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‘CONTEMPLATION TO ATTAIN LOVE’
in the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* and my own ministry

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1. INTRODUCTION

In order to introduce the topic of this essay, allow me to share a short personal recollection. Ten years ago, towards the end of my theology studies in the seminary in Prague, I was involved in a rather intensive youth ministry. Many in our groups, having previously experienced a deeper introduction into spiritual life in the context of Charismatic Renewal,¹ were at pains to find a further direction for their life-journey. For some of them, this search was closely linked with deliberation on their specific vocation. Therefore, we tried to respond to their needs by organizing a formation week, based mainly on Norbert Baumert's understanding of the Paul's concept of "calling" (in 1 Cor 7)² and on his introduction to Ignatius' discernment rules.³ Because the programme was rather successful, it gradually developed into an eight-week seminar called "Vocation and Faithfulness."⁴ It focused on building on the initial conversion experience of the participants and on helping them to enter into a deeper freedom necessary for making a good life choice. Inspired by the works by other two Jesuits, Peter Köster and Patrick Carroll,⁵ the last text of the "Reader"⁶ we attached to this seminar made an extensive use of Ignatius' "Contemplation to Attain Love" (from now on simply *Contemplatio*).⁷

At the time we were developing the seminar mentioned above, my knowledge in the area of spirituality (or even Ignatian spirituality) was rather vague. Now, after studying Ignatius in the context of our course, I started to ask: Was our use of this rich spiritual source responsible? Was it sensitive enough an accommodation? Was our understanding, even remotely, in line with the original meaning and purpose of the text? Didn't we only eclectically pick up something, what was near at hand, and didn't we squeeze it according to our own needs and purposes?⁸

Therefore, I decided to guide my work on this essay by this need for clarification, at least to some degree, of these questions. I hope, this small "case study" will have as well some more general significance, at least for my own orientation in the area of Ignatian spirituality.

2. MY OWN USE OF THE *CONTEMPLATIO*

According to the hermeneutic approach to studying texts, our preunderstanding is of a decisive importance.⁹ Therefore, at least a sketch of my previous understanding and the use of the text of Ignatius' *Contemplatio* will be necessary to begin with. Moreover, as I would like to check how appropriate our use of the text was, I have to outline it at least shortly.

As mentioned in the Introduction above, we used the *Contemplatio* in the context of a spiritual seminar called "Vocation and Faithfulness,"¹⁰ which, according to its own introduction, was "designated for people, who are searching for a specific direction in their personal life-journey, who already for a longer time follow Christ and desire to grow into a deeper faithfulness of discipleship, and who are searching for their specific place and ministry in the church community."¹¹ Because the seminar was understood as a kind of follow-up of the basic "Life-in-the-Spirit Seminar,"¹² the participants were expected to have accepted and experienced the "basic Christian message of God's love, sin, redemption and healing in Christ, the life from the gift of the Spirit, and a regular prayer life, both personal and shared."¹³ During the eight-week time, they were expected to keep at least half an hour of personal quiet prayer a day, using a suggested Scriptural text as their starting point or guide. In addition, they attended a two-hour meeting each week, containing a catechesis introducing the theme of the following week, a time for communal prayer, and a time for sharing in small groups. If they saw it as helpful, they had the opportunity to take advantage of our ministry of personal spiritual accompaniment.

The basic assumption of the seminar was that our "personal vocation is clarified and matures at the point of intersection of the specific situation where we live, and God's calling which comes into this situation."¹⁴ The "heart" of the seminar was seen in a particular liturgy containing both shared and personal prayer for our inner freedom. It was inserted between the fifth and the sixth week of the seminar, which made use of Ignatius' "Foundation" and "Rules for Discernment."¹⁵ The first four weeks of the seminar, preparing the way to experience this "centre," were oriented towards renewing God's image and inner healing,¹⁶ and towards some foundational dimensions of

God's calling within the context of the Body of Christ.¹⁷ The last two weeks then offered some stepping-stones for "remaining within" God's call and for connecting the seminar experience with our everyday life and ministry.¹⁸ The whole seminar was closed by a eucharistic liturgy with the opportunity of sharing something of its fruits with the others, in the form of a short story, praising God for all God's gifts, calls, and love, and expressing symbolically our new openness towards this "calling and loving God" by bringing something symbolically significant to the altar together with the bread and wine.

The *Contemplatio* was then offered in a accompanying textbook (the "Reader")¹⁹ as the main text for guiding the participants through the last week of the seminar, which was oriented towards our service, ministry, and everyday deeds of love as the "fruits" of God's loving call, incarnated in our lives and overflowing to our friends and to all in need. It was recommended to spend at least an hour with this exercise, but it was also suggested either to divide it into more days, or to spend a whole day on it before the closing Eucharist. The text of the *Contemplatio* was provided together with a short introduction and comments.²⁰ A "sample" of the prayer *Suscipe* (adapted and by Patric Carrol)²¹ was attached in order to find some inspiration for creating our own "personalized" version, which was possible to bring forward later as one of the symbols in the final eucharistic celebration.

