

THE WAY

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IGNATIUS AND THE FIRST COMPANIONS



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Ignatius of Loyola has a reputation as a hard-headed administrator, guiding and steering his nascent religious order from the heart of the Church in Rome. His personal writings, however, reveal other sides to his character. Here Tim McEvoy considers his predilection for gazing contemplatively at the stars, and asks what it can tell us about him in the light of the cosmology of his time.

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The well-known spiritual writer Anthony de Mello likened the text of the Spiritual Exercises to a cookery book. Here Gail Paxman develops that simile, exploring six of the 'key ingredients' in the Ignatian system, and looking at how they work together to produce the kind of conversion that is the goal of the Exercises themselves.

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In preparing the case of the canonization of Ignatius, the four hundredth anniversary of which will be celebrated in 2022, a great number of witnesses were interviewed, and many incidents in his life subjected to careful scrutiny. Here Joseph Munitiz presents one such incident, concerning a young man who mocked Ignatius and afterwards met his death in unexpected circumstances.

Ignatius of Loyola, the First Retreatant: Psychological Traits of His Personality 67–85*Carlos Domínguez*

Carlos Domínguez is a professor of the psychology of religion and a practising psychotherapist. Here he draws on both specialisms to analyse the mystical experience of St Ignatius, which lies at the root of the spirituality that bears his name and which, Domínguez believes, decisively marked his personality.

The Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus: A Brief Explanation 87–92*John Zupez*

In 2019 the Society of Jesus adopted four Universal Apostolic Preferences to guide its planning and work over the next decade. These offer a contemporary expression of what it means to choose a pattern of life shaped by the experience of Ignatian spirituality in the Spiritual Exercises. John Zupez gives a brief introduction to the preferences and what follows from their adoption.

Frontiers of the Spirit: The Mission of Spirituality Today 93–108*James Hanvey*

Human beings typically come to understand themselves and their place in the world by constructing large-scale explanatory narratives. Scientific progress and economic determinism are two such secular ‘grand narratives’. Religious faiths offer their own narratives to compete with these, and James Hanvey finds in the Jesuits’ Universal Apostolic Preferences’ elements that can bridge the divide between two.

Pierre Favre through His Letters 109–126*Mark Rotsaert*

Pierre Favre shared rooms with Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier when they studied together at the University of Paris. He went on to become the first ordained Jesuit, and the one who, according to Ignatius, best understood the Spiritual Exercises. Here Mark Rotsaert uses Favre’s extensive surviving correspondence to complement the picture given in the *Memoriale*, his record of his spiritual life.

The Vocation of Jerónimo Nadal 127–133*Joseph A. Munitiz*

When Ignatius wanted someone to promulgate and explain the new Jesuit *Constitutions* across Europe, he turned to Jerónimo Nadal, who then came to have a key role in the early Society of Jesus. A decade before his death in 1580, Nadal composed an account of his own vocation, a document known as the *Chronicon*. Joseph Munitiz asks what this can tell us about vocational discernment today.

The First Brothers of the Society of Jesus

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As well as priests, there have always been non-ordained brothers in the Jesuit order. Recent research in Spain has given a detailed picture of the first four of these men. Hedwig Lewis draws on this research to present brief portraits of each of them—a Spaniard, an Italian, and two from Portugal—four ‘enthusiastic and committed laymen’.

FOR AUTHORS

The Way warmly invites readers to submit articles with a view to publication. They should normally be about 4,000 words long, and be in keeping with the journal’s aims. The Editor is always ready to discuss possible ideas. A Special Issue is planned on conversion in 2022, so articles in this area will be particularly welcome.

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Cover design by Peter Brook SJ; cover image, St Ignatius and his companions, early seventeenth-century Spanish polychromatic sculpture, Campion Hall, Oxford. We are grateful for permission to translate ‘Ignacio de Loyola: el primer ejercitante: Rasgos antropológicos y psicológicos de su personalidad’, by Carlos Domínguez Morano SJ, from *El sujeto: Reflexiones para una antropología ignaciana*, edited by Fr Rufino Meana Peón SJ (Colección Manresa 71), pages 153–174. © Ediciones Mensajero—Editorial Sal Terrae—Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Bilbao—Santander—Madrid 2019. Thanks to Jason Dy SJ for the illustration on p.8, and to Erica Tighe Campbell, and the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, for that on p.91. The scripture quotations herein are generally from the New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Autobiography</i>	‘Reminiscences (Autobiography)’, in <i>Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings</i> , translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)
<i>Constitutions</i>	in <i>The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms</i> (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
Diary	‘The Spiritual Diary’, in <i>Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings</i> , translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)
Dir	<i>On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599</i> , translated and edited by Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
Exx	<i>The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius</i> , translated by George E. Ganss (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992)
GC	General Congregation, in <i>Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 31st–35th General Congregations of the Society of Jesus</i> (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009) and <i>Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus</i> (Boston: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2017)
MHSJ	Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, 157 volumes (Madrid and Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1898–)
<i>Papal documents may be found at www.vatican.va</i>	

FOREWORD

ON 20 MAY 2021 it will be five hundred years since Ignatius of Loyola was wounded at Pamplona, triggering his conversion from dreams of military glory to the service of a greater Lord. Next year marks the four hundredth anniversary of the canonization of Ignatius and another of the first Jesuits, Francis Xavier. Spanning these events, the current Jesuit General, Arturo Sosa, has called for the celebration of an ‘Ignatian Year’, offering an opportunity to reflect upon the origins of this particular pathway to God. This Special Issue of *The Way*, focusing on the person of St Ignatius and his First Companions, is one contribution to that celebration.

It is divided into three parts. The first series of articles considers Ignatius himself and the nature of the spirituality that bears his name. Gail Paxman draws on an image from the writings of a well-known spiritual writer, Anthony de Mello, to outline how the central elements of Ignatian spirituality work together to produce a conversion which in some ways echoes his own. Carlos Domínguez brings a background in psychology to his understanding of the mystical prayer that had a central role in shaping Ignatius’s personality, while Harvey Egan looks more broadly at the relationship between Ignatius’ own prayer and the kinds of devotion that he offered others in composing his *Spiritual Exercises*. Tim McEvoy considers what a habit of Ignatius—stargazing, attested both in the saint’s own *Autobiography* and by those who knew him—reveals about the man. In the first of two contributions to this issue, Joseph Munitiz takes up some of the evidence produced during the canonization process on a curious prophetic episode in Ignatius’ life. Two brothers, Timothy and David Gallagher, respond to the suggestion that Ignatian discernment lacks the rigour of the kind of analysis promoted by Thomas Aquinas.

The anniversary year is more than an opportunity for historical research, and in the second section of this issue ways in which the spirituality of Loyola is being lived out today are considered. The lens chosen for this is that of the ‘Universal Apostolic Preferences’, a set of guidelines chosen to channel the work of the Society of Jesus in this third decade of the twenty-first century. John Zupetz outlines these preferences: what they are, how they were selected and how, it is hoped,

they will aid an ongoing conversion of the Society as a whole. James Hanvey, who works as the Secretary for the Service of Faith in the Jesuit Curia in Rome, then situates the preferences in the context of the competing narratives, sacred and secular, employed by all who try to understand more deeply the meaning of the world and their place in it.

In the past few years a deeper understanding has grown up of how the Society of Jesus came into being. Without downplaying the central role of Ignatius in this process, the part played by a whole generation of early Jesuits has become clearer. Their experience and insights helped to shape this new kind of religious order. The third part of this issue presents some of the ways in which this shaping took place. Mark Rotsaert asks what can be learnt from the surviving correspondence of a key member of that initial group who gathered round Ignatius when he was studying in Paris. The Savoyard Pierre Favre was the first priest in the Society, and, in Ignatius' view, the one who best understood the Spiritual Exercises. Joseph Munitiz's second essay here considers the account that another central figure among those early Jesuits, Jerónimo Nadal, gave of his own vocation. While each vocation story is unique, Nadal's story will resonate with those attempting to discern how and to what God calls them today. Hedwig Lewis draws on recent Spanish research to present pen-portraits of the first four Jesuit brothers, a group often overlooked in the histories of the early Society, which tend to concentrate on the exploits of its priests.

Ignatius wrote the *Constitutions* of his new order with a certain tentativeness. He offered his first sketch both to those enquiring about this way of life 'and also to those who will later follow us if, God willing, we shall ever have imitators along this path'.¹ As we mark five hundred years since the event that set him on the road to founding the Society of Jesus, it is good to recall his own history, as well as that of his First Companions, and also to recognise more fully the ways in which the Spirit of God continues to inspire men and women in similar ways today.

Paul Nicholson SJ
Editor

¹ *Formula of the Institute* (1550), n. 9.

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Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jesuit poet

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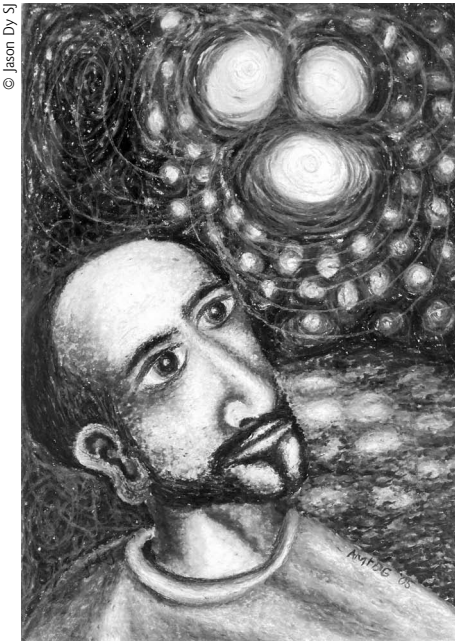
IGNATIUS AND THE STARS

Tim McEvoy

THE IMAGE OF IGNATIUS gazing in wonder at the stars is one which seems to endear him to many people today. It appears frequently in modern biographies and personal portraits of him, especially where authors want to evoke Ignatius' incarnational spirituality and mysticism. It has also been captured in art. These references often carry romantic overtones, such as Michael Paul Gallagher's affectionate description

of him as 'the mystic on the balcony'.¹ Since the rediscovery of his *Autobiography, Spiritual Diary* and other early sources, Ignatius' stargazing, like his copious tears, seems to have struck an emotional chord with people, evoking a softer and more soulful saint than the rather austere pin-up of the Counter-Reformation commonly encountered prior to Vatican II.²

There is something attractive and mysterious about Ignatius' relationship with the stars and our privileged glimpses of him at night, lost in contemplation of them. It is not surprising, then, that his stargazing is usually a keynote of the more human and appealing revisionist image of Ignatius, which



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Iñigo: Nakatingala sa mga Tala, by Jason Dy, 2005

¹ Michael Paul Gallagher, 'Ignatius of Loyola', in *Spiritual Stars of the Millennium*, edited by Selina O'Grady and John Wilkins (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2001), 64.

² See chapter 5, 'Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam', in James Martin, *My Life with the Saints* (Chicago: Loyola, 2006).

reveals the depths of his affectivity, his intimacy with God the Creator and even his eco-mysticism, as has been argued recently.³ However, while our imaginative and affective engagement is to be encouraged, we need to be careful not to enlist Ignatius' stargazing too eagerly as evidence of his proto-modernity.

I would like to explore here what happens to our imaginings when we consider Ignatius' relationship with the stars with more historical distance and look at the night sky, alongside Ignatius, through the lens of medieval cosmology.

Whatever the resonances with us today, the stars clearly meant something to Ignatius himself, and his lifelong habit of contemplating them was noted by those closest to him. The first reference to it occurs in his own words, as recorded by the Portuguese Jesuit Gonçalves da Câmara, as he describes the latter end of Ignatius' recovery in Loyola in late 1521 to early 1522:

Part of that time he would spend in writing, part in prayer. And the greatest consolation he used to receive was to look at the sky and the stars, which he did often and for a long time, because with this he used to feel in himself a great impetus towards serving Our Lord. (*Autobiography*, n.11)

Ignatius' great longing at this time was to be on his way to Jerusalem, imitating Saints Francis and Dominic, and it was the stars that consoled him in his time of impatient waiting. The passage above goes on immediately to say: 'he often used to think about his intention, wishing he was already completely well so as to begin on his way'. We might imagine Ignatius, with his itchy feet, longing for the road and the skies above Jerusalem. What was it about gazing up at the night sky that consoled him so much at this time, we might wonder—so much more, we are told, than his writing and other prayer experiences during this fertile spiritual period in his life. What caused him to feel interiorly such 'impetus' to serving God?

It is perhaps worth mentioning that his idol St Francis was also a noted stargazer, as his friend and first biographer Thomas of Celano confirmed: 'Who would be able to narrate the sweetness he enjoyed while contemplating in creatures the wisdom of their Creator ... while

³ See Hedwig Lewis, *St Ignatius Loyola: Retrospective—Perspective—Reflective* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2006), chapter 1.

he gazed upon the stars and the firmament?’⁴ It is tempting to think that Ignatius was in some way influenced in his behaviour by his strong affinity with Francis—whose own dreams of military success had been checked by illness and who later in life experienced eye-sickness ‘for continual weeping’ during prayer, a phenomenon that also affected Ignatius. But if Ignatius was aware of this aspect of St Francis, he did not get it from his reading material in Loyola Castle.⁵

The most frequently cited reference to Ignatius and the stars is from his time in Rome, some two decades later as he approached the end of his life. By now he was Father General of the burgeoning Society, largely tied to his desk as an administrator and no longer free to wander the roads of Europe beneath the stars. Each night, on the balcony of the Jesuit residence, it is said that he would look up in reverence at the stars and silently shed tears.⁶ It is a moving and intimate picture that seems to have originated from the first official biography of Ignatius, by a Jesuit who knew him well at this time. Pedro de Ribadeneira makes clear in his account that Ignatius’ stargazing habit—which began at the time of his conversion at Loyola—remained with him for the whole of his life:

... because many years later, already an old man, I would see him on a rooftop, or in some high place, from where he could see the horizon and a large part of the sky, fixing his eyes on it. And after some time spent in rapture and amazement, he would come to himself, moved, and with tears pouring from his eyes because of the great delight that his heart felt, I would hear him say: ‘Oh, how vile and low the earth seems to me! When I look at the sky, it is manure and garbage.’⁷

⁴ Thomas of Celano, *First Biography of St Francis*, n. 81, translated by Placid Hermann, in *Writings and Early Biographies: English Omnibus of the Sources for the Life of St Francis*, edited by Marion Habig (Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1983), 295.

⁵ The most likely ‘life of the saints’ read by Ignatius at this time is a vernacular version of the widely diffused *Legenda aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine, which has no mention of the stargazing episode in its account of Francis: see José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, translated by Cornelius Michael Buckley (Chicago: Loyola, 1994), 120; *The Golden Legend: Lives of the Saints*, translated by William Caxton, edited by George V. O’Neill (Cambridge: CUP, 1914).

⁶ See MHSJ FN 4, 746–748; Pedro de Ribadeneira, *The Life of Ignatius Loyola*, translated by Claude Pavur (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2014), 5.1.15; and Kevin F. Burke and Eileen Burke-Sullivan, *The Ignatian Tradition* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2009), xxxv.

⁷ ‘Porque muchos años después, siendo ya viejo, le vi yo estando en alguna açutea, o en algún lugar eminente y alto de donde se descubría nuestro emisferio y buena parte del cielo, enclavar los ojos en él; y a cabo de rato que avía estado como hombre arrobado y suspenso y que bolví en sí, se enterneció; y saltándose las lágrimas de los ojos (por el deleite grande que tení su corazón), le oía dezir: — Ay cuán vil y baxa me parece la tierra, quando miro al cielo, estiérco y vasura es.’ (MHSJ FN 4, 95, translated by the author and Marta Gil de Sola Bellas) It is interesting to note that the Spanish is much more revealing in this instance than the more abridged Latin version of Ribadeneira’s text, recently translated into English by Claude Pavur.

This was a pattern of behaviour, of prayer, which had stayed with Ignatius since the earliest days of his conversion and which seems to have consistently consoled him and drawn him closer to his Creator and Lord. But what do we imagine was going on for Ignatius in his contemplation of the night sky? What do we make of his tears and delight, or his striking words, if Ribadeneira's memory is to be relied upon?

Ignatius' stargazing obviously leaves room for some interpretation and projection, which is perhaps encouraged by its evocativeness. We can too easily picture the scene for ourselves and be tempted to step clumsily into his mental or emotional space. One corrective to this which is easily forgotten is historical distance. Since we can all think of ourselves looking up at the night sky we imagine that all people in all times and places have always looked at it the same way. But looking is an intensely subjective activity that is also shaped significantly by society and culture over time. As L. P. Hartley famously put it in his novel *The Go-Between*: 'the past is a foreign country: they do things differently there'. Perhaps there is a need to recover some of Ignatius' foreignness to us in that regard if we are to begin to appreciate the place of the stars in his imagination?

Looking is an intensely subjective activity

For those of us living in the early twenty-first century, it is difficult to gaze at the night sky without our looking being influenced by two important filters that would have been absent for Ignatius: our knowledge of modern science and cosmology, and our very modern sensibility towards the natural world in general following the Romantic movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Both of these are so embedded in the way we look at, feel and talk about nature or creation today that they can easily avoid detection, and we risk unwittingly projecting them backwards on to our ancestors who lived, thought and contemplated in quite a different mental universe.

The differences in scientific outlook are easier for us to grasp, but it is also easy to overlook the significant shift in attitudes towards creation influenced by the Romantic movement, with its cult of sensibility and new notion of the 'sublime', whose vestiges we still carry around with us today.⁸ For example, our modern way of looking at, say, a mountain range or great waterfall—evoking language of wonder and awe in us—is quite different from how the same features would have been taken in by people of Ignatius' generation, who are more likely to have framed

⁸ See Duncan Heath and Judy Boreham, *Introducing Romanticism: A Graphic Guide* (London: Icon, 2010).

their experience as terror or even revulsion. Nature tourism and our modern sense of appreciation of much of the natural world did not emerge until the early industrial age.

It would be a mistake and an anachronism, then, to superimpose on to Ignatius much later and more familiar ways of seeing the night sky, such as the ‘admiration and awe’ towards the ‘starry heavens above’ of an Immanuel Kant, writing in 1788, or the breathless ‘Look at the stars! look, look up at the skies!’ of Gerard Manley Hopkins in 1877.⁹ Kant’s famous passage, taken in context, not only exemplifies fairly well the quite recent sense of the sublime, but it also illustrates an already modern cosmology, post-Copernican and post-Newtonian. His admiration and awe come from his sense of smallness and insignificance in relation to the vastness of the universe, gazing above himself:

A countless multitude of worlds annihilates as it were my importance as an animal creature, which after it has been for a short time provided with vital power, one knows not how, must again give back the matter of which it was formed to the planet it inhabits (a mere speck in the universe).¹⁰

Ignatius, living in a very different age and seeing through quite different filters, might have experienced similar emotions but they would have been for quite different reasons.

Ignatius was possessed of a thoroughly medieval imagination, which applies to his stargazing as much as to his images of God, his penchant for chivalry or his views on hell, with which we might be more familiar. Although he lived during a period of dramatic change in Europe—as printing brought about an ‘information revolution’ and the effects of global exploration, economic and political expansion, and religious reform had their impact on people’s lives in myriad ways—there was still much in his time that remained the same. A man or woman from Europe in the 1520s or 1550s looking up at the night sky saw much the same ordered, earth-orbiting universe as his or her ancestors of a hundred or even three hundred years before, and Ignatius would have been no exception.

⁹ ‘Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the oftener and the more steadily we reflect on them: the starry heavens above and the moral law within’: Immanuel Kant, ‘Critique of Practical Reason’, in *Kant’s Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, translated by Thomas Kingsmill Abbott (London: Longmans Green, 1879), 376; Gerard Manley Hopkins, ‘The Starlight Night’, in *Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (London: Everyman, 1995), 24.

¹⁰ Kant, ‘Critique of Practical Reason’, 376–377.

It is very easy to caricature what such people believed they saw—and medieval cosmology in general—as absurdly naive and inaccurate, perhaps even at odds with the astonishingly prescient spiritual insights of somebody such as Ignatius, which we might think emerged in spite of the intellectual and scientific limitations of his day rather than from within their framework. But to do so is not only unfair—taking advantage of our hindsight—it also does a disservice to what was a complex, multifaceted and highly adaptive worldview, and ends up just repeating the anti-medieval propaganda of the founding figures of modern science much later in the period.¹¹

Although a contemporary of the great Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, Ignatius would almost certainly have lived, like the vast majority of his contemporaries, in complete ignorance of the new heliocentric theory that Copernicus published, reluctantly, in the year of his death, 1543.¹² Ignatius certainly would not have been rocked to the core by that theory—even in the unlikely event that he had come across it, as a mathematical model being debated by specialist academics. The immediate impact of *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* was nowhere near as revolutionary as its title, or popular history, likes to claim.

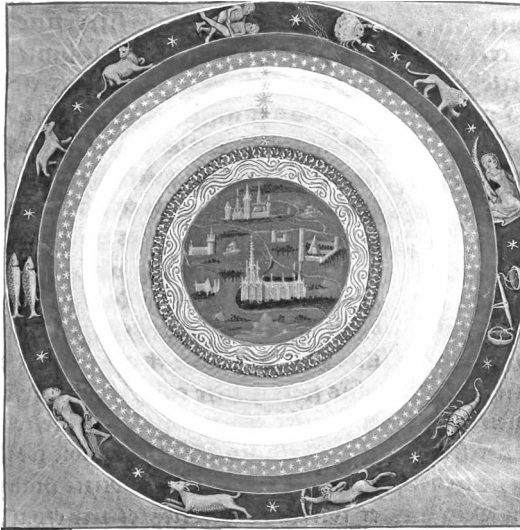
Owing in part to its prologue—where the theory was presented as a hypothesis not as fact—Copernicus' work did not attract much controversy, and the Church had no trouble accepting it initially as another contribution to the debate and reform of classical cosmology, still dominated by Ptolemy's *Almagest* and the physics of Aristotle.¹³ In fact only a tiny handful of academics read it, and full-scale debate in Europe over the potentially huge and destabilising implications of heliocentrism did not erupt until decades after Ignatius' death, a turning point being the appearance of an apparently 'new' star in the Tycho supernova of 1572. In Spain, there was only one recognised 'Copernican' while Ignatius was still active, and Copernicus' text was only included in the astronomy curriculum at the University of Salamanca in 1561.¹⁴ Galileo's wider

¹¹ See Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard U, 1995), 7.

¹² Before 1543 Copernicus' theory remained in manuscript and the topic of private discussion only: see Euan Cameron, 'The Power of the Word: Renaissance and Reformation', in *Early Modern Europe: An Oxford History* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 79.

¹³ Initially accepted by the Church, it was only placed on the Index in 1616 when Catholics joined a wave of Protestant opposition in Europe to the heliocentric theory: Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts*, 112–115.

¹⁴ See Victor Navarro Brotos, 'The Reception of Copernicus in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Case of Diego de Zúñiga', *Isis*, 86/1 (March, 1995), 52–55.



A geocentric world-view, from Évrard de Conty,
Échecs amoureux, c.1496

lowest point in the entire cosmos, in an absolute sense—looking up (again in an absolute sense), they would have seen the harmonious heavenly spheres above them. While down on earth all was change and decay, below the moon’s orbit; up above the stars could be observed turning in changeless perfection. The seven mobile planets, fixed in their transparent, crystalline spheres, stacked one upon the other in their separate orbits—Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn—and beyond this, there was the canopy of the fixed stars, or *Stellatum*, the last visible place between humanity and the dwelling place of God. Stargazers would look up and see the dome of heaven itself directly above them—a place beyond space and time yet full of God, light and love—almost as we would look up at the vast vault of a cathedral. It was perceived in terms of height not, as for us, distance. ‘The medieval world is vertiginous’, as C. S. Lewis once wrote.¹⁶

Did Ignatius experience a sense of vertigo when he gazed at the stars from his balcony? What was it like for him to contemplate, high above him, the threshold of heaven itself which, in the influential imagery of Dante, ‘has no “where” other than the mind of God. The love that makes

publication of the theory and his tussle with Rome were even further off on the horizon.¹⁵

When it comes to his stargazing, then, we have to set Ignatius firmly beneath the geocentric medieval firmament. So, what would men and women of Ignatius’ day imagine they saw when they looked up at the night sky? How might that have affected Ignatius’ looking?

Standing on the surface of the Earth—at once the very centre and the very

¹⁵ Cameron, ‘The Power of the Word’, 81.

¹⁶ C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 1964), 98.

it turn is kindled there, so, too, the powers it rains. Brightness and love contain it in one ring.¹⁷ His place in the cosmos felt quite different, in a real and spatial sense, from how we might experience our own. The heights of the heavenly spheres above him were vast, but not infinitely vast, distances away. Where we might lose ourselves in the unimaginable dimensions of the ever-expanding universe, Ignatius' cosmos was much more stable, intimate and less perplexing. As the medievalist Lewis put it:

The 'space' of modern astronomy may arouse terror, or bewilderment or vague reverie: the spheres of the old present us with an object in which the mind can rest, overwhelming in its greatness but satisfying in its harmony.¹⁸

What light does all this cast upon Ignatius' 'greatest consolation' and delight in spending long hours gazing heavenwards? For him this was no mere metaphor. His gaze took him upwards to the visible, finite limits of the universe, beyond which, he knew, was the throne of His Divine Majesty. It is hard for us to imagine what that experience must have felt like.

It is perhaps worth returning to the striking words attributed to Ignatius by Ribadeneira: 'Oh, how vile and low the earth seems to me! When I look at the sky, it is manure and garbage.'¹⁹ On first sight, they might seem difficult to reconcile with the Ignatius many of us claim to know and even love. The man who learnt to see and serve God in all things discarding the earth as sordid rubbish? Perhaps, on further reflection, we might come to see his heartfelt exclamation as reflecting something of what was expressed by St Paul in Philippians 3:8—next to Christ all else was worthless. But there is something else going on here as well and though we might recoil at it, we should not explain away as mere hyperbole: the Augustinian or dualistic overtones that were also ingredients in Ignatius' imaginative universe.

In Ribadeneira's reading of Ignatius' stargazing, the contemplation of God's goodness and beauty in the heavens above—the realm of

¹⁷ Dante, *Paradiso*, canto 27, 109–112, in *The Divine Comedy*, translated by Robin Kirkpatrick (London: Penguin, 2012).

¹⁸ Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 99.

¹⁹ Though it has gone out of style today, this was once one of Ignatius' better known catchphrases, often appearing, with some variation, via the abbreviated Latin version of Ribadeneira's text: 'Heuquam sordet terra cum coelum aspicio!' ('Alas, how sordid is the earth when I look at the sky!'). It appears frequently in pious nineteenth-century literature and is referenced in Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 149.

unchanging perfection—put into stark contrast his own smallness and sinfulness as an earthly creature below, confined to the sublunar realm of impermanence and imperfection. He would look attentively at the night sky for so long:

... because its external appearance, and the consideration of what is within the heavens and above them, was a great stimulus and incentive to him to disdain all the transitory and changeable things that are below them, and inflamed more his love for God.²⁰

How do we reconcile and hold in tension these different dimensions of Ignatius in our imagination? The world-spurning and heaven-seeking with his deeply embodied, incarnational spirituality? Somehow we need to hold this strange, old cosmological dimension in place alongside Ignatius' mysticism and profound awareness of the immanence of God in creation—the God who caused him to weep tears of delight and consolation. After all, Ignatius was a sixteenth-century mystic who was able to hold these in tension himself, even if we might struggle to. His cosmology may even have been a help to contemplation rather than a hindrance, as we moderns tend rather arrogantly to assume. For all its absolute and morally charged 'ups' and 'downs', his was a spiritually soaked universe that was fundamentally orientated towards heaven.

This brings us lastly to another piece of mental furniture that Ignatius would have carried around with him, probably unconsciously: the ancient theory of 'sympathies' and 'antipathies'. Everything in the medieval universe—whether spiritual or physical—had its rightful place and naturally inclined to it, was drawn to it, by a sort of homing instinct. Since the soul came from heaven, our desire for God and godliness was simply a natural inclination of like for like, kind for kind: one thing being drawn back to its rightful place almost as if by magnetic force. Our restless hearts longed for their resting place in God, as Augustine expressed it.

What applied to the human soul equally applied to the physical universe, including the heavenly bodies, and vice versa; the language of 'drawn' and 'desire' could be employed in a non-figurative sense for both. In this world-view, as C. S. Lewis expresses it, there was 'continuity between merely physical events [in our eyes] and our most spiritual aspirations'.²¹ Dante was not just being poetic when he ended his *Paradiso*

²⁰ MHSJ FN 4, 95.

²¹ Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 94.

by describing how ‘my will and my desire were turned, as wheels that move in equilibrium, by love that moves the sun and the other stars’.²²

In Ignatius’ day, long before Newton and the theory of gravity, there was no sense of reality being governed by mathematical laws: *love* was the driving force of the universe. While this may be a leap of faith for a modern—a spiritual or mystical insight into the heart of reality—for Ignatius it was also a self-evident scientific fact. What else but the love of God could attract and move objects even as large as the sun: the same love that drew and moved him. The stars that Ignatius gazed on were no mere balls of gas, but God-created, God-desiring spirits: fellow creatures, as St Francis would have recognised them also, with a character and charism of their own.

What do we make of this stargazing Ignatius? When we add some of the foreignness, the strangeness, back onto his looking at the stars, their place in his imagination takes on a different dimension from what we might at first expect. The question, perhaps, for us is: do such differences discourage or enliven our own imaginative engagement with Ignatius and the stars?

As Ignatius reminisced to da Câmara, ‘the greatest consolation he used to receive was to look at the sky and the stars, which he did often and for a long time, because with this he used to feel in himself a great impetus towards serving Our Lord’ (*Autobiography*, n. 11). Was this ‘impetus’, we might wonder, recognised by him as a natural inclining of his soul? The same love that moved the stars was moving him heavenwards, homewards, inflaming his heart and drawing him on in reciprocal love to the greater glory of God: the origin and destination of his soul. As Ignatius looked up at the sky and wept, he knew that what lay behind and beyond his vision was the source that drew both him and the stars ever onwards, from where ‘all that is good and every gift descends from on high’ (Exx 237). The motions of the heavenly bodies and the interior motions he felt in his own body were not unrelated but macro- and microcosmic levels of the same phenomenon: the drawing of the creature home to its loving Creator.

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²² Dante, *Paradiso*, canto 23, 143–145.

IGNATIAN DISCERNMENT AND THOMISTIC PRUDENCE

Opposition or Harmony?

Timothy M. Gallagher and David M. Gallagher

WHEN SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS who employ St Ignatius' teaching on discernment engage in theological conversation, at some point a question is likely to arise. A brief and (not so) imaginary dialogue will present the issue. The first speaker has theological training and speaks from a Thomistic background. The second speaker is an Ignatian spiritual director and replies from this formation:

FIRST SPEAKER: I have significant reservations about Ignatian discernment. It relies on feelings, and feelings are notoriously unstable. It complicates things unnecessarily by introducing too many variables liable to misperceptions. Sometimes the 'discernment' just goes on and on, and never reaches clarity. It's because the approach is too unwieldy and too uncertain. I prefer the solid ground of Thomistic teaching on virtue, in this case, the virtue of prudence. The steps of prudence, as St Thomas outlines them, avoid these complexities and lead to clarity: deliberate well on the factors involved, judge wisely regarding the best means to the end in view—God's will for you in this choice, in view of eternal life—and then do it. When you follow this approach with prayer and under wise guidance, you have what you need to find God's will.

SECOND SPEAKER: I respect your view, but I must point out that Ignatian discernment, as we find it in the Spiritual Exercises, is solidly rooted in the Church's tradition. This began with the papal bull that approved Ignatius' book, an approval that subsequent popes have repeated to this day. Also, many holy men and women, among them great saints, have found God's will through these Spiritual Exercises. I've given the Ignatian Exercises for years and have offered spiritual direction in their light to many people. I've seen repeatedly how this approach helps people. Ignatian discernment brings clarity into confused spiritual experience, and people perceive where God is leading—they see God's will. Experience has shown me that Ignatian discernment, properly applied, far from complicating and confusing things, brings light and points the way forward.

The conversation generally stops there. Neither has convinced the other. Neither has addressed the position of the other. Both remain unmoved in their opinions, the first speaker in mistrust of Ignatian discernment, and the second in conviction of its value.

Must the conversation end at this point? What if it were pursued with greater precision? What if the first speaker learnt more about Ignatian discernment, and the second engaged the first speaker's objections? Experience indicates that this dialogue matters, and particularly because the clash has pastoral consequences: help that could be offered may be denied to people in need of it. If this tension can be resolved, rich spiritual resources will be released for the People of God.

Clarifying the Question

The first step consists in clarifying the two terms: Ignatian discernment of God's will and the Thomistic virtue of prudence, both of which are concerned with finding the best way to choose and act in a given situation. It is this overarching similarity that leads us to ask about possible differences in their mode of arriving at a choice and whether they are at odds with each other.

Ignatian Discernment of God's Will

While Ignatian discernment of God's will may be applied broadly, it most directly concerns choices in which three qualities are found simultaneously. First, both options in the choice are good. Second, the person is free to choose either option; the choice is not governed by some law (divine, natural, ecclesiastical, civil) or by some aspect of the person's state in life that would make one of the options obligatory. Third, the choice is of some significance.¹ Such choices may include vocational discernment, choice or change of career, adoption of new ministries, decisions to relocate with the family, to adopt a child, to pursue advanced studies, to train for spiritual direction, or similar. In our discussion of Ignatian discernment, we will presume such choices.² Likewise, our focus is on Ignatian discernment of *God's will* in choices we face (Exx 169–189) and on Ignatian discernment of *spirits* (Exx 313–336) only as it is involved

¹ See Timothy M. Gallagher, *A Handbook for Spiritual Directors: An Ignatian Guide for Accompanying Discernment of God's Will* (New York: Crossroad, 2017), as well as *Discerning the Will of God: An Ignatian Guide to Christian Decision Making* (New York: Crossroad, 2009), 16–17.

