

From the Ignatian Tradition

GUIDELINES FOR PILGRIMS

Coimbra, Portugal 1546

Simão Rodrigues

Ignatius seems to have envisaged his Exercises as only one element in a broader process of conversion. For new Jesuits, the Exercises were to be followed by a spell in the 'hospital'. They were to help and serve all, 'the sick and the well',

. . . in order to lower and humble themselves more, giving a whole-hearted sign about themselves to the effect that they are parting company with the whole business of worldliness and its pomps and vanities, so as to serve in anything at all their Creator and Lord, crucified for them.¹

Then there was to be a pilgrimage:

Making a pilgrimage for a further month without money, but rather at appropriate times begging at the doors for love of God our Lord—so that they can get used to eating badly and sleeping badly, and so that, at the same time, leaving aside all the hope and expectation that they might have of money or other created things, they might place it whole-heartedly, with true faith and intense love, in their Creator and Lord.²

In the book of the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius left space for things to happen beyond anything he himself could imagine. In an important sense, the

¹ Examen, n. 66:3: . . . por más se abaxar y humillar, dando entera señal de sí, que de todo el século y de sus pompas y vanidades se parten, para servir en todo a su Criador y Señor crucificado por ellos.

² Examen, n. 67.1-2: Peregrinando por otro mes sin dineros, antes a sus tiempos pidiendo por las puertas por amor a Dios nuestro Señor, porque se pueda avezar a mal comer y mal dormir; asimismo porque dexando toda su speranza que podría tener en dineros o en otras cosas criadas, la ponga enteramente, con verdadera fe y amor intenso, en su Criador y Señor.

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meaning of the text has to be discovered anew every time a person enters the process. Nevertheless, the immediate aim which Ignatius had in view is also clear. Ignatius directs his text at well-to-do clerics, who may at least hope to be in possession of a benefice. He is encouraging them to develop a new self-understanding, as ministers of the gospel, devoted to God and to God's people. The commitment to 'poverty' is a symbol of the change, and the pilgrimage a lived exercise in 'going out from one's self-love, will, and interest' (Exx 189.10). It also symbolizes a commitment to ministry beyond conventional structures, beyond the regulations of particular places.

Ignatius' vision of pastoral formation here may perhaps always have been impossible to put into practice literally. But it remains worth pondering that Ignatius seems not to have envisaged the Exercises standing on their own.³ Conversions provoked by the Exercises today may be different in form from those of the first Jesuits, but they still need to be consolidated somehow.

The text that follows was written for use on the pilgrimage. It dates from around 1546, and was written at Coimbra in Portugal, which was the first substantial settlement of Jesuit students, and which was later to cause Ignatius considerable problems. Its author is probably Simão Rodrigues, one of Ignatius' first companions.⁴ There is a naïve pride in some of the writing, bordering on the smug; but it is also impressive how intensely the author imagines the pilgrim internalising the thought-patterns of the Exercises, especially in the second section. The author may draw on traditional ascetical and eschatological motifs, but he is not using them to encourage any sort of flight from the human condition. Rather, he is seeking to help people internalise the values informing a new kind of service, a new form of engagement with the world.

The POINT OF THE PILGRIMAGE IS SOMEHOW to attain firmer hope in God our Lord during our labours, and to let experience confirm the care He has for those who take on labours for His sake. When I thus experience that He never fails, I will become generous-spirited, broad-minded, so as not to leave off doing, for worry that He might fail me, anything in Jesus Christ's service. For in some way I will already

³ For fuller documentation, see Philip Endean, 'Origins of Apostolic Formation: Jerome Nadal and Novitiate Experiments', *The Way Supplement*, 39 (Winter 1980), pp. 57-82.

⁴ The text has come down to us in Portuguese and Latin versions, printed in MHSJ *Regulae Societatis Jesu*, edited by Dionisio Fernández Zápico (Rome, 1948), pp. 92-115. Old Spanish translations exist in manuscript. This text follows the sparer, Portuguese version, with occasional recourse to the Latin in order to resolve unclarity. Translational and textual problems have been resolved tacitly.

have experienced the opposite. Thus I will be able to follow Him without having to deal with what is contrary to this; I will not be tied to anything; I will be sure that all the labours, insults and disparagements that I receive from the world are very much accepted by Him, since I will be receiving them in order to conform myself with the many things he suffered for me. I will also be clear that all the opinions and judgments of the world are vain and short-lived, and that only the honour of God is to last for eternity.

