

# COVID-19 Lockdown: ‘SELF-GUIDED IGNATIAN FILM-RETREAT’

**Explanation:** What follows is a lay-out of a self-guided Ignatian-style retreat that uses film to access the graces and movements of the *Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*.

**Procedure:** Follow the table of contents list below and use the attached list of films. For each movement of the *Exercises* (i.e.: Principle and Foundation, 1<sup>st</sup> Week, 2<sup>nd</sup> Week, 3<sup>rd</sup> Week, and 4<sup>th</sup> Week):

- 1) Select a film from the list that connects to the movement you are approaching
- 2) Read the explanation of the movement of the *Exercises*.
  - a. I have loosely followed and paraphrased his exact exercises to fit this type of retreat. In this retreat, the films and reflection questions become the major exercise. However, I have included Ignatius’ paragraph numbers in brackets if you wish to consult the *Exercises* themselves.
- 3) Spend time discussing the “Questions for Personal Reflection” with God
- 4) Watch the film and pay special attention to the “Reflection Questions for the film”
- 5) After the film is finished, use the film as a diving-board to return to the “Questions for Personal Reflection” in a deeper way than before
- 6) Spend quality time (a few days, perhaps up to a calendar week) journaling, unpacking, praying over, and ideally discussing these questions and their connection to your life with a friend -or even better, a Spiritual Director

## Contents:

pp. 2-3.....	Principle and Foundation
pp. 4-5.....	1 <sup>st</sup> Week
pp. 6-7.....	2 <sup>nd</sup> Week
pp. 8-9.....	3 <sup>RD</sup> Week
pp.10-11.....	4 <sup>th</sup> Week
pp.12-14.....	Films List
pp. 15-17.....	Appendix for 2 <sup>nd</sup> Week

# Movement One: 'The Principle & Foundation'

"Humans are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by doing so to save our souls. The other things on the face of the earth are created for us to help us in attaining the end for which we are created. Hence, we are to make use of them in so far as they help us in the attainment of this end, and we must rid ourselves of them in so far as they prove a hindrance to us. Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life, and similar for all other things. Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created." [23]

- 1) "Humans are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by doing so to save our souls."

If God (Love\*) is 'our Lord' then He is be the focal point of all we do. God (Love) should be both the source and the goal for our lives and all we do. The more we act in accord with this the more happy, joyful, and fulfilled we become; the more we forget this the more lonely, angry, and isolated we become. Praise, reverencing, and serving God is not for *His* benefit, but ours. If God is infinite and perfect, then our praise does not increase God's perfection. If God is infinite and perfect, then our lack of praise does not decrease God's perfection. The point here is *NOT* that God *needs* our praise, reverence, and service. Rather, we need to do these things to "save our souls." However, if God is all-loving it is not as though God *rewards* us for doing these things. Doing these things does not *earn* our salvation. Instead, it makes us able and ready to accept the salvation God gives to us as a *gift*. If we are not in a position to accept this gift, then we will never have it, because a gift -by definition- cannot be forced. (\*: "God is Love" 1 John 4:8)

## QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How often is Love the focal point of my actions? What in my life tries to squeeze Love out of my center of focus? How do I handle these temptations?
  - How much of my time and energy is an attempt to praise, reverence, and serve God?
  - What are things that occupy my time and energy that increase my ability to accept God's gift of love and life? What are things that occupy my time and energy that decrease my ability to accept God's gift of life and love?
- 2) "The other things on the face of the earth are created for us to help us in attaining the end for which we are created. Hence, we are to make use of them in so far as they help us in the attainment of this end, and we must rid ourselves of them in so far as they prove a hindrance to us."

God created all that exists. "The other things" which Ignatius refers to can include literally anything: cars, pencils, technology, other people, books, knowledge, video games, etc. Because God is all-loving and all-powerful, all things that exist are good by nature. However, things can be misused in such a way that they are used for bad. By using something in the wrong way, or by using it at an inappropriate time, our use of a naturally good thing can have bad results. We must use things "in so far as" they help us to praise, reverence, and serve God. We should avoid things that are obstacles to praising, reverencing, and serving God. Because all people are unique, one person's use of a given thing could be good; but the very same use of the very same thing by another person could be bad. It is important to know what helps us -as

unique individuals- and what hurts us -as unique individuals. It is also important to realize that we are not the same as others, and therefore to restrain ourselves from judgment.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How often do I reflect on what draws me closer to Love and what leads me away from Love?
- When I reflect on this, how talented am I at letting go of what leads me away from Love? How talented am I at focusing on what draws me closer to Love?
- How do other people in my life assist me in focusing on what leads me closer to Love and avoiding what leads me away from Love? How do other people make it harder for me?

3) "Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honor to dishonor, a long life to a short life, and similar for all other things. Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created."

