THE WAY

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Recent Books

Sarah Jane Boss looks at Tina Beattie's new book on women, pilgrimage and Rome

Ruth Holgate on the Spiritual Exercises reclaimed for women

Julio Luis Martínez considers different attitudes to the State and religious freedom

William Wizeman on how attitudes to death and burial changed during the English Reformation

John Martis presents the provocative, posthumous collection of essays by the Dominican theologian, Herbert McCabe

Nicholas King draws on a new book to help us pray with the Psalms

Anna Marie Gallagher shares her thoughts on a retreat programme for Latino immigrants to the USA

Nicholas Austin on the spirituality of Generation X

Philip Endean discusses a range of new books on mysticism—notably Edward Howells' fine study of John and Teresa

The Way is an international journal of contemporary Christian spirituality, published by the British Jesuits. Through writing informed by critical and creative scholarship, it aims to provide a forum in which thoughtful Christians, from different walks of life and different traditions, reflect on God's continuing action in human experience.

Among particular concerns of ***The Way*** are:

- the role of spirituality in the struggle for justice
- the spiritual issues raised by intercultural and interreligious dialogue
- the interactions between spirituality, politics and culture
- the fostering and development of the Ignatian spiritual tradition

The Way warmly invites readers to submit articles with a view to publication. They should normally be about 4,000 words long, and be in keeping with the journal's aims. The Editor is always ready to discuss possible ideas. Further details can be found on ***The Way***'s website: www.theway.org.uk. The Special Number for July 2004 will be entitled ***Commitment and Freedom.*** It will mark the centenaries of three distinguished Jesuit theologians (Rahner, Lonergan, Murray) by exploring how Ignatian and other traditions of spirituality can expand the possibilities of Christian living and discipleship. Contributions to that issue would be especially welcome.

Christ in Chains, Luc Faydherbe (1612-1697)
Marble Church, Hanswijk, Netherlands

. . . to consider the discourse which the chief of the enemy makes to innumerable demons, how he tells them to cast out nets and chains.

(See Exx 140-142)

Christ the Lord is risen again
Christ hath broken every chain
He who slumbered in the grave
Is exalted now to save.

(German, 6th Century)

Introduction

ON THE BREAKING OF BARRIERS

Philip Endean

WE NO LONGER PLAN *THE WAY* round a particular theme except when we are doing a Special Number. Nevertheless the three regular issues we have produced since the re-launch in January have, of their own accord, come to crystallize as collections with a special focus. In January, the articles dealt with Ignatian mission at the margins of society and culture; in April, they all, in one way or another, explored the idea of 'educating the heart'. For its part, this present issue seems haunted by a sense of the Spirit gradually breaking down various kinds of barrier.

In her article, 'Motherhood as a Spiritual Path', Sue Delaney, writing from Australia, reflects on how the major religious traditions of the world marginalise a key experience in the adult lives of most women: that of motherhood. Yet the experience is of immense spiritual importance, not just because of how good mothering nurtures the child, but also because of what it brings to the mother herself.

We are delighted to follow that piece with the first of a new series of articles: *The Spirit in Contemporary Culture*. As an Ignatian journal of spirituality, *The Way* is concerned not just with the documents of the tradition, but also with discerning how the Spirit is stirring anew in the present. This new series thus complements *From the Ignatian Tradition*, the series of original texts that began with the re-launch in January. We inaugurate the series with a piece by John R. Quinn, retired Archbishop of San Francisco, who points out how the internet, with its vast potential for bridging the barriers between societies and cultures, will inevitably bring about changes in how religious authority is exercised. More importantly, it will demand of Christian disciples a new quality of integrity.

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After this, we turn to new possibilities in Church ministry, and the attempts to break down some barriers between the clerical and the lay. In this context, it is all to easy to swing from euphoria to embitterment. In different ways, the three articles by Christian Grondin, Gill K. Goulding and Bernard Sesboüé move us beyond both cliché and complaint. They encourage us to think freshly about the human, institutional and theological issues raised by 'lay ministry'—to use the familiar but problematic term.

The articles which follow deal with some rich themes in the early Ignatian tradition: the different ways in which we can make Ignatian decisions, and a developing vision of prayer and ministry. But in the background is a more problematic development: the tradition's gradual loss of a sense that the Spirit can work in *everyday* life; its increasing tendency to imagine the spiritual life as something for an elite, something that we can forget about as we cope with ordinary realities.

Perhaps one of the reasons why it has become so difficult to speak of God—the fact on which the late Joseph Veale reflects in 'The Silence'—is that we are still, unconsciously, stuck in habits of thinking and praying that the Spirit is now trying to call us beyond. We may still be repressing the pain of which John of the Cross speaks, the 'spiritual anguish and suffering . . . seeping through and flooding everything'—a pain which is nevertheless positive, because it marks the dawn of a new quality of divine light and peace 'so delightful that . . . it surpasses all understanding'. The problem is only the soul's 'inadequate preparation, and the qualities it possesses which are contrary to this light'.[1]

There are barriers within our own psyches, therefore, to the touch of God. Perhaps one of them is the expectation that writing on spirituality should be undemanding. Or at least we may need to discern such expectations carefully. Communication of *any* kind—not just about spirituality—should be clear; jargon needs to be kept to a minimum, and carefully explained. *The Way* is absolutely committed to clear writing. But the spiritual life should always challenge us to be growing, to be questioning 'how we have always thought', to be exploring the possibility that God is leading us into something

[1] *Dark Night*, 2.9, quotations from nn. 7, 6, 10.

different. If 'devotional writing' remains within well-established categories, it stands at risk of merely fostering pious resistance.

A previous article by Joe Veale included some memorable sentences about the inclusiveness of the spiritual:

> We need a new word, one we have not yet discovered. . . . It would encompass not only the prayer that opens the spirit to God and leads towards union . . . but, besides, all those other things which open the spirit to the action of God just as much as prayer (and sometimes better). . . . *Whatever* brings faith to life, *whatever* brings faith to bear on everything else we experience, *whatever* draws our focus away from ourselves, *whatever* beauty or goodness so absorbs us that we entirely forget ourselves, *whatever* strengthens hope and makes us more loving, all these can be purgative and illuminative and unitive just as much as prayer can.[2]

We do not yet have the words for what needs to be said; it is 'so delightful that . . . it surpasses all understanding'. We cannot cope with the inclusiveness of God; we insist on confining the Spirit behind barriers of the most varied kinds. 'Spirituality' indicates how the realities of our experience are leading conventional theology, and standard devotional practice, towards an ever new, ever more inclusive, relation to God. By definition, it involves a closeness to everyday life. But it also involves learning to think and feel differently, breaking the barriers of habit and convention, both in thought and in feeling. Those lessons can never be straightforward.

[2] Joseph Veale, 'Manifold Gifts', *The Way Supplement*, 82 (Spring 1995), pp. 44-53, here p. 51, emphasis PE. (The article is now available on *Ignatian Spirituality and* The Way *1961-2002*, CD-ROM [Oxford: Way Publications, 2003].)

MOTHERHOOD AS A SPIRITUAL PATH

Sue Delaney

WANDERING THROUGH CHURCHES, synagogues, temples and mosques in many cultures, one cannot but be struck by the fact that religion is basically 'men's business'. The sacred spaces, the scriptures, the teachers and guides, the rituals and the codes of behaviour have been evolved by men to meet the needs of men. Religion is a male world. Even wandering along the shelves of any religious bookshop is enough to confirm this. Books of spiritual guidance are almost all written by men. Why are women so absent from the heart of all the great religious traditions of the world?

