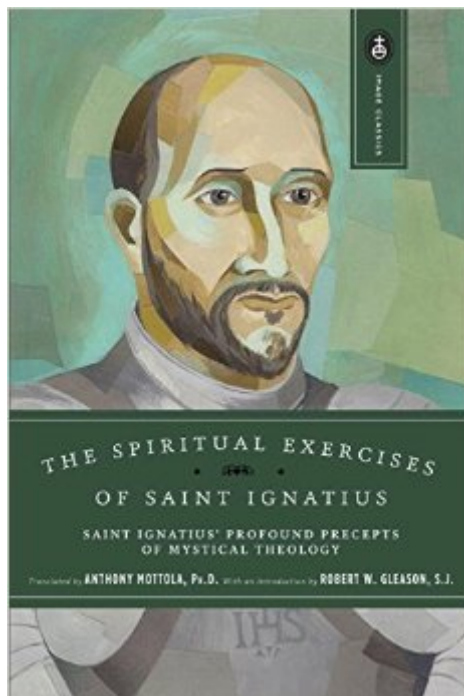


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The Spiritual Exercises Of Saint Ignatius: Saint Ignatius' Profound Precepts Of Mystical Theology (Image Classics)



Synopsis

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, one of the great masterpieces of the Christian canon, today continues to offer some of the most accessible and insightful guidance for going on retreat -- whether as a part of a group or by oneself. Based on the rich fruit of St. Ignatius' own meditations and practice, this guide for spiritual perfection has been treasured and faithfully used for centuries by members of the saint's Jesuit order and by millions more. Divided into four weeks of reflections and four key meditations -- on the Kingdom of God, the Two Standards (of Christ and Satan), the Three Classes of Men, and the Three Modes of Humility -- the whole retreat has at its center the emulation of Christ. Retreat masters, retreatants, and readers will benefit particularly from Anthony Mottola's new translation, which renders the timeless masterpiece into language both accessible and faithful to St. Ignatius' original expression and spirit. The Exercises have been universally recognized as a brilliant and inspired guide to the development of a deeper Christian spirituality ever since St. Ignatius completed them in 1533. Great saints -- as well as countless religious and lay people -- have been spiritually shaped through their dedicated use. This four-week system of meditation and prayer continues to be the very backbone of Ignatian retreats, where earnest seekers come to examine their lives, contemplate the future, face decisions, and revitalize their souls. Both religious and lay people make Ignatian retreats to renew their Christian dedication and enthusiasm, but even those who cannot make such retreats have profited greatly from a careful reading of the Exercises.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius" is one of the literary treasures of Christendom. Written by St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuits, in the 16th Century, it presents St. Ignatius' formula for the pursuit of spiritual perfection. The book itself provides a "guidebook", if you will, for a 30 day Ignatian retreat. St. Ignatius presents meditations for each day of the retreat. The meditations are very brief, leaving broad latitude for the retreat master to direct the retreat along the path most likely to be helpful to the retreatants. While this book certainly is not a "do it yourself" retreat book, it does provide the reader with an accurate insight into the essence of Ignatian Spirituality. The story of the conversion of St. Ignatius is told in the introductory sections of the book. St. Ignatius was an ambitious young Basque nobleman in the service of the King of Spain when he suffered a severe leg wound at the battle of Pampeluna. While recuperating in Loyola Castle, he read the lives of the saints, a book which redirected his service from that of the King of Spain to the service of the King of Heaven. As he gradually discerned his calling he unsuccessfully attempted a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, among other pious exercises. He used the method of his discernment process as a guideline for others, whether to discern their proper state in life or to more perfectly orient their lives toward God. The essence of Ignatian spirituality is that all creation is good. It was created by God to lead all people to Him. The duty of every Christian is to use all of creation to give honor and glory of God, and to use it to lead all men to their creator. Just as all creation is fulfilled in God, so too are all people.

Ignatius here presents a thirty day retreat for one seeking communion with God through meditation. It presumes a leader coaching participants through the experience. Three things are immediately notable about the work. First, it is extremely systematic. Ignatius has to a minute detail what subjects the participant is to think about. Secondly, it is remarkably different from Calvin's writings on spiritual growth and development. For all of Calvin's rejection of the Catholic rites and focus on grace, Ignatius here recommends the exact things that Calvin rejects as a means to the same end. Third, it is remarkable how much recommends the examination of conscience as a remedy for sin. The first week is broken down into a series of five "exercises," or meditations on a set subject, primarily on sin and hell. The second "week" is a series of twelve days that focus reflections on subject matters of the Scriptures. Here he presents the concept of using the five senses to imagine the situations of Scriptural figures (second week, first day, fifth contemplation). Other scriptural subjects including Jesus' departure from Nazareth, Christ in the desert, the disciples following Christ, the sermon on the mount (although he does not expound upon it), walking on the water, the

resurrection of Lazarus, and Palm Sunday. The third week is all about the Passion of Christ, but is a brief seven pages, with a random excursus on fasting. The fourth week teaches three kinds of prayer: the prayer through the ten commandments, prayer that focuses on the meaning of every word of the prayer, and rhythmic recitation of the Lord's Prayer or the creed.

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