

Mentoring Program
Session 4 — Week 2:
The Two Standards, Three Classes of Persons, Three Kinds of Humility
December 13, 2008

Opening Prayer:

Share reflections from homework — Two Standards, Jesus' Baptism, Desert Experience

The Two Standards

The story that Ignatius uses to introduce us to a practical application of Discernment of Spirits. An introduction to theological reflection/social analysis.

Not asking us to choose between Satan and God, but for insight into the strategies and values of Satan and God.

THE ENEMY

Pompous, Powerful, Oppressive

Summons, Scatters

Using all Force

Missing Nobody

Tempts to

Riches

Honor

Pride

Lead to all other vices

GOD

Humble, Gentle

Chooses, Sends

Gently

Embracing everyone

Invites to

Poverty (Spiritual Freedom)

Contempt (Vulnerability)

Humility (Unconditional Love)

Lead to all other virtues

Romans 7:11-14

Three Classes of Persons

Leads us to a deeper understanding of our resistances to true spiritual freedom, to be totally oriented to God's kingdom.

This prayer exercise is intended to help in choosing the kind of life towards which the Spirit of God is drawing one. During this process a person must always take into account the real data of one's history. It is so easy to be misguided. One may be biased towards what is less helpful among possible choices in God's service. Also it is easier to imagine oneself as being open than to be actually open. Many of us have non-negotiables which can contaminate the discerning process. These non-negotiables may be hidden assumptions; or unacknowledged inordinate attachments; or habitual ways of handling our lives. This exercise concerning the different attitudes of three categories of persons may be useful for surfacing such areas of unfreedom. As such it can help one to assume a freer attitude in making choices. This Ignatian parable is much more profound than it seems because it deals with that interface where the creature resists the loving Creator.

In the first instance, the parable applies primarily to one's attitude toward possessions as these impinge upon the material for decision-making. However by analogy this parable can touch the interior stances and those non-conscious, long forgotten, twilight decisions made long ago and still affecting one's choices. Hence in the place of the sum of money one can understand any one of the following: interior gifts ... non negotiables ... defence mechanisms ... habitual ways of handling life ... personal life-long dream ... assumptions ... the exaggerated behaviour flowing from one's shadow etc. (John Veltri, Orientations I, http://spiritualorientations.com/2ndwk_b.html#three_types)

[157] Confront our resistances/repugnance.

Events of Jesus' Life

From Nazareth to Baptism at Jordan

Temptations in the Desert

Call of the Disciples

Beatitudes...

Three Degrees of Humility

AKA Three degrees of indifference, three degrees of love, three ways of being lovingly humble. A consideration, something to come back to throughout the exercises.

1. What are the resistances experienced in this contemplation?
2. What are the graces experienced?

Humility — living in the truth of my creaturehood: that I am my most authentic self when I am totally immersed in God's love and want to respond with a similar passionate love even to be united in God's suffering love.

This consideration is placed after meditating on the life of Jesus up to the entry into Jerusalem and before the Election.

Ignatius isn't introducing anything new. Taking us deeper. An invitation.

Picks up the theme of indifference in P&F and deepens it. After meditating on the Two Standards and the Life of Jesus, Ignatius invites us to honestly consider our level of indifference/love before we move into the election. An invitation to radical living out of the gospel. Thou shalt not kill. Love your enemy. Blessed are the pure of heart. Hunger and thirst for justice — right relationships.

Cosmic Christ. When did you see me hungry, thirst, ... Mt 25:31-46

I find it useful as a litmus test: my level of resistance is a gauge of how balanced and centered I

am. It's a reality check. How willing am I to stand naked before God and surrender all. To let go of all my excuses. Rich young man.

Third degree of humility is a gift. It can only be desired and the poverty, humiliation and suffering should always be at the service of bringing about the kingdom. Transformational suffering. Leads into Third Week.

Review where we are in the Exercises: Sheets on Inner Dynamic and Dynamic of Desire

Why does Ignatius put these meditations at this point in the Exercises?