The "Reader" text, itself based rather closely on a book by Peter Köster,²² understood the *Contemplatio* as

towards contemplation directed a meditation, which at the end of the seminar, as it were in its epicentre, once more summarizes the whole dynamics of what has been happening during the whole time, and should create a bridge to our everyday life.²³

The text referred as well to the "Second Prelude" (*SpEx* [233]), and said, that "the main aim of this meditation is to acknowledge gratefully all what has happened for you during the whole seminar and to receive healing and strengthening assurance, in order to 'love and serve his Divine Majesty in all things'." The "Four points" (*SpEx* [234-237]) of the *Contemplatio* were here understood and introduced as a "living whole": "They are, in various mutually complementary and penetrating

ways, variations on the ‘breadth and the length, the height and the depth’ (Eph 3:18) of the incomprehensible love of God for all men and women. They want, on the basis of the all-inclusive ‘sight of all things’ to God, to make our own the ‘mind of Jesus Christ’ (Phil 2:5).”²⁴

Hence, the main goal of the *Contemplatio* was seen as threefold: (1) deeper awareness of God’s gifts (focusing mainly on the gifts received during the seminar); (2) wider openness towards all new gifts (focusing mainly on the final celebration and then on everyday life); and (3) clearer a Christ-like availability for “overflowing” the God-given love from my own prayer and life into my everyday and ministerial environment.

The particular focus points of each of the “four points” were here further explained as follows: (1) the specificity, distinctiveness, concreteness, and uniqueness both of *God’s* love for me and of *my* response to this love; (2) the universality and “wholeness” of *God’s* loving “self-sharing” both in the universe and in my own life with all its dimensions, relationships, limitations, desires, and uncertainties, calling for a response of *my* own “whole” personality; (3) the “cost of *God’s* engagement” within our world, including all its suffering and sin and leading to the cross,²⁵ which calls for *my* child-like trusting and grateful response on my way to the Father; (4) new awareness of and gratefulness for the Source of all good things in God, inviting us to a new openness towards the Holy Spirit, whose desire is to bring fruits in us and through us.

The final important insight into my preunderstanding of the *Contemplatio* can be found in the comment on Ignatius’ closing remark about the “colloquy” and “Our Father”:

Behind this abrupt closing remark, there is an invitation to proceed to the very climax, to which the whole “Contemplation” is directed. This “colloquy” is not an addition to or a full stop after a meditation, but it is the climax and the heart of the whole prayer time, where we enter a real conversation with God as with a friend.²⁶

Hence, the conversation, inspired by the “Four points,” expresses “a movement and direction, which calls for a final quiet ‘resting’ time, where meditation and conversation can cease and transmute into quiet contemplation.”²⁷

To respond to the initial questions, I have now to attend to some critical sources.

3. CRITICAL ANALYSIS

After (1) exploring his or her own “preunderstanding” (as I have done in the previous section), the researcher in the field of the “hermeneutical spirituality research” is invited (2) to “read” closely the text itself, (3) to carry out its “critical analysis,” (4) to focus on its “theological pragmatics,” (5) to open himself or herself to the “revelation of the mystery” in and behind the text, and, finally, (6) both to assess and to experience the “ongoing impact” of the text and its interpretation.²⁸ While I am, of course, not going to account for the whole hermeneutical process outlined above, I would like, by taking advantage of some of contemporary commentators,²⁹ at least to indicate some of the critical research lines³⁰ in regard to the text of Ignatius’ *Contemplatio* (*SpEx* [230-237]).

3.1 THE TEXT OF THE *EXERCISES* AND THE *CONTEMPLATIO*

Only a quick survey of some randomly chosen translations of Ignatius’ *Exercises* into English shows that there are many different versions at one’s disposal.³¹ It can be expected from any translated text, but it is necessary to be aware that in this case, already the original source was not handed down in one single text, but rather in three official versions: the *Autograph* (a Spanish text corrected by Ignatius himself), the *Versio Prima* (a fairly literal Latin translation made probably by Ignatius himself), and the *Vulgate* (a looser translation of the Spanish text into classical Latin by a French Jesuit). All three texts were used by Ignatius himself and both of the Latin texts were approved by the pope in 1548.³²

As for the exact place of the *Contemplatio* itself within the overall structure, the three official texts are not uniform. The *Autograph* does not list the *Contemplatio* (or, in this case, *Contemplación*) under the heading of the “fourth week” (as the Latin texts do), but places it after this period, before the “Three Methods of Prayer.”³³ It seems, that both the *Contemplatio* and the “Foundation” (*SpEx* [23]) can be seen as Ignatius’ “later addition to the principal core of the *Exercises*.”³⁴

Because all the three official texts were used or approved by Ignatius, they can be used as tools for tracing the development of his own understanding and for reaching clearer understanding

of his own meaning. It can be demonstrated already with regard to the very title of the *Contemplatio*. Although the *Autograph* reads it as “*La Contemplación Para Alcançar Amor*”³⁵ (where “*amor*” can be understood as “Divine love” or the “love of God”),³⁶ in the light of the Latin version of *Vulgate* (which can be translated as “Contemplation for arousing spiritual love in ourselves”)³⁷ it is clear that the *Contemplatio* is not aimed to “obtaining” God’s love to us, but rather to creating a space for mutual love-conversation and love-communion, where we can “attain” a growing love on our part for God and others.³⁸ A corresponding difference can be found in the last sentence of the well-known prayer called traditionally *Suscipe* (*SpEx* [234]), where the *Vulgate*’s “give me only love of you” again removes the ambiguity of the *Autograph*, which reads “give me only your love.” Thus it is clear that we are asking for deepening of our love for God, for which the participant asked already in the “second prelude” (*SpEx* [233]).