² In Exx 189 Ignatius also applies his Spiritual Exercises to situations in which no such choice is faced.

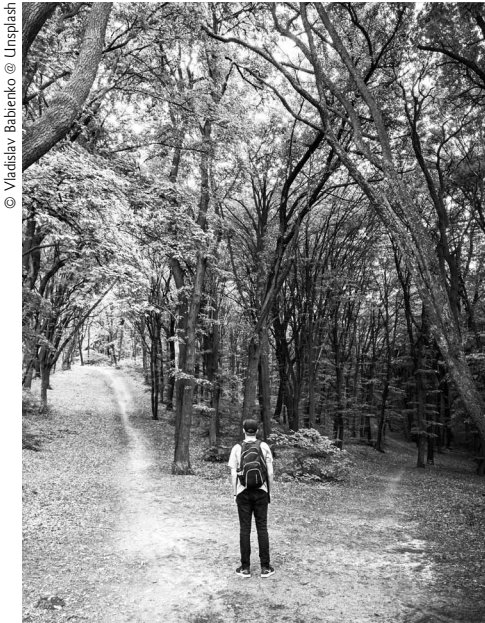
in discerning God's will.³ We will also discuss only experiences of spiritual consolation genuinely given by the good spirit.⁴

Following Ignatius, a spiritual director first helps retreatants prepare for discernment. Ignatius clarifies the end of human life (Principle and Foundation, Exx 23), helps them remove disordered affections that might impede discernment (First Week, Exx 45–90), and then guides them to the availability of heart that permits discernment (Second Week, Exx 91–189). This preparation is pursued through the sacraments, abundant prayer and competent spiritual direction. When the requisite availability to God is present, Ignatius invites retreatants to enter the discernment proper.

God may, Ignatius tells us, reveal his will to retreatants facing a

choice in one or more of three 'times' or 'modes'.⁵ An order holds among the modes: if the retreatants do not discern God's will by the first mode (most often they will not), they then move to the second; and if they are unable to discern by the second mode, they will move to the third. This process is carried out with the guidance of a spiritual director.

The first mode is 'when God our Lord so moves and attracts the will that, without doubting or being able to doubt, the devout soul follows what is shown to it'



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³ Ignatius' second mode of discerning God's will is exercised precisely through discernment of spirits, as we shall show. See Gallagher, *Handbook for Spiritual Directors*, 18–24, 67–109; *Discerning the Will of God*, 83–101. Ignatius provides two sets of rules for the discernment of spirits (Exx 313–327; 328–336). For reasons of space, here we will confine ourselves to the first set. For the second, see Timothy M. Gallagher, *Spiritual Consolation: An Ignatian Guide for the Greater Discernment of Spirits* (New York: Crossroad, 2007). And for the second set as applied to the discernment of God's will, see Gallagher, *Handbook for Spiritual Directors*, 101–107.

⁴ In the second set of rules Ignatius provides clear guidelines for distinguishing spiritual consolation given by the good spirit from deceptive spiritual consolation given by the enemy. See Gallagher, *Spiritual Consolation* and *Handbook for Spiritual Directors* for a full treatment of this issue.

⁵ Ignatius employs both 'times' (Exx 175–178; Dir 1:6) and 'modes' (Exx 189; Dir 1:18–19) to describe the three ways 'for making a good and sound election [*elección*, choice]' (Exx 175). We will adopt the word 'mode' here, and speak of 'discernment' rather than 'election'. For a discussion of these two words, see Gallagher, *Handbook for Spiritual Directors*, 176 note 3.

(Exx 175). In this case, God simply makes his will so clear that the discernment is complete: retreatants know with surety God's will in the choice and need only carry it out.

The second mode is 'when the person receives sufficient clarity and understanding through the experience of consolations and desolations, and through the experience of discernment of spirits' (Exx 176). By consolation, Ignatius intends an affectively uplifting experience (joy, hope, gratitude, love, peace and similar) on the spiritual level, the level of our relationship with God; by desolation, an affectively heavy experience (sadness, anxiety, hopelessness, discouragement and similar) on the spiritual level.⁶ When, over time, a person is consistently drawn to one option in times of spiritual consolation, it becomes clear that God wills that option. The discernment is clearer still if that attraction is attacked in time of spiritual desolation when the enemy is at work (Exx 318).

The third mode is employed when God has not given clarity by the first or the second. In a time of affective peace, Ignatius writes, retreatants consider 'by way of reasoning' the 'advantages or benefits', 'purely for the praise of God and the salvation of my soul', that accrue to the one option and the other, as well as any 'disadvantages or dangers' from the same perspective (Exx 181). They thus perceive which option will serve God's greater glory. In this way, as grace mingles with the retreatants' calm and faith-guided reasoning, God's will is shown.

The Thomistic Virtue of Prudence

For Thomas, prudence is the chief of the four cardinal virtues. Human persons are rational agents who direct their actions by reason or thinking. This is *practical reason*—thinking directed to action of some sort—and for actions to be good, practical reason needs to be perfected by a virtue. When reason aims at some partial goal, the virtue that perfects it is called art or skill.⁷ Medicine, which aims at health, would be such an art. But when practical reason is directing actions to the end of life as a whole, that is, when it is directing them precisely as *moral* actions, then the virtue

⁶ Dir 1: 18: 'A full explanation should be given of what consolation is, i.e. spiritual joy, love, hope for things above, tears and every interior movement which leaves the soul consoled in our Lord. The opposite of this is desolation: sadness, lack of confidence, lack of love, dryness, and so on.' In theological terms, spiritual consolation is an actual grace: see Timothy M. Gallagher, *Setting Captives Free: Personal Reflections on Ignatian Discernment of Spirits* (New York: Crossroad, 2018), 52–54. Ignatius' rules for discernment of spirits, speak of specifically *spiritual* consolation and desolation. For the difference between spiritual and nonspiritual (natural) consolation and desolation, see Timothy M. Gallagher, *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide to Everyday Living* (New York: Crossroad, 2005), 48–51, 60–61; *Setting Captives Free*, 46–54, 68–71.

⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.2, q. 57, a. 4, ad3. All translations are the authors' own.

that perfects it is prudence.⁸ Thomas refers to prudence as right reason regarding actions (*recta ratio agibilium*), having in mind moral actions.⁹

Because prudence aims at the end of life as whole—the highest end—it comes into play whenever there is a choice that has a bearing on that end. In other words, it is exercised in every moral act and there can be no good moral act that is not also a prudent act.¹⁰ Prudence always works with the other moral virtues. These virtues (justice, fortitude, temperance, and so on) dispose the person rightly towards the end of life, and prudence perfects practical reason as it finds the right means to achieve this end. Thomas says repeatedly that prudence deals with the means, and presupposes a right ordination towards the end.¹¹

Practical reason, when it is perfected by prudence in moral action, has three distinct acts. The first is *counsel*, by which the person considers or investigates the possible means to achieve the end. Having considered the possible options with their advantages and disadvantages, the person arrives at a *judgment* as to which is best. But with the judgment alone prudence is not perfected. It can happen that persons judge what would be best to do, but fail actually to choose, often because they are pulled away from the judgment by some form of passion (desire, fear, and so on). Hence Thomas points to a third act, *command*, by which the judgment actually informs the will's choice and the person carries out the good action. Since prudence is directed to the act of choice, Thomas says that command is the principal act of prudence.¹²

Let us take an example. A parish is struggling economically, and the pastor asks a parishioner who is skilled in such matters to join the parish finance council. This man loves the Lord and wants to do what the Lord is asking of him. He meets the pastor to learn what kind of help and how

⁸ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 21, a. 2, ad 2.

⁹ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 56, a. 3; 1. 2, q. 57, a. 4.

¹⁰ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 57, a. 5.

¹¹ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 58, a. 5.

¹² Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2. 2, q. 47, a. 8; 'Prudence is right reason concerning things to be done [*recta ratio agibilium*], as was said above. Whence it follows that the principal act of prudence will be that act which is the principal act of reason concerning things to be done. This kind of reason has three acts. The first of these is counsel, which pertains to discovery, for to take counsel is to seek something, as was said earlier [1. 2, q. 14, a. 1]. The second act is to judge the things that have been discovered, and with this act speculative [non-practical] reason is finished. But practical reason, which is ordered to action, goes further, and its third act is to command [*praecipere*]. This act consists in the application to action of the things discovered in counsel and then judged. And since this act is closer to the goal of practical reason, it follows that it is the principal act of practical reason and hence of prudence as well.' (See also 1. 2, q. 57, a. 6.) For a treatment of Thomas's understanding of choice and its relationship to other acts of the will and intellect, see David Gallagher, 'The Will and its Acts', in *Essays on the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas*, edited by Stephen Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown U, 2002), 78–83.

much time are involved. He discusses this with his wife, considering whether this further service is compatible with his existing commitments at home and at work. They examine the parish's need and whether or not others might help. The man then reflects and prays. In Thomistic terms, he has taken wise *counsel*. After consultation, prayer and reflection, and with his wife's support, he concludes that he can say yes. He has made a sound *judgment*. He accepts the position, sets a time to begin, and does so. He has exercised efficacious *command* by putting his decision into practice.

Thomas distinguishes between the natural moral virtues and the infused moral virtues. The natural virtues are habits acquired by means of repeated actions and operate at the level of nature. The infused virtues are infused by God into the soul and are found whenever a person is in the state of grace, that is, they accompany the sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*) poured into the soul at baptism.¹³ Also infused into the soul at baptism are the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, the highest being charity. By means of this virtue a person is able to love God above all things, and particularly God as seen in the beatific vision that constitutes the end of human life.¹⁴ The moral virtues are perfected when they are directed by charity to this highest end. Hence infused prudence—the form of the virtue with which we are concerned here—seeks to find the best means for achieving this supernatural end.¹⁵ And at this supernatural level, especially when it is a question of helping others to achieve salvation or serving the common good of the Church, prudence will be assisted by actual graces (*gratiae gratis datae*) as needed and as given by God.¹⁶

In addition, this infused virtue of prudence will be assisted by the gift of *counsel*, one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ Thomas teaches that these gifts, qualities infused into the soul by God, render a person well disposed to be moved by the Holy Spirit at the supernatural level, in order to achieve his or her own and others' salvation.¹⁸ Thomas specifically relates the gift of counsel to the virtue of prudence. As we have seen, counsel is the first of the three acts of prudence, and it enables people to carry out that act at a level beyond their merely natural powers.¹⁹

¹³ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 63, a. 3; 1. 2, q. 110, a. 3–4.

¹⁴ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2. 2, q. 23, a. 4–5.

¹⁵ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 65, a. 2.

¹⁶ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 111, a. 1–2.

¹⁷ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2. 2, q. 52, a. 1–2.

¹⁸ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 68, a. 1.

¹⁹ See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2. 2, q. 52, a. 1.

Because human reason cannot comprehend all the individual and contingent things that can occur, it comes about that *the thoughts of mortals are timid and our providence is uncertain*, as is said in *Wisdom*, 9:14. Consequently, man, in the investigation of counsel, needs to be directed by God, who comprehends all things. This happens through the gift of counsel which is received from God.²⁰

By this gift God will also quiet the anxiety of doubt when we are faced by choices.²¹ As we will see, it is important to keep in mind that the Thomistic virtue of prudence, especially infused prudence, is perfected by motions of the Holy Spirit working through the gift of counsel.

Ignatian Discernment and Thomistic Prudence: Similarities and Differences

Both Ignatian discernment and Thomistic prudence are concerned with finding the right way to choose and act in given situations. Both assume that love and service of God are the proper end of action. In Ignatian terms, this is the ‘principle and foundation’ of all discernment: ‘Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul’ (Exx 23). For Thomas, the acts of all the other virtues are aimed at the love of God (and neighbour) that is caused by the virtue of charity. Hence the willing (loving) of that end is required for all perfectly virtuous actions and, without charity, prudence will not exist or at best only imperfectly. Both assume the working of supernatural grace in the soul; neither operates on the purely natural plane. In Ignatian terms,

The love that moves me and causes me to choose this thing must descend from above, from the love of God; so that the one who chooses should first of all feel in himself that the love, greater or lesser, that he has for the thing he chooses, is solely for the sake of his Creator and Lord (Exx 184).²²

Both involve the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Finally, both presume that the advice of others is sought. In Ignatian discernment, the one discerning meets regularly—daily, in the context of the Spiritual Exercises as a thirty-day retreat, and weekly when they are made over several months in daily life—with a well-prepared spiritual director (Exx 6–10, 15, 17).²³ Thomas also points to the need for advice.

²⁰ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2. 2, q.52, a.1, ad 1.

²¹ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2. 2, q. 52, a. 3.

²² Ignatius returns repeatedly to this understanding of the end: Exx 46, 169, 177, 179. See Gallagher, *Handbook for Spiritual Directors*, 26–28.

²³ See Gallagher, *Handbook for Spiritual Directors*, 15–16.

Among the integral parts of prudence—the different elements that together form the virtue—he includes the sub-virtue of docility, a fixed disposition to seek advice when it is needed. Choosing and acting without seeking advice from others more experienced or more expert than oneself, especially in a serious matter, will constitute a lack of prudence.²⁴

In terms of differences, from what we have seen thus far it appears that Ignatian discernment is more restricted in scope than Thomistic prudence. Thomistic prudence applies to the entire range of moral choices and every virtuous act is a prudent act. Ignatian discernment is primarily concerned with choices of significance, in which both options are good, and the person is free to choose either. Consequently, if a harmony exists between the two, Ignatian discernment will be an exercise of the broader Thomistic virtue of prudence as applied to its specific realm.

Specifying the Question

We can now return to the original objection raised by the Thomist and attempt to state it more precisely. The heart of the objection was the following: *Ignatian discernment relies on feelings, and feelings are notoriously unstable. It complicates things unnecessarily by introducing too many variables liable to misperceptions. Sometimes the ‘discernment’ just goes on and on, and never comes to clarity.*

If we consider Thomas’s three acts of prudence, the objection appears to bear on the first act, the act of *counsel*. Ignatius and Thomas would seem to agree that the person needs to come to a (good) judgment, and both would say that the person should act on that judgment (command). But for the Thomist, the process of discernment described by Ignatius does not seem to fit with the act of counsel. Counsel is an act of reason; it should proceed in a rational way. It should be an exercise of thought and not just a matter of feelings. The whole idea of prudence is that a person acts as a *rational* agent, that actions are directed by *thought*. Thus the objection, in the end, seems to be that Ignatian discernment lacks the act of counsel, and replaces it with something not quite rational.

Counsel is ... an exercise of thought and not just a matter of feelings

The basic issue, then, comes down to this: can we understand Ignatian discernment in a way that fits within Thomas’s understanding of counsel? We will examine Ignatius’ three modes to see whether and how they might be understood in this way.

²⁴ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2. 2, q.49, a.3.

The Third Mode of Discernment

Although the third mode of discernment is practised when a person has been unable to discern by the first two modes, we discuss it first, since it fits most easily into the Thomistic understanding of counsel. We can use an example to show this.

'It Seemed Like the Reasons for Taking the Position Were More Solid'

The following is from a conversation with 'Patrick' and is shared with his permission:

When I was downsized by my company, I began my own business. Around the same time, I had begun to get involved as a volunteer in prison ministry, and this ministry was very rewarding. After a time, the person who ran prison ministry for the diocese had to move, and I was offered the position. It was a full-time position. I said no. I didn't want a full-time job with prison ministry. I just wanted to stay as a volunteer.

A few days passed and I was unsettled, not sure about this, still fighting the new position. I sought a spiritual director and told him that I've prayed but I've never discerned.

He suggested that I spend an hour a day in prayer and gave me scriptures for the prayer. So, each day I went to the Adoration chapel in the parish and prayed with a scripture. But I didn't get any clarity yet.

Then he suggested looking at the advantages and disadvantages of taking the position and of not taking it. I did that. First, I looked at the advantages. There were a number of them. I knew the ministry well from my experience. I had the administrative skills from my career. I had a good background in theology, and that would help in directing the ministry in the diocese. I also knew that, if I took the position, I would be giving more of myself to the Lord. The disadvantages were that I would lose time for myself, time for the gym, for my grandkids, really, time to be lazy and not have to push myself. When I thought about not taking the position, all of this reversed.

I went through this exercise, but also continued with the Blessed Sacrament and scripture. The whole process took about three weeks. That didn't matter to me; I wanted to do it well. About a week and a half into it, I found that all the selfish motives for not taking the position were gone. And it seemed like the reasons for taking the position were more solid.

Then the director gave me the passage about Bartimaeus [Mark 10:46–52]. It was a passage I knew well, and I was sitting there reading it. When

Jesus asked Bartimaeus, 'What do you want me to do for you?' he answered, 'I want to see'. That's what I wanted, too. Then the last five words of the passage really hit me: Bartimaeus 'followed him on the way'. I felt something of what Bartimaeus must have felt because I too had started to lose sight in one eye a few years before, and the eye healed. It seemed to me that the Lord was asking me to follow him, too, through the prison ministry. It hit me like a ton of bricks. It was amazingly clear what the Lord wanted

I've been doing the prison ministry for four years now, and I'm still sure that the discernment was clear.²⁵

In third-mode discernment, a person chooses a time of calm, when he or she can reflect well. Recalling the end of our life—to love and serve God, and so enter eternal joy—the person prayerfully reviews the advantages and disadvantages for God's greater glory of each option. God's greater glory, in Ignatian terms, signifies that which more effectively serves to make God known and loved in human hearts, in this life and unto eternal life. This approach is sometimes called the method of the 'four columns': an open notebook, with a line down the centre of each of two facing pages, each page representing one option, and at the head of the two columns on each page, 'Advantages' and 'Disadvantages'.

Having prayed, the person notes the advantages and disadvantages for God's greater glory of each option. This may require one or more times of prayer. When the columns are complete, the person looks to see which option presents a preponderance of reasons. The option that does present a preponderance of reasons is shown to be God's will. In this mode of discernment, God calls a person,

... to the free and peaceful exercise of his natural powers, so that with the help of ordinary grace, without special consolations, illuminations, or directly given movements, he may choose that which he finds to be more pleasing to God, with the single purpose of seeking God's greater service and praise.²⁶

This is to say that when God does not give first-mode or second-mode discernment, God calls the person to discern by the light of reason fortified by grace.

²⁵ See Gallagher, *Discerning the Will of God*, 110–13, for a slightly different version of this experience.

²⁶ Manuel Ruiz Jurado, *A la luz del carisma ignaciano. Estudios sobre san Ignacio de Loyola y al Compañía de Jesús* (Villatuerta: Mensajero, Sal Terrae and Universidad Pontificia Comillas, 2015), 107.

Turning to the Thomistic conception of prudence, we can see that this third Ignatian mode fits within it very well, especially in terms of the act of counsel. Patrick has a clear end—the glory of God—and is looking for the best means for him to achieve it at this particular point in his life. He has various options and reflectively examines them to see which will better achieve that end. He compares the options in terms of their respective advantages and disadvantages. In short, his counsel is very rational and contains the investigation (*inquisitio*) proper to the act of counsel. Having taken counsel, he proceeds to make a judgment as to what would be best and then chooses to do it (command). From a Thomistic point of view, he has clearly exercised the virtue of prudence, and particularly in the act of counsel.²⁷

The First Mode of Discernment

It is less immediately clear that Ignatius' first mode of discernment fits into the Thomistic understanding of prudence. As we saw earlier, in this mode 'God our Lord so moves and attracts the will that, without doubting or being able to doubt, the devout soul follows what is shown to it' (Exx 175). The suddenness that may characterize this mode can easily lead one to think that the act of counsel is hardly present, if at all. Let us look at an example of this of discernment in practice.

Pauline, Sister of St Thérèse of Lisieux

Pauline, Thérèse's 'second mother', cared for her sister until Thérèse, at eight years old, began studies as a day student at the Benedictine abbey in Lisieux. Pauline, now twenty, considered her task finished and prepared to enter religious life according to her long-felt desire. For many reasons, her thoughts turned to the Visitation Sisters of Le Mans. Her mother, Zélie, had loved them and often visited her sister Élisabeth there. Pauline had spent ten years with her aunt in the school attached to the Visitation monastery. Now she was free to enter religious life, she planned to enter that monastery and had already spoken with the superior.

In a moment, however, her plans changed completely. On 16 February 1882, she attended Mass in the parish church of Saint-Jacques in Lisieux. She recounts what followed:

²⁷ For reasons of space, we have not discussed Ignatius's second way of doing third-mode discernment, which adds three questions to the first way to assist greater objectivity in reasoning. See Gallagher, *Handbook of Spiritual Direction*, 129–139, and *Discerning the Will of God*, 113–118.

I assisted at the 6.00 a.m. Mass in Saint-Jacques, in the chapel of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Suddenly, a most vivid light shone in my soul, and the good God showed me clearly that it was not in the Visitation that he wanted me, but with the Carmelites I remember that I felt myself flushed with emotion, and when going forward to receive Communion and returning, I was afraid that this emotion would be evident to others. *I had never thought about Carmel*, and, in an instant, there it was, that I felt myself impelled to Carmel by an irresistible attraction.²⁸

Once at home, Pauline confided her experience to her older sister Marie. Her father, the wider family, her confessor and the superior of the Carmel of Lisieux, all supported her Carmelite vocation. Eight months later, Pauline entered the Carmel of Lisieux, where she passed 69 years of fruitful religious life, many of them as prioress. This lovely experience of grace perfectly illustrates Ignatius' first mode of discernment. Something is shown to a person: her call to Carmelite religious life. Her will is strongly drawn to this call; and the experience is so clear that she cannot doubt, then or ever, that God's will for her is to become a Carmelite.

From a Thomistic point of view, what seems problematic here is a seeming absence of the act of counsel. Without any investigation Pauline comes to the judgment that she should enter the Carmelites, and she proceeds similarly to choose (command) this course of action. It seems that this would not be an act of the Thomistic virtue of prudence, or at least it would be a defective act, lacking the essential element of counsel.

Here we should note first that Thomas, in his discussion of counsel, recognises that some actions are not preceded by the normal investigation of counsel. This happens when it is immediately obvious which course of action should be taken. As he puts it: 'In things that are manifest, reason does not inquire but rather immediately judges. And hence it is not necessary that there be the investigation of counsel in all the things that are done by reason.'²⁹ This teaching also appears in Thomas's understanding of divine and angelic choice. In both cases he says that the intellect grasps things immediately without any discursive motion and so God and the angels make their judgments immediately without the sort of investigation that normally precedes human judgment and command.³⁰ Ignatius' first

²⁸ Jean Vinatier, *Mère Agnès de Jésus: Pauline Martin, soeur aimée et 'Petite Mère' de Sainte Thérèse de l'Enfant-Jésus* (Paris: Cerf, 1993), 45–46 (emphasis original).

²⁹ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1. 2, q. 14, a. 4, ad 2.

³⁰ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q.22, a.1, ad 1; 1, q. 58, a. 3.

mode, then, could be understood as a case in which the act of counsel is immediate, and the person moves straight to the act of judgment.

How might we explain this in a Thomistic framework? In his treatise on God's providence, Thomas addresses the question of whether angels can move a human will. He says that they can do this, by presenting a good object to the person's intellect. The will, attracted by that object, for example a possible good action, moves itself freely towards it. Angels are said to move the will 'exteriorly', in a way that preserves the will's freedom, and Thomas says that they 'persuade' the human person. God also can and does move the will in this way, presenting the intellect



Pauline Martin, Mother Agnes of Jesus

with an attractive good which the person then freely chooses.³¹ Either way, either directly or through the mediation of an angel, God can move a person to consider a good object and can make it immediately attractive—so much so, in fact, that Pauline could experience, suddenly and without having deliberated, an 'irresistible attraction' to becoming a Carmelite. This would clearly seem to be a case where the gift of counsel is operative and Pauline is following an 'interior impulse' and is 'being moved by a principle better than the human mind'.³²

Here, then, we seem to have a way to explain, within Thomas's own teaching, the apparent lack of

³¹ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q.111, a.2.

³² Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.2, q.68, a.1. It does not seem, for Thomas at least, that Pauline's experience of an 'irresistible attraction' would signify a lack of freedom in her decision to enter Carmel. He teaches that there are certain good objects—specifically happiness considered in general and God seen in the beatific vision—that can in no way be taken to be evil and so the will is not free to reject them (this would be God moving the will 'efficaciously'). It is possible, however, for the will to reject all other goods, including something such as entering Carmel, because it is always possible somehow to see them in a negative light (1.2, q.10, a.2, 4). Nevertheless, Thomas holds that the will can be subject to a qualified kind of necessity, the 'necessity of the end'. This occurs when a person wills some end and there is only one means to accomplish it. For example, if a river can be crossed only by using a boat, a person who wills to cross the river necessarily wills to use a boat (1, q.82, a.1). In the case of someone such as Pauline, who would take as her highest end or goal to do the will of God, if an action were presented as what God willed, she would feel this kind of necessity in choosing it. This might explain her experience of an 'irresistible attraction'.

counsel, especially the lack of an investigation, that seems to characterize Ignatius' first mode.

The Second Mode of Discernment

In the second mode the person observes how an option appears when he or she considers it in times of consolation and in times of desolation. Ignatius describes this mode as follows:

Among the three modes of making a choice, if God does not move a person in the first mode, one should dwell persistently on the second, that of recognizing his vocation by the experience of consolations and desolations; in such manner that, as he continues with his meditations on Christ our Lord, he observes, when he finds himself in consolation, to which part God moves him, and likewise when he finds himself in desolation. (Dir 1:18)

The basic principle is that if in times of spiritual consolation a possible choice or action consistently appears good or attractive and its consideration brings peace and joy, while producing the opposite reaction in times of desolation, these experiences allow a person to judge that this choice is God's will and that he or she should pursue it.

Unlike the first mode, which may occur in an instant, the second mode entails a more or less extended period of prayer and reflection. In addition, there is a kind of weighing up or investigation (*inquisitio*) that can be understood to play the role of Thomistic counsel. Nevertheless, as we will see, this process of reflection can seem to be more a matter of emotions or feelings than the rational process that Thomas seems to describe. It seems to be very 'subjective' and lacking the kind of objectivity characteristic of prudence.

Let us turn to an example from Ignatius' own life.

'With a Great Abundance of Devotion and Tears'

Ignatius is 52, living in Rome, and writing the *Jesuit Constitutions*. He faces a significant discernment regarding poverty: does God will that the Jesuits live a completely radical poverty, with no fixed income? Or does God will a mitigation of this poverty for the proper maintenance of the churches entrusted to them? As he pursues this discernment, Ignatius notes his experience in his *Spiritual Diary*.

He begins on 2 February 1544: 'Great devotion during mass, with tears, with increased trust in Our Lady, and more inclined both then and during the whole day to choose complete poverty'. Here Ignatius

describes a rich experience of spiritual consolation during the Mass, and in this time of consolation his heart is more drawn towards radical poverty. The same drawing continues throughout the day. Something similar appears in the following days:

Sunday [3 Feb.]—The same; and more inclined both then and during the whole day to choose complete poverty.

Monday [4 Feb.]—The same; also other feelings and a greater inclination to complete poverty

Tuesday [5 Feb.]—Great devotion before, during and after mass, with tears so abundant that my eyes ached ... both then and during the day I was set on poverty and still more moved to it

Wednesday [6 Feb.]—Devotion, not without tears, before and during mass, and more inclined to complete poverty

6th. Thursday [7 Feb.]—Very great devotion and tears before mass; I felt throughout the day a warmth and a remarkable devotion, remaining myself ever more convinced and moved to poverty.

The pattern repeats day after day: in time of spiritual consolation, Ignatius feels drawn towards one option in the discernment—radical poverty. As the pattern grows ‘ever more firm’, he increasingly understands that God wills the radical poverty.

Weeks pass, and Ignatius is further confirmed in this discernment. On the final day of discernment, however, spiritual desolation enters, and his clarity is attacked:

After mass and later in my room, I found myself completely bereft of all help, unable to find delight in the mediators, or in the Divine Persons; I felt as remote and separated from them as if I had never felt their influence in the past, or was ever to feel any of it in the future. Instead I was beset by thoughts, now against Jesus, now against another, and quite bewildered with a variety of schemes, to leave the house and hire a room to escape the noise, to fast, to begin more masses, to place an altar upstairs: nothing satisfied me and yet I wanted to put an end to the affair with my soul in a state of consolation and complete satisfaction. (Diary, 12 March 1544)

Classical signs of spiritual desolation appear in this experience: a feeling of distance from God, darkness, a sense of confusion; and in this desolation the clarity given in spiritual consolation is attacked. From the desolation the thought ‘to begin the Masses over again’ arises, that is: *This discernment that you thought so clear is not clear at all. See how confused everything is. You must dismiss the experience of the earlier days and begin the process again.*

Here, then, we witness a classic second-mode discernment: a repeatedly confirmed attraction to one option in time of spiritual consolation that is attacked in time of spiritual desolation. Ignatius supplies the interpretative key in his rules for discernment: 'As in consolation the good spirit guides and counsels us more, so in desolation the bad spirit, with whose counsels we cannot find the way to a right decision' (Exx 318). Hence, Ignatius' discernment that God wills the radical poverty is doubly confirmed: when the good spirit is counselling, he is consistently drawn to the radical poverty; when the bad spirit is counselling, that attraction is attacked. A few hours later that same day, Ignatius concludes the discernment, arriving at the judgment that God wills the radical poverty.

In what way might we see in this process an act of counsel? How might it be reasonable, from a Thomistic point of view, to base a judgment of how one should act on the experiences Ignatius has described? Here we can draw attention to an important principle of Thomas's moral psychology. He teaches that how a potential object of choice appears to a person depends on that person's affective state or condition and will vary as that state or condition varies. As Thomas expresses it (quoting Aristotle), 'depending on the sort of person one is, ends will appear differently to him' (*qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei*).³³

Thomas applies this principle at two levels, that of (stable) moral virtue and that of (transient) passion. At the level of the moral virtues, he says that what appears as a good end to be pursued by one's actions depends on possessing a given virtue or its opposed vice. For example, to a glutton, maximising the pleasures of eating appears to be a good thing and the glutton directs his or her actions to that end. To temperate persons, on the other hand, the chief end pursued in eating will be health, and they will not eat to maximise pleasure, but rather to satisfy their objective bodily needs (enjoying such pleasures as this involves). To the temperate person, overeating does not appear as a good end to be pursued.

Similarly, what seems good to a coward—avoiding pain or death—is very different from what seems good to the courageous person—facing dangers as required by justice or charity. The moral virtues make a person capable of seeing the true ends of human life. And since prudence, to be truly a virtue (and not just some sort of cunning), has to find means to the *true* end of human life, only a person who is affectively well disposed by the moral virtues can be prudent.³⁴

³³ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.2, q.9, a.2.

³⁴ See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.2, q.58.

Thomas also invokes the principle, at the level of the passions, when he is explaining how it is that passions can move the will. In a state of heightened passion, he says, the person perceives goods differently from how he or she perceives them in a calm state. A thing will look appetising to a person who is hungry and has a strong desire to eat, but not when the person is not hungry. Likewise, a person who would normally think that lying or stealing is a bad thing to be avoided might, in a state of fear, start to see it as something it would be good to choose. So too, striking someone looks good while a person is angry, but once the person cools down he or she regrets it. As Thomas puts it, ‘what seems good to an angry man does not seem good to a calm man’.³⁵ Thomas’s point is that passions can move the will—rational appetite—precisely by changing how a possible action appears to the person’s reason, such that a person will choose in a state of passion what he or she would not choose otherwise.

Thomas adds another important point to his analysis. Not only do persons in different affective states see things differently, but it is the one who is in the good or proper affective state who sees goods and evils as they truly are. For example, although the glutton sees eating excessively as something good, it is not truly or objectively good for him or her. The temperate person, on the other hand, will judge accurately—objectively—the amount he or she needs to eat in any given situation.

Similarly, in a state of anger it is very likely that persons will take something to be a good thing to do which, in fact, is very harmful, often even for themselves. It is almost a commonplace that you need to be calm to judge what is truly good.³⁶ As is well known, Thomas distinguishes between the apparent good—what seems good to any given person at any given time—and the true good, what is objectively good for a person whether or not the person perceives it to be such.³⁷ In sum, for someone in a bad affective state the two will be different, while for a person in a good affective state the two will line up together.

Let us now take Thomas’s principle and apply it to Ignatius’ distinction between spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation. It seems we can say that a person in a state of spiritual consolation is in a good or

³⁵ Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.2, q.9, a.2.

³⁶ Although very often the passion of anger distorts one’s perception of the good, it is important to note that this is not always the case and that it is appropriate to become angry when the situation objectively calls for it. Thomas deals with the proper control of one’s anger while treating the virtue of meekness (*Summa theologiae*, 2.2, q.157).

³⁷ A few examples of the distinction can be found at: *Summa theologiae*, 1.2, q.8, a.1; 1.2, q.9, a.6, ad 3; 1.2, q.19, a.1, ad 1.

healthy affective state. This is a state which arises from the good spirit through God's grace. The opposite is true for the state of desolation, in which the soul is being attacked by the bad spirit. Consequently, it would seem to be expected that a person in a state of consolation will see what is the good thing to do more accurately than a person who is in a state of desolation.

