

**An Ignatian Way of Relating**  
**Elizabeth Liebert, SNJM**

**Shults Lectures, #2**  
**July 12, 2005, Rochester NY, July 13, Albany, NY**



Note: This lecture is illustrated by an accompanying Power Point “An Ignatian Way of Relating.” The bolded numbers in parentheses indicate the placement of the slides. Adobe Acrobat Reader is necessary to download this file, and is available free of charge [here](#).

**(1) Introductory comments:**

A bit of my personal history will help explain my interest in Ignatius of Loyola and this topic this evening. I grew up in a Jesuit parish, received a Master’s degree from a Jesuit University, but where I was really exposed to Ignatian spirituality was through the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius, which were adapted in my community’s annual retreats. Ignatian spirituality is a spirituality of mission, and it helped undergird our congregation’s own spirit of mission. When I was working on my graduate degree at Vanderbilt, I returned to the Rules for Discernment of Spirits from the Spiritual Exercises, and worked with them as a part of my dissertation. Later, in concert with several Holy Names sister colleagues, I wrote about the Spiritual Exercises, seeking to develop an approach to them that was comfortable for contemporary women. After the conclusion of that book, I began to develop ways of presenting dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises for my own particular constituency: students preparing for ordained ministry in (largely) mainline Protestant settings. As I began that teaching, my students’ responses assured me that the dynamics we were focusing on from the Exercises were indeed eminently practical for them—who had never heard of the Spiritual Exercises, nor worked with Jesuits, nor even shared “Catholic” sensibilities about ministry. So I hope you will hear these remarks this evening as an exercise in learning from a great minister something that you can adapt for your own ministry context.

**An Ignatian Way of Relating**

**(2)** I want to ask four questions in our time together: Is there a distinctive way of relating suggested by the Ignatian tradition? If so, what are its characteristics, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this style of relating? In these remarks, I hope to make the point that there *is* a characteristic Ignatian way of relating, demonstrating some of its characteristics and pointing out some of the strengths and weaknesses. Then, in the conversation period, we will try to explore how this way of relating might impact your own ministries.

(3) My historical focus will rest largely with Ignatius of Loyola. I want to note the kind of person Ignatius became as it led to the kinds of behavior he instilled in his colleagues and young Jesuits in formation and to the kinds of values that eventually become instilled in their institutions. It's that trajectory that leads me to conclude that there is an Ignatian way of relating that grounds a certain apostolic strategy of conversation. I believe that Ignatius points us to a way of conversing and relating that is powerfully pastoral and ministerial, and that we might all adopt for the good of our ministries—and without becoming quasi Jesuits!

**1. Ignatius learned constantly from his experience, but always submitted to appropriate authorities for confirmation or correction. In other words, he was his own alert, intelligent and autonomous person, yet he never acted as a “lone ranger.”**

(4) The story of Ignatius's conversion brings home the importance of self reflection, and self-knowledge. Many of you probably know the story: he began his inner journey in forced convalescence. With too much time on his hands, he began to notice how his imagination played and replayed what he had been reading. In other words, he began to pay attention to the interior reality he was living, recognizing the positive and negative possibilities of reason, intuition, and imagination. He gradually came to know himself better and better, gaining wisdom as he gained experience. He tutored his imagination. He read his affective life more and more accurately and came to understand how God works precisely in the imagination and affections. He eventually balanced intuition, imagination, affect with reason. As he began to exercise a public ministry, he also began to balance inner authority with outer accountability. All this growth took time, but once he grasped the essentials, he kept at it for the rest of his life. By looking back at all this development compressed into one life, we can catch the trajectory, learn the pattern and adapt it for ourselves. **(5 Ignatius Convalescing)**

An example to illustrate Ignatius's practice of consulting and obeying legitimate authorities:

(6) Again, you probably know the story: When the pilgrim, as he called himself, finally begged and then traveled the dangerous route to the Holy Land, where he intended to stay and preach the Gospel, he received word from the Franciscan in charge of the Holy Land sites that he could not stay. He turned around and went home again, pausing only long enough to return to little church said to be the site of the Ascension (he was trying to verify which way Jesus' feet were pointing—so literal was he at that point in his interpretation of Scripture and events!). **(7 Mosque, 8 Rock)** The whole escapade took about eleven months of begging and preparing and traveling, but as soon as he verified the authority of the person in charge, he turned around and came home, with no new plan in sight.

