

[1] I H S

¹ANNOTATIONS

to give some understanding of the spiritual exercises which follow, and to enable him who is to give and him who is to receive them to help themselves

²*First Annotation.* The first annotation is that by this name of Spiritual Exercises is meant every way of examining one's conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally, and of performing other spiritual actions, as will be said later. ³For as strolling, walking, and running are bodily exercises, so every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies, ⁴and, after it is rid, to seek and find the Divine Will as to the management of one's life for the salvation of the soul, is called a spiritual exercise.

[2] *Second Annotation.* ¹The second is that the person who gives to another the way and order in which to meditate or contemplate, ought to relate faithfully the events of such contemplation or meditation, going over the points with only a short or summary development. ²For, if the person who is making the contemplation takes the true groundwork of the narrative and, discussing and considering for himself, finds something which makes the events a little clearer or brings them a little more home to him³—whether this comes through his own reasoning, or because his intellect is enlightened by the divine power—⁴he will get more spiritual relish and fruit, than if he who is giving the Exercises had much explained and amplified the meaning of the

[1] SOME PRELIMINARY HELPS

The purpose of these observations is to provide some understanding of the spiritual exercises which follow and to serve as helps both for retreatants and for directors of the retreat.

1. The phrase “spiritual exercises” takes in all the formal ways we have of making contact with God, such as meditation, contemplation, vocal prayer, devotions, examination of conscience, and so on. We are familiar with the great variety of physical exercises, such as walking, jogging, playing games such as handball, golf, or even the demands of yoga and isometrics. These physical exercises are good for tuning up muscles, improving circulation and breathing, and in general for the overall good health of the body. So, too, what we call spiritual exercises are good for increasing openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit, for helping to bring to light the darknesses of sinfulness and sinful tendencies within ourselves, and for strengthening and supporting us in the effort to respond ever more faithfully to the love of God.

[2] 2. The director's role is that of being a helper to us in retreat. We receive help by the director's explaining the different ways of praying. The director helps by suggesting the matter to be considered in a prayer period, and does not hinder God's movements in us by imposing interpretations of scripture or of theology. The Exercises are, above all, a time for intimate contact between God and a retreatant. We, as retreatants, will profit far more from the understanding and love aroused by the grace of God within us than from the rhetoric or brilliant insights of a retreat direc-

* The word “Annotation” does not occur in the original after the first time. The same is true of similar cases in the mss.

events. ⁵For it is not knowing much, but realizing and relishing things interiorly, that contents and satisfies the soul.

[3] ¹*Third Annotation.* The third: as in all the following spiritual exercises, we use acts of the intellect in reasoning, and acts of the will in movements of the feelings: ²let us remark that, in the acts of the will, when we are speaking vocally or mentally with God our Lord, or with His saints, ³greater reverence is required on our part than when we are using the intellect in understanding.

[4] ¹*Fourth Annotation.* The fourth: the following exercises are divided into four parts:

- ²first, the consideration and contemplation on the sins;
- second, the life of Christ our Lord up to Palm Sunday inclusively;
- ³third, the passion of Christ our Lord;
- fourth, the resurrection and ascension, with the three methods of prayer.

⁴Though four weeks, to correspond to this division, are spent in the Exercises, it is not to be understood that each week has, of necessity, seven or eight days. ⁵For, as it happens that in the first week some are slower to find what they seek—namely, contrition, sorrow, and tears for their sins—⁶and in the same way some are more diligent than others, and more acted on or tried by different spirits, ⁷it is necessary sometimes to shorten the week, and at other times to lengthen it. The same is true of all the other subse-

tor. For in a retreat we do not find knowledges satisfying us, but rather deepdown tastes and feelings that sensitize us to what really matters.

[3] 3. As we enter into the Spiritual Exercises which follow, we retreatants find ourselves sometimes doing much thinking and reasoning things out. At other times, we experience far more the response of our hearts, with little or nothing for the head to be concerned about. It is good to remember that we are always in the context of prayer, whether the prayer is more meditative or more affective. We should always try to maintain a spirit of deep reverence before God, especially when our affections are involved.

