

# IS THE NINETEENTH ANNOTATION THE FULL EXERCISES?

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**W**HAT IS MEANT by the Spiritual Exercises according to the Nineteenth Annotation? Today many people speak of the 'Spiritual Exercises in daily life'. Should this method be identified with the Nineteenth Annotation? Are these methods the full Exercises of St Ignatius or adaptations? This article attempts to consider these issues and to look at the Nineteenth Annotation.

Ignatius gives a certain amount of advice in the Annotations or introductory observations as to how the Spiritual Exercises are to be made. Broadly speaking Annotation 18 is concerned with adapting the Spiritual Exercises. Here this means using various exercises from the First Week to enable a person to attain some instruction on the christian way of life and a certain degree of peace of soul. Annotation 19 outlines a method of making the Spiritual Exercises for people who are 'engaged in public affairs or necessary business'. Annotation 20 caters for those who can disengage themselves from such concerns.

## *Annotations 18 and 20*

It may help to understand Annotation 19 if first we look briefly at the two other methods Ignatius suggests for giving the Exercises. There seems little doubt that Ignatius's preference was for Annotation 20. In explaining this method of making the Spiritual Exercises, he states that ordinarily the one making the Exercises will make greater progress the more he withdraws from friends, acquaintances and worldly cares. Ignatius envisages that such withdrawal will give the person the freedom to seek diligently what he deeply desires, and the opportunity to ask himself how he can serve better his Creator and Lord. He hopes that the person making the Exercises will realize what is his personal vocation, and will come to understand

how he can respond as fully as possible. With the help of solitude, seclusion and prayer, the one making the Exercises will be more closely united with his Creator and Lord and will be the better able to dispose himself to receive graces from God.

It would seem that in the time of Ignatius this method of making the Exercises was ideally suited to those who wanted to make a choice about their state of life. For the most part Ignatius's early companions made the Exercises in this way, as did the novices of Ignatius's new religious order.

However, Ignatius's pastoral concern was wide-ranging, and so Annotation 18 speaks of adapting the Exercises:

The Spiritual Exercises must be adapted to the conditions of the one who is to engage in them, that is to his age, education and talent. Thus Exercises that he could not easily bear, or from which he would derive no profit, should not be given to one with little natural ability or of little physical strength. Similarly, each one should be given those Exercises that would be more helpful and profitable according to his willingness to dispose himself for them.<sup>1</sup>

It was such adapted Spiritual Exercises Ignatius gave when in his Autobiography he says that at Alcalá 'he was busy giving Spiritual Exercises and teaching christian doctrine'.<sup>2</sup>

#### *Annotation 19*

Annotation 19 is a further proof of Ignatius's pastoral inventiveness and concern for the care of souls. He realized that there would be some who could benefit from the Spiritual Exercises but would be unable to give up the necessary time of thirty days, to make the Exercises according to Annotation 20. Annotation 19 caters for such people: 'One who is educated or talented, but engaged in public affairs or necessary business, should take an hour-and-a-half daily for the Spiritual Exercises'. The rest of the Annotation is concerned with the practical steps of implementing this.

Annotation 18, it has already been noted, is concerned with adapting the Spiritual Exercises to those who have little natural ability. Such people, Ignatius insists, should not attempt Exercises which are outside the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises; they should certainly not take up the material which deals with a choice of a way of life. For time is limited, Ignatius argues, and there are other people from whom much better results can be obtained. Such a person would be the Annotation 19 retreatant whom Ignatius now

introduces, and who is expected to spend one-and-a-half hours daily making the Spiritual Exercises. It is worthy of note that when Ignatius introduces the Nineteenth Annotation retreatant he does not in any way speak of adapting the Exercises. Considered from the point of view of the text, Annotation 18 specifically speaks of adapting the Exercises, whereas Annotation 19 does not.

