

From the Ignatian Tradition

REMEMBERING IÑIGO

Luis Gonçalves da Câmara

In 1555, the year before the death of Ignatius, a Portuguese Jesuit, Fr Gonçalves da Câmara, who happened to be living in Rome, decided to keep daily notes (memos, hence the title '*Memoriale*') devoted to the day-to-day minutiae of Ignatius' life. He was convinced that future generations of Jesuits could learn much from a fly-on-the-wall observation of how Ignatius lived. However, his own duties—he was recalled to Lisbon in October of 1555 and appointed tutor to the young heir to the throne—prevented him putting the finishing touches to the notes he had jotted down while in Rome, where he had been using Castilian Spanish. Only nearly twenty years later in 1573, now retired from the Court, could he turn his attention to his personal papers, and with the encouragement of his superiors he began to prepare the 'memos' for publication. The interval of time had caused problems—as points mentioned in 1555 had lost their significance and needed clarification—but it also provided a certain distance and objectivity: the writer could see things in a new light. He felt the need to add comments and did so in the language of the land where he had been born: Portuguese.

Illness made the process more difficult, and then Gonçalves da Câmara's death in 1575 halted the full completion of the work. But enough had been written for a sizeable pile of papers to reach Rome, where the General at the time (Fr Mercurian) had been urging him to finish the work. One has to presume that the General read the work, and that what he saw appeared to him unsuitable for general publication; both he and his successor consigned the papers to the Society's archives, where they lay, consulted by only a few carefully chosen biographers of Ignatius, until in the twentieth century a new current of historiography became aware of the value and importance of these long-lost notes. With their publication in the *Monumenta Historica*, along with other equally revealing texts on Ignatius, it became possible to strip away much of the plaster that hagiography had applied to make the image of Ignatius conform to predetermined criteria. It is now possible to look more closely at the man who guided the Society during its initial sixteen years. The first English translation of his work is due to be published in 2004 with the

title *Remembering Iñigo*,¹ and the following extracts are intended to reveal some less known aspects of Ignatius, in particular how he interacted with people, both his fellow Jesuits and 'outsiders'. The choice is a difficult one, but the following extracts, chosen from many others, may at least give a taste of this extraordinary work.

Words, Words, Words

[28] Fr Peter Favre² used to distinguish three kinds of words: *verba verborum*, *verba cogitationum*, and *verba factorum*.³ According to this division he understood the third kind to be the good example of the deeds one performs, which is the most efficacious and intelligible of all. I mention this so that it may be understood that it was this third sort that was most frequently used by our Father, though sometimes he used the second type of speaking.

Early Impressions—and a Later Reflection⁴

[86] *There is much to reflect on in the way our Father uses completely opposite means for apparently identical purposes. One he treats with great rigour, another with great gentleness, and after the event one always saw that such was the remedy, although beforehand one had not understood. But he always inclines more towards love, imo [indeed] to such a point that everything appears as love. And because of this he is so beloved by all; there is no one in the Society who does not love him greatly, and does not himself think that the Father loves him very dearly.*

[87] A sign of this great love is the great joy and pleasure he experiences in talking about, and listening to, news of the doings of the brethren. He ordered the 'edifying letters'⁵ and news from the colleges

¹ The translation has been prepared by Alex Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz SJ, and will be published by the Institute of Jesuit Sources in the USA and by Gracewing in the UK. It is hoped that it will also be available through *The Way's* website. The original is found in MHSJ FN 1, 527-752.

² Pierre Favre (1506-1546), a Savoyard, was the only priest among the first companions; after the foundation of the Society (1540) he travelled extensively (in Germany, Spain and Portugal), gaining a reputation for sanctity and attracting many into the society; he died in 1546 in Rome while preparing to assist at the Council of Trent.

³ One might say, 'the language of words, the language of thoughts, and the language of deeds'.

⁴ The text printed in italics must date from February 1555, and is one of the early memos noted above; the following paragraph is from 1573-4, as are all the other extracts reproduced here.

⁵ Precise instructions encouraging the writing of these letters are given in the *Constitutions* VIII.1.9 [673-75] and led to the production of the now famous French series of *Lettres édifiantes*.

to be read two or even three times. Once in 1555, when I was at our villa, he called for me and talked to me with the greatest pleasure about this. He asked me to give him a reckoning of the numbers there were in the whole Society at that time, and I remember we reckoned nine hundred. When I arrived there [Rome] from here [Portugal], our Father talked to me many times about the Portuguese brethren and about India. He took great pleasure in this, wanting to learn details of how they ate, slept, what they wore and many other such small and trivial details, so much so that one day while he was questioning me about India he said, 'Indeed I would love to know, if it were possible, how many fleas bite them every night'.