Working with Thomas's principle, then, it seems that the fact that a certain option consistently seems good in times of consolation can serve as an indication that it is truly good. And this is confirmed by the experience of its seeming to be bad in times of desolation. Given this consideration, it may well seem 'rational' to take this consistent experience in consolations and desolations as a sign that one should judge that the option should be chosen. In this way we could see it as an instance of the act of counsel that leads to a (good) judgment.³⁸

This process of examining over time how things appear to oneself in different states may not seem to fit our expectation of a virtuous act of counsel, certainly not as the third mode does. In this regard, it may be helpful to recall that Ignatian discernment applies in cases where the usual 'objective' measures are not found: cases where the choice is between two good actions and where it is not governed by some law or by obligations arising from one's state in life. In other words, there is already something quite 'subjective' about the choice that requires a special attention to how the Spirit may be moving the person. In the second mode this is precisely what the person does in order to make the proper judgment. Also, this mode does not necessarily have to yield a judgment; if after some time the person, along with the spiritual director, understands that he or she will not discover the will of God in this way, they move on to the third mode. We might note that the initial critique of discernment as being interminable may arise, in terms of second-mode discernment, from a failure in the spiritual director to recognise the need to take this step.³⁹

³⁸ In this example and analysis of the second mode, the person examines how a possibility appears to him or her in periods of spiritual consolation or desolation. But the consideration of the possible course of action may also give rise to the consolation; see Ignacio Casanovas, *Comentario y explicación de los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio de Loyola* (Barcelona: Balmes, 1945), volume 2, 97. Here we might appeal to Thomas's teaching that the object of love and joy is something suitable or fitting (*conueniens*) to the subject to help explain why a person might rely on such experience (given that Ignatian consolation is a form of joy: Exx 317). On the nature of love and joy and their relationship, see David Gallagher, 'Desire for Beatitude and Love of Friendship in Thomas Aquinas', *Mediaeval Studies*, 58 (1996), 8–11.

³⁹ See Gallagher, *Handbook for Spiritual Directors*. More generally, unduly protracted discernments may arise from various factors: debilitating psychological wounds in the discernor, imperfect spiritual

Thomistic Prudence and Ignatian Discernment: A Mutual Benefit

From what we have seen, it appears that if Thomistic prudence and Ignatian discernment are well understood on their own terms, there does not seem to be any opposition between them. We can fit Ignatian discernment, in its restricted sphere, within the larger, all-encompassing virtue of prudence. Moreover, we might say that Ignatius' modes of discernment, which he learnt from his spirit-guided experience, receive a solid theological underpinning from Thomas's broader and highly developed synthesis of the moral and spiritual life. On the one hand, this underpinning offers the Ignatian director a deeper theological understanding of the modes, which in turn fosters a richer and more fruitful pastoral application. On the other hand, Ignatius supplies the Thomistic theologian with a broad grasp, from experience, of the varied ways in which God may give counsel. The theologian's understanding of how prudence is exercised in practice is thereby amplified.

Returning to our initial speakers, if both can perceive the harmony between Thomistic prudence and Ignatian discernment, pastoral blessings follow. The first ceases to mistrust, and possibly cause others to mistrust, an effective spiritual tool for seeking God's will. A pastoral door opens more widely. The second, who now understands discernment more solidly, will reverence it more, exercise it with more precision, and may avoid errors to which he might otherwise be exposed. Again, God's people benefit. Our hope is that this article contributes to that harmony and that benefit.

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formation in the discernor or director, lack of the requisite spiritual preparation for discernment, deficient understanding or application of Ignatius' modes by the director, and the like. A properly formed director will avoid these pitfalls.

CORE INGREDIENTS IN IGNATIUS' RECIPE

Gail Paxman

THE TEXT OF THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES* was developed by St Ignatius of Loyola to assist a giver of the Exercises in taking someone through the process, providing considerable detail and instruction, including warnings about some of the sorts of reactions that may occur. While the Exercises have the purpose of helping retreatants overcome their selves and order their lives on the basis of a decision made in freedom from any disordered attachment (Exx 21), it is the retreatants' experience of Jesus through prayer that enables this result.

I am attracted to Anthony de Mello's description of the text as being like a cookery book, and will accordingly explore the nature of six of Ignatius' core ingredients. These, along with some additional ones, when brought together in the proper proportions using the prescribed methods, will 'produce results'.¹ Ignatius drew on ideas and styles from a diverse range of sources and prayer traditions, 'adapting and simplifying ... weaving the various methods into a wider framework'.² His originality and organization resulted in a pedagogy forming a series of prayer experiences into a 'school of prayer'.³ The Exercises lead 'the *whole person* (mind, feelings, body, unconscious depths, etc.) into a freer and deeper love relationship with Christ'.⁴

It was Ignatius' own conversion experience, significantly influenced by his traits of self-discipline and imagination, that provided the core ingredients. While convalescing after a cannonball injury to the leg, Ignatius' only reading matter was the *Vita Christi* by Ludolph of Saxony and a book of lives of the saints, both of which he read repeatedly. Imagining himself as one of those saints he slowly became aware of what was going on inside him: his emotions, his consolations and desolations. His self-discipline in regard to his desires, and in recording his Exercises,

¹ Anthony de Mello, *Seek God Everywhere: Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius* (New York: Image/Doubleday, 2010), xii.

² Philip Sheldrake, 'Imagination and Prayer', *The Way*, 24/2 (April 1984), 92–102, here 97.

³ Brian O'Leary, 'Repetition and Review', *The Way Supplement*, 27 (Spring 1976), 48–58, here 51.

⁴ Robert L. Schmitt, 'Presenting the Call of the King', *The Way Supplement*, 52 (Spring 1985), 19–29, here 19.



resulted in a school of prayer that encourages a greater emphasis on the affections, stirred up by the will, than on intellectual experience (Exx 3), whereas ‘the more “traditional” instructions on prayer have often ignored the depth and richness of the personal resources a person brings to prayer’.⁵

Preparation

A good cook will prepare before launching into the recipe and this, too, was Ignatius’ approach for retreatants. They prepare for prayer time by engaging their affections and imagination in an explicit encounter with and response to God, by considering ‘how God Our Lord is looking at me’ (Exx 75), shifting attention away from the self ‘to catch a glimpse of how God gazes at me right now’.⁶ A preparatory prayer follows, ‘to ask God our Lord for the grace that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be ordered purely to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty’ (Exx 46). The words ‘actions’ and ‘operations’ in this prayer were a source of uncertainty for me while undertaking the Exercises. For much of the time I reworded the prayer to: *Lord be with me in this time, may my attention, energy, abilities, emotions and desires be open to you that we may go deeper together.* But in the Fourth Week I was drawn to return more to the form of Ignatius’ prayer, asking *Lord, I pray you will align all of me, spirit, soul and body, for your service and your praise and glory.*

Michael Ivens confirms there has always been unclarity around the distinction between actions and operations, and suggests: ‘a practically

⁵ William J. Connolly, ‘Story of the Pilgrim King and the Dynamics of Prayer’, in *Notes on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola*, edited by David L. Fleming (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1983), 103.

⁶ Robert R. Marsh, ‘Imagining Ignatian Spiritual Direction’, *The Way*, 48/3 (July 2009), 27–42, here 29.

useful distinction identifies “action” with the (inner) act of choice and “operation” with its subsequent execution.⁷ My use of *spirit*, *soul* and *body* was an attempt to include all of me, internal and external. In pondering Ivens's distinction and other options he provides in his footnotes, I have concluded that my prayer was in keeping with Ignatius' intention of ‘a very active, muscular kind of prayer’ which affects the whole of consciousness. The more retreatants ‘craft an intensely focused space for prayer’—open to ‘emotions, thoughts, imagination, senses, postures and the effects of environment’—the more God can act in and through them to bring about the desired end of responding to Jesus' call in their lives.⁸

Core Ingredients

What I Want and Desire

We come now to the first of the six core ingredients I wish to explore: asking God ‘for what I want and desire’ (Exx 48) through petitions, laid out by Ignatius in each meditation, for an awakening of affective knowledge. The grace asked for is progressively refined in light of the ‘transformative intimacy’ developing with the Trinitarian God and especially with Jesus.⁹ ‘Want’ and ‘desire’ are verbs—action words—and Ignatius wants retreatants to concretise their desires.

‘Desire’, as Gerry W. Hughes wrote, ‘... belongs to our very essence’.¹⁰ We are people made in the image of God, and the desires deep within us are God's desires for us as unique, loved children of God. The affective knowledge gained through the Exercises underpins the discernment process through which decisions are made. The struggle with opposing desires illuminates what is already present in the depths of our being. Retreatants who are reluctant to pray for the desire suggested by Ignatius can be encouraged to pray for the desire to have the desire.

Colloquy

The colloquy, a spiritual term invented by Ignatius, is the second core ingredient, and is used as the culmination of each prayer time. Derived from the Latin *colloquium*, a colloquy is a conversation, a speaking ‘in the way one friend speaks to another’ (Exx 54). A mutual and spontaneous

⁷ Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary. A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2016), 47.

⁸ Marsh, ‘Imagining Ignatian Spiritual Direction’, 32, 33; Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 65.

⁹ Gordon Rixon, ‘Transforming Mysticism: Adorning Pathways to Self-Transcendence’, *Gregorianum* 85/4 (2004), 719–734, here 727.

¹⁰ Gerard W. Hughes, *Cry of Wonder: Our Own Real Identity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 189.

**Colloquy
is not only
speaking, it is
also listening**

response comes from the resulting companionship, which presumes that the grace sought in the petition is achieved, and leads the retreatants' heart response into an eventual action.¹¹ Helped by a variety of details and guides, retreatants imagine themselves before the cross of Christ or in conversation with other gospel characters, and with God. 'In the colloquies it becomes clear that we do not stand alone before God when we pray.'¹² Colloquy is not only speaking, it is also listening. As intimacy grows the conversation becomes increasingly contemplative, deepening the graces in the mulling over and relishing of the time together. The triple colloquy—speaking first with Mary, then Jesus, then the Father—increases the intensity and introduces us to our next ingredient.

Repetition

Repetition, the third core ingredient, is a key element in Ignatian pedagogy and is required to awaken and assimilate the felt experiences and patterns that emerge in prayer, to provide enlightenment and to break down the barriers that prevent intimacy. Through repetition retreatants move from concern with the material as given to a more selective and subjective prayer from their own response. Focusing on places where strong emotional responses, negative or positive, occurred, the exercise moves from an intellectual consideration to a contemplation of these movements, allowing a spaciousness to be introduced whereby a settling down can occur at the point where they find what they want (Exx 76). 'My first "knowing" is able to become deep and complete.'¹³ In the silence of revisiting and dwelling people are able to confront themselves, bringing a simple and personal deepening of response.¹⁴

Self-Reflection

Fourth is self-reflection, a theme appearing throughout the Exercises and in the examination of conscience (Examen) and the rules for discernment. Reflection leading to self-awareness is essential for retreatants to understand what is impelling them. In the First Week an awareness grows

¹¹ See Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 54.

¹² Charlotte Carroll Prather, *A Generous Openness: Praying the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius* (Petersham: St Bede's, 1992), 30.

¹³ Adolfo Chércoles, 'The Role of Inner Knowledge in the Process of the Exercises', *The Way*, 49/1 (January 2010), 77–91, here 86.

¹⁴ See Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 58; O'Leary, 'Repetition and Review', 54, 57–58; De Mello, *Seek God Everywhere*, 1.

of our 'sinful but real self', and of what is hidden and repressed within us, formed by our ego through our sexual, cultural, familial, racial and religious contexts.¹⁵ With the personal discovery of God's mercy and a growing intimacy we can establish contact with our own self, for 'we cannot love and serve God with all our heart and mind and soul and strength if we have not yet found a mind and heart of our own'.¹⁶ Learning to discern between the opposing emotions and desires within us brings greater unity and integrity to our own being and allows us to discern God's will for our choices in life. Ignatius' personal experience of self-reflection was so important that he would never dispense with the Examen as a means for discernment of spirits in a giving of the Exercises.¹⁷

Imagination

Imagination, the fifth core ingredient, is used throughout the Exercises, explicitly in the composition of place (Exx 47) and in imaginative contemplation. Imagination is 'the faculty or action of forming new ideas, or images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses'.¹⁸ Ignatius' innate ability to fantasize and dream about impossible and improbable things was engaged during his convalescence as he read Ludolph's *Vita Christi*. The content and structure of this work, along with the information about meditating on events in the life of Christ in its prologue, had a profound influence on Ignatius' conversion and on the eventual content and shape of the Exercises. Here we can single out Ludolph's exhortation 'to see, to picture, to imagine, to put ourselves into the scene being contemplated', in order 'to always be thinking somehow about Jesus, so that you are striving to imitate him more closely or love him more deeply'.¹⁹

In reading and reflecting on the Bible we can study and gain an intellectual understanding of Jesus. It is through imaginative prayer, however, that we meet with Jesus and allow him to touch our hearts. For us to love and strive to imitate Jesus we must first come into relationship with him and fall in love. 'The Gospels are the word of God', so when we enter the story imaginatively we are not only in a story about the past but encountering the resurrected living Jesus, who draws

¹⁵ Prather, *Generous Openness*, 18.

¹⁶ Gerard W. Hughes, *God of Surprises*, rev. edn (London: Darton Longman and Todd, 2008), 39.

¹⁷ De Mello, *Seek God Everywhere*, 46.

¹⁸ *Oxford Dictionary of English*.

¹⁹ Milton Walsh, "'To Always Be Thinking Somehow about Jesus": The Prologue of Ludolph's *Vita Christi*', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 43/1 (Spring 2011), 14, 10 (author's italics).

us into union with him.²⁰ Fantasy and imagination are Ignatius' key to falling in love with Christ and desiring to follow him in both an intellectual and affective manner. He not only invites us into the scene but also goes well beyond the historical and geographical detail of the text, encouraging retreatants to develop the general idea in their own way: 'this is not so much a truth of history, but a *truth of mystery*'.²¹

We all come to prayer with emotional wounds and faulty images of God, ourselves and the world. Imagination is an enabler, a means to an end, as it activates interior sensing. The imagination projects thoughts, memories and feelings that are buried in our subconscious into our conscious, bringing their influence to light.²² Together with Jesus we uncover these deep-rooted issues and, by God's grace, confront, challenge, free, transform and heal them. Ignatius does not leave retreatants alone with their imagination; the director helps them to be attentive to themselves, to appreciate the gifts given and to test the 'genuineness and conformity' of their insights 'with an informed grasp of the scriptures and the wider faith of the Church'.²³ Everyone has an imagination, but we differ in our ability to visualise, hear and sense the story and characters.²⁴ The more we explore and free the imagination from the control of our ego, the more powerfully God can transform us.

Application of the Senses

Our sixth core ingredient, the application of the senses, expands imaginative contemplation into a 'fully embodied way of knowing'.²⁵ Applying the senses moves retreatants from a discursive engagement with the people, words and actions of the story to an engagement in every fibre of their being. Introduced in part in the meditation on hell (Exx 65), and in detail as the fifth contemplation in the Second Week (Exx 121–126), it comes after multiple repetitions and is used at the culmination of the day throughout the Second, Third and Fourth Weeks. Sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch are fully engaged to deepen the repetitions. Interior, metaphorical sensing gives access to a personal presence; we encounter

²⁰ Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 90.

²¹ De Mello, *Seek God Everywhere*, 64–65.

²² Hughes, *God of Surprises*, 37.

²³ Brendan Byrne, "To See with the Eyes of the Imagination": Scripture in the Exercises and Recent Interpretation', *The Way Supplement*, 72 (Autumn 1991), 3–19, here 15.

²⁴ Barry, *Allowing the Creator*, 69–70.

²⁵ Katherine Marie Dyckman, Mary Garvin and Elizabeth Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women* (New York: Paulist, 2001), 138.

God and the fullness of our own being within. Taste and smell are 'metaphors for attitudes and feelings'.²⁶ Through each imaginal sense, the silence and stillness of our reflecting enable us to become aware of God's intimate touch and embrace, leading us to draw profit. To find the fruit, we consider our insight, our desires and our responses, and through them discern, evaluate and appropriate them in an election that joins us to Jesus' call in our life.

Other Ingredients

While these six ingredients comprise the staples, they are integrated with others as we work through the dynamics of the Exercises. In the First Week there are the Principle and Foundation, and meditations on sins and hell. While mercy is central to this week, retreatants are first led to self-awareness about being a sinner.²⁷ As Christopher Bryant writes:

... there is a kind of split in the psyche between people's conscious aims and activities and the aims of the unconscious, an opposition between our deliberate purposes and our deep needs and instinctive drives. St Paul vividly described this opposition when he wrote: 'I do not do the good I want, but the evil that I do not want is what I do'.²⁸

There is a growing consciousness of the constructs of ego, and of the very illusoriness of the illusion we hold to be self. In encounter with God retreatants move to know and experience God's unconditional love and acceptance despite their sinfulness.²⁹ Before making the transition into the next week the director should ensure that the retreatants have received this consolation of gratitude in being profoundly loved.

The Second Week is christocentric and develops an interior knowledge of and growing intimacy with Jesus as retreatants experience God, the world, other people and themselves through Jesus' own experiences. Contemplations, characterized by their affective quality, and meditations, engaged with in an intellectual manner, work to help the retreatant make freer choices in following Jesus.³⁰ It is when retreatants are able to bring their 'yes' to Jesus, to trust and follow him even in humility

²⁶ Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 99.

²⁷ Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 43.

²⁸ Christopher Bryant, 'Images and the Psyche', *The Way*, 24/2 (April 1984), 83–91, here 86, quoting Romans 7:19.

²⁹ Monty Williams, *The Gift of Spiritual Intimacy: Following the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius* (Montréal: Novalis, 2009), 111–112.

³⁰ Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 46.

and poverty, and with the possibility of suffering, that they are ready to move into the Third Week.

Staying with Jesus in his sufferings, which comes out of their own suffering, is a very intimate journey, and entails compassion and a spiritual empathy in understanding and sharing feelings of pain. This empathy and 'staying with' will have been modelled by the director throughout the Exercises (assuming the director has the basic personal qualities and aptitudes for his or her role).³¹ Retreatants are united through compassion to Christ, and to the self, during the Third Week journey to the cross.

In the Fourth Week, the suffering of the Third Week is transformed into joy. The Contemplation to Attain Love acts as a bookend to the Principle and Foundation. The retreatants began the Exercises realising they were not free and now, here at their completion, they have been freed to respond in love with the whole of their being, reflecting on the gifts of the Exercises in gratitude, and offering all of it back to God to use.

A Banquet of Prayer

The Exercises are so much more than the six core ingredients that are present throughout. Moreover these ingredients have a significantly greater effect on prayer together than individually. There is a richness

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³¹ David Townsend, 'The Counsellor, the Director and the Annotations', *The Way Supplement*, 42 (Autumn 1981), 40–55, here 53.

in their interactions and in how they are revisited in new ways as the Exercises progress. They are a means to encountering the living God, meeting and discovering God, sensing God's presence and being captivated by God as a person.

Everyone's experience of the Exercises is unique and personal, as God is dealing 'immediately with the creature' (Exx 15). Once they have initiated an encounter in prayer then the Creator can be left to work directly with the creature, and the creature with the Creator in the newly developing relationship. The inner knowledge and relish gained by allowing retreatants to come upon things themselves (Exx 2) enable prayer to deepen and grow over the course of the Exercises. The director introduces the content and prayer method and gives space for an encounter and subsequent review.

The image of the cookery book lets me see the importance of the director—the chef—respecting the order and remaining faithful to the structure and purpose prescribed. The core ingredients are integral to the experience of the Exercises and help them prove effective for the retreatant. At the same time it is important to offer adaptation and contemporary interpretation at some points to assist retreatants in appropriating their desired outcomes—especially in presenting exercises such as the Call of the King, where Ignatius' world-view and context are so different from ours.

The more I explore this cookery book, the more I am amazed at the effectiveness of the chemistry of the recipe. It cooks up a feast of prayer methods which complement one another and combine into a veritable banquet. The nourishment is not only relevant during the Exercises but carries over into life too. It comprises many courses with different colours, flavours and textures. I know the effectiveness of this prayer banquet personally, and am enjoying uncovering the structure and dynamics that underpin it. My dream is to become a chef myself, who has expertise and confidence in the structure of the recipe and the intuition to adapt it to the history and tastes of the diner.

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IGNATIUS, PRAYER AND THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Harvey D. Egan

BECAUSE OF HIS EXTRAORDINARY apostolic success, and later that of the order he founded, Ignatius' reputation as one of the greatest mystics in the Christian tradition still remains somewhat obscured. When, years ago, I told a friend from a contemplative order that I was writing a book centred on Ignatius' mysticism, he all but denied that Ignatius had a mystical side.¹ Ignatius' life, however, was profoundly affected by four foundational mystical events: his conversion experience while recovering at Loyola from the Pamplona battlefield injury; an experience of the Virgin Mary during that same recuperation which confirmed his desire to live a chaste life henceforth; the subsequent enlightenment at the River Cardoner; and his vision at La Storta leading him to a mysticism of service.² In addition, God blessed him with numerous extraordinary secondary mystical phenomena.

And one of the purest examples of the direct reporting of mystical experiences in Christian history can be found in Ignatius' short *Spiritual Diary*. This extraordinary document contains irrefutable evidence of Ignatius' deeply trinitarian, Christ-centred, Marian reverential love, and of the priestly, eucharistic and apostolic aspects of his mysticism. Also permeating it is a profoundly mystical emphasis on discernment, visions, intellectual and affective mystical events, somatic phenomena, mystical tears and mysterious *loquela*—a phenomenon consisting of different levels of inner words saturated with meaning, tones, rhythm and music.

Bernard of Clairvaux, John of the Cross and others in the Christian tradition emphasized mystical bridal sleep—that is, swooning lovingly in God's embrace at the centre of the soul—as the most valuable way of serving God, the Church and one's neighbour. In mystical bridal sleep one does that for which one was created, namely, loving. For the most

¹ Harvey D. Egan, *Ignatius Loyola the Mystic* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2020).

² For more on these events, see Egan, *Ignatius Loyola the Mystic*, 38–44, 54–55; and Harvey D. Egan, *Soundings in the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2010), 227–234.

part, however, Ignatius valued mystical graces only in so far as they helped him to seek, find and carry out God's will. Thus, Ignatius has been rightly designated as an *apostolic mystic*.³ His mystical and apostolic gifts are really two sides of the same coin. He was apostolic because he was one of the profoundest mystics the Church has ever seen. His apostolic successes are the expressions, the sacramental embodiment, of his radical mysticism. Thus, to miss Ignatius as an apostolic mystic is to miss his heart and soul.

Ignatius' Views on Prayer

That Ignatius, the apostolic mystic, spent long hours in prayer but forbade his men to do so highlights another Ignatian paradox. In fact, the demand by some Jesuits for lengthy periods of prayer sparked the first major crisis in the Society of Jesus. When one Jesuit insisted that eight hours of prayer daily was insufficient and that prayer of less than two hours was 'no prayer' at all, Ignatius called that bad spirituality

Divesting oneself of self-love, self-will

and wrote: 'A truly mortified man unites with God more easily in fifteen minutes than an unmortified man does in two hours'.⁴ When someone praised an especially holy Jesuit as a man of great prayer, Ignatius corrected him and said: 'He is a man of much mortification'.⁵ For him mortification was not simply a matter of penance, any more than prayer was of duration. Because his own excessive physical penances had injured Ignatius' health, however, he later emphasized interior penances, such as divesting oneself of self-love, self-will and self-interest (Exx 189). He expected prompt obedience of Jesuits, not physical penances.

In a letter to Francis Borgia, Ignatius suggested that he cut his prayer time in half and that he learn to rejoice in our Lord in a variety of duties and places, instead of only one.⁶ In another letter, directed to those studying for the Jesuit priesthood, Ignatius wrote:

³ See Bernard McGinn, *Mysticism in the Golden Age of Spain (1500–1650)*, volume 6, part 2 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 2017), 62–113. Also, for the distinction between bridal mysticism and service or apostolic mysticism, see Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, translated by William J. Young (Chicago: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964), 178; 1–73 and 109–184 present an excellent overview of Ignatius' spirituality and mysticism.

⁴ *Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: The Memoriale of Luis Gonçalves da Câmara*, translated by Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitz (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004), n. 256.

⁵ *Remembering Iñigo*, n. 195.

⁶ Ignatius to Francis Borgia, 20 September 1548, in *Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola*, selected and translated by William J. Young (Chicago: Loyola U, 1959), 179–182.

Considering the end of our studies, the scholastics can hardly give themselves to prolonged meditations They should practice the seeking of God's presence in all things, in their conversations, their walks, in all that they see, taste, hear, understand, in all their actions, since His Divine Majesty is truly in all things by His presence, power, and essence. This kind of meditation, which finds God our Lord in all things, is easier than raising oneself to the consideration of divine truths which are more abstract and which demand something of an effort if we are to keep our attention on them. But this method is an excellent exercise to prepare us for great visitations of our Lord, even in prayers that are rather short. Besides this, the scholastics can frequently offer to God our Lord their studies and the efforts they demand, seeing that they have undertaken them for His love to the sacrifice of their personal tastes, so that to some extent at least we may be of service to His Divine Majesty and of help to the souls for whom He died.⁷

On another occasion Ignatius expressed his mind in this way:

The fourth way of helping your neighbor is very far-reaching indeed, and consists in holy desires and prayers. The demands of your life of study do not permit you to devote much time to prayer, yet you can make up for this by desires, since the time you devote to your various exercises is a continuous prayer, seeing that you are engaged in them only for God's service.⁸

When some of his men complained that distracting work prevented them from praying deeply, Ignatius insisted that they work with a right intention and direct all they did for God's honour and glory. He wrote:

For distractions which you accept for His greater service, in conformity with His divine will interpreted to you by obedience, can be not only the equivalent of the union and recollection of uninterrupted contemplation, but even more acceptable to Him, proceeding as they do from a more active and vigorous charity.⁹

Thus, although Ignatius expected his men to be united with God, he did not consider formal prayer and contemplation as the only ways to attain this. In fact, this highly circumspect and prudent Basque even maintained that 'of a hundred men given to long hours of prayer, the majority of them ordinarily come to grave consequences'.¹⁰ Ignatius

⁷ Ignatius to Anthony Brandão, 1 June 1551, *Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola*, 240–241.

⁸ Ignatius to the fathers and scholastics at Coimbra, 27 May 1547, *Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola*, 129.

⁹ Ignatius to Manuel Godinho, 31 January 1552, *Letters of St Ignatius of Loyola*, 254–255.

¹⁰ *Remembering Inigo*, n. 256.

was referring to the pride, obstinacy and illusions that often arise in such circumstances. Ignatius emphasized mortification and the abnegation of the will as the most important elements for union with God and a successful apostolate.

One striking example of a bogus emphasis on prayer is the view of the influential Jesuit Louis Lallemant (1588–1635), who maintained:

If someone should say that there is a danger lest a habit of recollection should interfere with the active duties of zeal to which our vocation obliges us, I reply that the very reverse is the case, that it is certain that a man of prayer will do more in a year than another will in his whole life.¹¹

Thus, the goal of Lallemant's teaching, as it is for all Jesuits, was effective apostolic action. However, he contended that apostolic action without contemplative grounding was more than likely to be ineffective and even dangerous. Ignatius—who expressed the emphasis on an effective apostolate very differently—would have contradicted him.

It is striking that Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* concluded with the Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx 230–237), rather than with an attempt to attain the heavenly life, as meditation books in his day often did. In this exercise one asks for the grace to be a contemplative in action, to be able to find God in all things, as Ignatius was and did. Ignatius would have exercitants ask for an intimate knowledge of the many blessings they have received from creation and redemption, to perceive how God dwells in all things, how God works for them in all things, how God dwells in them—so that filled with gratitude for all, they might in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty.

The Paradox of Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises

The *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola have enjoyed a privileged position in the spirituality of the Roman Catholic Church for over four hundred years. But one should not forget that Ignatius began his career as teacher and spiritual guide without any authorisation, with neither priesthood nor university degree. Furthermore, the access to God that his book and teaching promise seemed to be open to the accusations made against the so called 'enlightened ones', the *alumbrados*—heretics

¹¹ Cited in Bernard McGinn, *The Persistence of Mysticism in Catholic Europe: France, Italy, and Germany (1500–1675)*, volume 6, part 3 of *The Presence of God*, 277.

who claimed special access to the Holy Spirit and divine illumination. Was not Ignatius accused at Alcalá, at Salamanca, as well as later in Paris, of being a heretic? After imprisonment and investigation, he was acquitted both times in Spain, and was not even arrested in Paris.

What Ignatius was trying to work out was a new form of apostolic spirituality, at variance with traditional ideas—especially as represented by the ultra-conservative Spanish Dominicans, such as the fiercely anti-mystical Melchior Cano (1509–1560), who remained a lifelong opponent. Cano's was the first of many attacks on the Spiritual Exercises as allegedly being too mystical, too subjective, too passive, placing too much emphasis on God's role in prayer, and actually expecting God to communicate God's will to the one making the Exercises.

Ignatius wrote:

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, embracing it in love and praise, and disposing it for the way which will enable the soul to serve him better in the future (Exx 15).

What does one make of his teaching about an experience that only God can give? Ignatius described the 'consolation without a preceding cause' as the prerogative 'of the Creator alone to enter the soul, depart from it, and cause a motion in it which draws the whole person into the love of His Divine Majesty' (Exx 330).

Mysticism and Anti-Mysticism

Ignatius' profound mystical life has already been stressed. However, because of his emphasis on apostolic service, some scholars maintain that he was suspicious of mysticism—for which there is no evidence. He did show a noticeable reserve in speaking about higher degrees of prayer, but emphasized a discernment that would place a person in a position to attain deeper prayer, if grace invited it. His emphases fostered many excellent dispositions for receiving this gift of God, if God should offer it: freedom from every inordinate affection, humble abnegation of self, habits of recollection and of docility to divine inspiration—in short, practices aimed at seeking, finding and carrying out God's will.

In the early years of the Jesuits in Spain, several of them gained reputations as mystics and mystical teachers, especially Balthasar Álvarez (1533–1580), a confessor of Teresa of Ávila, and his disciple Luís de la Puente (1554–1624). Anti-mystical sentiment made Álvarez

a controversial figure, and his teaching was eventually prohibited by the Superior General Everard Mercurian (1514–1580). In addition, because some Jesuits said that affective prayer was superior to intellectual meditation, Mercurian forbade them from continuing to teach about such prayer. On 25 November 1574, he issued a general letter in which he insisted that Jesuits, because they were not a contemplative order, should remain faithful to the meditative prayer of Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* and *Constitutions* and not provide teaching about contemplation, which should be left up to God.¹² Mercurian had poorly understood Ignatius.

Scholars disagree as to whether the 'Álvarez episode' was simply one event in Jesuit history or the intensification of Jesuit anti-mystical tendencies. *The Practice of Perfection and Christian Virtues* by the Jesuit Alonso Rodriguez (1538–1616) became a highly popular ascetical and practical manual of the spiritual life. It treated the importance of mental prayer, but largely meditative prayer. With respect to the higher stage of mystical contemplation, Rodriguez did everything in his power to discourage his readers from aspiring to it. But the fact remains that the Jesuits in general remained noted spiritual directors and also composers of influential handbooks on spirituality and mysticism, especially the

flood of spiritual and mystical writings generated by French Jesuits during the seventeenth century.

Perhaps anticipating the impending crisis concerning the mystical life, authoritative Jesuit teaching against higher forms of prayer can be found in the unofficial and official Jesuit *Directories*, which were written instructions on how to give the *Spiritual Exercises* composed in the late sixteenth century. They indicate a shift away from a more affective form of contemplation and



Balthasar Álvarez with Teresa of Ávila, artist
unknown

¹² This letter is translated by Philip Endean in 'Spirit, Contemplation and Ministry', *The Way*, 42/4 (October 2003), 89–104, at 94–98.

emphasis on the discernment of the various spirits moving a person found in the *Spiritual Exercises* to a more discursive form of prayer.¹³ In addition, no scholar has yet given a satisfactory answer as to why Ignatius' *Autobiography* and *Spiritual Diary* dropped out of sight during this period.

'Jesuit Prayer'

Jon Philipp Roothaan (1785–1853), the superior general who rebuilt the Society of Jesus after the suppression, wrote a dry and complex book, *The Method of Meditation*, which quickly became known—almost down to the present day—as 'Jesuit prayer'.¹⁴ It is not. Whatever the real merit of this writing, it remains a simple, practical guide for beginners. It would be a serious error to seek Roothaan's complete thought on prayer in this little work. Still less ought anyone to see it as the official and integral expression of the manner in which the Society of Jesus understood and still understands Ignatius' methods of prayer. The best and the deepest part of Roothaan's own doctrine cannot be found in it. He stressed abnegation, humility, spiritual joy in the midst of sufferings and an unshakable confidence in the love of the Sacred Heart—but not higher forms of prayer. Consonant with Ignatius, Roothaan believed that persons truly humble and mortified could more easily unite themselves to God and find God in all things.

That some commentators have criticized the *Spiritual Exercises* for being too mystical, others for being too ascetical or too discursive, is one of the ironies of their history. However, it was and still is true that some Jesuits and those influenced by Jesuit spirituality trust little else but the practical, highly discursive, image-bound, somewhat mechanical approach to meditation taught in Roothaan's manual. For example, under the guidance of the Feuillant Fathers, Marie of the Incarnation (1599–1672), the first woman missionary to North America and an extraordinary mystic, tried to use 'Ignatian' methods of meditation but found that they gave her headaches.¹⁵ Thus, it is hardly surprising that not a few commentators on the *Spiritual Exercises*, even in the twentieth century, have claimed that the way of St Ignatius is not only ignorant

¹³ Bernard McGinn's forthcoming work, *The Crisis of Mysticism: Quietism in Seventeenth-Century Spain, Italy, and France* (New York: Crossroad, 2021), volume 7 of *The Presence of God*, will offer an exceptional presentation of this unfortunate historical period.

¹⁴ The New York company D. and J. Sadlier published an English translation in 1858.

