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Spiritual Exercises and Ignatian Spiritual Direction  
in Contemporary Times

〈神操與依納爵靈修指導的當代實踐〉

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## Editor's Word

Five hundred years ago, on May 20, 1521 a cannonball upended the life of a young man with courtly dreams of military success. Thus began the conversion of Saint Ignatius of Loyola who eventually founded the Society of Jesus. On March 12, 1622, he and one of his close companions, Francis Xavier, known as the Apostle of the East, were canonized. To mark these milestones of grace, from May 2021 through July 2022, the Society of Jesus and their mission partners, including the Centre for Catholic Studies, CUHK, celebrate the Ignatian Year. As Fr. Arturo Sosa, superior general of the Society reminded us, we observe the year not simply with ceremonies or academic output. Rather it is an opportunity for our ongoing conversion. The Jesuit community and the larger Ignatian family are called “to see all things new in Christ”—to ask for the grace of a real change in our day to day life-mission.

In fact just months after the promulgation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences (UAP's) of the Society of Jesus in June 2019, a cannonball of an infectious kind shot through the world. The COVID-19 pandemic altered many lives and cut short too many; among the mishaps, plans by Jesuits and their collaborators worldwide to discern the implementation of the Universal Apostolic Preferences 2019-2029 also turned awry.

The disruption of dreams and itineraries need not be the end. Like Ignatius, we can embark on a pilgrimage, a chance to discover what we truly desire; the gifts we have been given; and the mission each of us embodies.

Drawing on his own spiritual pilgrimage, Ignatius compiled the *Spiritual Exercises* as a tool to guide such movements of discernment and of drawing closer to God. Another founding document, the *Formula of the Institute* (1540), made clear the mission of the Society of Jesus: “to strive especially for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine and for the propagation of the faith by the ministry of the word, by spiritual exercises and works of charity, and specifically by the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity.”

From the beginning, the Exercises have been adapted according to the person and circumstances of the one making the Exercises. This pastoral adaptation recognizes “the rich set of realities that constitute the relationship of the one making the Exercises, the one who gives them and the Triune God (i.e., Father, Son, and Spirit) who is the ultimate Overseer of the entire enterprise.” (Howard Gray, *The Dynamics of the Exercises*, lecture one). In contemporary times, Ignatian spiritual direction is given increasingly by trained lay collaborators. This is welcome development, as the collaborators further diversify the talents and applications by which the Society of Jesus offers Spiritual Exercises as a gift.

The pandemic is said to have awakened the spiritual longing of peoples of different faiths or no faith. Perhaps. Other stressors too, such as conflicts, climate disasters, migration, social fractures and economic hardships, cry out for our discernment and conversion.

In the previous issue of this Journal, the theme was “Ignatian Spirituality and the Contemporary World” (echoing the first of the UAP’s 2019-2029). As Pope Francis affirmed, “without this prayerful attitude, the other preferences will not bear fruit.” In the current issue (#12) we delve deeper into the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, their adaptations and encounters with other cultures, including the cultures

of feminism, somatic psychotherapy, as well as Lonergan's cross-disciplinary integration of cognitional theory with religious, moral and metaphysical developments.

Companionship and conversation have played an important role in Jesuit spirituality and ministries. What does it mean to accompany another on an Ignatian spiritual journey? What is at stake? We invited several spiritual directors to reflect on their practice. The articles in this issue are grouped into two clusters: the first five on Spiritual Exercises, and the latter three on Ignatian Spiritual Direction. The Centre for Catholic Studies and I are grateful to the eight invited contributors who share generously the fruits of their own journeys in the articles below.

There is more to the Exercises than the promotion of personal spiritual growth. Fr. James Hanvey, who supports Jesuit Pastoral Ministry and Spirituality worldwide, with particular attention to the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises, draws out for us some political and cultural implications of the Exercises. Through examining the *Principle and Foundation* and the *Two Standards*, Fr. Hanvey presents to us the answer, or rather, the challenge: Why make the Spiritual Exercises? And what is at stake?

The *Principle and Foundation* reminds us that we belong to God. In this lies our transcendent purpose and value, thus making all other claims relative. Freed from the false idols that promise absolute freedom, we come to recognize our freedom as finite but also “graced.” We are dependent: “first upon God and then upon the community and the whole of creation.” This relational inter-dependency means “we are responsible for the good of the other and assisting their movement towards God.” According to Fr. Hanvey, our “graced freedom,” though located in “the pressing realities of human finitude,” is transfigured by



Christ's resurrection. It is what gives us the opportunity to take part in God's salvific plan.

Discernment is about choice. In Fr. Hanvey's words, "Christ is the unavoidable moment of decision, the moment of 'crisis' which always has a historical and existential reality." In the second part of his paper, he reads the *Two Standards* as an interpretive key to unmask the strategies of evil particularly in contemporary times. More than a "tool," discernment becomes an "apostolic moment." Discernment is radical practice when we allow ourselves to be poor, despised and humble with Christ. What choices do we make if we live the life of Jesus as incarnate in our everyday realities? Do we follow Jesus' *praxis of reconciliation* which refuses violence and the sacrifice of victims, and so join in the redemptive work of the Cross? What would it mean, Fr. Hanvey asks, if we could develop our social, economic and educational policies guided by the values that would prioritize the well-being of the contemporary *anawim*, the powerless and marginalized, the economically and culturally deprived? The whole dynamic of the Exercises is a profound, transformational journey "in" history, Fr. Hanvey reminds us. To be transformed is to be sent into the world again as a companion of Christ to create a new space, a new possibility within history.

"One of the most unique features of Ignatian spirituality is the development of a loving gaze on all things, on all Creation, starting with a merciful and unconditional acceptance of the person who prays." To understand the origins and development of this spirituality, Fr. José García De Castro Valdés takes us through the history of the Society of Jesus. Inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises* (chiefly "Contemplation to attain love," 230-237), the Jesuits believe that it is possible to seek and find God in everything. For this reason "the Society of Jesus has been

present in very different places and very diverse circumstances, a kind of presence that employs action as a principal means to explain her religious experience, her particular way of loving God and loving the neighbor.”

While the experience of Ignatius of Loyola, and his new method to search for God were foundational, the First companions decided to form a *Societas* (“companionship”). Together they confirmed the Society’s apostolic identity, adapted creatively a variety of ministries, went on mission to distant lands where many gave generous witness with their lives; they survived political suppression, and thrived through collaboration with others. For over 480 years, through community discernment, and by attending to the movement of the Holy Spirit, the Society has maintained a suppleness that continues to open new dimensions for Ignatian Spirituality. Fr. García De Castro Valdés notes that recently, drawing upon the Society’s rich missionary tradition, “Ignatian Spirituality returns to *culture* as one of the main factors for a fruitful mission. Once Spirituality is inside a culture, a process of dialogue begins.” This Spirituality is key to developing a “culture of dialogue”; it is a Spirituality of “listening, opening to others, and being ready to start a conversation for a better world.”

Fr. Monty Williams began his article with a confession or profession of love. An experienced giver of the Spiritual Exercises, he offers this insight: not that we have a desire for God, but more radically that we are created as the desire for God. Yet our discernments are also complicated by our “ambivalence to our primary relationship with God—we are both attracted to and hesitant towards such an intimacy.”

Tracing the dynamics of desire which underpin the Four Weeks (Stages) of the Spiritual Exercises, Fr. Monty uses a spatial

metaphor—that of everyday walking, rather than a city mapped by dogma. The journey in love does not follow a linear progression. Indeed, the consolations of each stage lead us into the disorders of the subsequent level of discernment. From the first stage of a self-enclosed security, the discovery of being loved reveals the illusions that have bound us in fear. “We let the living relationship with Jesus rather than a previously imprinted cultural and intellectual understanding of truth, our own biases, be the basis of our discernments” (Stage 2). As Christ has been for us in that first stage of spiritual intimacy, we are asked to recognize the world in ways that it does not recognize itself (Stage 3). Finally we arrive at a passivity which is content to contemplate God, but at the same time is a call to “creativity which builds community across the divisions of otherness and alienation.” This, Fr. Monty describes, is contemplation in action.

In the last section of the article, Fr. Monty contrasts the dynamics of narcissism (fear) and the dynamics of self-transcendence (love). The power of fear is acute in many places today. Fr. Monty’s caution is worth noting: “Before we discern, both in the sense of what we should do, but also in how we should read the contexts in which we live, there is the need to develop that intimacy with God which is our primary relationship. If that does not happen, we misread all of our contexts, both sacred and secular.”

Using discernment as a key, Fr. Thomas P. Sherman offers a close study of two classical texts, St. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* and Laozi’s *Dao De Jing* as practical guides to a happy life in the Aristotelian sense. Fr. Sherman reviews Ignatius’ rules for the discernment of spirits of weeks one and two to show “if a discernment of spirits is indeed a way of determining a choice of a way of life (or of any important action in the retreatant’s life) as being consonant with

God's will, the *subjective* experience of consolation ... *must* include the *objective* criterion of the faith of the Church." "The retreatant must consult not simply his or her own subjective experience of the spirit in making a choice of a way of life or action, but also and *finally* this choice must at the very least be in accord with the life of Christ as understood by the faith community." Fr. Sherman suggests that it is for this reason that Ignatius delimits choice-making as within the bounds of what is lawful within the Church (170-174, cf. 189) and concludes the *Exercises* with an appendix entitled: "Rules for Thinking with the Church (352-370)."

Though the *Dao De Jing* is not a religious text, it measures one's status in relation to the Dao or the Way: "when the best student hears about the Way he practices it assiduously, when the average student hears about the Way it seems to him one moment there and gone the next, when the worst student hears about the way he laughs out loud (41)." Fr. Sherman reads the *Dao De Jing* as a guide for discernment, for "living well and knowing one is doing so requires the sage to recognize not only his experience of inner peace and harmony as a criterion but as well the objective criterion of being in conformity with the real (vs. only apparent) harmony of nature and promoting harmony within human society." He gives the example of warfare. "Where troops have encamped, there will brambles grow" (30). Violence is contrary to the nature of the *Dao*, so the sage naturally avoids it. The text goes on to describe: "one who is good aims only at bringing a campaign to a conclusion and dares not intimidate. One brings it to a conclusion but does not boast." The verse implies that the sage recognizes that the situation compels him to fight. Such recognition presupposes an evaluation of the situation and a choice to take up arms. By what criteria could the sage choose? His experience of inner peace

and harmony would seem to offer no rationale for choosing to act, or not to act at all. But the verse implies that the sage does indeed choose to take up arms *and* that his choice is in conformity with the *Dao*. By studying similar examples in the text, Fr. Sherman concludes: “we learn from both works that if we are to live well and know that we are doing so, we need a discernment based not simply on self-justifying experience (of spiritual consolation or inner peace and harmony) but on objective, or self-transcending criterion as well.”

Dr. Margaret Chang quotes from Annotation 1 of Ignatius’ *Spiritual Exercises*: “every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies...to seek and find the divine Will...is called a Spiritual Exercise.” She states that for women in particular, such disordered tendencies are often attributable to social structures. In a patriarchal society, people consider God as a male ruler and “sin is to be understood as rebellious behavior against divine sovereignty.” However, a woman’s sin focuses not so much on pride and self-assertion, but rather on the sin of self-doubt, timidity, powerlessness, and even of being a self-hater. Instead of exploring instances of pride, a feminist spiritual companion “might encourage a woman to take on roles of responsibility and decision-making.”

Dr. Chang quotes liberally from feminist texts and scholars. Psychologist Carol Gilligan, for instance, found that while men use abstract rules or principles to decide, women seem to view moral problems as those that arise from “conflicting responsibilities and relationships rather than from competing rights.” She argued that women consistently use relationships and personal responsibility as their primary reference points in making moral decisions. Instead of the “separation-individuation” model proposed by Erik Erikson, theorists at the Stone Center at Wellesley College assert that the

development of a woman's self is a "self-in-relation." In general, a woman does not feel threatened in connection but utilizes the opportunity to organize and develop the self in the context of an important relationship. Disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies thus means renewing a woman's self-in-relation with God.

Dr. Chang presents the movements in the Four Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises in terms of mutual engagement, mutual empathy, and mutual empowerment. She concludes that the feminist spiritual companion should be aware of the psychosexual development of the retreatant, and adapt the masculine language of the Exercises to facilitate growth in intersubjectivity. God's Mercy is not a restoration to divine favor, but an empathic empowerment. A quote from Maureen Aggeler sums up this journey for women: "freedom means that 'she is her own person.' The price of her freedom, solitariness, means that although she is a person in relationship, only she can/ must take responsibility for what she sees and knows."

Fr. Stephen Tong understands one of the implications of the first Principle and Foundation is to hold the tension of the opposing dynamics in one's interior and spiritual life in order to become indifferent towards all things on earth. And the major meaning and function of spiritual direction is accordingly to acknowledge and process this tension in one's experience of life and prayers through the help of the spiritual director so that interior freedom for the greater glory of God is attained.

Taking this tension as a paradigm, he sees that it commonly dwells in the process of spiritual direction and relationship between the spiritual director and directee as well. He illustrates five possible tensions, namely, silence versus conversation, affectivity versus

rationality, mundane life versus spiritual experience, total acceptance versus thinking with the Church, and human efforts versus God's graces. Heightening the consciousness of this reality, as Lonergan's transcendental method suggests, is crucial to mutual self-appropriation in the service of doing spiritual direction.

Ignatian Spirituality is a journey towards authenticity. But not all desires are authentic. In her article, Ms. Sally Law, Formation Officer of Xavier House, illustrates how Bernard Lonergan's cognitional theory can be a helpful framework to accompany the directee's journey through a series of conversions (religious, moral, intellectual and psychic) to authenticity. According to Lonergan, it is in the autonomous human subject that self-transcendental stages of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deliberating occurs. The authentic subject follows the transcendental precepts to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Conversion occurs when one shifts from biases and self-absorption to becoming attentive in experience, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judgment, and responsible in deciding.

Love motivates a person to follow the transcendental precepts in operations of consciousness while fear fuels one's biases and leads to decline. Lonergan defined flight from understanding and flight from responsibility as biases which block continuous growth in authenticity and leads to inauthenticity. The spiritual director can help the directee turn from focusing on the incidents outside to self-appropriation of one's own inner operations. While spiritual directors explore with the directees their personal experiences, the focus is not to alleviate one's problem but to unpack the human dimensions of experiences as dispositions for prayer. Ms. Law posits: "Conscious presence to oneself is a foundation for presence to the Other."

Ms. Veronica Lai takes note of contemporary advances in neurosciences and introduces Somatic Experiencing, a body-oriented trauma healing model (developed by Peter Levine in the 1970s) as an approach to the discernment of spirits in spiritual direction. She cites Paul Yakovlev, a Russian-born neuropathologist, who challenged the top-down model that it was the “higher” thinking brain that controlled the “lower” functions of the body. Yakovlev argued that the “evolutionarily most primitive brain structures in the brain stem (dubbed the “reptilian brain”) and hypothalamus (“limbic brain”) are those that form “the matrix upon which the remainder of the brain, as well as behavior is elaborated.”

Modern imaging technology allows us to see a “bodily map of emotions”—the blood flow in the viscera, how and which neurons are “fired or charged” when a thought arises, or when there is a sensation. Thoughts are “charged” with feelings. Ms. Lai quotes Ignatius on “interior knowledge—for it is not much knowledge but the inner feeling and relish of things that fills and satisfies the soul” and the Prayer of the Senses in the *Spiritual Exercises*. Here I find an article by Gemma Simmonds (“Making sense of the application of the senses”) clarifying. Simmonds remarks: “The Spanish word *sentir* carries the same ambiguity as ‘to sense’ in English, in that it includes mental as well as bodily processes, but it is a broader word still, including intuition and emotional feelings. In week two of the Exercises especially, the senses are seen as an instrument of prayer and discernment. Being present to Jesus as he acts through his own bodily senses we come to share more deeply in his human experience and self-understanding....Praying to share Jesus’s way of sensing and feeling is not a way to pray when our minds can take us no further...It requires praying to be transformed at what is often for us the source of



dislocation and ambiguity when our sensual and affective longings take us in different directions from our rational thought processes.” For Simmonds, it confirms as reliable “the *sensus Christi* (1 Cor 2:16), which enables us to feel with the feelings of Jesus as well as to have his mind.” Ms. Lai concludes with two case studies using SIBAM (Sensation, Image, Behavior, Affect and Meaning), a Somatic Experiencing tool, to examine the movement of the spirits and to “detect across the whole spectrum of our activity and consciousness the movements through which the Holy Spirit leads and enlightens us, and those through which other influences, if given their head, work against that guiding and light.”

The Centre for Catholic Studies is a unit of the Chinese University of Hong Kong which is a place of scholarship (from Latin *schola* meaning "intermission of work, leisure for learning; learned conversation"). When the Jesuits in Hong Kong began the sponsorship of the Centre for Catholic Studies, CUHK, in August 2019, the Centre also becomes part of a network of Jesuit intellectual apostolate, with emphasis on scholarship, practice and mission. “Intellectual” is derived from a Latin word, meaning "discernment, understanding.” The term “apostolate” means “being sent as an apostle”; and as we recall in the *Formula of the Institute*, we are a companionship dedicated to the progress of souls in the Christian life and doctrine and to the propagation of the faith.

In his first interview as superior general, Fr. Sosa highlighted intellectual depth. He ventured: “We need to understand what is happening in today’s world and in today’s church in order to understand faith.” At the beginning of this Ignatian year, he continues: “we ask for the grace of a real change in our day to day life-mission”; “to see all things new in Christ.” We hope the articles in this issue

devoted to the Spiritual Exercises and Ignatian spiritual direction would lead to conversations, even collaboration with colleagues and all people of good will that will help us discern our respective life-mission.

The knowledge and understanding that we propagate, do they reveal the beauty and truth of all that exist? Does what we learn transform relations and social structures so that those whose dignity has been violated can be free to thrive and contribute to the common good? Do we design systems of governance from the local to global levels—based on subsidiarity, transparency and conflict resolution—so that life would be sustainable, I mean, for our children’s children?

We are embarking on a pilgrimage to discern, and put in practice the four universal apostolic preferences:

- A. To show the way to God through the Spiritual Exercises and discernment;
- B. To walk with the poor, the outcasts of the world, those whose dignity has been violated, in a mission of reconciliation and justice;
- C. To accompany young people in the creation of a hope-filled future;
- D. To collaborate in the care of our Common Home.

Will you join us in this spiritual and intellectual journey?

Fr. Stephen Tong, SJ

## 主編的話

五百年前，也就是 1521 年 5 月 20 日，一枚砲彈打碎了一位憧憬戰績功勳、宮廷鬢影的年輕人的夢。從而開始了聖依納爵·羅耀拉 (Ignatius Loyola) 的皈依，最終創立了耶穌會。1622 年 3 月 12 日，他和一位緊密夥伴、被稱為東亞宗徒的方濟各·沙勿略 (Francis Xavier) 一同宣聖。為紀念這些上主恩慈的里程碑，從 2021 年 5 月至 2022 年 7 月，耶穌會及其使命夥伴，包括香港中文大學天主教研究中心，隆重慶祝依納爵年。耶穌會總會長蘇薩神父 (Arturo Sosa) 這樣提醒我們：我們不僅通過儀式或學術成果來慶祝這一年；相反，這是我們不斷皈依的機會。耶穌會團體和更廣大的依納爵伙伴被召回「在基督內得見嶄新的一切」——並在我們的日常生活使命中祈求真正改變的恩典。

事實上，就在 2019 年 6 月耶穌會的普世性使徒優先 (UAP's) 公布幾個月後，一種具有傳染性的砲彈射遍了世界。COVID-19 大流行改變了許多人的生活，縮短了太多人的生命；在這些變故中，耶穌會士及其在世界各地的合作者旨在辨別實施 2019-2029 年普世使徒優先的計劃也被耽擱了。

夢想和行程的中斷並不意味著結束。像依納爵一樣，我們可以踏上朝聖之旅，有機會發現我們真正的渴望，看到被賜予的禮物，及體現所擁抱的使命。

依納爵根據自己的心靈朝聖之旅，寫成《神操》作為一種指導這種辨別的動態和親近上主之工具。另一份創始文件《耶穌會會典綱要》（1540年）闡明了耶穌會的使命：「扶助人靈進修並明瞭教會的道理，並以公開佈道傳揚天主的聖訓、領導退省 [spiritual exercises] 和愛德的工作，特別是以教理教育兒童及失學的人。」

從一開始，神操就根據退省者這個人和他或她的情況進行調整。這種牧靈調整認識到「一系列豐富的現實構成了退省者、指導者與作為整個事業最終主導者的天主聖三（即父、子和聖神）之間的關係。」（霍華德·格雷，《神操的動力》，第一講）。在當代，依納爵靈修越來越多地由訓練有素的平信徒合作者指導。這是一個可喜的發展，因為合作者進一步令耶穌會提供神操作為禮物的才能和應用多樣化。

有人說，這場大流行病喚醒了很多不同信仰或沒有信仰的人的精神渴望。有可能。其他壓力因素，如戰禍、氣候災難、流徙者和移民、社會分裂和經濟困難等，也呼喚出我們要作辨別和皈依的吶喊。

上一期的學報，主題是「依納爵靈修與當代世界」“Ignatian Spirituality and the Contemporary World”（與UAP 2019-2029的第一項相呼應）。正如教宗方濟各所肯定的：「缺少這種祈禱的心態，其他的優先將無從結出果實。」在本期（#12）中，我們深入探討了《神操》的文本、它們的調整及與其他文化的相遇，包括女性主義文化、軀體心理治療，以及將朗尼根（Lonergan）的認知理論與與宗教、道德和形而上學的發展作跨學科整合。

陪伴和交談在耶穌會的靈修和事工中發揮了重要作用。在依納爵靈修之旅中陪伴他人意味著什麼？有什麼是利害攸關呢？我們邀請了幾位靈修導師來反思他們的實踐。本期文章分為兩大類：前五篇關於神操，後三篇關於依納爵靈修指導。我和天主教研究中心感謝八位受邀撰稿人，他們在以下的文章中慷慨地分享了自己旅程的成果。

神操不僅僅促進個人的靈性成長。雅各伯·漢維神父（James Hanvey）負責支援全球耶穌會的牧靈工作和靈修，特別是關注神操的事工，他為我們引出神操的一些政治和文化含義。通過檢視《原則與基礎》及《兩旗默想》，漢維神父為我們解答了，或者更確切地說，是提出一個挑戰：為什麼要進行神操？其中利害攸關的是甚麼？

《原則與基礎》提醒我們，我們是屬於天主的。這就是我們超越的目的和價值，因此人與萬物的關係是相對的。當我們擺脫了那些向我們承諾絕對自由的虛假偶像，我們開始認識到我們的自由是有限的，但也是「蒙恩寵的」。「首先我們依賴天主，然後依賴團體和整個受造物。」這種相互依賴的關係意味著「我們有責任為他人的利益負責，並幫助他們走向天主。」漢維神父這樣解釋：我們「蒙恩寵的自由」，雖然處於「人類有限且受壓的現實」中，但因著基督的復活而轉化。這讓我們有機會參與天主的救贖計劃。

辨別與選擇攸關。依漢維神父的說法：「基督是不可避免的決定時刻，出現在總是具有歷史和存在現實的『危機』時刻。」在文章的第二部分，他將《兩旗默想》作為揭示邪惡策略（尤其在我們當代）的詮釋關鍵。辨別不僅僅是一個「工具」，而是一

個「使徒時刻」。當我們允許自己與基督一起變得貧窮、被鄙視和謙卑時，辨別可就是徹底的實踐。如果我們在日常生活中過著耶穌道成肉身的生活，我們會怎樣選擇？我們會否遵循耶穌拒絕暴力和犧牲受害者的「修和實踐」，從而加入十字架的奇妙救贖工程？漢維神父繼續問道，如果我們可以制定優先以考慮當代窮人（*anawim*）、無權者和被邊緣化、經濟和文化被剝奪者的福祉為價值指引的社會、經濟和教育政策，這意味什麼？漢維神父提醒我們：整個神操的動力是「在」歷史中的一個深刻的、變革之旅。被轉化就是作為基督的同伴再次被派到世界上去，在歷史中創造一個新的空間，一種新的可能性。

「依納爵靈修其中最獨特之處是開啟對所有事物、所有受造物愛的凝視，而這由對祈禱者的慈悲和無條件的接受開始。」為了解這種靈修的起源和發展，何塞·加西亞·德卡斯特羅神父（García De Castro Valdés）帶我們穿越耶穌會的整段歷史。受神操的啟發（主要是「獲得愛情的默觀」，230-237），耶穌會士相信可以在一切事物中尋找並找到天主。因此，「耶穌會臨在不同的地方和非常多樣化的環境中，這種臨在主要以行動來解釋它的宗教經驗，她愛天主和愛鄰人的特殊方式。」

雖然依納爵·羅耀拉的經歷和他尋找上主的新方法是基礎，但初期同伴決定組建一個 *Societas*（「同伴關係」）。他們一起確認了耶穌會的使徒身份，富創意地適應各種事工，一起往遙遠的地方傳教，許多人更慷慨地用他們的生命為福音作見證；他們在政治鎮壓中倖存下來，並通過與他人合作而茁壯成長。四百八十多年來，通過團體辨別，並留意聖神的觸動，該會一直保持著一份柔軟度，繼續為依納爵靈修開闢新的維度。加西亞神父指出，

最近，借鑒耶穌會豐富的傳教傳統，「依納爵靈修回到文化幅度，作為卓有成效的使命的主要因素之一。一旦靈修進入一種文化，對話的過程就開始了。」這種靈修是發展「對話文化」的關鍵；它是一種「傾聽、向他人敞開心扉，並準備開始對話以創造更美好世界」的靈修。

韋沐天神父（Monty Williams）以愛的告白或宣認開啓他的文章。作為一位經驗豐富的神操導師，他提出這樣的洞見：不是我們對天主懷有渴望，而更根本的是，我們受造為對天主的渴望。然而，我們「對這份與上主的首要關係懷著一種矛盾心理——我們既被這種親密關係所吸引，又對這種關係猶豫不決」，這份矛盾也使我們的辨別變得複雜。

韋神父用了一個空間隱喻來追溯那貫通神操四週（四階段）的渴望動力——這空間是經由日常步行，而非由一個規條繪製的城市所建構。愛的旅程不是線性的。的確，每個階段的神慰都會成為我們進入後續層次的辨別障礙。從第一階段自我封閉的安全開始，原來被愛的發現揭示了將我們束縛在恐懼中的虛幻。「我們讓與耶穌的活生生的關係，而不是習以為是對真理的文化和智力的理解，即自己的偏執，成為我們辨別的基礎」（第二階段）。正如基督在第一階段的靈性親密體驗中一直在我們身邊，我們被要求以世界不認識自己的方式去認識世界（第三階段）。最後，我們達到了一種滿足於默觀天主的被動狀態，但同時也是對「創造力的呼喚，這種創造力在與其他人的分裂及疏離中建立團體」。韋神父稱這為行動中的默觀。

在文章的最後一部分，韋神父對比了自戀（恐懼）和自我超越（愛）的動力。恐懼的力量在今天許多地方都很嚴峻。韋神父

的忠告值得我們注意：「在我們辨別之前，無論是關於我們該做什麼，或是該如何理解我們生活的處境，我們有必要發展與天主的親密關係，這是我們的主要關係。如果沒有這關係，我們就會誤解我們所有的處境，無論是神聖的和世俗的。」

以辨別為關鍵，多瑪斯·謝爾曼神父（Thomas P. Sherman）仔細研究了兩部經典文本，即聖依納爵的《神操》和老子的《道德經》，作為亞里士多德所指的幸福生活的實用指南。謝爾曼神父回顧了依納爵關於第一週和第二週辨別神類的規則，以表明「如果辨別神類確實是一種把生活方式的選擇（或退省者的任何重要決定）確定為切合天主旨意的方法，主觀的神慰體驗……必須包括教會信仰的客觀標準。」「退省者在選擇一種生活方式或行為時，不僅必須參考自己對神類的主觀體驗，而且最終這種選擇必須至少符合信仰團體所理解的基督的生活。」謝爾曼神父建議，正是出於這個原因，依納爵將選擇界定為在教會合法的範圍內（170-174，cf. 189），並用一個附錄結束神操，題為：「與教會一起思考的規則（352-370）。」

《道德經》雖然不是宗教典籍，但它衡量一個人與道的關係：「上士聞道，勤而行之，中士聞道，若存若亡，下士聞道，大笑之（41）。」謝爾曼神父將《道德經》作為辨別的指南，因為「生活得有德性，也知道自己這樣生活，要求聖人不僅要認知自己內心平靜與和諧的體驗作為標準，而且還要認識到那符合與大自然的真正（而不是表面上的）和諧並能促進人類社會和諧的客觀標準。」他舉了戰爭的例子。「師之所處，荊棘生焉」（30）。暴力違背道性，聖人自然避而遠之。文中接著說：「善者果而已矣不敢以取強，果而勿矜果而勿伐」。這節經文暗示聖人認識到



形勢迫使他去戰鬥。這認識的前提是他對局勢作了評估和做了拿起武器的選擇。聖人可以根據什麼標準來選擇？他內心平靜與和諧的經歷似乎無法為選擇採取行動或不採取行動提供任何理由。但這節經文暗示聖人確實選擇拿起武器，而他的選擇符合道。通過研究《道德經》中的類似例子，謝爾曼神父總結道：「我們從這兩部作品中了解到，如果我們要生活得有德性，並且知道自己是這樣生活，我們需要做的辨別不僅基於自我辯解的經驗（即神慰或內心的平靜與和諧），而且是基於客觀，或自我超越的標準。」

張淑芬博士引用依納爵神操第一條：「任何準備整理靈魂，驅除邪情，好能認清天主的聖意，以便調整自己的生活……也都叫『神操』。」她指出，特別是對於女性來說，這種錯亂的傾向，往往歸因於社會結構。在男權社會中，人們將天主視為男性統治者，「罪應被理解為對天上皇權的反叛行為」。然而，女人的罪不在於驕傲和自以為是，而是在於自我懷疑、膽怯、無力感，甚至是自我憎恨的罪。一個女性主義的靈修指導者「可能會鼓勵女性承擔責任和決策的角色，而不是探索驕傲的事例」。

張博士大量引用女性主義文本和學者。例如，心理學家卡羅爾·吉利根（Carol Gilligan）發現，當男性使用抽象的規則或原則來做決定時，女性似乎將道德問題視為「責任和關係的衝突而不是權利衝突」引起的問題。她認為，女性在做出道德決定時始終將人際關係和個人責任作為主要參考。韋爾斯利學院斯通輔導服務中心的理論家斷言，女性自我的發展是一種「關係中的自我」，而不是埃里克·埃里克森（Erik Erikson）提出的「分離-個體化」模型。一般而言，女性不會在一份連繫中感到受威脅，而是藉此

機會建構和發展自我。因此，準備靈魂，驅除錯亂的偏情意味著更新女性與天主的關係中的自我。

張博士在四週的神操中展示了相互參與、相互同情和相互賦權的動態。她的結論是，女性主義的神操陪伴者應該意識到退省者的性心理發展，調整神操中的男性化語言，以促進交互主體性的成長。天主的慈悲不是恢復神的恩惠，而是一種同理心的賦權。莫琳·阿格勒 (Maureen Aggeler) 的一句話總結了女性的這一旅程：「自由意味著『她的位格是她自己的』。她自由、獨自的代價意味著儘管她是一個在關係中的人，但只有她可以或必須為自己的所見所聞負責。」

董澤龍神父理解第一個原則與基礎的含義之一，是在一個人的內心和靈修生活中保持對立動態的張力，以達致平心對待世上的一切事物。因此，靈修指導的主要意義和功能是通過靈修導師的幫助，承認並處理一個人在生活經驗和祈禱中的這種張力，從而達到愈顯主榮的內在自由。

以這種張力為範式，他認為它普遍存在於靈修指導的過程以及指導者與退省者之間的關係中。他舉例說明五種可能的張力，即沉默對比交談、情感相對理性、世俗生活對比靈修體驗、完全接受對比跟隨教會訓導、人的努力對比天主的恩寵。正如朗尼根的超驗方法所暗示的那樣，提高對這一現實的意識對於在靈修指導的服務中相互的真我體認至關重要。

依納爵靈修是通往真實性的旅程。但並非所有的渴求都是真實的。在她的文章中，思維靜院培育主任羅家慧女士闡明了朗尼根 (Bernard Lonergan) 的認知理論如何成為一個有用的框架，來陪伴避靜者的旅程，一個通過連串的皈依 (宗教、道德、智力和

心理) 到達真實性的旅程。根據朗尼根的說法, 只有在自主的人類主體中, 經驗、理解、判斷和抉擇的自我超越階段才能發生。真實的主體遵循超驗指令 (transcendental precepts) 實踐留心、聰敏、合理、負責。當一個人從偏見和自我陶醉轉變為留心經驗、明智地理解、合理地判斷、且負責任地抉擇, 就會產生皈依。

愛會激勵一個人在意識運作中遵循超驗指令, 而恐懼則會助長偏見並導致衰退。朗尼根將逃避理解和逃避責任定義為阻礙真實性持續增長並導致不真實性的偏見。靈修導師可以幫助行神操者從關注外部事件轉變為對自己內部運作的自我體認。雖然靈修導師與行神操者一起探索他們的個人經歷, 但重點不是減輕一個人的問題, 而是將經歷的人性層面解開作為祈禱的準備。羅女士認為: 「對自己有意識的臨在是對他人臨在的基礎。」

黎桂英女士注意到神經系統科學的當代發展, 並介紹了 Somatic Experiencing, 一種以身體為導向的創傷治療模式, 由彼得·萊文 (Peter Levine) 在1970年代開發, 作為在靈修指導上辨別神類的一種方法。她引用俄國出生的神經病理學家保羅·雅科夫列夫 (Paul Yakovlev) 的話, 他挑戰了自上而下的模型, 即身體的「低級」功能是由「高級」思維的大腦控制。雅科夫列夫認為, 進化上最原始的大腦結構, 即「腦幹 (稱為「爬蟲腦」) 和下視丘 (「邊緣腦」) 是「大腦的其餘部分及行為賴以合成闡述的基質。」

現代成像技術使我們能夠看到「情緒的身體地圖」——內臟中的血流; 當一個想法出現時, 或者當有一種感覺時, 哪些神經單位是如何被「激發」的。思想充滿情感。黎女士引用依納爵關於內在知識——「因為不是知道的多, 而是內心的玩味品嚐更使

人滿意」——和《神操》中的〈感官祈禱〉。有關這議題，傑瑪·西蒙茲（Gemma Simmonds）的一篇文章（〈理解感官的應用〉）可助我們加深了解。西蒙茲評論道：「西班牙語單詞 *sentir* 與英語中的 'to sense' 都同是雙關語，因為它包括心理和身體過程，但 *sentir* 是一個更廣泛的詞，包括直覺和情感。特別是在神操的第二週，感官被視為祈禱和辨別的工具。當耶穌通過自己的身體感官行事時，而我們臨在於耶穌，與他同在，我們會更深入地分享他的人性經歷和自我理解。……當我們祈禱渴望分享耶穌的感覺和感受時，這並不是因我們的思想不能帶我們再進一步……反之，當我們的感覺和情感渴望將我們帶向與理性思維不同的方向時，這對我們來說通常是混亂和模稜兩可的根源，正正是這時刻，我們需要祈禱被轉化。」對於西蒙茲來說，它證實了「基督的心意（格前 2:16）」是可靠的，它使我們能夠感受耶穌的感受，並擁有他的思維。黎女士最後以兩個案例作為總結，她使用SIBAM（感覺、圖像、行為、情感和意義），一種軀體體驗工具，來檢查神類的動態，並「在我們的活動和意識的整個範圍內檢測那通過聖神引導和光照我們的動態，以及其他影響；這些影響，如果賦予它們思想，會相反聖神的指導和光照。」

天主教研究中心是香港中文大學的一個單位，而大學是一個學術的地方（來自拉丁語 *schola*，意思是「工作的間歇，學習的閒暇；學習的談話」）。當香港耶穌會 2019 年 8 月開始贊助中大天主教研究中心，中心同時成為耶穌會在學術領域使徒工作的一部分，重點是學術、實踐和使命。「使徒」一詞的意思是「被差派為門徒」；正如我們在《耶穌會會典綱要》中所回憶的那樣，我們是一個致力於基督徒生活和教義中靈魂進步以及信仰傳播的同伴關係。

在蘇薩神父獲選為總會長後的第一次訪問中，他強調了知識的深度。他大膽地說：「我們需要了解當今世界和當今教會中正在發生的事情，以便了解信仰。」在依納爵年的開始，他繼續說道：「我們祈求在我們的日常生活使命中真正改變的恩典」；「在基督內得見嶄新的一切」。我們希望本期關於神操及依納爵靈修指導的文章能夠引發對話，甚至與同事和所有善心的人合作，這將有助於我們辨別各自的人生使命：

我們傳播的知識和理解，它們是否揭示了所有存在物的美和真理？我們所學到的知識會否改變關係和社會結構，使那些尊嚴受到侵犯的人能夠自由地茁壯成長並為大眾公益做出貢獻？我們會否去設計從地方到全球層面的治理體系——基於輔助原則、透明度和衝突解決——這樣我們孩子的孩子的生活可以持續？

我們正踏上朝聖之旅去辨別和實踐四項普世性使徒優先：

- 一. 通過神操及分辨，揭示邁向天主之路；
- 二. 在修和及正義的使命中，與窮人、被世界遺棄者、其尊嚴受侵犯者同行；
- 三. 陪同年輕人創建充滿希望的未來；
- 四. 攜手照顧我們的共同家園。

你願意加入我們的靈性和知性之旅嗎？

董澤龍神父

Spiritual Exercises and Ignatian Spiritual Direction  
in Contemporary Times

〈神操與依納爵靈修指導的當代實踐〉

## **Some Political and Cultural Implications of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola**

James Hanvey, SJ

**Abstract:** As one of the great spiritual classics of early modern Catholicism, the *Spiritual Exercises* is a generative text of political as well as theological discourse, shaping early modern as well as contemporary culture. This paper aims, firstly, to identify key features which will help us appreciate the way in which the *Spiritual Exercises* are significant for our social and cultural agency and can serve as a theological-spiritual hermeneutic for judging political and cultural systems. Secondly, it will suggest that while the Exercises are intended for the conversion and liberation of our freedom, they also intend that this freedom be placed at the disposal of God's salvific purpose. The paper focuses on two sites: (a) the Principle and Foundation which represents the recovery of "the self" and the ordering of our freedom, and (b) the Two Standards where the discernment of spirits serves to unmask the strategies of Evil. Discernment is an act of faith. Choosing and surrendering to the incomprehensible wisdom of the Cross (to be "thought worthless and a fool for Christ") follows the resurrection into a Christological freedom that is realized in obedience and abandonment to the Divine salvific will. It is an operant freedom in history which has redemptive power. The whole dynamic of the Exercises is a profound, transformational journey "in" history. To be transformed is to be sent into the world again as a companion of Christ

to create a new space, a new possibility within history. In this sense, the paper seeks to develop Hugo Rahner’s insight that Ignatius offers us an apostolic mysticism which is not without political and cultural implications.

**Keywords:** apostolic, Christ, cross, discernment, freedom, history, Ignatius, Principle and Foundation, redemptive, Spiritual Exercises, Two Standards

### **Introduction: The Significance of a Text**

We do not normally think of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius as a political text. Yet Quentin Skinner, a Cambridge historian of political ideas, usefully and insightfully reminds us that key political texts are also interventions in the politics of their time. They have a “performativity” which makes them generative texts in political discourse long after their composition.<sup>1</sup> We can see this with seminal secular texts like Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx or Hegel. The principal scriptural texts of Judeo-Christianity have remained a constant source of political as well as theological discourse, shaping

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<sup>1</sup> Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics. Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge Core, 2002). For Skinner’s defence of his method, cf. Chapter 6, and for an insightful examination of the way through texts’ vocabulary and rhetoric change, cf. Chapter 10. Both have implications for the way we come to understand our “use” and understanding of the *Spiritual Exercises*. For a brief but indicative survey of the construction of Ignatian Spirituality, cf. John W. O’Malley SJ & Timothy W. O’Brien SJ, “The Twentieth-Century Construction of Ignatian Spirituality: A Sketch,” *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 52, no. 3 (Autumn 2020).



ancient as well as contemporary culture.<sup>2</sup> The text of the *Spiritual Exercises* ranks as one of the great classics among the spiritual texts of early modern Catholicism, but it is not a politically innocent text. Although it develops from the primary experience of Ignatius at Manresa, it is also marked by the different religio-political circumstances of his time which influenced its language and constructions. It is not difficult to find traces of this in the formulation of the “Call of the King” and the Two Standards. Not only do these draw upon scriptural eschatological imagery, but they are also clearly marked by memory of the medieval courtly heraldic ideal and the crusades against the “infidel” to recover Spain for Christianity. The more subtle religious and ecclesiastical “political” dimension of the text is Ignatius’ careful and persistent attention to anything which might support the charge of Illuminism.<sup>3</sup> There is also the latter introduction of the “Rules for Thinking with the Church” and perhaps the most radical premise of all: “that God deals directly with the human person” which, in the highly charged situation of a growing Protestant Reformation, could be interpreted as dispensing with priests

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. N.T Wright’s essay on Paul and Empire in *The Blackwell Companion to Paul*, ed. Stephen Westerhold (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2011). Cf. also: Krister Stendahl and Richard A. Horsley, *Paul and Politics: Ekklesia, Israel, Imperium, Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (Harrisburg, PA: Bloomsbury Collections, Trinity Press International, 2000).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Moshe Sluhovsky, “St. Ignatius of Loyola’s Spiritual Exercises and Their Contribution to Modern Introspective Subjectivity,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 99, no. 4 (2013). Sluhovsky argues that Ignatius introduced a number of technical changes to the late medieval tradition of undertaking spiritual exercises, which significantly widened the retreatant’s control over his or her spiritual growth and the access of the laity to spiritual exercises and introspective techniques. However, this “democratizing impulse” also ignited questions among conservative theologians who saw resemblances between Ignatius’s *Spiritual Exercises* and *Alumbradismo*. This led to a dramatic curtailment of the Exercises’ “democratic” potential in the last years of the sixteenth century.

and the sacramental mediation of the Church. Whatever one’s judgment about Dominique Bertrand’s method of “sociodoxie,” his work makes a very powerful case for the “politique” of Ignatius and the early Society.<sup>4</sup> Ignatius certainly understood the social and political world in which he lived. The Exercises are neither a neutral nor a purely private spiritual text.<sup>5</sup> They actively work to re-order desires and values leading to the experience of the *Contemplatio*.<sup>6</sup> They contain a powerful vision of the world as a *theatrum gloria Dei*. The text itself aims at the transformation of human agency and, therefore, it aims to significantly shape political and social agency as well. In more recent times, the work of Ignacio Ellacuría, especially his notes on the historico-politico dimension of the *Spiritual Exercises*, brings this dimension of the Exercises to the fore.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> D. Bertrand, *La Politique de Saint Ignace de Loyola: L'analyse Sociale* (Paris: Éditions Du Cerf, 1985), 640 ff. For the political and theological disputes while Ignatius and the companions were students in Paris and how they sought to navigate them, cf. Philippe Lécrivain, *Paris au Temps d'Ignace de Loyola (1528-1535)* (Paris: Editions Facultés Jésuites de Paris, 2006). Also useful for context, cf. Quintín Aldea Vaquero, *Ignacio de Loyola en la Gran Crisis del Siglo XVI: Congreso Internacional de Historia, Madrid, 19-21 Noviembre de 1991*, Bilbao: Colección Manresa, 11, Santander, 1993.

<sup>5</sup> This is carefully mapped in the second part of Bertrand’s work: “Une Lecture Active de La Société: Le VIF des Relations,” pp.127 ff.

<sup>6</sup> *Contemplación para Alcanzar Amor*. Sp Ex §230-237. It is the concluding and summative contemplation of the Exercises and many commentators regard it as the definitive disposition of Ignatian mysticism and vision of a God-filled reality.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Ignacio Ellacuría, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius,” *Spiritus* 10, no. 2 (2010): 205–42 (trans. by J. Matthew Ashley). Cf. also Ashley’s article on the translation in the same issue of *Spiritus*: “A Contemplative under the Standard of Christ.” Also, Oscar Arango Alzate and Orlando Solano Pinzón: “La Espiritualidad en Ignacio Ellacuría,” *Theologica Xaveriana* 66, no. 181 (2016): 123-145. For a useful introduction to the philosophical and theological thought of Ellacuría, cf. Kevin F. Burke, *The Ground Beneath the Cross: The Theology of Ignacio Ellacuría* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000), esp.

The intention of this paper is not to undertake a comprehensive exploration of the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* and its political implications. The aim is twofold: firstly, to identify key features which will help us appreciate the way in which the *Spiritual Exercises* are significant for our social and cultural agency and can serve as a theological-spiritual hermeneutic for judging political and cultural systems. Secondly, it will suggest that we do the Exercises a disservice if we confine them purely to the growth of an individual spiritual subject. They certainly are intended for the conversion and liberation of our freedom, but they also intend that this freedom is placed at the disposal of God's salvific purpose. In so far as the Exercises always direct us to an encounter with a God "working in all things," they do not allow us to flee from the world. Rather, they encourage us to become active apostles of Christ and his kingdom within it. The Exercises do not propose any particular political or social system, but offer us a way of discerning the principles and values that should guide our actions and the means that best serve us and our neighbor to attain our ends.

The two "sites" of the text of the Exercises which I think can most directly and economically illustrate my thesis are (a) the *Principle and Foundation* which represents the recovery of "the self" and the ordering of our freedom, and (b) the Two Standards and the unmasking of the strategies of Evil. I shall argue that they cannot be separated from the Cross (Third Week) which grounds the counter-strategy of a redeemed, cruciform freedom. What distinguishes this

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Chapter 3, pp.85ff and Chapter 4 on theological method. Cf. also Andrew Prevot, "Ignatian Spirituality, Political Effectiveness, and Spiritual Discernment: Dean Brackley's Account of Liberation Theology," *Political Theology: The Journal of Christian Socialism* 18, no. 4 (2017): pp. 309–324.

from the freedom recovered through the grace of the crucified Christ in the First Week is that it is the expression of Christological freedom realized in obedience and abandonment to the Divine salvific will. It is an operant freedom in history which has redemptive power. In the course of our exploration of each of these dimensions, I will also indicate where I believe they have contemporary political and social significance. In this sense, I seek to confirm and develop Hugo Rahner’s insight that Ignatius offers us an apostolic mysticism.<sup>8</sup>

### **1: *The Principle and Foundation*: Recovery of “Self” and the Gift of Discerning Freedom**

Although the *Principle and Foundation* (PF) came to be formulated later in the evolution of the Exercises, there is no doubt that it is central to their whole dynamic.<sup>9</sup> Not only does it act as a fundamental orientation and measure of freedom at the beginning, but it is also part of the purification of desire expressed in the preparatory prayer of every exercise. Indeed, the formula that “all my intentions, actions and operations may be ordered purely to the praise and reverence of the Divine Majesty” is a prayer which describes a whole life.<sup>10</sup> They constitute a doxological action realized in our purified and

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<sup>8</sup> Hugo Rahner, *The Spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Francis John Smith SJ (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1953).

<sup>9</sup> Santiago Arzubialde SJ, *Ejercicios espirituales de S. Ignacio: Historia y análisis*, coll. Manresa; second edition (Santander: Sal Terrae, 2009), cf. 111-124.

<sup>10</sup> Sp Ex §46. Cf. The clarifying note for “acciones” and “operaciones” in *Ignacio de Loyola: Ejercicios Espirituales: Introcción, texto, notas, y vocabulario*, ed. Cadido de Dalmases SJ (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1987). Cf. also *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana* (2 vols.), ed. José García de Castro et al. (Bilbao: Mensajero/Sal Terrae, 2007. Cf. vol 2: 1490-1497; 1377-1378.

liberated freedom expressed in and through the service of humanity and of creation. They capture the soteriological doxology of Christ's person and life which the graced life of the Holy Spirit realized in us.<sup>11</sup>

Three important features of the PF are relevant for our discussion: firstly, the human subject is set within a relationship to God which defines the origin and telos of a human life. It is a relationship in which all other goods are relativised in the light of this supreme good: “to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his (sic) soul.” Secondly, the PF establishes the criterion by which we can judge our proper use of these goods “in so far as they help” towards our end. This is also the measure of our freedom in relation to all created things and to God. Thirdly, the PF effectively maps the drama of our personal history which can also be expanded to frame all human history. In this respect, Ignatius condenses into a principle the drama of human freedom identified by Augustine as the relationship between *uti* (use) and *frui* (enjoyment).<sup>12</sup> Although its form is almost syllogistic, the PF is far from being a rationalist or voluntarist charter. If anything, it sets out the whole purpose of the Exercises upon which the exercitant is about to embark. It marks a central locus in grasping the subtle interplay between human nature and God's salvific will at work, not only in each individual, but within the sweep of history itself.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Ignacio Ellacuría, “A Latin American Reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius,” *Spiritus* 10, no. 2 (2010): 212, who argues against the spiritualist, voluntarist and materialist reading to ground the PF in the salvific work of Christ.

<sup>12</sup> For one of Augustine's most succinct treatments, cf. his homilies on I John, esp. Second Homily §7-14. Cf. also the still helpful discussion in John Burnaby, *Amor Dei: A Study of the Religion of St. Augustine*, first edition: 1938, (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007), 104-110.

As formulated and presented, the PF serves to interrogate the understanding we have of our freedom and how it is exercised. It also alerts us to the intimate relationship between the self and freedom. It pushes us to a deeper reflection of the desires which motivate us and direct our agency, both the desires we might rationally and publicly profess as well as those that are not so readily (or willingly) recognized. The PF presents us with a challenging clarity: if we truly desire the end proposed, we will enter into the school of the Exercises. We will allow ourselves to be taught by God in order to receive the gift of a loving freedom to serve in whatever state we are called. This is a freedom which Ignatius regards as “indifference.” It is not a neutrality or a lack of commitment; rather, it is a readiness for whatever might be asked of us, which is to God’s glory and the help of our neighbor. This “indifference” or freedom is the condition for discerning.<sup>13</sup>

The PF is a universal principle in the sense that it is operative whatever our circumstances, status, or abilities. The freedom which it puts before us is “*sola dei gloria*” and this will relativize all political and social claims to which we may be either attracted or subject. It places them in a new framework of value.

It would be a mistake to think that the PF proposes a purely instrumental “use” of created things – even human beings. Rather, as with Augustine, it is inviting us to attend to their proper “use,” which entails an appreciation of their own intrinsic value. It is a refusal to idealize or fetishize them as sources of our lasting happiness, our

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<sup>13</sup> For a brief treatment of this important and often misunderstood disposition, cf. *Diccionario*, 1495–1496 §6. Also, cf. the entry with bibliography of useful commentaries, “Indiferencia,” *Diccionario*, 1015–1021. The freedom which is ready for service already presupposes that we love Christ and are willing to choose whatever state of life or way of living that will be of greater service to him. “Indifference” already presupposes this real “affective commitment.”

“*fruition*,” which constitutes an instrumentalizing approach. The world is given in the sense of “being there” and in the sense of gift. To inhabit it and use it well is to live conscious of our relational dependence, which refuses to make it into some sort of “god” or exploit its “givenness” as a resource to which and for which we have no responsibilities. Our epistemological, moral and spiritual task is to see and respond to it in its own proper order. This entails an obligation to understand, respect and value the created order as something in its own right, possessing its own telos and value which cannot be reduced to our need or use. *Gaudium et Spes* captures this well when it says, “For by the very circumstance of their having been created, all things are endowed with their own stability, truth, goodness, proper laws and order.”<sup>14</sup> Creation has its own intrinsic goodness and this imposes obligations upon us; we have a moral relationship to all created things.<sup>15</sup> When we consider the role creation plays in the *Spiritual Exercises*, especially in the First Week (§55) and the *Contemplatio* (§230), we see it has a soteriological purpose. If creation is the enduring witness of God’s providential love for us, witnessing to this love even while we continue to reject it through our sinfulness, then, in some way, creation participates in our destiny. Creation remains an enduring reason for an outpouring of our gratitude. Gratitude is both an affective relationship as well as a moral one in which a gift is recognized, received and cherished, not only because of the giver but

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<sup>14</sup> §36. This is part of an argument for the proper autonomy of scientific investigation on the one hand, and the harmony between science and faith on the other.

<sup>15</sup> In this regard, our care of creation is to imitate the Creator, which extends beyond a narrow sense of stewardship as conservation and preservation. For a fuller discussion, cf. Willis Jenkins, *Ecologies of Grace: Environmental Ethics and Christian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008).

also for itself. Gratitude is the characteristic mark of someone who lives in the right disposition of all created things; it is a sign of a redeemed relationship towards God, neighbor and creation. If we live in the grace of gratitude, we cannot exploit or instrumentalize another. In this context, gratitude is more than thankfulness. It is the dynamic dilation of one’s whole self in openness to creation and its Creator. It heightens our awareness of our relationality, which takes active expression in generosity: the disposition of the self to the care and service of the other. When the soul is flooded with gratitude, not only is it more open to God, but it is disposed to the Divine will. Gratitude points us towards the sanctifying dimension of mission which every Christian has with regard to creation.<sup>16</sup> Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the ecological implications of this vision contained within the *Spiritual Exercises*, we can begin to see the radical personal, political and economic outcomes that such a vision will entail.

If the PF locates us as an active self within a nexus of dynamic and intersecting relationships, its sparse, succinct “scholastic” language can easily hide its multidimensionality and the process of “conversion” and transformation that it describes. All these dimensions will come into play as the PF unfolds throughout the dynamic of the Exercises. Our relationship with God and with others which takes place with the whole created order of the finite can conceal the deeper dynamic which marks all our relationships.

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<sup>16</sup> “Stewardship” has now become a contested term in ecological discourse. Within scripture, stewardship is not domination or subjection but the ways in which humans are called upon to imitate the Divine stewardship of care. Cf. James Hanvey, “Laudato Si’ and the Renewal of Theologies of Creation,” *Heythrop Journal* 59, no. 6 (2018): 1022–1035.



Although the central axis of mediation is always the individual's personal relationship of encounter with Christ, this dynamic in which and through which our lives are played out takes place in the transcendent reality of the salvific activity of the Triune life and the imminent realities of our "now" or our "situatedness." In the course of the Exercises, the self becomes transparent to itself in the course of loving God which, for Ignatius, is always expressed in the desire for ever greater service. It is the movement which St Paul articulates in I Cor 13:12 and it is both noetic and affective. The Exercises do not know a Cartesian self or self-knowledge. It is always a self-in-relation. This, too, has its own characteristic knowledge, for the self knows itself in so much as it knows how much it is in need of redemption. Hence, the deeper this awareness, the more we see that we cannot separate ourselves from Christ: the knowledge of self will depend on our knowledge of Christ. In knowing Christ, we cannot separate the cognitive from the affective. As in John's Gospel, knowledge of Christ comes through love. Indeed, the more we love Christ, the more we know him and our world through his love. Here, the Exercises lead us into the central mystery of revelation: all Christian gnosis comes by way of the Cross. "Conversion," which is the process by which we appropriate this "gnosis," is a recovery and reordering or reconstruction (conversion) of the self. Just as there is no distinction in Christ between his person and his mission, so the Exercises gradually re-form us in the grace of this Christ-like integrity. Hence, we will experience a desire to participate in his mission of establishing the Kingdom of God. The "self" that emerges from the Exercises has discovered that "to praise, reverence and serve" are not only active verbs that apply at the individual level, but they encompass the whole Divine purpose of "working the redemption of the human race" (§107).

The relationship with all created things, established in the PF, is disclosed as mission. We come to see that the way of our salvation, and becoming more completely who we are, must be through Christ and the service of others; through working for the salvation of the other, we enact the freedom of our graced self. It is now possible to see that the whole dynamic of the PF, which leads us into the mystery of Christ and whose end cannot be realized without him, will have significant cultural and political consequences in practice.

### **The Political Implications of the PF**

Firstly, if we genuinely love Christ and seek our own salvation, we cannot avoid history or society. Indeed, we are firmly located in and committed to the salvific good of all creation. We are reconstituted in Christ as soteriological agents: an agency which is worked out in the unpredictability of “times, places, circumstances.” For this reason, “discernment” is integral to our graced freedom and agency.

Secondly, location of the self in both transcendent and the temporal relationships with all created things means that St Ignatius recovers two vital dimensions for our understanding of the human person and his or her agency. In this respect, the Exercises represent an authentic Christian anthropology in which the person lives in a relational transcendence to God which is foundational for the imminent relationship with all other things.<sup>17</sup> It holds our relationship with

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<sup>17</sup> It is important to understand that these are not opposing relationships. There is a certain dynamic mutuality without collapsing one into the other. Ultimately, they disclose the character of finitude which is disclosed in the absolute and irreducible transcendence of God. In this sense, there is a certain

human society and creation in their most dynamic and creative order, while providing a barrier to any reductionism. Where humans are understood purely in material terms, not only is their moral responsibility to all created things compromised, but they themselves are exposed to instrumentalization. Value becomes determined by use and utility; in turn, this becomes subject to political, economic and social power, now liberated from any responsibility to “the human.”

The most egregious examples of this can be seen with slavery and the politico-social creation of classes and castes, which then subsequently determine access to legal protection and rights. Narratives are developed to legitimate these creations and de-humanize those placed in the categories. We can see this happening in history, especially through the power dynamics of colonization and empire, but it continues today with the Rohingyas, Yazidis, Uyghurs, indigenous peoples, and Tribals.

Instrumentalization and reductionism can also take place within societies where particular “identities”—sexual, social, economic, cultural—can be re-narrated so as to degrade value and make violence or policies of elimination appear necessary and virtuous. Neither the State nor the law (national or international) have the stability to be keepers of the human soul, for neither have any intrinsic commitment to transcendence. Yet, this transcendence, which grounds the non-reducibility of the human person and their freedom, can still be seen

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“Chalcedonian” analogy. It is only in their relationship that we can grasp them. However, the transcendent does not simply find expression in relation to God, but also in relation to all created things. They represent “the other,” which cannot be absorbed but stands as the condition and point of our own particularity on the one hand and opens up the space “beyond” us on the other. This means that “the other,” even when an apparent threat, is integral to our own identity and becoming.

even in the secular world, or where God is not explicitly acknowledged and may even be denied. It is exercised as conscience, which is recognized through the respect that is given to it even when it is seen as dangerous or inconvenient.

For the Ignatian Exercises, the ultimate guarantor of humanity is the absoluteness of God. Christianity not only maintains the absolute transcendence of trinitarian monotheism but, with the Incarnation of Christ, it refuses to allow this to be used to diminish or degrade the value of the human person. God’s decision to create that which is not God and, even more radically, to be involved in the history of creation opens up the uniqueness of the Judeo-Christian faith. It embeds human freedom in the Divine freedom and preserves the experience of God as liberator not oppressor. This radical freedom of God—which is God’s own aseity and transcendence—ultimately subverts any attempts to turn God into a product of the State or the dominant power group. The whole testimony of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament is a witness to this. The PF is a condensed statement of this history in which it is grounded. In stating the transcendent purpose of the human person, it relativizes all other claims. It also reminds us that we belong to God and are of infinite value to God, a value which is realized and secured in Christ. This transcendent value and, indeed, the transcendent destiny of our whole self (material, spiritual, historical) is realized in Christ’s resurrection. For this reason, we should understand the “telos” described in the PF as containing an eschatology.

### **The Gift of Finite Freedom for Transcendence**

The absoluteness of God and our transcendent destiny is not a hidden strategy for a theocratic state. That would be just as oppressive

and idolatrous as any secular absolutism. There are two dimensions to God's absoluteness, which makes it more than a religious assertion of Divinity. If it were only this then, politically and socially, it would become another power game within a secular order. Firstly, in Christian terms, God's absolute transcendence marks the boundary between the finite and infinite. It ensures that "God" can never be confused with the created order and, therefore, can never be made into an idol. Idols are not a self-creation; they are always the "product of human hands."<sup>18</sup> If God's absoluteness marks the irreducible nature of the finite precisely as finite, it does not necessarily pose a barrier to it. Indeed, the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation maintains the opposite. Chalcedon's insight into the relation between the two natures in Christ is a paradigm for the way in which the finite (human) is realized in its relationship to the Divine.<sup>19</sup>

Secondly, if the "telos" of the person is God and participation in the Divine life, then God has bestowed an inestimable value upon the person. This is not dependent in any way upon his or her capacity, gifts, status or physical form. Moreover, each one has a unique vocation to God as their end, which cannot be assimilated to historical achievements or recognition. If God is the absolute of a person's life, then, as we have seen, all other claims are relativized. Consequently,

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<sup>18</sup> In this sense, Ps. 135, vv. 16–18 speaks for the whole of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Karl Rahner, *Ignatius of Loyola*, ed. Paul Imhof; trans. Rosaleen Ockenden (London: Collins, 1979), 13-15. For Rahner, the Exercises are about the disclosure of God's freedom, which disposes our lives precisely through the recovery of our own freedom in Christ. The interplay of finite and infinite freedoms is also explored by Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-drama: Theological Dramatic Theory. Vol. 1: Prolegomena*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius, 1988). B/4. Cf. also: *Theo-drama: Theological Dramatic Theory. Vol. 2, The Dramatis Personae: Man in God, B/II*.

the order expressed in the PF ensures the proper ordering of relations between the person and the community, the community and the State.<sup>20</sup> Yet, this is not the assertion of an absolute individuality which risks confusing itself with God’s absoluteness. The PF encapsulates the radical nature of the person’s transcendent value, but it also articulates their dependence: first upon God and then upon the community and the whole of creation. As we have seen, this relational inter-dependency is the mark of finitude.<sup>21</sup> It not only characterizes our freedom but entails responsibilities; we are responsible for the good of the other and assisting their movement towards God. In this, it opens the way to the primary insight of the Christian tradition on the primacy of “charity.”