Ignatius at Table

[185] Fr Ignatius used to take his meals in a room⁶ next to the room where he slept: the Fathers whom he consulted for advice on the Society's business dined with him. Those were, at the time that I was in Rome, Frs Láñez, Salmerón and Bobadilla, when they were staying in Rome; and Frs Nadal, Polanco, Madrid and myself, when we were living in the house; Frs Olave and des Freux often came from the College to the house; and Fr Ribadeneira, whom our Father sometimes called for from the College where he was. Besides these, when some Fathers or Brothers departed from Rome or returned there again, they would eat with him on one of the last days as a sign of charity and warm feeling. At other times there were persons from outside the Society, those having authority and virtue, and devoted to the Society. To these our Father used to say when inviting them, 'Sir, please stay with us, if you would like to do some penance'.⁷



[186] The food we ate at table was the following: in winter, mutton, and in summer, *camparicha*,⁸ that is to say, veal, which costs

⁶ An early draft of the *Constitutions* (MHSJ Const 1.389) gave superiors leave to follow this custom of Ignatius of not eating in the normal refectory; however, subsequent General Congregations began by restricting the privilege to the General in Rome, and then abolished it.

⁷ The MHSJ editors point out that this phrase has a place in the Dictionary of the Spanish Academy of 1734 (with quotations from Cervantes), and was probably a set expression of polite invitation.

⁸ Perhaps a slang word in Italian or Portuguese.

the same as mutton in Rome; no other kind of meat, such as goat or fowl, was ever served at table even though there were guests. No one was served separately at table, but the meat dish was placed in the middle of the table, and each one served himself on his own plate. I do not remember if there was an *antipasto* at the midday meal; at supper in winter some cooked vegetables were served as a starter, or small dishes of carrots, and in summer some herb salads or some local fruit. The dessert was usually cheese or some fruit as I have mentioned, and that ended the meal. However when the Father was sick, if we were eating meat, he was given chicken, but for lack of a cook who knew how to prepare it properly, it was usually insipid and badly cooked.

[187] I remember I once spoke very badly about a chicken he was eating, but the Father made no reply and finished eating it impassively. However, after the meal he reprimanded me because of what I had said, remarking that it showed a lack of discretion to disparage to a sick person what he was eating, because this could do him no good, but only hindered him from eating something which he needed.

[188] Our Father ate very sparingly and accordingly the portions of meat or fish that were served to his table-companions were small. Apropos of this I remember one day we were served dogfish (a fish which in Rome is more unwholesome than in Portugal), and one of us told Fr Bobadilla that he should not eat it because it was bad for him: to which he replied, pressing on regardless, '*Modicum veneni non nocet*'.⁹

[192] At table our Father rather listened to others talking than talked himself. Those conversations were not on subjects of great importance, or ones that required much reflection. Instead the Fathers told him about current affairs, as much in Italy as elsewhere, which might have some bearing on the good government of the Society, and also some entertaining and pious stories, some of which are included in this folder.¹⁰ In these familiar discussions our Father showed himself not at all a spoil-sport or a bore, but he had a religious cheerfulness and ease of manner, balanced with his gifts of gravity and prudence. And so, not lacking these virtues, he applauded with humour what others said and did.

⁹ 'A pinch of poison does no harm': Bobadilla may have been quoting the Latin tag or may have invented it.

¹⁰ The words used by da Câmara here, *neste cartapacio*, seem to refer to a folder containing the papers and notes connected with the *Memoriale*.

The table itself, although, as I said, poor, was always very clean in every respect.

On one occasion I and several Fathers of the community were eating without our Father being present. On that occasion we were given only two or three eggs apiece, and afterwards the Brother serving at table presented us, on a plate, with some toothpicks, dipped in wine and covered with sage leaves. One of us said to him, 'Now you bring us toothpicks to clean our teeth, but we still haven't had anything to make them dirty!' Our Father enjoyed that sally when he was told about it later.

The Joyful Eyes

[180] When he wanted to welcome someone warmly, he showed such joy that he seemed to take the guest into his soul. His eyes seemed naturally so full of joy that, according to a story told me by Fr Láinez, when a man who had suffered from demonic possession at Padua spoke great praises of him, and wanted to identify him by his appearance, he gave this description: 'A tiny little Spaniard, a bit lame, with joyful eyes'. Even so, ordinarily he kept them so cast down that they seemed to be those of a dead man. And one of the things that he most reproved in the brethren was lifting one's gaze. It was only permitted to the superior to look his subject in the face when he spoke to him; our Father wanted all the others, when speaking to the superior or with one another, not to raise their gaze above the level of the other person's chest.

