

Comparisons of Ignatian Humanism and Renaissance Humanism.

At its heart, *Ignatian spirituality* is a humanism that defends human rights, prizes learning from other cultures, seeks common ground between science and religion, struggles for justice, and honours a God who is actively at work in creation.

<u>Ignatian Humanism</u>	<u>Renaissance Humanism</u>
<p>Ignatius read whole texts, primary texts; the <i>Exercises</i> are based on the Bible as a “classic,” it’s about “reading” the life of Christ.</p> <p>The Exercises are adapted to the individual; there is an awareness of the dignity of the individual person and his/her religious experience. They invite the whole person in by engaging all the senses. The person “makes” the Exercises. The goal is a truly liberated person (freed <u>from</u> selfishness and freed <u>for</u> greater participation in God’s project in the world); willing to travel anywhere in the service of God and humanity. Teachers, priests, citizens.</p> <p>One goes into retreat, but does not run away from life. It is a matter of focus and depth. It’s about learning how to “help souls” (metonymy: helping persons).</p> <p>It is about discerning the meaning of service. Not simply contemplation, but “contemplation in action,” i.e., growing in union with God precisely through loving service of the neighbor. A major service is reconciliation of the estranged. It seeks to produce Spirit-grounded leaders. Faith energizes inter-cultural dialogue and seeks companions.</p> <p>Grace (God’s transforming love) heals nature (created reality), elevates nature, and builds on nature. God is the author of nature (the gift of created existence) and grace (the gift of God’s <u>self</u>-communication to creatures). Holiness and authentic humanness require each other. Three dimensions of holistic human liberation: (1) basic economic well-being supportive of human dignity, (2) a growing sense of agency and responsibility in relation to one’s social situation; (3) increasing union with God: forgiveness of sin and growing participation in the divine life.</p> <p>Truth needs to be discerned, using the best available evidence of affect and thinking. There is need to respect the many kinds of knowing and not privilege one at the expense of others. Need to develop an interior knowing or “sensing” of one’s own tradition and to seek some of that interior knowing of another culture.</p>	<p>Classicism: The Greek and Latin classics are the core. They provide literary elegance, order, and clarity. There is a fascination with the Roman republic and republican values.</p> <p>Education of the whole person: The cultivation of a certain kind of human being who is developed in all forms of virtue. This is tied to classicism: good literature produces good people. The “Renaissance man,” <i>uomo universale</i>, balances the seeming opposites of thought and practice, of private and civic virtue. Were mostly teachers or secretaries to princes.</p> <p>The active life of civic virtue: One of the purposes of a classical education is to produce statesmen who are skilled in oratory (Cicero) and who can meet their audiences where they are.</p> <p>Individualism within community: Identity is shaped by community, but one is a thinking, choosing, and sometimes criticizing person in society.</p> <p>Human Dignity and Freedom: The emphasis is not on Augustine’s fallen race (<i>massa damnata</i>) corrupted by sin; rather humanity is wounded by sin; it possesses a wounded dignity. Focus is on humans as made for great things, beings who unite the realms of spirit and matter. But human existence is precarious. We shape our destinies by our moral choices.</p> <p>The unity and universality of truth: God, who is Truth, is the source of all, therefore the whole of the world contains truth and one should cite truth wherever one finds it. Wisdom is found in all human thinking, pagan and religious. Faith and reason are complementary.</p> <p><i>From Ronald Modras, Ignatian Humanism (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2004)</i></p>