### **Responsible Freedom for Others**

To exercise this responsibility ensures that I cannot instrumentalize the other to fulfil my own desires or will. This

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<sup>20</sup> From within the Protestant world, there is the important example of the prophetic *Barmer Theologische Erklärung* (1934), a document adopted by Protestant Christians in Nazi Germany who opposed the *Deutsche Christen*, which they regarded as making the Church subservient to the Nazi state. It also entails the rejection of any form of racism. On this question, cf. the impact of the Barmen Kairos Theologians: *The Kairos Document: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa*, 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. (London: Catholic Institute for International Relations, British Council of Churches, 1986). Cf. also Robert A. Cathey, “What Can the Barmen Declaration Teach Us Today?” in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 36, no. 2 (2009). For a review of the complexities facing the Catholic position, cf. Frank J. Coppa, “Pope Pius XI’s ‘Encyclical’ *Humani Generis Unitas* Against Racism and Anti-Semitism and the “Silence” of Pope Pius XII,” *A Journal of Church and State* 40, no. 4 (1998): 775-95. Also cf. Frank J. Coppa, *Politics and the Papacy in the Modern World* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008), esp. chapters 6-8.

<sup>21</sup> For a recent exploration of inter-dependency, cf. Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (London: Duckworth, 2009).

responsibility also lies with the community and the State. In ways appropriate to each, there is a commitment to respect the intrinsic transcendent value of each person, whatever their status or condition. Equally, there is also a commitment to provide those resources necessary for each person to realize their dignity and “mission” for the greater good. When the person acts in accord with their constitution in seeking God, they are living the genuine good within them. If the good is self-diffusive (*bonum diffusivum sui*), the person will also want to share and create this good. This is another dimension of our agency, especially when that goodness is elevated by grace.

It is in this context that we can understand how discernment is a necessary practice for spiritual growth and must become a habitual practice in the exercise of our freedom, especially in our relationships and their growth in goodness. The “redemption” or “healing” of freedom in the Exercises will also act as a critique of the dominant contemporary equation of freedom with autonomy.<sup>22</sup>

Autonomy as the unrestricted and independent exercise of personal will has become deeply embedded in our western culture. When accepted as an absolute value which underpins “freedom of choice,” the exercise of agency and therefore of political status, it can be double-edged. On the one hand, it can be instrumentalizing and, on the other, it can leave us open to exploitation. It undermines the responsibilities of interdependencies and mutual relationalities. Only God can have the absolute freedom that autonomy sets as the human goal. To be finite is to recognize our interdependent relationality. To

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<sup>22</sup> For an extensive discussion of the relationship between freedom and discernment within the theology of liberation and doxology, cf. Andrew L. Prevot, *Thinking Prayer: Theology and Spirituality amid the Crises of Modernity* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame UP, 2015): esp. chapter 5.

attempt to circumvent it can result in a profound alienation and a distortion of our social realities. As the alternative to this, the PF and the Exercises which follow firmly locate us within the finite. However, we come to understand that this does not diminish or restrict us. Rather, it becomes the realm in which we encounter our capacity for self-transcendence and the responsibilities we have to the other. Here, the finite becomes the condition of realising our potential for freedom which not only serves our own flourishing but is generative of community. In other words, the PF envisages us exercising our freedom in love and gratitude towards God and all created things. Dependency is not seen as a restriction of our freedom but the condition of its perfection (cf. *Contemplatio*). This understanding of freedom and the way in which identity and purpose is expressed in its exercise becomes a source of our liberation from the false (idolatrous) entanglements. It is also the perspective from which we can unmask them. It will now be clear that this understanding of freedom has wide implications for all of our social, political and economic systems, especially when they purport to be the cause, guarantors, and means of our autonomy, represented by their apparent ability to offer infinite capacity for choice.<sup>23</sup> The recent thesis advanced by Eugene McCarragher makes a thoughtful and persuasive case for the way in which capitalism has become the “religion” of modernity, and a similar genealogy could be developed for other economic systems.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Joseph Veale, *Manifold Gifts: Ignatian Essays on Spirituality* (Oxford: Way Books, 2006). All of these essays are worth reading but, for this point, cf. 169–170.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Eugene McCarragher, *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2019). Cf. also Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*, New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1944; and Tim Rogan, *The Moral Economists: R.H.*



However, what emerges from our experience of living the dynamic of the PF is that the finite is the realm in which we encounter the call or pull of transcendence, which is the essence of our own journey of self-realization. Yet, there is something more which we could not have seen had we relied on its deistic logic alone. The “finite” is precisely the ground in which God in Christ has chosen to meet us. In doing so, God has guaranteed the finite creation and its capacity to mediate, to be the theater of grace. The resurrection of Christ will confirm this and open up a new understanding of the finite for us.

### **Carrying the Memory of the “Who” in the Human**

It is now possible to see how the Exercises contain a theological anthropology which does not remain at a theoretical level. It becomes a way of living and acting in the world. Every political, economic and social system contains its own anthropology. Policies, structures and decisions express values; implicitly or explicitly they put forward a vision of the human “telos,” whether that is expressed in the pursuit of happiness and self-fulfilment or as service to the greater destiny of the State or the system. Such anthropologies do not necessarily lack an

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*Tawney, Karl Polanyi, E.P. Thompson, and the Critique of Capitalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2017). For a cultural critique, cf. Isabel Capeloa Gil and Helena Gonçalves Da Silva, *The Cultural Life of Money* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2015). Echoing Tawney, cf. Benjamin M. Friedman, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York: Knopf, 2021). Like Tawney, Friedman approaches his subject from a Protestant (and mainly American) perspective which distorts his argument. He seems largely ignorant of Catholic Social Thought, especially the work of Heinrich Pesch and the social encyclicals. Cf. the work of Stefano Zamagni and Luigino Bruni on economies of altruism and reciprocity. Also cf. the encyclical of Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (2009), which substantially advances Catholic magisterial thinking on economic systems and values. Cf. Daniel K. Finn, *The True Wealth of Nations: Catholic Social Thought and Economic Life* (New York; Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010).

understanding of the interplay of immanence and transcendence. In fact, they can convert it to their own ends. John Updike once famously described America as “a vast conspiracy to make you happy.”<sup>25</sup> The conspiracy, however, goes wider and deeper than America. It is the fundamental strategy for an unredeemed political and economic system. When harnessing religion to serve their own ends or when rejecting it, a soteriological claim lies within all secular systems. In an essay entitled “The Future of Catholicism,” Jean Luc Marion identifies a crisis in the post-Cartesian construction of the self. Even though Kant is able to establish “man” (sic) as an end in himself, Marion points out the implication of this humanist principle: “By a paradoxical but inevitable reversal, this means today that everything that can claim to serve man as a final goal immediately justifies itself; man himself can become a means for man, understood as an end—state violence, biological manipulation, attacks on life *in utero*, and so on, maintain their supposed legitimacy by claiming to serve man, as an end in himself, at the risk of reducing very concrete men to the rank of simple means.”<sup>26</sup> Marion concedes that we can think of “man” as his own final goal, but this does not answer the question of “who” such a person is. He argues that one of the functions of the Church is to provide the resources for answering this question, without which the “humanum” is always in danger. The Church’s mission is “to show that God alone can give man the freedom to go back—first—to man himself, by giving him the freedom to resemble nothing less than God

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<sup>25</sup> *The New Yorker*, August 19<sup>th</sup> 1972: “How to Love America and Leave it at the Same Time.”

<sup>26</sup> Jean-Luc Marion, *Believing in Order to See: On the Rationality of Revelation and the Irrationality of Some Believers* (New York: Fordham UP, 2017): 79

himself.”<sup>27</sup> What Marion sees as the future of Catholicism is, in fact, its theological anthropology, which can both resist a destructive self-idolization and propose a re-ordering of our relations through the recognition that we are nothing but what we have received.<sup>28</sup>

As we have seen, the Exercises not only offer such a theological anthropology, but they show us a way of living it. Ultimately, this is more significant than establishing a philosophical or theological vision of humanity, no matter how coherent or appealing. If the vision cannot be realized in history, it remains another noble edifice of human reason. It may hold a vision of Christ but, if it is not incarnated into history, the reality and practice of daily life, it will remain only an aesthetic hypothetical construct. Jesus Christ is not only a historical figure; he is a living presence in history, of which he is the Lord. History is the place of encounter, transformation and transfiguration. This is why the whole dynamic of the Exercises is a profound, transformational journey “in” history into which we are now sent as servant and companion of Christ who is already active within it.<sup>29</sup> The Christian life and the Christian community not only articulate this reality, but they present it in the court of human reason. By living it, they create a new space, a new possibility within history. This possibility can only be real and sustained by the gift of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Church is not a self-founding or self-sustaining community. If that is weakness before the world, it is also a subversion of worldly powers. When the Church lives from the gift of the Holy Spirit and the presence of the Risen Lord, she and her

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 81.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. The dynamic of the Fourth Week and the *Contemplatio ad Amorem* §230 ff.

members are also empowered to live that freedom which the PF describes. Such a graced freedom which takes up the cause of the other, their dignity and hope will always be a challenge to ideology whatever form it takes or security it offers. This will be as true for religious ideologies as it is for secular and atheist ones.<sup>30</sup> The Christian life and the community of faith, the Church, which sustains it, is a space of creative hope in which humanity comes to know its destiny and is empowered to live it.

If the graced experience of the Spiritual Exercises opens up this “new possibility,” they also place us at the heart of the drama and require us to exercise the gift of freedom that we have been given. The Exercises confront us with the ultimate reality of choice: are we for Christ or not? They do not allow us the luxury of neutrality. This, too, is part of their theo-political character.

## **II: The Two Standards and the Unmasking of the Strategies of Evil**

The centrality of the Two Standards and Three Modes of Humility in the dynamic process of the Exercises is well recognized. They are also at the core of the primitive version of the Exercises, indicating their foundational nature in Ignatius’ own experience at Manresa and subsequently forming the core of the shape of the

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Andrew L. Whitehead and Samuel L. Perry, *Taking America Back for God* (New York: Oxford UP, 2020), especially the concluding chapter, 151 ff. The analysis offered of Christian nationalism as a type of ideology is also effective for all religions which have been conscripted into nationalist politics. The other dimension of this is “Political Religions” apart from the seminal work of Eric Voeglin, *Die politischen Religionen* (Wien: Bermann-Fischer Verlag, 1938); cf. Emilio Gentile, *Le Religioni della politica: Fra democrazie e totalitarismi*, (ET) *Politics as Religion*. Princeton, NJ; Oxford: Princeton UP, 2006. It is not possible within the scope of this essay to enter into how the Exercises, indeed, Christian revelation, can critique this phenomenon which is not just a modern one.

Exercises which emerge from it.<sup>31</sup> While they are certainly there to school the process of discernment and frame the election, they concentrate and encapsulate the whole dynamic of the Exercises. They also become the principal tools for the life of service to which we are called. Here, we can briefly set out its key elements.

### **1: Knowing and Living Christ**

We have already seen how the Exercises place us within the drama of history. If one of the principal graces of the First Week is the knowledge of how sin and evil can entangle us, the subsequent weeks then take us into a profound and personal knowledge of how God acts to redeem us and the world. This brings us to our “second conversion”: the person and knowledge of Christ and his mission.

We have already encountered Christ in our “first conversion”: knowledge of the abyss of sin in the world, both personal and cosmic, and our encounter with the crucified Christ who is also our redemption (§53). Only in the experience and knowledge of the First Week can we enter into the second conversion of the Second and Third Weeks, which is the way of the crucified Christ. For Ignatius, understanding or knowledge is never purely an intellectual enlightenment. It is a deeper and more complete “knowing” which engages the affect or the heart, which is a sort of attunement to the person and way of Christ. In this way, our knowing becomes praxis. For Ignatius, there is a complementarity between the activity of our reason and our affective or experiential knowledge. We can see this movement set out in the

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<sup>31</sup> For the background to the “three classes of men” (Ex § 149-157), cf. Arzubialde, 401–416, and also Andreas Falkner SJ, “Nota sobre los Binarios” in Juan Plazaola SJ, ed. *Las Fuentes De Los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio: Actas de Simposio Internacional*, Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 1998.

governing petition of the Second Week. It is formulated in the two verbs: *conocer* and *imitar*—to know and to imitate. In their respective ways, they are both conditioned by “*interno*.”<sup>32</sup> Through the contemplations of the Second Week, we are drawn into an experiential knowledge. “*Imitar*” is an integral part of this knowing. Christ is more than an “exemplar” to be imitated. Rather, the knowledge which is given is a participative knowledge; it entails the Pauline “Christ lives in me.”<sup>33</sup> Here, we see that one of the fruits of the Exercises is a profound epistemological healing and expansion: “to see all things in Christ.”<sup>34</sup> Formally, this is the indwelling activity of the Holy Spirit in the exercitant through the growth and reordering of the energies of desire and love. To be drawn into this ever deeper “*conocimiento interno*” of Christ is to be drawn into the whole salvific economy of the Incarnation, its personal and historical unfolding. Not only is this

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<sup>32</sup> For a fuller exploration, cf. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios*, 347–354. For useful, informative, concise studies, cf. *Dicc.* Vol. 1, 400–408. Still useful: cf. also, Ig. Iparraguirre, *Vocabulario*. The entry in the *Diccionario* for “*Imitar*” comes under “*imitación de Cristo*” (cf. Vol I, 994–100). This gives a useful summary of the tradition with which Ignatius would have been familiar in the devotional movements and teachings. However, it does not deal with the epistemological significance of “*imitar*” and the critical role it plays in the Two Standards.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. The Exercises on the application of the senses. These types of exercises of the senses are certainly part of the spiritual tradition before Ignatius. They become an important part of deepening the experiential knowledge of Christ. However, in the Exercises, they are also part of the school of apostolic service. They serve to renew, sensitize and educate the faculties so that they are now not only open to the world in the normal way, but are open to it as the realm of God’s activity and Christ’s presence. The whole object of the interior knowledge which we seek is to become aware of, and alert to the presence of Christ the way someone deeply and truly in love “knows” and is alert and sensitive to the one whom they love, even able to anticipate their needs and thoughts.

<sup>34</sup> We can see these at play in the three ways of making the election, §175–188. The second and third ways of making an election refer respectively to reason and affect. They should also be read with the “parable” of the three classes of men in mind §150–157.

experienced in the concrete life of Christ but, as the *Contemplatio* indicates, it is the ever-present activity of the Divine Triune love sustaining, redeeming and sanctifying throughout history, past, present and future. Whatever state of life we choose, following him cannot be done in any way. It can only be effective through a total commitment to Christ. To be clear, it will entail entering into the cruciform reality of his person – his mission *ad extra*, which is grounded *ad intra* in his obedience as Son to the Father and sealed through the Holy Spirit, “the Lord and Giver of Life.” The position of The Two Standards and Three Modes of Humility within the Second Week is important if this transformation is to be realized.

## **2: The Eschatological Drama of the Kingdom**

The Two Standards and the Three Modes concentrate and summarize the whole mission of Christ. They correctly understand it as one that is universal and eschatological. If the experience of the First week shows us that the goal of the *Principle and Foundation* is actually impossible without the salvific grace of the crucified Lord, then discernment, to be effectively exercised, must have this knowledge. To read the world and history without the crucified and Risen Christ risks making it an exercise in theistic gnosis or atheistic self-construction: knowledge which may need experience and insight but not an encounter with the revelation of Jesus Christ.

## **The Hermeneutic of History**

At first glance, the presentation of the Two Standards can appear to have the same parabolic character as The Call of the Earthly King

(§91ff) but I think they stand in a different genre.<sup>35</sup> Although it presents us with a vivid imaginary scene, the imagery of the Two Standards is deeply rooted in scripture and tradition. They open for us the way in which the advent of Christ unmasks the activity of evil and its strategies. They locate or relocate us within the immediacy of the battle for the Kingdom. Anyone who wishes to know and follow Christ will find themselves in a real conflict with the forces named in Ephesians as “powers and principalities.”<sup>36</sup> We cannot forget the knowledge of the First Week concerning the cosmic and supernatural “history” of sin and evil.<sup>37</sup> As the gospels make clear, Christ is the unavoidable moment of decision, the moment of “crisis” which always has a historical and existential reality. To treat the imagery of the Two Standards as some anachronistic device derived from the piety of a previous age that needs to be “demythologized” risks de-historicising the reality of the Kingdom in conflict with evil. In doing so, we

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios*, cf. who sees it as a parable p.395.

<sup>36</sup> Eph. 6:12. Karl Barth’s *Rechtfertigung und Recht* (1938) was one of the pioneering works in this area; *Church and State*, trans. Ronald Howe (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1939). As noted by Marva J. Dawn, Barth’s work was preceded by the works of Johann Christoph Blumhardt and Christoph Friedrich Blumhardt. See Marva J. Dawn, *Powers, Weakness, and the Tabernacling of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001): pp. 1-5; and Johann Christoph Blumhardt’s biography, as narrated by Friedrich Zuendel: *The Awakenings: One Man’s Battle with Darkness* (Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing House, 1999). For influential contemporary studies, cf. Markus Barth, *The Broken Wall: A Study of Ephesians* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 1959); and G.H.C. MacGregor, “Principalities and Powers: The Cosmic Background of Paul’s Thought” in *New Testament Studies* 1, no. 1 (1954): 17-28; and Martyn, J. Louis, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1997). An important study for Catholic theology is Heinrich Schlier, *Principalities and Powers in the New Testament* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961).

<sup>37</sup> We should note that, in doing so, they recapitulate the “history” of sin in the First Week, and they run through the same dimension: cosmic/supernatural to existential and personal. In this sense, “history” is not simply a temporal category measured only in human terms.



remove it from the realm of history to the purely personal and dis-incarnate realm of the “spiritual.” As Karl Barth argues: “To say ‘Jesus’ is necessarily to say ‘history,’ his history, the history in which he is what he is and does what he does. In this history, we know God, and we know evil and their relationship the one to the other—but only from this source and in this way.”<sup>38</sup>

In locating us, the Two Standards also become a school in which we learn the practical and necessary “*discretion*,” the knowledge we need to serve Christ and stay true to him. This is essentially an apostolic wisdom. Not only is it ordered to our own personal growth in Christ, it is about mission. Indeed, this is what we find in the way in which the synoptic gospels present the inauguration of Jesus’ mission under the power of the Holy Spirit. After his baptism, he is immediately engaged in the trial or temptations of the “Enemy.” So, too, the Two Standards inaugurate and shape our response to the call of Christ and the unfolding of the Christian mission. Indeed, any mission which does not understand itself in terms of this eschatological drama will find it difficult to understand itself and its choices. In the Two Standards, the Exercises give us a “weapon” to be wielded in Christ’s service for the salvation of souls. They also show us that the only “weapon” is that of the cross.<sup>39</sup>

### **Discernment and the Choice of the Cross**

In this context, we can see how the drama of the Two Standards is the presupposition of the discernment of spirits. It takes up the cosmic and supernatural history of sin in the First Week and now gives

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<sup>38</sup> “Jesus is the Victor” in *Church Dogmatics* IV: 69. §3. The whole discussion is instructive for the Two Standards.

<sup>39</sup> Hugo Rahner, *The Spirituality of St Ignatius of Loyola*, 95.

it particular focus in the eschatological drama of another “kingdom” opposed to that of Christ. The kingdom of Satan exercises power through fear, terror, deception, and violence (§140).<sup>40</sup> It also has its “apostles” and servants; it parallels the contemplation of the Incarnation, for it too envisages the whole world (§141).<sup>41</sup> Just as the temptations of Christ are all socio-political and religious possibilities within “this” world, so the Two Standards offer us a hermeneutic for the concrete realities of our own history, circumstances and choices. In whatever guise evil presents itself, there is an active hatred of human freedom which it seeks to destroy with entrapments (nets and chains) and seductions: coveting wealth; vain honor; pride (§142). We can see that the effect of these is threefold:

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<sup>40</sup> Cf. also the Rules for the discernment of Spirit in the First and Second Weeks. For a significant modern treatment of this dynamic under the “mécanisme victimaire,” cf. René Girard, *I See Satan Fall like Lightning*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001). Girard’s whole book and his analysis of the mechanism of mimetic imitation and the role it plays in the cycles of violence, broken by the Cross, could act as a commentary on the Two Standards.

<sup>41</sup> “Satan” by Xavier Léon-Dufour in the *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (French: *Vocabulaire de Théologie Biblique*, 1967). The Christian must choose between Christ and Satan: 2. Cor. 6:14. He loves to disguise himself: traps, deceptions, wiles, maneuvers (2 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 6:11; 1 Tim. 3:7, 6:9). The angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14). The Apocalypse from 12 onwards offers a sort of synthesis of biblical teaching on the adversary against whom human nature has to struggle. The NT thinks of the devil in terms of a power struggle: power at work among specifically human and social realities. It seeks to describe that which is intimately connected to the exercise of human freedom in the empirical world yet recognizes that there is a “plus factor” that the choices of individual human freedom cannot explain. In this context the language of personification is not only appropriate but necessary. Is it possible, then, that the New Testament’s language about the demonic is true in ways that are important for us to relearn? Does the language say what needs saying in a way no other language can?

1: To destroy human freedom by false knowledge and illusion, especially the illusion.

2: To draw people into the world, which is itself transitory and cannot ultimately fulfil them. This becomes a distortion of the *Principle and Foundation* because we cease to use created things well. Not only do we destroy our own freedom, but we have a purely instrumental approach which destroys the very good that we seek.

3: Pride is ultimately the illusion of our own power and self-sufficiency. It not only rejects God but, because it sees God as a rival, it seeks to destroy God and faith in Christ, God's salvific and liberating love. As this is impossible, it will try to destroy the *imago dei* in each of us, especially as God has chosen us as the object of the Divine Love. Pride must always exercise its power as violence in one form or another. This is precisely what we see enacted in the figure of Lucifer. Although the dynamics of evil are presented in personal terms, there is a social and cultural dimension which, in the Two Standards, we come to realize is always an active and immanent power. It creates a toxic universe which is hostile not only to human flourishing but to the life of all that God has created and blessed as good.

In the presentation of Christ, the true leader, we have the exact counter-values and God's *modus operandi*: humility. Here, we gain critical knowledge of the way in which God works: we are not coerced or terrified into subjection. Grace never usurps our freedom but creates new possibilities for it to be realized in service of God's good purposes. There are no limits to the Kingdom which Christ envisages. His power is demonstrated not through violence, but through sacrificial

loving service: in poverty (spiritual and actual), suffering humiliation and contempt and, finally, in humility. This is the way of the Cross but, in accepting it, the Christian servant of Christ the King must also become the servant of his salvific mission. We can now see that discernment not only takes place within the horizon of the eschatological drama of the Kingdom, but it is also verified in the way of the Cross. It is a profoundly theological act: an act of faith and surrender to the incomprehensible wisdom of a crucified and risen Christ.<sup>42</sup> As such, it also has its own eschatological character for choosing to be “thought worthless and a fool for Christ”—*de ser estimado por vano y loco por Cristo* (§167)—is a realization of the Kingdom. In this way, all acts of discernment must always be measured in terms of the extent to which they advance the Kingdom. In some way and at some level, they will be counter-intuitive to the values and wisdom of the world. It will not be sufficient to ensure that any decision or course of action simply resists the traps of the enemy; it will have to positively express the values and means that God’s salvific wisdom disclosed in Christ.

We can now appreciate how discernment is grounded in this cruciform knowledge and presupposes it. The “rightness” of discerned decisions cannot be measured by the normal criteria of success but, rather, in the way we are open to the sovereignty of Christ in our lives and in our works. Only this will truly serve the Kingdom. In this way, discernment is not just an instrument, but a test of our desires and our values; it draws us into the mystery of the Divine economy.

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. 1 Cor. 1:18ff. For an excellent treatment of this theme, cf. Michael J. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul’s Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009).

### **The Wisdom of the Cross in the Two Standards**

One of the major features of contemporary theology is the recovery of the theology of the Cross.<sup>43</sup> Although Augustine does not have the same preoccupation with a revisionary metaphysics, in a brief but significant treatment in his *De Trinitate*, he draws out the radical significance of God's choice of the cross. In many ways, it is the same implicit "logic" of the Two Standards and it can offer a challenging consideration for the use of violence in social transformation. In Book XIII of the *De Trinitate*, Augustine asks why God does not use His power to counter Satan but chooses the powerlessness and degradation of the cross?<sup>44</sup> His answer is simple and profound: to do so would entail God using the same strategies as Satan to overcome Satan. Instead of breaking the "economy of evil," God would remain trapped in it, because God would be recognizing its logic. This is the way the world thinks, and it must inevitably perpetuate the cycle of violence and destructive power.

For Augustine, God chooses to triumph "*by the power of God's righteousness*" rather than by raw power itself. Of course, to those

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<sup>43</sup> The recovery of Luther's theology of the Cross combined with the conceptualization of *Aufhebung* gave European contemporary systematic theology the tools and the need to re-think the theology in terms of kenosis, especially following the experience of a century of war and the Atomic Bomb. This can be seen in the work of Jürgen Moltmann and Eberhard Jüngel as well as in Hans Urs Von Balthasar and J.B. Metz. It can also be seen in Liberation Theology, most notably in the work of Leonardo Boff and Jon Sobrino. It is present, too, in early pioneering Protestant thinkers, such as Karl Barth and P.T. Forsyth.

<sup>44</sup> *De Trin.* Book XIII. Chapter 13 ff. Cf. also Book IV. 12–13: here, reflecting on the Magi, Augustine "anticipates" the Two Standards. He argues that we should seek to return to our homeland (heaven) by another way, "which the humble king has taught and which the proud king, the adversary of that humble king, cannot block." Augustine also traces the strategies of deceit which characterize the devil.

who are not illuminated by the Cross, it will seem like the folly of an impotent dream. They will remain within the fatal logic of “Satan” and continue to have faith in their own liberating powers of violence. Discernment, which understands itself within the eschatological drama of the Two Standards, can only be a radical act of faith in Christ and that his way is the only way that can save.<sup>45</sup>

Augustine presents us with a challenging insight into the ways in which our decisions and actions must also break out of the logic of a fallen world. This is the work of discernment that we come to learn in the school of the Exercises, especially deepened and consolidated in the Third Week when we enter into the depth of Christ’s passion and crucifixion and its subtle education of our solidarity with Him and all the victims of political and religious power. Yet, it is only by our complete surrender to God and the Divine “way of proceeding” that we can receive the mission which comes with the Fourth Week where we learn from the Risen Christ how to be true ministers of consolation in a suffering and broken world. It is the ministry of reconciliation which is grounded in the work of Christ and eschews all violent means to achieve its end. The reconciled peace of the Risen Christ, the true “shalom” of the Kingdom’s sabbath can only be brought about when we are abandoned to God’s foolishness and step into its unfathomable darkness, the ultimate act of faith.

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. below and the discussion of René Girard. Cf. also Raymund Schwager, *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation: Toward a Biblical Doctrine of Redemption* (New York: Crossroad, 1999): esp. 182ff.: “The Transformation of Evil,” which Schwager develops from Girard.

### **3: Some Observations**

Even in the light of these preliminary remarks on some of the principal elements of the Exercises, we can begin to sense the extent of their implications in the socio-political field. In conclusion, it may be helpful for a deeper, more comprehensive and critical examination of the central thesis of this paper to make three final observations.

#### *a: Epistemology of the Two Standards*

As we have seen, neither The Two Standards nor the Three Modes can be thought of as operating purely within privatized interior spirituality. They are set within the struggle for the Kingdom and it is within the realm of our existence and history that they are lived out. It is a real participation in the immanent work of Christ “laboring and working” in the reality of each circumstance or moment. Both the Two Standards and the Three modes necessarily contain an epistemology. The full importance of those verbs we have discussed, *conocer* and *imitar*, realize their full significance: we have entered into “the mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:16). This is a continuation and deepening of our conversion. At its core is the freedom to enter into an ever deeper self-offering of the “*suscipe*” (§234). This self-offering is the core of his “apostolic mysticism” and the touchstone of mission.

#### *b) Discernment as the Transvaluation of Values*

In this context, we can see that discernment is more than a “tool.” It is itself an “apostolic moment.” We cannot ignore the exigencies of the situation or the pressing realities of human finitude. On the contrary, these are precisely the realities in which the incarnation requires us to acknowledge the limitations with which we must deal.

Yet, as the PF has taught us in grasping the way in which finitude discloses transcendence, when placed within the horizon of the Fourth Week, these very limitations can become the contingent opportunities to realize the Kingdom. Even so, given our weaknesses and the unfinished business of history, we cannot seek to meet our need for security in the systems and institutions of the world. Even when well established and ordered, they will surely be tokens of the Kingdom, but they can be no more than this. Discernment is always an act of surrender to God in faith.

At another level, when the values of the Standard of Christ are the operant ones in discernment, there is a transvaluation of the counter values of the world. There is a redemptive power in this. Discernment is radical practice when we allow ourselves to be poor, despised and humble with Christ. When these become the active values realized in our decisions, especially when they are about apostolic works and institutions, the Kingdom comes into view. This will always present a threat to the established order and to our own securities. What then would it mean if we could develop our social, economic and educational policies guided by these values: those that would prioritize the needs (spiritual, social and material) of the contemporary "*anawim*," the powerless and marginalized, the economically and culturally deprived?

*c: The Two Standards and End of Violence*

Finally, it could be argued that the greatest transvaluation of values is the ending of the cycle of violence in all its forms. René Girard's theory of mimetic violence can serve to underline the relevance of The Two Standards in this regard, not only on the



spiritual-theological plane but also in the field of politics. For Girard, societies are founded on primal acts of sacrificial violence (the scapegoat). This violence is rooted in the power of mimetic desire which inscribes violence into social structures.<sup>46</sup> In describing the ways in which these operate in relations, Girard is able to recover the ancient Biblical reality of “Satan” who “signifies rivalistic contagion,” up to and including the single victim mechanism.<sup>47</sup>

For Girard, modern exegetes, not recognizing the mimetic cycle, have the impression that since the word “Satan” means so many different things, it no longer means anything: “This impression is deceptive... Far from being too absurd to deserve our attention, this Gospel theme contains incomparable knowledge of human conflict and societies that are generated by the violent resolution of conflict...”<sup>48</sup> The cycle is broken by the cross, which refuses to enter into it. Here, we can see the social and political significance of Augustine’s insight into the alternative way of the cross, which the Two Standards encapsulate. What Christianity is able to do through its own counter-mimetic mechanism (*imitar*) is to heal this violence. It can restore peace through “absorbing the violence” and performing those reconciliations which are deliberate counter-strategies to it. The Two

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<sup>46</sup> For a probing analysis and exposition of Girard’s mimetic theory, cf. James Allison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin through Easter Eyes* (New York: Crossroads, 1998).

<sup>47</sup> Cf. René Girard, *Je Vois Satan Tomber Comme L’éclair* (Paris: Grasset, 1999); ET *I See Satan Fall like Lightning* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001). Reference is to the English translation. Satan and the strategies of mimetic violence which he symbolizes may be located either in the entire process or in one of its stages.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 43. The whole of the third chapter is on Satan and the Satanic strategies at play in society. It could be seen as a fruitful exposition of the Two Standards.

Standards provide us with a *praxis of reconciliation*, which refuses violence and the sacrifice of victims. In this sense, we are drawn into the redemptive work of the Cross as a political and social reality. This gives us a way of understanding the Church's mission in the world. It is a mission which belongs to every Christian life. The mark of its liberating power lies in the action of martyrdom. The prayer to imitate Christ in poverty, being despised and in humility bears marks of martyrdom, both in the sense of "witness" and also in suffering social, political, economic and spiritual violence, if not actual physical violence, whilst also refusing to return it. As a "praxis," it provides an exodus from the mimetic structures of death. As a "praxis," the violence of the enemy and the anti-kingdom will always be directed against it. This, too, is an eschatological reality.

In an impassioned and provocative penultimate chapter in *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning*, Girard inveighs against the usurping ideology of "victimization," which he sees as an ideological form of neo-paganism.<sup>49</sup> In fact, as Girard observes (but does not develop), Christianity is neither the religion nor practice of this ideology. The crucified is also the Risen Christ. If this were not the case, the cycle would remain a tragic one: "The Gospel theory of Satan uncovers a secret that neither ancient nor modern anthropologies have ever discovered. Violence in archaic religion is a temporary remedy. The sickness is not really cured and always recurs in the end."<sup>50</sup> Catharsis is not redemption. The power that triumphs over mimetic violence lies in the resurrection, which comes through the action and gift of the Holy Spirit: "The Resurrection is not only a miracle, a prodigious

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 181; whole chapter: 170-181.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 183.

transgression of natural laws. It is the spectacular sign of the entrance into the world of a power superior to violent contagion.”<sup>51</sup> Although Girard is primarily concerned to develop an anthropology, this conclusion provides an important direction for our understanding of the Exercises. He can help us appreciate that the Fourth Week is not only part of a narrative but is actually that from which the salvific power of Christianity is derived.

Firstly, the resurrection always ensures that the way of the crucified Christ as a redemptive and not a tragic way is always a grace. It is a gift that we must seek and it does not lie in our power: “if your most holy majesty wishes to choose and receive me into this life and state” (§98). As such, it cannot be achieved through a series of practices in which we only imitate, in the sense of playing a part. The same would be true for the gift of discernment. It cannot be effective if it is converted into a formulaic practice. It can only be sought as a grace which first requires an interior surrender to let Christ “indwell.” This, as I have argued, needs our willingness to be re-located in the eschatological drama of the Kingdom as a quotidian reality.

Secondly, the importance and indispensable requirement of the Fourth Week is too often treated in a perfunctory way and rarely discussed in the context of discernment. If the reality of the Risen Lord and the abiding gift of the Holy Spirit is not our habitual dwelling, becoming the effective horizon of our understanding, then, notwithstanding all our good intentions and noble desires, we will remain always prone “to feel his death but not his victory.” Without the Fourth Week, we cannot fully understand the reality of the Kingdom and the true purpose of Christian mission; we cannot be

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 189.

Christ’s apostles. To know and imitate Christ, to have that deep interior knowledge of him, is not an exercise in remembering or imaginative reconstruction of a First-Century Palestinian Jewish Messiah. It is precisely to know and imitate the Risen Christ, the one who is immanent and active in our lives and in our histories. This is the Christ that cannot be made the subject of any State or political party. It is the Christ to whom all nations, parties and movements must ultimately come and under whose cross they will be judged.

In a reflection given in Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben challenged the Church to recover its messianic vocation. Failure to do so, according to Agamben, risks it being swept away like every other government and worldly institution.<sup>52</sup> Even from this selective exploration of the *Spiritual Exercises*, we can see that the Church is not without resources to propose Christ and the Kingdom to humanity. Although its mission must always be renewed, the indwelling life of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women is the guarantee that its mission can never be lost or absorbed, either by coercion or by seduction, into the projects of worldly powers.

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<sup>52</sup> *La Chiesa e Il Regno* (Rome: Nottetempo, 2007): 18; ET: *The Church and the Kingdom*, trans. Giorgio Agamben and Leland de la Durantaye (London: Seagull, 2012).

**[摘要]** 作為早期現代天主教博大的靈修經典之一，聖依納爵的《神操》是政治和神學話語的衍生文本，塑造了早期現代和當代文化。本文旨在首先確定有助於我們了解神操如何對我們的社會和文化施為具有重要意義的關鍵特徵，並可以作為判斷政治和文化體系的神學-靈修解釋法。其次，它將表明，雖然這些神操旨在轉化和解放我們的自由，但它們也旨在將這種自由置於天主的救贖目的中。本文重點關注文本兩部分：(a) 〈原則和基礎〉，即代表「自我」的恢復和如何整理我們的自由，以及(b) 〈兩旗默想〉，即神類的辨別有助於揭露邪惡的策略。辨別是一種信仰的行動。選擇並臣服於十字架那難以理解的智慧（「被認為是毫無價值的，為基督而成為愚妄的人」），然後隨著復活進入基督（性質）的自由，這種自由是在服從和投身神聖的救贖旨意中實現的。這是在歷史中具有救贖力量的一種操作性的自由。整個神操的動態是一次「在」歷史中深刻的、具變革性的旅程。被轉化就是作為基督的夥伴再次被派到世界上，為創造歷史中一個新的空間，新的可能性。從這個意義上說，本文試圖發展胡戈·拉納（Hugo Rahner）的見解，即依納爵為我們提供了一種使徒神秘主義，而這種神秘主義並非沒有政治和文化含義。

**關鍵詞：**使徒，基督，十字架，辨別，自由，歷史，依納爵，原則與基礎，救贖，神操，兩旗默想

**Companionship in the Spirit.  
A History of the Spirituality of  
the Society of Jesus<sup>1</sup>**

José García De Castro Valdés, SJ\*

*To the Society of Jesus,  
and the Jesuits;  
In their 475 years of History  
(1540 – 2015)*

**ABSTRACT:** One of the most unique features of Ignatian Spirituality is the development of a loving gaze on all things, on all Creation, starting with a merciful and unconditional acceptance of the person who prays. “God labors and works for me in all creatures” [*Sp Ex* 236]. Throughout its 475 years of history, the Society of Jesus has been present in very different places and very diverse circumstances, a kind of presence that employs action as a principal means to explain her religious experience, her particular way of loving God and loving the

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<sup>1</sup> This article comes from two lectures given at the International Conference on Ignatian Spirituality, “An Ignatian Pilgrimage: from Personal Interiority to Shared Apostolic Vision”, held at Xavier House, Ignatian Spirituality Center, Hong Kong, 28 November – 1 December 2014.

neighbor: “Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words” [Sp Ex 230]. This article offers an inescapable panoramic view of the kind-hearted and merciful work that the Society of Jesus, the Jesuits who have dwelt in her and her collaborators, have been doing through her History.

**KEYWORDS:** Action, Ignatius of Loyola, Jesuits, Ministries, Mission, Society of Jesus, Spiritual Exercises

*Editor’s note:* Hong Kong Journal of Catholic Studies is grateful for the permission to republish this article originally published in *Estudios Eclesiásticos* 91, no. 356 (Jan-Mar 2016) to commemorate 475 years of the Society of Jesus. ([www.comillas.edu/estudioseclesiasticos](http://www.comillas.edu/estudioseclesiasticos)). The year 2021 marks 481 years of the Society’s history. In deference to the original publication, we publish the article as is, only updating the spelling of some words in English, and with a few editorial changes.

When the Society of Jesus was founded by Pope Paul III<sup>2</sup>, a new trend in spirituality arose within the Catholic Church. Even though the followers and the First Companions of Ignatius of Loyola were never known as or called “Ignatians”<sup>3</sup>, this new spirituality is nowadays recognized as “Ignatian Spirituality”. It was a new path, a new method

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<sup>2</sup>The official document *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae* (September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1540) confirmed ten years later by Pope Julius III, *Exposcit Debitum* (1550).

<sup>3</sup> As, for example, the Franciscans from Saint Francisco, Dominicans from Saint Dominique or Benedictines from Saint Benedict.

to search for God proposed by Ignatius and his First Companions<sup>4</sup> and mainly fixed in the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus.

In order to understand the origins and development of this spirituality and how this movement of the Holy Spirit has reached us, we will try to follow the historical development of the Society of Jesus. It is a long period of 475 [481 in 2021] years full of life, including a wide variety of experiences all around the world and in many different fields of human culture. The more we consider the history of the Society of Jesus, the more we realize how wide and deep the contribution of the Jesuits was to build the history and culture of Western tradition.

Because of the new features of this new congregation, the Jesuits could move around the world and were allowed to preach the Gospel through many different means, which they called “ministries”<sup>5</sup>. They did not adopt a single specific work (healing, education, preaching...) as their charismatic mission. From the very beginning, and inspired mainly by the “Contemplation to attain love” of the *Spiritual Exercises* [230-237]<sup>6</sup>, they had a deep conviction that God dwells, labors, and

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<sup>4</sup> I call “First Companions” the group of ten young men that gathered at Sorbonne University (Paris) between 1529-1536 around Loyola’s Project to travel to Jerusalem. See: GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J., “Ignatius of Loyola and his First Companions”, in *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola* (Mariks, R., ed.), Brill, Boston 2014, 66-83; GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J., “Los primeros de París: amistad, carisma y pauta”, *Manresa* 78 (2006) 253-275.

<sup>5</sup> See: O’MALLEY, J.W., “To Travel to Any Part of the World: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation”, *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 16/2 (1984).

<sup>6</sup> I will refer to the *Spiritual Exercises* offering the international paragraph numbers; GANSS, G. E. (ed.) *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand 1992.



works in everything, and so it is possible to search and find Him in everything.

To talk about Ignatian Spirituality requires a wide and deep vision that includes under this category the many apostolates developed by the Jesuits from the XVI century until our times. In these pages, we will consider only the most significant works, projects, and relevant figures of each historical period<sup>7</sup>. Let's start by going back to the first sources.

## **1. The Foundations of the Charisma, Gift of the Holy Spirit**

### *1.1 To follow the institute of Íñigo*

To understand the origins of what is known as “Ignatian Spirituality”, we have to turn back and travel to, maybe, the third floor of that “tower-house” of Guipúzcoa, located between two small villages, Azpeitia and Azcoitia. What was the inner experience of that 26 year-old wounded soldier between June 1521 and February 1522? The first and transforming spiritual experience of this man appears in the *Autobiography*, chapter 1 [5-7]. The reading of two classical books of Medieval piety was the starting point of his unexpected human and

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<sup>7</sup>Some reference books: BANGERT, W.V., *A History of the Society of Jesus*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis-MO 1972; De GUIBERT, J., *The Jesuits. Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis-MO 1964 (3<sup>th</sup> printing 1986) (Spanish translation: *La Espiritualidad de la Compañía de Jesús. Bosquejo histórico*, Sal Terrae, Santander 1956); GANSS, G. E. (ed.), *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis-MO, 1970; O'MALLEY, J.W., *The First Jesuits*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge-MA 1994; GRUPO DE ESPIRITUALIDAD IGNACIANA (ed.) *Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana* (2 vols.) Mensajero-Sal Terrae, Bilbao-Santander 2007 (*DEI*); O'NEILL, Ch. / DOMÍNGUEZ, J. M<sup>a</sup> (eds.), *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, (4 vols.) Universidad Pontificia Comillas – Institutum Historicum SI, Madrid-Roma 2001 (*DHCJ*).

spiritual transformation. Analysis and contrast of different feelings and thoughts; consolations and desolations, fantasies, desires and dreams... and at the end... a decision to leave his parents’ home and to travel to Jerusalem<sup>8</sup>.

Even before the Society of Jesus was founded, Ignatian Spirituality began to reach beyond the person and the experience of Íñigo / Ignatius of Loyola. The First Companions decided to found what they called a “Societas”, that is a “companionship.” That means that to understand the charismatic foundational experience and Ignatian Spirituality, we also need to look at the experience of the First Companions of Ignatius and to integrate their experience of God in the process of birth and development of the Ignatian Spirituality. Who were they?

### *1.2 Different... but one mind and one will<sup>9</sup>*

This “Societas”, this “friendship in the Lord” as Ignatius wrote<sup>10</sup>, included people from very different backgrounds. The First Companions were conscious of their diversity, coming from different places and cultures, but it was clear to them that the Holy Spirit was

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<sup>8</sup> See on Ignatius of Loyola: GARCÍA-VILLOSLADA, R., *Ignacio de Loyola. Nueva biografía*, BAC, Madrid 1986. Others: DALMASES, C. de, *Ignatius of Loyola. Founder of the Jesuits: His Life and Work*, The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis-MO, 1985; TELLECHEA IDÍGORAS, J. I., *The Pilgrim Saint*, Loyola University Press, Chicago 1994; recent one: GARCÍA HERNÁN, E., *Ignacio de Loyola*, Taurus, Madrid 2013. See, also: GARCÍA MATEO, R., *Ignacio de Loyola, su espiritualidad y su mundo cultural*, Universidad de Deusto-Mensajero, Bilbao 2000.

<sup>9</sup> “Aunque de tan diferentes naciones, de un mismo corazón y voluntad”, RIBADENEIRA, P. de, *Vida de Ignacio de Loyola, Fontes Narrativi IV*, Roma 1965 (MHSI 93), 233.

<sup>10</sup> “De París llegaron aquí, mediado Enero, nueve amigos míos en el Señor”, *Epistolae et Instruções I*, Madrid 1903, 119.

the link to the union between their hearts and minds. During their *Deliberation* in Rome (1539), they decided to remain together because they were sure that it had been God (and not themselves) who had gathered them years ago in Paris<sup>11</sup>.

The first companion was Peter Faber (Saboye 1506-Rome 1546). He and Ignatius met at Sainte Barbare College in Paris. After a long and delicate process of discernment, Peter decided to perform the Spiritual Exercises with Ignatius, and join him on his project of travelling to Jerusalem. Peter Faber was a Jesuit for only 6 years (1540-46) but during this short period of time he was a pilgrim around Europe, always available and obedient, ready to move to any part of the world he was required to. He was the “apostle of the conversation” and as Ignatius used to say, Faber was the best one in giving the Spiritual Exercises<sup>12</sup>.

Close to Faber, sharing the same room in that college, was Francis Xavier (Xavier/ Navarre 1506-Sancian / China 1552). It was not easy for Ignatius to convince Xavier to join the project to travel to Jerusalem. Even though he had not yet done the Spiritual Exercises, Xavier took part in the liturgy of Montmartre (August 15<sup>th</sup> 1534) where the first seven companions<sup>13</sup> promised to try to go to Jerusalem and

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<sup>11</sup> CONWELL, J., *Impelling Spirit. Revisiting a Founding Experience 1539*, Loyola Press, Chicago 1997, 11-17. See, also CONWELL, J., “Deliberaciones 1539”, *DEI*, 549-553.

<sup>12</sup> See: BANGERT, W. V., *To the Other Towns: a Life of Blessed Peter Faber, first Companion of St. Ignatius*, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Besides Ignatius, Faber and Xavier the first group of seven companions was integrated by Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón, Nicolás de Bobadilla and Simão Rodrigues. Once Ignatius left Paris to Azpeitia, his own town in North Spain, Faber gave exercises to Claudius Jayo, Jean Codure and Paschase Broët who decided to join the project. The three new members participated in the Liturgy of Montmartre, same date in the next two years: August 15<sup>th</sup> 1535 and

remain there forever, if possible. Xavier, maybe the most well-known of the First Companions, was the “apostle in mission,” generous and deeply motivated to gain souls for the Kingdom of Heaven. Through Francis Xavier and his departure for India (April 1541), the Ignatian Spirituality began to be universal, as it was already written in the *Formula Instituti*<sup>14</sup>.

Among the other Companions in the first generation of Jesuits, two of them had a more relevant role in the first development of the “body of the Society” and its spirituality<sup>15</sup>. Fr. Jerome Nadal (Palma de Mallorca / Spain 1507 – Rome 1580) was the first “Theologian” of the Ignatian Spirituality, that is, the first who offered a systematic reflection regarding the spiritual experience of Ignatius and its consequences for the foundation of the Society of Jesus<sup>16</sup>. Nadal had the responsibility of traveling to different parts of Europe to explain to the Jesuit communities what the Society of Jesus was and was not, and what this new spirituality consisted of<sup>17</sup>.

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1536. See: PADBERG, J., “The Three forgotten Founders of the Society of Jesus”, *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 29/2 [march 1999]). A short biography of each of the ten founders in *AHSI* 59 (1990).

<sup>14</sup> “and to go at once, ..., to whatsoever provinces they may choose to send us –whether they decide to send us among the Turks or any other infidels, even those who live in the regions called the Indies, or among any heretics whatever, or schismatics...” (GANSS, *Constitutions*, 68). See: SCHURHAMMER, G. O., *Francis Xavier: His Life, his Time* (4 vols.) Institutum Historicum S.I., Rome 1973-1982.

<sup>15</sup> “How did the Society of Jesus come to be?” O’Malley offers a list of important Jesuits of the very first years of the Society of Jesus, “however, three outstrip the others by far: Polanco, Nadal and Ignatius” (*The First Jesuits*, 376).

<sup>16</sup> Most of his lectures and “pláticas” in *Monumenta Natalis V, Commentarii de Instituto*, Roma 1962 (MHSI 90). See, also, *Las pláticas del P. Jerónimo Nadal. La globalización ignaciana* (LOP, M., (ed.) Mensajero-Sal Terrae (col. Manresa n° 45), Bilbao-Santander 2011.

<sup>17</sup> See: BANGERT, W. V. – MCCOOG, Th., *Jerome Nadal (1507-1580). Tracking the First Generation of Jesuits*, Loyola University Press, Chicago 1992.

Fr. Nadal worked closely with Fr. Juan Alfonso de Polanco (Burgos / Spain 1517 – Rome 1576), the main Secretary of the institution and one of the most influential Jesuits in the first Society of Jesus. He was not only in charge of the increasing bureaucracy in Rome; he also wrote thousands of letters in the name of Ignatius, and prepared a very valuable *Directory for the Spiritual Exercises* which was the main inspiration for the official one, *Official Directory* published by Fr. Claudius Aquaviva (1599). Polanco wrote both a *Directory for Confessors* (Roma 1554) and also one on how to assist and offer pastoral care to dying people,<sup>18</sup> two bestsellers in European spiritual literature of the sixteenth century. A man familiar with business, government and bureaucracy, he offered a new face to the Jesuit mission, working generously for the inner structure of the Institution<sup>19</sup>.

Polanco also worked as General Secretary of the Society under the second Fr. General, Diego Laínez (Almazán / Spain 1512-Rome 1565); it was a period of the founding of new schools and the expansion of the Society all over the world<sup>20</sup>. With Francis Borgia (Gandía 1510- Rome 1572), third General Praepositus of the Society of Jesus, spiritual life became more regular and more structured in a religious congregation which had neither prayer nor choir in common. The Second General Congregation (1565), decree 29, established: “At length the congregation agreed that Father Superior General in his

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<sup>18</sup> *Methodus ad eos adjuvandos qui moriuntur...* (Macerata 1575).

<sup>19</sup> GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J., *Polanco (1517-1576). El Humanismo de los jesuitas*, Mensajero-Sal Terrae-Universidad P. Comillas (col. Manresa n° 48), Bilbao-Santander-Madrid 2013; see also: *DEI* II, 1462-1471.

<sup>20</sup> SCADUTO, M., *L'epoca di Giacomo Laínez (1556-1565)*, La Civiltà Cattolica, 1964-1974; recently OBERHOLZER, P. (ed.), *Diego Laínez (1512-1565) and his Generalate*, IHSI, Rome 2015.

prudence might increase the time, as he would judge proper in the Lord, taking into account his understanding of persons, regions and so on”<sup>21</sup>. Two months after the Congregation was over, Fr. Borgia decided: one hour of morning prayer for all Jesuits in Spain (45 minutes in other places) and half an hour in the evenings, including an examen of consciousness<sup>22</sup>. Borgia himself was very attentive to his own personal prayer; his *Spiritual Diary* and most of his treatises on spiritual life<sup>23</sup> focus mainly on sin, mercy and indignity, and they allow us to uncover his soul. Borgia also supported and encouraged missions beyond Europe: Florida, Cuba, México, Brazil and Peru, where Jesuits such as José de Acosta were developing a deep connection with indigenous cultures.

## 2. Misunderstandings of the Charisma and First Controversies

But not everything was easy during the first years, even the first decades of the Society of Jesus. Over one thousand Jesuits spread all over the world were working in the Vineyard of the Lord at the date of Ignatius’ death (July 31<sup>st</sup> 1556). Far from Rome, despite the great

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<sup>21</sup> Very good modern edition of all decrees of the first thirty General Congregations in: *For matters of greater moment: the first thirty Jesuit General Congregations: a brief history and a translation of the decrees* (Padberg, J. W. / O’Keefe, M. D. / McCarthy, J. L., eds.) Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis –MO 1994; here, 120; original Latin texts in: *Institutum Societatis Iesu*, Typis Civilitatis Catholicae, Romae 1869, here II, 201-202. GC 4 went back to this point and confirmed what Fr. Borgia had decided: “is by all means to be retained as a devout and salutary custom” (GC 4, decree 5), see: *For matters of greater moment* 169, *Institutum* II, 248.

<sup>22</sup> See: SCADUTO, M., *L’opera di Francesco Borgia (1565-1572)*, La Civiltà Cattolica, Roma 1992, 97 and LETURIA, P. de, “La hora matutina de oración en la Compañía naciente [1540-1590]” *Estudios ignacianos* II, ,189-243, BIHSJ, Roma 1957.

<sup>23</sup> *Diario Espiritual* (Ruiz Jurado, M., ed.) Mensajero-Sal Terrae (col. Manresa n° 17), Bilbao-Santander 1997; *Tratados espirituales*, Juan Flors, Barcelona 1964.

efforts by Fr. Polanco and his Secretary, communications were not regular and information was not always punctual<sup>24</sup>. How, then, can one live a spiritual life trying to remain faithful to the first charisma if Jesuits didn't know what this first charisma was exactly?

### *2.1 Tendencies to cloistered and contemplative life*

One of the first misunderstandings about the interpretation of Ignatian charisma appeared soon in Gandía (Spain), promoted by Fr. Andrés de Oviedo and Fr. Francis Onfroy. Maybe through the influence of mystic spiritual ties from Northern Europe or from new Franciscan movements in Spain, as *recogidos*, they felt a strong vocation to contemplative life (silence, prayer, retreat) inside the Society. They were convinced that to be a good Jesuit they should pray five or six hours a day and keep silent for most of the day... as if they were part of a new form of monastic way of life. Fr. Oviedo wrote to Rome asking for permission to remain for seven years in the desert (!). Rome had to respond to these new proposals by showing and explaining to them the true Ignatian charisma and urging them to come back to the Ignatian way of prayer and apostolic life<sup>25</sup>. One hour of prayer including the exam of consciousness was enough; the rest of the

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<sup>24</sup> Some examples: a letter from Rome to North or South Italy, 6-8 days; from Rome to Madrid, Lisbon or Paris, 25-30 days; a letter to Goa (India) 12-15 months.

<sup>25</sup> Fr. Oviedo's letter in *Epistolae Mixtae* I, Madrid 1898 (MHSI 12) 467-472 and Polanco's answer in *Epistolae et Instructiones Ignatii* II, (MHSI 26) 54-65. Very interesting and also very unknown is the long letter called "Illusionibus quibusdam" written by Polanco (Rome 1547) (*Epistolae et Instructiones* XII, MHSI 42) in which the Secretary of the Society offers a very lucid list of criteria for discernment inspired in those we can find in "Rules to aid us..." of the *Spiritual Exercises* [313-336].

time should be invested in helping souls, that is, on “apostolic ministries” as related in *Formula instituti* (1550)<sup>26</sup>.

## 2.2 *Tendencies to silence and silent prayer*

Also in the XVI century, was the more powerful movement that proposed and taught a new style of prayer that distanced itself from that of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Fr. Antonio Cordeses (Olot / Gerona 1518 – Seville 1601) in his *Itinerario de la perfección (Itinerary to perfection)* developed a method of prayer in which he insisted that reaching inner silence and awakening the affections were the main goals of experience in prayer. Fr. Borgia told him that God had already given to the Society of Jesus a way to pray, that is in the *Spiritual Exercises*; next Fr. General, Everard Mercurian, had to insist (November 25<sup>th</sup> 1574) on the primacy of the apostolic sense of Ignatian prayer through contemplation of the Life of Christ. Cordeses accepted these recommendations from Fr. General and most of his final years were dedicated to ministries with sick people and confessions<sup>27</sup>.

Close to Cordeses, was Fr. Baltasar Álvarez (1533-1580), novice Master, Third Year Instructor and Rector of some colleges in Spain. He was Saint Therese's confessor: “he was the one who helped me most,”<sup>28</sup> “he was a real saint,” said the Saint of Ávila. But his teachings on prayer insisted, perhaps too much, on silence, taking distance from contemplation of the Mysteries of the Life of Jesus and colloquies, as

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<sup>26</sup> Fr. Oviedo was missionary in Goa and afterwards Patriarch of Ethiopia, where he died as a holy man (Fremona-Ethiopia 1577). See: VAZ DE CARVALHO, J., “Oviedo, Andrés de”, *DHCJ* III, 2936-2937; De GUIBERT, *The Jesuits*, 219-229.

<sup>27</sup> RUIZ JURADO, M., “Cordesés, Antonio”, *DHCJ*, I, 952-953; DUDON, P., “Les idées du P. Antonio Cordeses sur l’oraison”, *Révue d’Ascétique et Mystique* 12 (1931) 97-115.

<sup>28</sup> “el que más me aprovechó”, *Book of Life*, 26.3.



taught in the *Spiritual Exercises*. His Provincial Fr. Juan Suárez, knowing the last documents of the Inquisition against *Alumbrado*'s movement, decided to inform Fr. Everard Mercurian, Fr. General at that time. Rome sent some guidelines back to Spain strongly recommending following the traditional way of prayer of the Society of Jesus. Fr. Álvarez obeyed and continued working in the Society; he was appointed Provincial of Peru, but never travelled to Latin America; afterwards he was appointed provincial of Toledo Province (Southern Spain), but he died in Belmonte, Cuenca, before reaching his final destination<sup>29</sup>.

### 3. The Spiritual Exercises

#### 3.1 Who are we? *Spiritual Exercises* and Ignatian identity<sup>30</sup>

It is very difficult to understand either the inner life of the Society of Jesus or that of a Jesuit without entering into the “what” and the “how” of their spiritual experience as proposed in the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. We could say that the Society of Jesus took shape in the womb of the *Spiritual Exercises*. In a way, the *Exercises* are the articulated and systematic words of the spiritual processes of Ignatius of Loyola from 1521 until his last theological reflection on his own experience in Paris (1528-1534) and later in

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<sup>29</sup> ENDEAN, Ph., “The strange style of Prayer: Mercurian, Cordeses and Álvarez”, *Mercurian Project. Forming Jesuit Culture 1573-1580* (McCoog, Th., ed.), Institute of Jesuit Sources – Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, St. Louis – Rome 2004, 351-398; RUIZ JURADO, M., “Álvarez, Baltasar”, *DHCJ I*, 91-93; BOADO, F., “Baltasar Álvarez en la historia de la espiritualidad del siglo XVI”, *Miscelánea Comillas* 41 (1964) 155-257; DUDON, P., “Les leçons d’oraison du P. B. Álvarez”, *Révue d’Ascétique et Mystique* 2 (1921) 36-57; GUIBERT, Joseph de, *The Jesuits...*, 219-229.

<sup>30</sup> See: RUIZ JURADO, M.: “Los EE en la vida interna de la CJ”, inside “Ejercicios Espirituales”, *DHCJ II*, 1226-1227.

Rome (1540-1544). Ignatius understood his religious and mystic life under the systematic frame of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

All the first ten companions completed the full spiritual exercises in Paris (1534-1536), six of them under the Ignatius’ guidance,<sup>31</sup> and three of them under Peter Faber’s.<sup>32</sup> Even though we don’t know much about these foundation experiences,<sup>33</sup> we can affirm that this experience changed their lives; all of them decided to follow Ignatius’ way of life, which at that time implied traveling to Jerusalem and, if possible, living and preaching the Gospel in the Holy Land<sup>34</sup>. The first Jesuits were so convinced of the “power” of the spiritual exercises that they started to give them to many different social groups of people, always adapting them to the circumstances and possibilities of the person.

Peter Faber and Claudio Jayo in Germany, Francis Xavier in Portugal and India, Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón and Nicolás de Bobadilla in Italy... it doesn’t matter where they were, they always found time to talk about and to give the exercises, which became an essential and indispensable point in the identity of the Society of

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<sup>31</sup> Peter Faber, Diego Laínez, Alfonso Salmerón, Nicolás de Bobadilla, Simão Rodrigues and Francis Xavier.

<sup>32</sup> Claude Le Jay (Jayo), Paschase Broët and Jean Codure.

<sup>33</sup> Only a couple of paragraphs about Peter Faber and spiritual exercises in Paris: L. GONÇALVES DA CÁMARA, *Memoriale* [305]. See: *Remembering Inigo. Glimpses on the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The Memoriale of Luis Gonçálves da Cámara* (Egleaston, A. and Munitiz J. A., eds.), Gracewing, St. Louis-MO 2004; original critical edition in *Fontes Narrativi I*, Rome 1943 (MHSI 66), 508-752.

<sup>34</sup> These decisions were openly communicated in the liturgy of Montmartre, not far from Paris, August 15th 1534, and repeated the same date in 1535 and 1536 (see: *Autobiography* [85]).

Jesus<sup>35</sup>. Ignatius had already said: “The Spiritual Exercises are the very best thing that in this life I can think, perceive, or understand for helping a person benefit him[her]self as well as bringing fruit, benefit, and advantage to many others”<sup>36</sup>.

It was the General Congregation IV (1598) which determined that all candidates should perform the spiritual exercises during their first probation,<sup>37</sup> and the General Congregation VI (1608, decree 29) which decided that every Jesuit should practice eight or ten days of Spiritual Exercises every year. An *Instruction* from Fr. Aquaviva included the 30 days’ retreat (a full month of Spiritual Exercises) as an important element in the Tertianship (Third Year) that usually took place in the Noviciate community<sup>38</sup>.

In the most difficult days in the History of the Society, those of the Suppression, the Jesuits went back to the exercises as the mystical place for their own identity in troubled times. The I Polocense Congregation (1782) established that those priests or scholastics who

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<sup>35</sup> Fr. Iparraguirre prepared a long list with all the Jesuits who gave the spiritual exercises during Saint Ignatius times: Antonio Araoz, Francisco de Borgia, Peter Canisius, Jerónimo Doménech, Leonard Kessel, Francisco Villanueva and many others (see the wonderful: IPARRAGUIRRE, I., *Historia de los Ejericicios de san Ignacio I*, Mensajero-IHSI, Bilbao-Roma 1946, 299-301).

