

All My Liberty

Appendix I: Selections from the Text of the Exercises

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First Principle and Foundation

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 he 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.

Sin: Angelic, Original and Personal

THE FIRST EXERCISE is a meditation on the first, second, and third sin, employing the three powers of the soul. After the preparatory

prayer and two preludes, it contains three principal points and a colloquy.

In the preparatory prayer I will beg of God our Lord that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the praise and service of His Divine Majesty.

FIRST PRELUDE: This is a mental representation of the place. . . . In a case where the subject matter is not visible, as here in a meditation on sin, the representation will be to see in imagination my soul as a prisoner in this corruptible body, and to consider my whole composite being as an exile here on earth, cast out to live among brute beasts. I said my whole composite being, body and soul.

SECOND PRELUDE: I will ask God our Lord for what I want and desire. . . . Here it will be to ask for shame and confusion, because I see how many have been lost on account of a single mortal sin, and how many times I have deserved eternal damnation, because of the many grievous sins that I have committed.

THE FIRST POINT: This will consist in using the memory to recall the first sin, which was that of the angels, and then in applying the understanding by reasoning upon this sin, then the will by seeking to remember and understand all to be the more filled with shame and confusion when I compare the one sin of the angels with the many sins I have committed. I will consider that they went to hell for one sin, and the number of times I have deserved to be condemned forever because of my numerous sins.

I said we should apply the memory to the sin of the angels, that is, recalling that they were

created in the state of grace, that they did not want to make use of the freedom God gave them to reverence and obey their Creator and Lord, and so falling into pride, were changed from grace to hatred of God, and cast out of heaven into hell.

So, too, the understanding is to be used to think over the matter more in detail, and then the will to rouse more deeply the emotions.

SECOND POINT: In the same way the three powers of the soul are applied to the sin of Adam and Eve. Recall to memory how on account of this sin they did penance for so long a time, and the great corruption which came upon the human race that caused so many to be lost in hell.

I said recall to mind the second sin, that of our First Parents. After Adam had been created on the Plain of Damascus and placed in the Garden of Paradise, and Eve had been formed from his side, they sinned by violating the command not to eat of the tree of knowledge. Thereafter, they were clothed in garments of skin and cast out of Paradise. By their sin they lost original justice, and for the rest of their lives, lived without it in many labors and great penance.

So, too, the understanding is to be used to think over the matter in greater detail, and the will is to be used as explained above.

THIRD POINT. In like manner we are to do the same with regard to the third sin, namely, that of one who went to hell because of one mortal sin. Consider also countless others who have been lost for fewer sins than I have committed.

I said to do the same for the third particular sin. Recall to memory the gravity and malice of sin against our Creator and Lord. Use the understanding in considering that because of sin, and of acting against the Infinite Goodness, one is justly condemned forever. Close with the acts of the will as we have said above.

COLLOQUY: Imagine Christ our Lord present before you upon the cross, and begin to speak with him, asking how it is that though He is the Creator, He has stooped to become man, and to pass from eternal life to death here in time, that thus He might die for our sins.

I shall also reflect upon myself and ask:

“What have I done for Christ?”

“What am I doing for Christ?”

“What ought I to do for Christ?”

As I behold Christ in this plight, nailed to the cross, I shall ponder upon what presents itself to my mind . . .

The colloquy is made by speaking exactly as one friend speaks to another, or as a servant speaks to a master, now asking him for a favor, now blaming himself for some misdeed, now making known his affairs to him, and seeking advice in them. Close with an *Our Father*.

SECOND EXERCISE. This is a meditation on our sins. After the preparatory prayer and two preludes, there are five points and a colloquy.

FIRST PRELUDE: This will be the same as in the First Exercise.

SECOND PRELUDE: This is to ask for what I desire. Here it will be to ask for a growing and intense sorrow and tears for my sins.

FIRST POINT: This is a record of my sins. I will call to mind all the sins of my life, reviewing year by year, and period by period. Three things will help me in this: First, to consider the place where I lived; secondly, my dealings with others; thirdly, the office I have held.

SECOND POINT: I will weigh the gravity of my sins, and see the loathsomeness and malice which every mortal sin I have committed has in itself, even though it were not forbidden.

THIRD POINT: I will consider who I am, and by means of examples humble myself:

What am I compared with all men?

