

THE SINGLE DAY OF THE FIRST WEEK EXERCISES

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IS IT ACTUALLY POSSIBLE TO LEAD another person towards conversion? Does it make sense intentionally to try to bring conversion about? Ignatius Loyola was firmly convinced that the answer to these questions was yes. In his experience, it was possible to use specific meditations and methods of prayer as a way of helping others to discover God anew, to become fascinated by Jesus Christ, and even to change their whole way of life as a result. The exercises that Ignatius presented to his contemporaries and that had this real effect on them he called *Exercitia spiritualia*—Spiritual Exercises. They are still well known and practised today.

Ignatius' Exercises are formulated with striking precision. They have a clear structure, with numerous indications and elaborations. They lay down a clear division of the time they involve; the text explains quite fully when and how particular exercises are to be done in the four different thematic phases—called 'Weeks'. The method is in one sense rigorous; but it is also to be applied sensitively to individual exercitants and their inner processes (Exx 17). The text is at once precise and flexible.

The Problem: Organizing the Time in the First Week

In the four weeks of a thirty-day retreat, Ignatius lays down a clear order of the day (Exx 72). The days of the Second and Third Weeks have a detailed time-outline. There is guidance for the Fourth Week in Exx 226. And at first sight, the content and time-structure of the First Week, devoted to a turning away from sin as a preparation for following Christ, is also clear. After the Principle and Foundation (Exx 23), Ignatius begins by presenting various forms of examination of conscience or consciousness (Exx 24–43). Then he provides five detailed Exercises, offering the following comment:

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Note. The first Exercise will be made at midnight; the second immediately on rising in the morning; the third, before or after Mass—in any case, before dinner; the fourth at the hour of Vespers; the fifth, an hour before supper. This arrangement of hours, more or less, I always mean in all the four Weeks. (Exx 72)

This seems quite precise, but in fact a number of questions are left unresolved. There are quite clear specifications as to how the Exercises are to be spread over the one day, specifications that carry over to all four Weeks. But we only have content for *one* day. The five exercises are distributed over five particular times in the day, but nothing is said about what happens *after the first day*. It is also clear from Ignatius' use of the definite article—'*the* first exercise' not '*a* first exercise'—that he intends just these exercises to be given. But the distribution of time after the first day is not explained; retreat-givers are left to their own devices.

There seems to be some sort of answer in an additional note on Exx 71 to be found in the 1547 version of the *versio prima* and the 1548 Vulgate (this has been added in after the 1541 *versio prima* and the so-called Spanish Autograph of 1544):

If it seems to the one giving the Exercises to suit the progress of the one receiving them that to these (five) exercises further reflections should be added, for example about death or other punishments for sin, about judgment etc., these should not be regarded as forbidden to them, even if they are not written in here.

This addition extends the range of possible exercises, and it might seem as though we may have the missing themes for the following days of prayer. But the help given here is only limited. We are still not told what counts as the five exercises not sufficing, nor how the following days should be organized, nor what form these additional exercises should take. The only unambiguous indications are the five times of prayer outlined in Exx 72, and the indication that the First Week lasts longer than one day (Exx 4).

But there is also a further question about the order of the day given in Exx 72. The text of each of the five exercises is so rich that it is difficult to see how exercitants who are unfamiliar with the Exercises, and are perhaps faced with this sort of prayer for the first time in their lives, are going to be able to manage such a welter of



Avarice

preparations, preludes, notes and colloquies on one day, particularly the first day. Still less are they going to interiorise it all. It seems all too much. The distribution of the prayer material here seems quite unbalanced: there is (too) much material for the first day and almost nothing for the following ones. Ignatius' text offers no direct answers to these questions. And this is surprising. After all, in other places Ignatius thinks and writes pedagogically, with an eye to all eventualities.

Directories Going Back to Ignatius

Since the book of the Exercises gives no further clarification, we need to use other Ignatian texts about the practice of giving the Exercises. A particular importance must be ascribed here to the so called Autograph Directory.¹ But here too, we find no further relevant information. All

¹ All references to the Directories (early documents outlining custom and practice in the giving of the Exercises, culminating in the Official Directory of 1599) are taken from *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*, edited and translated by Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996). Citations are given by document and paragraph number, as established by Iparraguirre in his 1955 MHSJ edition.

this really is surprising. For Ignatius, the First Week was an important pastoral tool, and the thirty-day retreat can be made well only if the First Week is concluded successfully. Why then does Ignatius' language in the book of the Exercises and in his own directory seem so imprecise? One reason may have been that he was presupposing the way in which the elements of the First Week could and should be applied to particular circumstances and persons (see Exx 18). But then why is he in other places so exact, even in Exx 18 itself, but not in how he presents the course of the First Week in the normal process of the Exercises? Did he and his first companions really find it so obvious that they were convinced there was no need to elaborate further?