<sup>36</sup> Letter to Manuel Miona (Venice, November 16<sup>th</sup> 1536), IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA, *Letters and Instructions* (Palmer, M. / Padberg, J. / McCarthy, J., eds.) The Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis-MO 2006, 27.

<sup>37</sup> The Jesuits called “First Probation” (*Prima probatio*) a short period of time (12 to 20 days) that the young boys who wanted to join the Society of Jesus had to spend as a guest or in a separated room before becoming a part of the Noviciate Community. The Noviciate was the “Second Probation” and at the end of the Formation the “Tertia Probatio” or Tertianship appears (see the very complete and systematic article: RUIZ JURADO, R., “Probación”, *DHCH* IV, 3235-3242).

<sup>38</sup> *Ratio peragendi tertium annum probationis* (1592). See also: “De usu Exercitiorum Spiritualium” (August 14, 1599) in *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium ad Patres et Fratres Societatis Iesu* (I), Gandavi 1847, 276-279.

wanted to join back with the Society after having left it, should spend four weeks in the Exercises, showing how deeply rooted in the Exercises the identity was.<sup>39</sup>

One of the most fervent “apostles” of the Spiritual Exercises was Fr. Jan Roothaan. He was so convinced about the value of the Exercises that he learnt Spanish in order to be able to closely study the Spanish text called *Autograph* and to compare it with the Latin text *Vulgata* or other Latin versions as *P1* or *P2*. He was sure that it was through the fidelity to the Spiritual Exercises that the Society of Jesus would find the way back to its own identity and charisma<sup>40</sup>. M. Chappin says that Roothaan’s most personal contribution as General was his philological and spiritual focus on the book of *Spiritual Exercises*, offering the whole Society the core of its own charisma. Because of this, some historians considered Roothaan the second Founder of the Society of Jesus.<sup>41</sup> The energy flowing from Roothaan’s affection for the *Exercises* lasted until contemporary times. A hundred years later, another Fr. General, Wlodimiro Ledóchowski, insisted on this point: the spiritual vigor of the Society depended on the fidelity to the practice of the Exercises. After Council Vatican II, Fr.

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<sup>39</sup> *For Matters of greater Moment*, 409; *Institutum* II, 452.

<sup>40</sup> His second letter to the Society was *De Spiritualium Exercitiorum S.P.N. studio et usu* (Dec 27<sup>th</sup>, 1834); he insisted on how the Jesuits, especially Novices Masters and Tertian Instructors, should receive a deep knowledge of the Exercises and a faithful practice of the method. See: “Sobre el estudio y uso de los Ejercicios espirituales de nuestro Santo Padre”, *Cartas selectas de los Padres Generales*, Oña 1917, 194-205. Original latino: *Opera Spiritualia Ioannis Phil. Roothaan* I (De Jonge, L. / Pirri, P., eds.), Romae 1936, 357-366.

<sup>41</sup> CHAPPIN, M., “Generales: 21. Roothaan”, *DHCJ* II, 1665-1671, 1666-1670.

Arrupe encouraged all Jesuits to perform the Exercises every year according to the spirit of Saint Ignatius (silence, retreat, solitude...).<sup>42</sup>

### 3.2 *Spiritual Exercises... to help souls*

But the Spiritual Exercises were not only a key element in the identity of the Jesuits and the Society of Jesus; they were also one of the most important ministries in the apostolic life of those men.<sup>43</sup> The Exercises were included in *The Formula Instituti* as one of the specific ministries of the Jesuits;<sup>44</sup> in fact, the *Constitutions* recommend that every Jesuit has to learn how to provide the Spiritual Exercises<sup>45</sup>. Among all the Jesuits from the first generation, Peter Faber, according to Ignatius himself, was the best one giving the Spiritual Exercises<sup>46</sup>. He used to give the Exercises to many different kinds of people and

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<sup>42</sup> See: letters of Fr. W. Ledóchowski June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1935 and Fr. Arrupe's December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1975 (*Acta Romana SI*, Roma 1976, 635-636).

<sup>43</sup> See the monumental work of Fr. I. IPARRAGUIRRE, *Historia de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio* (vol. 1: "En vida de su autor" [During his Author's life]; vol. 2: "Desde la muerte de su autor hasta la promulgación del *Directorio oficial*" [from the death of his Author (1556) till the promulgation of the *Official Directory* (1599)]; vol. 3: "Evolución en Europa durante el siglo XVII" [development in Europe during XVII century]), Biblioteca del IHESI, Roma 1946-1973. See, also O'MALLEY, J., *The First Jesuits*, "The Exercises in Practice", 127-133.

<sup>44</sup> "...public preaching, lectures, and any other ministration whatsoever of the word of God, and further by means of the Spiritual Exercises, the education of the children..." (GANSS, *The Constitutions*, 66).

<sup>45</sup> "After they have had experienced of the Spiritual Exercises in their own selves, they should acquire experience in giving them to others. Each one should know how to give an explanation of them and how to employ this spiritual weapon, since it is obvious that God our Lord has made it so effective for His service" (*Constitutions* [408] see, also, next declaration [409], GANSS, *The Constitutions*, 202-203).

<sup>46</sup> "Speaking about the [Spiritual] Exercises, he said that of those he knew in the Society, Fr. Favre [Faber] took the first place in giving them, Salmerón the second..." *Remembering Inigo* [226], 130.

under different circumstances, always adapting the method as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> annotations propose. As the Jesuits started to deliver the Exercises, many different ways of interpreting the text appeared<sup>47</sup>. Fr. Aquaviva tried to unify them and published an *Official Directory* of the Spiritual Exercises (Rome 1599) that every Jesuit should follow in his ministry<sup>48</sup>.

The Jesuits gave the Exercises according to the *natura* of the person. They were convinced that the 30 days' retreat should be given to very few people, but especially to those who could consider the possibility of becoming a priest or joining a religious congregation, including the Society of Jesus... and the method worked! We have a list of the people who joined the different religious congregations after having undertaken the spiritual exercises<sup>49</sup>. During Saint Ignatius' life, the Jesuits gave the exercises to members from other religious congregations: Augustinians, Benedictines, Carmelites, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jeromes<sup>50</sup> ... Most of the retreatants undertook some exercises from the First Week about sin, the mercy of God, and guidelines for a good examen of consciousness and confession.

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<sup>47</sup> IPARRAGUIRRE, I., *Exercicia spiritualia Sancti Ignatii de Loyola et eorum Directoria. Directoria (1540-1599)*, Nova editio, II, Roma 1955. All directories in *On giving the Spiritual Exercises*, (Palmer, M., ed.) Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis-MO 1996; *Los Directorios de Ejercicios* (LOP, M. ed.) Mensajero-Sal Terrae (Col. Manresa n° 23), Bilbao-Santander 2000.

<sup>48</sup> It was not the first *Directory*. Some years before, other Jesuits had written of their own way of giving the Exercises, such as Diego Mirón or Juan A. de Polanco.

<sup>49</sup> Augustinians, Benedictines, Capuchins, Dominicans, Carthusians, Franciscans, Jeromes, Mercedarians, Theatins... Complete list of names and places in IPARRAGUIRRE, I., *Historia de los Ejercicios*, I, 297-298. Iparraguirre also offers some cases of people who had left their congregations and joined them again after the exercises (298).

<sup>50</sup> Complete list of names and places in IPARRAGUIRRE, I., *Historia*, I, 302-303.

But, where did they provide the Spiritual Exercises? In the very beginning Jesuits used to go to people's homes. Soon they started welcoming retreatants for spiritual exercises in their own residences and, as the numbers increased, they adapted an area of the schools (as in Gandía, Siena, Goa...) as a preliminary step to the appearance of the first retreat house<sup>51</sup>. During the XVII century the apostolate of the Exercises increased very quickly. In 1727, there were eleven retreat houses in France, seven for men and four for women<sup>52</sup>. Diocesan priests and other religious congregations (Redemptorist and Passionist) started to provide exercises (full or adapted) to all kinds of people. At the beginning of XIX century, 1816, Bruno Lanteri founded the Oblates of Virgin Mary whose specific charisma was to give spiritual exercises in rural and poor areas. Years later, the Parochial Cooperators of Christ the King and Hand Maids of Christ the King were founded to provide spiritual exercises and to support the retreat houses<sup>53</sup>.

#### **4. Spirituality on the Track. Fr. Claudio Aquaviva's Period (1581-1615)**

Elected by the IV General Congregation (GC) (February 7 – April 22, 1581) and having been Provincial of Naples, Fr. Claudio Aquaviva became the fifth Fr. General of the Society of Jesus. He was

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<sup>51</sup> Maybe the first retreat house was in Alcalá de Henares (Spain), promoted by Fr. Francisco Villanueva (see: IPARRAGUIRRE, I., *Historia I*, 145).

<sup>52</sup> About the apostolate of the spiritual exercises developed once the Society of Jesus was restored see: Tetlow, J., "Casas de Ejercicios" [Retreat Houses], *DEI I*, 311-314.

<sup>53</sup> The first congregation was founded by Fr. Francis de Paula Vallet (1883-1947) and the second by Fr. Pedro Legaria Armendáriz (1878-1956), both in 1928.

only 37 years old. His long generalate lasted for 35 years, so he was perhaps the most influential one in the history of the first Society of Jesus. Concerning spiritual life, the GC IV established one hour of daily meditation for all Jesuits and determined a formation plan for novices<sup>54</sup>. Fr. Aquaviva followed the spiritual life of the Society very closely, always encouraging and keeping alive the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through letters and documents to the whole Society<sup>55</sup>. It was during the GC VI (1608) that decree 29 established the eight – ten day retreat for all Jesuits and the triduum for renovation of vows<sup>56</sup>. Aquaviva also focused on formation for young Jesuits during the Juniorate or Tertianship. He also insisted on the presence of the Spiritual Father in every community and in the formation of those who would become preachers (human values, oratory style or even some techniques for memorizing).

Two very important documents appeared in 1599: The *Official Directory of Spiritual Exercises* and *Ratio Studiorum*, this latter after seventeen years of experience from many high schools all over Europe. This *Ratio* was probably the most influential pedagogical document in modern times. Inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises*, it offered a method and a frame to build an Ignatian person in all his or her dimensions<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> Decree 67, *Institutum I*, Roma 1869, 241-242.

<sup>55</sup> *Spiritus ac fervoris renovatio* (1583), *De studio perfectionis et caritate fraterna* (1586), *Ad augendum et renovandum spiritum in Societate* (1588), *De fervore et zelo missionum* (1594), *De renovatione spiritus et correspondentia cum Deo* (1604). See: *Epistolae Praepositum Generalium ad Patres et Fratres Societatis Jesu I*, Gandavi 1847, 74-359.

<sup>56</sup> “1. ante renovatione votorum instituatur vacatio per triduum...”; “homnes quotannis vacent spiritualibus exercitiis per octo vel decem dies continuos” (*Institutum I*, 279).

<sup>57</sup> See: DUMINUCO, V. J. (ed.), *The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400 anniversary perspective*, Fordham University Press, New York 2000. See also bilingual



Aquaviva did not forget the missionary life of the Society. The Mexican Province grew from 107 Jesuits (1580) to 314 (1599). Three new provinces appeared: Philippines, Paraguay and Nuevo Reino (Colombia and Venezuela) and, responding to the demands of Enrich IV of France (1604), some Jesuits were sent to Canada for the first time in 1611. In the East Assistancy, Aquaviva supported Robert De Nobili's mission for the conversion of brahmans in India, and the adaptation that the Gospel required in Japan, as Alessandro Valignano proposed<sup>58</sup>.

### **5. "... for your Spirit's Refreshment and Consolation."<sup>59</sup> Printed Spirituality**

It was also under the government of Fr. Aquaviva that the spiritual literature of the Jesuits reached a higher level of divulgation.

Fr. Alonso Rodríguez (Valladolid / Spain 1538 – Seville 1616) was one of the most influential Jesuit writers in the first Society of Jesus. He spent most of his life in Castile and Andalusia (southern Spain) teaching Theology in different places and working as Novice Master<sup>60</sup>. His *Ejercicio de perfección y virtudes cristianas* (*Practice of Perfection and Christian Virtues*, Seville 1609), consists in a collection of his weekly lectures to his community between 1589 and 1595. In

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edition, Latin-Spanish in *La pedagogía de los jesuitas, ayer y hoy* (Coria Gil, E., ed.) U.P. Comillas – CONEDSI, Madrid 1999.

<sup>58</sup> FOIS, Mario, "Generales: 5. Aquaviva", *DHCJ* II, 1614-1621.

<sup>59</sup> "It would be all right for you to occasionally read or have someone read to you [spiritual books] for your spirit's refreshment and consolation" (Letter to Francesco Mancini (Rome, April 7, 1554), *Letters and Instructions*, 490).

<sup>60</sup> DONNELLY, J. P., "Rodríguez, Alonso (II)", *DHCJ* IV, 3394-3395; DONNELLY, J.P., "Alonso Rodríguez: Ejercicio: A Neglected Classic", *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11 (1980) 15-24; VASSAL, Al de, "Un maître de la vie spirituelle, le Père Alonso Rodríguez", *Etudes* 150 (1917) 297-321.

1626, only fifteen years after the first edition, this book had been translated into French, Italian, Latin, German, and partially into English. There were more than 300 editions, and it was translated into 23 languages, including Armenian (1741), Arabic and Chinese (1890). This was perhaps the most printed and published book written by a Jesuit after the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius<sup>61</sup>. Rodríguez’s book was the text every novice had as his personal spiritual reading. Jesuits were not the only people who read and prayed with this book; other religious congregations and lay people used it as well. Practical, spiritual, rooted in the Christian tradition (Agustin, Bernard, Gregory, Jerome) and full of life and examples, the book of Rodrigues was very alive until the Council Vatican II.

Born in the same Castilian city as Rodríguez, we find Fr. Luis de La Puente (Valladolid 1554 – Valladolid 1624). La Puente lived most of his years as a Jesuit in Castile working as a Novice Master, Tertian instructor or teaching Theology in Valladolid.<sup>62</sup> In 1605, he published his *Meditaciones de los misterios de nuestra santa fe* (*Meditations of the Mysteries of our Holy Faith*), that reached 400 editions and translations (Chinese and Arab included). Four years later (Valladolid 1609), the *Guía spiritual* (*Spiritual Guide*) appeared, a description of the different paths of the Holy Spirit based on prayer and mortification.

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<sup>61</sup> See: SOMMERVOGEL, C., “Rodriguez, Alphonse”, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Bruxelles – Paris 1890-1930, VI, 1946-1963. The book has three main parts of eight treatises each; every treatise has around twenty chapters. The book touches the main aspects of Ignatian Spirituality (I), the principle virtues of the Christian person (II) and the spiritual fundamentals of the Society of Jesus (III).

<sup>62</sup> RUIZ JURADO, M., “La Puente, Luis de”, *DHCJ* III, 2244-2245. See, also: ABAD, C. M<sup>a</sup>, *El venerable P. Luis de la Puente. Compendio de su santa vida*, Valladolid 1935; ALLISON PEERS, J., *Studies of the Spanish Mystics*, 3 vols. (London 1951-1960), II, 241-269.

He also wrote a well-known *Vida del P. Baltasar Álvarez* (*Life of Fr. Baltasar Álvarez*, Madrid 1615) where he tried to offer a portrait of a perfect Master of spiritual life that was deeply influenced by the doctrines and teachings of Fr. Louis Lallemant<sup>63</sup>.

Achile Gagliardi (Padua / Italy 1539 - Módena / Italy 1607) had a deep influence as well as being a spiritual writer in Italy. Professor of Philosophy and Theology in Collegio Romano, he worked also in Padua, Milano, Brescia and Modena, always in Italy. During his fourteen years in Milano, he was the spiritual director of a mystic, visionary woman from the Milanese society, Isabella Berinzaga. Gagliardi wrote a *Breve compendio in torno alla perfezione christiana* (*Brief Compendium about Christian Perfection*, Brescia 1611) where he described and analyzed the mystic intuitions of this woman: deification of the soul, passive quietness, and pure union with God. Even though Gagliardi remained inside the orthodox Catholic limits, he seemed to be close to “pre-quietism.” Pope Clemens VIII imposed on him a *retractatio* and silence about these doctrines. His most popular Ignatian work, *S. P. Ignatii de Loyola de discretione spirituum regulae explanatae* (Naples 1851) (*On Discernment of spirits*) offers a synthesis of the Ignatian mysticism following the rules on discernment of the *Spiritual Exercises* [313-336]<sup>64</sup>.

Among the very long list of spiritual writers, there are still two more that we should mention. Fr. Diego Álvarez de Paz (Toledo 1561 – Potosí / Bolivia 1620) who was sent to Peru and reached Lima on

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<sup>63</sup> Four Latin editions, twelve French editions and some others in Italian, German, Flemish.... SOMMERVOGEL, “Puente, Louis de la”, VI, 1271-1295.

<sup>64</sup> MUCCI, G., “Gagliardi, Achille”, *DHCH* II, 1547-1548; GIL, D., “Gagliardi y sus comentarios a los Ejercicios”, *Manresa* 44 (1972) 273-284. SOMMERVOGEL, “Gagliardi, Achille”, III, 1095-1099.

June 1585. After being a teacher and a rector in several schools in Peru, he was appointed Provincial in 1616. Fr. De Paz combined his administrative work with his writing. A huge work in three volumes (1608, 1613 and 1618) constitutes his Spiritual Theology. The third one, *De inquisitione pacis*, is a treatise on prayer which develops in four steps: intellectual prayer, affective prayer, “inchoative” contemplation and perfect contemplation. Fr. Álvarez de Paz tried to integrate his own spiritual experience with his spiritual theological reflection in a systematic way: in the fifth part of the third volume he organizes the ascent to pure mystic life in fifteen steps<sup>65</sup>.

All this spiritual literature arrived in France and influenced Fr. Louis Lallemant (Châlons-sur-Marne / France 1588 – Bourges 1635). After years teaching philosophy, moral theology and mathematics, he became a Novice Master (Rouen, 1622-1626) and Tertian Instructor (Rouen, 1626-1631). One of his disciples, Jean Rigoleuc, took notes from his lectures and published, with Pierre Champion, the book *Doctrine Spirituelle (Spiritual Doctrine)*, one of the most important titles in the history of the spirituality of the Society of Jesus. The second conversion, caution regarding the active life, purity of heart and guidance of the Holy Spirit, are the main topics that Lallemant develops in the seven main parts (“principes / principios”) of his *Doctrine*<sup>66</sup>. The martyrs and saints Isaac Jogues (+ October 18, 1646),

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<sup>65</sup> FERNÁNDEZ, E., “Álvarez de Paz, Diego”, *DHJ* I, 94-95; LÓPEZ AZPITARTE, E., *La oración contemplativa. Evolución y sentido en Álvarez de Paz, S.J.*, Granada 1966; O’CALLAGHAN, T. G., *Álvarez de Paz and the Nature of Perfect Contemplation*, Rome 1950. See: SOMMERVOGEL, “Álvarez de Paz, Jacques”, I, 252-258.

<sup>66</sup> See: *The Spiritual Doctrine of Father Louis Lallemant, of the Company of Jesus*, Kessinger Publishing 2007; new and critical edition: *La doctrine spirituelle* (Salin, D., ed.), Desclée de Brouwer, Paris 2011. SOMMERVOGEL, “Lallemant, Louis”, IV, 1402-1404.

Antonio Daniel (+ July 4, 1648) and Jean de Brébeuf (+ March 16, 1649) were some of his disciples who died in the Canadian mission among the Hurons. Lallemand is nowadays recognized as the Master of what we can call the “French Jesuit School of Spirituality” whose most recognized disciples are Jean Joseph Surin, Julien Maunoir, Jean Rigoleuc and Vincent Huby.

## **6. “Among the Turks, or any other Infidels...”<sup>67</sup>. Spirituality for and in Mission**

As it is written in the *Formula Instituti* and appears in the VII part of the *Constitutions*<sup>68</sup> one of the main and biggest concepts in Ignatian spirituality is “mission.”<sup>69</sup> From the very beginning, the first Jesuits developed a deep self-consciousness of apostles, of men sent by Jesus Christ through their Superiors or through the Pope (Vicar of Christ) to a concrete and specific mission. Francis Xavier in India, Peter Faber in Germany, La ínez and Bobadilla in Italy, Claude Le Jay in Austria or Simão Rodrigues in Portugal served as the first missionaries in a long tradition in the Society of Jesus which reaches the XXI century.

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<sup>67</sup> “... even those who live in the region called the Indies...” (*Formula of the Institute* [3], see: GANSS, *The Constitutions*, 63-73, 68.

<sup>68</sup> “The distribution of the incorporated members in Christ’s vineyard and their relations there with their fellowmen” (“De lo que toca a los ya admitidos en el cuerpo de la Compañía para con los próximos, repartiéndose en la viña de Cristo nuestro Señor”).

<sup>69</sup> SIEVERNICH, M., “La misión y las misiones en la primitiva Compañía de Jesús”, *Ite, Inflammate omnia. Selected Historical Papers from Conferences Held at Loyola and Rome in 2006* (McCoog, Th., ed.) IHESI, Rome 2010, 255-273; O’MALLEY, J., “Mission and the early Jesuits” *The Way Supplement* 79 (1994) 3-10. See also: SALVAT, I., *Servir en misión*, Mensajero-Sal Terrae (col. Manresa n°27), Bilbao-Santander 2002.

From the very beginning, with Ignatius of Loyola Father General (1540-1556), the Society sent Jesuits to different parts of the world, and as a consequence, new provinces began to appear.<sup>70</sup> A Jesuit was a man not only *with* a mission, but *on* mission. Many young Jesuits departed from Lisbon (Portugal) or from Seville (Spain) to preach the Gospel in the new lands of Latin America, or following the first steps of Francis Xavier in India and beyond; most of them were volunteers. Between 1610 and 1730, more than 760 German Jesuits asked to be sent to the “missions,” and during the first fifteen years of the XVII century more than 130 Jesuits from Italy, Spain or Portugal left for the Portuguese Indies<sup>71</sup>.

### 6.1 Missions in India and Asia

On a very long and relatively unknown list of missionaries, we find Jesuits who have really fixed their names in the history of the Mission. Thomas Stephen (+ Salsete, Goa 1619), a friend of Edmund Campion, published a Catechism and the first *Grammar* of the Konkani language (and the first one in any Indian language); he also published his *Christian Purâna* (1616) in Marathi, a long epic poem of 11,018 stanzas of four verses each! The poem explains the History of Salvation since the Creation of the world till the Ascension of Christ to Heaven. People used to sing some stanzas during liturgy celebrations,

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<sup>70</sup> 1546 Portugal; 1547 Spain; 1549 India; 1551 Italy; 1552 Aragón (Spain); 1553 Brazil; 1554 Castile, Aragón, Andalusia (Spain); 1555 France; 1556 Germany.

<sup>71</sup> Those volunteers were known as *Indipeti* (those who ask [Latin “*petere*”] for going to the *Indees*) volunteers for the overseas missions. “About 14,000 of these autograph letters (pre-1773) are held in ARSI” (see: GRAMATOWSKI, Wiktor, *Jesuit Glossary: Guide to understanding the documents* [English version: Camilla Russell] in [www.sjweb.info/arsi/documents/glossary.pdf](http://www.sjweb.info/arsi/documents/glossary.pdf)

at home or while working in the fields<sup>72</sup>. Gonsalvo Fernandes worked hard in Madurai (India) for more than fourteen years without achieving one conversion until the arrival of Robert de Nobili (Rome 1577 – Chennai/ India 1656). This great Roman Jesuit studied Tamil, Sanskrit and the complex and rigid caste system. He dressed like an Indian man and tried to adapt the liturgy to Indian tradition. Nonetheless conflicts arose. Some Jesuits thought he was going too far in his methods of evangelization, to the point where Fr. Provincial, Pero Fernandes, forbade him from baptizing. Even though Fr. General Aquaviva supported De Nobili, the Inquisition of Goa prosecuted him; after a long process, Pope Gregory XV defended him and the case was closed<sup>73</sup>.

But India was not the limit. With Fr. Alessandro Valignano (Chieti 1539 – Macao / China 1606) the Jesuits crossed India and reached Japan. In 1573, Fr. Mercurian appointed Valignano as “Visitador” for India and the Far East. On March 24<sup>th</sup> 1574, he departed Europe from Lisbon for Goa with forty-one missionaries; it was the first trip to Asia, his place for mission during more than 30 years. He organized provinces in Japan, the formation of the Jesuits, the promotion of diocesan priests, and built the first press in Japan for Japanese Christian literature. Many of his great efforts had a deep influence in the attitude of the Church towards “mission”<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> See: CARAMAN, P., “Stephens (Stephanus, Estevão), Thomas”, *DHCJ* IV, 3637. SOMMERVOGEL, “Busten, Buston, de Bubsten, Estevam, Stephens, Thomas” II, 468-469.

<sup>73</sup> PONNAD, S., “De Nobili, Robert”, *DHCJ* II, 1060-1061; RAJAMANICKAM, S., *The First Oriental Scholar*, Tirunelveli 1972. SOMMERVOGEL, “Nobili, Robert de”, V, 1779-1780.

<sup>74</sup> CIESLIK, H. / Wicki, J., “Valignano, Alessandro”, *DHCJ* IV, 3877-3879; WICKI, J. (ed.), *Historia del principio y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús en las Indias Orientales (1542-1564)*, Roma 1944; ROSS, A. C., “Alessandro

A bit younger, LI Madou was the Chinese name of Matteo Ricci (Macerata / Italy 1552 – Beijing / China 1610), another Italian missionary, founder of the Jesuit mission in China. After a long formation in Rome, he travelled to Goa (1578), and four years later Valignano called him to work in China. He and Michele Ruggieri established the first mission in China. Ricci studied Chinese religious traditions and learnt Chinese. His deep knowledge of mathematics, cartography and cosmology and his extraordinary memory created a deep esteem and reputation among the Chinese high intellectual society. His five scientific books appeared under the title *Qiankun tiyi* (*Treatise on Heaven and Earth*). His collected works are very diverse and touch very different fields of human culture<sup>75</sup>. In 1604, the Chinese mission became independent from the Japanese Jesuit Province, and Ricci was its first Superior. As this happened to De Nobili in India, Ricci had conflicts with other missionaries (inside and outside of the Society of Jesus) who could not accept his methods for *inculturation* and provoked the “controversy about Chinese rites.” When Ricci passed away, the Jesuit mission in China had eight missionaries and eight Chinese Jesuit brothers working in four Jesuit residences, as well as a Christian community of 25.000 members<sup>76</sup>.

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Valignano: The Jesuits and Culture in the East”, *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts, 1540-1773* (O’Malley, J.W. / Bailey, G. A. / Harris, S. J. / Kennedy, T. F., eds.), University of Toronto, Toronto 1999, 336-351.

<sup>75</sup> See: SOMMERVOGEL, “Ricci Matthieu”, VI, 1792-1795.

<sup>76</sup> In his reception to the Jesuits of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (February 21<sup>st</sup> 2008), Pope Benedict XVI offered the testimony and life of Matteo Ricci and Robert de Nobili as examples of inculturation of the Faith: “extraordinary experiences of proclamation and encounter between the Gospel and world cultures” (*Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI to the Fathers of the General Congregation of the Society of Jesus* [5] in *Decrees and Documents of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation*, British Province of the Society of Jesus in association with Way Books, Oxford 2008, 143).



Chinese bishops in Council Vatican II (1963) asked the Pope to introduce the “cause of beatification” of Fr. Matteo Ricci<sup>77</sup>.

## 6.2 Missions in America

Meanwhile what was happening on the other side of the world? America was a new continent, and the new circumstances of its people and culture were demanding new methods for evangelization. Following the Franciscans projects, the Jesuits began with the “reductions,”<sup>78</sup> which included not only a way to promote Christian Faith or to convert unbelievers, but also a proposal for building a new life for the indigenous people: education, art, culture, music, economy, religion, family, and work. Jesuits began the first reductions in the region of Paraguay and the highest population reached 104,483 in 1755. Community life was always structured around the church<sup>79</sup>, the residence of the Jesuit Fathers and the big square in the middle of the city. They developed their own economy around agriculture (sugar, tobacco, potatoes) and cattle<sup>80</sup>. After a long period of conflict with

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<sup>77</sup> Among the very long bibliography: STANDAERT, N., “Jesuits in China”, *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (T. Worcester, ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, 169-185; SEBES, J. “Ricci, Mateo”, *DHCJ* IV, 3351-3353; SEBES, J., “Ritos chinos. Controversia”, *DHCJ* IV, 3367-3372; SPENCE, J. B., *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci*, Nueva York, 1984.

<sup>78</sup> The word comes from Latin “ducere” (to lead), and the word “reduction” was used to refer “to persuade” or “to convert”. The action consisted (in its first meaning) on leading the indigenous people from being dispersed in the jungle to new collective ways of living in villages organized and run by a small community of Jesuits.

<sup>79</sup> Some of them very big and rich: the church of Saint Ignatius Mini was 24 meters wide and 62 meters long. See: BAYLE, G. A., “Jesuit Architecture in colonial Latin America”, *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (Worcester, T. ed.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2008, 217-242.

<sup>80</sup> 700,000 sheeps, 75,000 horses give an idea of the prosperity of the economy of those communities.

Portuguese and Spanish kings, the reductions declined and started to disappear when the Jesuits were expelled from all Portuguese and Spanish territories in 1767 and 1768. Political and ecclesiastical conflicts wrote the last line of one of the most prosperous projects in the history of Christian missions, that revealed the “inner energy” of the Ignatian Spirituality<sup>81</sup>.

## **7. To Love and Serve till the very End. Spirituality of Martyrdom**

“No one has a greater love than those who give their own life for their friends” (John 15:13). In the *Spiritual Exercises* the retreatant used to pray: “I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision, provided only that it is for your greater service and praise, to imitate you in bearing all injuries and affronts, and any poverty actual as well as spiritual...” [*Sp Ex* 98]; and the “Third way of being humble” prays: “I desire and choose poverty with Christ rather than wealth; contempt with Christ laden with it rather than honors. Even further, I desire to be regarded as a useless fool for Christ... rather than as a wise or prudent person in this world” [*Sp Ex* 167].

The history of Ignatian Spirituality is also based on a fundament of fidelity and commitment with projects that the Jesuits started in so many different places all over the world and, even more, with the people they helped in their missions. This fidelity and commitment to people and to God was often the main cause of a violent death and martyrdom. The list of Jesuit martyrs is quite long; they offered their

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<sup>81</sup> MORALES, M. M<sup>a</sup>, “Reducciones”, *DHCJ* I, 111-114, under “América Hispánica III. Métodos misionales”; REVUELTA, M., “Los jesuitas en la América española. Gloria y Cruz de las Reducciones del Paraguay”, *Once calas en la historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, Universidad P. Comillas, Madrid 2006, 113-143.

lives in very different contexts, revealing how deep their spiritual experience was, mainly rooted in the friendship with Christ, through the *Spiritual Exercises*. Even though they were conscious of the circumstances and risks around them, they chose to remain in their missions.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Blessed/ Canonization</b>
1570, July 15	Canary Islands (Spain)	Ignacio de Azevedo and 39 companions (see list: <i>DHCJ</i> III, 2539-2540).	Beat.: Pius IX, May 11, 1854.
1571, Sept 13	Brazil	Pedro Días and 11 companions (see list: <i>DHCJ</i> III, 2540).	Venerable.
1574- 1603	England	Edmund Campion, Alexander Briant, Robert Southwell, Henry Walpole	Paul VI, Oct 25, 1970.
1583, July 25	Salsete (India)	Rodolfo Acquaviva, Alfonso Pacheco, Antonio Francisco, Pietro Berno, Francisco Aranha	Beat.: Leon XIII, April 30, 1893.
1597- 1633	Japan	Pablo Miki, Juan de Gotó, Diego Kisai and 34 companions (beat.) (see list: <i>DHCJ</i> III, 2545)	Canon.: Jun 8, 1862. Beat.: July 7, 1867.
1603- 1625	England	Nicolas Owen, Thomas Garnet	Paul VI, Oct 25, 1970.
1615	Glasgow (Scotland)	John Ogilvie	Paul VI, Oct 17, 1976.
1616, Nov 16- 20	Durango (North México)	Hernando de Tovar, Bernardo de Cisneros, Diego de Orozco, Juan del Valle, Luis de Alavés, Juan Fonte, Jeronimo de Moranta, Hernando de Santarén	Process reopened Dec 20, 1983.
1619, Sept	Slovakia	Istvan Pongrácz, Melchior Grodziecki, Marko Krizevcenin	Canon.: John Paul II, July 16, 1995.

1624, Sept 28	Ethiopia	Francisco Machado, Bernardo Pereira	Victim of Violence <sup>82</sup> .
1625- 1649	England	Edmund Arrowsmith, Henry Morse	Paul VI, Oct 25, 1970.
1628, Nov 15- 17	Paraguay	Roque González, Alonso Rodríguez, Juan del Castillo	John Paul II, May 16, 1988.
1635, Apr 25	Ethiopia	Gaspar Pais, João Pereira, Bruno Bruni	Process opened in 1902.
1638 June 14	Ethiopia	Francisco Rodrigues, Giacinto Franceschi	Process opened in 1902.
1642- 1649	Ontario –Canada	René Goupil, Jean de Lalande, Antoine Daniel, Jean de Brébeuf, Gabriel Lalemant, Charles Garnier, Noël Chabanel	Canon.: Pius XI- 1930.
1649- 1702	England	Peter Wright, Philip Evan, David Lewis	Beat.: Pius XI, Dec 15, 1929. Canon.: Paul VI, Oct 25, 1970.
1653	Ethiopia	Bernardo Nogueira	Victim of Violence.
1670, Jan 29 1672, Apr 2	Microne- sia	Luis de Medina, Diego Luis de San Vitores	Beat.: John Paul II, Oct 6 1985.
1674, Feb	Microne- sia	Francisco Esquerra	Victim of the War.
1675, Dec	Microne- sia	Pedro Díaz	Victim of the War.
1676, Jan-Sept	Microne- sia	Antonio di San Basilio, Sebastian de Monroy	Victims of the War.
1684, July – 1685, July	Microne- sia	Manuel Solórzano, Balthasar Dubois, Agustín Strohbach, Pieter Coemans	Victims of Violence.
1792, Sept 2-5	France	See long list of 23 Jesuits in <i>DHCF</i> III, 2534-2535	Beat.: Pius XI, Oct 17, 1926.
1936,	Valencia	Tomás Sitjar Fortiá and	Beat.: John Paul II,

<sup>82</sup> “Victim of Violence / Victim of War” is the name given by the *DHCF*; see vol. IV, 3940-3944: “Victims of Violence in El Salvador (Nov 16<sup>th</sup> 1989)” 3940-3941; “Victims of Violence in the Civil Spanish War (1936-1939)” 3942-3943; “Victims of Violence in Indonesia (Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> 1945)” 3943; “Victims of Violence in Libano (June 1860)” 3943-3944; “Victims of Violence in Pécs (Hungary) (March 26<sup>th</sup> 1704)” 3944.

Aug 19	(Spain)	12 companions (list: <i>DHCJ</i> III, 2538).	March 11, 2001.
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The *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* offers a long collection of articles (III, 2531-2551) on all these Jesuit Martyrs explaining the main causes, reasons and kind of martyrdom.

### **8. “Education of Children and Unlettered Persons in Christianity”<sup>83</sup>: Spirituality in Popular Missions**

This is a method of Evangelization that appeared in the XVI century. A “Popular Mission” was a pastoral strategy specifically thought and prepared for small villages and poor rural areas. This ministry had a deep influence during the Counter Reformation period in those places far from big cities and with much less opportunities for a basic Christian education. Even though the Society of Jesus invested a lot of Jesuits, time and efforts in this ministry, other new religious congregations were also dedicated to Popular Missions: the Priests of the Mission of Vincent Paul (1625) and Redemptorists of Alfonso M<sup>a</sup> de Liguorio (1732), among some others.

The first Jesuits adopted also this apostolate, motivated once more by the significance of “mission” in the *Formula Instituti* or in the *Constitutions* [603-632]. Probably the first one dedicated specifically to this apostolate in small villages was the Italian Silvestro Landini (+ Corse / France 1554)<sup>84</sup>, author of a very detailed apostolic project: one

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<sup>83</sup> *Formula Instituti*, GANSS, *Constitutions*, 66. See, also, *Constitutions* [528]: “The promise to instruct the children and uneducated [rudos] persons in conformity with the apostolic letters and the *Constitutions*...” (GANSS, 238).

<sup>84</sup> See: GUIDETTI, A., “Landini, Silvestro”, *DHCJ* III, 2277. Some people compared the work Silvestro did in Europe with the one Francis Xavier did in India.

week in a village preaching, giving Christian doctrine to different groups of population, praying the *Via Crucis*, offering sermons and confessions, promoting reform of life, and, in the end, founding small confraternities that could continue with the mission once the missionary had to leave for the next village.

Fr. Aquaviva encouraged this apostolate with three of his letters (1590, 1594, 1599) and one *Instruction*, mentioning the main goals, means and topics that the missionary should develop<sup>85</sup>. Soon this method was spread among other countries such as Germany, Spain, Portugal or France<sup>86</sup>. In northern Europe, missionaries fought mainly against the “false doctrine” of the Lutherans, while in the South the enemies represented ignorance, superstition and vices.

After the Restoration of the Society of Jesus (1814) and strongly supported by Fr. Jan Roothaan in his *Meditationes et Instructiones compendiosae pro SS. Missionibus* (1879)<sup>87</sup>, the Jesuits continued with this method of Evangelization. The *Manuel du missionnaire* (Paris 1847) published by the French Adrien Nampon offered a very good guide on how to proceed in the missions<sup>88</sup>. Germany (Colonia, Aquisgran, Paderborn), Holland, Austria, France, Italy, Spain, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and United States continued this fruitful

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<sup>85</sup> The *Instruction* “Pro iis, qui ad missiones fructificandi causa proficiscuntur”, in *Institutum SJ*, III, 365-368.

<sup>86</sup> Among the long list of Jesuits dedicated to this apostolate, we should mention: Konrad Herdigen and Georg Loferer in Germany; Jerónimo López and Pedro de Calatayud in Spain; Francis Regis and Julien Maunoir in France.

<sup>87</sup> See: SOMMERVOGEL VII, 127.

<sup>88</sup> *Manuel du Missionnaire, séculier ou régulier: ouvrage utile á tous les pasteurs des âmes* (Lyon et Paris 1847). Almost eighty five years later a new handbook appeared, this time in Italian: *Manuale pratico per le Missioni al popolo* (Padua 1931) by Giuseppe Golia. See: SOMMERVOGEL V, 1554-1557,

methodology always inspired by the *Spiritual Exercises*<sup>89</sup>. In the sixties of the XX century this apostolate came into a deep crisis and experienced a fast and universal decline.

### **9. “Collaboration at the Heart of Mission” (GC 35)<sup>90</sup> : Confraternities**

As it was written in the *Formula Instituti*, to move from one place to another was a proper element in the Jesuit vocation. So, first Jesuits started to think on how to preserve the experience and the fruits God had produced in the Vineyard where the Jesuits had been working. Without any institution around, there was a high risk of losing easily what they had built up with such big effort.

Sent to Parma (June 1539), Peter Faber and Diego Lainez worked there for more than one year. Before leaving for Germany (Faber), and to Rome (Lainez), they founded the confraternity of the “Holy Name of Jesus”. Faber wrote a list of guidelines offering advice on how to keep alive what people had already received through spiritual exercises and conversations with these two Jesuits<sup>91</sup>. In 1547 Ignatius worked with twelve men who could help him organize the works of mercy in

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<sup>89</sup> Some numbers are really amazing: Germany: in twenty years: 1.500 missions; Holland 1912: 179 missions; Austria Fr. Mathaus Wieser 943 missions in 33 years (almost 29 every year); France: 285 missions in 1851 (see: O’MALLEY, John “II. CJ Restaurada (Desde 1814). In “Misiones Populares”, *DHCJ* III, 2693-2694).

<sup>90</sup> “We are humble and grateful that so many –inspired as we have been by the vocation of Ignatius and the tradition of the Society- have chosen both to work with us and to share our sense of mission and our passion to reach out to the men and women of our broken but lovable world” (GC 35, decree 6 [3], 108).

<sup>91</sup> Meditation, Exam, Daily Mass, weekly Communion, works or mercy (see: *Monumenta Fabri*, 41-ss). Some important Jesuits of the first generation joined the Society through this confraternity: Jerónimo Doménech, Benito Palmio, Antonio Criminal (martyr).

Rome around the church of the “Twelve Apostles”, as the beginning of the confraternity of the “Holy Sacrament”. Nadal, founded in Mesina and Laínez in Palermo different confraternities; some others appeared in Genova, Padua, Ferrara, Florencia, Venecia, Siena and Perugia. Even though it was easy to see and verify the fruits of those small institutions, Ignatius preferred the Jesuits free from direct responsibilities in order to keep them available for other missions and he, for example, refused permission to Polanco when a confraternity in Pistoia wanted to elect him rector.

These pastoral platforms helped lay people live their Christian lives; sometimes the congregations were specifically oriented towards different social groups: doctors, lawyers, artisans, sailors, or even prisoners. Juan Berchmans discovered his vocation in the Congregation in Malinas; Francis Sales in Clermont; Jean Eudes in Caen and also others as Alfonso M<sup>a</sup> de Liguori, Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Camille de Lelis, etc...<sup>92</sup>

But the most important fruit of these confraternities were the Congregations of Our Lady, Marian Congregations, founded by Jean Leunis (Liège, Belgique 1532 – Torino, Italy 1584) a young Belgian Jesuit and grammar teacher at Collegio Romano<sup>93</sup>. He began a congregation with his students called “Congregation of Annunciation”, the name of the church where they used to meet. In 1564 they approved the *Rules of the Congregation*, the first structure of the thousands of communities that would appear in the future. Ten years

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<sup>92</sup> See: GUIBERT, J. de, *The Jesuits*, 295-301; O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits*, 192-197.

<sup>93</sup> See: WICKI, J. - DENDAL, R., *Le P. Jean Leunis, fondateur des Congrégations Mariales*, Rome 1951. A short article MEESSEN, G., “Leunis (Leon), Jean”, *DHCJ* III, 2242.



later, Fr. Aquaviva prepared a new version of the rules; the Jesuit “in charge” of the Congregation was not going to be elected anymore by its members, but appointed by the Fr. General. Soon this structure was adopted by other institutions: the Collegio Germanico, the Roman Seminary or the English College in Rome, and also beyond Italy as in Bohemia, Poland, Spain, Peru, México, Portugal, Brazil and Japan. Leunis founded new congregations in France (Paris, Billom, Lyon and Avignon) and they entered into Germany.

The General Fathers E. Mercurian and C. Aquaviva seriously supported the congregations and the Bulle *Omnipotentis Dei* (1584) by Pope Gregory XIII erected the congregation of Collegio Romano as the “Mother and Head” of all congregations and placed all of them under the immediate direction of the Fr. General. Marian congregations were integrated in the pedagogical structure of the Jesuit schools, being an important element in the Christian formation of the students<sup>94</sup>. After difficult times during the Suppression of the Society, the congregations renewed their rules (Fr. General Peter Beckx, 1855) and adapted to new times. The movement grew very quickly<sup>95</sup> till the new atmosphere after the Council Vatican II (1965) started to demand new changes in the congregations. It took many years, long conversations and a

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<sup>94</sup> One of the Rules of Fr. Rector of the *Ratio Studiorum* encouraged him to include the Congregation of Our Lady in the ordinary life of his School: “Procure que la Congregación de Santa María de la Anunciación del Colegio Romano se extienda por el suyo...” (“Reglas del Rector [90]”, *La pedagogía de los jesuitas*, 84; *Institutum* III, 168).

<sup>95</sup> “more than one thousand of new congregations were affiliated to the Prima Primaria in Rome every year”.

delicate process of discernment to transform the congregations into the new movement, the Christian Life Communities (CLC)<sup>96</sup>.

## 10. “Generous Contribution of Women”<sup>97</sup>

### 10.1 *The charismatic experience of Ignatius and his companions*

The role of women in the spiritual growth of Ignatius of Loyola was very important<sup>98</sup>. When he left his home in Azpeitia with his eyes and heart in Jerusalem he stopped in Manresa for quite a long time, eleven months (March 1522 – February 1523). On her way back home, the evening of March 25<sup>th</sup> 1522, Ines Pascual was the first one to talk to Ignatius, helping him when he was lost upon arrival to Manresa<sup>99</sup>. She and her friends assisted Ignatius during his sickness in Manresa, supported him with food and clothes and were affectionate towards the very first Ignatius’ teachings on prayer<sup>100</sup>. Inés, as her son Juan declared, also helped Ignatius during his years of studies in Paris (1528-1534), sending him money enough to pay for books, accommodation, registration...

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<sup>96</sup> Paul VI confirmed the new situation *ad experimentum* on 25th March 1968, and approved definitely 31<sup>st</sup> May 1971. See: O’SULLIVAN, P. “Congregaciones Marianas”, *DHCJI*, 914-918.

<sup>97</sup> “We wish to express our appreciation for this generous contribution of women, and hope that this mutuality in ministry might continue and flourish” (General Congregation 34, decree 14).

<sup>98</sup> And even before: his mother, his wet nurse, his “certain lady” (*Autobiography* [6]). For Ignatius, Women, and First Jesuits, See: GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J., “Las mujeres y los primeros jesuitas”, *Iguales y diferentes* (Rivas, F. ed.), San Pablo, Madrid 2012, 219-282.

<sup>99</sup> That day, Inés took Ignatius to Sainte Lucía Hospital and that first night brought him chicken soup.

<sup>100</sup> Their names: Angela Amigant, Juana Serra, Micaela Canilles, Inés Claver, Brianda Paquera, Juana Ferrer; they were known as “The Yñigues”, catalan word “affictionated to Iñigo”. Most of the information about these women in *Scripta Sancti Ignatii*, Madrid 1918.

In Barcelona Ignatius became friends with Isabel Roser and her group of devout women<sup>101</sup>. Isabel also supported Ignatius during his days in Barcelona and also years later, as Inés Pascual, during his studies in Paris. When Isabel's husband died, she decided to travel to Rome and to join the Society of Jesus. As Ignatius tried to avoid it, Isabel wrote to the Pope Paulus III<sup>102</sup> and Ignatius had to admit her and her two companions Francisca Cruyllas and Lucrecia de Brandine in the Society<sup>103</sup>. After pronouncing their vows, the three women became Jesuits and remained in the Society for a period of nine months. Which could be the most suitable mission for them? Ignatius sent them to "Santa Marta", a house for the rehabilitation of prostitutes<sup>104</sup>. But after a few misunderstandings and conflicts, Ignatius asked the Pope to cut the link of the vows they had pronounced and to allow the Society not to admit women again. Isabel and Francisca went back to Barcelona; Roser joined the Franciscan convent of Saint Mary of Jerusalem in 1549 and Cruyllas worked serving at Hospital de la Cruz<sup>105</sup>. Lucrecia joined a convent in Naples.

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<sup>101</sup> See: DALMASES, C. de, "Roser (Rosés, Rosell), Isabel", *DHCJ* IV, 3413. Names of her friends: Isabel de Josa, Leonor Zapila, Estefanía de Requesens, Guiomar de Ostalrich, Mencía de Requesens, Isabel de Boxadors, Aldonza de Cardona.

<sup>102</sup> The letter in *Scripta* II, 12-13 and also in *Fontes Documentales*, Rome 1977, 698-699.

<sup>103</sup> The three of them pronounced their vows 25<sup>th</sup> December 1545 in Saint Mary of the Way Church, in front of Ignatius of Loyola.

<sup>104</sup> CHAUVIN, Ch., "Ignace et les courtisanes. La Maison Sainte Marthe (1542-1548)", *Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo* (Plazaola, J., ed.), Mensajero-Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao 1992, 551-562.

<sup>105</sup> Ignatius himself explained the situation in a letter to Fr. Torres (*Epistolae* I, 437-441). See: GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J., "Las mujeres y los primeros jesuitas", 253-270.

Original and strange was the case of Juana de Austria, who was also admitted in the Society of Jesus (letter January 3, 1555) and who was a Jesuit till she died (September 7, 1573). Daughter of the Emperor Charles V, Juana was an important benefactor of the Society. To keep the unusual situation secret and in silence, Jesuits always referred to her in their correspondence as “Mateo Sánchez” or “Montoya”. She died at El Escorial Monastery (near Madrid) and was buried in the Carmelite convent of Descalzas Reales that she had founded in Madrid<sup>106</sup>.

Women appeared again in Alcalá and Salamanca (1526-1527) as devout followers of Ignatius, interested in deepening their spiritual lives<sup>107</sup>. They used to meet in private homes or in the Antezana Hospital, residence of Ignatius in Alcalá, to talk about methods of prayer, exam of consciousness and how to prepare a good confession. Because of this kind of meetings and the original personality of Ignatius and his friends (Calisto de Sá, Diego de Cáceres and Juan de Arteaga), the Inquisition began to keep an eye on them to the point where Ignatius spent forty-two days in prison. They had to leave the city and start thinking of a new plan<sup>108</sup>.

Once in Rome, and after the episode with Isabel Roser, Jesuits started to develop a way of proceeding with women based on prudence, respect and a certain distance. Other religious congregations considered that the Jesuits were too close to women in their

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<sup>106</sup> See: DALMASES, C. de, “Juana de Habsburgo (Austria)”, *DHCJ* III, 2159-2160; VILLACORTA BAÑOS-GARCÍA, A., *La jesuita. Juana de Austria*, Ariel, Barcelona 2005; DALMASES, C. DE., “Jesuitas”, *DHCJ* III, 2148-2149.

<sup>107</sup> Isabel Sánchez, Beatriz Ramírez, María Días, María de la Flor, Ana, Leonor... full list in *Scripta* I, 609.

<sup>108</sup> See: *Autobiography* [58-62].

confessions and conversations<sup>109</sup>, that's why some of Fr. Nadal's advices first, and the *Constitutions* later tried to introduce some changes in the behavior of the Jesuits<sup>110</sup>.

Nowadays, Jesuits have revisited this topic in the 34<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (1995). Decree 14 recognized all the mistakes in the Jesuit tradition against women, gave thanks to all the women that had been faithfully collaborating in Jesuit institutions, and offered some practical points in order to change ideas and behaviors for a better integration of women in the society<sup>111</sup>.

### *10.2 Ignatian spirituality and female religious institutions (FRI)*<sup>112</sup>

We have mentioned how women in different places and moments were sensitive and attracted to Ignatian Spirituality. If it is true that after the first approach by Isabel Roser, there were no other *open* initiatives from women to become Jesuits, Ignatian Spirituality inspired many other ways of living under the new charisma initiated by the First Jesuits. Five new FRI were founded before the Suppression of

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<sup>109</sup> As the Dominican Melchor Cano; See: O'REILLY, T., "Melchor Cano's *Censura y Parecer contra el Instituto de los Padres Jesuitas*. A Transcript of the British Library Manuscript", in *From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross. Spirituality and Literature in Sixteenth-century Spain*, Aldershot-Hampshire 1995, V, 1-21. See also the opinion of Archbishop of Valence (Spain) in *Epistolae Mixtae* I, 257 (January 26<sup>th</sup> 1546).

<sup>110</sup> See, for example, *Epistolae Natalis* IV, 334, 592, 597 and *Constitutions* [266.267.588]: "it is expedient that women should not enter the houses or colleges but only the churches" and few lines lower: "the superior in his discretion will have the power to grant a dispensation for just reasons".

<sup>111</sup> See: 34<sup>th</sup> GENERAL CONGREGATION, Decree 14: "The Society of Jesus and Women in the Church and in the Society"; FULAM, L., "Juana, S. J.: The Past and Future? Status of Women in the Society of Jesus", *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 31, St. Louis 1999.

<sup>112</sup> I am following DE CHARRY J. RSCJ, "Institutos Religiosos Femeninos ligados a la CJ", *DHCJ* III, 2050-2056.

the Society<sup>113</sup> (1773); six appeared during the Suppression of the Society (1773-1814)<sup>114</sup> and around 209 after the Restoration (1814). Among these 220, 166 were born in Europe<sup>115</sup>, 35 in North America (USA and Canada), 28 in Latin America, 12 in Asia<sup>116</sup>, 7 in Africa<sup>117</sup> and 4 in Australia.

<b>YEARS</b>	<b>N° of FRI</b>	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>N° of FRI</b>	<b>YEARS</b>	<b>N° of FRI</b>
1815-1830	32	1871-1880	21	1921-1930	17
1831-1840	23	1881-1890	15	1931-1940	7
1841-1850	17	1891-1900	10	1941-1950	15
1851-1860	13	1901-1910	11	1951-1976	4
1861-1870	17	1911-1920	7		

What was the main role of the Jesuit(s) in all these processes of foundations? The *Constitutions* [588] were very clear: “... people of this Society [...] must not take care of souls [‘cura de ánimas’], even less charge of religious women or any others, to confess them ordinarily or to govern them”<sup>118</sup>. But the fact that History is telling us is that Jesuits worked hard to promote and to incarnate Ignatian

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<sup>113</sup> 1585: Ursulines of Dôle; 1607: Daughters of Our Lady; 1609: Institute of BVM (Mary Ward); 1633: Order of Incarnate Word; 1650: Sisters of Saint Joseph.

<sup>114</sup> Daughters of Heart of Mary; Society of Sacred Heart; Daughters of Holy Family of Amiens; Daughters of Our Lady; Handmaids of Christian Instruction; Congregation of the Nativity of Our Lord.

<sup>115</sup> France 76; Spain 29; Italy 26; Belgium 14; Ireland 5; Holland 5; Germany 3; Poland 2 and Sweden 1.

<sup>116</sup> India 7; Lebanon 1; Syria 1; Sri Lanka 1; Indonesia 1 and Thailand 1.

<sup>117</sup> Algeria 2; Zaire 2; Nigeria 1; Zambia 1; South Africa 1.

<sup>118</sup> See: GANSS, 262-263.

Spirituality among women. Sometimes Jesuits were the spiritual directors of the Founder; at other times, they acted as advisors or confessors of the Foundress, and on other occasions Jesuits offered help in writing and preparing the first drafts of their *Constitutions*.

### **11. “Assisting and Serving those who are Found in Prisons or Hospitals” (*Formula Instituti*, 1550)**

When Ignatius of Loyola left his family home in Azpeitia for Manresa, poverty became one of the most important dimensions in his new life. This option for poverty led him to choose hospitals as ordinary places to live. During his eleven months in Manresa he stayed most of the time at Sainte Lucia hospital. After having finished his studies in Paris, Ignatius travelled to Loyola (April 1535) and decided to stay at La Magdalena Hospital in Azpeitia, two kilometers away from his family home<sup>119</sup>. With his own experience, Ignatius started a way of proceeding for his Companions.

#### *11.1 “The sick person was greatly comforted and quickly recovered” [Autob. 95]*

The First Companions made the same decision when they left Paris (November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1536) and travelled to Venice; they used to stop at hospitals sharing their lives with the sick and poor<sup>120</sup>. Once in Venice, “at the beginnings of 1537, they started to serve in diverse hospitals” and it was while serving the poor that Diego de Hoces, one

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<sup>119</sup> See: *Autobiography* [87-88].

<sup>120</sup> A wonderful description of this journey in Simão RODRIGUES, *A Brief and Exact Account: The Recollections of Simão Rodrigues on the Origins and Progress of the Society of Jesus* (Conwell, J. F., trans.), Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis 2004. (Original: *Origine et progressu Societatis Iesu, Fontes Narrativi* III, 5-135), with many references to the hospitals and how devoutly First Companions used to serve the sick.

of the First Companions, died in the hospital of Padua (13<sup>th</sup> of March 1538)<sup>121</sup>. Ignatius tried to keep the Jesuits close to poverty. In an instruction to the Fathers sent to Trent, Loyola recommended visiting the hospitals: “I would hear the confessions of the poor and console them, even bringing them something if I could. I would have them say prayers, as was said regarding confessions”<sup>122</sup>. Diego Laínez and Nicolás Bobadilla became members of the confraternity of the Holy Spirit in Rome. We can also mention Fr. Paschase Broët, a Jesuit from the First Companions, who died in Paris (September 14<sup>th</sup> 1562) taking care of sick people during a plague that started in July that year<sup>123</sup>.

After all these experiences, this ministry for helping the sick was considered so important as to be included in the *Formula Instituti* (“to serve the sick people in the hospitals” [3]) and in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus. To visit and to live in a hospital is the second “probatio” for the Jesuits novices, who are called to serve the poor with the love of Christ<sup>124</sup>.

Fr. Nadal “has justly been described, for instance, as ‘the premier organizer of social relief in Sicily’ during his years there, 1548-53”<sup>125</sup>. From the letters that Jesuits had to send to Rome every year, we know that in Lisbon, for example, Jesuits worked in hospitals preparing food,

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<sup>121</sup> See: *Autobiography* [93.98].

<sup>122</sup> See: “Instruction to the Fathers of the Council of Trent”, *Letters and Instructions* 128-131; the instructions of Ignatius written in first grammatical person “I”; see *Epistolae et Instructiones* I, 386-389.

<sup>123</sup> We preserve the last document from Fr. Broët: a short list of the things of this room he had touched; after, trusting God’s mercy, he peacefully says goodbye to his Jesuits companions before dying. See: *Monumenta Broetii*, Madrid 1903 (reprint, 1971) 194.

<sup>124</sup> See: *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus [66]; “They can help the sick, especially those in hospitals by visiting them” [650].

<sup>125</sup> O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits* 167.



making beds and washing the sick. The same occurred in Goa (India) and in Japan where Jesuits founded a small village near Nagasaki to take care of the lepers, both men and women, who were not allowed to enter into the cities.

In the ministry of caring for the sick, the borders are the people suffering from the plague, the most contagious and mortal illness among other diseases such as malaria, cholera or typhus. More than 2.000 Jesuits died serving the sick, and they are known as the “martyrs of charity”. Based mainly on the writings of Fr. Polanco, O’Malley offers some particular cases of this ministry of the first Jesuits: “During the plague in Rome in 1566 and again in 1568, they went out in large numbers to care for the stricken, with each Jesuit assigned a street as his particular charge. In Lisbon in 1569 seventeen Jesuits died while attending to victims of the plague”<sup>126</sup>.

The young Louis Gonzaga died in Rome (June 21, 1591), but there were many others in France, Northern Italy, Naples, Seville, Poland or Yucatán (México) and Paraguay. It is time to remember St. Pedro Claver, “apostle of black slaves” who also died after four years fighting against an illness he contracted during his service to sick people. This apostolate reaches our times. There have been institutions for lepers in Fontilles (Spain), Culión (Philippines) (1924 – 5,500 sick); Mangalore, Trombay and Goa (India) and N’Djamena (Tchad) a

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<sup>126</sup> O’MALLEY, J. W., *The First Jesuits*, 171, from *Polanci Complementa II*, Madrid 1917 (MHSI 54), 666.691 and 707. Recently: Malulu LOKUWE GAUTHIER, *Etude des oeuvres de miséricorde ignatiennes à Azpeitia, en Vénétie et à Rome*, Thèse doctorale, U. P. Comillas, Madrid 2015.

hospital for disabled servicemen. Fidelity and generosity appear as features of Ignatian Spirituality<sup>127</sup>.

To accompany *dying people* was a work of mercy in which Ignatius was always very interested. He knew that Jesuits were often called to this ministry, and therefore he showed a deep interest in having a handbook that could help young (and not so young) Jesuits in their ministries. He himself had gone through the experience of “touching the end of his life”, in Loyola, in Manresa, leaving Valencia, or Rome...<sup>128</sup>. We preserve many letters from different parts of the world in which Jesuits informed Rome how often they were called to assist people in their last moments: “We are usually called to help people in a ‘good death’, and we go there diligently”<sup>129</sup>; “it was more necessary to help people reach a good death than to enjoy a good living”<sup>130</sup>. Fr. Polanco published the first book: *Methodus ad eos adjuvandos qui moriuntur*<sup>131</sup>. This book had 17 editions and was translated into German, French and Portuguese. This text offered a synthesis of Dogmatic, Spiritual, Moral and Pastoral Theology and was

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<sup>127</sup> See: P. CARAMAN / C.J. VISCARDI, “Enfermos, ministerio de los”, *DHCJ* II, 1242-1244; all numbers in 1243.

<sup>128</sup> See: *Autobiography* [3.33].

<sup>129</sup> *Litterae Quadrimestres* V, 801: Alfonso Román to Diego Laínez (Zaragoza, Sept. 18, 1558). More references from other cities as Granada, Sevilla, Salamanca, Lisbon, Valladolid in GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J., “Que partan de esta vida en gracia y amor de Dios”. El *Directorio para ayudar a bien morir* del P. Juan Alfonso de Polanco”, *Discursos después de la muerte* (M<sup>a</sup> Jesús Fernández Cordero / Henar Pizarro Llorente, eds.), col. Textos para un milenio, Madrid 2013, 15-38, here 21-22.

<sup>130</sup> BURRIEZA, J., “Los Jesuitas: de las postrimerías a la muerte ejemplar”, *Hispania Sacra* LXI, 124 (julio-diciembre 2009) 513-544.

<sup>131</sup> Full Latin title: *Methodus ad eos adjuvandos qui moriuntur ex complurium Doctorum ac piorum scriptis diuturnoque usu et observatione collecta* (Macerata, Sebastiano Martinelli, 1575).

truly one of the most influential books among the Spiritual and Pastoral literature in the second part of the XVI century in Europe<sup>132</sup>.