Family as Impediment to Spiritual Life

In most of these religious traditions, there seems to be an understanding that marriage and children, especially for women, are an impediment to pursuing spiritual goals. While women have long felt themselves to be second-class citizens within the religious world, the woman who does not marry at least has a chance of redeeming herself and becoming an 'honorary man' if she chooses to dedicate her life to God in whatever way her tradition suggests. Bluntly, the choice is between having children and seeking a deeper experience of God.

Within Catholic forms of Christianity, for example, those men and women who are serious about their desire to encounter God in this life enter religious orders of monks or nuns, taking vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. But what if the call to encounter the Source more deeply arises after a commitment to marriage and children? Men and women may seem to face a similar predicament in this situation. However, while men are able to find a certain freedom from domestic duties in order to attend religious gatherings, this is not necessarily so for women.

Raising a family can take twenty or more years of a woman's life. That is too long a time for a person simply to postpone the spiritual

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quest. Consequently, in those years of raising children, a woman can find herself living two different lives. One life is set firmly in the everyday world with its responsibilities to home and family. The other is the life of the spirit, where the search for meaning arises and takes form. Is there more to life than being a wife and mother? Does God really exist? Is there life after death? What do I really want in life? Discussions with family and friends lead, more often than not, to a deep sense of spiritual loneliness as a woman realises that others either avoid such concerns or are indifferent to them.

In her spare time she turns to books for guidance and seeks out spiritual practices that might yield answers to her questions. However, attempts to follow traditional practices have often been a source of great frustration to such women, whatever their religious tradition. The constant presence of small children makes daily meditation and other spiritual practices well nigh impossible. Even at the end of a busy day, a woman with a husband and children cannot close her bedroom door and regard the night as her own.

With these family responsibilities, it is also difficult for a woman to participate in the life of the local religious community; bringing small children to services or meetings is too great a distraction both for the woman herself and for everyone else. Even within the Christian churches, where mothers and children are expected to attend, women with small children can come away from the service feeling that, though they were physically present, they were often too busy keeping the children quiet to attend to their own spiritual needs. When it comes to searching out spiritual teachers and courses, or going away on religious retreats, many women hesitate: arranging the care of children can be so complicated and disruptive to the lives of others.

Family life places severe limitations on women's ability to follow the call to a deeper spiritual life. As a consequence many women, rather than fully enjoying the present moment of family life, find themselves looking forward impatiently to the time when they will be free of dependent children.

Choosing Between Family and God

Family life is seen as so much of an impediment to serious spiritual practice that occasionally women have been challenged by their spiritual guide to choose between their family and God. Such a choice

faced Indira Devi, an Indian woman from a prosperous Sikh background. Her spiritual guide, Dilip Kumar Roy, was a disciple of the sage Sri Aurobindo of Pondicherry. After meeting Sri Aurobindo on a visit to his ashram with her spiritual guide, she was invited to live at the ashram to further her spiritual life. To do so she would have to leave her family behind. This was a devastating choice. Her elder son was at boarding school, but the younger was only three years old, a mere baby. In the end, she left him in the care of his nurse.

A few months later, word came to her that this child was seriously ill and not expected to live. Was she to go to him, or to stay at the ashram? She felt utterly torn. Her 'worldly attachment' to her son was revealed in all its strength. Her spiritual guide said that the choice to follow her worldly duty to her son, or her soul's duty to God, was hers. After a night of anguish, she made the decision to stay. He approved her decision, saying that what was right for other mothers was not right for her. She needed to dedicate herself completely to God.[1]

Indira Devi was not alone. Eileen Caddy, a Christian woman and co-founder of a spiritual community at Findhorn in Scotland, abandoned her first four children after being told that to stay with them would be running away from her destiny. The man she loved and looked to for guidance told her that there was more at stake than her personal happiness, that there was important spiritual work that the two of them were called to do.[2] Other women in search of spiritual meaning have abandoned a husband or partner when he was not interested in accompanying them, or when he became antagonistic to their spiritual interests.

The US American Dorothy Day, who was instrumental in the founding of the *Catholic Worker*, wrote in her autobiography, 'To become a Catholic meant for me to give up a mate with whom I was much in love. It got to the point where it was the simple question of whether I chose God or man'.[3] Her partner did not believe in marriage. If she became a Catholic she would have to leave him. Though it took a year to make that difficult decision, she chose God, separating from the father of her baby daughter.

[1] Dilip Kumar Roy and Indira Devi, *Pilgrims of the Stars: Autobiography of Two Yogis* (Porthill, Id: Timeless Books, 1985), pp. 267-269.
[2] Eileen Caddy and Liza Hollingshead, *Flight into Freedom* (Longmead: Element Books, 1988), pp. 40-42.
[3] Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness: The Autobiography of Dorothy Day* (New York: Harper, 1952), p. 140.

To leave a much-loved partner, or a child, is a heart-wrenching decision. That these women have had the strength and courage to make such decisions illustrates the passionate intensity of their search for That which lies beyond all names and forms. But did they need to make such sacrifices?

No Spiritual Path for Mothers

Intuitively, it seems that something is not right here. Why should following a spiritual path be so difficult for a woman just because she is a mother? Why are there no recognised spiritual paths within the major religious traditions that are more suited to the reality of a mother's life? While mothers of young children can to some extent participate in the public ritual life of synagogue, church, mosque and temple, there is always the sense that they remain on the periphery. Whatever outward public praise and acknowledgment they receive in their role as mothers, this does not make up for the feeling of being unable to follow spiritual aspirations—which are often deeply felt—along established routes.

But perhaps something obvious is being missed—the possibility that motherhood is itself a spiritual path. This does not seem to have been considered either by women themselves, or by those who guide them spiritually. While women are encouraged to incorporate into their lives whatever spiritual practices they can, they use for this purpose the small gaps in their lives, gaps which are liable at any moment to be taken away from them by pressing family needs. Because the conventional ways of thinking about spirituality are not really suited to the circumstances of their lives, they see what they can do as merely makeshift.

Motherhood is itself a spiritual path

The birth of a first child is an experience which totally changes the life of any woman. The birth itself is life-threatening and painful, even in these days of powerful medications. On a psychological level, it may be the first time in a woman's life that she has experienced her body as totally out of her control. Nature takes over with relentless efficiency, and there is nothing she can do about it. All the control over the process that she was promised in the antenatal classes turns out, for many first-time mothers, to be an illusion. When a woman becomes a mother, she is abruptly initiated into a new way of life, with no respite and no days off. Often she loses a sense of her own identity. What is

left, beyond being someone's wife and the baby's mother? Her previous life and identity seem to have vanished completely.

She simply lives 'being a mother'. In doing so, she enters into a life of self-denying service to her child—a life far more demanding than that asked by a guru of his disciple, an obedience far greater than any vow can command. If a baby needs something, everything else has to be put aside until that need is met. If not, the need only escalates. Furthermore, to deal impatiently with a fractious baby only upsets it further; thus a new mother is forced to learn patience and self-control. Contrary to popular myth, this does not come naturally to mothers. It comes only with the repeated experience of the consequences of impatience. Despite the challenges, however, motherhood is not without its spiritual consolations. A Sufi woman of Turkish origin, when asked how she integrated her family life and her spiritual life gave a simple, thought-provoking reply: 'When I looked at the faces of my children, I saw the face of my Beloved'.[4]

Trying to Meditate

The constant physical demands of caring for a baby make many traditional spiritual practices all but impossible. Meditation has long been recognised as an essential part of a spiritual life, especially in Hinduism and Buddhism. In Christianity contemplative meditation was formerly restricted to monks and nuns, but is now being taken up by lay people, who often have little awareness of the difficulties that can arise. An Indian Hindu woman, Deepa Kodikal, spoke of her own experience in trying to meditate as the mother of a small child. One afternoon, when her two-year-old daughter Aqeela was asleep beside her, she decided to try meditation, inspired by a book by Swami Vivekananda that she had been reading:

> How long and on what I meditated I do not remember, but after some time, I had apparently got into a state of oblivion. Suddenly I became aware of a far-off place of utter solitude, and, from somewhere very distant, I heard a child calling out to me. But as if in a coma, neither my mental nor physical faculties could function and recognise the fact that I should respond. I remained in that

[4] Personal comment made to author, quoted with permission.

