

CONSTITUTIONS FOR APOSTOLIC RELIGIOUS

By CARITAS McCARTHY

I'M GLAD I'M not a jesuit. The reason lies not in any emotional overtones behind such a statement, but rather in the value of being, for the purposes of this paper, an 'outsider'. Studies conducted in this present period of renewal of religious life indicate that Ignatius of Loyola's Constitutions for his own apostolic order have relevance for apostolic congregations in general. Some theologians and historians would hold that the jesuit Constitutions represent a new kind of document in modern history, in which is realized the total apostolic concept of religious life; that they contain both an integral theology of the apostolic religious life and a dynamic, effective application of this theology to an institutionalized way of life.¹ The fact that others deny such a claim in no way diminishes the value of the questions which a study of the ignatian Constitutions can raise for many modern apostolic congregations. If this paper can focus some of these questions, its purpose will be well served. These may show that, in spite of earnest fruitful renewal efforts, we apostolic religious have not yet asked ourselves *all* the basic questions. Perhaps a 'new scent in the hunt' will give us new energies.

Many of the questions regarding the relation of the jesuit Constitutions to those of other apostolic congregations emerge when one surveys the researches on them in recent decades. Results of researches which will be touched on briefly here will be confined to those concerning the jesuits and congregations of religious women influenced by them. Source materials in modern apostolic congregations of men would reveal factors similar to those of the women.²

¹ Chastonay, Paul de, S.J.: *Les Constitutions de l'ordre des Jésuites: Leur genèse, leur esprit* (Paris, 1941) pp 175 ff.; Ganss, George, S.J.: *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, translated, with an Introduction and Commentary (St Louis, 1970), pp 23, 27, 32-3; Guibert, Joseph de, S.J.: *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (Chicago, 1964), pp 139-151.

² Codina, A., S.J.: 'Prolegomena to *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola, Constitutiones Societatis Iesu*', tom 3, *Textus Latinus*, in *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, III (Rome, 1934-38), pp xcix-cxiii; de Guibert, *op. cit.*, pp 503-4, 599-600.

It is hoped that researchers in these congregations will make the applications relevant to this paper and will share their studies with religious women.

Jesuit scholars have already covered a portion of the indispensable ground-work for the kind of deep renewal studies needed now, by surveying ignatian influence on congregations of religious women; but their work has not been utilized in proportion to its value.³ Religious women are now at the point of focusing sharply on the development of those aspects of our congregations which have not fostered in a positive way an integral apostolic life. We seek to fulfil the ideal of *Perfectae Caritatis*: 'The entire religious life of the members of these communities must be imbued with the apostolic spirit, and all their apostolic activity animated by the religious spirit'.⁴ The first and basic question is: to what extent was the integral ignatian ideal made available and usable for foundresses from the sixteenth to the twentieth century, and what is the import of this for current renewal? A survey of a few historical facts will enable the reader to see the series of questions which emerge from this central one.

A closely related group of ignatian writings is referred to throughout this paper by the oversimplified term 'Constitutions'. We follow here Fr George Ganss, who included these related texts in his recent and most valuable english translation of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus.

The term Constitutions . . . is employed in a comprehensive sense to designate four separate treatises which he left, still in manuscript, at his death in 1556: The General Examen, the authoritative explanations of it entitled Declarations on the Examen, the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, and the Declarations on the Constitutions . . .

Nevertheless, the collection of the four documents just mentioned is not the basic rule or fundamental code of legislation . . . The supreme authority and dignity belongs to the papal document commonly called the Formula of the Institute . . . The formula first arose from the deliberations of Ignatius and his companions in 1539 . . ., established the fundamental structure of the new order, and authorized its general to establish, with advice from his companions . . .