It follows that, if I want to attain the freedom of spirit to be able to live for the Lord's glory and not following my appetites, I must also want the means that help me towards this. Therefore, just as I am searching for greater strength of faith and hope, so I must also look for labours, which are the means for attaining these virtues. Thus I shall rejoice in labours, and be consoled in them because I am finding what I am seeking. I shall find more spirit from the Lord than I believed or hoped before. As I experience many times how the Lord 'is a stronghold in time of trouble', I will not be troubled, whatever happens, because the Lord 'is at my right hand' (Psalms 9:9, 16:8).⁵ The more trouble comes, the more hope grows; in this way, I should remember, the virtue of faith and hope is confirmed.



Afghan Refugees 2001

⁵ The original text cites the Bible from the Vulgate. This translation gives Hebrew Bible verse numbering, and follows NRSV unless there is good reason for doing otherwise.

If anyone were to take these troubles away from me, they would be taking from me growth in this virtue of faith and hope. If anyone wanted to give money for the journey and I took it, so that it was unlikely I would be in any very great need, I would be taking a means towards meriting less, and thus the only labour would be physical: I would not obtain any spiritual fruit. However far a person goes physically, it all counts for nothing if the spirit is not exercised. For if they take money, they are taking what makes them hope in God less—they will have no worries about going without anything since they are travelling well equipped. What is at stake here is completely different: the person is to hope that, in taking God with them, they are taking everything, with nothing lacking to them.

They should remember how Jesus Christ sent out his disciples ‘without staff or purse’ (Matthew 10:10). They should be consoled by the knowledge of how the disciples rejoiced in their troubles. For it is not simply being poor that is to be praised; you rejoice in poverty out of love of Christ, who said, ‘strive first for the kingdom of God, and all these things will be given to you as well’. Then later he says, ‘Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? . . . Indeed your heavenly Father knows what you need’.⁶

I will think about what Christ used to do when he was tired, and what his disciples used to do: how they were joyful at their trials, and how they were consoled at seeing the face of Christ; how, as they saw his patience and his tiredness, their own troubles seemed little. I will try to make myself present to all this.

I will often examine my awareness,⁷ to see if I am acquiring more faith and hope in the Lord—this so as to grow each day in my spirit.

I must remember that now I am not going to worldly feasts and pleasures. Nor am I travelling in order to be praised except by God alone, with grief for my sins. I am meant to be suffering some little part of the much that I deserve, strengthening the faith, hope, patience and other similar virtues in my soul. Thus I shall desire to be disparaged by all; it will be a burden to me to be honoured by anyone. For in justice and reason I deserve to receive dishonour from all creatures for not

⁶ The quotations are from Matthew 6: 26, 32, 33. The author seems to have misremembered the order of the texts.

⁷ In context, this rendering of the Portuguese *conciencia* seems clearly appropriate.

having honoured my God and my Lord, but rather having sinned against his commandments.

It will happen that I imagine labours both many and great, with much sadness and desolation to boot; it will seem to me as if it were impossible to get out. Then I will notice how different thoughts come on me, new feelings—arguments for changing my way of life, arguments making what I previously agreed to seem bad to me. Still, I will also remember to prevail in these encounters, however powerful they are, raising my eyes to God: ‘for in God I shall leap over a wall’.⁸ Anything else I will think of as lies, only looking like truth; they can last only for a short time. For what does not exist does not last.

I will bear in mind that a day or days of great heat, or cold, will come. Some of these will pass without my finding anything to eat, or anywhere to sleep under cover. But the troubles arising from this will not stay in the memory, as I reckon that I am present before the Lord:

Thou in toil art comfort sweet;
Pleasant coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.⁹

And He is greatly content and pleased with these labours.

I will never make any change when I am in sadness and desolation, because normally reason is darkened by such states. I can deal with the enemy by reasoning that I cannot suffer anything worse than death, and dying for Christ is nothing, since He died for me.

I will answer simply the questions that they put to me. And if they ask me why I am travelling like this, I will reply: ‘because I am poor, and because my sins deserve it’. I will try, as far as I sensibly can, to make sure no-one becomes bothered about my sanctity; I will not say who I am. But if, from having seen me talk about things of God, they find in me some virtue, then I shall take advantage of this. With such a person I shall not abandon my purpose of talking with them about things of God. For God does not make saints out of what people say and think. And if someone presses to know who I am more specifically, I will say that I am a student, or whatever seems to fit.

⁸ Psalm 17:30.

⁹ From the Pentecost sequence, here cited in Edward Caswall’s translation.

