VULNERABILITY AND VIRTUES IN THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*: Exploring the Dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises* through the Lens of Virtue Ethics

Woo-jung Kim

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Advisors: James F. Keenan, S.J., S.T.D., Daniel J. Daly, Ph.D.

This thesis investigates the morality stemming from the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola through the lens of virtue ethics. It argues that if the *Exercises* are conducted according to Ignatius' intention, they can lead exercitants to develop moral character in their relationship with God.

This thesis is structured around four main chapters: bridging spirituality and morality, vulnerability as a key to understanding the dynamic between exercitants and God in the *Exercises*, freedom of conscience for being vulnerable to God and others, and the development of virtues rooted in vulnerability, especially humility, prudence, charity, and mercy, through the *Exercises*.

This thesis emphasizes that vulnerability serves as the basis for morality in the *Exercises*, and virtues provide practical guidance for moral action and reasoning. Through the *Exercises*, exercitants can recognize their own vulnerability by encountering God's vulnerability and cultivate virtues in their vulnerability. The *Exercises* lead them from individual conscience to a realm of interconnectedness with others. The bridge between the *Spiritual Exercises* and virtue ethics holds significant implications for the formation of Christian character because it fosters the cultivation of virtues consistent with the biblical narrative.

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NOMENCLATURE

Ignatian Texts

Exx	The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola
Const	The *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus

Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*

I	The First Part of *Summa Theologiae*
I-II	The First Part of the Second Part of *Summa Theologiae*
II-II	The Second Part of the Second Part of *Summa Theologiae*
III	The Third Part of *Summa Theologiae*
Q	Question
A	Article
resp	Response
ad	Reply to objection

Examples:

I-II, Q.6, A.3, ad.3	Reply to objection 3 in Article 6 of Question 6 in the First Part of the Second Part of *Summa Theologiae*
II-II, Q.10, A.2, resp	Response in Article 2 of Question 10 in the Second Part of the Second Part of *Summa Theologiae*

INTRODUCTION

The question that gave rise to the thesis is this: Does everyone who makes the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola become a moral person? The answer is "Not necessarily." Pope Francis warns us against a "spirituality of well-being." He writes,

> In other parts of our society, we see the growing attraction to various forms of a 'spirituality of well-being' divorced from any community life, or to a 'theology of prosperity' detached from responsibility for our brothers and sisters, or to depersonalized experiences which are nothing more than a form of self-centeredness.[1]

Some might argue against this, saying that their relationship with God is the only essential for spiritual life. However, as Pope Francis notes, spirituality separated from connection with others is self-centered. This self-centered spirituality leads to loving oneself more than God and others. In the Gospel of Mark, a rich man comes to Jesus and asks what he must do to have eternal life. The man claims to have kept every commandment. However, Jesus points out that he is still missing one thing. Jesus says, "Go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me" (Mark 10:21). No matter how excellent our spirituality may seem, it is incomplete if it is separated from a relationship with others.

[1] Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013) §90, at The Holy See, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#Yes_to_the_new_relationships_brought_by_Christ.

An essential fruit of the spiritual life is to love and show concern for one's neighbor. Pope Francis notes that a personal relationship with God and Christ fosters relationships with others and leads people to commit themselves to serving others.[2] In this sense, spirituality cannot be divorced from morality. [3] Some might argue that only the avoidance of sin is necessary for a moral life. However, the Jesuit moral theologian, James F. Keenan, notes that sin is "the failure to bother to love."[4] For him, sin is the opposite of goodness.[5] Aquinas even claims that it could be a mortal sin not to give alms, which is an act of mercy (II-II, Q.32, A.5, ad.3). This sin of apathy makes people self-centered and keeps them from having a sincere relationship with God. The result is a "spirituality of well-being."

The main argument of this thesis is that the *Exercises* lead exercitants to love not only God but also others. In other words, if they make the *Exercises* according to Ignatius' intention, they will become moral. In order to explore the morality stemming from the *Exercises*, the first chapter will examine the inseparable relationship between spirituality and morality, and then the attempts of Jesuit moral theologians to bridge virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality, specifically the *Exercises*.

The second chapter will introduce the concept of "vulnerability" as a key to understanding the dynamic between exercitants and God in the *Exercises*. Many philosophers and ethicists introduce vulnerability as an essential concept of human interconnectedness. Therefore, the philosophical and ethical concept of vulnerability will be explored first. Then, it

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[2] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §90-91.

[3] James F. Keenan observes that moral theology has been integrated with social ethics since the seventeenth century. He notes that there has been a significant turn to understanding a person as relational and social since the Second Vatican Council. We now refer to moral theology with a more comprehensive and inclusive view as "theological ethics." Hence, this thesis will use the terms *ethics* and *morality* interchangeably. See James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics* (New York ; Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2022), Preface, Kindle.

[4] James F. Keenan, *Moral Wisdom: Lessons and Texts from the Catholic Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016), 42, Kindle.

[5] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, 29.

will examine vulnerability in the Gospel, especially Jesus' parables and the Beatitudes. Next, vulnerability will be examined as a key to understanding the *Exercises*. Finally, it will show how vulnerability and virtues are intertwined in the *Exercises*. Exercitants may recognize their own vulnerability as they experience God's love revealed in His vulnerability; this stimulates their growth in virtues through the *Exercises*.

The third chapter will explore freedom of conscience. To become vulnerable, freedom of conscience is essential. In the *Exercises*, Ignatius respects the exercitants' unique relationship with God; it is related to the dignity of personal conscience. The voice of conscience urges them to love God and their neighbor. Virtues will grow in them as they become free from disordered attachments that make them self-centered and prevent them from being vulnerable to God and others.

The fourth chapter will explore how virtues, especially humility, charity, mercy, and prudence, develop in and through the *Exercises*. On the one hand, virtue ethics is an excellent tool for understanding the morality originating from the *Exercises.* On the other hand, the *Exercises* are valuable spiritual training for cultivating virtues to build the moral character of Christians.

In summary, growth in and through the *Exercises* is a passage from conscience to a world of interconnectedness, and it is accomplished through one's vulnerability to God, expressed in conscience, and developed by virtues.

1.0 VIRTUE ETHICS AND IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

This chapter examines the fundamental relationship between virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality. In the history of Catholic moral theology, the Fathers of the Church and many moral theologians have found foundational connectedness between morality and spirituality. Moreover, Jesuit moral theologians attempt to link, more specifically, virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality. Therefore, this chapter will first explore studies that connect ethics and spirituality. Then, it will examine the work of Jesuit moral theologians that bridge virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality.

1.1 INTEGRATING ETHICS AND SPIRITUALITY

In the Roman Catholic tradition, morality and spirituality[6] cannot be divorced. We can find the integration of morality and spirituality in the Old Testament. Here is an example: “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8). The Irish theologian Donal Dorr argues that we can find a basis for the balance of spirituality from this passage. [7] He

[6] The scholar of New Testament and Christian spirituality, Sandra M. Schneiders, defines spirituality as "the experience of conscious involvement in the project of life-integration through self-transcendence toward the ultimate value one perceives.” She adds, “The horizon of ultimate value is the triune God revealed in Jesus Christ, and the project involves the living of his paschal mystery in the context of the Church community through the gift of the Holy Spirit.” In this thesis, therefore, the term “spirituality” is primarily related to one’s relationship with the triune God, while “morality” or “ethics” are related to one’s relationship with others. See Sandra M. Schneiders, “The Study of Christian Spirituality,” *Studies in Spirituality* 8 (1998): 39–40, https://doi.org/10.2143/SIS.8.0.2004088.

[7] Donal Dorr, *Spirituality and Justice* (Dublin : Maryknoll, N.Y.: Gill and MacMillan ; Orbis Books, 1984), 8.

notes it has three demands: religious, moral, and political. For him, spirituality should be rooted in all three.[8]

Similarly, the Benedictine theologian Mark O'Keefe argues that the interconnection of morality and spirituality corresponds with the theme of the covenant between God and Israel: a call for commitment to worship and moral living.[9]

In the New Testament, Jesus taught us the two greatest commandments: "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:37-39). Therefore, the love of God and neighbors is indispensable.

Moreover, many moral theologians see ethics in the Beatitudes in Jesus' Sermon on the Mountain. The late Jesuit moral theologian from Hong Kong, Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan, argues that the ethical function of the Beatitudes is undeniable.[10] To enter the kingdom of heaven is not about citizenship but the relationship with God. Those who live according to Jesus's Sermon on the Mountains will receive God's "blessing."[11] Therefore, morality and spirituality are essentially combined in Jesus' teaching.

St. Paul understands the relationship of Christians as forming the Body of Christ. He said, "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another" (Romans 12:5)" Therefore, we should "be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21)" because all people of God are members in Christ. Furthermore, "God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member" (1 Corinthians 12:24). If

[8] Dorr, *Spirituality and Justice*, 18.

[9] Mark O'Keefe, "Ethics and Spirituality: Past, Present, Future," in *Ethics and Spirituality*, ed. Charles E Curran editor and Lisa Fullam editor, Readings in Moral Theology ; No. 17 (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 4-5.

[10] Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes: Biblical Studies and Ethics for Real Life*, Asian Theological Ethics Books Series (Lanham, Md., Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2012), 153, https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/bostoncollege-ebooks/reader.action?docID=1031974.

[11] Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, 154.

God gives honor to the weak, Christians should care for them, or they would shame the honor of God.

St. John expressed more clearly the inseparable bond of love of God and neighbors:

> Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also (1 John 4:19-21).

Augustine of Hippo was a pioneer in providing moral philosophy to Christianity. He brought the philosophy of Plato and Plotinus and developed it from a Christian view. He converted to Christianity, reading Paul's letter to Romans (13:13-14).[12] Naturally, Paul's letter had an impact on his ethics. For example, Augustine relies on the letter of Paul to Romans (13:1-7; 14:7-15:14), where Paul talks about conscience and law. For Augustine, the moral law is interior to us[13] because the law is written in men's hearts by God (*Confessions*, 2.4.9).[14]

Keenan notes that Augustine's ethics is based on "God's right-ordering of the will through virtue."[15] For Augustine, one's relationship with God is essential for moral life because God works through the will. God is not something needed for the perfection of humanity. Augustine says, "You are more inward to me than my most inward part" (*Confessions*, 3.6.11). In other words, God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. Therefore, there is the order of charity: loving God first, then loving ourselves, then loving neighbors (II-II, Q.26). Keenan notes that this order of charity, namely the order of the triple love, became the norm in Scholasticism.[16]

[12] "Not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires. (Romans 13:13-14)"
[13] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.2, III.
[14] St Augustine, *Confessions*, accessed January 25, 2023, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1101.htm.
[15] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.2, III.
[16] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.2, III.

Thomas Aquinas is one of the greatest Scholastics; Keenan contends that his *Summa Theologiae* is not only his achievement but also that of Scholasticism itself.[17] The Dominican theologian and specialist of the works of Aquinas, Jean-Pierre Torrell, argues that Aquinas "proposes a life program under the aegis of self-fulfillment, since the creature finds itself in finding its end. His is a morality of happiness, therefore, but a happiness that is obtained only through imitation of the Exemplar, in whose likeness we are made."[18] Aquinas' ethics is deeply connected to the eternal happiness one can obtain only by God's grace. Therefore, we can find an interconnectedness between morality and spirituality in Aquinas. Regarding virtue, for Aquinas, charity (the love of God) and mercy (the love of neighbors) are inseparable. This will be examined further in a later chapter. Keenan also notes that Aquinas' spirituality is deeply connected to moral life. It leads us to avoid sin and to seek goodness in and for the world; in other words, his spirituality urges us to depend on not only God but also others.[19]

Lumen Gentium, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church from the Second Council of the Vatican*,* harmonizes morality and spirituality, asserting the universal call to holiness in this world:

> Thus it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbor.[20]

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[17] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.4, IV.

[18] Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas Spiritual Master*, Saint Thomas Aquinas, v.2 (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 278.

[19] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.3, IV.

[20] Vatican Council II, Dogmatic Constitution on The Church *Lumen Gentium*, (21 November 1964), §39, at The Holy See. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

Vatican II teaches that Christians are called to pursue the fullness of their life and the perfection of charity in their relationship with God, and that this calling requires them to serve their neighbor. Therefore, the moral theologian Charles E. Curran rightly notes that Vatican II brought spirituality and morality together. He writes, "Vatican II's teaching on spirituality has two fundamental assertions —the call of all Christians to holiness and perfection and the fact that the answer to this call to holiness comes in and through our life in the world." [21]

Many contemporary moral theologians have found foundational connectedness between ethics and spirituality. Richard M. Gula is an example: "Without spirituality, morality gets cut off from its roots in the experience of God and so loses its character as a personal response to being loved by God, or being graced."[22] Likewise, spirituality would be impractical without morality. O'Keefe argues that moral life cannot exist without spiritual life, although we often distinguish them. He writes, "In the actual living of the Christian life, efforts to avoid sin, to grow in prayer, to make good moral decisions, and to grow in virtue are intimately intertwined."[23] The late moral theologian William C. Spohn argues, "An examination of spiritualities that reject ethics would be the topic for another study. Moral perception, motivation, and identity can be enhanced by most of the forms of spirituality that I have examined."[24] The Irish theologian Enda McDonagh emphasizes the relationship with God in the conscience of a community. He argues, "It is clearly impossible to discuss the church as moral (and immoral)

[21] Charles E. Curran, "How Vatican II Brought Spirituality and Moral Theology Together," in *Ethics and Spirituality*, ed. Charles E Curran editor and Lisa Fullam editor, Readings in Moral Theology ; No. 17 (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 80.

[22] Richard M. Gula, "Spirituality and Morality: What Are We Talking About?," in *Ethics and Spirituality*, ed. Charles E Curran editor and Lisa Fullam editor, Readings in Moral Theology ; No. 17 (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 56.

[23] O'Keefe, "Ethics and Spirituality: Past, Present, Future," 3.

[24] William C. Spohn, "Spirituality and Ethics: Exploring the Connections," in *Ethics and Spirituality*, ed. Charles E Curran editor and Lisa Fullam editor, Readings in Moral Theology; No. 17 (New York: Paulist Press, 2014), 72.

community without considering it in its relationship to Jesus Christ and his God, which at once establishes and undermines its authority."[25] For him, ethical foundations originate from a relationship with God only.

The emergence of liberation theology stimulates the integration of ethics and spirituality. Keenan argues that liberation theologians urge us to be aware of suffering in the world and respond to the call of Christ. The Peruvian theologian, Gustavo Gutiérrez, proposes the Spanish Dominican Bartolomé de las Casas as an example of responding to suffering.[26] The Spanish Salvadoran Jesuit theologian, Jon Sobrino, sees "the historicity of Jesus as key for understanding the promise of the kingdom." For him, it is crucial to care for those who suffer in order to follow and imitate Christ.[27] In liberation theology, there is no exclusively individual relationship with God. Jesus came to this historical world. He loves people, precisely the wretched. To follow Christ means to love others as he did. The love of God and neighbors are fundamentally interconnected. We can see the integration of spiritual life and social ethics in Sobrino's theology; whoever wants to be a disciple of Christ must participate in his liberating work for those in need.

In contemporary moral theology, Keenan rightly notes that the barriers between fundamental moral and social ethics actually vanished.[28] However, the integration of morality and spirituality is not something new. As stated above, it has existed in the Catholic tradition, beginning with the Old Testament. Therefore, we cannot separate Christian ethics from spirituality and vice versa.

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[25] Enda McDonagh, *Vulnerable to the Holy: In Faith, Morality and Art* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Columba Press, 2004), 78.

[26] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.8, II.

[27] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.8, II.

[28] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.8, II.

1.2 FINDING COMMON GROUND IN VIRTUE ETHICS AND IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

Jesuit virtue ethicists, such as James Keenan and Ai Van Pham, study the relationship between virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality. They argue that virtue ethics is a worthy instrument to bridge ethics and spirituality, in particular, Ignatian spirituality. Before we examine this, it is helpful to understand virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality first.

Aquinas defines virtue as *habitus*[29] and "a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use." He distinguishes acquired and infused virtues. Acquired virtues are those that humans can develop and strengthen by themselves. Infused virtues are those that God grants us as grace; he adds "which God works in us, without us" to his definition of infused virtue (I-II, Q.55, A.4). He also lists four cardinal virtues that humans can acquire on their own: prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude (I-II, Q.61, A.2, resp.). And he also describes three theological virtues with which God infuses us: faith, hope, and charity. For Aquinas, charity is the greatest of virtues because it is the "mother" and the "form" of other virtues (II-II, Q.23, A.8). Charity will be further examined later.

Keenan notes that contemporary moral theologians pay attention to virtues to reflect on the integrity of a person before God more broadly rather than focusing on certain particular actions.[30] He writes, "being virtuous is more than having a particular habit of acting, e.g.,

[29] The Latin word *habitus* is often translated as "habit." However, Aquinas' idea of *habitus* is not exactly the same as the modern idea of habit. The Jesuit moral theologian Nicholas Austin argues that a virtue is "both a habit and a principle of rational operation, in that in incorporates practical reasoning about how to act" for Aquinas. However, he notes that modern concept of habit includes "a habit of unthinking, nonvoluntary response." See Nicholas Austin, "Virtue as a Habit," in *Aquinas on Virtue*, A Causal Reading (Georgetown University Press, 2017), 23–36, https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1t89k5h.7.