11.2 “*The defense of Faith and promotion of Justice*” (GC 32, decree 4; 1974)

To visit prisoners or slaves in galleys<sup>133</sup> became a typical ministry for the Jesuits. It was already recommended in the *Constitutions*<sup>134</sup> and to ask about this apostolate was one of the Rules for Fr. Provincial during his canonic visits to communities. People were surprised and “edified” by these well-known priests who, aside from working as teachers in schools or universities, were also occupied with marginalized and poor people. They visited prisons to offer spiritual help through prayer, simple devotions, confessions, Masses or sermons, but they also offered corporal assistance<sup>135</sup>.

Jesuits begged in the streets or in their churches to earn money for bread, fruit, medicines, tobacco or even to pay for fines prisoners owed. They also worked to achieve better health conditions for sick prisoners. In Seville, for example, Fr. Pedro de León founded the

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<sup>132</sup> SOMMERVOGEL VI, 944-945 with all the editions and translations. Other titles: Tomás de Villacastín, *Práctica para ayudar a bien morir* (1630); Alonso de Andrade, *Lección de bien morir* (Madrid 1662); Juan Weyer, *Affectus pii* (Olmütz 1670). Long and amazing list about literature of helping dying people in SOMMERVOGEL X, 510-519: “La Mort”.

<sup>133</sup> Related to this, we find the early case of Fr. Laínez who in June 1550 had to join in Sicily the naval expedition of Juan de Vega as chaplain. Healing the sick, hearing confessions, helping dying people, baptizing the converted... “with almost no time to eat or to sleep”; see the four letters sent to Rome in *Monumenta Lainii* I, Madrid 1912, 164-173 and the short information from Polanco, *Chronicon* II, 43-44.

<sup>134</sup> GANSS, *The Constitutions*, 283: “[they] do what they can for the poor and for prisoners in the jails” [650], and the *Formula Instituti*: “and serving those who are found in prisons”.

<sup>135</sup> SOMMERVOGEL II, 1242-1243, “Clinton, Alexander, dont le vrai nom est Mac-Kensie”; first title, *The poor Prisoner's Comforter*, London 1764.

“Congregación de Nuestra Señora de la Visitación” to offer legal support to prisoners. He also accompanied 309 condemned to death, consoling them in the last moments of their lives. In Rome in 1575, the French Fr. Jean Tellier founded the “Confraternità dei carcerati”. Jesuits received a license from civil authorities to allow prisoners to attend Sunday Mass in any chapel close to the prison, and often they prepared prisoners for their First Communion<sup>136</sup>. This apostolate continued after the restoration of the Society of Jesus and during the XX century when many Jesuit Provinces sent members to work as chaplains in prisons<sup>137</sup>.

But there were also some other social groups of people who also needed to be liberated from other kind of prisons. A few months after their arrival in Rome, the first Jesuits realized how many prostitutes were in the city and how poor and miserable their living conditions were. The few institutions that already existed in 1540 seemed not to be enough to afford the situation. Ignatius decided to start a congregation, “Compagnia della Grazia”, to get money to start building a new place for them. The project, “Casa de Santa Marta”, was approved by the pope Paulus III in February 1543, and was supported by fourteen cardinals in Rome. This house was organized almost as a convent and the process of admission required the women

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<sup>136</sup> See: VISCARDI, C. J., “Encarcelados. Ministerios con”, *DHCJ* II, 1239-1241 and O’MALLEY, *The First Jesuits* 167-168, 173-174, with many references to Fr. Polanco’s *Chronicon Societatis Iesu*.

<sup>137</sup> We cannot forget the high number of Jesuits that for very different reasons have suffered themselves the experience of being prisoners; see: ANDERSON, G. M., *Jesuits in Jail, Ignatius to the Present*, Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits 27/4 (September 1995).

to answer a detailed list of questions<sup>138</sup>. Seven years after, more than three hundred women had received help from the institution and twenty years after the death of Ignatius, the house had been transformed into a female convent.

Even though this ministry doesn't appear in the *Formula Instituti*, it was quite common among the first Jesuits and Superiors who used to inform Rome about what the Jesuits in their communities and provinces were doing regarding the rehabilitation of prostitutes<sup>139</sup>.

### ***12. "This Sick Man was Devoted to Saint Peter" [Au. 3] Spiritual Life through Popular Devotions***

Devotion is a very important concept and experience in Ignatian Spirituality. It appears at the beginning and at the end of the *Autobiography*. "It happened that this sick man was *devoted* to St. Peter" and it was through his intercession that Ignatius started to recover his health [Au 3]; and in paragraph [99] Fr. Câmara says: "our Father [Ignatius] was always growing in *devotion*, that is, in facility to find God". Devotion was for Ignatius an inner feeling which helped him to discern and discover God in all things.

The Jesuits promoted different devotions to help people to discern and to discover God in their ordinary lives. It would take us a long time and a very great number of pages to describe in detail all

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<sup>138</sup> See: AICARDO, J. M., *Comentario a las Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús IV*, Madrid 1924, 651-652. CHAUVIN, Ch., "Ignace de Loyola et les Courtisannes. La maison Sainte Marthe (1542-1548)", *Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo*, Mensajero, Bilbao 1992, 551-562.

<sup>139</sup> CARAMAN, P. "Ministerios apostólicos especiales. I Prostitutas", *DHCJ III*, 2678-2679; See letter of Bartolomé Ferrão (November 1545; *Epp I*, 327-328).

these devotions; but we have to mention at least some of them in order to get a more complete picture of Ignatian Spirituality through history.

### *12.1 Devotion to frequent communion*

We know how important the Eucharist was in the life of Saint Ignatius: Manresa, Barcelona, Paris, Venice, Rome etc... Some of his important visions were related to the Mystery of Eucharist<sup>140</sup>; the first vows of the Companions in Montmartre were pronounced during a Liturgy, before the Body of Christ<sup>141</sup> and his very important spiritual discernment on poverty (Rome 1544-1545) always took place around the daily Mass, as the *Spiritual Diary* testifies<sup>142</sup>. The *Spiritual Exercises* recommend “to attend Mass and Vespers daily” and the “Third rule for thinking with the Church” says: “We should praise frequent attendance to Mass”; Jesuit Scholastics should frequent communion every eight days and hear Mass everyday<sup>143</sup>.

The first Jesuits were promoters of frequent communion. Peter Faber, in his notes to the confraternity in Parma, recommended receiving communion every eight days<sup>144</sup>. Frequent communion was a common topic in the preaching of the First Companions after their ordination. Bobadilla had written about it in his *Libellus* on frequent

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<sup>140</sup> *Autobiography* [29].

<sup>141</sup> See: *Autobiography* [29.85].

<sup>142</sup> The deep mystical experience during the thirteen months (2<sup>nd</sup> February 1544 – end of February 1545) of the *Spiritual Diary* takes place always around the Eucharist; the *Ignatian Concordance* offers more than three hundred references to the daily Mass celebrated by Ignatius.

<sup>143</sup> See: *Sp Ex* [20 and 355]; *Constitutions* [342]; “very special care should be taken that those who come to the universities of the Society to obtain knowledge should acquire along with it good and Christian moral habits [...] hear Mass everyday” *Constitutions* [481] (See: GANSS 184 and 223).

<sup>144</sup> See: *Monumenta Fabri*, Madrid 1914 (reprint, 1972) 42. Faber had gotten into troubles because he had recommended a woman to receive communion everyday.

communion<sup>145</sup> and the book of Fr. Cristóbal de Madrid, based on a previous incomplete text by Fr. Salmerón, became very popular<sup>146</sup>.

Fr. Aquaviva did not allow lay people to receive communion twice a week without permission from Fr. Provincial. In the XVII century the book of Jean Pichón *L'Esprit de Jésus-Christ et de l'Eglise sur la fréquente Communion* (Paris 1745)<sup>147</sup>, encouraged people to receive communion every day; it was a polemic text that received a lot of criticism, mainly from Jansenists, and was included in the *Index* of forbidden books. Still in 1883, Jesuits Scholastics were not allowed to receive communion more than once a week. In 1906, a decree by Pious X would change the situation.

### 12.2 Devotion to our Lady, Mary

Reading the *Autobiography* we discover how present Mary was in the life of Ignatius<sup>148</sup>; the *Spiritual Diary* is a clear example of the role of Mediator that She has in the mystical experience of Ignatius and in the *Spiritual Exercises* Mary is always the Third person to talk to in the final colloquy of every exercise. Very probably inspired by *The Vita Christi* of Ludolpho of Saxony, Ignatius offers the first

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<sup>145</sup> Maybe the first book written on this topic, but not the first published; see: CARAMAN, P., "Comunión, Misterio de la", *DHCJ* I, 893-894. The text from Bobadilla was published in *AHSI* 2 (1933) 258-279.

<sup>146</sup> *Libellus de frequenti usu Sacramenti Eucharistiae* (Neapoli 1556); see: SOMMERVOGEL V, 278-279.

<sup>147</sup> *The Spirit of Christ and of the Church on frequent Communion*; see: SOMMERVOGEL VI, 717.

<sup>148</sup> From *Autobiography* [10] (vision of Our Lady with the Son) till *Autobiography* [96] where Ignatius prays insistently to Mary to be placed with her Son, before the Storta vision. Our Lady of Olatz, in Loyola, Our Lady of Aránzazu near Azpeitia, or Our Lady of Montserrat, monastery where Ignatius offered his weapons and changed his clothes, and Our Lady of La Strada in Rome show how important Mary was in the first steps of his new life.

contemplation of the Fourth Week: “How Christ our Lord appeared to Our Lady” [*Sp Ex* 218-225]. Peter Faber used to say that, after the contemplation of the Mysteries of the Life of Christ, nothing is as helpful in spiritual life as the contemplation of the Mysteries of the Life of Mary<sup>149</sup>. During three years (1534-1536), the vows of Montmartre were pronounced on the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady (August 15) and the final vows of the first Jesuits in Rome at the basilica of Saint Paul before a mosaic of our Lady. In the beginning of the Society of Jesus, many Jesuits pronounced a vow of defending the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception; maybe the best known is John Berchmans who signed the formula with his own blood.

Jesuit literature on Marian topics is very wide. Only a few years after the Society was founded first devotional books started to appear: Gaspar de Loarte published *Istruzione e avvertimenti per meditar i misterii del Rosario* (Rome 1573), Francis Coster *De vita et laudibus Deiparae Mariae Virginis meditations quiquaginta* (Amberes 1587), similar to those of Vincenzo Bruni (Venecia 1586)<sup>150</sup>.

Joseph de Guibert maintains that Jesuits do not add anything original to the traditional devotion to Mary, but just preserve and care for what already was a patrimony of Western Spiritual Tradition<sup>151</sup>. Jesuits wrote abundantly about the Immaculate Conception of Mary, about devotion to Rosary, devotion to the Scapulary<sup>152</sup>, to the Heart of

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<sup>149</sup> See: Peter FABER, *Memorial* [110]. Mary is present in the experience of Peter Faber: *Memorial* [27.39.45.85.91.135.150.208238...].

<sup>150</sup> SOMMERVOGEL X, 424-442.

<sup>151</sup> DE GUIBERT, *The Jesuits*, 387-389.

<sup>152</sup> First titles on Rosary, maybe, Benoît Herbestus, *Adjecta quoque est pro Christianis piis Rosarii Virginis Mariae expositio devota* (Cracow 1568) and Gaspar Astete *Modo de rezar el Rosario, Salmos y oraciones* (Salamanca 1578) (SOMMERVOGEL IV, 292 and I, 604). Devotion to Scapulary started a bit later in



Mary or to the Month of Mary. Even though few titles of these two last devotions appeared at the end of XVII century, most of them belong to XIX century.

In XVII century, Jesuits referred to Mary as the “Mother of the Society”. In 1914, a hundred years after the Restoration of the Society, Fr F. J. Wernz changed the title into “Queen of the Society” and in 1942 W. Ledóchowski got from Pope Pius XII the Mass of “Mary, Queen of the Society of Jesus”; this title lasted till 1973 when it went back to “Mother of the Society”<sup>153</sup>.

Mary our Lady was always present in the main documents of different Fathers General during the difficult times of prosecutions. Fr. Lorenzo Ricci used to encourage the Jesuits asking them to pray first to Mary in all possible ways: litanies, offerings... totally convinced that “she never abandons who honestly pray to Her”<sup>154</sup>.

In contemporary times, last General Congregations have reminded and insisted on the role and significance of Mary in the life of the Institute: “filial devotion to his Mother and our Lady”, “humble and simple devotion to our Lady”<sup>155</sup>. “Mary shows us how to live in total availability and to place our whole lives at the service of her Son. In her instruction to the servants at Cana, ‘Do whatever he tells you’, Mary points out for us the basic orientation that should guide our lives.

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1654: Théophile Raynaud, *Scapulare Partheno-Carmeliticum illustratum et defensum* (Venecia) (SOMMERVOGEL VI 1537).

<sup>153</sup> O’NEILL, Ch, “Devoción a María”, *DHCJ* II, 1104-1106: “h) Mes de Mayo” and “i) Consagración a María”. See also *DHCJ* IV, “Teología. IV.5. Mariología” 3737-3739.

<sup>154</sup> See: *Supresión y Restauración de la Compañía de Jesús. Documentos* (Valero, U., ed.), Mensajero-Sal Terrae-Universidad P. Comillas, Bilbao-Santander-Madrid 2014, 89-134.

<sup>155</sup> GENERAL CONGREGATION 31, decrees 8.3 and 16.7e.

For this reason, the Society has always seen in Mary a model of obedience”<sup>156</sup>.

### 12.3 *Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*

This was perhaps the most popular and influential devotion promoted by the Society of Jesus. As we understand it today, the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus was not a part of the spiritual life of the first Jesuits. Faber and Borgia had special devotion to the wound in Christ’s side, that already appears in the medieval prayer *Anima Christi*: “intra vulnera tua, abscondeme” (“inside your wound, hide me”). Peter Canisius wrote about a deep experience he went through the day of this solemn profession in Rome: Christ opened his Heart and invited him to drink the water that flowed from His Heart<sup>157</sup>. Important Jesuits writers as Fr. Diego Álvarez de Paz and Luis de la Puente in Spain, or Vincent Huby in France began writing about the Heart of Christ.

But this devotion entered into a new dimension with Fr. Claude de la Colombière, spiritual director of Marguerite de Alacoque, a mystic visionary of the Heart of Christ. Her visions took place in Paray-le-Monial. She wrote six letters in which she established links between the Heart of Christ and the Society of Jesus. A year after her having passed away, the Jesuit Jean Croiset published *La dévotion au Sacré Coeur de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ* (1691) (*Devotion to Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ*). Soon some confraternities appeared, the first

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<sup>156</sup> GENERAL CONGREGATION 35, decree 4.53. Something similar offers the concluding paragraph [108] of decree 1 of GC 33, a quotation from one of the first letters of Ignatius to Inés Pascual: “I pray to our Lady to implore on our behalf between us sinners and her Son and Lord, and to gain us His grace, so that...”.

<sup>157</sup> See: PEDRO CANISIO, *Epistulae et Acta* (Braunsberger, O., ed.) Friburgo 1896, I, 55-59.

one in France in 1698 and eight years later there were more than one hundred. On January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1765 the Pope approved the Mass of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

This devotion was very important during the difficult times of the Suppression of the Society. The II Polocense General Congregation (decree 8) imposed prayer to the Heart of Christ in these days of prosecution, and to celebrate a triduum before the Feast. New religious congregations of the “Sacred Heart” appeared, and many bishops wanted to consecrate their dioceses to the Heart of Christ. In August 23<sup>th</sup> 1856, Pious IX extended the Feast to the whole Church; and in 1899 Leon XIII consecrated the world to the Heart of Christ. This devotion became a very important part of the spiritual life of the universal Church, and the Society of Jesus after the Restoration remained very close to the Heart of Christ<sup>158</sup>.

Yet, after the Council Vatican II, the 31<sup>st</sup> General Congregation (1965) recommended a renovation of this devotion and the next 32<sup>nd</sup> (1975) insisted on this point. At the same time, the most important theologians, such as Karl Rahner, offered a new theology of the Sacred Heart. Fr. Pedro Arrupe included the Spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Christ in one of his letters in 1972 and, again, in one of his most important documents as Fr. General of the Society of Jesus: “Rooted and Founded in the Charity” (1980). Pope Jean Paul II asked the Society to continue promoting this devotion (1986) and Fr. General P.-H. Kolvenbach went back to it in his lecture “Munus suavissimum”

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<sup>158</sup> All Fathers General wrote letters or documents on this devotion: Jean Roothaan, Peter Beckx, Anthony Anderledy, Luis Martín, Francis Wernz, Wlodimiro Ledóchowski, Jean B. Janssens.

(1988) and in his letter of April 12<sup>th</sup> 1992 announcing the canonization of Blessed Claude de La Colombière<sup>159</sup>.

#### 12.4 Devotion to Saint Joseph

Saint Joseph doesn't appear in the *Autobiography* nor in the *Spiritual Diary* nor in the *Exercises*<sup>160</sup>. Among the many saints that do appear, I have not found him in the *Memorial* of Peter Faber. But devotion to Saint Joseph became more and more important in Europe in the XVII century and some devotional books were published in honor of Saint Joseph; the Jesuits were devout promoters of this devotion<sup>161</sup>: De Barry *La Dévotion à Saint Joseph le plus aimé et le plus amiable de tous les saints* (Lyons 1640), Fr. Nadasi *Hebdomada S. Iosepho sacra* (Roma 1659); Fr. José Antonio Patrignani *Il divoto di San Giuseppe* (Florenzia 1707)<sup>162</sup>.

### 13. “He saw the windows were closed” [Au 97]. The Suppression of the Society of Jesus (1773)

From the very beginning, things were not always easy. Since his time in Alcalá 1526 until his last years in Rome (1540-1556), Ignatius

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<sup>159</sup> Lecture in the third Centenary of the revelations (July 2<sup>nd</sup> 1988); letter in *Acta Romana SI* 20 (1988-1992) 725-729. See the article NICOLAU, M. / VISCARDI, C.J., “Corazón de Jesús. Devoción”, *DHCJ* I, 944-948; De GUIBERT, J., *The Jesuits*, 392-401.

<sup>160</sup> Only in the references to Mysteries of the Life of Christ [264.265.269.270].

<sup>161</sup> See: DE GUIBERT, *The Jesuits* 389-390, who refers to SOMMERVOGEL X 447-448.

<sup>162</sup> Among the different devotions promoted by the Jesuits we can add devotion to Purgatory as a place to “awake” to a better life. Some titles: Binet: *De l'état heureux et malheureux des âmes souffrantes en Purgatoire, et des moyens souverains pour n'y aller pas ou y demeurer fort peu* (1626); Martín de la Roa: *Estado de las almas del Purgatorio* (Sevilla 1619); Domingo Bruno: *Il Purgatorio aperto e chiuso* (Nápoles 1730) (4 vols.); J. E. Nieremberg: *Devoción con las ánimas del Purgatorio* (1630); Marcos de Bonnyer: *L'avocat des âmes du Purgatoire* (1632); Jacques Mumford: *A remembrance for the living to pray for the dead* (1641); Nicolas Zucchi: *Pratica della vera divozione in aiuto delle anime del Purgatorio* (Roma 1659).

went through seven Inquisitorial processes. He and his First Companions were often under the eye of the Inquisition. 1538 was, maybe, one of the most difficult periods in the life of the group due to a conflict with an Augustinian Friar in Rome, Augustin Mainardi<sup>163</sup>. A few months later, the process of the founding of the Society took more time than expected because Cardinal Jerome Guinucci, in charge of writing the report to the pope, was openly against the foundation<sup>164</sup>. But all these difficulties were almost a game compared to what had to happen two hundred and thirty five years later...

In 1759 the King of Portugal decided to expel the Jesuits from his territories. Louis XV of France did the same in 1764 and also the King of Spain, Charles III, through his document known as *Pragmática Sanción* on April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1767. An experience of exile began for all Jesuits living in all these countries and their colonies in Asia and Latin America. We cannot spend time detailing the main causes for this very complex situation: the economy, social, political and ecclesiastical reasons<sup>165</sup> are behind this dramatic episode in the History of the Society of Jesus. The Pope Clemens XIII tried to avoid this conflict but all his efforts were not enough<sup>166</sup>.

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<sup>163</sup> “El negocio ha sido tal, que durante ocho messes enteros hemos passado la más recia contradicción o persecución que jamás ayamos passado en esta vida” Letter of Ignatius to Isabel Roser (Rome, December 19, 1538) *Epistolae et Instructiones* I, 137.

<sup>164</sup> See: CONWELL, J., “Cardinals Guidiccioni and Ghinucci faced with the Solemn Approbation of the Society of Jesus”, *AHSI* 66 (1997) 3-50.

<sup>165</sup> See the long article: PINEDO, I, “Supresión” inside “Compañía de Jesús”, *DHCH* I, 878-884; FERRER BENIMELLI, J. A., *Expulsión y extinción de los jesuitas. 1759-1773*, Mensajero, Bilbao 2013.

<sup>166</sup> He wrote the Bullle *Apostolicum Pascendi* (January 7, 1765), and an important letter to King Charles III (April 16<sup>th</sup> 1767), asking him to revoke the decision of expelling the Jesuits from his territories.

Elected in May 21, 1758, Fr. Lorenzo Ricci was the General of the Society<sup>167</sup>. In January 1765 he began writing open letters to the whole Society encouraging the Jesuits and asking them to remain faithful to their vocation and close to Jesus Christ in those very difficult times. He asked for sincere prayers, and to remain close to the Passion of Christ. The Sacred Heart of Jesus and Our Lady Virgin Mary, as well the Saints of the Society of Jesus, were always present in their prayers<sup>168</sup>. But the pressure that the different Kings of Europe placed upon the Vatican, and directly onto the Pope, succeeded, and Clemens XIV in his technically called *brief*, but quite long document, *Dominus ac Redemptor Noster* (June 21<sup>st</sup> 1773), decided to abolish the Society of Jesus. That meant that the Society had to disappear from the “face of the Earth”: Jesuits, institutions, patrimony... everything:

*We suppress and extinguish that Society; we abolish and declare null all and each of their ministries and works, houses, schools, colleges, orphanages, farms and whatever possessions placed in any Province, Kingdom or Dominions... and her statutes, customs, decrees and constitutions... And so, we declare that all authority of Fr. General, Fathers Provincial, Visitadores and any other Superiors concerning temporal and spiritual matters, were perpetually abolished and totally extinguished<sup>169</sup>.*

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<sup>167</sup> BOTTEREAU, G., “Ricci, Lorenzo”, *DHCJ* II, 1656-1657.

<sup>168</sup> See the very good collection of original documents on Suppression and Restoration in VALERO, U., (ed.) *Supresión y Restauración de la Compañía de Jesús. Documentos*, Mensajero-Sal Terrae-Universidad P. Comillas (col. Manresa n° 52), Bilbao-Santander-Madrid 2014, 89-134.

<sup>169</sup> VALERO, U., *Supresión y Restauración...*, 158-159.

The period of the Suppression lasted for forty years. Most of the Jesuits were living in very difficult and poor conditions. Many of them were in prison until they died. It was a time for the Society to grow in humility and poverty; time to contemplate the Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises, the Passion, suffering and death of Jesus Christ; time to consider the third level of Humility and to experience what more than two hundred years before, Fr. Diego Laínez had called the “*Minima Societas Iesu*”. Fr. General Ricci and his Assistants were put in jail in Castel Sant’Angelo in Rome in September 1773. Ricci was there for two years and two months, until his death on November 24<sup>th</sup> 1775<sup>170</sup>. It was a very hard period and probably the darkest page of the history of the Society of Jesus, but at the same time a very deep experience in the spiritual life of the Institution.

In the middle of the darkness, a very weak light was still shining. Zarina Catherine II of Russia did not recognize the papal document in her territories and that is why the Jesuits could continue with their own apostolates in that region. I am sure that Catherine was not conscious of the depth and transcendence of her decision supporting the Jesuits. She was so satisfied with Jesuit schools and their pedagogical methods, that she could not even think about the possibility of losing one of them.

#### **14. Towards Contemporary Times: the Society of Jesus Restored**

In 1800 there were in Russia 214 Jesuits (94 priests, 74 scholastics and 46 brothers). The Society was officially restored when

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<sup>170</sup> In his two-page document “Declaration of Innocence”, written a few days before his death, he declared open and honestly regarding his innocence and the innocence of the Society and also his forgiveness to all the people responsible for the situation: “I wish to die with this desire in my heart”.

Pious VII published his document *Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum* (August 7<sup>th</sup> 1814); at that moment there were six hundred Jesuits, but soon the situation started to change and the number of Jesuits increased very quickly, as we can see in the following table<sup>171</sup>.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>JESUITS</b>	<b>FR. GENERAL</b>
1814	600	Tadeusz BRZOZOWSKI
1829	2,139	Louis FORTIS
1853	5,209	John Roothaan
1887	12,070	Peter Beckx
1892	13,274	Anthony Anderly
1906	15,661	Luis Martin
1936	16,950	Francis J. Wernz
1942	26,588	Wlodimiro Ledó Chowski
1964	35,968	Jean B. Janssens

#### 14.1 Back to the Exercises

After the Restoration, Jesuits started to rebuild their own formation structures and were called upon by many institutions (mainly schools or seminaries) in different countries such as Ireland, England, France, Italy or the United States. But the Society did not have enough human resources to respond to all the demands. It was under the Generalate of Fr. Jean Roothaan (1829-1853) that the Ignatian Spirituality became more explicit in the life of the Society and

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<sup>171</sup> All numbers taken from the articles in the *DHCJ* II, 1660-1696, from “General 19c. T. Brzozowski” till “General 27. J. B. Janssens”.



in every Jesuit's life in particular. The Spiritual Exercises were the central point in the formation and life of the Jesuits<sup>172</sup>. Roothaan really loved the experience and the text of the *Exercises*. He studied the *Autograph*, (Spanish) version of the *Exercises*, and prepared some editions of the *Vulgata* (Latin) version<sup>173</sup>.

#### 14.2 Mission again and again

Roothaan also promoted the “Popular Missions” and attempted to have his own Jesuits involved in this ministry of all Jesuit Provinces. He was sensitive to the context surrounding this matter, as we see during the cholera epidemic in Rome (1837) where he organized all the Jesuits in the city to assist the sick. His letter *De Missionum externarum desiderio excitando et fovendo*<sup>174</sup> had a great impact among young Jesuits to the point where more than 1260 Jesuits offered themselves as volunteers to go to any mission around the world<sup>175</sup>. Diocesan Seminaries were opened in China and Albania (1843), India (1844) and Syria (1845), and Jesuits were sent to many countries

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<sup>172</sup> See the letter “Ad Patres et Fratres Societatis: De spiritualium exercitiorum S. P. N. studio et usu” (Roma December 27, 1834) in ROTHAAAN, Johannis, *Opera Spiritualia* (De Jonge, L. / Pirri, P., eds.), (2 vols.) Roma 1936, I, 357-366. See also *Cartas selectas de los Padres Generales*, Oña 1917, 170-221.

<sup>173</sup> Latin editions in 1838, 1847, 1852 y 1854. He also prepared an edition of the Spanish text that he liked to offer to Friends or visitors. Recently: CEBOLLADA, P., “Jan Philip Roothaan, restaurador de los Ejercicios Espirituales”, *Manresa* 87 (2015) 73-75.

<sup>174</sup> *On how to awake the desire for external Missions* (December 3, 1833), in *Opera Spiritualia* I, 347-356.

<sup>175</sup> But Roothaan was very strict with the natural and spiritual conditions of the missionaries, avoiding when possible “missionary romanticism”.

around the world<sup>176</sup>; where a few of them were appointed bishops in different dioceses.

General Congregation XXII elected Fr. Peter John Beckx as Father General in July 2, 1853. He wrote fourteen letters to the Society regarding Jesuit religious life, formation, and how to support the Society during troubled times<sup>177</sup>. Number 12 insisted on mission: “On the zeal for the souls and how to help them” (December 10<sup>th</sup> 1875). The 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1872, all Jesuit provinces were consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Missions in Asia and Latin America grew<sup>178</sup>. The same happened under the short period of government of the next Fr. General, Antonio M<sup>a</sup> Anderley (1887-1892).

#### 14.3 Spirituality, Formation and Mission

Fr. Luis Martín García was elected General (Loyola 1892)<sup>179</sup> and, following one of the main accents for Anderley, insisted, on intellectual apostolate and serious formation of the Jesuits. He had a deep interest in the History of the Society of Jesus and began (Madrid 1894) the huge collection of *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, a

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<sup>176</sup> United States, Syria, Bengal, Argentina, Jamaica, Greece, Algeria, Uruguay, China, Paraguay, Chile, Guatemala, Madagascar, Herzegovina, Central Africa, Sri Lanka, India...

<sup>177</sup> See complete list of documents in SMET, S. de, “Becks, Pedro Juan [Pieter Jan]”, *DHCJ* II, 1672. Selection of letters in *Cartas selectas*, 222-236.

<sup>178</sup> New missions in Cuba, Colombia, Philippines-Culión, Madagascar, Mangalore, Zambia, Australia.

<sup>179</sup> Due to the conflictive political situation in Italy, Fr. Martin (General Vicar) decided, with the approval of Pope Leo XIII, to convoke the General Congregation in Loyola (Spain); it started September 24<sup>th</sup> 1892. See the long article SANZ DE DIEGO, R. M<sup>a</sup>, “Martín García, Luis”, *DHCJ*, II, 1676-1682; some letters in *Cartas selectas*, 476-511.

critical edition of all documents regarding the beginnings of the Institution, starting from those of the first Jesuits<sup>180</sup>.

Fr. Franz Xavier Wernz (General September 8<sup>th</sup> 1906), a German canonist, insisted upon the renovation of the spiritual life of the Jesuits, vocations and solid formation inside the Society. To develop a deeper communication among the Jesuits, he founded *Acta Romana Societatis Iesu*, the official publication inside the Society of Jesus and also the prestigious periodical *America* (December 8<sup>th</sup> 1909). Pope Pious X founded the Pontifical Biblical Institute which was run by the Jesuits from the beginning, and Fr. Wernz founded the Sophia University in Tokyo in 1913 (this mission began in 1908). In 1914, the Society celebrated the first Centenary of the Restoration; one of the main outcomes of this was the *Liber saecularis S.I.* that included the main activities and ministries of the Society during the last hundred years. To prepare this important date, Wernz wrote a letter to the whole Society (September 8, 1907) insisting on spiritual renovation and on the apostolic value of high divulgation works.

Born in Austria October 7<sup>th</sup> 1866, and elected Fr. General on February 11<sup>th</sup> 1915, Fr. Wlodimiro Ledóchowski continued insisting on formation for the young Jesuits, education and what we call today “Intellectual Apostolate”. He revised the *Ratio Studiorum* and published a new version (1941); The Gregorian Pontifical University began publishing the periodical *Gregorianum* (1920) and in 1929 the Pontifical Biblical Institute started, always run by the Jesuits.

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<sup>180</sup> *Monumenta*, a treasure of the patrimony of the Society of Jesus, started in Madrid and then moved to Rome in 1932. More than 165 volumes including the writings of first Jesuits and all documents concerning the first missions of the Society of Jesus. Detailed and full description of this amazing collection in: DANIELUK, R., “Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu. Uno sguardo di insieme sulla collana”, *AHSI* 81 (2012) 249-271.

Ledóchowski founded the Historical Institute in Rome and started the periodical *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*. Some of his letters to the Society focused on “Apostolate of Sacred Heart of Jesus” (1919) and “On devotion to our Saints” (1933). He started the Secretaries of “Apostolate of Prayer” and “Congregation of our Lady”. It was Ledóchowski who established the Curia in Borgo Santo Spirito, inaugurated in 1927<sup>181</sup>.

The 29<sup>th</sup> General Congregation could not gather until September 1946, four years after the death of Fr. Ledóchowski (Rome, December 13th 1942). Fr. Jean Baptist Janssens, from Amberes (Holland) was elected in the first round. Among the many letters he wrote to the Society, the first one was about “Spiritual and interior life” (1946) and the second one on “Social Apostolate” (1949)<sup>182</sup>. He had to address the impact of the “New Theology” and provide instructions regarding books and readings which were not appropriate for Jesuits students.

Related to this, Janssens had to handle the conflict with Fr. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and his important book *Le Phénomène humaine*<sup>183</sup>. Scientist, Anthropologist, Theologian and Mystic, Fr. Teilhard had opened a new door for a new way of thinking, that is the relationship between Science and Religion. But his ideas were, maybe, too

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<sup>181</sup> See: *La voz del P. Ledóchowsky*, Barcelona 1945; *Selected Writings of Fr. Ledóchowsky*, Chicago 1945.

<sup>182</sup> *De vita interiore fovenda, Instructio de apostolatu sociale* and some others about *Ratio Studiorum* (1954), *On Liturgy* (1959), or even on *De veste Societatis (On Jesuit dress)* (1964) or *Normae de usu tabaci, (On tobacco and smoking in the Society)* (1957).

<sup>183</sup> Once Teilhard had passed away (December 19, 1955), the book was published without the required “imprimatur”. Janssens forbade the book in all Jesuits libraries (January 1956) and two years later it was the Congregation of the Holy Office who initiated the removal of all works of Fr. Teilhard from the libraries of all religious communities.

advanced for that moment. At the same time, the spirit of the mission continued growing; many new provinces appeared and also new missions in South Korea (1955), Zambia (1956), Yoro (Honduras, 1957), Sinoia (Rhodesia) and Osorno (Chile) the last two both in 1959. Fr. Janssens died on October 5<sup>th</sup> 1964, when the Council Vatican II was in its full development.

## **15. Ignatian Spirituality in Contemporary Times**

### *15.1 The renewal of the Society of Jesus*

The renovation of the Church promoted by the Council Vatican II provoked a deep and quick renovation inside the Society of Jesus. Fr. Pedro Arrupe (1907 Bilbao / Spain) was elected Fr. General on May 22<sup>nd</sup> 1965. He was the man who had to lead the Jesuits into a very turbulent period in the history of the Church. It is very difficult to summarize the richness of Arrupe's period (1965-1983) concerning Ignatian Spirituality<sup>184</sup>. Following his previous tradition, Arrupe confirmed the primacy of the Spiritual Exercises in the personal life of every Jesuit and in the life of the Society. He encouraged the "people who give" the Exercises to renew methodologies going back to more Ignatian ways of providing the Exercises. At the same time, he promoted the foundation of centers and institutes to study Ignatian

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<sup>184</sup> Almost everything about Pedro Arrupe, his time and circumstances in *Pedro Arrupe, General de la Compañía de Jesús. Nuevas aportaciones a su biografía* (La Bella, G., ed.), Mensajero-Sal Terrae, Bilbao-Santander 2007, 1077 pp. and 24 collaborators. German translation: *Pedro Arrupe Generaloberer der Jesuiten: Neue biographische Perspektiven* (Gianni La Bella and Martin Maier, eds.) 608 p. Herder 2008. English translation: *Pedro Arrupe Superior General of the Society of Jesus: New Contributions for his Biography* (Prologue by Father Adolfo Nicolás; trans. Michael Campbell-Johnston and others) Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand 2008, 362 pages and a CD containing 18 chapters of the original not in the printed edition.

Spirituality and the sources and history of the Society<sup>185</sup>. The fruit of all the efforts which had started years before the initiatives of Arrupe, was a quite long list of Jesuits fully dedicated to the study and promotion of Ignatian Spirituality and Jesuit History: Ignacio Casanovas, Joseph de Guibert, Pedro de Leturia, Dionisio Zapico, José Calveras, Hugo Rahner, Cándido de Dalmases, George Ganss, Ignacio Iparraguirre, Maurizio Costa...among many others.

He tried to adapt poverty and obedience to the new times but being faithful to the very first intuitions of Saint Ignatius, in search of the essential. Arrupe insisted on how necessary it is for a Jesuit to be rooted in a deep spiritual experience; his main letters and lectures to the Society have offered a renewed interpretation of Ignatian Spirituality<sup>186</sup>. Supported by the 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> General Congregations (decree 4)<sup>187</sup> the Society pushed its institutions and Jesuits towards a deeper commitment with “Justice” and this new perspective had an important influence on spirituality: spirituality from the poor and for the poor.

## 15.2 Contemporary Ignatian Spirituality

### a. Jesus Christ as “Principle and Foundation”

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<sup>185</sup> Some of the Ignatian periodicals that appeared in this time: *The Way* (London 1962), *Diakonía* (Panamá 1967), *Boletín de Espiritualidad* (Buenos Aires 1968), *Progressio* (Rome 1968), *Studies in Spirituality of the Jesuits* (St. Louis, MO 1969), *CIS* (Rome 1970), *Appunti di Spiritualità* (Napoles 1972), *Ignis* (Mumbai 1972), *Cahiers de Spiritualité* (Quebec 1976).

<sup>186</sup> Main documents of Fr. Arrupe on Ignatian Spirituality and Ignatian charisma are: “Apostolic mission, key to Ignatian charism” (1974), “Our way or proceeding” (1979), “Trinitarian inspiration of Ignatian Charisma” (1980) and “Rooted and founded in Charity” (1981). See recent edition of these documents: *Pedro Arrupe, carisma de Ignacio* (Mollá, D., ed.), Mensajero-Sal Terrae-U.P. Comillas (col. Manresa n° 55), Bilbao-Santander-Madrid 2015.

<sup>187</sup> Decree 4: “Defense of Faith and Promotion of Justice”.

Time, culture and people are in permanent change; that is why spirituality has to stay alert to adapt its language and pastoral methods, when and where possible, to these new circumstances. Different circumstances but the same God. He is the same as Ignatius discovered during his convalescence in Loyola, the same that the *Spiritual Exercises* offer to be known, loved and to be followed. He is the same that supported the Society in difficult times during the Suppression and the One who offered His grace to Jesuits who accepted martyrdom. After these Christocentric documents by Fr. Arrupe<sup>188</sup> and many others by Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach<sup>189</sup>, the 34<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (1995) opened the spiritual life of the Society of Jesus to new dimensions: Culture, Interreligious Dialogue, Ecumenism, Collaboration with lay people, Status of Women, Ecology<sup>190</sup>. These were new topics that invited Ignatian Spirituality to explore the world under the light, always new, of the Incarnation. Thirteen years after, the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation confirmed the Christocentric dimension of the heart of the Society, and so, the heart of the Ignatian Spirituality and the different ministries that flow from her. “Jesuits know who they are by looking at Him”<sup>191</sup>.

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<sup>188</sup> See, for example, Arrupe’s prayer: “Jesus Christ Our Model” in “Our way of Proceeding” (1979).

<sup>189</sup> KOLVENBACH, P.-H., *Decir al Indecible. Estudios sobre los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio*, (Iglesias, I., ed.) Mensajero-Sal Terrae (Col. Manresa n°20), Bilbao-Santander 1999.

<sup>190</sup> Decrees 4, 5, 12, 13, 14 and 20.

<sup>191</sup> General Congregation 35, decree 2. The whole document is very Christocentric: the first conversion of Ignatius in Loyola (1522), La Storta experience (1537), the Deliberation of First Fathers (1539) or the mission of Francis Xavier in India (1542).

*b. Culture – Dialogue - Justice*

And where is the Ignatian Spirituality nowadays? If we revisit the main points of the last two General Congregations (34<sup>th</sup> - 1995, and 35<sup>th</sup> - 2008) we discover new topics that have opened new dimensions for Ignatian Spirituality. According to the rich missionary tradition, Ignatian Spirituality returns to *culture* as one of the main factors for a fruitful mission<sup>192</sup>. Once Spirituality is inside a culture, a process of dialogue begins. This Spirituality remains always in the dialogue, we could say, developing a “culture of dialogue”; it is a Spirituality of listening, opening to others, and being ready to start a conversation for a better world. Dialogue with other Christian Churches (GC 34, decree 12 “On Ecumenism”) and dialogue with other religions (CG 34, decree 5 “Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue”) were incorporated as one of the missions’ main goals in the Society. Culture and Dialogue offer the possibility to continue working for Justice, the third pillar that inspires and supports a spiritual experience from an Ignatian perspective today<sup>193</sup>.

*c. Reconciliation*

The contemplation of the Incarnation offers us the possibility of contemplating “those on the face of the earth, so diverse in dress and behavior: some white and others black, some in peace and others at war” [*Sp Ex* 106]. The *Formula Instituti* (1550), expanding the “works of charity” that the previous *Formula* (1540) had only mentioned

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<sup>192</sup> See what we have already said about Matteo Ricci or Robert de Nobili; see also General Congregation 34<sup>th</sup>, decree 4 “Our Mission and Culture”. Twenty years before, Fr. Arrupe had started to talk about “Inculturation” in his letter to the whole Society “On inculturation” (May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1978), *Acta Roma S.I. XVII* [1978] (1979) 256-263.

<sup>193</sup> GC 32<sup>nd</sup>, decree 4 and GC 34<sup>th</sup> decree 3 “Our Mission and Justice”.



without any specification, included “reconcile the estranged” (*desavenidos*), encouraging the Jesuits to work as “peacemakers” among different people, families, villages or even countries. Recently Ignatian Spirituality has recovered this deep intuition from the first Jesuits<sup>194</sup>, and has begun thinking and working intensely in this ministry of reconciliation. The 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation in its decree number 3 wrote about “Reconciliation with God [19-24]”, “Reconciliation with one another [25-30]” and “Reconciliation with Creation [31-36].

*d. Ecology*

It has become one of the most sensitive points in contemporary culture. A new relationship with nature started to emerge a few years ago in many different countries and in social and political groups. If we refer to the *Spiritual Exercises*, we discover a few key elements which allow us to make a commitment to Ecology, deeply rooted in Ignatian tradition. We only have to explore what Ignatius says in the second and third points of “Contemplation to Attain Love”, found in the first definition of Consolation (third rule of discernment of spirits [316])<sup>195</sup>. As a prophetic voice, the 34<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (document 20) had written a short “Recommendation to Fr. General: On Ecology” asking for a study regarding how Ignatian Spirituality can contribute to inspire different ministries in the universal Society of Jesus.

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<sup>194</sup> See O’MALLEY, J., *The First Jesuits*, 168-171.

<sup>195</sup> See: paragraphs [235-236] “Contemplation to Attain Love” (how God dwells, labors and works in creatures) and [316] the first definition of spiritual consolation. See: AGUILAR, J., “Contemplation to attain love and ecology” and GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J., “Ecology and Consolation”, both in “A Spirituality that Reconciles us with Creation”, *Promotio Iustitiae* 111 (2013/2) 10-14 and 22-26.

Thirteen years later, the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation (2008) referred to Ecology in decrees two and three helping the whole Society of Jesus in becoming more sensitive and effective on ecological matters, “men and women to take responsibility for our home, the earth”<sup>196</sup>. The Congregation “urges all Jesuits and all partners engaged in the same mission, particularly universities and research centers, to promote studies and practices focusing on the causes of poverty and the question of the environment's improvement”. Our relation to Creation has become a criterion to discern the authenticity of our spiritual experience: “to appreciate more deeply our covenant with creation as central to right relationships with God and one another”<sup>197</sup>. Based on this mystical fundament, Ignatian Spirituality is inspiring new missions and ministries<sup>198</sup>.

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<sup>196</sup> See: decree 2 [20-24] and decree 3 “Reconciliation with Creation” [31-36].

<sup>197</sup> GC 35, decree 3 [35-36].

<sup>198</sup> See the document: *Healing a Broken World, Promotio Iustitiae* 106 (2011/2), specially “Understanding our Jesuit Mission in the Context of Ecological Crisis” 29-41 and “Recommendations and Concrete Suggestions”, 42-53. Recently: “Espiritualidad ignaciana y ecología. Ecos de la *Laudato si'*” (Tatay, J., coord.) *Manresa* 87 (2015).

**[摘要]** 依納爵靈修其中最獨特之處是開啟對所有事物、所有受造物的愛的凝視，而這由對祈禱者的慈悲和無條件的接受開始。

「天主在世上的一切受造物中為我操勞工作。」[《神操》236 條] 縱觀其 475 年的歷史，耶穌會臨在不同的地方和多樣化的環境中，這種臨在主要以行動來解釋它的宗教經驗，它愛天主和愛鄰人的特殊方式。「愛情不在空言，應在事實上表現。」[《神操》230 條] 這篇文章提供了一個全景，讓我們觀察耶穌會士和合作者，在耶穌會歷史中貫徹在做的善良和仁慈的工作。

**關鍵詞：**行動，依納爵·羅耀拉，耶穌會士，事工，使命，耶穌會，神操

## **The Way of the Faithful: Exploring the Dynamics of Desire Using the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola**

Geoffrey B. (Monty) Williams, SJ

**Abstract:** The paper examines the dynamics of desire which underpin the series of meditations and contemplations that form the four “Weeks” of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. It places these within the basic tension between love and fear. It recognizes these four stages of spiritual development as a process of becoming more human when one moves from the acceptance of being loved, while conscious of one’s conscription within the forces of destruction, to being so transformed by that love that one lives in ways which renews a broken creation. This paper removes that dynamic from the traditional language of a mediaeval Catholicism, in which Ignatius scripted his insights, to a contemporary rhetoric appropriate for use in other spiritual traditions. This accessibility also broadens the analysis of such conversion from the individual so that it can be applied also to communities, institutions and cultures.

**Keywords:** desire, discernment, spiritual journey, mutuality

I was happy  
until I met you  
now I know  
I was unhappy  
until I met you

## Preface

Anne Carson, the Canadian poet and classicist, writes about the peculiar ecstasy of love and about the difficulty of writing about love which she sees as a translation. Love, she says, asks the question: “What is it that love dares the self to do?” And she answers, “Love dares the self to leave the self behind, to enter into poverty.”<sup>1</sup> This undoing of self by moving through self to find a more authentic self, Anne Carson following Simone Weil, calls “decreation,” and she notes of this process “to undo the self one must move through the self, to the very inside of its definition.”<sup>2</sup> In this she follows the mystical tradition of introversion as a stage of the spiritual journey to enter into a contemplative stance towards reality.<sup>3</sup> This engages us with the world in ways that transform both it and ourselves. The dynamics of an engaged desire with the divine manifested as love is not restricted to the mystic or to the poet, but is, I would claim, a characteristic of becoming human. Maximus the Confessor (ca. 580-

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<sup>1</sup> Anne Carson, *Decreation: Poetry, Essays, Opera* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 162.

<sup>2</sup> Anne Carson, *Decreation*, 175, 179.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Thus, for instance, Gregory the Great in his homily on Ezechiel, 2, v. quoted in *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd ed., ed., Harvey D. Egan, S.J. (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1991, 1996), 109., writes, “And so the first step is that it collect itself within itself (recollection); the second, that to consider what its nature is so collected (introversion); the third, that it rise above itself and yield itself to the intent contemplation of its invisible Maker (contemplation).”

662) writes: Perfect love does not split up the one nature of men on the basis of their various dispositions...it loves all men equally.... [I]t manifests the fruits of love equally for all.<sup>4</sup>

Humans made in the image and likeness of God are created to love. They find their fulfillment in love. The difficulty of talking about love is that we must translate that experience of *ek-stasis*, of going beyond oneself, in language which in itself acts as a rearview mirror. In retrospect, it gives us some traces of the reality we incarnate, but it does not tell us where we are now or what we are entering into. We can offer only approximations. Rather than saying of what we endure,

That is not what I meant at all.

That is not it, at all.<sup>5</sup>

instead we can offer, like the later Eliot,

Hints followed by guesses; and the rest

Is prayer, observance, discipline, thought and action.

The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation.<sup>6</sup>

I have a confession.<sup>7</sup> I fell in love. Or to be more precise, I am falling in love and it keeps changing my life. I seem to have entered an adventure of meeting God, not as a philosophical abstraction, or a theological notion for investigation but as a real live relationship that engages every aspect of myself

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<sup>4</sup> Maximus the Confessor, “The Four Hundred Chapters on Love: First Century, # 71” in *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism*, 2nd. ed., ed., Harvey D. Egan, S.J., (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press), 127-8.

<sup>5</sup> T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” ll.98-99, in <https://poets.org/poem/love-song-j-alfred-prufrock>

<sup>6</sup> T.S. Eliot, “The Dry Salvages,” section 5, ll. 112-115 in <http://www.davidgorman.com/4Quartets/>

<sup>7</sup> This is a deliberately chosen rhetorical stance in keeping with the prophetic nature of desire in the Exercises, which is deeply personal and intimate and public.

and shapes all the relationships I have with others. On that path I encountered others whom I was concerned with, and cared for, and I discovered, in their allowing me to enter their worlds, a more accepting sense of self that opened me further to a deeper and more real relationship with Mystery. That embrace transforms me and opens me further to others, to the world and to creation. In living thus exposed I find myself even more drawn into the life of the Trinity as a *Loving* actively and passionately devoted to Life and to all of creation. It is a journey beyond the limits of my present imagination and, as Martin Buber has pointed out, “All journeys have secret destinations of which the traveler is unaware.”<sup>8</sup>

I am discovering that every act of love, however simple, or complex, is a revelation of that journey to the fullness of humanity as love. It arises from and points back to that *Loving*. This has not been an easy path. I have been challenged or seduced, enchanted or repelled, by the encounters on the path. There are aspects of my life, some bewildering, that emerge and cause distress. There are others that surprise and leave me in a state of wonder and delight. And then there are those I just had to wait patiently and attentively with to see what emerges without indulging in compulsions or leaping to pre-determined conclusions.

It is one thing to have these experiences, and another to understand them in the immediate context of our lives. But it is quite another thing to place them within the constantly changing relationship we have with God, and in the light of God’s desire for us. Being in love leads us to recognize ourselves in ways we had not expected, and it leads us to live our lives in ways that allow us to share what has been given to us with the rest of creation of which we are an intimate part. Then we seek to recognize others the ways we have been

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Buber in <https://www.voices-visions.org/content/poster/collection-poster-martin-buber-yarom-varidimon/>.

recognized, and desire to allow them to recognize themselves in similar ways. Love creates lovers, and the love that has loved us into being shows us we are loveable and capable of loving others in such a way that they too become loving and loveable. Love, quite simply, plots our lives.

St. Ignatius of Loyola discovered this in his own life. His *Spiritual Exercises* is a manifestation of that gift he received and shared with others, presented in the cultural narratives of his time. We cannot return naively to that time and to those narratives but we can undertake to explore how the human dynamics he confessionally explored of encountering grace can be appropriated for our times. This study is one such investigation. It undertakes to examine the dynamics of desire which underpin the discernments of each of the Four Stages of the spiritual journey Ignatius maps out in the Exercises. It plots a movement from the first stage of a self-enclosed security to the final stage of a creativity which builds community across the divisions of otherness and alienation. With each stage there is a growing recognition of what it means to be in love.

In contrast to the contemporary interpretations of the Exercises in terms of psychological well-being, social and ecological concerns, the present examination works from the question: what is happening to us, personally, socially, and culturally, when we are attentive to these Exercises in themselves, rather than to the uses we can put them to from a particular ideological perspective. It would hold that to be human<sup>9</sup> is to be attentive first to the Mystery we call God, and that such attentiveness determines how we deal with the concerns we have. Even more than our attentiveness to Mystery is that Mystery's attentiveness to us in a love relationship which constantly calls us

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<sup>9</sup> I hold to be human is to be engaged relationally on a personal, social, cultural, ecological and cosmic levels and so the stages of intimacy with God need to be considered in these dimensions of conversion as eschatology.



beyond our socially created conceptions of self. Being attentive we learn to recognize ourselves, and thus others and all of creation, as God recognizes us to be, an interrelated community. The creativity to which our growing intimacy with God invites us moves us beyond our self-enclosed worlds and concerns to build up that community of love where no one and nothing is denied the fullness of life. To be human is to walk that path of faithfulness.

At each stage of the path the concerns and tensions in our desiring the fullness of life differ from those of the other stages. Ignatius deals with this by positing pre-conversion and post conversion rules for discernment and these are respectively the Rules of the First Week and those of the Second and following Weeks. He notes that his observations in this matter are not comprehensive. His First Week rules are “for understanding to some extent the different movements produced in the soul” (*Spiritual Exercises*, 313; henceforth cited as *Sp Ex*, followed by the paragraph number). Yet the dynamics of desire in the Second through Fourth Weeks of the Exercises differ from each other. They need a refinement of the more general rules Ignatius gives to help one recognize the deceptions of what is inimical to our human nature.

Both before and after conversion we may be oriented to God and to others by the very nature of our creature-hood, but we may also find ourselves unable to fulfill or even recognize that orientation because of sin. Conversion is an ongoing process. Compromised by sin, we have not attained an appropriate sense of right relationship with God, others, or even with our very selves, but we can still desire it. That desire shapes our intentions and opens us up to be approached by God who desires for us the fullness of life. As that mutuality becomes more incarnate in our lives, we discover our awareness of how to live life becomes more comprehensively human. The questions and concerns we may previously have had now change. This best manifests itself in our times of prayer when we are more conscious of our desire to be in a

relationship with God and more open to God’s desire to be in a more intimate relationship with us. But that awareness also operates in the dailyness of our lives. As we become more intimate with God we start to discover the boundaries between prayer and the rest of the day disappears, such that the day and all in it moves to prayer not as a pious devotion but as an attentiveness which informs all we do. At any rate the material for prayer comes from the events in our daily life. All of this is to say our daily life manifests our spiritual life.

St. Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises*, which draws attention to how we live our lives daily, asks us to consider how and where we place ourselves as a preparation for prayer and how and where we find ourselves in the prayer itself. He suggests that before we pray we ask God for the grace “that all my intentions, actions and operations may be directed purely to the service and praise of His Divine Majesty” (*Sp Ex* 46). He asks that we consciously dispose ourselves towards God in our intentions, experiences, and habits. In doing this we acknowledge our awareness—not that we have a desire for God, but more radically that we are created as the desire for God. Ignatius sees us created as the orientation towards God though we may not be conscious of this most of the time. Even less so is our awareness of the spiritual space we inhabit at all times. That space he describes as being in the presence of “God Our Lord, and of the Angels and Saints who intercede for me.” (*Sp Ex* 232) For Ignatius, to have the awareness of who we are—as the desire for God—and of where we are—surrounded and interpenetrated by that unceasing activity of God’s love and in the company of all the forces of God, manifested in the Angels and Saints—is to be a “contemplative in action.” This is not to be caught up in some otherworldly transport of ecstasy but actually to live one’s life most truly in the here and now experiencing its conflicting attractions both outside of oneself and within one’s very own self. Our attention is often caught up by those conflicting attractions—one usually more dominant than others—which

draw us either one way or another and distract us from our rootedness and from living more fully our true nature.

### **We are Defined by Relationships**

We tend to see our lives within immediate needs or within the social constructions of job, ethnicity, gender, and creed. These pattern our lives and they distract us from the deeper patterning manifest in our call to God and to God's desire for us. Immediate concerns are important and we ignore them at our peril but they are contained in the deeper patterns of our ongoing relationship with God. These deeper patterns actually shape the way we live those more immediate concerns. Both sets of patterns influence each other and it requires deliberate forms of self-consciousness for us to discern which to be more attentive to in particular instances. Underlying this challenge are the questions of how we read, and understand ourselves, and of why we recognize our lives in that particular way. We may have a commonsense literacy about how things are and about the ways in which we make our way through this life. We may even have, given its emphasis in our culture, somewhat technical, psychological ways of understanding ourselves. And, whether we like it or not, since we are social beings, we also understand ourselves in the ways we interact with family, friends, those around us, our various groups, and within the places and times we find ourselves. As these change, we change, and our sense of immediacy changes. But underlying these relationships, and the way these relationships value the Mystery we call God, there is always the abiding primal relationship we have with that Mystery. At times that primal relationship is supported by others and by our own self-understanding, and at other times that primal relationship find itself in opposition to what those other relationships offer. We find ourselves caught in these conflicting relationships and so need to discern what to do.

Our discernments are also complicated by the fact that we have an ambivalence to our primary relationship with God—we are both attracted to and hesitant towards such an intimacy—and by the conflicting emotions we also have towards all of our subsequent relationships. This happens even within the different dimensions of our own personality. It would be wonderful if things could be simpler, but they are not. In all of this we are faced with the complexity of negotiating what is truly desirable, what is truly possible, and what is to be done.

### **Relationships are Manifest through Desire**

Ignatius asks that we pray for a felt intimacy with God, out of which flows love, which manifests itself in service to that God (*Sp Ex* 104). The dynamics of desire which lead to apostolic discernment are rooted in a lived intimacy with God, self-consciously manifest in a loving service to creation. Thus it seems before we discern, both in the sense of what we should do, but also in how we should read the contexts in which we live, there is the need to develop that intimacy with God which is our primary relationship. If that does not happen, we misread all of our contexts, both sacred and secular. It is not as if that intimacy is not offered to us already. The power of that love affirms what is good in us and celebrates what gives life so we can rejoice in what is present to us now. That love comforts and consoles us in our brokenness when we are trapped in ways beyond our control. It also calls us beyond ourselves in ways that offer us a fuller life and which leads on to the fullness of life. In all of this that love surrounds us, enters into our narratives, and journeys with us.

### **The Dynamics of Desire**

This essay explores that journey through our lives and time. It does not restrict itself to the dramatic moments of rites of passage or extraordinary spiritual experiences—important as they are—but examines more the

dynamics of graced desire present in our ordinary and everyday lives. It looks at how we negotiate in the commonplace the tensions between the desire for deeper spiritual intimacy and the desire, for whatever reason, which urges us to flee from that intimacy.

St. Ignatius in the very center of his *Spiritual Exercises* has a meditation he calls The Two Standards (*Sp Ex* 136). Using a military metaphor, he describes the battle present in every human being at every moment of life between the Standard of Satan and the Standard of Christ. Ignatius depicts Satan, surrounded by horrors, and inspiring fear and terror, sending out his minions to entrap people out of that fear and terror to protect themselves by provoking them to covet riches, of any sort, so that they may more easily win the honor of the world and then, self-assured, be trapped in an overweening pride which leads them to more and more acts of self-enclosure. This dynamic operates not only with individuals but also with institutions, cultures, and nations. Christ, on the other hand, attracts with his life peoples to move beyond their self-enclosed worlds<sup>10</sup> and he missions those who follow him to go to the whole world recommending a life of the highest spiritual poverty—which so goes against the values of a world deceived by Satan—where they are led to the state of radical dependence on the Father called humility.

For most of us this dynamic tension plays out often quite unconsciously in our daily lives. Our riches do not have to be financial but can be anything we regard as our gifts, be they intellectual, physical, social, or even spiritual. These generally arouse admiration among people. People with such giftedness often regard the social responses to those gifts as their due and live out of those responses in ways that inflame their selfishness. But if we choose to see our gifts as just that, gifts and not intrinsic to our identity, we discover that being human is the acceptance of our radical poverty of spirit. It is not deceived by

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Matthew 14:15-29.

the ways of the world and often stands in opposition to those ways. It relies instead on that spiritual intimacy offered by God as a way of living this life given to us all. Such a radical dependence on the Divine Providence, which has brought us into being and supports, maintains, and corrects our sense of identity, however, does not leave us irresponsible, passively accepting everything that comes along as if from God. We need to discern, and to ask ourselves if what is appealing to us comes from God or not, and is it helpful in building up the Kingdom.

### **Our Life is a Journey between Conflicting Desires**

While the tension between narcissism and self-transcendence occurs at every moment of our life, it is helpful to ask how these are experienced and understood in the different stages of our journey to the fullness of life. How are riches, honor, pride, and their opposites, poverty, humiliations, humility, experienced when one is turned away from God? How are they experienced when one realizes one is trapped in sin but still loved by God and so turns to God? How are those tendencies realized when one tries to dispose oneself to become a follower of Christ? How do they manifest themselves when as a follower of Christ we enter with him into his passion and death? What is our awareness of them as we accept and live the gift of the resurrection?

Just as I am constantly changing in my acceptance of God’s love for me, the more I allow myself to be opened by that love, the more does my sense of self change, and so too also do the dynamics of discernment by which I understand both my traps and my liberation to love. In fact the face of, and the call to love change as I journey into spiritual maturity. We build on what comes before, for without those previous stages we cannot maintain the structures of attention to be present to who we are now and to what we are called at a particular time. Similarly we cannot use earlier forms of discernment for later stages of the spiritual journey. The present is built on the

past, but is different from that past. Moreover, we also need to know that the future also shapes our present. In fact a realistic understanding of the present encompasses both past and future.

Often we start our spiritual journey long before we even realize we are on that journey. It is only years later when we look back on our past and reflect on it that we realize where some of the beginnings of that journey had its roots. It could have happened in our lifetime. It could have happened before within the dynamics of our family relations. We might even have some moments of quiet certainty that we were born for this journey, and even born into this journey. It is written in the prophet Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, And before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" (1:5). Each of us was born into the spiritual journey we are now on. We may go even further and say humanity, and all of creation, of which we are an integral part, has been brought into being for this journey. Creation needs the Creator, and the Creator loves this creation. Whatever dreadful distortions evil advocates and produces, it cannot deny, though it can frustrate, the deepest desire of creation to be in right relationship with the Creator. Here we do not intend to explore an ontology of evil. We note its presence and its effects in our history, our world, and in ourselves. We also note the power of God, in God's own time, to overcome evil and transform it into good so that the time will come as Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, when "In Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the first-fruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father" (I Cor 15:22-24).

In this cosmic journey extending through time and space, where do we fit in, and how can we contribute to the recapitulation of all things in Christ who returns them to the Father? We realize that this journey started before we were born and will continue even after the dissolution of our physical bodies as

we know them now. Ultimately, we come from God, we return to God, and the path given us is of God. But in this life and where we are now, how do we walk that path which open up in our daily lives and is present at every moment of that life? For those in religious traditions there are the cultic rituals—sacraments, meditation groups, spiritual direction—which offer life and guidance. But how are we to deal with the busyness of everyday life?