(Incidentally, the vividness that Ignatius experienced from this time on in his imaginative contemplation of the Gospels let him to ask his “right hand man” Jerónimo

Nadal, to prepare illustrations for the Spiritual Exercises, which finally appeared in 1593, long after both were dead.)

In our culture of hyper-individualism, we can recognize the value of self-knowledge, but the counter-cultural radicality of placing that self-knowledge within a wider communal context, of putting it at the service of the common good, both institutionally and for the wider society—this value stands out in stark relief.

**So: in our day, we too must pay attention to and learn from our experience, become our own alert, intelligent and autonomous persons, yet also learn how to collaborate for the common good of all. Ignatian relating assumes strong, ecclesial persons.**

Another sidebar: Ignatius tacked the Rules for Thinking with the Church to the conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises. He used them with those, including Jesuits, who were to work in public ministries in the Church. While they desperately need to be updated in theology, expression and practice, their goal, learning to have a heart simultaneously loyal to and and critical of Church, is a serious need for today.

Returning to Ignatius:

**(9) 2. In order to gain self-knowledge and then enshrine what he was learning in a way of life, Ignatius developed an increasingly broad network of “experience partners,” by which I mean persons in relationship with him from whom he learned constantly and whom he desired to serve.** He made a habit of paying close attention to a wide variety of persons. Some were obvious in his situation: confessors, teachers, bishops, inquisitors, benefactors, royalty, the popes. But others were less obvious, including persons hidden or frequently overlooked, persons in positions of relative powerlessness. Two examples show how Ignatius interacts with those of less power, his dealings with women and with those under him in the Society are instructive.

**(10) Women:** His first tutors are undoubtedly women: his wet-nurse, his sister, the women around Manresa, one of whom he describes thus:

At that time there was at Manresa a woman of great age with a long record also as a servant of God, and known as such in many parts of Spain, so much so that the Catholic King had summoned her once to communicate something. One day this woman, speaking to the new soldier of Christ [Ignatius], said to him, “Oh! May my Lord Jesus Christ deign to appear to you someday.” But he was startled at this, taking the matter quite literally, “How would Jesus Christ appear to me?” (*Autobiog* #21, Ganss 1991, 76-77).

While he was still in Barcelona before embarking, he sought out, as was his practice all spiritual persons to converse with them, even though they lived in hermitages far from the city. But neither in Barcelona nor in Manresa during the whole time he was there did he find persons who could help him as much as he

wished. He found in Manresa only that woman mentioned above, who told him she prayed God that Jesus might appear to him. She alone seemed to him to enter more deeply into spiritual matters. (*Autobiog*, #37, Ganss 1991, 83).

Even though this paragraph reveals the negative case (he is complaining about the depth that he doesn't reach in his spiritual conversations), it does show his pattern of seeking out and conversing with whomever he thought could help him learn what he wanted to know: how to enter more deeply into spiritual matter. His tutor in these spiritual matters: an old, and to us nameless, woman. At this stage in his growing consciousness of the power of conversation, Ignatius is primarily focused on his own learning, rather than on ministering through conversation.

The beginnings of a shift to conversation as an apostolic strategy also appear during his time in Manresa. These Manresan women were also his first audience for the Spiritual Exercises, and their direct and indirect feedback undoubtedly influenced their continual revisions until its printing in 1548. He continued to listen to and collaborate with women, some of whom early on become partners with Jesuits in the some of their first ministries in Rome--to prostitutes and their children. **(11 Women tending Ignatius, 12 Casa Santa Marta)**

**(13)** It is instructive to see how Ignatius chose to use power in his relationships, how Ignatius came to treat those under him in the order. Ribadeneyra (an early Jesuit biographer) describes Ignatius's way of being with and treating young Jesuits:

But the principle means [for promoting young Jesuits' progress in virtue] was to win their heart by a sweet and gentle fatherly love; for he was truly a father to all his sons. . . He received all his subjects with great affability and a marvelous kindness, when they came to him. . . He never spoke an abusive or bitter word for those he was correcting. . . He had great care for the good name of all his subjects,. . . always speaking well of them, showing the good idea he had of all, and not revealing the faults of anyone, except when it was strictly necessary to hold consultation. . . . He buried in perpetual forgetfulness the faults which one admitted and manifested in all confidence. In this matter his discretion and his fatherly kindness were incredible. . . He had great care of the health and consolation of each of his subjects. . . He showed this love by not burdening his sons beyond what they could easily bear. . .as also by the confidence he showed to those to whom he was entrusting some important affair, by giving them complete freedom, and credit and allowing them authority to act according to the capacity and talent of each one. And to the instructions which he as giving them he added: "you who are on the ground will see better what should be done. (*Writings of Ignatius*, Vol. I, Ch 3, quoted in DeGuibert 1964, 99-100.)

There are a lot of clues here for how, suitably adapted, we might deal with those "under us," be they staff who report to us or students in our classes (in my case) or the vulnerable with whom we minister: Ignatius shows us a pattern of winning hearts and affection not to himself, but to the end of setting others free, always speaking well of

others, “burying in perpetual forgetfulness” the faults of others, delegating with confidence without second guessing. . . You get the point. There is, I believe, an Ignatian way of treating people.

Of course this is an idealistic portrait of a revered founder. **Ignatius could be tough and persistent and decisive when the person or situation required it.** One example occurs with Jerónimo Nadal, who served as Ignatius’ personal deputy to present the newly written *Constitutions* to the members of the Society in Spain and Portugal. Ignatius had instructed Nadal to adapt his interpretation to the situations that he might find there, and so Nadal acceded to the request from the Spanish scholastics for more prayer time than the *Constitutions* provided for. When he returned to Rome and gave the account of his slight mitigation of the *Constitutions*, Ignatius so vigorously rebuked Nadal that another Jesuit, who was present at the time, was amazed at Ignatius’ strong reprimand but also Nadal’s patience in enduring it. (Conwell 2003, 76)

**So, it’s not just the kinds of caring that might be described as “pastoral,” but also the decisive and sometimes bold and direct actions that also characterize Ignatius and those in his spirit.**

(14) It is also instructive to see how Ignatius embeds this principle of paying close attention to the other in the *Spiritual Exercises*. He does so by his insistence that the Exercises be adapted to each person who makes them. Ignatius is very clear that it is the director’s responsibility to listen to the circumstances and the experience of each person making the Exercises in order that the director can propose the best combination of timing, content and arrangements. In fact, at least twelve of the twenty preliminary notes to the exercises contain explicit directives to the person giving the *Spiritual Exercises* about adjusting and adapting the Exercises to various situations that occur while making the exercises and to various kinds of persons who might desire to make them.

Ignatius certainly made mistakes, but clearly he also took great pains to pay attention to individual persons, groups and situations and to accommodate his responses so that greatest good could come to the other person, group or situation. His ultimate goal: the greater glory of God. At the same time, he was his own person, constantly learning from his experiences. (15) **In sum, he became a “company man” in the best sense of the word;** he became a companion with the other companions, although called to leadership in the group of first companions and then in the young *Company* of Jesus. It is not a coincidence, I believe, that his group came to be called the *Company* of Jesus.

So, too, us: we also can develop a **broad network of “experience partners,” becoming acquainted with a wide variety of people from whom we learn and with whom we share, relating in constructive ways not only with those who exercises authority over us but also equally constructively with those “under” us and with a lesser degree of power that we might hold. Ignatius assumed, as we are invited to, that God can be found in all persons, all situations, all things, so he was not ever embarrassed to learn from all and to treat all with respect, kindness, humility,**

**authority, strength as paradoxical as it may sound to put all those qualities into the same list.**

**(16) 3. Not only did Ignatius develop a certain way of being himself, he also systematized what he learned so that others could also internalize the same values and behaviors.** Here I'd like to explore four cases where he structured rules for conversation in order that they could become a shared behavior between those giving and making the Exercises, among those in the Society, , and ultimately, among us:

- The Presupposition, #23, of the *Spiritual Exercises*
- Ignatius's habit of extensive letter-writing;
- Spiritual conversation (as described by Thomas Clancy and further developed by Willi Lambert).
- The Rules for those attending the Council of Trent

