# WHERE NEW WINDS BLOW

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# INTRODUCTION

HIS GROUP of songs, like its predecessor Cave of living Streams, attempts to express and to communicate certain insights into the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola: the personal experience of consolation and desolation, the deep conviction of forgiveness which generates a new hope, a fresh impulse to seek and find God in a world that too often protests his absence.

Psychologically, the starting point of these songs concerns a genuinely human self-acceptance. The whole complex of my experience of myself and of others tells me clearly how much we all need this authentic self-acceptance. It is not, of course, another word for self-indulgence, nor has it anything to do with self-centredness. Rightly understood, it is an acute awareness of the dignity and the value of every 'self' made in the image and likeness of God: every self, including therefore my own self. This idea, though it may be expressed in psychological language, has a firm scriptural and theological basis: man is made in the image and likeness of God, and not even original sin, let alone personal sins, can destroy that image. In justice, as well as charity, I need positively to accept and value every 'self', including my own. The false humility which is self-depreciation has been an ever-present danger in christian spirituality; and the Exercises of St Ignatius are certainly open to misinterpretation on this score. Yet the whole thrust of his own experience and teaching is towards a right and high evaluation of the self. Souls are creatures to be used rightly; the self is the subject of the 'praise, reverence and service of God' to which the rational creature is called. Selves have a capacity for good choices and right order, indeed for 'better' choices and a more wholehearted service; under the impulse of grace, of course, but not in a way such as to destroy the true self. The purpose is rather to expand and develop it towards the full likeness of God as revealed in and through Christ with the help of the Spirit: a development which takes place in and through life in our changing and developing world.

These songs are also about wounded selves. It is not important whether the wounds are self-inflicted or not; they are all endemic to our past and our society's past; and, unfortunately, much of the religious teaching we have received has scarcely served as healing remedies. These wounds fester in the contaminated air of unhealed memories, forgotten fears, cowardice, and something very like despair; whilst our own vicious choices are even more polluting. Modern clinical psychology, with Freud as its leader, has established itself as the healer of these wounds by attempting to recapture and confront the wounding experience itself. But the various types of analysis and psycho-therapy have become an expensive, lengthy and by no means wholly successful enterprise; which is not to deny the pre-eminent value of insights and methods of clinical psychology, but merely to point out that such methods of healing can never be the ultimate restorer.

From the stand-point of christian faith, it is God alone who knows us well enough to heal us fully. 'I myself', says the Lord God, through the mouth of his prophet Ezekiel, 'will seek the lost and bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled and I will strengthen the weak' (Ezek 34, 15-16). He loves each of us and all of us; he wants to make us whole. Why, then, should we not accept his loving initiative and respond by asking him not only to forgive us but to heal us? Not only to forgive our sins and reconcile us with himself, but to reconcile us with ourselves in our experience of our past, our memories and our history. It is hoped that these songs may provide an atmosphere for the communication of God's words of healing.

The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, particularly those of the 'First Week', have often appeared more horrifying than healing. The emphasis on the fearful effects of one mortal sin and the horror of hell, immortalized in Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, is a far cry from the gentle winds and the healing airs of the Spirit. But while Ignatius took for granted a culture that had become infested by what has been called the 'satanic fever' of the late middle ages,<sup>1</sup> in which Brueghelesque pictures of hell were commonplace, he was equally able to lead his exercitant, at every stage, to the wonderful reality of God's compassionate love which is the consistent message of authentic christianity. It is by discerning some of these elements in the texts of the 'First Week', and by building these songs around them, that we can remain true to Ignatius and relate to the needs and experience of contemporary man.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Cf the article 'Démon', in Dictionnaire de Spiritualité, III, 225ff.

The Principle and Foundation for example, may be seen as praise arising from a heart in process of conversion at every level: self-acceptance, responsibility for self and for others, response to Christ's personal invitation to be forgiven and healed as a preparation for sharing in his mission.