I should remember that God does not gain from the trouble I take; nor do I have anything to complain about regarding God or anyone else except myself: the problem is that I do not recognise the great mercy which God is doing me in letting me share in His trials, so that if I suffer I will be glorified.

I should reckon that everyone who sees me is meant to be laughing at me: they are supposed to be surprised at me, holding me as just lost and as having taken leave of my senses, a dishonour to my lineage and to all my relatives. Meanwhile, I will remember that precisely here is the wisdom of Christ. With him the world was always in conflict and at variance. And so I will say something like this: 'I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent of the world and have revealed them to the little ones'.¹⁰

***Everyone who
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I will think about the great disorientation and shame that those reprobated by God will feel at the day of judgment, and about how hard their sentence will be: 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire', etc.¹¹ And about how much better it will be to be judged by human beings here than by God there. So I will try not to be one of those of whom Christ said, 'those who are ashamed of me, of them I will be ashamed when the Son of Man comes in his glory and the glory of the Father', etc.¹²

If I see that they are giving alms to others but not giving them to me, I will reckon that either now or in the future that person will have more need of them than I do.

When I am not in contemplation on the way, or trying to think of some good things, or speaking for the good of some neighbour, I will try to occupy the time in praying either with the beads or the psalms.

I will often go to confession and communion. When I arrive at the place, I will go first to the church if I reasonably can and if it is near. There I will give thanks to God for the loving-kindness shown to me throughout that day, and I will ask for help over the whole day. And then I shall beg for alms, very humbly and sincerely.

¹⁰ Matthew 11:25.

¹¹ Matthew 25:41.

¹² Alluding to Luke 9:26.

A More Specific Application of the Above Rules

I should not try to go too far in one day, lest with the concern to arrive the memory of Christ be lost.

Every time I leave the house in the morning, I should leave aside all other thoughts and try hard to imagine Christ with me, in real life, with me taking Him as a companion, and the whole heavenly court following Him.

I will think about what a person should say and do when they are constantly in the presence of such holy company and being accompanied by them. I should lament how the world does not see so great a good, and how it does not sense the great waste it is to occupy oneself in such short-lived things while neglecting the lasting good. And so I will sometimes address words of compassion to Christ about these things so that He might remedy them. Other times, I will speak words of love, such as: 'I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer', or other words like these.¹³

In the same way I will ask for the help and favour of the glorious Virgin, of the saints and angels, not forgetting my guardian angel. I will ask for love, for humility, and for strength so as to be able to suffer some trial for Him. I will suggest that He might like to use me and all my Brothers, and that He should take the whole congregation of them under his protection.

Sometimes I will rejoice with him; other times I will lament, remembering how much he suffered for me and seeing how little it all is that is being suffered for him.

When it is time for rest, for eating, or recreation, I will imagine that I do nothing without his permission, and that he gives me this with regard to everything. For that was how He used to eat with His disciples, saying: 'make them sit down', and 'I prefer that they not starve rather than become weakened on the road because they have not had anything to eat'.¹⁴ As long as humanity lives in the flesh, they are not to live like angels, but rather to eat and drink and do other natural things.

I will carry a New Testament, and every day will read something, in the hours when I find myself less busy, from the Acts of the Apostles as a way of meditation—and I shall consider the labours of St Paul.¹⁵ I

¹³ Psalm 18:1-2.

¹⁴ The allusions are to the narratives of the feeding of the five thousand, but they are not exact.

¹⁵ The choice of text here is surely significant, given the early Jesuits' commitment to itinerant ministry.

shall not read in order to get to the end, but rather to relish and to draw some fruit from what I read. I will notice how the words of good people were not idle nor over-clever, but rather all for the service of our Lord.

‘Greet no-one on the road’, said our pilgrim Jesus Christ, as if he meant to say: ‘don’t get involved in things that are not part of your purpose in going, which is that of serving the Lord’. And so I would rather go alone than with someone, unless there were some chance of giving them some spiritual teaching or assistance, as St Philip did in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 8. That is a mystery I will be able to read and contemplate in between times, applying everything to obtain profit and teaching. So too I will be able to take from the life of Christ other similar mysteries in keeping with my work, remembering how much greater the labours of Christ and his disciples were.