It is not as if we have to start from scratch. We are socialized into the constructions of belief. We apply the plot of belief to our lives. Here we are not talking about the abstractions of belief but what we actually do believe. These are the actual routes we take as we walk through our cities mapped out by dogma. The dynamics of desire drive that plot. They determine whether we move closer to salvation or not. They construct the imagined world of that journey. The belief systems we are educated into inform us both theoretically and practically how to seek and maintain a relationship with God. The various manuals and catechisms of our particular traditions offer us guidelines and norms for behavior and for belonging. We learn what to believe and how to believe in order to be saved. How we negotiate that episteme in the practicalities of actual living is another matter.<sup>11</sup> The tactics we actually live by are shaped by what we have personally found useful and, by the exigencies of a post-modern conscience, suspicious of those controlling institutions and their legislations which map out our moral and spiritual life. Those tactics are how we discern, even though we might say we do not discern. But discernment is more than a compass. The dynamics of desire direct our lives.

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, English translation by Stephen Rendell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). General Introduction, xix, accessed January 12, 2017.

<https://chisineu.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/certeau-michel-de-the-practice-of-everyday-life.pdf>. De Certeau makes the distinction between strategies, by which a world is ordered culturally through legal, educational, religious norms, and tactics through which individuals or social groups negotiate practically those strategies.



In practice the conflicting voices, within us and outside of us, telling us what to do and how to do it, negotiate among themselves in the site we call our lives. As such it is good to have an example of how these operate. For this we turn to someone who lived at a time when an established world was breaking down and the new world of modernity not yet fully born. We turn to Ignatius of Loyola.

### **St. Ignatius' Life: a Journey of Refining Desire**

St. Ignatius (1491-1556) lived in a time just like ours. Traditional ways of living in Western Europe were being challenged by scientific discoveries which changed the way people imagined reality to be, by explorations which brought to light, and contact with, new peoples, civilizations and countries, by the influx of Islam in Western Culture, by the conflicts in the Christian tradition, by corruption and dissension within the Catholic church, by suspicion of institutional authority, by the struggle for power in the political world, and by such diseases as the bubonic plague and cholera which cut across culture, class, and religion. What was one to do in the midst of such deep, rapid and sweeping changes? How was one to live, find meaning and security, and a sense of belonging in ways that affirmed and celebrated life?

When the world as we know it breaks down, and we are offered conflicting ways of reading reality, we tend to withdraw into ourselves to find a path that gives life. Ignatius thought that that path could be discovered by making the self the center of the universe. The young Ignatius was vain, aggressive, venal, and concerned only with making a name for himself in the world. But all his attempts despite his charm, intelligence, and energy, came to nothing. He was frustrated and actually was badly wounded in a small war and went home to recover. His illness was the beginning of his conversion and, in the course of his life after that, he moved from being driven by pride to becoming an apostle of Christ in the world. The shift lay in the understanding

of what it means to be a self. By becoming attentive to himself he discovered that the self was a tension of conflicting desires, some leading to a pleasure which soon left one dissatisfied, others to a sense of contentment which remained. Ignatius’ life was to follow that second path. Such a following was not easy or simple. The desires he had to be a simple Jerusalem pilgrim, then of being an itinerant preacher, then of returning to Jerusalem again with his companions after his studies, all of which were good in themselves, were frustrated. His desires encountered the emerging desires of God for him and he ended up against his own spontaneous inclinations as the founder and the first general of the Society of Jesus, stationed in Rome.

That radical shift from self to service is a spiritual journey and Ignatius’ spiritual journey is best seen in the *Spiritual Exercises*, based on his own experiences, which he created to help others discover the presence of God in their lives. In that relationship, through growing attentiveness, they discover a unique path of growing spiritual intimacy which allowed them to work as companions of Christ in making the world a place of community and creativity.

Now this journey is graded. One reaches higher levels of intimacy only by successfully establishing and maintaining lower levels of attentiveness. The journey starts off with a desire to know God more clearly, to love him more deeply, and to follow him more closely. We first feel this as a dissatisfaction with our present lives and all our flirtations to ease this unhappiness, without losing anything we already cherish do not bring us closer to an abiding sense of joy. So we set out.

### **Stages in the Journey of Desire to Greater Spiritual Intimacy**

Even though it was written later, Ignatius inserts what is called the Principle and Foundation at the beginning of the Exercises and it is usually given as a consideration before the work of the First Week. The strategy of its

rhetoric sets up a tension between the humanity of a committed relationship to God and one's existential state. It brings out the tensions between what we believe and how we actually live.

It brings to consciousness the dynamics of desire in our daily lives and leads us into the work of the First Week where we discover how we are loved in spite of being trapped by the disorders which circumvent a full response to that love. That work carries us through our anxieties which we must face, and beyond the limiting ways we see ourselves, God and the world. What we discover at this level are the traps that bind us, often quite unconsciously, but we also discover, deeper and more pervasive than those traps, a love which constantly loves us into being.

When we accept this we are ready for the second stage of the journey which teaches us how to live out of that newly discovered and deeper love. The tasks we accomplish here carry us to a profound intimacy with God out of which flows love and, out of that love, to the work of building up the Kingdom of God. Here we become companions of the Christ learning what it means to be human as we journey with him to His Father. We let the living relationship with Jesus rather than a previously imprinted cultural and intellectual understanding of truth, our own biases, be the basis of our discernments.

In that journey of living as mystery with Mystery, we reach the third stage of spiritual intimacy. There we follow behind Jesus as he enters into his passion opening a human path through suffering and death to the Father. He gives up worldly power and enters in this vulnerability to a state of emptiness. We too, as we travel deeper into a relationship with Mystery, give up power and enter self-consciously into radical states of vulnerability and emptiness totally dependent upon that Mystery Jesus calls Father. In this state we are opened to ways of being in the world which we have previously excluded. We are moved beyond our ghettoized sensibilities, with its power plays, reaching towards an inclusivity which embraces all of creation.

On that path the Father brings the humanity of his beloved Son to a new life and new creation called resurrection. So too does the Father bring us who remain simply present to Jesus in his journey into emptiness to the next stage of spiritual intimacy. In this fourth stage we move beyond a secularized reading of emptiness as social passivity to seeing it as the ground of creativity. Imbued with the Spirit we see that it reveals a new creation emerging out of the brokenness of the world. There we become living words of the Father and invited to work with Him and his Son, together with the community of those who, throughout the ages, build and maintain the Kingdom of God in this world. Like Christ we become the witness of the compassionate mercy of the Father in our world and time.

This level carries us deeper into the world and we experience at this new stage of awareness even more clearly the traps and disorders of the world we are asked to live in. We are asked to be as Christ has been for us in that first stage of spiritual intimacy. We are asked to recognize the world in ways that it does not recognize itself. We recognize that it cries out to be more loving and compassionate as it was created to be. We become present to its pain and, like the Christ on the cross, conspire with the Father to transform its misery. Thus the journey continues. Spiritual intimacy is a spiral which carries us deeper into union with God, and at the same time deeper into the miseries of a disordered creation.

When we look at this spiritual journey we see ourselves caught first in the tensions between closed and scripted worlds, maintained by fear, and an openness which we now have access to, as we become aware of our rootedness in God. When we accept and start to live out of that rootedness, we find ourselves in a tension between reading that rootedness from the categories of an understanding seeking faith and a deeply personal relationship with God which goes beyond such definitions but which casts light on them. This is a faith which sees the need for, and the limitations of, any conceptual forms of

understanding. We discover living in such Mystery gives us power, for now we are not trapped by the constructions of the world. Now we start to realize even more deeply the dynamics of spiritual desire moving us beyond the temptation to substitute one manifestation of power to control our reality for the next. We do not have to replace another's projection of how the world is to be with our own. We may be tempted here by our fear to do just that. But if we choose otherwise and patiently and humbly wait on the Father, something else happens. We actually discover that our growing intimacy with God carries us, within our own lives and elsewhere, to the spaces of the marginalized, the alienated, the broken and the forgotten. We find ourselves among the *anawim*, with those who do not have power in the world.

We move beyond the seductions of power to establish a world as we would like it, to an emptiness which can hold without manipulation all its encounters. Such a holding is not a resignation to the ways of the world—as occurs in the despair we acknowledge in the discernments of the First Week. The expression of our intentionality has been changed. Now we know and have a spiritual intimacy with God. We have learnt to trust that intimacy. We wait in that intimacy even as we experience the horrors a disordered creation inflicts upon us in our vulnerability. It is the witness of martyrdom. We are made and become empty. Out of that emptiness comes the power of the Divine Desire who desires the world to be made into a community of mutual giving and receiving.

Living that emptiness carries us to that fourth stage. Yet, we discover ourselves at this stage still tugged between fear and love. On the one hand there is a form of complacency which, though not of the world, goes along with the world, holding that God comes to us, and all we have to do is wait. This is a passivity which is content to contemplate God. On the other hand we find ourselves called to a creativity which actively seeks to make the world, and

wounded creation, a home respectful and caring for all. This is contemplation in action.

Such a journey from security to creativity evokes a spirituality of risk. We are constantly being called and led beyond ourselves in a passionate love affair with God. This engages us with the world in ways that transform both it and ourselves. On that journey to be sure we suffer, but we also find in it life, peace, joy, and companions who celebrate the life we are now looking for. And, interestingly enough, we find this path not in esoteric practices or in the mansions of high mysticism but in the everyday lives we lead. When we become attentive to our lives, we discover the path we walk is one which allows us to become more and more intimate with God and creation.

**Fear versus Love**

What this journey reveals is that the dynamics of narcissism move from fear, through self-justifying ideologies and into ghettos where the like-minded, confusing conformity with unity, dwell in states of complicity which accept and promote the status quo. On the other hand the dynamics of self-transcendence move us from the awe of discovering we are loved to learning how to live in such a love which carries us beyond our known selves, and the constrictions of a fallen creation, to a creativity which engages that world to transform it.

As in Ignatius’ “Two Standards” meditation of riches against poverty, honor against humiliations, and pride against humility, these two dynamics in each stage of the spiritual journey parallel each other

<b>FEAR</b>	<b>LOVE</b>
Security	Rootedness
Ideology	Mystery
Power	Emptiness
Status Quo	Creativity

As one moves through life, we notice that each stage builds on the previous stage, and that the consolations of each earlier stage lead us into the disorders of the subsequent level of attentiveness. Thus, being rooted allows us to explore the ways in which we are caught in ideologies. As we are taught to overcome those traps we find ourselves moving more and more into Mystery. Living in that Mystery we discover the traps of power. When we walk the path of the Passion, we discover ourselves leaving behind the forms of power which trap us. We become vulnerable and emptied. Living our daily lives in emptiness, we are tempted to be uninvolved in the worlds we live it. But the passion of the Spirit inflames us to be creative with what is given us in our worlds. Thus the energies liberated by consolations carry us to those places that cry out for conversion, and which are felt as desolation.

We note here that as we open ourselves to God that consolation leads to desolation, and desolation leads to consolation. In that journey the embrace of love slowly heals and repairs our damaged spirit and gives it the heart both to celebrate life as it is given, and also go to those damaged and isolated areas of our desires to bring them to light and integration. Desolation is merely our awareness of our isolation and alienation. It is the nature of love to seek out and to save what is lost. So the drive to God that causes us to nourish, affirm and celebrate life, also causes us to be present to what is life-destroying, and to aid in its transformation. Thus consolation leads to desolation, and desolation leads to subsequent consolation. Thus Ignatius observes that when one is in desolation, one should “dispose himself for the coming consolation.” (*SE* 7) Similarly, Ignatius also points out, “When one enjoys consolation, let him consider how he will conduct himself during the time of ensuing desolation, and store up a supply of strength as defense against that day.” (*SE* 323)

This essay explores the specific consolations and desolations and their sequencing as it occurs in the practices of our daily life. While historical, cultural, social, and political forces shape our lives and provide us with the

structures which inform what we do, it is what we actually do in the day-to-day busyness of living which manifest how and where we are in our spiritual journey. Our topic is the discernments of an everyday life and the forces those discernments encounter as one becomes attentive to one's life. Our reading of those dynamics is based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

### ***The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius***

In those Exercises Ignatius asks us to pray for different graces as we go through the different stages of our spiritual growth. Thus as one goes through the first stage of that journey, one prays for shame, confusion, sorrow and horror. In the second stage one prays for an intimacy which connects one to the Father in a loving service that shows one is a companion of the Christ. At the third stage one prays for a different sense of shame and sorrow being present to Christ's passion and suffering as the beloved suffers. In the fourth stage we pray to experience joy as we share Christ's resurrection and work in this world.

Ignatius sets the request for such graces within the prayerful context of dwelling in God's love and stemming from the desire to live the whole of one's life devoted to the praise, reverence and service of God. In the Ignatian Exercises the affectivity of consolation and desolation from which one discerns is experienced within the closed context of that prayer. The particular exercises are precise experiments within a controlled context. But is it possible to use Ignatius' insights within the broader realm of daily life? To be able to do this one must first see how the tension between narcissism and self-transcendence works out dynamically in each stage of the Exercises, and secondly whether the movement from one level of attentiveness to the next in the Exercises is similar to the one found in the spiritual path of our daily lives.

In the first instance there is the interaction between one's narcissism and the love of God which roots the self and calls it beyond its present sense of



self. The dimensions of that self which, conscripted by self-interest, and looking for ways to establish itself more comfortably in its present state of being, would struggle against the path offered by what is “Other” to it. What is at stake here is the world-view out of which the self operates. We live in our imagined worlds as if they are real. This “organization of reality,” which displaces reality as it is, is embraced by a Divine love always actively seeking to liberate the self from the illusions it has negotiated to make a home for itself. Each of us is caught in such a tension at every stage of our lives in prayer and out of it. Then the embrace of Love the Other offers us brings to light what is repressed, or ignored, or devalued. Such revelations, until they are accepted on an existential level, threaten us, not only because they are potentially dangerous to an already established life-style, but also because they are feared and the unknown quality they possess causes anxiety in us.

In this context we first experience the love of God for us in terms of fear which, as it is unpacked, manifests itself first in a sense of confusion as the conflicting narratives of our desire for God and our self-preservation engage each other. As we start to realize how we are trapped and how we co-operate with that disorder, we move to a sense of shame at this realization.<sup>12</sup> When we grow towards a liberation from that disorder, we move to a horror not only at what we have done, but also at the soul-destroying patterns behind our behavior, and at the ways in which the world seduces and entralls us.<sup>13</sup> In all of this the dynamics of fear operate. First there is the fear that keeps us trapped in socialized patterns of behavior which give us security but not spiritual intimacy. This fear is often so much a part of our lives that we do not regard it even as fear, and mis-name it as particular habits of inattention. This fear comes from a distorted relationship with God and results in misinformed

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<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Sp Ex* 50

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Sp Ex* 63

notions of how God operates. Fear, if not contained, or defused, increases our spiritual blindness. It keeps us frozen in a contractual relationship with our image of God that becomes even more legalistic.

Fear on that level is partly overcome when we discover, through prayer and meditation, and being truly attentive to our being in the world, that loved by the reality of God liberates us from such traps. We can do this by looking prayerfully at our present life and our histories. There we discover our vulnerability and the fact that we have not been destroyed in spite of the forces of disorder in and around us. But we still have to discover how to live lives of greater integrity. The habits of our culture and our past have indoctrinated us into forms of thinking, and behaving, in ways that misunderstands the Mystery which invites us to a fuller life beyond the ideologies we plot our lives with. At this second level of fear we are caught up in the tension between ideology and intimacy. The work of the spirit upon us and in us is to transform the narratives we live out of from closed and broken myths to an open myth<sup>14</sup>. There we trust not maps or theologies or just the symbolic world of our tradition but, more deeply, the lived relationship we have developed with the Mystery we call, in the Christian dispensation, “Father.”

Here we use the same word that the human Christ addresses the Mystery which roots him. In living in the same relationship that the humanity of Christ has with the Father we are thus able to follow the Christ as he enters into His Passion and Death in his human journey to the Father. The tension we now experience in this vulnerability is between the power exercised by adhering to that symbolic world of an enclosed community, which sees otherness as destructive, and the emptiness we embrace as we go beyond the norms of such community to ever greater forms of inclusivity.

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<sup>14</sup> See Monty Williams, “Ignatius’ Incarnation Contemplation and The Stories We Live By: The Nash Memorial Lecture 2010.” Campion College, University of Regina, 2010.

At this stage we can either define ourselves by the norms of the community we belong to or by our lived relationship with the “Father” for whom nothing or no one is excluded. Living out this call of self-transcendence to be empty, we are faced with the choice in our everyday lives between a complacency which accepts what is given as a path to God, and a creativity which seeks to transform the world to a more human place for all aspects of creation. Made in the image and likeness of God we are invited to be creative as God is creative.

The way of faithfulness carries us from limiting forms of security to a life of creativity where we help contribute in whatever way we can to the ongoing creativity of the Father. That journey carries us back ever deeper into our lived contexts to establish right relationships within created reality. Our growth to humanity occurs in the way we continue to negotiate the tension between fear and love. Fear keeps us trapped in limitation; love exposes us to the Mystery which calls us beyond our known world and our ways of understanding, living, and transforming that known world.

### **The Spiritual Journey**

What has just been described is a reading of the dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Those exercises move through four different stages of spiritual development. Each one builds on the graces received on the previous level. The first level deconstructs the imaginative world we live in so that we experience the love of God breaking through the traps which limit our affectivity. The second level seeks to transform the way we live by bringing the stories we live in into contact with the gospel stories of the Christ. The Christ enters into our existential narratives and transforms them so we can now live out of a deepening personal intimacy with him. Such an intimacy carries us to the third stage of spiritual development where we follow the Christ through his passion and death. At this level we are carried

beyond the borders of our imagined worlds into a state of emptiness and total abandonment to Divine Providence. Out of that emptiness comes an experience of resurrection which gives us the grace to be creative in our fallen world to build up the Kingdom. So changed we return to the world of the first stage, at a deeper level, to continue the transformation of the world. Embracing what is presented to us as alienated we share what we have been given in that spiritual journey to create a growing network of interrelationships.

In this journey we are always putting away limited ways of recognizing ourselves, others, and even God, so that we become more loving and more alive. There is always the tendency to stop or withdraw from this pilgrimage. Working against the dynamics of self-transcendence are the dynamics of narcissism manifest as fear. The “otherness,” which we experience as unknown and in contrast to who we think we are, and to the world as it is explained to us, fills us with fear. How we suppose that unknown to act constrains us. It is shaped by our fear.

### **The Nature of Fear**

We are educated into fear. Fears are socially constructed and made meaningful within cultural-historical contexts. As we grow into a culture we are shaped by its attitudes, its values and its presumptions, its stereotypes, patterns of behavior, ideas and beliefs. Within that broader context there are the family dynamics and narratives we are born into, and appropriate. Even more personally there are also our own individual mythologies shaped by our reflections and understandings of what we have experienced. Our understanding of our identity is shaped by these factors and while they might provide us with a basis of self-understanding, they also limit our understanding. Our fears maintain our conformity within approved norms and standards even when those factors take from us avenues of growth, self-

acceptance and trust.<sup>15</sup> Indeed as a primary emotion socializing fear manifests itself in the experience of anxiety, shame, regret, abjection, denial, repression, and overcompensation. Such fear threatens us about imagined consequences and we have personal and social histories confirm for us that those fears are valid. Fear provides us with incentives to conform by limiting our attentiveness.

By focusing on what is proscribed by such authority we restrict our openness to experience and limit the range of that experience. We then interpret that already limited data according to an acceptable hermeneutics, and respond in ways that reinforce our truncated world views. What we hold as natural is in fact constructed. For many of us, though, fear is not experienced as fear. It has become so habitual that we consider it normal as it pervades everything we see, say, or do. We live in a culture of fear, consciously and unconsciously. Even mass media, in general, with its emphasis on violence and its advertisements, with its appeals to the created deficiencies in their targets, contribute to this pervasive background against which one struggles to be human.

Fear misdirects one into what it means to be human. It limits our awareness of the contexts out of which we live, and it inhibits the processing of the data we receive from those contexts so we come to wrong conclusions and make bad decisions. It robs us of our freedom by paralyzing us so we become sick, avoid risk, and remain trapped in closed or broken myths. Fear subjugates the Christian virtues of compassion, hospitality, generosity, openness, wonder, wisdom, and patience, to a neurotic self-interest. This creates havoc because the order it seeks to establish and maintain is itself

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<sup>15</sup> Barry Glassner, "The Construction of Fear," *Qualitative Sociology* 22, no.4 (December 1999): 301–309.

disordered. If that fear is not contained or deconstructed, it spreads to cover more and more areas of our life until we find ourselves trapped in compulsions and obsessions. Rather than progressing along the spiritual path, we tend to be caught in resentments, and our histories become repetitive. It is as if a gear keeps slipping and so we are doomed to repeat patterns of behavior which we accept as natural and normal. Unless we practice a self-discipline informed by a deep sense of being loved, and a deep belief in our ability to love in return, our compulsions become obsessions which lead to addictions and we end up being possessed.

But in the context of accepting we are loved and are capable of loving, we can start recognizing and separating ourselves from the fear that has so dominated our lives in so many different ways and at so many different levels. There are stages of disengagement. We can start by recognizing our disorder through its effects on ourselves and others. What has been repressed manifests itself, quite unconsciously in our attitudes and behavior. Fear is actually a form of self-disclosure. It reveals to others our orientation to life. Because we are vulnerable, we see life as a series of threats without the humanizing dynamics of trusting relationships. Fear which interprets experience in terms of aggression uses violence to maintain its limited vision of order. That violence is found in the ways we maintain our security without accepting that deeper rootedness of being held in God’s love. It rationalizes its stance by world-views which absorb God into systems of belief that limit God’s freedom and God’s ongoing merciful care for all of creation beyond the Law. It protects its vulnerability by developing and operating out of positions of power. These seek to control what they do not understand by destroying or conscripting this “otherness.” In its pragmatism fear maintains the status quo it is comfortable with, even though that stifles creativity and the building of communities where difference is welcomed and celebrated.

### **The Nature of Love**

Love transforms the fear by embracing the memory which maintains that fear and the conditions which caused it. Love transforms the interpretation of the memory and releases it from its status as a closed myth. Opening to love allows us to recognize our fears for what they are. Often this is not instantaneous and dramatic. Slowly love brings the fear to consciousness in a different way. What had been previously repressed or ignored is liberated into suppression. As it rises even further up to awareness, it becomes a concretely realized oppression which translates into depression, as one realizes how complicit one is in what denies life. As one struggles to deal with this, the depression is turned outwards and becomes anger, and this is transformed into anxiety. Such anxiety reveals the vulnerability of the human condition in circumstances beyond its control. But even there, as one opens more and more to love, that anxiety becomes awe when one realizes one is looked after, even in spite of oneself. Then the power of the closed myth is broken.

The responses to the traumas which fix our identity through memory into a sense of self are repeated in daily life. Love allows those traumas to emerge into self-consciousness, and love dissolves the anxieties created by those traumas. When that happens spiritual growth occurs. We no longer feel trapped by that past. We see it in a different context. We experience ourselves differently. Fear gets transformed into awe. Both the fear and the awe are the responses of a person to forces beyond one's control. Fear sees those forces and conditions as inimical to one's perceived well-being; awe sees those forces and conditions as held in God's compassionate Mercy whose ways are not our ways, and whose thoughts are not our thoughts. Our God desires for us the fullness of life beyond our imaginings. Fear and awe might exhibit the same bodily sensations, but their dynamics are quite different. Fear traps us in closed myths and resignation; awe engenders hope and new life. While a single fearful incident can trigger a significant Pavlovian conditioning not

forgotten over an adult lifespan, the work of love can erase, or neutralize the effects of that negative experience. In time its meaning is transformed into something positive and life affirming. The threat of non-being that triggers fear is real in as much as the imagined world we live in is real. Entering into the areas of one’s fear often seems like forms of dying. It is only when we have had personal lived experiences of such deaths, in one form or another, that we discover such deaths are not the end of our life, but doors to a new and fuller life. Then we move from one imagined world to another, more life-giving and human. We do not move to nothingness. Living in a way committed to God translates fear into awe. It is the response we feel when we discover what we thought would be a life-destroying experience actually carried us to one which affirms life in ways beyond our imagining. The awe is not because we have triumphed over death because we know we did not have it within us to do so. Rather, it comes because there is an agency—we are happy to confess it as a personal God—who is able to rescue us from our disorders, is willing to do so, and in this instance has actually done so.

We can fear God because we have a wrong notion of God and see God as judgmental and punitive. We can fear God because we attribute to God the destructive consequences of a disordered creation. Here we fail to see God as loving us and caring for us even when we are complicit in destructive behaviors. We can fear God because as we walk the spiritual path we are transformed, and the unknown which calls us beyond ourselves triggers a fear we attach to God. We fear making a mistake in our judgments because we do not have all the facts to make informed choices. We can fear God because God’s ways are mysterious and God’s freedom in dealing with us as creatures reveal our absolute dependence on God in a world beset by evil over which we have little control. We can fear God because we are still trapped by sin even as we walk towards a deeper relationship with God and to freedom. We fear God because when we turn in on ourselves and consider our sinfulness, we expect



to be punished and we fear that punishment. We forget God's love for us even as we sin, and the fact of that love coming to us to liberate us from sin.<sup>16</sup> The tension between our narcissism and our transcendence engenders in us an ambiguity for we are torn in two directions about the nature of God. Such an ambiguity with its lack of clarity engenders fear.

We know from the scriptures that perfect love casts out fear (1 John 4:16,18), and that God does not give us a spirit of cowardice but one of power, of love, and of a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). We also know God aids us against the crippling effects of fear, as when Jesus eases the terror of the disciples caught in a storm at sea (Mark 4:35-41), or when he holds onto Peter who had become afraid while walking on the water towards him (Matthew 14:22-33). It is the same Jesus who advises us not to be anxious about our lives (Matthew 6:25-34), and he is the one who calms the fears of the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1-20). But the scriptures also tell us "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him (Psalm 103:11) and the Acts of the Apostles has the observation that "the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers (Acts 9:31). There are the distinctions between servile fear and filial fear. The first is the fear of punishment; the second the fear of offending someone one loves. The latter is touched with reverence, but as St. Ignatius points out in his Exercises,

Though the zealous service of God our Lord out of pure love should be esteemed above all, we ought also to praise highly the fear of the Divine Majesty. For not only filial fear but also servile fear is pious and very holy..., [I]t is very helpful for rising from mortal sin, and once this is accomplished, one may easily advance to filial fear. (*Sp Ex* 370)

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<sup>16</sup> Romans 5:8

A growing intimacy with God can start off with impure motives—such as the fear of punishment—but as that intimacy develops, the fear changes to one of not wanting to offend the Beloved. As the relationship develops, fear is turned into awe. The original impulse—the orientation to the Other—is still there but now, acknowledged in a new context of being loved and of being saved by that love, it is experienced and understood differently. Fear limits our attention by focusing and restricting it to imagined consequences and so we react to projections rather than to the reality offered us by a primary relationship to God. To give up those projections is long and difficult work. We cannot deal with our fear adequately through the despair of recklessness or by the paralysis of presumption. The courage required comes only from lived relationships which foster love.

Love deconstructs fear by allowing a context broader than an enclosed self-interest to inform the facts of one's life. Such a stepping out of one's security feels like a death. It is the dark night of the senses when the world we experience, as a system of belief, cannot make sense of how we find ourselves at this stage. The walls we put up to maintain our false sense of self erode and we are left with a sense of confusion. Whatever had educated us to the way we now think, feel, and respond, cannot withstand the erotic impulse of the divine which desires every part of us. Because our past histories cannot help us make sense of what is happening to us now, this dissolution feels like a depression and, until we finally give in to that desire of God, we struggle to maintain the world we know and accept.

There are in the spiritual life boundaries to be crossed. They demarcate stages in our growth in spiritual intimacy. The draw of God's desire for us brings us to one such stage here and once we cross that divide we are carried inexorably to those spaces where we are helpless in a state of dissolution until we arrive at a new level of awareness when we see we have not been

destroyed but transformed. What is eradicated in that process is the power fear has over us in the area of a particular security.

Freed from that, we develop a felt wariness to what had previously enthralled us and an instinct about the way we can be still conscripted into those earlier forms of behavior. Overall, the experience has given us the felt sense of being trapped, the felt sense of the agony of being released from those traps, and the felt sense of a new life being offered and accepted. Those felt senses help us to discern on a spontaneous level what to do when we encounter new situations which may trigger in us the same traps we have experienced before. The experience has educated us. We feel it in our bodies. Those feelings are values learnt and refined to spontaneity. We are educated into reading what we experience through the values we incarnate. We can say: God does not give us answers; God gives us experiences and those experiences shape us and the way we read reality. On the spiritual path our experiences educate us to a path which leads either to God or away from God.

We could choose a path which leads away from a growing intimacy with God because of fear. Giving into that fear and living out of it may give us the illusion of safety and security. But because we do not accept the deeper calling to a rootedness in spiritual intimacy with God, we find ourselves living, as the gospel tells us, on inadequate foundations which are destroyed in times of crisis (Matthew 7: 24-27). The power of fear traps us in the illusion which suggests its defenses against vulnerability are effective. Fear promotes a willingness to accept a certain flawed understanding and representation of what offers security. Such disorder favours certain forms of order, and ignores more comprehensive forms of ordering which, from its limited perspective, it sees as disordered.<sup>17</sup> Other alternatives are overlooked because fear paralyzes

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Michel Serres, *Genesis*, trans. Genevieve James & James Nielson (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995). “To say disorder is to say one is both

and limits attention. Fear, in this way, becomes a tool for manipulation, motivation, and control. We are coerced in acquiescence, and not only are our spiritual, social, political and existential liberties eroded by such tactics, but we can become so accustomed to such a way of living that the habitual becomes the familiar, and then the familiar is taken as the index of reality and of truth.

Our attention is always caught between our constructed worlds and the activity of God within and surrounding those constructed worlds. What is life-giving is affirmed; what does not give life finds itself in tension with the desire God has for us, and which we experience as the call to the fullness of life. We live these opposing tensions as a radical unresolvable ambiguity present at every moment of one's life, and we experience it as anxiety.

Living vulnerably manifests itself in anxiety. Although it can frighten us and freeze us in forms of despair, it can also shake us from our conditioned and habitual responses to existential decisions by making us more aware that we exist in a world of choices and consequences. Anxiety increases our self-awareness and sense of personal responsibility. It raises the question of trust. Do we make our decisions on our own, or in a conscious relationship with God?

At each stage on the path of spiritual intimacy we are caught up in the tension between fear and love. St. Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises* uses the tropes of mediaeval spirituality which defines that path as purgative and illuminative. (SE 10) Building upon, incorporating and transcending these is what patristic and mediaeval spirituality calls the unitive way. In the purgative way we are cleansed from the biases which focus us on self-gratification; so cleansed, in the illuminative way we learn to see reality as God sees it; while in

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unwilling and unable to conceive it. It isn't an anti-order, perhaps it is a more exquisite order still, one our banal stupidity cannot imagine, stiff as a board as it is, to conceive, since it is still given over to concepts—to order." (p.109)

the unitive way we become united with God and live reality as companions of God seeing things as God sees them. One concern with this taxonomy is that it suggests a chronology of response to God's intervention in our lives. But the truth is we are never out of the purgative way; we are constantly being illuminated even as we are trapped in destructive behaviors, and our union with God is not essentially once and for all, but suffers the fickleness of our humanity which, as St. Paul tells us, "makes me do not the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing." (Romans 7:19)

### **The Tensions in Becoming Human**

What can be helpful in discernment is understanding the level of dialectical tensions we are caught in in the different areas of our lives, all of which are created by God for a relationship with God. In different areas we may have different responses. In some we are committed loving people; in others our neuroses limit our affectivity and healthy relationships with others, the world, and God. When we are trapped we find ourselves compelled. There is an urgency which removed our detachment and limits our attentiveness in the situation we find ourselves in. When we indulge our compulsions, they become stronger and more demanding. They become obsessions and they limit our range of interests. Addictions do not just limit our range of interests, however. They become the sole focus of our interests. Everything we do, we do to satisfy a particular need. The addiction controls our life and finally takes possession of us. Possession destroys our humanity. It removes the remnants of whatever free will we had left as addicts. It seeks to eradicate the expressed commitment to God which even an addict might hold on to.

But there is an opposing dynamic to this drive to destruction. Because of a lived relationship with God, one can be disciplined enough not to be trapped by one's compulsive tendencies. One can become so committed to

that relationship that one values everything else in the light of that relationship. This allows us to make choices which build up the relationship and to live out of those choices in lives of service which manifests the Kingdom and liberate us into greater and greater lives of freedom. Freedom here is not to be understood as individual license, or as social liberty, but as a lived intimate relationship with God which allows us to discover what it means to be human.

It is possible to juxtapose these opposing dynamics of fear and self-transcendence as they operate in our lives and of which we are conscious when we find ourselves in situations of vulnerability.

A person is defined through –

	<b>act</b>	<b>habit</b>	<b>orientation</b>	<b>identity</b>
<b>fear</b> in the form of	compulsion	obsession	addiction	possession
<b>vs</b>	vs	vs	vs	vs
<b>love</b> in the form of	indifference	passion	freedom	emptiness

Living authentically does not destroy fear, but it allows one not to be trapped by fear. Fear constrains us in closed and broken myths which indicate the reality we experience is unchangeable. The compassionate mercy of God however says that creation is not complete. We are still being formed, and the creativity of God is such that every evil, such as death, will be transformed into resurrection. The stories we live out of and incarnate are not finished products. Those stories form the basis of our perceptions, our actions and our discernment. The plots which drive those stories operate from a basic tension

between fear and love. That tension is manifest in the operations of our daily life, often hidden and unacknowledged, but more overtly present when we find ourselves in crisis and vulnerable.

**Basic Tensions in Human Life**

<b>Fear</b> .....		<b>Love</b>	
dynamics of fear	Effects	Effects	dynamics of love
anxiety	security	rootedness	awe
suspicion	clarity	mystery	wonder
aggression	power	emptiness	vulnerability
despair	status quo	creativity	hope

This schema is based on what goes on in the Four Weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius. That 16th-century text is a manual for ordering one’s life to become more disposed to God. It is based on St. Ignatius’ own experiences of the evolution of his conversion. There he moved from being defined solely by his own needs, and the prevailing secular norms of his culture, to living out a spiritual intimacy with God which manifested itself concretely in his forming the Catholic Jesuit religious order noted for its creativity.

These Exercises offer us a way of looking critically and lovingly at ourselves, and offer us choices how we wish to be present to our world. The illusions we accept as ourselves are taken away in the First Week. We find our true life in the Second Week. In the Third Week this life is exposed to what borders this life, the test of death. In the Fourth Week we are liberated from the power of death for the service of the Divine Mystery. Our spiritual journey through the Exercises calls us always to be moving beyond ourselves and ever

deeper into the love of God. In order to do this we are constantly drawn from the worlds we have imagined and into a life as imagined by the mystery of the God we describe as Compassionate Mercy. This journey never ends. As we journey through the Fourth Week, we discover that we are not carried to a mythic paradise freed from the world. We find ourselves once again at a deeper level in the realities of the First Week, where we have to discover even more deeply how we are loved. There is no end to God’s love, and no end to our journeying ever deeper into that love and to the community created by that love.

Here we are interested in another thing. We are trying to unpack the dynamics of desire, manifested in the ongoing relationship between humanity and God, in a language which respects the insights of St. Ignatius as he presents them in the Exercises. We should note we are not adapting or translating the Exercises to fit contemporary concerns such as feminism or ecology, or contemporary social interests. Rather we provide a contemporary narrative which links the particular exercises within each stage in a developmental unity and also links each of the four stages of the Exercises in an evolving way of faithfulness. In doing this we find a way of extending the mission of the Exercises beyond even a Catholic and Christian context to include, without detriment to their own religious truths, “infidels and heretics.”<sup>18</sup> It is possible to do this if one sees the Exercises as following the emerging dynamics of desire common to every human being and community seeking the fullness of life.

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<sup>18</sup> J. Nadal, “Exercises for Infidels, Heretics and Sinners,” *The Way* 43, no. 1 (2004): 43-50. Nadal writes, “this is my belief: for all of these our Exercises can be accommodated, even for infidels, if we draw on the principles of the law of nature in the teaching of Paul (Romans 1 and Acts 17—the speech to the people on the Areopagus). Positively, they need only to be persuaded that they are being carried towards God.” (p. 46)



**【摘要】** 這文章檢視了渴望的動態，這些動態作為基礎，構成了依納爵《神操》四「週」內一系列的沈思和默觀。文章把這些置於愛與恐懼的基本張力中。它認為這四個靈修發展階段是一個使人變得更加人性化的過程：從一個人接受被愛開始，同時意識到自己受破壞性的力量所束縛，以至被那愛徹底改變，繼而選擇一種更新那破碎了的受造界的生活方式。本文將這種動態從中世紀天主教的傳統語言中，即依納爵用以編寫他的洞見的語言，轉為適用於其他靈修傳統的當代修辭。這種可及性還擴大了這種皈依的分析，使其可以應用於個人，以至社區、機構及文化。

**關鍵詞：**慾望，分辨，靈修之旅，相互

**The Rules for the Discernment of Spirits in  
St. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* and  
the Discernment of the Sage in Laozi’s *Dao De Jing*  
as Practical Guides to Living Well and  
Knowing that You Are Doing So**

Thomas P. Sherman, SJ

**Abstract:** Living well and knowing that one is doing so involve not only making the right choices in life but knowing that those choices are right. This requires a discernment in determining whether one’s feeling convictions are in accord with objective, checkable self-transcending criteria. In this paper I examine both St. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* and Laozi’s *Dao De Jing* as world famous practical guides for living well and knowing you are doing so. I argue that just as in the *Spiritual Exercises*, living well and knowing one is doing so involves a subjective criterion of the experience of spiritual consolation and the objective criterion of whether that chosen way of life or action is in conformity with the life of Jesus Christ as understood by the faith community of the Church, so in the *Dao De Jing*, living well and knowing one is doing so requires the sage to recognize not only his experience of inner peace and harmony as a criterion but as well the objective criterion of being in conformity with the real (vs. only apparent) harmony of nature and promoting harmony within human society. We learn from both works that if we are to live well and know that we are doing so, we need a discernment based not simply on self-

justifying experience (of spiritual consolation or inner peace and harmony) but on objective, or self-transcending criterion as well.

**Keywords:** discernment, spiritual consolation, spiritual desolation, objective and subjective criterion

## Introduction

The happiness of the virtuous person, Aristotle maintained, consists not simply in *living* virtuously but in knowing, or *appreciating*, that he or she is doing so.<sup>1</sup> In this paper I am going to examine and compare two famous but very different works from different religious, historical, and cultural points of view, the one the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, a famous religious manual composed in the mid-sixteenth century in Spain; the other, the *Dao De Jing* 道德經, an ancient (from the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE) Chinese mystical and philosophical classic ascribed to the figure of Laozi, 老子.<sup>2</sup> Despite their significant differences, both these works can be fruitfully understood and compared as practical manuals designed so that their practitioners might live well and be aware that they were doing so.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Nicomachean Ethics* IX.9 1170b10ff.

<sup>2</sup> For a concise historical introduction to the text and author, cf. WING-TSIT CHAN, ed., *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 136-8. In Daoism the *Dao* (or Way) is understood to be the principle of both the cosmic and moral order. In this paper the Chinese and English transliteration of the word will be capitalized.

<sup>3</sup> As the virtuous person, for Aristotle, consists not simply in his actually living virtuously but in *appreciating* (and so enjoying) that he is doing so, I shall argue that analogously for the Christian in making the *Spiritual Exercises*, living well is not simply making the right decision according to God's will but in *knowing* one is doing so in the experience of spiritual consolation. I shall

## The Argument of the Paper

In order to show that both St. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* (henceforth *Sp Ex*) and Laozi’s *Dao De Jing* (henceforth *DDJ*) can be such practical guides, I am going to focus on the description in each work of the inner life and dynamics of their practitioners as they make their way through the texts. In the experience of the person making the *Sp Ex* in the context of a retreat (normally accompanied by a spiritual director) and in the experience of the student of the *Dao* in meditating on the verses of *DDJ* (not without guidance from a Daoist master), both will engage in a reflective process in examining their lives and in making significant decisions. This reflective process involves two dimensions, one objective, the other subjective. The objective dimension to be considered will be whether the decision to be made is in conformity with the standard presented in the given text as *normative*, and the subjective dimension of the decision will be whether the one in making the decision experiences a feeling *consonant* with living in conformity with that standard. In the case of the retreatant making the *Sp Ex*, his or her reflective process in making a decision, which St. Ignatius calls a discernment (*discreción*) will involve an objective dimension as to whether the decision is in conformity with the standard of the life of Jesus Christ as this life is understood by the faith community of the Church. The subjective dimension will consist in whether the decision involves an experience of spiritual consolation in the love of God. In the case of the student of the *Dao*, as he or she meditates on the verses of the *DDJ*, the reflective

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argue similarly that in the *DDJ* enlightenment is not simply acting in accord with the *Dao* but in knowing that one is doing so in experiencing *zu* - peace and contentment.

process (which has no special name) involved in making a significant decision will respect an objective dimension as to whether the decision is in conformity with the standard of the *Dao* as the *Dao* is traditionally understood and recorded in the text of the *DDJ* and a subjective dimension in whether that decision is accompanied by an experience of inner peace and harmony, or “knowing contentment” (*zhi zu* 知足) (*DDJ* 33, cf 44), an experience understood to be characteristic of those who are in accord with the *Dao*.

For both the *Sp Ex* and the *DDJ* a proper reflection process in any decision will involve both these objective and subjective dimensions and by offering their practitioners guidance in this process, the *Sp Ex* and the *DDJ* can be understood as effective practical guides for their practitioners in living well and in appreciating that they are doing so.

## I

### **The *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius as a Method for Finding God’s Will in the Choice of a Way of Life (or in Some Particular Action)**

The practical purpose of the *Sp Ex* of St. Ignatius is for the retreatant to discover and to embrace the Will of God in a choice of a way of life (or of some important action). Such a choice has as its basis what Ignatius calls “The First Principle and Foundation”:

We are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and in doing so to save our souls. The other things on the face of the earth are created to help us in attaining the end for which we are created. Hence we are to make use of such things in as far as they help us in the attainment of our end, and we must rid ourselves of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to us. Therefore we must make ourselves indifferent to all created

things as far as we are not under any prohibition (...). Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created (*Sp Ex* 23).<sup>4</sup>

In order for anyone to make a choice of a way of life (or of some momentous action in one’s life) in accord with the praise, reverence and service of God, certain “spiritual exercises” are needed. Such exercises are described as “every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments, and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul” (*Sp Ex* 1). In the *Sp Ex*, these exercises involve contemplating Jesus Christ in his life, death, and resurrection. As Jesus is believed to be *the* Way to God (John 14:6), by so focusing on Christ throughout the retreat and by carefully attending to the inner movements of the heart, it is believed that the retreatant will be inspired to know and then choose to follow Christ in whatever particular way of life or action that the retreatant is considering.

In the process of considering a way of life or some particular action in following Christ, Ignatius describes three “times” in which a decisive choice can be made (*Sp Ex* 175-189). For the specific purposes of this article, however, we will focus on what Ignatius calls the *second* time of deciding—a time when the retreatant by attending to his or her inner experience of *spirits*, both good and evil, can be helped in making a right decision inspired by God, so that one can immediately experience the rightness of the decision.

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<sup>4</sup> While the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* in the original Spanish can be found in *Obras de San Ignacio de Loyola*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos (Madrid: Editorial Catolica, 1963), 206-303, I will be using the English translation of *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* by Louis Puhl, S.J, Chicago 1952.

But before we examine this second time of deciding according to an experience of spirits, a few preliminary points are to be kept in mind. In attending to inner experience, the retreatant will be aware of the state of, and movements within his or her consciousness.<sup>5</sup> “Soul” (*ánima*) is the term Ignatius uses to refer to the inner principle of life and consciousness unique to each person. By the phrase “movements of soul” (*las varias mociones que en el ánima*) Ignatius refers to the affective responses of feeling and desire based on perceptions, imaginations, thoughts, and images of the situations the retreatant may have in prayer or in mind at any time during the retreat. These movements of soul are experienced as motive forces, impulses of attraction or repulsion which may influence the retreatant in thought, word, or deed. These impulses can be felt as positive (e.g., pleasant, comforting, inviting) in attracting a retreatant toward someone or something (emotions like love, joy, peace, etc. are examples of positive impulses) or as negative (e.g., unpleasant, discomforting, discouraging) in repelling the retreatant from another person or situation (emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety). A *spirit* (*espíritu*) on the other hand is understood as a force which transcends the consciousness of the retreatant. As such, “spirit” is to be distinguished from the retreatant’s own *soul*.

For Ignatius movements of *soul* (*mociones que en el ánima*) are to be distinguished from motions as actions of *spirits* (*espíritus*). While

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<sup>5</sup> In beginning with the *second time* we begin with the retreatant’s subjective experience, his or her experience of inner movements and emotions. In examining and judging the truth of these subjective experiences, the second time begins with the subjective dimension of discernment and in discerning its truth will have the retreatant (and his or her director) consider the objective dimension of these experiences in their conformity (or not) with the life of Christ as understood by the faith community of the Church.

movements of soul can arise voluntarily or involuntarily from a retreatant’s own consciousness, these movements can also have as their causal source a *spirit*—a force which transcends the retreatant’s own consciousness and is in some form personal: the one good (ultimately God), the other, evil, Satan.<sup>6</sup> These different spirits are experienced as antagonistic, influencing the person to think and act in different if not opposed ways.

Ignatius believed that negative movements of soul could be caused either by a person’s own psychology or by the influence of an evil spirit. Positive movements of soul could also be the result of a person’s own psychology but could also be caused by either a good spirit (leading the person to God) or by an evil spirit (leading the person away from God). If the person is to make a right decision, the influence of personal psychology as well as the action of the different spirits must be recognized and distinguished

By the term “discernment” (*discreción*) Ignatius means the act or process of discerning, that is, of recognizing or perceiving something otherwise difficult or obscure by means of discriminating differences. A discernment of spirits (*discreción de espíritus*)<sup>7</sup> is a process of recognizing or perceiving the reality and influence of a spirit in one’s

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<sup>6</sup> Cf *Sp Ex* 329 where Ignatius writes “It is characteristic of God and His Angels, in their actions (*en sus mociones*) to give (*dar*) the soul true happiness and joy, and to banish all the sadness and disturbances which are caused by the enemy. It is characteristic of the evil one to fight against such happiness and consolation by proposing (*trayendo*) fallacious reasonings subtilities, and continual deceptions. The movements of spirits are personal and so better understood as *actions* rather than simply generic *motions*, as the latter could be the effect of the retreatant’s own psychological make-up or the effect of merely physical causes.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Sp Ex* 328 *Ejercicio espirituales, Obras de San Ignacio de Loyola*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos Madrid, 1963, 328



consciousness by first distinguishing that spirit from one's own consciousness and then by distinguishing that spirit as either a good or bad spirit.<sup>8</sup>

In order to aid the retreatant and his or her director in discerning good from bad spirits, St. Ignatius offers in the appendix of the *Sp Ex* (313-336) certain rules which he formulated, collected, and systematized over a long period of time.

### **The Use of Rules for the Discernment of Spirits (*Sp Ex* 313-336)**

Ignatius's Rules for the Discernment of Spirits are divided into what he calls "two weeks," or periods, which mark in some manner the retreatant's progress in following the life of Christ in meditation during his making the *Sp Ex*. As the retreatant is gradually drawn into a deeper relationship with Jesus in prayer during the retreat and considers the decision he or she needs to make, the influence of the spirits in the retreatant's consciousness can become more and more subtle. The "first week" rules deal with the basic principles of the different spirits and how to recognize them. The "second week" rules deal with some of the complicated and subtle ways the different spirits can interact and influence a person in making a choice of life. In an examination of these "two weeks" which follows, we will limit ourselves to consider

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<sup>8</sup> J. TONER, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius's Rules for the Discernment of Spirits* [cf. nt. 4] (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991), 12-13 and M. RUIZ JURADO, *Il Discernimento Spirituale* (cf. nt. 4), Edizioni San Paolo 1997, 232, and cf. M. IVENS, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* (Leominster: Gracewing 1998), 205-209. Understanding these spirits and discerning between them has not been without controversy among commentators of the *Sp Ex*. For some of the diverse interpretations of Ignatian "consolation" and "desolation" cf. J. TONER, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius'* (cf. nt. 4), 283-290.

and comment only on those rules most relevant for the purpose of this study.

### **FIRST WEEK RULES (*Sp Ex 313-327*)**

Ignatius opens the first week rules with a description of the purpose of the rules, which are: “for understanding to some extent the different movements produced in the soul and for recognizing those that are *good* to admit them, and those that are bad, to reject them” (*Sp Ex 313*).

The first rule of the first week focuses on the experience of the movement of soul and sets forth a crucial distinction between differing *movements* of soul with respect to an action:

In the case of those who go from one mortal sin to another, the enemy is ordinarily accustomed to propose apparent pleasures. He fills their imagination with sensual delights and gratifications, the more readily to keep them in their vices and increase the number of their sins. With such persons the good spirit uses a method which is the reverse of the above. Making use of the light of reason, he will rouse the sting of conscience and fill them with remorse (*Sp Ex 314*).

A few important preliminary things are to be noted in this first rule. “Mortal sin” is a thought, word, or deed in serious violation of God’s will based on Christian faith and the teaching of the Church. From the perspective of the Christian faith, a movement of soul toward what is sinful is toward what is objectively negative and yet such a movement of soul can be experienced *subjectively* as *either* positive or negative so that the retreatant’s *subjective* movement of soul, whether positive or negative, is not indicative of the objective goodness or evil of the action from the point of view of faith.

In the next, or second rule of the first week Ignatius states:

In the case of those who go on earnestly striving to cleanse their souls from sin and who seek to rise in the service of God our Lord to greater perfection, the method pursued is the opposite of that mentioned on the first rule. Then it is characteristic of the evil spirit to harass with anxiety, to afflict with sadness, to raise obstacles backed by fallacious reasonings that disturb the soul. Thus he seeks to prevent the soul from advancing. It is characteristic of the good spirit, however, to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations and peace. This He does by making all easy, by removing all obstacles so that the soul goes forward in doing good (*Sp Ex* 315).

A good spirit causes positive movements of soul in the direction of what is objectively good, whereas the evil spirit causes negative movements of soul toward what is objectively good, but positive movements toward what is objectively evil. Spirits are judged to be good or bad not by their positive or negative subjective “feel” but by whether they influence the agent to choose or not choose action which is in objective conformity with God’s will as understood from a faith perspective.

The third and fourth rules describe the experience of spiritual consolation and desolation:

**SPIRITUAL CONSOLATION.** I call it consolation when an interior movement is aroused in the soul, by which it is inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord, and as a consequence, can love no creature on the face of the earth for its own sake, but only in the Creator of them all. It is likewise consolation when one sheds tears that move to the love of God, whether it be because of the sufferings of Christ our Lord, or for any other reason that is immediately directed to the praise and service of God. Finally, I call consolation every increase of faith, hope, and love, and all interior joy that invites and attracts to what is heavenly and to the salvation of one’s soul by filling it with peace and quiet in its Creator and Lord (*Sp Ex* 316).

And the fourth:

SPIRITUAL DESOLATION. I call desolation what is entirely the opposite of what is described in the third rule, as darkness of soul, turmoil of spirit, inclination to what is lowly and earthly, restlessness rising from many disturbance and temptations which lead to want of faith, want of hope, want of love. The soul is wholly slothful, tepid, sad, and separated, as it were, from its Creator and Lord. For just as consolation is the opposite of desolation, so the thoughts that spring from consolation are the opposite of those that spring from desolation (*Sp Ex* 317).

Here we note that while spiritual consolation and desolation are subjectively experienced, respectively, as positive or negative movements of the soul, these movements are recognized as *spiritual* by their *intentional object*: the explicit consciousness of God or the things of God. When one considers God or the things of God and experiences *positive* motivation in the emotions of love, joy, and peace, this movement of soul is a spiritual *consolation* inclining the person to the love of God and the desire to do His will, whereas the experience of a *negative* movement of soul, when considering God or the things of God (feelings of sloth, tepidness, sadness, etc.), is an experience of *desolation* inducing the person to turn away from God.

In the fifth and sixth rules, Ignatius counsels the retreatant on how to treat desolation and consolation in discerning a decision to be made:

In time of desolation we should never make any change, but remain firm and constant in the resolution and decision which guided us the day before the desolation, or in the decision to which we adhered in the preceding consolation. For just as in consolation the good spirit guides and counsels us, so in desolation the evil spirit guides and counsels. Following his counsels we can never find the way to a right decision (*Sp Ex* 318).

Though in desolation we must never change our former resolutions, it will be very advantageous to intensify our activity against the desolation. We can insist more on prayer, upon meditation, and on much examination of ourselves. We can make an effort in a suitable way to do some penance (*Sp Ex* 319).

So far, the above rules seem to suggest that when considering a decision to be made, the retreatant can interpret his or her experience of (spiritual) consolation as in some way meeting with divine approval in so far as the consolation indicates being guided by the good spirit whereas the experience of desolation can be interpreted as failing divine approval in so far as in desolation the evil spirit is guiding and counseling. Yet as we shall see shortly when we get to the rules of the second week, there may not be a simple correlation between the subjective experience of spiritual consolation and objective divine approval.

### **SECOND WEEK RULES (*Sp Ex* 328-336)**

Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for the *second* week are described as: “further rules for understanding the different movements produced in the soul. They serve for a more accurate discernment of spirits” (*Sp Ex* 328).

In the first rule of the second week Ignatius describes the good spirit (whether God or His Angels) as giving true happiness:

It is characteristic of God and His Angels, when they act upon the soul, to give true happiness and spiritual joy, and to banish all the sadness and the disturbances caused by the enemy. It is characteristic of the evil one to fight against such happiness and consolation by proposing fallacious reasonings, subtleties, and continual deceptions (*Sp Ex* 329).

While this first rule apparently summarizes points already noted in the rules for the first week, there is a twofold complication as we are now told that the good spirit of the first week can be the action of *either* God *or* His Angels and that the effect of the good spirit (either God or His Angels) is “*true* happiness and joy”—a description which implies that there can also be a *false* happiness and joy. An experience of consolation, then, can be ambiguous—either true or false—and so itself is in need of discernment to determine whether it be one or the other.

In addition to a recognition that there can be a true or false consolation, in the second rule of this second week St. Ignatius notes for the first time a kind of consolation which only God can give:

God alone can give consolation to the soul without any previous cause. It belongs solely to the Creator to come into a soul, to leave it, to act upon it, to draw it wholly to the love of the Divine Majesty. I said without previous cause, that is, without any previous perception or knowledge of any subject by which a soul might be led to such a consolation through its own acts of will and intellect (*Sp Ex* 330).

God, as creator of the soul, is capable of consoling the soul of the retreatant “without previous cause” that is, in an immediate and intimate way.<sup>9</sup>

In the next rule of this second week, this divine “consolation without previous cause” is distinguished from an experience of consolation which can be caused by *either* good *or* evil spirits:

If a cause preceded, both the good angel and the evil spirit can give consolation to a soul but for quite different purposes. The good angel consoles for progress of the soul; that it may

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<sup>9</sup> For a more detailed analysis of this second rule of the second week as well as a description of various commentators’ differing views on the nature and frequency of such consolation “without previous cause,” cf. M. RUIZ JURADO, *Il Discernimento Spirituale* (cf. nt. 4), 227-229.

advance and rise to what is more perfect. The evil spirit consoles for purposes that are contrary, and that afterwards he might draw the soul to his own perverse intentions and wickedness (*Sp Ex* 331).

Previously, in the second rule of this second week we had read that “without previous cause” was to be understood as “without any previous perception or knowledge of any subject by which a soul might be led to such a consolation through its own acts of will and intellect” (*Sp Ex* 330). Now in this third rule of the second week Ignatius introduces us to a different kind of consolation—a consolation *with* previous cause. The experience of this kind of consolation can be caused by *either* the good spirit (angel) *or* the evil spirit depending on whether that consolation leads toward or away from God (“what is more perfect”).

So far, then, we can conclude that consolation *without* previous cause comes directly from God (and so must be true consolation) whereas consolation *with* previous cause can be either true or false depending on its source—*either* the good *or* the evil spirit. Once these two kinds of consolation are introduced, the retreatant must now discern (or be helped to discern) a possible consolation “without previous cause” from a consolation “with previous cause,” and of the latter kind—one that is true (as guided by the good spirit) from one that is false (misguided by the evil spirit).

In the fourth rule Ignatius begins to describe how the retreatant and his or her director are to discern whether consolation “with previous cause” is ultimately caused by the good or evil spirit:

It is a mark of the evil spirit to assume the appearance of an angel of light. He begins by suggesting thoughts that are suited to a devout soul, and ends by suggesting his own. For example,

he will suggest holy and pious thoughts that are wholly in conformity with the sanctity of the soul. Afterwards, he will endeavor little by little to end by drawing the soul into his hidden snares and evil designs (*Sp Ex* 332).

If the retreatant and director are to discern which spirit is ultimately causing consolation *with* previous cause, they must examine not the immediate experience itself of the consolation but rather its progression and conclusion. Moreover, judgments as to whether the consolation leads to thoughts suited to a devout soul or whether they lead to hidden snares and evil designs require a standard outside the subjective experience of the consolation itself.

The fifth rule of the second week instructs the retreatant and director how to determine whether the retreatant’s thoughts (an important component of consolation) are coming from the evil spirit rather than the good:

We must carefully observe the whole course of our thoughts. If the beginning and middle and end of the course of thoughts are wholly good and directed to what is entirely right, it is a sign that they are from the good angel. But the course of thoughts suggested to us may terminate in something evil, or distracting, or less good than the soul had formerly proposed to do. Again, it may end in what weakens the soul, or disquiets it; or by destroying the peace, tranquility, and quiet which it had before, it may cause disturbance to the soul. These things are a clear sign that the thoughts are proceeding from the evil spirit, the enemy of our progress and eternal salvation (*Sp Ex* 333).

As noted above in the third rule of the first week, spiritual consolation consists in thoughts of God accompanied by positive movements of soul, of emotions like love, joy, and peace. But to discern whether thoughts coming from consolation *with* previous cause are ultimately caused by the good *or* evil spirit, the retreatant is instructed to observe the *whole progression* of these thoughts and



finally their *conclusion*. If the conclusion of this progression of thoughts is in accord with what is wholly good and right, the consolation of such thoughts can be judged to come from the good spirit, but if those thoughts ultimately lead rather to something less good or even something evil, the consolation accompanying such thoughts can be judged to come from the evil spirit. What is implied here in this judgment is the insufficiency of the subjective *experience itself* of consolation; a standard or criterion *other than* the experience of the consolation itself is needed. For Ignatius, this objective standard or criterion is ultimately that of the teaching of the Christian faith which both retreatant and director accept.

In the sixth rule of the second week Ignatius counsels the retreatant to carefully review his or her experience with the evil spirit's use of consolation to deceive him so as to guard against such deception in the future:

When the enemy of our human nature has been detected and recognized by the trail of evil marking his course and by the wicked end to which he leads us, it will be profitable for the one who has been tempted to review immediately the whole course of the temptation. Let him consider the series of thoughts, how they arose, how the evil one gradually attempted to make him step down from the state of spiritual delight and joy in which he was, till finally he drew him to his wicked designs. The purpose of this review is that once such experience has been understood and carefully observed, we may guard ourselves for the future against the customary deceits of the enemy (*Sp Ex 334*).

Once the train and conclusion of the subjective experience of consolation can be seen to come from the good or the evil spirit, the retreatant and his or her director are instructed to go back and review the experience and its discernment for future discernment of like

experiences. Again, such discernment for future reference presumes the implication of the fifth rule: that the subjective experience of consolation is ultimately determined by an objective standard, the standard of faith that both retreatant and director accept.

In the eighth rule Ignatius goes back to examining the experience of consolation without previous cause, the consolation that comes directly from God:

When consolation is without previous cause, as was said, there can be no deception in it, since it can proceed from God our Lord only.<sup>10</sup> But a spiritual person who has received such a consolation must consider it very attentively, and must cautiously distinguish the actual time of the consolation from the period that follows it. At such a time the soul is still fervent and favored with the grace and aftereffects of the consolation which has passed. In this second period the soul frequently forms various resolutions and plans which are not granted directly by God our Lord. They may come from our own reasoning on the relations of our concepts and on the consequences of our judgments or they may come from the good or evil spirit. Hence, they must be carefully examined before they are given full approval and put into execution (*Sp Ex* 336).

