

When Are Spiritual Exercises Ignatian Spiritual Exercises?

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<http://www.sjweb.info/documents/cis/pdfenglish/200109804en.pdf>

In his keynote address to the European Conference on the Spiritual Exercises, the author affirmed that adaptation is essential to the Exercises. The Exercises are original in method because prayer is aimed at choosing a way to live. The Ignatian meditations are original, not only in content, but in their contribution to choosing. The review of prayer, integral to discernment, reveals felt knowledge. Finally, on method, there are no Ignatian Exercises without a director. The content is original principally in the Exercises' emphasis on the risen Christ, rare for their time. Also original in some ways are the rules for discernment, and the insistence that the Exercises must go on while thinking along with the Church. The author ends with brief remarks on Annotations 18 and 19.

"I was asked to answer the question: When are spiritual exercises 'Ignatian' Spiritual Exercises? Are all the adaptations of the Spiritual Exercises real Ignatian exercises ?

"It is not so easy to give the right answer. The aim of my speech is to help your reflection, not to impose my views on you. I am not here to tell you what is the correct answer, the right one, the only one. I am afraid I don't have the right answer. But we have to avoid two extreme positions: on the one hand, only the thirty days retreat following the book of Ignatius is the real Ignatian retreat; on the other hand, all kinds of retreats, all kinds of spiritual exercises, are Ignatian exercises. Such extreme positions remain too abstract. And specific to the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius is not some idea about the Spiritual Exercises, but a process of giving and of doing the exercises. Exercises are something you have to do, something you have to put into practice.