³ Notable among more recent studies are: Codina, *op. cit.*, pp xcix-cxii; Beyer, J., S.J.: 'Der Einfluss der Konstitutionen der Gesellschaft Jesu auf das moderne Ordensleben', in *Geist und Leben*, 29 (1956), pp 440-54; and 30 (1957), pp 47-59; Grisar, J., S.J.: 'Jesuitinnen: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des weiblichen Ordenswesens von 1550-1650', in *Reformata Reformanda: Festgabe für Hubert Jedin*, part II (Münster, 1965), pp 70-113.

⁴ *Perfectae Caritatis*, 8.

constitutions. In modern editions of Ignatius' Constitutions, the present one included, the Formula is fittingly printed as a kind of preface to them.⁵

These writings, which incorporate the principles and promote the giving of the Spiritual Exercises, formed for Ignatius, it would seem, a single powerful, synthesizing instrument by which he shaped that enduring 'Company of Jesus' which has given outstanding apostolic witness from the sixteenth century to our own time. Meanwhile, in the same century, the holy Spirit brought into being other effective apostolic orders of men, e.g., the capuchins, theatines, barnabites. Somewhat to the confusion of the roman and of various diocesan hierarchies, the holy Spirit was also inspiring sixteenth century women to found apostolic congregations. (That this was truly the holy Spirit's intent has remained a mystery to many segments of the clergy down to our own times; the general position of woman in society had, of course, much to do with this). The stories, such as those of Angela Merici's attempts to develop apostolic life for women and the consequent imposition of a monastic life upon her order, are too complex to be summarized here. So, too, are the stories of many others (surveyed by Codina, Beyer and Grisar), who from the sixteenth through to the twentieth century endeavoured to found apostolic congregations influenced by the ignatian pattern. Mary Ward is perhaps the best known of the foundresses who, within half a century after his death, recognized a close spiritual kinship with Ignatius, and was convinced that much in his constitutional writings expressed her ideal and inspiration regarding the nature, spirit and activities of her congregation.⁶ She, and others like her in the seventeenth century, tried to borrow from these ignatian writings for their own forms of constitutions; the obstacles and confusions they met with were but the beginning of a long history of ever-multiplying obstacles and confusions which bedevilled apostolic foundresses throughout the period of powerful growth of apostolic life for women after the french revolution, and especially after the restoration of the jesuits in 1814.

Research is making it evident that the constitutions of many

⁵ Ganss, *op. cit.*, pp 35-36. Also indispensable for the questions raised in this article is Courel's french translation, *Constitutions de la Compagnie de Jésus*. Vol I: *Traduction du texte officiel, notes et index par François Courel, S.J.*, and Vol II: *Introduction à une lecture par François Roustang, S.J. Traduction du texte primitif par François Courel, S.J.* (Collection Christus, nos 23 & 24, Paris, 1967).

⁶ Beyer, *op. cit.*, pp 440-50; Grisar, pp 86-90; Oliver, Sister Mary, I.B.V.M.: *Mary Ward* (London, 1959), pp 77-222.

nineteenth-century congregations were based to a considerable extent on the jesuit *Summary of the Constitutions and Common Rules*.⁷ In order to understand how this factor stunted their apostolic growth and made their constitutions inadequate as a framework for their apostolic ideal, it is necessary to turn again briefly to jesuit text history. In the story of the *Summary* is a striking example of what text histories often uncover: ever increasing confusion and ineffectiveness resulting from a change from the author's intention regarding the use of his text. Ignatius had stated clearly his limited intention regarding the *Summary*:

It will not be necessary for the novices to see all the Constitutions but only a set of excerpts from them, in which they learn what they must observe, unless perhaps for special reasons the superior thinks it better that the Constitutions be shown to someone.⁸

It is incredible but true that the final form of this 'set of excerpts', intended as a guide for novices and completed only after Ignatius' death in 1590, and a code of exterior behaviour – the *Common Rules*,⁹ came in time to constitute a large part of all but the strictly administrative sections of the constitutions of many apostolic congregations of women. By the provision of Ignatius, all the professed jesuits and even some novices were able to study the whole of the Constitutions from which the 'set of excerpts' were taken, and thus could grasp the dynamic context of the isolated paragraphs which were helping to guide their lives. But thousands of religious women through the last four centuries have lived out the whole of their apostolic lives without ever seeing the architectonic document, to which the *Summary* was intended to be only a kind of introduction, and, for older religious, a kind of reminder.¹⁰

