

THE FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION

The Spiritual Exercises, #23

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.

St. Ignatius Loyola as paraphrased by
David L. Fleming, SJ

**FIRST PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION
of St. Ignatius Loyola**

Paraphrased by Jacqueline Bergan and Sr. Marie Schwan

Lord, my God
When your love spilled over into creation
You thought of me.
I am from Love, of Love, for Love.

Let my heart, O God,
always
recognize,
cherish
and enjoy
Your goodness in all of creation.

Direct all that is me toward your praise.
Teach me reverence for every person, all things.
Energize me in your service.

Lord God,
may nothing ever distract me from your love.
Neither
health nor sickness,
wealth nor poverty
honor nor dishonor
long life or short life.

May I never seek, nor choose to be
Other than you intend or wish.