What are all men compared with the angels and saints of paradise?

Consider what all creation is in comparison with God. Then I alone, what can I be?

I will consider all the corruption and loathsomeness of my body.

I will consider myself as a source of corruption and contagion from which have issued countless sins and the most offensive poison.

FOURTH POINT: I will consider who God is against whom I have sinned, going through His attributes and comparing them with their contraries in me: His wisdom and my ignorance, His power with my weakness, His

justice with my iniquity, His goodness with my wickedness.

FIFTH POINT: This is a cry of wonder accompanied by surging emotion as I pass in review all creatures. How is it that they have permitted me to live, and have sustained me in life! Why have the angels, though they are the sword of God's justice, tolerated me, guarded me, and prayed for me! Why have the saints interceded for me and asked favors for me! And the heavens, sun, moon, stars, and the elements; fruits, birds, fishes, and other animals---why have they all been at my service! How is it that the earth did not open to swallow me up, and create new hells in which I should be tormented forever!

COLLOQUY. I will conclude with a colloquy, extolling the mercy of God our Lord, pouring out my thoughts to Him, and giving thanks to Him that up to this very moment He has granted me life. I will resolve with His grace to amend for the future. Close with an *Our Father*.

THE THIRD EXERCISE is a repetition of the First and Second Exercises with three colloquies.

After the preparatory prayer and the two preludes, this exercise will consist in repeating the First and Second Exercise. In doing this, we should pay attention to and dwell upon those points in which we have experienced greater consolation or desolation or greater spiritual appreciation. After the repetition, three colloquies are to be used in the following manner:

FIRST COLLOQUY: The first colloquy will be with our Blessed Lady, that she may obtain grace from her Son for three favors:

1. a deep knowledge of my sins and a feeling of abhorrence for them;
2. an understanding of the disorder of my actions, that filled with horror of them, I may amend my life and put it in order;
3. a knowledge of the world, that filled with horror, I may put away from me all that is worldly and vain. Then I will say a *Hail Mary*.

SECOND COLLOQUY: I will make the same petitions to the Divine Son that He may obtain these graces for me from the Father. After that I will say *Soul of Christ*.

THIRD COLLOQUY: I will make the same request of the heavenly Father that He Himself may grant them to me. Then I will close with the *Our Father*.

The Kingdom of Christ

FIRST PRELUDE: This is a mental representation of the place. Here it will be to see in imagination the synagogues, villages and towns where Jesus preached.

SECOND PRELUDE: I will ask for the grace I desire. Here it will be to ask of our Lord the grace not to be deaf to His call, but prompt and diligent to accomplish His holy will.

Call of an Earthly King

FIRST POINT. This will be to place before my mind a human king, chosen by God our Lord Himself, to whom all Christian princes and people pay homage and obedience.

SECOND POINT. This will be to consider the address this king makes to all his subjects, with the words: "It is my will to conquer all

infidel lands. Therefore, whoever wishes to join with me in this enterprise must be content with the same food, drink, clothing, etc. as mine. So, too, he must work with me by day, and watch with me by night, etc., that as he has had a share in the toil with me, afterwards, he may share in the victory with me."

THIRD POINT. Consider what the answer of good subjects ought to be to a king so generous and noble minded, and consequently, if anyone would refuse the invitation of such a king, how justly he would deserve to be condemned by the whole world and looked upon as an ignoble knight.

Call of Christ the Eternal King. The second part of this exercise will consist in applying the example of the earthly king mentioned above to Christ our Lord according to the following points:

FIRST POINT: If such a summons of an earthly king to his subjects deserves our attention, how much more worthy of consideration is Christ our Lord, the Eternal King, before whom is assembled the whole world. To all His summons goes forth, and to each one in particular He addresses the words: "It is my will to conquer the whole world and all my enemies, and thus to enter into the glory of my Father. Therefore, whoever wishes to join me in this enterprise must be willing to labor with me, that by following me in suffering, he may follow me in glory."

SECOND POINT. Consider that all persons who have judgment and reason will offer themselves entirely for this work.