Besides this, there is a further significant difference found in the original texts in the “first prelude” (*SpEx* [332]).³⁹ While the *Versio prima* understands here action as the criterion of love (in the sense of “love being better demonstrated by deeds than by words”),⁴⁰ the Spanish *Autograph* sees action as the connatural expression of love (in the sense of “love naturally demonstrating itself better in deeds than in words”).⁴¹

3.2 HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE *EXERCISES*

These textual differences are an expression of the fact that the Spanish text of the *Exercises* has a long and complicated history, which was once compared to “the history of a soul’s journey from spiritual childhood to spiritual adulthood.”⁴² We cannot delve into this area in detail, but at least three points should be mentioned.⁴³ Firstly, the core of the *Exercises* came into existence fairly early on in Ignatius’ conversion journey. Already during his time in Manresa (1522 – 1523), he used to write down some substantial parts of it (as means of sharing his experiences with others) and probably developed the overall thematic architecture as well.⁴⁴ Moreover, a substantial influence of his both personal experience and readings from the time of his recovery in Loyola (1521 – 1522)

can be clearly traced in the *Exercises* as well.⁴⁵ Finally, both the final literary structure of the *Exercises* was developed and the first Latin translation of them was made during Ignatius' studies in Paris (1528 – 1535), growing from his personal pastoral ministry.⁴⁶

As mentioned above, the *Contemplatio* itself seems to be added later to the principal core of the *Exercises*. According to some commentators, this exercise can be seen as created by Ignatius for the participants, who, after the month-long experience of the exercises, had a long journey to their home destination. It was probably meant to keep the experience alive during this days-long or even weeks-long homeward journey through all possible varieties of nature and weather. In this way, he or she was able to re-discover God continually at work through all these things.⁴⁷

3.3 PRAGMATICS OF THE *EXERCISES* AND THE *CONTEMPLATIO*

Although the history of the textual development can be important for our understanding of the text, equally important is to have some awareness as to what purposes the text was finally being used (which can be slightly different from, but still in line with, the original intention).

It is clear enough that both the preliminary notes and the final version of the book were designed and used as a tool to guide exercises personally given (either by Ignatius himself, or later by his companions) to a wide scale of various people looking for a deeper spiritual life. Although the ideal type of the exercises was aimed at retreats of thirty days with four or five contemplations a day in complete solitude, Ignatius clearly intended the book to be flexible enough a guide for using it in many other circumstances and forms (see *SpEx* [18-20]). This included the possibility of adaptation of the exercises into the form of “an hour and a half daily” for somebody, who is “educated or talented, but engaged in public affairs or necessary business” (*SpEx* [19]).⁴⁸ On the other side, the “Foundation” (see *SpEx* [23]) still indicates, that in any case, the participants should have a basic desire and decision to set out on quite a serious spiritual journey.

As for the pragmatics of the *Contemplatio* itself, the already mentioned differences in the official texts in regard to its precise position influenced early commentators, who seem to be rather

substantially divided in their positions on the precise function of the *Contemplatio* as well. Some argue for its use at any time during or after the exercises, others suggest any time from the “second week” forwards, many, connecting the *Contemplatio* with the “unitive way,” hold that it can be used during both the third and the fourth week, and finally, the most authoritative authors (e.g. Nadal, Polanco, Dávila) suggest that it should be used within the fourth week.⁴⁹

While it seems that the majority of modern commentators accept the last position connecting the *Contemplatio* with the whole fourth week and with the topics of Resurrection, Ascension and Pentecost,⁵⁰ some important authors, on the basis of a detailed analysis of its internal dynamic, suggest the very end of the exercises as the place corresponding best to its original purpose,⁵¹ which is seen either as a transition point from the experience of God’s transcendence to the experience of God’s immanence in the whole world,⁵² or as a synthesis of the whole exercises and a bridge to the future everyday life.⁵³

Hence, the very function and purpose seems to be not so much in adding some new themes to the already experienced during the whole exercises, but in creating a synthesizing space for further growth, development, or deepening and widening of all these dimensions, which were germinally present already in the “Foundation”⁵⁴ and which matured further during the whole process of the exercises.⁵⁵ Likewise the whole of Ignatius’ life, both the *Exercises* as a whole and the *Contemplatio* itself has to be seen developmentally, as still deepening movements of the encounter between the love of God and the love of men and women “in everything.”⁵⁶