⁷ Codina notices that the dependence of constitutions of other congregations on those of the jesuits may be directly from the *Summary* rather than the Constitutions themselves, but thus far studies by jesuits have not emphasized this. Researches presently being conducted in several women's congregations, not yet published, indicate that the significance of borrowing directly from the *Summary* needs to be studied.

⁸ Declaration to the General Examen [20], ch 1. Ganss, *op. cit.*, p 85.

⁹ For the *Summary*, Ganss, *op. cit.*, p 85 note 29; for the *Common Rules*, *ibid.*, pp 46–7. (These comments apply also to the *Rules of Modesty*, which also became part of women's constitutions.) For all three, see *Documents of the Thirty-First General Congregation of the Society of Jesus*, (Rome, 1967), Decrees 19, iii, and 20. For an older view of *Summary*, *Common Rules* and *Rules of Modesty*, see Coemans, A., S.J.: *Commentary on the Rules of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis, 1948). For the complex subject of the use of such terms as 'rules', 'constitutions', see Ganss, *op. cit.*, pp 39–47.

¹⁰ Some foundresses (e.g. Mary Ward, Cornelia Connelly) were introduced to the Constitutions themselves, and thus identified their spiritual kinship with Ignatius.

This seems incredible to one who examines the Constitutions and the *Summary* side by side today. Yet scholars in the field of historical textual study know how easily the incredible becomes the fact. What is important is to set about undoing the harm caused by long-standing confusion. For Ignatius, certain features of style and format had their importance along with the substance of the Constitutions; these are lacking in the *Summary*. Even the title of the latter is misleading, if 'summary' is taken in the sense of an outline indicating the scope and shape of the whole. Jesuits are beginning to comment on the perhaps disproportionate role which the *Summary* and other sets of rules have assumed in the past in their own Society.¹¹ Their studies will profit religious women, whose own history was often influenced by the views on the Constitutions *vis à vis* the *Summary* held by the jesuits of their time.

What then are some of the vital features of these Constitutions? For the following reflections, the 'outsider' who makes them claims neither completeness nor depth of penetration, but simply indication enough to allow questions to emerge which will be fruitful for the renewal of other apostolic congregations. If the significance of the questions is understood, interested congregations will study Ignatius' Constitutions and see for themselves.

On a first reading, one is aware of a strong and vital spirit by which complex elements in these Constitutions are inter-related and brought to unity. The overwhelming presence of this unifying principle makes it difficult to study any one aspect without constant advertence to the whole. One finds oneself echoing the view of commentators, who affirm that the Constitutions reflect Ignatius' profound mystical experience of the life of the Trinity communicating themselves and drawing man into that life.¹²

The reader is at the centre of the ignatian vision when he becomes aware of the clear and effective formulation of the end proper to the apostolic religious life: the greater glory of God and the salvation of men. The double term is seen as *one end*. Ignatius communicates this with emphasis and unity by insistent repetition, in order to frame, inter-relate, inform, and penetrate various parts of the Constitutions. François Courel, who has given us a recent

¹¹ Courel and Roustang, *op. cit.*, I, p 8; Rondet, M., S.J.: 'Les Constitutions de la Compagnie de Jésus', in *Christus*, 14 (1967), pp 259-60; Ganss, *op. cit.*, pp 46-7.