¹⁵ For an introduction to Marie of the Incarnation, see Harvey D. Egan, 'Marie of the Incarnation', in *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991), 488–499. And see McGinn, *Persistence of Mysticism*, 314.

of higher levels of prayer, but also an actual barrier to them—especially mystical prayer.¹⁶

The Underlying Dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises

Ignatius wrote:

By the terms Spiritual Exercises we mean *every method* of examination of conscience, meditation, contemplation, vocal or mental prayer, and *other spiritual activities*, such as will be mentioned later. For, just as taking a walk, traveling on foot, and running are physical exercises, so is the name of spiritual exercises given to any means of preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God's will and the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul. (Exx 1, my emphasis)

If what is called Jesuit prayer can be identified *in some way* with Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, then it obviously cannot be reduced to any one method of prayer. Ignatius insisted on *every method*, which, in my opinion, even includes those not mentioned in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Moreover, Ignatius had in mind a twofold goal: uprooting sinfulness, sinful tendencies and disordered loves, so that God's will can be sought, found and carried out. In fact, many of Ignatius' letters ended with a formula that conveys his pragmatic attitude towards the spiritual and mystical life: 'May it please the Divine Wisdom to grant that we may always know his most holy will and find our peace and happiness in ever fulfilling it'.

Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises present one of the clearest and most influential expositions of kataphatic, that is affirmative or sacramental, spirituality and mysticism. These involve meditations and contemplations on Christ's life, death and resurrection, and on other material. Ignatius does not call upon persons to forget everything for the sake of the naked love of God engendered at the core of one's being. But nor can his contemplations be reduced to a plodding, step-by-step procedure by which one remembers some Christian mystery and reasons about it in order to move the will to make practical, life-changing resolutions.

¹⁶ For example, Aldous Huxley, *Grey Eminence* (New York: Harper, 1941), 94–97, 101–2; Paul Sauvé, *Petals of Prayer* (Locust Valley: Living Flame, 1974), 40–46; Victorino Osende, *Pathways of Love* (St Louis: Herder, 1958), 83–88. Walter T. Stace, *The Teachings of the Mystics* (New York: New American Library, 1960), accepted only undifferentiated unity mystics, that is, those who dissolve the distinction between God and the person, as true mystics.

A Holistic Process

Contrary to some received opinion, the Spiritual Exercises guide persons in the progressive *simplification* of their prayer through a sacramental deepening of meditation upon and contemplation of Christ's life, death and resurrection. Ignatius sought an increasing *transparency* in the images, symbols and mysteries of salvation history to reveal the mystery both of the human person and of God's self-communicating love. This is a highly sacramental mystagogy.

For example, the Preparatory Prayer for any individual exercise requires exercitants to direct themselves purely to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty (Exx 46). The First Prelude usually instructs the exercitant 'to see in imagination the physical place where that which I want to contemplate is taking place' (Exx 47), in order to direct his or her imagination and fantasy to the truths of salvation history. Any genuine spirituality must purify the unruly and fickle imagination. In the Second Prelude (Exx 48), exercitants ask for 'what I want and desire', a consolation with a preceding cause (Exx 331), consonant with the matter of the exercise: grief with Christ suffering or joy with Christ rejoicing.

A reading of Ignatius' *Autobiography* and *Spiritual Diary* discloses a man who knew the importance of religious emotions. It is not surprising, therefore, to find in his *Spiritual Exercises* that exercitants must specifically ask for tears, shame, sorrow, confusion, horror, detestation, amazement, affectionate love, joy, gladness, peace and tranquillity. The needs they feel within themselves should often control the direction of their prayer (Exx 109). Exercitants must place themselves *into* the mystery of salvation history, as if they were actually present while it was occurring (Exx 114).

Even the more laborious meditations of the First Week require exercitants to understand that 'what fills and satisfies the soul consists, not in knowing much, but in our understanding the realities profoundly and in *savoring* them interiorly' (Exx 2, my emphasis). If exercitants at any point find what they are seeking, there they 'will repose until [they are] fully satisfied, without any anxiety to go on' (Exx 76). Thus, the emphasis is on savouring, being satisfied, never rushing from point to point, but following the consolations and the spiritual nourishment. Then, Ignatius would have them repeat exercises made previously in order to dwell especially upon those aspects that brought the most consolation or desolation (Exx 62).

The 'résumés' (Exx 64) likewise recall and review intellectually what happened in the previous exercises. The 'application of the senses' exercises (Exx 66–70) require the exercitant to see, hear, touch, taste or smell in imagination certain aspects of a particular Christian mystery. This greatly intensifies and transforms the contemplation begun in the exercises of any particular day. It may even awaken the mystical senses, a profound form of prayer found in the tradition.

Augustine is paradigmatic for the many Christian mystics who have felt, tasted, touched, smelt and seen God with their mystical senses. He wrote:

But what do I love when I love you? Not the beauty of body nor the gracefulness of temporal rhythm, not the brightness of light so friendly to the eyes, not the sweet and various melodies of songs, not the fragrance of flowers and ointments and spices, not manna and honey; not limbs receptive to fleshly embraces: I love not these when I love my God. And yet I do love a kind of light, melody, fragrance, food, embracement when I love my God; for He is the light, the melody, the fragrance, the food, the embracement of my inner self; Where that light shines into my soul which no place can contain, and where that voice sounds which time does not take away, and where that fragrance smells which no wind scatters, and where there is that flavor which eating does not diminish, and where there is that clinging that no satiety will separate. This is what I love when I love my God.¹⁷

Each exercise ends with a 'colloquy' addressed to the Father, Christ, Mary or others. It should be made 'by speaking as one friend speaks to another, or as a servant speaks to one in authority—now begging a favor, now accusing oneself of some misdeed, now telling one's concerns in asking counsel about them' (Exx 54). The colloquy actually not only carries forward, strengthens and unifies the movement initiated in the exercises of any particular day but also allows the most spontaneous desires and feelings of the exercitants to express themselves (Exx 53, 54, 63, 109, and so on). Emotional conversion is a key factor in the Ignatian Exercises.

The human person is a living question that only God can answer, and has answered in Jesus Christ. Ignatius implicitly knew that the Christian mysteries are the spiritually and/or mystically experienced facets

¹⁷ *Confessions*, 10. 6, in *Augustine of Hippo: Selected Writings*, translated by Mary T. Clark (New York: Paulist, 1984), 126.

of the one answer given to the one question that the human person is—different ‘keys’ that unlock the various levels and dimensions of the one person. Thus, the power of Ignatian prayer comes from its ability to initiate the whole body-person into the Christian mysteries. The directives in the Exercises ensure that exercitants fully utilise their senses, emotions, passions, fantasy, memory, reason, intellect, heart and will in order to interiorise the subject of any exercise. This holistic process may awaken the person’s mystical senses and render the *entire* person connatural to the Christian mysteries.

Simplicity and Transparency

Apophatic mystics recommend that when and only when certain signs are present, the contemplative place everything in a cloud of forgetting—even pious thoughts about the Trinity, Christ, Mary and others—so that a cloud of unknowing is created between the contemplative and God. This cloud can be pierced only by a person’s naked love. To aid persons to pray in this way, they are instructed to use a meaningful word in prayer, not to concentrate on its meaning, but to control distractions while emptying the mind of all created things.¹⁸ However, Ignatius’ second and third methods of prayer instruct the exercitant to contemplate the meaning of each word of the Our Father, or any other prayer (often in conjunction with one’s breathing rhythm), and to continue to ‘consider the word as long as meaning, comparisons, relish, in consolations connected with it are found’ (Exx 249–260).

I maintain that Ignatius would have allowed the repetition of the word *without* concentration on its meaning for those advanced in prayer. I further claim that, for such persons, the underlying dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises transform the Christian mystery at hand into a highly concentrated ‘word’ or mantra with which the exercitant mystically resonates. It is a word that draws attention not to itself, but to what it is in its essence: a sacrament of the healing and transforming presence of the Trinity and Christ. Teresa of Ávila taught much the same when she exhorted her nuns to turn to the Risen Lord within themselves and to use the mysteries of Christ’s life, death and resurrection as ‘sparks’ to enkindle love.¹⁹

The healing and transforming presence of the Trinity and Christ

¹⁸ Harvey D. Egan, ‘The Cloud of Unknowing’, in *Soundings in the Christian Mystical Tradition* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2010), 201–207.

¹⁹ Teresa of Ávila, *The Book of Her Life*, chapter 22, in *The Collected Works of St Teresa of Avila*, translated by Otilio Rodriguez and Kieran Kavanaugh (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2002).

Thus, the heart of Ignatius' method resides not so much in the particulars but in the essential dynamism of his Spiritual Exercises that renders the Christian mysteries increasingly *transparent*. Transparency, not forgetting and unknowing, underpins Ignatius' sacramental, or kataphatic, spirituality and mysticism. In and through the increasing simplicity and transparency of the Christian mystery, the exercitant penetrates to its very depths to experience its saving power. In fact, the mystery may become so simplified and transparent that it may draw the exercitant 'wholly to the love of His Divine Majesty' (Exx 330) through a 'consolation without previous cause' (Exx 330, 336).

Whatever Works

I have presented Ignatius as the apostolic mystic who eschewed lengthy periods of prayer for Jesuits but insisted that: 'The more one divests oneself of self-love, self-will, and self-interest, the more progress one will make' (Exx 189). I have also stressed that Ignatius would employ *every* method to seek and find God's will, not only those found in his *Spiritual Exercises*. His book demonstrates a powerful inner dynamic towards simplified prayer. There is nothing mechanical about these Ignatian Exercises. As a Jesuit for over sixty years, I have made the entire Spiritual Exercises twice, partially some years, given retreats of various sorts to both religious and laity, and guided numerous people from contemplative nuns to college students. From my experience, I maintain that authentic Jesuit prayer is simply *whatever works* to help the individual seek, find and carry out God's will.

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THE MENDOZA CASE IN THE LIFE OF IGNATIUS LOYOLA

Joseph A. Munitiz

DETAILS ABOUT THIS CASE came to light in the process of canonization of Ignatius Loyola, which was held in 1595. Before that it had been mentioned by Pedro de Ribadeneira, who wrote of it in the final Spanish version of his *Life* of the saint as a case of prophecy by Ignatius:

At the time when our blessed Fr Ignatius was in Alcalá, and was going around poor, barefoot and unknown, a young gentleman made fun of him saying before many others, 'May I be burned if this fellow doesn't deserve to be burned!' To whom Ignatius replied with great modesty, 'Well, watch out that what you're saying doesn't happen to you!' And it so happened that within a few days that gentleman did die, burned in a fire that broke out in a barrel of gunpowder that he had in his house for a certain festivity.¹

The *Acta* of the case deserve to be better known as they make clear that there was no actual *prophecy* by Ignatius of what would happen. He had simply remarked that the 'young gentleman', López de Mendoza, had predicted his own death. The event can be seen as nothing more than a curious coincidence—the sequel to a chance remark. But one can understand why it aroused comment and is worth further reflection.

The *Acta* themselves, and even the original first summary of them, have been lost. We must rely on a summary of the summary made in Rome early in the seventeenth century. As they are extremely repetitive, here a shortened version in English gives the substance of what they contain.² Although the *Acta* refer to the person, Juan Lucena, who accompanied Iñigo (as he was then called) while begging for alms to buy clothes, on the orders of the vicar apostolic, they do not mention that

¹ MHSJ FN 4, 887; and see Pedro de Ribadeneira, *The Life of Ignatius of Loyola*, translated by Claude Pavur (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2014), 413. His account was repeated in other biographies of Ignatius.

² The texts translated here were published in MHSJ SSI 2, 128–149; they were brought to my attention by Barton T. Geger, who pointed out their interest. He also made offered some helpful comment on an early draft of this article. To him my thanks are due!

he was a priest and a close friend of Iñigo. They both called on López de Mendoza when he was bowling. Iñigo seems to have had contacts previously with this man and to have tried to convert him from a licentious life, but no details are given though it is clear that he was a man of wealth and standing. The birth of Philip II on 21 May 1527 pinpoints the date of this event, as should become clear from the comments below.

The Acta of the Process

The various steps of the inquiry, dated 5–10 June 1595, are split into articles. It was held in Alcalá de Henares (in Latin *Complutensis*) with Mgr Camilo Caetano OSB acting as judge. He was the apostolic nuncio in Spain, and abbot of the Church of the Angels in Alcalá. He held the titular rank of patriarch of Antioch. The process of canonization was begun at the request of Gaspar de Pedrosa, the procurator general of the Society of Jesus in the kingdoms of Spain. The *Acta* were carefully recorded, and a request made for a copy to be delivered to Francisco Benavides, then resident at the Jesuit college in Alcalá and later rector.³

The witnesses called by Pedrosa were presented over various days (5–7 and 10 June 1595) and were seven in number: 1) Martín Fernández SJ, aged 66; 2) Anna de Vozmedrano (Vozmediano), inhabitant of Alcalá, aged 52; 3) María de Heredia, inhabitant of Alcalá, aged 58; 4) Pedro Quirino de Loayasa, inhabitant of Alcalá, aged 51; 5) Diego Viues, inhabitant of Alcalá, merchant, aged 60; 6) Juan Fernández, inhabitant of Alcalá, scribe, aged 66; 7) Alfonso Martínez de Soto, inhabitant of Alcalá, aged 34.⁴

Article 1

They were first asked (article 1) if they knew of Fr Pedrosa, and had heard of Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Society of Jesus and the first to organize it; if they knew of López de Mendoza, now dead, the uncle of Alfonso de Mendoza, still alive, both [uncle and nephew] inhabitants of this same town. All the witnesses replied in the affirmative, although not claiming to know Fr Pedrosa personally, except for the Jesuit; and all knew of both López de Mendoza and his nephew. All added that they had no personal interest in the case and simply wanted to make the truth known.

³ His name is incorrectly written 'Barrandes' in the *Acta*.

⁴ Antonio Astraín, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la asistencia de España*, 7 volumes (Madrid: Razón y Fe, 1912–1925), volume 1, 53 note 3 wrongly states that there were nine witnesses. All the ages are said to be 'more or less' (*plus vel minus*).

Article 2

The second article dealt with the date of the release from prison of Ignatius. Were the witnesses aware:

... that in the 27th year in the month of May [21 May], when our lord King Philip, now alive, was born, great festivities were held in Alcalá and in the whole kingdom, and that Juan de Figueroa, vicar general of the audience and of the archiepiscopal curia in Alcalá, as he had put into prison the said Fr Ignatius, he gave order that he should be freed and released from prison, and that somebody out of love for God should ask for clothes to dress the said Fr Ignatius, entrusting this work to someone called Lucena, who undertook such pious works, and that the witnesses should say what they knew.

All the witnesses agreed, but the first witness, Martín Fernández, added that he knew this.

... because he saw the process that had been drawn up on him [Ignatius] by the same vicar, and read it; and similarly he heard it said that on the day when the news of the royal birth arrived and was announced, the said vicar general, whose name was Juan de Figueroa, ordered that Fr Ignatius should be let out of the said prison in which he was held, and allowed him to beg for alms in the Lord's name in order to have clothing, a pious work which he committed to a certain gentleman [*cuidam viro*] called Lucena.

He had heard this from different people, but in particular Master Angulo, Licentiate Martínez (an ecclesiastical lawyer), and Juan López de Rueda.

The second witness (Anna de Vozmedrano) explained that she had heard all this from Dr Delgado, his wife and their aged servant: the said Lucena was known as someone who took part in similar works of charity on many occasions. The third witness (María de Heredia) said she had heard it from Lucena himself; the fourth and fifth referred to unknown witnesses



Ignatius imprisoned by the Inquisition at Alcalá, by Peter-Paul Rubens, 1609

and to the Licentiate Martínez. The sixth (Juan Fernández) added ‘that he had copied minutes of the process [against Ignatius], which had been written in the presence of Juan de Madrid by his son Alfonso de Madrid, notary of the said vicariate, at the order of Dr Fr Saavedra SJ’. The seventh, ‘replied positively about the date of the regal birth and the festivities, and said that he had heard from Juan Fernández of the release of Ignatius, but did not answer the other questions’.

Article 3

The third article dealt with the meeting that took place with López de Mendoza: the witnesses were asked if they were aware that,

... when Fr Ignatius, who was then called Iñigo [Innicus], was walking with the said Lucena to ask for alms for the purpose mentioned, they both met and began conversation with important people next to the house where López de Mendoza was living, and where he was playing at bowling;⁵ there the said Lucena asked for alms, as he had been commissioned, in order to buy clothes as mentioned, explaining that it was at the order of the said vicar general he was doing this task which had been enjoined on him in order to provide clothing for the said Fr Ignatius, who at that time was not a priest but a student, though he lacked the university *pileum* and footwear;⁶ the said López de Mendoza then turned to the said Lucena asking why a person of his standing should ask for those alms, and said that López himself would die burned if the said Fr Ignatius did not deserve to be burned; these words caused great scandal among those present and gossip about it spread in the whole town, and all thought the words were from the evil one because they knew about the honesty and sanctity of the said Ignatius.

The witnesses all confirmed this report and claimed to have heard about it from Master Angulo, Licentiate Martínez and Dr Delgado, along with his wife and servant, who had themselves heard it from Lucena himself. The third witness (María de Heredia) added that Mendoza had made his remark not just about Ignatius but also about ‘his companions’. All the witnesses claimed that it was general knowledge in the town. The sixth witness, Juan Fernández, added that he had heard about it from Dr Benavente, the nephew of María de Benavente in whose house Iñigo had a room; also that when,

⁵ The Latin *ad pilam* probably refers to the Spanish game where bowls are thrown to knock down as many pins as possible.

⁶ The *pileum* mentioned refers to the headdress required by the university of Alcalá, but may indicate the need for the full academic gown.

... the said Fr Ignatius was woken at midday, the said woman said to him: 'Father, López de Mendoza has been burned to death'. The said Fr Ignatius replied to her: 'He himself foretold that this morning, when I passed by his house'.

The seventh witness, Martínez de Soto, added an important detail: he had heard of all this from the Licentiate Martínez mentioned above, who was his father, and his father had said

... that the said Fr Ignatius Loyola was an exemplary man of great sanctity who had no other intention in that place but to reprehend vice and avoid sins, and that he gave spiritual advice always to those in the town whom he knew to be fallen into vice; who likewise had reprehended López de Mendoza about his life.

Article 4

The fourth article dealt specifically with the death of López de Mendoza:

Were the witnesses aware that after the incident recounted above, on the same day and only a short time later, the news arrived of the birth of our king, and the said López de Mendoza went up into a tower of his house, where he had a large quantity of sulphur ash [gunpowder] for firing arquebuses and suchlike; and with the said quantity of sulphur ash he set fire to himself, so that no human remedy could help him, for which reason he died; let them say what they know of this.

All the witnesses agreed that they had heard from the same people that this had happened: the Jesuit witness, Fernández, said that in the account he had heard López de Mendoza had gone up into the tower of his house with his steward [*mancipius*] and servants and all were burned. The seventh witness, Alfonso Martínez, added that he had also heard from his father that a spark had fallen on the gunpowder causing the death of López de Mendoza and one of his servants.

Article 5

The fifth article tackled the question of Ignatius' role:

Were the witnesses aware that the news of the death by burning of López de Mendoza spread through all the town, and when it reached the said Fr Ignatius he said that the said López had predicted it, namely when alms were asked of him by the said Lucena.

All the witnesses agreed that this was what they had been told by the reliable persons already mentioned. This was really the key point, and the editors of the *Monumenta Historicum Societatis Jesu* point to the

unanimity of the witnesses. It contradicts the version of Ribadeneira, where it is Ignatius instead of Mendoza who predicted what would happen.

Article 6

The sixth article focused on the extraordinary nature of what happened:

Were the witnesses aware that the death of the said López de Mendoza, that was foretold as described in the circumstances mentioned above, was held by those present to be a prodigy, a rare and wonderful case and an extraordinary event?⁷

Again all the witnesses agreed that this was the impression held by everyone in the town. It had made a huge impact: all thought it was extraordinary and several used the terms ‘prodigy’ and ‘miracle’. The fifth witness, Diego Viues, added that he took the death of López de Mendoza to have been an ‘expiation’ for his insulting remark.

Article 7

The seventh article questioned whether those who had told the witnesses what happened ‘knew about it either as people who were present there or because they had a certain and full knowledge of it’. The witnesses repeated the names, when known, of those who had informed them: Lucena himself, Licentiate Martínez and Licentiate López de Rueda, Master Angulo, Dr Delgado with his wife and servant, Juana Sánchez, Dr Benavente. But most also claimed it was public knowledge and notorious. The seventh witness, young Alfonso Martínez, added that his father (Licentiate Martínez) had died twelve years earlier (in 1583) aged 77, so could well have been present (in his twenties) in 1527 when the event took place.

Article 8

In the eighth article the witnesses had to testify to the trustworthy character of the people who had informed them, as all of these were now dead. Had they been, ‘good Christians, full of fear of God and of their consciences, with reputation for exemplary lives and great integrity, and such persons that credence may be given to their words?’ They gave full assurance on this point, while admitting that not all were known personally to them. The last witness, mentioned in the previous article,

⁷ The editors note that an odd *non* has crept into the text, so that it reads ‘not by those present’; which they say (correctly) seems redundant.

said that he had known personally only his father and Licentiate López, 'but that he had heard in particular about the others, and that all were people of excellent reputation whose testimony should be believed'.

Article 9

The final ninth article recorded the signature of the witnesses in the presence of the judge, Don Caetano.

Comments

When Ignatius reminisced before Gonçalves da Câmara about his past life, he mentioned his stay in Alcalá, which lasted from about March 1526 to the summer of 1527, although he did not give the date.⁸ He began by saying:

On arrival at Alcalá he began to beg and to live on alms. Then one day, after he had been living in this way for ten or twelve days, a cleric and others with him seeing him beg for alms, began to laugh at him and to say some insulting things to him, as is often done with those who beg even though they are in good shape. (n. 56)

Clearly this has nothing to do with the Mendoza case, both because it refers to a 'cleric' and because of the date (1526 and not 1527). But it does show the type of insult that a 'poor' Iñigo would have experienced.

Much of Ignatius' account of his stay is taken up with his contacts with the Inquisition: three processes took place, for which good records exist. At the end of the first process, when the Inquisitors from Toledo had handed over to the vicar general. This Figueroa then interviewed Iñigo and his companions, and told them to dye their clothes black or brown. Iñigo agreed but said, 'We'd like to know if they've found any heresy in us. "No", said Figueroa, "if they had found it, they'd have burnt you". "And they'll burn you too", said the pilgrim "if they find heresy in you".' (n. 59) This reference to burning chimes with the remark attributed to López de Mendoza. The burning of those suspected of heresy was (unfortunately) all too common, and Mendoza may well have been aware that the Inquisition had been investigating the pastoral activities of Iñigo.

The third process may have begun in April 1527 and finished on 1 June 1527, when Ignatius was released from prison.⁹ This fits quite well

⁸ *Autobiography*, nn. 56–63. For Iñigo's arrival in Alcalá in March 1526, see Enrique García Hernán, *Ignace de Loyola. Biographie*, translated by Pierre Antoine Fabre (Paris: Seuil, 2013), 194.

⁹ Philip Endean suggests this date, *Personal Writings*, 170 note 89.

with the date of the Mendoza case, which is linked to the birth of Philip II on 21 May. Ignatius reminisced that Figueroa told him, 'he could go free, they were to dress like the other students'. The mention of 'dress' also fits with the Mendoza case. Ignatius was in need of proper university garb. However, the Vicar Apostolic also forbade him 'to talk about matters regarding the faith within the four years they still had to study' (*Autobiography*, n.62). So, not being sure what to do, Ignatius shortly afterwards went for an interview with the archbishop of Toledo, who was in Valladolid for the baptism of the newly born prince. The archbishop encouraged him to move on to the university of Salamanca, and by the summer of 1527 Ignatius and his companions had done so.¹⁰

Several features from the *Acta* given above echo the account dictated by Ignatius in his *Autobiography*: he was accompanied by others; he was suspected of heresy, so 'burning' was not out of the question; Iñigo was active in his pastoral work, so much so that he was well known for this. And yet he makes no mentions of the Mendoza incident, even though it had aroused much comment in the town. However, the fact that Ribadeneira knew about it probably indicates that he had heard about it from Ignatius at some point, and others may also have heard of it. It is the kind of story that Jesuits would have spread among themselves to underscore their belief in their founder's sanctity.

If one asks whether Ignatius deliberately omitted any mention of it when dictating his autobiography, and why he might have done this, there is no obvious answer. He may have felt embarrassed and even distressed that people could have thought that someone had died because of public scandal about his reputation. Again, the Inquisition was hovering in the background and inquisitive about anything prodigious. Probably, given the mentality of the epoch, Ignatius considered the incident as yet another sign from God that Providence was at work. However, our own interpretation may favour a curious coincidence, or prefer to leave an open verdict.

Joseph A. Munitiz SJ, a Byzantine scholar and editor of Greek texts, has also translated a selection of the writings of St Ignatius and the *Memoriale* of Gonçalves da Câmara; he has worked in Leuven and Oxford, and is now living in Dorset.

¹⁰ *Autobiography*, n. 63, with Philip Endean's note 98, 370–371.

IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, THE FIRST RETREATANT

Psychological Traits of His Personality

Carlos Domínguez

Mystical Experience as a Hermeneutic Key

IT IS POSSIBLE TO APPROACH the personality of Ignatius by attempting to describe his personal dynamic, whether as a soldier who has undergone conversion, as a religious reformer, an outstanding legislator, a born leader or a lucid strategist. All these approaches have been attempted, and have admittedly given some quite useful results. However, as González de Cardedal has pointed out, the baroque mentality of the seventeenth century, which dominated the production of the official image of Ignatius, tended to neglect the mystical dimension and has rather brought into relief the figure of the ascetic apostle, the man of action who functioned with a quasi-military character.¹

And yet none of these aspects, even if they have been largely responsible for the collective image that exists today of the founder of the Society of Jesus, can really account for the personal dynamic that was most important in his psychic working. Experiences of a mystical sort, which began in Loyola and became fundamental for ever in Manresa, are what decisively marked his overall personality. Beginning with the complex, difficult situation of his religious conversion, Ignatius gradually passed through a spiritual evolution which would bring him into a state of permanent union with God that became ever more connatural to him.

It is only on the basis of his mystical experiences that one can make sense of how Ignatius lived his life, focused and canalised his libido, entered into relationship with other people, planned his future, overcame his difficulties, and came to achieve his transcendental historic work in the society and the Church of his time. As Ignacio Tellechea has rightly

Translated from 'Ignacio de Loyola: el primer ejercitante: Rasgos antropológicos y psicológicos de su personalidad', by Carlos Domínguez Morano SJ, in *El sujeto: Reflexiones para una antropología ignaciana*, edited by Fr Rufino Meana Peón SJ (Colección Manresa 71), pages 153–174. © Ediciones Mensajero—Editorial Sal Terrae—Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Bilbao—Santander—Madrid 2019.

¹ Olegario González de Cardenal, *Cristianismo y mística* (Madrid: Trotta, 2015), 119–120.

said, the fact that he was a mystic is 'the great Ignatian secret' and the best way at our disposal to work out what his life and his personality were.²

A Basic Lack: the Mother's Absence

It is in fact possible to discern certain essential aspects of his personal dynamic running through Ignatius' mystical experience. That type of experience springs from and is built upon a field of motivations which retain deep links with the most decisive events of a person's biography. Among them attention has to be given to what may be presumed to have had special repercussions both in his general affective life and in particular in his religious experience. I refer to the loss of his mother which, as all sources agree, happened at a very early stage in Ignatius's life.³

It is not only those who have approached the figure of Ignatius from a psychological perspective (such as W. W. Meissner or Louis Beirnaert), but also those who have written as historians, who emphasize the effect that this lack may have had on the life of Ignatius.⁴ Ignacio Tellechea, for example, raises the question:

Did he ever have the opportunity to know her or did she always remain simply a faceless name for him? I strongly suspect the latter, and I believe that the intensity with which the death of his mother affected him during the course of his childhood days must have left its indelible mark on the deepest part of his psyche.⁵

It is surely curious that in all the writings of Ignatius there is not a single reference to the figure of the mother. This absence should be borne in mind as an anonymous backdrop that lies behind many names and, after his conversion, behind a large part of Ignatius' mystical experiences.

Closely linked to that basic inner lack and the unsatisfied yearning for the lost maternal figure is the character of someone who was introverted and solitary: 'Even though he lived in the company of others, he was ever the solitary', writes Tellechea.⁶ Ignatius was a man who could never recover the lost object of his infancy. After his mystical

² José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius of Loyola. The Pilgrim Saint*, translated and edited by Cornelius Michael Buckley (Chicago: Loyola, 1994), 481.

³ See Ricardo García-Villoslada, *San Ignacio de Loyola. Nueva biografía* (Madrid: BAC, 1986), 48.

⁴ See W. W. Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint* (New Haven: Yale U, 1992); Louis Beirnaert, *Expérience chrétienne et psychologie* (Paris: l'Epi, 1964); Louis Beirnaert, *Aux frontières de l'acte analytique* (Paris: Seuil, 1987). Tellechea, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 42, also 56–57.

⁵ Tellechea, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 437.

⁶ Tellechea, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 437.

experience next to the Cardoner river he became an apostle, seeking with others to transmit to the world what he has found. But he remained at heart a person who took refuge within himself, retreated into an inner space which he explored in a way none had done before and which he needed to protect zealously in his contacts with others.

In Loyola he disclosed to no one the emotional commotion taking place within him, just as he would allow no one to go with him to Jerusalem. His experience was personal to him alone. He knew well that it was something which could not be shared, and he took great care to prevent it being interfered with. He was a solitary cultivating an inner life endowed with incalculable wealth, a treasure to be worked upon by means of self-analysis and critical reflection. But this treasure had to be kept safe from theft and zealously preserved from prying eyes. No wonder, then, that he found great difficulty in giving in to the requests of his most intimate companions to dictate his autobiographical reminiscences.

Undoubtedly the idealization of longing for this lost maternal figure played a part in his dream of service to 'a certain lady' (*Autobiography*, n.6), and added drama to it. His love of tales of chivalry, such as *Amadís de Gaula*, had built up a knightly ideal according to which he imagined himself being his lady's preferred object of attention and thus finding what would give meaning to his life.

Looking at the religious images that came to dominate Ignatius' inner life we can understand how they took the place of that 'certain lady' who was 'not of ordinary nobility, not a countess nor a duchess'. In particular there would be the great maternal figure of Mary, the Lady before whom he would lay down his arms in Aránzazu or Montserrat, in accordance with the knightly custom of the time. In Loyola, while he was seriously ill, a whole complex of unconscious attitudes linked to mediaeval chivalry would be transferred to a symbolic system proper to the religious world. These would affect the images that



Amadís de Gaula, from an edition of 1533

came before his eyes in difficult moments. Behind them basic maternal lack as the prime dynamic force remained active. As we will see later, such religious representations would have to undergo a deep transformation finally to make possible the experience of a mature faith, which went beyond its primary archaic motivational roots.

However, the mystical experience of Ignatius constantly reveals the imprint of a parental symbolism (both maternal and paternal) which differs from the spousal conjugal character that generally leaves such a mark in mystical tradition. In his experience of God, the link which is most clearly present is the maternal one, by means of which the mother–son relationship is made clear, either explicitly in images of Mary or more implicitly in devotion to the Trinity, which played such a key role in his mystical experience. This parental aspect can be seen reflected in the way Ignatius himself speaks of how God dealt with him in the early stages of his spiritual journey:

At this time God was dealing with him in the same way as a school-teacher deals with a child, teaching him ... it was his clear judgment then, and has always been his judgment, that God was dealing with him in this way. (*Autobiography*, n.27)

Ignatius, however, did not get easy access to his deep mystical experience. From the first moments of conversion in Loyola, through the varied experiences in Manresa, and up to the height of the Cardoner illumination, he had to pass through a fundamental personal crisis whose complexity cannot be analysed simply.

The serious wounds he received in his broken leg affected more than his physical health. Being an invalid, and at times very close to death, undoubtedly set in motion repercussions deep within his psychic dynamics. We are all aware that illness and the threat of death cause us inexorably to feel defenceless and impotent. In consequence a significant regressive process sets in. We all reactivate to some extent that helpless situation in which we found ourselves in the first moments of life, a time when our ‘salvation’ came thanks to parental figures. As Antoine Vergote has shown, the experience of closeness to death frequently plays a part in unleashing mystical experiences.⁷

⁷ See Antoine Vergote, ‘Plying between Psychology and Mysticism’, in *Mysticism: A Variety of Psychological Perspectives*, edited by Jacob A. Belzen and Antoon Geels (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2003), 81–107.

The Image in the Mirror

Throughout the complex process of transformation from courtier to mystic, another factor of key importance in the personality structure of Ignatius has to be borne in mind. I refer to the part played in his personal dynamic by a narcissistic tendency. Quite rightly, Meissner points to narcissism as ‘a broad river across the landscape of Ignatius’ intrapsychic world. It is in the vicissitudes and transformations of that narcissism that much of his psychology is played out.’⁸

Narcissism is the first characteristic to appear in the opening words of Ignatius’ *Autobiography*: ‘Until the age of twenty-six he was a man given up to the vanities of the world, and his chief delight used to be in the exercise of arms, with a great and vain desire to gain honour’ (n. 1). In other words, his life was dominated by the wish to show himself before others as a person of distinguished appearance. He was an elegant *señor*, careful of dress, proud of his long fair hair, and very preoccupied with his physical appearance. On one occasion an ugly pimple came out on his nose; it suppurated and smelt badly. This was so intolerable for Ignatius that he planned to retire completely from social contact and live as a hermit. And well known is the butchery to which he was willing to submit in Loyola when he had a bone cut from his leg because it protruded and looked ugly.⁹

His narcissism carried with it a whole galaxy of lofty ideals, hence his hope to win the favour of a lady ‘not of ordinary nobility, nor a countess nor a duchess’. In the opinion of many historians this lady was no other than the Infanta Catalina, sister of the Emperor Charles V, daughter of Queen Juana la Loca, who would later become queen of Portugal. Despite the minimal or even non-existent possibilities, she may well have given rise to the grandiose imaginings entertained by Loyola in accordance with the model of a mediaeval courtly ideal.