THIRD POINT. Those who wish to give greater proof of their love, and to distinguish themselves in the service of the eternal King

and the Lord of all, will not only offer themselves entirely for the work, but will act against their sensuality and carnal and worldly love, and make offerings of greater value and of more importance in words such as these:

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, this is the offering of myself which I make with Thy favor and help. I protest that it is my earnest desire and my deliberate choice, provided only it is for Thy greater service and praise, 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.

Two Standards

The one of Christ, our supreme leader and lord, the other of Lucifer, the deadly enemy of our human nature.

FIRST PRELUDE. This is the history. Here it will be that Christ calls and wants all beneath His standard, and Lucifer, on the other hand, wants all under his.

SECOND PRELUDE. This is a mental representation. It will be here to see a great plain, comprising the whole region about Jerusalem, where the sovereign Commander-in-Chief of all the good is Christ our Lord; and another plain about the region of Babylon, where the chief of the enemy is Lucifer.

THIRD PRELUDE. This is to ask for what I desire. Here it will be to ask for a knowledge of the deceits of the rebel chief and help to guard myself against them; and also to ask for a knowledge of the true life exemplified in the

sovereign and true Commander, and the grace to imitate Him.

Standard of Satan

FIRST POINT. Imagine you see the chief of all the enemy in the vast plain about Babylon, seated on a great throne of fire and smoke, his appearance inspiring horror and terror.

SECOND POINT. Consider how he summons innumerable demons, and scatters them, some to one city and some to another, throughout the whole world, so that no province, no place, no state of life, no individual is overlooked.

THIRD POINT. Consider the address he makes to them, how he goads them on to lay snares for men, to seek to chain them. First they are to tempt them to covet riches (as Satan himself is accustomed to do in most cases) that they may the more easily attain the empty honors of this world, and then come to over-weening pride.

The first step, then, will be riches, the second honor, the third pride. From these three steps the evil one leads to all other vices.

Standard of Christ

In a similar way we are to picture to ourselves the sovereign and true Commander, Christ our Lord.

FIRST POINT. Consider Christ our Lord, standing in a lowly place in a great plain about the region of Jerusalem, His appearance beautiful and attractive.

SECOND POINT. Consider how the Lord of all the world chooses so many persons,

apostles, disciples, etc., and sends them throughout the whole world to spread His sacred doctrine among all men, no matter what their state or condition.

THIRD POINT. Consider the address which Christ our Lord makes to His servants and friends whom He sends on this enterprise, recommending to them to seek to help all, first by attracting them to the highest spiritual poverty, and should it please the Divine Majesty, and should He deign to choose them for it, even to actual poverty. Secondly, they should lead them to a desire for insults and contempt, for from these springs humility.

COLLOQUY. A Colloquy should be addressed to our Lady, asking her to obtain for me from her Son and Lord to be received under His standard, first in the highest spiritual poverty, and should the Divine Majesty be pleased thereby, even in actual poverty; secondly, in bearing insults and wrongs, thereby to imitate Him better, provided only I can suffer these without sin on the part of another, and without offense of the Divine Majesty. Then I will say the *Hail Mary*.

SECOND COLLOQUY. This will be to ask her Son to obtain the same favors for me from the Father. Then I will say, *Soul of Christ*.

THIRD COLLOQUY. This will be to beg the Father to grant me the same graces. Then I will say the *Our Father*.

Three Classes of Men

FIRST PRELUDE. This is a history of the Three Classes of Men. Each of them has acquired ten thousand ducats, but not entirely as they should have, for the love of God. They

all wish to save their souls and find peace in God our Lord by ridding themselves of the burden arising from the attachment to the sum acquired, which impedes the attainment of this end.

SECOND PRELUDE. This is a mental representation of the place. Here it will be to behold myself standing in the presence of God our Lord and of all His saints to desire and know what is more pleasing to His Divine Goodness.

THIRD PRELUDE. This is to ask for what I desire. Here it will be to beg for the grace to choose what is more for the glory of His Divine Majesty and the salvation of my soul.

THE FIRST CLASS. They would like to rid themselves of the attachment they have to the sum acquired in order to find peace in God our Lord and assure their salvation, but the hour of death comes, and they have not made use of any means.

THE SECOND CLASS. They want to rid themselves of the attachment, but they wish to do so in such a way that they retain what they have acquired, so that God is to come to what they desire, and they do not decide to give up the sum of money in order to go to God, though this would be the better way for them.

