

ANITA BENISŁAWSKA**TRAITS OF SAINTS' PERSONALITIES**

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The problem of existence is indissolubly linked with the question of human development. It is connected with discovering one's hierarchy of values and a newly arising need for God. Our interest in the problems of life and death, the beginning and the end, development and change creates favourable conditions for this need.

Kazimierz Dąbrowski, a Polish psychiatrist, points out that people with a fervent need for God tend to idealize his image which is often out of keeping with the surrounding reality. The author writes: "The injustice, death, suffering, and failures of those who represent the highest idealization do not authenticate the traits of the ultimate God" (Dąbrowski, 1989, p. 186).

A totally different approach is characteristic of personalities who played an important role in the history of mankind and to whom K. Dąbrowski names "the leaders of mankind" (Dąbrowski, 1989, p. 186), such as Buddha, Socrates, Ramakrishna or Jesus Christ. Through his mission, Christ created the highest hierarchy of values, transcending human nature towards God. The leaders' of mankind approach to God of is realistic and rests on specific experiences of individuals rather than on their fantasies about God. At the same time, their attitude is accompanied by a high level of the person's development.

According to Dąbrowski's theory, the ability to develop and create, as well as the mystical experience connected with the cognition of God, are conditions of one's mental health. That is when our spiritual life begins. That is a dimension of our existence with the unknown, incomprehensible, but true presence of God made felt.

I. SAINTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE THEORY OF POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION

Professor K. Dąbrowski diagnosed some of the Roman-Catholic saints as having psychoneurotic personality disorders. He enumerated the names of St. Teresa of Jesus, St. Francis of Assisi (cf. Dąbrowski 1989, p. 101), St. Jerome, St. Paul, St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Augustine, St. Anthony the Anchorite, St. Mary Magdalene, St. Afra, St. Margarete of Cordova, St. Paschal Baylon (cf. Dąbrowski 1934, p. 43). As Dąbrowski wrote, „on the one hand (...) they combine certain psychoneurotic traits such as increased psychic excitability, reduced or even eliminated basic drives, extreme idealism, inhibitions, depressions, anxiety states; on the other hand, they have aspirations and need for development, especially faster development towards the so-called Excellence" (Św. Franciszek Salezy 1985, p. 100).

This is, however, not to say that all the saints have reached the same level of development. On the contrary, apart from "(...) saints who realize the high ideals of comprehensive development and self-perfection, there are others, who realize this ideal one-sidedly and

superficially" (Dąbrowski 1989, p. 100).

The different directions of saints' development shall be juxtaposed below, where the types of development have been determined in accordance with Dąbrowski's theory in relation to the following problems: the meaning of development, the existence of God, the meaning of death, and the symbol of the cross. This approach takes what the individuals achieved in their development into account. Moreover, attention will be paid to structures of the saints' personalities in the context of the meaning of the terms "person" and "spirituality", the breakdowns suffered by them, regression, infantilism, and attitude to power and the body.

II. PROFILES OF SAINTS' PERSONALITIES

INSPIRATIONS OF SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

He did not practice self-mortification and wrote: "Conquering the tongue is better than fasting on bread and water" (Św. Jan od Krzyża 1986, p. 103) [1]. Nor did he display features of positive infantilism and a tendency to regression. Man is, according to Saint John of the Cross, just one link in the great chain of beings created by God. Discussing the conception of the personal God, he writes: "The essence of God is the place where the Son of God is hidden, it is the bosom of the Father (...)" (Św. Jan od Krzyża 1986, p. 533). The spirituality of man, in his view, is a state in which "the true spirit seeks in God what brings suffering rather than pleasures" (Św. Jan od Krzyża 1986, p. 192), and that "(...) the life of the spirit is true liberty and wealth, bringing with it inestimable blessings" (Św. Jan od Krzyża 1986, p. 486). He was a reformer of the Carmelite Order. Father Otto Filek states that St. John of the Cross put the realization of monk's ideals on everyday basis first, and "administering [his] spiritual and religious congregation" (Św. Jan od Krzyża 1986, p. 17) – second. He prized it over teaching others and guiding their spiritual development.