[4] 4. The makeup of the Exercises is rather simple. The basic division is into four parts, called “weeks,” although there are no fixed number of days within these respective “weeks.” The first week is set in the context of God’s creative love, its rejection by each of us through sin, and God’s reconciling mercy in Jesus. The second week centers on the life of Jesus, from its beginnings through his public ministry. The third week fixes upon that very special time in Jesus’s life—his passion, crucifixion, and death. The fourth week considers the risen Christ and the world which has been renewed in his victory.

We move from week to week according to the grace which God gives to us. Some people come to an appreciation of a certain mystery of God’s dealings with them more rapidly than others. For each retreatant, it is the director who determines whether the time of the week should be shortened or lengthened, in accord with the movements of

quent weeks, seeking out the things according to the subject matter. ⁸However, the Exercises will be finished in thirty days, a little more or less.

[5] ¹*Fifth Annotation.* The fifth: it is very helpful to him who is receiving the Exercises to enter into them with great courage and generosity towards his Creator and Lord, offering* Him all his will and liberty, ²that His Divine Majesty may make use of his person and of all he has according to His most holy will.

[6] ¹*Sixth Annotation.* The sixth: when he who is giving the Exercises sees that no spiritual movements, such as consolations and desolations, come to the soul of him who is exercising himself, and that he is not moved by different spirits, ²he ought to inquire carefully of him about the Exercises, whether he does them at their appointed times, and how. ³So too of the additions, whether he observes them with diligence. Let him ask in detail about each of these things.

⁴Consolation and desolation are spoken of in [316, 317]; the Additions in [73-90].

[7] ¹*Seventh Annotation.* The seventh: if he who is giving the Exercises sees that he who is receiving them is in desolation and tempted, let him not be hard or dissatisfied with him, but gentle and indulgent, ²giving him courage and strength for the future, and laying bare to him the wiles of the enemy of human nature, and getting him to prepare and dispose himself for the consolation coming.

* "Offering" is in St. Ignatius' handwriting, correcting "giving" or "presenting," which is crossed out.

God's grace and each one's ability to respond. We note, however, that the full Exercises should be completed in approximately thirty days.

[5] 5. The most important qualities in the person who enters into these exercises are openness, generosity, and courage. As retreatants, our one hope and desire is that God will place us with his Son so that in all ways we seek only to respond to that love which first created us and now wraps us round with total care and concern.

[6] 6. A director expects that in the course of a week we as retreatants will be moved in various ways. When nothing seems to be happening in prayer, the director should ask us how we go about our prayer, at what times we pray, where we pray, and in general how we are spending the day. Sometimes what appears to be an action or event of small consequence can affect the course of prayer for a whole day or even a number of days. This is a situation in which a director can be a great help by the kind of questioning that may uncover what blocks our openness to God's call.

[7] 7. When we find ourselves in a time of temptation or desolation, the director is meant to be a kind listener and a gentle support. The director should help to expose the ways in which the powers of evil attempt to block our ability to respond to God. The director reminds us that God continues to be at hand even at such times with the necessary grace of strength and light.

*Rules for Discernment:
to give or not??*

[8] ¹*Eighth Annotation.* The eighth: if he who is giving the exercises sees that he who is receiving them is in need of instruction about the desolations and wiles of the enemy—and the same of consolations—²he may explain to him, as far as he needs them, the rules of the first and second weeks for recognizing different spirits [313-327; 328-336].

Rules for Week II:

[9] ¹*Ninth Annotation.* The ninth is to notice, when he who is exercising himself is in the exercises of the first week, if he is a person who has not been versed in spiritual things, and is tempted grossly and openly—²having, for example, suggested to him obstacles to going on in the service of God our Lord, such as labors, shame, and fear for the honor of the world—³let him who is giving the Exercises not explain to him the rules of the second week for the discernment of spirits. ⁴Because, as much as those of the first week will be helpful, those of the second will be harmful to him, as being matter too subtle and too high for him to understand.

Rules for Week III:

[10] ¹*Tenth Annotation.* The tenth: when he who is giving the Exercises perceives that he who is receiving them is assaulted and tempted under the appearance of good, then it is proper to instruct him about the rules of the second week already mentioned. ²For, ordinarily, the enemy of human nature tempts under the appearance of good rather when the person is exercising himself in the illuminative life, which corresponds to the exercises of the second week, ³and not to much in the purgative life, which corresponds to those of the first.

