

THE EXERCISES: A CREATIVE PROCESS

The role of the imagination in the Directed Retreat

By WILLIAM HEWETT

TO ACCEPT the hypothesis that making and giving the Spiritual Exercises is a personal experience of and participation in the divine creative process is an awesome thought. It may well be the most powerful reason why many thoughtfully holy people would rather not involve themselves in such an experience. Perhaps they fear, and not without cause, what might or should or does sometimes happen in the one-to-one relationship, which is the daily interview of the Directed Retreat. This is indeed to enter the inner sanctum of the other. Yet the Annotations and other directives of the Book of the Exercises, especially the Rules concerning the movement of the spirits proper to the first and the second weeks, leave us in no doubt that its author intended these interviews as one of the hinges of the Exercises. (This is not to deny that there are authentic 'Ignatian' means of intimately participating in this process by way of the admirable group-techniques used and popularized by Fr A. De Mello S.J., as well as those of the 'Intensive Journal' kind.¹)

The point at which Ignatius began the process himself is familiar enough, perhaps too familiar for us to grasp its real importance. He tells us in the *Autobiography* that after reading the *Vita Christi* of Ludolph and the *Legenda Aurea*, 'when he stopped to think and say to himself — how would it be if I did what St Francis did, or St Dominic did?', he was convinced that 'God was offering things to his imagination' (7); and that these reveries brought him consolation, not merely when he was thinking about them; but 'even when he put them aside, he remained happy and contented'. And this in opposition to his dreams of knightly chivalry, which, 'when he put them out of his mind in a moment of boredom, he was left in a state of

aimlessness and discontent (8). 'These', he says,

were the first reflections he ever made on the things of God, and when he came to make the Exercises, it was here precisely that he began to get some light on the diverse movements of the spirits (9).

The whole process, then, begins with the imagination. Initial consolation and desolation work through it. It would not be too much to say that, in the Exercises, Ignatius is teaching us to put our imagination to work as 'God offers it things', from the Principle and Foundation to the Contemplation for obtaining love. Ignatian prayer *par excellence* is imaginative contemplation. We can neither compose ourselves for nor make an end of the ignatian exercise without it: 'To see with the eyes of the imagination and to consider that my soul is imprisoned . . . imagining Christ our Lord present and hanging on the Cross, to enter into converse. . . . In like manner looking at myself . . .' (Exx 47,53).

If imagination is thus the power which energizes the exercitant so that he or she can move into the process of the Exercises, it will likewise move the director. It goes without saying that it can build up the fear of the process in the director as well as in the exercitant. It would seem that the director must also ask, 'what am I doing with it?' and 'what is it doing with me?'. Ironically enough, 'imagination' has been and still is a constant source of misunderstanding. We need to use it first to draw a veil across our clear and distinct notion of what it is. Many think of it simply as the ability to make satisfying fantasies — 'pictures in the mind'; and the temptation is for the director to soothe exercitants who complain that they lack such imagination by sharing the illusion that this is its real meaning — the inward counterpart of the TV 'action replay'. To catch a glimpse of how far such a notion is from Ignatius's rich and complex understanding of imagination, we need only recall briefly his second point in the Repetition normally called the 'Application of the Senses' — the final exercise on all those days when we are directed to contemplate the mysteries of Christ's life.

The fifth Contemplation will be to draw the five senses over and across (*traer los cinco sentidos sobre*) the first and second contemplation. . . . the second (point), to hear with the ear (of the imagination) what they [Christ himself, his Mother, etc] say or might say, and reflecting on oneself, to gather from it some profit (Exx 121-23).

Such a process is neither mechanistic, nor merely ritualistic: it is the heart of the ignatian methodology. What God offers to my

imagination through the experience of Christ our Lord, becomes my experience in so far as I appropriate and appreciate his. This experience manifests and declares to me what are my consolations and desolations: what moves me or repels me, what I welcome or shun. Our actual experiences are momentary; but the motor-power of imagination in reminiscence is such that this 'looking back over' the experience, becoming aware again of the accompanying movements of consolation and desolation, creates a new and more vivid experience: they gather strength, to the point at which they become indicative of where it is that the Lord is leading me, who see myself as Ignatius's 'poor pilgrim'. This is why Peter Favre will use such strong and evocative words as 'desire' 'affectivity', 'devotion', 'heart', to describe the reality of these experiences — lived again with a heightened awareness — of consolation and desolation² which lead us, as they led Favre, and his tutor Ignatius before him, from prayer into life and back again.