> state of oblivion, continuing to hear the distant cry and yet not responding to it till I was nudged by Aqeela herself. Then I became aware that Aqeela was actually yelling away at me for attention and had crawled over me as I was not responding to her crying.[5]

Of course not everyone who meditates has the ability to reach this level of absorption in meditation, just as individuals vary greatly in the level of hypnotic trance they can reach. But if a person does find this a natural and easy process, and also happens to be a mother with a baby or a small child in her immediate care, she needs to be careful. She must not enter so deeply into meditation that she cannot respond to the cries of her child. Deepa Kodikal waited another fifteen years before she tried practising meditation again. When she did, a problem common to busy women beset her.

> I found that, within no time, my head would slump forward and I would be fast asleep. I knew that it was not quite right to try to meditate after a long day of tiring housework, but there was no other suitable time. So I persisted. But the pattern continued. No sooner did I assume the erect posture than I would fall off in a deep slumber. For half an hour, I would struggle with myself to keep awake but to no avail, and then would decide that it was more practical to sleep in a normal, comfortable lying-down position than make a pretence at meditating.[6]

Conflicting Demands

Within the Eastern religions, the recommended times for meditation are at dawn and dusk. For a woman with the demands of family life, this is impossible. These are the very times that family work falls most heavily on her, especially if she is also working outside the home. If she does not have outside employment, then she may be able to give time to meditation once her children begin to go to school. Even so, she needs discipline and determination to take that time for herself while the daily work of the household stares her in the face. School and family holidays disrupt that discipline. In addition, women speak of the sense of being 'on call' even in those spaces where they can find a half hour

[5] Deepa Kodikal, *A Journey Within the Self*, (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1992), p. 2.
[6] Kodikal, *A Journey Within the Self*, p. 3.

There's no place like home

for meditation or spiritual reading. And using that space for their own spiritual nourishment in the face of conflicting demands for their time can leave a residual sense that they should be doing 'something more useful' while the baby is asleep or the older child is at school.

The reality of modern life suggests that meditation, in its traditional form of silent sitting, cannot be a core spiritual practice for a woman with family responsibilities. This is not to say that she should not meditate when spaces in her life appear, but rather that she should not feel her spiritual life has stalled because she cannot meditate on a regular basis. There will still be small, unplanned spaces where meditation can happen. The Englishwoman, Theosophist and mother

Alice Bailey suggested a different approach to mothers who came to her for spiritual advice:

> I told them they could regulate their thinking and learn mental concentration and spiritual orientation whilst peeling potatoes and shelling peas because that was what I had had to do, for I was no believer in sacrificing your family and their welfare to our own spiritual urges.[7]

Surrender as a Spiritual Path

More importantly, a mother has to develop a flexible attitude to life. This in itself is a spiritual practice in disguise. All the religious traditions speak of surrender as essential in the path to the Divine: abandonment to divine providence; submission to the will of God; the giving up of the desire that life be different when change is not possible; the surrender of the 'I want', of the 'I am right'; in this instance, the giving up of the wish to practise regular meditation, or to have a satisfying spiritual life during this phase of the mother's life-cycle.

In reality, the practice of surrender pervades a mother's life. Every day, without fuss, she has to put aside her own needs to respond to those of her family. This reveals another spiritual practice that is integral to this way of life: the selfless service given to family, and often to neighbours and the local community. Unfortunately, within Christianity, the predominant stories of women are about saintly celibates, living a supposedly more heroic form of spiritual life, a life of service to others beyond the domestic sphere. To emulate this is just not possible for women with children. They are already fully committed to the selfless service of their families. Such service proves its validity as spiritual practice by the fruit that it yields.

A spiritual practice in disguise

Judy Petsonk, a US American Jewish woman, recognised that her love for her child and her trust in her husband were actually intense experiences of God. She also remembered another experience of God that she had had as a young mother. As her baby slept in a pram and

[7] Alice A. Bailey, *The Unfinished Autobiography of Alice A. Bailey* (New York: Lucas Publishing, 1951), p. 182.

she folded sheets in her backyard, she suddenly realised that she had some time for herself. She could pray with her prayer book, something she rarely had time to do, or get some sorely needed exercise. Or else she could continue with her laundry so that she could play with the baby when he woke up. After some moments of indecision, she decided to try it all:

> So I cast out a quick silent prayer and asked the *Shekinah*, the loving Presence of God, to help me do it all. I ran inside, grabbed a prayerbook, scurried back outside, wrapped myself in a sheet, said the blessing for putting on a prayer shawl, and felt the Presence gently embracing me with arms of sunlight. I danced around the yard, folding the laundry in great swooping dancerly motions, turning pages as I passed the prayerbook perched on a lawn chair, singing, laughing at myself. I could feel the Presence bathe me in Her loving laughter.[8]

The memory of this experience still moved her many years later:

> Sitting here at my word processor, remembering that day, new thanks pour from my mouth and heart and my suddenly tearful eyes. I realise now that there was even more blessing in that luminous moment than I understood at the time. Often I have read the commandment to 'Love God with all your heart' and wondered despairingly how it is possible for someone like me—someone to whom God is sometimes real and sometimes not real, someone whose faith glimmers and wanes—ever to love God. I think, 'This very moment, dear Presence, you are showing me that I can'.[9]

It has also been written of Sarada Devi, the wife of the great Bengali Hindu saint, Sri Ramakrishna, that she attained spiritual realisation as deep as her husband's, though she did not practise his austere way of life. She had no children of her own, though in later life she took care of a little niece whose mother suffered a mental disorder. We are told that,

[8] Judy Petsonk, *Taking Judaism Personally: Creating a Meaningful Spiritual Life* (New York: Free Press, 1996), pp. 3-4.
[9] Petsonk, *Taking Judaism Personally*, p. 4.

> . . . she preoccupied herself with household duties, preparing vegetables, cooking, sweeping the house and the courtyard, washing clothes and dishes, kneading dough, worshipping in the shrine, and with infinite patience and compassion looking after the comfort and welfare of her relatives and visiting disciples.[10]

The only problem for women in regarding motherhood and housework as an opportunity for spiritual practice is that it looks too much like a plot to keep them 'barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen'. There is too much of an echo of the biblical words:

> Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. . . . Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty. (1 Timothy 2.11-15)

What woman does not feel rebellion arise when she reads these words? They support the idea that religion is men's business and that women's spiritual path is different. Women do not have to take on the spiritual practices of temple, mosque, synagogue and church that men have designed for their own spiritual evolution. What spiritual path they should choose if they do not have family responsibilities is another question. If they are mothers, then they need look no further than their own family life to find a powerful and fulfilling spiritual path—perhaps, even, a path that is the model for all others.

Family Provides Structure and Stability

Many women find a deeply primitive satisfaction and a sense of bodily fulfilment in bearing children. Motherhood brings a structure and a discipline to life. Though the work is at times nothing more than pure drudgery, at least it has meaning and purpose. For women on a spiritual quest, the necessity of responding to everyday family demands and household tasks also provides stability and a ruthless grounding in reality. Such stability is important when 'psychic' or spiritual experiences arise, as they are bound to do if a woman is serious about her quest.

[10] *In the Company of the Holy Mother, by her Direct Disciples* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1963), pp. 17-18.

