

The remarkable shifts of the third transition

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IMAGINE THESE TWO EVENTS: during the Second Vatican Council, a young Jesuit preached to several hundred religious women, four times each summer day, eight days in a row. He quoted De Lubac, Congar, Teilhard and a lot of Scripture; but he included every 'essential' meditation in the Spiritual Exercises. That same summer, he preached most of the same meditations (different stories) to sixty lay men, five times a day for three full days. That was thirty-five years ago. Then this past summer, the same Jesuit joined another priest, two religious, and one lay woman to guide a group through the thirty-day retreat. At the same time, he was assisting a lay programme of Exercises in Daily Life.

The paragraphs that follow try to account for the transition from the formality of that first summer to the flexibility of the recent one. The account begins with a sketch of the three great transitions in retreats during this century, and tells how those transitions have changed the retreat house. Then it details a few of the remarkable shifts – who guides, who makes retreats, and what retreats have come to be – in the current transition, the third in the century, from the formal to the flexible.¹

The first and second transitions

The first of three major transitions in retreats began a century ago when only religious, clergy and upper-class laity made retreats. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, in Belgium, France and Germany, retreat-givers began a movement to bring the silent retreat to as many lay men and women as possible. Around the Catholic world they built numerous retreat houses, engaged whole parishes, and applied spirituality to the transformation of industrial society.² This first transition marks the early democratization of spirituality, as houses were built in Holland and India, Madagascar and New York.³ It also established spirituality's connection with social realities, a connection which weakened during the century even though it remained official and is recrudescing today.⁴

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The second transition was beginning when, in 1922, Pope Pius XI declared St Ignatius 'patron of all Spiritual Exercises'. At that time, retreats were of every kind: weekends of the Laymen's Retreat League, days to teach labourers the Church's social doctrine, and longer retreats to introduce the young into Salesian and other spiritual traditions. All of these 'methods of spiritual exercises, which very laudably adhere to the principles of sound Catholic asceticism', the pope thought excellent; but 'one has ever held the foremost place'.⁵ Backed by bishops around the globe, he published *Mens nostra* in 1929, the encyclical that made St Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises almost church policy.⁶ All the other methods of spiritual exercises continued in use, of course. But by the Second World War, Pius XI had created a formal identity: *retreat* meant St Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises.

In the run-up to the Second Vatican Council, the Exercises reached 'the height of their development'.⁷ That is to say, retreat-givers faithfully covered the essential meditations of the Spiritual Exercises 'adapted' for each particular group. Many were preaching the doctrines of *Quadragesimo anno* and *Mystici corporis*, and, after *Divino afflante Spiritu*, using Scripture generously. But after the Council, they faced a spreading conviction among religious (emphatically including Jesuits) that the retreat had become an empty formality. Some even felt that *Spiritual Exercises* was dated, irretrievably riveted to its sixteenth-century context.⁸

The current transition, the third

Throughout these two transitions, scholars had been editing texts, publishing historical studies of spiritualities, and beginning empirical investigations.⁹ Thus, when the first scholarly edition of *Spiritual Exercises* was printed in 1919, early surveys of popular spirituality were being published.¹⁰ The scholarship was spread by journals and strongly influenced this third transition: *Manresa* in Spanish, *Christus* in French, and from 1961, *The Way* in English. In this last, just as the Council got under way, guides read about the traditional retreat that 'the adaptation required to condense into eight or six days, or even less, exercises designed to be given to individuals and spread over four weeks, has tended to distort their original structure'. The young priest who gave the retreat thirty-five years ago was then under the impression that he was following precisely and exactly the essentials of 'the original structure'. As to the 'essentials', *The Way* felt that they 'have very often been sacrificed to community routine and custom'.¹¹