In order to learn how to use "things" in a way that serves God, we must be wise enough to know when (and how) to use X and avoid Y. We must be wise enough to "make ourselves indifferent" or let go of our biases and truly reflect on what God is calling us to use and avoid; biases can often cloud our judgment. Although we might prefer riches to poverty and sickness to health, God often uses negative situations to help us grow. On the flipside, sometimes too much negativity draws us away from God. Ignatius' secret is that we do not prefer either a positive situation or a negative situation. Instead, we should simply accept any situation given to us and strive to use it in a way that "praises, reverences, and serves God." The key to happiness in the Ignatian life is not getting what you want, but rather finding the wisdom to want what you get. Our only bias should be towards whatever God thinks will help us grow closer to Him. This is obviously easier said than done, but if we can learn to do it, we will move one step closer to happiness, joy, and fulfillment.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How often do my own biases blind me from opportunities to be loving?
- How often do I let other peoples' biases become my own?
- What would it feel like to live a life free of biases? Would I be more loving?

Reflection Questions for the Film:

- Which characters have Love at the center of their actions? What were the results?
- Which characters become more loving as the film goes on? Which become less loving?
- Which characters have biases that make it harder for them to be loving? What were the results?
- Which characters did you feel drawn to? Which characters repelled you? Why?
- If God were trying to tell you something through this film, what do you think it is?

## Movement Two: 'The 1<sup>st</sup> Week'

- 1) Loved Sinner
- 2) "The *Spiritual Exercises*...have as their purpose the conquest of self...to rid oneself of all disordered attachments" [21]
- 3) Methods of Examination of Consciousness [24-43]

### 1) "Loved Sinner"

Ignatian scholars often use the phrase "Loved Sinner" to describe any-and-all humans. Although -to my knowledge- this phrase is not found in Ignatius' own writings, it is an apt description for the entirety of humanity. Sin is an absence of love. We all sin (do unloving things), but -more importantly- God loves us immensely, regardless. It also reminds us of the most basic Christian theological concepts: God is all-loving, all-powerful, all-merciful. If God is all-loving, then God does not love the person who sins less than the person who sins more. If God is all-powerful then God is not limited by anything (outside of God's-self) to bestow forgiveness. (Just think, what would this imply about the Sacrament of Reconciliation??) If God is all-merciful, then there is no sin which God cannot forgive. The 1<sup>st</sup> Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* spends time meditating upon both our own sin as individuals as well as the sinfulness in the world-at-large. In doing so, we recognize how our own individual sin is caused by and causes the sins of others. However, -and we cannot stress this enough- despite our sinfulness, we are loved by God regardless. We remember the image of a loving parent whose child has done something quite wrong...they are likely disappointed and even frustrated, but they love the child regardless. If a human parent can bestow such love, how much greater is God's ability? God's loving forgiveness has no limit. God's love fills the void of our lack of love.

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How do I experience sin (a lack of love) as an individual? How is that sin (lack of love) both caused by others' sins, and cause others' sins?
  - How do I receive messages of love and forgiveness despite my own lack of love?
  - What is that love and forgiveness prompting or propelling me to do in return?
- 2) "The *Spiritual Exercises*...have as their purpose the conquest of self...to rid oneself of all disordered attachments" [21]

This citation comes at the very beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises*, before the exercises begin, and even before the "Principle and Foundation." In Ignatius' own words they give us the 'Mission Statement' of the *Exercises*. In Ignatian Spirituality, 'Sin' comes from 'disordered attachments.' We all have 'attachments.' An 'attachment' is anything we spend our time, energy, or emotions on. Many attachments are ordered and good, but unfortunately some are disordered and bad. How can we tell the difference between 'good' and 'bad'? Remember the "Principle and Foundation": 'good' moves us closer "to the end for which we were created" (i.e.: to be with God), and 'bad' moves us away from God. To be more precise, if God is Love (1 John 4:8) then an ordered attachment is: 'something we spend time, energy, or emotion on that makes us *more* loving' and a 'disordered attachment' is: 'something we spend time, energy, or emotion on that makes us *less* loving.' When we are attached to things in a disordered way, we sin; when we sin, we become more attached to things in a disordered way. It becomes a vicious cycle. Therefore, the

*Spiritual Exercises* seek to rid us of these disordered attachments; this reduces our sin, which in turn brings us closer to God -and thus, closer to what we were created to be, our truest selves.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- What are my attachments (What do I spend my time, energy, and emotions on)?
- Which attachments are disordered (which make me more unloving)?
  - o There are no 'neutral attachments.' If an attachment takes up time, then even if it is not wholly bad, it still occupies time that could be better spent elsewhere. Although, certainly, attachments carry varying degrees of love/lack of love.
- How might I rid myself of these (how can I learn -slowly and perhaps painfully- to spend less time, energy, and emotion on these)?

