kingdom at the threshold between the First and Second Weeks as a transitional meditation — a hinge on which the whole movement of the *Exercises* turns. The retreatant has come through the First Week knowing themselves as sinners who have been met by mercy. The Parable of the Kingdom now sets before them the question that will govern the whole of the Second Week: will you follow? Not abstractly, not in principle, not eventually — but now, in the specific form that Christ’s life and call are about to take shape in your Contemplation?

The meditation takes two forms. The first is the parable itself: an earthly king of great virtue calls his subjects to a great campaign, promising to share with them its hardships and its glory equally. Ignatius invites the retreatant to feel the natural human response — the desire to serve such a king, the shame of refusing such a call. Then the parable shifts to the eternal King, who calls each person by name to the same campaign — but one whose stakes are the renewal of all creation and whose hardships include poverty, humility, and the cross.

The Anglican Key: The Baptismal Covenant

The BCP’s baptismal covenant is the Anglican form of the Parable of the Kingdom. The five promises made at Baptism — to continue in the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to persevere in resisting evil, to proclaim the good news, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, to strive for justice and peace — are the Anglican formulation of what it means to say ‘Yes’ to the call of the eternal King. The retreatant who has made these promises, perhaps in childhood, now meets them in their full weight for the first time: this is what I said I would do. This is who I said I would be. Am I?

The Society’s apostolic preferences (*Constitution*, Articles 21–25) — showing the way to God, walking with the poor, journeying with youth, caring for the Common Home — are the Society’s particular shape of this covenant response. The retreatant engaged in the Parable of the Kingdom meditation is being invited to hear whether and in what form this particular shape is theirs. The eternal King’s call comes to every baptized person; its specific form comes to each in their particular gifts, history, and vocation.

The Two Responses

Ignatius describes two possible responses to the King’s call. The first is the response of the generous soul who simply says yes — who hears the call and follows, offering their whole being without reservation or calculation. The second, greater response is offered by those who desire to distinguish themselves in the service of the eternal King: ‘Eternal Lord of all things, in the presence of thy infinite goodness, and of thy glorious mother, and of all the saints of thy heavenly court, I make my oblation with thy favor and help, that I desire and determine, to imitate thee in bearing all wrongs and all abuse and all poverty, both actual and spiritual, should thy most holy Majesty deign to choose and admit me to such a state and way of life.’

This is the oblation of the Second Week: not merely following Christ in his glory but following him in his poverty and humility, in his choosing of the lower place, his identification with the marginalized, his willingness to be misunderstood, to be opposed, ultimately to be crucified. The Anglican tradition, shaped by its theology of kenosis and its tradition of the servant-church, hears this oblation with recognition: Jeremy Taylor’s holy living, Charles de Foucauld’s little way, the Rule of St. Benedict’s insistence that the monk must ‘prefer nothing whatever to Christ’ — all are forms of this second response.

Evening Examen: *What stirred in me during the Parable of the Kingdom? Where did I feel the pull of the call? Where did I feel resistance — the calculation of cost, the preference for comfort, the doubt about whether the call is really addressed to me? Bring all of it to Evening Prayer.*



DAYS ONE AND TWO

The Incarnation: God's Election of the World

Scripture: *Luke 1:26–38; John 1:1–18; Philippians 2:5–11*

BCP Text: *Christmas Day Collect: “Almighty God, who hast given us thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin: Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit.” The Prologue of John’s Gospel, as read at the conclusion of the Christmas Eucharist in the Anglican rite.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 101–109 — The first contemplation of the Second Week: the mystery of the Incarnation. The Three Divine Persons regarding the world in its need, and the mission of the Second Person.*

The Composition of Place: The Trinity’s Gaze

Ignatius’s composition of place for the Incarnation is one of the most breathtaking in all the *Exercises*. The retreatant is asked to see the whole surface of the world — all nations, all peoples, all conditions of human life — and above it, the Three Divine Persons gazing upon it in love and in sorrow. They see the created world in its beauty and its disorder; they see the human family in its freedom and its lostness; and they determine, in the eternal counsel of the Trinity, to send the Second Person into that world in order to save it. The retreatant watches this eternal decision being made and feels, perhaps for the first time at full weight, that this decision was made for them specifically — that their own face was in the vision of the Three Persons as they determined to send the Son.

The Anglican liturgical tradition enacts this composition of place every Advent, every Christmas, every Epiphany: the Church’s annual movement through the approach to the Incarnation trains the Anglican soul to inhabit exactly the perspective Ignatius describes. The O Antiphons of Advent — ‘O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High’ — address the coming Christ with a yearning that is itself a form of the Trinity’s gaze on the world: the creation crying out for its Creator to enter it. The retreatant who has sung these antiphons year by year comes to Ignatius’s composition already knowing, in their bones, the world’s need and the divine response to it.

The First Point: The World Seen by God

Ignatius directs the retreatant to see all the variety of persons — the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the joyful and the sorrowful, the holy and the sinful — and to see them as the Three Persons see them: with a love that is simultaneously clear-eyed about their condition and absolutely committed to their restoration. This is not a sentimental vision; the Trinity sees the full reality of human disorder, including the disorder the retreatant has just been examining in themselves during the First Week.

The social dimension of this Point is inseparable from the Contemplation. The Society's apostolic preference for walking with the poor and the marginalized (*Constitution*, Article 21) is rooted in this very vision: the Trinity's gaze falls with particular tenderness on those whom the world has discarded or overlooked. The retreatant is invited to try to see with the Trinity's eyes — to look at the world not from the perspective of the comfortable or the powerful but from the perspective of the Love that gave itself for all.

The Second Point: The Annunciation

The decision of the Trinity is enacted in the Annunciation: Gabriel's visit to Mary, her question, her consent. Ignatius asks the retreatant to be present at this scene — to see the angel, to see Mary, to hear the exchange, to feel the weight of what is happening. A young woman in an obscure town in an occupied province is being asked whether the eternal Word may enter the world through her body. The universe waits on her answer.

The Anglican tradition's honoring of Mary as *Theotokos* — the God-bearer, the one in whom the Incarnation became concrete and particular — gives this Contemplation its full Anglican resonance. The *Magnificat*, sung at every Evening Prayer, is the theological commentary on the Annunciation: a young woman who has said Yes to the impossible sings of the reversal of the world's order that her Yes has initiated. The retreatant who contemplates the Annunciation and then sings the *Magnificat* in Evening Prayer is weaving the Contemplation into the liturgical fabric of their day.

The Colloquy: Speaking to the Three

Ignatius prescribes for the Incarnation Contemplation a colloquy with each of the Three Persons in turn, concluding with the *Pater Noster*. This Trinitarian structure of the colloquy is characteristic of the Second Week: as the retreatant moves deeper into Contemplation of Christ's life, they are drawn increasingly into the Trinitarian life that his life both enacts and reveals. The Collect for Trinity Sunday in the Anglican rite — 'Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity' — is the liturgical form of the Second Week's deepest contemplative movement.

Evening Examen: *Where did the contemplation of the Incarnation touch me most today? Which of the Three Persons felt most present? Was it the Father who sent, the Son who consented to be sent, or the Spirit who overshadowed Mary? Let that particular presence be the texture of Evening Prayer.*



DAYS TWO AND THREE

The Nativity: God in the Lowly Place

Scripture: *Luke 2:1–20; Matthew 1:18–25; Isaiah 9:2–7*

BCP Text: *Christmas Day Postcommunion: “We thank thee, O Lord, for the gift of thy Son, who has taken our nature upon him in the mystery of the Incarnation, that we, being made partakers of his divine nature, may be transformed into his likeness.” The Second Lesson at Christmas Midnight: John 1:1–14.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 110–117 — The second contemplation: the Nativity. The journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the birth in the stable, the poverty and humility of God incarnate.*

Entering the Stable

Ignatius’s composition of place for the Nativity is both theologically precise and sensuously specific: the cave or stable at Bethlehem, its smells and textures, the cold of a winter night in the Judean hills, the straw and the stone, the animals, the exhausted mother, the uncertain father, and in the center of it all, the infant who is the Word made flesh. The retreatant is invited not to observe this scene from a respectful distance but to be present within it — to serve, perhaps, as one of the shepherds stumbling in from the dark, or as an unnamed attendant who holds the lamp, or as the silent bystander who simply witnesses.

The Anglican Christmas liturgy has always understood that the Nativity is not merely recalled but entered. The crib, present in most Anglican churches since the Oxford Movement restored it, is the material form of Ignatius’s composition of place: here is where God chose to arrive in the world, and here is where we come to meet him. The darkness of a Christmas Midnight Eucharist, the *Gloria* breaking into it like the angel’s light, the Prologue of John read as the final word of the liturgy — all these are forms of the Second Week’s Nativity Contemplation enacted in the body of the worshipping community.

The Theology of the Lowly Place

The Nativity meditation’s deepest theological content is the poverty and humility of God’s manner of entering the world. Ignatius directs the retreatant to notice this: not that God came, but how God came — in maximum vulnerability, in minimum social standing, in a borrowed space in a minor town under foreign occupation, to parents of no particular account. This is not accidental. It is the shape of the Second Week’s most insistent theological claim: that the way of Christ is the way of kenosis, and that the retreatant who wishes to follow him must reckon seriously with this.

Lancelot Andrewes’s great Christmas sermon of 1611 on the *verbum infans* — the speechless Word, the Word that cannot yet speak — is the Anglican classic for this meditation. Andrewes piles paradox upon paradox: the one who spoke creation into being is now unable to speak; the one who holds all things in being cannot hold his own head up; the one whose glory filled the Temple lies in a

manger. This is not mere rhetorical play. It is theological precision: the Incarnation is precisely this — the eternal taking on the temporal, the infinite the finite, the self-sufficient the dependent. The retreatant who sits with this is sitting with the heart of the Gospel.

The Society's Vow of Simplicity (*Constitution*, Article 8) finds its deepest theological grounding in the Nativity: the willingness to hold all things lightly, to prefer the lower place, to be unimpressed by the world's measures of success and status, is a sharing in the manner of Christ's own entry into the world. The retreatant who contemplates the stable is not merely admiring a charming scene; they are being shown the shape of the life they are being invited to choose.

The Three Points: Seeing, Hearing, Reflecting

Ignatius prescribes three movements within each Gospel Contemplation: seeing the persons in the scene, hearing what they say and what they do not say, and then turning to oneself and drawing profit from what has been contemplated. For the Nativity, this means: seeing the Holy Family in their poverty and their joy, hearing the silence of the stable broken only by the infant's first cries and the distant sound of the angels' *Gloria*, and then asking — what does this scene ask of me? What of my life is being measured by what I see here? What do I need to let go of in order to be more fully present in this stable?

The third movement — turning to oneself — is characteristically Anglican in its resistance to mere sentimentality. The Anglican tradition has always insisted that the beauty of the liturgy, the wonder of the Gospel mysteries, must be translated into the transformation of life. Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*, with their relentless insistence that every spiritual experience must produce a change in the way one actually lives, are the Anglican commentary on Ignatius's third movement: Contemplation that does not issue in conversion is not yet Contemplation but only aesthetic experience.

Evening Examen: *What did you notice in the stable today that you had not noticed before? Where was your attention drawn — to Mary, to Joseph, to the child, to the shepherds, to the darkness and the cold? What is the particular detail that is lodging in you? Bring it to Compline and let it rest there.*



DAYS THREE THROUGH FIVE

The Hidden Life: Obedience, Formation, and Patient Wisdom

Scripture: *Luke 2:21–52 — The Presentation, the Simeon and Anna, and the Finding in the Temple. Matthew 2:1–23 — The Wise Men and the Flight into Egypt.*

BCP Text: *The Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas), February 2: “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.” The Collect for the Holy Innocents: “We remember before thee this day the Holy Innocents, who were slain for Christ’s sake.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 132–134 — The mysteries of the life of Christ from the Circumcision to the Baptism, including the Presentation, the Flight into Egypt, and the Finding in the Temple.*

The Thirty Hidden Years

The Contemplations of the hidden life — the Presentation, the Flight, the childhood in Nazareth, the Finding in the Temple — are among the most theologically rich and personally demanding of the Second Week. They invite the retreatant to sit with the mystery that the incarnate Word spent roughly ninety percent of his earthly life in obscurity: learning to walk, learning a trade, attending synagogue, living with his parents in obedience, being formed by a tradition he was simultaneously embodying in a new way.

This extended hiddenness is theologically significant, not merely a biographical detail to be passed over on the way to the public ministry. God chose to spend most of the human life in the ordinary — in the texture of everyday work and family and community life. The Anglican theology of vocation has always insisted on the equal dignity of every form of Christian life: the priest and the carpenter, the religious and the parent, the scholar and the laborer. The hidden years of Nazareth are the Gospel foundation of this claim.

The Presentation and Simeon’s Prophecy

The Presentation in the Temple is the first public encounter of the infant Christ with the official structures of Israel’s religion, and Simeon’s prophecy — ‘a sword will pierce your own soul too’ — introduces into the Second Week’s warm Contemplations of the Nativity the shadow of what is to come. The Anglican tradition has honored this feast with particular attention: Candlemas, with its procession of candles and its singing of the *Nunc Dimittis*, enacts the meeting of the old covenant’s fulfilment with the universal light it prepared the way for.

The aged Simeon and Anna represent the long obedience of those who have waited — who have prayed and fasted and hoped through decades of apparent silence, and who now, at the end of their lives, receive the answer they have been carrying all along. For retreatants who have been in the Society for many years, or who are older members making the *Exercises* in a later season of life, this

Contemplation speaks with particular force: the fruit of a long fidelity, the unexpected consolation that comes at the end of the waiting.

The Finding in the Temple

The Finding in the Temple is the only window Ignatius opens onto the years between infancy and the public ministry, and it is a revealing one. The twelve-year-old Jesus, absorbed in dialogue with the teachers of Israel, is oblivious to the anxiety he is causing his parents. His answer to Mary's reproach — 'Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?' — is the first recorded saying of Jesus in Luke's Gospel, and it names the driving conviction of his entire life: the absolute priority of the Father's claim over every other claim, including the claim of filial obedience.

Yet Luke immediately adds: 'And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them.' This is not a contradiction but a paradox at the heart of the Incarnation: the one who is absolutely free in his relationship to the Father chooses, in his obedience to the created order, to be subject to his parents. The Ignatian Vow of Obedience, and the Anglican Society of Jesus's understanding of it (*Constitution*, Article 8), finds its theological ground here: obedience chosen by the free is not a diminishment of freedom but its fullest expression.

The retreatant sitting with the Finding in the Temple is being invited to reflect on the structure of their own obedience: to what are they obedient? Where does the Father's claim and the claims of the created order require a careful navigation? Where have they resolved the tension too quickly in one direction or the other — either abandoning the Father's house entirely, or using it as an excuse to evade the ordinary obligations of creaturely life?

Evening Examen: *Which mystery of the hidden life stayed with you today? The patience of Simeon's long waiting, the terror of the Flight into Egypt, or the strange encounter in the Temple? What does it say about the particular season of your own life with God?*



DAYS FIVE AND SIX

Baptism and Temptation: The Anointed Servant Tested

Scripture: *Matthew 3:13–4:11; Mark 1:9–13; Luke 3:21–4:13*

BCP Text: *The Baptism of Our Lord (Epiphany I): “Father in heaven, who at the baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan didst proclaim him thy beloved Son and anoint him with the Holy Spirit: Grant that all who are baptized into his Name may keep the covenant they have made, and boldly confess him as Lord and Saviour.” The Collect for the First Sunday in Lent (the Temptation).*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 135, 136, 161, 162 — The Baptism and the Temptation as mysteries of Christ’s life.*

The Baptism: The Voice from Heaven

At the Baptism, the hidden life ends and the public ministry begins — and it begins not with a program or a manifesto but with an experience of prayer. Jesus comes out of the water, and the heavens open, and the Spirit descends, and the voice speaks: ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’ Before any healing, before any teaching, before any confrontation with the powers, Jesus is simply received as beloved.

This sequence is theologically foundational for the whole of the Second Week. The election toward which the retreatant is moving is not primarily a decision about what to do but a decision about who to be — or rather, a willingness to receive who God says they already are. The voice at the Baptism speaks not only to Jesus but, in the Gospel’s logic, to every baptized person: you are beloved; I am well pleased with you. The retreatant’s baptism, recalled and renewed throughout the *Exercises*, is the sacramental form of this same declaration.

The Anglican tradition’s rich theology of Baptism, articulated in the BCP’s baptismal covenant and in the Catechism, grounds the retreatant’s identity throughout the Second Week: the election being discerned is an unfolding of the baptismal call already given, not a new and separate act. The BCP’s question at the renewal of baptismal vows — ‘Do you reaffirm your renunciation of evil?’ and ‘Do you renew your commitment to Jesus Christ?’ — is the liturgical form of the Second Week’s election.

The Temptation: Testing the Shape of Mission

Immediately after the Baptism, the Spirit drives Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted. The three temptations that follow are not random assaults of evil but a systematic probing of the shape of Jesus’s mission: will he use his power for self-provision (bread from stones), for spectacle (throwing himself from the Temple), or for the immediate achievement of good ends by compromised means (the kingdoms of the world in exchange for a moment’s worship)?

Each temptation is, in its own way, a reasonable proposal. It would be good if hungry people had bread. It would be impressive if the Son of God demonstrated his divine protection. It would save many lives if the kingdoms of the world could be taken over peacefully and governed by someone of genuine virtue. The genius of the temptations is that they are not obviously wrong — they are the perennial temptations of every person and every institution that wishes to do good: to grasp at ends while abandoning the means that God has ordained.

For the Anglican Society of Jesus, whose apostolic mission involves real engagement with poverty, with structures of power, and with the ambiguous goods of the world, this Contemplation is not abstract. The retreatant is being formed in the specific shape of Jesus's resistance: the willingness to work from weakness rather than strength, from hiddenness rather than spectacle, from the long obedience of the cross rather than the short cut of the worldly deal.

Evelyn Underhill's theology of the spiritual life as the progressive conformation of the soul to the pattern of Christ's life finds its Second Week expression here: the temptations Jesus resisted are the temptations the retreatant will face in their own form of apostolic life, and the pattern of his responses — 'Man shall not live by bread alone; you shall not put the Lord your God to the test; you shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve' — is the pattern the Second Week is trying to form in the retreatant's soul.

Evening Examen: *Which temptation most resonated with your own characteristic patterns? The temptation to self-provision, to spectacle, or to the compromise of means for ends? How did Jesus's responses feel as you prayed them — liberating, demanding, or both?*



DAYS SIX THROUGH EIGHT

The Public Ministry I: Teaching, Healing, and the Poor

Scripture: *Luke 4:14–21 (the Nazareth manifesto); Matthew 5:1–12 (the Beatitudes); Mark 1:21–45; Luke 7:18–23*

BCP Text: *Collect for the Third Sunday of Epiphany: “Almighty God, whose Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world: Grant that thy people, illumined by thy Word and Sacraments, may shine with the radiance of Christ’s glory.” The Daily Office Lectionary’s continuous reading of the Gospels in Ordinary Time.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 137, 161, 273–288 — The mysteries of the public life of Christ, including the calling of the disciples, the first miracles, and the Sermon on the Mount.*

The Nazareth Manifesto

Jesus’ first public act in Luke’s Gospel is to stand in the synagogue of his hometown, unroll the scroll of Isaiah, and read: ‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.’ Then he rolls up the scroll, sits down, and says: ‘Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.’

This is the charter of the Second Week’s Contemplation of the public ministry: the anointed one is sent specifically to the poor, the captive, the blind, and the oppressed. The Society’s *Constitution*’s apostolic preference for walking with the poor and marginalized (Article 21) is not a modern addition to the Ignatian charism but its direct expression. The retreatant who contemplates the Nazareth manifesto is contemplating the specific shape of the mission they are being invited to share.

The Anglican tradition has always heard these words with a distinctive social edge. F.D. Maurice, whose theology of the Kingdom of God as already present and already operative in the structures of creation shaped the whole social gospel movement, heard the Nazareth manifesto as the founding text of his theology: the good news is not merely for souls in a spiritual register but for bodies, communities, and social structures. The Second Week’s retreat’s most socially engaged movements come to their focus here.

The Beatitudes: The Profile of the Kingdom

The Beatitudes are the Second Week’s most concentrated account of the character of the kingdom-life to which the retreatant is being called. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourning, the meek, the hungry for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted. This is not a description of virtues to be achieved by effort but of conditions to be received with

openness — the conditions in which the kingdom’s life becomes available because the soul’s normal defenses against it have been lowered.

Each beatitude opens a portal into the Second Week’s central movement. Poverty of spirit is the fruit of the Foundation’s indifference. Mourning is the fruit of the First Week’s honest reckoning with sin. Hunger and thirst for righteousness is what the Parable of the Kingdom has awakened. Purity of heart — ‘to will one thing,’ as Kierkegaard put it — is the goal of the election that the Second Week is preparing. The retreatant who sits with the Beatitudes at this point in the retreat is reading their own portrait, at least partially, and seeing what the portrait still requires.

George Herbert’s poem ‘The Pulley’ appears again here in a new light: the restlessness that God withheld as the means of the soul’s return becomes, in the Beatitudes’ logic, the hunger and thirst for righteousness that are themselves the form of blessedness. The soul that cannot be satisfied by any created good is the soul that is, by virtue of that very dissatisfaction, most open to the kingdom.

The Healing Miracles: The Gospel in the Body

The healing miracles that fill the Synoptic Gospels are not incidental to the Second Week’s Contemplations; they are the bodily form of the same Gospel the Beatitudes proclaim in words. Jesus touches the leper whom no one is permitted to touch. He heals on the Sabbath because the human person matters more than the regulation that was meant to serve them. He goes to the house of a Roman officer and a synagogue official with equal readiness. He allows a woman of questionable reputation to wash his feet with her tears. In each case, the healing is a social act as well as a physical one: it restores the person not only to health but to community, to the human belonging from which their condition had excluded them.

The retreatant who contemplates the healing miracles is being shown the texture of apostolic life as Jesus practiced it: attentive to the specific person before them, unimpressed by social categories, willing to be ritually compromised in order to restore the compromised, patient with the conditions of ordinary human life while challenging the structures that have made those conditions more painful than they need to be. The Society’s apostolic works, in whatever form they take, are called to this same texture.

Evening Examen: *Which scene from the public ministry stayed with you most powerfully? Where did you feel yourself in the scene — as the one healed, as a bystander, as one of the disciples, as one of the opponents? What is the Spirit showing you through that particular positioning?*



DAYS EIGHT THROUGH TEN

Three Discernment Exercises: Standards, Classes, and Degrees of Humility

Ignatius places three discernment *Exercises* at the center of the Second Week, after the Contemplations of the early public ministry and before the retreatant moves toward the election. These three *Exercises* — the Meditation on Two Standards, the Meditation on Three Classes of Persons, and the Three Degrees of Humility — function as a progressive tightening of the retreatant’s discernment, bringing the theological landscape of the election into sharper and sharper focus. The director should present them in sequence but allow adequate time for each, recognizing that they operate together as a single movement of deepening clarification.

The Meditation on Two Standards

■ **Scripture:** *Matthew 6:19–24; Luke 16:13; John 8:12*

The Meditation on Two Standards (*SpEx* § 136–147) is Ignatius’s most explicitly strategic meditation, and it has a martial flavor that reflects his background as a soldier. Two armies are arrayed in a vast plain: under one standard, the forces of the enemy; under the other, Christ. The retreatant is invited to consider the tactics of each leader — specifically, the chain of temptation that leads souls away from God and the chain of grace that leads them toward him.

The enemy’s tactic, Ignatius says, is riches first, then the honor that riches bring, then the pride that honor feeds. This is a sociological as well as a psychological observation: the structures of the world that are most resistant to the kingdom are those in which wealth concentrates power, power demands deference, and deference produces the kind of self-aggrandizement that makes the soul impermeable to God. The retreatant is invited to trace this chain in their own life and in the structures they are part of.

Christ’s tactic is the exact inversion: poverty first — actual or spiritual — then the humility that poverty, rightly received, produces, then the openness to all virtues that humility makes possible. This is the logic of the Beatitudes and the Nativity: the kingdom comes through the low door, and only those who are willing to stoop can enter. The Three Degrees of Humility that follow will develop what this willingness to stoop actually means in practice.

The Anglican tradition has its own vocabulary for the Two Standards: the tension between the love of God and the love of the world runs through the Reformers, the Caroline Divines, and the evangelical movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries alike. The BCP’s prayer for deliverance from the world, the flesh, and the devil in the Great Litany is the liturgical form of the Two Standards prayer: asking to be drawn under the right standard and kept there.

