

Loco por Cristo *en Tres Maneras de Humildad* (Fool for Christ in Three Kinds of Humility) – An Exegetical Reading

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Introduction

The classical translation for “*Tres Maneras de Humildad*” is “Three Degrees of Humility”. From the point of view of ‘degrees’, one understands that the second is a more perfect disposition than the first, and the third than the second. But the first two are so different in character, and proceed from such different motives, that it is better to keep to the word used by Ignatius and speak of them as ‘modes’ or ‘kinds’, rather than as ‘degrees’¹. Rickaby translated it as “Three Modes of Humility” while L. J. Puhl preferred “Three Kinds of Humility”². In the Autograph, Ignatius uses “*Tres Maneras de Humildad*” which can be translated accurately as “Three Kinds of Humility” or “Three Manners of Humility” or “Three Ways of Being Humble”. The Latin version used in Paris in 1534 calls them “*Tres Species Humilitatis*” which can be translated accurately as

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¹ Cfr. W.H. LONGRIDGE, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola – Translated from the Spanish with a Commentary*, A.R. Moubray & Co. Limited, Oxford, 1955, p. 119.

² The term Kinds of Humility has been used because it fits well the meaning and corresponds to the Spanish word “*maneras*”. The word degree so often used is not accurate, since the Three Kinds actually involve five degrees, as has been well pointed out by Nonell. Roothaan and the Vulgate use “*modi*” and many translators use Mode. See L.J. PUHL, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius – Based on Studies in the Language of the Autograph*, Loyola University Press, Chicago, 1951, p. 182. Although the original texts of the Spiritual Exercises always speak of three “Kinds” (in Spanish, *maneras*; in Latin, *species* and *modos*) rather than “Degrees” or “Grades” of humility, the early directories and even Ignatius’ own dictated notes often use the more evaluative language of “Degrees”; this is implied, too, in the insistence of the exercise that the second Kind is “more perfect” than the first and the third “more perfect” than the second. Clearly the whole movement of the consideration is to lead the exercitant towards actually wanting the third Kind of Humility for himself. For further studies, see B.E. DALEY, “To Be More Like Christ – The Background and Implications of Three Kinds of Humility” in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1995, p. 31.

“Three Species of Humility”. The Vulgate of 1548 uses “*Tres Modos de Humildad*” which can be translated as “Three Modes of Humility” or “Three Kinds of Humility” or “Three Sorts of Humility”³. The first two Kinds of Humility are concerned with that which is obligation. These two Kinds are based upon motives which belong mainly to the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises; the third Kind of Humility springs from a will that is free and proceeds from motives of generous love and devotion which being especially to the Second and following Weeks. In other words, the first two Kinds are in the order of obedience; the third is the perfection of love and of devotion to search for, to find and to fulfil the will of God. In the notes of Dr. Pedro Ortiz, exercitant of Ignatius at Monte Cassino, in place of Kind of Humility one reads “Kind and Degree of Love of God”⁴. It is suggested in the Autograph Directory of Ignatius that Three Kinds of Humility should not be assigned to a fixed hour of meditation, but should be expounded simultaneously with the meditations of the Two Standards and the Three Types of Men⁵. Actually, Ignatius is concerned here with the three Kinds of the love of God, but he uses the word “love” (*amor*) only sparingly and generally speaks of “humility” (*humildad*) – the generous service of God. He feels that the essence of love does not consist of words, but of service and deeds⁶. Ignatius’s concept of Three Kinds of Humility is an important characteristic of his spirituality and, in and through this exercise, the exercitant is introduced into some of the basic dynamics of Ignatian Spirituality.

³ I. IPARRAGUIRRE - C. DALMASES (ed), *Obras completas de San Ignacio de Loyola*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid, 1997, p. 259. Translation my own.

⁴ Pedro Ortiz, the doctor of Scripture and ambassador to the papal court, made the *Spiritual Exercises* for forty days under Ignatius’s personal direction at Monte Cassino in 1538. In his notes, which no doubt reflect his conversations with Ignatius about the topic, he terms them degrees of love: “Three Kinds and Degrees of love of God and desire to obey and imitate and serve His Divine Majesty” (*tres maneras y grados de amor de Dios y deseos de obedecer y imitar y servir a su Divina Majestad*). See G.E. GANSS, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius – A Translation and Commentary*, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, 1995, pp. 174-175. For detailed study see SpExMHSJ, *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, Monumenta Ignatiana, Series Secunda, Exercitia Spiritualia, S. Ignatii de Loyola et Eorum Directoria*, Nova Editio, Vol. 100, Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, Romae, 1969, p. 635; G. CUSSON, *Biblical Theology and the Spiritual Exercises*, Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1988, pp. 264-265.

⁵ The reason given is that the consideration of the third Kind is to be continued throughout the entire day, even though the exercitant continues the series of meditations. Consequently the almost casual manner in which Ignatius proposes this consideration should not mislead one in estimating its significance. See *Directory of the Spiritual Exercises of Our Holy Father Ignatius: Authorized Translation XXIX*, Manresa Press, London, 1925, p. 8; M.E. PALMER, *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1996, p. 9.

⁶ Cfr. K. RAHNER, *Spiritual Exercises*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1965, p. 196.