In this context, a further Directory is significant, which arises from oral statements of Ignatius himself, the so-called *Second Directory of St Ignatius*, headed in the original 'Procedure for Giving the Exercises in Their Full Form'. The manuscript has corrections and additions by Ignatius' secretary, Juan de Polanco, and also by Jerónimo Nadal. This Directory explains the course of the First Week as follows:

... the Foundation should be given before anything else; second, the Examen against a particular fault; third, the General Examen [32–42]; fourth, the five-point daily Examen. Then, on the first day, the 1st exercise should be given, in the evening if possible, so that it can be begun at midnight.

On the morning of the next day the 2nd exercise should be given; and on that day after dinner the 3rd and 4th exercises together. Then, if conveniently possible, on the same day after supper the Additions should be explained so that the exercitant can begin to use them in making the 1st exercise at the following midnight (which begins the third day), the 2nd at daybreak, the 3rd before dinner, and the 4th after dinner. On the third day also, if possible, the 5th exercise will be given after vespers.

On the following (fourth) day, beginning at midnight, he should go through the five exercises using the Additions (these Additions should be explained more carefully when the exercitant seems not to be making much progress). That is: at midnight the 1st exercise is made, at daybreak the 2nd, after Mass the 3rd, at midafternoon the 4th, and before supper the fifth—if the exercitant is capable of this exertion.

Then, at the next visit, the director should give him the examen on all the exercises and start explaining the Rules for the Discernment of

Spirits for the First Week. In short, he should always be bringing the exercitant something new

As for the number of exercises that should be given: on the one hand it can be useful to add others to the five aforementioned exercises, such as on death, judgment, and the like, if this is needed for the person to find what he seeks, i.e., sorrow, etc. On the other hand, if he finds what he seeks through the five aforementioned exercises no others are needed. (3: 1–4, 9)

Several points are clarified here. Firstly, exercitants are not to be given the whole package of exercises and reflections at once.² The day before, they are given the Foundation and the various means of examining conscience. Then the five exercises are given one at a time: the first in the evening of that same day, the second in the morning, the third and fourth after the midday meal. The additions are to be explained in the evening of that same day. The fifth Exercise, the reflection on Hell, is given only on the following day. On following days, then, there is ‘always something new’ added from the material belonging to the First Week, such as the explanations about penance (Exx 82–90) and on the discrimination between spirits (Exx 313–327), and the rules on scruples (Exx 345–351).

Secondly, it is striking that the same exercises are to be repeated by the exercitant at the same time of day, with the additional material gradually strengthening and refining them. This point suggests that Ignatius did not envisage that a person should simply go through the Exercises once, or stay with them until he or she had fully exhausted them. Ignatius seems to trust that exercitants will find through perseverance what they are meant to be looking for: tears, repentance, conversion, reconciliation. He seems to be aware that the full depth of the individual Exercises cannot and need not be appropriated all in one go. The concern is more with the overall movement of the four, and then five, exercises. He does not exclude the possibility of other exercises, but he insists that they be used only so as better to realise the goal being striven for. The Hell meditation is not to be given immediately on the first day with the other four. Ignatius waits till the second day, by which

² Compare Dir 2: 3, taken down from Ignatius by Polanco on the First Week Exercises: ‘the Father does not think they should be given all at one time, and has never done this. Instead, they should be given one by one, until at the end the person is making all five’. See also Polanco’s own Directory (20: 51); but contrast Miró, who envisages the first three exercises being given together (15: 8, 23: 36).



Envy

time the fundamental insights of the first four exercises may already be interiorised. Thus Ignatius seems quite aware of how his Hell meditation may be too much, and introduces it—according to this Directory—only tentatively.