[30] James F. Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology, Ignatian Spirituality, and Virtue Ethics: Strange Bedfellows," *The Way, Supplement* 88 (1997): 36.

generosity." He adds, "it means having a fundamental set of related virtues that enable a person to live and act morally well."[31] In this sense, Chan writes:

> Virtue ethics attends to the development of character and practices of the person and the community. Four important yields of virtues can therefore be identified, namely, "character," "practices," "exemplar," and "community." Finally, virtue ethics' priority of "being" over "doing" involves a kind of perfectionism in the sense of "viewing all aspects of life as morally relevant and in calling everyone to growth in every area of life."[32]

Therefore, virtue ethics is concerned with the character of moral agents who can determine their righteous actions and judgments according to their virtues, rather than simply engaging in certain moral actions to avoid sins.

The Jesuit spiritual director and author, David L. Fleming, says that Ignatian spirituality flows from the *Spiritual Exercises,*[33] which Ignatius wrote to help people have an intimate relationship with God. He argues that we can see Ignatius' visions in the *Exercises*: life, work, and love. First, the vision of life leads us to reflect on the meaning of our lives. He says that the Principle and Foundation (Exx. 23) ask us, "what is life all about?"; the *Exercises* invite us to the source of life. Second, the vision of work leads us to consider the meaning of our work in this world. Our role model is Jesus Christ, who calls us to be and to work with him for the salvation of souls. Third, this vision of love shows us that God loves us and invites us to love Him in response. He notes that we can find this vision in the Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx. 230-

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[31] James F. Keenan, "Proposing Cardinal Virtues," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 56, no. 4 (1995): 714, https://doi.org/10.1177/004056399505600405.

[32] Yiu Sing Lúcás Chan, "Bridging Christian and Confucian Ethics: Is the Bridge Adequately Catholic and Asian," *Asian Christian Review* 5, no. 1 (2011): 52.

[33] The book, *Spiritual Exercises*, is specifically designed to guide those who wish to a make thirty-day retreat, which consists of four weeks. The Jesuit translator of the *Spiritual Exercises*, George E. Ganss, explains the purpose of the *Exercises* well. He writes: "This book is not a treatise on the spiritual life, nor was it composed to communicate its massage through reading by a retreatant. Instead, it is a manual to guide exercises which were to be carried out by an exercitant, ordinarily with counsel from a director. Thus it is comparable to a book on 'How to Play Tennis.' Some profit comes to anyone who reads it, but the far more substantial benefit accrues to the one who carries out the practices suggested." See Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. George E. Ganss (St. Louis, Chicago, St. Louis, Mo.: Institute of Jesuit Sources, Loyola University Press, 1992), 2–3.

237). The *Exercises* contain these three visions, and exercitants are led to fulfill them in their relationship with God.[34]

The Australian-Vietnamese moral theologian, Ai Van Pham, connects Christian morality with Ignatian spirituality. He offers critical characteristics with regard to Ignatian spirituality informing a Christian morality.[35] He also focuses on the relationship between virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality. He argues, "Virtue ethics considers the existential dimension and the relational context between exercitants and Jesus." [36] In the *Spiritual Exercises*, there is a critical dynamic between God and the exercitants. He notes that the exercitant's response to God is "accentuated in a language of character and virtue: knowing Christ more deeply, loving Christ more intensely, and following Christ more closely." [37]

Keenan also connects virtue ethics with Ignatian spirituality, arguing, "Spirituality, especially Ignatian spirituality, has always recognized the need for morality, perhaps not one of the principles governing external acts, but rather one of the virtues."[38] He presents three English Jesuits[39] who have contributed to developing virtue ethics from Ignatian spirituality. Based on

[34] David L. Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?* (Chicago, Ill.: Loyola Press, 2008), 2.

[35] These are characteristics he offers: "Christian morality as the Person's Response to God's Call," "A Vision of the End in the *Spiritual Exercises*," "The Centrality of Christ," "A Process of Forming Conscience Following Key Ignatian Criteria," and "The Church and the Formation of Conscience." See Ai Van Pham, "A Jesuit Accent for Contemporary Christian Ethics: A Study on the Relationship between Spirituality and Morality" (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Weston Jesuit School of Theology, 2002), 86–169.

[36] Pham, "A Jesuit Accent for Contemporary," 116.

[37] Pham, "A Jesuit Accent for Contemporary," 116.

[38] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 43.

[39] They are John Mahoney, S.J., Thomas Slater, S.J., and Robert Persons, S.J. Mahoney insists that moral theology has been obsessed with sin as external actions and that moral theologians have never been interested in understanding morality with respect to the works of the Holy Spirit in our lives. In the second edition of his book *A Manual of Moral Theology*, Slater writes, "moral theology proposes to itself the much humbler but still necessary task of defining what is right and what wrong in all the practical relations of the Christian life... The first step on the right road of conduct is to avoid evil." Persons wrote a book titled *The first booke of the Christian exercise*. Its first edition appeared in 1582. Early British Puritans developed a morality out of Ignatian spirituality by way of virtues. They took Catholic devotional works of spirituality; one of them was Person's book. See Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 37-40.

them, Keenan tries to build virtue ethics from Ignatian spirituality. He presents ten similarities between virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality. Ten similarities Keenan proposes are as follows.

1. The priority of the spiritual: Keenan argues, "Because Ignatian spirituality so stresses the initiative of God as prior to the individual's response, then a virtue ethics in this context is always subsequent to God's movement." [40]

2. Morality as a response: God's love always precedes humans' acts. For Aquinas, mercy, a moral virtue, results from charity (II-II, Q.30, A.3). Therefore, acts of mercy cannot contribute anything to the relationship with God. God is always the initiative for the moral acts of humans. [41]

3. Deep interiority: "In developing a moral theology they did not turn to principles which govern actions, but virtues which perfect dispositions." The *Spiritual Exercises* do not aim to find a particular principle but help exercitants dispose themselves to develop virtue in themselves as their response to God. [42]

4. The uniqueness of the individual: For Aquinas, virtues are second nature for humans. In other words, "The virtues perfect an individual's dispositions uniquely." [43] Likewise, the *Exercises* respect individual uniqueness. [44] Ignatius instructs directors not to intervene in the communication between exercitants and God (Exx. 15).

5. The need for self-examination: In the First Week, Ignatius invites exercitants to ask themselves the triple question: "What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ? (Exx. 53)" Keenan argues that they are similar to three central questions

[40] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 41. Also see Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.3, VI.
[41] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 41.
[42] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 41.
[43] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 42.
[44] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 41.

to virtue ethics in Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue*, "Who am I? Who ought I to become? What steps ought I take to become that person?" Keenan notes that exercitants examine themselves and look at who they are and whom they are called to be as a disciple of Christ through the triple question. [45]

6. Ongoing task: Self-examination is not a one-off practice. [46] Ignatius likens the *Exercises* to physical training, such as walking, hiking, and running (Exx. 1). As people need to do those activities ceaselessly for their health, exercitants should continue to practice what they learn through the *Exercises* in everyday life for their spiritual health. Likewise, acquiring and cultivating virtues are "dynamic, lifelong process of reflection and intended practice." [47]

7. Exercises: One of the most critical similarities between the *Exercises* and virtue ethics is the need for constant exercise. Keenan writes, "This training is central, then, to both the spirituality of the *Exercises*, where the exercitant repeats meditations and contemplations to pursue the invitation to greater union with God, and to morality, where a person engages regularly in intended and repeated practices in pursuit of particular virtues." He notes that Aquinas even uses the term "*spirituale exercitium.*" [48] For him, they are necessary for "fighting against concupiscence and other defects" (III, Q.69, A.3, resp.).

8. A prudent director: Keenan argues, "Virtue theory, because it recognizes the difficulty in acquiring the virtues, acknowledges that the first sign of growth is the ability to find a prudent adviser." [49] The moral theologian Daniel J. Daly also emphasizes the importance of moral exemplars: "Embodied creatures often rely on embodied examples for moral guidance." He

[45] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 42.
[46] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 42.
[47] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 42.
[48] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 42-43.
[49] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 43.

argues that we cannot develop virtue without virtuous exemplars in the community.[50] The virtuous can be an example for moral acts and teach the young through the dialogue with each other.

9. An appreciation for human feeling: Keenan writes, "Thomas always saw the passions as essential to the acquisition and development of virtuous passion. Hugo Rahner points out in his important work that the regular 'application of senses' (a clear innovation in spirituality) taught the exercitant the importance of familiarity with one's feelings in order to discern properly." [51]

10. A vision of the end: Keenan argues that virtue ethics and the *Exercises* have the same goal: "The end of the *Exercises* is the First Principle and Foundation, that is, to serve God alone. That end is the same for virtue ethics in the Christian tradition." [52]

Moreover, we can find more common ground. For example, Daly presents three modes of "taking counsel with the virtuous" and two modes of "taking counsel with the virtues," countering the argument that virtue ethics cannot offer a practicable method for normative action guidance.[53] He does not attempt to connect these modes of "Virtue Action Guidance" to Ignatian spirituality. However, the first three modes are compatible with the method of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The latter modes can be adapted to practicing the *Exercises* in real life. This topic will be concretely examined in the later chapter.

All these similarities offer connectedness between virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality, in particular, the *Spiritual Exercises*.

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[50] Daniel J. Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 82, no. 4 (2021): 569, https://doi.org/10.1177/00405639211055177.

[51] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 43.

[52] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 43.

[53] The three modes of "taking counsel with the virtuous" are dialogue, emulation, and deliberation. The two modes of "taking counsel with virtues" are interrogative and discovery. See Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 569.

In sum, virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality are fundamentally related. In the history of Catholic moral theology, the Church Fathers and many moral theologians have found a fundamental connectedness between morality and spirituality. Moreover, Jesuit moral theologians show how virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality are fundamentally connected. This thesis will further explore the relationship between virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality, specifically the *Spiritual Exercises*. In addition, it will show that virtue ethics can be a worthy instrument for the moral growth of exercitants by expressing the virtues that comes from the *Exercises*.

2.0 VULNERABILITY AND VIRTUES

This chapter will examine the indispensable relationship between vulnerability and virtues. For this, it is beneficial to understand the basic concept of vulnerability from both the ethical and philosophical perspectives. Keenan is a pioneer who introduces it in Catholic moral theology. He appreciates it in Jesus' parables, such as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, etc., and argues that vulnerability is an essential ground for Christian morality. He argues that vulnerability is God's nature, [54] and humans are also vulnerable because they participate in His nature and are *Imago Dei*.[55]

The Indian Jesuit theologian, Joseph Lobo, argues that creation and incarnation show God's vulnerability. For him, God was fundamentally vulnerable at the time of the creation of the human being: the vulnerability to be rejected by rational creatures God made in His image and likeness. Lobo claims, therefore, that avoiding any risk cannot give witness to the Gospel. We can become vulnerable because we believe in God, who is love. Faith demands us to become vulnerable. [56]

Developing Keenan and Lobo's idea, this chapter will show that vulnerability is key to understanding the dynamics between God and exercitants in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Vulnerability is the center of exercitants' growth in virtue in the *Exercises*, and it is

[54] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom,* 128.; The late Hans Urs von Balthasar also argued that God's heart is intrinsically vulnerable. He writes, "It is God's going forth into the danger and the nothingness of the creation that reveals his heart to be at its origin vulnerable; in the humility of this vulnerability lies God's condescension (*condescensio*) and thus his fundamental readiness to go to the very end of love on the cross." See Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics* (San Francisco : New York: Ignatius Press ; Crossroad Publications, 1983), 356.

[55] James F. Keenan, "Vulnerability and the Father of the Prodigal Son," *Accademia Alfonsiana Blog* (blog), 2019, https://www.alfonsiana.org/blog/2019/09/27/vulnerability-and-the-father-of-the-prodigal-son/.

[56] Joseph Lobo, "Fede e Vulnerabilità: Gli 'Svantaggi' Dell'essere Credenti," La Civiltà Cattolica, May 5, 2022, https://www.laciviltacattolica.it/articolo/credere-significa-essere-vulnerabili/.

foundationally connected with virtue, especially charity. Vulnerability and virtues are intertwined in the *Exercises*.

2.1 ETHICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING OF VULNERABILITY

We can understand why human beings are naturally vulnerable to one another from the psychoanalyst and feminist psychologist Jessica Benjamin's theory of "mutual recognition" and "intersubjectivity." She defines intersubjectivity as a relationship of mutual recognition. In this relationship, "each person experiences the other as a "like subject," another mind who can be "felt with" yet has a distinct, separate center of feeling and perception."[57]

Benjamin counters the traditional view that infants are seen as only passive and withdrawn. For her, infants have the capacity and desire to relate to the world from birth.[58] Citing Benjamin, Keenan describes infants' mutual recognition as a "central experience among infants when they are suddenly no longer the object of others' attention; the infant encounters others like her or him, a subject, if you will, among other subjects." For infants, Benjamin argues, it is the most vulnerable moment of differentiation. She writes, "In mutual recognition, the subject accepts the premise that others are separate but nonetheless share like feelings and intentions."[59] Keenan rightly notes our vulnerability to one another makes us human in this mutual recognition.

[57] Jessica Benjamin, *Beyond Doer and Done to: Recognition Theory, Intersubjectivity and the Third* (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 22.

[58] Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988), 17.

[59] Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love* , 53.

Keenan notes that Benjamin discovered that some males are encouraged and guided to relinquish their vulnerability and cultivate a desire for domination as infants and later as children. It alienates them from their vulnerable self and leads them to want to dominate others, precisely women.[60] Consequently, human beings have an innate vulnerability to relate to themselves and others, and acknowledging one's vulnerability is crucial to psychological growth and the development of morality.

The philosopher Judith Butler writes about the nature of vulnerability:

> I am already bound to you, and this is what it means to be the self I am, receptive to you in ways that I cannot fully predict or control. This is also, clearly, the condition of my injurability as well, and in this way my answerability and my injurability are bound up with one another. In other words, you may frighten me and threaten me, but my obligation to you must remain firm.[61]

For her, vulnerability is a natural human condition. Everyone is exposed to being hurt in a relationship; no one is invulnerable, even if they do not want to be so. Moral responsibility for others lies in this vulnerability.

The ethicist Linda Hogan also describes ontological vulnerability:

> "Human beings share an ontology that is grounded in vulnerability. It is tied, of course to our embodiment, to our vulnerability as embodied agents; to our dependency as subjects, from infancy to old age; it is connected to the general reciprocity or interconnectedness of social life and also with the precariousness of social institutions."[62]

She claims that we share vulnerability. Because of the "shared vulnerability," [63] we are bound together no matter who we are or where we come from.

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[60] James F. Keenan, "Linking Human Dignity, Vulnerability and Virtue Ethics," *Interdisciplinary Journal for Religion and Transformation in Contemporary Society* 6, no. 1 (July 2, 2020): 61, https://doi.org/10.30965/23642807-00601004.

[61] Judith Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012): 141–142.

[62] Linda Hogan, "Vulnerability: An Ethic for a Divided World," in *Building Bridges in Sarajevo: The Plenary Papers from CTEWC 2018*, by Bosnia and Herzegovina) Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church (CTEWC) Conference Sarajevo, ed. Kristin E Heyer editor, Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2019), 219.

[63] Hogan, "Vulnerability: An Ethic for a Divided World," 219.

The theological ethicist Hille Haker also argues the ontology of vulnerability. The etymology of vulnerability is the Latin word *vulnerare*, which means "to wound" or "to be wounded." She writes, "I call this vulnerability 'ontological' because it does not matter whether we 'feel' vulnerable or invulnerable: human beings are, by their nature, vulnerable, that is, susceptible to incidents and/or conditions beyond their control." [64] However, she proposes the term "moral vulnerability" to clarify the positive meaning of vulnerability. She notes that people tend to connect vulnerability with susceptibility to suffering, namely weakness. For her, connecting vulnerability with susceptibility might make us overlook the moral and positive meaning of vulnerability. She describes it "as a risk of morally affecting the other and being affected by them in a positive way."[65] She also links vulnerability with one's autonomy. For her, vulnerability and autonomy are not contrary to each other: "The ethics of vulnerability embraces autonomy, but it understands it and reinterprets it as the capability to open up to the other, the capability to respond to the other." [66] Therefore, the freedom of conscience is essential for being vulnerable to others. It will be examined in the later chapter.

In this sense, vulnerability is not something to practice like virtues. For Aquinas, virtue is a habit, second nature. We can develop virtues in ourselves by practicing them. However, vulnerability is not second nature that we develop through exercises. We can only recognize it. Butler rightly notes, "it is prior to any individual sense of self." [67] Because of vulnerability, we know we are "already" bound to one another. In that sense, Butler rightly notes that our responsibility for others will remain despite the possibility of being hurt.

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[64] Hille Haker, "Dignity and Conflict," in *Value and Vulnerability: An Interfaith Dialogue on Human Dignity*, ed. Matthew R Petrusek editor and Jonathan Rothchild editor (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020), 295.

[65] Haker, "Dignity and Conflict," 303.

[66] Haker, "Dignity and Conflict," 310.

[67] Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," 141.

Butler takes the ethics of the Jewish philosophers Emmanuel Levinas and Hannah Arendt to support her argument. For Levinas, Butler argues, "ethical obligation not only depends upon our vulnerability to the claims of others but establishes us as creatures who are fundamentally defined by that ethical relation." [68] In other words, we are all responsible for one another before others claim, including those we do not know and choose. We can connect the meaning of vulnerability to his notion of "face." In the conversation with the philosopher Philippe Nemo, he said:

> There is first the very uprightness of the face, its upright exposure, without defense. The skin of the face is that which stays most naked, most destitute. It is the most naked, though with a decent nudity. It is the most destitute also: there is an essential poverty in the face; the proof of this is that one tries to mask this poverty by putting on poses, by taking on a countenance. The face is exposed, menaced, as if inviting us to an act of violence. At the same time, the face is what forbids us to kill.[69]

For Levinas, the face is most vulnerable because it is naked, destitute, exposed, and menaced even to violence. However, face ordains and orders people to serve one another.[70] He contends that we should not understand the face from the perspective of phenomenology.[71] Before one notices the color of the eyes and skin of others, the face speaks to us, saying, for example, "Thou shalt not kill." [72] The ethical relationship is beyond knowledge and perception. [73] Ironically, the face is the most vulnerable, but it orders and ordains us to be responsible for another.