The Three Classes of Persons

Scripture: *Luke 9:57–62; Mark 10:17–22*

The Meditation on Three Classes of Persons (*SpEx* § 149–157) is a parable of spiritual temperament rather than a typology of persons. All three classes have acquired a great sum of money — meaning any attachment that has become disordered — and all three wish, genuinely, to be free of it in order to serve God well. The first class intends to be free of it but never actually does the work of becoming free. The second class wants to keep the attachment but adjust their relationship to God to accommodate it — to have the comfort and the kingdom simultaneously. The third class places the attachment entirely in God’s hands and is genuinely free to keep it or give it up, as God directs.

The retreatant is asked to be honest about which class most accurately describes their present spiritual state. The painful recognition that most of us are, in most areas of our lives, members of the first or second class is itself a significant grace: it names the specific form of the freedom that the election is designed to produce. The Society’s Vow of Simplicity is precisely the third class’s posture rendered as a formal commitment: I hold this lightly; I am willing to use it or give it up entirely as God requires.

The Three Degrees of Humility

The Three Degrees of Humility (*SpEx* § 165–168) are the most demanding exercise in the entire *Exercises*, and they mark the point of maximum clarification before the election. The first degree is the minimum: never choosing a mortal sin for any earthly consideration. The second degree is the disposition of indifference arrived at in the Foundation: equally free with respect to all created things, seeking only the divine will. The third degree goes beyond even this: a positive preference for poverty, humility, and reproach in imitation of Christ, not merely as a condition to be accepted but as an active choice to be desired.

This third degree is where the Second Week asks its most searching question of the retreatant. Not merely: are you willing to be poor? But: do you prefer poverty — not for its own sake, but because it brings you closer to the one who was poor? Not merely: are you willing to be humiliated? But: do you prefer humility because it is the shape of Christ’s own life? Ignatius is careful to note that this preference should not be sought if it would involve sin, and that it should be prayed for rather than assumed. But it represents the outermost edge of the Second Week’s invitation: to want what Christ wanted, not merely to accept what Christ accepted.

The Anglican tradition at its most generous recognizes this third degree in the lives of its greatest saints: in Thomas Cranmer, who in his final hour thrust the hand that had signed his recantation into the flames first; in the Martyrs of Uganda and the English Martyrs commemorated in the Society’s calendar; in Evelyn Underhill, who gave up the intellectual celebrity she might have had in order to be a spiritual director to ordinary people. The third degree is not for show; it is the form of the love that has been fully formed by the Second Week’s Contemplations.

“The third degree of humility: to choose poverty with Christ poor rather than riches; and to desire reproaches with Christ replete with them rather than honors; and to desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ.”

— St. Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, § 167



DAYS TEN THROUGH TWELVE

The Public Ministry II: Parables, the Poor, and the Kingdom's Scandal

Scripture: *Luke 10:25–37 (the Good Samaritan); Luke 15:1–32 (the Lost Sheep and the Prodigal Son); Matthew 25:31–46 (the Last Judgment); John 2:1–11 (Cana)*

BCP Text: *Collect for Proper 25 (Ordinary Time): “Almighty and everlasting God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and, that we may obtain what thou dost promise, make us love what thou dost command.” The Eucharistic Prayer’s remembrance of ‘his life and ministry among us.’*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 161, 273–288 — The parables, the encounters with individuals, and the continuing mysteries of Christ’s public life.*

The Parables as Gospel Contemplation

The parables of Jesus are ideally suited to the Second Week’s Gospel Contemplation method. Each is a compressed scene, rich in sensory detail, in which a truth about the kingdom is enacted rather than merely stated. The retreatant who enters the parable of the Good Samaritan does not merely understand it; they find themselves in it — as the lawyer who asks the initial question, as the priest or Levite who passes by, as the Samaritan who stops, as the man left beaten in the ditch. The question ‘which one proved to be a neighbor?’ is not merely a teaching question but a discernment question: where am I in this story, and where does Christ need me to be?

The parable of the Prodigal Son, which has already been contemplated in the First Week as a meditation on mercy, appears now in a new light in the Second Week. The younger son’s return is no longer primarily about the retreatant’s own sinfulness and the mercy that received it; it is about the shape of the Father’s love, which is the model for all apostolic love. The director of the *Exercises*, the spiritual director of the Society, the priest hearing confession — all are called to be like the father who runs out to meet the returning son: not waiting to determine whether the contrition is genuine before extending the welcome, but running, embracing, robing, feasting.

Matthew 25 and the Apostolic Preferences

Matthew 25:31–46 — the parable of the Last Judgment — is the Second Week’s most direct engagement with the Society’s apostolic preferences. The criterion of judgment in this scene is not theological orthodoxy, not liturgical observance, not even explicit allegiance to Christ: it is the response to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the imprisoned. ‘Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’

The Society’s commitments to the poor, to migrants and refugees, to those in prison and in hospital, to the young and the neglected old — all find their Gospel grounding in this text. The retreatant who contemplates it during the Second Week is not receiving a new commandment but recognizing the shape of the life of Christ they have been contemplating for ten days: the Christ who touched

the leper, who crossed into Gentile territory, who dined with tax collectors and sinners, is the same Christ who identifies with the least in the final scene of judgment.

The Anglican tradition's long history of institutional engagement with poverty — from the medieval hospital charities through the Oxford Movement's settlement houses to the contemporary work of food banks and refugee support — is its communal response to this parable. The retreatant is being formed not to run programs but to see: to see Christ in the face of the one the world has overlooked, and to respond to that seeing with the same unhesitating generosity that characterized Jesus's own encounters.

The Wedding at Cana: Abundance and Joy

The miracle at Cana — the transformation of water into wine at a village wedding — is the second sign in John's Gospel and one of the Contemplations Ignatius specifically mentions for the Second Week. It is included here as a counterweight to the ascetic and demanding thrust of the Two Standards and Three Degrees: the kingdom of God is not only about poverty and humility and reproach. It is also about the extravagant abundance of the divine life poured out for human joy. Six stone jars of the finest wine, far more than the wedding guests could drink, produced at the request of a mother who trusted her son's goodness — this is the God of the Beatitudes, whose plenty overflows every expectation.

The Anglican theology of the Eucharist — as foretaste of the heavenly banquet, as participation in the abundant life of the Trinity, as the meal at which the hungry are always fed and the lonely always welcomed — is the continuing Cana of the Church's life. The retreatant who has been sitting with the demands of poverty and humility and reproach is reminded here that these are not ends in themselves: they are the conditions under which the wine that does not run out becomes accessible.

Evening Examen: *Which parable or miracle most opened itself to you during the contemplation today? Where did you find yourself placed within the scene? What is the kingdom asking of you through that particular placing?*



DAY TWELVE

The Transfiguration: The Vision That Sustains the Way

Scripture: *Matthew 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36; 2 Peter 1:16–19*

BCP Text: *The Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6): “O God, who on the holy mount didst reveal to chosen witnesses thy well-beloved Son, wonderfully transfigured, in raiment white and glistening; Mercifully grant that we, being delivered from the disquietude of this world, may by faith behold the King in his beauty.” The Daily Office Canticle, Te Deum Laudamus.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 164 — The Transfiguration is named among the mysteries of Christ’s life for contemplation in the Second Week.*

The Transfiguration as Sustaining Vision

The Transfiguration occurs at the precise midpoint of the Gospel narratives, between the confession of Peter at Caesarea Philippi and the journey toward Jerusalem and the cross. It functions as a sustaining vision: a glimpse of the fullness that lies on the other side of the passion, given to the disciples so that when the darkness comes they will have something to hold onto. The retreatant who contemplates the Transfiguration at this midpoint of the Second Week receives the same gift: a glimpse of the glory that the election they are approaching will serve.

Michael Ramsey’s great work on the Transfiguration argues that this mystery is central to Anglican spirituality precisely because it holds together the historical and the eternal, the visible and the invisible, the suffering and the glory, without collapsing them. The disfigured Christ of the cross and the transfigured Christ of the mountain are the same person; the disciples who trembled on the mountain and fled in Gethsemane are the same disciples. The Anglican *via media*’s refusal to separate the spiritual from the material, the heavenly from the earthly, finds its Gospel ground on this mountain.

The Composition of Place

The retreatant is invited to climb the mountain with Jesus and the three disciples. To feel the steepness of the ascent, the thinning air, the growing silence as the village falls away below. Then the light: not external but emanating from within him, his face bright as the sun, his garments white as light. And Moses and Elijah in conversation with him — the Law and the Prophets speaking with their fulfilment, the whole history of Israel gathered at this point.

Peter’s instinct to build three tents — to make the moment permanent, to stay on the mountain rather than go back down — is the retreatant’s own instinct during the Second Week’s most consoling moments: to hold onto the experience, to resist the movement toward the election and the demands it will make, to stay in the light a little longer. The voice from the cloud does not endorse

Peter's instinct: 'This is my beloved Son; listen to him.' Listen to him — not just see him. And when they look up, only Jesus. The vision has done its work; now comes the descent.

The descent from the Transfiguration is itself a Contemplation: Jesus touching the terrified disciples, saying 'Rise, and have no fear,' and leading them back down the mountain into the ordinary world that the ordinary world does not yet know has been transfigured. This is the rhythm the Second Week is trying to form in the retreatant: the movement up the mountain in Contemplation, the movement back down into apostolic life, carrying the light without trying to show it off or preserve it.

Evening Examen: *What did you see on the mountain today? Where in the Transfiguration scene were you placed — among the three disciples, or as an unnamed observer? What did the voice say to you in particular? What is the meaning of the descent back into the ordinary?*



DAYS TWELVE THROUGH FOURTEEN

The Election: The Specific Response to the Specific Call

Scripture: *Mark 10:17–22 (the Rich Young Ruler); Luke 9:51–62 (the Cost of Discipleship); John 21:15–19 (Do you love me?)*

BCP Text: *The Ordination Rites: “Do you believe that you are truly called by God and his Church to this ministry?” The Marriage Service: “I, N., take thee, N., to be my wedded spouse.” The Vow of Profession in the Society’s Constitutions.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 169–189 — The election: its nature, its object, the three times of election, and the methods for making a sound and good election.*

The Nature of the Election

Ignatius defines the election as the ordering of one’s life so that God may be served in it. It is not primarily a choice between options — though it involves concrete choices — but a disposition of the will: the placing of the whole self before God and the asking of the question, what do you want with me? The election that the Second Week produces is not a decision made by the retreatant and presented to God for approval but a decision arrived at through such thorough exposure to God’s person, God’s ways, and God’s love that the retreatant’s will and God’s will have come to be, at some deep level, aligned.

For retreatants of the Anglican Society of Jesus, the election typically concerns one of several matters: the profession of the Society’s vows; a discernment of call to Holy Orders or to a specific form of apostolic life; a major life decision such as marriage, significant change of work, or a decision about where to live and serve. The director should have a clear understanding of what question the retreatant is bringing to the election before the Second Week begins, so that the Contemplations can be organized to illuminate that question.

The Three Times of Election

Ignatius identifies three ‘times’ or conditions under which a sound election may be made (*SpEx* § 175–178). The first time is a moment of such clarity and certainty that no doubt remains: the soul simply knows, with the kind of certainty that needs no deliberation, what God is asking of it. This is rare and should not be sought or manufactured; but when it comes, it should be trusted. The Anglican tradition recognizes this first time in the accounts of the great prophets and apostles — Isaiah in the Temple, Paul on the Damascus road — and in the testimonies of saints who describe a moment of unambiguous divine clarity.

The second time is the normal time: the retreatant experiences consolations when drawn toward one option and desolations when drawn toward another, or vice versa, and learns to read these movements as indicators of the Spirit’s direction. This is where the Rules for the Discernment of

Spirits (First Set from the First Week, Second Set introduced in the Second Week) become practically crucial. The director's role is to help the retreatant distinguish genuine consolation and desolation from the projections of wish and fear, and to test what they are experiencing against the data of the whole retreat.

The third time is the time of tranquility: neither strong consolation nor strong desolation, but a calm clarity of mind and will that allows for rational deliberation. Ignatius provides two methods for this time (*SpEx* § 178–187): the first involves weighing the advantages and disadvantages of each option from the perspective of a person who desires only God's glory; the second involves imagining a person one deeply respects and asking what advice one would give them in the same situation. Both methods are designed to move the retreatant outside their own ego investment in the choice and into a more disinterested perspective.

The Anglican Theology of Vocation and the Election

The Anglican tradition brings to Ignatius's election its own rich theology of vocation, articulated most fully in the ordination rites and the marriage service but also in the BCP's daily Collects, which repeatedly pray for the grace to know and to do God's will. The election is not a Gnostic private communication between the individual soul and God, bypassing the community; it is always tested, confirmed, and enacted in and through the Body of Christ.

The Society's *Constitution* (Article 6) articulates this clearly: admission to the Society 'is a matter of grave discernment, undertaken by both the candidate and the Society together, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.' The election made in the Second Week is a personal discernment; its confirmation comes through the communal structures of the Society — the Vicar for Formation, the Superior General, the Council — who receive the retreatant's discernment, test it, and either confirm it or invite further discernment. This is the Anglican mode of election: personal clarity, communally confirmed.

The Methods of Election

The Weighing of Reasons

Ignatius's first method for the third time of election is deceptively simple: list the reasons for and against each option from the perspective of the greater glory of God. The retreatant is asked to do this not as a purely intellectual exercise but as an act of prayer: to lay out the reasons before God and to notice, in the laying out, which reasons carry weight and which feel like rationalization. The Anglican tradition of the prayerful use of reason — Hooker's insistence that reason is one of the three sources of Anglican theology alongside Scripture and tradition — gives this method its theological grounding: discernment is not opposed to reason but is reason operating at its highest, under the guidance of the Spirit.

The Imagining of a Wise Person

The second method — imagining what advice one would give a person one deeply respects in the same situation — is a form of the perspective-taking that the whole of the *Exercises* has been cultivating. The retreatant has spent fourteen days contemplating a person — Jesus Christ — whose perspective is radically different from their own natural perspective: who chooses poverty over wealth, humility over honor, service over power. To ask what such a person would advise is already,

by the end of the Second Week, to ask a very specific question whose answer carries considerable weight.

The Deathbed Perspective

Ignatius adds a further test for the election: imagine yourself on your deathbed, looking back. Which choice will you wish you had made? This is not a morbid exercise but a liberating one: it puts the election in the perspective of its ultimate context and strips away the short-term considerations that often dominate practical discernment. Jeremy Taylor’s *Holy Dying*, with its insistence that the manner of one’s death is shaped by the manner of one’s living, is the Anglican classic that gives this deathbed test its full theological weight.

Presenting the Election to God

Once the election has been made — with whatever degree of clarity the retreatant has been given — Ignatius directs them to present it to God in prayer, asking for confirmation or correction. This presentation is itself a form of the indifference the Foundation called for: the retreatant is not demanding that God ratify their choice but offering it humbly and asking that God either confirm it or redirect it. The confirmation may come as a deep peace — what Ignatius calls the ‘great consolation’ that accompanies a rightly made election — or it may come as a restlessness that indicates that the election, though genuine, needs refinement.

The director should encourage the retreatant to hold the election lightly even after it has been made: not anxiously, as though it might at any moment be overturned, but with the lightness of one who knows that God is more committed to their flourishing than they are themselves, and who can therefore trust that any genuine error of discernment will be corrected in due course. The Anglican tradition’s instinct for provisionality — its resistance to the premature closure of difficult questions — serves the election well here.

“The election is not the end of the discernment but the beginning of a life shaped by it. It is the hinge on which the door of the apostolic life opens.”

— Pedro de Ribadeneira, S.J., on the Ignatian election (adapted)



RULES FOR THE DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS

Second Set: For the Second Week

Ignatius appends to the Second Week a second set of Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (*SpEx* § 328–336), for retreatants who have advanced beyond the basic stages of spiritual life and who are now being tested at a more refined level. The hallmark of these rules is their attention to the difference between genuine consolation from God and a counterfeit consolation — a form of spiritual experience that presents itself as divine but leads, upon examination, away from God rather than toward him.

The Problem of Counterfeit Consolation

Ignatius observes that as retreatants advance in the spiritual life, the tactics of the enemy shift. The crude temptations of the First Week — toward obvious sin, toward despair, toward the abandonment of the spiritual life — are replaced in the Second Week by far more subtle ones: temptations that come dressed as virtues, consolations that seem to be from God but that, followed to their conclusion, lead toward disorder.

The classic form of this counterfeit consolation is what Ignatius calls ‘the angel of light’ (*SpEx* § 332): a spiritual movement that begins with good and holy thoughts and ends with the suggestion of something subtly disordered — a pride about one’s spiritual advancement, a contempt for those less advanced, a restlessness that uses spiritual fervor as a cover for the avoidance of the ordinary demands of one’s state of life. The director must be able to recognize and name these movements when they appear.

Rule 1 (*SpEx* § 329): *It is a mark of God and his angels to give true gladness and spiritual joy, removing all sadness and disturbance. It is a mark of the enemy to work against this, bringing false reasons, subtleties, and persistent fallacies to disturb the soul.*

Rule 2 (*SpEx* § 330): *God alone can give consolation without a preceding cause — a pure gift of love that does not arise from any external circumstance. Any other consolation has a preceding cause and must be tested.*

Rule 5 (*SpEx* § 333): *We must pay attention to the whole course of our thoughts. If the beginning, middle, and end are all good, this is a sign of the good spirit. But if the course of the thoughts leads to something evil, less good, or distracting from what had been proposed, this is a sign of the enemy.*

Rule 8 (*SpEx* § 336): *When consolation is present, the soul should humble itself and reconsider how little it can do without grace. When desolation comes, remember that with the grace God never withholds, much can be done. Consolation received should be stored as provision for the desolation that will follow.*

An Anglican Note on the Second Set

The Second Set of Rules is particularly important for Anglican retreatants who come to the *Exercises* with a strong liturgical and intellectual formation. The temptation of such retreatants is often not toward gross sin but toward a subtle spiritualization of the election — a way of making the call

sound very Christlike while avoiding its most demanding implications. The director should watch for the retreatant who finds beautiful and spiritually resonant reasons for choosing the comfortable option, or who uses the language of ‘discernment’ to indefinitely postpone the choice.

The Anglican tradition’s commitment to honest self-knowledge before God, articulated in the BCP’s Collect for Purity and in Andrewes’s *Preces Privatae*, is the spiritual formation that makes the retreatant most receptive to the Second Set of Rules: the soul that has practiced bringing all its desires to God without concealment is also the soul most capable of noticing when a desire is presenting itself in borrowed theological clothes.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Accompanying the Second Week in the Anglican Context

On the Pace of the Second Week

The Second Week is the longest and most variable of the four weeks. Some retreatants move through it in ten to twelve days; others need eighteen or twenty. The determining factor is not the quantity of material but the depth at which the Contemplations are working and the pace at which the election is ripening. The director's primary task is to attend to the retreatant's pace rather than imposing the material's schedule. When the retreatant is clearly dwelling in a particular Contemplation with great fruit, do not move on simply because the schedule calls for it.

At the same time, the director must be alert to the retreatant who is avoiding the election by lingering indefinitely in the consolation of the Contemplations. The goal of the Second Week is not beautiful prayer about the life of Jesus; it is a specific decision about the retreatant's own life, made in response to that prayer. The director should gently but consistently draw the retreatant toward the question that the Contemplations are illuminating.

On the Use of the Gospel Contemplation

The retreatant should be taught the Gospel Contemplation method at the beginning of the Second Week, if they have not already encountered it in their formation. The director should give explicit permission for the imaginative freedom the method requires: many Anglican retreatants, formed in a tradition that values the precise reading of texts, feel uncomfortable with the latitude Ignatius gives for the imagination to fill in the scene. The director should assure them that the imagination operating under the influence of grace is a reliable, if not infallible, medium for encountering Christ — and that what they discover in the Contemplation will need to be tested in prayer and conversation, as all spiritual experience does.

The director should also be alert to retreatants who use the imagination to escape the demands of the Contemplation rather than to enter them: retreatants who consistently place themselves as comfortable observers rather than as participants, or who reimagine the scenes in ways that avoid the poverty and humility that the Second Week is trying to form. Gently invite these retreatants to move closer, to place themselves in less comfortable positions, to ask what it would be like to be present not as a spectator but as a servant.

On the Relationship Between Contemplation and Election

The most common mistake directors make in the Second Week is treating the Contemplations and the election as two separate activities — spending the first half of the Week on Contemplation and then switching to election as though they were different *Exercises*. In Ignatius's method, the Contemplations and the election are one movement: the election is being prepared by every Contemplation, and the Contemplations are oriented toward the election from the beginning. The

director should keep this unity before the retreatant throughout: ‘As you contemplate the Nativity today, bring your question with you. Let the scene of God’s poverty speak to the choice you are holding.’

On Accompanying the Election Itself

When the retreatant indicates that an election is forming — that a sense of direction is emerging from the Contemplations — the director should shift their mode of accompaniment. The task is now less to offer material for prayer and more to help the retreatant test what is emerging: to distinguish genuine consolation from wish-fulfilment, genuine conviction from fear-driven avoidance, genuine openness to God’s will from a pseudo-openness that has already decided while maintaining the form of discernment.

The key questions the director should bring to this testing are: Does the emerging election produce the kind of peace that Ignatius associates with the second degree of humility — a peace that is deeper than comfort and different from complacency? Does the retreatant feel drawn toward the election or driven toward it? Is the election consonant with the retreatant’s deepest sense of themselves as known and loved by God? Does it take seriously the Three Degrees of Humility, or does it find a comfortable way around them?

The director should not share their own opinion about the election unless specifically asked, and even then with great caution. The election belongs to the retreatant and to God; the director is a witness, not a party. However, if the director has a clear sense that something concerning is emerging — a choice that seems to be driven by anxiety, compulsion, or an attachment that has not been adequately examined — they have an obligation to name what they are observing, gently and without judgment, and to invite the retreatant to sit with it further.



LITURGICAL INTEGRATION

The Second Week in the Anglican Office and Eucharist

The Second Week has perhaps the richest liturgical texture of all four weeks, because its subject matter — the life of Jesus Christ — is the subject matter of the Anglican liturgical year. The retreatant who is making the *Exercises* in the context of a community that observes the Daily Office and celebrates the Eucharist regularly will find the liturgical material continuously illuminating and deepening the Contemplations.

The Daily Office

The Gospel readings of the Daily Office Lectionary, which in the Anglican system read through the four Gospels in continuous course over two years, provide a natural supplement to the Ignatian Contemplations. The director may encourage the retreatant to notice the resonances between the Office reading and the Contemplation of the day, allowing the liturgical text to open dimensions of the Gospel scene that the retreatant might not have entered alone.

The canticles of the Office speak with particular directness to the Second Week. The *Benedictus* — ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people’ — is the dawn canticle of the Incarnation: the long waiting is over, the Visitor has come. The *Magnificat* is Mary’s response to the Annunciation — the perfect form of the election, the Fiat that makes the Incarnation possible. The *Nunc Dimittis* is the response of one who has received what the Second Week’s Contemplations have been offering: the vision of salvation, and the freedom that comes from having seen it.

The Eucharist

The Eucharist is the daily Contemplation of the whole life of Christ — Incarnation, ministry, death, resurrection — enacted in the sacramental actions of bread and wine. The retreatant who celebrates the Eucharist during the Second Week brings the particular Contemplation of the day into the Eucharistic mystery and receives back from it the sacramental confirmation of what the Contemplation has been showing: that the life of Jesus Christ is not merely a past history but a present gift, given in and through the physical media of the Church’s sacramental life.

The Eucharistic Prayer’s remembrance of Christ — his birth, his life and ministry among us, his suffering and death, his resurrection and ascension — is the liturgical form of the Second Week’s contemplative movement. The director may help the retreatant notice that the Eucharist is itself a form of the election: in coming to the table and receiving the Body and Blood, the retreatant is enacting the Second Week’s answer to the eternal King’s call. ‘Take, eat; this is my Body’ is the invitation that the election responds to with the whole of one’s life.



CLOSING PRAYER

For the Conclusion of the Second Week

The following prayer is composed for the Anglican Society of Jesus, to be offered by the director and retreatant together at the conclusion of the Second Week, before moving into the Third. It draws on the Collects of the Incarnation season, the language of the oblation from the Parable of the Kingdom, the BCP baptismal covenant, and the Ignatian tradition of offering oneself entirely to God in response to the vision of Christ's life.

