

## **The First Principle and Foundation**

*St. Ignatius of Loyola as found at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/ignatius/exercises.xii.i.html>*

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. 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.

From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it.

For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it; so that, on our part, we want not health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created.

*As paraphrased by David L. Fleming, S.J.*

The goal of our life is to live with God forever.  
God, who loves us, gave us life.  
Our own response of love allows God's life  
to flow into us without limit.

All the things in this world are gifts from God,  
presented to us so that we can know God more easily  
and make a return of love more readily.  
As a result, we appreciate and use all these gifts of God  
insofar as they help us to develop as loving persons.  
But if any of these gifts become the center of our lives,  
they displace God and so hinder our growth toward our goal.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance  
before all of these created gifts insofar as we have a choice  
and are not bound by some obligation.  
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 deeper response to our life in God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this:  
I want and I choose what better leads  
to God's deepening his life in me.