[8] 8. As we begin to be aware of the various movements in ourselves, whether of consolation or desolation, the director determines when it would be helpful to explain further the ways for discerning the sources of such movement so that we might be better able to understand how to respond to God.

[9] 9. Since there are different sets of instructions about the way we are moved in the first week in distinction to the second week and thereafter, the director needs to be careful to present and explain only what is more immediately helpful to us for where we are at present in our retreat. Otherwise, we will only get confused by the very explanations which were meant to be a help.

[10] 10. In the first week, it often happens that we will be tempted to discouragement or rejection by thoughts about our own unworthiness before God, to a despair about the costs of such a loving response, or to a fear for what others might think and say of us. The director may find the guidelines for the discernment of spirits for the first week, in [313-327] below, helpful to present to us at this time. By contrast, in the second week, the temptation which we often face comes more from the appeal and attraction of some good, real or apparent. At this time, the director may find the guidelines for the discernment of spirits for the second week, in [328-336] below, more helpful for us.

[11] ¹*Eleventh Annotation.* The eleventh: it is helpful to him who is receiving the Exercises in the first week, not to know anything of what he is to do in the second, ²but so to labor in the first as to attain the object he is seeking as if he did not hope to find in the second any good.

[12] ¹*Twelfth Annotation.* The twelfth: as he who is receiving the Exercises is to give an hour to each of the five exercises or contemplations which will be made every day, ²he who is giving the Exercises has to warn him carefully to always see that his soul remains content in the consciousness of having been a full hour in the exercise, and rather more than less. ³For the enemy is not a little used to try and make one cut short the hour of such contemplation, meditation, or prayer.

[13] ¹*Thirteenth Annotation.* The thirteenth: it is likewise to be remarked that, as, in the time of consolation, it is easy and not irksome to be in contemplation the full hour, so it is very hard in the time of desolation to fill it out. ²For this reason, the person who is exercising himself, in order to act against the desolation and conquer the temptations, ought always to stay somewhat more than the full hour; so as to accustom himself not only to resist the adversary, but even to overthrow him.

[14] ¹*Fourteenth Annotation.* The fourteenth: if he who is giving the Exercises sees that he who is receiving them is going on in consolation and with much fervor, he ought to warn him not to make any inconsiderate and hasty promise or vow: ²and the more light of character he knows him to be, the more he ought to warn and admonish him. ³For, though one may justly influence another to embrace the religious life, in which he is understood to make vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, ⁴and, although a good work done under vow is more meritorious than one done without it, ⁵one should carefully consider the circumstances and personal qualities of the individual and how much help or hindrance he is likely to find in fulfilling the thing he would want to promise.

[11] 11. When we are involved with the exercises of the first week, we should not try to escape from total attention upon those considerations by looking to the matter of the later weeks. At each stage of the retreat, we need to work as if our whole response to God is found in the material at hand.

[12] 12. In making the Exercises we ordinarily spend one full hour for each formal prayer period suggested by the director. When we feel tempted to cut short the hour, we should recognize the temptation for what it is—the first steps of taking back from God my total gift—and extend the time of prayer for a few minutes beyond the set time.

[13] 13. When we find prayer comes easy and is a joy, we may well be tempted so to prolong the period of prayer that soon we find ourselves responding to the consolations of God more than to God. At such times, the observance of the set hour is a safeguard against subtle self-seeking even in prayer. When we find prayer dry and even a burden, we must be sure to spend the full hour as part of our attempt to respond by waiting for the Lord.

[14] 14. When we are uplifted by consolation or fervor so that we desire to make great plans or to pronounce some sort of vow, the director needs to provide some caution. The director should respect our idealism, but at the same time for our own good progress the director must be able to weigh the graces of God, along with the natural endowments of personality, character, and intelligence—all God's gifts to us.

[15] ¹Fifteenth Annotation. The fifteenth: he who is giving the Exercises ought not to influence him who is receiving them more to poverty or to a promise, than to their opposites, nor more to one state or way of life than to another. ²For though, outside the Exercises, we can lawfully and with merit influence every one who is probably fit to choose continence, virginity, the religious life, and all manner of evangelical perfection, ³still in the Spiritual Exercises, when seeking the Divine Will, it is more fitting and much better, that the Creator and Lord Himself should communicate Himself to His devout soul, ⁴inflaming it with His love and praise, and disposing it for the way in which it will be better able to serve Him in the future. ⁵So, he who is giving the Exercises should not turn or incline to one side or the other, but standing in the center like a balance, ⁶leave the Creator to act immediately with the creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord.

