

Sample essay on finding god in all things

[Religion](#), [God](#)



“ God dwells in creatures, in the elements, giving them being, in the plants vegetating, in the animals feeling in them, in men giving them to understand: and so in me, giving me being, animating me, giving me sensation and making me to understand; likewise making a temple of me, being created to the likeness and image of His Divine Majesty”

St. Ignatius Loyola, “ Spiritual Exercises”

I remember my conversation with one priest, which influenced on my world view. We were talking about our doubts of the existence of God, and how strong is his faith. The priest’s answer was that he knows that God is among us and we can find him in everything. For him it is not only faith, but absolute certainty that God does really exist. The reason why this answer is important is that it has some similarity with thoughts of Ignatius Loyola, whose faith was also very strong and who made such a big impact on the whole Catholic religious practice. 500 years ago, Loyola was sharing his experience among Christians and also nowadays his knowledge, advices and theories help people to open and find God not only in their hearts, but in people’s work, activities, decisions and will.

It is an absolute truth that God is always the same and unchangeable, but it is a human nature, which change either in better or worse way. However, there are probably not so many people who would not want to change for the better. God directs man to perfection. Due to this, humans become Saints. Ignatius Loyola is one of the small numbers of people in the history who followed God’s will with all his heart, sincere faith and all the aspects of human sinful life. He became a model for us in life. Taking His example, we are changing for better. It is how God does. And people are not able to resist

the presence of God and His power “ because the Kingdom of God is not in the word, but in the power” (1 Cor. 4: 20).

The life of Ignatius is a great example of assuredness in the existence of God and the way in which we can open His will in us and live according to His words, as St. Loyola did. With this in mind, his life experience really shows that Ignatius’s faith was very strong and he really felt in each moment. With attention to this, it is important to consider what presence of God is. To my mind, it makes us human. If a person does something evil, it is because he forgets about His presence. Although, people cannot be bad all the time, it is not their essence. Furthermore, a spark of the feeling of God's presence begins to flame again, and as the result, people can change. However, one of the main characteristic of this feeling for a person who believes is regularity. In spite of human’s incertitude that tomorrow he will not commit a sin, he is definitely sure in the constant presence of God, and therefore, person has a hope for salvation. St. Loyola loved God with all his heart and mind, not because of the fear of hell and eternal tortures, or desire to live forever and the possibility to ask him some benefits for himself or for his relatives, but only because of the necessity in him. God told him what to do through his meditation, dreams and hope. He told him what to do. In his turn, Ignatius told people what to do in order to open God’s presence for them.

In my opinion, it was one of the Loyola’s main movers to write his “ Spiritual Exercises”. According to George E. Ganss, St. Ignatius “ convinced that he was being guided by God, he was led to form a worldview whereby he saw all things both as created by God and as the means by which men and women could make their way back to God” (11). All his life Loyola was trying to live

in accordance with God's will and live as Jesus, and his writings were a way to show and share his spirituality, which " is rooted in the conviction that God is active, personal, and – above all – present to us" (Where can I find God?). St. Ignatius also over his lifetime " became convinced that the Exercises could help other people draw closer to God and discern God's call in their lives, much as they had helped him" (O'Brien, TheJesusPost. org). In addition to this, William Creed summarizes, " Through Ignatius' own story and through his letters, we now understand more clearly how Ignatius, the mystic, found union with God in all things" (5).

The description of how person can find God in all things is in his famous work " Spiritual Exercises." The general characteristic of this book we can find in Carol Ann Smith and Gene Merz:

The structure of the book is reflective of The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of LoyolaThe Ignatian tradition – flowing from the unique insight and vision of Ignatius – can only be carried and passed on to others by people grounded in the spirituality of The Spiritual Exercises (10).

According to Loyola's Spirituality, the path of spiritual growth lays through recognizing and overcoming own weaknesses, and then – through opening own strength, unique way of life and free choice of it. Private meditative prayer appears to be an effective way in the spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, which leads to personal connection with God.

