



CENTER FOR CATHOLIC STUDIES

TO: WBC AND MICAH PARTICIPANTS
SUBJECT: IGNATIUS' SPIRITUALITY AND THE WBC
DATE: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2010

AGENDA

- Welcome
- Opening Prayer
- WBC Mission Statement
- **Scripture:** Galatians 5, 13-25
- Silent Meditation
- Sharing Insights on Scripture
- **Reading:** *The Examen: Upon Arising, After The Noon Meal, and After Supper*; from *Heroic Leadership* by Chris Lowney
- Discussion and Reflection
- Closing Prayer

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Woodstock Business Conference is to establish and lead a network of business leaders to explore their respective religious traditions in order to ask the individual executives:

- To integrate faith, family, and professional life,
- To develop a corporate culture that is reflective of their religious faith and values,
- To exercise a beneficial influence upon society at large.

The Conference, grounded in Roman Catholic tradition, welcomes believers who are open to and respectful of one another's religious traditions. It is committed to the conviction that ethics and values grow out of one's religious heritage.

SCRIPTURE:

Galatians 5, 13-25

For you were called for freedom, brothers and sisters. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. For the whole law is fulfilled in one statement, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

But if you go on biting and devouring one another, beware that you are not consumed by one another.

I say, then: live by the Spirit and you will certainly not gratify the desire of the flesh. For the flesh has desires against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; these are opposed to each other, so that you may not do what you want. But if you are guided by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

Now the works of the flesh are obvious: immorality, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, rivalry, jealousy, outbursts of fury, acts of selfishness, dissensions, factions, occasions of envy, drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

In contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Now those who belong to Christ have crucified their flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit.

READING:

The Examen: Upon Arising, After The Noon Meal, and After Supper
from *Heroic Leadership* by Chris Lowney

Recruits (Jesuit novices) who successfully absorb the Exercises are injected back into the world as *self-aware, ingenious, loving and heroic leaders*. But no month-long introspective journey, no matter how intense or sophisticated, is enough to fortify someone for a lifetime. Immersed in the world, with all hell breaking loose around them, Jesuits, like anyone else, risk slipping away from their goals and values when faced with the pressures, distractions, and competing demands of everyday life.

Loyola anticipated this and made sure that the Exercises could also be used as a daily follow-up **tool** to maintain focus on newly embraced values. The Exercises were specifically designed for those immersed in a busy lifestyle in an ever-changing world. Every day "upon arising," Jesuits are to remind themselves of key personal goals. And twice each day they make a short mental pit stop, what they call an *examen*. Each *examen* begins by recalling the positive, loving **worldview** that was the Exercises' culminating meditation: "The First Point is to give thanks to God our Lord for the benefits I have received."¹⁷ Then comes a mental replay of the day thus far, "exacting an account of self with regard to the particular matter decided upon for correction and improvement. He should run through the time, hour by hour or period by period, from the moment of rising until the present examination."¹⁸

In other words, the recruit recalls in his mind all the events of the day, the opportunities and challenges presented, and how he reacted to them—whether his subsequent attitudes and choices brought him closer to his long-term goals or moved him further away. This self-reflective habit is as powerful as it is simple. Ambitious goals become manageable when broken down into smaller goals. Not smoking for the rest of one's life is a daunting proposition, but not smoking for the next few hours is a manageable goal. Wanting to become more assertive in order to boost one's career trajectory is a sprawling, ill-defined aspiration, but assessing whether one asserted oneself in the

meeting that ended an hour ago is a way of focusing this aspiration with laser-like precision.

Moreover, the *examen* creates an ongoing feedback loop. Relevant new information is incorporated and assessed in real time; I remind myself of key goals each morning, not every six months, and I extract lessons learned from my successes and failures *twice a day*, not once a year. Finally and most important, the *examen* works for busy people. Few people are willing to set aside even one day a year for self-reflection, but *anyone* can carve out five minutes three times a day.

Self-awareness, the first of the four Jesuit leadership pillars, is the foundation of the others. **Ingenuity**—confident, optimistic innovation—hinges on indifference, the freedom to read and respond to a changing world. **Love**, engaging others positively and supportively, flows from the world-view established through the Contemplation to Attain Love. And **heroism** evolves out of the spirit of magis, a reflexive response that keeps one motivated through ambitious personal goals. Thus, self-awareness accomplished during the Exercises is a prelude to action. Cut off from the world for a metaphorical desert experience, each recruit reemerges all the more committed and engaged. So too, our focus now moves from the introspective Exercises to what those Exercises enabled the early Jesuits to achieve—and what they teach us about leadership today.