*Lord Jesus Christ,
Word made flesh and dwelling among us:
we have walked with you through the stable and the desert,
through the synagogue of Nazareth and the hillsides of Galilee,
through the wedding feast and the mountaintop of transfigured light.*

*We have heard you call the fishermen from their nets,
the tax collectors from their booths,
the diseased from their isolation,
the poor from their despair.
And we have heard you call us — by name, in the silence,
in the middle of our ordinary lives.*

*We make our oblation, with thy favor and help:
to follow thee as thou didst go —
not in the way of power and spectacle,
but in the way of the stable and the towel and the borrowed upper room.*

*We lay before thee the election we have been given:
hold it in thy hands,
confirm what is of thee within it,
and release what is merely ours.
Make us free enough to choose thee freely,
and chosen enough to know that we have been chosen first.*

*As we go down now from the mountain,
send us into the valley carrying the light:
not as those who possess it*

*but as those who have seen it,
and cannot live as though they had not.*

*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.
Amen.*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint



SOCIETAS IESU ANGLICANA

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus

DOCUMENT V

The Third Week

The Passion, Death, and Burial of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Hebdomada Tertia

“He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.”

— Isaiah 53:3–4

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint

Anno Domini MMXXVI

PREFACE TO THE DIRECTOR

The Third Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* is unlike any other. The Foundation gave the retreatant a theology; the First Week gave them a reckoning; the Second Week gave them an encounter and an election. The Third Week gives them something that cannot be summarized in a single category: it gives them the Passion. Not the Passion as a theological doctrine to be understood, not the Passion as a penitential meditation on one's own sins and their cost, but the Passion as a present event to be present at — the suffering of the one who has just been chosen, followed, and loved through fourteen days of Contemplation.

This is Ignatius's great insight about the sequencing of the *Exercises*: the Third Week arrives after the election, not before it. The retreatant does not contemplate the Passion in order to be moved to conversion or to follow Christ. They have already been moved; they have already elected. The Third Week is not the motivating cause of the decision but its deepening confirmation: having chosen to follow, the retreatant now looks without flinching at where following leads. The cross is not a surprise at the end of the journey but the shape of the journey itself, now fully revealed.

The grace Ignatius asks the retreatant to seek throughout the Third Week is characteristically precise and demanding: grief, compassion, and confusion because the Lord goes to his suffering for our sins (*SpEx* § 193). Not grief as a performance of piety, not compassion as a pleasant emotional response to a touching story, but the specific interior breaking that comes when one is truly present to the suffering of the one one loves. The director's task is to create the conditions in which that specific grief can arise — not to manufacture it, not to explain it away, but to stay with it.

In the Anglican context, the Third Week finds its natural liturgical home in Holy Week and Good Friday. The tradition of the Three Hours' Service on Good Friday, the Solemn Collects, the Reproaches, the Veneration of the Cross, and the stark liturgy of Holy Saturday — all these are the Anglican Church's form of the Third Week's Contemplation, enacted year by year in the body of the worshipping community. The retreatant who has been formed by these liturgies comes to the Third Week already knowing the terrain, if not yet the full weight of walking through it.

Director's Note: *The Third Week typically occupies Days 25–28 of the thirty-day retreat. It is intentionally shorter than the Second Week, and Ignatius does not prescribe a fixed number of days. The director should allow it to take as long as the retreatant's interior movements require, while resisting the temptation to shorten it prematurely for the sake of schedule. Some retreatants pass through the Third Week relatively quickly; others find it the most intense and prolonged of all four weeks. Both experiences are valid, and neither should be forced to conform to the other.*



THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

The Cross, Compassion, and Solidarity in the Anglican Synthesis

The Third Week's theology is the theology of the cross, and the Anglican tradition approaches that theology with a characteristic combination of reticence and depth. Anglican theology has always been wary of systematizing the atonement — of locking the cross into a single explanatory framework that domesticates its mystery — while simultaneously insisting that the cross is the hinge of all reality, the point at which God's love for the world is most fully revealed.

The Anglican Theology of the Atonement

The Thirty-Nine Articles say remarkably little about the mechanism of the atonement, and this restraint is characteristic. Article II declares that Christ truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men. The language of sacrifice and reconciliation is there; the specific theory of how the sacrifice works is deliberately left open.

This openness has allowed the Anglican tradition to hold together several accounts of the cross's meaning that other traditions have been forced to choose between. F.D. Maurice's theology of the cross as the supreme act of solidarity — God in Christ entering the full condition of human lostness and bearing it from within — stands alongside the Anselmian satisfaction theology, the moral influence tradition of Abelard, and the *Christus Victor* account of Aulen, all of them circling the same mystery from different angles. The Third Week is not committed to any one of these accounts; it is committed to the experience of the Passion itself, from which all theological accounts are subsequent derivations.

Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology of Holy Saturday — the descent into the condition of the dead, the experience of absolute divine abandonment from within — provides the Third Week with its most searching theological depth. Balthasar argues that in the Passion, the Son takes upon himself not merely the consequences of human sin but the condition of the soul that has turned definitively away from God: the experience, from within the divine life, of what it is to be separated from God. The cry of dereliction — 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' — is not a theatrical expression of distress but a genuine theological event: the Son, in solidarity with sinful humanity, experiences within his own consciousness the God-forsakenness that sin produces.

This Balthasarian reading is deeply consonant with the Ignatian Third Week's insistence that the retreatant must be present at the Passion without resolution, without the consolation of the Resurrection yet in view. The Third Week ends not with Easter but with the burial. The director who rushes the retreatant toward resurrection theology has misread Ignatius: the Passion must be sat with in its own terms, in its own darkness, before the Fourth Week's light can have its full meaning.

The Caroline Divines and the Suffering Christ

Lancelot Andrewes's Passion sermons are among the great Anglican contributions to the theology of the Third Week. Preached at the court of King James during Lent and Holy Week, they approach the Passion with the same combination of theological precision and devotional intensity that characterizes his Christmas sermons. Andrewes has an extraordinary capacity to hold open the full weight of each moment in the Passion narrative: the sweating of blood in Gethsemane, the mockery of the soldiers, the darkness at the sixth hour, the cry of dereliction — each receives his full attention, and he refuses to explain away what he cannot fully understand.

Jeremy Taylor's *The Great Exemplar*, his life of Jesus Christ, devotes its third and longest section to the Passion, and it represents perhaps the most extensive Anglican meditation on the Third Week's material outside the *Exercises* themselves. Taylor's method is close to Ignatius's own: he moves through the Passion narrative scene by scene, dwelling on the sensory details, imagining the experience of each participant, and drawing from each scene a meditation for the reader's own interior life. The retreatant who has read Taylor before making the *Exercises* will find their imagination already richly furnished for the Third Week's Contemplations.

Compassion as Solidarity: The Society's Apostolic Dimension

The Third Week's central grace — compassion with the suffering Christ — is not merely a personal spiritual quality to be developed for its own sake. It is the formation of the apostolic heart that the Society's mission requires. The *Constitution's* apostolic preference for walking with the poor and the marginalized (Article 21) is rooted precisely in the capacity for compassion that the Third Week is designed to deepen: the willingness to be present to the suffering of another without flinching, without offering premature consolation, without resolving the suffering too quickly into a lesson or a program.

Rowan Williams, writing on the theology of the cross, argues that the Passion of Christ permanently changes the meaning of human suffering. Suffering is no longer something to be avoided, explained, or transcended as quickly as possible; it is the place where Christ has been, and therefore the place where Christ can be encountered. The retreatant who has sat with the Third Week's Contemplations carries this knowledge into their apostolic life: when they sit with the suffering of the poor, the dying, the imprisoned, the grieving, they are sitting where Christ sat. This is not a pious metaphor; it is a theological claim with direct practical consequences for the Society's ministry.

"The death of Jesus is not a problem to be solved. It is a mystery to be entered. And the entering of it is itself the life of God in us."

— Rowan Williams, *Resurrection* (adapted)



THE STRUCTURE OF THE THIRD WEEK

The Grace, the Manner, and the Rule of Life

Ignatius structures the Third Week around the Contemplation of the Passion narrative from the Last Supper to the Burial. He prescribes two Contemplations per day — considerably fewer than the Second Week — and supplements them with a specific grace to be sought, a manner of life appropriate to the Week, and an additional consideration of the properties and offices of Christ’s humanity in suffering. The structure is deliberately stripped back: the Third Week does not fill the retreatant with material but empties them of the need for it, so that the single overwhelming reality of the Passion can fill the space that has been cleared.

The Grace of the Third Week (SpEx § 193, 203)

Ignatius prescribes a single grace to be sought throughout the Third Week: grief, compassion, and confusion because the Lord goes to his suffering for our sins. He also speaks of inner suffering with Christ suffering, of being broken with Christ broken, of tears and interior pain over so great pain. These are not prescribed emotional states to be manufactured but interior dispositions to be asked for and received: the director should present them as gifts to pray for, not performances to produce.

The Anglican tradition knows this grace under different names. The penitential office speaks of ‘heartfelt contrition’; the Good Friday liturgy solicits ‘true repentance of heart’; the Passion narratives read in Holy Week are designed to produce exactly the interior breaking that Ignatius describes. The retreatant who has been formed by years of Anglican Holy Week observance already knows the shape of this grace, at least partially, and the Third Week deepens and personalizes what the liturgical formation has been doing annually.

The Manner of Life in the Third Week (SpEx § 206–209)

Ignatius modifies the manner of life for the Third Week in ways that reinforce the Week’s penitential and compassionate character. Meals should be taken with moderation, so that the body shares in something of the deprivation that the Passion meditates upon. Recreation and conversation should be curtailed. The retreatant should try to maintain throughout the day the interior disposition of sorrow that the Contemplations produce, returning to it when the ordinary demands of the day have temporarily displaced it.

In the Anglican context, these modifications find their natural form in the traditional practices of Holy Week and the Lenten fast. The BCP’s provision for fasting and abstinence on Fridays, the stripping of the altars on Maundy Thursday, the Great Silence of Holy Saturday — these are the communal Anglican forms of the Third Week’s individual manner of life. The retreatant who is observing the Third Week outside the liturgical season of Holy Week may nonetheless draw on these practices as resources for the Week’s proper disposition.

The Twelve Additional Considerations (SpEx § 195–197)

At the beginning of the Third Week, Ignatius directs the retreatant to consider twelve additional points alongside the Contemplations themselves. These are not additional meditations but lenses through which the Passion is to be seen throughout the Week: the divinity hiding itself during the Passion; the suffering of the humanity; the suffering of the Five Wounds; the dishonor endured; the grief of the disciples; the loneliness of the cross; the degree of suffering from birth to death; the comparison of this suffering with any other person's suffering; the suffering as due to my sins; the depth of grief of Our Lady; the grief of all creation; and the magnitude of the love displayed. The director should introduce these considerations to the retreatant at the beginning of the Week as a framework that enriches each Contemplation without directing its specific content.



DAY ONE

The Last Supper and Gethsemane: Love's Final Gift

Scripture: *John 13:1–17:26 (the Last Supper Discourse and High Priestly Prayer); Luke 22:39–46; Matthew 26:36–46 (Gethsemane)*

BCP Text: *Maundy Thursday liturgy: the Washing of Feet; the stripping of the altars; the Watch. The Collect for Maundy Thursday: "Almighty Father, whose dear Son, on the night before he suffered, instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood: Mercifully grant that we may receive it thankfully in remembrance of Jesus Christ our Lord."*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 190–199 — The First Contemplation: from the Supper to the Garden of Olives, including the washing of feet, the institution of the Eucharist, Judas's departure, and the agony in Gethsemane.*

The Upper Room: Love That Stoops

The Third Week begins not with violence but with tenderness — or rather, with the tenderness that will itself become the interpretive key to all that follows. John's account of the Last Supper opens with one of the most theologically loaded sentences in the New Testament: 'Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.' The Greek word translated 'to the end' is *eis telos* — it means not only 'until the last moment' but 'completely,' 'perfectly,' 'to the uttermost.' Everything that follows in the Third Week is the concrete form of this *eis telos*: the total, unreserved, self-depleting love of the God who cannot do otherwise.

The retreatant enters the upper room with the disciples. It is evening; the Passover meal is laid; the disciples are uncertain and faintly afraid, not yet understanding what is happening. Jesus rises from the table, takes a towel, and begins to wash their feet — the act of a slave, performed by the master. The Anglican Maundy Thursday liturgy restores this action to the visible life of the Church: the bishop or priest kneeling before the congregation, washing feet, enacting what the Third Week contemplates. The retreatant who has experienced this liturgy comes to the Gethsemane with a body-knowledge of what John describes.

The institution of the Eucharist follows: bread broken, wine poured, the command 'Do this in remembrance of me.' The Anglican theology of the Eucharist — as real presence, as memorial, as sacrifice, as communion — is the continuing form of this Upper Room moment. The retreatant who has celebrated the Eucharist daily through the *Exercises* has been, at every celebration, in the Upper Room. The Third Week makes explicit what was always implicit: that the Eucharist is a death-meal, given on the night of betrayal, broken in the body that will be broken tomorrow.

Gethsemane: The Agony of the Will

The movement from the Upper Room to Gethsemane is the first great transition of the Third Week: from the warm light of the meal to the cold dark of the garden, from the community of the table to the solitude of the praying soul. Three disciples are taken further than the others; they fall asleep. Jesus is left alone with what is coming.

Ignatius asks the retreatant to be present at the agony in Gethsemane with the full weight of what they have learned in the Second Week about who Jesus is. This is not an anonymous sufferer; this is the one the retreatant has been walking with for fourteen days, whose words they have heard, whose healings they have witnessed, whose poverty and humility have become, through the Three Degrees, the retreatant's own aspiration. Now this person is prostrate on the ground, sweating blood, asking whether the cup can pass.

The theological content of the agony is immense. The prayer 'Not my will but yours be done' is the Foundation's indifference enacted in the most extreme possible conditions: not as a spiritual exercise in a retreat setting but as a real and agonizing choice between the soul's natural recoil from suffering and the Father's incomprehensible will. Andrewes's Passion sermons dwell on this agony with particular care: the Son who is the divine will itself, praying to be delivered from the Father's will, is the supreme paradox of the Incarnation, and it is also the retreatant's own paradox — the place where their election meets its cost.

The disciples sleep. Three times Jesus returns from his prayer to find them unconscious. There is a loneliness here that the retreatant must feel, not explain. Andrewes speaks of the agony as the moment when the humanity of Christ confronts its own condition without divine mitigation: the shrinking of the creature's will from what the Creator's love demands is real, and it is real in God. The God who commands us to take up our cross first prostrates himself before the cross's demand and prays to be delivered from it. This is not weakness; it is the full credibility of the Incarnation.

The Arrest

Judas arrives with the guards. The betrayal is enacted with a kiss: the sign of love and intimacy becomes the sign of treachery. The retreatant who has been shaped by the First Week's meditation on disordered attachments will recognize in Judas the extreme form of the attachment that refuses to be released: he has loved Jesus, perhaps genuinely, and has turned that love into an instrument of destruction. The disciples scatter. Jesus goes alone.

The BCP's Watch on Maundy Thursday night — the vigil kept before the reserved Sacrament until midnight, in solidarity with Christ's lonely prayer in the garden — is the Anglican Church's annual form of this Contemplation. The retreatant who has kept this vigil knows in their body the quality of the garden's darkness, and can bring that knowledge to the prayer.

Evening Examen: *Where in today's contemplation did you feel yourself most present? At the table, or in the garden, or in the moment of the arrest? What did it feel like to watch the disciples sleep while Jesus prayed alone? What in your own life is being named by the agony's 'not my will but yours'?*



DAY TWO

The Trials: Abandoned Before Power

Scripture: *Mark 14:53–72; Luke 22:54–71; John 18:1–27 (before Annas and Caiaphas, Peter’s denial); Matthew 27:1–26; Luke 23:1–25 (Pilate and Herod)*

BCP Text: *Good Friday Solemn Collects: “O merciful God, who hast made all men, and hatest nothing that thou hast made, nor desiring the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live...” The Reproaches: “O my people, what have I done unto thee? And wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 291–295 — The mysteries of the Passion from the arrest to the condemnation.*

Before Annas and Caiaphas: The Trial of Truth

The religious trials of Jesus before Annas and then before the Sanhedrin convened by Caiaphas are among the most theologically dense scenes of the Passion. The high priest’s question — ‘Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ — and Jesus’s answer — ‘I am’ — is the clearest self-identification in the Synoptic Gospels, and it comes at the moment of maximum vulnerability, before the court that has already decided to kill him. The truth that the Second Week has been forming in the retreatant’s Contemplation is here declared openly by its subject, at the cost of his life.

The witnesses contradict each other; the charges are incoherent; the procedure is irregular by the standards of the Sanhedrin’s own law. The injustice is not accidental. It represents the structural resistance of institutional religion to the presence of God in forms that challenge its assumptions about how God operates. The Collect for Good Friday prays for the conversion of those who do not know Christ and for the reconciliation of those who have fallen away: the Third Week’s Contemplation of the religious trial does not produce contempt for the Jewish authorities but a deeper recognition of the universal human tendency to protect our own constructions from the reality they purport to serve.

Peter’s Denial: The Betrayal of Love

Peter’s three denials in the courtyard of the high priest’s house are among the most painful scenes in the Gospels, and Ignatius intends the retreatant to feel them as painful. Peter is not a villain; he is the disciple who swore most confidently that he would never deny his Lord, who drew his sword in the garden, who was willing to die. His denials are the failure not of a faithless man but of a faithful one under conditions he was not prepared for. The retreatant who has been through the First Week’s examination of personal sin will recognize in Peter’s denials the structure of their own most characteristic failures: not deliberate apostasy but the incremental accommodation to pressure, each small compromise making the next one easier.

Luke's version of the scene adds the detail that at the moment of the third denial, Jesus turns and looks at Peter. This look — not condemning, not despairing, simply present — is one of the great images of the *Exercises*. Andrewes meditates on it at length in his Passion sermons: the look of Christ at Peter is the look of the Crucifix that Ignatius placed at the heart of the First Week's colloquy. It is the look that the retreatant has been receiving throughout the *Exercises*: seen, known, not abandoned. Peter goes out and weeps bitterly. The retreatant is invited to weep with him, and for the same reasons.

Before Pilate and Herod: The Trial of Power

The civil trials before Pilate and Herod take the injustice of the religious trials and add to it the injustice of political expedience. Pilate knows Jesus is innocent; his wife tells him so; his own repeated declarations tell the crowd so. He hands him over anyway — not out of conviction but out of the paralysis of a man who has too much to lose by doing what he knows to be right. Herod treats Jesus as a curiosity and mocks him when he will not perform on demand.

The retreat's Contemplation of the civil trials is an education in the specific form of institutional sin: the bureaucratic accommodation of violence through procedures that maintain the appearance of justice while producing its opposite. The Society's commitment to structural advocacy and systemic change (*Constitution*, Article 21) finds its theological grounding in the Passion's exposure of structural injustice: the cross does not happen in a vacuum but at the intersection of religious, political, and social systems that collaborate, each for their own reasons, to destroy the inconvenient truth that Jesus embodies.

Barabbas is released. The crowd chooses the guilty man over the innocent one, and the logic of the choice — preferring the familiar criminal to the unsettling holy one — is a logic the retreatant recognizes from their own experience. The Third Week does not exempt the retreatant from the crowd; it places them within it.

Evening Examen: *Which moment in the trials stayed with you most? The look of Christ at Peter? The question of Pilate who knows the truth and refuses it? The choice of Barabbas over Jesus? What is the particular form of institutional or personal injustice that this day's contemplation is naming in your own life and world?*



DAY THREE

The Way of the Cross: The Road to the Skull

Scripture: *Matthew 27:27–32; Mark 15:16–22; Luke 23:26–32; John 19:16–17*

BCP Text: *The Stations of the Cross (Anglican form, as used in many parishes of the Society's tradition); Good Friday Collect: "Almighty God, we beseech thee graciously to behold this thy family, for which our Lord Jesus Christ was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the cross."*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 291–296 — The mysteries of the Via Crucis; the application of the senses to the Passion.*

The Scourging and the Mocking

Before the road to Calvary, the body that walked the roads of Galilee healing the sick is broken. Ignatius directs the retreatant to apply the five senses to the Passion — to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, to touch — not as a morbid exercise in physical suffering but as the extension of the Incarnation's logic into its furthest reach. The Word that became flesh in the stable of Bethlehem is now flesh exposed to the soldiers' instruments: the same body that touched the leper, that held the children, that broke the bread is now scarred and bleeding.

The mocking of the soldiers — the crown of thorns, the purple robe, the scepter of reed, the bowing knee — enacts the supreme inversion of the Second Week's Parable of the Kingdom. The eternal King is crowned with mockery. The one who called his followers to seek the lower place is placed in the lowest place by those who have no idea what they are doing. The retreatant who has prayed the oblation of the Parable of the Kingdom feels the full weight of this inversion: the kingdom comes in this form. There is no other form available.

Simon of Cyrene: Compelled Compassion

The Synoptic Gospels record that Simon of Cyrene was compelled to carry the cross when Jesus could no longer bear it alone. He is coming in from the country — the agricultural periphery of the city — and he is seized by the soldiers and forced into service. What he feels about this compulsion we are not told; the Gospels are silent on his interior state. Mark adds that he is the father of Alexander and Rufus, names known to the early community — suggesting that the compelled service of that morning became, for Simon and his family, a defining encounter with the one whose cross they had carried.

Simon is the image of the compassion the Third Week is forming in the retreatant: not the compassion of the willing volunteer who has planned and prepared for this, but the compassion of one who finds themselves unexpectedly present to the suffering of another and is compelled, by circumstance and by grace, to share its weight. The Society's ministry to the poor and the

marginalized is often this kind of compelled compassion: not the heroic program of the well-prepared apostle but the sudden encounter with a specific suffering face that cannot be passed by.

The Daughters of Jerusalem: Weeping for the Right Thing

On the Way of the Cross, Jesus turns to the women of Jerusalem who are weeping for him and says: ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.’ This is a startling reversal of compassion: the one who is suffering redirects the grief of those who pity him toward the structural violence that is producing his suffering and will produce more. The retreatant is gently corrected: do not weep merely for the individual victim of injustice; weep for the conditions that create victims. Do not mistake emotional sympathy for the prophetic response that the suffering of the innocent demands.

The Anglican tradition has always known this tension, and the Society’s *Constitution* addresses it directly (Article 21): the commitment to the poor is ‘not merely charitable but structural’ — the Society will advocate for systemic change and seek to embody in its own life the solidarity it preaches. The Way of the Cross is the foundation of this structural commitment: Jesus is not a random victim but the consequence of specific systems of religious and political power, and his dying names those systems for what they are.

Evening Examen: *Where were you on the Way of the Cross today? Among the soldiers, among the weeping women, as Simon compelled to carry, as a bystander who watched from the side of the road? What is the way of the cross asking of you specifically — not of all Christians in general but of you, with your particular gifts and history and vocation?*



DAY FOUR

The Crucifixion: The Completion of Love

Scripture: *Matthew 27:33–54; Mark 15:22–39; Luke 23:33–49; John 19:17–37*

BCP Text: *The Reproaches (Good Friday): “I gave you a royal scepter, and you have given me a crown of thorns.” The Three Hours’ Service and the Seven Last Words. The Veneration of the Cross: “We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you; because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 297 — The Crucifixion. Ignatius prescribes the contemplation of the whole of Calvary: the nailing, the lifting of the cross, the darkness, the words, the death. This is the central contemplation of the Third Week.*

Golgotha: The Place of the Skull

The retreatant arrives at Golgotha — the Place of the Skull — carrying whatever the previous three days of Contemplation have given them. The composition of place is minimal: a hill outside the city walls, two criminals crucified on either side, the soldiers dividing garments, the crowd mocking, a few faithful women watching from a distance, and at the center, the one who has been the subject of four weeks of prayer, nailed to wood, lifted up.

Ignatius does not ask the retreatant to explain the crucifixion. He asks them to be there. The Third Week’s method is contemplative, not analytical: the retreatant is placed in the scene and asked to remain, with the grace of grief and compassion and confusion, for as long as is needed. The Good Friday liturgy’s Three Hours’ Service, developed in the Anglican tradition from Jesuit practice in Lima, is the Church’s communal form of this remaining: three hours at the foot of the cross, watching, praying, listening to the words of the dying Christ.

The Seven Last Words

The Gospels preserve seven sayings of Jesus from the cross, and the tradition of meditating on these words — taken together from all four Gospels — represents one of the great Anglican contributions to Passion Contemplation. Each word opens a dimension of the crucifixion that the retreatant can enter through the Third Week’s method.

First Word: Father, forgive them (Luke 23:34)

The first word establishes the key in which the whole of the crucifixion is to be heard: it is a word of intercession, of the love that has not contracted even under the hammering of the nails. The retreatant who has been through the First Week’s meditation on sin and mercy hears this word with a precision that was not available before: the forgiveness being asked is for the specific sinfulness that the retreat has laid bare. It is not a general benediction but a specific absolution: Father, forgive

them — forgive the soldiers whose hands are bloody, forgive the crowd whose voices are hoarse with mockery, forgive the disciples whose feet ran, forgive me.