3.4 COMPOSITION IN THE WIDER TEXTUAL CONTEXT

A further step in understanding a text is to see how it is connected with and placed within its wider textual context. The *Contemplatio* is the final exercise of the “fourth week” of the *Exercises*, which, together with the third one, invites the participants to enter into the paschal Mystery of Christ in his suffering and resurrection and traditionally is connected with the “unitive way.”⁵⁷ The “first week,” traditionally connected with the “purgative way,” outlines the whole plan of God’s creation

and redemption, and invites one to enter into a basic conversion experience. The “second week,” traditionally connected with the “illuminative way,” is aimed at the acquiring of virtues in imitation of Christ and towards the basic principles of “making sound election” (i.e. choice in regard to a state of life or in the context of renewal of life; *SpEx* [169-189]). As appendices, some additional resources for appropriate use during or after the exercises are attached, including the “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits” (*SpEx* [313-335]).

There were many attempts to understand the “four points” of the *Contemplatio* as structurally interconnected with the overall structure of the *Exercises*. The most frequent suggestion is to see a parallel between the “four weeks” and the “four points,”⁵⁸ as developed, for example, by Michael Buckley.⁵⁹ He understands the *Contemplatio* not only as an overall synthesis of the whole exercises, but also as an occasion for “repetition” or “recapitulation,” as a “summary in consciousness and affectivity of major consideration of the previous four weeks,” and connects thematically each week with a specific “point” from the *Contemplatio*.⁶⁰

Although, according to Michael Ivens, “this approach is favoured by many mainstream commentators, who regard the points and the Weeks as mutually clarifying,”⁶¹ others are rather critical of this suggestion. They argue, that the textual correspondences are often rather secondary and that the whole dynamic of the *Contemplatio*, not only the “fourth point,” is to be seen within the dynamic of the final days of the whole exercises.⁶² A middle route is assumed by Michael Ivens himself, when, although he accepts the possibility to draw some connection lines between the “weeks” and the “points,” he emphasises as well the importance of the “personal and subjective elements in the exercitant’s own contemplation,” “coming from remembered personal graces.”⁶³

3.5 DEPTH STRUCTURE AND INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONS

In any case, the interconnections between the text and its wider context are not enough for its deeper understanding and it is necessary to attend in depth to its own structure and to its intertextual relations. While the title of the *Contemplatio* itself, with all its already mentioned

ambiguity of the two meanings of the “love of God” (God’s love for us and ours for God), indicates the basic dynamic of the whole exercise, the “two preliminary observations” (*SpEx* [230-231]) elaborate the importance of the attitude of entering into the circle of mutual love-action and love-communication and even further.⁶⁴ Because this exercise is focused on “here-and-now,” the usual historical prelude of the second to fourth week disappears and the following two “preludes” (*SpEx* [232-233]) develop directly a simple “composition” (the community of the whole heavenly choir) and the main purpose and movement of the exercise: participating in the basic movement from deeper personal awareness (“interior knowledge”) of God’s love to the experience of mutual affective love with God (“profound gratitude”) to awakening, deepening, and growth of our own love for God and for all creation (“in all things”).

Although it is generally acknowledged that the specific themes of the “four points” (*SpEx* [234-237]) somewhat overlap⁶⁵ and can be perhaps understood simply as flexible hints on the journey of deepening the mutual love-conversation (see the recurring dual focus, at first on “God,” then on “myself”), there are also many attempts to interpret them more systematically. So, for example, while God is suggested to be seen in the “four points” successively as “bestowing his gifts,” “present in his gifts,” “working in his gifts,” and the “source of his gifts,” the participants are encouraged to see themselves in their “personal history,” in their “statically viewed environment,” in their “dynamically viewed environment,” and in the light of their “personal qualities.”⁶⁶

Although it is not too clearly emphasized by the text itself, it seems that the prayer “Take, Lord, and receive” (the so-called *Suscipe*, *SpEx* [234]) is meant to be repeated at the end of each “point.” It summarizes both the mutuality of the whole love-conversation and communion and the totality of God’s gift and our response.⁶⁷ The prayer itself stays at the general level only, but it is often recommended to connect it with a particular disposition or specific component according to our momentary perception of God’s will or invitation.⁶⁸ The final sentence (including its textual

ambiguity as mentioned earlier) summarizes again the basic dynamic both of the whole exercise and of the whole *Exercises*: the mutuality of God's love for us and our love for God.