[181] One day I was walking with him along the covered way from the garden to the church, and we met a Brother called Giovanni Domenico. He had been a novice for only a few months, a Roman by birth, and his eyes were always very lively and alert. Our Father wanted to admonish him and to help him alter his manner, but bearing in mind that he was still weak, he said to him, very gently, 'Giovanni Domenico, why don't you show outwardly in your eyes that modesty that our Lord has impressed upon you in your soul?'



Dealing with Others

[103] He was circumspect in his dealings with everyone, so that even if they had some weakness, they were not left hurt by his words or his style of conversation. He adapted himself to the state of soul and the character of his subjects; this happened even in very small matters, as for example when he ordered someone to tell Fr Benito,¹¹ at that time a Brother, that he had gained a listener for him, because once, when he left the house, he told an old lady that she should go to our church to listen to the sermon that Fr Benito was going to preach; or when, talking to Fr Polanco, he greatly praised Fr Olave, or Fr Polanco when he talked to Fr Olave, because he knew they were great friends of one another¹²

[104] He treated all the early fathers in the same way. Just as there was no one more affectionate and affable than he, so when our Father was angry, no one was feared as much. Fr Ribadeneira told me that once when the Father was discussing an important affair with Fr Laínez, who was over-insisting on a certain point, the words our Father said to him were, 'Very well, you take over the Society and govern it!', in a way that cut Fr Laínez short, incapable of uttering another word. All this took place in the presence of Fr Ribadeneira. ...

[204] However, there was one thing in conversation he could not abide, and that not only among ourselves, but even among outsiders: this was to speak pompously and authoritatively, as though laying down the law, as for example if someone says, 'It is necessary that we do so and so; there is no other possible way than this; the truth of the matter is so and so', and other similar modes of expression. Our Father used to call those who employed such expressions 'decretists',¹³ and as I say, he reproved them; and he considered such manners so bad that he criticized them even in a most important ambassador, a friend and supporter of the Society in Rome. He came to the residence a few times and expressed himself in this way: 'The Pope ought to do this or

¹¹ This is Fr Benito Palmio. There is another version of this story, given by a Lithuanian Jesuit, Nicholas Leczyski (Lancicius in Latin), who later in the century collected memories of Ignatius: he narrates that Fr Palmio himself invited an old lady to come and hear him preach, and when Ignatius found out he offered to invite other old ladies to go and listen to him (MHSJ *Scripta* 1, 495).

¹² They may have met in Paris as early as 1533 when Polanco was a sixteen-year-old student there and Olave a young lecturer.

¹³ A medieval term for students of law.

that Such and such a cardinal must do the other You need such and such a thing in that garden-plot', or 'It is essential to have an order given for it to be made', etc. Our Father therefore replied to him in the same way, advising him and reminding him of his duties and he said to us afterwards, 'Since he is a decretist, he will put up with being given decrees!'

[269] Our Father was a great friend to the idea that each should be given his due. And as Petronio was a grown man with a sort of responsibility for his three brothers, lads young as they were, he wished that even in this matter his orders should be followed.¹⁴

In matters of greater importance he followed more meticulously this gentle style of government, which consisted in giving each man his due by reason of his person or his office. I remember that he used to summon a Father when he was sending him to conduct weighty business with grand people in Rome, and he would say to him, 'Come here, I want you to arrange such and such a matter with such and such a cardinal, and I want you to have full power to do so. I would like to obtain this and this, and I have thought of such and such ways of getting it.' And after giving him all the necessary information and instruction, he would add, 'But when you are there I want you to use the means that the Lord will show you as most suitable, and I am leaving you in complete liberty so that you can do whatever you think best'. Sometimes he spoke to me in the same way, and when I returned in the evening, the first thing he asked me was, 'Are you happy with yourself?' He took it for granted that I had dealt with the matter freely and that everything achieved was my doing.

And although this trust he had in his subordinates was very general, he exercised it very particularly with subordinate superiors. In 1553 our Father sent as Visitor to this Province¹⁵ Fr Dr Miguel de

¹⁴ The long comment, reproduced only in part here, is something of a *cri de coeur* by da Câmara, who by 1574 had seen successive Generals (Lainez, Borgia, Mercurian) adopt different styles of government, some much more centralising than others, and had also seen different provincials, some much less inclined to give free rein to rectors of colleges. His own preference is clearly indicated, and although the hook on which he hangs his argument (a novice, Petronio, being given full authority over his 'subordinates', who happen to be his brothers) may seem very minor, he is probably correct in claiming Ignatian support for his preference.