Benjamin argues that Levinas theorizes absolute and asymmetrical responsibility for others as an ethical imperative and an alternative to the necessity of mutual recognition. For her,

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[68] Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," 141-142.
[69] Emmanuel Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 1st ed.. (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1985), 86.
[70] Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 97–98.
[71] Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 85.
[72] Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 89.
[73] Lévinas, *Ethics and Infinity*, 88.

this "contradicts the practical experience that a loop of reciprocity is necessary to sustain thirdness, which in turn helps contain some of the complex feelings we have in the face of the other's need."[74] She claims that Levinas' theory would lead to healers or helpers not needing the reciprocity of others to fulfill their roles. As a result, for her, it would only be a complementary relationship of giver and receiver. She uses the relationship between a mother and child as an example. [75] Her opinion is valid, but not all relationships are reciprocal, like a face-to-face experience between a mother and child. Levinas developed his theories as a Jew who witnessed the Holocaust, and his philosophy reflects this historical context. From another Jewish philosopher, Arendt, we can understand the responsibilities within such relationships.

Arendt disputes the view of individualism that allows us to be responsible for those relations that we can enter deliberately and volitionally, making an argument against Adolf Eichmann, one of the major organizers of the Holocaust. Butler argues, "Arendt's accusation against Eichmann bespeaks a firm conviction that none of us may exercise such a prerogative, that those with whom we cohabit the earth are given to us, prior to choice and so prior to any social or political contracts we might enter through deliberation and volition."

Eichmann insisted on his innocence: "With the killing of Jews I had nothing to do. I never killed a Jew, or a non-Jew, for that matter —I never killed any human being. I never gave an order to kill either a Jew or a non-Jew; I just did not do it."[76] Arendt concludes that he was not a Jew-hater and never willed murder. She argues that his crime resulted from his obedience to his superior, who commanded him to kill Jewish people.[77] Eichmann might think his obedience was

[74] Benjamin, *Beyond Doer and Done To*, 95.
[75] Benjamin, *Beyond Doer and Done To*, 96.
[76] Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Penguin Classics (New York, N.Y.: Penguin Books, 2006), 53, Kindle.
[77] Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 406.

a virtue for him as a Nazi officer. However, virtue cannot be cultivated without the recognition of the vulnerability of oneself. Therefore, it is not a virtue.

However, there is tension between these opposing views of Benjamin and other philosophers, Levinas and Arendt. Taking one side or the other is not the best way to resolve that tension. Therefore, Keenan tries to embrace them by proposing a new set of cardinal virtues for modern society. They are justice, fidelity, self-care, and prudence. He writes:

> If justice urges us to treat all people equally, then fidelity makes different claims on us. Fidelity is the virtue that nurtures and sustains the bonds of those special relationships that we enjoy whether by blood, marriage, love, or sacrament. Fidelity requires that we treat with special care those who are closer to us. If justice rests on impartiality and universality, fidelity rests on partiality and particularity.[78]

For him, justice requires a duty to all people, while fidelity involves a responsibility based on a reciprocal relationship. We must often choose a path at a crossroads and discern it based on certain circumstances. [79] In such cases, Daly argues virtue ethics provides "agent-specific action guidance" instead of a single principle based on a particular action or judgment. [80] This will be discussed in a later chapter.

As a result, humans are ontologically vulnerable because they affect each other in relationships. They experience love and solidarity in these relationships but are often hurt, even when they do not intend or do not want to. They are interconnected before noticing others' race, ethnicity, nationality, and all other characteristics. They are vulnerable to one another just because they are humans. Of course, as Benjamin points out, some relationships are unique because of mutual reciprocity. However, we are also responsible for others, even if they are not politically or ethnically connected. That is why Keenan brings justice and fidelity together.

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[78] Keenan, "Proposing Cardinal Virtues," 724–25.
[79] Keenan, Proposing Cardinal Virtues," 726.
[80] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 579.

Humans are not entirely individual but ontologically social; therefore, we cannot but suffer in relationships. Hence, some people strive to avoid being vulnerable to others because they do not want to suffer. On the contrary, others are willing to be vulnerable to others because they love them or believe it is their responsibility. Therefore, vulnerability is a fundamental ground of ethics for both personal and social.

2.2 VULNERABILITY IN THE GOSPELS

In the Gospel, we can find and understand "vulnerability": from Jesus' parables and the Beatitudes. While the parables describe God's vulnerability, the Beatitudes teach us how to be vulnerable. Keenan sees God's vulnerability in Jesus' parables, such as the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, etc. He argues God is vulnerable because it is His nature. Therefore, humans, as *Imago Dei,* are intrinsically vulnerable.[81] Moreover, Jesus taught us how to live vulnerably on the Mountain when he gave the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12).

2.2.1 Jesus' parables

Keenan sees God's vulnerability in Jesus' parables: the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. For him, vulnerability is capacious, vigilant, attentive, and responsive, like the

[81] Keenan, "Vulnerability and the Father of the Prodigal Son."

character of the father of the Prodigal Son. He emphasizes, "The centrality of the story is the enduringly vigilant, attentive, and responsive Father who is so, because he is vulnerable."[82]

We can understand the dynamics of recognizing vulnerability from the narrative of the parable Prodigal Son. The son decided to return to his father when he found himself in precarity. However, he still did not know his father was vulnerable and wanted to say, "I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands" (Luke 15:19). He probably thought his father would punish him. However, his father ran to his son, embraced him, and kissed him, filled with compassion. The father never asked about the son's faults because he was vulnerable. Vulnerability binds us together no matter who we are and what mistakes we make. It leads us to embrace others before asking for responsibility for their sins. It is prior to all human senses. That is why the father could see his son coming from afar and run to him. His vulnerability moves him to do that.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Levite and the priest passed by on the opposite side of the road where the wounded man was. Keenan argues, "They sinned precisely out of their strength."[83] They failed to bother to love and recognize their neighbor. They failed to be vulnerable to the wounded. So, they committed sins because they could have helped him. However, the Samaritan cared for him, sacrificing his time and expenses for travel. No matter who the wounded was, he took care of him because he was moved with compassion. The Samaritan shows us how a vulnerable person enters into another's chaos.

We can also see vulnerability in many other parables of Jesus. In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, for example, the rich man failed to become vulnerable to the poor man, Lazarus. However, God was so vulnerable to Lazarus that He saved him by sending angels to

[82] Keenan, "Vulnerability and the Father of the Prodigal Son."
[83] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom,* 39.

carry him away. The rich man is an example of how those invulnerable to others cannot be vulnerable to God. They reject on their own the vulnerability of God and thereby forsake their own salvation. Keenan rightly notes that sins often originate from strength.[84]

2.2.2 The Beatitudes in Jesus' Sermon on the Mountain

While the parables describe and show God's vulnerability, the Beatitudes teach us how to live vulnerably. In his book *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, Chan notes that the Beatitudes in Matthew 5 are as popular as the Decalogue and hold an important position for both theology and Christian ethics.[85]

The Beatitudes are essential for Christians' moral and spiritual life because Jesus taught us how to live vulnerably (Matthew 5:1-12) through his teaching on the Mountain. Indeed, Augustine says those who piously read Jesus' Sermon on the Mountain "will find in it, so far as regards the highest morals, a perfect standard of the Christian life."[86] In the Beatitudes, we can see the integration of morality and spirituality in the context of vulnerability. Furthermore, Chan interprets the Beatitudes in the light of virtues. He notes that Ambrose and Aquinas related the Beatitudes to virtues.[87] Consequently, this section will examine vulnerability as expressed in the Beatitudes and the virtues associated with some beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 5:3).

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[84] Keenan writes, "I think that when we suffer from moral weaknesses and do not try to overcome them, then we sin. But my experience tells me that many people are very attentive to their weaknesses and actually try to keep them in check, but they still fail. Are they sinning if they try as much as they can?" He believes that in order to understand the reality of sin, we must look at sin that comes from a strength. See Keenan, *Moral Wisdom,* 39.

[85] Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, 141.

[86] Augustine, *On the Sermon on the Mount*, accessed February 1, 2023, Book 1, no.1, https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1601.htm.

[87] Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, 143–44.

Exegeting this first beatitude, Chan notes the Greek term "πτωχος (poor)" refers not only to those "poor with few possessions" but also to those "socially and economically needy and dependent (such as those being forced to beg)."[88] He also argues that the term "poor" has a twofold meaning, religious and economic, and that we can find it in the New and Old Testaments.[89] The poor need God's help and rely on nothing but God. We can see the virtue of humility in them. Chan writes, "The "poor in spirit," who often suffer from economic poverty, are those who acquire the internal attitude of humility." [90]

The poor in spirit are "vulnerable" in two connotations. First, they are susceptible to their impoverished circumstances. Second, they are entirely open and dependent on God, namely, vulnerable to God. In that sense, this beatitude radically claims that the vulnerable in society and the religious community are blessed by God.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Chan notes the term "πενθω (mourn)" refers to "the grief of death and great loss."[91] He finds a connection between those who mourn and the poor in spirit. Likewise, Keenan connects this second beatitude with the first: "Our mourning, the second beatitude, is not over our losses, but rather over the poor in spirit and their condition; that stance calls us to learn an empathetic awareness of the poor in spirit."[92] Reading Butler's *The Powers of Mourning and Violence*, he notes that grief and loss can make us understand how we are understood in hardships. Therefore, mourning challenges our autonomy, self-centeredness, and individualism. It evokes us a sense of relatedness with others.[93]

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[88] Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, 161.
[89] Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, 162.
[90] Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, 163.
[91] Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, 169.
[92] James F. Keenan, "The World at Risk: Vulnerability, Precarity, and Connectedness," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 81, no. 1 (2020): 142, https://doi.org/10.1177/0040563920907633.
[93] Keenan, "The World at Risk: Vulnerability, Precarity, and Connectedness," 143.

In his homily on the Sermon on the Mountain, Augustine says those who mourn are converted to God. They lose the things they held dear in earthly life. They are wounded by some degree of grief caused by that loss.[94] Therefore, those who mourn are vulnerable because of hurt by their loss, their trust in God, and their capacity to empathize with others' suffering.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

In his exegesis, Chan sees the Greek term "πραΰς (meek)" can be translated to the Hebrew word *anawim*, which can be translated into "πτωχοὶ (poor)." Consequently, he notes the term "meek" is a synonym of the term "poor (in spirit)."[95] Keenan writes, "Meekness allows us to meet the other, the poor in spirit, vulnerably." They do not dominate others because they are also poor in spirit. [96]

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Chan writes, "striving for God's righteousness means continually and totally orienting one's heart (including emotions, thinking, and behaviors) to do what God's righteousness demands."[97] The Jesuit biblical scholar Daniel Harrington notes that righteousness refers to God's justice, then human relationships and behavior.[98] Consequently, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness are vulnerable to God and others for two reasons. First, they seek to do God's will. Second, they practice righteousness in their relationships with others.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

For Aquinas, mercy is the greatest of moral virtues; it is the love of neighbors (II-II, Q.30, A.4, resp.). Therefore, those who are merciful are vulnerable to others. Harrington notes

[94] Augustine, *On the Sermon on the Mount*, Book 1, no.4.
[95] Chan, "Bridging Christian and Confucian Ethics," 178.
[96] Keenan, "The World at Risk," 142.
[97] Chan, *The Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes*, 188.
[98] Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Sacra Pagina Series 1 (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1991), 79.

that mercy is an attribute of God, who asks for mercy from human beings.[99] Hence, they are vulnerable to God because they follow God's desire. Aquinas' understanding of mercy will be elaborated on in a later chapter.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Chan grasps Harrington's view on the seventh beatitude: "pure in heart" refers to the integrity from interior life to intentions and external actions.[100] He contrasts it with hypocrisy. Jesus did not denounce those who were considered sinners but critically blamed hypocrites: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" (Matthew 23:23). Therefore, the pure in heart are vulnerable to God, while hypocrites are not vulnerable to God because they denied Christ, the Son of God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Harrington writes, "Although all peace comes from God and perfect peace will be realized only in God's kingdom, following Jesus in the present demands the active pursuit of peace."[101] God does not need humans' actions to fulfill His will, "for God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). Nevertheless, He invites us to work with Him. After God raised Jesus from the dead and Jesus ascended into heaven, the disciples "went out and proclaimed the good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it" (Mark 16:20). Therefore, those who want to follow Christ should work with Jesus, who gave peace.[102] However, they should be vulnerable because they will suffer accusations and persecution.[103]

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[99] Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 79.
[100] Chan, "Bridging Christian and Confucian Ethics," 202.
[101] Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 79.
[102] "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives" (John 14:27).
[103] "They will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name" (Luke 21:12)

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

The eighth beatitude echoes Keenan's description of vulnerability:

> Love does not regret the price it pays for making itself vulnerable, but to speak of paying a price is itself to acknowledge that the suffering is itself an evil. Vulnerability, on the other hand, is a perfection of loving freedom. We imitate God when we practice this vulnerability and its accompanying mercy—that is, the willingness to enter into the chaos of another. That merciful act often entails an elective suffering for the sake of others.[104]

As noted above, God's righteousness refers to God's justice, and it is related to human relationships, too. Those who pursue God's justice cannot avoid persecution. Jesus said, "They persecuted the prophets who were before you" (Matthew 5:12). As Keenan says, those who care for others will enter into others' chaos and a precarious situation. In other words, they will become vulnerable.

In conclusion, the Beatitudes teach how to be vulnerable to God and others. Those willing to be vulnerable will have the kingdom of heaven and become the children of God. They will see God "face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12). Jesus is our exemplar, who is vulnerable. He teaches us how to become like him. Jesus' parables show how God is vulnerable. Jesus' Sermon on the Mount shows how to become vulnerable. Jesus' life in the Gospel shows how Jesus lived vulnerably to God and us. To practice this vulnerability, we need spiritual training. The *Spiritual Exercises* are one of the most excellent tools to recognize, understand, and practice vulnerability.

[104] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, 62.

2.3 VULNERABILITY IN THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*

This part examines vulnerability in the *Spiritual Exercises,* which are rooted in Ignatius' personal experience of being vulnerable to God. The Jesuit Tiziano Ferraroni points out moments when Ignatius became vulnerable to God. The first was when he lay in bed with a cannonball wound on his leg. Ferraroni writes: "Perhaps Ignatius would go so far as to confide to us that in certain moments he felt overwhelmed by a wave of despair, as if a black liquid invaded his heart." [105] At that time, he became vulnerable, yet he was not open to God but in precarity. However, the wound forced him to look back at his past, reading the only two books he had, *Life of Christ* and the *Lives of the Saints*. Finally, he became "vulnerable" to God. Ferraroni describes that Ignatius would declare, "In that bed, for the first time, my eyes were opened, and suddenly everything seemed new, alive, different. God was there, everywhere, I felt Him present. During those days I felt Life blossoming in me, and I never left it, and it never left me again." [106] However, it is not the end of his journey to becoming vulnerable.

The second moment was when Ignatius struggled with scruples. Although he began to convert, he could not experience God's mercy yet. Ferraroni says Ignatius hated his own vulnerability back then.[107] However, he surrendered and cried out to God: "Help me, Lord, for I find no remedy in people, nor in any creature. Yet, if I thought I could find it, no labor would be too hard for me. Yourself, Lord, show me where I may find it. Even if I have to chase after a puppy that it may give me the remedy, I will do it." [108] Ferraroni notes that Ignatius describes

[105] Tiziano Ferraroni, "Vulnerability in the Eyes of Ignatius," *Ignatian Year* (blog), October 13, 2021, https://ignatius500.global/2021/10/13/vulnerability-in-the-eyes-of-ignatius/.

[106] Ferraroni, "Vulnerability in the Eyes of Ignatius."

[107] Ferraroni, "Vulnerability in the Eyes of Ignatius."

[108] Ignatius of Loyola, *A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, ed. Barton T Geger, Revised Edition.. (Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts: Institute of Jesuit Sources at the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies, Boston College, 2020), [23].

God as "Lord" for the first time here. Ferraroni argues "God" sounds somewhat abstract while "Lord" evokes a relationship. [109] At that moment, Ignatius became vulnerable in a true sense: vulnerable to God, who is the Lord.

From Ignatius' conversion, we can understand the process of accepting one's own vulnerability. First, every person is intrinsically vulnerable because vulnerability is an aspect of human nature. However, people do not know they are vulnerable when they are mentally and physically healthy. Second, one might face her vulnerability in hardships, but she would reject and hate it. Third, she realizes that she cannot overcome struggles on her own. Finally, she surrenders to God and becomes vulnerable to God.

We can find this conversion process, namely becoming vulnerable to God in the *Spiritual Exercises*: from the Meditation on Sins in the First Week to the Contemplation to Attain Love in the Fourth Week. At the beginning of the *Exercises*, exercitants meditate on sins. What is the purpose of the meditation on sins? The Jesuit spiritual author Joseph Tetlow argues, "We have to learn that God's creative love comes first, and not our sins. The true model of God's work in the world is creation and salvation, all of it God's initiative." He contends that our common error is to make "the initiative rise out of our sin." [110] In other words, we sin, and then God redeems us. For him, it is a deep misunderstanding of God's work. God's love is most crucial in the whole *Exercises*, including the meditation on sins. Exercitants contrast God's love with their sins, looking back at their past.