¹² Dumeige, G., S.J.: 'Ignace de Loyola: Expériences et doctrine spirituelle', in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, (Dsp) VIII (1970), cols 1278-86; Courel, F., S.J.: 'Gloire', *ibid.*, VI, cols 487-94; Ganss, *op. cit.*, pp 32-3.

penetrating study of this end, rightly calls it a *leitmotif*.¹³ De Chastonnay, an earlier commentator, seems less sensitive to the real genius of his founder when he says that the end 'dominates'.¹⁴ Ignatius used it to give the Constitutions the effect of a complex, delicately organized, living body, poised for effective, purposeful action. More profoundly understood, this orientation towards the end evokes the image of the Son who seeks always the glory, does always the will of the Father. The end is proposed at the beginning of the Constitutions, and in the Formula of the Institute and General Examen which precede, as well as in the concluding sections of the Constitutions. It is also restated frequently throughout the texts, in order to affirm and give direction to subordinate doctrines and parts.¹⁵ One constantly sees doctrine and procedure fitted to the end. It gives both a certain exclusiveness and a total flexibility, again evoking the image of the divine Son, infinitely bound yet infinitely free. Nothing may deflect from the always greater glory of the Father through the advancement of souls toward him. On the other hand, everything that is not evil should be considered in working to achieve this end.

In showing the significance of the oneness of the ignatian end, Courel points to an essential contribution to the theology of the apostolic religious life. He makes it clear that Ignatius added something to the twelve hundred years of monastic theology which lay behind him; although a superficial reading of terminology has, in the last four centuries, often obscured this contribution. In his unified, single end, Ignatius deliberately set out to resolve the long-standing spiritual tensions between the pursuit of individual perfection and of working for the perfection of one's neighbour, between prayer and active service.

The first resolution of tension Ignatius accomplished by putting the apostle's own pursuit of perfection in proper perspective as an indispensable means, not an end, to God's glory and the salvation of one's neighbour. The second resolution is based on a full understanding of 'glory of God'. There are two senses in which this is traditionally understood: the first, the objective perfection of God which he possesses in himself and also manifests in his creatures.

¹³ Courel, 'La fin unique de la Compagnie', in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* XXXV (1966), pp 186-211, cf *infra*, pp 46-61; and 'Gloire', *Dsp loc. cit.*, col 490.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, pp 169-70.

¹⁵ Cf the index to Courel's translation under the entries 'Aide au prochain, Bien generale, Edification, Fin, Gloire, Oeuvre, Prochain, Service, Universel'.

The second is the one to which Ignatius refers: the glory which man, moved by God, gives to God through his total gift of himself in the Son in service to the Father. The will of the Father is the salvation of all men; by each man then, the Father is glorified by co-operation with the Son in the salvation of all other men. 'Glory and service are identified perfectly'.¹⁶

It hardly seems necessary to pose as a question to apostolic women's congregations whether they have experienced the tensions referred to above. It is equally apparent that our constitutions in the past have been inadequate to resolve these tensions. But it might be worthwhile to ask whether these constitutions, when juxtaposed with those of Ignatius, reveal elements which actually promote these tensions? And if so, were these tensions increased to some extent by the inclusion of certain ignatian apostolic elements isolated from the total, profoundly theological framework for the full ignatian understanding and experience of the greater glory of God?

Under the integrating framework established by its end, other doctrines of the jesuit Constitutions are further positively oriented towards forming apostles and formulating a viable theology of a way of life for them. One other feature encompasses the whole of the Constitutions almost as strikingly as does its *finalisme*. Ignatius gave them a 'genetic' or 'existential' structure, one based on a 'person-orientation'.¹⁷ The order of composition deals first and thoroughly with the prospective apostle, considering his vocation to the Society, and his and the Society's acceptance or rejection of him. It then takes him through his noviceship, scholasticate, and the various stages of his full incorporation into the life of the Society. Finally it traces his life as a professed apostle in terms of the body – its mission, government, unity and preservation. The 'person-orientation' of the Constitutions places the accent on the apostles in mission, and not on structure, although the structure of the body and the links of the apostle with the unifying head are strong and firm.