Understanding of Humility Before Ignatius

By the eve of the Reformation and at the beginning of the life of Ignatius, humility had acquired a profile of its own, as one of the distinctive characteristics of the Christian disciple's mind and heart. Looking back over the development, its main features may be summed up in a few broad strokes:

1. Christian thinkers were aware, in varying degrees, of the tension that existed between the Greco-Roman ideal of human autonomy, with its esteem for a noble awareness of one's own greatness, and the Gospel's invitation to join Jesus in "taking the form of a servant"; some, such as Origen and Thomas Aquinas, sought to find continuities and resonances between the two, while others, such as Augustine and Bonaventure, emphasized the newness of the Christian way.
2. As various forms of religious life were developed to provide scope for an ever deeper commitment to discipleship by those who felt themselves called beyond "ordinary" Christian observance, Christ-like humility came to be seen as one of the central values and principal fruits (Cassian, Benedict, Francis). The monastic community existed, in the eyes of many, as a school of humility.
3. For Christian writers as for the ancient Greeks, the core of humility was seen to be self-knowledge: for Christians, humility is the recognition of our status as unfaithful creatures before a loving and just God and the acceptance of grace in its utter gratuity (Augustine, Bernard, Aquinas, Thomas a Kempis, Savonarola).
4. Humility before God is a relational virtue. It begins in accepting the obligations of creaturehood – in simply keeping God's commandments because he is recognised as God; but, if allowed to grow, humility moves beyond observing the commandments to a deeper commitment and a more earnest quest for God, beyond creaturely obligation to the freedom of self-consuming love (Bernard, Savonarola).
5. Humility is also seen in the ascetical tradition to have direct implications for our relations with our neighbours; it leads to compassion, charity, and the works of mercy – to ministerial engagement (Bernard, Savonarola).
6. Humility is essentially discipleship, following and participating in the "way" of Jesus (Chrysostom, Augustine, Thomas a Kempis, Savonarola). Its final justification as a religious virtue comes from the distinctive view of God's saving activity in the world that is revealed in the teaching, the style, and, ultimately, the death of Jesus. Apart from Jesus, humility remains as unintelligible for Christians as it was for the Greeks. Apart from humility and from the kind of love humility brings to expression, Jesus remains unintelligible, as well⁷.

⁷ Cfr. B.E. DALEY, "To Be More Like Christ – The Background and Implications of Three Kinds of Humility" in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1995, pp. 5-20.

This brief survey of the Christian understanding of humility as it grew in the centuries before Ignatius can provide at least a broad context in which to understand the place of humility in the *Spiritual Exercises* – particularly in the consideration on Three Kinds of Humility that Ignatius offers just before describing the process of election in the Second Week.

Origin of the Exercise

Three Kinds of Humility was probably elaborated and drafted by Ignatius in Paris between 1528 and 1535. The Latin used in the exercise is very defective. The original text of the exercise was in Spanish, and the translation was done by the author whose knowledge of Latin was minimal⁸.

In the text of John Helyar⁹, Three Kinds of Humility is present after the Three times or modes of Election. But in the other texts, the place of Three Kinds of Humility is before the Election (SE 164). This suggests that the exercise on Three Kinds of Humility already existed in Paris and that Ignatius might have completed this before his departure for Azpeitia in the early days of April 1535. It is probable that Ignatius reformulated the text with the addition of two points (SE 164 and 168), one for starting and the other for closing the exercise on Three Kinds of Humility.

It is at least possible that Ignatius came to know Savonarola's treatise on Humility during the formative period of the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, between the mid 1520s and the completion of the first Latin version in 1541. Some of the friar's works, in Spanish translation, seem to have been published as early as 1511 at the behest of Cardinal Cisneros and were dedicated to Doña Guiomar, duchess of Nájera, the wife of Ignatius's first patron. A Latin collection, including the tract on humility, was published in 1529 at Alcalá by another friend and patron of Ignatius, Miguel de Eguía, who had also published a Spanish translation of Erasmus's *Enchiridion* and of the *Imitation of Christ* in 1526. A Spanish translation of Savonarola's tract was certainly available before 1534. Like Erasmus, who influenced the Principle and Foundation of the *Spiritual Exercises*, Savonarola enjoyed a very positive reputation in Spain during the early decades of the sixteenth century, but he came to be considered dangerous by ecclesiastical authorities in 1530s because of his emphasis on internal sanctity and his critical, antipapal positions; his work were placed on the Spanish Index in 1559¹⁰. What we have said thus far

⁸ Cfr. J. CALVERAS, *Estudios sobre la redacción de los textos latinos de los Ejercicios anteriores a la Vulgata*, Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu 31, Roma, 1962, pp. 57-58 & 62-63.

⁹ John Helyar, an English priest, had a copy of the *Spiritual Exercises* and he did the *Spiritual Exercises* in 1535 under the direction of Ignatius or Peter Faber. See *SpExMHSJ*, Vol. 100, Roma, 1969, p. 427; I. IPARRAGUIRRE - C. DALMASES (ed), *Obras de San Ignacio de Loyola*, p. 203.

¹⁰ Cfr. M. BATAILLON, "Sur la diffusion des oeuvres de Savonarole en Espagne et en Portugal, 1500-1560", in *Mélanges de philologie, d'histoire et de littérature offerts à Joseph Vianney*, Les presses Franchises, 1934, pp. 94ff.

is not an attempt to identify any sources on which this text in the *Spiritual Exercises* may be based, although the parallelism in the thoughts between Ignatius's "Three Kinds" and the "Five Steps" of humility outlined by Savonarola is particularly striking.