Highly significant, of course, in any assessment of the awareness and imaginative experience of Ignatius is his undoubted artistic sensibility. Ribadeneira — who, incidentally, seemed to have resented the fact that Ignatius chose to dictate his Autobiography to Luiz Gonçalves da Camara, and was responsible for its being overshadowed in its original form until this century, by his own 'Life' — remarks on the great consolation Ignatius enjoyed from the liturgical music of the mid-sixteenth century.³ In fact, a distinguished american poet and critic has singled out Ignatius as one of the true poets of the catholic tradition, on the strength of the *Spiritual Exercises*, along with Francis of Assisi and John of the Cross.⁴ One is reminded of Koestler's 'tryptich-symbol' in describing the imagination: the linked figures on the three panels — the sage in the middle, with the jester and the artist on either side; as long, that is, as we avoid the mistake of confusing the jester with the comedian, reaching into the profound and paradoxical shakespearean sense of clown,⁵ and add it to Unamuno's delightful evocation of the quixotic Inigo.

The eccentricities and the incongruities revealed in the *Autobiography* are too well known to need rehearsing here; whilst a moment's thought on, say, the figure of the Adversary in the rules for Discretion of Spirits applicable to the first week reveals how Ignatius is assisting us to our own experiential conclusion that the Devil is indeed a 'laughing matter': 'a h'ass', as another eccentric, Archbishop Ullathorne, remarked on his death-bed. It is the role of the artist to make us marvel, says Koestler, and of the sage to make us understand. If one puts the *Autobiography* into the first person and reads it aloud, we see how humour, wisdom and wonder are at the

heart of the conversion experience, which is the means to as well as the end of every truly creative prayer-process; and for Ignatius of course, of the process which first takes contemplation into choice, and thus leads the contemplative out 'into apostolic action' (*usque ad actionem*): 'To see with the eye of the imagination the synagogues, towns and country places through which our Lord went preaching' (Exx 91).

Ignatius, then, first transposes his lived experience by means of his imaginative power into the *Autobiography*; and da Camara, in his Introduction (1-5) gives a most vivid account of what it cost Ignatius to bring himself to the point of choosing to speak it out. In fact, the very act of speaking out these memories is closely akin to, indeed it is the supreme model of, what the exercitant is doing in the daily interview: that is, telling out loud to the director what things God is doing in his life and his prayer. The fact that this exchange can also be seen as an artistic process, a mutual creation of a dramatic dialogue or a miniature song (of songs!), accompanied on the director's 'piano', does not by any means necessarily artificialize it (though the danger exists; no created thing is utterly foolproof or free of potential deception and illusion). Rather, it should enhance the quality of the real experience by relating it, through enriching resonances, to fuller meaning. This is to expand what da Camara writes:

His normal way of telling his story is to recount everything with such a clarity that he seems to bring the past to life before the very eyes of the reader. Nor was there ever any need to ask a question; our Father never left anything unsaid which was helpful to know (3).

There is ample witness, from first companions like Jerome Nadal and Oliver Manares,⁶ that the Exercises are a sort of manual drawn from this lived experience, showing that what God had done in him, 'blind soul as he was',⁷ God would wish to do for others who desired to enter into this same creative process.

This ability to use images, to retain them and to transpose them, is also the key to his relationships with others, as the *Autobiography* informs us, when, for example, he is invited into the household of a rich Spaniard in Venice, whilst he is seeking for a ship to take him to Jerusalem:

Since Manresa, it had been the pilgrim's practice, whenever he took a meal with others, never to speak whilst they were at table, except to reply in the briefest way. Instead, he just kept listening to what

was said, gathering together [the word is highly significant] some of the things which would give him the opportunity of speaking about God; which is what he did when the meal was over (42).

And this was the reason why the man of substance and all his family grew so fond of him that they wanted to keep him with them and made every effort to have him stay; and his host took him to the Doge of Venice, that he (Ignatius) might speak with him: that is, he got an entrée and audience for him (43).

When he was first questioned at Alcalà about his 'preaching', he makes similar allusion to this way of listening and gathering what would present him with the opportunity of speaking about God:

'What is it that you preach about?', said the sub-prior. 'We do not preach', replied the pilgrim. 'We simply talk in a familiar way with people about the things of God: for instance, after a meal, with the people who invite us' (65).