It is the first moment when the exercitant encounters God's vulnerability in the *Spiritual Exercises*. The exercitant recognizes that God is vulnerable to him, imagining Jesus, the Creator,

[109] Ferraroni Tiziano, "IGNATIUS' CONVERSION: From a God in His Own Image to a God Greater than Any Image," *The Way* 61, no. 3 (2022): 125.

[110] Joseph A. Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*, Crossroad Spiritual Legacy Series (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 57.

on the cross in the colloquy where Ignatius gives the triple question: "What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?" (Exx. 53).

Ignatius deliberately places the mediation on sins as the very first exercise. Butler contends, emphasizing the priority of vulnerability, "This ethical relation is not a virtue that I have or exercise; it is prior to any individual sense of self."[111] Therefore, we need to recognize and understand vulnerability before any other exercises. Lobo claims only those who have deeply contemplated the vulnerability of God can find meaning in embracing a faith that demands such dedication from their lives.[112]

Through the meditation on sins, exercitants look back at their past, precisely sinful and precarious moments that they could not overcome the situation on their own. As Ignatius points out, exercitants might see God as always merciful despite their sins (see Exx. 60), like the prodigal son's father. They will surrender to God as the son comes to his father, saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands" (Luke 15:18-19). Like the father, God is vulnerable to exercitants. They will realize how God is vulnerable. Then, they will recognize they are vulnerable as God is vulnerable through the exercises that follow.

The culmination of the revelation of God's vulnerability is Jesus on the cross. Ignatius invites exercitants to "imagine Christ our Lord present before you upon the cross, and begin to speak with him, asking how it is that though He is the Creator, He has stooped to become man, and to pass from eternal life to death here in time, that thus He might die for our sins" (Exx. 53). He is the Creator on the cross! God is suffering and dying for us! The cross shows us how vulnerable God is. The Creator became man to save us and died for us.

[111] Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," 141.
[112] Lobo, "Fede e Vulnerabilità."

Ignatius invites exercitants to ask themselves the triple question: "What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?" (Exx. 53). These are not questions about 'doing something.' Rather, Keenan notes, exercitants examine themselves and look at who they are and whom they are called to be as a disciple of Christ through the triple question.[113] Similarly, Tetlow says, "What am I for? How will I know what I am to become? In the *Spiritual Exercises*, we postulate that God our Creator and Lord has real, concrete hopes in us and for us. We postulate that we can know them in knowing our truest, most authentic desires."[114] For him, the triple questions are related to our desires for Christ.

They lead us to realize who we are called to be Christ's disciples. Jesus said to his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Jesus is vulnerable to taking up His cross. Therefore, those who want to be his disciple should be vulnerable like him.

Ignatius' conversion was not completed all at once when he was wounded. He repeatedly struggled with his sins and weaknesses from the time he was converted in his bed with the books *Life of Christ* and the *Lives of the Saints*. Likewise, exercitants might experience a similar conversion process during the whole *Exercises*. In the Second Week, they see how Jesus is vulnerable to his Father, disciples, and others, contemplating Jesus' life. In the Third Week, they face the zenith of Jesus' vulnerability, contemplating the Passion of Christ. Through the Fourth Week, they feel God's love in His vulnerability, contemplating Jesus' resurrection and the last exercise, the Contemplation to Attain Love.

The contemplation invites exercitants to become vulnerable in the *Exercises* and their life after the retreat. Taking Tetlow's view, the Jesuit spiritual director William Barry notes that the

[113] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 42.
[114] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*, 53.

primary end of this exercise is not to simply receive God's love but contemplate how God loves: "the point is not to obtain God's love, or to learn to love God. It is to know how to love the way God loves, and to love God and every other person in that way." [115] Ignatius offers four prayer points. Each point invites exercitants how God loves: "How much God our Lord has done for me" (Exx. 233), "How God dwells in creatures" (Exx. 234), "How God labors and works for me in all the creatures" (Exx. 235), and "How all good things and gifts descend from above" (Exx. 236). Through this exercise, exercitants might desire to be vulnerable as God is vulnerable to all creatures.

For these reasons, vulnerability is the key to understanding the *Spiritual Exercises*. Furthermore, it is deeply connected to the virtue of charity. Aquinas describes charity as the "mother," "root," and "form" of all other virtues.[116] Therefore, examining the relationship between vulnerability and charity is crucial to see vulnerability in the light of virtues.

2.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN VULNERABILITY AND VIRTUES

Although many contemporary ethicists have introduced vulnerability in their ethics, Marina Berzins McCoy, the expert on ancient Greek philosophy, points out vulnerability has not often been linked with virtue. She etymologically describes vulnerability; "being vulnerable" means "capable of being wounded." [117] Then, she argues, "Awareness of one's own and others'

[115] William A. Barry, *Finding God in All Things: A Companion to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Companion to the Spiritual Exercises of St.Ignatius*, Kindle Edition (Notre Dame, Ind.: Ave Maria Press, 1991), 131.; Also See Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*, 145.

[116] Bonnie Kent, "Habits and Virtues (La Ilae, Qq. 49-70)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope and James F. Keenan, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 122.

[117] Marina Berzins McCoy, *Wounded Heroes: Vulnerability as a Virtue in Ancient Greek Literature and Philosophy*, 1st edition (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2013), vii.

capacity to be wounded, and the proper response to it, are a central part of virtue for successful communities."[118]

McCoy sees the moral value of vulnerability in ancient Greek literature and philosophy. The *Iliad* tells us vulnerability is essential for developing the meaning of life in the community; warriors' suffering is not only for individuals but also for the community. [119] *Oedipus at Colonus* shows that the incorporation and integration of the vulnerable Oedipus into the city of Athens constitutes part of the city's democratic strength. [120] In the *Philoctetes*, McCoy notes, his vulnerability makes Philoctetes understand his own humanity and his need for others. Therefore, vulnerability has an epistemological and moral value. [121] She sees the importance of awareness of one's vulnerability in Plato's *Gorgias*. Humans are vulnerable; they have limits to life, death, and freedom. They also have a lack of morality and perception of their nature. However, she notes that Callicles does not accept such vulnerability. He takes advantage of politics to satisfy his desires. [122] She argues the *Symposium* says that recognizing vulnerability is essential for the possibility of eros. She notes that eros is about a lover, a beloved, and the creative acts between a lover and a beloved. "The source of this creativity, however, is in incompleteness and need, and a striving to be responsive to that need." [123] She points out that Aristotle sees vulnerability in friendship. For Aristotle, even a virtuous man needs friends to help him exercise virtue. However, a single friend is not enough; those who want to be virtuous must participate in a wider community. [124] McCoy contends that *Poetics* contributes to a deeper understanding of how narrative can help shape the appropriate human response to vulnerability. Knowledge of human

[118] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* ix.
[119] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* 1-36; 205-206.
[120] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* 37-62; 206-207.
[121] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* 63-87; 207.
[122] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* 89-113; 207-208.
[123] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* 115-139; 208.
[124] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* 141-167; 209.

limits and vulnerability is necessary for good political action. [125] She concludes her book by saying, "Our own political communities would do well to respond in a similar fashion, not marginalizing the vulnerable, but instead recognizing a common bond between 'the vulnerable' and oneself."[126]

In his *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Eudemian Ethics,* Aristotle binds friendship, community, and justice together.[127] He argues:

> Friendship and justice seem, as we have said at the outset of our discussion, to be concerned with the same objects and exhibited between the same persons. For in every community there is thought to be some form of justice, and friendship too; at least men address as friends their fellow voyagers and fellow soldiers, and so too those associated with them in any other kind of community. And the extent of their association is the extent of their friendship, as it is the extent to which justice exists between them. And the proverb 'What friends have is common property' expresses the truth; for friendship depends on community (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 8.9.1159b25–32).[128]

For him, virtuous characters are vulnerable to others in their community because they share the common good as a good citizen. Therefore, McCoy rightly argues the appropriate response to one's own vulnerability and that of others is a crucial part of virtue. [129]

In the same sense, vulnerability is at the heart of the development of virtue in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Vulnerability is fundamentally linked to virtue, especially charity, because recognizing God's vulnerability to humanity is crucial to a deep relationship with God. Aquinas describes charity as "the friendship of man for God" (II-II, Q.23, A.1, resp.), and it "unites us to God" (II-II, Q.23, A.3, resp.). Those who recognize and experience God's vulnerability, like the prodigal son, will spiritually grow in charity.

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[125] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* 169-203; 209-210.
[126] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* 210.
[127] David J Riesbeck, *Aristotle on Political Community* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 58.
[128] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. David Ross, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).
[129] McCoy, *Wounded Heroes,* ix.

In the meditation on sins, exercitants should be careful not to focus on themselves. They should look at God. Sin is contrary to the nature of God, and it is not the object of the *Exercises*. Tetlow warns us to distinguish moral shame and guilt from neurotic shame and guilt. Of course, they find themselves in chaos due to their sins. However, Tetlow emphasizes, "these appreciations come in God's presence, who will not let you see into the horror of sin until He has taught you how He loves you, and then only in the measure in which you have accepted your Lord's love."[130] In God's love, meditating on sins will lead exercitants to recognize God's vulnerability. He does not condemn us. The more we face our sins, the deeper we can feel God's love. Keenan rightly notes, "Sin teaches us never to look back complacently but always to look forward in love and in hope."[131]

Vulnerability is foundationally connected with charity. In *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas argues, "The Divine Essence Itself is charity," and "the charity whereby formally we love our neighbor is a participation of Divine charity" (II-II, Q.23, A.2). Keenan writes, "our vulnerability is our answerability, what allows and prompts us to recognize, to respond, to communicate, in short, to love."[132] Vulnerability leads us to recognize our neighbors and love them. McDonagh also argues that one becomes vulnerable in "loving recognition" and "the acceptance of the different, of the other." If we let ourselves be with others as Jesus came and lived among us, we become "vulnerable to the holy." It is the acceptance and reflection of God's redemptive-creative work.[133] In sum, we recognize and love neighbors, participating in God's nature, Divine vulnerability and charity.

[130] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*, 59.
[131] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, 49.
[132] Keenan, "Vulnerability, Recognition and Conscience: Making Connections," 6.
[133] McDonagh, *Vulnerable to the Holy*, 12–13.

When exercitants look back at their past and reflect on their sins, they remember that they failed to act in mercy. Exercitants might realize they were like the Levite and the priest who passed the wounded in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Keenan invites us to think of the Last Judgment. “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me” (Matthew 25:45). Those who do not take care of the little ones will fall into eternal punishment, like the rich man in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. However, Ignatius gives the following point:

> This is an exclamation of wonder and surging emotion, uttered as I reflect on all creatures and wonder how they have allowed me to live and have preserved me in life. The angels: How is it that, although they are the swords of God's justice, they have borne with me, protected me, and prayed for me? The saints: How is it that they have interceded and prayed for me? Likewise, the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, and the elements, the fruits, birds, fishes, and animals. And the earth: How is it that it has not opened up and swallowed me, creating new hells for me to suffer in forever? (Exx. 60)

In the meditation on sins, Ignatius wants exercitants to experience God’s love, which is Divine charity. They ask themselves, “What ought I to do for Christ?” Those who feel God’s mercy might know what to do. It is an act of mercy! After telling the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus said, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). If exercitants accept Jesus’ demand, a significant change will occur in them. At first, like the Prodigal Son, they might fear God’s judgment. However, they will experience God’s steadfast love through this meditation. Finally, they want to act out of mercy for Christ. Charity begins to form in them, leading them to acts of mercy. For Aquinas, mercy results from charity; it is an effect of charity (II-II, Q.30, A.3). The relationship between charity and mercy will be examined in the later chapter.

Charity is different from all other virtues. Aquinas argues, “Charity is called the form of the other virtues not as being their exemplar or their essential form, but rather by way of efficient cause, in so far as it sets the form on all, in the aforesaid manner” (II-II, Q.23, A.8). Therefore,

other virtues are lacking without charity. Aquinas follows St Paul, who contends charity is the greatest among the theological virtues. "Charity precedes faith and hope: because both faith and hope are quickened by charity, and receive from charity their full complement as virtues" (I-II, Q.62, A.4).

Charity alone leads humans to love God. The end of the *Spiritual Exercises* is the relationship with God. Kent argues, "In Thomas's view, the virtue of charity, which has God as its object and enables people to act from the love of God, exceeds every other virtue."[134] Therefore exercitants can never achieve the goal of the *Exercises* without charity.

For these reasons, vulnerability with accompanying charity is the beginning and the end of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Ignatius deliberately places the meditation on sins as the very first exercise. Moreover, the *Exercises* ends with the Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx. 230-237). All the exercises, including the first and the last, lead exercitants to recognize God's vulnerability and experience His love for them. Consequently, they will want to be vulnerable like Jesus, following him as his disciples. This is the goal of the *Exercises*.

In conclusion, vulnerability is essential for ethics and Ignatian spirituality, precisely the *Exercises*. First, vulnerability is a fundamental ground of ethics because human beings are ontologically interconnected and affect each other in their relationships. Second, we can see vulnerability in the Gospel. Jesus' parables tell us about God's vulnerability; the Beatitudes teach us how to live vulnerably. Third, it is critical to understand the dynamics of the *Exercises*, which are rooted in Ignatius' personal experience to recognize God's vulnerability and to be vulnerable to God in return. Finally, vulnerability is fundamentally linked to virtue, especially charity, because recognizing God's vulnerability to humanity is crucial to a deep relationship with God.

[134] Kent, "Habits and Virtues," 124.

3.0 FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE IN ORDER TO BE VULNERABLE

This chapter will examine how vulnerability, virtue, and freedom are dynamically intertwined in the *Spiritual Exercises*. In general, vulnerability is considered to be an essential prerequisite for freedom. For example, a person who is willing to be vulnerable and open to others is free to act according to his or her will. In the spiritual sense, however, one cannot practice vulnerability without inner freedom. In other words, vulnerability is part of human nature, so people should be free from any obstacle that prevents them from practicing what is of their nature, e.g., vulnerability. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius asserts that exercitants cannot discern God's will unless they are free from inordinate affections (Exx. 1).

As vulnerability and freedom are deeply connected, virtue is also foundationally related to freedom. First, "The act of virtue is nothing else than the good use of free-will" (I-II, Q.55, A.1, ad.2). Second, freedom results from virtue, especially charity (II-II, Q.184, A.4, ad.1). Hence, vulnerability, virtue, and freedom are fundamentally intertwined in the *Exercises*.

The first section of this chapter will examine Ignatius' appreciation of freedom, rooted in a personal relationship with God. Then, it will link it to Aquinas' virtue ethics and one of the most quoted conciliar texts from *Gaudium et Spes,* the Pastoral Constitution on the Church from the Second Council of the Vatican. They lend credence to Ignatius' understanding.

The second section will explore the process of becoming free through the *Exercises*. Ignatius designed the *Exercises,* through which exercitants would become more and more free as they progress from the First Week to the Fourth Week. Therefore, this section will show how the *Exercises* help exercitants to be vulnerable to God, strengthened by virtues, in their freedom from all the obstacles that prevent them from discerning God's will throughout the *Exercises*.

3.1 IGNATIUS' APPRECIATION OF CONSCIENCE

In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius emphasizes a personal relationship with God. It is the most important foundation for Ignatius' understanding of freedom of conscience. In the Introductory Explanations, he writes that the purpose of the *Exercises* is "seeking and finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul" (Exx.1). Ignatius wants exercitants to focus on God's will for their lives, not others' lives. Therefore, he writes,

> The one giving the Exercises should not urge the one receiving them toward poverty or any other promise more than toward their opposites, or to one state or manner of living more than to another. Outside the Exercises it is lawful and meritorious for us to counsel those who are probably suitable for it to choose continence, virginity, religious life, and all forms of evangelical perfection. But during these Spiritual Exercises when a person is seeking God's will, it is more appropriate and far better that the Creator and Lord himself should communicate himself to the devout soul (Exx. 15).

Here, Keenan sees Ignatius' appreciation of personal uniqueness.[135] Aquinas contends it is meritorious to persuade others to enter religious life (II-II, Q.189, A.9, resp.). He thinks living a religious life is a great way to cultivate virtues, especially charity, to perfect one's life and seek ultimate happiness. [136] He ends the Second Part by describing his desire to inspire readers to the service of God (II-II, Q.189, A.9, ad.2). He says it is commendable to join the religious life without much hesitation and advice (II-II, Q.189, A.10, resp.). Ignatius's view is similar to Aquinas's, but he believes it is not lawful to lead exercitants to choose such lives during the *Exercises*. He intends to create an atmosphere for full communion between God and an exercitant. The ultimate and true director of the *Exercises* is not a spiritual director, but God,

[135] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 41.

[136] Mark D Jordan, *Teaching Bodies: Moral Formation in the Summa of Thomas Aquinas*, First edition.. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017), 61.

because He knows His creature best, even more than exercitants themselves. Augustine says, in this sense, "You are more inward to me than my most inward part" (*Confessions*, 3.6.11).