Structure and Content

| SE | THEME | CONTENT |
|-----|-------------------------|---|
| 164 | NOTE | Profitable by considering and pondering Three Kinds of Humility ¹¹ . |
| 165 | FIRST KIND OF HUMILITY | Necessary for salvation. Humble myself to obey the law of God in all things. I would not consent to violate a commandment and thereby commit a mortal sin. |
| 166 | SECOND KIND OF HUMILITY | More perfect than the first. I neither desire nor incline to riches rather than poverty, honour than dishonour, long life than short life, provided only in either I promote the service of God and salvation of my soul. I would not consent to commit a venial sin. |
| 167 | THIRD KIND OF HUMILITY | Most perfect Kind. To imitate and be in reality more like Christ, I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor rather than riches; insults with Christ rather than honours; I desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ. |
| 168 | NOTE | Beg our Lord to deign to choose him for the third Kind of Humility. |

The two notes (SE 164 & 168) are the perfect inclusion of the "opening and closing" (*apertura y cierre*) of the exercise. The formal analysis on this exercise consists of three fundamental parts: a) The symmetrical textual block in the SE 164-168 refers one's submission to the will of God in grave and light matters; b) The "indifference" (*indiferencia*) in front of great binomials (riches-poverty, honour-dishonour, long life-short life) in which one rests the security; c) A radical and total submission to the Father, such as Christ chose, guided by interpersonal love. The "indifference" in this exercise is transformed into an affection for the person of Christ: "desire and choose" (*quiero y elijo más*) (SE 167,3)¹².

¹¹ Ignatius uses the word "Humility" (*humildad*) seven times in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the word occurs five times in the Three kinds of Humility: SE 146, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168 & 289. Cfr. S. A. Teinonen, *Concordancias de los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio de Loyola*, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, Helsinki, 1981, p. 161; If it be asked why St. Ignatius should have called these dispositions Kinds of Humility, the answer may be that humility is the foundation of all virtues, and if we want to rise to the heights of charity and devotion we must begin by laying the foundation securely. As St. Augustine says, "Thou wishest to be great, begin from the least. Thou art thinking to erect some fabric mighty in height, think first of the foundation of humility" (*Sermons*, lxix. 2). Another explanation may be derived from St. Thomas Aquinas who says, "*Humilitas praeipue videtur importare subjectionem hominis ad Deum*" (*Summa Theologica* II, 2); for this is the fundamental idea which underlies each of the three Kinds. They are the manifestations of increasing subjection to God in obedience and self-surrender. For a detailed study, see W. H. Longridge, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, pp. 119-120.

¹² Cfr. S. ARZUBIALDE, *Ejercicios Espirituales de S. Ignacio – Historia y Análisis*, Mensajero-Sal Terrae, Bilbao-Santander, 1991, p. 361. Translation my own.

The Purpose of the Exercise

Ignatius presents the purpose of the exercise on Three Kinds of Humility in the following way: “Before one enters on the elections, that he may be well affected¹³ toward the true teaching of Christ our Lord, it will be profitable to consider and notice the three following kinds of humility, considering them from time to time during the whole day” (*Antes de entrar en las elecciones, para hombre afectarse a la verdadera doctrina de Cristo nuestro Señor, aprovecha mucho considerar y advertir en las siguientes tres maneras de humildad, y en ellas considerando a ratos por todo el día*) (SE 164). A careful analysis of the purpose of the exercise shows that this exercise is not obligatory. The exercise is introduced by the term “*aprovecha*” (profitable) (SE 164,2), and Ignatius does not even use the term “*muy útil*” (very useful). The exercise is only a consideration (*considerar*) (SE 164,2) and the terms like “*contemplar*” (to contemplate), “*meditar*” (to meditate) and even “*mirar*” (to look) are avoided¹⁴. The overall role of this “consideration” is the following: “To prolong, as a kind of constant background, though related to the activity of discernment, a reflection which proposes, in another way, the same criteria for verification of the exercitant’s dispositions, and for opening these dispositions into a path which calls for ever more freedom and ever more availability for the following of Christ”¹⁵. Thus, not only does this additional verification, along with and by means of other forms of evaluation, make it possible to acquire a clearer understanding of the exercitant’s interior situation, but it also opens up ways for the evolution of the availability which draws one to become more and more conformed to Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Thus this verification is a taking hold of the past and the present of one’s own interior experience, and also an invitation and encouragement to a further generous advance, in any measure indicated by the Holy Spirit. However, the main purpose of the exercise is to help one

¹³ “*Afectar*” (affect) is also found in the sixteenth annotation (SE 16), the second addition of the Fourth Week (SE 229), in the exercise of the Kingdom of Christ (SE 97) and some other passages in the *Spiritual Exercises* (3; 50; 157; 166; 179; 234; 338; 342; 363). C. DALMASES, *Ejercicios Espirituales – Introducción, texto, notas y vocabulario*, Editorial Sal Terrae, Santander, 1987, p. 189.

¹⁴ Some of the early notes on how to give the Spiritual Exercises, by experienced Jesuits, clearly treat the text on Three Kinds of Humility as a formal meditation. Fr. Eduardo Pereyra, in his memorandum of 1562, seems to include it among the subjects for prayer in the fourth day of the Second Week, along with the contemplation of the coming of the magi. See I. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Directoria Exercitiorum Spiritualium*, 1540-1559, in *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, vol. 76, Rome, 1955, p. 159. Fr. Paul Hoffaeus, in his notes (1575-80) assigns it as the material for regular meditations on the day before the election is to be made, and Fr. Gil Gonzalez Davila, writing before 1591, seems to consider it as parallel to the meditations on the Two Standards and the Three Types of Men. *Ibid.*, pp. 239 & 524. Fr. Didaco Miro, however, who was commissioned by Fr. Mercurian to draw up an official Directory in 1582 and who was concerned to return to the authentic practice of Ignatius, insists that the text is not proposed as a substitute for any of the day’s contemplations of the mysteries of the life of Christ, but is simply to be kept in mind all day, even during meditations, but only at the appropriate moment, with the help of the triple colloquy taken from the Standards. *Ibid.*, pp. 397ff.

¹⁵ Cfr. G. CUSSON, *The Spiritual Exercises Made in Everyday Life – A Method and a Biblical Interpretation*, Gujarat Shitya Prakash, Anand, India, 1992, pp. 88-89.

