

Part 31: Inner Agenda

Spend a few minutes in silence, gathering yourselves for this time together. Pray for the Spirit to lead you into truth with courage and humility. Share with the group something from your week. (20 minutes)

Freedom from our inner agenda

If we try to attain the indifference and balance which is central in Ignatius' Principle and Foundation, we find ourselves hindered by an inner agenda which has control and the power of veto in each of us. We would define Inner Agenda as that inner system of controls that needs certain things to happen or to be avoided as compensation for what seems to be wrong. An example is 'to be happy I have to be wealthy'.

It is all the more difficult to work with because it is largely hidden. Our inner agenda was originally formed and developed to protect us and to help us to survive in a critical and demanding world. We initially picked up the foundation for this agenda from the formative people in our lives, and then developed and adapted it by our own unique personality and experience of life. Our desires and our fears, both those which are familiar and the deeper, unknown ones, are the main formers of this agenda.

This inner system controls our lives more than we realise. It makes the ultimate decisions based on its own way of seeing and seriously hampers our ability to free our lives or to make clear, simple and wise decisions.

Identifying the voices of this hidden side of ourselves will go a long way towards clearing the way and opening our experience.

If our lifestyle allows us little time to reflect, we will find that the message of the inner agenda has firmly entrenched itself, and will always form the basis of our choice for any interaction. Mottos and sayings we or our parents live by will also be connected to this agenda. As long as this continues, we will not be able to be free of our old way of seeing and doing, however much we want to.

At times we become tired with the ineffectual lump that our lives have become. We try to change our routine or break out of our mould. We do a new course or get some other strong input and so may get a 'breath of fresh air'. When this happens, our inner agenda will submerge and 'go into hiding'. But the effect wears off in due course. As time passes, so the old voices return, ingrained habits and attitudes rear their heads again and we continue where we left off. (This is like the hardness of heart of which Jesus spoke, which will not let truth in. We are all hardened in places.)



Reflect on your life:

What truths or mottos do you live by?

What are the voices of your inner life saying?

- 'One must work to earn a living.'
- 'Never put off for tomorrow what can be done today.'
- 'I need to look good to be acceptable.'
- 'I haven't lived unless I've done all the things that are going.'
- 'If I don't pray, go to church ... God will punish me.'

What do these voices reveal about your inner agenda? Journal and share as you feel may be appropriate.

At home

Dwell on the following:

Luke 9:57–62

Romans 12:1–2.

Whose will do I really do?



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