INSPIRATIONS OF SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

Saint Francis de Sales founded the mystical-ascetic movement in religiosity in France. He was strongly inclined to practice self-mortification, which at one point even put his life at risk. He wrote: "(...) we must patiently accept, not sickness only, but such sickness as God chooses to send, in the place, among the people, and subject to the circumstances which He ordains" (Św. Franciszek Salezy 1956, s. 215) [2]. He didn't display features of positive infantilism.

He presented the person in the context of relationships between people: "Love and fidelity joined together always produce familiarity and mutual trust (...)" (Św. Franciszek Salezy 1956, p. 317). God is the Triune God: "The Son proceeds from the Father as his knowledge expressed, and the Holy Ghost as love breathed forth and produced from the Father and the Son, both the Persona being distinct from one another and from the Father, and yet inseparable and united, or rather one same, sole, simple, and entirely one indivisible divinity" (Św. Franciszek Salezy 1956, p. 100).

Saint Francis de Sales's biggest life crisis was connected with the "predestination problem", bothering him for a long time and finally leading to his physical exhaustion. He was keen on mental teamwork and rivalry. He put a lot of effort into implementing the decrees of the Council of Trent in his diocese and into visiting parishes subordinate to him.

INSPIRATIONS OF SAINT TERESA OF JESUS

With her profound knowledge of internal life, having it systematized to a great extent, St. Teresa of Jesus was poorly adjusted to the lower levels of life, as typical of people with psychostenic disorders. In the early stages of her life she was interested in affairs, which together with her sincerity and passion for everything taking place around her is, according to K. Dąbrowski's theory, a symptom of positive infantilism. She had strong tendencies towards

self-mortification: "Ah, I desire to be martyr over everything else. Martyrdom is the dream of my youth and this dream has grown with me within my Carmel's cloisters. But here again, I feel that my dream is a folly, for I cannot confine myself to desiring one kind of martyrdom. To satisfy me I would need them all" (Dąbrowski 1934, p. 44).

For Saint Teresa spirituality means "[becoming] the slaves of God and [being] branded with His sign, which is the sign of the Cross, in token that [you] have given Him [your] freedom. Then He can sell [you] as a slave to the whole world, as He Himself was sold (...)" (Renault 1983, p. 131). Her life was full of suffering and sacrifice, and eagerness to conform to God's will dominated it.

The saint was very kind to people and had a lot of empathy for them, displaying "a gentle interest in others" (Renault 1983, p. 22), as Emmanuel Renault named it. She writes of God: "Since I had the chance to see the indescribable beauty of my Lord, no person and no thing have been good and noble enough to occupy my heart and my mind" (Renault 1983, p. 124). A personal approach both to God and to man is noticeable in her writings.

She suffered several serious breakdowns. The first one, connected with the choice of her monastic path, was accompanied by serious health problems, having to do with anorexia. The other breakdowns were caused by dilemmas related to her need for new forms of piety. It kept her paralysed for three years. Moreover, she was in doubt whether her adopted form of piety was the right one, which tormented her even more after a new release of "The List of Prohibited Books" condemning many works that she had been using hitherto.

She looked after many of the religious congregations she founded. She did not intend, however, to manage the people under her care but mainly to help them develop.

INSPIRATIONS OF SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

According to Father M. Bednarz, St. Ignatius of Loyola considered personality to be "imparted by love" (Św. Ignacy Loyola, Kraków 1968a, p. 177) [3]. It is born in God, and man's spirituality is his vocation to "resemble Jesus Christ, who shall manifest Himself in each of men" (Św. Ignacy Loyola, Kraków 1968b, p. 382). Apart from that, spirituality is "a need for free, unrestricted willingness to serve in the spirit of universality, collectiveness, and to renounce oneself in a complete and faithful obedience" (Św. Ignacy Loyola, Kraków 1968b, p. 334). Ignatian spirituality imposes requirements difficult for anyone to meet, and leaves little space for one's own initiative. The personal God is the source and the aim of life, which St. Ignatius of Loyola expresses in his analysis of the doctrine of the Trinity.