Second Word: Today you will be with me in Paradise (Luke 23:43)

The promise to the penitent thief is the Second Week's election offered at the last possible moment, in the most improbable conditions, to the most unlikely candidate. The thief has nothing to offer: no works, no formation, no retreat. He has only the recognition of who is dying beside him and the bare request to be remembered. The response is immediate and absolute: today. No purgatorial delay, no probationary period, no requirement that the candidacy be presented to the Vicar for Formation. Today. The grace of the Third Week's Contemplation is that the retreatant hears this promise as addressed to them also: the election is not revoked by the suffering that follows it.

Third Word: Woman, behold your son (John 19:26–27)

The gift of the beloved disciple to Mary and Mary to the beloved disciple is the last act of a dying man who has remained, even in his dying, the servant of others. Lancelot Andrewes meditates on this word with extraordinary tenderness: the Son who is simultaneously sustaining the universe is making provision for his mother's old age. The domestic and the cosmic are held together in the same moment. The retreatant is placed in the scene as the beloved disciple — receiving from the cross the gift of a mother's care, and given to her in return.

Fourth Word: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? (Matthew 27:46)

The cry of dereliction is the theological summit of the Third Week and one of the most contested texts in the entire New Testament. Ignatius does not prescribe an interpretation; he asks the retreatant to be present to it. Von Balthasar's reading — that the cry represents a genuine experience of the Son's being separated, within the divine life, from the consciousness of the Father's love, in solidarity with the God-forsakenness of sinful humanity — opens the deepest possible depth of this word. The one who is God experiences, within his own consciousness, the condition of separation from God that sin produces. The Father does not intervene. The cross holds both, somehow, together.

The Anglican tradition, shaped by the theology of the Psalter which this word quotes (Psalm 22), hears the cry of dereliction as simultaneously the uttermost darkness and the beginning of the prayer that ends in praise: the Psalm's own movement is from 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' to 'He has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one.' The director of the Third Week should resist the temptation to resolve the cry of dereliction too quickly by pointing to this ending: the retreatant must first sit with the cry itself, in all its darkness, before the movement to praise is legitimate.

Fifth Word: I am thirsty (John 19:28)

The fifth word is the most bodily: the incarnate Word, dehydrated and dying, expresses physical need in two syllables. John notes that it fulfilled the Scripture, but the theological point is carried by the simplicity of the need itself: God thirsts. The one who offered the Samaritan woman living water that would quench all thirst forever now thirsts for ordinary water and is given sour wine on a sponge. The retreatant who has been applying the senses to the Passion receives this word through the body: thirst, deprivation, the humiliation of need unsatisfied.

Sixth Word: It is finished (John 19:30)

Tetelestai — the Greek word means not merely ‘it is over’ but ‘it is completed,’ ‘it is brought to its end,’ ‘the task has been accomplished.’ This is the *eis telos* of the opening sentence fulfilled: the love that promised to love to the uttermost has arrived at the uttermost. The election the retreatant made in the Second Week — to follow Christ in poverty, humility, and the preference for the lower place — is now seen in its ultimate form. This is where following leads. It is finished: not abandoned, not defeated, but completed. The love has reached its own fullness.

Seventh Word: Father, into your hands I commend my spirit (Luke 23:46)

The final word returns the Third Week to the posture of the Foundation: the creature returning itself to the Creator, the will surrendered at the last moment as completely as at every moment before. The *Nunc Dimittis* of Compline — ‘Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit’ — is the Anglican Church’s daily form of this final commendation: the Church ends every day with the prayer of the dying Christ, placing itself in the Father’s hands as Jesus placed himself. The retreatant who has been praying Compline throughout the retreat hears these words from the cross and recognizes them as the daily words of their own prayer, now revealed in their full depth.

The Death: The Curtain Torn

Jesus dies. The Gospels mark the moment with signs: darkness over the land from noon to three, the curtain of the Temple torn from top to bottom, the centurion’s confession — ‘Truly this man was the Son of God’ — and the earth shaking. The tearing of the Temple curtain is the Third Week’s central theological symbol: the veil that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple, the barrier between the divine and the human, is torn by the dying of the one in whom the divine and the human were united. There is no more barrier. The Passion has opened the way.

The Anglican tradition marks the death of Jesus in its Good Friday liturgy with a moment of stark silence — no music, no prayer, simply the fact of the death held in the congregation’s stillness. The director of the Third Week should provide the retreatant with the equivalent silence in the Contemplation session: after the reading of the death, before any reflection, a period of unstructured silence that simply holds what has happened. This silence is itself a form of prayer, and it is the form most appropriate to the Third Week’s final movement.

“It is finished. The love has reached its own fullness. There is nothing more to give because everything has been given. And in the giving, the world has been changed at its foundations.”

— Lancelot Andrewes, Good Friday Sermon (adapted)

Evening Examen: *The seven words: which one most opened itself to you today? Where did you feel the specific grace of the Third Week — grief, compassion, confusion — most clearly? Let this specific moment of grace be the texture of Compline tonight. Pray the seventh word as your own prayer: ‘Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.’*



DAY FIVE

The Deposition, Burial, and the Silence of Holy Saturday

Scripture: *John 19:38–42; Matthew 27:57–66; Mark 15:42–47; Luke 23:50–56; 1 Peter 3:18–20; Revelation 1:17–18*

BCP Text: *The Burial of the Dead: “In the midst of life we are in death.” Holy Saturday: the Great Vigil’s opening darkness. Psalm 88: ‘darkness is my closest friend.’ The ancient liturgy of Tenebrae : candles extinguished one by one in the gathering dark.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 208–209 — The mysteries of the burial; the desolation of Our Lady on Holy Saturday; the Ignatian instruction to remain in grief through the Lord’s burial.*

The Deposition: The Body Taken Down

When the death has been confirmed — pierced by the soldier’s lance, from which blood and water flow, and theologians have found in that flow the sacramental life of the Church — Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take the body down from the cross. These are secret disciples, men of standing who had not declared themselves publicly while Jesus was alive. In the crisis of the death they emerge: Joseph asks Pilate for the body; Nicodemus brings a hundred pounds of spices. Their service to the body of the dead is the form of discipleship available when the living Christ is no longer present to be followed.

The retreatant is present at the deposition. The body that was conceived in the Contemplation of the Annunciation, born in the stable at Bethlehem, Baptist at the Jordan, transfigured on the mountain, is now wrapped in linen and carried to a garden tomb. The whole arc of the Second Week’s Contemplation is visible in this moment: from *verbum infans* to buried flesh, from the Trinity’s eternal decision to the finality of the sealed stone.

The Burial: The Sealed Stone

The burial of Jesus in the Synoptic accounts is immediate and practical: the Sabbath is approaching, there is no time for the full preparation of the body, the tomb is sealed and the women note its location so that they can return. There is no expectation of what will happen in two days; there is only the grief of loss and the ordinary human care for the dead. The retreatant who enters this scene without the Resurrection in mind — as Ignatius intends — sits with the absolute finality of the sealed stone.

The Anglican tradition of Holy Saturday is liturgically sparse for precisely this reason: it is not a day of celebration or even of active waiting. It is a day of stillness, of sitting with what has happened, of holding the absence. The ancient office of *Tenebrae* — which the Society is encouraged to observe (*Constitution*, Article 13) — ends in total darkness and silence, the lights extinguished one by one as

the Psalms of the darkness are sung. The retreatant who has observed *Tenebrae* knows the texture of Holy Saturday's silence in their body, and can bring that knowledge to the Third Week's final day.

The Theology of Holy Saturday

Von Balthasar's theology of Holy Saturday — the descent into hell, the Harrowing of Hell in the patristic tradition — is the Third Week's deepest theological claim. The ancient homily for Holy Saturday, preserved in the Eastern tradition and quoted in the Roman Office, describes Christ entering the realm of the dead and addressing Adam: 'I am your God, who for your sake became your son... I have not come to hold you in the realm of the dead any longer.' This is the Gospel reaching into the condition of absolute absence: not the place of the dead but the condition of God-forsakenness that is death's ultimate meaning.

For the retreatant of the Anglican Society of Jesus, the theology of Holy Saturday has a particular apostolic resonance. The Society's mission takes it to those who inhabit forms of the Holy Saturday condition: the bereaved, the dying, the traumatized, those who have lost their faith, those who live in the social and spiritual darkness that poverty, addiction, and marginalization create. The Third Week's Contemplation of Holy Saturday is the formation of the apostolic capacity to be present in the dark without immediately trying to light a candle — to sit with the sealed stone without demanding that it roll away on schedule.

The Desolation of Our Lady

Ignatius directs the retreatant to reflect, on Holy Saturday, on the desolation of Our Lady — the grief and incomprehension of the one who bore the Word into the world and now watches the world apparently triumph over him. Mary is the model of the soul that has given everything in response to the divine call and now sits in the silence on the far side of total loss, with no resurrection yet in view and no guarantee that one is coming. Her faith on Holy Saturday — if it holds at all — is the purest and most costly form of faith in the entire New Testament: the faith that has nothing left to hold onto except the character of the God who asked this of her.

The *Magnificat* that Mary sang at the Annunciation — the proclamation of God's reversals, the bringing down of the mighty and the lifting of the humble — has not been contradicted by Holy Saturday. It has been tested to its breaking point. The retreatant who has been singing the *Magnificat* daily at Evening Prayer throughout the retreat comes to Holy Saturday's silence and asks: can this be sung now? And the Third Week answers: not yet. Wait. The Fourth Week will come. But first, the silence.

Evening Examen: *Sit in silence for the length of one full Psalm. No prayer, no reflection, no production. Simply hold the sealed stone. Then, when the silence has done its work, pray Compline with the full weight of the Third Week's seven days behind every word.*



DAYS SIX AND SEVEN

Repetition and the Application of the Senses: Deepening the Wound

Scripture: *Psalm 22 (the Psalm of the cry of dereliction and its resolution); Isaiah 52:13–53:12 (the Fourth Servant Song); Hebrews 4:14–16 (our high priest who has suffered)*

BCP Text: *The Passion narratives read on Palm Sunday and Good Friday in the Anglican rite; the Solemn Reproaches; the Veneration of the Cross. The prayer of the Church through all the night watches.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 200–209 — Repetitions and the Application of the Senses in the Third Week. The retreatant returns to the points of greatest movement in the previous days and remains in them.*

The Purpose of Repetition in the Third Week

As in the First Week, repetition in the Third Week is not the repetition of failure but the deepening of encounter. Ignatius instructs the retreatant to return to the points of greatest consolation or desolation from the previous days — the cry of dereliction, the look of Christ at Peter, the seventh word, the sealed stone — and to remain in them, allowing the Spirit to do in the additional time what the first Contemplation began.

The Passion narrative, unlike the events of the hidden life or the public ministry, does not distribute its weight evenly. Certain moments carry a gravity out of all proportion to their narrative length: the agony of Gethsemane, the third denial, the cry of dereliction, the deposition. The retreatant returns to these moments not because they are the most spectacular but because the Spirit has indicated, through the specific experience of grief and compassion and confusion, that they are the places where the Third Week's work is happening most deeply in this particular soul.

The Application of the Senses to the Passion

Ignatius's application of the five senses to the Passion narrative is among the most demanding *Exercises* he prescribes. The retreatant is asked to see the disciples and leaders and servants; to hear the weeping, crying, and keening; to smell the smoke and the sulfur, the ointment and the vinegar; to taste the bitterness of tears and the sourness of the wine offered on the sponge; and to touch the wounds, the crown of thorns, the cold stone of the tomb.

This bodily engagement with the Passion is not theatrical. It is the Incarnation extended to its full implication: the Word became flesh, and the flesh suffered in every dimension of its fleshiness. The retreatant who applies the senses to the Passion is not indulging in spiritual masochism but honoring the full bodily reality of what happened. The Anglican tradition, shaped by its sacramental theology of matter as the vehicle of grace, is well prepared for this exercise: the same tradition that finds God in bread and wine and water finds God in the wounds.

The Passion and the Psalter

The Psalter is the Third Week's companion text throughout the days of repetition. Psalm 22, from which the cry of dereliction is taken, moves from 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' through the description of suffering to the proclamation of divine faithfulness: 'For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.' This movement — not yet available in the Third Week itself, which does not permit the resurrection's resolution — is held in reserve, like a promise not yet claimed.

Psalm 88, the darkest Psalm in the Psalter and the only one that ends without praise, is the Third Week's most authentic companion on the days of deepest desolation: 'I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death'; 'darkness is my closest friend.' The retreatant who has been through Holy Saturday's silence and returns in repetition to the material of the Week may find themselves praying Psalm 88 not as a theological exercise but as an honest description of their own interior state. This is the Third Week's deepest gift: the permission to be in the dark without demanding light, to remain in grief without demanding resolution, to hold the sealed stone without breaking it open by force.

Isaiah 53 and the Servant's Suffering

The Fourth Servant Song of Isaiah — 'He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief' — is the Old Testament's most sustained pre-figuration of the Passion, and the Christian tradition has always read it as a key to the Third Week's meaning. The retreatant who prays Isaiah 53 during the days of repetition finds their experience of the Passion doubled and deepened: the suffering they have been contemplating in the Gospels is also the suffering that the prophetic imagination foresaw and described, embedded in the structure of Israel's covenant relationship with the God who bore its pain.

The Servant's suffering in Isaiah 53 is explicitly vicarious: 'Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.' The retreatant who has spent the First Week examining their own sin and finding it met by mercy now contemplates the specific form that the bearing of that sin and sorrow takes: not an abstract divine forgiveness but a specific suffering body, carrying what we could not carry ourselves. The intercessory heart that the Society's spirituality forms is this same vicarious posture: bearing in prayer and presence what those it serves cannot bear alone.

Evening Examen: *After the days of repetition, what has the Third Week deposited in you? Not what you have understood — the Third Week is not primarily about understanding — but what you are carrying. Name it as specifically as you can: a word, an image, a wound in the Passion narrative that has become yours. Bring it to Evening Prayer and let it rest there.*



ON CONSOLATION AND DESOLATION IN THE THIRD WEEK

Spiritual Direction Through the Darkness

The Third Week presents distinctive challenges for the director's practice of spiritual accompaniment, because the normal relationship between consolation and desolation is disrupted. In the First Week, consolation was a signal of God's mercy; in the Second Week, it was the Spirit's confirmation of the Contemplations and the election. In the Third Week, the normal markers shift: the specific grace being sought is grief and compassion, which are not consolations in the ordinary sense but neither are they desolations. The director must navigate this disruption with care.

The Difference Between Grief and Desolation

Ignatius distinguishes carefully between the grief that is the Third Week's proper grace and the desolation that is the enemy's counterfeit of it. The proper grief of the Third Week is characterized by a specific quality: it is grief with Christ, oriented toward the one who suffers, and it is accompanied by an interior sense of being drawn more deeply into the mystery of the Passion rather than pushed away from it. The desolation that the enemy may introduce in the Third Week feels different: it is grief that turns in on itself, that becomes obsessive or self-referential, that leads the retreatant toward discouragement about their own spiritual state rather than toward a deeper compassion for the suffering Christ.

The director should help the retreatant make this distinction. A retreatant who is weeping in the Third Week is not necessarily in desolation; they may be receiving the Third Week's most characteristic grace. A retreatant who is dry and unmoved is not necessarily in consolation; they may have protected themselves, consciously or unconsciously, from the impact of the Passion. The director's question is not 'Are you feeling something?' but 'Where is what you are feeling taking you — toward Christ or away from him?'

The Temptation to Shorten the Third Week

The most common temptation of both retreatants and directors in the Third Week is to move toward the resurrection prematurely. The Third Week is dark, and the human desire for resolution and consolation is powerful. The retreatant may find themselves reading ahead to the Fourth Week's material, dwelling in imagination on Easter morning as a way of escaping the weight of Holy Saturday. The director who is sensitive to the retreatant's discomfort may be tempted to accelerate the movement toward resurrection in order to provide relief.

Both temptations should be resisted. Ignatius specifically prescribes that the Third Week should end with the burial, not the resurrection: the retreatant should arrive at the Fourth Week through the sealed stone, not by going around it. The capacity to remain in the dark without forcing resolution is one of the Third Week's most important apostolic formations: the director or spiritual companion who has never sat with the sealed stone without demanding that it open is not fully equipped to sit with the suffering of others.

The Grace That Hides Itself

Ignatius notes a distinctive form of consolation available in the Third Week: the grace of spiritual insensibility — the condition of the soul that is so profoundly engaged with the Passion that the ordinary consolations cease to be needed or desired. This is not the desolation of the First Week, which is experienced as painful absence; it is a kind of holy numbness, the condition of one who has been so fully entered into the grief of the Passion that personal emotional experience has temporarily ceased to be the measure of what is happening.

The director should recognize this condition and not pathologize it. Some retreatants pass through the Third Week in a state of deep interior stillness that might appear, from the outside, like desolation or spiritual flatness. In many cases it is neither: it is the specific grace of the Third Week doing its deepest work below the level of felt experience. The test is not what the retreatant feels but where they are oriented: toward Christ in his Passion, or away from him.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Accompanying the Third Week in the Anglican Context

The Director's Own Passion

The director who accompanies a retreatant through the Third Week must have their own relationship with the Passion that is alive and honest. This does not mean that the director must have completed the Third Week in the thirty-day form, though this is strongly preferred; but it does mean that the director must have sat with the Passion in their own prayer life with a seriousness and a willingness to be broken by it that makes them a credible companion in that terrain. A director who has managed the Third Week at an intellectual distance, treating it as theological material to be handled rather than as a mystery to be entered, will be unable to accompany a retreatant who is doing the deeper work.

The Good Friday liturgy is the most important annual formation for the director's own Passion spirituality. The director should observe Good Friday each year with full attention: not as a liturgical duty to be completed before Easter but as the Third Week's annual renewal in the body of the worshipping community. The Three Hours' Service, where it is available, provides three hours at the foot of the cross that is the director's own equivalent of what they are asking the retreatant to undertake.

On the Use of Silence

The Third Week requires more silence from the director than any other week. The temptation to fill the session with theological commentary or pastoral reassurance must be firmly resisted: the retreatant does not need the director's theological help during the Third Week; they need the director's presence. The director who can sit in silence with a weeping retreatant for ten minutes, simply being there without speaking, is providing what the Third Week most requires: a witness to the suffering, a Simon of Cyrene who shares the weight without taking it over.

The questions the director asks during the Third Week should be minimal and specific: What did you see? What stayed with you? Where did you feel the grace? The director's role is to help the retreatant name and hold what has happened in the Contemplation, not to interpret it, contextualize it, or resolve it. The Third Week's theology has its own weight; the director's task is to create the space in which that weight can be fully felt.

Pastoral Care and the Edges of the Third Week

The Third Week can surface unexpectedly deep material in retreatants whose personal histories include serious loss, trauma, bereavement, or experiences of abandonment. The director should be alert to the possibility that the Passion's themes — betrayal, abandonment, the cry of dereliction, the sealed stone — are resonating with specific experiences in the retreatant's life that are not fully integrated. This resonance is often a significant grace; but it requires pastoral sensitivity to

distinguish between the healthy grief of the Third Week and the reactivation of unresolved trauma that needs a different kind of accompaniment.

The director should not attempt to provide therapeutic processing of trauma within the retreat context; this is not the role of the director of the *Exercises*. However, the director should be able to hold the resonance compassionately, to distinguish between what belongs to the Third Week and what belongs to the retreatant's personal history, and to make referrals when necessary without disrupting the retreat's overall movement. The Third Week's grace can be received even alongside significant personal pain; but it requires a director who is not alarmed by the depth of what emerges.

Preparing the Transition to the Fourth Week

The Third Week ends not with a programmatic transition but with a waiting. The retreatant who has completed the Contemplation of the burial sits with the sealed stone and waits for the Fourth Week to begin — not because they have arranged for it to begin but because the same God who arranged the Passion will arrange the Resurrection in his own time and in his own way.

The director should make the transition to the Fourth Week gently, watching for the signs that the Third Week has produced its proper grace: a quality of stillness that is different from numbness, a grief that has settled into its proper place rather than overflowing its banks, and the first faint sense that something has changed in the dark without the retreatant yet knowing what. When these signs are present, the Fourth Week is ready to begin. The director should present the transition not as a relief from the Third Week but as its natural completion — the rolling of the stone that the Third Week's own Contemplation has been leading toward.



LITURGICAL INTEGRATION

The Third Week in the Anglican Liturgical Tradition

The Third Week is the week with the richest Anglican liturgical resonance: the entirety of Holy Week and Good Friday is its natural liturgical home. The director should ensure that retreatants making the *Exercises* during the Lenten season observe Holy Week's liturgies as part of the Third Week's formation, and should help retreatants making the *Exercises* at other times to draw on the memory and the texts of Holy Week as resources for the Contemplations.

Palm Sunday and the Entry into Passion

Palm Sunday's liturgy enacts in a single day the movement from the hosannas of the entry into Jerusalem to the silence of the Passion narrative read in its entirety. The dramatic reading of the Passion — with the congregation taking the role of the crowd, shouting 'Crucify him!' — is the Church's annual reminder that the Passion is not something done to Jesus by others while we watch from a safe distance; it is something we are implicated in. The retreatant who enters the Third Week through Palm Sunday's liturgy begins already knowing that they are both the Palm Sunday crowd and the Good Friday crowd, and that the distance between these two crowds is shorter than we like to think.

Maundy Thursday

The Maundy Thursday liturgy — the Washing of Feet, the institution of the Eucharist, the stripping of the altars, the Watch — is the liturgical form of Day One's Contemplation of the Last Supper and Gethsemane. The director who is accompanying retreatants through the Third Week during Holy Week should encourage them to observe the full Maundy Thursday liturgy as their Day One Contemplation, allowing the liturgical action to do the work that the structured prayer period would otherwise do. The Watch kept after the stripping of the altars is the Anglican form of Gethsemane: the hours in the garden, the sleeping disciples, the vigil of the one who watches alone.

Good Friday

Good Friday is the Third Week's central day. The Solemn Collects — praying for the whole world from the foot of the cross — are the Third Week's form of the oblation: the suffering that the retreatant has been contemplating is the suffering that redeems the world they have been called to serve, and the Solemn Collects name that world in its full breadth. The Reproaches — the ancient liturgical dialogue between the suffering Christ and his people — are the Third Week's most searching form of the first-person address: not a general meditation on sin but a direct accusation from the cross that is also, precisely, the love that cannot let go.

The Veneration of the Cross — where it is practiced in the Anglican community — is the Third Week's bodily consummation: the body approaching what the soul has been contemplating, kneeling before the wood, touching the form of the instrument that has become the instrument of salvation.

The director should encourage retreatants to participate in this act with full intention and without embarrassment.

Holy Saturday and the Easter Vigil

The Great Easter Vigil — beginning in darkness, progressing through the lighting of the Paschal fire, the readings of salvation history, the renewal of baptismal vows, and the proclamation of the Resurrection — is both the end of the Third Week and the beginning of the Fourth. The Vigil begins in exactly the condition the Third Week leaves the retreatant in: darkness, silence, the sealed stone. And it ends in the explosion of light and the proclamation that the stone has been rolled away. The director who has accompanied the retreatant through the Third Week should ensure, if possible, that they experience the Easter Vigil as the natural liturgical transition to the Fourth Week.



CLOSING PRAYER

For the Conclusion of the Third Week: The Sealed Stone

The following prayer is composed for the Anglican Society of Jesus, to be offered by the director and retreatant together at the conclusion of the Third Week, as they stand before the sealed stone and wait in the dark for what only God can provide. It draws on the language of the Good Friday liturgy, the Passion psalms, the Reproaches, and the Ignatian tradition of compassion with the suffering Christ.

*Lord Jesus Christ,
we have been where you were:
in the garden where the disciples slept,
in the courtyard where the denials were made,
on the road where the cross was carried,
at the hill where it was raised.*

*We have heard you speak from the wood:
Father, forgive.
Today, paradise.
Behold your son. Behold your mother.
My God, my God.
I thirst.
It is finished.
Into thy hands.*

*We have heard these words as our words —
words we did not know we needed until you spoke them.
We have seen the darkness at the sixth hour,
the curtain torn,
the stone sealed.*

*We do not ask that the stone be moved yet.
We ask only to remain beside it:
as Mary remained, as the beloved disciple remained,
as all who have loved you and watched the darkness fall
have remained through the long night.*

*Form in us the grief that is not despair,
the compassion that does not flinch,
the silence that is not absence.
And when the stone moves —
as it will move, because you are who you are —
let us be there to see it.*

Until then: into thy hands.