But if such courtly ideals inspired much of his narcissistic imagining, other ideals drawn from notions of the military hero also had a part to play in the lofty notion of himself that Ignatius felt he had to maintain. Thus in the defence of Pamplona, against all reasonable arguments put forward for giving in and abandoning the fortress, it was the feeling of ‘shame’—a feeling closely linked to narcissism—that led him to maintain

⁸ Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 378.

⁹ *Autobiography*, n. 4. For a full description, see Pedro de Ribadeneira, *The Life of Ignatius of Loyola*, translated by Claude Pavur (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2014), 12–13; MHSJ FN 4, 85.

obstinately an enterprise doomed to failure. Juan de Polanco, in his account of what happened, mentions that Iñigo spoke out against any treaty, ‘as it seemed to him to be shameful’.¹⁰ It was the opinion of his ‘Ideal Ego’ and the thought of what others might think that motivated him in maintaining a position that gave no grounds for hope.

This narcissistic structure of his personality will be seen to undergo a deep process of transformation. But in the early moments of his spiritual journey it remained intact, even if under a different format. What was now at stake was how to emulate other sorts of achievements that would maintain the necessary picture of the ‘Ideal Ego’ in his own eyes and the eyes of others. Now he would emulate the great heroes of sanctity (whose deeds were what impressed him rather than the evangelical spirit that moved them) so that he might win before his inner image of God the merit and honour that he continued to desire. ‘How would it be, if I did this which St Francis, and this which St Dominic did?’ (*Autobiography*, n. 7) Once again, it is the ego which takes first place, an ego which needs to distinguish itself in his own eyes and in those of others. As he would come to recognise later, he had no knowledge of ‘what humility was’, but his whole purpose ‘was to do these great exterior deeds because so the saints had done them’ (*Autobiography*, n. 14).

The French Jesuit psychologist Louis Beirnaert noted perspicaciously that ‘the new life undertaken by Ignatius was simultaneously a rejection



St Dominic and St Francis, by Angelo Lion, early seventeenth century

¹⁰ Juan de Polanco, ‘Summary of the Most Notable Things concerning the Institution and Progress of the Society of Jesus’, in *The First Biographies of St Ignatius Loyola*, translated by Joseph A. Munitiz (Oxford: Way Books, 2019), 40.

and a continuation of his former life'.¹¹ The deeds to be accomplished changed by an obvious process of reaction from worldly to ascetic: the elegant gentlemanly clothing was replaced by the rough rags of the beggar; the heroic undertakings of the warrior gave way to the most radical and exigent acts of mortification; in place of the imaginary identification with Amadís de Gaula there was now an imaginary identification with saints and even with the Lord Jesus. The saints took on the role of strange knights whom he was to rival in the accomplishment of mighty deeds.

From the 'Ideal Ego' to the 'Ego Ideal'

Nevertheless, the narcissism that forms the backbone of the personality of Iñigo has a major role in the process by which he will transform himself into Ignatius the mystic. In fact, the process which began in Loyola, but would develop more deeply in Manresa, would impose a fundamental change on that narcissistic dynamic. Moreover, it is thanks to it that he could undertake a fundamental restructuring in the overall dynamism of his personality.

The 'Ideal Ego' of Ignatius gradually gave way to an 'Ego Ideal', as a more evolved type of personality emerged in which collective ideals were present that transcended the 'Ego' and which, as we shall see, opened up a path that leads, of necessity, to a whole process of sublimation.¹² And even if the narcissistic character is to be found in both instances of his personality, one should bear in mind that the type of narcissism present in each differs enormously. In the first the 'Ego' and the 'Ideal' are confused with one another; in the second the 'Ego' gives way to, and is transcended by, the 'Ideal'.

One of the most important developments in psychoanalytic theory after Freud has been precisely the differentiation between a healthy narcissism and one that is pathological in nature. Freud himself had already pointed out that narcissism can contribute in an important way to the development of strong independent personalities which, by virtue of their own innate narcissistic dynamic, can prefer to love rather than to be loved: they are then especially suited to the service of others, can assume the role of leaders, and give a strong stimulus to the

¹¹ Biernaert, *Expérience chrétienne et psychologie*, 302.

¹² Worth consulting on 'Ego Ideal' (*Ideal del Yo*) and 'Ideal Ego' (*Yo ideal*) is the *Diccionario de psicoanálisis*, edited by Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis (Barcelona: Labor, 1971).

development of culture.¹³ There can be no doubt that the figure of Ignatius fits perfectly into this scheme outlined by Freud with respect to the positive function that narcissism can have.

Certainly, one of the most obvious aspects of the personality of Ignatius was its strong independence. Even in his youth he stood out for his vigour, 'lively and full of spirit', as Ribadeneira describes him, with a healthy self-esteem and a marked confidence and self-assurance.¹⁴ His strength of will (thought by Tellechea to be 'the most typical characteristic of Ignatius') along with his robust ego also gave him a striking capacity to react in the face of his own tendencies, helped by the exceptional self-knowledge that he came to possess.¹⁵

In relation to this narcissistic current that affects the dynamic of his personality so strongly, we have to understand the exceptional role that Ignatius assigns in his spirituality to the struggle against any type of pride or vainglory in the world. Doubtless it was here that some of his own most serious battles had to take place.¹⁶ However, this also made

**The struggle
against any
type of pride
or vainglory**

him realise profoundly the harm that this dimension of human affectivity can effect in any spiritual endeavour. *Pride* is the first sin that the exercitant is invited by Ignatius to consider in the First Week (Exx 50); it is one of the main themes in the Second Week in the meditation on the Two Standards (Exx 136–147); and it dominates that sort of pointer to the Election that consists of the Three Kinds of Humility (Exx 165–168). Somehow the narcissism that prevents both openness to the other and entry into the rule of love has to be challenged and overcome.

To Practise the Hatred He Had Conceived against Himself¹⁷

That transformation of his narcissism, which made possible an openness to otherness and the entry into the rule of love, required of Ignatius a dense, painful and very complex process. This was felt by him with particular intensity while he was staying at Manresa. The process was

¹³ See Sigmund Freud, 'Libidinal Types' (1931), in *The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and its Discontents, and Other Works*, translated by James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1961), volume 21 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 215–220.

¹⁴ MHSJ FN 4, 81.

¹⁵ Tellechea, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 570.

¹⁶ Some examples of this are to be found in the *Autobiography*: for example, when he recounts the compulsive thought that came to him when he was in danger of death 'telling him he was just' (n. 32), and his insistence that his lineage and rank should not be known, hence his change of clothes (n. 18).

¹⁷ *Autobiography*, n. 12.

one of interior transformation which enabled him to pass from one world of values, ideals, attitudes and conduct proper to a culture of chivalry to another world of values and ideals which emerge as he enters a religious culture. While in Manresa, he achieves a major victory over the more infantile layers of his narcissism, and that is where access becomes possible for him to an authentic mystical experience which comes to dominate his personal dynamic for the rest of his life.

On leaving Loyola for Barcelona, Ignatius had been resolved to sail to Jerusalem, where he wanted to live as Lord Jesus had done—the Jesus who now polarised his affective self-identity. But this intention was clearly influenced by a deep desire with strong unconscious roots; he wanted really to demolish all the interior obstacles that might get in the way of his new project in life. The aggressive dimension of his personality—built up by his previous life, whose ‘chief delight used to be in the exercise of arms’ and which reacted violently against any enemy—showed itself in his willingness to ‘stab’ and kill the Moor who had questioned the Virginity of Mary (*Autobiography*, nn.15–16). That accumulated aggressiveness would change direction and enable him to transform his life into what he now desired to become.¹⁸

His journey to Jerusalem seems linked to a life of mortification, self-denial and exceptional penances:

About going to Jerusalem barefoot, and about not eating except herbs, and about doing all the other rigours he was seeing the saints had done ... with all the acts of discipline and all the acts of self-denial that a generous spirit, fired with God, generally wants to do. (*Autobiography*, nn.8 and 9)

He still had no idea what he would do when he returned; all that was clear to him was, ‘about the penances he wanted to do while wandering through the world’ or perhaps going to the Charterhouse, but ‘he was afraid he wouldn’t be able to practise the hatred he had conceived against himself’ (*Autobiography*, n.12).

If the mutilation of his leg could have been interpreted subconsciously as God’s punishment for the sort of life he had been living up till then; now his striving for a radical transformation of his life had to be accompanied by the notion of radical submission to that God the

¹⁸ See W. W. Meissner, *To the Greater Glory: A Psychological Study of Ignatian Spirituality* (Milwaukee: Marquette U, 1999), 522–530.

Father, still thought of as having ambiguous traits, largely those of threat. It looks as if Ignatius was making a transfer on to God of a ferocious superego, which turned God into a merciless Judge, before whom the only attitude possible was one of expiation and self-sacrifice.

It seemed to him that the only right disposition on his part was one of radical negation of self in order to affirm in his life the submission to God and God's Law. He then felt he had 'to practise the hatred he had conceived against himself'. This obsessive submission to the Law of God, with its obvious masochistic colouring, became more pronounced as Ignatius left Loyola with the firm intention of changing his life. As he says himself at that time his soul 'was still blind ... with an eye at this point not so much to making satisfaction for his sins as to pleasing and being agreeable to God'. This was a submission to God that, quite apart from sins, seemed to require the radical negation of self as a primary condition for being accepted. This he had to achieve in the same way as those saints, whom now he wanted to rival, 'not knowing what humility was, or charity, or patience, or discernment in regulating and balancing these virtues'. He now had only one thing in mind: 'his whole purpose was to do these great exterior deeds because so the saints had done them for the glory of God, without considering any other more individual circumstances' (*Autobiography*, n. 14).

Stirred by Various Spirits

Such a radical submission to the law and will of God, in accordance with a form of life diametrically opposed to what had gone before, was not to be undertaken easily: rather there would emerge strong resistance and internal opposition. As he would point out later in the *Spiritual Exercises* to anyone attempting a similar project, it is not possible to achieve this without being 'stirred by various spirits' (Exx 6).

Indeed, during the period—almost a year—that Ignatius would pass in the region of Manresa, there would be many and violent spirits to stir his soul. During an initial stage he may well have enjoyed moments of great consolations and happiness (due in part, no doubt, to the narcissistic pleasure of seeing himself performing great things),¹⁹ but very soon he had to taste some very bitter feelings: 'he began to undergo great variations in his soul' (*Autobiography*, n. 21).

¹⁹ 'Up to this time he had always persisted almost in one identical interior state, with largely unvarying happiness' (*Autobiography*, n. 20).

Dryness and desolation now overtook him. As his resistance and difficulties increased he began to question the very meaning of the new path he had begun to follow, and to ask himself, 'what new life is this we're beginning now?' (*Autobiography*, n. 21) Many new elements seemed to become active within him and he was incapable of understanding their cause and meaning.

But he does not only become aware of *thoughts*. From deep within him an image began to arise which from a psychoanalytic point of view was charged with meaning:

Something happened to him, many times: in full daylight he would see clearly something in the air alongside him, which would give him much consolation because it was very beautiful, enormously so. He couldn't properly make out what it was an image of, it somehow it seemed to him that it had the shape of a serpent, and it had many things which shone like eyes, thought they weren't eyes. (*Autobiography*, n. 19)

This vision delighted him and produced an ever greater pleasure the more he saw it, and its disappearance was accompanied by increasing sadness. After the illumination next to the river Cardoner, which will be mentioned later, Ignatius sees with complete clarity that this vision came from the evil spirit:

He recognized very clearly, with strong backing from his will, that it was the devil. And in this form later the devil had a habit of appearing to him often and for a long time, and he, by way of contempt would cast it aside with a staff he used to carry in his hand. (*Autobiography*, n. 31)

Ambivalence, Guilt and the Waking from Sleep

There can be no doubt that the way in which Ignatius was attempting to submit himself to the law of God, was indebted to an ambivalent image of the divinity, in so far as the relationship established with God had to be one of 'I and You', each regarded as mutually exclusive. The affirmation of God seemed to require the negation of self: the 'hate' he had to conceive against himself in order to please and 'satisfy' that God. However, this denial of self and this violence turned, of necessity and unconsciously, against the One who seemed to demand them.

In such a dynamic context it is unsurprising that Ignatius endured both anguish and a morbid sense of guilt. While in Manresa, he found himself caught in a veritable hell of scruples that plagued him without mercy. Although in the abbey of Montserrat he had made a general confession that took him three days, in writing and with great care over

the smallest detail, he found himself assailed again and again by scruples, and could find no way of escaping them (*Autobiography*, nn.17, 22). He was caught in a typically obsessive situation and was incapable of getting free.

His first recourse was to consult others, 'some spiritual men to cure him of these scruples' (*Autobiography*, n.22). But all was in vain. The problem he had went beyond any faults that he might consciously remember and confess. It lay hidden elsewhere, in the unconscious ambivalence which led him both to want and not want the new life he had begun to live, and the God to whom he wished to devote himself. The problem was not in the number of bad acts and sins, but in his image of God: it was this which came into play and which was finding imaginary expression. It was a sort of narcissistic alter ego from which he was failing to escape.

In utter despair he cries out and shouts:

Help me, Lord: I can find no cure in human beings nor in any creature. If I thought I could find it, no struggle would be hard for me. You, Lord, show me where I am to find it. Even if I have to follow a little dog so that it can give me the cure, I'll do it. (*Autobiography*, n.23)

In these circumstances of complete despair Ignatius endured a classic dynamism of phobic-obsessive character, even contemplating suicide: 'While he was in these thoughts there often used to come over him, with great impetus, temptations to throw himself out of a large opening which the room he was in had'. But he would try another means to emerge from this inferno in which he found himself: he would drag peace out of God in exchange for very severe penance, 'he would neither eat nor drink till God did something for him or death seemed as near as could be' (*Autobiography*, n.24).

Nothing was gained even by this. Eventually, 'there came to him some feelings of disgust for the life he was leading, and some impulses to cease from it', at which 'the Lord willed that he woke up as if from sleep' (*Autobiography*, n.25). He 'woke up as if from sleep': what a telling phrase! In fact, what happened was that he abandoned the imaginary world in which he had been living; he broke with the narcissistic phantasy that he could seduce God, rather like a child trying to win over his mother, or like forcing a favour by a masochistic submission to a law which is imagined as the omnipotent will of a father.

Ignatius had been fixed, one way or another, in a dream world, the realm of the imagination, where no authentic experience of God

could take place since in that imaginary register the only relationship possible was with his own mirror image. It would not be by force of will, by violence, nor by the achievement of mighty ascetic deeds of external penance: the result came, as Ignatius said, because 'the Lord willed'. Only in this way was he able to open himself not to a dream, but to an otherness beyond his control, before which the sole reaction possible is 'respect and reverence'.

Up to this point the only words that spoke to him came from the ascetic practices of the religious culture of his time. He had been trying to integrate God into his own system, relying on the doubtless enormous force of his personal will. But he now felt that it was God who had 'liberated' him from the religious and cultural discourse that had been the only one he could hear, and also from a false self-confidence, allowing him to begin to investigate his own way of speaking. That 'way' would involve, from now onwards, a complex process of discernment, a willingness to listen to voices that speak from within, thanks to which he could risk himself, though without any feeling of omnipotence or magic, to options decided upon by his own reflection and choice.

Thus, Manresa worked rather like a psychoanalytic process: it opened up a space in which the imaginary narcissistic order of reality was called into question and disintegrated. It could be replaced by the possibility of access to a different order, that of the symbolic. In this order there is a recognition of his personal limit, and with the acceptance of his distance and difference an encounter with another becomes possible, also with the Other recognised as free and different and not simply the mirror image through which he had been trying to maintain his own life.



Ignatius Doing Penance in the Cave at Manresa,
by Juan de Valdés Leal, mid seventeenth century

From that moment, Ignatius changes his form of life radically: he returns to reality, though one modified by an inner experience that will mark him for ever. He leaves the extreme penitential practices he had been following, he cuts and arranges his hair, cuts his nails, dresses in a normal fashion, decides to eat meat even though his confessor warns him of the danger that this decision may be a temptation, and he goes out in public. He is going to meet a world, a society, a historical reality that will raise challenges of many sorts, question him, attract him, and give rise to an historical project, the dimensions of which he could not so far have foreseen (*Autobiography*, n.29).

The Mystical Experience of the Cardoner

However, such a transformation in Ignatius cannot be understood without reference to a key experience that could occur only when, defeated in his efforts to 'deal with God' by seducing God with heroic deeds and masochistic penances, he opened himself to the possibility of a meeting with God which was completely beyond his dominion and control. To be precise, this was an experience that could only take place when he had overcome his infantile narcissism. Without any doubt, his experience of illumination next to the River Cardoner was the most foundational of his spiritual life and the key to understanding the changes which took place in his personal make-up.

The passage that describes what happened on that occasion as he sat near the river preoccupied in his devotions is worth rereading:

The eyes of his understanding began to be opened: not that he saw some vision, but understanding and knowing many things, spiritual things just as much as matters of faith and learning, and this with an enlightenment so strong that all things seemed new to him. One cannot set out the particular things he understood then, though they were many: only that he received a great clarity in his understanding, such that in the whole course of his life, right up to the sixty-two years he has completed, he does not think, gathering together all the helps he has had from God and all the things he has come to know (even if he joins them all into one), that he has ever attained so much as on that single occasion. And this left him with the understanding enlightened in so great a way that it seemed to him as if he were a different person, and he had another mind, different from that which he had before. (*Autobiography*, n.30)

There are few descriptions in spiritual literature that express in better and more concise terms what mystical experience is and the

effects it brings to those who have it. In his experience next to the Cardoner, Ignatius sees nothing new, nor does he hear any voice. It is 'the eyes of his understanding' that are opened. He sees *reality* in a radically new way, the reality of himself and of all that surrounds him, so that 'it seemed to him as if he were a different person, and he had another mind, different from that which he had before'.

What has occurred to him is an 'illumination', concerning his life and the world, which will mark him permanently and which will continue to influence his personal dynamic, modifying, compensating, impelling and containing different aspects of his personality structure. Ignatius attains now to a new way of relating, both with himself and with God. One of the first effects of this new form of openness will be a clear appreciation of the imaginary character of his former experiences. Now he can understand clearly that 'thing' which shone and gave him such feelings of happiness and pleasure even though he did not know what it meant. In the paragraph following the account of the illumination in his *Autobiography*, he writes:

A new way of relating, both with himself and with God

There appeared to him there that vision which had often been appearing and which he had never recognized: i.e. that thing mentioned above which seemed very beautiful to him, with many eyes. But ... he recognized very clearly, with strong backing from his will, that it was the devil. And in this form later the devil had a habit of appearing to him, often and for a long time, and he, by way of contempt, would cast it aside with a staff he used to carry in his hand. (*Autobiography*, n.31)

Finally, the imaginary world in which he had found himself immersed and confused reveals its true nature. The 'thing' will not cease to reappear, but it has now lost its power to obfuscate.

This mystical experience next to the Cardoner indicates that his former crisis had been resolved and he is now immersed in a mystical dimension of existence. The way he thinks of God will now undergo a restructuring and other very particular aspects will become dominant, prominent among them the parental dimension which will affect the whole of his spiritual experience. The God of Ignatius is not the Husband longed for in a spousal way by the soul, as in the *Spiritual Canticle* of St John of the Cross. Nor is his God the One who impregnates the Word into the soul, as experienced by Meister Eckhart. Rather God is the Father 'dealing with him in the same way as a school-teacher deals with a child'

(*Autobiography*, n.27); God is the Creator whom we are called to find in the things of the earth (according to the teaching of the Principle and Foundation) and ‘dwelling in creatures’ (according to the Contemplation to Attain Love) in the *Spiritual Exercises* (Exx nn. 23, 230–237).

Even if Ignatius’ image of God is now drawn essentially along the lines of the Father Creator, the salvific dimension appears clearly expressed in how he represents Jesus. There is hardly any need to insist on the dominance of Jesus in his spirituality. It is the figure of Jesus who tugs him along from the first moments of life in his conversion. But although to begin with this pull took the form of *imitation* (so linked to narcissism) gradually it began to give way to a different dynamic, one of *identification* that generates and functions in a dynamism of following (‘so that I may better love and follow Him’; Exx 103), an obligation whereby each has to find out what sort of compromise he or she has undertaken. This Jesus is essentially the Jesus of history, and therefore relates without any equivocation to history, thus eliminating the risk of a religiosity which might be imaginary or infantilising. This Jesus, in any case, is one who has to be accepted, although in the Third Week ‘the divine nature goes into hiding’ (Exx 196). Thus one can understand that this God of Jesus is not merely the projection of infantile wishes.

The ‘triple colloquies’, such an important element in the structure of the Exercises, illustrate in exemplary fashion the attitude of Ignatius to his religious images. Mary is no longer the object of loving devotion appropriate to the knights of chivalry in their romantic dreams. She is Our Lady, who can ‘obtain for me grace from her Son that I be received under His standard’ (Exx 147), so she acts like the good mother who must support the father’s plan

Sublimation and the Following of Jesus

Following his time at Manresa, and especially the experience next to the Cardoner, the life of Ignatius became polarised by a loving passion which was to give essential shape to it for ever. Everything will become relative to that great passion and will be of value ‘in so far as’ (*tanto ... cuanto*) (Exx 33). From then on Ignatius’ deepest affective structures will show a special and rare sensitivity to perception and contact with this new object of love which has been established in his life. Until the end, numerous mystical experiences will break into his life and many of them will be of quite an extraordinary character.

These experiences, which play such an intense role in his life, make quite clear the special relevance of psychoanalytic mechanisms that we now know as elements of sublimation. In reality, all the processes that took place from the moment of the Loyola conversion consisted of a gradual displacement of the poles of interest and attraction which up to then had predominated in his life.

Polanco gives a brief outline of his previous life with the words, 'he was especially ill-behaved in gaming and things relating to women, and brawls and armed fighting'.²⁰ From such a picture of his juvenile personality, a transformation would take place in the mind of Ignatius of the view he had of his 'Ideal Ego'. Instead of models such as Amadís de Gaula would be found the saints whose lives he was now reading and, above all, Jesus whom he wanted to imitate and duplicate in his life. We explained in an earlier paragraph how the narcissistic slant of the personality of Ignatius continued to function with the change of models. But we must remember that every process of sublimation goes into action with the mobilisation of the narcissistic ideals of the Ego. Thus it was that Ignatius' narcissistic slant could provide the sort of impulse that enabled him to enter a new dynamic situation which radically changed the direction of his life.

Undoubtedly the first impulse that unleashed the process came, as we saw, from his feeling of intense guilt, 'he was left so sickened at his whole past life, and especially at matters of the flesh' (*Autobiography*, n.10). However, the sort of containment dyke that he raised from the beginning against his powerful libidinal urges might have produced very different psychic effects if Ignatius had not possessed a significant capacity for sublimation and then undertaken the intense work to bring that about. In the landscape of his psychic make-up, he had to open a new channel by which to divert all that libidinal current which during many years had been aimed at such objects as gaming, women and brawls. The work was not easy and did not lack risks. That was shown by the deep crisis and internal conflict that he underwent while living in Manresa.

In order for him to open such a new outlet for his libidinal energy he could rely on an ego gifted with exceptional strength of will, along with a complex set of stimuli drawn from the spiritual domain with which he wisely surrounded himself. But above all, he enjoyed the experience of periods of incalculable joy when he felt himself seduced

²⁰ Polanco, 'Summary of the Most Notable Things', 39.

by God and the figure of Jesus. There were also, no doubt, other less healthy elements in his personal structure that played a decisive role. Such, for example, were the feelings of guilt with a masochistic tone, or the narcissistic aspect that had played such a decisive role in his personal make-up. The final result was that the dyke he constructed in such a decisive fashion to contain his instinctive impulses did not lead to his drowning in his own libidinal waters, but instead he succeeded in directing those powerful currents towards a new object of love: one that he tasted in an intense and unique fashion in his mystical experiences.

What cannot be disputed is that, without a significant capacity to set in motion the process of sublimation, Ignatius would never have been able to transform his life's dynamism in the way that he did. However, that did not save him from an immense psychic effort to achieve the 'modification of the aim and change of the object' that characterize this psychic mechanism.²¹ In order to do this, it was fundamental for Ignatius to undergo successive deep processes of identification with the figure of Jesus. Essentially it was in this way that the true transformation of his former system of values could take place. He thought in an initial phase that this transposition from being a knightly hero to becoming a saintly hero could occur with a simple change of clothes. In Manresa he had to admit, not without struggle, that such a transmutation was not possible.

The transformation of life that he desired could truly take place only by means of a long, complex process of identification with the figure of Jesus. An identification that would modify the structure of his ego, and of the 'Ego Ideal', had to go much further than the imitation which at first he planned by going as a pilgrim to Jerusalem, so that he might live there as Christ had done (*Autobiography*, nn. 9, 45). From an outward reproduction of a way of life, Ignatius moved to an 'imitation' of Jesus that involved making his own a system of values, and a way of being rather than of acting. In place of 'reproducing' some comportment and conduct, the change implied a much deeper change of sensitivity. He would have to explore not in Jerusalem but in his own internal space; he had to search for what he wanted in the course of a long and dangerous interior pilgrimage.

²¹ Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis and Other Works*, translated by James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1964), volume 22 of *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 97. According to this definition, sublimation is a psychic process which, drawing its strength from libidinal energy, is able to direct a person towards aims and objects that are socially esteemed and set apart from that person's primitive aims and objects. I have dealt in detail with this very complex subject in the final chapter of my book *Los registros del deseo* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2000), 242–267.

When planning at first how to change his way of life he thought it would be as a pilgrimage to a sacred place. But when he saw that his project to stay in Jerusalem was not possible, he returned to Venice asking himself the question, *Quid agendum?* (What was to be done?), and finally settled in Barcelona 'inclining more towards studying for a time in order to be able to help souls' (*Autobiography*, n.50), while nevertheless not abandoning his project of a return to Jerusalem.

In the course of his journey he had made the step from the sacred world to one where learning and pastoral work were uppermost.²² Later, when he met up with the new companions in Paris, the idea of going to Jerusalem would emerge once more for all of them. Only when they found that blocked would they go to Rome, however not as pilgrims to a sacred site but to put themselves at the Pope's orders, ready to go to any part of the world. This was the decisive step from one universe to another, from one form of journeying to another very different one.

They would not settle in some holy place secluded from the world in order to remain constantly in prayer and the worship of God. Instead they would head for the greatest variety of worldly places where people live and work. There they would spread the practice of the Spiritual Exercises as a means of undertaking the interior pilgrimage by which each ought to find the way and the means to serve God best. The plan for prayer now is one that does not find its roots in the consolation it may give, but rather in the search for a means by which best to serve God within the context of real life. Instead of taking refuge in a sacred space, they find a road which opens up into a secular world along with the desire to transform it and change historical reality. Such was the change that took place in the paradigm of Ignatius' wanderings. And it best characterizes his mystical experience and the aim of his spirituality.

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translated by Joseph A. Munitiz SJ

²² See Louis Beirnaert, 'Relire Ignace après Freud, Lacan et quelques d'autres', in *Aux frontières de l'acte analytique* (Paris: Seuil, 1987), 199–204.

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THE UNIVERSAL APOSTOLIC PREFERENCES OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

A Brief Explanation

John Zupez

IN 2019 THE SUPERIOR GENERAL of the Society of Jesus, Arturo Sosa, promulgated four Universal Apostolic Preferences for Jesuits for the next ten years. This followed widespread consultation and concluded with approval by Pope Francis. Here I will briefly explain how to understand these preferences, how they were arrived at, and the significance of each one in particular.

The preferences can also be called orientations, and they are at the heart of the Jesuit mission today. They may lead to concrete proposals for action but they pertain more to where our heart is as Jesuits, to our deeper desires. As such they are not the same as working priorities within our apostolates but are horizons which we allow to influence all our decisions and the future of our works. These four Universal Apostolic Preferences are:

1. To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment.
2. To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice.
3. To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future.
4. To collaborate in the care of our common home.¹

The *discernment* in the first preference, beyond being a characteristic way of proceeding for Jesuits, is a necessary path to implementing the other

¹ Arturo Sosa to the Whole Society, 19 February 2019, available at https://www.jesuits.global/sj_files/2020/05/2019-06_19feb19_eng.pdf.

three. And these other three in some ways overlap and have an impact on one another. Finally, in all this we recognise the need not to go it alone but to *show the way, walk with, accompany* and *collaborate* with all our partners in ministry and with those we serve.

Growth out of the Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) made some startling breaks with the received Roman Catholic tradition. During the previous four centuries, mission was carried on in large part by baptizing as many persons as possible. ‘Baptism of desire’—baptism through repentance and the desire to be baptized, without receiving the sacrament itself—was thought to be rare, and this left those outside the Christian faith without hope of afterlife, destined for hell.

Vatican II returned to the roots of Christian doctrine and found reason to hope that all those who were faithful to the voice of conscience would be saved.² More respect was shown for the cultures and life situations of peoples in mission lands. The new question was: what must we do to assist these peoples in coming to faith in the God of Jesus Christ? Works of justice were seen as inseparable from spreading the faith in our time. The council called for reform of the social and economic order and for respecting the conclusions of modern science.³ The council also called for a new synodality in church governance, which would become a central theme of the papacy of Pope Francis.⁴

Early Developments

At the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1965, Pedro Arrupe was elected Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Under his leadership Jesuits would emphasize a commitment to ‘the crucial struggle of our time: the struggle for faith and that struggle for justice which it includes’.⁵ In 1979 Arrupe founded the Jesuit Refugee Service, which became a basic commitment for Jesuits.

Arrupe’s successor, Peter Hans Kolvenbach, also pursued the commitment to the promotion of justice during his fifteen years as Superior General. As vocations in Europe and the United States declined, the majority of delegates to Jesuit General Congregations began coming

² *Lumen gentium*, n. 16.

³ *Gaudium et spes*, nn. 26, 63, 36.

⁴ See International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church* (2 March 2018).

⁵ GC 32, decree 2, n. 2.

from outside these areas.⁶ The decrees of these the congregations would demonstrate a broadening of dialogue with cultures and peoples, increased input from women and laypeople, and a focus on the view 'from the bottom up', on experiential knowledge of the needs of the poor and marginalised.⁷

When Adolfo Nicolás succeeded Kolvenbach at General Congregation 35 in 2008, Pope Benedict XVI confirmed and applauded the Society's efforts to venture into the 'new frontiers' of our time, which included globalisation, new technologies and environmental concerns, even as the previous themes of promotion of justice and care for refugees were reiterated.⁸ The congregation also expressed the need to involve the laity in the practice of communal discernment, learnt through the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius.⁹

General Congregation 36 in 2016 elected Arturo Sosa as Superior General. Taking its cue from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato si'*, it emphasized that 'poverty, social exclusion, and marginalisation are linked with environmental degradation'.¹⁰ It also called for greater commitment to discernment, collaboration and networking, with lay colleagues to be included in the discernment of apostolic preferences.¹¹

Consultation Leading to the Preferences

In autumn 2017, Arturo Sosa picked up on a major theme of Pope Francis's papacy and called for a two-year process of consultation and discernment by all Jesuits and apostolic partners worldwide. Then in January 2019 Sosa and about 25 others met to finalise the results of this broad consultation. He explained that the preferences are 'orientations, not priorities. A priority is something that is regarded as more important than others; a preference is an orientation, a signpost, a call.'¹² The preferences may never be realised, but must nevertheless be desired and pursued. They are challenges, ways we allow God to change us. They

⁶ George Traub, 'General Congregation 34', at <https://www.xavier.edu/jesuitresource/jesuit-a-z/terms-g/general-congregation-34>, accessed 12 June 2020.

⁷ GC 34, decrees 14 and 13.

⁸ Benedict XVI, 'Address to the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus', 21 February 2008, n.2, in GC 35; GC 35, decree 3.

⁹ GC 35, decree 6, 'Collaboration at the Heart of Mission'.

¹⁰ GC 36, decree 1, n. 29.

¹¹ GC 36, decree 2, nn. 27, 14.

¹² Arturo Sosa, 'Assimilating and Implementing the Universal Apostolic Preferences 2019–2029', to all Major Superiors, 21 April 2019, available at https://www.jesuits.global/sj_files/2020/06/2019-13_21Apr19_ENG.pdf.

require constant discernment as to where the *magis* or more universal good, the greater glory of God, is to be found in our world today.¹³

Explaining the Preferences

The first universal apostolic preference is *to show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment*. The Second Vatican Council called for a more synodal Church, and Pope Francis has picked up on this in a more determined way than his predecessors. He saw that ‘making a synodal Church a reality is an indispensable precondition for a new missionary energy that will involve the entire People of God’.¹⁴ He insists that all members of the Church are potentially messengers of God’s will, ‘missionary disciples’, in touch with God’s Spirit.¹⁵ Francis’s letter *Gaudate et exultate*, on the laity’s call to perfection, devotes an entire section to discernment by the laity.

Responding to this, Sosa says, ‘we resolve to make regular use of spiritual conversation and discernment in our implementation of the preferences at all levels of the life-mission of the Society’. Only through synodality and wide consultation will Jesuits in authority hear what the Spirit is saying. It is incumbent upon Jesuits to foster this charism of their founder St Ignatius by showing ‘the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment’ as a universal apostolic preference. By this we hope to help all to listen to the Spirit in preparation for sharing in dialogue with others the fruits of praying over their various life situations. And from this we seek to contribute in a collaborative way to the process of creating a Church that is more vital, more relevant, more effective in addressing major problems that confront us in our time, for the greater glory of God.

The second preference is *to walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice*. It is not primarily about direct service offered to the marginalised, but about walking alongside them—alongside migrants, children and others made vulnerable by changing social structures—and about defending the culture and the dignified existence of indigenous peoples. It may mean changing our style of life as we go out to the human peripheries so that our accompaniment will be more credible. This

¹³ Most of the material that follows is drawn from Arturo Sosa’s letter to the Whole Society promulgating the preferences. Also see the entire dedicated website on the preferences, at <https://jesuits.global/en/uap/>.

