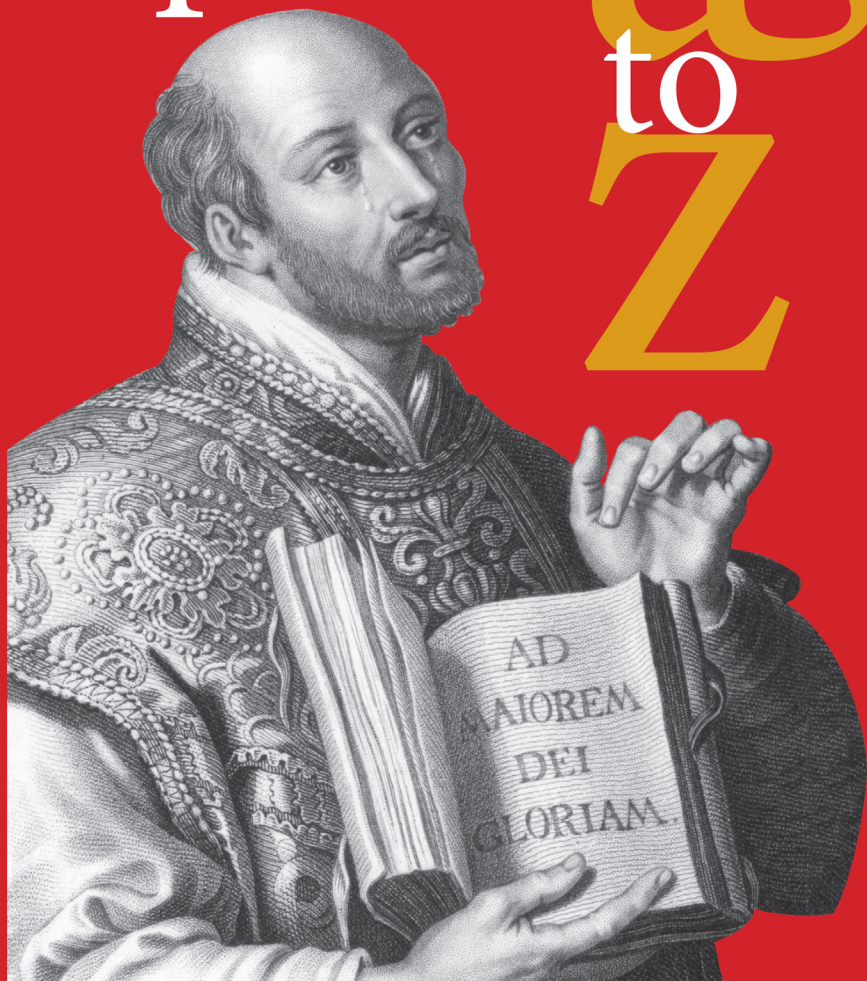


JIM MANNEY

AUTHOR OF *A Simple, Life-Changing Prayer*

Ignatian Spirituality to



Ignatian
Spirituality
a^{to}z

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Ignatian Spirituality a^{to}z

Jim Manney



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To William A. Barry, SJ

*Everywhere there is good to be done,
everywhere there is something to be
planted and harvested. For we are
indebted to all men in every condition and
in every place.*

—Peter Faber, SJ



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Preface

The Ignatian Alphabet

The idea for this book came to me late one Saturday afternoon at a workshop on Ignatian discernment at Manresa Jesuit Retreat House in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. At the time, I didn't know much about Ignatian spirituality; I was there because I was editing a book on discernment and wanted to learn more about it. I struggled all day to understand what people were talking about. Most were spiritual directors, pastoral counselors, and others who had been part of the Ignatian world a long time. They used strange terms such as "consolation and desolation," "annotations," and "magis." Familiar words such as "indifference" and "desire" seemed to have a special meaning, and people casually referred to the "Contemplatio," "Suscipe," "Examen," and other odd and unfamiliar things. I thought: *What I need is a good little book where I can look up this stuff.* I didn't find one in the retreat house bookstore.

I went on to get an Ignatian education. I went to more workshops, made the Spiritual Exercises, read many books, and learned to walk the Ignatian path along with many friends and mentors.