In the colloquy of the meditation on sins, Ignatius invites exercitants to ask, "What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?" (Exx. 52). In the autograph of the *Spiritual Exercises,* the original Spanish text is "*Lo que he hecho por Christo, lo que hago por Christo, lo que debo hacer por Christo*."[137] Here, he writes in the first person singular, not the plural. He then emphasizes "I" in front of Jesus on the cross. Moreover, he describes what Christ's redemptive works have done "for me." In the third point of the contemplation of Nativity, he writes:

> This is to behold and consider what they are doing; for example, journeying and toiling, in order that the Lord may be born in greatest poverty; and that after so many hardships of hunger, thirst, heat, cold, injuries, and insults, he may die on the cross! And all this for me! Then I will reflect and draw some spiritual profit (Exx. 116).

Therefore, there is a critical dynamic between Christ and an exercitant in the *Exercises*. Christ has done "all this for me" (*todo esto por mí*), and an exercitant reflects on what she or he has done, is doing, and will do for Christ. This is the essential feature of the *Exercises*. Therefore, those who give the *Exercises* are not advisers or counselors to provide answers to exercitants. They must be able to step back and allow God to be the ultimate director of exercitants.

In the Contemplation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, Ignatius presents this prayer:

> I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision, provided only that it is for your greater service and praise, to imitate you in bearing all injuries and affronts, and any poverty, actual as well as spiritual, if your Most Holy Majesty desires to choose and receive me into such a life and state (Exx. 98).

[137] San Ignacio de Loyola, *Ejercicios Espirituales* (Red Ediciones, 2011), Kindle.

Through the *Exercises*, exercitants are led to recognize their desires. They may want to dedicate themselves voluntarily to a certain devotional life in order to serve God. Tetlow rightly argues that Ignatius "fills his book with emotions and feelings, a large sense of harmony, intimacy, intense personal relations, tenderness, and a prime concern for each person's gifts and desires."[138] Ignatius wants exercitants to recognize their desire to imitate and follow Jesus through their feelings and emotions in the intimate relationship with him.

The late Jesuit spiritual writer Herbert Alphonso understands Ignatian spirituality and the *Exercises* from the perspective of "personal vocation." He writes:

> The Ignatian "greater" and "*magis*" make no reference whatever to a quantitative element or factor: it has to do with the qualitative "uniqueness" or "specificity" of a particular person's response. In other words, it has direct reference to what I have termed the "personal vocation."[139]

He notes that Ignatius emphasized "the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and imprints upon hearts" in the Jesuit *Constitutions*.[140] For Alphonso, discerning God's calling to oneself is essential for those who aim to accomplish the purpose of the *Exercises*. The more exercitants acknowledge their personal vocation, the greater glory of God they seek; God calls them in a unique way for each person.

The personal relationship with God is fundamentally related to freedom of conscience. In the first rule for the Discernment of Spirits, Ignatius writes:

> In the case of persons who are going from one mortal sin to another, the enemy ordinarily proposes to them apparent pleasures. He makes them imagine delights and pleasures of the senses, in order to hold them fast and plunge them deeper into their sins and vices.

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[138] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*, 17.

[139] Herbert Alphonso, *Discovering Your Personal Vocation: The Search for Meaning through the Spiritual Exercises* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 45.

[140] John W. Padberg, S.J., ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms: A Complete English Translation of the Official Latin Texts*, First Edition, vol. 1, Jesuit Primary Sources in English Translation 15 (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), §134, 56, https://jesuitas.lat/uploads/the-constitutions-of-the-society-of-jesus-and-their-complementary-norms/Constitutions%20and%20Norms%20SJ%20ingls.pdf.

> But with persons of this type the good spirit uses a contrary procedure. Through their good judgment on problems of morality he stings their consciences with remorse (Exx. 314).

The "good spirit" means the Holy Spirit,[141] who speaks personally in one's conscience by resonating with it. The Jesuit writer Gerard Hughes argues, "The Exercises can be a most effective instrument for the formation of a Christian conscience, provided they are given as St Ignatius advises in the annotations." For him, the *Exercises* do not provide ready-to-wear principles and make exercitants conform to others. [142] Exercitants are to determine their acts and decide on their own in their personal relationship with God without any obligations or intervention by others, including their spiritual director. For this, they should be free from disordered affection, or they cannot notice the stings of the Spirit in their conscience.

In his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas understands freedom from two points of view: *libertas* (freedom) and *liberum arbitrium* (free will).[143] For him, all human beings have free will, but not all have true freedom. To attain true freedom, man should surrender to God and depend on Him. The Dominican moral theologian Servais Pinckaers notes that Aquinas' *Summa* is based on his studies on human cognitive and appetitive powers, which focus on exercising free will.[144] Aquinas writes, "Man is said to be made in God's image, insofar as the image implies an intelligent being endowed with free-will and self-movement" (I-II, Prologue). As a result, Pinckaers writes, therefore, "It is in our free will that St. Thomas perceives the true image of God within us, for it is in our mastery over our actions that we show forth his image."[145] Humans

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[141] The translator of the *Exercises*, George Ganss identifies the good spirit with the Holy Spirit. See Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, 192.

[142] Gerard W Hughes, "The First Week and the Formation of Conscience," *The Way. Supplement* 24 (1975): 14.

[143] Aquinas cites Augustine's claim: "*Virtus est bonus usus liberi arbitrii* (Virtue is the good use of free-will)" (I-II, Q.55, A.1).

[144] Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 327, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt3fgpbg.

[145] Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 327.

"image God" in their freedom, controlling their actions.[146] Consequently, one cannot attain true freedom outside a relationship with God.

Gaudium et Spes, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church from the Second Council of the Vatican, describes how God relates to people in their conscience:

> In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience when necessary speaks to his heart: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God; to obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged. Conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths. In a wonderful manner conscience reveals that law which is fulfilled by love of God and neighbor. In fidelity to conscience, Christians are joined with the rest of men in the search for truth, and for the genuine solution to the numerous problems which arise in the life of individuals from social relationships. Hence the more right conscience holds sway, the more persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and strive to be guided by the objective norms of morality. [147]

This passage teaches us that personal conscience is not independent from God because He has written a law within it. Furthermore, it is not separate from our relationships with others, as the law is fulfilled through loving God and our neighbors. The more faithful Christians become to their consciences, the more they love God and care for others. Consequently, conscience is a key component of Christian morality.

This passage is among the most quoted conciliar texts in Catholic moral theology. Keenan says it significantly changed moral theology because conscience became the heart of moral judgment. [148] *Gaudium et Spes* also emphasizes freedom: "Only in freedom can man direct

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[146] Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics,* 380.

[147] Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on The Church in The Modern World *Gaudium et Spes*, (7 December 1965), §16, at The Holy See. https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html.

[148] James F. Keenan, "The Renewal of Moral Theology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Vatican II*, ed. Richard R. Gaillardetz, Cambridge Companions to Religion (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 329, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108698610.018.

himself toward goodness."[149] Consequently, a human cannot seek goodness and God's will without freedom of conscience. As noted above, Ignatius writes "the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and imprints upon hearts" in the Jesuit *Constitutions* and describes the Holy Spirit's stings of conscience in the *Exercises*. Therefore, one's freedom of conscience is key to finding God's will and seeking goodness in a personal relationship with God.

For Ignatius, freedom of conscience is crucial in seeking and finding God's will. Without it, exercitants cannot develop a deep relationship with God and follow His will correctly because they are distracted and tempted by their unpurified desires. In order to achieve the goal of the *Exercises*, the love of God and neighbor, exercitants should pay attention to their conscience. As noted above, they will hear the voice of God, feel the Holy Spirit's stings, and acknowledge what He will for them. However, disordered affections prevent them from listening carefully to God's voice and noticing the Spirit's movement in their conscience. That is why Ignatius especially offers the Examination of Conscience. He describes its purpose as "to purify oneself, and to make a better confession" (Exx. 32). Through a confession accompanied by the Examination of Conscience will lead exercitants to be from their sins and be purified from inordinate desires. Through those practices, exercitants will dispose of themselves to be vulnerable to God and others by God's grace.

In sum, Ignatius believes that God writes an interior law of charity in one's heart, which is conscience. Exercitants can feel the Holy Spirit's stings and hear God's voice in their conscience insofar as they are free from sins and inordinate desires. The *Exercises* help

[149] Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, §17.

exercitants prepare and dispose of themselves to seek and find God's will for their lives and the salvation of their souls.

3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF FREEDOM AND VIRTUES IN RECOGNIZING VULNERABILITY IN THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*

For Ignatius, the freer exercitants become, the more they love God and become vulnerable to Him. However, as noted above, sins and disordered inclinations are great obstacles to freedom. According to Augustine, there are two kinds of freedoms: open and closed. While the former involves loving God and others to the point of self-forgetfulness, the latter involves loving the self even more than God and neighbor.[150] Pinckaers notes that the latter freedom is related to sin, which is rooted in self-centeredness.[151] It was the hope and intention of Ignatius that through the *Exercises* exercitants would become more and more free from any hindrance and turn to God as the progressed from the First Week to the Fourth Week. This section will explore this process as exercitants gain freedom in the development of virtues.

At the beginning, Ignatius writes that the purpose of the *Exercises* is to free our soul from all disordered affections to find and pursue God's will for the salvation of our soul (Exx. 1). This is the same as the goal of Aquinas' virtue ethics. According to Aquinas, virtuous people are free from disordered passions or emotion.[152] They can make good choices and pursue God's will because virtues, especially the infused virtues, direct them toward the ultimate end (I-II, Q.65,

[150] Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 42.
[151] Pinckaers, 42.
[152] Thomas M Osborne, *Thomas Aquinas on Virtue* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 88, 90.

A.2, resp.), which is the happiness that consists in "the vision of the Divine Essence" (I-II, Q.3, A.8, resp.). Therefore, freedom and virtue are essentially related.

By grasping the Principle and Foundation, exercitants can understand why freedom is essential for achieving the end for which they were created. First, they should be free from and indifferent to all creatures to the extent that they do not hinder them from the end. Second, freedom leads them to desire and choose what is more conducive to the end. In his commentary on the Principle and Foundation, Tetlow says, "We come to be what God hopes us to be by enacting those desires in freedom. They are our desires; they are God's desires."[153] Exercitants are not forced to choose; they are free. This freedom is rooted in a relationship with God; the *Exercises* lead exercitants to want what God wants for them.

Before making the first exercise, the meditation on sins, Ignatius offers a way to examine one's conscience: the Daily Particular *Examen* and the General *Examen* of Conscience. The Daily Particular *Examen* focuses on a particular sin or fault in order to correct it (Exx. 24-31). In the General *Examen,* exercitants examine their thoughts, words, and deeds hour by hour throughout the day in order to purify themselves and make a better confession (Exx. 32-43). Ignatius encourages exercitants to make a general confession during the *Exercises*, especially right after the First Week (Exx. 44), because they will understand their sinfulness more deeply by meditating on sins. Ignatius expects that exercitants will become freer from sin through all these exercises.

Charity, or the love of God, is the *fundamentum* of the *Exercises*, and the growth in charity is the goal of the *Exercises*. However, one cannot grow in God's love if he or she is blinded by sin. Sin significantly affects one's relationship with God because even a single act of

[153] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*, 53.

mortal sin can exclude charity (II-II, Q.24, A.12, resp.). Therefore, Ignatius deliberately places the meditation on sins as the first exercise of the entire *Exercises* in order to make exercitants free from sins first through God's love. Barry argues, "A profound experience of the forgiveness of God and of the overwhelming realization that Jesus died for me, a sinner, leads to a great sense of freedom, a feeling that a weight has been lifted from one's soul and heart."[154] By meditating on their sins, exercitants realize God's love and mercy for them, while many others may undergo eternal punishment for a single mortal sin.[155] Furthermore, the colloquy with Jesus on the Cross leads them to realize that Jesus died and did everything for them. This leads them to repent and turn to God. To respond willingly to His love, they decide to stop committing sins anymore and follow God's will. They will begin to grow in God's love, or charity, being free from sin.

While exercitants become free from sin in the First week, their freedom becomes more perfect in the following Weeks. The first exercise of the Second Week is the contemplation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. In this contemplation, exercitants imagine Christ calling people to work and be with him. Fleming notes that exercitants respond to Christ's calling in their freedom. He says, "Jesus wants us to join him. But his beckoning does not contain any element of coercion. God beckons, and then waits for our response. Our human response to God is always free." [156] Exercitants should be left to decide in their own freedom, which comes from their unique relationship with God. Ignatius writes,

> Those who desire to show greater devotion and to distinguish themselves in total service to their eternal King and universal Lord, will not only offer their persons for the labor, but go further still. They will work against their human

[154] Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 53.

[155] "I see how many people have been damned for committing a single mortal sin, and how many times I have deserved eternal damnation for my many sins" (Exx. 48).

[156] Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 68.

> sensitivities and against their carnal and worldly love, and they will make offerings of greater worth and moment (Exx. 97).

Instead of urging what exercitants 'should' do, Ignatius describes "those who desire to show greater devotion." He wants exercitants to look at their desire in their freedom and to mirror themselves with "those who desire to show greater devotion" in this exercise. Hughes rightly says that the *Exercises* are an effective way for the forming conscience when exercitants and directors work well according to Ignatius' advice in the Annotations.[157] [158] For him, the formation of conscience must include self-knowledge, including the knowledge of one's emotions and feelings.[159] The *Exercises* help exercitants gain self-knowledge rather than forcing them to conform to a particular rule or principle. Moreover, the *Exercises* respect one's emotions and feelings because experiencing consolations and desolations is essential for discerning God's will and making a good choice.

In the Second Week, another important exercise is the Meditation on Two Standards contrasting freedom and vices. Under the standard of Satan, the leader of the enemy admonishes devils how to seduce people into vices. He suggests the three steps: from riches to honor and then to pride (Exx. 142). On the contrary, under the standard of Christ, Jesus offers the three steps against Satan's steps: from poverty to reproach or contempt and then humility (Exx. 146). The enemy tries to keep people attached or inclined to vices to diminish their freedom. Jesus, however, invites them to be free to follow him for the salvation of souls. Barry points out that

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[157] Ganss translates the Spanish word *annotaciones* as "Introductory Explanations." Ignatius places 20 explanations before the First Week as a kind of introduction. Explanations 3, 5, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20 are for exercitants, and 1, 2, 4, 6-10, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19 are for exercitants, while others are for directors. In the fifteenth explanation, Ignatius instructs directors not to intervene in the communication between exercitants and God. Ganss writes, "In Spanish as in English, the word "annotation'' means a jotting or note added by way of commentary or explanation; e.g., a marginal note. In Ignatius' Exercises, however, a collection of such notes or explanations serves as the introductory chapter to his book. Hence we translate the word by the more descriptive term 'introductory explanations.'" Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, 143.

[158] Hughes, "The First Week and the Formation of Conscience," 14.

[159] Hughes, 6.

exercitants should not simply choose poverty on their own. He writes, "Ignatius suggests that I leave the choosing to God alone. I can ask to be chosen for the life of actual poverty, but I leave the actual choosing to God."[160] They would desire only what God wants for them. For Aquinas, the natural inclination to goodness is the source of freedom.[161] Therefore, one's natural inclinations should be purified in order to freely choose goodness. This meditation leads exercitants to be indifferent and free from disordered inclinations.

Pinckaers emphasizes that human freedom and virtue are deeply connected in Aquinas' perspective. He writes, "The progress and flowering of freedom for excellence by means of all the virtues, centered, for the Christian, in charity, which binds them together, enlivens them, and brings them to their perfection." [162] From the relationship between freedom and natural inclinations, we can understand how freedom and virtue relates. Aquinas notes that human's natural inclination itself is not virtue but it acts according to virtue (I-II, Q.94, A.3, resp.). Human is naturally inclined to goodness and the end (I-II, Q.21, A.1, resp., I-II, Q.62, A.3, resp.) and virtue directs humans to make a good choice and act righteously for the end by reason (I-II, Q.54, A.4, ad.3., I-II, Q.55, A.4, resp.). By cultivating virtues, therefore, natural inclinations are formed to have the character of virtues, and freedom results from this practice. Thus, according to Aquinas, virtue is essential for the development of freedom.[163] On the other hand, freedom fosters the cultivation of virtues. As Pinckaers observes, Aquinas sees freedom as a "faculty proceeding from reason and will, which unite to make the act of choice." [164] The more freedom one possesses, the more one can make a choice for the end in accordance with reason and will.

[160] Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 103.
[161] Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 245.
[162] Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 370.
[163] Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 375.
[164] Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 331.

Therefore, if they have great freedom, they are likely to act in accordance with virtue, which leads them to the end by reason. Therefore, freedom and virtue are interdependent.

In the Third Week, exercitants might resist accepting Jesus' suffering and death first. Barry points out that resistance depends on one's previous experience with suffering and death.[165] However, through the Third and the Fourth Weeks, he notes that exercitants would be freed from the inordinate fear of death.[166] He writes, "In the Spiritual Exercises Ignatius expects that those who have received, in some measure, the grace of compassion for Jesus and his sufferings, both personal and in his mystical body, will begin to desire to experience the joy of Jesus' resurrection."[167] This is a great freedom. Fear, especially inordinate fear, makes people self-centered so as to protect themselves. To become free from this fear, one must face it. The *Exercises*, specifically the Third Week, lead exercitants to confront this fear with Jesus. By contemplating the Passion of Jesus Christ, they confront their fears of death and suffering that they could not face on their own. As they realize that Jesus' death and passion are toward his resurrection, they would become free from their fear. They may not want to stay in their safe zone for themselves, but want to be vulnerable to God and others as Jesus was vulnerable to his Father and people. Keenan rightly notes that vulnerability is "the willingness to enter into the chaos of another."[168] It is a great freedom to enter into the chaos of others, even to the point of risking death and suffering. Jesus said, "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it" (Mark 8:35). Those who are free from the inordinate fear of death would understand this word of Jesus.