The novelty of such experiences, whether they are authentic or merely the result of some mental disturbance, has caused some women to withdraw into themselves, especially if spiritual guidance is not available. Flora Courtois, a US American woman brought up in the Roman Catholic tradition, was a student in the 1940s. Even though she was living with a family and helping with chores in exchange for her board, she had her own room where she could close the door and be on her own. After two unexpected mystical experiences, she stopped looking for answers in books, and became intensely interested in exploring her own inner experience.

Seeking an immediate experience of Reality, she began to spend long periods alone in her room. Soon she began to have dreamlike visionary experiences. Her sense of aloneness deepened. Recognising that she was moving into dangerous territory, she made two attempts to seek guidance. In the first instance she went to the Catholic chaplain on campus; in the second, she went to her philosophy professor. Neither was of help to her. Acquaintances became so concerned about her behaviour that she was referred to the university's psychiatrist. He instigated practical measures that included a few days in the infirmary, regular meals on campus and further counselling, and thus averted the transformation of a spiritual crisis into a mental health breakdown. The regime also gave her a stability that allowed her to continue her spiritual quest, and her academic studies, without further threat to her mental health.

She married, and plunged into family life and further post-graduate study. Only when she was in her forties did major surgery and a time of convalescence bring her to the realisation that she had lost her way spiritually. A profound sense of abandonment engulfed her, and she longed for guidance. But she could not find it in her local churches. She abandoned her academic work, spent more time with her husband and family, wrote poetry, and returned to her earlier practice of sitting alone in quiet concentration. She joined a Zen centre, and eventually found the guidance she sought from a visiting Zen master.[11]

[11] Flora Courtois, *An Experience of Enlightenment* (Wheaton, Il: Theosophical Publishing House, 1986).

'Have some respect for my learning style'

Search for Guidance

Flora Courtois' story, and many others like it, reveal the deep hunger for spiritual guidance felt by family women who have been called to a spiritual quest. In essence, this quest is a mystical one. Within the Christian tradition especially, it is not easy to find authentic guides who have themselves experienced the razor-edge path of mystical life. As a result, many Christian and Jewish women, and women of no faith tradition at all, have looked towards Hinduism, Buddhism or Sufism to find spiritual guides and spiritual teachings in harmony with their own yearning. Yet even in these traditions little recognition is given to the spiritual needs of women with children. Motherhood is—in more senses than one—a spiritual 'no-man's land'.

There are many women who have been mothers, and who have written intimate accounts of their spiritual exploring. But in these they have neglected to say anything about the years spent caring for

children. It is as if they too believed that their spiritual lives had gone on hold while they were immersed in the busyness of family life and careers. The hard work of this phase of their lives is not seen as intense spiritual practice. And yet there is a maturing and a mellowing going on in preparation for the next phase, a phase that might not begin until a woman is in her forties or fifties. Then the spiritual quest can take on a new intensity. The little moth can at last break through the casing and take off in joyous flight in search of the searing, consuming flame of the Beloved. The child-rearing years have been the cocoon in which the slow but inevitable process of spiritual transformation has taken place. Nothing is wasted. All the years of preparation and training are needed so that this might happen. Motherhood can truly be a time of intense spiritual practice for women engaged in a spiritual quest. Perhaps it is time to recognise motherhood as a spiritual path in its own right.

Sue Delaney is a wife, mother and grandmother living in Sydney, Australia. A clinical psychologist and former counsellor at the University of Sydney, she has had a long personal and academic interest in mysticism and women's spirituality across different religious traditions.

THE INTERNET AND THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

The Coming of the Fourth Church

John R. Quinn

WHEN THE GREAT GERMAN THEOLOGIAN, KARL RAHNER, stood in St Peter's during the sessions of Vatican II, he saw some 2,300 bishops. He noticed that they came from every race, language and culture, from all over the world. Such experiences led him and others to say that with the Council the Church had for the first time become a world Church. And so people spoke of the coming of the third Church, the world Church.

The first Church lasted from the time of the Apostles until the conversion of the Emperor Constantine in the year 313. The second Church, often called the European Church, lasted from the conversion of Constantine until Vatican II in 1962-65. The third Church was the world Church beginning, let us say, in 1965. With Vatican II, the Church was no longer only European in its culture and make-up. There were two obvious signs of this passage from a European to a world Church. Bishops in Asia and Africa were no longer European-born missionary bishops, but native Asians and Africans. And Latin—a European language—ceased to be the Church's language: Roman Catholic worship all over the world used a wide variety of native languages.[1]

[1] See the two essays in Rahner's *Theological Investigations*, vol. 20 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981): 'Basic Theological Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council', pp. 77-89; and 'The Abiding Significance of the Second Vatican Council', pp. 90-102.

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I believe, however, that alongside the world Church and within the framework of a world Church, we must now speak of the coming of the fourth Church. The fourth Church is the Church of globalisation, of broadband communication, the Church of the Web and the internet. The difference between broadband communication and past means of communication is like the difference between a two lane road and a six lane motorway. With fibre-optic cable and satellites, for instance, you can now have a thousand television channels to choose from, whereas in the past there were three or four. We have not yet begun to imagine what all this will mean for the Church. But without question its impact will be immense.

A generation ago, Vatican II noted a cultural shift that was taking place:

> The human race is moving from a more static view of things to one which is more dynamic and evolutionary, giving rise to new combinations of problems which call for new analyses and syntheses.[2]

Even then, we were in transition from an essentialist or static view of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary worldview. People now are not content with what is. There is an underlying sense that things will always be improved, and that it is only a matter of time until we discover how. The internet can only strengthen this trend.

[2] *Gaudium et spes*, n. 5.

In his book, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman describes his mother, who lives in Minnesota, playing bridge several times a week on the internet with three people in France. When he expressed surprise at this, his mother replied that the week before she had been playing with people in Siberia. We may not yet know clearly what all that means, but instinctively we sense that there is something very different and something very important going on here.

Friedman confirms the far-reaching implications we suspect:

> The globalisation system is . . . characterized by a single word: the *Web*. . . . In the Cold War we reached for the 'hotline', which was a symbol that we were all divided but at least two people were in charge—the United States and the Soviet Union . . . in the globalisation system we reach for the internet, which is a symbol that we are all increasingly connected and that nobody is quite in charge.[3]

If we are to be more closely connected, what does this mean for the Church of the future? What does it mean for the Church of the future that the internet is bringing with it a world in which 'nobody is quite in charge'? It will not be possible to think about shaping this future Church unless we face the great positive potential, and the drawbacks, of broadband communications and the internet. I would like to highlight three particular features of the internet which will have a significant effect on how the Church exercises authority and carries out her mission.

Bypassing Authority

First, the internet bypasses authority. Take medicine as an example. Drugs are normally tested over a long period of time and then given approval by a government agency. At that point doctors may prescribe the drug. When you have a problem, your doctor will examine you, make a diagnosis and prescribe the approved drug if indicated. They will prescribe how much you should take, and how often you should take it. Now, however, you can go on the internet, get a diagnosis and find all the medications listed which could be used for your condition, and you can obtain that medication even if it is not approved yet. No

[3] Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Random House, 2000), p. 8.

authority—no doctor, no government, no drug expert—has played a part in this process.

The same dynamic will be at work in people's religious lives as well. Anyone can go on the internet, use the name 'Catholic' or 'Christian', and promote any doctrine or practice or movement, without the knowledge or endorsement of any theologian, pastor, bishop or pope. Today, any parishioner, or non-parishioner for that matter, can use a computer to circulate or promote anything. The Web makes instantly available to anyone who wants it any doctrinal idea or position imaginable.

If Rome publishes a document on stem-cell transplants and rejects using embryos for this purpose, you can read it immediately on the internet. But you can also instantly read an opposing view written by a scientist in Germany or a theologian in South Africa. No Church authority is capable of preventing anyone anywhere in the world from being exposed to this mass of conflicting information. There is no gatekeeper to decide what religious doctrine can or cannot go on the internet, and no gatekeeper to determine what doctrine may or may not be called orthodox doctrine.