¹⁴ International Theological Commission, *Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church*, n. 9.

¹⁵ See Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, nn. 119–121.

preference would also promote social organizations and civic formation, as well as reflection and studies on the economic, political and social structures that generate injustice, in order to devise alternative models of development.

The third preference is to accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future. Most young people in the world today are poor, and face challenges such as a lack of job opportunities, economic instability, increased political violence and discrimination,

and progressive degradation of the environment. We are committed to accompany them as they seek to find God in their lives and to discern the way to a better future built on justice, reconciliation and respect for different cultures. Accompanying young people puts us on the path of personal, communitarian and institutional conversion.

The fourth preference is to collaborate in the care of our common home. We can only speculate on how earth will be taken up into eternal reality in ‘new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home’ (2 Peter 3:13), or how each will participate in this through a ‘spiritual body’ (1 Corinthians 15:44). But we do know that praise of God becomes articulate now on earth in human persons who find God’s love in the abundance and diversity of creation and of all living creatures. In human history all is meant for our praiseful use, with care to preserve what will lead future generations to enjoy and to marvel at the creative generosity of God. Now, in our own time, those most affected by the deterioration of our common home are ‘indigenous peoples, peasants forced to emigrate, and the inhabitants of urban peripheries’.

We are called to promote analysis and discernment that will give guidance towards healing the ecosystem and inform future decisions. On the individual level, Pope Francis wrote in *Laudato si’* of ‘nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions’ and went on to enumerate some of these as: ‘avoiding the use of plastic and paper,



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reducing water consumption, separating refuse ... planting trees, turning off unnecessary lights' and other such practices.¹⁶ Conversion on the individual level enhances the prospect that our deliberations together will point us towards the care necessary to preserve our common home.

Open Horizons

In launching the process of consultation in October 2017, Superior General Arturo Sosa pointed out that,

The preferences do not establish a hierarchy of the needs of humanity or of the Church, but they do indicate the best ways for the Society to make use of the resources it has available for the service of Christ's reconciling mission in the world.

In the collaborative way of arriving at these preferences,

We have experienced the grace of feeling ourselves to be one united body and of growing in indifference and availability so as to become what General Congregation 36 called us to be, 'a discerning community with open horizons'.¹⁷

Sosa adds that we understand the preferences 'as orientations that go beyond "doing something" and enable us to achieve our transformation as persons, as religious communities, and as apostolic works and institutions in which we collaborate with others'.

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¹⁶ *Laudato si'*, n.211.

¹⁷ Sosa to the Whole Society, citing GC 36, decree 1, nn. 7-16.

FRONTIERS OF THE SPIRIT

The Mission of Spirituality Today

James Hanvey

A Tale of Two Grand Narratives

WHO NARRATES YOU? Who holds and creates your story? These are key questions for us personally and in community. For narrative is power, and whoever narrates us has power in our lives to control and shape them, to determine our limitations as well as our dreams and possibilities. It is in narrative that the self is expressed, discovered and made.

The gospel is the great narrative; it is the one in which God tells us God's own story in Christ, but in doing so invites us into that story. It is the grand, *open* narrative of God's love through which we come to see our truth and the truth of our world. God is narrating us into new life: the inexhaustible mystery of life which is the Triune God. The Pope rightly identifies this, as does St Ignatius in the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises, as the healing, restoring and liberating narrative of Divine mercy.

The secular world also has its narratives. Constantly, it is engaged in a self-narration, seeking to determine its own vision and *telos*, and part of this entails counter-narratives against religion.¹ In a sense, secular narratives can present as a form of soteriology, in which a particular version of the fulfilment and well-being of the rational autonomous person has replaced union with God.

The two dominant forces in the secular soteriology are beliefs in scientific progress—usually benign—and autonomy. The mechanisms of achieving this 'salvation' are gathered mainly in a belief that science can resolve our problems, making the world a more secure and prosperous

This is a version of a keynote address to the European Centres of Jesuit Spirituality. It has been adapted and developed for *The Way*.

¹ Of course, we live in cultures with powerful and plural narratives of religion, for example that of Islam. One of the important dynamics within the Islamic world is 'resacralisation', which runs counter to secularisation. This is part of the difficulty that the Western world has with understanding Islam, especially Islamic communities in Western cultures. See Oliver Roy, 'The Transformation of the Arab World', *Journal of Democracy*, 23/3 (2012).



place. With this goes a belief in the capacity of democratic reason to fashion those national and international structures that ensure peaceful existence and protect the vulnerable. The other dimension is that of the economy. Functioning through the mechanism of the markets, it generates and distribute wealth to the benefit of each section of society.² All of these are cornerstones of secular modernity's faith in its own progressive and enlightened capacity to secure the future prosperity and well-being of humanity.³ Here the Anthropocene is a triumph of the human will and intellect. The human and physical sciences have exorcised the supernatural from our lives and imaginations, although its return can be tolerated in exotic and harmless 'primitive' or residual cultural practices.

In this secular account religion is at best a private concern and at worst an obstacle to human progress. The teachings of religions carry no truth value; their vision of the world is a misleading and obstructive myth; their practices and beliefs hold people back from achieving their freedom. Often religion is used to discriminate against sectors of society based on the prejudices against 'primitive' world-views which can no longer have a place in a modern demythologized world. There must be a necessary purifying disenchantment, so that we may be reenchanting by the wonders of science and the achievements of the human spirit.

² On the 'deification' of the market economy see Harvey Cox, 'How the Market Became Divine', *Dialog*, 55/1 (2016), 18–24; also Harvey Cox, *The Market as God* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard U, 2016); Eugene McCarragher, *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard U, 2019).

³ One of the most prominent apologists for the grand narrative of secular modernity and the march of progress in every dimension is the evolutionary cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker. See *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (London: Penguin, 2011) and *Enlightenment Now* (London: Penguin, 2018).

What is often not acknowledged is that the secular has its own version of justification by faith alone, except it is faith in the auto-perfectability of humanity. Of course, this secular 'sola fide' may itself come under a purifying critique. There arises then a sort of nihilistic humanism which accepts that there is no lasting cure for human corruption.⁴ It is ironic that this position effectively adopts an Augustinian realism about the human condition without grace. The best that can be done is to restrain and limit evil rather than abolish or exorcise it through reason and science.

The secular meta-narrative about religion can also be internalised by those of us who are believers. While we may reject its convenient caricatures of our faith, we might also acknowledge the validity of its critique for some forms of religion. Often, this critique will be given weight by the very public wounds of an institutional Church—abuse, self-interest, concern with power and influence. We cannot deny that we live with such tensions and divisions, especially as they are precisely displayed in disputes about responding to this powerful secular narrative. And while postmodernity may call many aspects of that narrative into question as a strategy of resistance against hegemonies, it cannot itself become a coherent alternative.

The danger for the Church, like any group under pressure, is to surrender to the temptation of closing ranks. Here, theology (and tradition) can easily be turned into ideology, which is used to claim a purity and strength against those who have been 'contaminated' by the secular world and its values. The temptation for the Church is to position itself as the 'resident alien' or idealise its response in pseudo-apocalyptic imagery. Here, God has appointed a special angel to bar the way of isolation and nostalgia: 'Why do you seek the living among the dead?'⁵

Equally, there is the other danger of the Church accepting the secular narrative far enough to allow it to declare a 'no-go zone' for God. This simply endorses something we know to be false, for God cannot be excluded from the world God has created. Humans may reject God, or forget about God, or try to discredit Christ; all of this is part of the

⁴ See Bülent Diken, 'Climates of Nihilism', *Third Text*, 22/6 (2008), 719–732; also Bülent Diken, *Nihilism* (London: Routledge, 2009).

⁵ For significant analyses of the paradoxical position of the Church in the world, see Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, volume 4, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, translated by G. W. Bromiley (London: T. and T. Clark, 2009), 76.3, on the Church's 'provisional' character and mission in and to the world; Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, volume 4, *The Action*, translated by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994), C; and Christoph Theobald's development of Rahner's notion of the Church of the diaspora in *Christentum als Stil. Für ein zeitgemäßes Glaubensverständnis in Europa* (Freiburg: Herder, 2018).

Church's history—indeed, it only adds life and urgency to the Church's mission. We must not accept the secular 'theology' of what God can and cannot do. The angel of the annunciation speaks not only to Mary but to us all and to the Church in every age, 'nothing is impossible to God'. The Church is not an institution which needs to attend to its own survival. It is not our creation but that of the Holy Spirit who even, in our time, is preparing new life for God's people.

Nevertheless, Hans Urs von Balthasar reminds us that God's plan was not to redeem the Church: 'it was always about redeeming the world'.⁶ The Church cannot become 'locked up' by the secular or go into self-isolation for fear of contamination. Rather, it is ordered to the world; it has no existence that is not an existence in this world, even as it lives out of the vision of the Kingdom that is still becoming.

For the Love of the World

Only Christ has the life for which the secular longs but cannot make for itself, no matter how powerful its science and its progress. As we celebrate in the sacrament of baptism, *vitam eternam* is this life in Christ which the Church holds for all humanity: 'And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent' (John 17:3–4).⁷ With this fount of life at the centre, the Church announces God's unconditional invitation to every culture (Isaiah 55: 1–2).

From this perspective, we can begin to see how important it is not to take our understanding of the secular solely from what it says about itself. Its own self-narration is too narrow and restrictive. Of course, there are many important and valuable goods in our contemporary cultures which do mark genuine progress, but there is also the danger of a reductive humanism. Part of the mission of the Church is not to overcome or defeat the secular but to liberate it, so that it can attain the good to which it genuinely aspires. The mission is beautifully articulated in *Lumen gentium*:

Through her work, whatever is good in the minds and hearts of men, whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, is not only saved from destruction but is cleansed, raised up and perfected unto the glory of God, the confusion of the devil, and the happiness of man. (n. 17)

⁶ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic*, volume 3, *The Spirit of Truth*, translated by Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 255.

⁷ Compare also the pre-Vatican II formula for baptism: *What do you ask of the Church of God? Faith. What does faith offer you? Eternal Life (vitam eternam).*

We can see that there is a vital mission for Christian spirituality here. For it is often the point of contact for people who have either become wary of institutional religion, or recognised the spiritual impoverishment of a material, reductive secularism and a dissipated postmodernity. Here, we need a spirituality at the frontiers—the frontiers within the Church as well as those between the community of faith and the secular world. In those areas of the world where religion is not marginalised but very much in the public forum, and where Christianity itself is a minority faith, spirituality is also at the frontiers of encounter and has important work to do.

Yet, this is not a spirituality without form or centre. It will always be one which arises from the life of the Holy Spirit, conscious that it is at the service of Christ and the Church without in any way losing its creativity, imagination, resilience and adaptability. Such a Christian spirituality knows that it lives always within the mystery of God's Triune salvific love; within the mystery of a God who refuses to abandon the world to its idols and illusions—such is God's fidelity sealed unto eternity in Christ. It is a spirituality which tests every utopian dream or perfectionist myth with the reality of the cross. This is God's frontier. It runs through every moment of history and through the forgetfulness of every society. The mark of a truly liberative spirituality is its rejection of any 'cheap grace' and its unwillingness to disguise or minimise the nature of faith and its call to conversion.

A Secular Spirituality

Those who deny any connection with institutional religion or distance themselves from may nevertheless still describe themselves as 'spiritual'. Only about 30 per cent of those who identify themselves as 'nones' (of no religious affiliation) regard themselves as atheists or agnostics.⁸ This is quite remarkable given the strength and pervasiveness of the secular narrative and the culture it creates.

In trying to get some sense of the features of secular spirituality, Peter Van Ness has offered a useful descriptive definition: 'secular spirituality reflects an attempt to locate optimal human experience within a

⁸ 'Religious nones' is a broad term that oversimplifies the diversity of this group. There are distinct philosophical differences among people claiming to be atheist or agnostic and those who report traditional religious beliefs while being disenfranchised from organized religion. The term itself seems to have been coined by Glenn M. Vernon in 'The Religious "None": A Neglected Category', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 7 (Fall 1968), 219–229.

nonreligious context of existential and cosmic meaning'.⁹ Taking this general definition, we can sketch some key features of this spirituality. These can be modified and added to, but they seem to be the major characteristics:

- Secular spirituality is *deliberately eclectic*.
- There is a *rejection of the Western conception of 'sin'*. This does not mean that people deny the alienation, violence, revenge and hatred that characterize human actions and form patterns within our societies. Rather, it is the theological interpretation of sin, and with it grace, that is not accepted. Instead, there is a therapeutic model and a language that emphasizes self-affirmation, creativity and overcoming defective or limited self-awareness and so on.
- *There is no strong commitment to an afterlife* as such. Although the language of some hope in an 'afterlife', as well as gratitude, can be present—'see you in the sweet bye-and-bye'—this carries no metaphysical claims. Rather, there is an emphasis on the immanent life, the life now: well-being and a sense of cosmic harmony, of being part of the whole—a desire for 'goodness' in all its dimensions. Hope here is confined to this world and the good to which we have contributed while alive and which we hope will last after our death. Judgment is found in the quality of our legacy not in some eternal court of Divine Justice. Here, too, we may note that the problem of 'theodicy' is removed. The world is accepted as it is: a place of beauty and potential, of contingency and trials, of a complex fluid interplay of good and evil forces, natural and human. The moral courage to shift the balance toward the good, even in the face of trial and disaster, is the moral struggle that falls to humanity. This can be corrupted into the lust for domination and so on, but the judgment on these destructive acts lies with the court of human opinion and historical reckoning. History is a moral activity in 'this world' and is always under revision.
- *There is reserve about absolute truth*. We live in an information-saturated age and have unparalleled access to many claims and authorities via the internet. 'Truth' tends to be seen in terms of personal and subjective experience; it is fluid and occasional.

⁹ Peter Van Ness, *Spirituality and the Secular Quest* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 7.

Even science is constantly being revised. We are used to living in multiple worlds with multiple truths whether virtual, quantum or Newtonian. Of course, this does not mean that people are not concerned about the truth. It is simply that first historical consciousness and then postmodernism have made them sophisticated readers of truth claims and authorities, whether scientific or religious, political or cultural. Truth is a function of power. The question is not ‘What is true?’ but ‘Whose truth is it?’

- *There is a search for value and meaning.* We can no longer accept the ‘grand narratives’ either of religion or the secular enlightenment. Yet the desire to find meaning does not disappear (*pace* Samuel Beckett). We can see evidence of this in the significant mobilisation around humanistic causes. Even so, we know how fragile these patterns are when compassion and solidarity are set in opposition to perceived nationalist interests.¹⁰ A secular spirituality will often reflect some search for a transcendent or higher purpose. It can motivate people to make sacrifices for those they love or esteem, for country and even for the organizations where they work. We should never underestimate this mysterious capacity for sacrifice which casts a sudden light upon the vastness of the human soul.
- *Ecology* has become one of the major inspirations in secular spirituality. Here, spirituality also expresses itself as a political movement in its concern for the preservation of the biosphere, in the ‘Green New Deal’ and in the recognition that our well-being is deeply interlinked with that of the whole planet, ‘our common home’. This produces an ethical stance which calls for responsibility not just to the human good but to that of the whole planet, not only representing a genuine and deep concern for sustainability but also a desire for connectedness—an antidote to our alienated and deracinated urban existence.¹¹

¹⁰ It is interesting to notice how populist movements set up identity and nation against ethnic and racial groups. It is also interesting to see how populist movements can present themselves as defenders of traditional religious identity—for example Catholicism in Italy or Hinduism in India.

¹¹ See, for example, Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014); Naomi Klein, *On Fire: The (Burning) Case for a Green New Deal* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2019); Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* (Chicago: U. of Chicago, 2016); for spirituality see Douglas Christie, *The Blue Sapphire of the Mind: Notes for a Contemplative Ecology* (New York: Oxford U, 2012); and, of course, *Laudato si’* (2015). On the Green New Deal, see <https://greennewdealgroup.org/history-of-the-green-new-deal/>.

- Our contemporary culture, indeed, involves a search for *connectedness* and *belonging*, expressed by developing a rootedness in place or community, or even in fluid online communities. The social and informational online media create an entirely different sort of space in which ‘information’ is available and relationships may be formed. They change our ways of working, relating, understanding and judging; they are more than just a tool, but a whole environment which also mediates self and reality.

Creating Identity in Secular Spirituality: Seekers, Dwellers, Pilgrims and Converts

It is useful to recognise how the features of secular spirituality are present in forming the way in which people identify themselves. Robert Wuthnow makes a distinction between ‘seekers’ and ‘dwellers’:

A spirituality of seeking emphasizes negotiation: individuals search for sacred moments that reinforce their conviction that the divine exists, but these moments are fleeting; rather than knowing the territory, people explore new spiritual vistas, and they may have to negotiate among complex and confusing meanings of spirituality.¹²

Seekers are content with fluidity and do not really wish to be tied to any absolute narrative. Dwellers, on the other hand, are those who desire to experience the sacred through religious traditions and communities. They are happy to have their lives ordered by sacred celebrations and rituals, customs and practices.



¹² Robert Wuthnow, *After Heaven: Spirituality in America since the 1950s* (Berkeley: U. of California, 1998), 7.

Although Wuthnow deals with patterns of spirituality in the US, they are not dissimilar to those traced by the French sociologist of religion Danièle Hervieu-Léger in *Le Pèlerin et le convert* ('The Pilgrim and the Convert').¹³ The 'pilgrim' is eclectic and constructs identity from a variety of different spiritual traditions and sources. There is no commitment to any community or fixed religious order of life as such, although the 'pilgrim' may develop one. The 'convert' is one who chooses to belong to a religious community, with fixed times and practices, codes and teaching, such as Islam, Judaism or Catholicism. In both cases, however, identity is self-constructed: chosen and created out of personal autonomy.

The Crossroads of the Church and the World

The features and types of secular spirituality I have just sketched will not be new to us. What is striking, in fact, is that these 'types' are not confined to the secular. They characterize all those attempting to live a spiritual life, whether they identify with faith communities or not. The actual distinctions between the spirituality of believers and of those who reject formal religion is perhaps more fluid than we might assume. I think we can find these 'types' in each one of us: sometimes we may be seekers and sometimes dwellers and, even within our traditions, we can be both. In many ways it is a characteristic of the Ignatian tradition to be both a 'seeker' and a 'dweller', a pilgrim and a convert. We can never, and should never, set boundaries to the freedom of God's gracious Spirit.

Although they may well have a particular Western form, these types also express a deeper movement within the human spirit that the secular cannot erase. It is the *inquietude* that Augustine so astutely recognised, and it is also more than that. It is not just a longing for an Absolute, but a longing for encounter with a *real God*, one who knows us in all our goodness and in all our ugliness. This is the God before whom any pretence or self-marketing is useless. Such a God will ultimately escape and subvert our constructions because this God is free to be God, is free to be unimaginable, to be incarnate as one of us. Taking that profound insight of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius that God is 'labouring and working in all things, we may now appreciate what lies at the heart of the mission or apostolate of spirituality, from whatever tradition it draws its inspiration. In such work there is a graded

¹³ Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *Le Pèlerin et le convert. La Religion en mouvement* (Paris: Flammarion, 1999).

encounter with the Spirit who brings all things to new life. We may provide the conditions and offer the support but it is always a meeting that lies within God's initiative. If we try to manufacture or control it in some way, then whatever the appearance, it is a hollow experience.

Our culture asks for disclosure, but it is ruthless in its mockery and judgment when it finds us naked. Disclosure is not liberation unless it comes with respect, forgiveness, generosity and love. When God discloses God's self, we too are disclosed to ourselves. It is one of the most astonishing revelations of the Risen Christ that he does not condemn, shame or blame, but trusts and sends. This is the God we are asked to make visible, not in some comfortable collusion with a modern therapeutic gnosis, but with real liberation that impels us to the praxis of truth, a healing, redeeming and transforming love. This is the God we encounter in the Exercises: who does not let us settle for complacent securities but summons us, like Lazarus, from our tombs into a life that is always 'more' (*magis*), a service that heals our wounded soul and our wounded planet.

Responsive Mission

If Christian ministries are to respond to the call of the Spirit and serve our complex, fast-moving, mercurial world they need to come to it with a contemplative attentiveness. To do this requires that we first be aware of our own conditions for attending to culture: our needs, prejudices, expectations and hopes. I do not think our work is to eliminate these; indeed, I am doubtful if that is ever a real possibility. Rather, by being aware of them we can better understand how they allow, block or shape that which we desire to attend to.

From this awareness we can better understand how we might develop and adapt our responses to the needs that we see. The freedom to change—'conversion'—is part of any responsive mission. It arises from the priority of God's perspective: how God looks upon us in our world and calls us into God's redeeming action. In Ignatius' great contemplation on the Incarnation this is already part of the gift of the Spiritual Exercises to us (Exx 101). Here Ignatius shows us a Trinity engaged in loving attention to the world in all its states and needs.¹⁴

¹⁴ It is significant to recognise that God does not approach our world with need. The Divine always has an absolute freedom. But this is not a scientific neutrality or indifferent curiosity. God is already *pro nobis* or, as the Exercises always emphasise, 'for us'. This means that God has chosen to look with a loving gaze—already disposed to us in our need.

While our faith calls us to a deeper love of the world, it also offers us a generative critical distance. Held in God's gaze, we can see below the surface to the longing and searching in the unrecognised heart of our secular world. Here, we need to be perceptive about the so-called shift to 'the post-secular'.¹⁵ This does not mean that secular culture has substantially changed its attitude to religion, but simply that it is repositioning itself in relation to its own narrative claims. It knows that reason has its limits and science can be used for evil ends as well as good.

If we are genuine servants of the Spirit, then we cannot be afraid to show creativity and take risks in ministry and in mission. Like the 'poor, little, and unworthy slave' of the contemplation on the nativity (Exx 114), we can only assist persons in their need. We can support and nourish the grace that is already at work in their hearts—whoever they are, whatever state they are in, wherever their path is leading them. Of course, we will attempt many things; some will succeed, and many will fail or will not last. However, this is not true failure, it is life: to be on the road with Christ. The constant searching to open up the ways of encounter for others means that our institutions—our spirituality centres and programmes—must be a means and not an end. I think it is always a challenge to maintain a bias towards the 'end' rather than getting caught up in the moment of the means. In doing so we will find ourselves standing at the crossroads of the Church and the world.

There is no true encounter with Christ independently of his Church. We all know how much that Church stands in need of healing, but just as we see spiritual people who are radiant with compassion and courage in the secular world so, too, we see them in the Church. We must not let ourselves become blind to the beautiful, if wounded and scared, heart of the Church to which Christ is always faithful.¹⁶ How can we count or measure those who give witness daily to the holiness of the Church in their actions of worship and love, especially for those in need (Matthew 25:31–46)? Not only in its teaching and sacramental life, but in the lives of the faithful, the Church realises itself as the 'universal

¹⁵ See, for example, Jürgen Habermas, 'Notes on Post-Secular Society', *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Fall 2008), 17–25.

¹⁶ Centres and apostolates of spirituality are critical for this time of the Church's life. They are a resource for many to negotiate their relationship with it, and a resource for the Church's own renewal. The 'Rules for Thinking with the Church' in the Exercises are a sort of ecclesial Two Standards for us. They measure our love and our freedom to be counted an ecclesial fool for Christ before the tribunal of the world. They testify to the Society's conviction that the Exercises are an ecclesial charism and perhaps we should develop them now into 'A Contemplation to attain Love of the Church'

sacrament of salvation'. They are the proof of the indwelling life of the Holy Spirit which will never depart from the mystical Body of Christ.¹⁷

Nourishing the Grace to Choose

There is a beautiful and profound principle, often attributed to St Augustine—*nemo credit nisi volens*—no one believes unless they choose to. In other words, faith requires not only an act of intellectual assent but consent, the 'I do' and 'I will' of the renewal of the baptismal promises at Easter.¹⁸ We must desire to believe.

As we have seen, the conditions for this desire are already present in us and will find expression even in our secular cultures. But desire needs an object, a real God, a person, which attracts it, in which it can believe and find itself satisfied—that movement of the *inquietude* again. No matter how sound, subtle or convincing our exposition and arguments for faith may be, they will not succeed unless we fall in love with the person of Christ. For he is the truth which satisfies our mind and our heart. In a profound statement from the Declaration on Religious Freedom we meet Augustine's principle again in a modern form, 'The truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind at once quietly and with power' (n.1).

I believe this is not only a governing principle for our reason and for our politics, ecclesial as well as secular; it is also a theological principle. This is how grace itself works; it is how Christ works, not through coercive power or fear but through love, a crucified love. It is this God of love, this truth, by which all spiritual ministries should be conditioned. It entails a deep respect for every human being who entrusts him- or herself to us, in the Church and in the Society of Jesus; and, of course, on our part, it requires a great act of faith in the action of the Holy Spirit and in the openness of the human person, no matter how resistant or wounded that person may be. We will not be able to show the attractiveness of Christ unless we have also discovered it for ourselves and allowed it to shape our way of working and the environment of encounter we provide.

¹⁷ See the rapturous paragraphs 1–7 in *Lumen gentium*, chapter 1. On the centrality of holiness in the mission and life of the Church, see *Christi fideles laici*, n.17, 'The Church's holiness is the hidden source and the infallible measure of the works of the apostolate and of the missionary effort'; also Pope Francis's beautiful and significant exhortation, *Gaudete et exsultate*.

¹⁸ The principle is also central to Aquinas: see *De veritate* q.14, a.1c; *Summa theologiae* 2.2, q.1, a.4; also Ralph McInerny, *Praeambula Fidei: Thomism and the God of the Philosophers* (Washington, DC: Catholic U. of America, 2006), 19 following.

The Universal Apostolic Preferences as Sites of Encounter

In the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius is always directing us to our desires, *id quod volo*, so that they may be attuned and grounded in God's desires. I believe this is also the purpose of the Universal Apostolic Preferences of the Society of Jesus. They are the paths that Jesuits desire to follow, taking us to the heart of our world and our cultures. The verbs—*show the way*, *walk with*, *accompany* and *collaborate*—give us the key to this.

To be honest, when they were first presented, the Universal Apostolic Preferences seemed a bit unremarkable. Are we not already 'doing' them in some form or other? Often our expectation of a discernment process—and the Universal Apostolic Preferences resulted from an extensive one—is that something different will emerge. Or we will at least experience something special, some charismatic sparks! The fact that these preferences are familiar seems to me to indicate a moment of confirmation and clarification at this point the Society's life.¹⁹ It is clear that they also represent a moment of convergence with Pope Francis's vision for the renewal of the Church and its mission. Strangely, too, I think they hold the *call of the Spirit from within our world*, summoning us to take these unspectacular but revolutionary roads of encounter with those who thirst for God, the poor and unseen in our societies, the young and the planet itself, labouring under the weight of our carelessness and instrumentality. In some way, we can see that the Universal Apostolic Preferences are the paths of the Beatitudes, our way to serving the Kingdom already in our midst though 'secret and hidden' (1 Corinthians 2: 7). For this reason, they can become points where the Spirit converges, sites of encounter.

Despite their familiarity, they also require a new way of proceeding. If they do represent the call of the Spirit, we cannot go with answers given in advance. We need to take time to listen beyond the noise—our own noise as much as that of the secular world itself. Here those capacities that we have developed in our ministry of spirituality can begin to become the norm: that ability not to impose an agenda but attend to the desires people are expressing or struggling to express, to listen beneath the surface to the deep currents of the Spirit where we need the freedom to follow.

***The call of
the Spirit
from within
our world***

¹⁹ They can be traced in various forms through the Congregations up to GC 31.

Discerning Attentiveness

It is no accident that the practice of discernment has become the focus of attention not only for the Society of Jesus but for the Church. In his writings and his way of leading, Pope Francis has made it part of the Church's vocabulary. He is surely right in seeing this practice as essential for any renewal. Yet, it is deeply challenging, because discernment recovers a Church, and a Society of Jesus, that is led by the Spirit.

Prudence and Discernment

It is helpful to distinguish discernment from the important exercise of *prudence*. In contemporary English-speaking cultures, prudence carries a sense of being 'cautious' or measured and risk-averse. However, prudence is a form of practical wisdom which we use daily in our normal decision making. It is a certain practical judgment about the best means to obtain some contingent end or good. It comes through knowledge and experience, and it seeks to weigh possibilities and measure consequences in a given situation or likely future situations, so that the best course of action can be taken. Rather than being cautious or risk-averse, it is aimed at avoiding reckless decisions which will undermine the intended outcome. Although some will possess it naturally, it can be acquired through example, practice and learning. Most of the decisions we take and the judgments we make are exercises in prudence, or at least we hope that they are!

Discernment as a Theological Act

Discernment may often require prudence in weighing up a situation or course of action, but it is essentially a *theological act*, because it seeks to locate and present all things within God's action and purpose. We can see how Ignatius' Principle and Foundation is, in fact, always the context for discernment: to view all created things and circumstances with a view to our ultimate purpose. This is not just a theoretical proposition, it is the practice of Christian life, especially that of the Society of Jesus. In other words, discernment is a soteriological activity; it is about the way we use our capacities and agency within all the contingencies of our existence and histories to live the grace of our salvation and glorify God. Not only is this integral to our mission, serving Christ in the redemption of the world, it also sanctifies that mission. In this way, we can see that discernment is the very substance of Christian life. It belongs to every Christian. All we really need to know about discernment is given in the first petitions of the Lord's prayer, the ground of the Principle and Foundation itself.

The Prayer of Discernment: Our Father.

The grace which is given in the Holy Spirit is to know God as our Father—‘Abba’—and speak directly with God as a son or daughter. To glorify and sanctify God’s name is already the advent of the Kingdom; for where God truly reigns in our hearts and minds the great *Shema Yisrael* is lived and fulfilled, the Kingdom is come, heaven and earth are reconciled in proclaiming God’s sovereignty.

This is the heart of christology: it is the centre of Christ’s person and mission so to glorify and be glorified by the Father in the gift of the Holy Spirit. So it is for every Christian. In this we are not only his disciples, we live in him and share his sonship through grace. This is the one action in which all our actions exist, from which they flow and to which they return; the true moment when contemplation becomes lived in actions that show God’s reign, in the ‘now’ of this world. The prayer, ‘your kingdom come’ is answered in us and in the transformation of the world when it becomes the realm of God’s sovereignty.

When understood in this way, we can see that discernment is not only a theological but an eschatological act: it places us under God’s rule and makes us servants of and witnesses to the salvific economy of God’s grace. The horizon of discernment is not simply practical reason or knowledge. It lives within the *sapientia* or wisdom of the whole economy: this is the lens through which we come to see the world—its ultimate purpose and glory—and to which all our actions are ordered.

I take this to be the transforming hermeneutic of the contemplation on the Incarnation in the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises: ‘an interior knowledge of Our Lord, who became human for me’ (Exx 104). It is a knowledge that is given in and through faith. It will not be understood by a world which sees itself as self-founding. This is the ‘more’ that faith brings to the world; without it the world is lost and can only see itself as fleeing from the abyss of nihilism. Even when the actual decision is relatively small, discernment is always made within an attentiveness and desire to cooperate with or be the instrument of the Lord who is active to bring all things to the fullness of life. Discernment is thus an act of loving attentiveness and self-gift, a free movement of service to God and the world. It lives in humility and poverty, in absolute dependence upon the Divine care: ‘give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins ...’

The Universal Apostolic Preferences require of us this habitual discerning disposition. We start with humble loving attentiveness to the voice of the Spirit speaking to us in the poor and marginalised, in the

generations who are yearning for a secure hope and a future which can give meaning and purpose to their existence, in the natural world which, in so many ways, cries out to us to live in harmony with it.

Discernment as Freedom

At the heart of this disposition is a freedom. It is our freedom in action as a true *ek-stasis* in an ordered love of God and all God has made. Our desire is purified and healed to become a passionate longing for the good of the other, which is God's glory. There are two dimensions to this: first, the freedom to attend without imposing any prior framework which would determine what we find or how we judge it; second, the freedom to respond and adapt to what is heard and discovered in attentive listening.

Such freedom again embodies that of the Principle and Foundation, but this time translated from the personal dimension to that of our ministries and mission. If discernment is placed within the dynamic economy of God's revealing and redeeming love, it must be an adaptive and responsive freedom. It will require of us the quality of every pilgrim to improvise according to the circumstances and what is given. This freedom is the source of a generative creativity, but will also require us to examine the values embedded in our works and institutions, and how we can so easily and imperceptibly make them our actual end rather than a means.

Discernment means that we must make *an institutional examen* as well as a personal one. In this way, discernment becomes a habitus of love: it knows its weaknesses and its obstacles, the patterns of deceptions that the enemy will employ, but it seeks to know them precisely in order to love and serve more. There can be no effective discernment without our journey—especially institutionally—through the First Week. All our ministries stand under the meditation of the Two Standards and the three modes of humility, for the enemy can bind us within our own webs. When these meditations become our practice, they liberate us and challenge us, especially the three modes of humility, to a deep faith and trust: 'Father into your hands, I commend my spirit'. Can our ministries and institutions pray this and desire it without reservation?

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PIERRE FAVRE THROUGH HIS LETTERS

Mark Rotsaert

PIERRE FAVRE (1506–1546) WAS DECLARED a saint by Pope Francis in 2013. His spiritual diary or *Memoriale* has become well known since it was translated into a number of languages in the second half of the twentieth century.¹ But a book containing all his letters in translation was published only in 2017. These letters serve to enrich our understanding of the saint and his life.²

Favre was born in 1506 in Villaret in the Haute-Savoy, a hamlet, not even a village. In 1525 he went to Paris to study philosophy and theology. He moved into the Collège Sainte-Barbe, where he shared a room with Francis Xavier. In 1528 Ignatius of Loyola left Spain for Paris—alone and on foot—aiming to continue his studies. In 1529 he became the room-mate of Pierre Favre and Francis Xavier.