If I do not find relish in my labours, I will look at what Job said in chapter 10: ‘If I am wicked, woe to me! If I am righteous, I cannot lift up my head, for I am filled with disgrace and look upon my affliction’. Our troubles are nothing compared to what St Paul was talking about to the Hebrews:

Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy.¹⁶

I will remember that Christ did not go round with his flesh swathed in cotton. If my hands and feet are hurting me, so his hurt him: indeed, they were pierced with nails. If my body hurts me, I must remember how he was scourged; if I sweat, he first sweated drops of blood; if I am thirsty, I must remember his thirst; if I do not find lodging, ‘the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head’; if I am tired, ‘Christ too, tired out by his journey, sat by the well’. I will console myself with this, and ask for some of the water that he was promising to the Samaritan woman, water that is only given to the poor and simple in spirit, ‘for His talk is with the simple’.¹⁷ And I can take this meditation on the Samaritan woman before arriving where I am meant to be having my evening

¹⁶ Job 10:15; Hebrews (following what was then the standard attribution to Paul) 11:36-38.

¹⁷ Matthew 8:20; John 4:16; Proverbs 3:32 (Vulgate).

meal, a league before, more or less. And as I am begging, I must always think to walk with Christ alongside me.

In the evenings, before arriving at the place where I am meant to be sleeping, a league before, more or less, I will contemplate how two of the disciples were going to a village called Emmaus,¹⁸ and how Jesus Himself was going along with them, and ‘their eyes were kept from

***As I contemplate the
disciples on the road to
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recognising him’. And I will ask the Lord that He might open my eyes, so that I not belittle or disparage the labours I am going through, believing such a way of service not to be very pleasing to the Lord.¹⁹ And if I begin to look at other paths different from my vocation, saying,

‘we *had* hoped he was the one to redeem Israel . . .’, and so on—I too hoped and expected that I’d be in a state of great solace on this journey, I too thought I could live in this way and be able to work both my salvation and that of many others (note you are certainly being tempted here) . . . then, ‘O you stupid people, how slow of heart to believe! . . . Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer and thus enter into His glory?’ I will ask Him to stay with me and not go away, ‘because it is almost evening and the day is now setting’. And because He is the light, I will find myself in darkness without Him. ‘As you turn these things over, won’t your heart be burning?’ and so on. ‘So, show yourself to God as a sweet-smelling sacrifice; work steadfastly; believe that you have Christ as a leader on your journey and in your life.’ I will be with this meditation, working through the points that seem good for me, until I go into the hospital.

As I come into the hospital, I will be aware that I am entering the house of God, remembering how He was born in a stable. This was not as good a place as what I am entering now; and yet in this stable the shepherds and the Magi kings found Christ. In this way, I will try to find Him, and so on. I will take this meditation on the Nativity a number of times, and then other meditations.

As I come into the hospital, I will be aware that I am entering the house of God. In it I will see Christ disfigured, present again in the poor.

¹⁸ Luke 24:13-35; again, the quotations are sometimes free.

¹⁹ The advice here is interestingly different from what was said in the first set of rules: ‘I should remember that God does not gain from the trouble I take’. The two sets seem to address the needs of people at different stages or in different moods, rather like the two sets of discernment rules in the book of the Exercises.

I will see how these souls are free from the world's honours. I will rejoice at being in the most despised place in the world, so as to flee its cares. I will reflect on how, were God to be on earth, I would find Him in this place rather than in kings' palaces or houses, 'for those who are in the houses of kings wear soft robes'.²⁰ And so I will not have any fear of being in the place where the King of Kings was. I will have desires on behalf of the poor, wishing their good in my soul. I will ask the Lord that, since they *are* poor, they should be aware of this and draw profit from it. I will think about how they have been poor for so long, and some perhaps without wanting it, and about the great blessing I am receiving from the Lord in taking it on of my own will.

When I feel sad and tired, I will remember how the prophet Elijah was persecuted by Jezebel:

He was afraid; he got up and fled where his will carried him . . . and sat down under a juniper tree. He asked that he might die. He said, 'it is enough for me, O Lord; take my soul; for I am no better than my ancestors'. Then he lay down in the shade of the juniper tree and fell asleep . . .

And how help comes during our labours and not during our rest, when we are in need and not when we have plenty—help from the Lord,

. . . who sent his angel to him and said to him, 'Get up and eat'. He looked, and there at his head was a cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water.

The Lord did not give Elijah delicacies or manna, because eating delicacies while travelling in the desert lessens one's desire for the city, and leads one to think of the stomach rather than the spirit. 'Thus Elijah ate and drank, and then went back to sleep.'²¹

We mix up the mercies and the favours that we receive in this life from the Lord—mix them up with such earthliness, so many imperfections and unnecessary cares, that we lose our awareness of such great good. We come to be, with these mercies we have received, just as we would be without them. We end up sleeping in our wretchedness.