The founder of the Society of Jesus had strong inclinations to self-mortification, masochism and sadism. His requirements were difficult for his fellow monks to meet, and he would not allow them to choose their individual ways of development. He displayed traits of positive infantilism, which manifested itself in his interest in knight's tales and romances.

His illness played a very important role in his life, and it was it that caused the need for spiritual development to arise in him. It was the reason for his mental breakdown and not a result of it. He suffered another breakdown after a general confession in Montserrat, when he was tormented by the obsessive fear that he had not confessed all of his sins. It induced him to fast, which was why he went down with the illness. Also, Saint Ignatius of Loyola showed strong suicidal tendencies accompanying his ascetic practices, which Father M. Bendarz gives accounts of. As for the origins of authority, the saint wrote: "When the principles and the origins of power, which God is, are removed, one can only conclude that there is no such human authority that cannot be undermined" (Św. Ignacy Loyola, Kraków 1968b, p. 255). He paid special attention to

discipline within spiritual development. As Father Bednarz argues, he had a unique ability to recognize his fellow brothers' talents and affections and assigned them duties in accordance with them. He was a spiritual superior in the Society of Jesus that he founded, which was based on his far-reaching interventions in his fellow brothers' spiritual development. He adamantly opposed tendencies towards solitude and separation in some of them.

III. TYPES OF MYSTICAL EXPERIENCES

THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

The human soul gains an understanding of God through contemplation, as St. John of the Cross argues. Contemplation is "an inflowing of God into the soul, which purges it from its unconsciousness and habitual, natural, and spiritual imperfections" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 451). He describes it as "infused contemplation" or "mystical theology" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 451). He distinguishes ten stages of mystical experiences which he refers to as "ten steps of the mystic ladder of Divine love" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 499). On the first one, which "causes the soul to languish, and this to its advantage" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 499), the soul is powerless at the beginning of its road to God. The second step "causes the soul to seek God without ceasing" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 500). On the third step, the soul is "[made] to work and [given] fervor so that it fails not" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 501), and on the fourth "an habitual suffering is caused in the soul because of the Beloved, yet without weariness". The fifth step makes the soul "desire and long for God impatiently" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 502). On the sixth step "the soul runs swiftly to God and touches Him again and again (...) without fainting by reason of its hope" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 503) to "become vehement in its boldness" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 504) on the seventh step. Here, with God's grace, the soul starts to be guided by the mind. Then, on the eighth step, the soul "seizes Him and holds Him fast without letting Him go" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 504), in other words, the soul is united with God. On the ninth step, where the presence of the Holy Spirit is evident, the soul is made "to burn with sweetness" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 504). Finally, on the tenth step the soul "[becomes] wholly assimilated to God" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 505) which means that it comes from Him. That is the moment when the soul transcends the body. According to St. John, the soul "will be called, and will be, God by participation" (Św. Jan od Krzyża, 1986, p. 505).

THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE ACCORDING TO ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

Piety is the love of God, the grace that makes one loved by God himself. Mystical experience is not, as was the case for St. John, man's spiritual achievement, but a knowledge gained by him anew all over again, a partial experience of God's truth. It proceeds from meditations provoked by one's imagination. Spiritual experience is to create a physical and spiritual image of oneself, i.e. "adopt a particular posture" (Św. Franciszek Salezy 1985, p. 82).

THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE ACCORDING TO ST. TERESA OF JESUS

Mystical experience is the devout state of entering into contact with God. Then the soul calms down, feeling nothing but a will to be with God and experience His presence. That is when the supernatural truths are revealed to it. The soul receives a new image of the world, a new and totally different view, a type of journey, during which the soul can hear just an internal voice leading it towards God. At the same time, it loses consciousness of the dimension of reality given to it through its perceptual, present-day sensations. Saint Teresa's will to experience sensations of the higher, supernatural level manifested itself in her vision, in which Jesus hugs her to His breast and feeds her with milk – type of supernatural food. One of her maxims, "Your breasts are better than wine" (Św. Teresa od Jezusa 1944, p. 103), was formed at that time.

The Holy Spirit is an intermediary between the soul and the body. It is to inspire the love towards God in the soul and "bring the fire close enough for the soul to burst into flame" (Św.

Teresa od Jezusa 1944, p. 112). Love is an arrow shot by the will, and the will of all the worldly things plunges right into the "heart of God" (Św. Teresa od Jezusa 1944, p. 117) who returns the love to man whose will has sent it.

The body and soul, between which the Holy Spirit mediates, symbolize the two worlds – that of God and that of man. The sensations experienced by the person discovering the supernatural truths are of such special nature, that man is not capable of expressing their nature in words. It is a completely new quality, and a suitable language to describe it, is yet to be found. In terms of Plato's doctrine of ideas, it can be understood merely by intuition, i.e. a type of intellectual perception, in which feeling plays a managing and hierarchizing role.

THE MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE ACCORDING ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

As Father Bednarz writes of St. Ignatius's of Loyola mysticism, "the authentic features of mystical experience, in the most general terms, is the immediate consciousness of the supernatural reality, i.e. the discovery of God in love, which is usually vague and ambiguous (...). It is not a consequence of your own initiative, nor a fruit of your efforts, but it is infused into the soul by God either for a moment or for good" (Św. Ignacy Loyola 1968a, p. 281). Mystical experience is closely related to the need of contemplation, of which there are three stages in the Ignatian view. In the first one, man's will alone is involved, while his mind and imagination is disengaged. In the second stage, all the powers of the soul contribute to the soul's union with God, which is, however, only a transitional and short-lived state. It is not until the last stage is reached that a permanent union of the soul and God is formed. His mystical experiences were accompanied by imaginary visions: "After the meal, especially after I passed through the door of the vicar, in the house of Trana, while perceiving or seeing Jesus, I experienced many interior motions amid many tears" (Św. Ignacy Loyola 1968a, p. 335), or "Outside the house, in the church before Mass, I had a vision of the heavenly fatherland or of its Lord, in the form of an insight into the Three Persons, and into the Second and Third Persons as being in the Father" (Św. Ignacy Loyola 1968a, p. 338). One's conscious emotions, sorrow being the one most frequently felt, are the source of mystical experience. Saint Ignatius of Loyola discusses that extensively in his "Spiritual Diary".

IV. ORIGINS AND DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRAYER PRAYER ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

Prayer is connected with the scheme of "Mount Carmel" (Św. Jan od Krzyża 1986, p. 119) worked out by St. John of the Cross, which is also referred to as "the mountain of excellence" (Św. Jan od Krzyża 1986, p. 119). It consists of six stages, and at the top of it there is God. In order to get there, man has to be prepared to start a journey into the unknown. The journey is accompanied by a fear resulting from the need to give up everything, including renouncing oneself. Throughout the different stages of spiritual development, man receives various blessings.

At first, prayer relies on the ideas of the praying person. It is just a transitional phase, though, and is later replaced with contemplation. The moment of transition to contemplation is dictated by one's feelings. The need for contemplation is to arise in the soul.

Since a clear conscience opens the soul to God's grace, it is a necessary prerequisite for good prayer. Such prayer causes suffering but leads to getting to know God's truths. According to St. John of the Cross, solitude creates favorable conditions for prayer. As he writes: "Prayer together with clear and light understanding in God may be short, but it extends over a longer period of time" (Św. Jan od Krzyża 1986, p. 141).