This was the situation when the third transition in this century began, seemingly abruptly, at the end of the sixties. It left a few formal retreats, but swiftly created flexible variations on Ignatian Exercises and on every other kind: individual direction, retreats on themes, women giving retreats, weeks in a hermitage, teams of directors, ecumenical and inter-faith retreats. The transition touched everyone: the Camaldolese began accepting people for weeks of hermit living; Benedictine monasteries housed guests for long periods of prayer in rhythm with the Divine Office; women religious began giving their own novices the long retreat. The eight-day Ignatian Exercises were framed by one of the Gospels or strung out on a theme; then the themes supplanted the Weeks. As the transition has matured, the word *retreat* no longer means days in silence and prayer; it certainly does not mean only Ignatian exercises. It might now mean *workshop*, *faith-sharing* or *seminar* as well as some prayer experiences that last for months, like Exercises in Daily Life, or that recur at stated intervals like Exercises *in etapas* or stages.¹²

These changes have not all happened everywhere and some are more complete in one place than in another. There have been no encyclicals. One-to-one direction, for instance, is the paradigm of the retreat in Northern Europe and North America, where it began. The preached retreat remains common in Mediterranean Europe and parts of Africa, sometimes accommodated as the guided retreat.¹³ Exercises *in etapas* or stages are well established in Spain and in Poland but practised hardly at all in Latin America or the United States. Spending a week in monastic prayer has grown common in Western Europe but remains unlikely in Eastern Europe; a week in a zendo can happen in India but not in Latin America.¹⁴

The pace of the transition commonly depends on the culture. For instance, the incorporation of lay women and men on retreat-house staffs is farthest advanced in English- and French-speaking countries and in Germany; it has begun in most Latin countries but remains unfeasible in most of the Eastern world. And again, some practices already mature in one place will be just starting in another. For instance, programmes to train lay directors have thrived for twenty-five years or more in northern Europe, England and North America; they have hardly begun in Korea, Argentina or Malaysia.

Retreat house and spirituality centre

This flexible variety now runs through the many hundreds of retreat houses in the Church, some now owned and run by laity.¹⁵ Many

continue offering the preached or the conference retreat: houses in Eastern Europe like the one at Gdynia in Poland must still provide the annual retreat for religious, who were deprived of retreats for decades. In Malaysia and Taiwan, houses do the same and also have active programmes for the young. However, the past thirty years have changed even these retreat houses a great deal. Most have long since expanded the schedule of formal weekend retreats by adding directed retreats. Houses that began giving eight- and thirty-day directed retreats (often ex-novitiates) have added other kinds of activities. A number of retreat houses offer long formation programmes that include a retreat; the Instituto Centroamericano de Espiritualidad in Guatemala, for instance, offers a sophisticated programme in enculturation, human maturity and spirituality. Houses ordinarily print brochures advertising evenings, weekends or workshops on prayer or discernment; journaling, personal growth, or the Enneagram; and psychology and spirituality, to cite a few advertised by Malta's Mount St Joseph. A growing number, including Campion Hall in Melbourne and Changhua in Taiwan, have begun programmes to train spiritual directors and retreat directors.

With these new activities, houses take a new formal identity: the *spirituality centre*. The newer ones are not offspring of older centres which have had international influence, some beginning in the seventies and earlier: St Beuno's in Wales, Centro de Loyola in Spain, Guelph in Canada, the Société de Bienfaisance in France. Nor does the newer centre look much like the larger institutions that have been quietly but strongly influential, like the Centre Manrèse in Québec, Wernersville in the United States, Czestochowa in Poland, and São Leopoldo in Brazil. The newer spirituality centre is sometimes a set of offices supporting flexible programming and outreach, often into surrounding parishes. Numerous mother houses are now centres, and dioceses are transforming grand seminaries like Mundelein in Chicago into diocesan spirituality centres. In Eastern Europe, it is true, and in the less affluent areas of countries like Argentina, buildings still go up as retreat houses. But from Austria to Taiwan, from Anchorage to Melbourne, the transition is to centres of spirituality.

The centres are commonly right in the middle of a city, either moved there from a remote retreat house as was the centre in Toulouse or founded directly, as were the ones in San Diego and Tokyo. Cenacles which were once on the peripheries of cities are now engulfed in urban sprawl, and have become centres. Few are more than ten years old as

centres, so that they incorporate the great changes made during this transition.