[165] Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 123.
[166] Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 127.
[167] Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 125.
[168] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, 62.

The finale to the attainment of perfect freedom is the final exercise, the Contemplation to Attain Love. Ignatius writes it to lead exercitants to love and serve God in all things (Exx. 233). As mentioned earlier, the goal of this contemplation is not simply to obtain God's love but to learn how to love God and His creatures. In other words, exercitants learn how to respond to God's love and practice their vulnerability before God and others. In this contemplation, Ignatius invites exercitants to consider how God dwells and works in creatures for them (Exx. 235-236). Fleming notes that exercitants' response to God's love depends on their freedom. He writes, "Creation is a flow of God's gifts, with a human response being the link that allows the flow to return to God. The human response is a free choice to allow God's creation to speak. Creation helps us to know and love God and to want to live with God forever."[169] Through this contemplation, exercitants would see how God dwells and works in creatures for them and realize how to respond to His love. Loving God is about responding to His love in one's freedom. Pope John Paul II links freedom and love. He writes,

> Freedom is for love. Freedom that is unused, not employed by love, becomes precisely something negative—it gives man a sense of emptiness and unfulfillment. Love engages freedom and fills it with what the will clings to by nature: it fills freedom with the good. The will tends to the good, and freedom belongs to the will, and therefore freedom is for love, for through love man most fully participates in the good.[170]

Without love, freedom cannot not exist. Love is the *fundamentum* that makes freedom perfect. That is why the last exercise, the Contemplation to Attain to Love is the culmination for the development of freedom.

From the grace that Ignatius invites exercitants to ask for in each Week, we can understand how their freedom becomes perfect in recognizing their vulnerability over the course of the *Exercises*. In the First Week, exercitants might ask for the grace to repent and realize that

[169] Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 17.
[170] Pope John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility* (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2013), 117.

they are sinners but loved by God. They desire to become free from sins that keep them from God's love. They realize their vulnerability in encountering God's vulnerability. In the Second Week, they may desire the grace to offer themselves to follow Christ as they gain intimate knowledge of him. They become freer to imitate Christ, who was poor and humble, more than simply avoiding sin. Through the contemplation of Jesus' life, they learn of his vulnerability, which leads them to a deeper understanding of their own vulnerability. In the Third Week, they may desire the grace to share in Jesus' passion and walk with him on the way of the Cross. They would become much freer to follow Christ even to death. In the Fourth Week, they may desire the grace to share with Jesus the joy of his resurrection. They would become free in God's love. They seek to live out their vulnerability, which has been shared by God, in His perfect love.

In this way, the development of freedom and the recognition of vulnerability go together in God's love. While exercitants are free from sin in the First Week, they become free for God when they complete the *Exercises*. As freedom develops, they become more open to God's will and more vulnerable to God. Charity, or God's love, is the foundation of all this. Exercitants become vulnerable to God as their freedom develops, and all the other virtues are strengthened in them through this process. In the next chapter, charity and other virtues, such as humility, prudence, and mercy will be further explored.

4.0 VIRTUES ROOTED IN VULNERABILITY IN THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*

Through the *Spiritual Exercises*, exercitants grow in the development of virtue by encountering God's vulnerability and recognizing their own vulnerability. According to Ignatius, only a humble person can find and seek God's will. In other words, the virtue of humility is necessary to be open to God. In addition, the virtues of charity and mercy are two pillars of the *Exercises.* Aquinas says that charity is the greatest of all the virtues, and mercy is the greatest of the moral virtues. All these virtues are essentially related to vulnerability. Humility makes people open to God's will; in other words, to be vulnerable to God. Charity leads people to love God and be vulnerable to Him, while mercy leads them to love their neighbors and be vulnerable to others. Furthermore, the virtue of prudence is crucial for practicing vulnerability in real life. Without prudence, one cannot be "indifferent" to all things to love God and others properly.

Virtue ethics is an excellent tool for understanding the morality originating from the *Exercises*; the *Exercises* are valuable spiritual training for cultivating virtues to build moral character for Christians. This chapter explores how virtues are strengthened and developed with vulnerability in the *Exercises* and how the *Exercises* aid exercitants in growing morally in their relationship with God.

This chapter proposes Humility, Prudence, Charity, and Mercy. After that, in concluding this work, it will show how virtue ethics helps us understand the process of the *Exercises* and also helps us to do the *Exercises*. In a manner of speaking, virtue ethics helps us see the logic of growing in the virtues while we grow as an exercitant along the way.

4.1 HUMILITY

In the *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius emphasizes humility as a fundamental attitude for discerning God's will. For him, humility involves humbling oneself for the service of God by obeying His will, just as Jesus did (Exx 165-167). Ignatius instructs exercitants to begin their prayer by raising their minds and thinking about how God our Lord is looking at them (Exx. 75). This act of reverence and humility is crucial to enter into contemplation. Humility is a necessary response to God's love for us.

Ignatius presents Jesus as an exemplar for the cultivation of humility. He believes exercitants can develop humility by imitating Jesus. That is why Ignatius offers most of the contemplation of the *Exercises* on the life of Jesus. In the First Week, he invites exercitants to imagine Jesus on the cross (Exx. 53). In the Second Week, he offers contemplations on the life of Jesus according to the Gospel. He also provides other contemplations on Jesus Christ which are not found in the Gospel. They are the Kingdom of Christ (Exx. 91-100), the Incarnation (Exx. 101-109), and the Standard of Christ (Exx. 143-148). In the Third Week, Ignatius presents contemplations on the Passion of Christ (Exx. 190-209). As the first contemplation of the Fourth Week, he invites exercitants to contemplate how Christ appeared to Mary, his mother (Exx. 218-229). In the Mysteries of the Life of Christ Our Lord, he gives prayer points for contemplation on the whole life of Jesus (Exx. 261-312).

For Ignatius, exercitants are to seek "interior knowledge" of Jesus. In the contemplation of the Incarnation, Ignatius writes, "The Third Prelude will be to ask for what I desire. Here it will be to ask for an interior knowledge of Our Lord, who became human for me, that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely" (Exx. 104). He presents this prelude for other

contemplations on Jesus' life, too. The Jesuit spiritual director Pavulraj Michael explains interior knowledge:

> Interior knowledge for Ignatius is not just information but a personal relationship, an involvement. The deeper the involvement and the more intimate the relationship, the more it takes within itself all other life-experiences. When the one that is personally known is God, then interior knowledge is theological faith. This faith-perception is different from normal sensory perception, for it is not sight but insight. Without this faith approach, Jesus will remain to the exercitant just a human being and nothing more, and the experience of Jesus as the Son of God is not possible.[171]

As Michael says, interior knowledge is experiential knowledge in the interaction between an individual and Jesus. It is knowledge based on faith in the Son of God, hope in him, and friendship with him. This knowledge is closely related to faith, hope, and charity and differs from something that could be gained in human relationships.

Fleming argues that the interior knowledge of Jesus is essential for discernment. He writes, "Prayer, a growing familiarity with God, and an intimate knowledge of Jesus and his actions are all elements of a discerning heart."[172] Jesus is our exemplar, who spent a night praying to God (Luke 6:12); he was one with his Father (John 10:30); he "humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8). Hence, those who want to find God's will must have an intense relationship with God and gain a deep interior knowledge of Jesus through prayer, precisely contemplating Jesus' life.

We can understand the humility of Jesus from the notion of *kenosis*. The Greek term κένωσις means "act of emptying" or "emptying" and is used in St Paul's letter to the Philippians: "[he] emptied (ἐκένωσεν) himself" (Philippians 2:7). Christians refer to *kenosis* as meaning Jesus' self-emptying. Jesus gave away everything he received from his Father for us.

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[171] Pavulraj Michael, "Ignatius and His Understanding of God," *Gregorianum* 95, no. 1 (2014): 127.
[172] Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?*, 89.

Kenosis is related to Jesus' obedience to his Father. St Paul describes it in the Letter to the Philippians:

> Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:4-8)

Therefore, those who desire to seek God's will must empty themselves and obey God as Jesus did. Ignatius was eager to imitate Christ. When he stayed in Montserrat, his confessor, Fr. Jean Cannon, introduced Thomas a Kempis' book, *The Imitation of Christ,* to him, and it became his favorite book throughout his entire life. When he served as a Superior General of the Society of Jesus, he read it every day and often recommended it to others.[173] Its influence on Ignatius was significant. The Jesuit scholar of Ignatian spirituality, Barton T. Geger, writes,

> In particular, its themes of self-conquest, personal intimacy with Jesus, and pure intention which means a Christian doing something solely for love of God and for his glory, without any degree of self-interest—appear prominently in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions* of the Jesuit order. [174]

From Geger's notes, we can conclude that seeking God's glory, love for Him, humility (self-conquest), and personal intimacy (interior knowledge) with Jesus are interrelated in *The Imitation of Christ*; and Ignatius naturally put them into the *Exercises*. Consequently, they are essential themes in the *Exercises*, which leads exercitants to imitate Christ.

The humility of Jesus shows us his vulnerability. Kasper writes,

> God did not just stand by and watch human misery. He does not sit motionlessly enthroned over a world full of horror. He himself also became involved in humiliation, suffering and death, even unjust death, in order to be near us in such extreme situations, so that where all hope is lost he can give us hope and a share in his divine life.[175]

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[173] Loyola, *A Pilgrim's Testament*, 100.
[174] Loyola, *A Pilgrim's Testament*, 100.
[175] Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, New ed.. (London: Continuum, 2012), xiii-xiv.

The Son of God became man. He emptied himself. He gave away all that he received from his Father for people. He willingly obeyed his Father's will to save humans. He freely accepted entering this sinful world where people suffered from injustice. He was vulnerable to his Father because he was totally open to His will; he was vulnerable to people because he did not stay away from their pain. Jesus, who is consubstantial with Father and is God, entered the chaos of the world. Keenan says we can imitate God by practicing His vulnerability and mercy, "the willingness to enter into the chaos of another."[176] That vulnerability was revealed by Jesus, who humbled himself and became a man to come into this world for us. Likewise, we can imitate Christ by practicing his vulnerability through which he was willing to share in people's suffering.

Along with the contemplations on Jesus' life, Ignatius presents many spiritual exercises to help exercitants learn humility, imitating Jesus Christ. The Three Ways of Being Humble is one of the most important exercises to learn to be humble to find God's will, namely, vulnerable to God. The exercise precedes the Election. The purpose of the Election is to make a good decision, such as marriage, priesthood, or taking or rejecting temporal goods. Ignatius writes that those who want to make a good election must focus only on the purpose for which they are created, to praise and serve God. Then, they will elect something conducive to that end (Exx. 169). For this, humility is essential.

Ignatius distinguishes three ways of being humble. The first is to obey the law of God. In this state, he says, no one violates a commandment, whether human or divine, which binds them under mortal sin. The second is to be indifferent to everything if possible options are equally effective for the service of God and the salvation of souls. Ignatius says this state is more perfect

[176] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, 62.

than the first. The third is to desire poverty and contempt like Christ to imitate him if options are equally for the glory of God. According to Ignatius, this state shows perfect humility. In his note for the Election, Ignatius writes,

> Before entering into the deliberations about an election, an exercitant who desires to become lovingly attached to the genuine teaching of Christ our Lord will profit much from considering and pondering the three ways of being humble which are described immediately below (Exx. 164).

Ignatius notes that those who want this perfect humility should ask God for grace (Exx. 168). He recommends making the colloquies with Our Lady, her Son, and the Father. In this triple colloquy, exercitants first ask Mary to intercede for them to obtain grace from her Son and the Lord. Then, they ask the same grace from the Son, who obtains it for them from the Father. Finally, they ask the same grace from the Father (Exx. 147).

As Ignatius notes, humility is essential to make a good election. It makes those who want to make an election indifferent to everything. Furthermore, it leads them to desire something conducive to the end of God's creation of them and for the glory of God, even if it is poverty and contempt. In perfect humility, one only makes an election for the service of God and for the salvation of souls. In other words, the greater humility they cultivate, the more they are vulnerable to God and others.

4.2 PRUDENCE

In the *Spiritual Exercises*, prudence is essential for discernment. In virtue ethics, prudence is understood as a balance between excess and deficiency, enabling the achievement of the appropriate end. The late and former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach S.J., says, "Prudence is the central value in discernment, more central even than

charity."[177] It does not mean prudence is greater than charity, but prudence is essential to discernment for practicing out of charity.

Kolvenbach connects *discreción* to prudence. The Spanish word is usually translated to "discernment," but he argues it is legitimate to render it as "prudence."[178] In the Jesuit *Constitutions*, he observes that *prudencia* is sometimes used as an alternative to *discreción*. He says, "It can happen that one is expecting discernment and one finds 'prudence.'"[179] He compares the different texts in a similar context.[180] All these texts are about discerning according to different situations, circumstances, places, and people. He also sees the link between discernment and prudence in the following passage of the *Constitutions*.

> Although learning is highly necessary for one who will have so many learned men in his charge, still more necessary is prudence along with experience in spiritual and interior matters, so that he [the Superior General] may be able to discern the various spirits and to give counsel and remedies to so many who will have spiritual necessities (Const. 729).

Therefore, prudence, along with spiritual experiences, is indispensable to discernment.

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[177]Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, "Discreta Caritas," *Reveiw of Ignatian Spirituality* XXXVII (2006), https://kolvenbach.jesuitgeneral.org/en/archive?view=archivo&id=33, 10.

[178] Kolvenbach, "Discreta Caritas," 11.

[179] Kolvenbach, "Discreta Caritas," 11.

[180] "In regard to the exercises of repetitions, disputations, and speaking Latin, if something ought to be changed because of circumstances of place, time, or persons, the decision will be left to the discretion [*discreción*] of the rector, with authorization, at least in general, from his superior" (Const. 382).

"In general, they [Jesuit scholastics] ought to be instructed about the manner of acting proper to a member of the Society, who has to associate with so great a diversity of persons throughout such varied places. Hence they should foresee the difficulties which may arise and the opportunities which can be grasped for the greater service of God by employing this means or that. Although all this can be taught only by the unction of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27) and by the prudence [*prudencia*] which God our Lord communicates to those who trust in his Divine Majesty, nevertheless the way can at least be opened by some suggestions which help and prepare for the effect that is to be produced by divine grace" (Const. 414).

"Whether in addition to the ordinary masters who have special care of the students there ought to be some one or several who in, the capacity of public lecturers are to give lectures on philosophy or mathematics or some other subject with greater solemnity than the ordinary lecturers, prudence [*prudencia*] will decide, in accordance with the places and persons involved, looking always to the greater edification and the greater service of God our Lord" (Const. 458).

"Just as it pertains to the general to see to it that the Constitutions of the Society are everywhere observed, so too he will have power to grant dispensations in particular cases which require such dispensation, account being taken of persons, places, times, and other circumstances. He will do this with the discretion [*discreción*] which the Eternal Light gives him, looking to the purpose of the Constitutions, which is the greater divine service and the good of those who live in this Institute" (Const. 746).

In the *Constitutions*, Ignatius uses the term *discreta caritas*. It was translated as "prudent charity" in the English translation of the *Constitutions* published in 1996. It is a key to understanding the Jesuit way of proceeding. Ignatius emphasizes it as the quality of the Superior General of the Society of Jesus. He writes,

> He [The Superior General] will also have the task of giving correction and imposing the penances which he judges suitable for any faults whatsoever, with attention given to the persons and other circumstances. The consideration of these is entrusted to his prudent charity [*discreta caritas*], which he will use for the glory of God our Lord" (Const. 754)

Discreta caritas is essential for discernment according to different people and circumstances, and it is for the glory of God. Therefore, Ignatius warns Jesuits not to discern or judge in *caritas indiscreta*. For example, it is *caritas indiscreta* to accept someone into the Society of Jesus when there are clear reasons not to (Const. 217). It is obviously imprudent. In this sense, Kolvenbach says, "Without prudence, charity is *caritas indiscreta* (Const. 217)." [181] He defines *discreta caritas* as "a charity which can discriminate among the spirits that haunt us, the good and the bad, the less good and a greater good, *amour propre* and the greater glory of God."[182] Also, he describes it as moderating to avoid the two extremes and stay in the middle.[183] This idea aligns with Aquinas' understanding of prudence.

According to Aquinas, prudence is the most excellent acquired virtue. It directs moral virtues, appointing them to their ends (I-II, Q. 66, A. 3, ad 3). Therefore, no moral virtue exists without prudence (I-II, Q.58, A.4, resp.). It is different from other cardinal virtues, such as justice, fortitude, and temperance. While they are moral virtues, prudence is an intellectual virtue because it is "the right reason of things to be done" (I-II, Q.57, A.4, resp.). Moral virtues observe

[181]Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, "Discreta Caritas," *Reveiw of Ignatian Spirituality* XXXVII (2006), https://kolvenbach.jesuitgeneral.org/en/archive?view=archivo&id=33, 10.

[182] Kolvenbach, "Discreta Caritas," 11-12.

[183] Kolvenbach, "Discreta Caritas," 13.

the mean between excess and deficiency (I-II, Q.64, A.1, resp.), and prudence directs the moral virtues in choosing the means (I-II, Q.66, A.3, ad.3). Without prudence, therefore, practicing moral virtues is likely to lose balance and fall in extreme, excessive or deficient.

For supernatural end concerning a relationship with God, infused prudence is essential. *Discreta caritas* is related to infused prudence because acquired prudence, one of the moral virtues, aims only at natural ends. In this sense, Aquinas says, "It is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness" (I-II, Q.62, A.1, resp.). Infused prudence is a grace that helps Christians become morally perfect in their relationship with God. Therefore, *discreta caritas* is not about the acquired virtues but the infused virtues, specifically infused prudence and charity. Charity serves as the form of virtues; thus, infused prudence relies on charity (I-II, Q.65, A.2, ad.3).

