***God In All Things*: St Ignatius Way of Prayer**

Gemma Simmonds CJ

St Paul’s Cathedral

26 March 2023

‘God who loves us creates us and wants to share life with us forever. Our love response takes shape in our praise and honour and service of the God of our life. All the things in this world are also created because of God’s love and they become a context of gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we show reverence for all the gifts of creation and collaborate with God in using them so that by being good stewards we develop as loving persons in our care for God’s world and its development. But if we abuse any of these gifts of creation or, on the contrary, take them as the centre of our lives, we break our relationship with God and hinder our growth as loving persons.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some responsibility. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a more loving response to our life forever with God. Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God’s deepening life in me.’

David A. Fleming, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises*, (Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, MO, 1996)

‘In prayer we discover what we already have. You start from where you are and you deepen what you already have, and you realize you are already there. We already have everything, but we don’t know it and don’t experience it. Everything has been given to us in Christ. All we need is to experience what we already possess.’

Quoted in John Moses ed. *The Art of Thomas Merton: A Divine Passion in Word and Vision* (Franciscan Media, Cincinnati 1981)

‘You are the mystery that is placed upon the Lord’s table. You receive the mystery that is yourself. To that which you are, you will respond, “Amen”’ [...] Be what you see; receive what you are’.

St. Augustine, *Homily on the Feast of Pentecost*

 ‘The whole life of a good Christian is holy desire. What you desire you cannot see yet. **But the desire gives you the capacity**, so that when it does happen that you see, you may be fulfilled… this is our life, to be exercised by desire’.

St. Augustine, *Homily on the First Letter of John,* 4,6,2

‘It is not what you are nor what you have been that God sees with his all-merciful eyes, but what you desire to be’.

*The Cloud of Unknowing*, Simon Tugwell ed., (New York, Paulist Press, 1981)

‘That which is amazing and even confusing in the life of Jesus is that it remains completely within the framework of everyday living […] in him concrete human existence is found in its most basic and radical form. The first thing that we should learn from Jesus is to be fully human!’

Karl Rahner, ‘On the Theology of Worship’, in *Theological Investigations*, volume 19, (London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1984),.p. 121