*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.
Amen.*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint



SOCIETAS IESU ANGLICANA

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus

DOCUMENT VI

The Fourth Week

Resurrection, Consolation, and the Contemplation to Attain Love

Hebdomada Quarta

“*I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die.*”

— John 11:25–26

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint

Anno Domini MMXXVI

PREFACE TO THE DIRECTOR

The Fourth Week arrives as the light arrives after the longest night: not gradually, with warning, but suddenly, without permission, and with a power that cannot be prepared for by any amount of waiting. The retreatant who has sat through the Third Week's darkness, who has remained beside the sealed stone and refused to force the stone open, now finds that the stone has been moved — not by them, not by their endurance, but by the same power that called the universe into being. The light does not reward the darkness; it simply comes.

This is the Fourth Week's first and most important theological claim: the Resurrection is entirely God's initiative, entirely God's gift. It is not earned by the quality of the Third Week's grief, not proportioned to the depth of the Passion's meditation, not conditional on the completeness of the election. It comes to the women who were faithful at the tomb and to the disciples who had locked their doors in fear with equal abundance. It comes to Peter who denied three times as much as to John who remained at the cross. The Fourth Week's consolation is not distributed according to the merit of the previous weeks; it is the character of the risen Christ pouring himself out as he has always poured himself out: unconditionally, abundantly, with a superabundance that leaves everyone better fed than they expected.

The grace Ignatius asks the retreatant to seek throughout the Fourth Week is specific and beautiful: to rejoice and be glad intensely at the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord (*SpEx* § 221). Not a modest spiritual satisfaction but intense rejoicing — the undisguised, full-bodied, theologically serious joy of one who has been through what the preceding weeks have required and has arrived at a light that is not merely the absence of darkness but a positive, creative, world-transforming glory. The director's task is to create the conditions in which this joy can be received at its full weight, without the false modesty that reduces it to a pleasant feeling or the exhaustion that settles for a vague warmth.

In the Anglican tradition, the Fourth Week inhabits the space between Easter Sunday and the Ascension — the fifty days of Eastertide in which the Resurrection is proclaimed, the appearances are contemplated, and the Church comes to understand what it has witnessed and been commissioned to do with it. The Easter Vigil's explosion of light, the *Gloria* restored to the liturgy after Lenten silence, the Alleluias returning to the Office after their long winter absence — all these are the Anglican Church's form of the Fourth Week's grace, celebrated year by year in the liturgical body. The retreatant who has been formed by these celebrations comes to the Fourth Week already knowing, in their bones, the quality of the joy they are being invited to receive.

Director's Note: *The Fourth Week typically occupies the final three to five days of the thirty-day retreat. In the Nineteenth Annotation form it extends over two to four weeks of daily prayer. The director should allow the Week to breathe: the joy of the Fourth Week is easily cramped by too much material too quickly. The Contemplation to Attain Love, which is the crown of the Exercises, deserves at least two full days of prayer. Do not rush the sending forth.*



THEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

Resurrection, Joy, and the Recovery of the World in the Anglican Synthesis

The Fourth Week's theology is the theology of the Resurrection, and the Anglican tradition approaches that theology with a characteristic combination of intellectual sobriety and doxological abandon. Anglicanism has always resisted the sentimentalization of Easter — the reduction of the Resurrection to a seasonal feeling, a welcome relief after Lent, a return to normality. The Resurrection, in Anglican theological understanding, is the most disruptive event in human history: it is the defeat of death from within death, the vindication of the cross by the power that was always at work in it, and the foundation of a new kind of human life in the world.

The Anglican Theology of the Resurrection

Michael Ramsey's *The Resurrection of Christ* is the modern Anglican classic for the Fourth Week's theological formation. Ramsey argues that the Resurrection cannot be understood as a mere resuscitation — as though Jesus had recovered from death and returned to the conditions of his previous life. The risen Christ inhabits a new mode of existence: embodied but not limited by embodiment, present to his disciples but not constrained by physical space, recognizable but not always immediately recognized. This new mode of existence is the firstfruits (1 Corinthians 15) of the new creation that the Resurrection initiates.

Ramsey's insistence that the Resurrection is a real, historical event — not a myth, not a metaphor for the disciples' subjective experience of Jesus's continuing influence, but an objective transformation of the one who died — is the theological ground on which the Fourth Week's Contemplations rest. The Gospel Contemplation method that served the Second Week so well is now applied to the Resurrection appearances: the retreatant is invited not merely to think about the Resurrection but to be present at it, to encounter the risen Christ as the disciples encountered him. And this encounter is possible, Ramsey argues, because the risen Christ is not a figure of the past but the permanently present Lord who continues to appear to those who seek him.

Rowan Williams's *Resurrection* develops this Anglican theology in a more explicitly narrational direction. For Williams, the Resurrection is primarily God's act of rehabilitation for those who failed Jesus: Peter who denied, Thomas who doubted, the disciples who fled. The risen Christ appears not to the faithful remnant who stood firm but to the broken and the frightened and the doubting. The Resurrection is thus the continuation of the mercy that the First Week meditated upon, now extended through death and into the new life on the other side: the mercy that holds does not only hold through sin but through death itself.

Joy as Theological Category

The Fourth Week's central grace is joy, and the Anglican tradition has a rich theology of joy that is surprisingly underexplored in common piety. Thomas Traherne's *Centuries of Meditation*, perhaps the most joyful spiritual text in the Anglican inheritance, is the Fourth Week's natural companion.

Traherne’s vision of the world as a treasury of delight, of the human person as the inheritor of all things, of God as the one who desires the creature’s joy more intensely than the creature itself desires it — all this is the Fourth Week’s theological home. The Foundation’s claim that the human person is created to praise, reverence, and serve God finds its completion in Traherne’s vision: praise is not duty but delight, and the soul that has been through the whole journey of the *Exercises* arrives at this delight as at its native country.

C.S. Lewis, writing from within the Anglican tradition in *Surprised by Joy*, describes joy as the specific experience of longing for a goodness that transcends every created satisfaction — and its fulfilment as the discovery that the longing was always for God, and that God has been approaching from the other side all along. This is the Fourth Week’s experiential texture: the retreatant who has been through the preceding weeks has been having their lesser goods stripped away and their longing purified, so that when joy comes in its fullness in the Fourth Week, there is nothing left to mistake it for. The joy of the Fourth Week is unmistakable because everything that was not joy has been given up in the preceding weeks.

Dorothy L. Sayers, in her theological essays, argues that joy is a necessary attribute of the Creator and therefore of all creativity that participates in the divine creativity. The Fourth Week’s joy is not merely a reward for spiritual effort; it is the condition in which apostolic creativity becomes possible. The retreatant who leaves the *Exercises* carrying the Fourth Week’s joy carries with them the energy of the Resurrection — the specific creative power that transforms not only the soul but the world the soul inhabits and serves.

The Resurrection and the Apostolic Preferences

The Society’s *Constitution*’s four apostolic preferences (Articles 21–25) are, in the light of the Fourth Week, Resurrection projects. The Resurrection does not only rescue souls from sin; it initiates the renewal of all creation that the prophets foresaw and that Paul describes in Romans 8 as the groaning of the whole creation toward its liberation. The society committed to walking with the poor is committed to a share in the resurrection’s work of reversal: the valleys exalted, the mountains brought low, the crooked made straight. The care for the Common Home that the Society’s *Constitution* requires is the ecological form of the Resurrection’s promise: not only souls but the whole created order is the object of the God who raised the dead.

“The Resurrection is not a postscript to the Gospel but its destination. Everything that came before it was moving toward this; everything after it moves from this. The stone that was rolled away was rolled away for good.”

— Michael Ramsey, *The Resurrection of Christ* (adapted)



THE STRUCTURE OF THE FOURTH WEEK

The Grace, the Manner of Life, and the Contemplatio ad Amorem

Ignatius structures the Fourth Week around two interconnected movements. The first is the series of Gospel Contemplations on the Resurrection appearances, culminating in the Great Commission. The second is the Contemplation to Attain Love — the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* — which is the crown of the entire *Exercises* and functions as the retreatant's guide for the whole of their apostolic life after the retreat ends. The Fourth Week does not conclude with a final exercise; it concludes with a posture — a way of seeing and being in the world that the *Exercises* have been forming, and that the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* names and seals.

The Grace of the Fourth Week (SpEx § 221)

Ignatius prescribes the grace with unusual warmth: to rejoice and be glad intensely at the great glory and joy of Christ our Lord. The retreatant is asked not for a moderate spiritual satisfaction but for the fully extended version of joy — the kind that makes people weep with gladness, that overturns their ordinary categories of what is possible, that sends them back into the world as changed people. The Anglican Easter liturgy, with its Alleluias and its *Gloria* and its explosion of light from the Paschal fire, is the community's shared form of this intensity: the *Exercises* simply make it personal, specific, and interior.

The Manner of Life in the Fourth Week (SpEx § 229)

Ignatius modifies the manner of life of the Fourth Week in the opposite direction from the Third Week's austerity: the retreatant should take moderate consolations where they are available — pleasant weather, music, good food shared with companions — as expressions of the joy the Week is cultivating. This is not spiritual self-indulgence; it is the recognition that the Resurrection restores the goodness of created things, and that to refuse them out of continued penitential habit would be to hold onto the Third Week's darkness beyond its proper season. The Resurrection declares that matter is good — the body that was buried has been raised — and the Fourth Week's manner of life honors that declaration.

The Anglican tradition's famous hospitality — the table as the center of community life, the feast as the form of celebration, the garden as the place of encounter with the risen Christ — makes this instruction feel natural rather than prescriptive. The Fourth Week's retreatant who shares a meal with companions, who walks in the garden, who listens to music or reads poetry with pleasure, is not being distracted from the spiritual work; they are doing it. The Resurrection consecrated these things permanently.



DAY ONE

The Empty Tomb and the Appearance to Mary Magdalene: The First Witness

Scripture: *John 20:1–18; Mark 16:1–11; Luke 24:1–12. The empty tomb, the folded grave clothes, the angels’ proclamation, and the appearance to Mary Magdalene in the garden.*

BCP Text: *The Great Easter Vigil proclamation: “Christ is risen!” The Exultet: “This is the night in which Christ, breaking the chains of death, rose triumphant from the grave.” The Easter Eucharist Collect: “Almighty God, who through thine only-begotten Son Jesus Christ hast overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 218–225 — The first contemplation of the Fourth Week: the Appearance to Our Lady. Ignatius places this appearance first, as a gift of consolation to the one whose grief was greatest. The canonical appearances follow.*

The Appearance to Our Lady: The Comfort That Comes First

Ignatius begins the Fourth Week not with one of the canonical Resurrection appearances but with an appearance that the Gospels do not record: Christ’s appearance to his mother. There is no Scripture reference because there is no Scripture text; Ignatius is working from theological imagination, rooted in his deep devotion to Mary and in the conviction that the one whose grief was deepest deserved the consolation first. This is itself a theological statement about the character of the risen Christ: his first concern, having passed through death, is for the ones who are most broken.

The director who presents this Contemplation to Anglican retreatants may need to provide some pastoral sensitivity. The Anglican tradition honors Mary deeply — the *Magnificat* is sung daily — but is not accustomed to non-canonical Marian narratives. The director should present this Contemplation as Ignatius intends it: not as a historical claim but as a contemplative invitation. What would it look like for the risen Christ to appear first to the one who had borne him, who had stood at the cross, who had remained in Holy Saturday’s silence? The retreatant is invited to be present at this reunion and to feel, through it, the quality of the risen Christ’s consolation.

The Empty Tomb: The Absence That Announces Presence

Mary Magdalene arrives at the tomb before dawn, while it is still dark, and finds the stone removed. She does not immediately understand; she runs to tell Peter and the beloved disciple that the tomb is empty. The empty tomb is not itself the Resurrection; it is the absence that points toward a presence that cannot yet be named. The retreatant who has been through the Third Week’s sealed stone comes to this empty tomb with a body-knowledge of what the absence means: the stone has been moved, and something has happened in the dark that only God could do.

Peter and the beloved disciple run to the tomb. The beloved disciple looks in but does not enter; Peter enters first. The beloved disciple, the Gospel says, ‘saw and believed’ — though even now

‘they did not yet understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead.’ This is the Fourth Week’s epistemology: the Resurrection is believed before it is understood, received before it is comprehended, encountered before it can be explained. The retreatant is not asked to understand the Resurrection theologically before they can contemplate it; they are asked to be present at it, and understanding will follow.

Mary Magdalene in the Garden: Do Not Cling

The appearance to Mary Magdalene in the garden is among the most intimate and theologically laden scenes in the entire New Testament. Mary is weeping outside the empty tomb when Jesus speaks to her, and she does not recognize him until he speaks her name: ‘Mary.’ The recognition is complete and immediate — ‘*Rabbouni!*’ and it is followed by an instruction that has puzzled commentators ever since: ‘Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father.’

The Ignatian reading of this instruction illuminates the whole of the Fourth Week. The risen Christ is not refusing Mary’s love; he is redirecting it. The form of presence she is reaching for — the physical nearness of the teacher she has followed, the restoration of what the Passion took away — is not the form of presence the Resurrection provides. The risen Christ will be present differently: not as a recoverable past but as a permanent future, not as a local companion but as the ground of all being. The retreatant who receives this instruction in Contemplation is being prepared for the end of the retreat: the risen Christ will not return to Galilee in the form of the earthly Jesus; he will come as the Spirit who fills all things, the love present in every creature.

The Anglican Easter garden — the crib-garden of the Resurrection, which many Anglican churches provide alongside the Christmas crib — is the visual form of this Contemplation. The garden of the Resurrection echoes the garden of Eden: creation restored, the exile ended, the original harmony between God and creation renewed in the body of the risen Christ. Traherne’s vision of the world as God’s garden, offered to the human person with unbounded generosity, is the Fourth Week’s contemplative context: the garden is not merely a location but a theology.

Evening Examen: *Where in today’s contemplation did the light first break through? Was it in the empty tomb, in Mary’s name spoken by the risen Christ, or in the instruction not to cling? What is the Fourth Week asking you to release — what form of the previous weeks’ experience are you tempted to cling to, rather than receiving the new form of presence the risen Christ is offering?*



DAY TWO

The Road to Emmaus and the Upper Room: Recognized in the Breaking

Scripture: *Luke 24:13–49 (the Road to Emmaus and the appearance to the disciples in Jerusalem); John 20:19–23 (the gift of peace and the Holy Spirit); Mark 16:14–18.*

BCP Text: *The peace in the Eucharistic liturgy: “The peace of the Lord be always with you.” The post-communion prayer: “Send us out in the power of your Spirit.” Evening Prayer, where the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis are sung in the light of the Resurrection.*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 226–229 — The appearance to the disciples going to Emmaus; the appearance to the apostles gathered together.*

The Road to Emmaus: Incognito Companion

Two disciples are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus on the afternoon of the first day, talking about everything that has happened: the arrest, the trials, the crucifixion, the strange reports of the empty tomb from the women. They are in the condition that the retreatant is in at the beginning of the Fourth Week: full of the Passion’s weight, uncertain how to process what they have witnessed, their hope shaken but not quite extinguished. Into this condition a stranger joins them — and asks them what they are talking about.

The retreatant who enters the Emmaus scene in Contemplation is invited to walk with the two disciples, to feel the road’s texture under their feet, to hear the conversation, to experience the strangeness of the stranger’s questions — which keep probing deeper than a stranger should be able to probe. Then the stranger opens the Scriptures, and ‘beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.’ The disciples’ hearts burn within them — they say this explicitly later: ‘Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road?’ The retreatant is asked to feel this burning: the specific inner movement of recognition that precedes full understanding.

The recognition comes at table: ‘When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.’ This is the Anglican Eucharist’s deepest theology in one sentence: Christ is present, but recognized specifically in the breaking of the bread. The retreatant who has celebrated the Eucharist throughout the *Exercises* has been having this recognition renewed at every celebration; the Emmaus scene names what has been happening. The director should invite the retreatant to bring this recognition to the Eucharist of the Fourth Week with the full weight of the whole retreat behind it.

The Upper Room: Peace and Commission

On the same evening, the risen Christ appears to the disciples gathered behind locked doors and says simply: ‘Peace be with you.’ The three-repeated peace is the risen Christ’s characteristically

abundant gift: more than once is needed, because the wound of the Passion is deep and the first offering of peace barely touches its surface. The Anglican liturgy's exchange of peace in the Eucharist — the moment when the congregation turns to one another with the peace of the risen Lord — is the weekly renewal of this Upper Room gift.

The commission that follows — 'As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you' — is the Fourth Week's apostolic turning point. The retreatant who has been through thirty days of inward movement is now turned outward: the formation has been for the mission, the mission is the reason for the formation, and the moment of sending has come. The risen Christ breathes on the disciples and says 'Receive the Holy Spirit' — the second creation, the new Adam breathing life into the new humanity, the Spirit that was poured out at the Jordan now given to the disciples for their own apostolic life.

The Society's *Constitution* articulates its apostolic mission (Articles 21–25) as the form that this commission takes in the Anglican and Ignatian synthesis: showing the way to God, walking with the poor, journeying with youth, caring for the Common Home. The retreatant who receives the Upper Room's commission in Contemplation is receiving the foundation of these apostolic preferences — not as programmatic obligations but as the natural expression of the risen life that the Fourth Week's grace has given them.

Evening Examen: *Where were you on the road to Emmaus today? Were you one of the two disciples, or the stranger? Where did your heart burn? And in the Upper Room: how did the peace arrive — gently, or with a force that was unexpected? What does the commission 'as the Father has sent me, so I am sending you' mean specifically for the life you are returning to?*



DAY THREE

Thomas and the Lakeside: Faith Through the Wounds, Love Through the Breakfast

Scripture: *John 20:24–29 (Thomas); John 21:1–19 (the lakeside appearance and the reinstatement of Peter); Matthew 28:16–20 (the Great Commission on the mountain).*

BCP Text: *The Collect for St. Thomas the Apostle: “Evermore grant us so perfectly, and without all doubt, to believe in thy Son Jesus Christ, that our faith in thy sight may never be reprov’d.” The baptismal covenant renewal at Easter: “Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord?”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 230–237 — The appearance to Thomas; the appearance at the Sea of Tiberias.*

The Appearance to Thomas: Faith That Honours Its Own Doubt

Thomas was absent from the Upper Room on Easter evening, and when he is told by the other disciples ‘We have seen the Lord’ he says: ‘Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.’ This is usually called the response of doubt, but it is more precisely the response of a person who refuses to believe on secondhand testimony what he needs to experience directly. Thomas is not faithless; he is honest about the conditions of his faith. The Church has sometimes treated Thomas’s doubt as a failure to be apologized for; Ignatius treats it as an occasion for the risen Christ’s specific mercy.

A week later, Jesus appears again, and addresses Thomas directly: ‘Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’ The risen Christ does not rebuke Thomas for his conditions; he meets them. He offers his wounds to be touched. And Thomas’s response is the New Testament’s most explicit confession of faith: ‘My Lord and my God.’

The Anglican tradition’s comfort with intellectual honesty — its long tradition of faith seeking understanding, its welcome of the doubting as participants in the life of the Church — finds its Gospel ground in the appearance to Thomas. The retreatant who has struggled with doubt during the *Exercises*, who has found the Second Week’s election difficult because faith was mixed with uncertainty, who has passed through the Third Week’s darkness without the certainty of resurrection — this retreatant finds in Thomas the risen Christ’s specific word: your doubt has not prevented you from arriving here. Bring it, and have it met.

The wounds of the risen Christ are theologically significant. The risen body bears the marks of the Passion: not as scars that will eventually heal but as permanent features of the resurrection body, as the Lamb that was slain in the book of Revelation stands permanently as having been slain. The wounds of the cross are carried into the new creation; they are not erased by the Resurrection but transformed into the marks of love’s total expenditure. The retreatant who has spent the Third Week contemplating those wounds now sees them again in the context of the Fourth Week’s light — and

understands for the first time that the wounds and the glory are not in tension but are the same thing.

The Lakeside Appearance: The Reinstatement of Peter

The appearance at the Sea of Tiberias is one of the most tender scenes in the New Testament, and one of the most important for the Society's apostolic formation. The disciples have returned to fishing — to the lives they had before the call — and are catching nothing. The risen Christ stands on the shore and calls out to them, unrecognized at first, and directs them to cast the net on the other side. The net fills with a hundred and fifty-three fish. The beloved disciple says 'It is the Lord,' and Peter — characteristically — throws himself into the water.

The scene of reconciliation that follows is the Fourth Week's pastoral climax. Jesus has prepared a charcoal fire — the same word used in John 18:18 for the fire at which Peter warmed himself while denying Jesus. The parallelism is intentional: the risen Christ has recreated the conditions of the denial in order to undo it. Three times he asks: 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Three questions against three denials. Three affirmations against three refusals. The rehabilitation is specific, public, and complete.

The retreatant who has been through the First Week's meditation on Peter's denial — and who recognized in it the structure of their own most characteristic failures — now sits with Peter by the charcoal fire and receives the same specific rehabilitation. The risen Christ does not restore Peter to the condition he was in before the denial; he restores him to a more honest version of it, one that has passed through failure and knows its own limits. 'When you were young, you dressed yourself and walked where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will dress you.' The apostolic life, fully received, leads where the Third Week has already prepared the retreatant to go.

The Great Commission: Sent to the Ends of the Earth

Matthew's Gospel concludes with the risen Christ appearing on a mountain in Galilee — where some worshipped and some doubted — and giving the Great Commission: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

The Great Commission is the Fourth Week's apostolic fulfilment of the Second Week's Parable of the Kingdom. The eternal King who called the retreatant to his service now sends them, with his own authority and his own permanent presence, into the world. The Society's motto — *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* — is the short form of this commission: everything the retreatant does in the apostolic life is done under this authority and in this presence. The 'I am with you always' is the Fourth Week's final word on the consolation of the risen Christ: not a feeling to be sustained by effort but a fact to be lived in by faith.

Evening Examen: *By the charcoal fire: how many times has the risen Christ asked you 'do you love me?' in the course of this retreat? How have you answered, and how do you answer tonight? And the Great Commission: what specific form does 'go and make disciples' take in the life you are returning to?*



DAYS FOUR AND FIVE

The Contemplatio ad Amorem: Finding God in All Things

Scripture: *Colossians 1:15–20* (‘In him all things hold together’); *John 1:1–5* (‘In him was life, and the life was the light of all’); *Acts 17:28* (‘In him we live and move and have our being’); *Romans 8:18–25* (creation’s groaning toward its liberation).

BCP Text: *The Benedicite, Omnia Opera:* “O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him for ever.” *The General Thanksgiving:* “We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life.” *The Collect for Creation Sunday:* “Almighty God, you created this amazing universe and called it very good.”

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx* § 230–237 — *The Contemplation to Attain Love.* Ignatius places this as the final and crowning exercise of the Exercises. It is not an appendix but the goal toward which the whole of the Exercises has been tending: the ability to find God in all things and to love all things in God.

The Preamble: Two Observations About Love

Before the Contemplation itself, Ignatius makes two observations about the nature of love that serve as its theological preamble. The first: love ought to manifest itself more in deeds than in words. The second: love consists in mutual communication — the lover gives and communicates to the beloved all that is theirs, sharing goods, honors, and knowledge; and the beloved gives in return to the lover. These two observations are the *Contemplatio*’s theological frame: what follows is a meditation on the specific form that God’s love takes in its communication to the creature, and on the creature’s response to that communication.

The Anglican tradition hears both observations immediately. The *via activa* that Ignatius describes — love as deed rather than word — is the theme of Jeremy Taylor’s Holy Living, of the Oxford Movement’s social engagement, of the Society’s own apostolic commitments. And the mutual communication that Ignatius describes — the lover giving all they have to the beloved, the beloved giving all they have in return — is the Anglican Eucharist’s central act: God giving the divine life in bread and wine, and the creature offering in return ‘ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice.’ The *Contemplatio ad Amorem* is the *Exercises*’ final Eucharist.

The First Point: All Gifts Come from God

Ignatius directs the retreatant to call to mind the gifts they have received: natural gifts — existence, health, beauty of body, the senses and their pleasures; supernatural gifts — faith, grace, the sacraments, the Church; particular gifts — the specific people, places, vocations, and experiences that have shaped this particular life. Having enumerated these gifts, the retreatant is asked to consider how God dwells in each one: in the elements giving them being, in the plants giving them

life, in the animals giving them sensation, in human persons giving them reason, understanding, and the divine likeness.

Traherne's Centuries are the Anglican commentary on this First Point. His meditation on the world as God's gift to the soul — 'You are as prone to love as the sun is to shine; it being the most delightful and natural employment of the soul' — enacts exactly what Ignatius prescribes: the enumeration of gifts leads to the recognition of the Giver, and the recognition of the Giver leads to the posture of the soul properly oriented to reality.