It will be valuable to spend some time looking at the text of Annotation 19. Ignatius outlines the programme a Nineteenth Annotation retreatant should follow and the subject matter he should cover. The subject matter he mentions is the basic First Week material: the end for which man is created; the particular and general examinations of conscience; the method of confessing and receiving communion; the meditations on the first, second and third sins; the meditation on personal sins; the meditation on the punishment due to sin; the ten Additional Directions (including Ignatius's notes on penance).

The sections of the First Week omitted in the Nineteenth Annotation programme are sections 62, 63, 64, 72 and 90. The omission of 72 involves the abandonment of the 'ignatian day', of the five periods of prayer starting with the first exercise at midnight and finishing with the fifth exercise, the Application of the Senses, an hour before supper. Ignatius does not adapt the 'ignatian day' in any form for the Nineteenth Annotation method and consequently the third and fourth exercises of the first day of the First Week are omitted (sections 62-64). Repetitions, which seem to play an important part in the Spiritual Exercises, are not catered for in Annotation 19. Perhaps we should conclude that, although Ignatius expected the Nineteenth Annotation retreatant to cover the full material of the First Week, nevertheless he thought it best to curtail the programme in view of the many occupations such a retreatant was involved in.

As to the remaining weeks of the Exercises, Ignatius has only the following to say about the Nineteenth Annotation method: 'In the mysteries of the life of our Lord, the same order should be observed which is explained later on at great length in the Exercises themselves'. He refers only to the 'mysteries of the life of our Lord'. Can we presume that this phrase would have included the Kingdom of Christ, the Two Standards, the Three Classes of Men, the Three Degrees of Humility? Nothing is said about the election.

It is strange that having given such a detailed programme for the First Week, Ignatius does not do so for the remaining weeks. This prompts the reflection that perhaps he envisaged the Nineteenth

Annotation retreat as mainly a First Week retreat. How then would such a retreat differ from the Eighteenth Annotation? In Ignatius's experience the Eighteenth Annotation referred to the adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises he gave, in the early days after his conversion, to the pious souls in Manresa and Alcalá. He taught them how to live a good christian life with the help of basic christian instruction and simple methods of prayer. These were simple, easy exercises (*exercicios leves*). It was not until later in his life, in Paris and in Rome, that he gave the Nineteenth Annotation retreat to more educated people, to university students, judges, cardinals. They were capable of a deeper spiritual life, and were able to cope with the serious demands of the exercises of the First Week. Thus, even if only a First Week retreat, the Nineteenth Annotation retreat would still be something more serious than an Eighteenth Annotation retreat.

Another possibility would be that the emphasis the text of the Nineteenth Annotation places on the First Week reflects Ignatius's own experience in giving the Nineteenth Annotation: that in practice many of the people who made such a retreat only made a First Week retreat. If there was no likelihood of their changing their state of life (many were already priests or married), it might have seemed best to concentrate the available time and effort on the First Week. They may have concluded the retreat with some of the mysteries of the life of our Lord without entering seriously into the crucial Second Week ignatian exercises such as the Two Standards, the Three Classes of Men, the Three Degrees of Humility and the election. The Nineteenth Annotation text as it stands, with a heavy emphasis on the First Week and only a slight reference to the Second Week, would then reflect Ignatius's practice in this regard.

On the other hand, Ignatius may have realized that as the affairs and business of Nineteenth Annotation retreatants would differ greatly, it was best to leave considerable flexibility to the director. Why then did he give such detailed directions for the First Week? It may have been that he wanted to make it clear that the Nineteenth Annotation retreat was radically different from Annotation 18; that the Nineteenth Annotation was in fact the Spiritual Exercises and not an adaptation; that it was a serious attempt to present the Spiritual Exercises, though in a different way from Annotation 20. In other words Ignatius is making sure that the director gets the message, that Annotation 19 is the full Exercises and not an adaptation. Having stated this position clearly with regard to the First Week, Ignatius is willing to allow the director to use his discretion

for the remaining weeks, bearing in mind the very varied circumstances of Nineteenth Annotation retreatants.