The *Autobiography* is thus an instrument by means of which Ignatius remembers his own past and sees how God was working in his past, in order to present it to the reader, that he in turn might 'derive profit' from it. In a similar way, he enters into the creative process of others, first by listening, then by 'gathering up', and by representing whatever there is in their conversation or stories, which lead him, out of *their* recounted experience, to speak of divine things. We might ask what simpler way is there of explaining his method as a Director of his Exercises. He is a story-teller, gathering his material, reflecting upon it, and in reproducing it, with a shape which he imposes upon it, presents it to its original creator (the speaker) for further reflection; and — in the case of the Exercises — for prayer, for decision-making, for the activity of christian life.

It is by no means accidental that we find historians of art and professional critics speaking of the same creative process, as they turn their attention to the fundamental problem of the relationship between living and creating in an artist. Creativity is equally at the root of artistic expression and life experience.

Lived experience can only be understood as the expression of volitional creative impulse. And in this, the two spheres of artistic production and actual experience overlap. Then, too, the creative impulse itself is manifested first and chiefly in the personality, which being thus perpetually made over, produces art work and experience in the same way.⁸

'Spiritual exercises for taking control over oneself, and for ordering one's life (*ordenar su vida*), without being compelled by any affection that is disordered' (Exx 21). If we read Inigo's title against the background of his bible — the Vulgate, the phrases and images from the sapiential books crowd our memories:

Wisdom reacheth therefore from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly. Her have I loved and have sought her from my youth, and have desired to take her for my spouse. . . . For it is she that teacheth the knowledge of God, and is the chooser of his works . . . and if sense [imagination] do work, who is a more artful worker than she? (Wis 8,1-8).

I was set up (*ordinata sum*) from eternity . . . I was with him forming all things: and was delighted every day, playing before him at all times (Prov 8,23ff).

He brought me into his chamber and set charity in order in me (Cant 2,4).

Ignatius echoes, then, the divine creative process: the experience of God's wisdom in life's events, 'motored' and stored by the power of the imagination in the graced memory, to be turned again into every act which 'chooses life' (Deut 30,19); so that the art-work turns again into the enhancement of life-experience. So it is that the artist's whole psychology, as centred over and again on the experience, 'can only be explained through the creative impulse to turn ephemeral life into personal immortality. In creation he tries to immortalize his mortal life. He desires to transform death into life as it were, though actually he transforms life into death'.⁹ 'Immortalizing life'. Certainly a legitimate expression of the way the Lord leads one through experience re-produced and being reproduced — artistically transformed: the prayer-process of the Exercises, where I see my life as God sees it; how I come to appreciate the value and dignity of who I am, as all this happens to me in the ordinary ephemeral facts of life; how I juxtapose them with their eternal kernel, as my passing life is related to the reality of God acting.

' . . . to transform death into life, though actually he transforms life into death'. The process is so integral to the Exercises that the artistry of it almost passes us by unnoticed. 'Imagining Christ on the cross, to have converse with him, how from being creator he is come to become man, from eternal life to temporal death — to die for my sins — and so to look at myself, what have I done for Christ, what am I doing, what ought I to do — and seeing him thus, to move backwards and forwards over what shall offer itself to me' (Exx 53).

Or: 'to pay regard . . . to see Christ our Lord . . . crying to each one in particular; he who desires to come with me must labour with me, so that following me in pain, he may follow me in glory' (Exx 95). Or again: 'to look at and to weigh all that they do — in order that the Lord may be born in poverty, and after those many labours — may die on a cross, and all this for me. So, reflecting, I may gather some spiritual profit' (Exx 116).

The dangers or the illusions surrounding this gift of imaginative wisdom, the attraction to an apparently good life which is in reality a life of escape, a running away from the scene, is illustrated in an experience 'in the stream of life' of Ignatius, referred to in passing in the *Autobiography*, concerning his years in Paris: 'During this time he was in the company of Masters Peter Favre and Francis Xavier, whom he later won over to God's service by means of the Exercises' (82). The 'process' was too well known to be recounted at length in the *Autobiography* as its first french translator notes.¹⁰ Ignatius played the Francis who was looking forward to a life profuse with golden moments, as a musician creates variations on a theme, by *repeatedly* redirecting his imagination to see and hear Christ saying, 'whoever will save his life shall lose it . . . what advantage is it to a man if he possess his whole world, and lose himself, and cast away himself?' (Lk 9,23-27).