The effectiveness of Ignatius' accent on the formation of apostles is found especially in his provisions for the formation period, in which he was deliberately an innovator. He wrote in 1541, regarding the 'testing experiences' which he incorporated into the noviceship:

¹⁶ Courel, *art. cit.*, p 211 (cf *infra*, p 60); 'Gloire', Dsp, *loc. cit.*, cols 487-94.

¹⁷ de Chastonay, *op. cit.*, p 76; Iparraguirre, I., S.J.: 'Ignace de Loyola', Dsp VIII (1970), col 1274.

One who is to be a member of our Society, in one way or another, must pass through experiences and tests of its life for a year and three months. The reason which impels us to establish greater experiences and to take more time than is customarily employed in other congregations, is the following.

If someone enters a well-ordered and organized monastery, he will be more separated from occasions of sin because of the cloister, tranquillity, and good order there than in our Society. It does not have that cloister, quiet, and repose, but travels from one place to another. Moreover, if one has bad habits and lacks some perfection, it suffices for him to perfect himself in a monastery so ordered and organized. But in our Society it is necessary that one be well-experienced and extensively tested before being admitted. For as he travels about later on, he must associate with men and women both good and bad. Such associations require greater strength and experiences as well as greater graces and gifts from our Creator and Lord.¹⁸

The Constitutions give clear teaching on the apostolic virtues and the means of acquiring them. Significantly, they do not spell out any pre-ordained pattern of life for the formed apostle. Rather they envisage the opposite in the primacy of the interior law of love:

Although it must be the supreme wisdom and goodness of God our Creator and Lord which will preserve, direct, and carry forward in his divine service this least Society of Jesus, just as he has deigned to begin it; and although what helps most on our part towards this end must be, more than any exterior constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts; nevertheless, since the gentle arrangement of divine providence requires cooperation from his creatures, and since too the vicar of Christ our Lord has ordained this; and since the examples given by the saints and reason itself teach us so in our Lord, we think it necessary that constitutions should be written to aid us to proceed better, in conformity with our Institute, along the path of divine service on which we have entered.¹⁹

In view of the time and approval of their life through which those wait before being admitted among the professed and even among the formed coadjutors, it is presupposed that they will be men who are spiritual and sufficiently advanced to run in the path of Christ our Lord, to the extent that their bodily strength and exterior occupations undertaken through charity and obedience allow. Therefore, in

¹⁸ From a declaration written by Ignatius in 1541 entitled *De Collegiis et domibus fundandis*, 18. Ganss (*op. cit.*, p 96) and Courel (Constitutions, I, p 32) cite it as a note to the *General Examen and its Declarations* [64].

¹⁹ This paragraph opens the Constitutions proper (Preamble); Ganss, *op. cit.*, pp 119-20.

what pertains to prayer, meditation, and study, and also in regard to the bodily practices of fasts, vigils, and other austerities or penances, it does not seem expedient to give them any other rule than that which discreet charity dictates to them, provided that the confessor should always be informed and also, when a doubt about expediency arises, the superior.²⁰

The lack of the full ignatian emphasis on the primacy of the interior law of love in the constitutions of many congregations who sincerely desired to draw on his heritage has been one of the most serious though unintentional misrepresentations of his teaching. The second of the passages quoted above was not contained in the *Summary* or *Common Rules*; the detailed and prescriptive nature of most of the *Summary* seems to have weakened the force of the first passage with which the *Summary* begins. One evidence of this weakening is that religious authorities have often invoked Ignatius in support of a rigid pattern of life.

Not only in his view of the life of each of his apostles, but also in his plan for the apostolic activity of his whole society, Ignatius sought to avoid a settled, rigid pattern. Rather he 'built in' a sustained flexibility for responding most relevantly in any period to the urgent needs of the apostolate through his provisions for the better choice of ministries.²¹ These provisions provoke questions which all apostolic congregations might ask themselves.