The first three songs are variations on the initial petitions of the Our Father, the opening of the spirit to his praise. In this way they echo the first phrases of the *Principle and Foundation*, and they can also be used as the initial moments of recollection recommended by St Ignatius before any prayer: pausing for the length of an Our Father in the presence of the Divine Majesty.

The third chapter of John's gospel, the story of Nicodemus, provides the basis for the next three songs. They also have their connection with the 'First Week' meditation on personal sin. Here the scriptural and ignatian dimensions are brought together in the explicit reference to the healing of memory as integral to the new birth. Much of our sinfulness springs from false or painful relationships which we may have forgotten but which continue, nevertheless, to have an effect in our lives. Not that the healing of memory is an attempt to wipe out the past by denying responsibility for it. It is rather that the healing brings us to accept the past, to come to terms with it in the certainty of being loved by Christ. Only in this way can we come to *metanoia*, the real transformation of heart when the Spirit is invited into the recesses of our memory, touching, healing, integrating our past into our here-andnow.

*Echo*, the song which follows *Nicodemus*, takes account of the difficulty we experience in allowing this healing to penetrate into those areas of our lives which are often full of pain and hard to reach. Our hearts are sluggish: we feel at times too disillusioned, too bogged down, too apathetic to face up to this responsibility for our past. Nevertheless, the very admission of the difficulty is perhaps the first grace and the first step towards cure.

The third song in this group is called, simply, *Memory*. It explores some of the implications of forgiveness and healing, and relates them to the rich and maybe neglected theology of memory. Memory for St Augustine is that element of God's likeness in us that corresponds to his eternity, the fulness of his *tota simul*, his 'all-at-onceness'. 'Do this in memory of me'. The eucharistic liturgy concerns itself with re-expressing and realizing, in greater or less degree, the treasured memory. It was memory, in the control and use of its content, that saved Sir Geoffrey Jackson, Herrema and many another lonely captive from madness. It is memory that can truly, not just sentimentally, console the rootless, the exiled and the old. The songs they sing, the stories they tell: it is these which keep them alive and give them identity. One of the essential elements of the *Spiritual Exercises* is precisely Ignatius's insight into the function of memory. It is often as important to pray through the remembered hard sayings or harsh experiences which at first caused desolation as it is to recall again in prayerful repetition the points of consolation.<sup>2</sup>

It was Marcel Proust in his A la récherche du temps perdu who explored the way in which the distortion of the past contributed largely to the disintegration of individuals and society as a whole. The healing of memory, as the hero of that novel discovered, does not mean the recovery of lost innocence; but it does provide the basis for that genuine self-acceptance which is a platform for creative aspirations; and, for the Spirit-filled christian, these aspirations are re-creative.

# THE SONGS AND COMMENTARY

# I. OUR FATHER

We begin with the Our Father, not only because it is the conclusion to practically every ignatian meditation and contemplation (cf Exx 54, 61, 63, 70, 109 etc) and the prime example of the second and third methods of prayer (Exx 252, 258), but because it is the paradigm of all christian prayer: 'When you pray, pray like this...'. It reflects Christ's own struggle as he faces the Father in Gethsemane: '... if it is possible ...'. It is also the index of his own psychological and spiritual maturity. In coming to terms with the Father's will, he asserts his human individuality at its most authentic: that is, as man he relates fully to the Father's reality.

We too are called upon to pray the Our Father as Christ prayed it. We can cry 'Abba, Father', because we have received the Spirit of his Son (cf Gal 4, 6). Anyone can, indeed, say the Our Father with his lips; but to mean it from within involves us in the christian striving to grow and change in our attitudes towards others, towards God, towards the whole of reality, in co-operation with the Spirit (Rom 8, 15-25). In the Exercises we have the constant recommendation of Ignatius at the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Cf O'Leary, Brian, s.J.: on the function of repetition, in *The Way Supplement* 27 (Spring, 1976), pp 48ff.

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beginning of every meditation to pause for the space of an Our Father, in order to enter into his presence by 'considering how he sees me' (Exx 75). Thus the Our Father is a call, a deepening of the awareness of God's ever-living presence among us; it is the response of the Spirit within us to the invitation of the Father to draw closer to him.