Ignatius's tactic of directing Xavier's imagination to this passage is not, I would suggest, to *provoke from without* a moralistic fear, but rather to *evoke* a free and freeing experience in Francis: one that would flow from his own pre-scriptural pre-'Exercises' awareness. To use the modern jargon, Inigo's was an artistry as well as a therapy, enabling Francis to be in touch with his own 're-membered', actual, truthful 'responses', and thus to come to a more fully reflected, more deeply enriched and 'at-oned response-ability' in Christ. Here we find ourselves at the heart of the ignatian process; and also offer a valid response to those who insist, 'I have no imagination'. The very act of re-membling earlier, actual experiences of joy and delight, as well as of challenge and disturbance, is itself supremely the work of the imagination in its richest ignatian sense, as well as that of modern psychology.¹¹

'The creative work', says Rank, 'no longer has any significance for the creator once he has produced it. He, therefore, again takes refuge in life, and again forms experiences which for their part represent only mortality'.¹² So Solomon imagines himself as passing from one wise act to another: 'I shall be found of a quick conceit in judgment, and shall be admired in the sight of the mighty . . . by the means of her [imaginative wisdom] I shall have immortality: and shall leave behind me an everlasting memory . . . thinking these

things within myself, and pondering them in my heart¹³ . . . that to be allied to wisdom is immortality . . . I went about seeking, that I might take her to myself. And I was a witty child and received in exchange a good soul' (Wis 8,11-19).¹⁴

'To take refuge in life': to move on and into life again means that the artist can gather more experience for yet another and richer production. Ignatius tells us that during his period of scruples at Manresa, 'he overcame in himself the distaste and loathing for life which continued to drive him', so that 'the Lord allowed him to awaken as from a dream'. Again it was 'thanks to the lesson God had given him' that 'he began to go into the matter of how this spirit had entered into him'. He also reflected on how what he thought were consolations were robbing him of his sleep: 'and so he began to ask himself if these lights came from the good spirit' (24-26). It was during this time that 'God treated him in the way a schoolmaster handles a child he is teaching': moving him through experiences, which he recounts with the genius of lucidity and economy. He concludes with his reflection on his life-enhancing Cardoner experience, very familiar to us, but well worth the repetition in the context of the imaginative — artistic — prayer process:

. . . when he gathers up all the help he has received from God, and all the things he has learnt during the course of his life up to the age of sixty-two, and brings them together in one story, it seems to him that all together it does not amount to what he received in this single event (30).

Yet it was an experience immediately followed by the vision he had often had before — of the beautiful thing with so many eyes; and equally often he had wondered what it was. Now he realized that it was the Evil one: the one experience clarifying a host of other imaginative events (32). In the same way, the Exercises have to be re-experienced over and again; so that the truly creative experiences may be newly represented. What led to life will lead to new life; what were mere appearances will be recognized for what they are: dead, because now broken, shrivelled, fossilized. As the great commentators on the *Cantic of Canticles* insist, one after another, the whole point of the graced imagination is that it enables us to remember these past experiences as contributing to this 'ongoing' creative process. 'Draw me in the fragrance of your perfume' (Cant 1,3). This reminiscence is like the fragrance of scented oil: it lingers, and entices us to seek out again its source.

'Imagination', it has been said, 'is a function which in itself is to some extent synthetic. It can operate at several levels concurrently:

those of sensation, thinking, feeling and intuition. It includes all these various types, such as visualization — the evocation of visual images, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic imagination and so on'.¹⁵ This much, we assume, the director is only too well aware of before he begins. As we have noticed, most retreatants have far too narrow a sense of the ignatian *imaginar* — a lack of awareness which easily prevents them from ever entering into the creative process of the Exercises. But Assiegoli speaks more sharply to our point:

In the precise sense of evoking and creating images, imagination is one of the most important and actively spontaneous functions of the human psyche, both in its conscious and unconscious aspects or levels. Therefore, it has to be controlled, to be dispersed when excessive, to be trained when weak, and to be utilized according to its great potency.¹⁶

In fact, this is no more than a recasting of what Richard of St Victor says in his treatise on preparation for contemplation, *Benjamin Minor*.¹⁷ We could adopt the scholastic adage and say *nihil in appetitu nisi prius in imaginatione*: in ignatian terms, consolation and desolation originate in the imaginative faculty — which remains true however one interprets 'consolation without a cause'. It is by means of the imagination that we recall our previous experiences, and enter into them so that they become our present experience. We may even say that the imagination thus enhances, completes and fulfils the present experience, unifying it and synthesizing it, bringing about the at-one-ment of it.