3) "Methods of Examination of Consciousness" [24-43]

Ridding ourselves of attachments is challenging. It becomes even more challenging the longer we have been attached to them, and especially difficult if we feel pressured to hold on to the attachments by others. However, part of trusting in God and having faith means we must place God's influence above that of humans. A helpful way to understand God's influence is to perform regular Examinations of Consciousness. The Spanish word Ignatius used is often translated "Conscience", but it is more appropriately translated "Consciousness." (Remember, Ignatius did not write in English.) The truly Ignatian understanding is not "Examination of Conscience" but instead "Examination of Consciousness." Therefore, we are not making tallies of all the wrong actions we have done. Rather, we are pondering the 'interior movements' (thoughts, emotions, feelings, priorities, and motivations) which cause those actions. We ponder where these things have come from and where they are leading us. Are these 'interior movements' leading me to grow in love, patience, and kindness? Or are they causing me to become more cold, aggravated, and nasty? When we can identify where these interior movements are leading us, we can grow more confident in letting them go and begin to focus on other things. To truly Examine our Consciousness, means to grow in touch with all the messiness of our own thoughts, feelings, and motivations. Our actions do not occur in a vacuum; rather they are a result of the things occurring in our consciousness. The more we understand our consciousness, the more we understand our actions. The more we understand our actions, the more we understand our movement towards or away from God -and thus, our truest-selves.

QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How can I better ponder my own 'interior movements' (thoughts, feelings, emotions, motives)?
- How does pondering my consciousness shed light on my relationships with others?
- How does pondering my consciousness shed light on my relationship with myself -and ultimately, God?

Reflection Questions for the Film:

- Which characters experience sin (a lack of love) as an individual? How is that sin (lack of love) both caused by others' sins, and cause others' sins?
  - o Does that character receive messages of love and forgiveness?
- What are those characters' attachments? Which attachments are disordered?
- Does that character rid themselves of these over the course of the film? If yes, how does that make them more loving? If not, what prevents them from doing so?

## Movement Three: 'The 2<sup>nd</sup> Week'

- 1) The Incarnation and Childhood of Jesus [101-134]
- 2) "The Two Standards Meditation" [136-147]
- 3) Making a Good Choice (Sound Election) [169-189]

### 1) The Incarnation and Childhood of Jesus

Only after we have received a heart-felt understanding of the pervasiveness of Sin, the brokenness in our world and our own lives can we begin to truly understand how important the Incarnation is. Sin disrupts. It breaks apart the bonds between a person and God, people with one another, and -perhaps most tragically- the bond between a person and their truest self. The Incarnation is the most vivid 'first step' towards fixing the brokenness caused by Sin. It is a comprehensive reminder that humanity-at-its-best is closer to divinity than any other aspect of creation. It recalls that the first chapter of the entire Bible states humans are 'made in God's image.' It recalls the 'Principle and Foundation' stating that humans are created to praise, reverence, and serve God. What better example do we have to follow in praising, reverencing, and serving God than Jesus? Meditating upon the Incarnation and Childhood of Jesus reminds us that we do not sin because we are human, but rather that we are too often inhumane. The problem is not that we are human, it is that we are often not human enough. The Incarnation begins the Second Week with the optimism that is encapsulated in St. Irenaeus of Lyon's famous quote: "The glory of God is the human being fully alive." It will be in the Second Week that we learn to truly live.

#### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- What experiences and activities help me to feel 'fully alive' or 'like my truest self'?
- Recalling "attachments," how can I more properly attach myself to these things?
- How has Jesus' example helped you, personally, become more loving, patient, and kind?

### 2) "Two Standards Meditation" [136-147]

This Meditation is considered one of the three most profound meditations in the *Exercises*. It confronts us with reminder that we all must make decisions. It gives us the direct question: Will you follow the Standard (or flag) of Satan, or the Standard of God? Ignatius states that Satan entices people "first with riches, then with honor, and third with pride...from these flow all other vices." On the other hand, God's Standard involves "first, poverty as opposed to riches; second, insults as opposed to honor; third, humility as opposed to pride. From these three flow all other virtues." If we are being honest, it is easy to think that Satan's Standard initially appears much more appealing. If we trust Ignatius' words we can sympathetically acknowledge why so many people fall into vice, and are 'Loved Sinners.' Yet, the knowledge of Jesus' resurrection reminds us that we do not follow God because it is always easy or enjoyable, rather we follow God because it will eventually result in joy, fulfillment, and meaning. If the First Week focuses on transitioning us away from Sin, the Second Week encourages us to convert ourselves towards Jesus and His way of living and example for life. As the story of the Rich Young Man (Mk. 10:17-31; Mt. 19:116-30; Lk. 18:18-30) reminds us, the true mark of a follower of Jesus is not the absence of wrong-doing, but the presence of right-doing.