As a final point in these cursory reflections on the Constitutions, it should be noted that they call for incorporation into apostolic mission understood in its deepest sense through a truly personal, unitive experience of the paschal mystery. It was this that Ignatius had himself experienced, and it is for this especially that he relies on the Spiritual Exercises.²² In justice to the *Summary*, which some may feel has been underrated in these pages, it should be stated that it passed on to other congregations more than one profound ignatian constitutional passage concerning the apostle's experience of the paschal mystery. For example:

It is likewise highly important to bring to the mind of those who are being examined (through their esteeming it highly and pondering it in the sight of our Creator and Lord), to how great a degree it helps and profits one in the spiritual life to abhor in its totality and not in part whatever the world loves and embraces, and to accept and

²⁰ *Constitutions* VI, 3, 1 [582]. Ganss, *op. cit.*, pp 259-60.

²¹ *Ibid.*, VII, 2, 1-2 [622]-[629]. Ganss, *op. cit.*, pp 274-9.

²² Dumeige, *art. cit.*, cols 1278-1306.

desire with all possible energy whatever Christ our Lord has loved and embraced.

Just as men of the world who follow the world love and seek with great diligence honours, fame, and esteem for a great name on earth, as the world teaches them, so those who are progressing in the spiritual life and truly following Christ our Lord love and intensely desire everything opposite. That is to say, they desire to clothe themselves with the same clothing and uniform of their Lord because of the love and reverence which he deserves, to such an extent that where there would be no offence to the divine majesty and no imputation of sin to the neighbour, they would wish to suffer injuries, false accusations and affronts, and to be held and esteemed as fools (but without giving occasion for this), because of their desire to resemble and imitate in some manner our Creator and Lord Jesus Christ, by putting on his clothing and uniform, since it was for our spiritual profit that he clothed himself as he did. For he gave us an example that in all things possible to us we might seek, through the aid of his grace, to imitate and follow him, since he is the way which leads men to life. Therefore the candidate should be asked whether he finds himself in a state of desires like these which are so salutary and fruitful for the perfection of his soul.²³

Even where passages like the above are included in the *Summary*, they are only completely effective when understood within their proper context in the Constitutions and the Spiritual Exercises. Reference to the Spiritual Exercises brings out further questions: To what extent did foundresses rely on the Exercises to convey the ignatian vision in forming their followers for apostolic mission? What relationship to their own constitutions did they see in the Exercises? How well was the true ignatian understanding of the Exercises held by those who directed apostolic women in the last four centuries? To what extent, for the apostolic religious, does the confirmation through the Exercises of an apostolic vocation call for the firm yet flexible way of life which Ignatius provided through his constitutions?

It is perhaps useful, before drawing our questions to a conclusion, to root them in the concrete by citing from one apostolic women's congregation a few nineteenth-century texts which might be considered typical of the period.

Cornelia Connelly, who founded the Society of the Holy Child

²³ This paragraph from the General Examen [101] (Ganss, *op. cit.*, pp 107-8), constitutes the eleventh rule of the *Summary* minus the first and last sentences.

Jesus in England in 1846, understood that she had a mission to found an *apostolic* congregation, still 'new' for women in her time. She wrote to her brother in the United States in that year:

I will . . . send you the heads of our rules which will please you, I am sure, since we enter into the active duties of the world and will not be cloistered . . . Our rules were first drawn up for the United States, as I had no intention nor have I now for deserting my own dear country, but the immense number of converts in England offered so large a field for spiritual mercy that it seems more in the designs of God to begin here.²⁴

In the decades that followed she strove to gain from diocesan authorities an understanding of the nature and needs of the apostolic congregation she was establishing. She wrote to the vicar general of Philadelphia in 1863:

No educational Order could ever flourish to any extent in unity of purpose and in effective work unless a certain bond of union exists between the branches and the parent stem, nor could there be freedom of action necessary for an Educational Order were we tied down to the restrictions of cloistered nuns and obliged to seek . . . an external authority for effecting the internal details of our ordinary duties and arrangements.

