

+ Desires of the Heart: Themes of Ignatian Spirituality +

FREEDOM & FOUNDATION

Oriented toward God; preparing for prayer

BACKGROUND

St Ignatius Loyola was considered minor nobility, but that didn't stop him from leading a life of vanity, sin, and pride—being “of the world” he might say—indulging in gambling, duelling, and affairs. After a conversion while recovering from a battle wound, Ignatius began living a life of poverty and asceticism. He didn't cut his hair or nails and wore shoes with no soles. His attachment now was not to vanity but to harsh penances.

Through prayer Ignatius learned that God's love and grace is a free gift. As a love response, he says, we must be *detached* from all the things of this world, “not wanting health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honour rather than dishonour, long rather than short life.” This is **freedom** and it leads to our purpose:

Principle and Foundation

“Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord... And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created... For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things...” - [23] Spiritual Exercises

PREPARING FOR PRAYER

- ❖ **Environment.** Be in a place and position that's comfortable for you where you can remain focused. Light a candle? Darkness? Soft music? Quiet? Sitting? Lying?
- ❖ **Presence.** Acknowledge God's presence. We must approach a time of prayer as a privileged time spent with the Lord. Prayer is about relationship with the God of our life.
- ❖ **Orientation.** The Principle and Foundation orients us toward God. Our prayer should be, too. Ignatius says we should ask God that our actions, thoughts, and prayer be directed toward God's praise and service.

RESOURCES

jesuits.ca/orientations/pandf_reilly.html - Contemporary version of the Principle and Foundation

godinallthings.com/prayer - Prayer resources

“This, then, is how you should pray:

‘Our Father in heaven: May your holy name be honored’” - Matthew 6:9 (GNT)