THE THIRD CLASS. These want to rid themselves of the attachment, but they wish to do so in such a way that they desire neither to retain nor to relinquish the sum acquired. They seek only to will and not will as God our Lord inspires them, and as seems better for the service and praise of the Divine Majesty. Meanwhile, they will strive to conduct themselves as if every attachment to it had been broken. They will make efforts neither to

want that, nor anything else, unless the service of God our Lord alone move them to do so. As a result, the desire to be better able to serve God our Lord will be the cause of their accepting anything or relinquishing it.

THREEFOLD COLLOQUY. I will make use of the same three colloquies employed in the preceding contemplation on the Two Standards.

It should be noted that when we feel an attachment opposed to actual poverty or a repugnance to it, when we are not indifferent to poverty and riches, it will be very helpful in order to overcome the inordinate attachment, even though corrupt nature rebel against it, to beg our Lord in the colloquies to choose us to serve Him in actual poverty. We should insist that we desire it, beg for it, plead for it, provided, of course, that it be for the service and praise of the Divine Goodness.

Three Kinds of Humility

THE FIRST KIND OF HUMILITY. This is necessary for salvation. It consists in this, that as far as possible I so subject and humble myself as to obey the law of God our Lord in all things, so that not even were I made lord of all creation, or to save my life here on earth, would I consent to violate a commandment, whether divine or human, that binds me under pain of mortal sin.

THE SECOND KIND OF HUMILITY. This is more perfect than the first. I possess it if my attitude of mind is such that I neither desire nor am I inclined to have riches rather than poverty, to seek honor rather than dishonor to desire a long life rather than a short life, provided only in either alternative I would promote equally the service of God our Lord

and the salvation of my soul. Besides this indifference, this second kind of humility supposes that not for all creation, nor to save my life, would I consent to commit a venial sin.

THE THIRD KIND OF HUMILITY. This is the most perfect. It consists in this. If we suppose the first and second kind attained, then whenever the praise and glory of God would be equally served, I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor, rather than riches, in order to imitate and be in reality more like Christ our Lord; I choose insults with Christ loaded with them, rather than honors; I desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in this world. So Christ was treated before me.

Note: If one desires to attain this third kind of humility, it will help very much to use the three colloquies at the close of the meditation on the three Classes of Men mentioned above. He should beg our Lord to deign to choose him for this third kind of humility, which is higher and better, that he may the more imitate and serve Him, provided equal praise and service be given to the Divine Majesty.

Two Ways of Making an Election

The First Way

FIRST POINT. I place before my mind the object with regard to which I wish to make a choice, for example, an office, or the reception or rejection of a benefice, or anything else that may be the object of a choice subject to change.

SECOND POINT. It is necessary to keep as my aim the end for which I am created, that is, the praise of God and the salvation of my soul. Besides this, I must be indifferent, without any inordinate attachment, so that I am not more inclined or disposed to accept the object in question than to relinquish it, not to give it up than to accept it. I should be like a balance at equilibrium, without leaning to either side, that I might be ready to follow whatever I perceive is more for the glory and praise of God and the salvation of my soul.

THIRD POINT. I should beg God our Lord to deign to move my will, and to bring to my mind what I ought to do to promote His praise and glory with regard to the matter in question. Then I should use the understanding to weigh the matter with care and fidelity, and make my choice in conformity with His most holy will.

FOURTH POINT. This will be to weight the matter by reckoning the number of advantages and benefits that would accrue to me if I had the proposed office or benefice solely for the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul. On the other hand, I should weigh the disadvantages and dangers there might be in having it. I will do the same with the second alternative, that is, weigh the advantages and benefits as well as the disadvantages and danger of not having it.

FIFTH POINT. After I have gone over and pondered in this way every aspect of the matter in question, I will consider which alternative appears more reasonable. Then I must come to a decision in the matter under deliberation because of weightier motives presented to my reason, and not because of any sensual inclination.

SIXTH POINT. After such a choice or decision, the one who has made it must turn with great diligence to prayer in the presence of God our Lord, and offer Him his choice that the Divine Majesty may deign to accept and confirm it if it is for His greater service and praise.

The Second Way

FIRST RULE. The love that moves and causes one to choose must descent from above, that is, from the love of God, so that before one chooses he should perceive that the greater or less attachment for the object of his choice is solely because of His Creator and Lord.