Besides this, there is a third document going back directly to Ignatius on the First Week: the directory of Juan Alfonso de Vitoria. Gonçalves da Câmara's *Memoriale*, written during Ignatius' lifetime, tells us that Vitoria, while giving the Exercises to one Lorenzo Martinegro, 'was constantly being instructed by the Father' (n.280).³ Thus the 1555 Vitoria Directory—entitled 'Notes on the Exercises and How to Give Them, Drawn from the Original of Fr Vitoria—Dictated, at least in Substance, by our Father Master Ignatius of Holy Memory'—depends on dictated counsels of Ignatius, and is the key source for a second tradition about how the First Week is to be organized:

³ See *Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola—The Memoriale of Luis Gonçalves da Câmara*, translated by Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004).

... on the first day, he should be given the 1st exercise with four repetitions. After that he should be given the ten Additions for making the Exercises well. On the second day he should be given the 2nd exercise, on the third day the 3rd, with repetitions, etc. When only one exercise is given on a day, it can be divided up so that he makes one or more points in each hour, with one or two repetitions of the entire exercise. (4.13, 16)

Here, what the book of the Exercises envisages as material for one day is now spread over the whole First Week. Each exercise is independent; there is no overall sweep over the day. Each day is dedicated to the different points in one of the five Exercises. This way of operating makes some sense for the first and second exercises, since there is a lot of material in these. But when it comes to the third exercise questions arise: how is the third exercise, which is itself a repetition, to be stretched over a whole day through four further repetitions? The same point applies to the fourth exercise, which makes a further summary of the third. We also need to ask what the point would be of making the Hell meditation five times. Moreover, Vitoria's distribution of the material seems to contradict Exx 72.

However, in defence of this interpretation we should note that Ignatius in Exx 19 seemed to envisage something very similar to this for Exercises in daily life:

A person of education or ability who is taken up with public affairs or suitable business, may take an hour and a half daily to exercise themselves Let them, during three days every morning, for the space of an hour, make the meditation on the First, Second and Third Sins [45–54]; then, three other days at the same hour, the meditation on the statement of sins [55]; then, for three other days at the same hour, on the punishments corresponding to sins [65].

Nevertheless, Exx 19 represents an adaptation for an exercitant with limited time, time that does not allow for the full course of the Exercises. Here the repetitions and colloquies of the third and fourth exercise are also left out—another point on which this Annotation marks a divergence from the 'normal' First Week.

At this point, then, we have established that there are two lines of interpretation in the directories based on Ignatius himself regarding the course of the First Week. The first involves repeated cycles, following the *Second Directory of St Ignatius*: the rhythm of the five

exercises as set out in Exx 72 is to be followed on a series of days. Only if, after a number of days, they are not attaining the desired end, should extra exercises be added. The second approach is more linear. According to Vitoria's directory, only one exercise should be given each day, and then deepened with repetitions. If the five exercises do not suffice, then further exercises of the same style are to be added.

Later Directories

Given that the question cannot be settled from the Ignatian sources themselves, the next obvious step is look at how the first and second generation of Jesuits interpreted and practised this point in the Exercises. From the period up till 1599 there are nine documents that deal with the question of how the First Week should be given. Three opt for Vitoria's linear approach.

A very early example is the *Counsels of Fr Duarte Pereyra*,⁴ dating from 1562, which contains not only clarifications about the Exercises but also explanations about meditation and some exegetical discussions. In dealing with when the additional material in the First Week should be given, they coincide with Vitoria, and speak of the first two Exercises as each having 'its own day' (10:46). However, Pereyra is in other matters very free in his interpretation of the *Spiritual Exercises* text, a point which does not exactly enhance the credibility of his testimony.⁵

A second text is the Directory of Fr Gil González Dávila (1587).⁶ This was highly regarded and it influenced the 1599 Official Directory in many respects. González expressly rejects the idea of giving all five exercises over and over again on different days; instead, one or two exercises, with appropriate repetitions, are to be given on each day. In general, he refers to the freedom of the one giving the Exercises and the task that person has to apply their normal practice to the particular exercitant. The anonymous *Remarks on the Exercises* (1585–1590), sometimes attributed to Fr Bencio, is a small collection of counsels brought together from various sources. This text likewise points to the

⁴ (1527–1587). He made the Exercises with Villanueva in 1547; later he was novice director and rector of several colleges.

⁵ He places the meditation on the King after that on the Incarnation, and links it with that on the Nativity. He also finds the three degrees of humility in the childhood of Christ (10:82, 105–106).

⁶ (1532–1596). Provincial of Toledo, Andalucía and Castile.

possibility of breaking up the different points of the first and second exercise, and for giving a full hour to each of the resultant parts (30:7).

