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Photograph

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longer know who we are and what we should do.”⁴⁰ One important way to work through the many emotions that arise in the course of our lives is by external processing. Speaking about one’s feelings and emotions can be more than simply therapeutic if done so with God. Another similarity between von Speyr and Ignatian spirituality is their encour-



agement of conversational prayer.

Prayer, for any Christian must be central to deepening her or his relationship with God; the different ways of praying greatly influence the way that a believer experiences and understands God (*lex orandi lex credendi*). Ignatius encourages prayer that is conversational, which allows the person to openly admit her or his true feelings, in an effort to overcome the emotions that are detrimental to a person’s relationship with God. In other words, conversational prayer entails “sharing experience,

saying thank you, asking for help, crying out in pain, begging forgiveness, expressing love, [and] just spending time together.”⁴¹ These are all aspects of conversation that enhance the intimacy of a person’s relationship with another; seeing prayer as this type of communication, in turn, promotes an intimate relationship with God.

Von Speyr builds on this insight by discussing how conversational prayer can enhance a believer’s understanding of God. “At first, perhaps, he [*sic*] sees only the life by which God administers and guides the world and providentially orders its course. Then in a deeper sense, he [*sic*] sees the eternal life as a triune exchange of love within God himself [*sic*]. This is a life that creates itself in love—a love that is both question and answer at once in an eternal circulation.”⁴² Von Speyr nuances the Ignatian conversational style of prayer through her understanding of the active triune God. For von Speyr, conversational prayer leads to an intensification of the infinite triune God’s activity in the finite world.

Conversational prayer as it aids the believer in discernment of spirits is only implicit in the “Principle and Foundation.” Ignatius uses verbs such as “should” and “ought” and in so doing, infers a disconnect

between that which the believer is supposed to do and the actions she or he might actually do. The “Principle and Foundation” is written in such a way that concepts such as conversational prayer which leads to discernment of spirits can be discovered through the very word choice of the text.

A consequence of a heightened sense of God acting in the world through emotions and daily activities is the importance of right action as

⁴⁰ Adrienne von Speyr, *Man before God*, 122.

⁴¹ David L. Fleming, *What is Ignatian Spirituality?* 53.

⁴² Adrienne von Speyr, *Man before God*, 22.