

## **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.