(*hombre*) to be affected by the true teaching of Christ, before he enters on the Election (SE 164,1) where he truly searches for and finds the will of God. In this way, the *Spiritual Exercises* are a major step in the life-process of maturing in Christ; and this maturation consists in coming increasingly to experience life, and then habitually to respond to that experience on the basis of the paradoxical wisdom of the third Kind of Humility.

For some authors, Three Kinds of Humility has to be done on the Fourth Day of the Second Week with the other two meditations, Two Standards and Three Types of Men, while for others Three Kinds of Humility has to be done for a whole day of the Second Week (*cuarto día bis*), these quoting the intention of Ignatius: “consider from time to time throughout the whole day” (*considerando a ratos por todo el día*)¹⁶. The desire to be poor and to undergo insults and humiliations is only possible for those who have been affected by Christ poor and humble. This desire to be “like Jesus” (*como Jesús*) is a “demand” (*exigencia*) for a sound Election¹⁷. Thus this exercise is a kind of “backdrop” (*telón de fondo*)¹⁸ through which the exercitant is led to themes such as “indifference” (*indiferencia*) and “loving humility” (*humildad amorosa*), which are the fundamental virtues for searching for and finding the will of God.

Three Kinds of Humility¹⁹ – Virtue to Search and Find God’s Will

The First Kind of Humility

The first Kind of Humility describes a person who would do nothing to break the relationship and yet can act in ways that neither build the relationship nor strengthen it. This Kind of Humility is “obedience to God as the Lord and Master” (*obedecer a Dios nuestro Señor*) (SE 165). He will fulfil the will of God manifested in all the requirements and laws. This first Kind of Humility, to which the *Spiritual Exercises* of the First Week should bring the exercitant, is a habitual and serious purpose never to commit a mortal

¹⁶ C. DOMÍNGUEZ, “Las Tres maneras de humildad: una relectura desde la teología y el psicoanálisis” in *Manresa*, Centro Loyola, Madrid, 1996, pp. 288-289.

¹⁷ E. BASTOS (ed.), *Para hacer y dar hoy los Ejercicios – Profundización Teológica de las Meditaciones Ignacianas*, Centro de Proyección Cristiana, Lima, Peru, 1991, p. 101.

¹⁸ Cfr. A. RESTREPO, *Teoría y Praxis de los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio*, Tercero Probación Publicación, Buga, Columbia, 1981, p. 33.

¹⁹ Apart from this meditation Ignatius used Three Steps or Three Points (*tres puntos*) in the *Spiritual Exercises* as follows: the Three Points in the meditations and the contemplations (SE 50-52, 92-94, 95-97, 106-108, 114-116, 140-142, 144-146, 262-312, etc), the Colloquies (SE 63, 71, 147, 156, etc), the Preambles of the contemplations (SE 102-104, 137-139, 150-152, etc), the Three Types of Men (SE 153-155), the manner of penance (SE 83-85), the time for making a sound and good Election (SE 175-177), the Three Methods of Praying (SE 238-260), the three times of the particular examination of conscience (SE 24-26), the chapters of the general examination of conscience (SE 32-42), the General Confession (SE 44) and so on. See A. GUILLÉN, “Las cuarto semanas de los EE. en una sola contemplación” in *Manresa*, Centro Loyola, Madrid, 1996, pp. 5-17. Translation my own.

sin or even to deliberate about committing it, whatever may be the stress of temptation. Ignatius says that it “is necessary to eternal salvation” (*es necesaria para la salud eterna*), because it is precisely that disposition without which the exercitant cannot be validly absolved. It represents an intense realization of the value system of the First Week, an effective internalization of it and a level of ego-synthesis which makes this internalization an effectively functioning and organically integrated part of the ego’s own structure. Thus it is the humility of accepting fully the fact that the exercitant is a creature, although intelligent and free: the humility of realizing that he can never be the lord of all creation in any genuine sense and that he cannot ultimately save his life here on earth through his own power; the humility of accepting responsibility to a moral order not of his own making and not manipulable in his own interests; the humility that recognizes God alone as God and that is the only alternative to the pride at the heart of all real human sin²⁰. Without this Kind of Humility, the exercitant only destroys himself by living out a lie.

The Second Kind of Humility

The second Kind of Humility describes a person²¹ whose whole way of living is found in the relationship with Jesus and his life-orientation of searching, finding, and doing the will of the Father. This Kind of Humility eliminates the exercitant’s own wish and desire as decisive where a choice is to be made i.e., “neither desire nor incline” (*no quiero ni me afecto*) (SE 166). In this second Kind of Humility, submission to the will of God, desire for God’s service and glory, has become so centrally the focus of the human creature’s will that even minor inconsistencies in his choices – expressions of unbalanced desires for his own pleasure, security, or self-advancement – cease to operate²². In the humility of affirming God as first of all beings, in setting his own interests consistently below his love of God, the exercitant comes to the full realization of his identity and vocation. The person of the second Kind of Humility has been pictured in the “third example” (*tercer binario*) (SE 155) given in the exercise on the Three Types of Men. The second Kind of Humility, which is closely related to the Principle and Foundation, comprises two things: (1) indifference to creatures and (2) a habitual determination never to enter into deliberation about committing even a venial sin, however great may be the stress of temptation. But the two things are closely related to one another. For, when indifference to creatures is the habitual disposition of a soul, it is plain that it would be well-nigh impossible for such a soul to commit a deliberate venial sin or even to desire to do so; for it is always a lack of indifference, or, in other words, an inordinate affection for some creature, which

²⁰ Cfr. B.E. DALEY, “To Be More Like Christ – The Background and Implications of Three Kinds of Humility” in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1995, pp. 26-27.

²¹ A person whose attitude is that of the second way of being humble (1) has the indifference of the Foundation and (2) is speaking the language of right reasoning. See G.E. GANSS, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius – A Translation and Commentary*, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand, 1995, p. 175.