# 2. THE GLORY OF GOD

The phrase, 'the glory of God is man alive', is the celebrated one of St Irenaeus. It is peculiarly popular these days, because it seems to express so aptly that God's life is in man here and now, and not just in the hereafter; that the very expression of man's aliveness — his full use of talents and so on — is in itself a prayer, which gives glory to God's name. So often the glory of God appears to be an esoteric sort of notion, conjuring up visions of cherubs and remote angels. St Irenaeus comes much closer to the reality when he talks about the glory of God being man's aliveness, man's being what he should be in every moment. There is, too, in this song an attempt to highlight two very different attitudes towards religion. On the one hand, there are those who see religion as something to survive by, something to be maintained, a passport for the life to come; on the other hand, there are those for whom religion means imbuing the whole of life with the spirit of the risen Christ. This is what man is made for : this is how man creates 'his new world'; this is how he makes the glory of God a reality in his life.

The glory of God is man alive; Man's made to live — not just survive. The glory of God is man alive, Awake with all his heart.

The glory of God is man alive; Man's called to rise — not just survive. The glory of God is man alive, Rising through all his past.

The glory of God is man alive; Man can be healed — not just survive. The glory of God is man alive, Fulfilling every hour.

The glory of God is man alive; Man's called to share — not just survive. The glory of God is man alive, Creating his new world.

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#### 3. PRAISE

'Praise' is in some ways the personal response to the challenging statements made in the previous song. There is a progression in the simple yet profound notion that the quality of praise grows in accordance with the quality of self-acceptance, of that moment-to-moment response to the demands of the world which invites me to share my real self from within. When I begin to respond to the demands of each moment, I can begin to hear 'the voice that calls my name'.

I can praise when I accept Who I know myself to be From within.

I can praise when I say and mean That I do accept to be From within.

I can praise when I respond to the call to share myself From within.

I can praise when I listen deep To the voice that calls my name From within.

I can praise when my memory Is touched and healed by Him From within.

#### NICODEMUS

This song tries to show how the Lord invites Nicodemus (Jn 3) to go back through his life, healing and integrating past with present, allowing the Spirit to penetrate the years. The chorus reflects the growth of Nicodemus's understanding of the Spirit — and therefore of himself — as Jesus leads him to a new understanding of fulness of life.

Nicodemus came by night Out of the darkness into light: Nicodemus came alone To the man whose deeds were known. The night was still, the stars were clear, He breathed the gentle air.

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Nicodemus thought he knew What was correct to say and do: Nicodemus spoke his mind To the man whose heart was kind. The night was still, the stars were clear, He breathed the gentle air.

Be born again if you would see What it could mean to be set free. 'Be born again': what that can mean? How be again where I have been? New breath of wind, new dawning breeze Rustles through the nearby trees.

Listen to that sound, hear what I say; My spirit leads you on that way. You cannot see, you don't yet know: Risk now the way the new winds blow. New breath of wind, new dawning breeze Rustles through the nearby trees.

Let him echo through your heart Where he resounds, there make a start: Let him whisper, let him sound, Let him tell where you are bound.

New breath of wind, new dawning breeze Rustles through the nearby trees.

Let him gently sigh and groan, Fuse together flesh and bone. Let him breathe and let him bring Fresh response to everything. Wind now increased, it comes with power, Freshening the morning hour.

Deeply let him breathe in you, Grip now your life, begin anew. He knows where the source is found Deep in your heart — no other ground. Wind now increased, it comes with power, Freshening the morning hour. Let my spirit enter in:

He heals all hate, blows out all sin, He knows where the pain still lies, Heals all our hurts, soothes with his sighs. His breath has blown the night away, Full sail greets the new born day.

Nicodemus through his tears Let go the anchors of the years, Sensed now the joy that comes with dawn, Breathed in the life of man reborn. *His breath has blown the night away*, *Full sail greets the new born day*.

So too with you if you would be Soul-sail filled, born anew, born free, Sail down the seas of all the years, Cast off in him all binding fears. *His wind will blow your night away*, *Bring you healing in his day*.

