



Fall, 2017

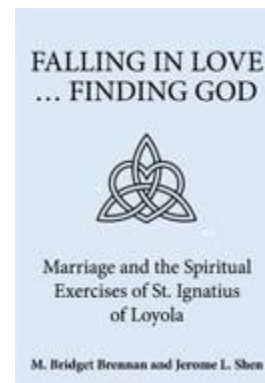
Book Review

**M. Bridget Brennan and Jerome L. Shen,
FALLING IN LOVE...FINDING GOD,
Marriage and the Spiritual Exercises of
St. Ignatius of Loyola**

(Lulu Publishing Service, 2017)
[Order through Canainstitute.org]

This book is a testament to the spiritual development of the authors, both individually and as a couple. In comparing my own spiritual development, it has also been dependent upon praying “the Ignatian Way” and participating in the Bridges and Christian Life Community. I can testify that Ignatian spirituality has enriched my commitment to our marriage, as well as having positive effects on all my relationships. Even with this enamored devotion to Ignatian Spirituality, I was initially “put off” as to the value of the book for me. Mel and I have been married 40 years and have two grown children. Mel is not Catholic, but has faithfully accompanied us, the boys and me and now me alone, to weekly Sunday Mass. His spiritual and cultural heritage is Mennonite; his birth family worshiped in the Church of Christ. “Finding God in all things,” imaginative prayer and many other qualities of sacramentality are foreign to him. So, as the flier and opening chapter of the book lists the goals of the project as encompassing the principles of Ignatian Spirituality, I was challenged and, I admit, felt the “lesser.”

The grounding assumption of the text is that the path of one’s spiritual journey, as organized and structured by St. Ignatius, parallels the spiritual journey of married couples. This is outlined in Chapter I (pp. 1-19) and charted on page 15. I have reviewed this proposal and I have some reservations as to their assumptions. They include marriage preparation in Week 1 (pp. 39-50) of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In the *Bridges Ignatian Retreat in Daily Life*, the retreatants spend at least four weeks in the Preparation Days as outlined by Fr. Tetlow, S.J. So, I find myself wanting to put the Marriage Preparation in the Preparation Days as well as Week 1. Also, in Week II, they consider the grace as the growth of discipleship—a spiritual level beyond what is normally graced in that period. With discipleship formed in Week II, the graces of Week III and Week IV are given different emphasis than the “usual.”



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To their credit, Chapter II (pp. 21–37) is completely dedicated to the Principle and Foundation. They offer very good descriptions of Ignatian principles such as reflection, p. 16, desire, p. 27, intimacy, pp. 28–32 and the Examen, p. 33. The book also includes 61 footnotes, an extensive bibliography, a glossary of Ignatian terms, and a listing of resources. I especially admire their descriptions of the principles of Ignatian Spirituality, especially of Week 1 as found in Chapter III (pp. 77–94).

In Week 2 of the Spiritual Exercises, I have come to experience the principle grace as supporting the development of an intimate relationship with Jesus. For Brennan and Shen intimacy is found in the Principle and



Bridget Brennan

Foundation and Week I. They describe in Chapter IV (pp. 51–76) the grace of Week 2 as responding to the call to discipleship which they parallel with developing commitment by

the married couple. They describe Week 3 of the Spiritual Exercises in Chapter V (pp. 77–94) as putting the commitment into action by living as a discipleship and making sacrifices to fully experience the process of dying into new life.

The grace of Week 4 found in Chapter VI (pp. 95–102) is described as a time of transformation brought about through the process of commitment—into a state of being, being with GOD as they have come to the quality of love as being with each other. The last chapter of the book, Chapter VII (pp. 103–118) is titled *Living the Commitment in Our Daily Lives*. It includes factors and random occurrences that can require adaptability and increased prayer, although all through the book, the authors offer personal stories to exemplify the grace needed and the resulting gratitude. If this was included in the beginning of the book, I believe the reader would more readily accept their propositions and lovely story.

So, I am grateful for having the opportunity to read and review this book. I admire the witness of Brennan and Shen and I would recommend it to married couples who have both received the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. I plan to use the descriptions of Ignatian principles and especially the writing describing Week I. I did begin the reading thinking this marriage is the exception and the principles idealized—and perhaps they are. However, the authors have made the Church's ideal vision of marriage, as described in *Gaudium et Spes*, a real possibility... a living reality! For this I say, "CHEERS!"

-- Linda Leib

Ratio Studiorum

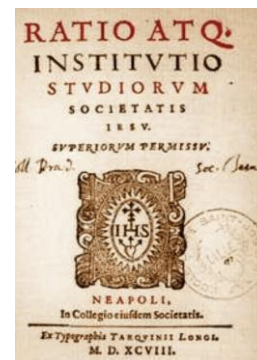
The *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Iesu* (*The Official Plan for Jesuit Education*) is a scholarly work that standardized the worldwide plan of Jesuit education in 1599. It is a collection of regulations for school administrators and teachers. It is usually abbreviated as *Ratio Studiorum* (*Plan of Studies* in Latin).