SECOND RULE. I should represent to myself a man whom I have never seen or known, and whom I would like to see practice all perfection. Then I should consider what I would tell him to do and choose for the greater glory of God our Lord and the greater perfection of his soul. I will do the same, and keep the rule I propose to others.

THIRD RULE. This is to consider what procedure and norm of action I would wish to have followed in making the present choice if I were at the moment of death. I will guide myself by this and make my decision entirely in conformity with it.

FOURTH RULE. Let me picture and consider myself as standing in the presence of my judge on the last day, and reflect what decision in the present matter I would then wish to have made. I will choose now the rule of life that I would then wish to have observed, that on the day of judgment I may be filled with happiness and joy.

Guided by the rules given above for my eternal salvation and peace, I will make my decision, and will offer it to God our Lord.

Directions for Amendment and Reformation in One's State of Life

It must be borne in mind that some may be established in an ecclesiastical office, or may be married, and hence cannot make a choice of a state of life, or, in matters that may be changed and hence are subject to a choice, they may not be ready to make one.

It will be profitable for such persons, whether they possess great wealth or not, in place of a choice, to propose a way for each to reform his manner of living in his state by setting before him the purpose of his creation and of his life and position, namely, the glory of God our Lord and the salvation of his soul.

If he is really to attain this end, during the Exercises and during the consideration of the ways of making an election as explained above, he will have to examine and weigh in all its details how large a household he should maintain, how he ought to direct and administer it, how he ought to teach its members by word and example. So too he should consider what part of his income should be used for his family and household, and how much should be set aside for distribution to the poor and other pious practices.

Let him desire and seek nothing except the greater praise and glory of God our Lord as the aim of all he does. For every one must keep in mind that he will make progress in all that concerns the spiritual life in proportion as

he shall have divested himself of self-love, and of his own will and interests.

Contemplation to Attain the Love of God

Note: Before starting this exercise, it will be good to call attention to two points:

1. The first is that love should be manifested in deeds rather than words.
2. The second is that love consists in a mutual sharing of goods, for example, the lover gives and shares with the beloved what he possesses, or something of that which he has or is able to give; and vice versa, the beloved shares with the lover. Hence, if one has knowledge, he shares it with the one who does not possess it; and so also if one has honors, or riches. Thus, one always gives to the other.

FIRST PRELUDE. This is a representation of the place, which here is to behold myself standing in the presence of God our Lord and of His angels and saints, who intercede for me.

SECOND PRELUDE. This is to ask for what I desire. Here it will be to ask for an intimate knowledge of the many blessings received, that filled with gratitude for all, I may in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty.

FIRST POINT. This is to recall to mind the blessings of creation and redemption, and the special favors I have received.

I will ponder with great affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and

finally, how much, as far as He can, the same Lord desires to give Himself to me according to His divine decrees.

Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is moved by great feeling, I will make this offering of myself:

Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will, whatsoever I have and possess. Thou hast given all these things to me; to Thee, O Lord, I restore them: all are Thine, dispose of them all according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is enough for me.

SECOND POINT. This is to reflect how God dwells in creatures: in the elements giving them existence, in the plants giving them life, in the animals conferring upon them sensation, in man bestowing understanding. So He dwells in me and gives me being, life, sensation, intelligence, and makes a temple of me, besides having created me in the likeness and image of the Divine Majesty.

Then I will reflect upon myself again in the manner stated in the first point, or in some other way that may seem better.

The same should be observed with regard to each of the points that follow.

THIRD POINT. This is to consider how God works and labors for me in all creatures upon the face of the earth, that is, He conducts Himself as one who labors. Thus, in the elements, plants, fruits and cattle, he gives being, conserves them, confers life and sensation.

Then I will reflect on myself.

FOURTH POINT. This is to consider all blessings and gifts as descending from above. Thus, my limited power comes from the supreme and infinite power above, and so, too, my justice, goodness, mercy, etc., descend from above as the rays of light descend from the sun, and as the waters flow from their fountains.

Then I will reflect on myself as has been said.

Conclude with a colloquy and the *Our Father*. *

* *With minor changes, the foregoing selections are from the English translation of the Spiritual Exercises by Rev. Louis J. Puhl, S.J., published by the Newman Press.*

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