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- Why is making decisions sometimes frightening, frustrating, or intimidating?
- Have you ever made a poor decision after being tempted by riches, honors, or pride? Have you ever made a good decision after embracing poverty, insults or humility?
- What gives me the strength to not be satisfied with “not doing anything wrong” but rather “trying to do something right”?

### 3) “Making a Good Choice (Sound Election) [169-189]

After meditating upon Jesus’ earthly life and acknowledging what following His Standard involves, the pinnacle of the *Spiritual Exercises* is explicitly making the decision to follow Jesus. This is not meant to be an abstract “acceptance of Jesus as our Savior,” but rather truly pondering what it means for me, myself, as I am to follow Jesus’ example in my own, concrete, unique way in the life I live. Ignatius gives us varying ways to make this decision. Different ways work better for different people. Each method uses reflection and thought over our Interior Movements, but with varying degrees of complexity. The Appendix gives a user-friendly summary of the major approaches. Please consult that Appendix at this point. The earlier steps are less complex and more appropriate for people with little or no experience of the Spiritual Exercises. Those who have already made the *Spiritual Exercises* or currently meet with a Spiritual Director may benefit from the later steps. Yet, for all steps, it is necessary to adhere to the Indifference mentioned in Movement One of this retreat.

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How can I remember that “following Jesus” is not simply an abstract state of belief, but rather a concrete and practical way of “living Love” amid our own day-to-day existence?
- What helps me appreciate that we all follow Jesus (live lovingly) in our own way?
- What helps me appreciate that we all make decisions differently?

### Reflection Questions for the Film:

- Which characters seemed ‘fully alive’ or ‘like their truest self’?
- Which characters seemed to struggle with decisions, and which seemed to do excel? What do you think the difference was?
- Which characters made poor decisions based on “riches, honor, or pride”? Which characters made good decisions out of “poverty, insults, or humility”?

## Movement Four: 'The 3<sup>rd</sup> Week'

- 1) The Shortest and the Longest
- 2) "Jesus' Passion" [190-209]
- 3) Journey, Community, and Commitment

- 1) "The shortest, and the longest."

The Third Week meditates on the Passion of Jesus. The Passion (His Suffering and Crucifixion) was the result of his Public Ministry (which threatened the religious authorities and Romans). It is the shortest and longest Week of the *Exercises*. It is the shortest in terms of literal 'space' in the published version of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The Third Week occupies the least amount of pages by a significant margin. However, in the lived experience of human existence, many people have found that most of our adult life naturally remains 'in the Third Week.'

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How might this give new meaning to the cliché "Time flies when you're having fun" or the opposite notion that time moves slowly when you're in an unpleasant situation?
- What could remind you that challenges and obstacles are a part of human existence?
- How does God want you to treat yourself during challenges and obstacles?

- 2) "The Content: Jesus' Passion; The Context: between the Discernment and Resurrection"

Perhaps the most important aspect to understanding the Third Week is to understand its content and context. The Third Week contains meditations on Jesus' experience of what we now call "Holy Week." It contemplates his experiences entering Jerusalem, through Last Supper, into the Garden of Gethsemane, and culminates with the crucifixion. The content of the Third Week is not exactly joyous, uplifting, or energizing...and considering its context this is quite appropriate. By considering the context, we can greatly appreciate Ignatius' understanding of the human condition.

The context of the Third Week is between the Second Week and the Fourth Week. While this seems obvious, we must remember that the Second Week was all about making the decision to follow Christ. The Fourth Week will focus on the joy of Christ's resurrection. The Third Week is a sobering reminder that even the best decisions we will ever make lead directly to having to follow through with those decisions. Decisions are not conclusions, they are introductions. A great decision -in this case, to follow God's call in our own personal way- will ultimately lead to fulfillment but will often immediately lead to a journey of struggle, challenge, and the need for courage.

It would be quite nice if making a decision was directly rewarded with only positive and reassuring feelings of confidence and joy. Unfortunately, that is often not the way life works. As we seek to apply the messages of the Third Week, we are reminded of three important concepts: Journey, Community, and Commitment.

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How often are you tempted to skip over or neglect the more unpleasant experiences of life, and how does this usually work out for you when you do?
- The Christian understanding of Jesus sheds new light on Lao Tzu's famous quote: "If you are depressed you are living in the past, if you are anxious you are living in the future, if you are at peace you are living in the present." How is God calling you to embrace the present?
- How does Jesus model the way we should do this?

### 3) "Journey, Community, and Commitment."

Jesus journeyed from Bethany to Jerusalem, from the Last Supper to the Agony in the Garden, from the Garden to Pilate, and from Pilate to the Cross. Of course, these smaller journeys comprised one larger journey from his Public Ministry to his Death. So too it is with our own lives. Once we decide where we feel God is calling us, we begin the journey towards living out that calling. This larger journey will contain many smaller journeys of varying degrees of length and challenge. However, luckily, we do not make this journey alone.