We are told here that the immediate experience of God’s action on the soul cannot deceive for it comes directly from God. No further discernment as to the source of the consolation is needed. The consolation is directly of God. Aside from the question of how the retreatant and his or her spiritual guide (or anyone else) could be certain of an experience of consolation without previous cause (a question Ignatius does not seem to ask), one could ask: what practical

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<sup>10</sup> And for a detailed analysis of this eighth rule of the second week, cf. M. RUIZ JURADO, *Il Discernimento Spirituale* (cf. nt. 4), 229-239.

significance such a consolation can have for the retreatant trying to make a decision in accord with God's will? If, as some commentators have understood, consolation is more a volitional impetus than anything else, does this special consolation indicate that what the retreatant is considering as a way of life or a particular action to be chosen *is* being divinely inspired and so in accordance with God's will? Nowhere in the text does Ignatius identify any experience of consolation (with or without previous cause) with God's will. Yet in warning the director and the retreatant to distinguish consolation *without* previous cause from the experience of its aftereffects by means of the *thoughts* that arise from the latter, Ignatius seems to imply that (in contrast to the thoughts and plans made during an experience of the aftereffect) there *could* be thoughts or plans made during the time of experiencing consolation *without* previous cause, and then the question could be asked whether such thoughts or plans can be taken as indicating the divine will. However, *even if* an experience of consolation without previous cause *could* be interpreted as an indication of God's will in a choice of action, (as seems to be the case in Ignatius's description of the conversion experiences of St. Matthew or St. Paul at *Sp Ex* 175) Ignatius holds that whatever is made manifest or affectively affirmed in these special experiences must always be within the objective bounds of the faith.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> And outside the *Sp Ex* themselves, as in his letter to Teresa Rejadell (June 18, 1536), Ignatius writes, "It often happens that Our Lord moves and forces us interiorly to one action or another by opening up our mind and heart, i.e., speaking inside us without any noise of voices, raising us entirely to His divine love, without our being able to resist His purpose, even if we wanted. The purpose of His that we then adopt is such that of necessity we conform with the commandments, with the precepts of the Church and with obedience to our superiors, and it is full of complete humility because the same divine Spirit is in everything," Letter No. 7, 99-107 from *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal*

We must conclude then that if a discernment of spirits is indeed a way of determining a choice of a way of life (or of any important action in the retreatant’s life) as being consonant with God’s will, the *subjective* experience of consolation (whether *with* or *without* previous cause) *must* include the *objective* criterion of the faith of the Church. In the case of consolation *without* previous cause, if there is indeed any intentional content by way of any thought or image that could be interpreted as some sort of divine manifestation, that consolation would *at least* have to conform with (or not contradict) the faith of the Church for it to even be considered as coming from God, much less any indication of the divine will. In both kinds of consolation, that objective criterion can be none other than the person and life of Jesus Christ as understood and believed by the faith community of the Church. The retreatant must consult not simply his or her own subjective experience of the spirit in making a choice of a way of life or action, but also and *finally* this choice must at the very least be in accord with the life of Christ as understood by the faith community. It is for this reason that Ignatius begins his analysis of making a choice of a way of life in the *Sp Ex* by setting the parameters of such a choice as within the bounds of what is lawful within the Church (*Sp Ex* 170-174, cf. 189) and concludes the *Sp Ex* with an appendix entitled: “Rules for Thinking with the Church” (*Sp Ex* 352-370).

So what can we take away from this analysis of St. Ignatius’s Rules for the Discernment of Spirits in our own choice of a way of life or of some important action? If we want our choice to be right, that is, in accord with God’s will (or at least not opposed to God’s will) for our

true end of praising, reverencing, and serving God, we must meet *two* criteria, one *subjective*, the other *objective*. The subjective criterion is the experience of spiritual consolation as described in the third rule of the first week, the experience of the love of God leading to an increase in faith, hope, and charity, and joy, peace, and quiet in God. If the retreatant is sincerely seeking to find and do the will of God in making a choice of a way of life, the experience of consolation (as the felt love of God) surely must be a *sine qua non* for the rightness of any decision made. Consolation could be understood as constituting a *necessary* condition for knowing that one's choice of life or action is consonant with God's will. Yet however *necessary*, the experience of consolation cannot be a *sufficient* condition for knowing that one's choice of life or action is so consonant with the divine will. If the retreatant and his or her director are to know whether the choice to be made is in accordance with (or at least not opposed to) God's will, that choice must conform to the objective criterion of the life of Christ as believed in by the faith community of the Church. If both these criteria are met, the retreatant and retreat directors can be sure that that choice is *consonant* with God's will for His praise, reverence, and service.

However, as St. Ignatius never *identifies* God's will with an experience of spiritual consolation, these two criteria can be understood only as offering necessary and sufficient conditions for knowing that the contemplated choice is consonant with or at least not opposed to God's will. The actual discovery of God's will for the retreatant in his or her very particular choice of life or in a particularly significant decision in his or her life will involve historical and personal particulars which will ultimately require the exercise of his or her prudential judgment. What can be said, though, is that *whatever* God's will actually is for the retreatant in any particular choice as this has been

discerned by the retreatant, that choice will be consonant with God’s will if it is chosen for the sake of following Christ as understood and approved of in the faith community of the Church from an experience of spiritual consolation in the love of God.

The retreatant can then be understood to be living well (as living in conformity with God’s will) and to be knowing that he or she is doing so (by experiencing the consoling love of God).

## II

### **Laozi: *Dao De Jing* and the Need for Discernment in the Sage’s Experience of Following the *Dao***

Recalling Ignatius’s understanding of the term “discernment” as the act or process of recognizing or perceiving something otherwise difficult or obscure by means of discriminating differences, we have seen how in the *Sp Ex* a discernment of the action of spirits in the inner experience of the retreatant was necessary to make a right choice of a way of life or of some important action—a choice in accord with God’s will. This discernment of spirits required the recognition of two criteria, one subjective (the experience itself of the positive movements of soul in spiritual consolation) and the objective criterion of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ as understood by the faith community of the Church. A spiritual, or religious faith discernment as found in the *Sp Ex* requires the retreatant to recognize and fulfill these two criteria if he or she is to live well and know that he or she is doing so in a choice of life or action.

While Laozi’s *DDJ* is not a text written from a religious faith perspective and not usually understood specifically as a guide for decision-making, it can certainly be understood as a practical guide for

the serious student to live well by meditating on the *Dao* (and by joining with the sage in following the *Dao* in his or her life). In this second section of my paper, however, I am going to argue the *DDJ* can also be understood more specifically as a practical guide for decision-making. The evidence for this in the text is found in certain verses where the sage (and, by implication, the student of the *Dao* in following the example of the sage) is presented as engaged in a reflective process that can be understood as a *moral philosophical* discernment of a choice of action. Moreover, this reflective process the sage engages in arguably involves both a subjective and an objective criterion if he is to really (rather than only apparently) follow the *Dao* in that decision. This reflective process the sage engages in in making a decision can be understood as *analogous* to the process of discernment the retreatant engages in as described in the *Sp Ex*. Despite the obvious difference between the *Sp Ex* as an explicitly religious faith document and the *DDJ* as a more secular mystical or philosophical work, I argue that the experiences of both the sage (and by implication the student of the *Dao*) and the retreatant in these two works are comparable enough that their comparison can be mutually enlightening for appreciating both works as practical guides for their practitioners by helping them make use of a reflective decision process for the sake of their living well and knowing that they are doing so. To do this however we must first note the profound similarities between the *Sp Ex* and the *DDJ*.

The first remarkable similarity to be noted in the *Sp Ex* and the *DDJ* is that both works are self-described not as a theoretical investigation of the nature of their respective subjects but rather as *practical* guides, that is, guides as to *how* to live in accord with a special way. For St. Ignatius, of course, as a Christian, Jesus Christ is

presumed to be *the* Way to God (cf. John 14:6) and the purpose of making the *Sp Ex* is not to offer a theoretical reflection on that belief but rather to discover God’s will in the important decisions the retreatant as a Christian needs to conform to the life of Jesus Christ as *the* Way in his or her life. For Laozi in the *DDJ*, the nature of the *Dao* 道 as the Way is examined but that examination is offered for the sake of putting the Way into practice. Both works then can be understood as presenting a *practical* ideal to be followed in *action*; a recognizable way to live well.

Secondly, in both the *Sp Ex* and the *DDJ* great attention is paid to the inner experience of the practitioner in following that Way. This inner experience involves both positive and negative kinds of emotion where the experience of the positive indicates the way is *rightly* being followed, while the experience of negative kinds of emotion indicates that the way is *not* being followed or at least that something is wrong.

But thirdly, and most importantly, as I shall presently attempt to show, while the inner experience of positive feeling is a *subjective* indication of rightly following the way for both the practitioner of the *Sp Ex* and the *DDJ*, an *objective* criterion needs to be recognized and conformed to if the practitioner is to *know* he or she is *rightly* following the Way.

What is the textual evidence in the *DDJ* for these three claims?

First of all, as many commentators have noted, the *DDJ* has as its practical concern the *Dao* as the Way to be *lived*.<sup>12</sup> The sage or

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<sup>12</sup> This of course is one possible interpretation of the *DDJ*. For some others, cf. I. ROBINET, “The Diverse Interpretations of the *Laozi*” in M. CSIKSZENTMIHALYI – P. IVANHOE, ed., *Religious and Philosophical Aspects of the Laozi* (Albany: State University of New York, 1999), 127-159.



enlightened person (*sheng ren* 聖人) is the one who follows the Way by *practising* that Way. But following the *Dao* for the sage is not a matter of following some practical maxim or abstract rule but is rather an identification in some way with the *Dao* as the mysterious origin or source (*shi* 始) of everything:

*wu ming tian di zhi shi* 無名天地之始 “nameless it is the source of heaven and earth” (1).

*Dao sheng yi; yi sheng er; er sheng san; san sheng wan wu* 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物 “The Way begets the one; one begets two; two begets three; three begets the myriad creatures” (42).<sup>13</sup>

*dao ke dao fei chang dao ming ke ming fei chang ming* 道可道，非常道，名可名，非常名 “The Way that can be spoken of is not the constant way; the name that can be named is not the constant name” (1).

This mysterious nameless source of everything cannot be sensibly perceived:

*shi zhi bu jian ming yue yi ting zhi bu wen ming yue xi* 視之不見，名曰夷，聽之不聞，名曰希 “searched for but unseen, its name is without form; listened to but not heard, its name is silence” (14).

Indeed, it is not a perceptible *thing* among things. Rather, as the *source* of all things, the *Dao transcends* those things and can only be referred to (in comparison with them), as “*no thing*”:<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> English translation of the Chinese text: D.C. LAU, *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching* (New York: Penguin, 1976). I will use Lau’s translation throughout although I will also rely in part on Philip Ivanhoe’s translation and commentary of the *DDJ* in his *The Daodejing of Laozi* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2003).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. M. CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, “Mysticism and Apophatic Discourse in the *Laozi*,” in M. CSIKSZENTMIHALYI – P. IVANHOE, ed., *Religious and Philosophical Aspects* (cf. nt. 10), 33-58.

*tian xia wan wu sheng yu you you sheng yu wu* 天下萬物生於有，有生於無 “the myriad creatures in the world are born from something, and something from nothing” (40).

The influence of the *Dao* is unique and supremely effective:

*Dao chang wu wei er wu bu wei* 道常無爲而無不爲 “the Way never acts yet nothing is left undone” (37).

An influence that is beneficent, even provident:

*fu wei dao shan dai qie cheng* 夫唯道，善貸且成 “it is the Way alone that excels in bestowing and accomplishing” (41).

*wan wu zuo yan er bu ci sheng er bu you wei er bu shi gong cheng er fu ju* 萬物作焉而不辭，生而不有，爲而不恃，功成而弗居 “the myriad creatures arise from it yet it claims no authority; it gives life yet claims no possession; it benefits them yet exacts no gratitude, it accomplishes its tasks without dwelling on them” (2, cf. 34, 51, 81).

*tian zhi dao bu zheng er shan sheng bu yan er shan ying bu zhao er zi lai chan ran er shan mou tian wang hui hui shu er bu shi* 天之道，不爭而善勝，不言而善應，不召而自來，繹然而善謀，天網恢恢，疏而不失 “the Way of heaven excels in overcoming though it does not contend, in responding though it does not speak, in attracting though it does not summon, in laying plans though it appears slack. The net of heaven is cast wide. Though the mesh is not fine, yet nothing ever slips through” (73).

*tian dao wu qin chang yu shan ren* 天道無親，常與善人 “it is the Way of heaven to show no favoritism. It is forever on the side of the good man” (79).

The *effect* of the *Dao's* benevolent influence is the ordered harmony (*he* 和) of nature:

*Dao sheng yi yi sheng er er sheng san san sheng wan wu wan wu fu yin er bao yang chong qi yi wei he...* 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物，萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以爲和 “the Dao produces the one. The one produces the two. The two produces

the three. Three produces the ten thousand things. The ten thousand things carry yin and embrace yang and by blending their qi they attain harmony” (42).

But as the provident source of the harmony of all things, the *Dao* presents itself as a practical reality to be freely *followed or not* and many if not most prefer not to do so:

*da Dao shen yi er min hao jing* 大道甚夷, 而民好徑 “the great way is easy, yet people prefer by-paths” (53).

Indeed, those who *do* follow the *Dao* in practice are few:

*shang shi wen Dao qin er xing zhi zhong shi wen dao ruo cun ruowang xia shi wen dao da xiaozhi bu xiao bu zu yi wei dao* 上士聞道, 勤而行之, 中士聞道, 若存若亡, 下士聞道, 大笑之, 不笑不足以爲道 “when the best student hears about the Way, he practices it assiduously; when the average student hears about the Way, it seems to him one moment there and gone the next; when the worst student hears about the way, he laughs out loud. If he did not laugh, it would be unworthy of the way” (41).

The sage on the other hand is the one who follows the *Dao* and in doing so imitates the *Dao*:

*Tian zhi Dao li er bu hai sheng ren zhi dao wei er bu zheng*, 天之道, 利而不害, 聖人之道, 爲而不爭 “the Way of heaven benefits and does not harm; the Way of the sage is bountiful and does not contend” (81).

For the sage to follow (*cong* 從) the *Dao* is to put the *Dao* into practice (*xing* 行 41) by means of non-action (*wu-wei* 無爲) (37, 38, 43, 47, 48, 63, 64) with no words (*bu yan* 不言), thereby benefiting all people, both good and bad (27, 49) without contending (*bu zheng* 不爭) (66, 68) or exalting himself (72) or expecting recognition from others (77). Moreover, should the sage be called to govern others, he will imitate the *Dao* by effectively promoting peace and contentment among the people (3, 80, cf. 57).

The sage’s following the *Dao* is an inner *experience* of unity (*yi* 一) (22), harmony (*he* 和) (55, 56), peace, or stillness (*jing* 靜) (16, 31, 37), a pleasing state of consciousness which can be summed up by the phrase “knowing sufficiency (or contentment)” (*zhi zu* 知足) (33, cf 44).

On the other hand, the experience of those who *refuse* to follow the *Dao*, is described as troubled (*luan* 亂) (3) by inner confusion (*huo* 惑) (22), and discontent (*bu zhi zu* 不知足) in the desire to *possess* (*yu de* 欲得), (46) what is difficult to obtain (*nan de* 難得) (12, 26).

Now to step back briefly here to consider the significance of these verses for the purpose of this study, we might note that while the *DDJ* may not be an explicitly religious work,<sup>15</sup> the nature of the *Dao* in the text is nevertheless described in recognizably religious terms. The *Dao* is the fundamental reality which both causes and providentially cares for all things, presenting itself as a way to be freely followed by imitation. To this extent at least, the *Dao* and its relation to the sage could be understood as analogous to the figure of Jesus Christ as the Way in relation to the retreatant in the *Sp Ex*. For as the retreatant in meditating on the life, death, and resurrection of Christ in the *Sp Ex* is inspired to follow Christ in making a particular choice of life or action, so the sage can be understood as meditating on the *Dao* in order to imitate the *Dao* in his day-to-day life.

Further, in both the *Sp Ex* and the *DDJ* close attention is given to the inner experience of their respective practitioners in following their respective ways and the positive and negative feelings noted in doing so seem to parallel one another. The sage’s experience of inner unity

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<sup>15</sup> Although cf., Jia, Jinhua, 2009. “Religious Origin of the terms *Dao* and *De* and their signification in the *Laozi*,” The Royal Asiatic Society *JRAS*, Series 3, 19, 4.

and harmony, for instance, appears analogous to the experience of spiritual consolation in the *Sp Ex* and the experience of inner confusion and discontent as described of one who does not follow the *Dao* appears analogous to the experience of what Ignatius would call the spiritual desolation of one who is tepid or negligent in his or her spiritual exercises (cf. *Sp Ex* 322).

But if there is a striking analogy in the description of the inner experience of the Daoist sage and the retreatant in the *Sp Ex*, there is certainly one clear difference between them. In the *Sp Ex* the experience of positive emotions in spiritual consolation in contemplating a choice of life or action does *not* by itself indicate that the choice the retreatant is considering is in accord with God's will, for, as we have seen, spiritual consolation can be either true (as caused by God or good spirits) in leading the person according to God's will or false (as caused by the evil spirit) in leading the retreatant away from God's will. And, as we have noted previously, even *true* consolation for Ignatius cannot in itself be identified as doing God's will. This ambiguity in the retreatant's subjective experience of spiritual consolation leads to the recognition that a spiritual discernment is required which takes as its objective criterion the conformity of the retreatant's chosen life or action with the life and action of Christ as understood by the normative faith of the Church. If the experience of spiritual consolation is really an indication of divine approval in some way, any choice of action must be in conformity with the objective criterion of faith. But can a parallel for this need for an objective criterion in the *Sp Ex* be found in the sage's experience in the *DDJ*? For the sage's experience of inner peace in unity and harmony appears to need *no* criterion *outside* the experience itself as indicating that he is following the *Dao*. The sage, in other words, appears to need no

reflective process, no type of discernment as to whether he is following the *Dao* or not beyond the awareness of his own experience of the *Dao*. In other words, for the sage to experience inner peace and harmony *is* to be following the *Dao*.

If this is so, is there any evidence in the text of the *DDJ* to suggest that there may be certain situations in which the sage may find that his experience of inner peace and harmony would *not* in itself be *sufficient* to determine if he were following the *Dao*? If there were any such situations, the sage would then appear to need a criterion *beyond* that of his habitual subjective experience of contentment and inner harmony to discern if he were really (rather than only apparently) following the *Dao*. In the following, I cite some verses in the *DDJ* that suggest the sage *does* need such an objective criterion.

The first piece of textual evidence in this regard can be found in a verse from chapter 31 where the sage is described as encountering situation in which he must make a practical decision on how to respond to situations of violence and war. In this verse, the sage first recognizes that weapons and their use are not open to a follower of the *Dao*:

*Fu jia bing zhe bu xiang zhi qi wu huo wu zhi gu you dao zhe bu chu* 夫佳兵者，不祥之器物或惡之，故有道者不處 “Fine weapons are inauspicious, all find them repulsive and so one who has the Way does not use them” (31).

Weapons are instruments of violence and as violence is contrary to the nature of the *Dao*, the sage naturally does not use them. Yet the following part of the verse suggests that at times the taking up of arms is necessary and when this is so, arms must be taken up even if it means killing human beings:

*bu de yi er yong zhi tian dan wei shang sheng er bu mei er mei zhi zhe shi le sha ren* 不得已而用之，恬淡爲上，勝而不美，而美之者，是樂殺人 “when one is compelled to use them [arms],

it is best to do so without relish, for there is no glory in victory, and to glorify it despite this is to exult in the killing of men” (31).

When, or in which particular situation or situations would the sage feel compelled to take up arms? The text here does not explain and a similar question arises in a verse from chapter 30 where military campaigns are criticized:

*Shi zhi suo chu jing ji sheng yan da jun zhi hou bi you xiong nian* 師之所處，荊棘生焉。大軍之後，必有凶年 “where troops have encamped there will brambles grow; in the wake of a mighty army bad harvests follow without fail”.

Despite the moral problematic of a military campaign, the sage may find himself in the midst of such a campaign where:

*shan zhe guo er yi bu gan yi qu qiang guo er wu jin guo er wu fa* 善者果而已，不敢以取強，果而勿矜，果而勿伐 “one who is good aims only at bringing a campaign to a conclusion and dares not intimidate. One brings it to a conclusion but does not boast” (30).

In these two verses, the sage appears to find himself faced with a situation which would appear to challenge him in his commitment to following the *Dao*. Presumably in such a situation the sage must (somehow) respond as one who habitually follows the *Dao*. Verse 31 implies that the sage recognizes that the situation compels him to take up arms. But surely such recognition on his part presupposes an evaluation of the situation and a choice to take up arms. By what criterion or criteria could the sage use to make such a choice? His habitual experience of inner peace and harmony, or “knowing contentment” by itself would seem to offer no rationale for choosing to act in one way or another—or not to act at all. But these verses imply that the sage does indeed choose to take up arms *and* that his choice is in conformity with the *Dao*.

In a verse from chapter 74 the sage appears to be called on to make another decision, this time with regard to the administration of punishment:

*chang you si sha zhe sha fu dai si sha zhe sha shi wei dai da jiang zhuo fu dai da jiang zhuo zhe xi you bu shang qi shou yi*  
常有司殺者殺，夫代司殺者殺，是謂代大匠斲 夫代大匠斲者，希有不傷其手矣 “there is a regular executioner whose charge it is to kill. To kill on behalf of the executioner is what is described as chopping wood on behalf of the master carpenter. In chopping wood on behalf of the master carpenter, there are few who escape hurting their own hands instead”.

This passage has puzzled many commentators.<sup>16</sup> Is the sage being called on to decide whether human beings or God alone can kill, and if the former, who is authorized to do the killing? Such a decision presupposes having to make a choice of action between alternatives and the passage implies that there is a right and a wrong way to respond. As in verses taken from chapters 30 and 31 where the sage appeared to be called on to make a decision to take up arms or not, this passage describes another situation in which the sage must decide how to respond. The verse clearly implies that in this situation there is a *right* way to respond, that is, by refraining to kill on behalf of the executioner. But to respond in this (the right way) rather than in the wrong way (or ways) would (again) seem to require of the sage something more than his habitual experience of inner peace and harmony, for to rely solely on that inner experience of peace would appear to justify (or not) *any* or *no* response at all!

Finally, in a verse from chapter 79 the sage appears to be confronted with another difficult situation calling for evaluation of a

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. A. SABBADINI, ed., *Lao Tzu Tao Te Ching: Una guida all'interpretazione del libro fondamentale del taoismo*, Milano 2017, 550-554.



complicated situation and a decision to respond in one way *rather* than another. In this chapter the sage is presented with a decision that involves the administration of justice between parties so as to ensure harmony between them:

*He da yuan bi you yu yuan an ke yi wei shan shi yi sheng ren zhi zuo qi er bu ze yu ren you de si qi wu de si che*, 和大怨，必有餘怨，安可以爲善，是以聖人執左契，而不責於人，有德司契，無德司徹 “When peace is made between great enemies some enmity is bound to remain un-dispelled. How can this be considered perfect? Therefore the sage takes the left hand tally but exacts no payment from the people. The man of virtue takes charge of the tally; the man of no virtue takes charge of exaction.”

Here the sage is (yet again) presented with an *option*: *either* to take the left hand tally, the tally of the creditor who is *owed* exaction *or* to take the right hand tally, the tally of the debtor who *owes* the exaction. But if he would bring about harmonious reconciliation between enemies, the sage sees that the left hand tally *rather than* the right hand tally must be taken. He as creditor (to whom is owed the exaction) has the rightful authority to exact or refrain from exacting payment from the people as his debtors. He understands that the *right* (as opposed to a *wrong*) way to respond to this situation is to take the left hand tally as this will enable him to refrain from demanding rightful exaction from the people as his debtors and so contribute to reconciliation among the people. This decision of the sage to take the left hand tally *rather* than the right for the sake of a harmonious reconciliation would appear to require consideration of a criterion beyond his own habitual inner peace in order to discern what the right (vs. less good or even wrong) response would be.

If the sage is one who habitually acts in accord with the *Dao*, we see from the above verses in the *DDJ* that there are situations where the

sage seems to require some criterion beyond his own habitual peace and inner harmony, if he is to respond in the *right* way—that is, a response that is *really* in accord with the *Dao*. Does the *DDJ* provide evidence of a criterion the sage can appeal to above and beyond his own inner (subjective) experience to decide *rightly* rather than wrongly in any given situation?

The textual evidence for such a criterion in the *DDJ* appears to be the nature of the *Dao* itself.

*Dao sheng yi yi sheng er er sheng san san sheng wan wu wan wu fu yin er bao yang chong qi yi wei he* 道生一，一生二，二生三，三生萬物，萬物負陰而抱陽，沖氣以為和 “The way begets the one; the one produces two; two produces three. Three produces the myriad creatures. The myriad creatures shoulder yin and embrace yang, and by blending these qi they attain harmony”<sup>17</sup> (42).

The *Dao* is the source of real order and harmony. Since the sage wishes to follow the *Dao* in his life, the nature of the *Dao* as the source of all and whose providential influence effects order and harmony in nature should be *normative* for him in his evaluation of situations in which he must decide to act and to act in one way or another.<sup>18</sup> And since the *Dao*, by effecting the real order and harmony in nature effects the order and harmony in human society, the sage in following the *Dao* would act in accordance with the *Dao* so as to promote the real order

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<sup>17</sup> Here I use Ivanhoe’s translation of the line in *The Daodejing of Laozi* (cf. nt. 11), 45.

<sup>18</sup> This practical maxim of the sage does not involve illicitly deriving an “ought” from an “is” by deducing a practical conclusion from a theoretical premise. Rather, by first desiring to follow the *Dao* as his good and practical goal, the sage’s choice of action in conformity with that goal is a piece of practical reasoning through and through, as cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1143a31-5.

and harmony of nature and of his society. This arguably is the objective criterion the sage needs in his choice of action in conformity with the *Dao*.

Now in some verses of the *DDJ* the sage is called on to govern the people by following the *Dao* in *non-action*:

*Wo wu wei er min zi hua wo hao jing er min zi zheng wo wu shi er min zi fu wo wu yu er min zi pu* 我無爲而民自化, 我好靜而民自正, 我無事而民自富, 我無欲而民自樸 (*the sage says*) “I take no action and the people are transformed of themselves; I prefer stillness and the people are rectified by themselves; I act without busyness and yet the people will prosper by themselves; I am free of desire and the people of themselves become simple like the uncarved block” (57).

*Sheng ren zhi zhi xu qi xin shi qi fu ruo qi zhi qiang qi gu chang shi min wu zhi wu yu shi fu zhi zhe bu gan wei ye wei wu wei ze wu bu zhi* 聖人之治, 虛其心, 實其腹, 弱其志, 強其骨, 常使民無知無欲, 使夫智者不敢爲也, 爲無爲, 則無不治 “in governing the people the sage keeps them free of desire and satisfies their needs, dampens their hearts and strengthens their physique. Constantly keeps the people without cunning and without desire, ensures that the clever never dare to act. In taking no action, order prevails” (3).

The result of such non-action is to:

*Sui you jia bing wu suo chen zhi shi ren fu jie sheng er yong zhi gan qi shi mei qi fu an qi ju le qi su lin guo xiang wang ji quan zhi sheng xiang wen min zhi lao si, bu xiang wang lai* 雖有甲兵, 無所陳之, 使人復結繩而用之, 甘其食, 美其服, 安其居, 樂其俗, 隣國相望, 鷄犬之聲相聞, 民至老死不相往來 “ensure that even though the people have tools for war for a troop or battalion they will not use them. Let the people return to knotting cord and use them as well so that they find relish in their food and beauty in their clothes, will be content in their abode and happy in the way they live. Neighboring communities may see each together, roosters and dog’s sounds can mutually be heard, people reach old age and death, yet without having gone to visit each other” (80).

The *Dao* is supremely effective in ordering and harmonizing states of affairs by this mysterious non-action. In these verses, the sage in understanding the nature of the *Dao* follows by non-action, thereby imitating the *Dao* as the source of universal natural harmony as well as harmony within human society. In so doing (or not doing) the sage apparently allows the people simply to be in well-being. Does this mean that in situations of governance, the sage simply assumes a quietist attitude by not acting at all thereby allowing the *Dao* to act (by not acting) in allowing the people simply to be? A way of interpreting the sage's apparent quietism in governing the people that would be consonant with our understanding of the necessity of the sage's choice of action in the previous verses would be to interpret the sage here as *choosing to act by not acting* in conformity with his understanding the nature of the *Dao*. On this interpretation, his is not an absolute quietism here but a rightly reasoned response to a given situation.

What I am suggesting then is that the sage as the wise man understands the nature of the *Dao*, and this *knowledge* of the nature of the *Dao* as a providential source and provider of all things provides him with an objective *moral* reason for responding in the morally *right* way to each and every situation he finds himself in so that he would be acting (or better not-acting) in imitation of the *Dao*. And since there is a radical difference between order and disorder, harmony and disharmony, right and wrong, the sage must respond to each situation, as it were, *mindfully* with the *knowledge* of the nature of the *Dao* (and the *motivation* to act as the *Dao* acts). His awareness of the nature and (non) activity of the *Dao*, then gives the sage the objective criterion to *morally discern* how to respond *rightly* (as in accordance with the *Dao*) in any given situation. Sometimes, for instance, he will discern that following the *Dao* will involve entering (or not entering) a military

campaign, if so entering would promote (or not) an overall harmony in nature and society (more so than another possible choice). Other times he will be able to discern that following the non-action of the *Dao* in a particular situation is rather to make a decision about whether, and if so, who, is to administer what kind of punishment that will promote natural and civic harmony.<sup>19</sup> These decisions require that the sage (or those who aspire to live like the sage) must rely not only on the subjective criterion of an habitual inner experience of peace and harmony, but on an evaluation of the given situation in the light of the objective criterion of the *Dao* as the source and provider of peace and harmony. This objective criterion as provided by the text of the *DDJ* will then have its public criterion in whether or not the choice of the sage in each situation actually does promote peace and harmony in nature and in his community.

The sage, then, can be understood to be living well (as acting in conformity with the nature of the *Dao*) and to be knowing that he is doing so (in his experience of peace and contentment).

We may conclude then that as the retreatant in the *Sp Ex* must discern and choose what life or what action is in real conformity with Jesus Christ, so in an analogous way the sage in the *DDJ* makes a *moral* discernment in choosing to live in conformity with the *Dao* in each of the many and differing situations in which he finds himself. And as the retreatant is able to know the rightness of a decision according to a subjective criterion of spiritual consolation and the objective criterion of the life of Jesus Christ according to Church teaching, so the sage in making any decision to follow the *Dao* makes

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<sup>19</sup> Daoist non-activity cannot (rightly) be understood as any form of quietism unconcerned with, or in disregard of morality.

use of a subjective criterion of inner peace and harmony (knowing contentment), as well as a consideration of the nature of the *Dao* as source and provider of harmony in nature and society—a harmony which he must conform to and promote. If then the *Sp Ex* is understood as a practical religious faith manual to help a person make the right decision, that is, a decision in conformity with the life of Jesus Christ, the *DDJ* can also be understood as a practical manual of reflective moral reasoning in helping the student of the *Dao* follow the *Dao* in his or her life. Both works in their own way help their practitioners live well and know that they are doing so by providing a reflective procedure in decision-making which requires following both a subjective and an objective criterion. Of course this reflective procedure differs as the one is rooted in religious faith while the other is rooted in a particular philosophical or moral understanding of the universe, but the criteria involved in such a process appear to be remarkably analogous.

### SUMMARY

Living well and knowing that one is doing so involve not only making the right choices in life but knowing that those choices are right. In this paper I have looked at both St. Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercises* and Laozi’s *Dao De Jing* as different examples of practical guides in making use of a reflective process which aids in the decision to act rightly rather than wrongly in one’s choice of life or actions. I have first examined the *Spiritual Exercises* as such a practical guide and then examined the *Dao De Jing* as a practical guide in an analogous way. I have argued that just as in the *Spiritual Exercises*, living well and knowing one is doing so is to be combined in a choice

of life or action which involves respecting the subjective criterion of the experience of spiritual consolation with the objective criterion of that life or action in a verifiable conformity with the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the faith understanding of the Church, so in the *Dao De Jing* living well and knowing one is doing so is to be combined in the choices of action of the sage (or anyone who wants to be a sage), choices which in a comparable way involve a recognition and fulfillment of two criteria: a subjective criterion of inner peace and harmony in following the *Dao* and the objective criterion of those choices promoting peace and harmony in nature and in the social community.

So what can we take away from this interpretation of the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Dao De Jing*? We learn from the former that living well and knowing one is doing so is living in conformity with God's will as manifest in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ with the inner experience of spiritual consolation while for the latter, living well consists in following the *Dao* in the promotion of a publically verifiable social harmony, and knowing that one is doing so is in the experience of inner peace and contentment. And in both works we learn that while the subjective experience of consolation or inner contentment is a necessary condition for a right decision, this subjective experience must involve an objective, or self-transcending criterion, a criterion that is (at least in principle) open to a communal evaluation (in the one case in the judgment of the Church, in the other, in a communally recognized sense of social and natural harmony).

In summary, then, both the retreatant and the sage in the important decisions in life as guided by their use respectively of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius and the *Dao De Jing* of Laozi can be understood to be living well and knowing that they are doing so.

**[摘要]** 活得有德性，且知道自己是這樣生活，不僅涉及在生活中做出正確的選擇，還要知道這些選擇是正確的。這需要辨別一個人的感覺信念是否符合客觀的、可檢驗的自我超越標準。在這篇文章中，我檢視了聖依納爵·羅耀拉的《神操》和老子的《道德經》，作為世界著名的生活實踐指南，即如何認知活得好、有德性。我認為，就像在《神操》中，活得有德性，並知道自己是這樣做，涉及到主觀的神慰的體驗和客觀標準，即選擇的生活方式或行為是否符合教會團體所理解的耶穌基督的生活。同樣，在《道德經》中，活得有德性，並知道自己是如此生活，這要求聖人不僅認識到他內心平靜與和諧的體驗是一個準則，而且符合真實的（對比表面的）大自然的和諧，以及促進人類社會和諧的客觀標準。我們從這兩部作品中了解到，如果我們要活得有德性，並知道自己是這樣生活，我們需要的辨別不僅基於自我辯解（神慰或內心的平靜與和諧）的經驗，而且也基於客觀或自我超越標準。

**關鍵詞：**分辨，神慰，神枯，主觀及客觀標準



## **Claiming the Spiritual Exercises for Contemporary Women: A Feminist Perspective Based on the Self-in-Relation Theory**

Margaret Shu-Fen, Chang

**Abstract:** This article examines how to integrate the feminist perspective into meeting the need of contemporary women when giving the Spiritual Exercises. The paper outlines the necessity of adaptation for contemporary women, structural sins on women, Self-in-Relation theory, and adaptation of the giving of the Exercises based on a feminist perspective. It then articulates the definition and characteristics of a self-in-relation, and moves to discuss the dynamics of the Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises based on feminist spiritual direction. More specifically, the dynamics are as follows: (1) The First Week is about helping the retreatant to renew one's self-in-relation with God. Through the first and second meditations, one might explore his or her sin of a poor self-image. Then from the third to the fifth meditations, the director might facilitate the retreatant to experience God's mercy—that is empathic empowerment from God. (2) The Second Week aims at growing in mutual intersubjectivity. The retreatant and Jesus Christ participate in one another's life and eventually establish mutual intersubjectivity between them. (3) The Third Week is a moment when the retreatant shares mutual empathy in suffering. The contemplation of the Passion serves as a means of developing empathic interaction between the retreatant and Jesus Christ. (4) The Fourth Week facilitates the retreatant to connect with Jesus Christ and share the view of the risen Christ. Thus the retreatant could see the world in an enlarged vision to the extent that one could find God in all things

**Keywords:** feminism, Self-in-Relation theory, the Spiritual Exercises, spiritual direction

### **Introduction: The Necessity of Adaptation for Contemporary Women**

The flexibility and adaptability elaborated by Ignatius in Annotation 18 provide the foundation for considering adaptation for contemporary women in giving the *Spiritual Exercises*. Because Annotations 18 to 20 manifest the feature of adaptability of the Spiritual Exercises, the essential spirit of such flexibility is to adapt to the need of the person. Hence, the adaptation could encourage contemporary women to “take their own unique needs and desires seriously” in making the Exercises.<sup>1</sup>

Based on this notion, the question that arises here is: how does a spiritual companion (or spiritual director) adapt the *Spiritual Exercises*, which are composed by a man in the sixteenth century, for contemporary women to be transformed and to transcend themselves? If they are not adapted, some contemporary givers of the Exercises such as Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert, argue that for women, “The *Spiritual Exercises* present serious obstacles, either in their content or the way they have been interpreted and presented.”<sup>2</sup>

The point is that the *Spiritual Exercises* were composed when the social context and church situation were quite different from what they are today.

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<sup>1</sup> Katherine Dyckman, Mary Garvin, and Elizabeth Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

Besides, Ignatius used imagery and language in a more masculine way to articulate and expound some exercises. For example, in the Kingdom exercise [92-108], he describes how a king calls for conquering the whole world and every enemy. In Two Standards [137-148],<sup>3</sup> he uses metaphors of commander and battle. In Rules for Discernment [327], he talks about a military leader setting up his camp and inspecting the enemy, and so on. Such “military” and “masculine” content and language might be alienating, and hard for a contemporary woman to resonate with. The images of “commanding” “obedient submission,” “winning-losing,” and “fighting-fleeing” do not cohere with the aspirations and perspective of many women in contemporary culture.

To put it further, the more masculine image and language manifest tension between being powerful and being powerless and assume that men gain more power than women due to social and economic status. Exercising power on the one hand and becoming dominated on the other hand make the tension grow even higher. Pierre Bourdieu notes, “If women, subjected to a labor of socialization which tends to diminish and deny them, learn the negative virtues of self-denial, resignation, and silence, men are also prisoners, and insidiously victims, of the dominant representation.”<sup>4</sup> Since domination results in valuing someone and devaluing others, it is harmful to both men and women. In this sense, an adaptation of the Exercises to be more androgynous (suitable to or for either sex) might help to reduce the tension and make it easier for the retreatant to resonate with.

There are, of course, some other images in the *Exercises* that manifest the closeness, friendship, love and fragility of God, which are easier for the retreatant to understand. For instance, the colloquy of the First Week reads,

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<sup>3</sup> The number in square brackets in this article refers to the paragraph number in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

<sup>4</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Masculine Domination*, trans. Richard Nice (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 49.

“speaking as one friend speaks with another” [54]; in the Third Week “how the divine nature goes into hiding” [196]; and in the Contemplation to Attain Love, “love consists in mutual communication” [230]. These images are greatly valued in modern theology, particularly in feminist theology.<sup>5</sup> The reason is that mutual communication, empathy, and identification with fragility make more sense based on women’s self-knowledge and the way they relate to others.

It is not possible here fully to debate the disputed question of masculine language and female language in spiritual direction; these issues include a universal biological factor and cultural diversity as well. Hence this essay will focus more on exploring women’s experience and emphasizing that the spiritual companion needs sensitivity and flexibility in attending to the inner experience of the female retreatant when giving the Exercises. The spiritual companion has the responsibility to accompany a retreatant to understand each exercise, to be able to resonate with the grace asked for, and engage in an intimate colloquy before the end of each prayer. Thus the retreatant’s experience might be interwoven into the dynamic of each Week to achieve the goal of the Exercises—the rebirth of a new self in a renewed relationship.

## **A Broader Perspective: Structural Sin Imposed on Women**

Kathleen Fisher points out, “It is clear that spiritual friendship will not meet the needs of women unless it reflects an awareness of the cultural and religious situation in which women find themselves, and an acknowledgment of the harmful effects of the sexist society in which we live.”<sup>6</sup> It is obvious that

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<sup>5</sup> Nerea Alzola, “Women helping to give the Spiritual Exercises,” *The Way* 49, no. 1 (January 2010): 52.

<sup>6</sup> Kathleen Fisher, *Women at the Well: Feminist Perspectives on Spiritual Direction* (New York: Paulist Press: 1940), 5.

the social and cultural value system has a major influence on people's life. Demaris Wehr highlights *sexism* as one of the factors that impact human life. She notes, "sexism consists of limiting beliefs about the "nature" of women and men...women are the ones who stand outside of the definition of the fully human...Women find many difficulties in claiming adult status, responsibility, and authority."<sup>7</sup> That is, sexism is damaging to both genders, but it is particularly wounding to women in terms of how women should live their life.

Most people are not aware that sexism is a "lens" through which they see the world and thus make sexism a structural sin in human society. God creates humans as a whole person, yet the worldview of sexism distorts humanity and brings about unequal status and oppression both on men and women. Women's sense of self is easily damaged to the extent that the self is treated as an object, not normative, and even not fully adult. Therefore Kathleen Fisher notes,

Perhaps what women need to die to is the false system imposed on them by patriarchy...dying to this false self would prepare for the birth of their true selves. Men, on the other hand, may need to die to a self—experienced as separate and distinct from others, and be reborn into relationality.<sup>8</sup>

In this sense, it is important to analyze the social situation to help women "differentiate between internal and external sources of conflict."<sup>9</sup> For instance, the spiritual companion should begin with the woman retreatant's experience, encourage her to rely on her own experience, not on what

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<sup>7</sup> Demaris Wehr, *Jung and Feminism* (London: Routledge, 1988), 15.

<sup>8</sup> Fisher, *Women at the Well*, 117.

<sup>9</sup> Fisher, *Women at the Well*, 17.

someone from the ruling group tells her what her experience should be. Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt gives an example of this: "Human sinfulness, taking the form of physical violation of women, is a pervasive expression of sexist behavior with long-term and depressive effects on women's spirits."<sup>10</sup> Different forms of violence against women are truly human sinfulness, namely the violation of connections among oneself, God, and others.

Although feminist psychology highlights women's experience of self-knowledge, it also challenges various genders to recognize problematic workings in different cultures and socio-economic dynamics, especially the widespread ideas of patriarchy and its injustice. Ignatius wrote in Annotation 1: "every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies...to seek and find the divine Will...is called a Spiritual Exercise." One might say a retreatant who has benefited from the Exercises might be willing to advocate social justice thus enhancing the dignity of all humans. This is the value of making the Exercises.

## **Feminist Psychology: Self-in-Relation Theory**

### **Definition of Self: A Being- in-Relationship**

John Calvin asserts that without the knowledge of self, there is no knowledge of God, and without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self.<sup>11</sup> That is, self-knowledge and knowledge of God are a *mutual enhancement* in our journey of seeking and union with God. If the self-knowledge of a person increases, he or she might have a better understanding

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<sup>10</sup> Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt, "Women and the Exercises: Sin, Standards, and New Testament Texts," *The Way Supplement* 70 (Spring 1991): 20.

<sup>11</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2002), 30.

of God and build a closer and healthier relationship with him as well. Therefore, how a woman's self grows and relates to others influence her faith journey. Feminist theorists from the Stone Center at the Wellesley College in America<sup>12</sup> assert the development of a woman's self is a "self-in-relation," instead of "separation-individuation" proposed by Erik Erikson,<sup>13</sup> which is a more masculine view. Self-in-Relation Theory offers meaningful insights in understanding a woman's self- development. They assert that a woman's self grows in a mutual, reciprocal attachment.

One question arises here: what is *self* after all? Judith Jordan defines it as a construct that refers to "the organization of a person's experience and construction of reality that illuminates the purpose and directionality of her or his behavior."<sup>14</sup> One might say that a self is the central consciousness of one's being that is aware of and constructs his or her own reality. Moreover, how a person perceives and experiences the reality have an impact on his or her way of living almost beginning from the stage of an infant. When a girl infant's self develops, it tends to be a *being-in-relationship*,<sup>15</sup> which means she feels what is going on in her mother as well as what is going on in herself. That is, attending to each other's mental states and emotions is a woman's nature in terms of the development of her sense of consciousness.

This "*being-in-relation*" is the base of all continuing psychological growth. The essential concept is what Jean Baker Miller observes: a woman's

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<sup>12</sup> Judith V. Jordan et al., *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991).

<sup>13</sup> Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1950).

<sup>14</sup> Jean Baker Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1991), 15.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

growth "occurs within emotional connections, not separate from them."<sup>16</sup> Miller also notes, "women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make, and then to maintain, affiliations and relationships," and that "eventually, for many women, the threat of disruption of an affiliation is perceived not just as a loss of a relationship but as something closer to a total loss of self."<sup>17</sup>

Further, feeling more related to another person means one's self is enhanced, not threatened. In general, a woman does not feel threatened in connection but utilizes the opportunity to organize and develop the self in the context of an important relationship. That is, relationship is the basic goal of development; a woman's self aims at deepening her capacity for building and maintaining relationship.

In this sense, self-in-relation theory has profound importance in explaining a woman's development of a sense of self. In Janet Surrey's words, "The notion of the self-in-relation involves an important shift in emphasis from separation to relationship as the basis for self-experience and development."<sup>18</sup> Surrey also asserts that self-in-relation theory serves to explain "the complex needs of women and the role of relationships in their development and functioning."<sup>19</sup> Hence, women grow in many facets and develop toward a more connected relationship, which becomes a base for their life.

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<sup>16</sup> Surrey, "The Self-in-Relation: A Theory of Women's Development," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1991), 52.

<sup>17</sup> Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), 83.

<sup>18</sup> Surrey, "The Self-in-Relation," 53.

<sup>19</sup> Melinda Pilkinton, "Self-in-Relation Theory: A Model for Helping," *Perspectives*, 5, no. 1 (2007), 30.



## Characteristics of a Self-in-Relation

### *Mutual Empathy and Intersubjectivity*

Based on the definition of self, a being-in-relation, one might say that the human psyche is fundamentally relational in nature. That is, humans are relational beings and most cannot survive in isolation. Here another question arises: What is the feature of relationship? First of all, in Janet Surrey's definition, relationship involves an experience of *mutual empathy*, which refers to the "ability for relatedness, emotional closeness, and emotional flexibility."<sup>20</sup> When a woman could experience, comprehend, and respond to the inner state of another person, she has developed the ability to be empathic.

Further, accurate empathy involves "a balancing of affective arousal and cognitive structuring."<sup>21</sup> In this sense, a woman could empathize with the other person, while receiving the other's response based on affection-cognition balancing. In short, relationship means "an experience of emotional and cognitive *intersubjectivity*: the ongoing, intrinsic inner awareness and responsiveness to the continuous existence of the other or others and the expectation of mutuality in this regard."<sup>22</sup> This authentic relationship embodies an *I-Thou* relation described by Martin Buber,<sup>23</sup> and is exactly how Jesus Christ interacts with people who encounter him. That is, authentic relationship is central for all humans across cultures and gender issues.

The third question is: Why is relationship so important to women? What role does relationship play in a woman's life span? According to Heidi Fishman's quotation, Jean Baker Miller emphasizes that relationships are central to women's development because women's sense of self is organized

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<sup>20</sup> Surrey, "The Self-in-Relation," 53.

<sup>21</sup> Surrey, "The Self-in-Relation," 54.

<sup>22</sup> Surrey, "The Self-in-Relation," 61.

<sup>23</sup> Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (New York: Scribner, 2000), 6.

around their ability to make and to maintain affiliation and relationships. Women's whole sense of self depends on a process of continuity of emotional-cognitive dialogue, thus forming a process of mutual relational interaction. To put it another way, the "caring for and being cared for" in a mutual way is the key factor in women's self-esteem.<sup>24</sup> Hence, women's growth and maturation are "virtually impossible without relating to others and to self."<sup>25</sup> That is, a woman's self develops and nurtures within the context of an important relationship.

Furthermore, not only external relationships are important for women, but also internal relationships. On the one hand, internal relationships are those that occur inside a woman's psyche, such as fantasies, images, and memories. On the other hand, external relationships are real interactions with other people in the world.<sup>26</sup> In this way, internal relationships and external relationships are interwoven in a woman's psyche, forming an interacting self. Besides, Jean Baker Miller asserts that the interacting sense of self includes "feeling the other's emotions and acting on them as they interplay with one's own emotions."<sup>27</sup> That is, a woman would relate to, even engage with others' inner state, while allowing the other's inner state to have an impact on her own. Thus both or all people involved in the relationship might "be encouraged and challenged to maintain connection and to foster, adapt to, and change with the growth of the other."<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Heidi Fishman, "Exploring the Self-in-Relation Theory: Women's Idealized Relationship-of-Choice and Psychological Health," *Dissertations* (1992), 6.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Miller, "The Development of Women's Sense of Self," 14.

<sup>28</sup> Surrey, "The Self-in-Relation," 60.

### *Mutual Empowerment*

Most women build connections through dialogue to empower each other. In conversation, women tend to convey messages and aim at understanding and to be understood by each other. Through dialogue, they try to “remain real, vital, purposeful, and honest in relationship.”<sup>29</sup> Ideally, relationship-authenticity serves as a motivation for most women to create mutually an empowerment context within which maturity could occur and continue. As Carol Gilligan’s research demonstrates, interdependence can create strength, build resources, and motivate giving in the mature feminine style.<sup>30</sup> Through interdependence, dignity is enhanced and maturity might grow.

Heidi Fishman quotes from Janet Surrey and summarizes a relational self as follows:

(1) It is an interest in, and attention to, the other person(s) which form the base for the emotional connection and the ability to empathize with the other; (2) the expectation of a mutual empathic process where the sharing of experience leads to a heightened development of self and other; and (3) the expectation of interaction and relationship as a process of mutual sensitivity and mutual responsibility which provides the stimulus for the growth of empowerment and self-knowledge.<sup>31</sup>

These three important concepts highlight mutual engagement, mutual empathy, and *mutual empowerment* as well. They are significant features of relationship for women, as Kathleen Fisher notes, “disruption of such

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<sup>29</sup> Surrey, “Relationship and Empowerment,” in *Women’s Growth in Connection: Writing from the Stone Center* (New York: The Guilford Press: 1991), 162-180.

<sup>30</sup> Joann Wolski Conn, *Women’s Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development*. (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 19.

<sup>31</sup> Fishman, “Exploring the Self-in-Relation Theory,” 29.

relationship is perceived not just as the loss of the relationship, but closer to a total loss of the self.’<sup>32</sup>

In brief, feminism is a vision of life emphasizing inclusion rather than exclusion, connectedness rather than separateness, and mutuality in relationships rather than dominance and submission. Lying at the heart of dominance is the way by which people exercise power. One can hand his power over to others or receive it from others. When one participates in a power structure, he or she is to acquiesce to it to a certain degree and so to hand over personal power.<sup>33</sup> Thus power is actually organized by the relational webs of which one is a part. In the feminist view, mutuality means mutual empowerment for all who engage in relationships, thus to connect one another and foster development of self-in-relation.

## **Adapting the Exercises based on Feminist Spiritual Direction**

Based on the core concept of feminist psychology, there would be appropriate adaptation that needs to be considered in giving the Exercises. The following sections will explore how to adapt the main exercises in each Week based on these theories.

### **The First Week: Renew Women’s Self-in-Relation with God**

The following sections discuss how the meditations in the First Week renew the retreatant’s self in regards to relating and maintaining the relationship with God. The spiritual companion should be aware of how the distortion of the biblical revelation of God as a male being prevents a woman

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<sup>32</sup> Fisher, *Women at the Well*, 118.

<sup>33</sup> Jamie Calder, *The Mission of Jesus Christ: The Kingdom of Kingship and Belonging*, page 7. Class resource.

from “valuing and affirming herself as authentically an image of God.”<sup>34</sup> The fruit of the First Week should be the restoring of self-image and God-image, and the experience of one’s self as a beloved sinner.

*Principle and Foundation: Respond to and Interact with God*

“The human person is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by so doing to save his or her soul [23].” Ignatius himself makes clear that humans’ life is to respond to God’s love; to put it in another way, God’s incarnation embodies the divine self that relates to humans, and we need to respond to God continually to keep this relationship fresh and energetic.

This principle serves as a foundation for evaluation and discernment of our relationship with other creatures, as Ignatius expounds, “One must use other created things in so far as they help towards one’s end, and free oneself from them in so far as they are obstacles to one’s end [23].” Therefore, a person’s self exists, identifies and energizes in connection to God and all creatures. Ignatius pinpoints the self that needs to grow in the context of responding to God, namely to praise, reverence, and serve him.

In Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert’s view, a feminist spiritual companion should help a retreatant in the exercise of Principle and Foundation to be aware of God’s creation and presence within the mystery of one’s self. The idea is that a woman who pays more attention to her self might be the prelude to paying more attention to God. Based on the notion of self-in-relation, the key idea here is to relate a woman’s self to God, as well as to emphasize her self-identity before God, thus to facilitate her self-awareness and benefit from the exercise more greatly.

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<sup>34</sup> Conn, *Women’s Spirituality*, 14.

Further, in this exercise, Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert highlight the importance for the spiritual companion to see the woman retreatant’s personality and be aware of her experience within her worldview. The spiritual companion might ask questions like: How do you relate to other people and God’s creation? How do you sense your role in cooperation with God’s creation? These questions could help the retreatant to deepen one’s consideration of the Principle and Foundation through bringing one’s own worldview. In this sense, a woman’s experience of her world and her relation with others would be considered thoughtfully, thus she might increase the awareness of her sense of self-in-relation to all creatures.

Another point in this exercise is about the desire for *indifference*. Regarding indifference in Principle and Foundation, Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert argue, “Women cannot act with indifference in any positive sense until they have identified their desires and passions.”<sup>35</sup> The companion might help the retreatant to list her desires and passions by discerning between “ought to seek and ought not to seek,” and it is quite possible the list might embody cultural myths on gender, including beauty, body shape, dependency, and so on. Then the retreatant might reflect on whether or not these issues form a false self- image in her.

John Veltri points out the main theme of indifference is about *being spiritually free*. He emphasizes the importance of “understanding the concept of spiritual freedom” and “awareness of an area in his life where he needs to grow in freedom.”<sup>36</sup> The woman retreatant might ruminate over the Principle and Foundation first, then ask for the grace of seeing herself in front of God, being aware of some areas in her life that need to grow in freedom. If it is

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<sup>35</sup> Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*, 102.

<sup>36</sup> John Veltri, *Orientations, For Those Who Accompany Others on the Inward Journey* (Toronto: Guelph Center of Spirituality), chapter 5, 1.

helpful, she could write in her own words about the purpose of her life, the self-identification among various relationships and spiritual freedom she pursues, thus constituting her own principle and foundation of life.

In this broader sense, a woman's relational self could not be disengaged from interaction with significant others, particularly with God. If the mutual interaction has been cut off, a woman's self would be distorted and would wither, thus she would lose her sense of self. In this case, this distorted self-image would influence her image of God, causing a disconnection between her and God; it is possible that sinfulness has been generated exactly when the relationship has been twisted or even cut off.

Furthermore, both women and men will pass through developmental phases, which involve a certain kind of balancing between differentiation and integration, between autonomy and inclusion. As Maureen Aggeler points out: "Both will have and identify 'inordinate attachments' along the way and both will exhibit defenses typical of those stages."<sup>37</sup> She asserts that the necessity of freedom from "inordinate attachments" is a key element of discernment.<sup>38</sup> It is exactly the grace of Principle and Foundation that will lead women and men to identify inordinate attachments, and to renew the purpose of life.

#### *The First and Second Meditation: the Sin of a Poor Self-Image*

In a patriarchal society, people consider God as a male ruler and "sin is to be understood as rebellious behavior against divine sovereignty."<sup>39</sup> Such insubordination is unforgivable and the only way to be restored to divine favor is through divine mercy or forgiveness. However, Lavinia Byrne notes,

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<sup>37</sup> Maureen Aggeler, "Women's Metaphors for Freedom," *The Way Supplement*, 74 (1992): 22.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>39</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Feminist Critique and Re-visioning of God-Language," *The Way* 27, no. 2 (1987): 134.

"Women sin by having a poor self-image, men through pride."<sup>40</sup> That is, a woman's sin focuses not so much on pride and self-assertion, but rather on the sin of self-doubt, timidity, powerlessness, and even of being a self-hater. The self-hater might lack self-actualization, focus, and ambition, exhibiting too much self-abnegation. Kathleen Fisher notes, "A basic tenet of feminist spirituality is the conviction that women have been socialized to discount their feelings and responses."<sup>41</sup> Similarly, Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt argues, "It may be said that typically women's experience of original sin today is not pride in an honorable lineage or an over-blown sense of self-worth, but shame and self-denigration."<sup>42</sup> In many cultures, women are led to believe they are virtuous "when actually they have not yet taken the necessary possession of their lives to have an authentic 'self' to give in self-donating love."<sup>43</sup> That is to say, the culture of poor self-image can operate as an inner voice or inner figure for a woman, so as to form an obstacle to a healthy self-image.

Therefore, the dynamic of the First Week is "the need for a strong and loving sense of self before God and others."<sup>44</sup> This transforming of self-image is exactly at the heart of conversion and this conversion might transform the culture of a poor self-image. But how does this happen? Demaris Wehr puts it well: "It is possible that if the woman changes her inner image, by dialoguing with it, befriending it, or in some cases exorcising it, the person's behavior will change."<sup>45</sup> Therefore, instead of exploring instances of pride, a feminist spiritual companion "might encourage a woman to take on roles of

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<sup>40</sup> Lavinia Byrne, "Women and the Second Week." *The Way Supplement*, 74 (1992): 34.

<sup>41</sup> Fisher, *Women at the Well*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Rosenblatt, "Women and the Exercises," 20.

<sup>43</sup> Conn, *Women's Spirituality*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> Dorothy Lee-Pollard, "Feminism and Spirituality: The Role of the Bible in Women's Spirituality," *The Way*, 32, no. 1 (1992): 27.

<sup>45</sup> Demaris Wehr, *Jung and Feminism*, 21.



responsibility and decision-making.”<sup>46</sup> Feminist spiritual direction can help women to stop blaming themselves, and learn instead to restructure their beliefs about themselves.

In Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert’s view, sin for women is a relational concept rather than disobedience to laws. Sin is more like the lack of self-voice and absence of authentic relationship, not transgressions of rules. Hence in the light of God’s divine love and mercy, a woman could be aware of her sin in terms of relationships with self, other creatures, and God.

*The Third to the Fifth Meditation: God’s Mercy—an Empathic Empowerment*

In the second meditation, Ignatius invites the retreatant to conclude with a colloquy about mercy. “All my thoughts will be about mercy and I will thank God for giving me life up till now [61].” The retreatant is enlightened with “Exclamation of wonder, with intense feelings, as I reflect on the whole range of created beings, however have they let me live and kept me alive! [60]” This dynamic of conversion lasts to the third, fourth, and the fifth meditation, God’s mercy lies there for the retreatant. God does not put humans into hell; instead, he has an empathic action to feel the retreatant’s feelings, to tolerate one’s choice of moving away against him, and still keeps one alive. Katherine Dyckman and Patrick Carroll assert if one has not tasted or seen or felt the love of God and others, one cannot recognize and acknowledge sin because “sin, infidelity, is correlative to love.”<sup>47</sup> That is, God’s mercy elicits one’s conversion.

In the third and fourth exercise, God’s empathic mercy *empowers* one to “feel an interior knowledge of my sins...a sense of the disorder in my

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<sup>46</sup> Annice Callahan, “Some Women’s Perspectives on the Ministry of Spiritual Direction,” *The Way Supplement* 91 (1998): 89.

<sup>47</sup> Katherine M. Dyckman and L. Patrick Carroll, *Inviting the Mystic, Supporting the Prophet: An Introduction to Spiritual Direction* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 9.

actions...so that out of abhorrence for it I may put away from myself worldly and aimless things [63]." The retreatant has been empowered and encouraged now to move toward God and re-connect to him. In other words, the retreatant's self is energized and activated through being in relation with God again. One has been empowered to live out his or her self-in-relation.

The first and second meditation in the First Week leads the retreatant to meditate on the first sin, which was that of the angels' sin, to the sin of Adam and Eve, then to the sin of any particular individual who has gone to hell, all the way to the record of one's own sin [50-56]. This funnel-shape of meditation opens the retreatant's view and enhances one's awareness of sins from a universal level to a personal level. In this sense, the retreatant might be aware of the whole picture of structural sin, particularly the hidden oppression upon women.

Considering sins from a feminist perspective, the spiritual companion needs to help the retreatant to enhance self-empathy. Self-empathy suggests that one focuses on some experiences in a new, empathic manner.<sup>48</sup> On the one hand, a self-empathic manner could decrease self-blame and guilt-feeling. On the other hand, it increases the ability to see herself from God's sight. In this broader sense, facing and admitting one's sin leads the retreatant along the way to where God's mercy is.

### **The Second Week: Growth in Intersubjectivity**

In the Second Week, the retreatant asks to better know and love Jesus of Nazareth. This grace helps the retreatant to contemplate Jesus' hidden life as well as public life. In the contemplation, the retreatant maintains interaction with Jesus Christ through imaginary prayer in contemplation, in which not

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<sup>48</sup> Judith V. Jordan, "Empathy, Mutuality, and Therapeutic Change: Clinical Implications of a Relational Model," in *Women's growth in Connection: Writing from the Stone Center*, 286.

only does the retreatant enter into Jesus' life, but she also invites Jesus to be involved in her life span. In this sense, the retreatant and Jesus Christ participate in one another's life, encounter each other in significant life events respectively, and eventually establish *mutual intersubjectivity* between them.

*The Kingdoms: Commitment to a Relationship to Change the world*

Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert emphasize that the grace of the Second Week is a deepening relationship with Jesus that offers new ways of knowing, loving and following. They argue that "beneath the image of the King and Kingdom lies the truth of commitment, single-heartedness, sacrifice, and freedom."<sup>49</sup> However, the language of monarchy seems repugnant to contemporary women because this parable emphasizes God as a male conqueror. A woman retreatant might reject being in a relationship with a powerful male in a hierarchical and impersonal system. Hence they suggest reconstructing this context as if "one recalled a person who unleashed one's admiration and loyalty in a relationship that elicited personal greatness."<sup>50</sup> This relationship evokes a great desire-sharing vision, which could be understood as a commitment to a relationship and as the necessary disposition for entering the kingdom of peace and justice.

Jean Baker Miller notes that power is "the capacity to move or to produce change."<sup>51</sup> In this sense, power is not defined as "domination, control, or mastery, implying power over."<sup>52</sup> This shift in the definition of power leads us to reconsider the focus of the Kingdom. For women, the essence of this exercise is not about "conquer[ing] all the land of the infidels" [93], namely

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<sup>49</sup> Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*, 190.

<sup>50</sup> Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*, 193.

<sup>51</sup> Miller, "Women and Power," 198.

<sup>52</sup> Surrey, "Relationship and Empowerment," 162.

winning over others, but about producing change according to a desire to follow Christ and change this world.

Furthermore, meditating on the Kingdom helps the woman retreatant to be empowered by Christ, who asserts “they will afterwards share with me in the victory, as they have shared with me in the labours [94].” The mutuality of sharing in the Kingdom empowers women to be alert to Christ’s call and to be firm in following him.