In his "Dzieła zebrane św. Jana od Krzyża", Karol Wojtyła remarked on two different types of

union between man and God – natural and supernatural. The natural kind of union is intrinsic to every man, while the supernatural one, accomplished due to God's grace and love – just to a few.

PRAYER ACCORDING TO ST. FRANCIS DE SALES

While praying, man should rely on the heart, not the mind. A combination of mental powers and feeling, which provokes a thought, is required here. Mental exercise should rest on meditation linked with images set in an appropriate schedule. The images are to help man contact God and are a type of a "sermon of images", made in solitude, meant to encourage man's change, e.g. "God looks down upon you in his loving-kindness and invites you sweetly: Come, O my dear soul" (Św. Franciszek Salezy 1985, p. 57).

Prayer revives human soul. It starts from establishing spiritual contact with God. St. Francis de Sales refers to this as "placing yourself in the presence of God" (Św. Franciszek Salezy 1985, p. 77). Inspiration is what in his view plays an important role in prayer. It is about experiencing affections arising during the prayer so that they help you recognize the truths of God. Prayer ends in thanksgiving, offering oneself to God, asking for His grace and blessing for one's affections and resolutions. Preserving a clean soul through frequent confessions makes prayer more effective.

PRAYER ACCORDING ST. TERESA OF ÁVILA

Prayer is one's eagerness to be in the company of God. Contact with God brings relief. It is then that he starts to comprehend the supernatural truths that gives him a new image of the world – the higher reality. A vision of Jesus hugging her to His chest accompanied her personal prayers. The Holy Spirit mediates in man's conversations with God.

Prayer is closely connected with suffering. Her most famous maxim was "Either suffer or die" (Św. Teresa od Jezusa 1944, p. 323). "The Way of Perfection" was fully dedicated to the question of prayer. She states in it that prayer causes growth in one's independence and self-discovery. She also discerns the difference between contemplation and meditation, the former being a capacity for inner prayer, and the latter – a higher level of prayer, i.e. union of man and God.

Contemplation requires clean conscience and the grace of God. Prayer brings such suffering to man that he can only bear it when strengthened by 'sustenance of inner delight' (Św. Teresa od Jezusa 1924, p. 100), i.e. mystical experience increasing his strength. Inner prayer is superior to the spoken one, though the latter can often lead him into it and help him contact God.

In a letter to Father Gracian of 1576, she wrote: „I could not agree that he who is suffering is not praying, for when he offers his suffering to God, he may be praying far better than does the one who goes apart, smashes his head over it, and thinks he is praying if he manages to squeeze out a few tears" (F. Renault 1983, p. 134).

PRAYER ACCORDING TO ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

Saint Ignatius of Loyola worked out a special cycle of exercises for people who the doctrine of the Church regarded as irredeemable sinners. He believed that everyone should have their exercise designed specially for them. During the first week, the person should conquer their emotions to learn to experience them and transform them into affection. At that time, the praying person makes a general confession and receives Communion. In the second week he learns to distinguish between good and evil spirits, i.e. bringing him closer to God or moving away from Him.

The next stage of prayer is contemplation, consisting of the allegorical and the main parts. The allegorical part is a form of explaining the truths of faith to the praying person by referring them to the reality he lives in. It introduces the person to the main part.

We may distinguish between contemplations that 'apply the senses' (Św. Ignacy Loyola 1968b, p. 35), i.e. are meant to introduce the person to the truths contemplated, especially the ones of Birth and of Incarnation, and those that 'do not apply senses' and constitute a higher level of contemplation. There are three types of prayer: examination of conscience, spoken prayer and contemplation. Zeal, the rhythm of prayer, independence, maximalism, and desire for self-improvement are all important in prayer.

"'Spiritual Exercises' were named the school of praying (L. Peeters), but it would be equally right to call them the school of feeling", (Św. Ignacy Loyola 1968b, p. 35) as Father Bednarz writes.