The six other documents advocate the cyclical procedure as given in the *Second Directory of St Ignatius*. The first that we should mention is the *Method of Giving the Exercises* (probably 1568), a brief collection of instructions that goes back to Fr Alfonso Ruíz:⁷ exercitants ‘should spend an hour on each meditation’, even if they go through ‘four different ones in a single day’, repeating each one until the time of confession (11:8). Polanco’s Directory, which was put together between 1573 and 1575 at the request of Fr General Everard Mercurian, also follows the *Second Directory of St Ignatius*. This text enjoyed great respect in the early Society, not only because Polanco was Ignatius’ secretary from 1547 until the latter’s death, but also because this document offers a highly integrated, systematic interpretation. Fr Miró’s directory (no later than 1582), which was likewise written at Mercurian’s behest, follows this tradition, and indeed expressly rejects Victoria’s approach to distributing the Exercises:

... during the First Week it is not right to give a single exercise to be made with its repetitions throughout the whole day, with the 2nd exercise being given on the following day, etc. This is not the procedure given in the Exercises. (23:40)

It is worth noting that Ruíz, Polanco and Miró were all members of a commission that Fr General Francisco Borja set up to work out an official directory—but the project did not, in Borja’s period of office, come to anything.

Three further documents take up the approach of the *Second Directory of St Ignatius*. There is a treatise by Fabio de Fabi⁸ dating from the 1580s, which at least implies that all five exercises should be given on one day (24:15). The same goes for the anonymous *Short Directory*, from the same period (26:36), and for Antonio Cordeses’⁹ Directory (32:25–30).

The history of the text’s interpretation shows that there was controversy in the first decades of the Society of Jesus as to how the

⁷ (1530–1599). Director of novices, Provincial in Rome, and rector of several colleges.

⁸ (1545–1615). Entered 1567, a rector and a director of novices. 1613, admonitor to Fr General.

⁹ (1518–1601). Several times Provincial and rector.



Wrath

First Week was to be given, and one can find both main schools of thought persisting even in the immediate preparations for the official Directory produced under Fr General Claudio Acquaviva in 1599. The first text to be produced in 1590 follows the cyclical approach of the Second Directory of St Ignatius, and the later texts of Ruíz, Polanco and Miró. When this text was first worked over, only a few changes were made to this draft. But one of these was a switch to Vitoria's linear approach regarding the First Week, along with a lengthy explanation.

This second text was sent out to the Jesuit provinces with a request for comments and amendments, and the Fifth General Congregation of 1593 dealt with what was sent in. The result was that the second text was again subjected to small changes. But one of these involved a return to what the original had said about a cyclical approach. The text now envisaged two possibilities. If a person is praying five times in the day, then all five exercises are to be done on one day, and the whole process is to be undertaken again completely on the following days. If there are only four periods of prayer, the Hell meditation is to be delayed until the following day, and then filled out with meditations on death and judgment, along with appropriate repetitions. On the

third and fourth days, the programme of the first two is then repeated, and supplemented with a few new points.¹⁰

In 1599, the Official Directory was published in this form. What is striking is that in the to-and-fro between the two interpretations here and in all earlier texts the cyclical interpretation, when it is articulated, is stated concisely, as though there is no need for argument. Vitoria's account, however, always comes with a sense that it has to be argued for. Thus Gil González Dávila's Directory begins by referring to Exx 72 and Polanco's interpretation (20:51–52), but then makes a qualification:

I am not in favour of always doing the full five exercises on one and the same day; the mass of materials can easily be overwhelming. It will also frequently happen that the meditation will be dry and barren if the mind is engaged in nothing but repetitions for so many days in a row. Add to this the practice of many of the most distinguished fathers who had Father Ignatius as their teacher in giving the Exercises: they would give one or two exercises to be gone through in four or five hours on a single day, depending on the exercitants' various dispositions. Some more fertile minds are scarcely able to get through all the points of a single meditation in one or two hours. Some are slower, some quicker, at obtaining what they seek. Hence this must be left to the director's prudence; and this seems to be in harmony with our Father's remarks in the book of the Exercises.

González is giving here arguments from standard practice, from authority. What is clear here is that a justification has to be given for the linear approach; the cyclical one is taken for granted.