The imaginative contemplation in the book of Ignatius is thus an ascetical exercise. The rules for temperance (Exx 83-84) might well be applied to it, in the sense that we must not let it run riot. For example, in the point to which we referred in the fifth contemplation on the Incarnation and the Nativity — 'hearing the things that they say or may say' (Exx 123), the imagination might become hallucinatory. Certainly, however one might think of or respond to Inigo's own statement, in the context of his imaginative visions of Christ in his humanity, or of our Lady, as a director one would be cautious:

These visions which he had were a confirmation for him at the time [at Manresa] and gave him so strong and permanent assurance in his faith, that he often thought to himself, 'if there were no Scripture which taught us these things of the faith, I would still be ready to die for them, simply because of what I saw at that time' (29).

'Hearing the things that they may say' certainly can open up a whole world of creative imagination; and not infrequently the director

encounters exercitants who manifest a powerful experience of being present to the real presence of the living Lord. But equally the history of christian spirituality is strewn with pseudo-mystics, with unconscious frauds, victims of self-delusion and what is now characterized as nervous hysteria. The Church and those saints who have been the recipients of genuine mystical experience have always been alive to the possibility of illusion. Hence the constant ignatian return to the rules for Discretion of spirits 'more suitable to the second week'.

However this may be, 'to be trained when weak' is perhaps the more important advice to present-day directors. Because of the bombardment of the visual sense, our imaginations tend to be trivialized. When Ignatius writes of the Nativity, 'The first point is to see the persons . . . the child Jesus just as he is born . . . looking at them, contemplating them, serving them in their needs . . . as if I were present there', he adds, 'with all possible reverence' (Exx 114). An imagination that drools over into sentimentalizing will lead to desolation. One of the last lessons we learn from the *Autobiography* is that devotion, in the life and direction of Ignatius, is simply defined as 'the facility for finding God' (99). And there can be no doubt that a crucial function of the repetition is to allow time for the imagination of the exercitant to emerge, to evoke what is hidden, to discover in oneself and for oneself 'how God works in me' and 'the things he offers to the imagination'.

The Ignatian process: classical and romantic

It has frequently been remarked that Inigo Loyola represents the transition from the medieval man to the renaissance man: a notion that has been emphasized by John Futrell's account of the feudal climate in which the basque Hidalgo grew up, loved and fought until his conversion.¹⁸ Here we wish to stress the importance of the 'two cultures' in terms of the classical and romantic types of artistic process, bearing in mind the strong baroque strain in the art and architecture so favoured and fostered in the early Society (one need only recall the main examples of baroque architecture in Rome, the *Gesù*, *Sant'Ignazio* and *Sant'Andrea in Quirinale* — all Jesuit). We may usefully quote again from Otto Rank, as he distinguishes the classical and the romantic type of artist:

The classical type, who is possibly poorer within yet nearer to life, more vital, takes it from without: that is, immortal work from mortal life, without necessarily having first transformed it into personal experience, as in the case of the romantic. For to the romantic, experience of his own appears to be an essential

preliminary to productivity, although he does not use experience for the enrichment of his own personality: to economize the personal experiences the burden of which he would escape. Thus the one artist-type constantly makes use of life other than his own — nature, in fact — for the purpose of creating; whilst the other (the romantic) can create only by perpetually sacrificing his own life.¹⁹

For our purposes, the essential difference is that the classical type does not necessarily pass through experience in the same way. It would seem that, at least since the restoration of the Society in the early nineteenth century until little more than a decade ago, we Jesuits always gave the Exercises in a 'classical' manner: symmetrical, ordered, but with little or no emphasis on personal involvement. Once we open the door on this latter, we are bound to lead the exercitant into the romantic creative activity, which invites one 'perpetually to sacrifice his own life'. Inevitably, the direction is towards the giving of my very self — this is the constant petition; towards mobilizing myself in self-offering — this is entering into the 'action of the contemplation'; towards being vulnerable — this is 'deriving some profit for myself': that is, asking the authentic question of the great romantic St Paul, as he sheds the order and symmetry of the law — 'Lord, what would you have me do?' (Acts 9,6). And the director, through *his* romantic imagination, must become compassionate as the Father and Christ are compassionate (cf Mt 5,48; 11,28-30); he too must undergo this alchemy of change in his own experience. How often does the director find that he wants — even needs — peace, like each of the 'three couples of men'? (Exx 150) In the classical mould, he need not give himself totally; he can find substitutes — either those to whom he preaches, or in the text itself. The director must himself leave himself, to give himself to the 'one who receives the Exercises', in order to find himself.