²⁰ Matthew 11:8, slightly changed. Here, exceptionally, a chapter reference is given in the text itself.

²¹ 1 Kings 19:3-6, somewhat imaginatively interpreted.

The east calls and we look to the north. The Lord shows us the way, and there is no one to go on it. The Lord calls, and his servant does not hear. O good, faithful, gentle Jesus, may your servant hear what their Lord is saying. May your voice sound in my ears. Arouse the one who is asleep; invite the one who is reluctant; draw on the one who is hesitant; hold in the one who is escaping; bring back the runaway. Give sight to the one going blind, understanding to the ignorant, so that the servant may hear what their Lord is saying. 'Arise, eat, for you still have a long way.' 'Elijah, Elijah, are you asleep when the angel is speaking to you? Aren't you getting up? Aren't you awestruck? Do you want the angel to strike you, to beat you? Don't you see who it is that is showing you, by the heat of the bread and by the water, that you are going to dissolve into dust and ashes just as water slips into the sea? And you're still asleep? Are you asleep in order to relieve the tiredness and fatigue of your body, when you know the text full well:

. . . what the cutting locust left, the swarming locust has eaten. What the swarming locust left, the hopping locust has eaten, and what the hopping locust left, the destroying locust has eaten. Wake up, you drunkards, and weep; and wail, all you wine-drinkers, over the sweet wine. . . .

For the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.²² You are not going up Horeb, the mountain of God, like Elijah; you are not going up Mount Sinai like Moses; you are not fleeing to Mount Shechem like Lot; you are not fleeing like Noah into an ark he made of wood. You are going up, rather, to the holy city, Jerusalem, adorned with eternal glory and splendour, where the Lord will place on our heads 'the diadem of eternal glory', because 'in Sion and Jerusalem the Lord will be our salvation'.²³ Is not Jerusalem the glory of Judah? There is no wickedness in the inhabitants there, such as to cause a salty waste. There 'the sun shall not burn you by day, nor the moon by night', nor strangers pass through it, because the Lord our God is in its midst? Glorious things are spoken of you, city of God—you whose foundations are in the holy mountain; 'if I forget you, let my right hand wither; I will

²² Joel 1:4-5; Romans 8:18.

²³ Baruch 5:2; Joel 2:32 (Vulgate differing from Hebrew Bible).

place you above my highest joy'.²⁴ Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together. May, indeed, that Sion take me back:

Sion, the peaceful City of David,
Whose maker is the author of light,
Whose gates are the wood of the cross,
Whose keys are Peter's word,
Whose citizens are always joyful,
Whose walls are living stone,
Whose guardian is the festal king.

Here sweet perfume fills the sky;
Here is always festal melody;
Here there is no corruption,
No failing, no complaining,
No diminishing, no decaying:
All are conformed to Christ.

Heavenly city, blessed city,
City built upon a rock,
City built in a safe haven,
From afar I salute you.
I salute you, I sigh for you,
I aspire to you, I seek you.

Those who dwell within can know
How much your people rejoice in you,
How merrily they feast together,
The desire that binds them as one,
The gems that adorn the walls,
The chalcedon, the hyacinth.

Good and gracious Jesus, I ask:
May our memory draw us always here,
To the broad streets of this city;
May it be bonded to the crowds of saints,
May it be placed within your glory.²⁵

²⁴ Allusions to Psalms 107:34, 121:6; Joel 3:17; Psalms 87:1-3, 137:6; 122:3.

²⁵ The MHSJ editors were unable to find a source for this hymn, '*Me receptet Sion illa*'. The resources of the internet suggest that it was written by Hildebert of Lavardin (1056-1133), Archbishop of Tours, a prolific writer and much admired stylist. The poem features in works by the US American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and also by the British composer, Arthur Sullivan. More recently, it has been set to music by Judith Weir as the anthem, '*Ascending into Heaven*'; the translation offered in the publicity material for that latter work is the starting point of the version given here.

When I arrive at the church to which I am making my pilgrimage, I will take the saint to whom it is dedicated as one who does me special favours before the Lord. I will give Him great thanks for having brought me to the place in question, and ask for help to persevere in His service. And I will renew all my good purposes and specific intentions about God's service, calling on the saint whose house it is as a witness, asking them that they should always remember me especially before the Divine Majesty, seeing the obligation that I have to God.

PRAISE GOD!