Over the years, I've met many people who were in the same boat I was in that afternoon at Manresa. Many of them are personally drawn to Ignatian prayer and discernment; they've heard a homily or a talk or made an Ignatian retreat and want to know more. Others are involved in Jesuit ministries and institutions as students, volunteers, employees, board members, or alumni. Some are spiritual directors, therapists, pastors, and others who engage in what Ignatius called spiritual conversation. Some are clergy, lay leaders, and others who make it their business to stay abreast of spiritual movements. All these people—like me—discover that there's a lot to learn about Ignatian spirituality. Like me, they face a learning curve that would be easier to navigate if they had a book where they could look up the terms they keep encountering.

This is that book—the book I wish I had when I was getting started. I tell the story of Ignatius and the Jesuits, explain the main ideas of Ignatian spirituality, clarify unfamiliar terms, and demystify some jargon. I've written entries about the main parts of the Spiritual Exercises; I include some short sketches of famous Jesuits, and, well—look at the Table of Contents. I've covered a lot of ground, eighty-three entries in all, arranged in an A-to-Z lexical format.

The A-to-Z format allows you to read the book any way you want. You can read it straight through. You can consult it when the need arises. If you're beginning an Ignatian education, start with the entry on Ignatius, go to discernment, read about the Spiritual Exercises, and follow your interests from there. If you're interested in Ignatian prayer, start with the entry on the Examen, then read about imaginative prayer, colloquy, and friendship with God. If Jesuit lore is your thing, read the brief history of the Jesuits and then continue to the suppression of the Jesuits, Constitutions, our way of proceeding, helping souls, and *ad majorem dei Gloriam*. As you read, follow the **bolded** terms in the text; these denote other entries in the book that fill in the topic.

The great pitfall of writing about spirituality is a tendency to heaviness and abstraction. To avoid this, I've injected personal observations from time to time, and a bit of my personal history. I've had some fun. (See the entries on Jesuit Conspiracy Theories, Basketball, and Jesuits in Fiction and Film.) I've kept things short. For more, follow up with the books in "An Ignatian Reading List" at the end.

Ignatius saw the spiritual life as a pilgrimage. If you are reading this, chances are that your pilgrimage has taken an Ignatian direction. I hope this book can help you along that Ignatian way.

Jim Manney





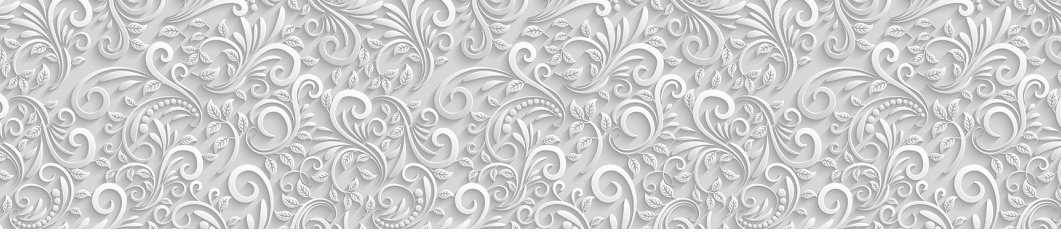
Pedro Arrupe



Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam

When I was a kid in Catholic school, the nuns made me put the letters JMJ at the top of my test papers and writing exercises. They stood for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph; it was a pleasantly sentimental appeal for the blessing of the Holy Family. Nobody made me write pious letters at the top of my papers in high school, a no-nonsense prep school run by the tough Irish Christian Brothers. But in college, initials reappeared. One of my freshman teachers, a Jesuit, would write the letters AMDG at the top of the blackboard at the beginning of every class.

If JMJ is on one end of the sweetness spectrum, AMDG is at the other. AMDG stands for the Latin phrase *Ad majorem Dei gloriam*, meaning “For the greater glory of God.” It’s the motto of the Jesuits, and when you think about it, it’s a very bold claim. It declares that God is



glorified by what I'm doing, even if it seems futile and meaningless. At the same time, it's a profoundly humble claim: the meekest work, even work that seems far removed from the spiritual realm, can give glory to God.