Further Developments in the Practice of the Exercises

A third school of thought can also be found among the Jesuits of the first decades: one that tends to increase the number of exercises in the First Week, and lays several different reflections, more or less inspired by the Exercises, before the exercitant. The most prominent representative of this movement was Giuseppe Blondo. In his Notes of 1587, he describes for the First Week alone twenty different exercises. The first ones have some remote association with those in Ignatius' book;

¹⁰ See 43: 118; the MHSJ edition gives details of the composition history.

the rest spring from free association. So the later exercises of a group of nineteen are on 'annihilation', 'expropriation', 'perfect expropriation', 'oblation', 'dedication or consecration' and 'the benefits of God' (28:2).

The many reformulations here of the First Week arose from a need to adapt the Exercises to different target audiences: people in established religious orders, men and women educated to different levels and from different backgrounds. There was also the institution of the Jesuit annual retreat, and the expectation that each Jesuit would make an annual retreat of eight days centred on the Exercises.¹¹ This kind of retreat required additional material, or at least extensions of the Ignatian material.¹² All sorts of adaptations arose, which then had their influence on the practice of the classical long retreat. This development took place against the background of a crisis in the formation of retreat-givers. Those who had special talent for giving the Exercises and who had to some extent been taught by Ignatius—Láñez, Gonçalves da Câmara, Polanco, Ribadaneira, Salmerón, Palmio, Miguel de Torres, Borja, Canisius, Hoffa—had been entrusted with major tasks of the Society's government and administration. This was good for the Society's administration, but less good for the development of the Exercises. It meant that many people gave exercises who had never themselves been properly schooled in them. The problem was exacerbated by the Society's rapid growth and by the numerous foundations of colleges. Many young men entered the Society; there were many demands for the Society's apostolic ministry. Between 1550 and 1570, apostolic activity took priority over formation and training. More and more Jesuits were having to give exercises more and more often with less and less experience.¹³

The third, 'free', interpretation of the First Week was soon clearly criticized by the Society's authorities. Already in 1578, Mercurian wrote in his Rules for Masters of Novices that the Exercises were to be given 'according to the order given, exactly following the order of the book'.¹⁴ In the *Defence of the Exercises* from the end of the sixteenth century

¹¹ The recommendation of an annual retreat began early, but it did not become a rule till 1608. See Ignacio Iparraguirre, *Historia de la práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio en vida de su autor*, volume 2 (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1955), 292–293, 319–320.

¹² Iparraguirre, *Historia*, 265–284.

¹³ See Iparraguirre, *Historia*, 389–390.

¹⁴ See *Regulae Societatis Jesu* (Rome, 1580), cited in Iparraguirre, *Historia*, 322.



Sloth

there is an explicit complaint that retreat-givers are multiplying the First Week exercises, and giving as many as twenty written by themselves.¹⁵ The Official Directory, in all three versions, reacts against arbitrary restructuring of the Exercises and stresses that the Exercises from the book are to be retained in their entirety, without anything being added or changed.

This third, freer kind of approach was quite common in the Society's first decades, but we should note clearly that it ran against Ignatius' text and the opinion of the leading retreat-givers of the time. It marks a clear shift of emphasis. The different exercises tended to present the exercitant with some kind of preparation for confession, and therefore from the outset were orientated towards making a general confession. But Ignatius in the First Week was not, at least not primarily, interested in confession, but rather in 'pain' regarding one's own sinfulness and the experience of a need for redemption which then passes over into tears of consolation as one is confronted with the

¹⁵ The *Defence of the Exercises* is an anonymous document written prior to the Official Directory, and was edited in the 1919 MHSJ edition of the *Spiritual Exercises*. See 690.

Redeemer. That such an experience can, even should, issue in a general confession, is shown by Exx 44. But in another place Ignatius explicitly stresses that preparation for confession as such should not happen until *after* the First Week.¹⁶

Early Texts of the Exercises

Given the variety of interpretations from the period after Ignatius' death, it seems appropriate to take a step backwards in time again. What ideas do other, older sources give us? The main resource here are the early texts of the Exercises before 1541, of varying length and written by various people.¹⁷ The oldest document of this kind is the text of John Helyar (1503–1541), an English priest who made a retreat either with Ignatius himself or with Pierre Favre in 1535. It gives us a text which, as regards the First Week, is already very similar to the definitive text. The five Exercises are distributed just as Exx 72 lays down. They are immediately followed by the Second Week exercises. There is no reference to additional exercises beyond the Ignatian five, nor to a distribution of the five exercises over several days in the way that Vitoria suggests. The same applies to the Cologne text, which goes back to Favre, and for the Exercises of Master John, which very probably go back to Jean Codure and which include comments from Ignatius' own hand. The fact that this latter text does not indicate any different structure or distribution is all the more remarkable because in general it provides an extensive and amplified version of the Exercises. It contains extensive paraphrases and many scriptural citations, bringing out the biblical character of the First Week. There would certainly have been scope for supplements, changes and alternative timetabling.