3.6 THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND ONGOING IMPACT

After understanding the text a little bit more in the light of the previous critical steps, it is finally necessary to see it as well in the light of Ignatius' overall theological and spiritual outlook and to trace its further ongoing impact. So according to Michael Ivens and many others, the *Contemplatio* "presents in the form of a contemplative paradigm the spirituality of finding and loving God in all things which is the lasting outcome of the Exercises."⁶⁹ Although I have neither space nor abilities to explore the deeper theological significance of the *Contemplatio*, it is clear enough that it has to be understood both in the context of the overall theology of the *Exercises* and in the light of the movement of the whole Ignatius' life, which can be seen both as the foundation for and the interpretation of his *Exercises*.⁷⁰

It seems to me as well that the *Contemplatio*, in its strong mystical dynamism of "here and now," has to be understood both as looking back and pointing forward. On the one hand, it is understood as a

comprehension of all that had gone before, a comprehension whose integrity was the sharing of personal communion. Within the single person, there is the ecstatic unity in which knowledge, love and serviced become total surrender... unity in which the lover and beloved become one.⁷¹

On the other hand, it is clear that the significance of the *Contemplatio* does not cease with the end of the exercises. Life after the exercises can be in a sense understood as a prolonged *Contemplatio*, as a process of our "continual 'yes'," as "finding God in all things," as "uninterrupted renewal" of the life in the communion with the Trinity, as a participation in God's plan of salvation for the whole world,⁷² and as "an effort to make oneself a part of this same circular movement: God down to creation and back up to God."⁷³

4. CONCLUSIONS

It is clear that for a more precise elaboration of the questions I put forward in the Introduction, I would need to explore as well some literature on current ways of using and adapting Ignatius' *Exercises* in practical spiritual ministry. However, only a quick look into just one of such sources⁷⁴ indicates, that if doing so, I would already have material enough for a whole dissertation. Therefore, in this final part I will outline shortly only some rather modest reflections based on the previous research.

Was the accommodation for the seminar "Vocation and Faithfulness" of the *Contemplatio* in line with its original meaning and purpose? I would say, partly so. It was surely in line with its basic functions of reviewing the experiences gained during the exercises and of bridging the exercises with the following everyday life. Even the emphasis we put on the invitation to personal adaptation of the *Suscipe* can be found in some current commentaries. However, with regard to the main content dimension of the *Contemplatio* (i.e. "finding God in all things"), which summarizes the main theological lines of the *Exercises* as well, there can be found no such links between the content of our seminar (which was focused almost exclusively on the "call-dimension" of the Christian vocation) and our use of the *Contemplatio*. In this sense, our accommodation of the *Contemplatio* for the final week of the seminar can be seen as only partially faithful to its original purpose and not too sensitive to its contextual dimension.

On the other hand, the question about the responsibility of our use of the *Contemplatio* can be answered rather positively. It seems that the sources we originally used in the process of developing the seminar as our guides for understanding the *Contemplatio* within its wider context (Peter Köster, Patrick Carroll, and Norbert Baumert) were rather in line with the sources used for the "critical analysis" part of this essay (see, for example, the rather corresponding emphases in the area of the particular outlooks of the "four points"). Furthermore, the participants of the seminar were carefully screened (both with regard to the seriousness of their desire for deeper spiritual life and to their previous faith and conversion experiences), before they were admitted to the seminar.

Besides this, there can be also found a certain internal connection between the *Contemplatio* as used at the end of the seminar and the other Ignatian emphases found at the beginning (“Foundation”) and in the middle of it (“Election” / “Discernment”). Finally, although I did not find in my critical sources any comment on the closing “colloquy,” I think that our emphasis on the importance of it (as a space for developing the contemplative dimension of the whole exercise) is still in the line of its original intention. Hence, taking moreover into consideration the openness of some commentators for using the *Contemplatio* at other points of the exercises or even outside of them, it can be said that our use of it was perhaps partly naïve, but not irresponsible.

In conclusion, I would like to add a final, rather personal thought. Because one of my side motives in selecting this topic for this assessment essay was the fact that the *Contemplatio* itself is a fairly short and quickly manageable text, I was finally rather unpleasantly surprised how wide and complex an issue it actually was. I have, however, to say as well that all the research struggles were worth it, because somewhere deeper in me I discovered something like a new desire to let God’s love to ignite anew the “interior knowledge” of all the “great good I have received” in order that I “may become able to love and serve” God “in all things” (see *SpEx* [233]).