It is not surprising, then, that already cyberspace communities of faith are growing on the internet. Not long ago, I met a man who told me that he and others from a variety of places met regularly on the internet for discussion about doctrinal issues and had their own lay synod. Tom Beaudoin has described this phenomenon in some detail and observes:

> The medium is uniquely able to accommodate both like- and different-minded users who want to form cyberspace communities of faith . . . There is much anecdotal evidence that such cybercommunities of faith . . . can and do thrive in cyberspace.

Surprisingly, the book goes on to speak even about virtual monasteries in cyberspace:

> The net is increasingly becoming a virtual monastery for the spiritually dispossessed. As in 'real' monasteries, a user may seek community at specific times or in particular sites, and there are myriad opportunities for self-reflection, prayer, meditation, and Scripture studies. There are even on-line monasteries, in which

> users can listen to chanting monks, gaze on brilliant iconography, and read holy manuscripts without interruption.[4]

Everything Beaudoin describes here is being done in a way that bypasses all Church authority. But it is not an anarchic world, not a world without authority: the internet itself becomes the authority. For many people, especially for young people, something is more authoritative and therefore more believable if it is on the internet. The medium itself competes with other kinds of authorities: government, the Church, and professional authorities such as medicine.

Eroding Brand Loyalty

A few years ago, an article in *The Wall Street Journal* (14 September 2000) reported that shoppers buy national brands more than store or local brands, and cited the internet as a major factor. Again, something similar could be said with regard to the Church. The internet breaks down 'brand loyalty'. People do in fact stay with a brand they like until they are persuaded that something else is better or easier to get. If you use Ivory soap you are likely to keep buying Ivory soap. But with the internet, people can browse around and see different products, find out how they are made, get comparative prices and learn how a different product works in comparison with Ivory soap. These discoveries can break down the brand loyalty of customers to Ivory soap and lead them to a new product. The same principle applies in the religious sphere. Many people are Christian because they were brought up Christian and lived in a Christian environment. But with the internet, everything is available, and, as mentioned before, there is no gatekeeper to filter it, explain it or black it out. Religions and religious beliefs and practices of all kinds are on the internet. It follows

[4] Tom Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), pp. 88-90.

that there is clear potential for the 'brand loyalty' which people have to their Church to break down.

This erosion of 'brand loyalty' occurs not just at the national or international level, but also more locally. Take this example: a man we will call M. J. Griffin owns a bookstore in San Francisco. He has been on Geary Boulevard for forty years. But many of his customers have discovered www.amazon.com. As more and more of his customers go to the internet, Griffin is forced by lack of business to close. What happens on the internet affects what happens at home, at the local level. Thus we cannot simply regard the internet as a global phenomenon; in a Church context, we must ask how this powerful new development will affect the ministry and mission of parishes and dioceses.

The Click

The third feature of the internet is flexibility and choice: the button. If you see something on the internet that does not attract you or hold your interest, you just click and go to something else. If Catholic offerings on the internet are presented with no grasp of the signs of the times, with no thought for the needs and psychology of people today, and in dated language, they are not likely to hold general interest. People will switch to something else.

When the printing press was invented in the fifteenth century, church authorities were afraid of it, and uncertain of how to deal with it. What would happen, they thought, if everyone could have a Bible and read it? What would happen if books could be printed that were doctrinally misleading or even erroneous? There were legitimate pastoral reasons for concern. So it is with the internet. The implications of the internet, while not entirely clear, will certainly be far reaching and have a profound effect on the Church. The internet is bringing the world, and thus by necessity the Church, into a qualitatively new era. We will have to find new answers to the question of how, in actual practice, the Word of God and the teaching of the Catholic Church are to be authenticated in a media world where there is no authority. The apostolic teaching office in the Church must surely remain. But how will it carry out its mission in the world that is coming to be?

Discerning the Future

The Church must recognise that this new global reality of the internet will transform the relationships in which it is involved, both those among its own members and those which it forms as it engages in mission. It needs to ask in a new way, 'What do we bring that they need? How will they each understand us? How will they know that we want to understand them?' These are crucial issues for our future, our children's future, and the future of the Church and her mission. The developments now foreseeable have the potential to be deeply disturbing and disorienting.

If we seek to shape the Church of the future, then daring and imagination, not anxiety, must be our driving force. Daring is not defiance. Nor is it worldly prudence and calculation. It is not timidity or fear. It is not recklessness. We need to test the spirits; we cannot rush after fads. But neither can we reject every new idea and impulse without examination. Though some of these may be silly, harmful and counterproductive, many are positive, and critically necessary for the Church if it is to fulfil its mission.

Daring must be our driving force

If we look back at the Reformation period, we see that the reform movements, some of which were led by saints, did not succeed in preventing the split in Western Christendom. The movements that stayed within Catholicism did not probe the issues sufficiently radically. They saw abuses on the part of bishops and clergy, and their solution was to put things back the way they were: make the bishops live in their dioceses and not at the royal courts; make the priests and the canons live by the regulations governing their lives. They did not, however, ask the more radical questions that were pressing: about how the bishops of the time all came from the nobles, whereas most of the priests came from the peasant and poorer classes; about how uneducated the clergy were; and about the kinds of formation that the clergy needed. Moreover, this lack of radicality was matched by a delay and hesitation on the part of Church leaders. Hubert Jedin, one of the most respected historians of this period, points up how Luther first made his stand in 1517, and yet as late as 1562—45 years later—the

work of Catholic reform had not even begun.[5] We would do well to learn from this experience.

Nevertheless, there are also some factors in the Church's life which will remain perennially. In Acts, we are told that the first believers in the Resurrection 'persevered faithfully in the teaching of the Apostles, in the communion, the breaking of the bread and the prayers'.[6] We can see here antecedents of what later theology would call the Word of God, the sacraments and the apostolic office. Moreover, we can also recall the Church's prophetic teaching about the abiding presence of Christ to us:

> . . . underlying so many changes there are some things which do not change and are founded upon Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever . . . . [t]he key and the focus and culmination of all human history are to be found in its Lord and master.[7]

[5] See, for example, Hubert Jedin's *Crisis and Closure of the Council of Trent: A Retrospective View from the Second Vatican Council*, translated by N. D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1967 [1963]).
[6] This is a literal translation of Acts 2:42.
[7] *Gaudium et spes*, n. 10.

What, then, can we say about how the Spirit is leading the Church through the great cultural transformation represented by the internet?

Most importantly, no matter how great and pervasive the power of the internet is, it will not remove the need for the Church. In *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Friedman says,

> There is nothing about globalisation or the internet that eliminates the need for ideals or codes of restraint on human behaviour. The more we are dependent on this technology, the more we need to come to it armed with our own ideals and codes of restraint. . . . And we certainly don't want to be unifying mankind through the internet without any value system, without any filters, without any alternative conception of meaning other than business and without any alternative view of human beings other than as consumers looking for the lowest price.[8]

And he draws the important conclusion: 'But these much-needed values are best learned off-line . . . in their church, synagogue, temple or mosque'. In this new world of the internet, the Church will be more necessary than ever.

Moreover, we can see the power of the internet as a providential sign of the times, calling the Church to rediscover an emphasis on the original mandate of Christ: to make *disciples.* We have emphasized the mission to go out and teach and to baptize, but we have not placed sufficient emphasis on the mandate to make disciples, in the full sense, of those whom we teach and baptize.

When the Church was beginning, people came to belief because of the testimony of those who had seen, lived with and experienced Jesus.

> We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1.1-3)

[8] Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, p. 470.