²² Cfr. F. PRAT, “Sur les trois degrés de l’humilité d’après saint Ignace”, in *Revue de l’ascèse et de la mystique* 2, Paris, 1921, p. 255.

is the cause of sin, whether mortal or venial. It might seem that the disposition here described reaches so high a perfection that there could be nothing beyond it. But in the third Kind of Humility, Ignatius carries the exercitant higher still.

The Third Kind of Humility

The third Kind of Humility describes a person²³ who desires so close an identity with Jesus that if the externals of his life, especially in terms of the poverty that Jesus experienced, the rejection he received and ultimately the crucifixion he embraced, were to be mirrored in the person's life, only delight and joy would be the result, i.e., "to imitate and be in reality more like Christ" (*imitar y parecer más actualmente a Cristo*) (SE 167). What Ignatius pictures in the third Kind of Humility is the madness of martyrs like St. Lawrence or St. Thomas More who truly delighted in a suffering and death that, because of their love, brought them into the closest of relationships with Christ²⁴. This is "loving humility" (*humildad amorosa*), and the person of this third Kind imitates Christ the poor and suffering with delight and joy. What is the most powerful, the highest motive for choosing the third Kind? Is the primary motive effectiveness (what contributes most to attain the end), or is it, rather, heroic effort for Christ? According to Feder and Raitz von Frenzt, "the equal glory of God is proposed; i.e., prescinding from imitation of Christ crucified. Suarez says, 'Since there is no virtue in choosing poverty for poverty's sake, since suffering is not an end in itself'. But it is known from the whole course of the *Spiritual Exercises* that the greater glory of the Father is promoted precisely by Christ poor and crucified. Thus for the choice of the third Kind of Humility, the motivation is *major gloria divina* based on the conviction that the best way to promote it is to attain the greatest possible resemblance to Christ crucified"²⁵. This choice of fulfilling the will of God puts the finishing touch on the work of the Election in the *Spiritual Exercises*. In the third Kind the exercitant advances not simply to a new phase, but enters a whole range of higher spiritual values which have no limit and in which the ego proceeds to higher and higher levels of realization and synthesis. The ego passes beyond indifference and control to a new level in which it is able to desire and choose poverty and contempt and all things opposed to the gratification of self in order the better to follow Christ our Lord and identify with him²⁶. It is in this third Kind of Humility that reverence and submission take a new and mysterious turn, leaving the realm of ethical

²³ A person whose attitude is that of the third way of being humble (1) has indifference and (2) is speaking the language of love. His or her attitude is, "I love Christ and want to be as like to him as possible, no matter what the cost". Please refer to G.E. GANSS, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, pp. 175-176.

²⁴ Cfr. D.L. FLEMING (ed.), *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, Review for Religious, St. Louis, 1989, p. 14.

²⁵ The opinions of Feder, Raitz von Frenzt and Suarez are taken from H. RAHNER, *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises*, Woodstock College Press, Jersey City, N.J., 1956, p. 327.

²⁶ For further studies on this point, see, W.W. MEISSNER, *Psychological Notes on the Spiritual Exercises*, Woodstock College Press, Jersey City, N.J., p. 39.

norms and creaturely self-understanding to enter with Jesus into the full unfolding of God's saving will in human history.

The first two Kinds of Humility are described only in terms of our relationship to God, as the creator of our being and as the one ultimately desirable goal of our searching, finding and choosing. In the third Kind of Humility, with the creaturely realism and that ordering of affective priorities presupposed, Christian humility deliberately strives to conform itself to "that mind which is in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5) by emptying itself in a way that reflects and realises the pattern by which Jesus revealed the self-emptying love of God²⁷. All the tendency of the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* to see humility as the central characteristic of the saving history of the Incarnation reaches here a kind of climax in the direct appeal to let a desire for this same humility – expressed, as always, primarily in terms of poverty and lack of honour or social status – be the guiding affective element in the exercitant's decision of searching for and finding the will of God with regard to how to shape his own saving history, how to realize his own incarnation as Jesus disciple and companion. M. Ivens expresses the third Kind of Humility in the following way:

- It is the attitude of a person deeply in love with Christ. Poverty, contempt, a reputation for foolishness are not preferred for themselves, or even as means of ascetical self-liberation, but as ways of following Christ and being like him. The third Kind of Humility is the love of Jesus, the wish to be identified with him, intensified to the point of folly.
- It includes everything that has already been specified in the preceding two kinds. It respects the law of God. It seeks the service of the Kingdom and one's own salvation.
- Its characteristic desires fall within the larger and absolutely fundamental desire that in all things God be praised and glorified²⁸.

Thus in the exercise on Three Kinds of Humility, there is a movement from "indifference" (*indiferencia*) to "love" (*amor*) and from "salvation of my soul" (*salud de mi ánima*) to "praise to the Divine Majesty" (*alabanza a la divina majestad*):

- If what one discerns is equally effective for the service of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul (*siendo igual servicio de Dios nuestro Señor y salud de mi ánima*) (SE 166,2)
- If what one discerns equally further the praise and glory of the Divine Majesty (*siendo igual alabanza y gloria de la divina majestad*) (SE 167,1)
- If the service and praise to the Divine Majesty would be equal or greater (*si igual o mayor servicio y alabanza fuere a la divina majestad*) (SE 168,2)
- To imitate and serve our Lord better (*Para más imitar y server nuestro Señor*) (SE 168,2)

²⁷ Cfr. B.E. DALEY, "To Be More Like Christ – The Background and Implications of Three Kinds of Humility", p. 28.

²⁸ M. IVENS, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises – Texts and Commentary*, Inigo Enterprises Links View, Surrey, 2008, p. 126.