During all of her religious life, she struggled to gain approbation from Rome of constitutions for which she borrowed, in her first draft (1846-53), from the Constitutions of St Ignatius; though in later editions she was restricted to the *Summary* and *Common Rules*. In 1870 she wrote to the bishop of Southwark, England, in which diocese her mother-house was located, concerning the action of Propaganda Fide on the constitutions she had submitted:

I wrote to H.E. Cardinal Barnabo, as I was advised, to know about the clause introduced into the Rules after our departure regarding the Sacred Canons which has put us in doubt and embarrassment (*sic*), having always regarded the Canon as belonging to the old cloistered Orders, and not binding on any of the lately approved active Orders, but no answer has come, and all the Convents are waiting to know! . . . Every Bishop has the full jurisdiction over the house without any need of bringing each poor sister under the Canons which were made for cloistered and simply contemplative nuns.

²⁴ All citations from documents relating to the Society of the Holy Child Jesus are from the Archives (unpublished) of that Society.

If the above citations are clear expressions of an apostolic vocation, Cornelia Connelly and her followers have left equally clear statements of their conviction that they must draw from the ignatian tradition to formulate and carry out that mission. In 1877, two years before her death, in a period when a bishop was trying to supersede her ignatian-influenced constitutions with some of his own composing, she gave a conference to her community in Paris:

I have done all in my power to leave things here on a good foundation, and now recommend . . . fidelity to the rule and spirit of St Ignatius, than which nothing could be found more perfect for the spiritual life. In this rule and spirit, as you know, we have been trained from the first, and it is now 31 years since we began the Society on those principles.

Impositions of 'foreign rules' by Propaganda Fide continued after the death of the foundress until, in 1887, a jesuit consultor of Propaganda Fide successfully restored a substantial amount of the *Summary* and *Common Rules* to the constitutions of the Society of the Holy Child Jesus.

References to the Spiritual Exercises are even more numerous in the Society's documents, and are sometimes linked with the constitutions:

We must always remember and at all times, that the spiritual exercises of St Ignatius form a sort of bulwark to the rules and constitutions. They are the great means we have to bring us to the true spirit of the constitutions and to an inward correspondance (*sic*) with the light of God in leading to the perfection of a true religious.

It is in the light of what sources such as the above show, that the following questions are summarized for possible usefulness to the present apostolic renewal of religious life for women: One final caution is necessary. Nothing said or asked here should be thought to imply that contemporary congregations should consider borrowing *verbally* from the Constitutions of St Ignatius. If renewal has taught us nothing else, it has shown that formulations of religious ideals need periodic, fresh, relevant expression, and even additions in terms of theological and historical development.

Questions for congregations of women who share the ignatian heritage:

1. To what extent did the foundresses express an identity of their charism with that of St Ignatius?
2. To what extent was the whole composite of ignatian constitu-

tional documents made available and intelligible to the foundress and the first generation of the congregation?

3. To what extent were they allowed to use his theology of the apostolic life, and his structures and procedures for its implementation?

4. To what extent were they allowed to use his actual texts; with what understanding of the nature of these texts?

5. Through what other means were ignatian teachings communicated to them?

6. How important a role did the Spiritual Exercises play in the initial formation of the members of the congregation, and of the early and ongoing development of its spirituality?

7. What has been each congregation's view of its own constitutions? How has this changed through varying periods of development?

8. To what extent and in what ways do the whole body of the foundress's writings outside the constitutions echo ignatian teachings?

9. Finally, two questions which should be the reasons for the others, and the researches which they would entail. What do the answers to the preceding questions show regarding the adequacy of the constitutions of each congregation for the theology and implementation of the apostolic religious life bequeathed to them by their foundresses? What other doctrines from Ignatius' Constitutions,²⁵ besides the few points noted in this paper, provide provocative material for the renewal of apostolic Institutes of religious women, so that 'the entire religious life of their members be imbued with the apostolic spirit, and all their apostolic activity animated by the religious spirit'?²⁶

²⁵ A pertinent example is that of discernment.

²⁶ *Perfectae Caritatis*, 8.