[16] ¹Sixteenth Annotation. The sixteenth: for this—namely, that the Creator and Lord may work more surely in His creature—it is very expedient, ²if it happens that the soul is attached or inclined to a thing inordinately, that one should move himself, putting forth all his strength, to come to the contrary of what he is wrongly drawn to. ³Thus if he inclines to seeking and possessing an office or benefice, not for the honor and glory of God our Lord, nor for the spiritual well-being of souls, but for his own temporal advantage and interests, ⁴he ought to excite his feelings to the contrary, being instant in prayers and other spiritual exercises, and asking God our Lord for the contrary, ⁵namely, not to want such office or benefice, or any other thing, unless His Divine Majesty, putting his desires in order, change his first inclination for him, ⁶so that the motive for desiring or having one thing or another be only for the service, honor, and glory of His Divine Majesty.

[17] ¹Seventeenth Annotation. The seventeenth: it is very helpful that he who is giving the Exercises, without wanting to ask or know from him who is receiving them his personal

[15] 15. A director always provides the balance for us, both in our times of exhilaration and of discouragement. The director is not the one who urges a particular decision—for example, to enter religious life, to marry this or that person, or to take a vow of poverty. The director facilitates the movement of God's grace within us so that the light and love of God inflame all possible decisions and resolutions about life situations. God is not only our Creator but also the Director of our retreat, and the human director never should provide a hindrance to such an intimate communication.

[16] 16. If we feel a disorder in our attachment to a person, to a job or position, to a certain dwelling place, a certain city, country, and so on, we should take it to the Lord and pray insistently to be given the grace to free ourselves from such disorder. What we want above all is the ability to respond freely to God, and all other loves for people, places, and things are held in proper perspective by the light and strength of God's grace.

[17] 17. We are aware that the retreat director, even if a priest, is not necessarily our confessor. It is not essential for the director to know our past sins or even our present state of sin. At the same time, however, the attempt to speak out

Director's relationship.
sins, ²should be faithfully informed of the various movements and thoughts which the different spirits put in him. ³For, according as is more or less useful for him, he can give him some spiritual exercises suited and adapted to the need of such a soul so acted upon.

[18] ¹*Eighteenth Annotation.* The eighteenth: the Spiritual Exercises have to be adapted to the dispositions of the persons who wish to receive them, that is, to their age, education, or ability, ²in order not to give to one who is uneducated or of little intelligence things he cannot easily bear and profit by.

³Again, that should be given to each one by which, according to his wish to dispose himself, he may be better able to help himself and to profit.

⁴So, to him who wants help to be instructed and to come to a certain degree of contentment of soul, can be given the particular examen [24], and then the general examen [32]; ⁵also, for a half hour in the morning, the method of prayer on the commandments, the deadly sins, etc. [238]. ⁶Let him be recommended, also, to confess his sins every eight days, and, if he can, to receive the Blessed Sacrament every fifteen days, and better, if he be so moved, every eight. ⁷This way is more proper for illiterate or less educated persons. Let each of the commandments be explained to them; and so of the deadly sins, precepts of the Church, five senses, and works of mercy.

Week 2
So, too, should he who is giving the Exercises observe that he who is receiving them has little ability or natural capacity, from whom not much fruit is to be hoped, ⁹it is more expedient to give him some of these easy exercises, until he confess his sins. ¹⁰Then let him be given some examens of conscience and some method for going to Confession oftener than was his custom, in order to preserve what he has gained, ¹¹but let him not go on into the matter of the election, or into any other exercises that are outside of the first week, ¹²especially when more progress can be made in other persons and there is not time for every thing.

our temptations and fears, the consolations and lights given to us by God, and the various movements that happen within us provides most important data for the direction of our retreat. For as we speak out what is happening to us, the director can listen, mirror back to us, enlighten, and adapt the progress of the retreat according to the way we are being stirred by God to make our response. Without this openness between ourselves and our director, the retreat itself will not be able to be adapted and focused so as to facilitate the growth possible for us.