The formal and the flexible

What were *changes* thirty or more years ago have grown into formal practices or convictions. Many of them have been tested, reflected upon, discussed and confirmed. For this reason, the third transition can no longer be understood as simply a shift from the formal to the flexible. For within the flexibilities have emerged some correct attitudes and established practices. For example, the common conviction today is that every Christian, not only the religious and the priest, has a right to a spiritual life. And a correct attitude toward experimentation in giving retreats is confidence and trust. During the past three decades, consequently, practices like centring, danced prayer and the spirituality of the Enneagram have become popular, thrived, and then have either yielded to others or become a formal part of the retreat repertory.

Under the pressure of this experimentalism and of the thirst for spiritual experience, two formal concurrences have emerged that are worth noting. The first is a willingness to formalize technique. Already in the mid-seventies, for instance, Judith Roemer called attention to a growing 'formalism which could reduce discernment to a technique'; and with many others, she joined the struggle against too great an enthusiasm for that or any other 'technique'.¹⁶ The second formal concurrence is that those who give retreats do not need to be concerned about what happens after them. This concurrence is under pressure, because everywhere in the world those who make retreats want to know what comes next. It is extraordinary how many wish to belong to some kind of group. One response to this desiring has been the establishment of programmes to train retreatants to give spiritual companionship or Exercises. However, it is informative that very many (most, it seems) who go through these programmes never go on to be companions or guides. They are seeking something else, perhaps a form of life or some formal structure for their spiritual experience. In a few places (northern Europe and England, for instance) guides have begun to think it useful to keep in touch with former retreatants, though no one is yet sure what form that will take.

The Ignatian long retreat

This thirst for experience has been moving people to lengthy stays in monasteries or hermitages. It has also moved many to the month-long

Exercises. Retreat houses like that in Varese in Italy, which a few years ago were offering just one long retreat each year, have added a second and a third, all completely subscribed. In part, the long retreat has remained what it was before the Council, a vehicle for confirming or re-kindling a religious vocation.¹⁷ But the long retreat is being called for by more and more people of varied background.

Many still make it along with others in a group, a generally accepted formal arrangement, though some directors in Germany and Spain feel that individuals do better alone, and prefer giving the Exercises in Daily Life to the long retreat in a group. The formality of having everyone make 'resolutions', however, was quickly and universally corrected, and the value of the election has been re-established. The retreat to make an election of a state in life is no longer uncommon.¹⁸ Hidden here is a clear indication how swiftly this third transition developed: few of the guides now directing retreats of election have ever made one themselves.

For some time the directed long retreat was given to whoever wished to make it. Many came because they wanted to – a holy desire but not one mentioned in Annotation 5. After some painful experiences (two or three people a year sent away without 'finishing', which continues to happen) the retreat centres began a more careful screening of candidates. Centres now use a nearly universal process of filling in forms, getting recommendations, and recounting personal spiritual history. Directors ask whether the screening is adequate and some centres now have activities prior to the long retreat ('disposition days'), and the practice is spreading. A handful of guides give long retreats only reluctantly, preferring to work with an exercitant over a long period of time, including Exercises according to Annotation 19.

The difficulty of screening is being compounded by a new kind of retreatant: the ordinand. Notably in Korea, Italy and the Philippines, but in many dioceses elsewhere as well, ordinands are being sent to make the long retreat. They rarely make adequate retreatants; most have not prayed mentally or had any serious spiritual direction. At the retreat house in Cebu in the Philippines, one director simply tells the men that they are not making the Spiritual Exercises but thirty days of good prayer. The men seem relieved. Italian Jesuits courteously wrote for the bishops a page-long sketch of minimal dispositions. One director in Manila takes her team to the seminary to prepare the men during the years before they are required to make the Exercises.