Favre, who was fourteen years younger than Ignatius, nevertheless became his tutor in philosophy. Ignatius was at that time 38 years old, and already had much personal spiritual experience as well as experience in directing others. Little by little the pupil became the spiritual director of his teacher. A deep friendship developed between them. Favre opened his heart to Ignatius, and Ignatius taught him how to interpret and manage his inner movements—especially his many scruples. With Ignatius' guidance, Favre acquired the qualities to become a spiritual director himself; indeed, it emerges from his letters that he was much in demand as a director. Ignatius himself would say that, among the First Companions he gathered in Paris, Favre was the best giver of the Spiritual Exercises.³

A version of this article appeared in Dutch in *Cardomer*, 38/2–3 (2020).

¹ The *Memoriale* was translated into French by Michel de Certeau (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960); into German by Peter Henrici (Trier: Einsiedeln, 1963); into Italian by Giuseppe Mellinato (Casale Monferrato: Piemme, 1990); into Portuguese by Armando Cardoso (São Paulo: Loyola, 1995); and into English by Edmond C. Murphy and Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

² *Saint Pierre Favre, Lettres et instructions*, translated (into French) by Pierre Emonet (Brussels: Lessius, 2017).

³ See *Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The Memoriale of Luis Gonçalves da Câmara*, translated by Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004), n. 226.

Pierre Favre, Apostle of the Spiritual Exercises

Favre did his first apostolic work in Parma, Italy, during 1539 and 1540. In one of his letters of that time he wrote to Ignatius, 'I am giving the Exercises to two important men from this region. Two ladies from the nobility receive every Sunday the holy communion, as do more noble ladies. Most of them have done the Exercises with much fruit.'⁴ To Francis Xavier and Pietro Codazzo, Ignatius' secretary, he wrote:

Concerning the Exercises, there is nothing special to say, except that a great number are giving the Exercises—we don't know how many. Everybody wants to do the Exercises, both men and women. And when a priest has done the Exercises, he starts by giving them to others.⁵

Here are some other quotations from a letter to Ignatius and his secretary:

Parish priests give the Exercises to the faithful of their parish. When we came to Parma, we started by explaining the commandments. The improvements were so big thanks to men and women who had done the Exercises, and thanks to the teachers who had given the Exercises of the First Week to a great number of pupils All the priests who, after having done the Exercises, took the decision to live an honest life are persevering in their resolution.⁶

Renewal and Healing of Divisions in Germany

In October 1540, Pope Paul III ordered Favre to accompany Doctor Ortiz, the ambassador of the Emperor Charles V, to Spain. But just as the journey started there came a message countermanning the order. Ortiz should represent the emperor at the Colloquy of Worms, a conference seeking theological reconciliation with the Lutherans. Favre arrived at Worms on 24 October. It was the first time he had confronted the divisions that the Reformation had brought about in Germany. In a first letter from Worms to Ignatius, Favre wrote:

I have an appointment for tomorrow with the dean of the city to start the Exercises. He was for many years vicar general and ecclesiastical inquisitor. He resigned because he did not see how to continue his pastoral ministry for people who are already spiritually dead⁷

⁴ Favre to Ignatius, 21 March 1540, MHSJ MF, 20. (The original Dutch version of this article made use of Pierre Emonet's French translation of Favre's letters.)

⁵ Favre to Xavier and Codazzo, 21 March 1540, MHSJ MF, 22.

⁶ Favre to Ignatius and Codazzo, 1 September 1540, MHSJ MF, 32–33; see *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, translated by Edmond C. Murphy and Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 319.

⁷ Favre to Ignatius, 27 December 1540, MHSJ MF, 46–47.

Some days later, we read:

In a former letter I wrote to you about this dean who is ‘acting bishop’ here in Worms, but who has resigned his pastoral mission because he doesn’t see how to exercise this mission in such a difficult time any more. He is doing the Exercises. He told me this afternoon that another two persons want to do the Exercises. The blind Doctor spoke today with another dean of the cathedral suggesting that he do the Exercises, to which he happily agreed.⁸

In another letter Favre rejoined: ‘My exercitant, the dean of Saint Martin, makes good improvements day after day, but he cannot wait to encourage other people from his circle of acquaintances to do the Exercises’.⁹

Favre’s opinion was that the official talks between Catholics and Protestants were going in the wrong direction. All sides hardened their own positions about theological issues, and no one really listened to anybody else. He thought another way should be found to engage with the Protestants. Favre wished to meet Melanchthon, a Lutheran-minded reformer, himself. However, as this was not the mission he had been given, it did not happen. Favre was convinced that this was a missed opportunity.

The Colloquy of Worms was adjourned in January 1541, with the discussions to be resumed at Regensburg. Favre went to Speyer, where he found a stronger Catholic community. Before leaving Worms he had met Johann Cochlaeus, an important and well-known theologian, who decided to do the Exercises. Unfortunately, they had just started when Favre had to



Pierre Favre, by Frans Quartier SJ, mid nineteenth century

⁸ Favre to Ignatius and Pietro Codazzo, 1 January 1541, MHSJ MF, 56–57.

⁹ Favre to Ignatius and Pietro Codazzo, 10 January 1541, MHSJ MF, 59.

leave the city, though he was able before he went to give Cochlaeus a conference on the difference between to 'know things' and to 'feel things spiritually'. Favre wrote: 'The theologian said with a smile: I am so happy that I finally found masters in the affective life'.¹⁰ The emperor then became ill and Favre had to stay longer in Speyer. He wrote to Ignatius:

Thanks to this unexpected delay I started to give the Exercises to the vicar general of the city. We will be able to finish the part on the Examens. The man has good culture and sane judgment. He wishes that I could remain in Speyer. The bishop himself promised yesterday that he might do the Exercises in Regensburg, where he will go as a prince of Germany. Doctor Cochlaeus, too, will continue his Exercises in Regensburg.¹¹

Favre kept Ignatius informed about his pastoral activities, and especially about giving the Exercises:

Eleven days ago, I started to give the Exercises to the local bishop, on his explicit request. He finished the exercises of the First Week, with much more profit that I can describe Many important persons came to me, spontaneously or recommended by Doctor Ortiz The Doctor encourages many to go to confession and to do the Exercises.¹²

He always followed the same pattern, contacting priests and people with responsibilities in the Church. He proposed that they make the Exercises, and because of their own experience they became the best advocates of the Exercises to others. Most of his contacts were with these 'multipliers'. A characteristic aspect of Favre's way of proceeding while travelling through Europe was his many visits to the families of his Jesuit companions and the benefactors of the Society.

Favre arrived in Regensburg on 23 February 1541, where the imperial diet was assembling. The emperor was already there, as was Doctor Ortiz. However, the diet could not start because of the absence of the papal nuncio Gasparo Contarini. During all these travels in Germany, Favre remained the spiritual director of Doctor Ortiz. He had no mission to intervene in official talks or discussions. This gave him the opportunity to continue his vocation as apostle of the Exercises.

¹⁰ Favre to Ignatius and Pietro Codazzo, 25 January 1541, MHSJ MF, 64.

¹¹ Favre to Ignatius and Pietro Codazzo, 27 January 1541, MHSJ MF, 67.

¹² Favre to Ignatius and Pietro Codazzo, 5 February 1541, MHSJ MF, 69–70.

It is clear that Favre moved in the highest church circles and at the court of the emperor, where he resided as spiritual counsellor of Doctor Ortiz. He had fewer contacts with simple German people because of the language; with people who had finished their studies at the university or with important church people he spoke Latin. He wrote to Ignatius from Regensburg:

I have nothing special to say only that I started to give the Exercises to someone of the court of the emperor, a doctor in law, an important man. This morning I started with the ambassador of Portugal, who came spontaneously to me. He asked me to reserve one or two hours for him every day from next Monday on.¹³

All this suggests that Favre liked to emphasize his contacts with important people. He knew that his letters could give this impression but, on the other hand, he explicitly asked Ignatius never to make known the names of his exercitants to anybody.

Besides the work of the Exercises there were also many spiritual conversations and the apostolate of hearing confessions. Favre accepted a huge number for spiritual direction. The sacrament of reconciliation and the eucharist were at the centre of his pastoral ministry. He preached little, saying that he did not have the charism necessary to touch a big crowd; he was more a man of personal spiritual ministry. When possible, he liked to visit the sick in the city. Favre was not able to respond positively to all the demands made upon him, so he asked Ignatius to send more Jesuits to Germany. He wrote that he could be fully occupied with the Exercises alone because there were so many requests. The need was immense, and Favre was convinced that his companions in Rome did not know what was really happening in the Church there. He suggested that Ignatius read Melanchthon's *Confessio Augustana* or another text, perhaps by Luther, so that he could better understand the situation in Germany.

**A man of
personal
spiritual
ministry**

From Regensburg he wrote to Ignatius a wonderful story about a man from the court of the emperor who came to see him: Juan Rodríguez de Figueroa. For eighteen years he had been the inquisitor in Toledo, and as such he had to give his opinion about Ignatius' activities in Alcalá (1526–1527). While he was there Ignatius was accused of being an *alumbrado*. Favre writes about this Juan Rodríguez de Figueroa:

¹³ Favre to Ignatius and Pietro Codazzo, 26 February 1541, MHSJ MF, 74–75.

You can imagine that, if the Inquisition of Toledo had had some distrust or bad information about us, this señor, who was well informed about our activities, would not have taken me as his confessor. Figueroa is one of my regular visitors. He knows us better than anyone else, since he, years ago, had to investigate Ignatius' ideas.¹⁴

I conclude this account of Favre's first stay in Germany with a longer quotation from a letter written in Regensburg on 28 May 1541, addressed to Ignatius:

I can assure you that, concerning my priestly ministry, were we here with ten Fathers of our Society, we would have all much apostolic work to do along our vocation But since I don't know how long I will remain in this poor country ... my priority is to give the Exercises to Germans. I count on Doctor Cochlaeus from whom I expect many fruits in our Lord. He accompanied the bishop of Meissen to the general confession, the end of the First Week—with great satisfaction. The doctor from Scotland accompanied three persons until the confession, namely the bishop of Speyer, a physician and a priest Don Sancho de Castillo, who was my first exercitant from the court of the emperor, accompanies two Spanish señores.¹⁵

Spanish Intermezzo

On 27 July 1541 Favre left Regensburg, together with Doctor Ortiz and all his household. They went to Spain, where Ortiz—finally—arrived in the parish for which he was responsible at Galapagar, a small city north-west of Madrid. From this period—October 1541 to March 1542—only seven letters have been preserved. These have a different tonality: they make clear to Ignatius how fruitful the climate was in Spain for the Society and its apostolic works.

Favre visited several cities in Castile. He wrote to the Jesuits in Rome from Galapagar:

I continue to produce fruits in three ways: by explaining to children the foundations of the Christian faith, by giving Exercises to people with responsibilities—namely to a master, the vicar of Doctor Ortiz, and to a priest from the court of the Doctor—and thirdly by preaching to the people every Sunday and on feast days.¹⁶

¹⁴ Favre to Ignatius and Pietro Codazzo, 20 April 1541, MHSJ MF, 90.

¹⁵ Favre to Ignatius and Pietro Codazzo, 28 May 1541, MHSJ MF, 107–108.

¹⁶ Favre to the Jesuits in Rome, 30 November 1541, MHSJ MF, 138.

He found the general situation in Spain more favourable than in Germany, even if his heart remained with the German people. He had no problem with the language, since Spanish was the most common language among the first companions of Ignatius. Nevertheless, he remained convinced that preaching was not his greatest talent. One difference between the letters he writes from Spain and those he writes from Germany is that the former do not mention the names of those to whom he gives the Exercises.

Suddenly, in December 1541, like a bolt from the blue, Favre received a letter from Cardinal Alexander Farnese with a mission, in the name of Pope Paul III and of holy obedience, to go immediately to the bishop of Modena in Italy, Giovanni Morone. Morone had been appointed as papal legate in Germany to mediate between Catholics and Protestants. The two chaplains of the *infantas* (the daughters of Emperor Charles), whom Favre had met at the imperial court, would accompany him, along with the chaplains Alfonso Álvaro and Juan de Aragón. They wanted to learn how to give the Exercises and desired to become Jesuits, and Favre became their private 'novice master'. When Favre left Galapagar, he also had to leave Doctor Ortiz. His mission now was to be at the service of the papal legate, Morone.

Germany Again

From April 1542 Favre returned to Speyer for five months. He knew the city, and many were happy that he had come back. He was shocked, however, to see so many cities and villages in Germany without priests, or with only one priest for a large region. Since the papal legate was no longer there, he was free to do what he thought was most important. Writing to Ignatius, he said,

It is not my habit to do nothing Anyway, the two chaplains of the *infantas* [who had come with Favre from Galapagar], started making the Exercises eight days ago. I cannot express how much I admire and appreciate even only the half of all the good I find in them both The vicar general started the Exercises, hoping to make his general confession soon. Also Otto Truchsess started the Exercises.¹⁷

In other letters to Ignatius during this second period in Germany (1542–1544), Favre continued to report on his work with the Exercises,

¹⁷ Favre to Ignatius, 27 April 1542, MHSJ MF, 164; *Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 334–335.

but some new aspects appear, such as his friendships with the prior of the Carthusians in Cologne, Gerhard Kalckbrenner, with Peter Canisius and with Diego Laínez, a companion from the first group who gathered around Ignatius in Paris. More quotations concerning these friendships will appear later.

Asked by Cardinal Albrecht von Brandenburg, Favre arrived in Mainz at the beginning of November 1542. From there he wrote to Ignatius:

Since I have been here, we have had a lot of spiritual conversations and we made some arrangements for the Exercises. Four or five days ago I started the Exercises with an important priest of the main church. He is full of good intentions and wants to make progress. He said that Our Lord had sent me to Germany for the good of his soul. Another priest, a real pastor, promised me to make the Exercises. I myself, I started today giving the Exercises to two bishops I expect from these two bishops as great a good as I have ever seen in Germany.¹⁸

In another letter we read:

I wrote to you already about these two bishops who started the Exercises. Each of them has made his general confession and has now started with the contemplation of the life of Christ, according to the prescribed method Father Juan [de Aragón] started giving the Exercises to a very simple parish priest, who also made his general confession and has started with the contemplation of the life of Christ Two others started the Exercises with me, and another one promised to do them.¹⁹

Peter Canisius came to Mainz in 1542 to meet Favre, who convinced him to make the Exercises. Favre directed him, and a deep friendship arose between them.

In August 1543 Favre arrived at Cologne. He was very upset to hear that the archbishop, Hermann von Wied, had tried to introduce Lutheran ideas into his ministry. Favre wrote a long letter to the papal legate, Morone, urging him to motivate the emperor to intervene. Nevertheless, in Cologne the work of the Exercises continued. He wrote to Ignatius:

One of the persons whom I let you know was going to make the Exercises has started doing them. He had much profit from his

¹⁸ Favre to Ignatius, 7 November 1542, MHSJ MF, 187; *Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 339.

¹⁹ Favre to Ignatius, 22 December 1542, MHSJ MF, 189.

general confession, with much satisfaction for his soul and mind. Another person is ready to start the Exercises today or tomorrow. A third one had asked his mother, a rich widow, for permission to make the Exercises in seclusion. We may thank God our Lord that she doesn't hinder this retreat but, on the contrary, she makes the issue easier. Her son received an amount of money for works of mercy.²⁰

Favre at Louvain

Again, Favre was asked to move on: Ignatius sent him to Spain and Portugal. On his way to Antwerp to embark, he visited the community of young Jesuits in Louvain, who were guided by Corneel Wischaven, dean of St Peter's church. Later on, Wischaven himself would become a Jesuit and be sent to Sicily, where he became the first official novice master of the Society. Most of the students in the community were Spaniards who had been studying in Paris but had to leave France in 1542 because of the war between the Emperor Charles and the French King Francis I. At Louvain, in the Low Countries, which were under the authority of the emperor, the Jesuits found not only a house but also a university where they could study. Favre's letters from there cover the period from 19 October 1543 to January 1544, not much more than two months.

Here it became clear that Favre had the qualities to work well with young candidates for the Society. The two chaplains of the Spanish *infantas* who had accompanied him from Galapagar wanted to be instructed in how to give the Exercises and to become Jesuits. In different letters Favre not only tells of their progress with the Exercises, but also how they endured the 'experiments', or practical training, including surviving a pilgrimage of several weeks undertaken with no money in their pockets!

Favre sent a group of young candidates whom he believed had the potential to become Jesuits to Portugal to be trained. In a letter to Simão Rodrigues, the Jesuit Provincial of Portugal and a friend from the time of the First Companions of Ignatius, Favre wrote:

You will have a lot to do with the group I am sending to Portugal. Perhaps you will find that what I send you is not always of good quality. But, first of all, they have to make the Exercises, and there we will discover what is really is in each of them. The reason why I send so many young men to you is that I desire that as many

²⁰ Favre to Ignatius, 27 September 1543, MHSJ MF, 221.

co-workers as possible could be formed who speak the language of the country. Therefore, I implore you in the love of Christ our Lord to love each of them for what he really is. They are not yet capable of discerning the Spirit who visits them or knowing how to retain him when they received him. So, it will be necessary to work in depth so that they can decide to persevere [in their vocation] without reserve. You will also have to examine who, in your opinion, needs more study and who needs less, or doesn't need to study at all.²¹

This quotation tells us not only about the young men sent to Portugal, but also about the spiritual care Favre had for them.

In a letter to Francis Xavier, written from Cologne two weeks after that to Rodrigues, Favre described the fruits of his apostolic work in Louvain. There were also problems in the small community there, and some of the young men left the group.

You will have heard from other letters of the effervescent spiritual results of my short stay in Louvain. When the news was heard that we all would leave the city, different students wanted to follow me. First of all, Master Pieter de Smet, bachelor in theology, plus eight students who wanted to renounce everything and are ready to leave Louvain to follow me wherever I would go. Five of them are masters in philosophy, another one is bachelor in theology, another is a professor in moral theology The other ones who don't yet have a master's degree are all good Latinists We should praise Jesus Christ for the deep consolation each of them had experienced in the Holy Spirit for their vocation. All have made their confession and have received Holy Communion on the feast of the Three Kings. Each of them has opened his heart to me and they have listened to my words with great attention.²²

Finally, eight members of the group embarked at Antwerp for Portugal. Favre himself left for Portugal from Veere in Zeeland on 12 July 1544; he arrived in Lisbon on 24 August.

Favre and the Crisis in Portugal

The Portuguese Jesuit Province was in a state of crisis when Favre arrived. This was occasioned by the intense spiritual enthusiasm of the young Jesuits at Coimbra, which was an important formation centre. They prayed for many hours a day and undertook extreme flagellation

²¹ Favre to Rodrigues, 8 January 1544, MHSJ MF, 231.

²² Favre to Xavier, 24 January 1544, MHSJ MF, 233. Pieter de Smet (Peter Smith, or Pedro Fabro in the Spanish) took this name to honour Pierre Favre.

and severe fasts, all things that Ignatius did not wish for the new Order. The central government of the Society in Rome was greatly concerned about the situation, as was the Portuguese Province itself. The Provincial, Simão Rodrigues, nevertheless did not take any decisions; on the contrary, he did not intervene in the situation in Coimbra at all.

In addressing this crisis in his letters to the young Jesuits in Coimbra themselves, Favre showed great prudence, preferring not to make explicit references to the situation. In his letters to Ignatius he avoided taking a position, and in those to the superior of Coimbra he was very mild. As for Simão Rodrigues, Favre had been his friend since the very beginning of the Society, and remained a friend for ever. He wrote three letters to the Jesuits of Coimbra, more or less one each year from December 1544 to January 1546.

In the first letter he expressed his vision on obedience in the Society, but there is no reference to the concrete situation in the college:

It can happen that someone who lives under obedience wants to realise something with love and with the desire to produce many fruits which are predictable, and that obedience orders him to do something different with no apparent fruit, he should remember that he did not make a vow to produce the fruits of love but to obey, that he did not vow to save souls according to his own ideas, but to do what the superior is asking him.²³

In the same letter Favre gave some tips for fostering a healthy community life, as for example:

If it should happen that the good spirit in the community is weakening and also the positive opinion we had of others, we have to do all we can to bring that original good spirit back, with prayers and concrete deeds. We should think that the reason for this weakening might come from myself and not from others If we should see, by accident, a serious shortcoming in a member of the community, we should nevertheless not lose the kindness we had before. We should not admit becoming bitter or furious against someone, because our conscience could be troubled and our spirit agitated.²⁴

The second letter to the young Jesuits in Coimbra is a farewell letter. It is full of love and tenderness; remain rooted in Christ is the heart of his

²³ Favre to the Society at Coimbra, December 1544, MHSJ MF, 285; *Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 371.

²⁴ Favre to the Society at Coimbra, December 1544, MHSJ MF, 286; *Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 372.

message. He implored many benedictions for them, and he promised to pray for them, asking them to pray for him, who needed it so much. From Coimbra Favre left for Valladolid in Spain.

In the spring of 1546 Favre was informed that Pope Paul III wished to send him to the Council of Trent. Favre hastened to Rome—where he died on 1 August, exhausted by travel and apostolic work. On 6 March he had written from Madrid, in a note added to a letter to Ignatius, about what he would like to do after finishing his mission at the court in Spain:

I would be happy never to stand still and to be a pilgrim always on new roads to different places of the world May Our Lord and your Reverence order me to go to all cities and places where the Society, or a part of it, should be established, as one who should be founding residences and desires not to be fixed there and not to rest.²⁵

Letters to Friends

Many of the letters already quoted give a portrait of Favre as the apostle of the Exercises and an indefatigable missionary. In others he appears

por parte del papa, de su magt. y del rey de romanos por
 asistentes y testigos de lo q se fara o desfara. todo esto va
 fuerza de mi profesion y el debito del tribunal de mi juyzio,
 bastaba dezir q asse fuesse q la voluntad y parecer de su
 magt. magt. de gra mela etc. se pudiesse effectuar co estas
 protestas q me dio no les faltaria ni falta. esto rogando
 la infinita bondad a todos nos quiesca dar entera gra para su
 sancionada voluntad sin taxos y co plamos conforme a su dñimo
 parecer — de zafsona a los 3 de mayo 1541

Vro m. x. ha. me. Ger.
 Pedro fabro
 P.F.

Autograph letter from Pierre Favre to Ignatius and Codazzo, 3 May 1541

²⁵ Favre to Ignatius, 6 March 1546, MHSJ MF, 397–398.

as a formator of young Jesuits, full of human and spiritual qualities. However, there are also many that show Favre as a good companion and a loyal friend.

There are four Jesuits who appear in Favre's letters to friends: Francis Xavier, Simão Rodrigues, Diego Laínez and Peter Canisius. Except Canisius, all were members of the group of First Companions around Ignatius in Paris. But what about Ignatius himself? Most of Favre's letters are addressed to him (18 to Ignatius with his secretary, and 26 to Ignatius personally). But nearly all these letters are mainly informative: Favre says where he is and what his apostolic activities are. In these letters, Ignatius is the Superior General to whom he reports and gives his obedience—nothing more.

From the beginning of the order Ignatius organized correspondence between every Jesuit and the Superior General and his secretary. Those who were sent somewhere in Italy had to write two letters to Rome every week; those sent to other places in Europe had to send two letters every month. In a long letter they should report mainly about the local situation and about their apostolic activities; they should give more personal and sensitive details in a shorter letter. Using the information given by the longer letters coming from many different places, Ignatius' secretary in Rome would write a circular containing the most important elements. These circulars were sent out to support the relationships between Jesuits spread throughout the world. The circulars were also sent to bishops, ambassadors and princes, as well as other people with important responsibilities, to inform them about the new Order, their apostolic activities and their way of living. The shorter letters remained confidential.

This organization of correspondence may explain why, in all Favre's letters to Ignatius, there is never an explicit allusion to the personal relationship which sprang up during his years of spiritual direction by Ignatius. Nevertheless, from time to time, Favre reproaches Ignatius for not answering him

Francis Xavier

There are five letters to Francis Xavier, of which three are also addressed to Ignatius' secretary, Pietro Codazzo. These three are from the period when Favre was still in Parma (1539–1540). The other two were written in 1544, when Francis Xavier had already been in south-east Asia for three years, and were sent from Cologne. In January 1544 Favre wrote about the success of vocations to the Society in Louvain.

In May he described for his friend in the Far East his contacts in Cologne, and especially his relationship with Peter Canisius and with the prior of the Carthusians in that city.

In the letters to Xavier there are not many direct allusions to their friendship. However, in one to Ignatius of 16 April 1540, written from Parma, Favre does speak about his friendship with Francis Xavier. Xavier had wanted to visit his friend at Parma before being sent to Portugal to embark for India. But he arrived the very day that Favre had gone away to visit a young man, Angelo, who was very ill at Brescia. In this letter to Ignatius, Favre speaks about this missed appointment with Xavier:

If we don't see each other in this world, may the Lord give us the grace to be joyful in the other world for this kind of separation, accepted only for Christ, as well as for our encounters. May he guard us from ever thinking that one spirit unites us and another spirit separates us. Because, if one spirit should unite us and another should separate us, we are heading for disaster. We should ask the Lord, always, that neither the old man in us nor the evil spirit could separate what he has united, except when it is necessary.²⁶

In a letter from 1540 addressed to Xavier and Codazzo, Favre tells a story about a certain brother Raphael who, despite his interesting public lectures on the scriptures, made many people angry by criticizing the traditional works of charity in the Church. Favre concludes this story, and at the same time his letter, with this beautiful prayer:

May the Lord gives us the grace to recognise the great blessing we received by opening our eyes to these kinds of situations, but also by giving us the intuition to be able to discover them even when we don't see them. Amen.²⁷

Simão Rodrigues

There are also five letters addressed to Simão Rodrigues. In the first, written from Louvain at the beginning of 1544, Favre explained why he could not yet embark for Portugal, where Rodrigues was waiting for him. A short letter written in Valladolid in June 1545 starts as purely informative, but there is this last paragraph which has a very personal character:

²⁶ Favre to Ignatius, 16 April 1540, MHSJ MF, 30.

²⁷ Favre to Xavier and Codazzo, 7 April 1540, MHSJ MF, 27.

Master Simon, my brother, I ask you to write to me regularly, since you know how much I appreciate in the Lord your feelings, your words, your works and prayers. May Jesus Christ open you, and all who are with you, to the feelings of his Spirit, for the words of his love, for the works of mercy and for the splendour of his face full of glory May Jesus Christ be with us all, he who belongs to us all, and may we be with him, to whom we belong. Amen.²⁸

Two other letters from 1545 are again primarily informative, and in the last letter, written in April 1546, Favre announced to Rodrigues that he was leaving Spain because he has been appointed as papal delegate at the Council of Trent. He finished this letter with a spiritual instruction (his testament?) in which, again, the relationship with Christ is at the very centre.

Diego Laínez

Favre wrote three letters to Diego Laínez. The first is dated 30 August 1542 and was sent from Speyer. It is a cordial letter in which Favre opens up his most inner spiritual experience:

You cannot image, my brother in Jesus Christ, the consolation I experienced the day I received your letter, written from Rome with your own hand

May it please Mary, the Mother of God, that I can give you an idea of all the good that has happened in my heart from the day I took leave of you at Plasencia till today, as well of the growing insight and intuition I have about the things of God our Lord, of his Mother, of the holy angels and the souls in heaven and in purgatory; but also about myself, concerning my ups and downs, the moments I went into myself and the moments I came out, my desire of purity of body, soul and spirit ... also concerning my fellow and brother: may the Lord show me the way, the truth and the life to know my brother and to feel what is good or bad for him in Christ, so that I may love him, endure with him, suffer with him and be compassionate; that I may be able to thank and to ask the grace for him, to search how I can forgive and find some excuses, by speaking good about him in the presence of his Divine Majesty and his saints.²⁹

The letter from Favre to Laínez of 7 March 1546 is his best known, because it is quoted in most of the biographies of Ignatius. In it Favre

²⁸ Favre to Rodrigues, 16 June 1545, MHSJ MF, 329.

²⁹ Favre to Laínez, 30 August 1542, MHSJ MF, 180–182; *Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 336–338.

gives guidelines on how to engage with Protestants. You should start to love them, and in personal conversations about things we have in common you should try to obtain their love of us. In the beginning you should start from spiritual experience, not from theology. It is important to speak about the quality of Christian life and to invite them to do good works. Only then can you start to speak about the content of our faith. But Favre knows that all our efforts will have no results without the grace of God. Favre wrote his last letter to Laínez on 23 July 1546. He made it clear how great his concern was for the families of his companions as well for the benefactors of the Society.

Two letters to Peter Canisius should be mentioned here. There is a short letter of 21 June 1543, from Mainz, in which he wrote about Jesuit companions, priests and common friends. The way he began and ended this letter gives us particular insight into Favre's capacity for friendship:

Most loved brother in Jesus Christ, may the grace of Jesus Christ and the peace which is beyond knowledge comfort and strengthen your heart and your understanding

May Jesus Christ be in your heart and may his spirit become visible in your body. Your brother and great friend in Christ, Pierre Favre.³⁰

Some months later Favre wrote from Louvain to Alfonso Álvaro and Peter Canisius giving news about some companions and saying: 'I don't want to receive any letter from you which does not mention the prior of the Carthusians and his community, who I hope very much are in good health and planted in all virtues'.³¹

Gerhard Kalckbrenner

In speaking about letters to friends it is impossible not to mention Favre's letters to this Carthusian prior, Gerhard Kalckbrenner (Hammont). Four letters are addressed to him, three from 1543 and a last one from 1546. Except for one that is very short, discussing the encounters between Favre and two priors of other Carthusian houses (at Trier and Hildesheim), these letters are like small treatises on spiritual life and spiritual friendship.

³⁰ Favre to Canisius, 21 June 1543, MHSJ MF, 207–208.

³¹ Favre to Álvaro and Canisius, 28 November 1543, MHSJ MF, 225.

In that of 10 July 1543 we learn that Kalckbrenner had asked Favre to become his spiritual director, but Favre answered that it might be better that he himself should receive some spiritual help from the prior. He writes:

I find it difficult—and perhaps this is true for you too—to remain the prisoner of any method which is not coming from the Holy Spirit himself, since he is the only one who knows our coming and going, our progress and our regression: the only one who knows the most extreme corners of our souls.³²

He finishes his letter with the following words:

If grace would not be sufficient, nevertheless God is merciful enough to give us his peace, a peace first of all in his cross, and next in his resurrection—through Jesus Christ our Lord in whom I wish you to be well in whatever circumstance, that he may give me what I said in so many words and what could be said in only one word, namely that I desire you to help me as much as you desire that I might help you. In any case, I don't give up the hope as well for one solution as for the other. He who is all in all will not miss me—in you and through you—in Christ our Lord. Mainz, 10 July 1543. Entirely yours in Jesus Christ glorified, Pierre Favre.³³

In his letter of 12 March 1546, Favre refers with great thankfulness to the spiritual bond which exists between the order of Carthusians and the Society of Jesus. In a general chapter in 1544 the Carthusians had decided that they would collaborate with the apostolic efforts of the Society, by allowing the Society to participate in the spiritual fruits of their sacrifices, prayers, abstinences and other pious exercises, asking the Jesuits to remember the Carthusians in their prayers and apostolic works.

The Life through the Letters

The letters of Favre show us different aspects of his personality. Favre was a Jesuit full of apostolic zeal, always ready to be sent wherever he was needed. Personal spiritual ministry was his charism: giving the Exercises, spiritual conversation, hearing confessions, giving spiritual direction, visiting the sick. But Favre also had the qualities of a good formator,

³² Favre to Kalckbrenner, 10 July 1543, MHSJ MF, 211; *Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 353.

³³ Favre to Kalckbrenner, 10 July 1543, MHSJ MF, 212; *Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 354.

and he was a man with a great heart, a man of friendship—even if this does not appear in many of the letters, which mainly report on his apostolic activities. These informative letters show clearly how Favre was concerned with the pastoral situation in Germany, where he had his own way of engaging with Protestants. The letters of Favre contain much more interesting information than can be included here. They should be considered as a complement to his *Memoriale*, in which Favre confides what is happening in his interior spiritual life.

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THE VOCATION OF JERÓNIMO NADAL

Joseph A. Munitiz

ALTHOUGH JERÓNIMO NADAL (1507–1580) was not one of the companions who gathered around Ignatius of Loyola while he was studying in Paris (1528–1535), his later role, when he was chosen by Ignatius to explain the *Constitutions* of the newly founded Society of Jesus to houses in various European countries, gave him capital importance in the early history and development of the order. Fortunately, information about the process followed by Nadal on entering the Society in 1545 comes to us in an exceptional form: circa 1570, ten years before his death, he hurriedly scribbled in Latin an account of how he had become a Jesuit. He entitled it *Chronicon Natalis iam inde a principio vocationis suae*, ‘An account of Nadal’s life just from the beginning of his vocation’, and he begins it in 1535, when he was a student in Paris. A full English translation by M. F. Palmer was published in 1992, and the original Latin text appeared recently alongside a Spanish translation.¹ It has been extensively studied, but there are aspects of Nadal’s vocation which deserve constant reflection.²

Nadal hailed from the island of Majorca, where his family owned substantial property, and he seemed destined for the comfortable life of a cleric with private means and an ecclesiastical benefice. He states (n. 1) that he had seen Ignatius while the latter was in Alcalá (1526–1527), though a recent biographer has questioned the likelihood of this.³ But they certainly met in Paris in 1535: ‘I got to know Fr Ignatius familiarly

¹ *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 24/3 (May 1992), 31–40; Ignacio Ramos Riera, *Chronicon Natalis. Una lente para introducirse en el surgimiento de la espiritualidad ignaciana* (Madrid and Bilbao: Mensajero, Sal Terrae and Comillas, 2019), 156–232. It was while writing a review of this latter book for the *Journal of Jesuit Spirituality* that the thought of the present article occurred to me; I am grateful to the editor, Robert Maryks, for having invited me to write the review. The first edition of the original Latin was published in MHSJ MN 1, 1–25.