The mission of the Church is not just to form a body of people who know the doctrine about Jesus, but to make disciples in the full New Testament sense of the word. For in the New Testament, the disciple is the one who experiences Jesus, who lives close to Jesus, who hears his word, and who feels the impact of his presence. The fourth Church will demand, more than any of its predecessors, disciples who are truly rooted in Christ Jesus. Once again, an observation of Friedman's helps us make the point:

> What makes the internet so exciting and troubling is that, unlike *The New York Times* for example, it has no editor, no publisher, no censor. . . . But precisely because the internet is such a neutral, free, open and unregulated vehicle for . . . communication, personal judgment and responsibility are critical when using this technology.

Or we might quote Paul VI: 'Modern people listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because the teachers are witnesses'.[9]

The shaping of the future Church will depend crucially on disciples who are themselves shaped, shaped by their drinking from the living waters at the fountain of God's Word. Our new context only confirms the teaching of Vatican II:

> . . . the synod *strongly* and *specially* urges all the faithful . . . to learn by frequent study of the Scriptures 'the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ'(Philippians 3.8).[10]

The Fourth Church will remain the Church of the Bible—the Book of the Third Millennium. The biblical Word will perhaps be communicated in ways we are only beginning to imagine, but it will remain central—central not as a weapon, but as the unceasing fountain of life. Through this Word, disciples will be formed, heralds of Christ. We can remember how John the evangelist summed up the whole purpose of his gospel: it was written 'so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name' (John 20.31).

[9] *Evangelii nuntiandi*, n.41.
[10] *Dei verbum*, n. 25 (emphases added).

Shaping the Church of the future is and will be no simple task. It is complex and challenging. It is also exhilarating. It will require hard work and evangelical daring.

John Raphael Quinn was born in 1929, and ordained priest in 1953, during his studies in Rome. Having worked in parish, seminary and university settings, he was ordained bishop in 1967, serving as auxiliary in San Diego, and subsequently as archbishop in Oklahoma and in San Francisco. Between 1977 and 1980, he was president of the US National Conference of Catholic Bishops. He resigned his see in 1995, and is now occupied in writing, lecturing, and giving retreats.

IGNATIAN IDENTITY IN TRANSITION

Christian Grondin

'A READING OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES since the Second Vatican Council shows unmistakably that the Church of the next millennium will be called the "Church of the Laity".' (GC 34, d.13, n.1) This statement from the last General Congregation of the Society of Jesus highlights an emerging phenomenon that is beginning to transform the life of the entire Church. It is not just a matter of redefining the relationship between the 'clergy' and the 'laity', and of the associated question of how responsibilities are to be shared between them. What is really at issue is the very shape of the Church and its way of defining its mission.

In its own way, Ignatian spirituality is sharing in this renewal of ecclesial life. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that Ignatian identity is itself in the midst of a complete transformation. And the process of reinvention is nowhere more intense than in the relationship between Jesuits and non-Jesuits in mission together.

Having worked in an Ignatian institution for more than fifteen years, I consider myself a privileged witness and at the same time, in some small measure, a live participant in this ongoing shift in identity. Moreover, when I attended an international conference on 'Ignatian partnership' in 2002, I realised how wide-ranging, indeed universal, this challenge of reconstructing Ignatian identity was.[1]

This article is a kind of spiritual exploration. I shall try to name some issues arising from the attempt to construct authentic Ignatian partnership in mission. I will take care to draw my ideas from the context of my particular apostolate, the *Centre de Spiritualité Manrèse*

[1] The conference, designed as a consultation, was held in Rome from 17 to 23 February 2002, under the aegis of the Secretariat for Ignatian Spirituality. It brought together around fifty Ignatian women and men from five continents. For material from this consultation, see *Review of Ignatian Spirituality*, 99, 33/1 (2002), pp. 21-76.

The Way, 42/4 (October 2003), pp. 32-45

(CSM) in Quebec City,[2] in the hope that this will help them get some sense of what is stirring throughout the church.

New Frontiers

It is quite remarkable to see how the understanding of Ignatian spirituality has evolved over recent decades. We have moved on from a time when Ignatian spirituality tended to be confused with the life and mission of the Society of Jesus. We now recognise an important distinction between the Jesuit way of enfleshing Ignatian spirituality and other ways of living it out, whether in religious or lay contexts.[3] We can see a parallel here with the refounding of the Marian Sodalities as the Christian Life Community (CLC) in the 1970s; we have come to recognise a certain autonomy among lay people when it comes to taking the Ignatian charism into the world.

The common source of all currents of Ignatian spirituality lies, of course, in the Spiritual Exercises. However, the Exercises themselves—particularly through the growing involvement of lay people in the ministry of spiritual accompaniment—have become a place where many different interpretations and practices can be developed and tested. And these interpretations and practices reflect a pluralism inherent within Ignatian spirituality as such. Some schools of interpretation, such as that promoted by the CSM in Quebec, see the Exercises first and foremost as a style of pedagogy valid for everyone, for all spiritual experience. The Exercises have as much to say to people at large who are simply looking for a meaning in life as to people who are committed Christians. The pedagogy of the Exercises transcends any particular spirituality. This approach raises all the more acutely the issue of Ignatian identity: if the Exercises do not necessarily generate a distinctively Ignatian spirituality, how does one become Ignatian? How and under what conditions *can* the Exercises lead to an Ignatian

A pluralism within Ignatian spirituality

[2] The *Centre de Spiritualité Manrèse* was founded in 1976 by the late Gilles Cusson SJ and a group of other Jesuits. Its mission is seen today in three major sectors of activity: a school of spirituality, based on the practice of the Exercises in daily life; an international school for the formation of spiritual guides; and a journal—*Cahiers de spiritualité ignatienne*—which promotes dialogue between spirituality and contemporary culture. The composition of the Centre's team is presently around 45% lay, 45% women religious and 10% Jesuit.

[3] This concern to differentiate Jesuit spirituality and Ignatian spirituality was officially expressed after the 32nd General Congregation (1974-1975).

identity? And does the grace of the Exercises need to be filled out with something else? If so, with what? There are many such cutting-edge questions that are drawing Ignatian spirituality down untravelled paths.

In scarcely thirty years, Ignatian awareness has thus undergone a phenomenal transformation. One transition has been definitively made: we no longer identify Ignatian spirituality with its Jesuit expression, but recognise many different ways in which it can be lived. But now we seem called upon to make a new shift: an Ignatiocentric idea of the Exercises (in the sense just described) is giving way to a more universalist and pluralist interpretation, paradoxically more Ignatian perhaps than ever before. What is beyond question is that Ignatian spirituality will always be the spirituality of unexplored and foreign frontiers, including the frontiers within itself.

A New Role for the Society of Jesus

Experience of collaboration between Jesuits and others throughout the world has shown that Ignatian Spirituality does not become a pluralist reality without there being some conflict. I myself have several times heard Jesuits state as an axiom that Ignatian spirituality can only be preserved safely by Jesuits, in other words, by those who make the Thirty Day retreat at least twice in their lifetime—not to mention the general experience that comes from annual retreats, apostolic discernments, the study of fundamental Ignatian texts during the novitiate and tertianship, and so on. One of them even explicitly told me, no doubt with noble intentions, that 'the only way for CSM to apply the pedagogy of the Exercises to and for our times is to pay attention to the Jesuits'. On the other hand, I have also heard lay people complain—in a way rather lacking in due

discriminating charity—about the desire of some Jesuits to claw back the gift of the Exercises. They even accuse Jesuits of a chronic inability to leave behind the old reflexes of a clericalism that persists in treating the laity as infants. Such reactions, even if they are to some extent well-grounded, are clearly not going to bring about change. Above all, they do not convey the whole truth.