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NOTES

- ¹ It was mostly through an adapted form of the Life-in-the-Spirit Seminar. The most frequently used version was an adaptation of N. Baumert, *Neues Leben im Heiligen Geist* [New life in the Holy Spirit], Passau, Germany: Kommunikationdienst für Charismatische Erneuerung in der katholischen Kirche e. V., 1986.
- ² See, for example, N. Baumert, *Woman and Man in Paul: Overcoming a Misunderstanding*, translated from German by P. Madigan and L.M. Maloney (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996) 25-131, 415-473.
- ³ See N. Baumert, *Rozlišuj duchy: Pomoc k duchovnímu rozlišování podle Ignáce z Loyoly* [Discerning the spirits: Introduction to spiritual discernment according to Ignatius of Loyola] (Prague, CZ: Pastorační středisko sv. Vojtěcha, 1993).
- ⁴ P. Hruška, M. Špilar & A. Scarano, *Povolání a věrnost: Seminář prohlubující život v Duchu Svatém* [Vocation and faithfulness: A seminar deepening the life in the Spirit] (Prague, CZ: Pastorační středisko sv. Vojtěcha, 1994).
- ⁵ See P. Köster, *Hledejte moji tvář* [Searching for my face] (Kostelní Vydří, CZ: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1993) and P. Carroll, *Milovat, dělit se, sloužit* [Loving, sharing, serving] (Olomouc, CZ: Matice Cyrilometodějská, 1993).
- ⁶ P. Hruška & M. Špilar, eds., *Povolání a věrnost: Sborník textů* [Vocation and faithfulness: The reader] (Prague, CZ: Pastorační středisko sv. Vojtěcha, 1994).
- ⁷ See “Nazírání k získání lásky” [Contemplation to attain love] in *Povolání a věrnost: Sborník textů* [Vocation and faithfulness: The reader], edited by P. Hruška & M. Špilar (Prague, CZ: Pastorační středisko sv. Vojtěcha, 1994) T 16.
- ⁸ In the context of his preliminary remarks to the chapter focusing on the Contemplation to Attain Love, Gilles Cusson says: “Again, one can gain from this same exercise fruit corresponding to varying needs in different circumstances... But again, in doing this we are not necessarily respecting the original signification of this contemplation. We are in the area of ‘accommodations’; and to indulge in this too freely is to neglect the premises of the Ignatian thought process; also, to sacrifice for immediate gain a benefit which can come only from a slow and careful development.” G. Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises: A Method toward a Personal Experience of God as Accomplishing within us his Plan of Salvation*, translated by M.A. Roduit & G.E. Ganss (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1988) 313.
- ⁹ See, for example, K. Waaijman, *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002) 703, 710-711, 729-741.
- ¹⁰ Hruška et al., *Povolání a věrnost*; see footnote 4.
- ¹¹ Hruška et al., *Povolání a věrnost*, Introduction.
- ¹² See footnote 1.
- ¹³ Hruška et al., *Povolání a věrnost*, Introduction.
- ¹⁴ Hruška et al., *Povolání a věrnost*, Introduction.
- ¹⁵ The topic of the fifth week was “Here I Am: The Point of Departure of my Personal Vocation,” with its basis very close to the “Foundation” of Ignatius’ *Exercises* (*SpEx* [23]); the topic of the sixth week was “Discernment and Choice: The Authenticity of my Vocation,” containing an introduction to Ignatius’ “Rules” (*SpEx* [313-336]).
- ¹⁶ The topic of the first week was “Man and Woman as God’s Image: The Space for God’s Call”; the topic of the second week was “Dwelling in God’s Sight: Healing God’s Word.”
- ¹⁷ The topic of the third week was “The Holistic Gift of God’s Love: The Foundational God’s Call”; the topic of the fourth week was “The Body of Christ: The Space for Maturing of our Vocation.”
- ¹⁸ The topic of the seventh week was “Faithfulness and Growth: The Goal and Enactment of our Vocation”; the topic of the eighth week was “Overflowing God’s Love: The Fruit of God’s Call.”
- ¹⁹ Hruška & Špilar, eds., *Povolání a věrnost: Sborník textů*; see footnote 6.
- ²⁰ The introduction and comments were based on P. Köster, *Hledejte moji tvář* [Searching for my face] (Kostelní Vydří, CZ: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1993).
- ²¹ See P. Carroll, *Milovat, dělit se, sloužit* [Loving, sharing, serving] (Olomouc, CZ: Matice Cyrilometodějská, 1993).
- ²² P. Köster, *Hledejte moji tvář* [Searching for my face] (Kostelní Vydří, CZ: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 1993). Unfortunately, because I do not have Köster’s book at hand and by creating the „Reader“ text I did not pay attention to a proper work with sources, I am now not able to distinguish precisely what was a literary quotation from Köster’s book and what was my own adaptation. But it can be safely assumed that the main introductory points were based rather closely on Köster own thought.
- ²³ Introduction to “Nazírání k získání lásky” [Contemplation to attain love] in Hruška & Špilar, eds., *Povolání a věrnost: Sborník textů*, T 16. It went further as follows: “Authentic contemplation and a life rooted in God’s call leads back to people, to the earth, where people live, celebrate, suffer, and die. An authentic vocation leads there, where, in people’s suffering and in their desire, Christ continually dies and rises from the death.”
- ²⁴ “Nazírání k získání lásky” [Contemplation to attain love] in Hruška & Špilar, eds., *Povolání a věrnost: Sborník textů*, T 16.
- ²⁵ The introductory texts make here an allusion to the contemplation on Christ’s “labour” in his Nativity in poverty and his death on the cross (*SpEx* [116]).
- ²⁶ “Nazírání k získání lásky” [contemplation to attain love] in Hruška & Špilar, eds., *Povolání a věrnost: Sborník textů*, T 16. A reference is made here to the “Note on Colloquies” [54], which speaks about the informal style of the conversations with God during the times for “Colloquies.”
- ²⁷ “Nazírání k získání lásky” [contemplation to attain love] in Hruška & Špilar, eds., *Povolání a věrnost: Sborník textů*, T 16. The whole text was closed by a short quotation of Jerónimo Nadal: “From the exercises, we can ‘gain understanding and very delicate sensitivity for our own, entirely unique vocation, and so as well entirely unique peace and connection with God in spiritual obedience and in continuous going on the way towards God.’”
- ²⁸ See Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 689, 729-770.
- ²⁹ The sources I will use are as follows: R.W. Gleason, “Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises,” in *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, translated by A. Mottola (New York: Image Books, 1964) 11-31; M. Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” in *The Way*