² Apart from the work of Ramos Riera, there is a very full study (in Spanish) by Alfredo Sampaio Costa, ‘Cuando no somos suficientemente libres para elegir’, *Studies in Spirituality*, 18 (2008), 261–287, who gives an ample bibliography of previous works.

³ Juan Nadal Cañellas, *Jerónimo Nadal. Vida e influjo* (Santander and Bilbao: Sal Terrae and Mensajero, 2007), 31.



Jerónimo Nadal, artist unknown, sixteenth century

in Paris' (n.1), where he was also in touch with several future Jesuits, companions of Ignatius. Some of these, as well as Ignatius himself, urged Nadal both to have closer contact with them and more especially, *ad pietatem*, which Palmer translates as 'to a deeper religious life' (n.5) and which means according to Ramos 'a life in the Spirit'.

In particular, Ignatius read Nadal a letter he had written to a nephew 'calling him from the world to a life of perfection' (n.9). However, Nadal had been warned by a Franciscan,

also from Majorca, to beware of the orthodoxy of Ignatius. And he was scared that it might be reported to his family that he was thinking of the religious life. Clearly, at this stage, family disapproval was a decisive motive; it might be thought that he was letting the family down by choosing a life of poverty. For the time being, he put all such thoughts aside and, despite being plagued by constant ill health and bouts of depression, he showed himself an excellent scholar, mastering Hebrew and scholastic theology.

During the next ten years (1535–1545) he continued to struggle with depression and illness. Completely absent seems to have been any *feeling* of vocation. He was also bereft of any sort of spiritual devotion, until the funeral of a holy woman suddenly triggered 'a more profound religious feeling than ever before in my life. I dissolved in tears ...' (n.27) However, he was lucky enough to establish contact with a hermit, Br Antonio Castañeda (n.28), and began to discuss religious matters with him. He notes that these conversations kept clear of *sensus spiritus*, 'spiritual experiences' (Palmer), '*mociones del Espíritu*' (Riera) (n.28) and were confined to *specula* ('ideas').

It looks as if his depression so filled his mind that anything *spiritual*, in the form of self-reflection, was excluded. Thus in his earlier contacts with Ignatius and his associates, they might just as well have been

talking with a brick wall. In an ambiguous sentence he also suggests that he came to appreciate *solitudo* (n. 29, literally 'solitude', but 'loneliness' may be more the meaning).⁴ Two important events were a general confession (n. 27) and the discovery of a book on the spiritual 'way' (n. 29), both of which provided much consolation.⁵

More important was the arrival from Rome of the copy of a letter sent by Francis Xavier in which he spoke of the fruitful work achieved in far-away India and of his joy at the papal approval of the Society. For Nadal this was like a wake-up call: 'I seemed to wake from a long slumber' (n. 31). Suddenly memory of his contacts in Paris with Ignatius and the companions came flooding back. There was no question at this stage of joining the Society, but he urgently wanted to be in Rome in order to study and to be in the vicinity of Ignatius. Financial considerations figure prominently in his thoughts; he wanted to have money available in Rome and to be sure of his possessions in Majorca. Nadal's account is very precise and detailed recalling the people involved. He is obviously a capable and intelligent administrator.

Later in life Nadal was to see that God was playing him rather like a fisherman with a salmon (n. 39). His first days in Rome were 'days of complete distraction and dissipation of mind' (n. 41), even if he did visit Ignatius from time to time. Nadal was convinced that he was not the sort of man who would fit into the Society: he felt the need for wealth and prestige, both as a personal need and as one required by his family. Several Jesuits were urging him to make the Exercises, but he resisted, convinced that they wanted to inveigle him into a change of life. When he spoke with Ignatius, pointing out that he felt completely unsuitable to become a Jesuit, 'He listened carefully and, if I remember rightly, with a smile. He then answered quietly, "It's all right; there will be something for you to do in the Society if God calls you into it".' (n. 42) Calmed at these words, Nadal asked to make the Exercises and Ignatius assigned Jerónimo Doménech to guide him.

The course of his Exercises is described in detail (nn. 44 following). The first two Weeks were periods of fruitful reflection. 'However, upon coming to the election I was so agitated and dissipated that I began to go to pieces mentally and physically: my mind was in darkness and my will

⁴ As Riera points out, 183 note 42: he may simply refer to the 'solitude' of the hermit.

⁵ Both Palmer and Riera give 'life' and 'vida' as if the Latin was *vitalis* whereas it is *viae*. Unfortunately the title and author are not mentioned.

barren and balky [*obstinata*]’ (n.47). His next steps are very interesting: Ignatius had elaborated in great detail the whole process to be followed and Doménech dutifully instructed Nadal how to proceed. So he wrote out the pros and cons, hoping that the force of one set would outweigh the other—the election being whether he should become a Jesuit.

Nadal found that this procedure gave him no help; on the contrary it simply confused and depressed him. The discomfort was so great that Doménech suggested dropping all further consideration. Nadal asked for one more day of reflection. To his astonishment he found himself in the so-called ‘first time’ in which ‘a sound and good election can be made’: ‘when God Our lord so moves and attracts the will that without doubting or being able to doubt, a dedicated soul follows what is shown’ (Exx 175). As Nadal recorded: ‘a special grace of God came to my help. I took up my pen and wrote as I was moved by Christ’s Spirit, with extraordinary consolation’ (n.48).

Curiously enough the pros and cons were still before him, but he suddenly saw that what he could most feel against the choice of becoming a Jesuit was an *aversio animi*, ‘which is a great and convincing sign that this is God’s will’. The Latin here is far from clear:

Quod vero maxime omnium me movet, ego nullam rationem inueni, quae videatur pugnare ut ominino mouear: solum est *aversio animi*, quod est maximum et certissimum signum eam esse voluntatem Dei: *postquam* illi sensus, depravata voluntas, mundus, honor, species quaedam infidelitatis, cogitando nimium difficultates, sunt quae non possunt percipere regnum Dei et quae contraria sunt spiritui. (n.48)

A translation (adapted from Palmer) might be:

But what moves me most is my not finding any opposing arguments that would move me at all, just *sheer repugnance*, which is a great and convincing sign that this is God’s will; *consequent upon* this repugnance [I can see that] those feelings—a perverse will, the world, prestige, a kind of lack of faith by thinking too much of difficulties—are what cannot perceive the Kingdom of God and are opposed to the Spirit.

The paradox is that it is precisely the feeling of *not* wanting to be a Jesuit which most clearly indicates God’s will that he should be one. There is an initial dislike, a wanting to reject. Of course, this is not uncommon as the initial reaction of many who later become Jesuits, just as many of the prophets in the Old Testament start with negative reactions

to God's call. Isaiah (6:1–5) and Jeremiah (1:5–10) are well-known examples, as is Jonah, who took ship to get away 'from the presence of the Lord' (Jonah 1:1–3). Peter, too, resists his call in Luke 5:8, despite the vast catch of fish he had just witnessed. Nadal was able to see that his heart felt *turned away* from the choice of being a Jesuit by thoughts of things which impeded sight of the Kingdom and which were opposed to the 'spirit'.

In the strength of this special grace, he was able to write, 'I determine and resolve to follow the evangelical counsels with vows in the Society of Jesus' (n.49). But several interesting features are to be found later in the *Chronicon*: thus after having been in the Exercises for just 24 days he was received into the Jesuit house and on instructions from Ignatius began to help in the kitchen and to read chapters from the *Imitation of Christ*. He continued to have poor health, and at times felt very hungry.

When I brought a scruple about this to Fr Ignatius, he asked me why I ate. I answered that it was so that I might live to do penance for my sins and serve God. Smiling calmly, he said, 'Then eat, poor chap!' [*Comede igitur, pauperem me!*] (n.68)

Nadal had made vows to enter the Society: however, not only were these simply private vows, but they were vows to take vows, and not religious vows as such. This worried him and he went through the election process of the Exercises once more to find out if he should take further vows, which would oblige him eventually to take the three vows of religious life. He decided that he definitely wanted to do so.

However, I wanted to submit the matter to Fr Ignatius. He answered that it was all right. 'But listen', he said: 'you already have before God the merit of desiring to take these vows. But now I want you to obtain the additional merit of not taking these vows because I do not think you should'. (n.69)

One might have thought that the matter was settled. But there is an extraordinary sequel which has not (I think) been sufficiently considered. At first, Nadal said that he would follow the advice of Ignatius,

... but after I left the thought came to me, 'To whom are you making these vows, Ignatius or God? Go ahead and make them; it is God's will.' This thought led me to decide to take the vows without Ignatius' knowing. (n.69).

There is a further development of great interest:

In this state, it occurred to me that taking the vows would entail no difficulty for me, so I decided not to take them at that moment but *to wait until a time when it would be hard for me*. This in fact happened in a striking way one night when I was reading the *Te Deum* at lauds. As soon as I became aware of it, I broke off my prayers and addressed myself to making the vows (n.69, my italics)

It was only when he felt *reluctance* that he recognized God's will for him. Once again it was the feeling of difficulty, the need to go against an inclination, that served to guide him. He adds: 'Later I told Fr Ignatius about this and he approved. From this it was easy to conclude that he had actually wanted me to make the vows, but not at his behest.' (n.71)

Two obvious reflections seem worth making. First, it is sometimes assumed that Nadal was completely devoted to Ignatius and knew his mind to perfection. It is important to see that, however true that may be, Nadal remained an individual with a mind of his own. He was prepared to reject the advice of Ignatius regarding his own inner life. Indeed, this may well have been why Ignatius trusted and respected Nadal. From remarks made by Ignatius, it is clear that he was well aware that Nadal was subject to depression and that life would not be easy for him in the Society: 'he will have trials in the future ... but God will help him, the perturbations will lessen, consolations will increase, and he will get a taste of paradise in this life'.⁶

But, second, how significant is the role that Nadal gave to *agere contra* in the identification of God's will? One former Provincial of Spain, Elias Royón Lara, has described Nadal's vocational process as 'paradigmatic, even in our time'.⁷ As was mentioned earlier, it is not unusual for prophets to feel reluctance in carrying out God's will. Sceptics may be tempted to suspect a masochistic process at work, and there is a danger of this. The guidance of a spiritual director is needed and fortunately Nadal had one at hand.

In his study of the *Chronicon* Ramos Riera raises questions about the reasons that led Nadal to compose it, and whether he intended to publish it.⁸ It is easier to give an answer to the second question than

⁶ Nadal himself records this in the *Chronicon* (n.72)..

⁷ In the Prologue to Cañellas, *Jerónimo Nadal. Vida e influjo*, 9.

⁸ Ramos Riera, *Chronicon Natalis*, 146–150.

to the first. The style in which it is written—very colloquial Latin which is in marked contrast to (for example) Nadal's *Apologia* written in reply to the censure of the University of Paris—seems to exclude the idea of publication.⁹ Again, when asked by Mercurian, the Superior General who succeeded Francis Borgia in 1573, to give him a list of his works, Nadal did not mention the *Chronicon Natalis*.

This text is not really an autobiography; it turns constantly about Nadal's relation with Ignatius, and it breaks off in incomplete fashion shortly after the death of Ignatius. So Nadal may have thought of it as a contribution to the biography of Ignatius to be consulted after his own death. Again, he may have felt that the great grace he had received, despite his own initial reluctance to listen to the call God was making, was too precious a gift to be kept locked in his heart—rather as Ignatius himself felt he should not destroy testimony to God's mystical gifts and so left to posterity the pages that make up the *Spiritual Diary*.

Even though the *Chronicon* remained hidden for so many years—only a few Jesuit historians, such as Niccolò Orlandini, having access to it—it deserves to be better known.¹⁰ How far its account of a vocation can be described as 'paradigmatic' is open to question. So many different types of vocation exist, and God makes His will known in unpredictable fashion. But Nadal holds such a key role in the early history of the Society—the man who, more than any other, presented the thought of Ignatius and the novelty of this form of religious life to so many of the early Jesuits—that his own struggle and victory can continue to inspire.

Joseph A. Munitiz SJ, a Byzantine scholar and editor of Greek texts, has also translated a selection of the writings of St Ignatius and the *Memoriale* of Gonçalves da Câmara; he has worked in Leuven and Oxford, and is now living in Dorset.

⁹ Original Latin text published in MHSI FN 2, 38–113; Spanish translation by Miguel Lop Sebastián in *Ignaziana*, 5 (2008), at https://www.ignaziana.org/5-2008_1.pdf.

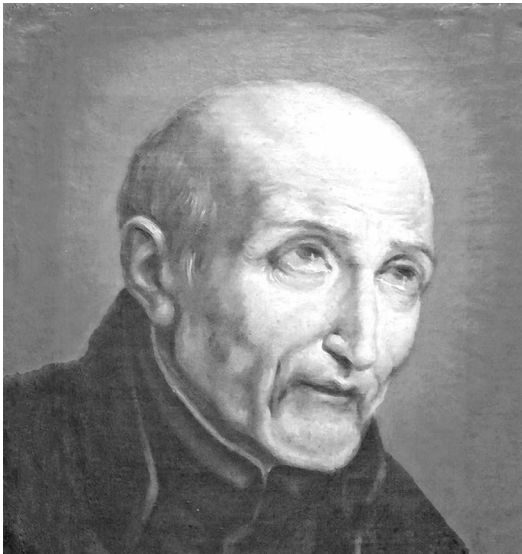
¹⁰ Author of the *Historia Societatis Iesu* (Cologne, 1615).

THE FIRST BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

Hedwig Lewis

WHEN ONE BEGINS TO REFLECT on the history of Jesuit brothers, the first image that comes to mind is that of the endearing and saintly brother Alphonsus Rodriguez. He was admitted into the Society of Jesus in 1571, three decades after its foundation, and worked as a doorkeeper for 45 years. Obviously, he stands out from a long line of Jesuit brothers, so this begs the question: what do we know about his predecessors? And, to get to the root of the matter, who indeed were our first brothers?

Recent research on the origins of Jesuit brothers by Marcos Recolons de Arquer, published by the Historical Archives of the Society of Jesus, traces the identities of the first four Jesuit brothers.¹ Arquer provides authentic evidence from a range of relevant sources, unearthing an



St Alphonsus Rodriguez, artist unknown

assortment of documents dating back to the very foundations of the Order. These include manuscript catalogues of the first years of the Society of Jesus, most of them only faintly legible; an invaluable folder containing the original transcripts of the first vows of novices admitted to the Society of Jesus from 1543 to 1606; and a collection of 'stories' of the early Society preserved in the archives. Arquer pieces these sources together like a jigsaw puzzle

¹ Marcos Recolons de Arquer, 'Los primeros hermanos jesuitas', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 84/1 (2015), 51–78.

to create the portraits of our first Jesuit brothers. Based on his research, I offer in English miniatures of those inspiring personalities—our first brothers in the Lord!

Historical Background

Having left Paris, Ignatius of Loyola spent 1536 in Venice. Towards the end of that year, an old friend from his student days in Alcalá de Henares, who had just returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, visited him and was so enamoured of Ignatius' way of life that he decided to join him in his venture, despite having no desire to become a priest. Ignatius accepted him as part of the group he had founded in Paris. The identity of this visitor, Esteban de Eguía, is found in the early catalogue of the Jesuits of Italy, with the terse statement that he entered the Company 'at the end of 1536 or early January 1537', before the arrival of the companions from Paris.²

This event is historically significant on two counts. First, the Society of Jesus was founded in 1540 as an order of priests. Second, the authorisation to admit 'temporal coadjutors' or brothers was official only after Pope Paul III's brief *Exponi nobis* in 1546. The brothers were designated as 'temporal coadjutor' for official purposes, but in everyday intercourse they were addressed as 'brothers'. Over the years the official term went into disuse, and in 1995 General Congregation 34 stipulated that it should be replaced altogether by 'brother' or 'Jesuit brother'.³

The Society of Jesus continued the practice of admitting laymen into their houses who were not candidates for the priesthood. They would assist the professed Jesuits and were assigned responsibilities according to their capabilities. A letter written by Jerónimo Doménech to Ignatius from Paris on 15 January 1541 contains evidence of this practice.⁴ Doménech refers specifically to an enthusiastic young man whom he had earlier met in Parma, Italy, who was genuinely convinced that his calling was from God. He was intently determined to join the Society of Jesus, but had no intention or inclination to become a priest. The young man was accepted into the Jesuit residence in Paris and he proved to be a source of great edification and joy to the

² *Catalogo dei Gesuiti d'Italia 1540–1565*, edited by Mario Scaduto (Rome: IHSI, 1968).

³ GC 34, decree 7, n. 12.

⁴ Doménech to Ignatius, 15 January 1541, MHSJ *Epistolae mixtae* 1, 52–56; and see *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús. Biográfico-temático*, edited by Charles E. O'Neill and Joaquín María Domínguez (Rome: IHSI, 2001), 1135–1136.

community. He does not figure in the list of 'first brothers', however, since there is no mention of the man's name or any further biographical information. He provides a fine example of the incorporation of permanent non-priests into the Jesuit community, alongside those in training for the priesthood, spiritual coadjutors and professed fathers.

For more definitive records of our early brothers, Arquer delves into the catalogues of the Province of Portugal. Simão Rodrigues, one of the founding fathers, after having spent some years working under the direction of Ignatius in Italy, was sent to Portugal, where his strong personality immediately attracted many young men to the Society and he became very influential at the royal court. Of interest here is the fact that he was responsible for admitting three brothers into the Society of Jesus as early as 1542: Bernardino Descalco o dos Reis, an Italian, and Andrés Gomes and Adão Francisco, who were Portuguese.

Esteban de Eguía y Jasso (c. 1485–1551)

Esteban was born around 1485 into a noble family in Estella, Navarre, Spain. His father, Nicolas de Eguía, was in the service of Ferdinand II, the Catholic King of Aragón. The Eguías were related to their countryman Francis Xavier on their mother's side. Ties of friendship existed between the families of Eguía and Loyola, derived from their common loyalty to the crown of Castile.

Esteban had three brothers: Pedro, the oldest, Diego and Miguel. Esteban and Diego were sent to study at the University of Alcalá, where they lodged with their brother Miguel, who was a prosperous printer. The brothers became associated with Ignatius during his stay in Alcalá in 1526. They generously provided alms in cash and kind for the poor, and helped when Ignatius came begging (*Autobiography*, n. 57).

After graduation Esteban returned to Estella, to a life proper for a nobleman. He married María de Mongelós, marquesa of Magallón, and they had two children, Nicolás and Catalina. He was a man of exceptional piety and uprightness. In the spring of 1536, being already a widower, Esteban accompanied his brother Diego, who had been ordained priest shortly before, on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. They embarked from Venice and, upon their return to the city towards the end of that year, they found Ignatius and renewed old ties. Ignatius had been in Venice for almost a year, and was now awaiting the imminent arrival of his companions from Paris, with plans for making their own pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in fulfilment of the vow they had made at Montmartre.

It was a providential meeting. The brothers felt strongly drawn to Ignatius' way of life. It may be assumed that they made the Spiritual Exercises with him, during which they elected to dedicate their lives to God in his company. Given their genuine intentions, Ignatius accepted them as part of his group. But whereas Diego was already a priest, Esteban would remain a layman.⁵

Among the First Companions

Ignatius' companions from Paris arrived in Venice on 8 January 1537. They found three new members whom Ignatius had accepted into the group, all older than Ignatius: Diego de Hoces, aged 46, and Diego de Eguía, 48, both priests, and Esteban de Eguía, 50. There was no mistaking their genuine spirituality and deep fervour.

In 1538 the companions were settled in Rome. There are no records available of Esteban's occupation during this period. At the end of 1539 he travelled to Estella to settle family matters and dispose of his assets. It took him the better part of four years to complete this task, during which time the Society of Jesus was approved in 1540. It was not until October 1543 that he could make it to the Jesuit community in Barcelona, on the first leg of his journey back. He remained there two months, and then embarked for Rome on 13 December.

In the Society of Jesus

In Rome, Ignatius entrusted Esteban with the delicate assignment of accompanying and serving Isabel Roser. Roser, who had arrived in the Eternal City eight months earlier with two women friends, was determined to establish a female branch of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius did not share her intentions, but he owed a huge debt of gratitude to her, for she had supported him financially since the early days of his conversion and during all his studies. Ignatius provided the three women with a house near his residence at Santa Maria della Strada and arranged for their meals. A finicky lady, Roser demanded that he also make available a full-time attendant to be at their disposal and take care of their security.

Esteban's arrival in Rome was opportune for Ignatius, who considered him the ideal man for this assignment. Esteban, an aristocrat himself, was comfortable with accompanying the women around and other exigencies. However, dealing with the restive Roser required diplomacy,

⁵ MHSJ Polanci Chronicon 1, 55.

forbearance and humility. Esteban, a deeply spiritual man, measured up to everyone's expectations. He performed menial tasks and tackled trying circumstances in such an exemplary way that his brother Diego called him a 'true martyr'.⁶

Roser succeeded in her designs when, on Christmas Day 1545, she and her companions professed the religious vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Roser bequeathed her entire estate to the Society, although Ignatius attempted to refuse it. Rumours began to circulate that Ignatius had usurped her fortune. This dispute went to court, which decided against Roser. She and her companions were dismissed from the Society on 1 October 1546, and returned to Barcelona to a pious life.

Esteban, feeling his age, and with indifferent health, moved in with Ignatius, and remained under medical supervision. He died peacefully on 28 January 1551, and his burial took place after midnight. Diego, in a letter informing Esteban's son Nicolás of his father's demise, provides a significant detail:

I was consulted as to where to bury him, and I proposed a spot near the entrance of the church, as I deemed would be proper to him. However, Father Ignatius ordered that Brother Esteban should be interred alongside the graves of Peter Faber and Jean Codure at the steps of the main sanctuary in the church of Santa Maria della Strada!⁷

Status as First Brother

Not all historians are willing to grant Esteban de Eguía the status of first temporal coadjutor in the history of the Society of Jesus. His name is registered in the Italian Jesuit catalogue as having been accepted into the Company in Venice in January 1537. But there are no further records of his formal entry into the Society of Jesus. It is not clear when, or even whether, he made vows, since this was not obligatory at the time. Those who make a case for him appeal to circumstantial evidence to attribute to him the pride of place. Esteban de Eguía was the first layman, they argue, who, without intention to pursue ordination to the priesthood, was admitted to the group of Ignatius' First Companions—and remained faithful to this incorporation until his death, which certainly happened after he had formally become a 'temporal coadjutor'—a full-fledged Jesuit brother!

⁶ Diego de Eguía to Nicolas de Eguía, 5 February 1551, MHSJ Epistolae mixtae 2, 499.

⁷ Diego de Eguía to Nicolas de Eguía, 5 February 1551, 499–500.

Bernardino Descalcio o dos Reis (c. 1518–1575)

Simão Rodrigues and Francis Xavier, two of the First Companions of Ignatius, were assigned by him to go as missionaries to India, on the request of the Pope and at the urging of King John III of Portugal. Rodrigues arrived in Lisbon to begin the voyage in the spring of 1540, and Xavier in June. During the months before they embarked, they were involved in preaching and became well known in the city. The king was highly impressed by these gifted priests and wanted to retain them in Portugal, promising that he would give them a house in Lisbon and even endow a college. However, Xavier embarked for India on 7 April 1541, though Rodrigues remained behind.

The king took his time keeping his promises. The impulsive Rodrigues grew restless, to the point of making private plans to go to India, which he discreetly kept hidden from the king. It was at this juncture that Rodrigues met Bernardino Descalcio, whom he saw as a potential collaborator in his clandestine project. Bernardino was an Italian from Frugarolo, in the province of Alessandria, Piedmont, and was in his early twenties. He desired to become a religious brother. Rodrigues instructed Bernardino to get trained in maritime skills and promised to admit him into the Society of Jesus once their ship was on the high seas.

Meanwhile the king finally fulfilled his first promise by handing over the old monastery of San Antón in Lisbon, which would become the first Jesuit house in Portugal. Rodrigues abandoned his clandestine mission and, together with a few other Jesuits from Italy appointed by Ignatius, took possession of the house on 5 January 1542. Bernardino Descalcio, who had accompanied the group, was received into the Society of Jesus that same day, designated as ‘temporal coadjutor’. He was 23 years old.

An enthusiastic and enterprising youth, Bernardino was eager to venture out to foreign soils as a missionary. However, he was appointed to several houses in Portugal, mainly as a procurator and overseer of Jesuits awaiting embarkation to the missions of India, Japan and Brazil. Bernardino endeared himself to all, as is evident in the several letters from Jesuits addressed to Rodrigues which end with affectionate remembrances of Bernardino, and endearments, regards or request for prayers to him.

John III fulfilled his other promise by endowing a college for the Jesuits in Coimbra. On 13 June 1542, Rodrigues initiated the venture with twelve companions, one of them being Bernardino. On 1 October 1553, the San Roque church in Lisbon was inaugurated. It was a red-letter



Lisbon, from Braun and Hogenberg, *Civitates orbis terrarum*, 1623

day because seven formed Jesuits—four priests and three brothers, including Bernardino—also made their final profession. It was indeed a very solemn occasion; the king and Francis Borgia were present at the ceremony in the church, annexed to the college. The vows were received by a Jesuit delegate from Rome, Jerónimo Nadal, who was visiting Portugal in the course of his travels to promulgate the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus. From then on, the denomination ‘temporal coadjutor formed’ appears in the Portuguese catalogues.

In 1558, Bernardino was posted to the San Roque house of the professed in Lisbon, as one overseeing those ‘embarking to India’.⁸ After seventeen years of uncompromising commitment to his responsibilities, and having witnessed the departure of scores of his companions as missionaries abroad, Bernardino could not contain his own deep-seated passion for becoming a missionary. He recalled Rodrigues’ assurances about taking him to India, and sought the latter’s help in fulfilling his dream. Rodrigues wrote to the Superior General, Diego Laínez, requesting that Bernardino be sent to the missions. But the appeals were in vain.

Ordination as Priest

Not one to be disheartened, Bernardino turned his attention to another long-cherished desire: to become a priest. Now, at fifty years of age, he

⁸ Catalogues of the Portuguese province of the Society of Jesus, Rome, Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), Lus. 43 I, fol. 149r.

wrote to Father Laínez urging that he be considered for promotion to the priesthood. His plea was made within the context of Pope Paul III's brief *Exponi nobis* (1546), which granted the Superior General the power 'to admit coadjutors to assist the Society of Jesus in spiritual and temporal matters and to promote the latter to the sacred orders'. Bernardino received the necessary permission and was instructed to do studies related to the priesthood even as he continued to perform his duties as a brother.

Bernardino was ordained some time between 1 September 1562 (the date of issue of the last catalogue in which he appears as a formed temporal coadjutor) and 1 January 1563, the date found in a brochure listing the staff of the college of San Antón in Lisbon, where Bernardino's name is prefixed by 'Father'. His designation was procurator for Italy. Four months later he was appointed assistant to the Jesuit secretary and attorney of the same school.

There are sketchy records of Bernardino's priestly activity. In January 1572 he was still at the college of San Antón and was reported to be 'very old and sick' and that he 'hears some confessions'.⁹ The catalogue drawn up on 2 January 1574 lists Bernardino in Coimbra as superior of the small residence attached to and dependent on the College. In his health he was 'ill-disposed' and, as regards his capability, 'he knows what is enough for a priest'. He is noted as being 'good for business and mediocre as a confessor'.¹⁰ In January 1575 Bernardino was back at the San Antón college in Lisbon. His illness worsened and he was relieved of all his duties. He died on 16 May 1575.

Andrés Gomes (c. 1522–c. 1578)

The trajectories of the first two Jesuit brothers discussed above may be considered as atypical compared with the biographies of those who followed them. The third in line, Andrés Gomez, is the prototype of a brother who is recognised for his holiness and service, who is assigned humble duties, who shuns the limelight, working discreetly and often unnoticed. Brothers from now on would be acknowledged as the soul of the Jesuit community. Their engaging presence would attract the students and staff of Jesuit colleges, who sought their counsel; and

⁹ Catalogues of the Portuguese province, ARSI, Lus. 43 II, fol. 448.

¹⁰ Catalogues of the Portuguese province, ARSI, Lus. 43 II, fol. 469v.

their compassion would win the confidence of the poor who flocked to the gates for alms. The Jesuit brothers would be exemplary religious whom the Church would raise to the altars in the likes of Alphonsus Rodriguez and Francisco Garate.

Andrés Gomez was born around 1522 in Vilacova, in the diocese of Porto, Portugal. He had acquired some basic education. He entered the Society of Jesus as a brother in October 1542 in Lisbon. The chronicle of the year 1542 notes that Andrés Gomez was the first cook at the College of San Anton, and that in the ‘humble office he exemplified his high virtue’.¹¹ The catalogues of the Society of Jesus in Portugal from 1542 to 1577 keep track of the various postings of Andrés. He was at Coimbra College from 1542 to 1553; he worked as the chef between 1553 and 1564 at the House of San Roque and College of San Antón in Lisbon. In 1566 he was appointed at the school in Porto where he handled the jobs of buyer and almoner—distributing community alms to beggars who came to the residence. The catalogue of Porto, released in January 1572, gives Andrés the status of almoner and appreciates his skill as a housekeeper. In the catalogues of 1574 to 1577 he appears again in Lisbon at the professed house of San Roque as almoner. There is no record of the date of his death.

Adão Francisco (d. 1549)

There are no records of Adão Francisco’s early life, as regards his date or place of birth, except that he was Portuguese. There are, however, confirmed testimonies of his holiness of life, missionary zeal and courtesy in everyday interactions.

Adão Francisco entered the Society of Jesus at the newly created college in Coimbra, on 8 November 1542, as listed in the first catalogue of the Jesuits of Portugal. He was among the young men whom St Ignatius was regularly sending from Rome to Simão Rodrigues in Portugal. The catalogue contains a long list of those who arrived there from Rome on 29 July 1542 and records the exact dates on which they were later received into the Society. Adão’s name is on this list.¹² In the space of just two years from the arrival in Portugal of Simão Rodrigues and Francis Xavier, abundant vocations to the Society of Jesus arose, and these were

¹¹ Balthazar Telles, *Chronica da Companhia de Iesu, na prouincia de Portugal, primeira parte* (Lisbon: Paulo Craesbeeck, 1645), 93.

¹² Catalogues of the Portuguese province, ARSI, Lus. 43 I, fol. 1.

on the increase. Rodrigues was able to gather together a large number of Jesuits in those years, comprising teachers, students and brothers

In 1546, Francisco was among eight Jesuits—five priests and three brothers—who embarked from Portugal for Goa. Francisco remained in Goa for a year. In 1547 he was sent to Cochin (modern Kochi), on the Fishery Coast, about 750 kilometres to the south. The annual report sent to Rome from India contains high praises for Francisco's commitment to his missionary endeavours. A testimony, preserved in the archives, states: 'Thanks to the kind offices and persistence of our Brother Adão Francisco a respectable Malavar man together with his wife, children and household was converted to the faith'.¹³

Francis Xavier, who visited Cochin in 1547 or early 1548, stated in a letter to Simão Rodrigues, dated 20 January 1548: 'Of all those you have sent me I have not seen anyone as extraordinary as ... and Adão Francisco, who are there in Cochin'.¹⁴ It was then that Xavier decided to appoint Adão to accompany brother Baltasar Nuñez to establish a new mission at Cape Comorin (Kanyakumari), at the southernmost tip of India. Francisco died on 2 January 1549. The cause of his death is not known. He had been in the Society of Jesus for just over six years. Xavier paid glowing tributes to Adão at the funeral. Then, in a letter to Ignatius from Cochin a few days later, he wrote:

It has pleased God to take from this life our sweetest brother, Adão Francisco, to give him the reward of his many and great merits. His death corresponded to his life, which, from what I have heard from others and I saw myself, was very holy. He was a very pious man and of great zeal for the conversion of the Gentiles. I am convinced that already he is enjoying the bliss for which he was born, so rather than entrust him to God, I entrust myself to him.¹⁵

Sterling Qualities of the Brothers

In the four Jesuit brothers discussed above, there are some common features as well as remarkable variety. Their spiritual orientation and virtuous living were outstanding. Their personal attraction to the Society of Jesus was overwhelming, but even more so was the attraction towards

¹³ Francisco Pérez to the Society at Coimbra, 4 December 1548, MHSJ Documenta Indica 1, 368.

¹⁴ Xavier to Rodrigues, 20 January 1548, MHSJ EX 1, 419; and see *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier*, translated by M. Joseph Costelloe (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 192.

¹⁵ Xavier to Ignatius, 20 January 1549, MHSJ Monumenta Xaveriana 1, 506.

them displayed by the early Jesuits through a mutual bonding. The brothers were held in high esteem for their remarkable personalities, talent, dedication and apostolic commitment.

Esteban de Eguía was a man of the world, with experience of weapons, government and dealing with high-ranking people. Ignatius could have envisaged him as someone who could help the Society of Jesus' mission in public relations, especially with important people, and in administration. Bernardino, young and energetic, possessed a venturesome spirit; though an Italian, in Portugal he 'moved like a fish in the water in the motley and complex atmosphere of the port of Lisbon'.¹⁶ Simão Rodrigues recognised his potential and entrusted him with the management of personnel and cargo embarkation to the missions in India, Japan and Brazil, as well as being the procurator for the missions. In contrast, Andrés Gomez, remarkably level-headed and composed, was the faithful and trustworthy man who could remain content for many years performing some humble service, such as that of a cook, and handling alms with scrupulous fidelity. Adão Francisco integrated into his personality a pleasing suavity with a bold and persevering apostolic spirit, ideal for the universal mission.

The Ignatian way of proceeding in the incorporation of the first four enthusiastic and committed laymen into religious communities, even before the institutionalisation that came with *Exponi nobis*, sets a benchmark for the future admissions of brothers into the Society of Jesus.

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¹⁶ Arquer, 'Los primeros hermanos jesuitas', 73.