At the time the Society of Jesus was established in 1540, it was not conceived as an order that would run a network of schools. But before too long it became involved and associated with the educational process. By the time founder Ignatius of Loyola passed away in 1556, there were 35 Jesuit colleges across Europe; two hundred years later, there were more than 800 in Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

As originally conceived it did not address elementary education and it relied on the classical subjects: theology, philosophy, Greek and Latin. Formulated at a time when there was little scheme in most educational establishments, the *Ratio Studiorum* is a system of education established by the Society of Jesus that is well thought out and put into practice. It was largely composed in Rome by a group of twelve Jesuit educators (later reduced to six) who solicited input from a wide spectrum of educators and scholars, then revised and reworked the document repeatedly during the latter part of the sixteenth century with the intention of producing a practical system of education. It was completed and introduced in 1599.

The plan for education was partitioned into four sections, establishing rules for different groupings of educators in Jesuit institutions:

1) the provincial superior, the rector, the prefect of studies, and the prefect of discipline, 2) the professors of theology: Scripture, Hebrew, ecclesiastical history, canon law, dogmatic theology and moral theology, 3) the professors of philosophy, physics, and mathematics, and 4) the teachers of the *studia inferiora* (the lower department), comprised of the literary branches.



The suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773 necessitated some changes in the approach to Jesuit education. Several decades later the *Ratio Studiorum* was revised and an updated version was issued in 1834. Over time the system has shown a flexibility that enables Jesuit education to adapt to changes in educational trends and changes in society which occur inevitably over time. Jesuit education allows room for intellectual freedom and individual expression, and it has produced many of the world's great thinkers, scholars and intellectuals. The Jesuit educational system adapts itself to the situations of the times.

Today the Society operates 362 secondary schools and 174 colleges and universities in the world, including 28 institutions of higher education in the United States. An English translation of the full text of the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* of 1599 can be found online in the Boston College archive at www.bc.edu/sites/libraries/ratio/ratio1599.pdf

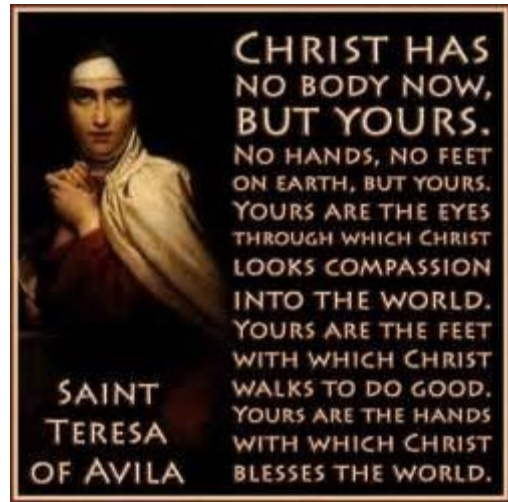
**Bridges Foundation Fall Programs
Have Been Set in Motion
with Others to Follow in the Spring**

There are 24 exercitants enrolled in the Bridges Retreat, which is to be held at five locations in 2017-2018: St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church in St. Louis City (4), St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in the City of St. Louis (9), the Good Shepherd Spirituality Center at St. Nicholas Catholic Church in O'Fallon, Illinois (5), Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Maryland Heights (2), and Webster Groves Christian Church (4). As a result of the low enrollment at Holy Spirit, participants will meet there for the one-on-one sessions and with the College Church group at College Church for the group sessions.

The Magis Program began at Webster Groves Christian Church on September 16 and will continue until April. It has 58 participants as well as 6 facilitators and 1 on the wait list this year. The numbers shown here are subject to change as adjustments occur.

Plans are being made for the Faithsharing Retreat on November 4, the Annual Membership Meeting on February 17, the Marketplace Spirituality Retreat on March 23 & 24, the Bridges Sending Celebration on May 16, and the Ignatian Community Retreat on July 13 and 14. All of these events are to be held at the Sisters of St. Joseph Motherhouse at 6400 Minnesota Avenue, with one exception -- the Annual Membership Meeting of the Bridges Foundation, to which all are invited, will be at Webster Groves Christian Church.

This year's retreat leader for the Ignatian Community Retreat will be Carol Atwell Ackels, Director of the Ignatian Spirituality Institute in Dallas.



This is the newsletter of the Bridges Foundation of St. Louis. The newsletter is published quarterly and distributed as a PDF file via email, free to anyone who would like to receive it. Thank you to the contributors to this issue: Linda Leib, Cheryl Rauschenbach and Tom Simon.

Quarterly issues are sent late in the months of March, June, September, and December. The deadline for submission of material is on the 15th day of each of those months for inclusion in the issue to be mailed later that month. Look for your next issue around the time that the seasons change.

The deadline for submissions to the next issue of the Bridges Newsletter is December 15, 2017. Please send articles, letters, mailing list additions and deletions, and other correspondence to: Tom Simon, Editor, 1730 Derrynane, Manchester, MO 63021, or by email to tsimon@tsimon.com.