Having spent much time with a wide variety of Jesuits in the context of my work at CSM, I have learned from experience that the Society's desire to collaborate with the laity emerges from a truly Spirit-based decision; it clearly arises from that love which 'consists in interchange between the two parties' (Exx 231.1). I have been able to observe the generosity of God's gift operating through the loving and gracious presence of those men who have served, and are still serving, a mission that they immediately and intuitively recognised as larger than the specifically Jesuit charism. Their 'way of proceeding' has also taught me that quality of love marked by 'the lover's giving and communicating to the beloved what they have . . . and so conversely the beloved to the lover' (Exx 231.1). Further, I have been called gradually to an authentic partnership, bringing to the life of the Centre that which is lacking in the Jesuits—starting with everything involved in my vocation as a lay person. I know that many other people involved in the work of the Centre, lay or religious, would express gratitude for similar reasons.

I consider myself today to be a lay Ignatian 'without hang-ups' in relation to my Jesuit brothers in Quebec, and capable of maintaining an Ignatian dialogue with them on an equal basis. But the process of arriving at this position needed patience, and involved some wounds along the way. On the one hand, I had to accept my need to grow, to be instructed by those who were more Ignatian than me—which meant allowing myself to be formed by members of the Society of Jesus. That responsibility fell to Jesuits not through any kind of theological necessity, but rather through historical and cultural circumstances. On the other hand, the conversion that Jesuits themselves have to live requires of them too a certain patience with a growth-process. To become men not only *for* others, but also *with* others (as the 1995 General Congregation challenged them to do) will involve a transformation in attitude—supported by new patterns of formation—which can only come about over several generations. That

Not only FOR others but also WITH others

is why I feel admiration rather than hurt after my fifteen years or so of spiritual and apostolic fellowship with the Jesuits.

At this stage of our journey together—or, rather, at this stage of the alliance which we must build in order to make a stronger unit for mission—I think that the greatest challenge facing the Society of Jesus will be that of remaining in fellowship with its partners at the heart of the apostolic works it has created. As far as the CSM is concerned, the Jesuits of the French Canadian Province chose in 1995 to institute a broad Ignatian partnership. This initiative brought partner groups together on the Administrative Council, with memberships drawn from different religious congregations, from among diocesan priests and from among lay people. The work is incomplete; in many respects it is still in embryo. But it shows an energizing confidence in the future of Ignatian partnership for the 21st century.

The question that preoccupies me, however, is the following: will the Society be tempted to consider its own mission complete once the work can be fully taken over by its non-Jesuit partners? The temptation will be all the stronger as active Jesuits, in Quebec as throughout the Western world, become fewer and fewer in number over the years to come. But true partnership will not be possible if one of the supposed partners is completely eclipsed, even if this is to make room for mature and competent lay Ignatian disciples.

The Jesuit way of serving today undeniably involves the death of an old form of presence. But it is probably also true that straightforward withdrawal from an apostolic work represents a powerful temptation under the appearance of good. Partnership implies the risks of dialogue and companionship on a daily rather than an occasional basis. Hence the importance of a meaningful Jesuit presence that is still fully invested in the work—not in order to affix the official Ignatian seal of approval (such recognition has already ceased to be the Society's role)—but in order to live out complete Ignatian partnership, and to contribute to the formation of a new

Ignatian identity at the heart of the Church and of the world. It seems to me that, for the Jesuits, this remaining is also part of what is entailed in the call to become men *with* others, after having been so generously and for so long men *for* others.

Towards Mature Partnership

The challenges involved in Jesuit-lay partnership must be understood in relation to the new place of the laity in the Church. Within the overall history of Christianity, the emergence of the laity as real partners (rather than simply as people who did what they were told), has as yet occurred only on the surface. Like all those involved in the Church, I have heard—especially in my role as spiritual director—numerous sad stories of both laity and clergy in situations of shared responsibility. They may be suffering from incomprehension and humiliation, or from guilt and feelings of inferiority, or even at times from the secret fear of losing 'their' place at the heart of the Christian community. All these cries and whispers express the inevitable discomfort of a dialogue between people who are trying to find a common language and culture. This shared understanding will need decades and more to come to birth.

There are of course examples of successful partnerships in the Church, but they rarely make the headlines. I like to see in the multiplicity of diocesan synods a constructive affirmation, even if hesitant and incomplete, of the will of the whole Church to expose itself to the wind of change. We know full well where this wind of change is coming from, but no one has any idea where it is going, apart from the fact that there will be a complete institutional remodelling. However, it does not take a skilled exegete to decipher, between the lines of all the decrees promulgated after these conferences, permanent conflicts and uncertainties around key concepts like synodality and co-responsibility. These words do not always mean the same thing for lay people as for clerics.

The experiences of collaboration in the Ignatian world are also marked by these hopes and ambiguities. As an example, the 1995 General Congregation decree on the laity was received by lay people and by Jesuits in quite different ways. Jesuits themselves differ in their perception of its importance for the life of the Society, and I have noticed that it has generally aroused greater enthusiasm from lay

people than from Jesuits. After the international conference on Ignatian partnership in Rome, I was able to see what were at least paradoxes—if not downright contradictions—in the expectations of both sides. For example, I heard the Jesuit General call forcefully on the Christian Life Community to grow in autonomy, so as to become a true partner in mission. At the same time, I also heard lay people protest that too many members of the Society understood the CLC and its way of mission in very Jesuit-centred terms.

On this last point, one question, raised at several points during the conference, is remarkably revealing of the issues at stake in building Ignatian partnership. 'Who is it that sends out on mission?' This question was usually put by Jesuits who were concerned at not finding representatives of the laity (now going beyond the CLC) authorised to build an institutional partnership, as opposed to a partnership between Jesuits and particular individuals. In the Society of Jesus, the situation is clear: it is the Father Provincial (or General) who 'missions' and who is the mandated spokesperson for the Jesuit community. With the laity, it cannot be like this. This question seems to express an unease also shared by lay people, since some of them have chosen to become Ignatian Associates in order to be formally attached to the Jesuits' mission and to be 'sent' by the Provincial.

The thinking on this subject contributed by the laity, especially by members of CLC, opens up quite a new way of understanding what it means to be sent on mission: it is not a person in authority who sends, as in the Society of Jesus, but the community itself, 'without intermediary', one might say. So each local community can be seen as a 'discerning body', entrusting its mission to each member, following—if appropriate—the orientations of the wider association to which it belongs, and respecting the lay realities that shape the involvement of each person—family, work and so on. Seen in this light, lay status entails a new way of thinking about 'missioning' and the mobility that it necessarily entails. To put the matter bluntly: lay status is not a limitation to be accommodated, but part of a mode of genuinely Ignatian mission that is different—Ignatian, but not Jesuit.

Lay status implies a new way of understanding mission

An Ignatian concept of this kind of mission has scarcely reached the awareness of the laity, and it will probably take several decades for it to grow fully. Thus we are faced with two questions. First, how can the Society of Jesus let go of its Jesuit models for understanding

Ignatian lay identity? And secondly, how can the lay people involved come to see themselves (and I am thinking here very concretely of the CLC and other similar communities) as a body that has not yet reached maturity, a body that still needs the resources of the Society to continue creating itself, and still looks to the Jesuits for its foundational Ignatian identity to be recognised?

The Variety of Lay Ignatian Vocations

This body of Ignatian laity will always be, by its very nature, pluriform. Lay Ignatians are not always grouped into communities, far from it. Many lay people work alongside Jesuits, or in the apostolic network of the Society of Jesus, without having any firm link to an Ignatian community. Others are Ignatian Associates or members of a Christian Life Community.

All this points to how complex lay Ignatian identity is, and how far-reaching the challenge is when it comes to constructing a Jesuit-lay partnership. One point is clear: the partnership will always be pluriform in its structures of association and in its ways of functioning, or else it will not exist at all.