The Anglican theology of creation, articulated in the Benedicite's great liturgical catalogue — 'O ye sun and moon, O ye stars of heaven, O ye showers and dew, O ye whales and all that move in the waters' — is the communal form of this First Point. The creature that praises is the creature that has noticed it exists, that has traced its existence to the one who gives existence, and that has discovered in that tracing the specific joy of the *Contemplatio's* grace. The retreatant is invited to pray the Benedicite on the first day of the *Contemplatio* and to feel it for the first time as their own personal prayer rather than a liturgical duty.

The Second Point: God Labors in All Things

The Second Point of the *Contemplatio* is one of the most theologically audacious claims in all of Ignatius's writing: God works and labors for me in all created things on the face of the earth. Not merely that God created things and sustains them in being; but that God is actively at work in them, laboring in them, doing something in and through them that is directed toward the retreatant's life and the life of all creation. The sun shining is God laboring; the rain falling is God laboring; the bread baking and the wine fermenting are God laboring.

The theological tradition that underlies this claim is the doctrine of concurrence: God's primary causality operates through and within the secondary causality of created things rather than despite it. Every natural process, every human action, every creative work is simultaneously the action of the creature and the action of God. Hooker's account of God as the sustaining ground of all being — not the clockmaker who set the mechanism running and stepped back but the one in whom we live and move and have our being at every moment — is the Anglican philosophical ground of Ignatius's Second Point.

The Society's apostolic preferences find their deepest theological grounding in this Second Point. To walk with the poor is to walk where God is laboring. To journey with youth is to join God's labor of formation in young lives. To care for the Common Home is to participate in God's labor of sustaining creation. The retreatant who has received the Second Point of the *Contemplatio* carries into their apostolic work the specific theological conviction that the work they do is never their work alone: God is laboring there before them, alongside them, and through them.

The Third Point: God Descends into All Things

The Third Point deepens the Second: Ignatius asks the retreatant to consider how God descends and condescends to me — how the divine presence is not merely sustaining created things from above but dwelling within them, as divinity dwells in the elements, life in plants, sensation in animals, understanding in people. This is the patristic doctrine of divine immanence received in Ignatian form: the God who transcends all things is simultaneously the innermost reality of all things, more interior to each creature than the creature is to itself.

Augustine’s famous phrase — interior *intimo meo*, ‘more inward than my innermost self’ — is the Augustinian form of this Third Point, and the Anglican tradition’s debt to Augustine runs deep. The God who is closer to the retreatant than they are to themselves is also the God who is closer to the bread, to the wine, to the water, to the earth, to the suffering person in front of them than those things are to themselves. The sacramental theology of the Anglican tradition is the liturgical form of this Third Point: the insistence that grace operates through matter because God is more intimately present to matter than matter is to itself.

The retreatant who has been through the Second Week’s Contemplation of Christ’s hidden life — the thirty years of Nazareth in which the eternal Word lived as a carpenter — finds in the Third Point the cosmic form of what that hiddenness embodied. The incarnate Word who labored in a workshop for thirty years is the supreme case of the God who descends and condescends into the specific and the ordinary. Every piece of wood he shaped, every joint he fitted, every customer he dealt with — all were instances of the divine labor that the Third Point names as God’s universal mode of presence.

The Fourth Point: All Good Comes Down from Above

The Fourth Point completes the *Contemplatio* with the image of God as the sun from which all light descends, as the source from which all gifts flow — goodness, beauty, justice, piety, and every other good that appears in creation. This is the Foundation’s theology of creatures as means toward their end, now transformed by the journey of the *Exercises* into a vision of creatures as transparent to the love that creates and sustains them: not obstacles to God but windows onto God, not distractions from the divine but mediations of it.

The great Anglican mystical texts that draw on this vision — Traherne’s *Centuries*, Andrewes’s *Preces Privatae*, Julian of Norwich’s *Revelations*, which although not strictly Anglican belongs to the tradition that Anglicanism has absorbed and honored — all arrive at the same place by different roads: the soul that has been properly purified by the preceding weeks of the *Exercises* sees the world as it truly is, charged with the grandeur of God, every particular thing both itself and more than itself, both creature and sign of Creator.

The *Contemplatio*’s Fourth Point is the Foundation’s First Movement — praise, reverence, and service — arrived at through the whole journey of the *Exercises* and now seen from the other side. At the Foundation, these were prescribed as the creature’s purpose; at the *Contemplatio*, they are discovered as the creature’s joy. The retreatant does not praise and reverence and serve because they have been told to; they praise and reverence and serve because they cannot do otherwise, having seen what they have seen.

“Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To thee, O Lord, I return it. All is thine, dispose of it wholly according to thy will. Give me thy love and thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.”

— St. Ignatius Loyola, *Suscipe* — the prayer of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*



THE SUSCIPE

The Prayer of the Contemplation to Attain Love: A Theological Commentary

Ignatius places the *Suscipe* — ‘Take, Lord, and receive’ — at the conclusion of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* as the retreatant’s response to the Four Points. It is the most celebrated of all Ignatian prayers, and it is also the most demanding; it offers God everything. Not the surrender of specific sins, not the oblation of particular works, but the offering of the fundamental capacities of the person — liberty, memory, understanding, will — back to the one who gave them. This is the Foundation’s theology of the creature arrived at its completion: all that I have is gift; the appropriate response to gift is to return it; the returning is not a loss but a freedom.

Liberty

The offering of liberty is the offering of the freedom that the whole of the *Exercises* has been cultivating. The Foundation asked for indifference; the First Week received the freedom from the guilt that constrained it; the Second Week made the election in the freedom that indifference enabled; the Third Week tested that freedom through suffering; the Fourth Week receives it back as a gift — a freedom that has been through fire and come out purified rather than destroyed. To give this liberty back to God is not to give up freedom but to give up the illusion that freedom consists in self-determination, and to receive in its place the deeper freedom of the one who wants only what Love wants.

Memory

The offering of memory is the offering of one’s history. The retreatant who has been through the First Week’s examination of personal sin, the Second Week’s Contemplation of Christ’s life, and the Third Week’s sitting with the Passion carries a specific memory: the memory of this retreat, of these encounters, of this election. To offer that memory to God is to trust that God will use it — that the consolations received, the graces given, the specific moments of encounter with the risen Christ will bear fruit in ways the retreatant cannot predict or control. The Anglican tradition’s confidence in the providential use of all experience — even painful experience, even failure — grounds this offering; nothing in the retreatant’s history is wasted.

Understanding

The offering of understanding is the offering of the intellectual life. For a tradition as deeply theological as Anglicanism, this is a particularly significant moment in the *Suscipe*. The Anglican formation has produced, in the retreatant, a theologically informed understanding of the faith; the *Exercises* have added to that the experiential wisdom of the four weeks. To offer this understanding back to God is not to abandon theological rigor but to subordinate it to the love from which all true theology derives and toward which all true theology aims. The retreatant who has been shaped by Hooker’s reason, by Andrewes’s learning, by Williams’s intellectual depth, is being invited to lay all of

this at the feet of the one whose wisdom is beyond all human comprehension — and to receive it back, enlivened by that wisdom rather than replaced by it.

Entire Will

The offering of the entire will is the offering of the election: everything that the Second Week labored toward, now handed over. Not given up — the election still stands, the vocation is still real — but held in a different way. The will that made the election is now the will that offers the election back to the one who called it forth, trusting that the call and the response and the confirmation and the living-out are all held in a love that does not fail. The *Suscipe* is the Foundation's indifference in its final, full form: not the freedom of one who has not yet chosen but the freedom of one who has chosen everything and held it lightly, because the Giver is greater than the gift.

The Final Request: Love and Grace

Having offered everything, Ignatius asks for only two things: thy love and thy grace, for this is sufficient for me. This sufficiency is the Fourth Week's deepest claim. The retreatant who has given up everything — liberty, memory, understanding, will — finds that the love and grace they are given in return is everything they need. Not everything they might want in the natural order; not everything the world counts as success or comfort or security; but everything the person of God's love needs in order to live the life they have been formed for and sent to live.

The Anglican tradition's great collect, which has accompanied the retreatant throughout the *Exercises* — 'Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee' — finds its completion in the *Suscipe's* final line. To perfectly love thee: this is the love that has been sought from the Collect for Purity of the First Week's threshold to the *Suscipe's* final offering. Give me thy love and thy grace. This is sufficient.



DAY FIVE: ASCENSION AND THE PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT

Sent Into the World: The Ascension and the Coming of the Paraclete

Scripture: *Luke 24:44–53; Acts 1:1–11 (the Ascension); John 14:15–17, 25–27; 16:5–15 (the promise of the Paraclete); Acts 2:1–12 (Pentecost).*

BCP Text: *The Ascension Collect: “Grant, we beseech thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe thy only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with him continually dwell.” The Collect for Whitsunday: “God, who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit.”*

Ignatian Reference: *SpEx § 226, 312 — The Ascension and the commission to the disciples, who are left with the promise of the Spirit as the form of the risen Christ’s continuing presence.*

The Ascension: The Necessary Departure

The Ascension is the moment the Fourth Week has been preparing: the transition from the mode of presence the disciples have known — the risen Christ appearing and disappearing, breaking bread and breathing peace — to the permanent mode of presence that will characterize the life of the Church. ‘It is to your advantage that I go away,’ Jesus says in John’s Gospel, ‘for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.’ The departure is not abandonment; it is the condition for a new and deeper form of presence.

The Anglican tradition observes the Ascension as a principal feast, and with good reason: the Ascension completes the Incarnation’s logic. The Word who became flesh does not discard the flesh at the end; the humanity that was assumed at the Nativity is carried permanently into the life of the Trinity. The risen, ascended Christ is permanently human, permanently embodied, permanently carrying the marks of the Passion in the Father’s presence. This is the ground of all Christian hope: the human condition is permanently present in God, and what happens to the human condition is not a matter of indifference to the divine life.

For the retreatant who is preparing to leave the retreat, the Ascension has a specific personal resonance. The particular form of Christ’s presence that the retreat has provided — the daily prayer periods, the director’s accompaniment, the liturgical community of the retreat house, the deep interior attentiveness that extended retreat makes possible — will end. The retreat ends; the ordinary life resumes; the risen Christ withdraws the specific form of presence the retreat provided. This is not abandonment; it is the Ascension’s logic: the departure of one form of presence is the condition for the arrival of another. The Spirit who will accompany the retreatant back into the world is more reliably and permanently present than the consolations of the retreat could be.

The Promise of the Paraclete: The Spirit’s Apostolic Character

John's Gospel's Farewell Discourse — the long conversation of the Last Supper that provides the Second Week's theological depth — contains Jesus's most extended teaching on the Holy Spirit. The Paraclete, the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth — this Spirit will teach the disciples all things and remind them of all Jesus has said. The Spirit will convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment. The Spirit will guide the disciples into all the truth. And the Spirit will take what belongs to Jesus and declare it to the disciples.

For the retreatant who has been through the whole arc of the *Exercises*, this teaching on the Spirit is the interpretation of their own experience. The interior movements of consolation and desolation that the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits have helped them navigate are the work of the same Spirit who is being promised in the Farewell Discourse. The election that was made in the Second Week was made under this Spirit's guidance. The compassion that was formed in the Third Week, the joy that is being received in the Fourth Week — all these are the Spirit's gifts, given in anticipation of the Pentecost that is now approaching.

Pentecost: The Mission Begins

The Acts account of Pentecost — the rushing wind, the tongues of fire, the speaking in many languages — is the Fourth Week's final Contemplation, and it is deliberately overwhelming. The disciples who have been waiting in the upper room are suddenly filled with a power they have been promised but could not have prepared for, and they pour out into the streets of Jerusalem speaking the Gospel in every language. The barriers of Babel are reversed; the fragments of a divided humanity begin, in the Pentecost event, to be gathered into the unity that is the Spirit's work.

The Society's second motto — *Ut Omnes Unum Sint*, 'that they all may be one' — finds its pneumatological ground in Pentecost. The unity the Society seeks in its ecumenical commitments, in its collaboration with the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus, in its ministry of reconciliation within the Anglican Communion — all this is the Spirit's work, begun at Pentecost and continuing in every apostolic community that takes up the mission of the risen Christ. The retreatant who leaves the *Exercises* carrying the Fourth Week's joy leaves as a Pentecost person: sent, filled, commissioned to be part of the Spirit's gathering of all things into the love of God.



DISCERNMENT IN THE FOURTH WEEK

Consolation Without Cause and the Testing of Joy

The Fourth Week presents a distinctive challenge for the discernment of spirits: the challenge of receiving consolation well. The preceding weeks have trained the retreatant to be alert to the movements of the Spirit in the midst of difficulty; the Fourth Week requires the spiritual discipline of allowing joy without grasping it, receiving consolation without clinging to it, being glad intensely without making the gladness itself an object of attachment.

The Possibility of False Consolation in the Fourth Week

Ignatius's Second Set of Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (given in the Second Week) warned of the possibility of consolation that begins well but leads to disorder. In the Fourth Week, this warning takes a specific form: the danger of what might be called spiritual inflation — the condition of the retreatant who has received the Fourth Week's grace of intense joy and mistakes it for permanent arrival, for the completion of the spiritual journey, for a condition of spiritual superiority that sets them above the ordinary demands of apostolic life.

Ignatius's response to this danger is characteristically concrete. In the Second Set of Rules, he notes that after a period of intense consolation, the soul experiences an 'afterglow' — a period of warmth that is the natural consequence of the consolation but is not itself the consolation. This afterglow can be mistaken for continued divine consolation; the director's task is to help the retreatant distinguish between the two, and to help them understand that the ordinary life they are returning to after the retreat will be lived primarily in the afterglow rather than in the intensity of the consolation itself. This is not a diminishment; it is the normal condition of the apostolic person.

Consolation Without Preceding Cause

Ignatius notes in the Second Set that only God can give consolation without a preceding cause — a pure infusion of grace that does not arise from any thought, image, or circumstance. This is the highest form of the Fourth Week's grace: the moment when joy arrives not because the Contemplation has been particularly vivid or the liturgy particularly beautiful, but simply because God is God and God's love overflows. The retreatant should be taught to recognize this form of consolation, to hold it with profound gratitude, and to neither explain it away nor build their entire spiritual life around it.

The Anglican tradition recognizes this form of consolation in its theology of prevenient grace: the grace that goes before the human response, that arrives before the prayer that calls for it, that is present before the condition that might seem to warrant it. The baptismal theology of the BCP, which speaks of the grace given before the child can respond or even understand, is the sacramental form of this consolation without cause: God's love precedes and exceeds every condition we might place on its reception.

Finding God in Ordinary Life: The Test of the Fourth Week

The ultimate test of the Fourth Week's grace is not what the retreatant experiences during the retreat but what they carry back into the ordinary life they return to. Ignatius's *Contemplatio ad Amorem* was designed as a permanent orientation — a way of seeing and being that, once received, transforms the whole of ordinary life into a form of prayer. The retreatant who has received the *Contemplatio* carries into their daily work, their relationships, their apostolic service, and their own suffering the specific perception that God is laboring in all things, descending into all things, offering all good through all things.

This is what Ignatius means by the phrase that is most associated with his spirituality: finding God in all things. It is not a maxim to be repeated but a practice to be developed — the daily exercise of the *Contemplatio*'s four points, applied to the specific conditions of the ordinary life. The retreatant who practices this finds that the Examen — the daily review of the day's movements of consolation and desolation that is prescribed in the Society's Rule of Life (*Constitution*, Article 12) — becomes the natural form of the *Contemplatio*'s practice: each evening, reviewing the day for the places where God was laboring, where the gifts descended, where the love was at work in the specific textures of this specific day.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Accompanying the Fourth Week and the Sending Forth

The Director's Own Joy

The director who accompanies the Fourth Week must themselves be a person of resurrection joy — not cheerfulness, not optimism, but the specific joy that comes from having been through the Passion and found it met by the Resurrection. The retreatant in the Fourth Week is exquisitely sensitive to the quality of the director's own interior life: a director who has not received the Fourth Week's grace in their own experience cannot create the conditions for the retreatant to receive it. The annual retreat that the Society's *Constitution* requires of its members (Article 12) is, among other things, the director's annual renewal of the Fourth Week's grace — the returning to the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* and the *Suscipe* as the foundation and orientation of their apostolic life.

The Art of the Sending Forth

The transition from the retreat to the ordinary life is one of the most delicate moments in the director's art. The retreatant who has been through thirty days of intensive interior work is in a condition of unusual openness and sensitivity; they carry the grace of the Fourth Week in a form that is genuinely fragile, that can be damaged by the wrong kind of re-entry into the demands of ordinary life. The director should attend carefully to the transition: not by extending the retreat indefinitely, but by providing the retreatant with specific resources — the daily Examen, the practice of the *Contemplatio*, the ongoing relationship with a spiritual director, the community of the Society — that will help them translate the retreat's grace into the ordinary life.

The final session with the retreatant should include: a review of the election that was made, confirming its substance and identifying the concrete next steps; a presentation of the daily Examen as the primary practice for sustaining the Fourth Week's orientation in ordinary life; an identification of the specific form of apostolic service that the election points toward; and the scheduling of ongoing spiritual direction for at least the first year after the retreat. The retreatant should not leave the *Exercises* without these specific resources in hand.

On the Long-Term Fruit of the Exercises

Ignatius understood the full *Spiritual Exercises* as a once-in-a-lifetime formation, not an annual resource. The thirty-day retreat is not designed to be repeated every year; it is designed to shape a life. The annual retreat prescribed by the Society's Rule of Life (*Constitution*, Article 12) is not a repetition of the full *Exercises* but a renewal of their fruit — a return to specific mysteries or specific graces, a deepening of the election, a refreshment of the *Contemplatio's* orientation. The director who knows the retreatant well can help them identify, in each subsequent year's retreat, which of the *Exercises'* four weeks is most calling for attention.

The Nineteenth Annotation — the form of the *Exercises* given in everyday life over several months — provides a more accessible regular renewal for members of the Society who cannot take extended time away. When constituted by the General Congregation, the Vicar for Spiritual Direction (*Constitution*, Article 17) bears responsibility for ensuring that all members have access to this ongoing formation, and that the quality of the *Exercises* in their adapted forms is maintained with fidelity to the Ignatian method.

Gratitude as the Orientation of Apostolic Life

The *Contemplatio ad Amorem* ends with the *Suscipe*, but the *Suscipe* ends with ‘thy love and thy grace is sufficient for me.’ This sufficiency is the apostolic life’s fundamental orientation: the person sent into the world carries not a competence but a gratitude, not a program but a Presence, not a self-made identity but a received one. The director’s final word to the retreatant should be a word of gratitude: for the gifts given in the retreat, for the grace of the *Exercises* themselves, for the God who met them in the Foundation and in the First Week’s mercy and in the Second Week’s election and in the Third Week’s darkness and in the Fourth Week’s light. All of it has been gift. All of it has been sufficient. Go now and give it away.



LITURGICAL INTEGRATION

The Fourth Week in the Anglican Liturgical Tradition

The Fourth Week is liturgically the richest of all four weeks, because the Anglican Eastertide provides a fifty-day celebration of exactly the grace the Fourth Week is cultivating. The retreatant who makes the *Exercises* during the Easter season has the incomparable gift of the Church's communal joy as the context for their own; and the retreatant who makes the *Exercises* at other times of the year has the resources of the Eastertide liturgy — its texts, its music, its imagery — to draw on as background material for the Contemplations.

The Easter Vigil and Day One

The Great Easter Vigil — if the retreatant has observed the full Holy Week and Holy Saturday liturgy — is the perfect transition from the Third Week to the Fourth. The Vigil begins in darkness (the Third Week's sealed stone), moves through the lighting of the Paschal fire and the singing of the Exultet (the Fourth Week's light breaking), traverses the salvation history of the Old Testament readings (the *Exercises*' four weeks in miniature), and culminates in the Baptismal renewal and the Eucharist of the Resurrection. The director should ensure, where possible, that the retreatant experiences the Easter Vigil as the liturgical form of the Fourth Week's beginning.

The Daily Office in Eastertide

The restoration of the Alleluia to the Daily Office at Easter — absent through Lent, returning with sudden abundance at the Vigil — is the Anglican Office's most dramatic musical expression of the Fourth Week's grace. The retreatant who sings the Office through the Fourth Week hears the Alleluias as their own: the word that the tradition has reserved for the experience that cannot be contained in ordinary speech, the word that says only 'Praise God' because there is nothing more specific that can adequately be said.

The Eastertide canticles — the *Pascha Nostrum* ('Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us') as the invitatory at Morning Prayer; the *Te Deum* with its full range of adoration — provide the Fourth Week's daily liturgical frame. The Benedicite, commended for the *Contemplatio*'s First Point, is ideally used during the retreat as the canticle for Morning Prayer throughout the Fourth Week: its catalogue of creation's praise becomes the daily form of the retreatant's own contemplative practice.

The Eucharist as Emmaus

Every Eucharist during the Fourth Week is an Emmaus: the risen Christ present but not always immediately recognized, made known in the breaking of the bread. The director should invite the retreatant to bring the Fourth Week's specific Contemplations to each Eucharist — to hear the words of institution as the Emmaus stranger's familiar action, to receive the Body and Blood as the Lakeside breakfast prepared by the risen Christ, to say the post-communion prayer of self-offering

as their own *Suscipe*: ‘Here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice.’

The Peace at the Eucharist has a particular resonance during the Fourth Week: it is the Upper Room’s gift, renewed at every celebration, extended now not only to the disciples behind locked doors but to the whole community of the Church and through them to the world. The retreatant who extends the peace with full intention during the Fourth Week is practicing the apostolic sending that the Great Commission describes: ‘As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.’ Each exchange of peace is a small commission and a small sending.



CLOSING PRAYER

The Suscipe of the Anglican Society of Jesus: For the Conclusion of the Exercises

The following prayer is composed for the Anglican Society of Jesus, to be offered by the director and retreatant together at the conclusion of the Fourth Week and the *Spiritual Exercises* as a whole. It gathers the whole arc of the *Exercises* into a single act of offering: the Foundation's creature returning its gifts; the First Week's sinner receiving mercy; the Second Week's beloved disciple offering the election; the Third Week's witness to the Passion surrendering the darkness; the Fourth Week's resurrection person carrying the light into the world. It concludes with the *Suscipe* of St. Ignatius, received into the cadences of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

O Lord and God of all things,
who made us for thyself and set us in the midst of thy gifts:
we have sat with thee through the darkness
and found thee there.

We have walked with thy Son through the fields of Galilee,
heard him in the synagogue and on the mountain,
watched him break the bread and wash the feet,
and followed him to the garden and the hill.

We have stood beside the sealed stone
and found it open.
We have heard our name spoken in the garden,
eaten breakfast on the shore,
received the peace we did not deserve
and the commission we could not have imagined.

Now, in the fullness of this grace,
we make the offering of the Exercises:

Take, Lord, and receive
all our liberty — the freedom we have been given back, purified;
all our memory — these thirty days and all the days before them;
all our understanding — the theology we have learned and the theology we have lived;
our entire will — the election we have made, the vocation we have heard, the life we have consented to.

All is thine.
Thou hast given all to us.

*To thee, O Lord, we return it.
Dispose of it wholly according to thy will.*

*Give us thy love and thy grace.
This is sufficient for us.*

*Send us now:
to show the way to God,
to walk with the poor and the forgotten,
to journey with the young,
to care for the world thou hast made and dost love.*

*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.
Ut Omnes Unum Sint.
Amen.*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint



SOCIETAS IESU ANGLICANA

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus

DOCUMENT VII

Conclusion

Contemplata aliis tradere — Giving to Others What We Have Contemplated

Conclusio et Missio

“The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.”

— Romans 5:5

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

— Matthew 28:19–20

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint

Anno Domini MMXXVI

PROEM

On the Nature of This Conclusion

A conclusion to the *Spiritual Exercises* is, in one sense, a contradiction in terms. The *Exercises* are designed not to conclude but to open — to crack the retreatant's life open toward God and send them back into the world with a capacity for encounter that will never close again. Ignatius himself did not provide a formal conclusion to the *Exercises*; he ended with the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* and trusted that the retreatant who had received that Contemplation had received everything they needed to begin. The conclusion was the beginning of the apostolic life, not a period placed at the end of a text.

And yet a document series of this kind requires something that gathers, names, and releases. The retreatant who has passed through the seven documents of the *Spiritual Exercises* of the Anglican Society of Jesus has traversed considerable theological and spiritual terrain. They have met Ignatius and Thomas Cranmer in the same room, sat with the Caroline Divines and the Oxford Movement, heard Lancelot Andrewes preach on the Incarnation and Jeremy Taylor on *Holy Dying*, found the Foundation in the General Thanksgiving and the election in the Baptismal Covenant. Something has been made in that traversal, and this conclusion exists to name it.