[18] 18. We should be aware that the Spiritual Exercises are meant to be adapted for us by the director who takes account of our age and maturity, education, potential, and talents. The director decides what exercises would prove useless or even harmful to us as retreatants because of our lack of physical strength or natural ability as well as what exercises would benefit and perhaps challenge us when we are properly disposed and endowed. The director may discover that at this particular time of life we have neither the ability nor the desire to go beyond what is ordinarily described as the exercises of the first week. So, too, the director should make the judgment whether the full Exercises would be profitable to us at this time. Because the Exercises are a limited instrument through which God can work, we should be aware that this retreat method does not seem to suit everyone—sometimes because of a lack of appropriate talents, perhaps because of a certain personality makeup, or because God does not draw a person to respond through the structured method of these Exercises.

[19] ¹Nineteenth Annotation. The nineteenth: a person of education or ability ²who is taken up with public affairs or suitable business, may take an hour and a half daily to exercise himself.

³Let the end for which man is created be explained to him, and he can also be given for the space of a half-hour the particular examen and then the general and the way to confess and to receive the Blessed Sacrament. ⁴Let him, during three days every morning, for the space of an hour, make the meditation on the first, second, and third sins [45-54]; ⁵then, three other days at the same hour, the meditation on the statement of sins [55]; ⁶then, for three other days at the same hour, on the punishments corresponding to sins [65]. ⁷Let him be given in all three meditations the ten additions [73-90].

⁸For the mysteries of Christ our Lord, let the same course be kept, as is explained below and in full in the Exercises themselves.

[20] ¹Twentieth Annotation. The twentieth: to him who is more disengaged, and who desires to get all the profit he can, let all the Spiritual Exercises be given in the order in which they follow.

²In these he will, ordinarily, more benefit himself, the more he separates himself from all friends and acquaintances and from all earthly cares, ³as by changing from the house where he was dwelling, and taking another house or room to live in, in as much privacy as he can, ⁴so that it be in his power to go each day to Mass and to Vespers, without fear that his acquaintances will put obstacles in his way.

⁵From this isolation, three chief benefits, among many others, follow.

⁶The first is that a man, by separating himself from many friends and acquaintances, and likewise from many not well-ordered affairs, to serve and praise God our Lord, merits no little in the sight of His Divine Majesty.

[19] 19. We may be retreatants of suitable talent and proper disposition whom the director determines to help through the full Exercises, but carried on in the face of normal occupations and living conditions for the extent of the whole retreat. Truly it is a retreat in everyday life. As retreatants we should determine, along with the director, the amount of time possible each day for prayer so that the director can divide up the matter accordingly. If an hour and an half can be secured daily by us, the retreat could progress slowly, with almost a single point providing enough material for such a consistent prayer time. For example, in the first exercise of the first week, each single example of sin might provide the matter to be considered in prayer for that day. So, too, in the mysteries of Our Lord's life, we may find it helpful in our retreat in daily life to return to the same mystery for three or four days in succession.

[20] 20. Ordinarily, if we want to give ourselves over to the movement of these Exercises, it is most helpful to go apart from what usually surrounds us—both friends and family, job and recreation, and our usual places of home and work. There are many advantages which come from this separation, for example: (1) if we are so intent on responding ever better to the love of God wherever it will lead us in our life, we will find the kind of quiet in which the movement of God in our life becomes all the more apparent; (2) our mind will not find itself divided over many

⁷The second is, that being thus isolated, and not having his understanding divided on many things, but concentrating his care on one only, namely, on serving his Creator and benefiting his own soul, ⁸he uses with greater freedom his natural powers, in seeking with diligence what he so much desires.

⁹The third: the more our soul finds itself alone and isolated, the more apt it makes itself to approach and to reach its Creator and Lord, ¹⁰and the more it so approaches Him, the more it disposes itself to receive graces and gifts from His Divine and Sovereign Goodness.

cares, but rather its one concern will be to follow the lead of God; (3) in a similar way, our powers of loving, too, will be focused for this period of time solely upon God, and the response which we will be able to make is all the more intense and intimate because the demand for such a response is so single.