Study of these early versions shows that they add nothing to the material already given in the book of the Exercises. Particularly significant is the fact that they seem not to support the interpretation

¹⁶ Even in the Second Exercise about one's own sins, the concern is something other than preparation for a general confession. What matters here is not comprehensiveness, but rather an overall sense of one's own sinful history and need for redemption. See Dir 3: 10 (Ignatius), 20:298 (Polanco) and the *Defence of the Exercises* (MHSJ Exx [1919], 690–691).

¹⁷ For sources here, see MHSJ Exx (1969), 418–609. In English, see Rogelio García-Mateo, 'The "Accommodated Texts" and the Interpretation of the *Spiritual Exercises*', *The Way*, 44/1 (January 2005), 101–116; and, in the same issue, 'The Exercises of Master John', 117–132, especially 117–120.

*Lechery*

going back to Vitoria, even though they are based on retreats that were actually given. They make no reference to the Ignatian exercises being divided up between different periods of prayer, but always present the fivefold structure. Nor are there any additional exercises of the kind suggested in the Vulgate text's insertion. These early versions support the cyclical approach.

There is a significant variation, however, in the Madrid text of 1543, which goes back to dictation from Pierre Favre. Here the Fourth Exercise, 'resuming' or 'summarising', is absent. Instead we have after the meditation on Hell an exercise on Death, ending with the triple colloquy to Mary, to the Son and to the Father.¹⁸ But the number of exercises remains at five, and they are expressly numbered from one to five, suggesting a link with the standard timetable for one day. There is no mention of other exercises. This would suggest that the giving of additional exercises is a later development, that may have been practised by Ignatius himself, but if so only at a later stage. Perhaps it

¹⁸ The Valladolid manuscript, dating from the second half of the sixteenth century, adds a meditation on judgment as well as the meditation on death (MHSJ Exx [1969], 623–626).

represents an acknowledgement of other retreat-givers' experiences—in this case, that of Pierre Favre.¹⁹

What the Historical Evidence Yields

For the timetabling of the First Week there seem to be three interpretations current in the second half of the sixteenth century: the cyclical approach of the *Second Directory of St Ignatius*, the linear approach of Vitoria, and the expansive approach most prominently represented by Blondo. Which of these three corresponds to the original intention behind the book of the Exercises?

The third approach appears only relatively late. It was not accepted by the early experts on the Exercises; most importantly, it diverges from what the book of the Exercises actually says. It is therefore almost certain that it does not represent the original intention informing the text.

The second approach, the linear interpretation, has in its favour that Vitoria's Directory draws on Ignatius' verbal dictation and enjoyed great respect in the Society of Jesus. Its later advocates speak also of specific experience with individuals suggesting such procedures, and refer to the practice of certain *gravissimi patres* who are said to have studied under Ignatius himself.²⁰ This position can also draw on what is said about the retreat-giver's discretion in adapting the Exercises with prudent discrimination. (Exx 17–18) However, there is a fundamental problem with this position: it goes directly against Exx 72. It involves arguing from Ignatius' text against Ignatius' text. Up to 1590, there are only three written sources which advocate this approach. Nonetheless, it must be acknowledged that it was sufficiently influential to find its way into the second draft of the official Directory.

In favour of the cyclical interpretation in the *Second Directory of St Ignatius*, we have to note how widely this position was held in the first decades. Six authoritative commentaries and directories follow this line, including those of Polanco, Ruíz and Miró, and the Official Directory of 1599 also points in this direction. The value of the *Second*

¹⁹ See Gonçalves da Câmara, *Memoriale*, n. 226: 'Speaking about the Exercises, he said that of those he knew in the Society, Fr Favre took first place in giving them, Salmerón the second, and then he put Francisco from Villanueva and Jerónmio Doménech. He also said that Estrada gave those of the First Week well.'

²⁰ See, for example, Dir 31:61.