Also, the social dimension of humility is suggested most clearly by the third, and best, Kind of Humility: to desire to be like Christ poor, despised and “foolish”²⁹. In other words, the third Kind of Humility presents the definitive criterion: the love of Christ poor who is to be found among the poor when the exercitant places himself with the poor. This Christ, the absolute, is mediated by the historical sacrament of the poor.

Three Kinds of Humility – A Step Forward to be a Fool for Christ Doing God’s Will

Most of the commentators on Ignatian Spirituality³⁰ think that the exercise on Three Kinds of Humility is a step forward in the process of searching for and finding the will of God and that it helps the exercitant to secure the right disposition before the Election.

Ignatius instructs the exercitant to enter the *Spiritual Exercises* with great spirit and generosity, offering his entire will and the disposition of his person (SE 5; 20). His progress consists in the depth of his “flight from self-love, self-will and self-interest” (*salire de su proprio amor, querer y interese*) (SE 189,10). This movement manifests itself christocentrically when the exercitant begs to be taken under Christ’s standard in its most intimate form (SE 98; 147; 156; 168), asks what he is going to do for Christ (SE 53), imitates Christ the poor and humble, and becomes a “fool for Christ” (*loco por Cristo*) (SE 167), and offers his total self to the Lord (SE 234)³¹.

Through the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius leads the exercitant to answer the question raised in SE 53, “What ought I do for Christ?” (*lo que debo hacer por Cristo*), in terms of the call of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ (SE 91-98), the example of Christ in the third Kind of Humility (SE 167), and an Election which explicitly and correctly

²⁹ J.M. RAMBLA, “Ejercicios para la fe y para la justicia” in *Manresa*, Centro Loyola, Madrid, 1983, pp. 291-315.

³⁰ J. Roothaan, M. Meschler, W. Sierp, A. Bellecius, E. Przywara, G. Fessard, K. Rahner, H. Rahner, F. Marxer, G. Cusson, D. Gil, H. D. Egan, L. Bakker, R. G. De Mendoza, S. Arzubialde and so on. We concentrate mainly on the recent Ignatian commentators.

³¹

| SE | CONTENT |
|---|--|
| Enter with great spirit and generosity and offer all desire and freedom to God (SE 5) | Humble myself to obey the law of God in all things (SE 165) |
| God communicates, embraces and disposes the soul to serve him better (SE 15) | I would promote equally the service of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul (SE 166) |
| Seriously seeks to rid himself of all inordinate attachments (SE 16) | To imitate and be in reality more like Christ our Lord, I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor... (SE 167) |
| A person who desires to make all the progress possible (SE 20) | |

The table shows how the third Kind of Humility contains higher perfection than the annotations and the first and second Kind of Humility.

locates this call and humility (SE 165-167) in a particular way of life or a particular course of action³².

The goal of the Second Week is “asking for an intimate knowledge of our Lord, who became human for me, that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely” (*pedir conocimiento interno del Señor que por mí se ha hecho hombre, para que más le ame y le siga*) (SE 104). This knowledge flows into the most radical form of Ignatian service: to serve the Eternal Father in poverty, in abuses and in sufferings, as seen from Christ’s example given in the third Kind of Humility (SE 167)³³. The following of Christ in poverty, in abuses and in sufferings (SE 167; 168) provides the hermeneutical key for understanding the Christocentrism of the Second Week.

Several key Ignatian meditations are specifically designed to purify and to test the readiness of the “exercitant’s will” (*la voluntad del ejercitante*) to choose only what is in keeping with “God’s will” (*la voluntad de Dios*). Three Classes of Men (SE 149-156), Three Kinds of Humility (SE 165-167) and the Colloquies (SE 63; 147; 157) uncover the exercitant’s secret weaknesses, expose his hesitations and lay bare his real motives and desires³⁴. The unmasking of the exercitant’s secret weaknesses, hesitations, real motives and real desires may prevent him from stumbling at the critical moment of the *Spiritual Exercises*, the Election³⁵. And so, it is clear that Ignatius has placed the exercise on Three Kinds of Humility at the right place on the Second Week and at the right moment before the Election so that the exercitant, without having any hesitation, sincerely searches for and finds the will of God in his life. The same interplay of rival interests or motives in the consciousness of the exercitant is extended into the structural meditation on the Three Kinds of Humility (*las tres Maneras de Humildad*). Ignatius has consistently, throughout the *Spiritual Exercises*, contrasted the motive of legitimate self-interest with its opposite, that of total self-dedication to Christ. Accordingly, he presents in this meditation, as the third “kind” of humility, the natural climax of this rival line of thought and motivation³⁶. The exercitant should ideally “desire and choose poverty with Christ the poor, rather than riches, etc”. Thus, whether the exercitant chooses to act on the motive of enlightened self-interest, as represented in the end point of the meditation, or on the basis of self-dedication to Christ, as depicted in the third point, he can be morally certain that his election will be made under the influence of divine grace and therefore represent for him the concrete will of God in his life. H. Rahner says, “Ignatius in the Three Degrees of Humility uses the language of Foundation; the First and Second De-

³² Cfr. H. RAHNER, *Ignatius von Loyola und das geschichtliche Werden seiner Frömmigkeit*, Salzburg, 1947, p. 106. This idea is taken from H. RAHNER, *Ignatius the Theologian*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 1990, pp. 100-101.

³³ Cfr. J. ROTHAN, *Exercices spirituels de saint Ignace de Loyola*, Annotés par le R.P. Roothaan et traduit par le P.P. Jenneaux, Paris, 1891, p. 161.

³⁴ Cfr. G. CUSSON, *Pédagogie de l’expérience spirituelle personnelle*, Paris, 1968, p. 331.

