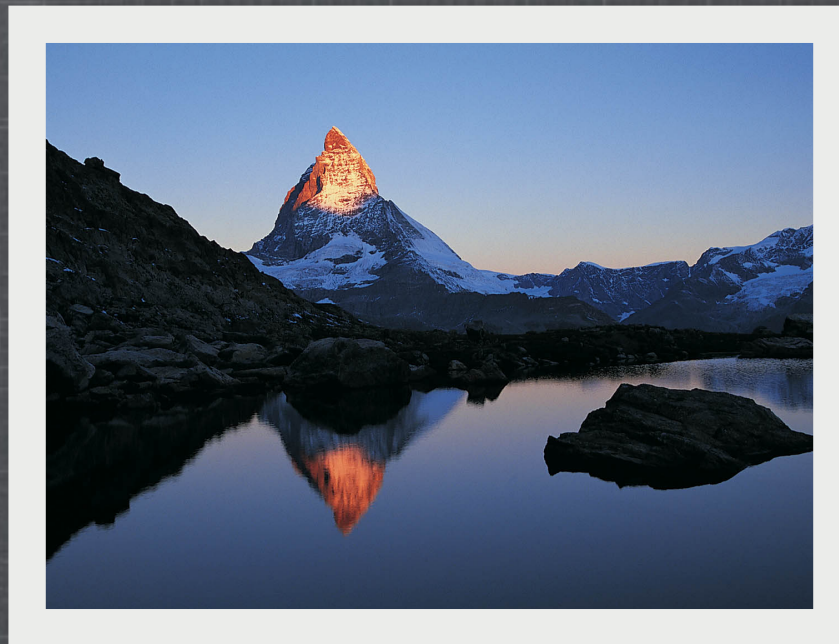


“KNOWING OUR ENEMY”

CONSOLATION & DESOLATION

But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance. (Luke 8:15)



3rd Presentation

CROSSING THE GOAL

- Click [here](#) for video

BEARING FRUIT

- The cursing of the fig tree (cf. Matthew 18:22) was a sign that we can bear fruit through all seasons if we are open, humble and docile to the Holy Spirit.
- Even the difficulties in life can be used to glorify God and show that real love “endures all things” (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:7)
- Our ability to shoulder our crosses helps others come to faith (power in weakness theme) (Daniel 3)

GREAT WISDOM FROM ST. IGNATIUS - RULE 1

The first rule: in persons who are going from mortal sin to mortal sin, the enemy is ordinarily accustomed to propose apparent pleasures to them, leading them to imagine sensual delights and pleasures in order to hold more and make them grow in their vices and sins. In these persons the good spirit uses a contrary method, stinging and biting their consciences through their rational power of moral judgment.

ACTIVITY OF THE ENEMY

St. Augustine: “In my youth I burned to get my fill of evil things.” A great energy is stirred in Augustine, an energy that leads him away from God and toward “sensual delights and pleasures.” If this working in the imagination is the ordinary tactic of the enemy in all ages, it would seem true to say that the stakes are higher in a “culture of the image” as is ours today.

ACTIVITY OF THE GOOD SPIRIT

“I was in torment, reproaching myself more bitterly than ever as I twisted and turned in my chain. . .And you, O Lord, never ceased to watch over my secret heart. In your stern mercy you lashed with the twin scourge of fear and shame in case I should give way once more and the worn and slender remnant of my chain should not be broken but gain new strength and bind me all the faster.”

ACTIVITY OF THE GOOD SPIRIT

- Augustine was experiencing the Good Spirit of God leading him away from sin.
- Questions can arise in the heart of such a person: Are you really happy living this way? Can you continue to live in such inner emptiness? Is not life meant to be more than this? Why do you hurt those who love and need you, living the way you do?
- Such stirrings are the action of the good spirit, arousing a “godly sorrow” that “produces a salutary repentance without regret” (2 Cor 7:10)

ST. IGNATIUS

RULE 3

The third rule is of spiritual consolation. I call it consolation when some interior movement is caused in the soul, through which the soul comes to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord, and, consequently when it can love no created thing on the face of the earth in itself, but only in the Creator of them all. Likewise when it shed's tears that move to love of its Lord, or because of other things directly ordered to his service and praise. Finally, I call consolation every increase of faith, hope, and charity, and all interior joy that calls and attracts to heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, quieting it and giving it peace in its Creator and Lord.