Gluttony

Directory of St Ignatius becomes yet stronger when one notes that both Nadal and Polanco worked it over and made use of it. Finally—and this is the strongest argument—this way of giving the First Week of the Exercises follows Exx 72 quite straightforwardly, and takes what it says utterly seriously. The five exercises are each given their proper importance. Because they are given several times, but always with new information, such an approach meets the concern that there is just too much detail. The early texts of the Exercises also provide indirect confirmation of this approach. None of these speak of taking one Exercise a day, or of breaking them down into smaller parts. Finally, whereas the advocates of the linear approach always felt the need to argue for their position, those who followed the cyclical approach seem simply to have worked on the assumption that it could be taken as read. Tradition is on this side; other sides have to create arguments.

To conclude: the abundance of evidence for the repeated giving over several days of the five exercises makes it appear as the way of proceeding that Ignatius had in mind when he was writing his book of the Exercises—even if he allowed an individual retreat-giver some freedom. In no way does his text go against such a procedure.

What, then, are we to make of the linear interpretation? After all, Vitoria's Directory draws on sayings of Ignatius himself. But first we need to recognise that it was not dictated to be a directory as such; rather it is a collection of different individual sayings, ordered and arranged by someone else. One can no longer distinguish between what comes from Ignatius and what comes from Vitoria. It is possible that the time-distribution it implies regarding the First Week comes only from Vitoria, not from Ignatius after all.

For Iparraguirre, this Directory does not give us 'the spirit and pure soul of the system'.²¹ He suggests we should see it as a collection of hints arising from particular contexts that Ignatius expressed to Vitoria in response to the needs of quite particular retreatants.²² The linear interpretation might be seen as a kind of alternative procedure, corresponding to several other directives in the book of the Exercises. We have already noted its closeness to Annotation 19; in the Second Week, from the fifth day onwards, there is only one set of material for prayer each day, distributed over two contemplations, two repetitions and the prayer of the senses (Exx 159, 161). In the Third Week, Exx 209 suggests that all repetitions and prayers of the senses can be left out, and in their place the material for prayer be divided between several exercise-periods. In the Fourth Week, Exx 228 permits retreatants 'to set more or fewer points' depending on how they react better. But we should also note that these indications are embedded within the later Weeks; they do not refer to the First Week, nor are they suggesting procedures that are generally appropriate.

Significance for Today

It may be surprising that the historical evidence tells in favour of the first, cyclical interpretation as Ignatius' basic intention, because today's practice is closer to the second and third approaches. The matter is not merely one of historical interest; it has implications for our understanding and practice of the First Week today.

²¹ Iparraguirre, *Historia*, 417.

²² Gonçalves da Câmara, when giving a retreat to one Abbot Martinengo, received this kind of orientation from Ignatius (*Memoriale*, n. 180).



Pride

Without being too revolutionary in our understanding of the Exercises, and without wanting to restrict the freedom of the individual retreat-giver (Exx 17), we might nevertheless recall, in the light of this finding, some basic intuitions of the First Week.

First: the cyclical method of giving these exercises underlines an important and central pedagogical device for the Exercises—that of repetition—as a means of engaging the material more deeply and of experiencing inner movements. Ignatius therefore quite deliberately gives these exercises a cyclical structure. There is, of course, a linear movement between the five exercises of the First Week, and indeed as the material of the Exercises unfolds over the four Weeks. But this movement is decisively enriched and consolidated through a quite deliberate working-over and reiteration of recurring motifs.²³ The process of the Exercises is not simply a linear one, as if we are just

²³ So we have the repetitions, the reviews of prayer, the preparatory prayer before each Exercise (which takes up the Principle and Foundation), the prayers for grace in keeping with the grace sought in each Week, the colloquies, exercising us in encounters with the Father, with Christ and with Mary. In the Contemplation to Attain Love, Ignatius speaks of a fundamental truth: love consists in the lovers' complete mutual self-communication (Exx 231). From the outset, we are working at this kind of communion with God.

climbing up a staircase with the help of a banister. Rather the goal is a maturity, and the path a spiral one, involving interiorisation and deepening.

The repeated giving of all five exercises over several days also brings home the unity between them. They form an arc, beginning with the preparatory prayer for being centred on God and for 'shame and confusion about myself', and leading finally to gratitude at the end of the fifth exercise for 'so much kindness and mercy' (Exx 71) that God has shown me. There is an interplay here between awareness of one's own sinfulness and a specific experience of the redeeming love of God that does not come through in individual exercises alone, but only over the programme for an entire day. The aim of the whole First Week is that the retreatant should be overwhelmed by an experience of mercy, and should taste and feel it from within (Exx 2).