I do not think it would be wise to conclude that we know with certainty what Ignatius and the early Jesuits did when they gave the Spiritual Exercises according to Annotation 19. We certainly have more evidence as to their practice in giving Eighteenth and Twentieth Annotation retreats. However, we can conclude, I think, that the Nineteenth Annotation retreat required a deeper involvement in the dynamism and pedagogy of the Spiritual Exercises than an Eighteenth Annotation one, and that it certainly involved doing the First Week seriously. Moreover, such a retreat probably went beyond the First Week and included some involvement with the mysteries of the life of our Lord contained in the remaining weeks. From the text it seems that Ignatius did not encourage the making of an election in a Nineteenth Annotation retreat. Polanco, however, in his Directory, definitely considers the possibility of a Nineteenth Annotation retreatant making an election:

If the exercitant should want to deal with a choice between taking up or relinquishing some job or post (even of the question of a state of life), the Exercises relating to elections should be put before him in the Second Week. If, however, people of this kind were not to dispose themselves outstandingly well and were not to take on the true resignation of heart and mind needed to search out the will of God, then it would not be a good idea (especially in those cases where the question of a state of life is involved) to go on to the end; rather to defer the matter to another time when they might be more free from any leading of self-love. But if it does seem that an election can be carried through, then what is said about the election further on (that is in Annotation 20) should be observed.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, in the next section in his Directory, Polanco envisages a Nineteenth Annotation retreatant doing the remaining exercises of the Second, Third and Fourth Weeks:

If after the Exercises of the First Week, once he has tasted the spirit of God, the exercitant should be disposed to do the remaining Exercises in due order, and if this can be done without inconvenience, this would be a useful thing to do, and it would be especially useful when there is a question about making a decision about a state of life.<sup>4</sup>

I think that we must conclude that, after the First Week, what was done may have depended very much on the needs and circumstances of the individual retreatant. Antoine Possevin, secretary to the jesuit General Mercurian, spent forty days in the First Week when he made the Spiritual Exercises according to the Nineteenth Annotation method. It seems too that Simon Rodriguez, one of Ignatius's first companions, may have made the Exercises according to the Nineteenth Annotation method, because of poor health and because he was occupied with university studies. Perhaps we could say that in practice sometimes a Nineteenth Annotation retreatant did the full Exercises (with or without an election, but at least with a reformation of life), but that this will not always have been the case. Sometimes a wise director would have perceived that the circumstances and needs of the retreatant required less.

Ignatius preferred to give the Spiritual Exercises according to the Annotation 20 method. Perhaps in this way he came closest to sharing with others the graces he received at Manresa. However, many good and able people were able to make themselves free for the thirty days required for the Spiritual Exercises. So the genius of Ignatius, whose inventiveness in finding ways to promote the good of souls was outstanding, found a way in which such people would be able to have a serious experience of the Spiritual Exercises in daily life. Whether Ignatius saw the Nineteenth Annotation as the full Exercises or as an adaptation is secondary to his perception that those who could not retire from their daily cares and preoccupations into silence and solitude could have a serious experience of the Spiritual Exercises. It seems that giving the Spiritual Exercises according to the Nineteenth Annotation method died out within half a century or so of the death of Ignatius. However, in the present revival of interest in the Spiritual Exercises, attempts are being made in various ways to make them available to people in their daily lives.

I would like to refer to two recent publications which are concerned with our subject. *Orientalions* volume 2 by John Veltri and *The Exercises in daily life*, a course conducted by Maurice Giuliani.<sup>5</sup> Fr Veltri's work is a manual to aid new directors of the Spiritual Exercises according to Annotation 19. Because it is intended for directors who are taking their first steps in this field, it is a highly programmed work. Starting in October the course outlines a thirty week programme which finishes about the beginning of the following May. The manual provides the director with suggested prayer

patterns from the disposition or preparation days right through the four weeks of the Exercises. The programme outlined in the manual blends in with the liturgical year, so that the infancy narratives are offered at Christmas and the Third and Fourth Weeks fit in with Holy Week and the Easter season. The manual also provides extensive coverage of the situations and problems a director will surely meet. The programme outlined would seem to be a logical extension of the text of Ignatius's Annotation 19. Ignatius provided a programme for the First Week; it would seem reasonable to construct a programme for the remaining weeks of the Exercises.