- Supplement 24 (1975) 92-104; G. Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises: A Method toward a Personal Experience of God as Accomplishing within us his Plan of Salvation*, translated by M.A. Roduit & G.E. Ganss (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1988); G.E. Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Writings*. The Classics of Western Spirituality (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991); M. Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises – Text and Commentary: A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1998).
- ³⁰ In the area of “critical analysis,” Waaijman speaks about the following steps or lines: “the part-whole relation: composition,” “depth structure,” “intertextual relations,” “contextual reconstructions,” “the pragmatics of the text,” and “the religious field of meaning”; see Waaijman, *Spirituality*, 746-755.
- ³¹ I had at my disposal four English translations as follows: *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (translated by E. Mullan, New York: P.J. Kenedy & Sons, 1914); *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, translated by L.J. Puhl (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951); *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, translated by A. Mottola (New York: Image Books, 1964); *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Writings*. The Classics of Western Spirituality. Edited by G.E. Ganss (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1991); in addition, I had a Czech translation as well: *Ignác z Loyoly, Duchovní cvičení* (Rome – Prague: Křesťanská akademie, 1990).
- ³² See Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, xii.
- ³³ See Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 92.
- ³⁴ Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 315.
- ³⁵ See Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 92.
- ³⁶ See Mottola’s translation (“Contemplation to Attain Divine Love”) or Puhl’s translation (“Contemplation to Attain the Love of God”).
- ³⁷ See Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 312.
- ³⁸ Gilles Cusson understands the *Contemplatio* as a “contemplation aimed at increasing our love for God.” Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 312. Michael Ivens says: “The word *attain* is used in the sense not of ‘obtain’ but rather of ‘reaching to’ or ‘arriving at’. The *love* to be ‘attained’ is a growing love on our part for God... In Vulgate the title reads: ‘Contemplation for arousing spiritual love in ourselves.’” Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 172. Michael Buckley says similarly: “This second prelude, then, explains the title of the contemplation, which is not to *win* the love of God, for this is always present of men. It is rather to receive it so consciously, with such interior knowledge, that the love of man for God is evoked and develops into an integrated comprehensive affectivity, which infuses every aspect of his life. Thus is it a way of prayer which grounds a way of life.” Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 96-97.
- ³⁹ See Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 98; see also *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, translated by L.J. Puhl (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951) 189.
- ⁴⁰ “*Primo, quo amor monstrati et lucere magis in operibus quam verbis.*” Quoted according to Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 98 n. 25.
- ⁴¹ “*La primera es, que el amor se debe poner más en las obras que en las palabras.*” Quoted according to Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 98 n. 25.
- ⁴² Gleason, “Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises,” 11.
- ⁴³ The following information is based on the “General Introduction” in G.E. Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 9-63; see as well Gleason, “Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises,” 11-30.
- ⁴⁴ See Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 26-34, 50.
- ⁴⁵ First of all, *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine and *Life of Christ* by Ludolph of Saxony. See Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 15-26, 50.
- ⁴⁶ See Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 35-37, 50-51.
- ⁴⁷ See J. Veltri, *Orientations: For those who Accompany Others on Inward Journey*, Volume 2 (Orientations for Spiritual Growth, http://www.sentex.net/~jveltri/or2ch18_19.html) Chapter 19.
- ⁴⁸ “He [Ignatius] and others whom he trained gave his Exercises to many kinds of persons and in many different ways; for example, for two or three days, or one week, or three, or four; to some persons who were deliberating about the choice of a state of life, and to others who had no such election to make. The topics and directions were presented in conversations between the director and the retreatant.” Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 51.
- ⁴⁹ For a detailed overview of the positions see, for example, Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 312-315, and Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 92-93; see also Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 169 n. 13.
- ⁵⁰ See Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 315.
- ⁵¹ See Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 418 n. 107.
- ⁵² See Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 317-321.
- ⁵³ See Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 326-332. Ivens expresses it in the following way: “[W]ithin the Exercises themselves, the *Contemplatio* is the note on which the whole process concludes. It has a contemplative quality which commends its use when the spiritual development of the four Weeks is complete; its content gathers up the themes of the Exercises in their entirety, and it reaches beyond the Exercises themselves to work its insights and attitudes into the texture of everyday life.” Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 169. In the attached footnote (n. 14), Ivens comments that the suggestions to use the *Contemplatio* already from the beginning of the fourth week are influenced more or less by practical reasons in order to give the participants more time for it.
- ⁵⁴ “In the Foundation, the Creator/creature relationship is proposed with explicit reference to the things, events, and situations of the exercitant’s everyday world. In the Foundation, these were the material of ‘ordered use.’ In the present exercise, they are the medium within which the exchange of loves itself takes place. As God, on his side, gives himself in love through all things, so our love for God includes all things, the totality of the self, everything we call our own, every element of our experience of God’s world.” Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 170.
- ⁵⁵ “The phrase ‘to love Christ more’ in the Second and Third Weeks now becomes to love God more ‘in all things’ – reminiscent of Ignatius’ constant concern to ‘find God in all things’ of ordinary everyday life. Another important function of this contemplation

is to build a bridge for intensive spiritual living in everyday life after the Exercises have ended.” Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 418-419 n. 110.