As the Jesuit poet **Gerard Manley Hopkins** wrote:

It is not only prayer that gives God glory but work. Smiting on an anvil, sawing a beam, whitewashing a wall, driving horses, sweeping, scouring, everything gives God some glory if being in his grace you do it as your duty. . . . To lift up the hands in prayer gives God glory, but a man with a dungfork in his hand, a woman with a slop pail, gives him glory too. He is so great that all things give him glory if you mean they should.

Ad majorem Dei gloriam captures several of the central ideas of Ignatian spirituality—the conviction that God can be found in all things, the desire to find union with God through the work we do, and the importance of seeking the choice that will give God the *greater* glory.



Agere Contra

Several important Ignatian ideas are given extra gravitas by being rendered in Latin (see *Cura Personalis*, *Magis*, and *Suscipe*). One is *agere contra*, which means “do the opposite.”

Ignatius says we should do the opposite, *agere contra*, when we’re plagued by self-pity, sloth, lust for wealth and power, and other troublesome **desires**. Often you’ll see *agere contra* translated as “act against,” but Ignatius meant something stronger than that. When you’re beset by temptations, don’t just pray that they go away. Desire the opposite. Ignatius gives the example of an ambitious cleric who is tempted to seek high church office because he wants the power and creature comforts that go with it. “He should strive to rouse a desire for the contrary,” Ignatius says. If you lust for riches, seek poverty. If you want power, pray to be



powerless. If you're feeling sorry for yourself, go find someone to help. If it's hard to pray, pray more!

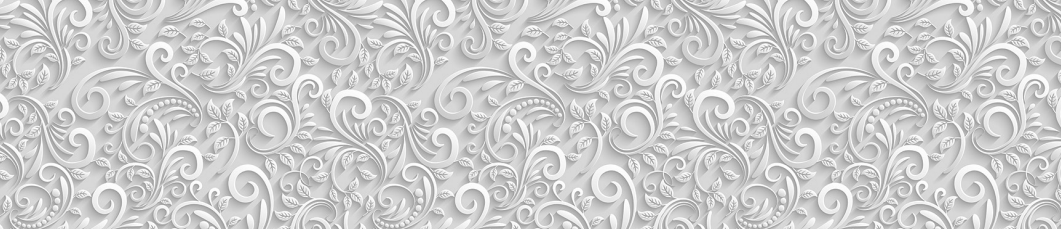
Agere contra illustrates the vigilant assertiveness that permeates the Ignatian outlook. Don't get comfortable. Beware of settling in. Always be alert for the next thing the Lord is calling you to do.



Annotations

When I was just getting started in Ignatian spirituality, I went to a workshop on **discernment** at a Jesuit retreat house with a bunch of highly experienced spiritual directors and others who had been around a long time. I was an outsider, but I foolishly tried to act as if I was part of the club. At lunch I asked a woman when she had made the **Spiritual Exercises**. She said, “I made a nineteenth annotation retreat four years ago.” I smiled and nodded. I had no idea what she was talking about.

Turns out that a nineteenth annotation retreat is a way to make the Exercises without going away to a retreat house for thirty days. You work with a spiritual director over six or seven months while keeping up your normal daily routine. It’s often called a “retreat in daily life,” and it’s the most common way for people to make the Exercises these days.



Ignatius described this kind of retreat in the nineteenth of twenty-two “annotations” that he put at the beginning of the published version of the Exercises—hence the name. The annotations are Ignatius’s ground rules for the Exercises, written for the director who leads other people through the retreat. They touch on some of the most important ideas of Ignatian spirituality.

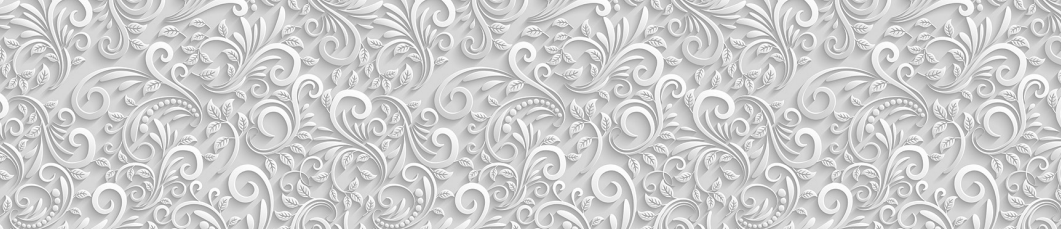
The second annotation tells directors to stifle their urge to explain everything and let retreatants figure things out for themselves. Ignatius didn’t want the Exercises to be an experience of words and ideas and concepts. “It is not much knowledge that fills and satisfies the soul, but the intimate understanding and relish of the truth,” he says. This is one of Ignatius’s firmest principles: God speaks most powerfully in our hearts, not our minds.