Flexible experience of the truth

In the preconciliar formal retreat – including Ignatian – the matter given was the truths of revelation, that is, the ‘Truths’. Pius XI had lauded ‘the wonderful and lucid order in the meditation of truths that seem to follow naturally one from another’ in the *Exercises*.¹⁹ A lesser authority pronounced them ‘a center upon which converges the whole of Christian doctrine’.²⁰ Too often in the past these truths have formed a kind of cocoon within which people lived comfortably in the status quo. They actually interpreted real life, but the interpretation was more full of meaning than was the life.²¹ That still happens in some conservative religious groups and in their retreats. But it can as readily happen in many weekends and workshops that convey bold new ideas and insights that comfort but do not challenge even to moral conversion, let alone to intellectual, affective or social conversion. Studies of retreats, strange to say, have neglected the area of conversion.²²

In general, however, the transition to flexibility has matured beyond the context of truths ‘applied to life’, and has moved retreats to the existential context of the history of salvation in Christ. The Italians now talk about the *cammino oggettivo* and the *cammino soggettivo*, the objective and the subjective journey. Neither is directly about dogma; each is about experience – the experience of the whole of God’s People, first, and then that of this particular child of God. This transition has brought retreats to the present correctness, which is the emphasis on the individual’s graced experience, both historical and current. Particularly in one-to-one retreats, the truth now involved is the truth in each person’s experience of Christ in the Church.

This turn to experience has demanded that guides have a method beyond just listening to stories. Fortunately, right from the beginning of the third transition, they have had at hand a developed model for careful listening: client-centred therapy. Guides find it a powerful means for structured listening and also for reflecting on their own experiences and keeping them separate from the retreatants’ material. Guides who instructed retreatants in the seventies to ‘begin where you are’ derived this practice partly from client-centredness. Moreover, the model coincided with the refreshed understanding that the Spirit is at work in each person all the time. This shift of focus from ‘the Truth’ to the person’s experience of God in Christ is now an established form in retreats. Anyone who wants merely to preach and be listened to will have to look for a place to do it (some still exist).

Guides and programmes sometimes go very far in what has come to be called non-directiveness. One centre recruits people 'endeavouring to create life by beginning with freedom and personal conscience, and not by beginning from a religion inherited from the past or from a God outside the self'.²³ The centre's skilled guides can handle that process with sureness; less skilled guides have sometimes let non-directiveness become a personalism that practically disestablishes tradition and Church. It has brought guides to feel that it is correct not to make moral judgements – whose norms would be involved? – or at least not to enunciate them even in pertinent situations. More guides were prone to this kind of non-directiveness early on in this third transition, when all were shaking off the *staretz*-like director's role of preconiliar times.

The new flexibility of the one who guides

During the past thirty years, experience has been giving nuance and flexibility to guidance. A consensus is building that experienced guides can give more than one kind of retreat or Exercises and can establish one of several different relationships to those who make them: director, guide, companion, presenter, witness. The perhaps overly non-directive guide is yielding to the one who knows how and when to direct clearly, and whom and for what purposes. Those who give retreats have been helped to this flexibility by both international publications and an extraordinary number of fine desktop publications from centres and programmes. One consequence is that guides are giving as much attention to the matter or material of retreats as they gave forty years ago, but differently. Some, of course, never stopped very active resourcing, but even they had to change.

This is evident in the 'directories' for *Spiritual Exercises* that began appearing in the nineties, in Canada, Latin America, Italy and Brazil. Their language differs from the language of earlier directories. Instead of talking about essential meditations or detached sets of rules, these directories talk about the *dynamic* or (in the romance languages) the *pedagogy* of the Exercises. That dynamic is understood as the interplay between the objective '*id quod volo* – what I want' specified in the book for each time of prayer, and the subjective experience of accepting the gift given in that prayer. Generally today, Ignatian directors consider it necessary to hold in tension some informed grasp of the dynamic or pedagogy of *Exercises* and a careful hearing of the person's experiences.