*Rules for Discernment: Dancing in Mutual Harmony*

In writing rules for discernment, Ignatius helps the retreatant to be more aware of the way one dances with the good spirit or evil spirit. Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert offer a psychological perspective in understanding the movement of dancing with a good or evil spirit. They assert that the spirits are intrapsychic rather than external.<sup>53</sup> Timothy Gallagher also explains, “Besides Satan and demons, [evil spirit] includes the tendency in our psyches which spring from egoism and disordered sensuality and also from other individual human persons or society insofar as these are an influence for evil in our lives.”<sup>54</sup> Luigi Rulla also notes, “The ‘spirits’ to be discerned are understood not in the preternatural sense of demons and angels, but in the sense of the dispositions of the individual person.”<sup>55</sup> That is, being aware of one’s inner movement is helpful to discern whether one is moving toward God or away from God. In the feminist view, the inner movement represents mutuality in terms of how one responds to Jesus’ call. It is God who initiates an invitation

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<sup>53</sup> Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*, 251.

<sup>54</sup> Timothy M. Gallagher, *The Discernment of Spirits: An Ignatian Guide for Everyday Living* (New York: Crossroad, 2005) 33.

<sup>55</sup> Luigi M. Rulla, “The Discernment of Spirits and Christian Anthropology,” 2, Class resource.

to dance with him, and the inner movement in one's psyche shows harmony or discord with his music.

Through prayer and reflection on the inner movement, a woman retreatant discerns the living truth about her self, thus maintaining her integrity and her own authority.<sup>56</sup> If not, when a woman's self-doubt colludes with Satan, it makes the *enemy of human nature* [334] stronger. In contrast, when consciousness dances with angels and the Holy Spirit, it makes the good spirit increasingly powerful.

Michael Ivens argues that movements of the soul refer to "the interactions of feelings, thoughts ... imagination, impulses of attraction and recoil, which occur spontaneously in consciousness."<sup>57</sup> The spiritual companion should help the woman retreatant to be aware of what Timothy Gallagher expounds as three key elements of discernment: be aware, understand, and take action.<sup>58</sup> That is, the movements of the psyche are not just focused on the feelings themselves but on the *direction* to which these feelings lead. In other words, what matters is not only where a person is, but whether their direction to God is forwards or backwards.<sup>59</sup>

In this sense, the spiritual companion needs to be aware of consolation and desolation in terms of three components: the feeling itself, the source of that feeling, and the consequences of that feeling on one's life and decisions. Antonio Guillén writes, "discernment is not a technique, but a constant call to search for God."<sup>60</sup> Elizabeth Liebert also emphasizes, "ideally, discernment becomes an entire way of life, beyond simply a process for making a single

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<sup>56</sup> Lee-Pollard, *Feminism and Spirituality*, 30.

<sup>57</sup> Michael Ivens, *Understanding The Spiritual Exercises* (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 1998), 210.

<sup>58</sup> Gallagher, *The Discernment of Spirits*, 16-17.

<sup>59</sup> Ivens, *Understanding The Spiritual Exercises*, 211.

<sup>60</sup> Antonio Guillén, "Deceptions in Discernment," *The Way* 49, no. 3 (2010): 92.

decision."<sup>61</sup> Therefore, at this stage, the woman retreatant has learned how to listen to God's music, to move toward him, and to dance with him in mutual harmony.

*Two Standards: Identifying with Jesus' Value System*

Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert argue that language referring to poverty, reproaches, and humility in Two Standards are not easy for contemporary women to resonate with, especially for those who are oppressed. One reason might be that humility implies submission to an authoritative figure, and this seems to be in conflict with finding a voice and asserting oneself. Consequently, Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert stress a different aspect of humility for women. They suggest insult and contempt are not imposed by culture, class or economic situation, but "(arise) from freely identifying with the poor out of love for Christ."<sup>62</sup> Hence for women, the essence of Two Standards is not about victory or conquering enemies; rather, it is about identification with a value system, which invests energy in empowering the oppressed. The standard of Christ will lead one toward imitation of Jesus Christ's self-emptying, namely living in poverty, insult and contempt, which resonate with most women's need to be empowered.

Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt writes, "From a woman's perspective, the imaginative picture of two leaders, evoking the world-view of a Christian crusader, rests on a dichotomous split between a world dominated by the force of good, and that dominated by evil."<sup>63</sup> The dichotomy deepens one's awareness of inner movement and serves as a reference point for choosing the beloved's value system.

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<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth Liebert, "Discernment for Our Times," *Studies in Spirituality* V18 (2008): 13.

<sup>62</sup> Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*, 198.

<sup>63</sup> Rosenblatt, "Women and the Exercises," 22.

Based on this notion, Rosenblatt asserts that “Emphasis then would fall less upon a leader’s triumph over an enemy than upon the performance of those acts which truly liberate the oppressed, the acts of Jesus which express determined and courageous care for those suffering injustice.”<sup>64</sup> Because a woman’s psychological orientation is for total commitment in love and relationship, the conquest is replaced by the love of a woman for her beloved. In this sense, the spiritual companion might utilize the image of “bride of Christ” (John 3:29; Revelation 19:7) to enhance the retreatant’s identity with, and commitment to Jesus Christ’s value system, which aims at liberating the oppressed.

### *Three Classes of Persons: Toward Spiritual Freedom*

Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert interpret the three classes of persons with three terms. The first class is a *postponer*, the second class is a *compromiser*, and the third class is a *surrenderer* who is a wholeheartedly indifferent person.<sup>65</sup> The third person roots his or her decision in love and desires for true spiritual freedom to choose whatever Christ desires for him or her with indifference. Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert interpret indifference as getting rid of nailing desire to specific objects, which creates addiction; that is *attachment* in Ignatius’ words.<sup>66</sup> They suggest questions like “What is the one thing I refuse to turn over to God’s care?” thus helping the retreatant to cooperate and dance with God freely. In this way, the retreatant’s spirit even transcends indifference and chooses to give over the whole of life to imitate Jesus Christ and let him guide his or her way of living.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>65</sup> Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*, 200-201.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 200.

*Making an Election: Focusing on Responsibility and Relationship*

For a spiritual companion, to help a woman retreatant to maintain growth in prayers is important. This means to develop "the ability to heighten awareness of what one really wants in life and how one really feels in God's presence."<sup>67</sup> Journeying through the Exercises, the woman retreatant might be more aware of her desire and affirmation of her self and be more indifferent to make an election in her life in terms of taking actions to be a bride of Jesus Christ.

Regarding making an election, Carol Gilligan found that men use abstract rules or principles to decide, while women seem to view moral problems as those that arise from "conflicting responsibilities and relationships rather than from competing rights."<sup>68</sup> She argued that women consistently use relationships and personal responsibility as their primary reference points in making moral decisions.<sup>69</sup>

Kohlberg describes how the most mature level of moral development accords with universal principles of justice and respect individual rights; however, for women, Gilligan argues moral imperative repeatedly emerges as "an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the world's trouble."<sup>70</sup> Likewise, Heidi Fishman notes, women's moral judgments are embedded in "a context of human relationships, mutuality, communality and interdependence."<sup>71</sup> To put it another way, responsibility and relationship lie at the heart of making decisions for women. The spiritual companion should understand that responsibility is conceived in terms of a woman's caring and

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<sup>67</sup> Conn, *Women's Spirituality*, 12.

<sup>68</sup> Aggeler, "Women's Metaphors for Freedom," 21.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Conn, *Women's Spirituality*, 18.

<sup>71</sup> Fishman, "Exploring the Self-in-Relation Theory," 3.



involving with others, and thus help the woman retreatant find an appropriate way of expressing mutuality and interdependence.

Joann Wolski Conn notes, “Christian spirituality entails the conviction that God is indeed personal and that we are in immediate personal relationship to another, an Other who ‘speaks’ and can be spoken to, who really affects our lives.”<sup>72</sup> In this sense, making an election is about maintaining a vital personal relationship with God. Thus the election made in this stage is “not externally determined but internally determined.”<sup>73</sup>

### **The Third Week: Sharing Mutual Empathy in Suffering**

The contemplation of the Passion serves as a means of developing empathic interaction between the retreatant and Jesus Christ. In the contemplation on the Last Supper, the grace asked for is “*grief, deep feeling and confusion* because it is for my sins that the Lord is going to the Passion [193].” In contemplating the narratives of the Passion, the retreatant asks for “*grief with Christ in grief, to be broken with Christ who is broken, and for tears and interior suffering* on account of the great suffering that Christ has endured for me. [203]” These phrases describe a strong emotional connection, which engages with each other’s deep and authentic feeling and thus conveys a mutual empathy between the two parties. Ignatius insists that through following Jesus Christ, people are not simply to be led into all truth but also “into the vulnerability of Jesus’ way.”<sup>74</sup> Jesus’ way is through poverty, insult, and contempt, to true humility [147], thus it is like what Katherine Dyckman and Patrick Carroll expound, “To really love others means to become

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<sup>72</sup> Conn, *Women’s Spirituality*, 50.

<sup>73</sup> Aggeler, “Women’s Metaphors for Freedom,” 22.

<sup>74</sup> Philip Sheldrake, “Befriending our desires.” *The Way* 35, no. 2 (1995): 93.

progressively more vulnerable to them.”<sup>75</sup> Christ’s way is riskier, losing what one possesses, rather than gaining any personal benefit or success. In this sense, the God-image of an exalted father has been changed into a vulnerable person, which is easier for women to resonate with.

A woman retreatant steps into Christ’s experience in suffering in the Third Week; meanwhile, she is empowered by Christ to face the experience of suffering in her life. Thus, her election made in the previous Week is confirmed and she is strengthened as well. This mutual empathy is activated, validated, and sustained through sharing in each other’s suffering.

*Compassion: Maintaining a Faithful Presence to the Beloved one*

Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert note difficulties for women, for instance, in contemplating the victim image of Christ and considering the Cross as a sign of domination and violence. They suggest a woman retreatant might pray over the passage on the unnamed woman anointing Jesus Christ prior to his death (Mark 14:3–9; Matt 26:6–13), because he recognizes the significance of her action and values her enthusiastic spirit. Another alternative might be to pay attention to the women who helped Jesus out of their resources (Luke 8:3), Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38–42), the daughters of Jerusalem (Luke 23:28), to say nothing of Jesus’ mother and other women at the foot of the Cross (Mark 15: 40–41). These women described in the Bible “communicated eloquently by their faithful presence at the death and burial of Jesus.”<sup>76</sup> Therefore, faithful presence to the beloved embodies women’s authentic love and deep compassion even in a dreadful situation.

Adaptations like these might increase a woman retreatant’s commitment to discipleship and friendship with Jesus Christ. The point is, after being with

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<sup>75</sup> Dyckman and Carroll, *Inviting the Mystic*, 9.

<sup>76</sup> Dyckman, Garvin, and Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed*, 221.

Jesus in his suffering, they might encounter the suffering Jesus in their own experience of suffering too. This will eventually deepen the union with Christ. In the light of such understanding, presence at Christ's suffering and facing one's own suffering might teach one the true meaning of compassion.

In brief, women could deal with suffering through having faith that God has not abandoned them. The capacity for compassion helps women to feel with Jesus—to be flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood—thus manifesting mutual empathy.

### **The Fourth Week: Union in Relational Empowerment**

Mutual empathy in the Third Week has deepened the relationship between the retreatant and Christ, thus an authentic interaction is confirmed. Both persons are connected and united in each other's suffering. Now in the Fourth Week, the retreatant asks for the grace to "*feel gladness and to rejoice intensively over the great glory and joy of Christ Our Lord* [221]." All grief and tears are replaced by rejoicing in the Fourth Week. The resurrection of Christ gives power to the woman retreatant for renewing her self. In this sense, relational empowerment is a process in which one could "enlarge vision and energy, be stimulated through interaction, in a framework of emotional connection."<sup>77</sup> That is, the woman retreatant connects with Jesus Christ and shares the view of the risen Christ; she could see the world in an enlarged vision to the extent that she could find God in all things.

#### *In the Tomb: Waiting with Tenderness and Connection*

In the first contemplation of the Fourth Week, Jesus Christ appears to his mother Mary. However, before his appearance, Mary was waiting quietly. Ronald Mercier interprets Mary's waiting very well. He notes, "waiting in the

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<sup>77</sup> Surrey, "Relationship and Empowerment," 171.

transition—a transition into, not out of, emptiness—allows for creation of the space into which the Risen Lord comes, if we let the quiet ripen.”<sup>78</sup> The transition from suffering into emptiness deepens and widens one’s soul to welcome the risen Christ. Mary shows us the significant meaning of waiting: let the quiet ripen till it bears fruit. Furthermore, her waiting manifests a beautiful way that characterizes a female’s tenderness and connection that interrupt even death.

*Resurrection: Generating Life and Giving Birth*

God the Father raises Jesus Christ from the dead and somehow renews his self through resurrection. Contemplation on the narratives of resurrection is like meditating on the process of generating life and giving birth to a renewed self. In this sense, for a woman retreatant, resurrection is similar to pregnancy and giving birth, yet it is generated by the Holy Spirit, not by human power. Union with the risen Christ is a powerful yet gentle paschal experience.

The spiritual companion might help the woman retreatant to put any “dead experience,” for example, an unfinished business or an unrealized dream, beside Jesus Christ’s body in the tomb in her contemplation. Then the retreatant can ask God the Father to touch it when he raises Jesus Christ. Thus the woman retreatant might share the joy of his resurrection, experience a renewed self-generation within, and give birth to new possibilities for an enlarged world.

Furthermore, the narrative of appearance in which the risen Christ appeared to his followers strengthens disciples in various ways. He is truly a consoler who bestows comfort abundantly, as Ignatius writes, “To observe how Christ Our Lord fulfills *the office of consoler*, and to draw comparisons

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<sup>78</sup> Ronald Mercier, “Without the Drama: The Transition from Third to Fourth Week of the Spiritual Exercises,” *Review for Religious* 71, no. 1 (2012): 30.

with the way *friends are accustomed to console one another.*” [224] Jesus Christ consoles people according to their needs, and touches them deeply. At this stage, a desire to see him again, listen to him again, and encounter him in one’s life, might grow intensely in the heart of the woman retreatant. She desired to be a faithful companion in the previous Week; similarly, now she desires to share Christ’s gladness and joy in his resurrection. Margot Donovan asserts, “In the accounts of resurrection-appearances, the risen Christ is described as giving joy, confidence, and peace”<sup>79</sup> to people who remained open to him. She also highlights, “The Lord is portrayed as consoling primarily by reassuring his friends of his identity in difference; the consolation that he gives is that he is alive and with them.”<sup>80</sup> The retreatant also receives this assurance as a gift onwards: The risen Christ’s newborn self is always dwelling in one, thus renewing one’s self.

*The Contemplation to Attain Love: Practicing Mature Intimacy*

The dynamic here is what Ignatius terms “love (which) ought to find its expression in deeds more than in words; love consists in *mutual communication* [230-231].” This statement expresses the very essence of love and gives the retreatant a lens to contemplate all creatures and life events. That is, mutual understanding, giving and receiving, speaking and listening, calling and responding, namely mutual communication is exactly the fruit of this contemplation.

God is always the one who initiates an invitation, loves creatures first, and then waiting for humans to cooperate with him. Ignatius suggests, “To consider how God *works and labours* on my behalf in all created things on the face of the earth...” [236] Schemel and Romer expound, “God the Worker is

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<sup>79</sup> Margot Donovan, “Contemplating Christ Risen.” *The Way Supplement* 46 (1983): 80-81.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

at work and myself as yoke-fellow, the *co-worker* with God in building the kingdom.”<sup>81</sup> That is, God and humans are reciprocal partners in building a redeemed earth.<sup>82</sup> This is the effect of the Paschal Mystery, it leads the retreatant all the way to *attain* love, which means to “reach to or arrive at” a growing love on our part for God.<sup>83</sup>

In this sense, the *Contemplatio* is not a conclusion of the *Spiritual Exercises*. Rather it serves as a *transition* from the Exercises to daily life. It invites one to discover new meanings in current reality after making the Exercises. The retreatant would realize that God’s essence is love, “who freely conceives and creates, whose peculiar mode of being is compassion and mercy for both women and men.”<sup>84</sup> Particularly for most women, their belief is that *mature intimacy* includes not only interdependence but also belonging to each other, thus in the *Contemplatio* women might find not only their whole selves belong to God but also they could find God in all things.

## Conclusion

As a comprehensive world-view, feminism addresses all human experiences. It concerns men as well as women.<sup>85</sup> If a spiritual companion understands the way one’s psychological dynamics moves in each Week, this understanding might apply to attending the experience of both genders. For a feminist spiritual companion focuses on how men and women differ in terms of the way they develop the self; however, it does not neglect cultural factors that impact both sexes. In other words, psychosexual development is a process

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<sup>81</sup> George J. Schemel, S. J. & Judith A. Roemer, “The Fourth Week and the *Contemplatio ad Adorem*,” *Beyond Individuation to Discipleship* (Private Printing), 288-289.

<sup>82</sup> Ruether, “Feminist Critique and Re-visioning of God-Language,” 142.

<sup>83</sup> Ivens, *Understanding The Spiritual Exercises*, 172.

<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Abounding in Kindness: Writings for the People of God* (New York: Orbis Books, 2015), 144.

<sup>85</sup> Fischer, *Women at the Well*, 2.

of growth that embraces all aspects of our human reality, including physical, cognitive, emotional, social, moral, and spiritual dimensions.<sup>86</sup> Hence in giving the Exercises, the feminist spiritual companion should be aware of the psychosexual development of the retreatant and understand how the dynamics of the Exercises might influence psychosexual dimensions, particularly in regard to self-development. Besides, a feminist spiritual companion always focuses on the graces the retreatant asks for, and adapts a language that is easier for the retreatant to resonate with, thus fostering a more relational self and building up a more authentic connection with Christ—a desire that God has for all humans.

Gilligan rejects autonomy as the only appropriate goal for human maturity, instead, she argues that both men and women equally value relationships as a goal.<sup>87</sup> It is possible that autonomy and relationship are both important drives to develop a healthy self. A feminist spiritual companion can be aware of socio-cultural contexts that shape genders. Therefore, giving the Exercises from this broader viewpoint might increase the possibility of experiencing God's desire to equally relate to humans, as well as humans' desire to love him back. Making the Exercises facilitates the retreatant's self to grow, change, transform and transcend through the dynamic of each Week, to liberate the oppressed self of both sexes and become a reborn self-in-relation with the ultimate One, and thus to respond to the call to be whole and holy.

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>87</sup> Conn, *Women's Spirituality*, 60.

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**[摘要]** 本文探討如何依據女性主義觀點的靈修輔導幫助現代女性進行神操，希冀從女性主義找到符合現代女性心理需求的輔導方法。本文首先討論提供神操給現代女性時，調整方法的必要性；其次探討關係自我理論的重要概念，最後闡述這些概念如何融入神操的逐週動力中。具體而言，第一週是幫助避靜者更新與天主關係中的自我，在操練中碰觸扭曲自我形象的罪，而在天主的慈悲中體驗被賦能。第二週目標是幫助避靜者跟耶穌基督彼此參與對方的生活，經驗彼此互為主體。第三週對基督苦難的默想，幫助避靜者在相互同理中共赴苦難。第四週則是分享耶穌基督的復活，經驗新生命的誕生，與基督加深連結，而能以更廣的眼光在一切事中找到天主。

**關鍵字：**女性主義，神操，關係自我理論，靈修輔導

## **An Ignatian Perspective of Tension in Spiritual Direction**

Stephen Tong, SJ

**Abstract:** Being indifferent towards all created things for the greater glory of God is the core of Ignatian Spirituality. This attitude cannot help but put a person inherently under tension in making good decisions. In spiritual direction the director is, under this similar tension, offering help to the directee so that the latter can also grow to become indifferent in one's life for the greater glory of God. This article is to delineate and explore five kinds of tension which are commonly present in the process of doing spiritual direction. The heightening of one's being conscious of these tensions during the conversation would be conducive to accompany the counterpart in the journey towards God.

**Keywords:** tension, Ignatian Spirituality, First Principle and Foundation, indifferent, operations

### **Introduction**

The request for and practice of spiritual direction has become a widespread phenomenon within the Church the last two decades. More encouraging is that a good number of qualified lay people take this service as their calling and receive corresponding formation to become spiritual directors.

This ministry is no longer limited to religious or clergy. Having worked in an Ignatian retreat house for almost twenty years, I witness that many Christians are yearning for a personal and deeper relationship with the Lord, and they appreciate the help of spiritual direction during Ignatian retreats to respond to this inner desire.

In this context, the formation of competent spiritual directors is necessary. However, different from other disciplines or professions, spiritual direction presupposes faith and a personal relationship with God which cannot be scientifically or academically measured and produced. Although books and lectures are helpful and necessary in training, being a spiritual director is fundamentally a vocation. One discovers this in personal prayers and retreats, and then it is affirmed by the larger Church community. Similar to a religious vocation, personal conviction in the Lord and communal affirmation are correlated, constantly interacting with each other as a way of proceeding, which we call discernment. That process is not without tension. On some occasions, personal appropriation is more significant, especially in moments of life crisis; at other times, communal feedback becomes crucial in deciding whether one’s calling is authentic or beneficial to the common good. Such tension was evident in the journey of St. Ignatius after his conversion in 1521, in discerning between his personal desires and the responses of the church. “God treated him at this time just as a schoolmaster treats a child he is teaching.”<sup>1</sup>

This symbol of tension also depicts the dynamics of spiritual direction. As a Jesuit formed in the Ignatian tradition and inspired by Bernard

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<sup>1</sup> In this work, the numerated paragraph in the text of the Autobiography will be designated as A, followed by the paragraph number in square brackets, for example [A19]; the numerated paragraph in the text of the Spiritual Exercises will be designated as SE, followed by the paragraph number in square brackets, for example [SE 23]. The Autobiography quoted in this work is from Barton T. Geger ed. *A Pilgrim’s Testament: The Memoirs of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. (Boston: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2020).

Loneran's transcendental method of self-appropriation, I can see both Ignatius and Lonergan put their money on the importance of and prioritizing operations. While Ignatius structures his Spiritual Exercises to operate within the four Weeks, Lonergan explores the operation of human consciousness and differentiates it into experience, understanding, judgment and decision. Human transcendence and transformation depend on how one has sincerely and authentically operated in this process. In both kinds of operation, tension is present. Ignatius sees the perennial struggle between the good and evil spirits, while Lonergan realizes that human authenticity is precarious, fluctuating between progress and decline.

Borrowing from their insights, this paper delineates some dimensions of tension in spiritual direction. As Lonergan advises the heightening of consciousness in knowing and doing, a spiritual director's heightened awareness of tension in one's interaction with the directee would facilitate a better discernment process in the ministry.

Before illustrating the five fundamental—but by no means comprehensive—tensions, I would like to invite the Ignatian readers to ponder on the first Principle and Foundation in the Spiritual Exercises from the perspective of tension.

### **First Principle and Foundation from the Perspective of Tension**

St. Ignatius created this masterpiece of consideration to begin the Spiritual Exercises. Howard Gray understands it as the content of conversation between the retreatant and spiritual director in entering the Exercises, spending a few days to ponder and converse what it means to the life of the retreatant.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Howard Gray, *Dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises Lecture 2: Principle and Foundation* (Georgetown University, November 7, 2012),

The text itself contains three parts, namely, the purpose of human life as being God-centered, an indifferent attitude towards all created existence, and the retreatant’s appropriating the *Magis* in fulfilling that purpose.<sup>3</sup> The process of conversation in spiritual direction brings flesh and blood to the text, echoing the transcendental process that Lonergan describes as moving from experience to understanding, from understanding to judgment, and from judgment to decision and so to complete one’s self-appropriation.

The religious worldview as being God-centered gives birth to a tension in how one sees the world and things, that is, a process of becoming indifferent towards all created goods as a universal worldview. If one does not desire health over sickness, wealth over poverty, success over failure, and a long life over a short one [SE 23], this attitude implies the readiness of putting the two opposite options into consideration, that is, holding the stronger inclination in a phenomenological *epochē*, while letting the lesser one emerge and be attended to. Spiritual life means making an effort to have a disciplined awareness of these opposites since human consciousness tends to disregard the less desirable inclinations, such as negative emotions, sickness, poverty, etc., in one’s spontaneity.

Therefore, there are three levels of healing or freedom,<sup>4</sup> as graces from the Lord. First, the emergence and acceptance of unfavorable emotions and unattended inclinations. Second, to hold the favorable and unfavorable ones

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkJ0F7CVtKFI&list=PL5k0yYNwcTkaG-MQI7Smcm5Qy5HbgN3Ph&index=2> (accessed June 7, 2021).

<sup>3</sup> *Magis*, Latin, literally meaning "more" or "greater." In Ignatian tradition, *magis* is related to *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, a Latin phrase meaning "for the greater glory of God."

<sup>4</sup> Healing and freedom are understood in the context of Spiritual Exercises as “every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all inordinate attachments, and, after their removal, of seeking and finding the will of God in the disposition of our life for the salvation of our soul” [SE 1].

together so that one can understand and discern for the greater glory of God. Finally, the determination to choose one over the other for the *Magis*. All three processes are in tension.

Following Gray's suggestion, the conversation at the beginning of the Spiritual Exercises on the first Principle and Foundation is partly to elicit the awareness of the presence of such ongoing tensions in one's life and past decisions, apart from eliciting the joy and gratitude in one's relationship with God. New images of similar tensions from memory come out as the conversation goes on, giving way to more and deeper insights into self-understanding and the dialectical worldview or spirits, which permeates in the dynamics and content of the four Weeks in the Spiritual Exercises.

### **An Understanding of Spiritual Direction**

Spiritual direction has many facets. There are various modes of delivering.<sup>5</sup> A spiritual director may emphasize one approach over another; the content and dynamic of the conversation between the two parties is neither rigid nor limited to one level of meaning. In fact, the catchwords of Ignatian tradition are accommodation and flexibility, which are the fruits of being indifferent towards one's own preferences in giving spiritual direction. The starting point of the conversation is open to all kinds of possibilities, according to the interest and need of the directee.<sup>6</sup> For Ignatius, the purpose of a spiritual conversation is to help souls. But the condition of possibility in achieving this

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<sup>5</sup> David L. Fleming, "Modes of Spiritual Direction" in *The Christian Ministry of Spiritual Direction*, ed. David Fleming (St. Louis, MO: Review for Religious), 106-112. There, spiritual direction can be functioned as institutionalized, as interpersonal relationship, as charismatic, as sacramental, and as incarnational.

<sup>6</sup> Howard Gray, *Dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises Lecture 1: Presupposition and Introductory Annotations* (Georgetown University, November 7, 2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gMTEYHB130&list=PL5k0yYNwcTkaGMQI7Smcm5Qy5HbgN3Ph&index=1> (accessed June 7, 2021).

purpose is, in the contemporary understanding, to build up a good rapport by attentive listening and empathy.

On the one hand, the goal of spiritual direction as relating oneself with the Lord may not be emphasized in the first place. On the other hand, any specific service has its own meaning and purpose. According to William Barry, spiritual direction is “a help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, . . .” This purpose is to be kept in mind, disregarding the accommodation that one is facilitating in the process. The holding of this purpose bears a kind of tension in the inner movements of a spiritual director.

In a wider sense, even in doing spiritual direction proper, this helping service itself can create a tension of various degrees due to their difference in horizons. According to Lonergan, horizon defines one’s boundary of knowing, including the known known and known unknown. When two persons interact, their horizons can overlap so that they are in congruence during the conversation and proceeding. No tension is implied. The two parties become different when their horizons are either complementary, developmental, or dialectic.<sup>7</sup> For example, the spiritual and professional practice of a married person is basically different from that of a religious. Their difference is complementary, and they can learn from each other and widen mutual horizons. The tension is usually not apparent.

However, in the process of spiritual direction, it can happen that the director discovers the inconsistency between what the directee has pronounced versus what was operational. For example, a directee may pronounce God as merciful and forgiving but the director hears an operational image of a

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<sup>7</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 236.



judgmental and punishing God in the former's prayer and life experiences. Then the help is to develop one's awareness of this discrepancy and to invite him/her to bring this to prayer. The interaction can imply a certain degree of tension. Finally, it sometimes happens that the two parties are at loggerheads on certain beliefs related to moral teachings or values. This becomes dialectical and the tension is keenly felt. More delineation and understanding on these in spiritual direction will be explored subsequently.

### **Tension #1: Conversation versus Silence**

This contrast presupposes the intention of moving into a personal depth in the direction process. At the beginning of spiritual direction, by free conversation the directee expresses one's outer and inner experiences in certain historical events or personal prayers. The spiritual director's attentive listening and empathy help the person connect, understand, and own oneself, and relate deeper to oneself, others, and God. Afterwards, the conversation usually moves into another level under the guidance from the spiritual director, who, according to one's own understanding of the purpose of spiritual direction, raises questions to help the directee into further discovery and understanding of oneself and God so that proper judgment and decision can be made accordingly.

When and why does silence come into the picture? According to Lonergan's transcendental analysis of human consciousness, experience itself is a complex phenomenon, including both conscious and unconscious dimensions. When a person says that the room is too hot, the very person may not yet be aware of the itchiness of his/her sole, although both are the simultaneous experiences of the body. Conversation seems to mediate between human conscious and unconscious intentionality. An ongoing conversation allows many related but unattended dimensions of one's experience to unfold, especially the inner experiences of feelings, ideas,

expectations, etc. so that one receives a more comprehensive attentiveness to the personal experience. Otherwise, the narrowing of oneself to partial experience leads to prejudiced opinion and judgment. For example, only focusing one’s hatred and anger towards someone may ignore the simultaneous appreciation and love towards the same person. Although not immediately, to elicit the awareness of unattended feelings is necessary. Here, the capacity to create space and time and to allow the directee to explore other inner dimensions in silence becomes significant in spiritual direction.

Beyond noticing experience, receiving insights into one’s own reality and deciding on values to serve God is the fundamental meaning of spiritual direction, especially in the Ignatian tradition where election for the greater glory of God is emphasized. But the emergence of possible insights greatly relies on relevant and inspiring images from one’s psychic censorship which governs the selection of images into our consciousness.<sup>8</sup> According to Lonergan, “Just as wanting an insight penetrates below the surface to bring forth schematic images that give rise to the insight, so not wanting an insight has the opposite effect of repressing from consciousness a scheme that would suggest the insight.”<sup>9</sup> Lonergan implies here that due to the human dramatic experience of trauma or other reasons, the psychic censorship represses relevant and useful images to understand the reality and allows the person to live in fantasy and illusion. He calls this aberration of understanding a *scotosis*,<sup>10</sup> a blind spot. Furthermore, “primarily, the censorship is constructive; it selects and arranges materials that emerge in consciousness in a perspective

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<sup>8</sup> Lonergan uses the dramatic instance of Archimedes rushing naked from the baths of Syracuse with the cryptic cry ‘*Eureka!*’ (I find it!) to begin his milestone book *Insight*. Archimedes was overjoyed because he received the insight to calculate the density of the golden crown when he saw the image of water being displaced in his own bath.

<sup>9</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 215.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

that gives rise to an insight.”<sup>11</sup> This belief justifies the importance of silence during interaction between the two parties. Silence is an important prerequisite for penetration through such psychic censorship. Our psyche needs sufficient space and security to organize and censor the related materials to give way to insights. Through raising relevant and significant questions for deeper exploration of the inner self, the spiritual director is helping the directee’s psychic censor to organize various images within to prepare for receiving further insights.

The child Jesus asked our Lady, “Why were you searching for me? Did you not know I had to be in my Father’s house?... but his mother treasures all these things in her heart.” (Luke 2:49, 51) At first they were in conversation after finding Jesus, but a significant question from the Lord immediately put his mother in silence. Jesus’ question and body language were to stimulate certain images, like “Father,” “His House,” “Staying,” in Mary that up to that moment were not obvious to her. Our lady needed the inner space and time to digest the meaning of this question so that she could understand her son and herself. She was in a way waiting for insights to this question. More conversations or explanations here would not help. This kind of silence seems to be the most precious and prayerful moment in spiritual direction. However, this moment comes from the previous flow of engaging conversation in the first place.

My own watershed experience in spiritual life confirms this understanding. When I was a Jesuit scholastic, i.e., before being ordained as a priest, I was sent to a secondary school to teach. Once, I complained to my spiritual director, a Jesuit companion, about the unedifying behaviors of the school principal. I lamented, “I don’t mind what he has done, but acting like that is not a good model in front of the teachers; I don’t mind what he has said

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 216.

but speaking in such manner before the students would certainly upset them...” My spiritual director gazed at me and remarked, “Stephen, you mind!” I was stunned and could not utter a word. I did not expect that the spiritual director picked up a casual word in my articulation, which was unconscious or unintentional. The spiritual director’s mirroring of the word “mind” helped me to be aware, and notice the affective dimension that I had ignored or bypassed. In Ignatian tradition, the affective dimension is often the raw material for discernment and self-knowledge in conversation with God. Despite the emphasis on authenticity in spiritual life and human formation in contemporary times, its appropriation cannot simply rely on personal effort and determination. Rather, it is a dynamic or journey of co-discovery and exploration between two parties or in a community.

These two examples illustrate the significance and contribution of an insightful remark or evocative question raised to the counterpart in conversation. Such confrontation mediates between speaking and silence, leading to helpful insights for deeper self-knowledge and intimacy with God. However, this initiative causes tension first in the heart of the spiritual director, asking oneself to discern whether it is appropriate or timely to respond in such a way to this very person here and now. Then the response itself may cause tension between the two parties since the directee is usually not ready to digest or understand the remark or question addressed to oneself. The director needs the capacity at this moment to hold the tension of silence itself.

Ideally, conversation and silence become a rhythm during the spiritual direction. After a certain moment of silence, the directee can usually speak out and share deeper feelings, new images, previous unattended memory, or insights. This discovery leads to another level of conversation toward further exploration, which is extremely fruitful and a rewarding moment in spiritual direction. Sometimes the spiritual director may think it appropriate to break the

silence, especially if it lasts too long, and to ask the counterpart what was happening in such a moment of silence, and the conversation goes on.

### **Tension #2: Affectivity versus Rationality and their Stages**

The contrast between conversation and silence brings the mutual dynamic between the spiritual director and directee to a deeper level of self-discovery and understanding in the Lord. The contents to be engaged are one's affectivity and rationality in certain events or happenings. The director has a greater responsibility to be aware of which content is more helpful to deepen the process, following the First Principle and Foundation.

Rationality is usually related to our capacity to recall, understand, and interpret the events in one's natural attitude,<sup>12</sup> while affectivity is like a kind of step back from such rationality and to explore the feelings towards those events and corresponding understanding. However, both dwell within the greater horizon of one's own development in religious faith, namely, in one's institutional, critical, and mystical stage that Gerard Hughes explains in a lucid way from the contribution of Von Hugel.<sup>13</sup>

According to Von Hugel, each stage has its own attached rationality and affectivity. The Institutional stage represents the logic and need of our senses and memories in developing trust, stability, conviction, authority, security, and sense of belonging through sacraments, words, and teachings of the Church. Being critical in our development signifies the need to find meaning to integrate the world with one's own self-appropriation to make sense of life. One is no longer satisfied with the ready-made answers from others, including

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<sup>12</sup> Natural attitude, according to phenomenology, is a way of seeing the world and oneself without putting it in parenthesis. It is similar to Heidegger's use of "ready at hand" which connotes a lack of authenticity in the first place.

<sup>13</sup> Gerard Hughes, *God of Surprises* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd, 1985), 11-24.

doctrines and moral stipulations of religious belief. Convictions are formed and owned through the process where one questions, criticizes, and systematizes with intellectual strength and passionate vigor.

Finally, the human is called to be mystical as well, a sense of being united with the world, the others, and God. It is an interior path where one is interested and absorbed in one’s inner movements, such as feelings, feelings about feelings, thoughts, hidden beliefs, expectations, desires, and yearnings. These movements become the knowing objects to be explored. Although this is also a process of finding meaning in one’s life, this stage dwells on the unifying nature of the mystical yearning. The individual’s claim of truth and meaning is no longer significant, rather the harmony and union with others or the Other is predominant. While the rationality of the critical stage avoids and lessens sufferings, a person in a mystical vision is willing to choose suffering and loss for the sake of love. That is the tension between Peter and Jesus in His prediction of the coming suffering and death in the Gospels (Mt 16:21-28). The rationality of the former tended to be black and white, bending towards binary thinking, while the latter was fond of paradoxical, pluralistic, and inclusive language.

How are these kinds of distinctions related to spiritual direction? As succinctly mentioned above, the relationship between the director and directee can be in a development process due to the difference of their horizons. The spiritual director is to help the counterpart explore oneself for greater and deeper discovery. Gerard Hughes illustrates an example in *God of Surprises*.<sup>14</sup> Fred, a retreatant contemplating the Gospel scene of the Wedding in Cana, saw Jesus holding a staff, wearing a thorny crown, showing disapproval of the merriment of the celebration. At least two things are at stake there.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 36.

First, Fred was a fervent and model Christian whose image of God was the God of love and mercy, but his prayer showed the Lord as a demanding judge. In fact, Fred has not found joy in his good works of serving the Lord. This discrepancy indicated the tension between Fred's affectivity and rationality that Hughes, as a spiritual director, acknowledged and took as a theme to help Fred to explore further. Second, Hughes' telling this story reveals that the director is helping the directee to move from a limited institutional stage to a freer critical and mystical one. A Christian is called to find balance and maturity in these three stages, without prejudice towards one or the other two of the stages. Again, this is the perspective of the first Principle and Foundation.<sup>15</sup>

Another example is Ignatius' letter to Sr. Rejadell.<sup>16</sup> He quoted her words saying, "I am a poor religious, and I think I have a desire of serving Christ our Lord," following his explanation in the previous lines on false humility. The evil spirit uses this tactic to prevent the soul from saying any of the blessings and strength the Lord has bestowed on him or her.<sup>17</sup> By this rationality Ignatius expounded that she had been deceived by the devil and did not dare to say clearly, "I have a desire of serving Christ the Lord." Here Ignatius' attention was on her affective movement rather than on the rationality such as eliciting her ideas on what and how to serve the Lord. Ignatius felt the hesitation and timidity behind those words which rendered the possible what or how to serve the Lord irrelevant. Here, Ignatius has demonstrated the

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<sup>15</sup> The spiritual director has also his/her moment of tending towards the institutional, critical or mystical stage during the conversation. It is important to be aware where one is and which stage of language and values that one is engaging.

<sup>16</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, "To Sister Teresa Rejadell," *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1959), 18-23

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 20

spiritual director’s discernment between affectivity and rationality during the conversation.

The above two Illustrations do not imply that affectivity should always be dominant or emphasized during spiritual direction. Although the significance of affectivity is easily ignored and difficult to detect, Ignatian pedagogy on discernment of spirits is more of an affective movement, signified by consolation and desolation, than a rational calculation in the first place. On the contrary, when a retreatant is overwhelmed by feelings or strong inclination towards a certain preference, its rationality is to be explored. Jesus had a similar concern when someone was so keen to follow him, he tells the person, “... the foxes have dens and the birds have nests, but the son of man has no place to rest his head.” (Luke 9:58) It presents a cool and rational calculation for such a passionate candidate to consider whether one is ready. Each moment has its own priority in how best to help a person.

### **Tension #3: Mundane Life versus Spiritual Experience**

It was not uncommon to hear the comment that the Spiritual Exercises are like a rigid model which everyone is required to fit into, such as the fixation to go through the four Weeks of the whole Spiritual Exercises even in the length of an eight-day retreat. At the opposite extreme, some Ignatian guides just tell the retreatants to do repetition after hearing their sharing over the prayed passages. The lack of clear explanation and indication impressed the latter that they did not fulfil the expectation of getting the corresponding fruits of the Exercises.

Undoubtedly, these are grey areas to judge whether such proceedings serve simply to fit into the preconceived model. The structure of the four Weeks is the perennial Christian dynamic in spiritual life, while the purpose of repetition is to elicit greater fruits through the same passage of prayer, or to let the retreatants have more time to dispose themselves to such prayers. However,



there are various ways the original intent can be distorted into unhelpful practices. The following articulation on the tension between mundane life and religious experience has no intention to tackle the complaints but to shed light on it so that hopefully the guides will become more contemplative to avoid such Procrustes' temptation.

The keyword is contemplation.<sup>18</sup> Since its meaning is rich in Christian spiritual tradition, the term becomes elusive to some people. The following discussion limits the understanding of contemplation to focus on the tension between what is seen versus unseen, revealed versus concealed, known versus emerging to be known, and finally, what is already versus what is not yet. When I contemplate a flower, by senses I firstly see its various parts and appreciate its color, angle, brightness under the sun, movement in the breeze, and smell its fragrance. Slowly when I immerse in this gaze and appreciation, I feel the flower seemingly telling me, "You are as beautiful and blessed as I am." I am amazed by this sudden voice which is a kind of revelation to me beyond my expectation before my contemplation. Upon hearing this I tend to ask related questions, such as whether it is true, whether it is the voice of the Lord, etc. This illustrates the movements of contemplation when a simple human appreciation of flowers can move into a religious horizon and possible engagement with the Lord.

On the other hand, a person may converse a lot about one's interaction with the Bible passage in a spiritual direction, full of religious language or concepts, but the spiritual director does not discern interior movement at all in the directee's articulation. In fact, the conversation becomes dry and shallow as it goes on. Being aware of his or her own affectivity, the director is able to

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<sup>18</sup> The two complaints, namely, being rigid in giving all the Four-Week themes in the Spiritual Exercises or demanding repetition, in the above paragraph, are actual illustrations of lacking the capacity of contemplation.

contemplate the movements. They indicate that the religious thoughts or ideas of the directee may be concealing certain blind spot, struggle, or resistance that the counterpart has not been aware of. The director who is able to contemplate those possible traces, begins to raise certain questions to engage with the counterpart.

In the above illustrations, the contrast between the director and directee is filled with tension because passively the director must be indifferent towards certain elements in one’s consciousness, be open to the inquiries by the counterpart, and patiently wait for the answer or revelation. But at the same time, one is also actively making an effort to ask related questions to understand, to judge and to decide what is more helpful to the directee.

The Ignatian motto of finding God in all things implies everything of the mundane life can be a fulcrum towards religious experience. One of the challenges for the spiritual director is how to engage the directee in a thematic religious experience, as the purpose of spiritual direction. Religious experience is sometimes confused with religious language. It is not uncommon for people to have such a misconception that if the conversation is about God, Scriptures, pious thoughts and feelings, charity service, etc., they are the facets of religious experience, whereas sharing of one’s workaday life stories is not a religious experience. Certainly, this kind of judgment has a grain of truth in it, but fortunately it is not the whole picture.

The first two rules of discernment of spirits give some illumination. [SE 314-315] These rules show that the dynamics of the evil spirit and the good spirit are different, according to the moral states of the human soul. The guide is to contemplate the presence of spirits, a kind of religious experience, behind the orientation of one’s mundane life even without the awareness of the very person on it. Analogically, the guide is called to have a connatural sense of God’s presence or absence when one listens with contemplative love to the stories, feelings, thoughts, desires, etc., of the directee. This fruit of

contemplation, in many such occasions, becomes the entry point to help the directee connect one's personal experience with a clearer sense of God or the spirits.

For example, a directee shared the complaints and accusations due to her acute suffering from the injustice in her life; the guide was touched by her closeness with the crucified Jesus and sensed the love of Christ towards her. Through his contemplative love, the guide went beyond the directee's suffering to see the other side of the story and the grace in that person, even though such accusing language of mundane life also bothers the listener. This insight and confidence prompted the guide to invite the directee to attend to and appreciate God's possible presence and support in those sufferings in due time.<sup>19</sup> Often in spiritual direction, the guide can be the crucial mediator to facilitate a spiritual illumination from a merely secular perspective.

This contemplative attitude is also a remedy to the above-mentioned rigidity in giving the Spiritual Exercises. If being indifferent to worldly things, including the structure of the Spiritual Exercises, represents the fruit of being God-centered according to the first Principle and Foundation, then contemplative love is the other side of the same coin.

#### **Tension #4: Total Acceptance versus Thinking with the Church**

This tension is not always a specific concern in spiritual direction. It presumes certain revelations of the directee whose living norms or beliefs are somewhat in opposition to those of the spiritual director in terms of biblical

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<sup>19</sup> A tension or caution needs to be addressed here. Contemplation can be distorted to become a top-down instruction towards the directee, due to the director's preoccupation to change the person, insisting that God's love is always present in the sufferings when the counterpart is not yet ready to digest this.

teachings or church doctrines.<sup>20</sup> Normally it creates the two pulling forces within the guide, namely God is all merciful and forgiving in accepting sinners on the one hand, and the followers are to obey the commandments of the Lord on the other. The former leads to an accommodating and sympathetic attitude while the latter implies a need for instruction and expectation of change. Christian conscience is to be formed in a healthy sensibility of guilt and remorse as well as a trustful surrender to God’s love and forgiveness. The horizon of conversion and hope is commonly present in the sacrament of confession, pastoral counseling, and spiritual direction. However, the concern of spiritual direction is not so much with the instruction or explanation of church teachings as helping the person achieve a greater self-knowledge and to facilitate one’s closer relationship with God even amid one’s moral defects in behavior or intellect in Christian belief.

Honoring the complementarity of different horizons, the director is to acknowledge one’s own ignorance and possible bias, and the need to discover certain history and life stories of the directee so that the cause of wrongdoings can be better understood and empathized. This understanding provides a bigger picture for further contemplation and elaboration of respective affectivity and rationality as conversation, silence, and prayers go on during the spiritual direction.<sup>21</sup>

This kind of exchange and conversation facilitate the process of development, helping the directee elicit mutual affection between oneself and

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<sup>20</sup> No doubt in the discussion below, the aberration is basically assumed to be on the side of the directees. But it does not deny the possibility of aberration on the part of the directors. But supervision of the directors and its related concerns are beyond the capacity of this paper.

<sup>21</sup> Moral or intellectual defects have several layers, including one’s motivation, reason, circumstances, responsibility, etc. whose exploration is beyond the capacity and purpose of this paper. The complementary aspect simply draws out the necessity for the director to put this tension into thematic awareness.

the Lord in one's life stories, and to enhance one's self-understanding in the defective religious beliefs or moral behaviors. The former facilitates the experience of God's love for religious conversion;<sup>22</sup> the latter is about the discernment of spirits in Ignatian tradition, or about receiving insights into one's judgments and actions in Lonergan's paradigm. Even in tackling one's unfreedom in beliefs or behaviors, spiritual direction does not focus on immediate behavioral change but a deeper experience, understanding and judgment of the presence of the good and evil spirits in one's values, beliefs, or actions. This pedagogy has at least two implications.

First, it differentiates the reflective self in discernment from the workaday self in action with a healthier distance and more realistic objectification. The confusion of these two selves happens either in defensive reaction or self-blame. On the one hand, the reflective self protects or justifies the workaday self beyond proper proportion due to fear or shame; on the other hand, the reflective self blames the workaday self out of guilt and remorse. Neither stance facilitates a deeper self-understanding and a closer relationship with God. Through differentiation, the reflective self can shift its attention to feel and name the presence and influence of various spirits and one's inordinate attachments. Proper guidance from the director may help the directee to stay in a calmer and more reflective disposition.<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile, discernment of spirits allows the guide to focus less on the demand for change but more on eliciting experience and understanding of the

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<sup>22</sup> According to Lonergan who is fond of the quote "the love of God has poured into our heart through the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:5), religious conversion is the person falling in love unreservedly with the transcendent, which becomes the foundation of one's moral and intellectual conversion. *Method in Theology*, 243.

<sup>23</sup> Again, it is beyond the capacity of this paper to illustrate the ways of doing discernment of spirits in spiritual direction. This reflection presumes the director has had the knowledge of the rules of discernment and skills to apply them in facilitating such understanding for the directee.

tactics of the spirits. Under less burden, the guide is freer in accompaniment which is itself a helpful modeling for the counterpart. Such discernment provides a religious perspective in mundane life that is typically human and belongs to spiritual direction proper.

However, this director-directee operation can become dialectical when the mutual difference becomes irreconcilable. Lonergan names them position and counter-position.<sup>24</sup> This can lead to an end of the mutual relationship, when either party would propose to terminate it or refer to someone else. It may not be a bad outcome, but this needs discernment too. If that is not the case in consideration, it is still meaningful to continue and explore the mutual engaging. Here is a tension at stake! On the one hand, the interaction seems to be going nowhere as both parties are at loggerheads; on the other hand, there are rich dynamics in the movements of various spirits between the two parties. The spiritual director is to be gently aware of the temptation towards desolation, and to recognize the natural inclination towards desolation in the counterpart.

According to St. Ignatius, desolation is a formation process that needs to be handled patiently and delicately as the soul is suffering from inner turmoil.<sup>25</sup> Again, contemplation and compassion render the guide capable of holding the counter-position of the directee at ease and with hope. Even when the conversation goes nowhere for the time being, the guide is to trust the power of prayers and silence that God works on the soul. In this process, the director is the ambassador of Christ and the Church, whose horizon is to hold the rapport with the directee and the salvific end of the latter together according to the spirit of the first Principle and Foundation.

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 21

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, #7 on treating those in desolation, and #322 on reasons of encountering desolation.

### **Tension #5: Human Effort versus God's Grace**

This concern has nothing to do with the doctrinal controversy of Pelagianism, God's salvific and sanctifying grace has always come first before any human merits. Rather, this is a practical inquiry of striking a balance between making effort to help souls as spiritual director versus leaving it to God to achieve the intended fruits for the directee. How is the guide to understand whether one is doing too little or too much in one's awareness, reflection, and evaluation?

Ignatius adopts the principle of "less is more." He emphasizes that what satisfies the soul is the heart and not the length of exhortation or explanation [SE 2]. He reminds the giver to let the exercitant have direct contact with God rather than relying on the giver. [SE 15] In a good number of letters as Superior General, Ignatius instructs his fellow Jesuits to keep quiet and listen first and keep the speech succinct while speaking. All this drives home the point that the guide is always to have the vision of God in front of oneself even when one is trying to offer help to the counterpart.

How does this vision of God differentiate from doing too little or being incompetent as a guide? Leaving the result and change to God can become a convenient excuse of avoidance, procrastination to confront one's inadequacy. These questions have become more acute since our modern world values and even demands professional standards in service. The more professional and competent one is, the more sophisticated skills and guidance are expected, and thus the helping effects are more significant. Christians who are trained and formed within this horizon naturally feel the need to live out the same standard in doing spiritual direction.

Ignatius is neither stunned nor upset by this modern development. That corresponds exactly to the tension in the first Principle and Foundation which reminds us to remain indifferent towards changes. To be professional and to rely on God is not contradictory; the difficulty lies in one's preoccupied

attachment without enough awareness, just as humans have attached easily to health, honor, richness, and long life in the first place. Their opposites can become strange, despised, and non-sensible. When Peter pulled Jesus aside and advised him of the unnecessary of sufferings (Mt 16:22-23), his attachment towards the political Messiah caused him to say too much to the Lord. On the other hand, the parable of the rich man’s aloofness towards the basic need of the poor Lazarus (Luke 16:19-22) right outside his house elicited the danger of doing too little. Spiritual directors need to be aware of one’s own tendency and temptation of certain values that can lead one to go astray in guiding the directee.<sup>26</sup> However, some differentiations might be helpful here.

Ignatius, in his quoted advice above, assumed that retreatants have developed a certain degree of relationship with God in spiritual life, whose willingness to pray or engage in colloquy with the Lord is not a major block. The question of whether the directee has a healthy self-image and image of God was not in the religious and cultural horizon of the Medieval period. Contemporary understanding of spiritual psychology shows that a distorted self-image and image of God hinder one’s deeper conversation and relationship with the Lord. A capable director may deem it helpful to lead the counterpart to explore deeper the human condition and one’s history in such distorted dimensions before bringing those discoveries to prayers. This is simply one example of making a human effort which is like the work of counseling in contemporary practice.

Considering individual differences in gift and calling, it is impossible to draw a boundary line of human efforts for all spiritual directors, but some parameters are worthwhile to consider. The prominent ones are consolation

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<sup>26</sup> Nowadays, this kind of values can apply to being the left wing or right wing of the Church; being conservatives, traditionalists or liberals; homophobes or LGBT activists, etc.



and desolation for both director and directee during the interaction and afterwards. When Jesus reacted to the point of violently pulling down the tables of those merchants and even using a whip to drive away the cattle in the temple area, His passion for the temple consumed Him entirely. (John 2:13-17) It is a way to express His connection and love with the Father. His human effort was not simply to clean up the temple for better worship or to change the scandalous conditions, but to live out His love for the Father. This interior passion can be empirically felt and articulated beforehand, during the action or later in Examen. Analogically, the director is to have the felt sense and connection with the Lord in one's effort of helping. The formative familiarity with consolation and desolation in one's spiritual life is crucial to detect the interior signal whether one is doing too much, too little or hitting the bull's eye. Consolation is always related to true love and other-centered, not centered on one's achievement or self-satisfaction. On the other hand, the felt sense of desolation reminds us of self-centeredness, relying on oneself too much or falling prey to timidity and avoidance.

Moreover, the human effect of facilitating changes in the directee is not the main purpose of direction. All the help intends to prepare the counterpart to encounter the Lord and receive consolation from Him. This interior journey is to form the directee to gain familiarity with oneself and the Lord, and with the working of the good and evil spirits. This is the hallmark of genuine spiritual direction, in contrast to relying on the director or getting his/her approval.

### **Conclusion**

I would like to conclude this paper with a personal experience. It has taken me more than a year to finish this article. In addition to daily responsibilities in the retreat house and with the Jesuit community, an unexpected sickness and operation have diminished my focus and energy to write. In fact, I am still in the recovery process as I finish writing this article. Reflecting on this incident, I feel providential that this year sees the Jesuits and

our collaborators around the world celebrating the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ignatius’ conversion. I am in a mysterious way sharing his cannonball experience, greatly shocked and heavily upset by this physical illness beyond my imagination. But amid all this, I have learnt to keep in touch deeper with my vulnerability and become more patient and trustful in the Lord.

Javier Melloni, a Spanish Jesuit, in his lectures on the life of St. Ignatius, likes to capture the hallmark of God’s leading this saint as “fertile tension.” Tension represents the pulling forces between two powers that renders a person under its domain to feel uncomfortable, disturbed, and even painful. From the event of the cannonball onward, Ignatius could not settle on certain paths, ideas or decisions that would render God’s will clear to him. Moment by moment, the established conviction was suddenly challenged or shattered so that he needed to ask the Lord’s guidance again. This process is forming a person of faith, and a man or woman of God for the divine mission, as St. Ignatius has shown us.

This image of tension is helpful in forming a spiritual director and doing spiritual direction. From a cognitive perspective, tension represents a state of confusion or unknowing in confronting two possibilities that one cannot immediately rely on previous knowledge to proceed. Whether for the director or the directee, at certain points of the conversation one needs to pause and humbly be led, in God’s guidance, by shifting our use of faculties, by the felt sense of consolation and desolation, or by the habit of differentiating the good and evil spirits. It is a normative and formative process that one becomes closer and familiar with the Lord, which is the purpose of spiritual direction.

The Ignatian dictum affirms “finding God in all things,” yet the privileged one among all things is the fertile tension in our life and service.

**[摘要]** 依納爵靈修的要義是人為了天主更大的光榮，對世間的種種能達致平心。有了這份態度，想作出好的決定的人自然處身於張力之中。放在靈修輔導的處境來看，陪伴者是在這種張力中提供幫助，使受輔者同樣在生命中邁向平心來愈顯主榮。本文嘗試探討普遍臨在於靈修輔導中的五種張力。若在彼此交談中加強這些張力的意識，會對陪伴受輔者走向天主很有幫助。

**關鍵詞：**張力，依納爵靈修，第一原則與基礎，平心，操作

## **Lonergan’s Operations of Consciousness as a Framework in Spiritual Direction**

Sally Law

**Abstract:** Ignatian spirituality, following the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises, is an interior journey on which the exercitant embarks to reclaim one’s true and authentic self, and thereby to live out one’s authentic desires which are also God-given. In the Ignatian tradition, spiritual direction plays a key role as the director accompanies the directee through a series of conversions moving from inauthenticity towards authenticity. Besides empathetic ears, supporting words, giving meditations and contemplations, in what ways can spiritual direction be helpful to the fervent soul?

Bernard Lonergan’s study on the operations of consciousness provides a clear and systematic account of how the human mind and heart can operate in an integrated way. This paper explores how attention to the operations of consciousness may contribute to spiritual direction, beginning with an elaboration on Ignatian Spirituality as a journey towards authenticity, how such a journey moves through conversions, and affirms that attending to the operations of consciousness facilitates spiritual direction to accompany people on this journey.

**Keywords:** Ignatian Spirituality, Spiritual Direction, Bernard Lonergan, Operation of Consciousness, Conversion

## 1. Introduction

Spiritual direction plays a key role in Ignatian spirituality. St. Ignatius of Loyola helped many of the people he met through spiritual conversations. William Barry and William Connolly define Christian spiritual direction as “help given by one believer to another that enables the latter to pay attention to God’s personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.”<sup>1</sup> Ignatian spirituality, following the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises, is a journey on which the exercitant embarks to reclaim one’s true and authentic self, and thereby to live out one’s authentic desires which are also God-given. James Connor has remarked, “[i]n modern terminology, the aim of the Ignatian Exercises is to help a Christian become an authentic human being.”<sup>2</sup> In the Ignatian tradition, the director accompanies the directee on this journey through a series of conversions moving from inauthenticity towards authenticity. Besides empathetic ears, supporting words, and giving the meditations and contemplations in the *Spiritual Exercises*, in what ways can spiritual direction be helpful to the directee?<sup>3</sup>

Bernard Lonergan’s study on the operations of consciousness provides spirituality with a clear and systematic account of how the human mind and heart can operate in an integrated way, and has been of most help to

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<sup>1</sup> William Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 8.

<sup>2</sup> James L. Connor, *The Dynamism of Desire: Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J. on the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), 28.

<sup>3</sup> As a basis to the present work, I use the translation in George E. Ganss, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1992). The *Spiritual Exercises* in italics is a reference to the actual text, and Spiritual Exercises refers to the actual prayer exercises.

spirituality.<sup>4</sup> According to Loneragan, it is in the autonomous human subject that self-transcendental stages of experiencing, understanding, judging, and deliberating occur. The authentic subject follows the transcendental precepts to be attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible. Conversion occurs when one shifts from biases and self-absorption to following these transcendental precepts. However, this transcendental method involves a heightening of one’s consciousness, which not everyone is at home with, and where spiritual direction may help. This paper explores how attention to the operations of consciousness may contribute to spiritual direction, beginning with an elaboration on Ignatian Spirituality as a journey towards authenticity, how such a journey moves through conversions, and affirms that attending to the operations of consciousness facilitates spiritual direction to accompany people on this journey.

## **2. Ignatian Spirituality: A Journey towards Authenticity**

Human beings have a restless longing for God. The person who embarks on a spiritual journey has a desire to find and live out God’s will, to praise, reverence and serve God. However, spirituality is not something that operates independently and divorced from other realms of humanity; on the contrary, grace builds on human nature and interacts with our humanity as we struggle towards wholeness. God’s will is not a pre-determined plan which the human soul can only achieve by following commands. Rather, God’s will for us is that we respond in freedom to God’s love, which gives shape to both our individual and common lives in freedom by the choices that we make. As Saint Irenaeus proclaimed, “the glory of God is a human fully alive,” the essence of spirituality lies in the revelation of a person’s authentic self through

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<sup>4</sup> Raymond Moloney, “Conversion and Spirituality: Bernard Loneragan (1904-1984)” *The Way*, 43 no. 4 (2004), 123.

a personal experience of the love of God, and the person's response by choosing to live out one's meaning of life, thereby to glorify God. Instead of looking outward to seek and find God's will, spirituality is an inward journey into one's own self. As we reach into ourselves at the deeper level, we experience authentic desires which are "uniquely our own but also God-given."<sup>5</sup>

How do we understand authentic desire? Unlike other animals whose lives are driven by basic instincts, human lives are driven by purpose, meanings, and values. The search for meaning and purpose of one's life is the deepest desire in the human soul. Edward Kinerk proposed that such authentic desires come from a person's true-self instead of superficial false-self, and that the question "what do I want" is closely related to "who I am."<sup>6</sup>

Although finding God's will is coherent with living out one's authenticity, the journey is not straightforward. Our true-self is often hidden or concealed under other images, often referred to as our persona, masks, or false-self. Michael Ivens has cautioned that "even in our more seemingly innocent creative desires, radical egocentricity, values inconsistent with the gospel, crippling images of God, and elements of psychological unfreedom readily find shelter under the cover of moral neutrality."<sup>7</sup> In other words, not all desires are authentic. Robert Doran described that "[a]uthenticity is achieved in self-transcendence, and consistent self-transcendence is reached only by conversion."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Edward E. Kinerk, "Eliciting Great Desires: Their Place in the Spirituality of the Society of Jesus," *Studies in the Spirituality of the Jesuits* 16, no. 5 (1984), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Ivens, "Desire and Discernment," *The Way Supplement* 95 (1999), 32.

<sup>8</sup> Robert M. Doran, "What Does Bernard Lonergan Mean by 'Conversion'?" (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 2011), <https://lonerganresource.com/pdf/lectures/What%20Does%20Bernard%20Lonergan%20Mean%20by%20Conversion.pdf> (accessed January 2019), 2.

### 3. Conversion

Ignatius described spiritual exercises as a name “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 in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul.”[1]<sup>9</sup> Michael Ivens explained that conversion in the Spiritual Exercises is “both a ‘turning to’ and a ‘turning from’. ‘Turning to’ in the language of the *Spiritual Exercises* consists in seeking and finding the will of God, while the correlative ‘turning from’ is the process of getting free from the influence of ‘disordered’ drives and attachments that stifle love and impede integrity of intention.”<sup>10</sup>

#### 3.1 Religious, Moral, Intellectual and Psychic Conversions

Loneragan identified three forms of conversions: religious conversion, moral conversion and intellectual conversion. Doran further suggested the psychic dimension of conversion. Conversion as turning to self-transcendence and authenticity implies turning away from some degree of self-absorption or self-enclosure.