At the very beginning of the spiritual exercises, before ever the director and the retreatant begin their conversations, we find this statement, which Ignatius labels the "presupposition." **(17)**

Presupposition: That both the giver and the receiver of the Spiritual Exercises may be of greater help and benefit to each other, it should be presupposed that every good Christian ought to be more eager to put a good interpretation on a neighbor's statement than to condemn it. Further if one cannot interpret it favorably, one should ask how the other means it. If that meaning is wrong, one should correct the person with love; and if this is not enough, one should search out every appropriate means through which, by understanding the statement in a good way, it may be saved. (Ganss 1991, 129)

Ignatius is saying, in effect, if this process is to work to bring greater glory to God, here is the basic rule for relating to each other. Notice: **(18)**

- Mutual: applies to both
- Contextual: the situation influences interpretation
- Generous: each assumes the best of the other
- Disciplined: sincere attempt to see both sides
- Goal: for mutually acceptable positions
- Correct: only in love and if necessary at the end
- Conclude: with something that can be affirmed

When you think about it in light of the way we usually converse, this pattern is really striking. What could happen if this were the behavioral norm in our government? in the church? in the parish? in our families? What would it take for us to move one step towards it?

The challenge is that, even if the other party does not act this way toward you, you can still choose to act this way toward him/her. It's harder, yes, sometimes *much* harder,

but there is nothing that prevents one side of the conversation to from assuming the best of the other, making a sincere attempt to see the other side, strive for a mutually acceptable position (instead of “winning”), correcting only after attempts to understand and to come to a mutually acceptable position, and, regardless of the effect of the other responses, conclude by affirming something—“at least we can agree to disagree without it closing down our ability to talk.” **This exhortation to presume and search for the best in the other is the starting point for Ignatian conversation.**

(19) Second example, letter-writing. Too bad Ignatius didn’t have e-mail! His letters were either written out by his own hand, or, in later years, dictated to one of his secretaries. Once Polanco took over as secretary, the volume of letters grew exponentially. Undoubtedly there are many more letters that do not exist, especially in the earlier years, before the establishment of the Society, when there would have been little reason to preserve them. But once the Society was established, letter writing became a primary method that Ignatius used to unite the fledgling society scattered around the world. The letters went two-way. Not only did Ignatius write, he insisted on reports from the field. Xavier’s letters were eagerly copied and circulated among Jesuit houses and electrified the growing society. Chris Lowney (2003) captures one such event:

Jesuits in Brazil conveyed the impact of one such letter from Japan, describing how even its late-night arrival couldn’t keep them from reading it: “From [midnight] till morning, there was none who could sleep, because the Father Provincial began at once to read the letters.” After devouring what they called the “great news from Japan,” the Brazil Jesuits wrote to headquarters, urging them to continue forwarding such reports and explaining that the “consolations” they derived from hearing of colleagues’ exploits “excel all others.” (p. 206)

Ignatius wrote extensive directions to the persons in charge of various ministries, but almost always, after he finished the details, he would put in a qualifier, something to the effect: “You are the one there. You know what to do better than I do. Adapt all this accordingly.” He knew that, even with his extensive letter-writing, that mission in the round was constantly changing and evolving. So he was clear about the principles and his desires, and after that, refrained from second-guessing those he had left in charge. Not a bad practice for today!

Letters were so important to Ignatius that he was very impatient if there were errors, or if, upon reviewing the draft, he realized something could be better put. He not infrequently asked for letters to be recopied before they were sent out, and he insisted in similar care from other Jesuits. This is how important he believed the communication to be with his far-flung companions. **(20 Ignatius’ writing desk, 21 Ignatius writing, 22 a letter)**

**Frequent, clear and empowering communications is the lesson for me in all these thousands of letters. Though our means may not—probably will not—be the same, the point is clear: extensive and attentive and personal networking builds relationships, and carefully tended relationships serve the mission. Those men in**

**Brazil were filled with energy and zeal upon reading of the exploits of another of their number.**

(23) Thomas Clancy (1978) has pulled out from Letters of Ignatius and other documents the vital importance of conversation for Ignatius. I shall be relying on his work in what follows. What Ignatius had in mind as he stress spiritual conversation was to speak familiarly (informally and personally—literally using the “tu” form, rather than the formal “usted”) with people so as to draw them into greater service of God. In other words, attentive and personal speech for an apostolic goal.