So it is that the layers of the self can surface in the imaginative contemplations which are the beginning and the end of the creative process of the Exercises. They are the constant measure of my involvement, informing me whether I am a mere onlooker in the human/divine experience of Christ in his successive encounters — his 'mysteries'. The director is the one who accentuates what is happening. He can, to change the metaphor, orchestrate it. (Hence the 'directed' retreat need not be entirely on one-to-one basis; for the elements of the relationship can be present in a group, as Anthony de Mellow, for one, has shown.)

We must notice, as well, that our modern world is witnessing the breakdown of the classical style or mode. Perhaps one who has

analysed it for us most thoroughly is Bernard Lonergan; and it is well worth citing him at length in our context: the role of the director in the creative, imaginative process which is the Spiritual Exercises, with its analogues in the artistic process. 'From the modern viewpoint', says Lonergan, 'classical culture appears as a somewhat arbitrary standardization of man. It distinguished the literal and figurative meanings of words and phrases . . . the figurative a dress or ornament which makes the literal more striking, more vivid, more effective. . . . It is only through uncounted centuries of development that the human mind succeeds in . . . distinguishing literal truth from figurative expressions. . . . But this achievement, if a necessary stage in the development of the human mind, easily obscures man's nature, obstructs his spontaneity, saps his vitality, limits his freedom . . . the human spirit expresses itself in symbols before it knows — if ever it knows — what its symbols literally mean. It is to open the way to setting aside the classical definition of man as a rational animal, but instead . . . as a symbolic animal and . . . as incarnate spirit'.²⁰

To be faced with so uncompromising a statement from one of the outstanding exponents of classical catholic theology is daunting, to say the least. However, we see that this symbolic and artistic emphasis moves us closer to what Ignatius calls 'positive doctrine': noting that 'it is more proper to the positive doctors, for example St Jerome, St Augustine and St Gregory, etc., to move the affections so as to love and serve God our Lord wholly' (Exx 363). It is nearer to humankind than the classical, which does not necessarily involve personal experience of revelation; and it is thus more akin to the ignatian prayer-process. Imaginative contemplation, as we have come to see, plunges us into the state of becoming, out of our personal experience, so that we cease to be mere monuments to past experience. It is no longer a question simply of 'imitating the model', but to walk the way of the model, or to build something new in our discovery of the process. We gradually come to realize that the Exercises are tantalizingly incomplete; and necessarily so, as Ignatius beckons us to enter into the way he found that he must take to Christ, as we must find our own way.

The election, the fundamental option, is thus described by Lonergan:

What are we to choose to be? What are we to choose to make of ourselves? In our lives there still comes the moment of existential crisis, when we find out that we have to decide for ourselves what we, by our own choices and decisions, are to make of ourselves. But the psychologists and the phenomenologists and the existentialists

have revealed to us our myriad potentialities without pointing out the tree of life, without unravelling the secret of good and evil. And when we turn from our mysterious interiority to the world about us for instruction, we are confronted with a similar multiplicity, an endless refinement, a great technical exactness and an ultimate inconclusiveness.²¹

Definitions and doctrines no longer compel our assent, nor do they support us to the point of releasing us from personal responsibility. The 'classical mediation of meaning' has broken down and is being replaced by a modern mediation which strives to analyse but only succeeds in beguiling; which compares and contrasts a myriad new forms across language and literature, artistic, moral and political systems, family-patterns and religious sects, but without being able, in the attempt to understand them, to judge and evaluate them. It is thus left to the individual to judge and to decide — a task which seems to outstrip his capabilities. The crisis, however, is not one of faith, but of culture. 'There has been no new revelation from on high to replace the revelation given in Christ Jesus. . . . There is bound to be formed a solid right, to live in a world which no longer exists . . . a scattered left, captivated now by this, now by that new development. . . . But what will count is a perhaps not numerous centre . . . at home with both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half-measures, and to insist on complete solutions, though it has to wait'.²²

' . . . but the labourers are few'. Ignatius never expected his Exercises to be popular in terms of numbers. As we adapt them for our own times — similar to his at least in the radicality of the change and the complete breakdown of an older order, the work of the Director is still similar: to bring the suitable exercitant to appropriate and appreciate Inigo's mode of personal discovery and delight in the christian tradition as experienced in the 'sacrament of each present moment' of our lives.