All journeys are easier when shared with others, and they are harder when embarked upon alone. Thus, the second concept of the Third Week is Community. Surrounding ourselves with others who support us, encourage us, and help us remain focused on our calling is a vital component to the Christian Faith. While the chief member of our community is Jesus, it would be foolhardy neglect human companionship when it is available to us. More to the point, we must remember that we ourselves must also support and encourage those around us, since they also are on their own journeys.

The recognition of our journey and the acceptance of community will help us in our commitment to living out the decision we made in the Second Week of the Exercises. It will help us cultivate the Virtues of Hope, Fortitude/Courage, and Prudence as we Faithfully advance towards Love. It will help us to forge ahead when we feel slothful and lazy. It will keep us grounded and humble when we feel prideful and greedy. It will help us stay focused when we feel distracted by wrath/anger, gluttony/over-indulgence, or lust/immediate pleasure.

### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- What positive communities are you a part of, and how can you show gratitude for them?
- What communities might not be so positive, and what is God encouraging you to do about this?
- How can you cultivate and apply virtues that will help you? What vices tempt you the most to stray from your journeys, and how might God help you past these?

### Reflection Questions for the Film:

- Which characters approached their journeys with virtues such as Hope, Courage, Prudence, or Love?
- Which characters surrounded themselves with positive communities that assisted their journey?
- Which characters isolated themselves or were surrounded by a negative community?

## Movement Five: 'The 4<sup>th</sup> Week'

- 1) Resurrected Christ's Appearance to Mary [218-229]
- 2) Contemplation to Attain Divine Love [230-237]
- 3) Suscipe [234]

### 1) Resurrected Christ's Appearance to Mary

As Christians we are all familiar with the story of Easter Sunday. This story of joy and fulfillment can derive an even deeper and more heart-felt meaning when reviewed through the *Exercises*. Christ beholds the sinfulness of the world (1<sup>st</sup> Week), chooses to come to earth and invites us to 'follow Him' (2<sup>nd</sup> Week), for this message of love He suffers crucifixion (3<sup>rd</sup> Week), and now experiences the fulfillment of Resurrection (4<sup>th</sup> Week). He courageously endures the challenges that accompany his decision to follow God's call to Him, and he then participates in the joy of Resurrection. So too is our journey through the *Exercises*. We acknowledge our participation in the brokenness of the world (1<sup>st</sup> Week), we make the conscious choice to follow Jesus in our own way (2<sup>nd</sup> Week), we endure the challenges that accompany our decision (3<sup>rd</sup> Week), and we participate in the fulfillment and joy which God had in store for us the entire time -despite our understanding of it (4<sup>th</sup> Week). When we experience joy and fulfillment, we all feel the urge to share that joy with others. The question becomes: to whom do we go to share our joy, and why that person? Ignatius envisions Jesus going to Mary.

#### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Who are the first people you go to with good news or feelings of joy? Why them? What do you say?
- How does sharing your joy affect your own experience of that joy?
- How does this joy flavor how you look back on the challenges experienced in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Week? (The cliché, "Hindsight is 20/20" is a cliché for good reason!)

### 2) CONTEMPLATION TO ATTAIN DIVINE LOVE [230-237]

Ignatius begins this wonderful contemplation with two extremely important notes, which cannot be overstated. First, Love is shown more in deeds than words [231], and second, Love consists in mutual sharing [232]. These two points alone are worth spending much time pondering. How do we best show our love in action? Why is it so easy to be skeptical of words, yet so easy to be reluctant to act? Why do peoples' actions touch us so deeply? Why do we often forget peoples' words, but not their actions? Whom do we strive to share our love with? Why is it so hard to keep love silent and individual? If 'God is love' then how to we show and share our love of God?

After these introductory points, Ignatius encourages us to reflect on all the gifts we have received through our following of Jesus...but more importantly to see those gifts as being truly originated by God. Thus, our gratitude for the gifts are merely a vehicle to give gratitude to God. Ignatius offers the image of the Sun with its rays...God is the Sun, the rays are the gifts to us. Just as we cannot truly distinguish where the sun ends and the rays begin, so it is with the gifts in our lives and God as their source. When we look close enough, God's bestowal of the gift and the gift itself become one.

#### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- How have I succeeded in sharing love through my actions in my own life? Who shows love to me?
  - How can I best share my love, and with whom? Who shares their love with me?
  - What are the gifts in my life I am most grateful for? How can I consistently remember to give that gratitude to God?
- 3) “Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will -all that I have and hold. You have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to Your will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me.” [234]

Ignatius instructs us to say this prayer (commonly called the *Suscipe*) in the middle of the Contemplation to Attain Divine Love. It serves as the culmination of the *Spiritual Exercises* that both helps to conclude our experience on retreat as well as propels our re-entry into the world. Together with the “Principle and Foundation” which began the *Spiritual Exercises*, the *Suscipe* forms a bookend to our experience. While the “Principle and Foundation” commenced our journey with the mindset of our human condition, the *Suscipe* concludes with the action of giving everything back to God. In this sense, our entire retreat (our insights, realizations, graces, resolutions, hopes, dreams, promises, etc) is handed over to God so He may dispose of it the way he sees best -since His judgment would be more reliable than ours anyway! All we ask in return is to receive God’s love and grace. As we saw in our first movement, this love and grace is unconditionally bestowed to us regardless. Our prayer is that we may receive it. And so, the *Exercises* come full circle. We began with God’s unconditional love, and we end with it. What has happened in the interim -our retreat- is our acknowledgment, reception, and appropriation of that love. As such, we have become conduits of God’s work. We are no co-laborers with God, by following Jesus in the way that His Spirit has led us to through these *SPIRITual Exercises*.

#### QUESTIONS FOR PERSONAL REFLECTION:

- Now that the retreat is done, look back and savor how you have received, acknowledged, and appropriated God’s love.
- How does it feel to hand the things that matter most to us (our freedom, memory, understand, and will) to God?
- What are things you believe God might want to do with them? What will help you recognize and respond to this when the time comes?

#### Reflection Questions for the Film:

- Which scenes show characters sharing their joy? How does that sharing influence the plot of the film?
- What scenes show characters using their actions to show love rather than simply using words? How does this influence the plot of the film?
- How do certain characters hand over themselves and their gifts to something beyond themselves?

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>RATING</u>	<u>IGNATIUS "WEEK" CONNECTION</u>
<i>16 Candles</i>	1984	PG-13	Principle and Foundation
<i>3:10 to Yuma</i>	2007	R	3rd Week
<i>A League of Their Own</i>	1992	PG	3rd Week
<i>About Time</i>	2013	R	4th Week
<i>Accepted</i>	2006	PG-13	Principle and Foundation
<i>Answer This!</i>	2011	PG-13	Principle and Foundation
<i>Away We Go</i>	2009	R	3rd Week
<i>Batman Begins</i>	2005	PG-13	Principle and Foundation
<i>Blue Jasmine</i>	2013	R	1st Week
<i>Calvary</i>	2015	R	Entire Exercises
<i>Cars</i>	2006	G	Principle and Foundation
<i>Chef</i>	2015	R	Entire Exercises
<i>Charlie Bartlett</i>	2007	R	Principle and Foundation
<i>Cinema Paradiso</i>	1988	R	4th Week
<i>Citizen Kane</i>	1941	PG	1st Week
<i>Coco</i>	2017	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Dead Poet's Society</i>	1989	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Definitely, Maybe</i>	2008	PG-13	2nd Week
<i>Departures</i>	2008	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>Elf</i>	2003	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>EuroTrip</i>	2004	R	3rd Week
<i>Field of Dreams</i>	1989	PG	Entire Exercises
<i>Frozen</i>	2013	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Garden State</i>	2004	R	3rd Week
<i>Good Will Hunting</i>	1997	R	Principle and Foundation
<i>Gran Torino</i>	2008	R	3rd Week
<i>Green Book</i>	2018	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>Green Street Hooligans</i>	2005	R	Principle and Foundation
<i>Groundhog Day</i>	1993	PG	3rd Week
<i>Hoosiers</i>	1986	PG	3rd Week
<i>Hugo</i>	2011	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Ice Storm</i>	1997	R	1st Week
<i>In Bruges</i>	2008	R	2nd Week
<i>Inside Out</i>	2015	PG	3rd Week
<i>It's A Wonderful Life</i>	1946	G	Entire Exercises
<i>Joyeux Noel</i>	2005	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>Legends of the Fall</i>	1994	R	3rd Week
<i>Lion King</i>	1995	G	Principle and Foundation
<i>Little Miss Sunshine</i>	2006	R	3rd Week
<i>Love Actually</i>	2003	R	4th Week
<i>Major League</i>	1989	R	3rd Week
<i>Meet Joe Black</i>	1998	PG-13	4th Week