So what does Ignatius note about spiritual conversation?

(24) **First, spiritual conversation is built upon a certain natural aptitude for conversation.** Ignatius recognized that, to a degree, this aptitude is a given in one’s personality. He thought it so important for the apostolic work of the Society that he enshrined it in the list of criteria that those responsible for formation look for in candidates. Qualities of alertness, prudence, and a pleasing personality become the natural grounds upon which to build with education and further honing of the skills of spiritual conversation. But it is less the good talker than the good listener who will excel in Ignatius’s ideal of spiritual conversation. And, to a certain extent, any person of good will can improve in the ability to engage in the kind of empathic conversation that Ignatius lifts up.

**What Ignatius suggests by way of honing natural aptitudes might be surprising: modesty.** We might say poise or self-possession or courtesy or personal graciousness, though these have a slightly more “secular” ring than Ignatius would himself prefer. (We might also use the word “humility,” though in so doing, we have a lot of cultural baggage to wade through to get to the essence of this virtue in today’s world.) For Ignatius, the outer bearing should arise from one’s inner condition. In other words, Ignatius desires that we demonstrate with our bearing who we really are, and that it be hospitable, welcoming and genuinely interested in the other person. Inner peace manifested in outer composure. The integrity between inner and outer is crucial.

**The third quality for spiritual conversation according to Ignatius is zeal.** Ignatius believed that the person who would engage in spiritual conversation should be “desirous of all virtue and spiritual perfection, energetic in whatever enterprise of divine service they undertake,” as he put it in the *Constitutions*, #156. In other words, we must be convinced of the worth and value of what we are undertaking. And it is not sufficient to have such desires “generically,” detached from real people. **Ignatius has in mind desire for the good of *this* particular person, *this* particular institution.**

(25) **Then there is the matter of setting priorities.** Ignatius faced the same problems we do: too much to do, too many people to see and who want to see him, and too little time. His solution: Try to determine what apostolic action is most for the greater glory of God, and then concentrate one’s attention and efforts on this aspect. “Think big!” Ignatius would have said. Of course this leaves Ignatius open to charges of elitism,

especially as we judge him by today's standards. However, we can really do no better: figure out what is the center of our life and vocation, and order our priorities from that center. From this prioritizing, we can then hopefully, marshal an unhurried, genuine empathy for those we deal with.

**In a face to face relationship, Ignatius had a lot of common sense.** For example, one needs to get to know the other, what his or her disposition is like, what her values and joys might consist in, what is really important. According to Da Camera, Ignatius's scribe for his *Autobiography*, Ignatius had a real knack for getting to know the feelings and personality of anyone he talked with. After a conversation, he really knew a person from inside out.

**Then, the heart of spiritual conversation: just plain listening, long and intently.** "Be ready to listen for long periods," he told Salmeron and Broet as he sent them off on a difficult mission to Ireland (Young 1959, 51-52):

In the paragraph I am going to quote next, which is actually from Pierre Favre, one of the early Jesuits, I invite you to substitute for the word "heretic," a phrase more appropriate to our situation, such as "nemesis" or "leader of the opposition." In other words, the following comments cover the most intractable kind of relationship, including with one's enemies, but apply as well the more naturally compatible people are.

In the first place it is necessary that anyone who desires to be serviceable to heretics of the present age should hold them in great affection and love them very truly, putting out of his heart all thoughts and feelings that tend to their discredit. The next thing he must do is to win their good will and love by friendly dealings and converse on matters about which there is no difference between us, taking care to avoid all controversial subjects that lead to bickering and mutual recriminations. The things that unite us ought to be the first ground of our approach, not the things that keep us apart. (quoted in Clancy 1978, 19-20).

You can see that there is a good bit of asceticism required: most of us don't spontaneously act with tact, patience, generosity of time and spirit, patience and self-control with those we don't see eye to eye with as a matter of course. We may be better able to sustain this way of behaving to the degree that we are confident of its importance for fulfilling our vocation. Ignatius would also remind us that it is always the work of God in us, not merely our own doing.