In the *Exercises*, Ignatius implies the importance of prudence. In the Principle and Foundations, he emphasizes "indifference" (Exx. 23). This inner attitude of indifference is crucial to choose what is more conducive to the end of creation. Kolvenbach notes that those who seek the glory of God in *discreta caritas* become "indifferent." [184] In the second point of the Election, Ignatius writes, "I [Exercitants] should find myself in the middle, like the pointer of a balance, in order to be ready to follow that which I shall perceive to be more to the glory and praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul" (Exx. 179). Without "balance," one cannot make a good election. Kolvenbach notes what Ignatius wants to gain through *discreta caritas* is balance. He writes, "Discerning the right path is often a question of finding the golden mean—the 'measure'— between extremes." [185] Therefore, one should discern God's will with

[184] Kolvenbach, "Discreta Caritas," 17.
[185] Kolvenbach, "Discreta Caritas," 12.

prudence to make a good election. In the fifth note for perceiving and understanding scruples, Ignatius says,

> A person who desires to make progress in the spiritual life ought always to proceed in a manner contrary to that of the enemy. In other words, if the enemy seeks to make a soul lax, it should try to make itself more sensitive. In the same way, if the enemy seeks to make a soul too sensitive, in order to entice it to an extreme, the soul should endeavor to establish itself staunchly in a correct mean and thus arrive at complete peace (Exx. 350).

Ignatius believes the enemy, or bad spirit,[186] strives to lead humans to extremes. They hinder people from discerning God's will in prudence. Ignatius offers Rules for The Discernment of Spirits (Exx. 313-336). He describes the purpose of these rules: "to aid us toward perceiving and then understanding, at least to some extent, the various motions which are caused in the soul: the good motions that they may be received, and the bad that they may be rejected" (Exx. 313). He calls the good motion as "consolation" (Exx. 316), the bad motion "desolation" (Exx. 317). By interpreting these motions, exercitants can discern which spirits are affecting them. As a result, they can accept the action of good spirits and reject the action of bad spirits. Therefore, practicing discernment with a spiritual director is an excellent way to cultivate prudence. Through the *Exercises*, exercitants learn to be prudent to make a good election, discerning various movements of spirits and God's will for the glory of God.

4.3 CHARITY AND MERCY

During the *Spiritual Exercises,* some exercitants focus on their individual relationship with God and overlook morality, especially social relationships or love for neighbors. In such a

[186] Ignatius describes bad spirits as "enemy" or "enemy of human nature" (Exx. 135).

case, exercitants are likely to seek their own spiritual benefit without moral growth regarding relationships with others. Pope Francis warns us against a "spirituality of well-being." He notes that spirituality is not only for the individual but also for the community. It leads people to turn from themselves to others.[187] In agreement with the Pope, this section will argue that spirituality cannot be divorced from morality, and vice versa.

This section will describe the ethics of the *Exercises* in terms of Aquinas' theory of charity and mercy in his *Summa Theologiae*. According to Aquinas, charity is the greatest of all virtues, while mercy is the greatest of moral virtues. Keenan notes,

> Charity is the greatest virtue because by it we are united in love to God; second to charity alone, mercy is the greatest because by it we exemplify God in God's actions and, therefore, we become like God. Charity, in effect, makes it possible for us to be merciful.[188]

Charity is related to one's relationship with God, while mercy is related to love for neighbors. They are inseparable because mercy is an effect of charity and leads us to imitate God. In this sense, morality is inseparable from spirituality, especially when it comes to caring for and loving others in need. This section will show charity and mercy are the two pillars of the *Exercises*.

4.3.1 Charity: The Greatest of All Virtues

According to Aquinas, charity is the greatest of virtues because it is the "mother" and the "form" of other virtues. He writes, "Charity is called the form of the other virtues not as being their exemplar or their essential form, but rather by way of efficient cause, in so far as it sets the form on all, in the aforesaid manner" (II-II, Q.23, A.8, ad.1). Therefore, the other virtues are not

[187] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §90.
[188] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.1, II.

perfect without charity. St. Paul considers charity the greatest among the theological virtues.[189] Following him, Aquinas says, "Charity precedes faith and hope: because both faith and hope are quickened by charity, and receive from charity their full complement as virtues" (I-II, Q.62, A.4, resp.). Consequently, charity is greater than all virtues, including the other theological virtues.

Aquinas refers to charity as "the friendship of man for God" (II-II, Q.23, A.1, resp.) because charity unites us with God (II-II, Q.23, A.3, resp.). Only charity leads humans to God; in other words, it makes them establish a personal relationship with Him. In the Principle and Foundation,[190] Ignatius says, "Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls" (Exx. 23). For him, the purpose of creation of human is having a relationship with God by praising and serving Him. Ignatius wrote the *Exercises* on this foundation. Therefore, charity is the *fundamentum* of the *Exercises*.

Keenan rightly notes that the end of the *Exercises* and virtue ethics are the same. He writes, "The end of the Exercises is the First Principle and Foundation, that is, to serve God alone. That end is the same for virtue ethics in the Christian tradition."[191] Likewise, charity is essential for humans to reach the last end: "the ultimate and principal good of man is the enjoyment of God, according to Ps. 72:28: *It is good for me to adhere to God*, and to this good man is ordered by charity" (II-II, Q.23. A.7, resp.). Therefore, it is reasonable to express the end of the *Exercises* in terms of virtue, precisely charity.

Aquinas argues that humans cannot cultivate and strengthen charity on their own because they only receive it when God infuses them with it. Therefore, it is grace (I-II, Q.62, A.1, resp.).

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[189] And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love. (1Corinthians 13:13)

[190] "The First Principle and Foundation gives us the outline of where Ignatius is leading the retreatants. Once the retreatants have this, they are ready to start the Exercises, and by the middle of the second week it is to be hoped that they will understand it." See Anthony De Mello, *Seek God Everywhere: Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, 1st ed.. (New York: Image/Doubleday, 2010), 17.

[191] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 43.

Ignatius does not lead exercitants to develop charity, or their relationship with God on their own. Instead, he invites them to experience God's love first. The very first exercise of the *Exercises* is the meditation on sins, preceded by the Principle and Foundation.[192]

One might ask why Ignatius places the meditation on sins as the first exercise. For Aquinas, mortal sin is thoroughly contrary to God's love: "Every mortal sin is contrary to charity, which is the root of all the infused virtues, as virtues; and consequently, charity being banished by one act of mortal sin, it follows that all the infused virtues are expelled *as virtues*. (I-II, Q.71, A.4, resp.)" Even a single act of mortal sin breaks one's relationship with God because it excludes charity (II-II, Q.24, A.12, resp.). Ignatius asks exercitants to meditate that a significant number of people have been condemned for one mortal sin and that the exercitants also deserve to be punished (Exx. 48). Yet God has not punished them. Ignatius wants to make exercitants realize God's merciful love through the meditation on sins.

The purpose of this first exercise is to realize God's love rather than simply reflect on individual's sins. Ignatius invites exercitants to contrast themselves to God: "Consider who God is against whom I have sinned, by going through his attributes and comparing them with their opposites in myself" (Exx. 59). Tetlow rightly notes, "We have to learn that God's creative love comes first, and not our sins. The true model of God's work in the world is creation and salvation, all of it God's initiative."[193] For Tetlow, focusing on one's sins more than God's love is a mistake, in which people think that they sin first and then God redeems them.[194] The initiative of God's salvation is not our sins but God's love. God loves humans first and saves

[192] The Principle and Foundation is not an 'exercise.' Ignatius named the Meditation on Sins as "First exercise" (Exx. 45).
[193] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: spiritual exercises*, 57.
[194] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: spiritual exercises*, 57.

with His love. “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

God’s love is crucial because it is the foundation and the ultimate end of the *Exercises*. Ignatius writes, “We ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end.” For him, it is “to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord” and thereby to save our souls (Exx. 23). That is why Ignatius deliberately places the meditation on sins as the first exercise to lead exercitants to make their *Exercises* in experiencing God’s love. Therefore, those who give the *Exercises* should guide exercitants to pursue their spiritual journey with God and in His love. Without sharing in God’s love, one will fail to achieve the goal of the *Exercises*.

Jesus Christ on the cross is the culmination of the revelation of God’s love for humans. According to 1 John 4:10, “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.” Ignatius, therefore, invites exercitants to imagine Jesus on the cross during the colloquy of the meditation. During this colloquy, Ignatius asks exercitants the triple question: “What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?”[195] Keenan rightly notes that exercitants examine who they are and how are called to be disciples of Christ by these questions.[196] Fleming rewrites these questions as, “In the past, what response have I made to Christ? How do I respond to Christ now? What response should I make to Christ?”[197] While “do” seems to emphasize action, “response” seems to focus on a relationship with Christ.

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[195] Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, Exx 53, 28.
[196] Keenan, “Catholic Moral Theology,” 42.
[197] David L. Fleming, *Draw Me into Your Friendship: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading of The Spiritual Exercises*, Series IV--Study Aids on Jesuit Topics ; No. 17 (St. Louis, Mo.: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 49.

According to Aquinas, charity is fundamentally related to the desire to be united with Christ. For him, charity is the form and mother of all the other virtues because "it directs all other virtues to its own end" and "conceives the acts of the other virtues, by the desire of the last end" (II-II, Q.23, A.8, ad.3). He distinguishes three degrees of charity: beginning, progress, and perfection. The last stage "belongs to the perfect who desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (II-II, Q.24, A.9, resp.). Charity is strengthened in humans, leading them to desire to be united with Christ.

Ignatius emphasizes exercitants' desire. In the Principle and Foundation, he says, "we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created" (Exx. 23). He encourages exercitants to ask God for what they desire when they begin their prayers. However, he also advises them to ask for what is relevant to the subject of each exercise. For instance, "In a contemplation on the Resurrection, I will ask for joy with Christ in joy; in a contemplation on the Passion, I will ask for pain, tears, and suffering with Christ suffering" (Exx. 48).

The Jesuit spiritual director William Barry notes the importance of exercitants' desires. He argues, "Each 'week' lasts as long as it takes for the retreatant to attain from God the grace desired."[198] For him, therefore, exercitants should desire God's grace pertinent to the main subject of each Week, and their spiritual directors should confirm if they received that grace before proceeding to the following Week. In the First Week, for example, exercitants may desire the grace to repent and realize they are sinners but loved by God. In the Second Week, they may desire the grace to offer themselves to follow Christ as they gain interior knowledge of him. In the Third Week, they may desire the grace to share in Jesus' passion and follow the way of the

[198] Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 13.

Cross with him. In the Fourth Week, they may desire the grace to share with Jesus the joy of his resurrection. As Barry rightly notes, each Week's goal is critically related to the exercitants' desire for grace to be united with God and Christ. Hence, Aquinas and Ignatius have common ground regarding 'desire.' Without that desire, one cannot grow spiritually and morally in charity.

The Contemplation to Attain Love begins with a special note: "Love consists in a mutual communication between the two persons. (Exx. 231)" Barry notes that Ignatius believes God wants our love, the mutual friendship. Inspired by the traditional prayer *Amina Christi* that Ignatius included in his *Exercises*, Barry describes Jesus as our "Best Friend."[199] Aquinas describes charity as "the friendship of man for God" (II-II, Q.23, A.1, resp.). The virtue of charity is, therefore, essential to this contemplation.

Beginning with the meditations on sins and ending with the Contemplation to Attain Love, from the First week to the Fourth week, exercitants practice a series of exercises. All the exercises are designed to help them experience God's love and develop a desire to follow Jesus Christ as his disciple. As mentioned earlier, exercitants cannot cultivate and strengthen charity on their own. Through the *Exercises*, they can open their hearts to God's grace. In His free will, God infuses them with charity. The more open they are to God, the more willing they are to receive God's grace, especially, charity.

[199] Fleming, *Draw Me into Your Friendship*, 3.

4.3.2 Mercy: The Greatest of Moral Virtues

Mercy is the greatest of the moral virtues and is fundamentally inseparable from charity. Human mercy is not directly related to one's relationship with God because God does not need human mercy. Mercy is about the deficiencies of others, but God has no deficiencies (II-II, Q.30, A.4). The moral theologian Sheryl Overmyer says that mercy is as good as those who possess it. On the contrary, charity makes them good by binding them to God.[200] Mercy itself cannot lead humans to God. Nevertheless, humans need mercy to unite with God for the following reasons.

First, mercy results from charity and is an effect of charity (II-II, Q.30, A.3). Overmyer notes that, for Aquinas, mercy without charity is not true mercy.[201] Second, mercy concerns the needs of others, who are the charity's object. Other effects of charity, such as joy and hope, add nothing to the object of charity since they only flow from charity (II-II, Q.30, A.3, ad.3). Third, Jesus combined charity and mercy when he gave the two greatest commandments. He commanded his disciples to love not only God but also their neighbor. He also said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40). The two commandments cannot be separated: "Whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20). There is no mercy without charity, and charity cannot be realized without mercy. That is why Aquinas says charity extends to the love of others (II-II, Q.25, A.1, resp.). Charity directs humans to God, resulting in mercy that makes them love their neighbors. Fourth, mercy makes the image of God in us perfect and enables us to follow Christ and work as he did. Keenan writes, "Mercy is found in our encounter with God: in

[200] Sheryl Overmyer, "Grace-Perfected Nature: The Interior Effect of Charity in Joy, Peace, and Mercy," in *Questions on Love and Charity: Summa Theologiae, Secunda Secundae, Questions 23-46*, Rethinking the Western Tradition (New Haven, New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2016), 365.

[201] Overmyer, "Grace-Perfected Nature," 366.

response to that mercy, we become imitators of the God in whose image we are made. Likewise, in answer to Christ's call to follow him, we practice mercy."[202] It reminds us of the words of Jesus: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

Overmyer notes that mercy surpasses justice, one of the cardinal virtues, quoting Yves Congar: "Mercy is not opposed to justice. Mercy does not suspend justice; rather, mercy transcends it; mercy is the fulfillment of justice."[203] Aquinas does not include mercy as one of the cardinal virtues, even though it surpasses justice. According to Aquinas, humans can acquire cardinal virtues by their nature without God's grace (I-II, Q.63, A.3, resp.). Mercy is different from them. The cardinal virtues can exist without charity because humans can obtain them on their own. Charity is needed only for the perfection of those virtues. However, mercy does not exist without charity because charity is the efficient cause of mercy. Therefore, mercy is not an acquired virtue but an infused virtue. Overmyer says, "because mercy surpasses human nature so greatly, Thomas calls it a gift of the Holy Spirit and a new infused virtue. As an infused moral virtue, mercy turns our love of God toward our neighbor's suffering."[204] Hence, mercy is an infused moral virtue that humans receive as God's grace. Also, mercy is not a theological virtue because it is not directly related to God but to love for others. Nevertheless, mercy is crucial to one's relationship with God because it results from charity.

Therefore, Christians must act out of mercy. After giving the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus commanded works of mercy to the lawyer who tested him and asked who his neighbor was. He said, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37). As the good Samaritan cared for the wounded, Christians must show mercy to those in need. It is the second greatest commandment

[202] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.1, II.
[203] Overmyer, "Grace-Perfected Nature," 367.
[204] Overmyer, "Grace-Perfected Nature," 365.

that Jesus gave us. Aquinas asserts that it can be a mortal sin to omit to provide alms, which is an act of mercy (II-II, Q.32, A.5, ad.3). Likewise, Keenan contends that sin is the failure to bother to love.[205]

Mercy extends to those whom we may find difficult to love for two reasons. First, Aquinas claims that we must love sinners and enemies because God created them, and they have the same nature God gave us. He writes, "He [a sinner] has a capacity for happiness, on the fellowship of which charity is based" (II-II, Q.25, A.6, resp.). Therefore, we love our enemies for God's sake (II-II, Q.25, A.8, resp.).

Second, Jesus called his disciples friends and commanded them to love one another the same way he loved them.[206] According to Aquinas, charity is "the friendship of man for God" (II-II, Q.23, A.1, resp.). He explains that friendship is twofold: the first is the respect of a friend, and the second is the extension of that respect to those who belong to the friend (II-II, Q.23, A.1, ad.2). If one loves God, he or she must also love the people of God because He loves them. Acts of mercy, an effect of charity, are expressions of love for one's neighbor.

Aquinas asserts, "The sum total of the Christian religion consists in mercy, as regards external works" (II-II, Q.30, A4, ad.2). In other words, mercy is crucial for Christianity. Keenan notes that mercy was not simply a disposition but an active set of practices in the early church.[207] Overmyer criticizes that Christians tend to focus on the intellectual aspects of *Imago Dei* and overlook the fact that Jesus became human.[208] Charity is not limited to intellect. It is the

[205] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, 42.

[206] "I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another (John 13:34)"

[207] Keenan, *A History of Catholic Theological Ethics*, Ch.2, I.

[208] Overmyer, "Grace-Perfected Nature," 368.

foundation of all the other virtues (II-II, Q.23, A.8, ad.3). As an effect of charity, mercy makes Christians participate in God's merciful work for those suffering.

Kasper writes, "Personal connectedness with Jesus Christ means participation in his pro-existence. Consequently, the Christian form of mercy is ultimately Christian existence on behalf of others."[209] Those personally connected with Jesus participate in his pro-existence; then, their act of mercy will represent the realization and incarnation of God's charity for people in this world. Overmyer claims that mercy makes us more human in God's merciful humanity,[210] which was revealed to us through Jesus Christ.