5.

ECHO

At first sight this song appears to be a pessimistic and even cynical view of two-dimensional modern man, without depth, without direction, without even the ability to hear. But it is also an attempt to see beyond that: to see an opportunity of truthfully admitting where people really are, so that God's word can come through and communicate to them. It will speak to different people at different times of their lives. Perhaps it will speak most particularly to the disillusioned, those who have struggled in the vineyard for a long time, who have grown tired and weary and feel that they are unable to carry on. Just to be able to admit this can be an opportunity for a new beginning.

It also links with the main theme of memory. So often people recall sad memories: memories of the things that have gone wrong. Perhaps if we tried to recall memories of some of the things that went right, we could find a point of new beginning. This is what the liturgy is about: the recalling of memories to celebrate. All of us can find some memory to celebrate, even if it is to remember that we have been born, have been given in that event the great gift of life. Can you find an echo in your heart? Can you find a place to start? Do the words breathe through at all? Is your heart becalmed — too small?

Can you find an echo in your heart? Can you make the space to start? Have the gales blown through your sail? Does your tattered spirit fail?

Can you find an echo in your heart? Can you find the time to start? Have the seas swirled round your cave, Left your heart an empty grave?

Do you hear his echo in your heart? Memories that blow apart? Will you let your memory clear? ... Or will you let it drown in fear?

#### MEMORY

This song continues the ideas presented in the previous two songs: take Christ at his word, be born anew, go through our memories and really integrate them into our lives. It is a kind of struggle song; it is a struggle between the desire to evade bad memories and the belief that with Christ the whole of our lives can be healed. The theme is one of great hope: in him we have nothing to fear, and from him we have nothing to conceal. He will neither judge nor condemn. Holding his hand we can afford to walk on the deepest waters and be assured that we will not sink. Here memories are seen to be the living waters on which we walk with Christ, to be made whole in him.

Memory — if you'd echo clear, The words he spoke, the heart I broke, My depths set free, his presence be, I'd turn through you, a heart made true.

Memory, all my years, forgotten fears, bring back the tears of all those years. Look up and see what life could be. He walks with me, down memory, My open sea, my life to be, My heart set free, memory. Memory — if you'd only be Part of me, newborn, set free, My listening cave, my open sail, I'd ride with you, through every gale.

Memory — in you I'll be Whole and healed, nothing feared, concealed, No anchored heart, no life apart, I'll sail your sea — eternity.

Memory — on you I walk On waters deep, my balance keep. I do not sink, I take his hand. His living waters are my land.

#### 7. EMMAUS

Again the theme is the healing of sinfulness and of memories through the creative and renewing presence of the Spirit, in the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24, 13-35). We simply follow the narrative: the sadness of the disciples, the presence of Christ who lifts their hearts, who shares their meal and disappears into the night; whilst they return to share their joy with the brethren. Each of us has experienced their tendency to give up too soon. The middle section develops from the hints in the gospel narrative of what Jesus might have said as he 'opened the scriptures': the history of Israel, seen through the eyes of the suffering Servant of second Isaiah. All this involves coming to terms with the wounded heart, the wounded memories, the hurts we inflict on others and taking responsibility for them; and the hurts inflicted on us by others, facing up to them and integrating them into our lives. Again the movement is from the darkness of desolation and despair to a new revelation, a wider understanding of suffering in the history of man which flows from the words of Jesus in the strength of the Spirit. The song ends with a direct reference to the famous vision of Elijah (1 Kg 19, 1ff), in which the gale and the earthquake did not swallow him, but prepared him to receive the still small voice of the Spirit. The point of contact with the Exercises is the whole area and history of racial sin: Emmaus stands for the story of sin as a racial and world phenomenon, the Nicodemus episode for sin as individual. In both cases, it is sin in the context of the need, not only of forgiveness, but of the further reality of healing: the healing of individual and collective life and experience.

Plodding sadly down the road, Two friends were letting hope corrode: They could not sense the gentle breeze; Their hearts were heavy, ill at ease. A stranger joined them on the way: The man he was he did not say. He asked them why their hearts were sad: They answered sadly, was he mad?