**(26) Finally, we come to the most characteristically Ignatian image for spiritual conversation.** In a Letter to the two Jesuits serving as Papal legates to Ireland, Salmeron and Broet, September 1541 (cited in Young 1959, 51-52), he wrote: "Whenever we wish to win someone over and engage him in the greater service of God our Lord, we should use the same strategy for good which the enemy employs to draw a good soul to evil. He enters through the other's door and comes out his own."

(27) The reference here, to which both Salmeron and Broet would be familiar, is to the rules for discernment of spirits in the *Spiritual Exercises*, #332, where he ascribes just this pattern for good people to be gradually seduced by something that appears good. As we start to follow the apparent good, we are drawn step by step from the real good that they were about. But notice the different contexts in which the metaphor is employed: in the Rules for Discernment of Spirits, the metaphor is used to describe how the Evil One might fool an inattentive discerner. In the letter to Salmeron and Broet, the metaphor is used to describe a pastoral strategy to be employed by (presumably good-intentioned) persons, and as understood as a means to secure the greater glory of God.

Ignatius based his strategy on Paul's words "I became all things to all people so as to win all to Christ" (I Cor 9:22). You can see in the letter how Ignatius instructs Salmeron and Broet on this very point. Is this strategy deceptive? Paternalistic? Manipulative? It certainly *could* be all three. It could be patronizing if we assume we have a corner on what's best for the other person (remember Ignatius's response to Borgia about the Cardinal's hat!). It can be manipulative if we forget that even accurate empathy can be turned to our own purposes, not to the good of the other. The desire to be all things to all people can easily slip into fear of conflict and avoiding honest criticism, of being nice at all costs, of becoming content with the least common denominator. But this strategy need not be manipulative if our motives are sincere interest in the other person and deep desire to do the best thing in the circumstance, if we always leave the other free to go another way, if we do not promise more than we can deliver, if we desire and live humbly and if we simply desire the greater glory of God in the exchange. Spiritual conversation is far beyond mere technique; it is about being a certain kind of integrated person who responds to another, always intent on his or her greatest good person.

**At its best, what Ignatius describes is the skillful use of accurate empathy as an apostolic strategy. But since it is so easy to pervert this strategy, even, perhaps especially unconsciously, it requires a balancing a set of conversation rules that also stress appropriate resistance, boundaries and disclosure.** David Tracy offers a useful set:

...say only what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend your opinions if challenged by the conversation partner; be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, to change your mind if the evidence suggests it. (originally in *Plurality and Ambiguity* 19; here quoted by Susan Simonidis in Jones and Paulsell, 2002, 114)

Notice that Tracy's list is quite similar to Ignatius, though he puts them in a different order than Ignatius' does with his methodical steps.

(28) A wonderful example of this strategy on a large scale is Matteo Ricci's mission to China. He "became" a Confucian wise person in every aspect of his life in order to converse intimately with other Confucian wise persons and adapted every aspect of his ministry to the situation. He learned speak and write Chinese, he discussed

mathematics and other topics of great interest to his scholar conversation partners, dressed and lived as a wise person would. He was prepared to spend years at the project. Unfortunately, later decisions subsequently undid most of the enormous bridge he built into the Chinese culture, but Ricci is still a revered figure in China today. To explore this fascinating story, see Jonathan Spence's *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (Viking Penguin, 1984). **(29 Ricci)**

**(30)** Willi Lambert (1999) puts these principles into a modern context and around them develops a whole model of communication based on Ignatius. He isolates seven "Rules" that help us see concretely the wisdom of Ignatius's principles of spiritual conversation and how relevant they are for *any* conversation: (1) being convinced of the surprising worth of conversation (and so the importance of preparing oneself, while all the while recognizing that the really successful conversation is a gift [p.31-32]); (2) slowness of speech, that is careful and affectionate (32); (3) listening with peaceful attention to the whole person (34); **(31)** (4) coming free of prejudice to conversations (37); (5) rarely if ever using arguments from authority to trump the other speaker (39); (6) speaking with modest lucidity (41); and (7) taking enough time (42). **If we could develop such habits, every time we entered into a conversation, we would be extending the mission in our families and communities.**