Systematic and mystical approach to the prayer in Ignatius spirituality helps people to see God and find union with Him in all things. To understand from what His spirituality originates will help the explanation of Javier Melloni, who writes:

There is a new step taken by Ignatius with respect to the entire previous tradition of which the significance might be epitomized by saying: the Ignatian name for union with God is 'election.' Such union comes about in the act and art of choosing in each moment in terms of God's will which declares itself in history for the transformation of the world: an act and art of choosing which, the more profoundly they are exercised, the more they become in reality the act and the art of 'allowing' oneself to be chosen. This ultimately is what discernment is about: allowing oneself to be taken by God, allowing God to act through oneself in every event of history. Thus, for Ignatius, union is always a quest and a tendency, never a definitive state. In Ignatius the movement of union is one of incarnation not elevation, or more accurately, the form of elevation for Ignatius is that of a descent. The search for union with God – that aspiration which is within the heart of every human being – comes about for Ignatius not through the flight from the world of monastic tradition, but through the kenotic movement of incarnation in the world and for the world (50).

Given these points, I understood that the mystic approach of finding God in all things by Ignatius first of all consists of contemplation, which he put into the midst of action. Also, person must try to live with God in his heart, mind and actions. Secondly, this union is not a constant and permanent state; on the contrary, union with God means an act and a tendency. Each time we make the election, and we choose God's side, we can feel that He is here with us. This is how God is in all things. Another key point is love, because as we choose to live in accordance with the will of God and his presence in every moment of our life, it means to live in love. A proof of this statement

we can find in “ Spiritual Exercises” Of Ignatius Loyola, who is saying “ It belongs to God our Lord to give consolation to the soul without preceding cause, for it is the property of the Creator to enter, go out and cause movements in the soul, bringing it all into love of His Divine Majesty.” (70). Therefore, it is understandable to me that it is God, and only He can disturb the calmness of our souls in order to stimulate us to think about our behavior and our life in general. It is He, who at the moment of our election between good and evil, inclines us to the right decision. At the same time, God through the voice of our consciousness makes us regret about bad things that we had done. It is the way God treats our souls and bodies. After such treating we begin to seek God, talk to Him, pray, at first, those memorized prayers that often we do not understand, but then person begin to grow into a deep intimate prayer. However, as it can be understood from the St. Ignatius teaching, a prayer is not a monologue of a man, but mutual communication between God and a person. Therefore, one of Apostles is saying in the Bible, “ Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you” (Jas. 4: 8).

Furthermore, what I understood while I was reading “ Spiritual Exercises” is that God is always with us, he is present in every action and every my decision. And the same is with all people around the world. Nevertheless, not everybody believes in Him. I can explain this phenomenon only with God’s will. I agree also with St. Ignatius’ statement, “ God our Lord is in every creature, according to His own essence” (Spiritual Exercises, 20), but we must put some efforts to open His Will in us. Therefore, Ignatius Loyola wrote his Exercises in order to help people to open God in all things, including

humans. God is present in our thoughts, in our actions, in our imagination. That is why for Loyola it was not enough only just to have faith, but do many things in order to open God. Due this, almost in every exercise Loyola incites people to use their imagination. For instance, he is writing, “ Imagining Christ our Lord present and placed on the Cross” (Spiritual Exercises, 23). Also, he encourages person to analyze and overthink every day and his every thought. One more important element is to try to concentrate all attention and free consciousness for the will of God. St. Ignatius impels people to “ meditate, I will put myself standing for the space of an Our Father, my intellect raised on high, considering how God our Lord is looking at me” (26)..

