

## **Ignatius' First Principle and Foundation**

As a help during Section I retreat founder Ignatius puts before us what he refers to as the First Principle and Foundation. (See attached) In many ways it was his “mission statement” ... a comprehensive look at what he believed most important.

During Section I of this retreat you might want to simply reflect, meditate upon and pray over his *First Principle* (making notations in your journal as you go). You may also want to meditate on Ephesians 1: 3-14, noting that it was the basis for Ignatius' *First Principle and Foundation*.

### **“All other things”**

There is no better medium to take in, observe, appreciate, revel in, get lost in, be overwhelmed by, etc. the magnificence of God than that we step out into *creation* ... into nature. Ignatius put it well:

**“All other things on the face of the earth  
were created for man to help us attain  
the end for which we were created.”**

And lest we miss this ... all other things does means all!

- all that came to be during the six days of Creation
- all that has been birthed by the creativeness God instilled in man
- all of our experiences, remembrances, imaginations, relationships and thoughts

## First ...

This is a wonderful Exercise to simply take time to wander in the beauties of nature ... slowly moving about ... observing what we so often miss ... taking in deeply what we so often only glance at ...

just reveling in the God Who could even conceive of such “all other things” ... much less create them.

Take your time ... walk slowly ... stop often ... allow God to speak to you ... and then you speak to Him.

## Then ...

Secondly, do give ample time to reflect upon the gifts you've received over the course of your own life. As you consider each gift you might want to ask the question, “Where were You O Lord in my receiving this particular gift/blessing?”

Consider carefully what “**All other things**” means to you ... both past and present. You might want to take the categories below and reflect/journal as to how various events/people/gifts/experiences/etc. over the course of your life helped you to ...

**“ ... attain the end for which  
you were created.”**

**AND TO**

**“ ... want and choose what better leads to  
God deepening His life in me.”**

## Some Categories of “All other things” ...

People you've known  
Spouse  
Children/Grandchildren  
Education  
Parents/Grandparents

Places you've lived  
Churches you've attended  
Employment you've had  
Spiritual experiences  
Financial resources you've had

Places you've gone  
Animals  
Health  
Hobbies you've loved  
Things you've seen

Other, etc.

Use your journal ... allow God to speak to you through your reflections, written prayers and meditations.

### **Gratitude**

Of critical importance, Ignatius often spoke of 'gratitude' as being the key virtue of the Christian life. Meditating on the *First Principle* and/or Ephesians 1 ... and luxuriating in the creativeness of God in nature, and the gifts He has lavished you with, let gratitude flow freely from the depths during this time of quiet and silence.

## **Ignatius' Principle and Foundation**

**THE GOAL OF OUR LIFE (THE END FOR WHICH WE WERE CREATED) IS TO LIVE WITH GOD FOREVER. WE WERE ALL CREATED TO PRAISE, REVERENCE, AND SERVE GOD OUR LORD. OUR OWN RESPONSES OF LOVE ALLOW GOD'S LIFE TO FLOW INTO US WITHOUT LIMIT.**

**ALL OTHER THINGS ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH WERE CREATED FOR MAN TO HELP US ATTAIN THE END FOR WHICH WE WERE CREATED.**

**HENCE, WE ARE TO MAKE USE OF THEM IN AS FAR AS THEY HELP US TO ATTAIN OUR END, AND WE MUST RID OURSELVES OF THEM IN AS FAR AS THEY PROVE A HINDRANCE TO US.**

**THEREFORE, WE MUST MAKE OURSELVES INDIFFERENT TO ALL CREATED THINGS, AS FAR AS WE ARE ALLOWED FREE CHOICE AND ARE NOT BOUND BY SOME OBLIGATION. 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 ONLY DESIRE AND OUR ONE CHOICE SHOULD BE THIS: I WANT AND I CHOOSE WHAT BETTER LEADS TO GOD DEEPENING HIS LIFE IN ME.**