This is quite as true for guides in other traditions. Far from having no orientation, *they know what they are to listen for*. During this third

transition, they have been informed by research into the congregations' charisms and the foundresses' spirituality. Guides in every tradition have carefully rehearsed the dynamic or pedagogy inscribed in each charism or spiritual method, so they can hold it in balance with individual retreatants' experiences.²⁴

A generation ago, the spiritual director had been thoroughly prepared by formation in his (it was almost always 'his') religious congregation. Jesuits, for instance, had made the thirty-day Spiritual Exercises twice before they began giving them. When religious women began guiding and presenting, they had had similarly extensive personal experience of retreats. Professional preparation for retreat-giving came with religious profession. That has changed entirely as persons with little training and theology begin acting as companions. One-to-one guidance is labour-intensive, and almost extravagant numbers of people all around the world want to make retreats and Exercises as this transition matures. Who is to guide them?

Formal flexibility about who can guide

Earlier on, preparation of lay guides involved a long apprenticeship, as it did in Germany, or perhaps a four-month residency at a centre like St Beuno's. More recently, the preparation has been less formal altogether. For instance, a centre in Seoul gathered seventy candidates for a two-year course. There was no set curriculum; experts came and taught what they knew. Or again, more than one programme of Exercises in Daily Life has had to train its own guides. The training typically has stretched over two years with a moderate amount of instruction, and only recently has it included mentoring or supervision. There is a hurry about training women and men to guide retreats, particularly in everyday life. It is necessary because spiritual experience at present moves people to 'pass it on' to others. And the new correctness is that many are called and chosen to give the enormous variety of retreats and prayer experiences on offer, so that it is not an outrageous exaggeration to say that at times little more than baptism seems to be required.

It is very informative that in this transition, already in Europe and North America and more and more in Latin America and the Asian Pacific, the term 'director' is losing ground to 'spiritual companion' or some other term. With this shift and all that it implies, the guide's necessary preparation is perhaps less calculable and more personal. Some experienced people feel that the day of the amateur is over; the amateurs, however, are unaware of it. Reflective experts would want

preparation to match the seriousness of the retreat, admitting that it is not always calculable. The correct opinion about scarcely trained guides and companions seems to be that there is no great harm being done.

The issue of preparation is related to a recurring question: what is the *authority* of the one who gives retreats? Where does it come from? As the third transition matures, that question is being related to a growing sense that spiritual direction is a ministry in the Church.²⁵ Serious reflection on these issues is enriching current flexibility with some sensible forms.

One formalism abolished in many, but not all, cultures is that the retreat-giver must be a priest. Rather slowly in this third transition, religious women joined the teams in retreat houses and centres for one-to-one guiding of retreats. By the end of the eighties this was common in Europe and North America. During the nineties, women began giving conference retreats. And by now, even in cultures where the woman's role is fixed in its traditional mould, as it is in India or Japan, retreat centres are nonetheless seeking women for their teams. There are cultures, however, where this is not yet possible.

In any case, the correct thinking now is that the problem comes not from the nature of retreats or the *Exercises*, and not only from the Church, but rather more from the cultures. The loud complaint heard even during the seventies – *Spiritual Exercises* are irredeemably male, abstractly intellectual, and aggressive – collapsed under the weight of the evidence in the book and of retreat experiences charged with relationship, creative passivity, affectivity, and well-grounded emotion. The women who joined retreat teams have helped to quiet the complaint. They have also drawn attention to and helped rectify what in the complaint was accurate. These teams of men and women, active in some measure almost worldwide, are at the leading edge of retreat-giving, where the conviction conveyed is more important than the timbre of the voice. But women have not yet been broadly integrated in most nations.