<i>Michael Collins</i>	1996	R	3rd Week
<i>Midnight in Paris</i>	2011	PG-13	2nd Week
<i>Mr. Smith Goes to Washington</i>	1939	G	3rd Week
<i>Office Space</i>	1999	R	Principle and Foundation
<i>On the Waterfront</i>	1954	PG	2nd Week
<i>Remember the Titans</i>	2000	PG	3rd Week
<i>Robots</i>	2005	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Role Models</i>	2008	R	2nd Week
<i>Rudy</i>	1993	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Saving Private Ryan</i>	1999	R	3rd Week
<i>Scent of a Woman</i>	1992	R	1st Week
<i>Seven Pounds</i>	2009	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>Shawshank Redemption</i>	1994	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>Shrek</i>	2001	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Shutter Island</i>	2010	R	Principle and Foundation
<i>Silver Linings Playbook</i>	2012	R	Principle and Foundation
<i>Simon Birch</i>	1998	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Steve Jobs</i>	2015	R	1st Week
<i>The Artist</i>	2011	PG-13	Principle and Foundation
<i>The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel</i>	2011	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>The Blind Side</i>	2009	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>The Conspirator</i>	2010	PG-13	2nd Week
<i>The Death of a Salesman</i>	1985	PG	1st Week
<i>The Departed</i>	2006	R	1st Week
<i>The Devil Wears Prada</i>	2006	PG-13	1st Week
<i>The Greatest Showman</i>	2018	PG	Entire Exercises
<i>The Ides of March</i>	2011	R	1st Week
<i>The Judge</i>	2014	R	1st Week
<i>The Land Before Time</i>	1988	G	3rd Week
<i>The Last Kiss</i>	2006	R	2nd Week
<i>The Mission</i>	1986	PG	Entire Exercises
<i>The Sandlot</i>	1993	PG	3rd Week
<i>The Social Network</i>	2010	PG-13	1st Week
<i>The Town</i>	2011	R	1st Week
<i>The Way</i>	2010	PG-13	Entire Exercises
<i>The Wrestler</i>	2008	R	1st Week
<i>There Will Be Blood</i>	2007	R	1st Week
<i>Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Mo</i>	2017	R	1st Week
<i>Up in the Air</i>	2009	R	1st Week
<i>What's Eating Gilbert Grape</i>	1993	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>Wreck It Ralph</i>	2012	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Young Adult</i>	2011	R	1st Week
<i>Young Guns</i>	1988	R	3rd Week

*Zombieland*

2009

R

3rd Week

**Spiritual Exercises through Harry Potter**

<i>Harry Potter: Sorcerers Stone</i>	2001	PG	Principle and Foundation
<i>Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets</i>	2002	PG	Principle and Foundation-1st Week
<i>Harry Potter: Prisoner of Azkaban</i>	2004	PG	1st Week
<i>Harry Potter: Goblet of Fire</i>	2005	PG-13	2nd Week
<i>Harry Potter: Order of the Phoenix</i>	2007	PG-13	2nd Week
<i>Harry Potter: Half-Blood Prince**</i>	2009	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>Harry Potter: Deathly Hallows 1</i>	2010	PG-13	3rd Week
<i>Harry Potter: Deathly Hallows 2</i>	2011	PG-13	3rd-4th Week

## Appendix: Discernment Assistant

**Directions:** What follows is a worksheet for the three basic ways of going through Ignatian Discernment. Those newer to the Spiritual Exercises should stick with #1 through #3. More advanced users may proceed to #4

- 1) List of Pros vs. Cons** (Make TWO lists, one for each option! Those who only make one list are only looking at half of the decision. NB: Requires remaining indifferent otherwise you will subconsciously mark down only what you want to mark down.)

Choice #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Choice #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Pros for Choice #1	Cons for Choice #1	Pros for Choice #2	Cons for Choice #2

**2) Advice You Would Give a Friend/Think of Your Own Funeral (or Obituary)**

- a. What would you tell “your friend”?
  - i. Which choice gives you more optimism and hope, and how can you increase that?
  - ii. Which choice makes you feel more free, open, and available, and how can you use that freedom?
  - iii. What choice makes you feel more you? More in-line with your identity, and how can you celebrate that identity?
  - iv. What choice makes you feel closer to the people you know care about you?
- b. What do you want people at your funeral to say about you? What do you want your obituary to say?
  - i. On your death bed, what will you wish you would have chosen?

**3) Spend a few days with each decision, even before you make it.**

- a. Imagine for a few days you chose “Choice A”
  - i. Do you feel happy, open, confirmed, joyous, lightly, empowered, energized? ..follow that road
  - ii. Do you feel dread, closed off, second-guessing, stressed, burdened, beaten down, tired and cranky? ...take a break and re-examine things
- b. Imagine for a few days you chose “Choice B”
  - i. Do you feel happy, open, confirmed, joyous, lightly, empowered, energized?....follow that road
  - ii. Do you feel dread, closed off, second-guessing, stressed, burdened, beaten down, tired and cranky?....take a break and re-examine things

**4) Overall: Generally “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits” (Only for Advanced)**

**a. Step One: Discover your motivations and recent history**

- i.** Are you “Going from one sin to another” (in a downward spiral, digging yourself a hole?) **OR** Do you have selfish motivations (fame, possessions, reward, accolade) *(NB: Trying to please the wrong people or pleasing people for the wrong reasons is a selfish motive despite the fact that they are other people)*
- ii.** Are you “truly trying to serve God” (make the world better, be your truest self, help others in need, increase love, kindness, patience) **OR** Do you have selfless motivations (want to help others grow in patience, love, and kindness)?
  - 1.** Do you want something because of what you will GET or GIVE?
    - a.** Teacher: Get summers off, or affect students positively?
    - b.** Parent: to fulfill a societal expectation, or to give your children the opportunity at life?
    - c.** Doctor: A big pay check, or to help other people in their time of need and discomfort?
    - d.** Lawyer: To look important, or to help bring the truth to light in a just and responsible way?
    - e.** Business: A big paycheck, or to provide a needed product at a reasonable price to your consumers?