CONCLUSIONS

St. John of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales, St. Teresa of Jesus and St. Ignatius of Loyola all to a lesser or higher degree meet the conditions of mental health described by K. Dąbrowski. As he states, "(...) mental health is one's ability to continue to develop one's cognition, discovery and realization at higher levels of reality and hierarchy of values (aesthetic, moral and religious) according to a particular personality ideal" (Kobierzycki, 1994, p. 5).

According to the Rev. Franciszek Leśniak, Ph.D., people at the higher levels of personality development are overcome with a creative dynamism which then turns into a dynamism of the altered inner psychic milieu, as well as syntony and identification with others. It is linked with the activation of some of the person's overexcitabilities. When the creative dynamism is enhanced, imaginal overexcitability plays an important role. Later on, emotional and intellectual overexcitabilities accompanying it take its place. People at this stage of development choose their goals and define the meaning of life for themselves in accordance with a particular personality ideal. For the saints, it is the person of God, in Christianity – Jesus Christ.

The aptness of Dąbrowski's theory can be confirmed by biographies of the two healthiest personalities in the history of mankind, who remained paragons of spirituality for posterity – Jesus Christ and Socrates.

SHORT BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SAINTS

SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS

His name was Juan de Yepes Alvarez. He lived from 1542 to 1591. Apart from working at hospitals and poorhouses, he worked as a weaver, tailor, woodcarver and painter. At the age of 21 he entered the Carmelite order and was ordained a priest at the age of 25. He knew St. Teresa of Jesus in person. The most significant works of his were "Ascent of Mount Carmel" and "Dark Night of the Soul". He wrote many poems and kept abundant correspondence. John of the Cross was beatified on 25 January 1675 by Pope Clement X, canonized on 27 December 1726 by Pope Benedict XIII and declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XI on 24 September 1926.

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

He was born in 1567 in Savoy. He was deeply bothered by the problem of predestination reflected in the dispute between St. Thomas Aquinas and Molina. The former believed that some souls are saved as evidence of the grace of God and others are condemned as evidence of the justice of God, whereas the latter claimed that the predestination of souls depends on their merits. Even though he regarded St. Thomas as "the prince of Christian philosophers" (Św.

Franciszek Salezy 1956, p 23), St. Francis the Sales was in this case in favor of Molina. He was an outstanding preacher who held talks with Protestants in Geneva. He founded the contemplative Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary in 1609. He wrote "The Treatise on the Love of God" and the "Introduction to the Devout Life". He died in 1622. He was the founder of the French ascetic-mystical movement. Pope Alexander VII beatified him on 8 December 1662, and canonized him four years later, on 8 April. Francis de Sales was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1877 by Pope Pius IX.

SAINT TERESA OF JESUS

She was born in 1515 in Ávila, baptized as Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y Ahumada, also called St. Teresa of Spain or Teresa the Great. She was a beautiful woman and a favorite in her family. She lived in a city of dreams built upon romance novels. At the age of 21 she entered the Carmelite order. She dithered a long time before finally deciding on it. Her life was marked by many severe illnesses. In 1539 she fell into a coma, but her father would not allow her burial. She regained consciousness after four days but remained paralysed for three consecutive years. It was then that she understood that "there is no such state that man can find himself in, which could be a real obstacle in his seeking of God, for the heart of all matter is to fulfil His will" (Renault 1983, p. 20). She found it very difficult to get over the death of her father. She was overcome by a feeling of hopelessness, which caused the need for spiritual life to grow even greater in her. She was very well-read and in reading she looked for guides that would allow her personal development. In 1562 she established a male monastery, which she called St. Joseph's and which for some time was excommunicated for some of its reforms. Another turning point of her life was in 1572 when she had an imaginary vision in which Jesus pledged that she would be His bride. St. Teresa called it a "spiritual marriage". As time went by, the conflicts in her order and at St. Joseph's started to escalate. She died in 1582. Among her works are "History of the Soul" and "The Interior Castle". She was beatified in 1614 by Pope Paul V and canonized in 1622 by Pope Gregory XV. Pope Paul VI bestowed the honor of Doctor of the Church upon her on September 27, 1970.

SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

He was born in 1491 to one of the most illustrious Basque families and was baptized Inigo Lopez de Loyola. He changed his name after choosing the path of pilgrimage. As a young courtier he was a voracious reader of romance novels. He led an unruly life He went on military expeditions, including the rebellion against the Habsburg rule and the defense of Pamplona in 1520. On 19 May, the day of Pentecost, Inigo wanted to get his life in order, but since there was no priest in the chapel, he confessed his sins – as it was a custom in medieval tradition – to one of his comrades in arms. The next day his legs got seriously wounded, which caused his lifelong disability and need of painful convalescence. During his illness, he read "The Life of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" and "The Golden Legend", a collection of hagiographies. Influenced by it, he changed his attitude towards the world. After recovering, he went on a pilgrimage to the places of worship dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In a small town Igunlda, he wrangled with a Moor over the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, and in consequence decided to take off his armor and wear plain clothing of a humble pilgrim instead. It was then that he understood that spreading the faith by the sword was not the most appropriate form of piety. During his long sojourn in Manresa he assisted patients in a hospital. Helping others, both physically and spiritually, was one of the most significant elements of his life. He was the founder of the Society of Jesus, traditionally referred to as the Jesuits and in 1551 wrote the Jesuit Constitutions. He also founded missions in India, China, Ethiopia, and Jerusalem. He invented spiritual exercises. His writings include "The Spiritual Diary", "A Pilgrim Story" and abundant correspondence. He died in 1564. He was beatified on July 27, 1609 by Pope Paul V and canonized on March 12, 1622 (together with Saint Francis Xavier) by Pope Gregory XV. On July 7, 1922 Pope Pius XI declared him the patron saint of all spiritual exercises and retreats.

Saint	Meaning of Life	Meaning of Death	Existence of God	Symbol of the Cross
St. John of the Cross	God – happiness as being in the company of God; "I" – sense of security; "you" – calming the fear, providing help	desiring death as relief from suffering brought forth by the cognition of God	immanent, pantheistic; wishful attitude to God	symbol of enduring suffering and pain in the name of God
St. Francis de Sales	God – contact with Him is a matter of will; "I" – virtue of humility; "you" – love of the neighbour	death is an examination of man's fulfillment of God's will throughout his life	pantheistic at the first stage of development, personal at the second stage; comes out in the interpretation of the mystery of the Trinity	Symbolizes denying one's predestined fate
St. Teresa of Jesus	God – fulfilling God's will; "I" – contemplating the path of self-perfection; "you" – helping others develop	death as a liberation from the physical reality and a facilitation in contacting God	personal approach; man strives to be in contact with God, though he cannot love Him as much as He deserves it; there is a distinct boundary between the world of God and man	symbolizes suffering in the name of God, the painful path to God
St. Ignatius of Loyola	God – fulfilling God's will; "I" – discipline as a virtue that aids it; "you" – help in development, care	being the end of the work for God, it is an unwelcome necessity	personal conception of God; antinomy of obedience to God's will and need of one's initiative – hence the wishful attitude to God; no disparity between the world of God and man	mystical view of the mystery of the Trinity and the unity of God

NOTES

[1] [tr.] This translation draws on Works by John of the Cross On Line, available at <http://www.geocities.com/baltimorecarmel/johncross/index.html> [access March 17, 2009].

[2] [tr.] This translation draws on: Francis de Sales, St. Treatise on the Love of God and Introduction to the Devout Life. "Benziger Brothers", New York 1884, available online: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/desales/?show=worksBy>, [access March 17, 2009].

[3] [tr.] This translation draws on: George E. Ganss (ed.), Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works. "Paulist Press", New York 1991.

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