This final document serves three purposes. First, it offers a retrospective theology — a reading of the whole arc of the *Exercises* in the specific key of the Anglican Ignatian synthesis that this Society embodies, identifying what has been accomplished and why it matters for the Church and the world. Second, it provides a practical guide for the ongoing life of prayer and apostolic service that the *Exercises* have prepared: the Daily Examen, the Rule of Life, the continuing practice of spiritual direction, and the specific forms of mission the Society undertakes. Third, it offers a doxology — a sustained act of praise that is itself the *Exercises'* final exercise, the practicing of what has been learned in the form of prayer.

It is written in the spirit of the Ignatian motto that the Dominican tradition brought to fruition and that Aquinas himself embodied: *contemplata aliis tradere* — to give to others what one has contemplated. This is the Conclusion's fundamental movement: from the interior life of the *Exercises* back into the exterior life of the world, carrying what has been received and offering it in service.



PART ONE: A RETROSPECTIVE THEOLOGY

What the Exercises Have Done and Why It Matters

The *Spiritual Exercises* of the Anglican Society of Jesus are not merely an adaptation of Ignatius Loyola's sixteenth-century text for a different ecclesial context. They are a theological claim: that the Ignatian and Anglican traditions are not merely compatible but mutually illuminating, and that their synthesis produces something that neither tradition produces alone. This claim deserves examination at the end of the series, now that the retreatant has the experiential evidence to test it.

What Ignatius Gives Anglicanism

The Anglican tradition, at its most characteristic, is a tradition of formation through liturgy and communal prayer. The Daily Office shapes the Anglican soul through repetition, through the Psalter's full emotional range, through the annual cycle of the liturgical year that moves the worshipper through the mysteries of Christ's life year by year. This formation is real and deep; it is also, at its characteristic weakness, formal rather than personal, communal rather than interior, shaped by the Common Prayer rather than by the individual encounter. Anglicanism can produce extraordinarily formed liturgical persons who have never had a direct, personalized encounter with the living Christ.

What Ignatius gives Anglicanism is precisely this direct, personal, interior dimension. The Gospel Contemplation that takes the retreatant into the Nativity scene or the Upper Room or the Garden of Gethsemane is not a replacement for the liturgical formation but its intensification and personalization: the words the retreatant has been saying for years in the Office suddenly become their own words, addressed to the specific person they have been encountering in the specific scenes of the *Exercises*. The election that the Second Week requires is a decision that no liturgy can make for the worshipper; it requires the interior freedom and the direct address that the *Exercises* cultivate. The compassion of the Third Week is more than the aesthetic response to a moving liturgy; it is the formation of the apostolic heart through direct encounter with the suffering Christ.

More specifically, Ignatius gives Anglicanism three things that the tradition tends to undervalue. First, an account of the will: Ignatius is extraordinarily interested in the will, in its formation and purification and ordering, in the way that disordered attachment subverts the best intentions, and in the specific practice of indifference that frees the will for genuine choice. Anglican spirituality, shaped by its sacramental and liturgical formation, tends to emphasize the transformation of consciousness over the formation of the will; Ignatius corrects this emphasis without displacing it. Second, Ignatius gives Anglicanism an urgent apostolic orientation: the *Exercises* are not an end in themselves but the preparation for action, for the specific form of service that the election has identified. Anglican retreats, at their weakest, can become elegant forms of spiritual aestheticism; the *Exercises* will not permit this. Third, Ignatius gives Anglicanism the gift of discernment as a discipline: the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits are a rigorous, practical, psychologically sophisticated tool that Anglican spirituality has not always developed with comparable precision.

What Anglicanism Gives Ignatian Spirituality

The gifts flow equally in the other direction. Ignatian spirituality, received in its Roman Catholic form, carries the marks of its Counter-Reformation origin: a tendency toward systematic completeness, a confidence about the mechanism of grace that can shade into rigidity, and an ecclesiology centered on hierarchical obedience that can undervalue the conciliar and dialogical wisdom that the Anglican tradition has cultivated. The Anglican Ignatian synthesis corrects these tendencies without abandoning the Ignatian method.

First, Anglicanism gives Ignatian spirituality the gift of the *via media* — the theological instinct to hold tensions in creative relationship rather than resolving them prematurely. The Anglican willingness to live with theological provisionality, to say ‘in things doubtful, liberty,’ is itself a spiritual discipline consonant with Ignatian indifference: neither the Roman tendency to over-define nor the Protestant tendency to over-simplify, but the patient inhabiting of the tension. Applied to the *Exercises*, this means that the Anglican director can accompany a retreatant through the ambiguities of the election without forcing premature closure; the Anglican *Exercises* can name the mystery of the discernment of spirits without claiming to have solved it.

Second, Anglicanism gives Ignatian spirituality the immense resource of the Daily Office. The Jesuit tradition has not historically been an Office tradition — the original Society of Jesus was dispensed from the choral Office in order to be free for apostolic mobility. The Anglican Society of Jesus, grounded in the Daily Office as the primary form of its communal prayer (*Constitution*, Article 13), brings this liturgical inheritance into the Ignatian charism. The result is a form of contemplative-in-action life that is more deeply rooted in the rhythm of communal prayer than Jesuit life has characteristically been: the *Exercises* are given and received within a liturgical frame that sustains them, contextualizes them, and prevents them from becoming a purely private spiritual transaction.

Third, Anglicanism gives Ignatian spirituality the gift of its sacramental cosmology — its theology of the world as charged with divine presence, of matter as the vehicle of grace, of the ordinary as the locus of encounter with the holy. This is the theological ground of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*’s claim that God labors in all things and descends into all things: a claim that the Anglican tradition, schooled by Traherne and Herbert and the Oxford Movement’s recovery of sacramental theology, is uniquely equipped to inhabit. The Ignatian principle of finding God in all things is not merely a pious aspiration but a rigorous theological claim about the structure of reality, and the Anglican sacramental tradition provides its fullest theological development.

Fourth, Anglicanism gives the *Exercises* an ecumenical horizon that their original context could not have imagined. The Anglican Society of Jesus exists within a Communion that has always understood itself as a bridge church — between Catholic and Reformed, between East and West, between the ancient and the modern. The *Exercises* received in this ecumenical context become not a tool of one tradition but a gift to the whole Church, capable of being received by retreatants from many Christian backgrounds and offered back to the whole Body of Christ. This is the meaning of the Society’s second motto — *Ut Omnes Unum Sint* — in its specifically Ignatian dimension: the *Exercises* serve the unity of the Church precisely because they go deeper than the divisions that separate its traditions.

“The synthesis of Ignatian and Anglican spirituality is not a compromise between two traditions but a discovery of what each tradition was always reaching toward and could not fully grasp alone.”

— Pedro de Ribadeneira, S.J., on the universality of the Ignatian charism (adapted for the Anglican context)

What the Exercises Have Formed

The retreatant who has completed the seven documents of the *Spiritual Exercises* of the Anglican Society of Jesus has been formed in specific ways that can be named. They have received the Foundation's account of the creature's nature and end, and have experienced the Foundation's indifference not as an abstract principle but as a lived interior movement. They have passed through the First Week's honest reckoning with sin and found it met by mercy, receiving in the sacrament of reconciliation the absolution that the Week's meditation prepared them to receive at full weight. They have spent fourteen days in the Second Week's company of Jesus — in the stable and the desert, at the lakeside and on the mountain, in the company of the poor and the marginalized whom he served — and have made in that company the election that the *Exercises* exist to enable. They have sat through the Third Week's darkness beside the sealed stone and found that the love which was displayed on the cross did not require their permission to be present in the dark. And they have received the Fourth Week's joy — not as a reward for endurance but as the gratuitous, unconditional gift of the God who is always already giving everything.

These are not merely experiences that will fade with the warmth of the retreat. They are formations — shapings of the soul's fundamental orientation toward God, toward itself, toward the world it inhabits and serves. The Foundation's indifference, if it has been received, will manifest as a growing freedom from the compulsive attachments that previously shaped the retreatant's choices. The First Week's mercy, if it has been received, will manifest as a compassion for others that recognizes in their disorder the same disorder that was met by mercy in themselves. The Second Week's election, if it has been received, will manifest as a clarity of vocation that gives direction and purpose to the apostolic life. The Third Week's solidarity with the suffering Christ, if it has been received, will manifest as the capacity to sit with the suffering of others without flinching, without resolving, without offering false consolation. And the Fourth Week's joy, if it has been received, will manifest as the foundational orientation of gratitude from which all the apostolic life flows.



PART TWO: THE ONGOING LIFE OF PRAYER

Sustaining the Exercises' Formation in the Apostolic Life

The *Exercises* are a once-in-a-lifetime formation, but the life they form is a daily one. The retreatant who leaves the thirty-day retreat or completes the Nineteenth Annotation carries within them the capacity for a kind of prayer and a kind of living that the ordinary Christian life does not automatically sustain. The practices described in this section are the means by which the *Exercises'* formation is translated into the ordinary daily life of the apostolic person — and by which the Society's Rule of Life (*Constitution*, Article 12) is given its fullest interior meaning.

The Daily Examen: Finding God in the Specific Day

Of all the practices the *Exercises* have introduced, the Daily Examen is the one most directly continuous with the ordinary life that follows the retreat. Ignatius valued the Examen so highly that he prescribed it even for members of the Society who might for some reason be unable to celebrate the Eucharist or pray the Office: if nothing else, keep the Examen. It is the minimum of Ignatian prayer, and it is, properly understood, a maximum: a daily form of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*, applied to the specific texture of the specific day.

The Examen has five movements, and the Anglican retreatant will recognize in them the structure of Evening Prayer enriched by the *Exercises'* specific training. The first movement is gratitude: to look back over the day and notice the gifts — not the dramatic consolations but the ordinary ones, the warmth of a particular conversation, the beauty of the light at a particular hour, the unexpected ease with which a difficulty was resolved. This is the *Contemplatio's* First Point compressed into a daily practice: all gifts come from God, and the Examen is the daily naming of the day's particular gifts.

The second movement is petition: to ask for the light to see the day clearly, to notice what the Spirit has been doing in it and where the Spirit was resisted. This is the Collect for Purity transposed into the Examen's key: 'to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid.' The third movement is review: to move through the day hour by hour, noticing the movements of consolation and desolation, the moments of generous response and the moments of contracted self-protection, the places where the day's specific vocation was lived and the places where it was evaded. The fourth movement is contrition: to bring before God the moments of failure without self-laceration, acknowledging them honestly and receiving the mercy that the First Week established as the constant of God's response. The fifth movement is renewal: to look toward the following day and ask, in the spirit of the election, what the next day's specific form of the apostolic life will be.

The Anglican Evening Prayer provides the liturgical frame for the Examen in the corporate life of the Society: the Office's review of the day through the Psalms, its canticles of gratitude and memory, its final commendation into the Father's hands, all mirror the Examen's movements. The member of the Society who prays Evening Prayer with full attention is, if they have been formed by the *Exercises*, also praying the Examen within the communal prayer's structure.

***Lectio divina*: The Scriptures as Living Voice**

The second primary practice of the ongoing Ignatian Anglican life is *lectio divina* — the slow, prayerful reading of Scripture that is itself a form of the Second Week’s Gospel Contemplation extended into the ordinary life. The practice is ancient — it belongs to the Benedictine tradition as surely as to the Ignatian — and the Anglican Daily Office is its primary vehicle: the daily readings from the Old and New Testaments, read not as texts to be analyzed but as the living word of the living God addressed to the specific person on this specific day.

The Anglican tradition’s great Collect for the Second Sunday of Advent — ‘Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them’ — is the Anglican theology of *lectio* in a single sentence. The movement from hearing to reading to marking to learning to digesting is the movement of *lectio* itself: from the first encounter with the text through the noting of what moves, through the understanding that deepens over time, to the final assimilation in which the word becomes not merely known but lived. The *Exercises* have trained the retreatant in this movement through the Gospel Contemplations; *lectio* is its continuation in the daily life.

For members of the Anglican Society of Jesus, *lectio divina* should be practiced alongside the Office readings rather than instead of them: the Office provides breadth and continuity, moving through the whole of Scripture in the two-year lectionary cycle; *lectio* provides depth, returning to a single passage until it has yielded its specific gift. The director’s accompaniment of the member’s prayer life should attend to the relationship between these two forms: the breadth of the Office and the depth of *lectio*, the communal and the personal, the structured and the open-ended.

The Ignatian Repetition in the Ongoing Life

The *Exercises* introduced the retreatant to repetition as a spiritual practice: returning to the material of a previous Contemplation to remain in the places of greatest consolation or desolation. This practice does not end with the retreat; it becomes a permanent feature of the ongoing prayer life. The member of the Society who, in their annual retreat, finds themselves returning to the Gethsemane scene of the Third Week is not failing to move on; they are returning to the place where the Spirit has identified the specific work that still needs doing. The repetition is not repetition in the sense of mere recurrence; it is the deepening of a wound that is becoming a wisdom.

The annual retreat prescribed by the Society’s Rule of Life (*Constitution*, Article 12) provides the primary occasion for this repetition at scale: five days in which the member returns to the *Exercises* in their shortened form, guided by their spiritual director, attending to whatever of the four weeks is most alive in the current season of their life. The director’s art in the annual retreat is precisely this: to discern which of the *Exercises*’ movements is calling for renewed attention, and to offer the material accordingly. In one year it may be the Foundation’s indifference, which has been eroded by a year of disordered attachment; in another, the Second Week’s election, which has been obscured by the accumulation of minor compromises; in another, the Third Week’s compassion, which has been hardened by the demands of the apostolic life.

The Practice of Spiritual Direction

The *Exercises* are given in the context of spiritual direction, and the ongoing apostolic life of the Society’s members is sustained by the same accompaniment. The monthly meeting with a spiritual

director, prescribed in the Society's Rule of Life, is not a luxury or an optional add-on for those with particular spiritual needs; it is the structural form of the Ignatian conviction that the discernment of the Spirit's movements in the individual soul is always done better in the presence of a trained and faithful witness than in solitude.

The Society's ministry of spiritual direction — its primary apostolic work, as the *Constitution* names it (Article 22) — is both a gift to the wider Church and a form of the members' own ongoing formation. The director who gives direction is themselves being formed by the act of accompanying: the capacity to be still, to attend, to refrain from directing while directing, to hear what is being said below and behind the words — all these are themselves Ignatian disciplines, forms of the indifference and the discernment that the *Exercises* have formed. The Society is a community of people who are simultaneously giving and receiving the same gift.

The Anglican tradition of spiritual direction — carried through the Caroline Divines' practice of the cure of souls, the Oxford Movement's recovery of confession and absolution as a spiritual practice, and the twentieth century's renewal of contemplative accompaniment — provides the cultural and theological context in which the Society's specific Ignatian ministry of direction is received. The director formed by the Society is simultaneously an Anglican pastor and an Ignatian guide: holding both traditions, drawing on both inheritances, serving the specific person in front of them with the full depth of the synthesis.



PART THREE: THE APOSTOLIC LIFE

The Four Preferences as the Form of the Exercises' Fruit

The *Spiritual Exercises* are not ends in themselves. They are, in Ignatius's own description, a method for preparing souls to receive the grace of God and to respond to that grace in the form of apostolic service. The service is not incidental to the *Exercises*; it is their teleological orientation, the direction in which everything they do points. The retreatant who completes the *Exercises* and returns to their life brings back not merely a richer interior life but a specific vocation — a particular form of service, confirmed and clarified by the election, to which the whole formation of the *Exercises* has been ordered.

For members of the Anglican Society of Jesus, this specific vocation is shaped by the Society's four apostolic preferences (*Constitution*, Articles 21–25), received now — at the conclusion of the *Exercises* — not as external obligations imposed by the Society's governance but as the natural expression of what the *Exercises* have formed. The retreatant who has been through the four weeks understands, from the inside, why these four preferences take the shape they do: they are the *Exercises'* grace translated into the grammar of apostolic action.

Showing the Way to God: The Ministry of the Exercises

The first apostolic preference is the Society's primary work: the giving of the *Spiritual Exercises* in their various forms, the training of spiritual directors, and the ministry of discernment that flows from both. The retreatant who has received the *Exercises* knows, from the inside, what they give: the encounter with the living Christ, the freedom of the election made in that encounter, the compassion formed in the Third Week, the joy of the Fourth. To give this to another person — to create the conditions in which another soul can receive what has been received — is the highest form of the first apostolic preference.

The Anglican tradition's theology of mission, articulated in the baptismal covenant's fifth promise — 'Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?' — provides the ecclesial frame for this preference. The Society's giving of the *Exercises* is one form of this proclamation: not the proclamation of abstract doctrine but the creation of the specific conditions in which the Good News can be encountered directly. The director of the *Exercises* is, in this sense, a proclaimer of the Gospel in its most intimate and most demanding form: the form that requires the whole person, the whole life, the whole forty days.

The training of directors that the Society undertakes (*Constitution*, Article 22) is thus not merely a professional formation but a transmission of the Gospel. Each director trained is a potential multiplier: the dozen or twenty persons they accompany through the *Exercises* over the course of their ministry carry forward the formation they have received, and some of them become directors in their turn. The *Exercises* propagate themselves through a lineage of directors, each one formed by another, stretching back through the tradition to the original experience of Ignatius at Manresa. The Anglican Society of Jesus is a new and distinct branch of this lineage, shaped by the specific

formation of the Anglican inheritance, and committed to carrying that inheritance forward with fidelity and creativity.

Walking with the Poor: The Election's Social Form

The second apostolic preference — walking with the poor and marginalized — is the social form of the Second Week's election. The retreatant who has contemplated the Beatitudes, the Nazareth manifesto, the healing miracles, and Matthew 25 carries within them the specific image of the Christ who identified with the least and the last. The Third Degree of Humility asked for a positive preference for poverty and humility in imitation of Christ; the second apostolic preference is the structural form of that preference in the Society's common life.

The *Constitution's* insistence that this commitment is 'not merely charitable but structural' (Article 21) is the *Exercises'* own logic applied to the social realm: just as the *Exercises* do not stop at the surface of the soul but go to the root of the disordered attachments that shape the soul's choices, so the Society's commitment to the poor does not stop at charity but goes to the structural analysis of why poverty persists and what the Gospel requires in response. The member of the Society formed by the *Exercises* brings to this structural analysis the specific theological lens of the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*: God is laboring in the life of the poor person in front of them, as God labors in all things; the response to poverty is not pity but recognition — the recognition of the laboring God.

F.D. Maurice's theology of the Kingdom of God as already present in the structures of human community, which the second apostolic preference inherits, meets the Ignatian Second Week's vision of Christ moving through the world healing and restoring at the exact point where the two traditions are most needed: the point where love and justice, prayer and action, interior formation and exterior engagement converge. The Society's members are formed, by the *Exercises*, to be people who do not experience this convergence as a tension between the spiritual and the political, the personal and the social, but as the single integrated response of the fully formed apostolic person to the single command of the Gospel.

Journeying with Youth: The Exercises as Formation for the Future

The third apostolic preference — journeying with youth — has a particular resonance for a Society whose primary work is formation. The young person who has not yet found their way into the life of committed faith, who is carrying questions about vocation and meaning and the existence of God, is precisely the person the *Exercises* are designed for in their adapted forms. The Society's engagement with youth is not a program delivered to passive recipients but a companionship offered to active seekers: the Ignatian model of the accompaniment of souls applied to the specific conditions and questions of the young.

The Anglican tradition's long history of education and formation — from the medieval cathedral schools through the universities that the Church founded to the contemporary parish youth ministries — provides the institutional context for this preference. But the Society's distinctive contribution to youth ministry is not institutional but personal: the trained spiritual director who can sit with a young person's questions without needing to resolve them, who can offer the Nineteenth Annotation's adapted *Exercises* to a young adult navigating a vocational decision, who can accompany the specific spiritual crisis of the specific young person with the full depth of the Ignatian tradition and the full breadth of the Anglican inheritance.

The *Exercises* themselves were designed with young people primarily in mind. Ignatius gave them first to his companions at the University of Paris — young men in their twenties, navigating the questions of vocation, direction, and commitment that the young have always faced. The Society's third apostolic preference is, in this sense, a return to the *Exercises'* origins: the recognition that the young person's need for a comprehensive formation of the whole person, for an encounter with the living Christ that is personal and demanding and joyful, is exactly what the *Exercises* exist to provide.

Caring for the Common Home: The *Contemplatio's* Ecological Dimension

The fourth apostolic preference — caring for the Common Home — is the *Contemplatio ad Amorem's* ecological dimension, received in the specific urgency of the present age. The retreatant who has prayed the *Contemplatio's* Second Point — God labors in all created things — and its Third Point — God descends and dwells within all things — carries within them a theology of creation that the ecological crisis makes not merely interesting but urgent. If God labors in the forest and the river and the soil, then the destruction of the forest and the river and the soil is not merely an environmental problem but a theological one: it is the diminishment of the specific loci of divine labor and divine presence.

The Anglican tradition's sacramental theology of matter — its insistence that God is encountered through, not despite, the physical world — gives this fourth apostolic preference its deepest theological grounding. The *Constitution's* articulation of it (Article 25) is explicitly Ignatian: 'not merely programs and advocacy but a transformation of consciousness: seeing the world as God sees it, as Ignatius taught in the Contemplation to Attain Love, in which God dwells in all created things and through them labors for the fullness of life.' The Society's ecological commitment is thus not an addition to the Ignatian charism but its extension: the finding of God in all things, extended to include the non-human creation that the Benedicite has always called to praise alongside the human.

The retreatant who has prayed the Benedicite during the *Contemplatio* — 'O ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord' — and who has carried the *Exercises'* formation into the ordinary life, will find that the care for the Common Home is not a burden imposed by a Society preference but a natural expression of the *Contemplatio's* vision: the sun and moon and stars, the showers and dew, the whales and all that move in the waters, are not mere scenery for the human drama but the community of creation with which the retreatant is called to dwell, and which the love that has been poured into their heart through the Holy Spirit is called to protect.



PART FOUR: THE VISION OF THE SOCIETY

Contemplatives in Action: The Anglican Ignatian Identity

The Anglican Society of Jesus exists at the intersection of two streams of the one Spirit's movement in the Church: the Ignatian charism of finding God in all things and being sent in apostolic service to all people, and the Anglican inheritance of liturgical prayer, sacramental life, theological breadth, and ecumenical commitment. The Conclusion of the *Exercises* is the proper place to articulate the vision that holds these two streams together and to invite the retreatant, now formed by the *Exercises*, into the full life of the Society that embodies that vision.

Contemplatives in Action

The phrase most associated with the Ignatian charism — contemplatives in action — names the fundamental integration that the Anglican Society of Jesus seeks: not the alternation between prayer and work as though they were two separate activities, but the integration of both in a single life so unified that the distinction between them becomes secondary. The member of the Society who rises for Morning Prayer and then goes to work with the poor is not moving between two different modes of being; they are living the single mode of the person who has found God in all things and now encounters God in both the morning's Office and the afternoon's service.

The *Exercises* have been training the retreatant for exactly this integration throughout all four weeks. The Foundation established the theological unity of prayer and action: all things — including action — are means to the one end of God's glory. The Second Week's Contemplation of Christ's life showed the integration in action: Jesus in prayer on the mountain and Jesus healing in the valley are not two different Jesuses but the one person whose prayer and action are the single expression of a single relationship with the Father. The *Contemplatio ad Amorem* is the seal of this integration: the person who has learned to find God in all things does not need to leave the world to find God; the world itself has become the medium of the encounter.

The Anglican contribution to this integration is the Daily Office. The member of the Society who prays Morning and Evening Prayer within a community of the Society is not supplementing their prayer life with a communal exercise; they are grounding the contemplative-in-action life in the rhythmic, communal, liturgical prayer that prevents the activism from becoming mere busyness and prevents the Contemplation from becoming mere aestheticism. The Office holds together the individual and the communal, the personal and the traditional, the present moment and the long memory of the Church's prayer through the centuries. It is the Anglican synthesis at its most essential and most beautiful.