³⁵ Cfr. H.D. EGAN, *The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1976, p. 71.

³⁶ Cfr. J.A. BRACKEN, *The Double Principle and Foundation in the Spiritual Exercises*, pp. 340-341.

grees reflect the first and second part of the Foundation, the Third Degree corresponds to the last sentence of the Principle and Foundation, but is not altogether intelligible before the Kingdom of Christ, which is the Foundation seen on the level of the history of salvation³⁷. It is important to become aware of the fact that the *Spiritual Exercises* are a major step in the life-process of maturing in Christ; and this maturation consists in coming increasingly to experience and to respond to life habitually on the basis of the paradoxical wisdom of the third Kind of Humility. However the development of the habit is one thing, and the disposition at the moment of the Election in the *Spiritual Exercises* is another; and the Three Kinds of Humility is introduced to help the exercitant to become aware of the attitudes that will exert an influence on judgment and will, as the exercitant becomes a ‘fool for Christ’ (*loco por Cristo*) before the Election³⁸.

The relationship between Three Kinds of Humility and the Principle and Foundation is very much evident starting from the use of terminologies. In the Principle and Foundation Ignatius explains the purpose of the creation of human being and he says, “Human being is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord³⁹ and by means of doing this to save his soul” (*El hombre es criado para alabar, hacer reverencia y servir a Dios nuestro Señor, y mediante esto salvar su anima*) [SE 23]. In Three Kinds of Humility, Ignatius compares the first Kind of Humility as “is necessary for eternal salvation” (*es necesaria para la salvación eterna*) [SE 165], the second Kind of Humility as “for the service of God our Lord” (*igual servicio de Dios nuestro Señor*) [SE 166] and the third Kind of Humility as “for the praise and glory of the Divine Majesty” (*la alabanza y gloria de su divina majestad*) [SE 167]. A careful study of these two meditations reveals that Ignatius in the Principle and Foundation expresses “praise, serve, and save” (*alabar, servir y salvar*) in the descending order while in Three Kinds of Humility explains “save, serve, and praise” (*salvar, servir y alabar*) in the ascending order⁴⁰. Thus, it is evident that there is a dynamic relationship between Three Kinds of Humility and the Principle and Foundation. Also, Ignatius uses the language of the Principle and Foundation in Three Kinds of Humility; the Principle and Foundation and Three Kinds of Humility are a consideration, not a meditation⁴¹.

³⁷ H. RAHNER, *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises*, Woodstock Letters, Woodstock, 1956, p. 299.

³⁸ Cfr. M. IVENS, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises – Texts and Commentary*, p. 123.

³⁹ The praise (*la alabanza*) of God is inseparable from the service (*servicio*) of God, which is properly collaborating in his plan of salvation. This service of God is evolved (*se desarrolla*) in the service to human beings. See CL. VIARD., *Crées pour louer*, in *Christus Cahiers spirituels*, Paris, 1979, p. 217. The praise is expressed with full of thanksgiving and admiration to the glory of God who is the Creator and Lord. The praise, in end, is enrolled (*se inscribe*) in the service. To serve (*servir*) is a compromise in an active and intelligent submission to the plan of salvation. See A. CHAPPELLE, *Le Principe et Fondement*, in *Un commentaire littéral et théologique*, Bruxelles, 1990, p. 60.

⁴⁰ For a detailed study on this theme, see B. POTTIER, “L’Election” in *Les Exercices Spirituels d’Ignace de Loyola: Un commentaire littéral et théologique*, De l’Institut d’Études Théologiques, Bruxelles, 1990, pp. 283-320.

⁴¹ H. RAHNER, *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises*, Woodstock College Press, Jersey City, N.J., 1956, p. 299.

Through Two Standards, Three Classes of Men and Three Kinds of Humility Ignatius leads the exercitant to spiritual maturity. This might be summarized in terms of three elements⁴²: “knowledge of Christ’s way, commitment to Christ’s way, and loving commitment to Christ’s person”. While each exercise is concerned with all three, the emphasis moves progressively from the first to the third. In Two Standards the fundamental grace is knowledge of the antithetical ways of Lucifer and Christ, whose way is a sacred doctrine (SE 145). The colloquy represents an initial response to this knowledge, an offering of oneself for a way of life without specific implications being necessarily confronted. In the Three Classes of Men, the knowledge is assumed and the emphasis is on the condition necessary for sincere commitment to Christ’s way, namely a truly effective indifference (SE 157). Assuming knowledge of Christ’s way and sincere commitment to it, the emphasis in the third Kind of Humility is on the effective quality of love (SE 167). This quality is, of course, present and effective throughout the whole sequence, but here it is carried to a new level of intensity and gratuitousness. The Triple Colloquy is a prayer, itself inspired by love, for the grace of a greater love to search for, find and fulfill the will of God by having a loving commitment to the person of Christ.

Comparing Three Kinds of Humility with that on Three Classes of Men it is evident that, while the object of the latter is to lead the exercitant to rid himself of any inordinate affection which may be hindering that perfect indifference to creatures and readiness to obey the will and call of God which are necessary condition for making a sound and good Election, the object of Three Kinds of Humility is to urge him to go beyond mere indifference and to desire and choose by preference whatever will make him most like to Christ in his poverty and humiliations, and to the extent of becoming a *loco por Cristo*. And this, while it is the best possible disposition for making an Election, is also, in a way, the culminating point of spiritual perfection taught in Three Kinds of Humility.

Through the Third Class of Men and the Third Kind of Humility, Ignatius provides a far broader purpose in the *Spiritual Exercises*, one that subsumes particular decisions or reform of life. By means of the meditations, he expects a certain connaturality to develop in us such that the way in which Jesus responds to his Father, to his fellow men and women, and to events becomes more and more our way of response. It is only when this atmosphere is nurtured that the Ignatian method of discernment can properly take place. For him, the way to live our life and the way to make decisions in accord with the will of God does not come from human logic or even from prayerful consideration about either action or decision. The discernment is the continual process of putting on the mind of Christ Jesus – a process brought about by the focusing on Jesus through meditation⁴³.

