



## God Calls, We Respond

*This blog post from William Barry, SJ, is a reflection on David Fleming's Book, "What is Ignatian Spirituality", which Ignatian Volunteers are using for spiritual reflection in many regions this service year.*

What is God's call to us? What God does want? Over the centuries people have given many responses. But let's reflect again on what it means that God is love loving. Then God's love that creates us is itself that call. Love calls into being all that exists. Most of what exists, as far as we know, cannot choose not to be what they are called to be; but we human beings cannot avoid that choice. So God's call to us is to be human beings, images of God in this world, images of "love loving," and our response can be a "yes" or "no" to that call. We can choose to be friends of God and cooperators with God in the great work of creation, or we can refuse that call.

What a great risk God takes in creating us, then! God loves us into existence, thus asking us to be his friends and co-workers, and we can refuse that request, that call. By saying "no," or hedging our bets in some way, we disrupt God's dream for our part of the world. Let me risk a statement that may sound like heresy in order to help us to comprehend the enormity of God's risk. I do not believe that God wanted Jesus to be rejected as the Messiah by God's people and die on a Roman cross. But because human beings like us could not believe that God's Messiah would look and act as Jesus looked and acted, they condemned him to this cruel and demeaning death. I could imagine God saying, "This is not what I want." But it happened, and God deals with what happened by raising Jesus from the dead with a message of continuing, forgiving love. God is not changed by human sin, but the history of the world is different because of it. Yet love loving continues to call. IVC members continue to say yes, by the grace of God. And we continue to see others who try to say yes. Imagine how pleased God is with all these efforts to say yes.