The fifth annotation says that someone interested in making the Spiritual Exercises should show “**magnanimity** and generosity toward his Creator and Lord.” It’s often thought that the Exercises are for people with great intelligence, holiness, education, and vast experience in spiritual matters. Ignatius doesn’t mention these things. Instead, he’s looking for people with a spirit of openness, curiosity, courage, and generosity.



In the fifteenth annotation, Ignatius tells the director of the Exercises not to get in the middle of what's happening between the retreatant and God: “**Permit the Creator to deal directly with the creature**, and the creature directly with his Creator and Lord.” This is one of the bedrock principles of Ignatian spirituality. If we look for God, we will find him. We can have a personal relationship with God that's uniquely our own. This idea got Ignatius in trouble: he was suspected of denying the traditional teaching that the church was the mediator between God and his creatures. He was cleared of heresy; it is, after all, Catholic teaching that we can have a personal relationship with God.

The world would be a different place if everyone practiced the twenty-second annotation, known as the **Presupposition**. Ignatius writes, “It is necessary to suppose that every good Christian is more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it as false.”



Arrupe, Pedro, SJ

When you look at modern Jesuit history and talk to Jesuits about why the order looks the way it does, one name stands out: Pedro Arrupe. Arrupe was a cheerful, eloquent, and enormously charismatic man who was **Superior General** of the Jesuits from 1965–1983. He guided a renewal of the Society based on a deeper understanding of its initial Ignatian charism. He oriented the Society toward service to the poor and refugees and emphasized the centrality of the **Spiritual Exercises** to Jesuit ministry. His vision of training **men and women for others** reshaped **Jesuit education** and profoundly influenced Ignatian ministries of all kinds.

Some words attributed to him capture the spirit of Ignatian spirituality as well as anything I know:

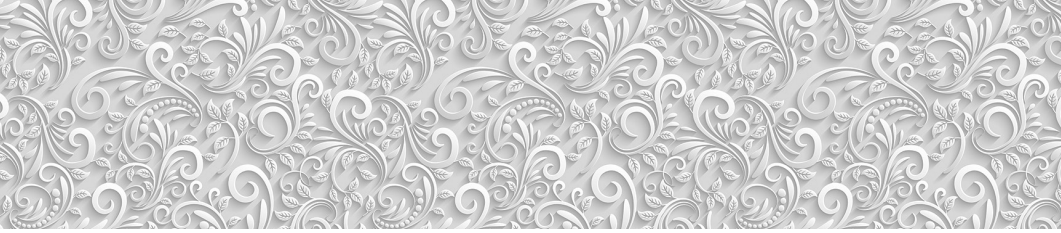
Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What



you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love and it will decide everything.

Arrupe suffered a stroke in 1981 and spent the last ten years of his life in an infirmary, paralyzed and mute. He wrote:

More than ever I find myself in the hands of God. This is what I have wanted all my life from my youth. But now there is a difference; the initiative is entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in God's hands.



Autobiography

In 1552, two of Ignatius's closest friends asked him to write an account of his conversion and the events leading to the founding of the Jesuits. Ignatius was reluctant; he was tired and ill (he died in 1556), and he was temperamentally disinclined to talk about himself in any case. He went ahead with it anyway, and it's a good thing he did. Ignatian spirituality flows directly from the life of Ignatius, and most of what we know about his life comes from his *Autobiography*. It's a rare document—the life of a saint in the saint's own words. It's only about 20,000 words long; you can read it in an evening.

Ignatius sees his life as a **pilgrimage**, and he refers to himself throughout as “the pilgrim.” He covers the first part of his life in one sentence: “Until the age of twenty-six, he was a man given up to the vanities of the world, and his chief delight used to be the exercise of arms, with a great