¹⁵ Portugal, of course, where da Câmara is writing this part of the *Memoriale*. This famous visitation was organized to deal with the disastrous situation created by the Provincial, Simão Rodrigues (one of the first companions of Ignatius); the Visitor moved Rodrigues to Spain and expelled a large proportion of the Portuguese Jesuits. To heal the wounds, da Câmara suggested to Ignatius from

Torres, who had entered the Society less than a year before, but so that he could undertake the visit he ordered him to make his profession. Although there were very difficult and important negotiations in hand, he still did not impose on him any rules or laws to deal with them, such as might have limited the authority or freedom which he wanted him to exercise in all these matters. Yes, he did give him long instructions about everything, and advice that it occurred to him that he might need in such and such circumstances; but in no way did he oblige him to this or that particular course of action. Previously he had given him a great number of blank sheets with his signature, so that he could write commands or letters as he judged fit to whom he wished and how he wished.

The Neighbour from Hell ...

[206] Mutio¹⁶ was a Roman gentleman, our neighbour, an individual of violent temper. He used a courtyard, called the *cortil*, which, being on our site, undoubtedly belonged to our houses. He, however, seeking to have us buy all the houses from him, on this account not only kept the use of it for himself, but prevented us from opening some small windows in the wall of the refectory, which was next to the *cortil*, without which we could not have sufficient light in the refectory. Not satisfied with this, he let loose some peacocks in that patio—I do not know if this was just to create a bad neighbourhood for us—which with their incessant squawks disturbed us and made our heads ache, since some of us had rooms with large windows onto this courtyard. And, despite being very anxious to sell us the houses, he went round Rome complaining about us, saying that there were none worse than these Theatines,¹⁷ who wanted to take his property by force, and what he would do to us, and what would happen to us, and similar silly remarks.

Portugal that he should write a letter to the whole Province on the subject of obedience, and the result was a letter acknowledged to be one of the most important from Ignatius (Ignatius to the Fathers and Brothers of Portugal, 26 March 1553—MHS] EI 4, 669-681; ET in St Ignatius of Loyola, *Personal Writings*, edited by Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean [London: Penguin, 1996], 251-260).

¹⁶ This gentleman, Mutio Muti, is known from other sources for the difficulties he caused.

¹⁷ The Theatines were something of a rival religious congregation, recently set up by the saintly Cajetan of Thiene and the formidable Cardinal Carafa (the future Pope Paul IV so dreaded by Ignatius): the Jesuits would not have been amused to find themselves confused with them, as Mutio probably realised.

Finally we bought them for much more than they were worth ...¹⁸ and when he left he took with him the doors, windows, iron grills and even some of the carved stones. Our Father preferred to suffer all this with consummate patience, to avoid lawsuits with him. Nevertheless, at the same time, and with his approval and permission, we were dealing with the lawsuits that people were bringing against us over the properties of many colleges.¹⁹

Time Off

[172] At the time that Fr Ignatius ordered the purchase of this country estate, and built some good houses in it for the colleges in Rome, there were some difficulties raised by the Fathers, such as the very severe lack of funds ... and the example and edification that would be given to members of the Society later. When I was talking to our Father about this at the estate itself, he replied that because he foresaw that those who would come to the Society later (and to their good example he attached more importance than to all the other considerations) would need to look for some recreation to relieve the stress and mental labour arising from their ordinary work, and perhaps would be more self-indulgent in this matter than was really necessary, for this reason he wanted criteria to be laid down now about what should be done in this regard, and that the first should provide a rule and example for those coming after them.

[173] In order to do this he himself indicated and arranged those games that the brethren might play at the country house, which were only the tablet game and the quoit or target game. The first was in imitation of the College of the Sorbonne, which is the most important in Paris and has the most learned and dedicated members. There the teachers are accustomed to play a game after dinner with the keys of their rooms: whoever gets nearest to the edge of the table wins. And instead of the keys, our Father ordered the tablets which we still use now. For the second game he had some thin iron round discs made, about a palm's width wide, with a large hole in the middle for the

¹⁸ The manuscript here is worn away, and some words have been lost.

¹⁹ It is a little surprising that da Câmara does not refer to the different legal status of the colleges (entitled to accept and protect capital given by their founders) and the professed houses (residences), which deliberately renounced the right to possess fixed income.



fingers to fit in easily. With his own hand he made a model out of red wax of the size he wanted.

[174] No other game of any kind was allowed at the country house. He imposed a serious penance on Fr Dr Olave, superintendent of the College, and on Fr Ribadeneira and others for playing games with oranges, throwing them to one another continually, with the one who dropped the orange having to say a Hail Mary on his knees. He gave two others a good penance for playing at *castro*²⁰ in the villa. To sum up, he seemed to be continually alert to stop all the gaps through which dissipation might slip into the villa.

²⁰ This game used to be popular among Spanish children and was played with pebbles along lines that represented military emplacements: hence the name, which means a 'camp' (see *Diccionario Enciclopédico Hispano-Americano*, [Barcelona: Montaner y Simón, 1888], volume 4, 941).