⁵⁶ See Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 94-95.

⁵⁷ For the information in this paragraph see Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 51-53.

⁵⁸ Michael Cusson mentions critically even more complicated attempts, such as Fessard’s suggestion to see a complex parallelism between “three ways” (purgative, illuminative, unitive) – “four weeks” and “three powers” (memory, intellect, will) – “four points,” or a parallel between the “four points” and “four degrees of deepening of the life of faith and love in everything.” See Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 317-318 n. 17.

⁵⁹ See Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 100-104.

⁶⁰ Buckley compares the movement from creation to personal salvation in the “first week” and the “first point”; the entering of the *Logos* into the universe as a man of the “second week” and the dwelling of God within all creatures with its climax in the Incarnation of the “second point”; the invitation to “labour with Christ” in discipleship and in his suffering of the “third week” and the God “labouring” for me within the whole world in the third point; the divine risen Christ as the source of all consolations in the “fourth week” and God as the Source of all things in the “fourth point.” See Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 100-104.

⁶¹ Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 171.

⁶² See, for example, Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 317 n. 17, who says here: “Fessard is quite right in finding the attitude of the Fourth Week in the fourth point; however his long demonstration does not succeed in proving to us that such is not the case for the other three points which, taken one by one, are just as much attached to the same Fourth Week.”

⁶³ Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 171.

⁶⁴ See Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 169-170. See also Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 418 nn. 108 and 109.

⁶⁵ See Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 419 n. 111.

⁶⁶ See Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 170-171; for the first line see also similar characteristics in Ganss, ed., *Ignatius of Loyola*, 419 n. 111. Similarly, God is successively seen as the “giver of good gifts,” who “dwells within creatures,” who “works out the salvation,” and who is both the “Source of all things”; correspondingly, “all things,” including the participants themselves, are seen as being “gifts,” “holy,” parts of “sacred history,” and “participants in God’s nature.” See Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 101-103.

⁶⁷ While “take” is understood as an emphasis on my own act of handing over myself in love and trust, “receive” is seen as a petition to God expecting his own active, accepting and helping love. See Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 175.

⁶⁸ See Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 175. Ivens lists here some examples, like “indifference in the face of choice; commitment to work for God’s Kingdom fully as his instrument; acceptance of diminishment, loss or death” or “gifts of leadership, or friendship, one’s sexuality, one’s creative talents, and so on.”

⁶⁹ Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 169.

⁷⁰ For a serious elaboration of this dimension see, for example, Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 317-326 and the whole Chapter 2, B.

⁷¹ Buckley, “The Contemplation to Attain Love,” 104.

⁷² “In our opinion, this is the circularity of the Exercises. It is the Christian experience lived out in practice, over and over again in its totality every moment of our lives. It is the continual “yes” which such Christians, by their living faith and burning love, offer to God while they are finding him in all things; and it presupposes the uninterrupted renewal of the process which snatches a person from evil and reconciles him or her to God in Christ under the action of the Spirit. As an inevitable result of this experience, the person pursues his or her journey of openness to the created world; and the world, in and through this person and his or her union with the living Church of Christ, continues its painful but sure movement toward final salvation. Through this person, too, the world is fulfilling its purpose: the praise, by intelligent beings, of the God who made it.” Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 330-331.

⁷³ Cusson, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, 332.

⁷⁴ See, for example, the manual by J. Veltri, *Orientations: For those who Accompany Others on Inward Journey*, Volume 2 (Orientations for Spiritual Growth, <http://www.sentex.net/~jveltri/or2ch30.html>) Chapter 30. In this practical manual, we can find an overview of some basic approaches and categorizations as follows: “the major approaches when giving the exercises” (“from outside in” or “from within”), exercises understood as “a formation instrument” or as “one-in-a-lifetime experience,” the “different modes” of making the exercises from the perspective of the participant (“healing mode,” “purgative mode,” “call mode,” or some combination of all three), exercises for “different levels of maturity” (according to *SpEx* [18-20]), “two purposes” of the exercises (“holiness / school of prayer” or “discernment / instrument of decision-making”), the “private” or “public” context of the exercises (“individual-personal-private,” or “personal-societal,” or “communal-societal”), the “levels of competency” of spiritual guidance (“prayer companion,” “prayer guide,” “director of the exercises,” “spiritual director”), and the “differences among centres of Ignatian spirituality” (“historical perspective,” “ongoing-personal-development-and-growth perspective,” “from-practice-to-understanding perspective,” “theological-cultural-historical-literary perspective,” “theological perspective,” or “biblical perspective”).