The Vows as the Exercises' Structural Form

The vows of the Anglican Society of Jesus — Simplicity, Fidelity, and Obedience at First Profession, with a fourth vow of mission and the protection of children added at Final Profession (*Constitution*, Article 8) — are the structural form in which the *Exercises'* formation is made permanent. They are

not additions to the life that the *Exercises* have prepared; they are the naming of what the *Exercises* have already formed. The Foundation's indifference finds its permanent form in the Vow of Simplicity: the willingness to hold all things lightly, to use them and give them up as God requires, to stand before God as a creature wholly dependent on the Creator's gift. The Second Week's election finds its permanent form in the Vow of Fidelity: the specific relational commitment — whether to celibacy or to marriage — in which the election is embodied and given structural continuity. The Parable of the Kingdom's oblation — the willingness to follow the eternal King wherever he leads — finds its permanent form in the Vow of Obedience: the placing of the will in the hands of the Society's governance and, through it, in the hands of God. And the Fourth Week's apostolic sending — the Contemplatio's outward turn toward the world in which God labors — finds its permanent form in the fourth vow professed at Final Profession: the special mission to protect children and to remain available for mission within and beyond the Anglican Society of Jesus, the vowed expression of the contemplative in action who has been fully formed and is now fully sent.

The Anglican adaptation of these vows — their departure from the traditional evangelical counsels in ways that honor the diversity of the Society's membership — is itself a form of the Anglican *via media* in action: holding the demanding integrity of the vowed life together with the breadth of the Anglican charism that welcomes the married and the single, the ordained and the lay, within the same community of apostolic commitment. The *Exercises* have prepared the retreatant for this form of the vowed life; the Conclusion is the moment at which the connection between what the *Exercises* have formed and what the vows ask is made fully explicit.

The Society Within the Church

The Anglican Society of Jesus does not exist for itself. It exists for the Church and through the Church for the world. Its specific charism — the Ignatian *Exercises* and the ministry of spiritual direction and discernment — is a gift that the Society holds in trust for the whole Body of Christ. The *Constitution's* vision (Articles 5, 24) of the Society as a servant of the whole Church, committed to ecumenical partnership and to the full visible unity of the Church, is the *Exercises'* own ecclesiological implication: the love poured into the retreatant's heart through the Holy Spirit is not merely for their own sanctification but for the healing of the divisions that prevent the Church from being the sign and sacrament of unity that the Gospel requires it to be.

The relationship between the Anglican Society of Jesus and the Roman Catholic Society of Jesus is a particular expression of this ecumenical vision. The two Societies share a charism — the *Exercises*, the ministry of direction, the apostolic life of contemplatives in action — and they share, in their different ways, the inheritance of Ignatius's original experience. The Anglican Society does not seek to replicate the Roman Society or to diminish its own Anglican distinctiveness; it seeks to be a companion in mission, recognizing that the Spirit who formed Ignatius at Manresa is the same Spirit who formed Cranmer at Canterbury and who now forms members of both Societies through the *Exercises* they share. *Ut Omnes Unum Sint* is not a distant aspiration; it is the daily practice of a community that lives the unity it proclaims.

The Exercises and the Future of the Church

The *Spiritual Exercises* were given to the Church in the sixteenth century at a moment of acute crisis: the Reformation had shattered the visible unity of the Western Church, and the old structures of formation were crumbling. Ignatius responded not with institutional reaction but with interior formation: the *Exercises* were his conviction that if individuals could be formed in the direct

encounter with the living Christ, the Church's renewal would follow. He was right; and the Jesuit tradition that grew from the *Exercises* became one of the most significant instruments of renewal in the history of the Church.

The Church of the twenty-first century faces a crisis no less acute: the secularization of Western culture, the fragmentation of Christian witness, the ecological emergency, the collapse of inherited structures of formation and community. The Anglican Society of Jesus exists in the conviction that Ignatius's response remains the right one: the formation of individuals in the direct encounter with the living Christ, through the *Exercises* that he bequeathed and the liturgical and theological inheritance of the Anglican tradition, is still the seed of the Church's renewal. The *Exercises* do not fix the structural problems of the Church; they form the people who can. They do not resolve the ecological crisis; they form the people who will. They do not produce ecclesial unity by institutional arrangement; they form the people whose lives, shaped by the *Suscipe's* total offering and the *Contemplatio's* universal vision, embody the unity they are seeking.

“What the world most needs is not better programs but deeper people: people who have been to the root of themselves, found God there, and come back changed. The Exercises exist to make such people.”

— Pedro Arrupe, S.J., Superior General of the Society of Jesus 1965–1983 (adapted)



PART FIVE: A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

The Saints of the Anglican Ignatian Inheritance

The Hebrews writer speaks of a great cloud of witnesses — the communion of saints whose completed lives surround and sustain the present community's race. For the Anglican Society of Jesus, this cloud has a specific composition: the saints and holy persons of both traditions who have contributed to the inheritance that the Society embodies and to whose memory it is accountable.

The cloud includes Ignatius of Loyola himself, who at the cave of Manresa, broken by injury and spiritual crisis, received the encounters with God that became the *Exercises*; who gathered a small company of friends at the University of Paris and at Montmartre and began the community that became the Society of Jesus; who governed that Society with the same combination of apostolic urgency and mystical depth that the *Exercises* express. His Spiritual Diary, his letters to the scattered Society, his famous insistence that love ought to show itself more in deeds than in words: these are the inheritance that the Anglican Society of Jesus receives with gratitude and holds with responsibility.

The cloud includes the blessed Peter Faber, Ignatius's closest companion and the first Jesuit priest, whose approach to the Reformation's divisions was the gentlest and most ecumenical of the first Jesuits' — whose conviction that the way to reach those separated from the Church was through kindness, conversation, and the sharing of one's own interior life makes him the patron saint of the Anglican Ignatian synthesis. It includes Francis Xavier, whose apostolic mobility and missionary courage at the ends of the known world embodies the Society's willingness to go wherever the greater glory of God requires.

The cloud includes the Caroline Divines: Lancelot Andrewes, whose *Preces Privatae* are the most sustained Anglican form of the *Exercises*' method of personal examination and praise; George Herbert, whose *Temple* maps the soul's journey with God in the very shape of a church building; Jeremy Taylor, whose *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying* provide the Anglican moral theology that the *Exercises* require; Thomas Traherne, whose *Centuries of Meditation* is the closest Anglican equivalent to the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* in the whole tradition. These are the companions who have walked the road that the Society's members are now walking, and who left their maps for those who came after.

The cloud includes the Oxford Movement's great figures: John Henry Newman, who began as an Anglican and ended as a Roman Cardinal but whose spiritual writings belong to both traditions; Edward Bouverie Pusey, whose recovery of confession and the interior life gave the Anglican tradition back the sacramental dimensions of the *Exercises*; John Keble, whose *The Christian Year* provided the Anglican liturgical imagination with its most sustained poetic meditation on the mysteries of Christ's life. These figures recovered for Anglicanism precisely what Ignatius had always known: that the intellectual and doctrinal dimension of faith required the interior and devotional dimension for its completion.

The cloud includes the twentieth century's great Anglican theologians and spiritual writers: Michael Ramsey, whose theology of the Transfiguration and the Resurrection provides the Third and Fourth

Weeks with their deepest Anglican grounding; Evelyn Underhill, whose *Mysticism and Worship* are the Anglican introductions to the contemplative tradition that the *Exercises* deepen; Rowan Williams, whose theological writings on the Resurrection, the Passion, and the interior life are the most sustained contemporary Anglican engagement with the tradition the Society inherits; Dorothy L. Sayers, whose work on creativity and the life of the mind enriches the Society's understanding of the apostolic life's full range.

The cloud includes the martyrs of both traditions who embody the Third Week's third degree of humility in its most extreme form: the English Martyrs of the Reformation on both sides of the confessional divide, who chose fidelity to their convictions over survival; Charles I of England, whom the Anglican tradition venerates as Charles, King and Martyr; the Oxford Movement's missionaries who died in the service of the poor; and the Society of Jesus's own martyrs in Japan, England, North America, and Africa, who carried the *Exercises'* oblation to its ultimate conclusion.

To be a member of the Anglican Society of Jesus is to be accountable to this cloud: to receive their formation with gratitude, to honor their witness with faithfulness, and to carry their inheritance forward into conditions they could not have imagined but that their spiritual gifts are fully adequate to meet. The Conclusion of the *Exercises* is the moment at which the retreatant consciously joins this cloud — not by dying but by living, not by extraordinary heroism but by the daily practice of the Examen and the Office and the *Exercises'* ongoing formation.



PART SIX: THE RULE OF LIFE

The Exercises' Formation in the Society's Common Framework

The Society's Rule of Life (*Constitution*, Article 12) is the structural expression of the *Exercises*' formation in the ongoing life of the professed member. At the conclusion of the *Exercises*, it is appropriate to read the Rule's requirements not as external obligations but as the natural shape of a life that has been formed by what the *Exercises* have given. Each element of the Rule corresponds to a specific grace of the *Exercises*; together, they constitute the daily form of the apostolic life that the *Exercises* have prepared.

Daily Prayer in the Book of Common Prayer: *Morning and Evening Prayer, or their equivalent, are the Exercises' Foundation and Contemplatio sustained in daily liturgical form. The retreatant who has prayed the General Thanksgiving as the Foundation's opening and the Benedicite as the Contemplatio's daily practice now prays both within the Office's structure as the normal rhythm of each day's beginning and end.*

Daily Examen: *The Examen is the Exercises' four weeks compressed into a daily practice: the gratitude of the Fourth Week, the honesty of the First Week, the discernment of the Second Week, and the compassion of the Third Week, applied to the specific texture of today. It is the minimum of Ignatian formation and, rightly practiced, a maximum.*

Regular Reception of Holy Eucharist: *The Eucharist is the Upper Room renewed, the Emmaus breaking of bread continued, the Incarnation's material form perpetually given and received. For the member of the Society formed by the Exercises, the weekly Eucharist is not a religious obligation but the encounter they have been formed to recognize and receive.*

The Reconciliation of a Penitent (Commended Practice): *The Reconciliation of a Penitent is the First Week's grace carried into the ongoing life: the form in which the mercy the Week established as God's constant response to honest self-knowledge may be received again and again. In the Anglican manner, this practice is commended rather than required: 'all may, none must, some should.' For the Companion who finds it life-giving, regular use of the BCP's rite of Reconciliation is among the most powerful means of maintaining the interior freedom the Exercises have established. The Society's Constitution commends the practice as consonant with Anglican discipline but does not prescribe it as a minimum obligation of the Rule of Life.*

Monthly Spiritual Direction: *Spiritual direction is the Exercises' accompaniment extended into the ordinary life: the presence of the trained and faithful witness who helps the member discern the Spirit's movements in the specific texture of their specific life. The Exercises were given in direction; the life they form is sustained by direction.*

Annual Retreat: *The annual retreat is the Exercises' periodic renewal: the return to the silence and the specific prayer forms that the thirty-day retreat established, for the deepening of what has been given and the refreshment of what has been depleted. Each year's retreat is not a repetition of the Exercises but a renewal of their fruit.*

Participation in Common Life: *The Society's common prayer and community life is the ecclesial form of the Exercises' communal dimension: the recognition that the formation the Exercises give is always formation within the Body of Christ and always for the Body of Christ.*

The member of the Society who observes this Rule is not merely following a set of religious prescriptions; they are living the *Exercises* in the form that ordinary life permits. The Rule is the *Exercises*' daily form; the *Exercises* are the Rule's spiritual ground. They interpret each other, sustain each other, and together constitute the integrated apostolic life that the Society exists to form and to offer to the Church.



DOXOLOGY

A Concluding Act of Praise for the Whole of the Exercises

The *Exercises* end, as they began, in praise. The Foundation's first claim was that the human person is created to praise, reverence, and serve God; the Conclusion's last act is the performance of that praise, not as a duty but as the natural expression of the soul that has been through what the *Exercises* have required and found, at every point, a love that held.

The following doxology is composed for the Anglican Society of Jesus, drawing on the whole inheritance of the series: the language of the *Book of Common Prayer*, the imagery of the *Exercises'* four weeks, the theology of the Caroline Divines and the Oxford Movement and the twentieth century's great Anglican witnesses, and the Ignatian tradition's most characteristic forms of praise. It is offered not as a liturgical text to be read mechanically but as a prayer to be entered, a doxology to be meant, a praise that is also a thanksgiving and a commitment and a sending.

*Glory be to thee, O Lord,
glory be to thee:*

*for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
for the Foundation that named us creatures and called that naming joy;
for the indifference that set us free from our lesser gods;
for the discovery that beneath all things a love was holding.*

*Glory be to thee, O Lord,
glory be to thee:*

*for the mercy that met us in the darkness of our own history;
for the absolution that said: all this I have already borne;
for the First Week's specific grace —
to be seen completely and loved completely in the same moment.*

*Glory be to thee, O Lord,
glory be to thee:*

*for the stable and the desert and the hillside and the lake;
for the Beatitudes that called our restlessness a form of blessedness;
for the election that was given us — not earned, not constructed, but given;
for the eternal King who called us by name and went before us.*

*Glory be to thee, O Lord,
glory be to thee:*

*for the garden and the trials and the Way of the Cross;
for the seven words that were spoken from the wood;
for the sealed stone that did not prevent what was coming;
for the love that descended into the uttermost and called it finished.*

*Glory be to thee, O Lord,
glory be to thee:*

*for the garden in the early morning and the name spoken in the dark;
for the road to Emmaus and the recognition in the bread;
for the charcoal fire and the three-repeated question of love;
for the Contemplatio's discovery that all things were always already full of thee.*

*Glory be to thee, O Lord,
glory be to thee:*

*for Ignatius at Manresa, broken open by grace;
for Cranmer's common prayer, wrested from the Latin for ordinary mouths;
for Andrewes kneeling before dawn, enumerating the gifts;
for Herbert singing the Temple into being, poem by poem;
for Taylor's holy living and holy dying, patient and exact;
for Traherne seeing the whole world given to him as a child's inheritance;
for Ramsey on the Resurrection and Williams on the Passion
and Underhill on the mystical life and all the cloud of witnesses
who walked this road before us and left the road marked.*

*Take, Lord, and receive:
our liberty, our memory, our understanding, our entire will;
this Society and all it has been given;
this Communion and all its breadth;
this world and all its groaning toward its liberation.*

*All is thine.
Dispose of it wholly according to thy will.*

*Give us thy love and thy grace.
This is sufficient for us.*

*Send us now:
to show the way to God,
to walk with the poor and the forgotten,
to journey with the young who are looking for thee,
to tend the world that cries out for its Maker.*

*Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.
Ut Omnes Unum Sint.*

Amen.



THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus

Societas Iesu Anglicana

Seven Documents, Complete

Anno Domini MMXXVI

— *Document I: Introduction and Orientation* —

— *Document II: Foundation and First Principles* —

— *Document III: The First Week* —

— *Document IV: The Second Week* —

— *Document V: The Third Week* —

— *Document VI: The Fourth Week* —

— *Document VII: Conclusion and Sending Forth* —

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

Ut Omnes Unum Sint



SOCIETAS IESU ANGLICANA

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

of the Anglican Society of Jesus

The Rite of Sending Forth

For the Conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations — and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

— Matthew 28:19–20

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam — Ut Omnes Unum Sint

PREFACE AND RUBRICAL NOTES

The Rite of Sending Forth is celebrated at the conclusion of the full Spiritual Exercises, whether in the thirty-day form or at the completion of the Exercises in Everyday Life. It may also be used, in abbreviated form, at the conclusion of a significant adapted retreat of five days or more.

The Rite is designed for celebration within the Holy Eucharist, which is its natural home. The Sending Forth replaces the usual dismissal and follows the post-communion prayer. The full Rite, including the examination and the vow renewal or oblation, ordinarily takes place before the post-communion prayer; the dismissal then becomes the Rite's final movement.

Where a bishop is present — which is strongly preferred for the conclusion of the novitiate Exercises — the bishop presides. Where the Rite is celebrated without a bishop, a priest of the Society or a priest-director of the retreat presides.

The Rite has five movements: the Gathering of Witness, the Examination of Gratitude, the Act of Oblation (the corporate Suscipe), the Sending Forth with the Apostolic Commission, and the Final Blessing. Each movement is marked in the text. Rubrics are printed in italic green. The people's responses are in bold violet. Spoken by the presider unless otherwise noted.

The retreat community gathers in the chapel or a suitable space. Candles are lit. If the Rite follows the Eucharist, the people remain in their places after the post-communion prayer. If the Rite is celebrated as a standalone liturgy, it begins with a period of silence during which the paschal candle or a single large candle is lit in the midst of the assembly.



MOVEMENT I

The Gathering of Witness

The presider stands facing the assembly. The director of the Exercises, if different from the presider, stands alongside. All are silent for a moment.

Presider: Brothers and sisters in Christ, companions in this holy work:
we have come to the end of a journey.
We give thanks to God, who is always the real director of every soul that seeks him.

People: Thanks be to God.

Presider: We acknowledge the cloud of witnesses that has surrounded this retreat:
Ignatius at Manresa, who received and tested and gave these *Exercises*;
the Caroline Divines and the Oxford Movement,
who prepared the Anglican soil in which this work has taken root;
the directors who have accompanied, the communities who have prayed,
and all whose faithful lives have made this moment possible.

We give thanks for the gift of those who walked before us.

Presider: We acknowledge those who have made this retreat:
who came with desire, however uncertain;
who offered their liberty, memory, understanding, and will
to the One who gave all things and asked all things in return.

We have been met by a love that held us through every darkness.

Presider: Let us hear the word that calls us forward.

The reader reads one of the following passages. The assembly stands.

*Option A (for those completing a First Exercises): Isaiah 43:1–5 — ‘I have called you by name;
you are mine.’*

*Option B (for those completing the full Exercises): John 21:15–17 — ‘Do you love me? Feed my
sheep.’*

Option C (for those making the Nineteenth Annotation): Matthew 28:18–20 — ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore.’

A period of silence follows the reading. Then:

Presider: This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



MOVEMENT II

The Examination of Gratitude

The presider invites the assembly to be seated. What follows is a brief public examination of the Exercises' graces, structured around the four weeks. The presider speaks each invitation; the response is said by all together. A brief silence follows each exchange.

Presider: For the Foundation: that we discovered ourselves to be creatures — dependent, gifted, ordered toward a glory not our own; that we were given the grace of holy indifference and tasted the freedom of holding all things lightly—

We bless you, Lord, for creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life.

Presider: For the First Week: that we looked honestly at what we are, and found mercy waiting; that we received absolution for what we had kept hidden, and were given back to ourselves, cleansed—

We bless you, Lord, for your inestimable love in the redemption of the world.

Presider: For the Second Week: that we walked with Jesus through the stable and the desert and the lakeside; that we heard the call of the eternal King and felt it addressed to us by name; that we were given the grace of the election—

We bless you, Lord, for the Word made flesh and dwelling among us.

Presider: For the Third Week: that we stood at the foot of the cross and did not turn away; that we sat beside the sealed stone in the dark and found you there; that we learned the compassion that does not flinch—

We bless you, Lord, for the love that descended into the uttermost.

Presider: For the Fourth Week: that the stone was rolled away; that we heard our name spoken in the garden; that we found God laboring in all things, and received the joy that cannot be taken away—

We bless you, Lord, for the Resurrection and the life that is stronger than death.

A longer silence is kept. Then the presider continues:

Presider: Let us give thanks, as it is right to do at all times and in all places, for everything we have been given in this holy work.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.



MOVEMENT III

The Act of Oblation

The Corporate Suscipe of the Anglican Society of Jesus

The assembly rises. The director of the Exercises, or a senior member of the community, introduces the Suscipe:

Director: At the heart of the *Spiritual Exercises* stands the *Suscipe* — the prayer of total oblation that Ignatius placed at the conclusion of the Contemplation to Attain Love. We have prayed it silently in the retreat; we now pray it together, publicly, as the community of the Society gathered around those who have completed this holy work.

Director: Let us pray together the *Suscipe* of the Anglican Society of Jesus.

All say together, slowly:

*Take, Lord, and receive
all our liberty,
our memory, our understanding,
and our entire will —
all that we have and possess.*

*Thou hast given all to us.
To thee, O Lord, we return it.
All is thine;
dispose of it wholly according to thy will.*

*Give us thy love and thy grace.
This is sufficient for us.*

*Send us to show the way to God,
to walk with the poor and the forgotten,
to journey with the young,
to care for the world thou hast made and dost love.*

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

Amen.

A period of silence follows. Then, where the Rite includes the formal renewal of vows by professed members, or the oblation of Novices or Companions, that act takes place here. The form for each is given below.

Form for the Renewal of Vows (Professed Members)

Each professed member, standing in their place or coming forward as custom directs, says:

I, [Name], a professed member of the Anglican Society of Jesus,

having received the grace of these holy Exercises,

renew my vows of Simplicity, Fidelity, and Obedience [and, where applicable as one who has made Final Profession, my fourth vow of availability for mission and the protection of children]

in the presence of this community and in the sight of God.

May the life I have offered be used for the greater glory of God

and the service of all people.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam. Amen.

The presider responds after each member:

Presider: The Lord receive your offering and renew your vocation.

Thanks be to God.

Where this is the first profession of vows, each professed member receives a vow cross from the presider. Upon the death of a Companion, the vow cross may be buried with them, at their election, or returned to the Superior General for bestowal upon a newly professed Companion (Constitution, Article 9).

Form for the Oblation of Novices Completing the Exercises

Each Novice completing the full Exercises as part of their novitiate formation says:

I, [Name], a Novice of the Anglican Society of Jesus,

having completed the holy Spiritual Exercises

in preparation for my profession of vows,

offer myself to God in this community's witness,

asking for the grace to live the life I have discerned.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam. Amen.

Presider: May God who has begun this good work in you bring it to completion.

Thanks be to God.



MOVEMENT IV

The Sending Forth with the Apostolic Commission

The presider stands. All remain standing. The following litany of sending is led by the presider, with responses said by all.

Presider: You are sent to show the way to God:
to give the *Spiritual Exercises* in their forms and seasons,
to accompany those who seek the living God,
to be trained and faithful witnesses to the movements of the Spirit.

Send us, Lord. We go in your name.

Presider: You are sent to walk with the poor and the marginalized:
to see the face of Christ in the ones the world has overlooked,
to work not only with charity but with justice,
to embody in your common life the solidarity you proclaim.

Send us, Lord. We go in your name.

Presider: You are sent to journey with the young:
to sit with their questions without needing to resolve them,
to offer the *Exercises* in forms they can receive,
to be the companions in faith that the next generation needs.

Send us, Lord. We go in your name.

Presider: You are sent to care for the Common Home:
to see the world as God sees it in the Contemplation to Attain Love,
to labor with God in all created things,
to advocate for the earth and all its creatures.

Send us, Lord. We go in your name.

Presider: You are sent to seek the unity of the Church:
to be companions with the Society of Jesus in Rome and its brethren worldwide,
to serve the Anglican Communion and the whole Body of Christ,
that all may be one, as Christ and the Father are one.

Send us, Lord. We go in your name.

The presider then says:

Presider: Go into the world in the power of the Spirit.

Carry with you the grace of these holy days.

Find God in all things.

Love in deed and not in word only.

Seek always the greater glory of God.

Thanks be to God.



MOVEMENT V

The Final Blessing

Where a bishop presides, the bishop's blessing is given in the customary form. The following blessing is provided for use by a priest in the bishop's absence, or as the bishop's blessing where the bishop prefers this form.

Presider: The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Presider: And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

The deacon, or the presider in the deacon's absence, dismisses the assembly with one of the following. The dismissal of the Exercises has traditionally used the expanded form:

Deacon: Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord,
to show the way to God, to walk with the poor,
to journey with the young, to care for the Common Home.
Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.

Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

The assembly processes out in silence, or to the singing of a suitable hymn. Suggested hymns: 'God of grace and God of glory'; 'Lord, you give the great commission'; 'We are marching in the light of God (Siyahamba)'; 'I, the Lord of sea and sky'; 'Take my life and let it be.'



A NOTE ON ADAPTED FORMS

For a Day Retreat or Parish Mission: Movements II and III (the Examination of Gratitude and the Suscipe) may be used alone as a concluding prayer, omitting the vow renewal and the full Litany of Sending. Movement V provides the blessing.

For a Nineteenth Annotation Cohort: Where a group completes the Exercises in Everyday Life together, the full Rite is appropriate. The director of each member's individual retreat should be present. Movement III may include brief personal testimonies from each retreatant before the corporate Suscipe.

For a Solitary Retreatant: Where a single person completes the Exercises, the Rite is celebrated within the normal Sunday Eucharist of the retreat community or the retreatant's home parish. The director and the retreatant's confessor should be present if possible. The Rite is integrated into the Eucharist at the point following the post-communion prayer.

The music of the Rite should reflect the season of the liturgical calendar in which it falls. Where the Exercises conclude during Eastertide, the Gloria and Alleluias of Easter may be incorporated. Where they conclude in Ordinary Time, the tone should be warm and apostolic rather than festive.

Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam — Ut Omnes Unum Sint