Such appreciation must flow from the individual's realization of this break-down of the classical mediation of meaning, the necessary re-expression in our own time and environment of man as the symbolizer, ready as Inigo was to enter into the creative process of mediating meaning to himself and for others. The question 'how would he have done it today?' irritates, may be; but it is obvious at the least that he would not have done it as he did it in his own day. As he points out in the consideration of the election, if it is not possible to be an absolute beginner, re-formation is exacting and costly enough (Exx 189). It is equally revolutionary, in that we allow

ourselves to be drawn into the process of using the creative imagination to convert and to transform the mundane detail of everyday experience into the enriched, reflected, prayed-out and remembered experience, with all its facing up to sorrow, with its entering into our personal and authentic story: to the extent that God strikes us and heals us through our own imaginative power, his ultimate gift. Only thus does he lead us into the delighted appreciation of the world which can change structures, worlds and hearts, in that it can release the true self in every human spirit. It is what makes the 'lame leap like the hart, and the dumb sing'. It has ever been the effective way of preaching the gospel of justice, love and peace to us his poor, in all our guises.

NOTES

¹ Cf my article, 'Creative Loneliness', in *The Way*, 16 (October, 1976), pp 274-83. And Dr Ira Progoff, *At a Journal Workshop* (New York, 1975). I have come to appreciate from experience the importance of close familiarity with Progoff's authentic process, and its value in conjunction with giving the Exercises.

² Cf Brian O'Leary S.J., *The Discernment of Spirits in the 'Memoriale of Bl Peter Favre'*, in *Supplement to The Way*, 35 (Spring, 1979), pp 56ff.

³ Pedro Ribadeneira S.J., *Vita Ignatii* (first published in Naples, 1572) I, 418.

⁴ Cf *infra*, p 17.

⁵ One is instinctively reminded of figures like Jacques in *As you like it*, the fool in *King Lear*, and Feste in *Twelfth Night*.

⁶ Cf Paul Molinari S.J., 'The place of the Kingdom in apostolic spirituality', in *Supplement to The Way*, 18 (Spring, 1973), pp 53ff.

⁷ *Autobiography*, 14; cf Exx 106.

⁸ Otto Rank, 'Myth of the birth of the hero', in *Art and Artist*, ed Philip Freund (New York, 1976), ch iii, 'Life and creation', pp 103ff.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Cf *Le récit du pèlerin*, ed Eugène Thibaut S.J. (Paris, 1924), p 134.

¹¹ Cf Ira Progoff, *The practice of process meditation* (New York, 1980); and A. de Mello S.J., *Sadhana: a way to God*; see also my own *Ways of Awareness* (cassette: Croakham Farm, Edenbridge, Kent).

¹² Rank, *loc. cit.*, p 140.

¹³ This is our Lady's 'creative process' — cf Lk 2,19.51. See M. Giuliani S.J., 'Notre Dame dans les Exercices', in *Christus*, I, 3 (1954), pp 34ff.

¹⁴ Robert Bolt, in his play on St Thomas More, *A man for all seasons*, uses the phrase, 'to serve him wittily in the tangle of my mind'. Cf *infra*, p 59.

¹⁵ Roberto Assievoli, *Psychosynthesis* (Wellingborough, Northampton, 1980), p 143.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Richard was prescribed jesuit novitiate reading, in the first extant hand-list, 1573: Cf J. de Guibert S.J., *The Jesuits: their spiritual doctrine and practice* (Chicago, 1964), p 216.

¹⁸ Cf *Making an apostolic community of love* (St Louis, 1970), 'Cultural patterns', pp 56ff.

¹⁹ Rank, *loc. cit.*, p 149.

²⁰ Cf *Collection: Papers of Lonergan*, ed Frederick Crowe S.J. (Montreal, 1967), pp 262-63.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p 264.

²² *Ibid.*, p 266-67.