A lay movement both formal and flexible

Just twenty years ago, the formality of going away to make a retreat was loosened by the flexibility of making even, as one country puts it, 'the long retreat in everyday life'. By the beginning of the nineties, this practice had been identified with Annotation 19 of *Spiritual Exercises*, and only gradually during the decade has the independent usefulness of Annotation 18 – St Ignatius' *ejercicios leves* – emerged. That seems a

quibble, however, to those who take hundreds through retreats in daily life.²⁶ A university professor in Madrid guides her colleagues through these Exercises; a judge in Los Angeles, an information specialist in Japan, a teacher in Bolivia, a social worker in Belgium, a radiographer in Australia, a farmer in Bassano del Grappa – all real people – take their friends and colleagues through Exercises in Daily Life. The ‘exercises’ are very flexibly interpreted. Perhaps not since the mid-eighteenth century have guides had so pragmatic an appreciation of *Spiritual Exercises*. Many are now using them who have not so much a vested interest in guarding their authenticity as a zealous interest in an instrument and its results. This is the current correctness.

Conclusion

Programmes which summarize the new flexible formalism, Exercises in Daily Life, are launched as readily as were retreat houses a century ago. They are based in spirituality centres, parishes and dioceses; some stand on their own. They are administered by women and men, clergy and laity. They invite people to the interior life, teach them to pray, give them the experience of Annotation 18 retreats, and then of longer retreats, sometimes Annotation 19 and sometimes the thirty-day retreat. And increasingly, the programmes invite retreatants to join some kind of continuing group, taking responsibility for what happens after ‘the retreat’.

On the face of it, as the closed retreat *for the laity* became a movement at the end of the last century, the open retreat *by the laity* is becoming a movement at the end of this one. Whatever else is the case, it is clear now that while the thirty-day Ignatian Exercises, the time of hermitage in silence, and the sacred monastic time remain formal retreats, they have each become one item on a long list – the flexible meanings given to the word ‘retreat’.

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NOTES

1 The word 'formal' is used here in the first meaning given by the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*: that which is 'used or done or held in accordance with rules, convention, or ceremony'.

2 Charles Plater, *Retreats for the people* (London, 1912), remains the best treatment of this movement.

3 The 'retreat house movement' continued throughout the century. In 1920, for instance, Jesuits conducted about 80; in 1950 more than 100; and in 1990 more than 250. If scattered information can be relied on, Cenacles spread accordingly, as did diocesan retreat houses. Beginning around 1975, old novitiates, houses of formation, and mother houses were transformed into retreat houses and spirituality centres.

4 The Twenty-Fourth General Congregation, decree 20 (1892), decreed that Spiritual Exercises be given to workers and to the poor; and the Twenty-Eighth, decree 9 (1938), explicitly connected *Exercises* with social doctrine, the temporal welfare of workers, unions and social institutes.

5 Pius XI, *Mens nostra*, 20 December 1929. English translation in Austin G. Schmidt SJ (ed), *Selected writings of Father Ledóchowski* (Chicago, 1945), pp 732–743, at p 742.

6 Fr Ledóchowski reported that bishops worldwide – 'to be exact, 672' – had asked that St Ignatius be named patron of retreats, suggesting how widely appreciated *Spiritual Exercises* had become after the First World War.

7 Joseph de Guibert SJ, *The Jesuits: their spiritual doctrine and practice, a historical study*, trans W. J. Young SJ (St Louis, 1964), p 495. The original had appeared in 1953.

8 In a meeting in 1966, Pope Paul VI exclaimed to Fr Pedro Arrupe about these objectors, '*Quam vehementer errant!* How very wrong they are!' 'Jornadas Iberoamericanas de Estudio sobre Ejercicios Espirituales: Loyola (España 17–27 Agosto 1966)', typescript minutes, 53 pp. Varia Exercitia, D-4, Bibliotheca P. Generalis SJ, Roma.

9 Some Jesuit scholars' names are still familiar: Luis Peeters, Moritz Meschler, Henri Bremond, Pedro de Leturia, Léonce de Grandmaison, José Calveras. The *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité* began in 1932, a sign of the matured academic discipline of spiritual theology (now called spirituality).