**(32)** One case example must suffice: Ignatius's letter to the Fathers observing at the Council of Trent (Young 1959, 93-96). Ignatius tells them: be slow to speak, be considerate and kindly, first listening to be able to understand the meanings, leanings and desires of those who speak. Notice the echoes of the Presupposition. They are to learn when to speak and when to keep silent. Especially in contentious matters, they are to speak dispassionately, without taking sides. When necessary to give their opinion or defend a truth, they are to do so with the greatest possible calmness and humility. Today we would say that they are to exhibit a "non-anxious presence" that calms and de-escalates by the very manner of their conversation. Every evening they are to come together and discuss among themselves what worked and how to improve the way they carry on their ministry at the Council. We find in this letter an entire plan for ministry that takes into account principles for conversation, ways of avoiding unnecessary controversy, pointers for preaching, teaching, giving the Exercices and other ministries that will engage in "around the edges" while attending the Council, down to the details of how to debrief in the evenings. **(33, Lainez and Salmeron)**

**(34)** In sum, good conversation skills and accurate empathic listening are not simply good strategies, they are part of the whole heritage of Ignatian and Jesuit ways of working in ministry. They are an invitation to a particular way of being together in the common work of the church. The general principles have proven themselves effective pastoral strategies. They are available for all of us to adapt and use, even if we are not particularly attracted to other aspects of Ignatian spirituality. There is, I believe an Ignatian way of relating. It is immanently pastoral, focused on the good of the other and upon seeing the possibilities of God in each person and situation. But can it work for you? This question will be the focus of our discussion.

Now it's time for you to respond. First, turn to your neighbor (two's and three's). Spend a few minutes talking about what you have just heard. Try to come up with one question, observation, or example. In a few minutes, we'll turn to a group conversation around this material. You may use the following questions, if you like:

**(35) To Ponder. . .**

- **How could these ways of relating inform your particular ministry?**
- **Do these qualities of person hold in today's pastoral ministry? Why/why not?**
- **What, really, does the metaphor "enter through the other's door and come out your own" mean? Does it lose something in moving from the Rules for Discernment of Spirits to a pastoral conversation?**

**(36) Works Cited:**

- Clancy, Thomas. *The Conversational Word of God* (Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978).
- Conwell, Joseph. *Walking in the Spirit* (Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2003).
- DeGuilbert, Joseph. *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice: A Historical Study*. (Institute of Jesuits Sources, 1964).
- Ganss, George, *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works* (Paulist, 1991)..
- Jones, L.Gregory, and Stephanie Paulsell, *The Scope of Our Art: the Vocation of the Theological Teacher* (Eerdmans, 2002): 114 for quotation, which was originally from David Tracy, in *Plurality and Ambiguity*, p. 19.
- Lambert, Willi. *Directions for Communication* (Crossroad, 1999).
- Liebert, Elizabeth. "Catholic and Jesuit: What These Suggest for Ways of Being Together" Lecture, Fairfield University, August 22, 2002.
- Lowney, Chris, *Heroic Leadership: Best Practices from a 450-Year-Old Company That Changed the World* (Loyola Press, 2003).
- Spence, Jonathan. *The Memory Palace of Mateo Ricci* (Penguin, 1984).
- Young, William. *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (Loyola University Press, 1959).

**(37) Picture credits**

- [www.cori.dk/images\\_castelli\\_romani/OT34.jpg](http://www.cori.dk/images_castelli_romani/OT34.jpg) (Ignatius at his writing desk)
- [www.faculty.fairfield.edu.jmac](http://www.faculty.fairfield.edu.jmac) (digitized version of *Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola en Imágenes*, Ignatius convalescing)
- [www.farcampus.unito.it/corsi...ricci.jpg](http://www.farcampus.unito.it/corsi...ricci.jpg) (Matteo Ricci)
- [www.library.georgetown.edu...sjexhibit/sjex1.htm](http://www.library.georgetown.edu...sjexhibit/sjex1.htm) (letter of Ignatius)
- [www.ignatiushistory.info](http://www.ignatiushistory.info) (pictures of women of Manresa tending Ignatius, Láinez and Salmeron)
- Personal photographs (Mosque on Mt of Ascension, Casa Santa Marta)