



## The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life: St. Ignatius's 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation Retreat

**Ignatian Spirituality has the simplest of premises: find God in all things. But the language associated with it can seem daunting if you don't know what it means. So in plain English, here is a guide to understanding the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius.** Saint Ignatius designed a retreat to help people deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and grow in the inner freedom they need to discern where God is truly calling them. The freedom sought in this retreat is a freedom from anything that disrupts our ability to experience what our heart most deeply desires. The things that restrain us often go unnoticed or unnamed: compulsions, addictions, or obsessions. Theologian Wilke Au once described it as a freedom from all the places in your life where you are “driven so that you can experience where you are being drawn.” The retreat is known as the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius because it includes a series of contemplations (meditations or visualizations), reflections and prayers - quite literally “spiritual exercises” - to use in daily spiritual practice. Ignatius structured it in four “weeks” because he envisioned that his exercises would be undertaken during a thirty-day silent retreat and directed by an experienced companion on the journey, a spiritual director. These are not literally seven-day weeks, but “movements” or “stages”. The four movements include: 1) God's love and mercy and the reality of our sinfulness, in all its complexity, 2) Jesus' life, from the moment of his incarnation and throughout his public

ministry, 3) Jesus' last days, from his arrest to his passion, crucifixion and death; and finally, 4) Jesus' Resurrection, his Ascension, and the coming of his Holy Spirit, and his ongoing mission which we live out.

Ignatius realized that not everyone could make a thirty day silent retreat and so he wrote into the structure of the exercises a provision (the 19th Annotation) for busy people who wanted to make “the retreat in daily life”. It is still experienced through a one-on-one relationship with a spiritual director. You meet weekly and make a commitment to in-depth daily prayer using Ignatius' contemplations. Over the course of about nine months, you make your way through the four “weeks” at your own pace with the guidance of your director. Even the 19th Annotation (or Retreat in Daily Life) is not for everyone. Though it is for busy people, it is a very significant undertaking but a richly worthwhile one. Are you feeling called to experience the Exercises for yourself? Do you want to learn more? Please contact the Director of the Ignatian Spiritual Life Center, Grace Salceanu, to discern if the 19th Annotation may be right for you.

### **Interested in Applying?**

Contact Grace Salceanu  
Director, Ignatian Spiritual Life Center  
415-487-8560 x225  
Grace@SaintAgnesSF.com

**Applications Due:** Tuesday, September 5th

# The Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life: St. Ignatius's 19<sup>th</sup> Annotation Retreat

Considering whether the 19th Annotation Retreat is right for you? Here are reflections from a few of our past participants:

Collectively, the Spiritual Exercises have been my single biggest action towards strengthening my faith. They have given me new perspective on my goals, my relationships with my family, friends and myself. Without the personal direction offered in the exercises, I am sure the experience would not have been as rich.

*Cate Degraw*

I recently had the privilege of completing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius under the able and loving direction of Naomi Mayer...I undertook this awesome task with some fear and trepidation, which I discussed with Naomi during our first of several weekly meetings. To help me understand what it all entailed, Naomi reviewed in detail the overall process as well as the general expectations and requirements. She also provided me with some inspiring tools and meditation tips. It took about three weeks of effort and meetings before I truly appreciated what I had undertaken. Suddenly, I found myself looking forward to my daily meditations and wondered why I hadn't done this much sooner. The meditations helped bring Christ to life before me as I journeyed with Him through the key phases of His earthly life, from His birth through His ascension. It was a journey of wonder and love. The end result for me has been a deepening of faith, hope and love in living my daily life and a stronger desire to be of service to others as Christ served. I continue to carry out the daily practices of prayer and meditation to keep that fire of love burning.

*Eileen O'Riordan*

The 19th Annotation offered me a path to learn more about the foundations of my faith in a practical and relevant manner. My Spiritual Director guided me to put myself imaginatively as a companion to Jesus through selected Scripture passages. As I followed Jesus' experiences through these passages, I start to appreciate how his teachings were revolutionary in first-century Palestine and how they are applicable to our times. Jesus grows into my source of inspiration and comfort. And as Ignatius also teaches us, I learn to assess my daily experiences seeking the presence of divine inspiration and interventions in my life.

*Lily O'Neill*

Ignatius of Loyola's Spiritual Exercises found me at a point where I felt disconnected in my prayer life and somewhat adrift. I remembered as a child having full conversations with Jesus. He was real to me. I'd see him in my mind's eye. I'd hear his voice. Now that I was older, I had grown somewhat "hard of hearing" spiritually...A close friend of mine recommended that I consider following the Spiritual Exercises by way of the 19th Annotation. It would provide me with an opportunity to devote time to regular, focused, guided contemplation and prayer...The Spiritual Exercises have extended to me a series of intimate, enlightening, humbling encounters with Jesus. I feel alternately inadequate but capable, broken but whole, flawed but loved. And once again, I've found my Dear Friend.

*Anthony Cistaro*

**Many thanks to Cate, Eileen, Lily and Anthony for sharing their experience.**