10 In 1926, a typical pamphlet recorded the retreat houses built in mission territories and gave the number of their retreatants: Karl Sudbrack SJ, *Leienexerzitien und Heidenmission*. The author drew on the editing work of Henri Watrigant SJ, *Collection de la Bibliothèque des Exercices*, which had already published sixty studies. Varia Exercitia, D-5, Bibliotheca P. Generalis SJ, Roma.

11 *The Way Supplement* 1 (July 1965), p 3, Preface. See Thomas Corbishley SJ, 'The annual retreat: past and present', *The Way Supplement* 16 (Summer 1976), pp 89–95, for a personal experience of these changes.

12 Retreats in *etapas* or stages are fairly new. Exercitants make one Week of the Exercises and then pause before going to the next. The retreat house in Czechowice-Dziedzice, Poland, schedules ten days at a time for the First, the Second, then the Third and Fourth Weeks – a division fairly standard throughout Poland and in Spain, too. Some who begin do not come back to continue – a kind of natural selection which the directors consider a good thing.

13 Guided retreats combine some talks with personal direction. In India, Africa and the Asian Pacific, there are simply too many exercitants for one-to-one directed retreats. In places such as North America and the Mediterranean nations, significant numbers of exercitants prefer having 'points' offered. This form of the Exercises seems to be the one currently preferred by most religious around the world.

14 Intercultural flexibility: The splendid Bodhi-zendo at Kodaikanal in southern India was built with funds from Germany, to which the Indian Zen Master goes each summer to train disciples.

15 The Casa de Ejercicios 'La Armenia' in Quito, Ecuador is owned and directed by laity; Switzerland's Notre-Dame de la Route and Loyola of the Lakes in Ohio, USA, are owned by religious and directed by laity. The rapid development of 'boards of advisors' or even 'boards of directors' for retreat houses and centres – a very recent phenomenon – has affected these developments.

16 Judith Roemer, 'Discernment in the director', *Review for Religious* vol 34 (May 1975), pp 949–956, at p 950.

17 By formal practice, the novice in religious congregations made the long retreat to *confirm* the vocation chosen, not to *elect* it. See *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, 193, 196, 277.

18 Guides are giving more attention to the *election* in all kinds of retreats. Jiri Sykora SJ writes about short Exercises from Cesky Tesin, a retreat house in Bohemia: 'The number of people who try to find their vocation during the Exercises is growing', *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* vol 30, no 1 (1990), p 49.

19 *Mens nostra*, in *Selected Writings of Father Ledóchowski*, p 743.

20 From an anonymous pamphlet, 'Classification of notes for retreats and sermons based on the plan of the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius' (London: The Manresa Press, 1917). *Varia Exercitia*, D-11, Bibliotheca P. Generalis SJ, Roma.

21 This is the 'supracontext' of Roberto Mangabeira Unger's *Passion: an essay on personality* (New York and London, 1984), p 243. It is an important concept for those who deal with the extreme conservative or liberal retreatant.

22 See the first two chapters of Donald L. Gelpi SJ, *The conversion experience* (New York, 1998), for a succinct, lucid outline of the processes of conversion based on Bernard J. F. Lonergan's thought. See also Robert Kegan, *In over our heads: the mental challenges of modern life* (Boston, 1994), for useful categories for reflecting on the mental processes entailed in true indifference.

23 Lise Robitaille SSCh, 'Some reflections', *Review for Ignatian Spirituality* vol 30, no 1 (1999), pp 63–73, at p 65.

24 Guides now tend to see themselves guiding as did Cornelia Connolly or Mary Ward, or they invite others to 'a Dominican experience'. *The Way's* series on the traditions of spiritual guidance has broadened understanding on this point.

25 A commission of the Council on Ignatian Spirituality meeting in Rome this past February observed this worldwide experience: 'The giver of *Spiritual Exercises* always stands in a position of some authority towards the one who makes them', 'Notes two for the one giving exercises', *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* vol 30, no 1 (1999), p 17.

26 The completely lay movement in St Louis, USA, has guided during the past decade about six hundred exercitants through Exercises of nine months or more. The programme is exceptional but there are others like it.