The Kingdom of Christ, Two Standards, Three Classes of Men and Three Kinds of Humility lead the exercitant to enjoy the unique spiritual experience of identifying totally with Christ poor, suffering and despised (the third Kind of Humility) (SE 167). The

⁴² M. IVENS, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises – Texts and Commentary*, p. 127.

⁴³ Cfr. D.L. FLEMING, *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St Louis, 1985, p. 15.

exercise on Three Kinds of Humility, in particular, paves the way for the spiritual growth of the exercitant, especially before the time of Election. The third Kind of Humility, while including the first and second, goes beyond them. It is not content with that indifference and neutrality towards creatures which belongs to the second Kind, but, out of pure love to Christ and in order the better to imitate him and to become actually more like to him, it desires to choose poverty and humiliation with him rather than riches and honours, provided that the praise and glory of God be equal, i.e., provided that it is not more for the praise and glory of God that riches and honours should be accepted and retained. Thus the third Kind of Humility is the culmination of those generous dispositions of being and becoming a 'fool for Christ' (*loco por Cristo*), which have their roots in the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ and their development in all the subsequent Exercises of the Second Week and which are exemplified in their highest perfection by our Lord in his Passion. The exercitant should therefore carry the complete freedom to fulfil the will of God with him into the Third Week, in which he seeks to be strengthened and confirmed in the perfect following of our Lord in the royal way of the holy Cross.

From all that has been said, it is interesting to see the gradual steps by which Ignatius leads the exercitant on to that perfect subjugation of all inordinate affections which is necessary if he is to have a clear perception of the will of God while making the Election:

- The first step is a deliberate and firm purpose to follow Christ our Lord in the spirit of poverty, and in actual poverty if he should deign to call the exercitant to such a life and state (Kingdom of Christ).
- The second step is an ardent desire to imitate Christ in the closest way, and a sincere prayer that the exercitant may be received under his Standard in the highest degree of the spirit of poverty, and not less in actual poverty, and in bearing reproaches, contempt and injuries, if that should be his will (Two Standards).
- The third step, which tests the sincerity and reality of the two former steps, is to have such a genuine desire to embrace actual poverty that the exercitant should at once do so were it not that he is still uncertain whether it is God's will for him. And meanwhile, so long as the uncertainty remains, the exercitant wishes to consider himself as having actually parted with his possessions, and as intending not to resume them, unless God plainly shows it is God's will that he should do so (Three Classes of Men).
- The fourth step is a desire and purpose, God willing, to choose poverty and humiliations with Christ, out of pure love for him and the desire to imitate him as closely as possible, even though, in other respects, it might seem that the retention of wealth and honours would be as much for his service and glory as our parting with them (Third Kind of Humility)⁴⁴.

These are some of the arguments of the Ignatian commentators which support the view that the exercise on Three Kinds of Humility is a step forward to be a fool for Christ in the overall context of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

⁴⁴ W.H. LONGRIDGE, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, pp. 247-248.

Conclusion

In the Three Kinds of Humility, the third Kind includes and recapitulates the previous two. It represents an advance, therefore, in which the value orientations of the previous Kinds are elevated and synthesised into a new level of integration. Consequently, one must be careful of expressing this progression in terms of self-annihilation; for Ignatius, it is an evacuation of the last remnants of self in the sense of the self that is the object of narcissism in all its forms. But, at the same time, it is a product of the highest and most intense activity of the ego in which a profound work of ego-synthesis and organization is accomplished. It achieves, therefore, more completely and more perfectly the objectives which have been leading the ego from the very start. For, in truth, there is no higher or more perfect disposition of soul than the third Kind of Humility, which constrains the exercitant, for love of Jesus Christ, to desire to search for, to find, and to embrace whatever will make him like Christ, however difficult and repugnant to nature it may be. This third Kind of Humility is the culminating point of perfection to which Ignatius leads the exercitant to become a ‘fool for Christ’ (*loco por Cristo*). If he attains it, he shall have found that “treasure hidden in the field” of Three Kinds of Humility, which will be cheaply purchased at the cost of all that he possesses. Also Ignatius expects all his Jesuit sons to opt for the effective poverty “with Christ poor” (*con Cristo pobre*) and, in consequence, to strive “to feel the effects of this poverty” in his personal life, which continues to be ordered to apostolic works.

On condition that the exercitant embraces all the possibilities offered by the third Kind of Humility in its expansive scope and at this remains a “radical availability to be placed with the suffering Christ”, with Ignatius, the exercitant who has dedicated himself to the spread of the Kingdom should be disposed to arrive at the third Kind of Humility. Thus the consideration on Three Kinds of Humility seems to have been meant both as a help towards such indifference and as a test of the exercitant’s readiness for the election, i.e., readiness to search for, to find and to embrace the will of God. This analysis of Three Kinds of Humility will end with a quote from Ignatius:

First of all one must insist that any who will make the elections enter into them with complete resignation of their will, and, if it is possible, that they reach the third Kind of Humility, in which, for their part, they are more inclined to what is more conformed to the counsels and to the example of Christ our Lord, if God should be equally served. Any who are not in the indifference of the second Kind are not ready to put themselves in the position of making a choice, and it is better to keep them engaged in other exercises before moving on to it⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ I. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Directoria Ignatiana Autographa*, 17 in *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, vol. 76, Rome, 1955, pp. 74ff. The English translation is taken from M.E. PALMER, *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises – The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, 1996, p. 335.