The man we hoped would set us free Died yesterday on Calvary.

O slow of heart and dim of sight, You have not understood this night, This Jesus whom you claim to know Was bound these things to undergo. Don't you remember what was said Before your hearts took fright and fled? That love is bruised when men can't see What love incarnate's bound to be.

But by his wounds mankind is healed, Born yesterday in death revealed.

For men deny incarnate love They'd sooner leave it safe above: It interferes with laws and life, It tears down walls, revealing strife; You cannot bring your healing where Officials pass and do not dare: When you don't pick up stones to throw You can expect yourself the blow.

He opens memories man conceals, Born yesterday anew he heals.

Be glad if your heart can see That all these things were bound to be, Not because the law says so But that's the way men have to grow. The hearts of stone lash out in fear Until the heart of flesh draws near; And when it's broken man is healed By my wounds in your hearts revealed.

Through all the pain, the lies, the fears He's born today down all the years. At last they felt the gentle breeze, They found their hearts renewed, at ease. They asked him then to stay and share The meal he'd helped them both prepare. He said the blessing, broke the bread; He shared his life where hope had fled, And when he vanished in the night There was no darkness, only light.

The earthquake has not swallowed all: He lives today, breathes out his call.

#### 8. ON GENTLE BREEZE

This song seeks to catch again the atmosphere of peace and tranquillity which, through the divine compassion, can flood the human heart in the midst of its anxieties and wretchedness. It was so with the two disciples at Emmaus, and with Elijah, as we saw in the last song. Every child of God, when he reaches the point where he is free enough to accept himself, can expect to share, each in his own way, this experience of the felt presence of the Spirit, urging him to live more fully the christian life in his own state and circumstances. This is what Ignatius calls consolation without cause (Exx 330). The song is also a kind of ignatian repetition: it calls to mind not only Elijah, Emmaus and Job (4, 12), but goes right back to the beginning of the bible — God walking in the garden in the cool of the evening (Gen 3, 8).

It echoes on a gentle breeze When least expected, undeserved. It echoes now down all the years, His still small voice on gentle breeze.

I breathe in you my healing air When darkness falls and near despair: I breathe again down all the years, A still small voice on gentle breeze.

I walk with you, I call your name When evening winds play through the trees I stir your heart to hope again, My still small voice on gentle breeze.

## 9. WONDER

The verses of this song refer to the seemingly irreconcilable spirits (consolation and desolation) of the Emmaus event: the black despair and the tiny hopes. They speak of the logical outcome of evil, not in the speculative terms of the theology of original sin, but the practical, sociological, ecological and theological results of our abuse and misuse of our environment and of one another, which should in itself lead to real desolation and disaster. But the wonder is that the earthquake has not destroyed, nor the fire; and I am still alive in spite of all. It is not that man goes scot-free because of God's forgiveness. On the contrary, his compassion, gratuitously offered, becomes the motive for living justly, for putting right order into our world. And this is precisely the thrust of the 'First Week' of the Exercises (Exx 53, 58-61, 63); it is the lesson of the parable of the Prodigal that we should 'come to ourselves' (Lk 15, 17).

I should have drowned, I should have died, I have no right to be surprised: The hell I make, things I abuse Rise up round me and now accuse.

But the earthquake has not swallowed me Nor fire burnt out my true desire, The gale has passed — I'm not outcast: Your still small voice surprises me: O wonder of your living breath, Breathe now in me, rise through my death.

I walk away, my hope all fled, I too should lie among the dead: My history is still the same, I still refuse to share the blame. I am a part of all men's sin, I dare not face where I begin. The very structure I support Oppresses men, brings hope to nought. I am the man who talks hot air, Mine is the heart that does not care. I am the man who passed you by, Blocked tight my ears against your cry. I am the man who joins the mob, Who howls for death, who plans to rob, I am the man whose niche I carve

From others' work, while others starve.