The cyclical structure also reminds us that the First Week is about something more than a delicate examination of conscience and moral rectitude. This phase turns rather on people having a real and live experience, a liberating experience for themselves, of God's saving love. It is just this experience that brings about a readiness in exercitants to let themselves be called into the service of God, and enables a transition into the Second Week. Ignatius wants his exercitants to be motivated by the good for the good.

Moreover, the presentation of all five exercises on one day enables the first exercise, with its stress on the objective dimension of sin in the world, to be reinforced, rather than qualified, by the second exercise's underlining of the subjective dimension. By this means it becomes clear that the exercitant's ego is embedded in, and remains within, the world history of salvation and its opposite. The intrinsic connection between the first and second exercises is thus already preparing us for the Second Week's perspective of mission into a world that has to be redeemed anew. As Gilles Cusson has said, the Exercises serve their purpose,

... only by the confrontation they foster between our personal history and the history of the world of evil: a history that is still in process, still happening, a history that challenges us to adopt a stance. If one introduces another element (into the First Week), it

is therefore important to do it with full knowledge of what we are doing, and with great respect for the dynamic which is essentially characteristic of the Exercises as structured by Ignatius himself.²⁴

One final observation. Nowhere in the First Week of the Exercises does Ignatius use the expression 'first day'. Nor does he talk about a second day. Whereas the Second, Third and Fourth Weeks have 'days' that are individually numbered, even the very word is absent from the exercises of the First.²⁵ The first day that Ignatius calls 'first day' comes, surprisingly enough, in the Second Week. What might this mean? It is as though the exercitants' constant repetitions of the five First Week exercises are preparing them for entry into the first 'day' proper. The First Week is, so to speak, a time of 'untime'. It is a time of preparation, and of disposing the self's interiority for the real 'first day', the day when the Call of Christ resounds.

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²⁴ Gilles Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises: A Method toward a Personal Experience of God as Accomplishing within Us His Plan of Salvation*, translated by Mary Ann Roduit and George E. Ganss (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1988 [1968]), 148–149, translation slightly altered.

²⁵ The word 'day' comes up only in the Particular Examen (Exx 29) and in the Additional Directions on penance (Exx 88–89).

	<i>Second Directory (cyclical)</i> <i>before 1556</i>	<i>Vitoria Directory (linear)</i> <i>about 1555</i>	<i>Blondo (his own)</i> <i>1587</i>	<i>Official Directory (cyclical)</i> <i>1599</i>	
<i>Day before</i>	Principle and Foundation Examinations of Conscience: Particular, General, Daily	Principle and Foundation (perhaps in 3 parts) Examinations of Conscience: Particular, General	no indication	Principle and Foundation (perhaps in 3 parts) Examinations of Conscience: Particular, General, Daily	
				<i>5 Exx</i>	<i>4 Exx</i>
<i>Day 1</i>	Ignatian Exx 1–4	Ignatian Ex 1 4 repetitions	the soul; vocation; ingratitude; sins of religious life	Ignatian Exx 1–5	Ignatian Exx 1–4
<i>Day 2</i>	Ignatian Exx 1–5	Ignatian Ex 2 4 repetitions	2 repetitions; evil habits of past life; death	Ignatian Exx 1–5	Ignatian Ex 5; Exx on death and judgment; repetition
<i>Day 3</i>	Ignatian Exx 1–5	Ignatian Ex 3 4 repetitions	particular judgment; universal judgment; hell; divine love	Ignatian Exx 1–5	Ignatian Exx 1–4
<i>Day 4</i>	as before, or other Exx (death, judgment)	Ignatian Ex 4 4 repetitions	paradise; annihilation; expropriation; perfect expropriation	Ignatian Exx 1–5	Ignatian Ex 5; Exx on death and judgment; repetition
<i>Day 5</i>	as before, or other Exx (death, judgment)	Ignatian Ex 5 4 repetitions	oblation; dedication; God's benefits	as before, or other Exx	as before, or other Exx
<i>Day 6 onwards</i>	as before, or other Exx (death, judgment)	if needed, other Exx with repetitions		as before, or other Exx	as before, or other Exx

Comparison of Approaches to the First Week