Religious conversion is other-worldly falling in love, as one is being grasped by ultimate concern.<sup>11</sup> It frees one from the self-enclosure of radical lovelessness to a total surrender without reservations as a being-in-love. Doran remarked that conversion is a process occurring in incremental steps, and religious conversion is “a process of ever-deepening withdrawal from ignoring the realm of transcendence in which God is known and loved, and of ever

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<sup>9</sup> In this work, the numerated paragraph in the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* will be designated by a number in square brackets, for example [19] is paragraph 19 of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

<sup>10</sup> Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary: A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, ed. Robert M. Doran and John D. Didosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 226.



deeper entrance into that realm.”<sup>12</sup> God’s love flooding our hearts is a gift of grace, replacing the heart of stone by a heart of flesh. Ignatius described how it is the prerogative of the Creator alone to enter the soul and cause a motion in it which draws a whole person into His love.[330] Religious conversion is a twofold process: the operative grace of being loved unconditionally results in a cooperative grace as one’s own loving becomes unconditional. Therefore, religious conversion leads to moral conversion.

Moral conversion is self-transcendence in one’s decisions, opting for the objective value even if it conflicts with one’s own satisfaction. There are two kinds of questions for deliberation: the self-regarding questions that concerns what is in it for oneself or for the group one belongs to, and the moral questions that ask what is worthwhile, what is truly and not merely apparently good. There is moral transcendence when one’s basic question for deliberation regards not satisfaction but values.<sup>13</sup> The Spiritual Exercises move one from the egocentricity of self-regarding deliberation to Christo-centricity when one chooses and follows the values of Jesus Christ.

Moral conversion is a shift in the criterion of decision, whereas intellectual conversion is a shift in the criterion of truth. Concerning reality and knowing, there exists a myth that knowing is like looking and the real is what is out there, which then regards knowledge as a matter of taking a good look at what is already out there. Operating from this stance is staying in the world of immediacy, but the real world is a far vaster world that is mediated through meaning. There is intellectual conversion when one shifts to regard knowledge “as a matter of raising and answering questions for intelligence and

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<sup>12</sup> Doran, “What Does Bernard Lonergan Mean by ‘Conversion’?” 5.

<sup>13</sup> Bernard Lonergan, “Self-transcendence: Intellectual, Moral, Religious,” in *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, ed. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 324-325.

reflection.”<sup>14</sup> Intellectual conversion opens the horizon of questions and transforms one’s cognitional life so that questions regarding meaning and truth are pursued for their own sake.

If intellectual self-transcendence is about taking possession of one’s own mind, then psychic conversion is about “appropriating the operations of the psyche.”<sup>15</sup> One’s inner movements provide raw materials for insights, judgments, evaluations, and deliberations. Attention to inner movements helps us to notice ways in which our psyche hinders or helps in the search for meaning, truth, and value. Psychic conversion is considered affective self-transcendence as the affective and imaginal components are being brought into harmony with one’s operations of consciousness and there is a sense of opening communication between one’s conscious-intentional orientation as a cognitive, moral and religious being, and the underlying neural and psychic manifolds. Here’s an example to illustrate psychic conversion when the retreatant’s affectivity is in harmony with her religious conversion: Lucia had a traumatic experience when she was young; therapeutic and psychological intervention could not help much.<sup>16</sup> Whenever she recalled the experience, she was deeply trapped in the threat of the trauma and exhibited vomiting. During an eight-day retreat, she experienced a strong sense of security in the love of God to the extent that her vomiting reactions to the memory had stopped, and she was able to receive therapeutic help after the retreat. Her religious conversion of experiencing God’s love brought a change in her psyche and led to a change in somatic reactions.

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<sup>14</sup> Doran, “What Does Bernard Lonergan Mean by ‘Conversion’?” 8.

<sup>15</sup> Neil Ormerod and Christiaan Jacobs-Vandegeer, *Foundational Theology: A New Approach to Catholic Fundamental Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 131.

<sup>16</sup> In this paper, pseudonyms are used in the case illustrations.

### **3.2 Conversions in Ignatian Spiritual Journey**

The self-transcending journey towards authenticity is often not smooth but laden with fertile tensions, even capsizing the stability of self-reassurance one has built up over the years.

Although created in the image of God as a true-graced self, each individual has a unique story subject to various influences both biologically and environmentally. Psychic wounds were inevitably created through one's life journey in this world, twisting and crippling the soul since infancy. As a consequence, the human soul is far from wholeness, but rather influenced by unconsciously operating false images of self and the beliefs that I am not loved, that I am less than good or that I am insecure. Out of such wounds, survival strategies were developed to deny the lack of love in relationships, to compensate for the inferiority experienced, and to defend a sense of security. Throughout the years these survival strategies become persistent, gradually evolving into fixed beliefs and interpretations of self, others and life.

An ideal self, a picture of the kind of person one should be, is developed, and parts consistent with such image are retained and developed as one's persona, whereas those unacceptable parts we considered inappropriate are pushed into the shadow. The self is attached inordinately to masks that give an illusory counterfeit of the true-graced self. For example, instead of a healthy development of one's potential, a perfectionist lives in a myth identifying oneself with performance and pursuing excellence ceaselessly; being perfect provides a sense of recognition, worthiness, or lovability. This false ideal creates paradoxes of illusion: at a surface level, one may feel a certain sense of goodness in the masks and cover-ups, but it inevitably implies that one has to gain one's own security or recognition, which further reinforces the notion that one is not being cherished.

Religious conversion is thus a turning away from this hidden belief in radical lovelessness to an experiential knowing oneself as being loved by God. Receiving and allowing God’s love to fill up one’s heart strengthens one’s capacity to reclaim and own one’s authentic self as a true-graced person. Religious conversion frees a person from being trapped in inordinate attachments to false reassurance. Despite such a vision, to receive God’s love often involves a struggle between love and fear, approach and avoidance. Ignatius defined the contrary movements of the soul as spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation: the former describes interior movements of the soul towards God, whereas the latter movements in the opposite direction, both originating from the dynamics of love and fear respectively. William Barry described that such bipolar motivations of love and fear result in a rhythm of withdrawal and return which characterizes all our relationships, including our relationship with God.<sup>17</sup> When the soul is dominated by fear, it withdraws into the familiar false self-images, and when fear is subordinated to love, it has the courage to step into the mystery. Ignatius introduced the rules for the discernment of spirits as “rules to aid us toward perceiving and then understanding, at least to some extent, the various motions which are caused in the soul: the good motions that they may be received, and the bad that they may be rejected” [313]. The definition implies that the discernment of spirits is highly correlated with the operations of consciousness, which will be elaborated in the following section: love motivates a person to follow the transcendental precepts in operations of consciousness while fear fuels one’s biases and leads to decline.

There are two movements in the dynamics of the Ignatian journey: one is the receiving of the gift of one’s authentic self, another is the living out of

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<sup>17</sup> William A. Barry, *Spiritual Direction and the Encounter with God: A Theological Inquiry* (New York/Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1992), 59-72.

one's capacity to love by the giving of self in Christ and with Christ. The first movement to reclaim one's authentic self brings the second movement, to live out the capacity of love by the giving of oneself in Christ and with Christ. Authentic desires are uniquely personal but at the same time apostolic: authentic desires lead the individual out of oneself into the human community.

Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises are set to widen and challenge the retreatant's horizon, thereby initiating movement away from self-referential criteria towards objective value step by step, to be shaped by religious value. In Ignatian anthropology, the objective value and good in an absolute sense is referenced to Jesus Christ Himself and other exemplars such as Mary and Joseph. For example, some retreatants were attracted by the responses of Mary in her "fiat," but were stunned when they were invited to the same level of faith and trust in God. Mary's invitation challenges retreatants' belief that "fiat" is for Our Lady only. The contemplations and meditations are designed to bring a series of conversions to an authentic indifference. Through the dialectical processes of the Spiritual Exercises, the spiritual desires undergo further purification, mounting to a total and positive indifference, singleheartedly for the glory of God. Ivens described that the personal love of Christ is "a love which changes and re-orientates the whole person. It is the love by which we allow the loved-one to take over our lives, to lead us along his own ways towards his own objectives, the love by which we trust ourselves to the other's power to change us."<sup>18</sup>

The purification of the soul reaches an apex when the exercitant enters into a union with Christ through his passion, death and resurrection. It brings out the greatest paradoxes that the human mind cannot comprehend, such as the freedom in loving obedience, that the sacrifice of love can fill the abyss of death, and that death has no power over Jesus' powerlessness. The dialectic

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<sup>18</sup> Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 75.

confronts the greatest darkness to bring out the greatest light of humanity, enhancing one’s capacity of strength, fidelity and courage. However, this conversion is only possible through “com-passion,” standing with Jesus in His Passion. The intimate and participatory grace of compassion also brings the grace of confirmation to the exercitant.

Conversion is a vertical exercise of freedom involving a movement to a new horizon, the limit of one’s field of vision. It repudiates characteristic features of the old horizon and begins a new sequence that reveals a greater depth and breadth.<sup>19</sup> The gift of oneself for Christ and with Christ is a choice out of the freedom to love. Reaching human authenticity is a matter of achieving self-transcendence both in the field of knowledge and in the field of action. The authentic realization of human potential takes one beyond oneself. The fruit of reclaiming one’s authenticity is the vision of apostolic soteriology, one’s capacity to see the *Imago Dei*, the supreme dignity, which is a redeemed dignity of each person within the vision of the crucified Christ.

## **4. The Operations of Consciousness as a Framework for Spiritual Direction**

### **4.1 The Operations of Consciousness**

Lonergan’s intentionality analysis distinguishes four levels of consciousness and intentionality beyond the states of sleeping, dreaming and waking: experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding. Experiencing includes seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, feeling, etc. Beyond sensitivity, one starts to ask questions such as what, why, how, and what for in order to understand, and the answers to these questions “unify and relate, classify and construct, serialize and generalize.”<sup>20</sup> Understanding constructs a

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<sup>19</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 223-230.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

world by imagination and intelligence, which is mediated by words and meaning. The diversity of constructions brings questions of reflection to judge whether the understanding is real and true. Moreover, there is doing besides knowing. Therefore, beyond questions for intelligence and reflection, there are questions for deliberation when one considers objective value: namely, whether this is truly good and worthwhile.

The human spirit has its natural tendency to observe the transcendental precepts of being attentive in experiencing, intelligent in understanding, reasonable in judging, and responsible in deciding. Human authenticity is a matter of following such a built-in law of the human spirit. Such authentic upward movement from one level to another (from experiencing to understanding, from understanding to judging, and from judging to deciding) is a transcendental movement, and one's consciousness and intentionality expand as one journeys towards authenticity. Lonergan described how one's capacity for self-transcendence becomes an actuality when one falls in love, and being in love with God is the basic fulfilment of one's conscious intentionality. It "sets up a new horizon in which the love of God will transvalue our values and the eyes of that love will transform our knowing."<sup>21</sup> Operations of consciousness are authentic when they are in tune with the downward movement descending from being in love unrestrictedly to experiencing. Surrendering oneself as a being-in-love, one desires to follow Christ the Lord and allows His value to take over one's self-regarding value in decision; likewise love influences the intelligent questions and reasonable questions one raises in understanding and judging, and eventually the experiences one attends to. Moloney further described that when each level of conscious intentionality comes into harmony with God's primordial gift and culminates in the fruits of the Spirit, such as love, joy and peace, "[o]ur

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 102.

ffective development from above downwards is matched by a cognitive and affective development from below upwards, as we learn to understand, assess and implement our experience.”<sup>22</sup> In other words, when one surrenders to ultimate love, the grace of religious conversion brings intelligence to understanding, reasonability to judging and responsibility to deciding.

There is progress when the transcendental precepts are observed, but the operations are also prone to decline, when transcendental precepts are violated and one becomes inattentive, obtuse, irrational, and irresponsible. Lonergan defined flight from understanding and flight from responsibility as biases which block continuous growth in authenticity and leads to inauthenticity.

Conversion happens when one shifts from the biases and blocks of self-absorption to observing the transcendental precepts in one or more domains of one’s operations of consciousness. While redemption is God’s grace, spiritual direction helps to heighten the directee’s awareness of their biases, and to enhance their openness to bring biases and blindness in prayer, which are dispositions for the grace of conversion. The operations of consciousness offer a helpful framework, by inviting attentiveness to the overlooked, raising questions of intelligence and reflection, pointing out the biases, and even challenging the flights. This framework contributes to spiritual direction in accompanying the retreatant’s conversion journey.

## **4.2 Self-Appropriation**

Despite the fact that operations of consciousness are built into human nature, Lonergan iterated that it is quite difficult to be at home in this transcendental method, as it requires a heightening of consciousness by objectifying it, a matter of “applying the operations as intentional to the

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<sup>22</sup> Moloney, “Conversion and Spirituality,” 130-132.



operations as conscious.”<sup>23</sup> Such self-appropriation begins with noticing and registering one’s inner movements. This is where spiritual direction may contribute, by raising questions that focus on one’s operations to help the directee to turn from focusing on the incidents outside to self-appropriation of one’s own inner operations. To illustrate this, consider a directee, Patrick, who remembered an argument with his boss during his prayer. On the one hand, he reflected that his boss had not intended to hurt him and he desired to let the issue go; on the other hand, he felt an overwhelming sense of anger and was preoccupied with thoughts about the argument. The focus of his operations was on the external happenings: the issue, the situation, his boss, and what to do. During spiritual direction, questions focusing on his own operations were raised that helped him to shift his focus from the issue to self-appropriation, where Patrick realized there was hurt behind the anger. As he pondered the question “what were the thoughts that have aroused the feelings of hurt?”, he realized that he felt hurt when he could not convince his boss that he was right, and further noticed an inner voice that said “I am of no use unless I am right.” Focusing on his own interiority brought further questions for intelligence and reflection, such as “is this inner voice a single occurrence or a recurrent pattern?” “How did this pattern develop?” “Is this belief true?” “Who am I in the eyes of God?” These questions led Patrick to embark on a journey of interiority towards authenticity that eventually gave him the freedom to forgive. Connor remarked that Spiritual Exercises are exercises in self-appropriation, being present to oneself and grasping what goes on in consciousness.<sup>24</sup>

Ignatian spirituality focuses on God’s presence in and through a person’s humanity. It is quite common and helpful for people to recall issues in their lives during their prayers. However, spiritual direction distinguishes itself

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<sup>23</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 18.

<sup>24</sup> Connor, *The Dynamism of Desire*, 19.

from counseling: while spiritual directors explore with the directees their personal experiences, the focus is not to alleviate one’s problem but to unpack the human dimensions of experiences as dispositions for prayer. The emphasis of self-appropriation in operations of consciousness also serves as a reminder for spiritual directors to be attentive. To illustrate, Eva was attacked by utter loneliness and frustration as a middle-aged single woman. She shared her prayer experience when she asked God why she had to suffer such loneliness. Instead of counseling on the pressing issue of loneliness in single life, spiritual direction from the perspective of self-appropriation noticed that despite her complaints, she did not interact with God in the prayer. When this was reflected and counterchecked with her, Eva noticed that she had refused to converse with God, out of her anger and bitterness. Such reflections helped Eva to realize a contradiction: although she considered God as most important in her life, she demanded God to love her in the way she had wished. This operating blindness is powerful yet hidden. Unconsciously, she had placed her wish in a higher order than God. Realizing, understanding and judging such “dis-order” triggered her real desire for God’s love. This religious conversion started Eva’s journey to reclaim her authentic self, with the capacity to bear loneliness in life.

#### **4.3 Framework for Spiritual Direction**

Observing the transcendental precept to be attentive in experiencing encourages one to move from the concepts of God’s love to an experiential knowing. It is not uncommon to see directees “touch and go” while encountering God’s love. Spiritual directors often invite directees to stay in the experience of love and to relish it. Questions to prompt directees’ attention to their felt sensations such as sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste, as well as their inner movements such as feelings, thoughts, and beliefs are often helpful. Consider an experience of accompanying Anna who described her prayer

experiences when she shared with God the difficulties in her life, and remarked that God was present but did not respond. When she was invited to describe how she had sensed God's presence, she described a sensation that God was right next to her. Upon the spiritual director's curiosity on what God was doing, Anna replied, "God was listening to me." A further explorative question "How did God listen?" prompted Anna to pause, close her eyes for a moment and to sense before she replied, "God looked at me." The exploration continued, "and how is this gaze?" "The gaze is gentle...and reassuring...as if telling me that God does not forsake me." Attentive questions prompt the directees to notice, stay with and pay attention to God's encountering, which directees may have overlooked.

While it is natural for a person to interpret and understand one's experience, one may at one time ask intelligent questions, but other times may be biased and obtuse. Questions from the spiritual director may inspire the directee to reflect on such beliefs. Consider Linda who had experienced abuse in her childhood and became a psychotherapist specializing in child abuse. She has a long-held belief that God had allowed her to be abused in order to train her to be a therapist. As the spiritual director invited her to explore her belief, she realized that the thought offered her a reason to account for the innocent suffering. Encouraging her to listen to the inner voice "why did I have to suffer" revealed the anger that had been buried deeply. It was not easy for Linda to face the wounds covered by the false image of a tyrannical God, but this opened up a journey of healing for her.

Spiritual direction also helps by raising questions out of a different horizon. Consider sin which is a common theme in prayers. Most people would normally try to cover up the feelings of shame when facing one's sin, but Ignatius suggested that retreatants ask for the graces of shame and confusion, sorrow and tears for one's sins. [48, 55] Such graces are challenging and we naturally avoid such feelings. In this Ignatian horizon,

shedding tears of sorrow opens the person’s heart to experience God’s unconditional love at a deeper level. Spiritual direction with Tony in a retreat illustrates this. The memory of a fault that he had committed decades ago surfaced in his prayer, with an image of a big dark hole enlarging enormously. Tony was worried that all his previous efforts of repentance and confession were in vain. Shame over his sin turned into anger at God for not protecting him from falling into the sin. Instead of comforting words to alleviate the shame and reassure his repenting efforts, the spiritual director operated from a horizon which understood shame as a possible window for grace, and thus emphasized the shameful feeling. Tony stared at the spiritual director in disbelief as the latter invited him to experience God’s love in this shamefulness. In his prayer that evening, after pouring all his anger towards God, Tony suddenly experienced a peaceful “silence” and an indescribable “lightness,” he described as if he was floating on the surface of a vast and deep ocean without limit. He broke into a smile when the spiritual director asked, “in this infinity, how big is the dark hole?” The spiritual director’s understanding of shame as grace helped to dispose Tony to experience what Ivens has described, “there can be no profound sense of God’s mercy without a profound sense of sin.”<sup>25</sup>

A felt knowing of one’s identity as God’s beloved challenges a person’s belief of lovelessness. Therefore, a crucial point in conversion is the judgment of who I really am, the distinction between what appears to be me and what is really so. It is not easy to make reasonable judgments: some people brush the question aside, others allow themselves to remain in a state of confusion, or make irrational conclusions. For example, one of Martha’s beliefs was “I’m not loved” as she felt neglected by her mother since childhood. At the same time, she was affirmative of God’s love as she prayed her personal salvation history. When asked who she really was, she replied, “I’m loved, and I’m not

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<sup>25</sup> Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 44.

loved.” The spiritual director clarified the difference between feeling and identity. While feelings of being loved (by God) and not being loved (by mother) are both very real to her, the identities of “I’m cherished” and “I’m not cherished” are contradictory and could not coexist. Such clarification prompted Martha to face the reflective question on what her true identity was. The criterion of truth shifted as she prayed over this question: in spite of intense emotions, feelings of not being loved were not the criteria of her identity; the word of God was gentle but firm.

Relevant questions help the directee to shift from regarding truth as what was already out there in one’s history to a fuller sense of reality through reasoned argument, allowing religious conversion to bear fruit in intellectual conversion. As Lonergan has iterated, “[f]or a judgment that this or that is so reports, not what appears to me, not what I imagine, not what I think, not what I wish, not what I would be inclined to say, not what seems to be, but what is so.”<sup>26</sup> This can be illustrated by Debbie who suffered gross neglect in childhood and also had a traumatic experience of being molested. She articulated her anguish, “I prefer to believe that God did not exist when that incident happened, I could not accept God’s presence and allowing an innocent child to suffer!” Spiritual direction, allowing her to articulate the anguish, exposed her hidden belief and disposed Debbie for God to address the question if her belief is true. Amazed that she neither died nor went astray despite all the sufferings, Debbie saw God’s grace not in the reality “out there,” but in her persistence to survive the sufferings and in the faith she had kept since childhood. God’s presence in her heart was so real that despite historical happenings that remained unchanged, Debbie chose to believe what was true for her. This freedom disposed her to experience a deeper intellectual conversion in another retreat a few years later. In a contemplation on Jesus’

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<sup>26</sup> Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 100.

childhood, Debbie saw herself as a young child growing up together with Jesus. Gradually, her memory brought back the incident of sexual abuse, but this time she experienced Jesus' accompaniment. A phrase surfaced in her heart, "I was helpless but I was not abandoned," which brought her deep consolation. Debbie experienced intellectual conversion when she could distinguish the feeling of helplessness versus the reality of not being abandoned. The power of this phrase was beyond her own capacity which proved to her this was a grace from God to free her from her anguishes.

The process of moral self-transcendence when one inquires, answers and lives by objective values is also filled with fertile tensions. Despite the desire to follow Christ to the point of poverty, humiliation and humility, directees filled with awe and fear may exhibit various kinds of reactions during the process such as avoidance, subjecting the ends to the means, rash decisions, illogical judgments, deceptions, indecisiveness, etc. The operations of consciousness are helpful reference points for accompaniment during this process. For example, Teresa, during the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises, avoided the consideration of election and convinced herself with various justifications that discerning God's will would imply a mistrust in God, or that discernment would distract her from contemplating the life of Christ. Exploring how she understood her justifications revealed her fears, and bringing these fears to prayer disposed her to greater indifference. Another illustration on the application of the operations of consciousness is Sylvia, a teacher with tremendous love for her students who had great spiritual consolations when she saw Jesus entrusting lambs to her care. But she became confused when she recalled the frustrations and tiredness from her teaching. Questions during the spiritual direction session helped to explore the cause of the frustrations such as time management, and clarified that these issues required further attention but they were technical problems and do not weigh equally with love for students. Sylvia was able to make reasonable judgments

as she remarked, “some voices, despite their loudness, are not so important at all.” There is moral conversion when love became her referential value in decision-making, which in turn led her to ask further intellectual questions about setting priorities and making better time arrangements.

## **5. Conclusion**

Lonergan’s cognitional theory is a practical framework for spiritual direction to accompany the directee’s Ignatian journey through conversions to authenticity. An Ignatian journey is full of fertile tensions between movements and counter-movements. Growth in relationships requires not only paying attention to the other, but also awareness of what is happening inside oneself. Similarly, in one’s relationship with God, conscious presence to oneself is a foundation for presence to the Other. By asking relevant questions in line with the transcendental precepts of being attentive, intelligent, reasonable and responsible, spiritual direction helps the directee to focus on the pivotal point in self-appropriation, so that one is disposed to allow “the Creator to deal immediately with the creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord.” [15]

〔摘要〕依納爵靈修是建基於神操的動力，行神操者展開一個向內走的心靈旅程，重遇真我，並重獲和活出一己真誠的渴望，分辨天主的旨意。在依納爵靈修傳統中，靈修指導或靈修陪伴扮演著一個重要的角色，陪伴著避靜者走過連串的皈依，從不自由中釋放出來，活出真實的生命。那麼，除了同感的聆聽、鼓勵的說話、給予默想的材料之外，靈修指導可以怎樣才對避靜者更有神益？

朗尼根對意識的操作的研究提供了一個清晰而有系統的架構，關於人的思想和情感如何整合地操作。本文探討這「意識的操作」框架對靈修指導的貢獻。文章先闡述依納爵靈修作為一個邁向真我的旅程，期間通過重重皈依，繼而討論和肯定「意識的操作」對靈修指導於陪伴路上的貢獻。

**關鍵詞：**依納爵靈修，靈修指導，朗尼根，意識的操作，皈依



## **The Use of Somatic Experiencing in the Discernment of Spirits in Spiritual Direction**

Veronica Lai

**Abstract:** St. Ignatius of Loyola, wrote the Spirit Exercises with the purpose to save souls. From his own conversion experience on the recovery bed, he discovered two opposite forces in operation– the good and bad spirits. He wrote down the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for spiritual directors. Discernment is not a linear process.

Five centuries have passed since the birth of this saint; thanks to the diligent work of many experts and practitioners in different disciplines, and the breakthrough in medical technologies like imaging, we acquired more knowledge and understanding of human beings, able to see what was invisible inside the human bodies – the energy flow, the movements of neurons, blood flow, brain cells, etc.

This paper articulates the development of significant neuroscience findings and the use of Somatic Experiencing, a body-based trauma healing model developed by Peter Levine in the process of discernment of spirits in spiritual direction. Two case studies are included to illustrate the examination process.

**Keywords:** Spiritual Exercises, Discernment of Spirits, Somatic Experiencing, Neuroscience

St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* with the purpose to save souls. From his own conversion experience on the recovery bed, he experienced and discovered two opposite forces in operation—the good and bad spirits. By revisiting and re-examining the details of his dreams, he detected and differentiated the dynamics of the two spirits, hence he formulated the Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for spiritual directors. Discernment is not a linear process; “one needs to be generally sensitive to the whole fluid and elusive realm of one’s feelings and reactions.”<sup>1</sup>

As noted in the Fifth Rule of “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits” in the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* [SE 333],<sup>2</sup>

We must pay close attention to the whole course of our thoughts: if the beginning, middle and end are entirely good and tend towards what is wholly right, this is a sign of the good angel. But if the course of the thoughts suggested to us leads us finally to something bad or distracting, or less good than what one had previously intended to do, or if in the end the soul is weakened, upset or distressed, losing the peace, tranquility and quiet previously experienced—all this is a clear sign of the bad spirit, the enemy of our progress and eternal well-being.<sup>3</sup>

How to pay close attention to the whole course of our thoughts? What are the things to look out for? What are the signs to be aware of? What are the elements of the movements?

In the past century, psychology was the major scientific discipline that studied the human mind and behavior. Thanks to the dedication and diligent work of experts and practitioners in different disciplines, plus the breakthrough

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Ivens, SJ., *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* (London: Morehouse Group, 2000), 206.

<sup>2</sup> References to the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* in this article are given in square brackets [SE, followed by the numbered paragraph(s)].

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

in medical technologies like imaging, these advances enable and encourage more inter-disciplinary collaboration to study the human being as a whole organism, not as individual parts or systems. In the 1950s, Francis Schmitt established the first neuroscience research program in the Biology Department at the Massachusetts of Technology, bringing together biology, chemistry, physics, and mathematics. Since then the scope of neuroscience has been broadened, embracing different approaches to study the biological basis of learning, memory, behavior, perception and consciousness. These new findings of the functions of the brain and of the nervous system enable a new paradigm for the seemingly non-related disciplines to collaborate together, to name just a few: neuroethology, neuropsychology, neuroeconomics... even neurotheology. Peter Levine, developer of Somatic Experiencing received his doctoral degree in medical biophysics and holds a doctorate in psychology; he devoted his passion and time to study the impact of trauma on the nervous system. Somatic Experiencing is a body-oriented trauma healing model based on a multidisciplinary knowledge of physiology, psychology, ethology, biology, neuroscience, indigenous healing practices and medical biophysics.<sup>4</sup>

In this paper, I am going to examine some significant milestones of findings in neuroscience to explain some Ignatian terms such as *sentir*, and the “application of the senses” and how to apply Somatic Experiencing as an approach to the discernment of spirits in spiritual direction.

## **I. Significant Milestones of Neuroscientific Findings**

*The Word became flesh.*

*A mystery.*

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<sup>4</sup> “What is Somatic Experiencing?” accessed June 18, 2020, <https://traumahealing.org/se-101/>.

How much do we understand how the human body functions? From basic survival for food, safety and procreation to more sophisticated abstract thinking, creativity and searching for the meaning of life?

Many people know Charles Darwin (1809-1882) published his theory of evolution in his book *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, but few know that he was also among the first psychologists to study human psychology. In 1872, he published *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*; his findings inspired many psychologists to conduct research in this area and today “many agree that certain emotions are universal to all humans, regardless of culture: anger, fear, surprise, disgust, happiness and sadness.”<sup>5</sup>

### **1. How Does the Brain Function?**

*It is a long and winding road to understand the human brain and behavior.*

For centuries, René Descartes (1596-1650), a French philosopher, whose idea that human beings are “a thinking thing” and that there exists a body-mind dualism had a significant influence on earlier philosophers, theologians and physicists. However, in 1948, Paul Ivan Yakovlev (1894-1983), a Russian-born neuropathologist, published a paper titled *Motility, behavior and the brain; stereodynamic organization and neural coordinates of behavior*, challenged the traditional Cartesian view that the thinking brain was the control center. Yakovlev argued that “the innermost and evolutionarily most primitive brain structures in the brain stem and hypothalamus are those that regulate the internal states through autonomic control of the viscera and blood vessels.... The most primitive system forms the matrix upon which the

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<sup>5</sup> Ferris Jabr, “The Evolution of Emotion: Charles Darwin’s little-known psychology experiment,” *Scientific American*, May 24, 2010, <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/the-evolution-of-emotion-charles-darwins-little-known-psychology-experiment/>.

remainder of the brain, as well as behavior is elaborated.”<sup>6</sup> His theory upset the top-down model that it was the “higher” thinking brain that controlled the “lower” functions of the body, such as the digestive system. His research opened a whole new dimension to understanding how the human organism functions, how the mind and body are interconnected instead of being distinct parts, and that “we feel and think with our guts.”<sup>7</sup>

The human nervous system conducts stimuli from sensory receptors to the brain and spinal cord, and conducts impulses back to other parts of the body. It has two main parts: the central nervous system (the brain and spinal cord) and the peripheral nervous system (the nerves that carry impulses to and from the central nervous system).

## 2. The Triune Brain Model

Another important figure who provided a new map for modern neuroscientists to study brain functions was Paul MacLean (1913-2007), an American physician and neuroscientist, who formulated the Triune Brain Model in the 1960s.

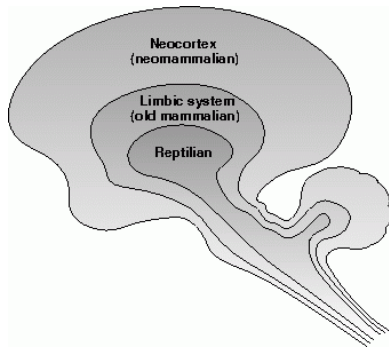


Figure 1. Paul Maclean's Triune Brain<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Levine, *In an Unspoken Voice* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2010), 252-253.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

<sup>8</sup> Credit: PAFCA, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

His research showed that the human brain was in reality three brains in one: neo-cortex, limbic system, and reptilian complex. “Although these fundamental brain structures show differences in structure and chemistry, all three intermesh and are meant to function together as a unitary (triune) brain.”<sup>9</sup>

The basic functions of the triune brain:

- i. Neocortex: thinking, conscious memory, symbols, planning and inhibition of impulses
- ii. Limbic system: feelings, motivation, interaction and relationship
- iii. Reptilian complex: sensations, arousal-regulation (homeostasis) and initiation of movement impulses.<sup>10</sup>

This simple model illustrated the functions of different parts of the brain. The implication is that each part requires different languages for communication. For the limbic system, we use the language of feelings such as happy, delighted, excited, panic, anxious, surprise, shock, sad, lonely, disgust, being loved, angry, etc. For the reptilian complex, we use the language of sensations such as tingling, shaking, hot, cold, warm, dry, wet, sticky, electric shock, goose bump, open, numb, expanding, constricting, burning, itchy, sweaty, etc.<sup>11</sup> When we engage the triune brain to describe one experience, it may sound like this: when I remember the first trip to Paris with my good friends, I still feel the excitement and joy; my chest relaxes, the heart beats a little faster; I take a deep breath with a smile on my face.

### **3. The Five Senses**

How do we understand and perceive the world? It is through the five senses: taste, smell, touch, hearing, and sight. The stimuli from each sensing

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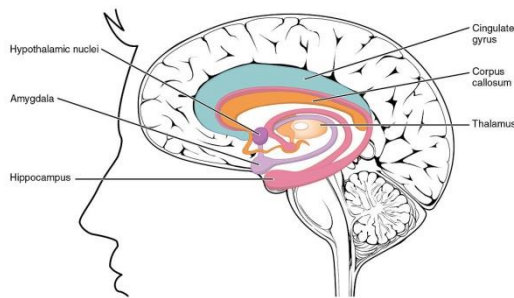
<sup>9</sup> Peter Levine, *In an Unspoken Voice*, 256.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 256.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Levine, *Somatic Experiencing Beginning Year Manual* (Boulder, CO: Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute, 1997), 28-29.

organ in the body are relayed to different parts of the brain through the nervous system.

The limbic system plays a vital role in sensory perception, sensory interpretation and motor function. The amygdala, for example, receives sensory signals from the thalamus and uses the information in the processing of emotions such as fear, anger, and pleasure. It also determines what memories are stored and where the memories are stored in the brain.<sup>12</sup>



“The limbic lobe”; OpenStax College, CC BY 3.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

### **The Invention of Medical Technology**

The medical invention of Positron Emission Tomography (PET) in the 1960s and other imaging technologies like functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) provide an important tool for researchers to ‘observe’ that the triune brain is in action throughout the whole body via the nervous system, not just in the head. Any thoughts in the mind, feelings or sensation in the body are interconnected and affect each other. We can now actually see what was invisible inside the body—the energy flow, blood vessels, how and which neurons are “fired or charged” and where in the body when a thought arises, or

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<sup>12</sup> See the senses’ map figure in R. Bailey, *Overview of Five Senses*, Thought Co., updated July 16, 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/five-senses-and-how-they-work-3888470/>.

when there is a sensation—that leads to many studies on body processes like the one mentioned below—a bodily map of emotions.

### 5. A Bodily Map of Emotions

In 2014, Lauri Nummenmaa, Enrico Glerean, Riitta Hari, and Jari K. Hietanen conducted a research using a topographical self-report tool to reveal how different emotional states are associated with distinct bodily sensations as shown in the following figure<sup>13</sup>:

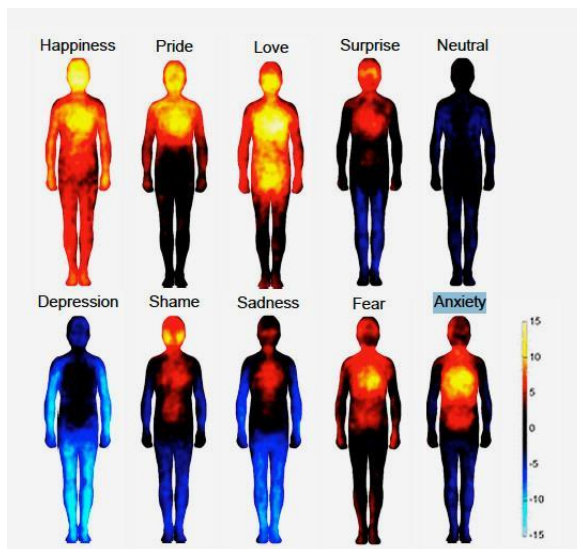


Figure 3: Bodily topography of basic (Upper) and non-basic (Lower) emotions associated with words. The body maps show regions whose activation increase (warm colors) or decreased (cool colors) when feeling each emotion.

( $P < 0.05$  FDR corrected;  $t > 1.94$ ). The color bar indicates the t-statistic range.

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<sup>13</sup> Lauri Nummenmaa et al. “Bodily Maps of Emotions,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, January 14, 2014, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1321664111>. (Editor’s note: *The Bodily Map of Emotions is originally in color. You can visit the reference link to view the original image which is Fig. 2 in that article.*)



The findings suggest that emotions are in motion. Emotions are not something to talk about, they are processes happening on different body levels; they are whole body experience.

These researches continue to reveal that the mystery of the brain is not hardwired or fixed, but is plastic and changes in structure with changes in thoughts, feelings and behaviors. This neuroplasticity of the brain brings new hope for healing diseases, trauma and the well-being of human being.

## **II. Why are these Neuroscientific Findings about the Functions of the Brain Important in Spiritual Direction?**

St Ignatius of Loyola who lived in the 16<sup>th</sup> century did not have access to our knowledge of neuroscience today, but when he wrote the *Spiritual Exercises*, he put much emphasis on *sentir* which covers a combination of the bodily senses, the affectivity and the understanding<sup>14</sup> (now we know they are the functions of the triune brain). He emphasized the essence of obtaining “interior knowledge—for it is not much knowledge but the inner feeling and relish of things that fills and satisfies the soul”<sup>15</sup> and the Prayer of the Senses<sup>16</sup> in the *Spiritual Exercises*. It is the full body experience both inside our bodies and of events from the outside that are important in the spiritual journey. What St Ignatius deemed to be important in our human experience is now proven by neuroscientists and psychologists.

When St. Ignatius was lying on his sick bed dreaming about following Christ to save souls and chasing the young lady for his personal glory, he

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<sup>14</sup> Antonio Guillen, ‘Imitating Christ our Lord with the Senses,’ *The Way* 47, no. 1 (2008), 225-241.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercise*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.

experienced two forces working within him—the good and bad spirits. They pulled him in different directions and affected him differently as regards his feelings, bodily sensation and the meaning of his life. He spent months, not days or weeks during his recovery to examine, re-visit, and re-examine the details of his dreams, then he could detect and differentiate the dynamics of the two spirits. He gradually identified the behaviors of the good spirits “like a drop of water penetrating a sponge” or the bad spirits “like a drop of water falling upon a stone.”<sup>17</sup> The more we are familiar with the knowledge of these spirits’ dynamic, the better we can discern and follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

### **1. How to Track the Directee’s Emotions and Body Behavior in Spiritual Direction?**

In spiritual direction, we usually listen and pay attention to the directees’ stories, without taking notice of their bodily experience. Fr. William Johnston, S.J., in his book *The Mirror Mind* (1981), observed on the spiritual direction process, “Now let me add that this process of listening is not complete until one learns to listen also to the body.”<sup>18</sup> He also said, “Language/word, beliefs affect our body/posture... look at a very pious one obeying the ten commandments..., the Pharisees...even Paul, how rigid they were in action, no flexibility, only in the extreme, muscle and joints are locked.”<sup>19</sup> The question is “How to listen to the body?”

### **2. Somatic Experiencing**

Since the 1960s, there are more and more body-based psychotherapy models developed to heal trauma and resolve stress disorders. Eugene

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<sup>17</sup> Michael Ivins, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 234-235.

<sup>18</sup> William Johnston, *The Mirror Mind: Spirituality & Transformation* (London: Fount Paperbacks, 1983), 60.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 75.

Gendlin developed the Focusing Psychotherapy approach, and introduced a new term “felt-sense” which provides a language to describe the innate body-felt experience.<sup>20</sup>

Somatic Experiencing is a body-oriented trauma healing method developed by Peter Levine in the 1970s. Somatic Experiencing focuses on the “felt sense” in the present moment to relieve the physical, emotional and physiological effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and other stress- and trauma-related health problems.”<sup>21</sup> This model is based on other research findings such as the Triune Brain theory by Paul MacLean and the Polyvagal theory by Stephen Porges. Levine explains how the autonomic nervous system behaves in different fight-flight-freeze situations and develops different ways to resolve trauma. I find some of the techniques of Somatic Experiencing, namely SIBAM (to be explained below), the Tracking and the Vocabulary of Sensations useful in spiritual direction, especially in the discernment of spirits. Other psychological and counselling models like Cognitive-Behavioral therapy, or Person-Centered therapy do not emphasize bodily sensations which we now know in neuroscience constitute a significant part of the human experience. In addition, Somatic Experiencing addresses the elements of voluntary and involuntary, conscious and unconscious, individual and collective experiences that are essential in examining the whole process of the movements of the soul:

By the term *movements of the soul* the Exercises refer to the interactions of feelings, thoughts and impulses of attraction and recoil, which occur spontaneously in consciousness. It should be remembered that these movements consist in thoughts as well as feelings, “thoughts” in this context being not dispassionate or solely

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<sup>20</sup> *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, s.v. “Eugene T. Gendlin,” accessed June 18, 2020, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene\\_Gendlin/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugene_Gendlin/).

<sup>21</sup> “What is Somatic Experiencing?” accessed October 11, 2021, <http://www.seaustralia.com.au/what-is-somatic-experiencing/>.

speculative thoughts, but thoughts as it were “charged” with feeling. In the vocabulary of the Exercises, “thoughts” also include the activity in the imagination.<sup>22</sup>

## **SIBAM**

Peter Levine developed this framework to “track” his clients when they were processing experiences. SIBAM stands for **Sensation, Image, Behavior, Affect and Meaning**. The SIBAM model incorporates the neurophysiologic, somatic, sensory, behavioral and affective aspects of an individual’s experience:

SIBAM is the essence of “bottom-up,” sensorimotor processing aimed at guiding the client through different “languages” and brain systems, from the most primitive to the most complex; from physical sensations to feelings, perceptions and finally to thoughts.<sup>23</sup>

When we attend to the phenomena of these five elements both inside and outside the body, we can gain important information to process our experience in greater detail. One particular sensation is always connected to that image, to that behavior, to that affect and to that meaning.

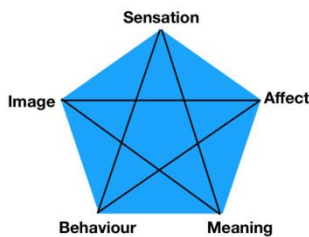


Figure 4: SIBAM Model<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercise*, 210.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Levine, *In an Unspoken Voice*, 139

<sup>24</sup> Pedro Prado, Lecture notes on Hong Kong Somatic Experiencing Training Beginning II Level (November 14-22, 2020).

Among the five elements of SIBAM, except for the Behavior level that can be observed directly, other elements are reported by the clients. In brief, SIBAM covers the following:

**Sensation** refers to interoceptive (from receptors lying in the interior of our organisms), physical sensations that arise from within the body (from the most conscious to the least conscious) including:

- Kinesthetic – muscle tension patterns
- Proprioceptive – awareness of our position in space
- Vestibular – acceleration and deceleration
- Visceral – sensations from the viscera (guts, heart, and lungs) and blood vessels which involve the functions of the vagus nerve that connects the brain stem to most of our internal organs. According to the Polyvagal Theory by Stephen Porges, “this vagus nerve is second only to the spinal cord in total number of neurons. Over 90% of these fibres are afferent, relaying information from our guts upward to our brains. Thus, the colloquialisms ‘gut instinct,’ ‘gut feelings’ do have a robust anatomical and physiological basis. For example: When we feel relaxed, our blood vessels and viscera gently pulse like jellyfish, causing sensations of warmth. When the vessels and viscera are constricted, we feel cold and anxious.”<sup>25</sup> Please refer to the above-mentioned “Bodily Map of Emotions” in which different emotional states are associated with distinct bodily sensations.
- The Vocabulary of Sensations<sup>26</sup> are used to describe different bodily sensations, such as hot, cold, numb, tight, raw, chilled, electric, expanding, energized, shaking, trembling, soft, strong, tingling etc. This

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<sup>25</sup> Peter Levine, *In an Unspoken Voice*, 141.

<sup>26</sup> Peter Levine, *Somatic Experiencing Beginning Manual* (Boulder, Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute), 28.

is often the part that is overlooked and neglected in our daily conversations and spiritual direction.

**Image** refers to both external stimuli (which include the five senses of sight, taste, smell, hearing and tactile) and internal images (such as thoughts, dreams, etc.). For example, the image of a full moon may evoke pleasant memories with the taste of moon cakes and the sounds of a friend’s laughter, or it may bring up feelings of loneliness, missing loved ones and experience heartache or headache. The image affects how we feel, which memory surfaces, how we sense in the body and what meaning we attach to that particular image.

**Behavior** is the only channel that the observer is able to observe directly. One can sometimes “infer the speaker’s inner states from reading his/her body language, the unspoken language of his/her actions/inactions or tension patterns.”<sup>27</sup> These elements refer to any observable behavior:

- Voluntary gestures – such as hands and arms movements when communicating
- Emotional or facial expressions – generally are considered to be largely involuntary, like changes in the muscle tension of the face, jaw tightening, smiling, sobbing, laughing, twitching of the lips, etc.
- Posture – the platforms from which intrinsic movement is initiated; typically refers to the spine—rigid, collapsed, braced, twisted; retraction, expansion, openness, preparatory movement of fight/flight, etc.
- Autonomic signals – includes the cardiovascular and respiratory systems, like breathing rates, heart rate by observing the carotid pulse in the neck, pupil size, skin tone, etc.
- Visceral behavior – digestive shifts can be “observed” via changing sounds in the gut.

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<sup>27</sup> Peter Levine, *In an Unspoken Voice*, 143.

- Archetypal behavior that includes subtle involuntary hands and arms gestures or postural shifts that are similar to hand/finger/arm movements in sacred dances, known as *mudras* that convey universal meanings across the spectrum of the human experience. “These archetypal movements arise at unique moments when the instinctual is seamlessly wedded with one’s conscious awareness—when the primitive brain stem and the highest neocortical functions integrate.”<sup>28</sup>

**Affect** refers to the categorical emotions of fear, anger, sadness, joy and disgust, as well as contours of feelings. Contours are the nuanced, sensation-based (felt sense) feelings of attraction and avoidance, of “goodness” and “badness,” that guide us through the day.

**Meaning** refers to “the labels we attach to the totality of experience—the combined elements of sensation, image, behavior and affect.”<sup>29</sup> These include trauma-based fixed beliefs, distorted values, bias, prejudice, such as “I can trust no one,” “I am bad,” “all step-mothers are cruel,” etc.

Our beliefs and values are influenced by our families, societies, cultures, technologies, religions and personal experiences; some of them may not be relevant anymore; some need to be updated or upgraded. By examining the first four elements of Sensation, Image, Behavior and Affect thoroughly, it is probable for fresh new meaning to emerge with a heightened awareness and consciousness.

### ***Tracking***

When we read about St Ignatius’s experience during his first discernment of spirits at Manresa, he did so by repeatedly tracking the

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<sup>28</sup> Peter Levine, *Trauma and Memory* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2015), 47.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Levine, *In an Unspoken Voice*, 151.

movements of the two different spirits—how different thoughts created different feelings, sensations and meanings inside his whole body.<sup>30</sup>

In spiritual direction, we track the sensations of our directee by observing how their body and nervous systems respond to whatever is being spoken, felt or remembered. By listening to how they tell their stories, we observe their SIBAM. We track for changes and shifts; we observe their gestures, postures, tone of voice and facial expressions. Like a detective, we follow the trail all the way back to the source—is it from the good or bad spirit? Note that when we check the sensations, we need to give as much time as is needed, as it takes much time for the body to sense; and sometimes we need to provide or suggest to the directee a vocabulary of sensations.

In general, we ask open-ended questions to track SIBAM:

- As you are talking about this person/event/memory/prayer experience, what do you feel? (May need to help the directee to name the feelings.)
- As you feel sad/angry/frustrated/excited, where is this feeling in your body? (May need to guide them to check: in your chest/belly/hands/jaw/face...?)
- What is the sensation like in your chest? (May need to provide suggestions like heavy, light, cold, warm, heart beat faster, sweating, tingling...?)
- When you feel sad/angry/frustrated/excited, what else do you notice?

In the process, the spiritual director does self-tracking in order to be aware of any provocation from the directee’s story. It is important to

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<sup>30</sup> Joseph A. Munitiz & Philip Endean. *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings* (London: Penguin Group, 1996), 15.



develop self-awareness as the bad spirits are active all the time in both the spiritual director and the directee.

### **III. Session Sharing**

Don't try to interpret, analyse, or explain what is happening: just experience and note it, observe them and let them go. "Take it as it comes" is the best way to learn the language of felt sense. Information will come in the form of words, pictures, insights, and emotions, which invariably will be accompanied by another layer of sensations.<sup>31</sup>

I would like to share two spiritual direction sessions to show how I use the SIBAM to deepen the directees' religious experience and to discern the movements of the spirits. It may sound "odd or even weird" as this is not the usual way we converse in daily life. Both directees had participated in previous Ignatian workshops and shorter retreats. The sessions were part of the eight-day retreat.

#### **1. Directee A:**

A had worked for a financial company for over 15 years. Due to the financial crisis, the company had to restructure and downsize, A had to take up more job duties and worked long hours everyday. He had lost his enthusiasm and love for God. He found both working and family lives stressful and demanding. He had no particular desire for the retreat but wanted to be free and longed for simplicity in life.

On the first day of the retreat, I invited him to rest and enjoy the environment of the retreat house. I invited him to read the first day of Creation

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<sup>31</sup> Peter Levine, *Waking the Tiger* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 1997), 73.

(Genesis 1:1-5). I suggested that he could do anything, such as drawing, swimming and sleeping to rest and relax himself.

On the second day, he told me that he was very happy when I suggested that he could draw.

**A: Directee A**

**V: Veronica**

- A: When I read the second day of Creation, I noticed how God did things step by step. God was not in a hurry. I went up to the rooftop to look at the sky, the ocean, the land. It’s so beautiful. I haven’t felt so relaxed for a long time. I started to appreciate the beauty of nature. I took out the crayons to draw the trees, flowers, mountains...I felt a deep joy in my heart. (A gentle smile on his face; his eye sparkle.) When I was a kid, I loved drawing and I drew well. But my father was very strict, he forbade me to draw when I started secondary school. He said drawing was not productive and a waste of time. He expected me to get good grades at school, and then find a good job. (A sad look on his face, face falls, and a flat tone of voice.) I remembered my father’s face and then heard a voice in my mind, “See, you are so lazy and just want to play, you haven’t changed since you were a boy. You are on a retreat, you should read the Bible and pray!” So, I stopped drawing...blaming myself for not taking the retreat seriously! (His body immediately collapses on the chair.)
- V: What else do you notice?
- A: I feel sad and guilty because I am wasting time here. (His head lowered, he tears up, his shoulders brace and his eyes look down on the floor.)
- V: Let’s pause and go back a little. When you said that you realized God is not in a hurry, doing things step by step, what was your experience?
- A: (Starts to sit up a little bit, wiping the tears) I felt relaxed, a sense of relief and a little surprised. I pushed myself and worked very hard all my life, but on the contrary, God was not in a hurry!
- V: Where in your body did you feel this relief?
- A: My chest. I can breathe more easily. I can even smell the roses, sensing the breeze blowing over my body. I feel like melting in the arms of God. I am very touched. My image of God was like my father, strict and

demanding, but this time I experience God's tenderness and gentleness. Quite a surprise. (His tone lifts, his eyes open wider and his hands rest on the armrest.)

V: When you started to draw the trees, flowers...what happened?

A: Oh, it was a wonderful feeling to hold the crayons in my hand. It was such a joy. I felt the little boy inside me becoming alive again. (Moving his fingers and wrist like he is drawing.)

V: What is it like to feel alive again in your body?

A: There was a warmth throughout my body, my heart beats faster, my whole body feels much lighter. I feel energized (He lifts his head up, a smile on his face, his eyes sparkle, his right hand on his chest.) and feel there is hope in life. I am 47 years old, hmmm... mid-life crisis, it's about time to think about what's important in life.

V: You feel hopeful and want to explore what's important in life. Then, what happened when you recalled your father's face and heard his voice?

A: In a way, I regressed to a little boy. The voice reminded me that my father always scolded me for being "lazy and unproductive"...I had to obey my father...otherwise he would beat me and there'd be no dinner. I had no choice.

V: What did you feel when you heard the voice scolding you?

A: It was loud and mean, just like my father's voice. It was scary. My heart began to pound and beat very fast. My limbs felt numb and weak, felt like my father was going to beat me and I could not escape. I told myself, "I have made a mistake again! I have made father angry again!" So, I felt guilty and sad. (Body slightly collapses, his head down, breathing heavily.)

V: These are two very different experiences. Let's review them. What is the impact of each experience on you? How are they different?

A: Yes, they were very different, but they happened so fast. The first one made me feel relaxed and hopeful. It gave me a new understanding and experience of God. I did not expect this. It's a pleasant surprise. The other was heavy and depressing. It pulled me back to the past and kind of reminded me that I had no choice, I was still under my father's power. I was still trapped.

The good spirit touched A with “tenderness and gentleness” but the bad spirit did the contrary “to bite, sadden and put obstacles, disquieting with false reasons, that one may not go on.” [SE 315]<sup>32</sup>

In the following table, I use SIBAM to illustrate how the movements of the good and bad spirits manifested themselves and the corresponding Rules for the Discernment of Spirits that are observed in the last row of the table.

	<b>Good Spirit</b>	<b>Bad Spirit</b>
Sensation	Open chest Deeper breathing Warmth in the body Energized	Heart pounding Limbs numbed and powerless
Image	Nature: flowers, mountains, breeze  God is not in a hurry	Strict, punitive father scolding him: “lazy and unproductive”
Behavior	Draw pictures Smile on his face	Head down Body collapses
Affect	Relaxed, hopeful, joy, enjoying himself	Guilty, scared, sad, trapped
Meaning	I have grown up I can make my own choices  New image of God: gentle and tender	I made mistake again I was trapped like the little boy  I had no choice
Guidelines for Discerning Spirits	First Week [313-327] <sup>33</sup>	

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 212.

<sup>33</sup> Louis J. Puhl, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1950), 141-146.

## 2. Directee B

B was in her early 60s. She served as an evangelist for over 25 years. The church hired a new pastor last year and she had difficulties working with him. She felt rejected and despised. One of her brothers had committed suicide one year ago and her mother died of a heart attack two months ago.

On the third day, I suggested that she pray on the scriptural passage “*Jesus Raises the Widow’s Son at Nain.*” (Luke 7:11-17)

**B: Directee B**

**V: Veronica**

B: I could not pray on the scripture you gave me yesterday. I was too upset.

V: Tell me what happened.

B: I was angry. Jesus would show up in the scene to comfort the widow and resurrect the boy. But in my prayer, I only saw two hands. I want to see Jesus in my prayer, but he never answers my prayer. I heard so many others say that Jesus would sit beside them or hug them, but it never happened to me. I know I am not welcome. From the day I was born, my parents did not like me because I am a girl. Even Jesus does not want to come close to me.

V: I see that you are very angry and upset.

B: Yes, I am angry, upset and sad. (Tears rolling down her cheeks, her jaws clenched, her right hand in a fist.)

V: I am curious when you said that you always saw two hands in your prayer. Can you recall this experience?

B: Yes, they are right in front of me. (She shows me the position of the hands, then bursts into tears.) Jesus does not like me. I disappointed him.

V: How about you look at the hands for a little longer? (Glad that she agrees.)

B: (Staring at the spot she showed me just now)...Oh, I saw the hands moving towards me (A sense of wonder on her face, her tears stop, her eyes open)...I saw the holes on the palms...Oh! They are the hands of the resurrected Jesus...They are touching my broken heart... (She lowers her head slowly and becomes more attentive and still)...the

hands tenderly wiping the blood, soothing and comforting my wounds...then the hand put a band-aid on the wounds...(Suddenly she looks up in the air)...I hear a song in my mind, it’s one of my favourite hymns. The lyrics are about following God till the end of my life because he is my only saviour...(Then she starts to sing it...head up, body straight, stronger breathing.)

V: Oh, you heard a song in your mind...but let’s go back to your heart...let’s see what happens next when the hand put a band-aid on the wounds? (Glad that she is willing to stop singing and brings her attention back to the heart.)

B: (She lowers her head again and put her hands on her chest)... I feel the hands are embracing my broken heart...My heart can finally settle...there is an anchor for my heart to land...I feel being comforted, Jesus understands my pain.

V: Jesus comes in person to embrace your heart, what is it like?

B: Amazing. I have never thought Jesus would do this to me...I thought when I saw the band-aid, that’s it...now I feel safe and not alone...now I know why God only lets me see the hands...God wants to come and heal my wounds in person...wow, it’s beyond my imagination.

V: (I let her settle and savor the experience. We sit silently for a while.)

V: Let’s review what happened just now. What happened when you heard the hymn in your mind?

B: I left Jesus’ healing work on me...As I started to sing, I felt there was heat in my body, feeling so energized and good. Then I started to think that the lyrics are true...The theology is right that God alone is my Savior...There was a voice telling me, “Now Jesus has healed you, you should go and serve God more.”...then I started to think about the project I am working on at church...I focus on myself more. I left Jesus.

V: Then what happened when I invited you to come back to the healing work?

B: The experience was much deeper. I could feel the presence of Jesus. I could sense God’s tender love and total acceptance of my unworthiness...I was overwhelmed with joy and surprise...I have never

thought that Jesus would come so close to me. I felt the anchor in my heart. Jesus knows what I need now is healing, not just do do do...

V: What is it like when your heart finds the anchor? What changes do you notice in your chest?

B: I feel more relaxed, my chest becomes lighter and more spacious inside. I can breathe better and deeper. My whole body is calming down. I am safe now. Oh! My God! God really loves me. I am the beloved daughter. (Tears rolling down her cheeks, she sits back in silence.)

	Good Spirit	Bad Spirit
Sensation	Warmth Heart settled and calm Chest relaxed, lighter and more spacious inside Breathe better and deeper	Heartbeat faster Heat in the body Feel energized Stronger breathing
Image	The two hands  Jesus' resurrected hands with the holes  Jesus puts a band-aid on her broken heart Jesus' hands embracing her broken heart Anchor in her heart	Other people could see Jesus, not me  Hear the hymn  Hear "Now Jesus has healed you, you should go and serve God more."  Her projects at church
Behavior	Eyes open Body becomes still and attentive Sit back	Holding right fist Tight jaw Sing the hymn

Affect	<p>Amazed</p> <p>Being touched, comforted, soothed and understood</p> <p>Feel safe and not alone</p> <p>Joy and surprise</p>	<p>Angry, upset and sad</p> <p>Feel energized and good</p>
Meaning	<p>Jesus understands my pain</p> <p>Jesus knows what I need is healing now</p> <p>God really loves me as I am, not because of how much I do</p> <p>I am the beloved daughter</p>	<p>I am not welcome</p> <p>I disappointed Jesus</p> <p>Jesus does not like me</p> <p>Need to do all the time</p>
Rules for the Discernment of Spirits	<p>Second Week [328-336]<sup>34</sup></p>	

The bad spirit tried to tempt Directee B with her favourite hymn with good meaning to take her away from the intimate moment with Jesus. As Guillen suggests, “a full examination that covers all stages of the experience will finish up revealing the ‘serpent’s tail’ of the Tempter, the evil end to which he leads.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Louis J. Puhl, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1950), 147-150.

<sup>35</sup> Antonio Guillen, ‘Deceptions in Discernment,’ *The Way* 49, no. 3 (2010), 81-93.



## **Conclusion:**

Five centuries have passed since the time of St. Ignatius, with advances in sciences, technologies, neurosciences and other disciplines of studies on human and our universe; there are more tools available to widen and deepen our self-understanding and the knowledge of God. This self-knowledge and knowledge of the spirits are essential to guide us to discern if our decision leads us to follow God or away from God.

There are many voices in our daily lives, not just when we pray. The ability to recognise God's voice like the sheep recognising the shepherd, and how the bad spirit stirs us up are vital in developing personal relationship with God and to strengthen us to follow in the footsteps of Christ. Somatic Experiencing, a body-based trauma healing model, provides an appropriate tool to examine the movement of the spirits and to "detect across the whole spectrum of our activity and consciousness the movements through which the Holy Spirit leads and enlightens us, and those through which other influences, if given their head, work against that guiding and light."<sup>36</sup> The more we learn to pay attention to the SIBAM, the more skilful we can be to discern the spirits and to follow Christ closer and better.

Like St. Ignatius, we review, re-visit and re-examine the details of our experiences, engaging in "every way of preparing and making ourselves ready to get rid of all disordered affections so that, once rid of them, one might seek and find the divine will in regard to the disposition of one's life for the salvation of the soul."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 207.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

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【摘要】 聖依納爵寫神操的目的是為拯救靈魂。他從自己皈依的經驗當中，留意到有兩種不同的神類在他的幻想中出現：一種是天主的靈感，另一種由魔鬼以來；並且寫下了「辨別神類的規則」。辨別神類不是一個簡單的過程。

聖依納爵誕生在 15 世紀，距今五百多年，隨着科技上不斷突破，和不同專家在不同領域的專業知識增長，我們對於人類的生理、心理、思想、行為都有更深的了解，能透過儀器觀察身體內部結構和狀態，例如能量、神經元、血液運行、腦細胞活動等等。

本文透過介紹一些重要的神經系統科學發展里程碑，和由彼德列汶博士建立的「體感創傷療法」，指出可以利用「體感創傷療法」的技巧幫助神操過程中辨別神類，並分享兩個靈修指導的個案作為例子。

**關鍵詞：**神操，辨別神類，體感創傷療法，神經系統科學

## 對話論壇

為強化大中華地區和國際間對華人天主教團體的學術研究工作，雙語性質的《天主教研究學報》接受以中文或英文的投稿，並附以相對語文的摘要。《學報》偶爾或包括書評及本中心的活動簡訊。本刊每年出版一次，主要以電子方式發行。我們鼓勵讀者及作者以本刊作互動討論的平台，並歡迎對本刊批評及提出建議。

《天主教研究學報》以同儕匿名審稿方式選稿以維持一定的學術水準。本刊的性質大體屬於人文學科，以社會科學方法研究天主教與中國及華人社團，同時著重文本及實證考察的研究。本刊歡迎個別投稿及建議期刊專題。本刊下期專題是「人類兄弟情誼與社會友誼」，將採用 2021 年 12 月舉行之宗教交談研討會上提交的論文。

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