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### 10. LORD HAVE MERCY

This song gathers together the wealth of the Church's age-old experience of the 'Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction' (2 Cor 1, 3-4). In the words of the Council, 'the Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at once holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penitence and renewal' (Lumen Gentium, 8). So we begin with the 'Lord have mercy', the invocation which has always concluded the penitential rite in the liturgy and is integral to the contemplative petition so dear to the Eastern Church --the 'Jesus prayer', at once highly personal as well as ecclesial. The spoken invocation to Father, Son and Spirit is ignatian in that it forms the 'triple' colloquy: 'the colloquy', says Ignatius, 'is made, properly speaking, just as one friend speaks to another' (Exx 54). It also includes explicitly his reflective prayer of the sinner before Christ who is crucified for me and yet glorified: 'Lord, what have I done for you, what am I doing, what am I going to do for you?'

Finally we turn to pray, as the Lord asks, to the Spirit of the Father and ask that he might dwell in us, to discern in us and to direct us in action. We are not merely passive in our contemplation, looking down on the great uproar that is the sinful world, but truly involved with God's creation, striving with his grace and by the discerning power of the Spirit to reshape it according to his good will and desires.

Father, Creator, Eternal Lord of all, You make me in your image You call me by my name You bring me back to myself and to you I have sinned before heaven and before you. I am sorry . . . I ask forgiveness.

Jesus Christ, Friend, Liberator, Atonement of all. You remake me in your likeness, You come to me where I am, You heal my whole human life. What have I done for you? What am I doing for you? What shall I do for you? Holy Spirit, gentle presence,
Healing wind,
Love of God alive in man,
You heal our memories,
You send us to serve your world,
You lead us to the fulness of your family life.
Dwell in us, discern in us,
Direct us to our world's true needs . . .

#### II. I ACCEPT YOU

This is the most fundamental of all the songs in the cycle. It presents the ultimate basis of our hope and of our whole christian life: God has first loved us (1 Jn 4, 10). His attitude to us is not that of judge, but of the one who accepts, who refuses to condemn, who loves us at all times. My value lies in the fact that I am 'precious in his eyes', I am honoured and he loves me (Isai 43, 4). If we can respond to this great love with love, and open ourselves to him, there will be no room in our lives for harshness, no room for fear; instead our wounds will be healed, our sins forgiven and we will be truly free.

I accept you where you are, You can never go too far: I do not judge, do not condemn. Where you are now breathe again . . . again, again, now breathe again. A hundred times I said, do not fear; I mean it more now that I am near. I seek you where you dare not be, In your heart alive to me . . . alive, alive, alive to me. When I see you on the ground, Hear the harshness all around, I'm there with you though you can't see, You only need to turn to me . . . to me, to me, turn to me. Half of you says go away, The other half holds me to stay;

I he other half holds me to stay; I cannot leave, I cannot go, For at that point my healing flows . . . my healing flows, my healing flows.

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When I hear you hardly say, Lord, be merciful, I pray, There's nothing more I want to do Than open my heart to you . . . to you, to you, my heart to you.

Let my healing words breathe in, Forgive you now every sin: I am here to help you be Whole, alive, accepted, free . . . alive, alive, accepted, free.

#### 12. THANK YOU, LORD

We are forgiven and healed, not simply for our own sakes, but for each other: 'so that we might live, no longer for ourselves, but for him' — the Father and the Son and the Spirit, so that we too might be sent. This is our thanksgiving, our Eucharist, the consummation of our lives.

Thank you, Lord, my new heart sings, Reborn, restored, Renewed, revealed. You found my heart as dead as stone: You breathed in me, gave me your own.

Thank you, Lord, my healed heart sings, No fear, no dread, No memory stings. You walked with me down all my years, You give me joy in place of tears.

Thank you, Lord, my whole heart sings, It rises now on gentle winds. You fill my sail on open seas: You steer me home with gentle breeze.

Thank you, Lord, deep down I pray From where you've come to dwell and stay, What have I done? What shall I do? Lord, guide my life — lived now in you.

Thank you, Lord, our voices ring, And echo now with everything, For you live now in hearts and minds, You help our world your presence find.