But Spiritual Exercises include not only God and a person who is doing them. The important factor is our surrounded worlds here, because we live, act and exist in it and all our actions and thoughts are sent to God and, on the contrary, the answers receiving from Him are through the prism of our world. Talking about the Exercises, “ They are a triadic experience of God’s presence and action in the retreating immersed in the world” (Creed, 7). The most important is that Loyola’s teaching will never be out-of-date. For instance, due to his teaching and “ Spiritual Exercises” people can find strength to overcome difficulties of the modern world. Such a great example I found in the article with a name, which speaks for itself, “ Finding God in The Midst of Chaos” (TheJesusPost. org). In accordance to the article, the twenty-first century presents to an individual as the world of chaos, but only what helps to defeat all the difficulties is a faith in God and prayer.

This is a story about a man who works in the Emergency Department. Due to

this, we can imagine how many tragic moments he experienced. One of them was about a child, who died. Jason Brauning is remembering, “ From the moment this young child was brought into the trauma room, I knew that God was present” (TheJesusPost. org). Author is sharing with us his spiritual experience that in such episodes of life he trusts to the St. Loyola’s teaching that we can find God in all things, including even such a bad consequence as death. It is very interesting to know that people nowadays use Spiritual Exercises. For instance, Brauning is saying about the importance of the “ examen”, which he describes as “ a period of self-reflection, a time where we can look back into every aspect of our day and search for the ways in which God was present” (TheJesusPost. org). Moreover, author presents the parts of the examen, which he is praying after his shift in the hospital.

Another example of modern interpretation and use of Loyola’s teaching I found in the article “ Five ways to Find God in All Things”. Andy Otto, the Author, presented five ways, according to Ignatian Spirituality, aside the examen of finding God in everything. They are: 1) Micro-Awareness, 2) Journal, 3) Do something an “ old fashioned way”, 4) Listen, 5) Say “ God is here” (ignatianspirituality. com). On the one hand, it is good that Ignatian teaching has an impact on nowadays society and still lead people on the way of seeking and finding God in all things, but, on the other hand, his teaching begins to lose its first aim, as I found this on the example of this article.

That spiritual wisdom that I have gained from the course is mostly because of the reading Loyola’s Exercises and comments to them. His teachings help me to come closer to God. I could not imagine before that people can feel God’s presence. I did not know the way how to find him, but now, I think, I

do. I understood that I must put a lot of efforts on this, and be very patient doing all these exercises. After I read "Spiritual Exercises" the first time, I thought that it is great - four weeks of doing everything that Ignatius advised and I will find God and he will be with forever. Nevertheless, now I understand that four weeks can last four years, or even longer. Time is not important in this situation. Only sincere repentance and, what more important contemplation and meditation, can lead us to God step by step. My prayer must be thoughtful; my mind must be clear and abstracted from the inner world. At first, it was strange for me that in Christianity Loyola used meditation, because it is more widespread among East religions, but now I see how it is important to contemplate in order to open yourself to God and, on the other hand, open Him in you.

Now I would like to share some of my own experience. I understand that God is always present in my life, he is with me all the time, but to tell the truth, as I am trying to analyze, I am not always with God. Of course, I feel that God is not only engaged in my life while I am praying, but also I can sense him in my daily events. First of all, I began to feel Him while doing my prayer at the end of the day, similar to Ignatius examen. The explanation of how I notice His presence is my feeling of repentance about things that I had done during the day, the feeling of regret. Also, it is my attempts to understand God's nature and without asking accept His will. And then I understood that the most important to live in union with God, which for me is to follow His commandments and do everything with love to God and other people. I think, after this comprehension I began to notice God in my usual moments of life. To my mind, it is every usual occasion, which I am doing with God in

my heart, when I am considering what Jesus would do being in my shoes. It is also very important to learn how to listen to God, as well to the other people. For me, the most appropriate for this is prayerful time, during which I am trying to leave all the worries behind and open myself to God. Maybe it is sound strange, but I hope that someday I will attain the state of harmony with God and the outer world. In such moments listening is more important than thinking. I try to clear my mind and listen. Such moments give me strength and inspiration in all my doings.

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