**b. Step Two: “Listen” to your thoughts, feelings, emotions, reactions, etc. over an extended period of time**

- i.** “One sin to another” or Selfish intentions (your goal is your own benefit)
  - 1.** When you feel: Justified, complacent, content, satisfied
    - a.** Run the other way; look for other options; do not continue; spend more time in thought, reflection, prayer;
  - 2.** When you feel: Guilt, remorse, tough-love, second-guessing
    - a.** Dig deeper, think about what the cause might be, consider a change, follow this
- ii.** “Truly Trying to Serve God” or Self-less intentions (your goal is the benefit of another/God/the world)
  - 1.** When you feel:
    - a.** Loss of self-worth; bullied or forced
    - b.** Absence of hope; no where else to turn
    - c.** Pervasive heaviness, oppressed, bullied, forced
    - d.** Overwhelming anxiety and confusion
    - e.** Cut off from others whom you know care for you
    - f.** Led into negative interactions with good people
    - g.** Dwelling on your own shortcomings and failings and sin
  - 2.** Pump the breaks, run the other way, look for other options, do not continue down the path, remember a time when you felt good and try to re-capture that mindset, talk with people who love you
  - 3.** When you feel:
    - a.** A real sense of your own self-worth; renewed confidence
    - b.** Feeling more alive, energized, available, open

- c. Connected with others, lighter hearted, freer
  - d. Feeling drawn, welcomed, invited, free to choose
  - e. Feelings of clarity, comfort, and confidence
  - f. Optimistic, patient, kind, warm, empathetic
  - g. Aware of sin, but with forgiveness and learning and growth
4. Follow that road, continue going farther, spend time savoring and capturing the feeling, share that feeling with others,

<b>Signs of the Evil Spirit (Enemy of Human Nature)</b>	<b>Signs of the Good Spirit</b>
<p><u>Loss of the sense of our worth.</u> We are down on ourselves and even think or say things about ourselves we would never say about anyone else.</p>	<p><u>There is a real sense of our own worth.</u> A renewed confidence. “Yes, I can do this; it might be tough, but I can do it! I will do my best, and I am confident in.”</p>
<p><u>Hope is blighted and fades away; the light goes out.</u> There is a feeling of being stuck or trapped, of having nowhere to go, or going in circles. “This is hopeless; I feel lost; I have nowhere to turn and no one to turn to, I feel bullied.”</p>	<p><u>Hope comes alive; we believe others are with us no matter what.</u> There is a genuine feeling of movement. “It doesn’t have to be like this. I want to do something about this, and I can do something about this.”</p>
<p><u>There is a pervasive sense of heaviness; we feel burdened.</u> We denigrate into cynicism (we cannot see any good in anything), apathy, or self-pity. “Whatever. It doesn’t matter. Who cares?”</p>	<p><u>Something lifts us; we feel lighter and freer.</u> We grow in compassion and sensitivity to the needs of others. “Yes, this <i>does</i> matter. This choice affects x,y,z.”</p>
<p><u>A questioning that creates anxiety and ends in confusion.</u> We find ourselves mulling constantly over incidents, or giving all our attention to resolving one issue. We end up more fragmented and de-energized and weary.</p>	<p><u>A questioning that is accompanied by clarity and conviction.</u> We are led to bring our concerns into the light and focus on the possibilities not the problems.</p>
<p><u>We are easily led into negative interactions with others that degenerate into mutual recriminations.</u> An “I am right, you are wrong” attitude. Me against the world attitude. Combative. Angry.</p>	<p><u>We put an optimistic spin on what people say rather than point out where they are wrong.</u> <u>We give people the benefit of the doubt.</u> We are led to let go of our hurts and are able to better relate to others.</p>
<p><u>When we think of our sins and failings, we feel bad about ourselves and stay there.</u> “I am worthless. I am terrible. I have nothing to offer. I am awful”</p>	<p><u>Awareness of sin is always tinged with hope and leads us towards a feeling of forgiveness.</u> “Yes, I made a mistake. But that doesn’t make me a terrible person. I can learn and improve. I want to do better. I <u>can</u> improve”</p>

\*\*Adapted from *Where the Hell is God?* By Richard Leonard SJ; Chapter 4