Mercy is the highest form of moral virtue. Although it is not a theological virtue, it perfects the *Imago Dei* in us because it leads us to imitate God's merciful work. Farrell notes, "Mercy is a God-like virtue; indeed, it is a virtue proper to God, one of the chief means of manifesting the divine omnipotence."[211] By practicing mercy, Divine charity is manifested in us because the object of charity is the people God created, specifically the poor and needy. There is no mercy without charity as its efficient cause, and there is no charity without mercy as its effect. St James emphasizes practicing the word we hear: "Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves" (James, 1:22). The Word was incarnated and became man; analogically, the word what we hear should be incarnated in us through mercy. Those who say that they need God's love only, listening to His words but not practicing them, are a liar: "If we say that we have fellowship with him while we are walking in darkness, we lie and do not do what is true" (1John 1:6). Mercy is the greatest moral virtue and inseparable from charity. The unbreakable

[209] Walter Kasper, *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life* (New York ; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2014), 150.

[210] Overmyer, "Grace-Perfected Nature," 368.

[211] Walter Farrell, *A Companion to the Summa*, vol. II-The Pursuit of Happiness (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1938), 108.

relationship between morality and spirituality derives from this fundamental relationship of charity and mercy.

In the *Exercises*, Ignatius presents God as working for each person. He invites exercitants to imagine "what the Divine Persons are doing, that is, bringing about the most holy Incarnation, and other such activities" (Exx. 108). He also describes that Jesus works for the salvation of people. In the Contemplation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, for example, Jesus calls people to be his disciples to "conquer the whole world" together (Exx. 95). In this contemplation, Ignatius provides a prayer to say:

> I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision, provided only that it is for your greater service and praise, to imitate you in bearing all injuries and affronts, and any poverty, actual as well as spiritual, if your Most Holy Majesty desires to choose and receive me into such a life and state (Exx. 98).

This prayer is a dramatic moment in which one's desire meets God's desire. The desire of those who want to imitate Jesus meets that of God who wants to allow them to live such a life. Therefore, only those who desire to imitate Jesus grow in charity, which unites them with God. To imitate Jesus is to come with, labor with, and follow him in his passion and glory to save the people in the world (Exx. 95). Therefore, those who want to follow Jesus must work as Jesus did: work in giving mercy to save people in misery. In the *Exercises*, exercitants, in contemplating Jesus' life, acknowledge how Jesus loves them and others. They gradually gain interior knowledge of him and experience his mercy by practicing exercises given by Ignatius.

As noted earlier, Ignatius respects one's relationship with God. It does not mean that he emphasizes only a personal relationship with God. In the *Exercises,* it is also crucial to imitate Christ, who works for the salvation of souls. In the Jesuit *Constitutions*, he identifies both graces of charity and mercy: "The end of this Society is to devote itself with God's grace not only to the salvation and perfection of the members own souls, but also with that same grace to labor

strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of the souls of their neighbors."[212] It is the same grace: the grace for one's own soul and the grace that enables that person to work for the souls of others. Likewise, Aquinas argues that charity extends to the love of neighbors (II-II, Q.25, A1, resp.).

In the Fourth Week, Ignatius places the Contemplation to Attain Love as the last exercise of the *Exercises*. Ignatius offers four points of prayer. Each point invites exercitants to see how God loves them and other creatures: "How much God our Lord has done for me" (Exx. 233), "how God dwells in creatures" (Exx. 234), "how God labors and works for me in all the creatures" (Exx. 235), and "how all good things and gifts descend from above" (Exx. 236). Although Ignatius does not explicitly talk about loving neighbors here, exercitants may learn and desire to love others because they see how God cares for all. Tetlow and Barry point out that the purpose of this exercise is not just to obtain God's love but to contemplate how God loves us and to learn to love God and others in the same way.[213]

Barry interprets the Contemplation to Attain Love from the communal perspective. Ignatius presents two notes in this exercise. In the second note, he says, "Love consists in a mutual communication between the two persons. That is, the one who loves gives and communicates to the beloved what he or she has, or a part of what one has or can have; and the beloved in return does the same to the lover" (Exx. 231). Barry argues it is God's invitation to a universal community.[214] He writes, "The Ignatian Exercises rest on the theological assumption that God creates this universe precisely in order to invite other persons into the relational life of

[212] Padberg, S.J., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms: A Complete English Translation of the Official Latin Texts*, 1:24.
[213] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*, 145.; Also, See Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 131.
[214] Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 131-132.

the Trinity." He notes that Ignatius learned from his experience that God wants to relate to each person, personally and communally.[215]

Ignatius realized that God wanted him to serve Him in the world. When he underwent a spiritual conversion, he tried to enter the Carthusian monastery, but then he made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After returning to Europe to study theology, he met his companions. They wanted to go and stay together in Jerusalem. However, when they realized this was impossible, they discerned God's will and realized that He wanted them to place themselves at the service of the Pope in Rome for the salvation of souls. Until his death, Ignatius served as Superior General of the Society of Jesus and wrote the Jesuit *Constitutions* in Rome.[216] For him, God is working in a universal community that He created; He wanted him to serve Him for the salvation of souls in the world, not in a cloistered convent. Ignatian spirituality, precisely the *Exercises*, mercy, or love for neighbors in the world, is crucial to serve God and to seek His will.

One's relationship with the Church is also crucial for discernment: "With all judgment of our own put aside, we ought to keep our minds disposed and ready to be obedient in everything to the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our holy Mother the hierarchical Church" (Exx. 353). Ignatius believes one must discern God's will within the Church. In this sense, the goal of the *Exercises* is both personal and communal. Ignatian spirituality is not only a spirituality for an individual's well-being. Its fruit is a deep relationship with God, which extends to the community, precisely the Church.

Consequently, charity and mercy are two pillars of the *Exercises*. The *Exercises* aim to promote not only the individual's spiritual growth but also the growth of personal morality with

[215] Barry, *Finding God in All Things*, 14.
[216] Loyola, *A Pilgrim's Testament,* [12], [85], [96]-[101].

and in the community. Charity and mercy are inseparable. Exercitants will not achieve the goal of the *Exercises* if they consider only one or the other.

4.4 VIRTUE ETHICS AS A TOOL TO EXPRESS THE ETHICS OF THE *EXERCISES*

As noted earlier, there is significant common ground between virtue ethics and the *Exercises*. Therefore, this section will explore some advantages of expressing the ethics of the *Exercises* through virtue ethics.

First, virtue ethics provides a systematic grounding for the morality that emerges in the *Exercises*. Pope Francis warns us against a spirituality of well-being, whereby some people may not consider mercy, the love of their neighbor. We can understand how charity and mercy are interrelated in the *Exercises* and they are the two pillars of the *Exercises*.

Second, virtue ethics helps both a spiritual director and an exercitant achieve the goal of the *Exercises*. Directors may determine whether exercitants are receiving the grace of each Week. Virtue ethics provides guidance for directors to lead exercitants to achieve the goal of the *Exercises*: charity and mercy, in other words, love of God and others.

Third, virtue ethics helps exercitants understand what virtues they need. In the Daily Particular *Examen* of Conscience, Ignatius invites exercitants to examine a particular sin or fault they want to correct. He instructs them to put a dot on every sin they commit on the examination sheet. He does not intend simply to count the number of a particular sin or fault. However, some people focus excessively on their own sins in this examination. It is more important for them to cultivate the virtues opposed to their sins. Thus, virtue ethics would be an excellent tool to teach

them what they need in order to overcome their habitual sin. For example, it provides key virtues for them, such as charity for their relationship with God, mercy for loving others, humility for obedience to God's will, and prudence for discerning God's will and movements of spirits in real life.

Fourth, virtue ethics gives exercitants practical guidance to respond to the grace they receive in the *Exercises*. As noted earlier, Daly argues that virtue ethics provides practical guidance for judgment and action to a moral agent in particular situations.[217] He claims that virtue ethics can guide diverse agents in various circumstances, while principles and norms cannot consider the uniqueness of each case and agent.[218] In his article, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," Daly does not attempt to connect the method of Virtue Action Guidance to Ignatian spirituality. However, this method is practical for bridging virtue ethics and the *Exercises*.

Daly presents three modes of "taking counsel with the virtuous" and two modes of "taking counsel with the virtues."[219] The former modes are compatible with the methodology of the *Exercises*. They are modes of dialogue, emulation, and deliberation.

Daly notes that the dialogue mode leads us to consult with the virtuous members of communities because they can make moral judgments that a moral novice cannot do.[220] It is analogous to the conversation between an exercitant and a director in the *Exercises*. Experienced spiritual directors can discern the movements of good and evil spirits in the exercitants and have a rich knowledge of spiritual matters. Therefore, those who give the *Exercises* must be prudent

[217] Daniel J. Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," *Theological Studies (Baltimore)* 82, no. 4 (2021): 565–82, 569, https://doi.org/10.1177/00405639211055177.
[218] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 579.
[219] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 582.
[220] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 572.

enough to guide someone. Keenan notes that finding a prudent adviser is a sign of growth in virtue.[221] Even after completing their *Exercises*, exercitants may continue to counsel their spiritual director or other virtuous mentors to respond to the grace they have received and cultivate virtues in daily life.

The emulation mode is to imagine a narrative of a moral exemplar.[222] This mode is fully compatible with the method of contemplation offered by Ignatius. In the contemplation of the Nativity, he instructs how to contemplate this narrative:

> FIRST POINT. This will consist in seeing the persons, namely, our Lady, St. Joseph, the maid, and the Child Jesus after His birth. I will make myself a poor little unworthy slave, and as though present, look upon them, contemplate them, and serve them in their needs with all possible homage and reverence. Then I will reflect on myself that I may reap some fruit. (Exx. 114)
> SECOND POINT. This is to consider, observe, and contemplate what the persons are saying, and then to reflect on myself and draw some fruit from it. (Exx. 115)
> THIRD POINT. This will be to see and consider what they are doing, for example, making the journey and laboring that our Lord might be born in extreme poverty, and that after many labors, after hunger, thirst, heat, and cold, after insults and outrages, He might die on the cross, and all this for me. Then I will reflect and draw some spiritual fruit from what I have seen. (Exx. 116)

Ignatius wants exercitants to draw spiritual benefit from a story in the Bible by reflecting on and comparing themselves to saints, angels, and Jesus. Likewise, the emulation mode leads moral agents to gain action guidance by imagining the narrative of virtuous people. For example, patience from Job, courage from Harriet Tubman, justice from Martin Luther King Jr., and mercy from Dorothy Day.[223] For those who have made the *Exercises,* it is easy to use this method because the method is very similar to the way of Ignatian contemplation. They can imagine some narratives of virtuous people as well as narratives about Jesus. The deliberation

[221] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 43.
[222] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 572.
[223] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 571.

mode is the mode of "substituted judgment."[224] Daly notes that there is a limitation to using the emulation mode. One cannot simply follow the virtuous without considering one's unique situation and particular circumstances.[225] For example, one's life is not the same as that of Dorothy Day or Martin Luther King Jr. In such cases, the deliberation mode can be an excellent alternative to the emulation mode.[226] In this mode, moral agents imagine what exemplars would recommend to them. They may ask for advice on what they can do in their situation. It is very similar to the colloquy that Ignatius presents in each prayer: "A colloquy is made, properly speaking, in the way one friend speaks to another, or a servant to one in authority —now begging a favor, now accusing oneself of some misdeed, now telling one's concerns and asking counsel about them" (Exx. 54). Those who have made the *Exercises* are familiar with this deliberation mode so that they can use this method for their moral judgment in their life. These three modes practically bridge the *Exercises* and virtue ethics. Exercitants can gain action guidance for daily life in the growth of virtue.

Fifth, virtue ethics helps exercitants examine their conscience by reflecting on the virtues. In this case, they can use the method of "taking counsel with the virtues" that Daly presents. Daly argues that Aquinas provides a way to take counsel with the virtues. For example, the virtue of beneficence guides whether one should respond to starving neighbors or to one's parents who are less needy. Therefore, Daly argues, "Taking counsel with the virtues and vices enables an agent to deliberate and judge future actions in light of the traits that she desires to enact and become, and those she detests and wishes to avoid."[227] While principles or rules cannot account for all circumstances, virtue ethics help people develop a moral character to judge and act rightly

[224] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 571.
[225] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 572-573.
[226] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 574.
[227] Daly, "Virtue Ethics and Action Guidance," 577.

in all situations. In this way, exercitants can respond to the grace they receive through the *Exercises* and realize it in their daily life by the guidance of the virtue ethic.

Sixth, virtue ethics requests ongoing practice for the growth of virtues and encourages exercitants to continue their exercises in daily life. Constant training is essential to the development of virtue in them because virtue is a *habitus*.[228] Keenan notes that Aquinas describes the acquisition of a virtuous state through "exercise."[229] Aquinas even uses the term "*spirituale exercitium.*" For him, they are necessary for "fighting against concupiscence and other defects" (III, Q.69, A.3, resp.). Therefore, virtue ethics awakens exercitants to do constant exercises in their lives to cultivate the virtues they need. The *Exercises* are an excellent tool to strengthen and develop virtues. Hence, exercitants are motivated to do their daily life exercises.

In summary, there are many advantages to expressing the ethics of the *Exercises* through the lens of virtue ethics, since they have fundamental congruencies, as noted above. Virtue ethics is an excellent tool for understanding the morality of the *Exercises*. For those who want to respond to God's grace received through their *Exercises*, virtue ethics helps them find the necessary virtue. One of the essential graces of the *Exercises* exercitants receive is to recognize their own vulnerability in encountering God's vulnerability. However, they may wonder how to practice out of vulnerability in real life. As noted earlier, humility, charity, mercy, and prudence fundamentally relate to vulnerability. Humility makes people open to God's will; in other words, to be vulnerable to God. Charity leads people to love God and be vulnerable to Him, while mercy leads them to love their neighbors and be vulnerable to others. Prudence is needed for practicing vulnerability in real life because it is essential for discernment.

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[228] Aquinas describes virtue as *habitus.* The Latin word *habitus* is often translated as "habit." However, Aquinas' understanding of habitus differs somewhat from the contemporary concept of habit. The difference is not insignificant. See Austin's "Virtue as a Habit," 23–36.

[229] Keenan, "Catholic Moral Theology," 42.

Some might argue that the *Exercises* alone are enough to live both morally and spiritually. However, Pope Francis warns us against a "spirituality of well-being" [230] because we are likely to focus on ourselves without proper guidance. Virtue ethics can provide practical guidance for our lives.

This understanding of the *Exercises* through virtue ethics shows that the *Exercises* are also a valuable tool for cultivating virtues such as charity, mercy, humility, prudence, etc. Therefore, the bridge between virtue ethics and the *Exercises* makes them synergistic because their goals are not different. They are working toward the same goal: to serve God and others.

[230] Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §90.

CONCLUSIONS

In one of his most influential books on contemporary moral theology, *A Community of Character*, Stanley Hauerwas envisions the Church as both a "community of character" and a "community of characters."[231] In this view, the Church and its members are formed by the story of God and Christ in the Bible.[232] He notes that Christian social ethics is often based on principles and policies that lack a clear foundation in faith. However, he argues that all social ethics involve a narrative. In this sense, the story of God's salvation and Jesus' redemptive works are essential to Christian social ethics. [233] Hauerwas asserts that the Church needs virtues to sustain its existence because the meaning and form of each virtue is derived from the biblical story. Virtue is essential for Christians to remember and to live according to the narrative. [234] Therefore, virtue contributes to the formation of the individuals' character in the context of the community, especially the Church.

In this regard, the bridge between the *Spiritual Exercises* and virtue ethics has significant implications for the formation of Christian character and the cultivation of virtues that are consistent with the biblical story. In the *Exercises*, Ignatius offers various exercises for contemplating Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Exercitants can cultivate virtues by contemplating and meditating on the story of God and Christ. Thus, the *Exercises* help exercitants form their character according to the biblical narrative, especially by imitating Christ.

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[231] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 3.

[232] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 1, 5, 10, 12, 50, 69, 70, 85, 91, 93, 110.

[233] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 9-10.

[234] Hauerwas, *A Community of Character*, 68.

Virtue ethics provides guidance for moral judgment and action in their real lives, based on the fruits they have received in the *Exercises.*

In addition to virtue, the concept of vulnerability serves as a foundation for understanding morality in the *Exercises*. One of the primary goals of the *Exercises* is to imitate Christ. Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), and human beings are created in the image of God. Therefore, we must imitate Christ to perfect the *Imago Dei* in us. Through the *Exercises*, exercitants encounter God's vulnerability and realize that Jesus on the Cross is the culmination of the revelation of His vulnerability. The *Exercises* encourage them to recognize their own vulnerability as made in the image of God by contemplating Jesus' life and imitating him. However, they need guidance to practice vulnerability in their lives. Virtues, such as charity, mercy, humility, prudence, etc., provide the practical guidance for their moral action and judgment.

In summary, vulnerability is the fundamental basis for the morality of the *Exercises*, and virtue helps exercitants practice in accordance with this vulnerability. In the *Exercises*, morality and spirituality are not separated but integrated. Two pillars of the *Exercises* are love of God and others, or charity and mercy. The *Exercises* serve as an excellent vehicle to lead them to encounter God's vulnerability, to recognize their own vulnerability, and to cultivate virtues by discerning God's will and the movements of spirits, making an election, and contemplating the story of God and Christ. As a result, the *Exercises* lead exercitants from their conscience, where they hear the voice of God, to a realm of interconnectedness, where they live with their neighbors.

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