

## **Two presentations of “The First Principle and Foundation” - The beginning of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola [1491-1556] -**

- **1954 literal translation by Louis J. Puhl, S.J. of Spanish of St. Ignatius in the 1500s**

Man 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 man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.

Hence, man is to make use of them in as far as they help him in the attainment of his end, and must rid himself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to him.

Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things.

Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created.

- **1978 contemporary reading/paraphrase by David L. Fleming, S.J.**

The goal of our life is to live with God forever.  
God who loves us, gave us life.  
Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit. All the things in this world are gifts of God, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God insofar as they help us develop as loving persons.  
But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives, they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some obligation.  
We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or short one.

For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a deeper response to our life in God. Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to the deepening of God's life in me.

Dear XU Board Members,

In preparation for our XU Board Mission Reflection -- The Spiritual Exercises: The First Principle and Foundation, we invite you to imagine St. Ignatius presenting this foundational consideration to you.

The two variations being sent to you are the beginning of the Spiritual Exercises. Historically and in this very day, all the work that the Society of Jesus does and sponsors is built on this First Principle and Foundation. Because our work at XU will be built with your continued good self and intentions, what stirs within you as you consider this First Principle and Foundation?

So, in light of XU and your own self, take a few daily moments between now and the Board meeting to consider, to ponder, to wonder, to reflect upon these two presentations. One is a literal translation from the Spanish of old. The other is a contemporary reading/paraphrase.

We will use this as the “foundation” for our presentation and table sharing at the start of the Board meeting on Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. We do not envision any “reporting out” from tables!

Peace,



Walter Deye, S.J., Eric Sundrup, S.J., Bill Verbryke, S.J.

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