In the following letter, Ignatius offers instructions to how Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón, and Claude Jay, whom he had sent to the Council of Trent at the order of Pope Paul III, were to deal with others there. He advises the three men to “be slow to speak, deliberate and loving” on matters before the council. When disagreements arise, the men were to “mention arguments for both sides, so as not to appear attached to my own judgment, taking care not to leave anyone annoyed.” Ignatius also explains how they were to carry out the full range of the Society’s ministries (such as preaching, giving the Exercises, hearing confessions, and visiting hospitals) and to assist each other. Favre was also designated to attend the council, but died in Rome on August 1, 1546, on his way to Trent. Peter Canisius later joined the other three in that city.

**INSTRUCTION FOR THE STAY AT TRENT**

Ihs.

**FOR DEALING WITH OTHERS**

1. While with God’s help much can be achieved by associating and dealing with large numbers of people for the salvation and spiritual progress of souls, nevertheless, such dealings can, unless we are vigilant and favored by God’s grace, be attended by great loss on our own and sometimes everyone’s part. And since according to our profession we cannot avoid such dealings, the better we are furnished with and guided by some plan, the more serenely will we proceed in our Lord. The following points—or others like them, more or fewer—can be used to help ourselves in our Lord.

2. I would be slow to speak, deliberate and loving, particularly when expressing a judgment on matters that are or might be treated at the council.

3. I would be slow to speak and careful to listen, keeping still in order to grasp and understand the speaker’s ideas, feelings, and inclinations, so as the better to respond or keep silence.

4. In discussions of these or other topics, I would mention arguments for both sides, so as not to appear attached to my own judgment, taking care not to leave anyone annoyed.

5. I would not appeal to any persons’ authority, particularly if they are important, unless the matters have been very carefully thought through; I would keep on good terms with everyone and avoid all partisanship.
6. If the points being discussed are so right that one cannot or should not keep silent, I would express my view as calmly and humbly as possible, and conclude with “in the absence of a better opinion.”

7. Finally, for conversing and dealing with people about acquired or infused doctrine, when one wishes to discuss these things it is very helpful not to take into account my own leisure, lack of time, or urgency—that is, my own convenience—but instead to adapt myself to the convenience and condition of the person with whom I wish to deal, so as to move him to God’s greater glory.

FOR HELPING SOULS

1. For the greater glory of God our Lord, our main purpose during this stay at Trent is, while trying to live together in some decent place, to preach, hear confessions, and give lectures while teaching children, giving good example, visiting the poor in hospitals, and exhorting our neighbors—according as each one possesses this or that talent for moving all the persons we can to devotion and prayer, so that they and we may all implore God our Lord that his Divine Majesty will deign to infuse his divine Spirit into all those handling the matters of this high assembly, so that the Holy Spirit may descend upon the council with a greater abundance of gifts and graces.

2. In preaching, I would not touch upon any points where Protestants differ from Catholics; I would merely exhort to virtuous living and to the Church’s devotions, urging souls to thorough self-knowledge and to greater knowledge and love of their Creator and Lord. I would frequently mention the council and, as indicated above, conclude each sermon with a prayer for it.

3. In lectures, I would do the same as in sermons, attempting to enkindle in souls a love of their Creator and Lord as I explain the meaning of the passage under discussion, and also getting the hearers to pray as indicated above.

4. In confessions, I would speak as if my words to the penitents were being said in public; and in every confession I would give them some penance by way of prayers for the above-mentioned intention.

5. In giving the Exercises and in other conversations, I would likewise be minded that I speak in public. To all I would normally give the exercises of the First Week and no more, except in the case of the few persons who are prepared to decide their life by means of the elections. During the elections and throughout the Exercises, I would not let people make promises. Nor would I place them in seclusion, especially at the beginning; I might do this later if time allowed, but always with restraint, particularly if I had occasion to give the complete Exercises. And I would recommend prayers for the council.

6. I would teach catechism to children for a suitable time, depending on the possibilities and readiness of each place. I would teach the basic elements, with more or less explanation depending upon the hearers. At the end of the instruction or exhortation, I would have them say a prayer for the same intention.
7. I would visit the hospitals at the hour or hours of the day most suitable for physical health. I would hear the confessions of the poor and console them, even bringing them something if I could. I would have them say prayers, as was said regarding confessions. If there were at least three of us, we could each visit the poor every third day.

8. I would urge everyone I could in conversation to frequent confession, Communion, celebration of Mass, spiritual exercises, and other pious works, recommending also that they pray for the council.

9. As was said above, when expressing a judgment on some point, it helps to speak slowly or sparingly; however, when urging souls to their own spiritual progress, it helps to speak at length, articulately, lovingly, and feelingly.

FOR OUR OWN GREATER HELP

We will all take an hour in the evening to discuss with one another what was done during the day and what should be aimed at for the next day.

We will come to agreement on past or future matters by vote or in some other way.

One man each evening should ask the others to give him any corrections they think needed; the one being corrected in this way should make no reply unless they ask him to give an account of the point on which he has been corrected.

The second man will do the same the next evening, and so forth, so that they can all be assisted in greater charity and good reputation on all sides.

We should make our resolution in the morning and examine ourselves twice during the day.

This order should go into effect within five days of our arrival at Trent. Amen.