Fr Giuliani's approach on the other hand is more thematic. He speaks as a director of the 'Spiritual Exercises in daily life' about some of the main characteristics of such Exercises. They stress the relationship between a person's prayer and daily living. The emphasis is not on a programme to be followed, nor on the period of prayer a person makes, but on the interaction of prayer and daily living to the extent that the area of daily living, as well as the periods of prayer, is included in the sphere of the Spiritual Exercises. Thus what is prayed about must be lived out, perhaps immediately, outside formal prayer. This interaction between prayer and daily living becomes the touchstone of progress, determines when one moves forward in the Spiritual Exercises, and so makes a formal programme impossible. The retreatant moves forward in stages and crosses each threshold when he is ready.

Do we then have two ways of giving the full Spiritual Exercises outside the enclosed retreat situation? On the one hand a highly programmed approach in which the programme determines progress, and on the other hand a less structured approach in which progress is determined by the interaction of prayer and daily living?

There is one classic way of giving the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius. The director accompanies the retreatant as a guide, a pilgrim on a spiritual journey. As he listens to the pilgrim's tale, the guide tries to be sensitive to his situation before God and, with the help of the dynamism and pedagogy of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius, attempts to help the pilgrim understand where he is and the way forward. This pilgrimage can take place either in the 'enclosed retreat' situation (Annotation 20) or in the 'daily life' situation (Annotation 19). As the journey gets under way, it may become clear that for the moment at least the pilgrim is capable of only a limited part of the journey. This would be the situation envisaged by Ignatius in Annotation 18.

From the text it does seem that Annotation 19 is a highly programmed work, at least as regards the First Week. However, in all his work of directing others, Ignatius would have given primacy to the relationship between God and the individual. No programme, not even the liturgical year, should impede this relationship. Likewise in Fr Veltri's work one can see the value of putting down something on paper for those who are taking their first steps in directing others, but once the director begins to direct, he or she will have to be sensitive to the pace at which the person making the Exercises is moving. The problem in the end is not so much the programme, but finding good directors.

We talk about the thirty day retreat in place of Annotation 20. Perhaps 'the retreat in daily life' expresses what is essential in Annotation 19. The essential point about Annotation 19 is that the Spiritual Exercises can be given to busy, hardworking people, in their daily lives. This is not to say that the 'retreat in daily life' has not developed considerably from the Nineteenth Annotation retreat as envisaged by Ignatius. We have to give the Spiritual Exercises today in a different climate and culture from that of Ignatius. We have to work out afresh how to give the Spiritual Exercises in daily life because there is no unbroken tradition, and we are not adequately informed as to Ignatius's own practice in this regard. Nevertheless, we must recognize that it is to the genius of Ignatius that we owe the fact that the Spiritual Exercises, which were so wonderfully developed in his day in the enclosed situation, are capable also of being given today to busy people in the midst of their daily lives without requiring them to withdraw to a retreat house.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The text of the Spiritual Exercises used is that of Louis J. Puhl.

<sup>2</sup> *The Autobiography of St Ignatius Loyola*, translated by Joseph F. O'Callaghan (Harper Torchbooks, New York), p 61.

<sup>3</sup> *MHSJ* 76, pp 283-84, section 16: translated by P. Endean.

<sup>4</sup> *MHSJ* 76, p 284, section 18.

<sup>5</sup> Veltri, John: *Orientations*, vol 2 (Guelph, Ontario, 1979). Giuliani, Maurice: *The Exercises in daily life*, *Progressio* Supplement 18-19 (Rome, 1981).