EXAMPLE OF RULE 3

“I will never have the strength to be a Carmelite,” I said to myself; it’s too hard a life for me.” I had been kneeling for several minutes in this state of agitation and sad thoughts when, all of a sudden, without having prayed or even yearned for peace, I felt an extraordinary change in my soul. I didn’t recognize myself anymore. My vocation, the privations and the fatigues of religious life seemed to me infinitely more desirable than mundane satisfactions. I left prayer absolutely transformed.”

ST. IGNATIUS 4TH RULE

The fourth is of spiritual desolation. I call desolation all the contrary of the the third rule, such as darkness of soul, disturbance in it, movement to low and earthly things, disquiet from various agitations and temptations, moving to lack of confidence, without hope, without love, finding oneself totally slothful, tepid, sad, and, as if separated from one's Creator and Lord. For just as consolation is contrary to desolation, in the same way thoughts that come from consolation are contrary to the thoughts that come from desolation.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Persons in spiritual desolation, finally, feel as though they are without love. In spiritual consolation the heart experiences a “warm” perception of God’s love. In spiritual desolation, on the contrary, the heart finds itself “cold,” unable to sense God’s loving presence; it feels as though it is without love.” This feeling does not signify that such dedicated person in fact have no love of God but it is, rather, a classic indication of spiritual desolation. Within the time of desolation, however, this perception can seem very real. To name such experiences as spiritual desolation is an invaluable step toward liberation from the lie they suggest.

CONSOLATION/ DESOLATION

- God gives the first lesson, that is spiritual consolation. With equal clarity he teaches that God does not give the second lesson, that is, spiritual desolation, but simply permits it to be given by another agency, that is, by the enemy. God gives spiritual consolation; God never gives spiritual desolation. God however, does permit the enemy to give us spiritual desolation at times for reasons that lie within his loving providence.

UNDERSTANDING

Once we comprehend clearly, in practical and usable terms, the nature of spiritual desolation, we are on the road toward freedom from its tyranny. This is the service of Ignatius renders us with his fourth rule. Ignatian discernment of spirits opens the gateway to hope; it is a proclamation of liberation to those who were held in bondage (Luke 4:18)

ST. IGNATIUS

5TH RULE

In time of desolation never make a change, but be firm and constant in the proposals and determination in which one was the day preceding such desolation, or in the determination in which one was in the preceding consolation. Because, as in consolation the good spirit guides and counsels us more, so in desolation the bad spirit, with whose counsels we cannot find the way to a right decision.

EXAMPLE

- “It is difficult to exaggerate the good this single rule has worked in lives of countless dedicated persons over the centuries since Ignatius formulated it. At time it will be the one light that shines in the confusing darkness, revealing clearly the call of the Lord to unchanging fidelity in time of spiritual desolation. Knowledge and practical application of this guideline will bless us repeatedly on the spiritual journey.

ST. IGNATIUS

6TH RULE

The sixth; although in desolation we should not change our first proposals, it is very advantageous to change ourselves intensely against the desolation itself, as by insisting more upon prayer, meditation, upon much examination, and upon extending ourselves in some suitable way of doing penance.

EXAMPLES

- “If in desolate prayer, which God seems far away and our efforts useless, there is a tendency to resolve the heaviness by ending the prayer sooner than planned, then says Ignatius, the “suitable” remedy is to do exactly the opposite. In the first place, we should reject the tendency to shorten the prayer and should continue for the full time as planned before the spiritual desolation began. In fact, says Ignatius, rather than shorten the prayer we may even lengthen it, perhaps just a minute or two, beyond the time originally planned. In this way we habituate ourselves “not only to resist the one illustration of the small but well-directed acts of courage that “act against the desolation” and fortify us in the ability to resist and overcome the enemy.

SPIRITUAL HEALTH CHECK

- Area of sin
- Teaching
- Testing
- Staying connected with the believing community. God designed the Body to function through its members. Not just one on one
- Receiving / Versus giving mode (Balance - reasonable expectations for ourselves and others.)