



Spiritual Topo #5 related to the election of Ignatius as Superior General: Seeking and finding God in all things.

→ [Link to the video of the topo \(with subtitles\)](#)

Episode summary

This is happening in Rome in 1539. Pope Paul III is supporting the companions projects and sends them on mission everywhere. To keep in touch, they decide to found a congregation (which Ignatius had always resisted, given the bad reputation of religious orders at that time). On September 27, 1540, the Pope approves the founding of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius is elected Superior General on April 17, 1541 (after having refused twice). He will spend the last 16 years of his life in Rome, carrying out various ministries (confessions, preaching, Spiritual Exercises, charities...). But his primary mission was about writing the Constitutions, receiving and sending a large amount of mail (more than 6,815 letters and instructions were written by him or on his behalf); his efficient secretary Polanco also helped him from 1547 onwards.

What is this exactly all about?

We know Ignatius' "slogan": *"seeking and finding God in all things"*. But about the *"in all things"* part, he had hoped for something elsewhere and far away, that would have taken the form of a *"being there at the service of all"* in a more austere and sober form. We often think that our vocation consists in doing extraordinary things and we also imagine that God is only to be found in prayer, liturgies and strong moments. Of course God is there too! But God is also to be found in the small as well as in the "exceptional" things!

What does the Gospel say about it?

Seeking and finding God in all things is a profound attitude of Jesus. First of all, we see it in his way of announcing a Kingdom of God that is very close, a *"kingdom and its justice"* that are first to be sought and that produce an incredible fruit: *"all other things will be given in addition"* (Mt 6:33). Moreover, Jesus' own way of perceiving the beneficent presence of his Father in all things means that no single human reality, even the darkest one (illness, adultery...), escapes his benevolent and compassionate gaze.

What's in it for us today?

Jesus is inviting us to look at the world through his own "glasses". Not a "naïve" and idealistic gaze where everything would be beautiful and perfect. No! We have to look at this world with its lights and its shadows, we have to contemplate God in "our mixed lives" as Etienne Grieu says: *"We are spontaneously looking for the source of Faith in pure experience, an experience where it is only about God: being able to contemplate Him face to face, regardless of all the things which are usually*

blurring our heart-to-heart experience with Him". And yet, even "what is dividing, separating or opposing us, everything that is unfair or that is hurting us, can be seen as a passage to God. Standing in these difficult places is to go to an appointment in an unusual place. This very simple expectation means that here an encounter has to take place" (1).

Let's get back to Ignatius.

The tireless pilgrim has accepted to remain sedentary in Rome, at the service of an expanding and apostolic body. This mission is rooted in a deep willingness to obey God's will in a way that is different from his initial dreams - again! - but out of love for God and out of concrete love for his brothers. He, the fiery one, will learn to remain simple and poor, in a passionate love for Christ and the humanity. He will remain the ears and the heart of a group dispersed by its mission. Dreaming of obeying others in order to continue to renounce his own will, he will learn to exercise authority over others. Ignatius is learning how the joys and the struggles of this restless group will require from him a constant intercession and a continuous discernment.

Through the intercession of Ignatius, I ask the Lord for the grace to participate in his work of evangelization, whatever my state of life and the place where I live, and for the grace to consent to the tasks which are fostering unity among all.

(1) <https://nsae.fr/2009/12/31/la-vie-melee-lieu-de-la-revelation-chretienne-par-etienne-grieu> [in french]

The story of Ignatius can be seen in terms of a transformation of different challenges (the "cannonballs") into opportunities, discovering an "intelligent" use of painful events. This is not a pious justification of suffering. With Ignatius, we can progressively embrace **a possible wisdom and a freedom facing the struggles and the failures of our own life.**

Points of reflection...

- What does this story inspire me? Does it echo a familiar situation that I have been through or witnessed?
- I look with the Lord at the humble and simple places in my life, in the service of my brothers and sisters, without noise. I give thanks to him for this. And if I find it hard to consent, I can simply and humbly ask his help to rejoice in what I am living.
- Through the intercession of Ignatius, I ask the Lord for the grace to participate in his work of evangelisation whatever my state of life and wherever I live, and for the grace to consent to the tasks that promote unity among all.

I can leave a note on the spiritual wall of the retreat

I prepare for this personal time of prayer:



- As I approach the place of prayer, I remember that I am going to spend a moment of intimacy with the Lord.
- I decide on a time for this prayer (15 minutes? 20 minutes?)
- I look for a space and a position that helps me to be present.
- I am silent, I turn off my mobile phone, I breathe slowly: my whole body calms down.
- I realise that I am entering the presence of the Lord. I look at him as he looks at me.
- After a sign of the cross, I ask the Holy Spirit to support me in listening to the Lord during the time of prayer. May everything that happens help me to find Jesus Christ, to know him better, to love him more and to follow him more closely.



BIBLICAL TEXT: 1 Co 12, 3B-7.12-13

Introduction:

After the Ascension and the departure of Jesus, today is the day of the long-awaited gift made to the disciples. At the beginning of this prayer, give me also, ô Lord, to fully live by Your Spirit. Your Spirit is life and binds me to my brothers and sisters in humanity.
In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Reference of the biblical passage

Today's reading is taken from the first epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians, chapter 12

Point 1

"No one is able to say 'Jesus is the Lord', except if he is living in the Holy Spirit."

For a moment, I'm looking at this church in Corinth which receives Paul's letter.

Women and men from all walks of life, young and old, they are all inhabited by the Holy Spirit and they gather in the name of Jesus. I join them.

Point 2

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was given to the Church. As it was for each of us on the day of our baptism and our confirmation. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit gifts are varied: Wisdom, intelligence, knowledge to receive the world as a gift from God, strength, guidance, piety and fear of God. Which one would I particularly like to ask today?

Point 3:

St. Paul uses this beautiful image of a body made up of many members but all united in one being. I contemplate the church of my parish, the Church in the world and my family or community of life: this core church where God is revealed.

In my own words, I express the richness of this diversity, yet united in a project of life.

Introduction to the second listening :

I listen again to this letter.

I rejoice with Saint Paul in the richness of the Church, which makes its diversity.

Invitation to personal prayer:

I now turn to God.

I simply share with Him what I have experienced during this prayer time.

I might thank Him for a gift I have received and ask Him to teach me how to use it with great generosity.

I entrust Him with some members of the Church in order to grow in unity and coherence.

Final prayer

Prayer to the Holy Spirit by St. Augustin

Breathe into me, Holy Spirit, that I may think what is holy.

Act in me, Holy Spirit, that I may do what is holy.

Draw me, Holy Spirit, that I may love what is holy.

Strengthen me, Holy Spirit, that I may keep what is holy.

Guard me, Holy Spirit, that I may never lose what is holy.

At the end of the prayer

- I take a moment to look at the way it happened, to see if the setting was appropriate (place, time, duration etc.)
- I write down a fruit of the prayer in my notebook
- I can leave a note on the spiritual wall of the retreat

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Testimony #10: "The discovery of God's presence in worship" - Xavier de Bénazé sj

→ [Link to the video of the testimony \(with subtitles\)](#)



At the end of the listening session

- **What does this testimony mean to me? Does it echo a personal experience or that of someone I know?**
- **Xavier discovered Christ through a liturgical aspect that did not attract him a priori. Despite his questions, he leaves the door open to let himself be reached by God. Have I also been reached by this God of surprises one day, in a place, in a relationship where I did not expect him or no longer?**
- **Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version) I write a reflection in my notebook or leave a note on the spiritual wall of the retreat.**