The CSM is an interesting case in point. Founded by the Society of Jesus apostolic network of the French Canadian Province (it is scarcely ever termed 'a Jesuit work'), the CSM is now constitutionally dependent on a formally established Ignatian Association, involving (besides the Society of Jesus as the original founders) a group of religious congregations, a group of secular priests and a group of the Ignatian laity. Each group is represented on the administrative Council, enabling a sensitivity to the needs of the various sectors as the basis for ongoing discernment as to how the Centre's mission evolves.

Although there is room for improvement, one element here must surely be maintained: the imaginative vision that has led to a style of partnership that is both structured and open—a partnership of a kind quite different from that between the institution and those who work for it. For the presence of women religious and secular priests breaks down the sense of polarisation that arises when one thinks simply of Jesuits and lay people. It brings to Ignatian partnership other ecclesial dimensions that are essential if the pluriform reality which is true Ignatian partnership is to grow fully.

I am personally part of an Ignatian community that grew from CSM—the Community in Daily Life (CDL)—which could well be called one day to join the ranks of the Ignatian Association. Whether that happens or not, I already feel myself 'sent' by my community to work at the Centre. However, though the Centre is quite used to thinking about people from religious congregations in these terms, I am sure that it does not yet see me, a lay person, in this way.

Alongside that, in my capacity as Director of Programmes, I receive my mandate from the Administrative Council (and therefore from the Ignatian partnership), which, through the director, 'missions' me in terms of the responsibility that is given me at the Centre. Then again, since the Centre is also an apostolic work of the Society of Jesus, I can see a particular link between myself and the Jesuit Provincial, whom I meet during his annual visitations. I experience that meeting as an 'account of conscience', the revealing of all one's 'inclinations and motions' that is very characteristic of Jesuit governance.[4]

In short, I experience Christ sending me on mission by three different Ignatian means: my lay community, the Ignatian Association, and the Provincial. Ignatian partnership in mission is something that works itself out in me through the interplay of these three linked agencies. All three of them are interpersonal and institutional structures that affect me personally. I could not now abandon any of them without giving up something integral to the texture of my lay Ignatian commitment.

I am convinced that my situation is not at all exceptional—it simply highlights the pluriformity and complexity of lay Ignatian identity and Ignatian partnerships, now and in the future. I think we should resist the reductionist temptation to simplify the multiple, often contradictory components of lay Ignatian identity. We should rather be happy to live in the insecurity of an Ignatian partnership that moves forward in trust through the darkness as it tries to define itself. This is perhaps the price we must pay for living in creative fidelity to the spirit of Ignatius Loyola.

[4] *Examen* 4.35 [*Constitutions* 92.4].

Diversity in Partnership

One of the most innovative forms of collaboration in mission is the involvement between Ignatian and non-Ignatian individuals or groups. In a growing number of situations, Christians without any experience of the Exercises, or with only a rudimentary knowledge of Ignatius' work, are called upon to fulfil key functions in Ignatian institutions or Jesuit projects (such as schools, spiritual centres or social justice programmes), and even, in certain provinces, within the government of the Society of Jesus itself. There are also situations in which fully Ignatian or Jesuit programmes are partly staffed by individuals from other religious traditions, or by those with no faith at all. All are able to work together on the basis of shared values. And of course there are more and more Ignatian women and men involved in spiritual or humanitarian projects that do not originate in the Society of Jesus or in Christian churches. Each of these models of Ignatian partnership is important; all of them have much to teach us.

Ignatian spirituality is essentially about making relationships. Thus those who follow it need to make alliances with people who are different—either just a little different (Roman Catholics who are not Ignatian or Ignatian people from other Churches), or else rather more different (mainstream members of other Churches), or perhaps quite different (followers of other religions), or even very different indeed (non-believers).

Much more is at stake here than a pragmatic *faute de mieux*. Such alliances are inspired by a dynamism at the heart of Ignatian identity:

the irresistible urge towards new frontiers. By the very fact of their otherness, these others participate in a mysterious way in the blossoming of a more authentically Ignatian partnership. True, this type of collaboration is sometimes far removed from an Ignatian partnership rooted in the 'pure' Ignatian tradition, but this is precisely where its true grace lies. To refuse to take the risk of such connections, even at the institutional level, would be a violation of the Ignatian spirit, a spirit which seeks ceaselessly to break down barriers, especially those which divide the Churches from humanity as a whole.

In Quebec, the CSM has long-established alliances with individuals from non-Ignatian traditions. Thus, many collaborators, notably those with expertise in the human sciences, have come from other schools of spirituality, other spiritual families. Though such links have clearly been fruitful, there have been some occasional difficulties in integrating them within the overall Ignatian vision. Indeed, some instances of collaboration have seemed problematic to at least some Centre staff and some French Canadian Jesuits—problematic because they seem threatening to the specifically Ignatian character of the Centre. Obviously we are dealing here with something far short of an established partnership. Inevitably there will be a gap between how the Centre perceives those outside it and how those outside perceive the Centre. There is one set of questions about the Centre's desire to collaborate, and another about how far those concerned want to be incorporated into the definition of Ignatian identity. These gaps are difficult to negotiate: we are dealing with people who are 'other', and that means what it says. But living with this tension is an essential part of Ignatian identity.

Institutionally, too, the CSM has begun to forge institutional partnerships with various external bodies. We have begun here by making agreements with the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at our local university, and also with the interreligious chaplaincy there. The link with the Faculty enables the Centre to offer formation courses for spiritual guides at the Centre, and gives the Centre a chance to exert a broader Ignatian influence on society at large—the university is, after all, a public institution. The Centre is also stimulated to be more open to the educational values at the heart of contemporary Western society. For its part, the agreement with the chaplaincy will, among other benefits, expose the Centre more directly to the practice of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, and invite it

to explore what it is to live out such a dialogue in an Ignatian way. Such partnerships will help significantly in broadening Ignatian awareness. These two examples will suffice to suggest future paths beckoning the CSM forward. Its history has brought it to a crossroads, from which it cannot but move on towards bold and original forms of Ignatian partnership.

Conclusion: The Ignatian Hope

As I come to the end of these thoughts on Ignatian partnership, I want to describe the hope I nurture at the outset of a new century that is calling for Ignatian partnerships of new kinds. At the heart of this call are the new relationships being forged between Jesuits and the laity. Yesterday's beacons serve only to remind us of the road we have already travelled. It is time for an ecclesiological breakthrough, and for creativity in our discernment. Ignatian spirituality is one of the resources being summoned by the Spirit to a place of meeting, a radically catholic, universal place, a place from where we can enter into the 'Church of the laity'. This Church will, in its entirety, be oriented towards the service of the world. And the lay state of life will be the focal sacramental reality.

At the risk of being accused of spiritual chauvinism, I believe that Ignatian spirituality, precisely by virtue of its position as the most secular spirituality in the history of Christianity, has a prophetic role to play in this great project. This is the deep conviction that keeps me going, and which has led me to write here about all these years of Ignatian fellowship in mission. I believe that the new creation which the Spirit is bringing about at the CSM in Quebec, in interaction with the whole Ignatian tradition, can contribute to the opening of paths that will be fruitful for the future. Moreover, through the variety of our experiences, Ignatian identity is itself growing. We are constantly experiencing the Ignatian *magis*—the 'ever greater glory'. And the Ignatian tradition is coming to nourish the Church as a whole. It can serve as the 'little yeast' which 'leavens the whole batch of dough' (1 Corinthians 5.6).

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TRUTH AND SILENCE

Learning from Abuse

Gill K. Goulding

COLLABORATIVE MINISTRY INVOLVES HARD WORK. It is grounded in the universal call to holiness; it requires a deep appreciation of the involvement of lay people in ministry. It requires a commitment to honest communication and conversation from all concerned. Inevitably there are problems of misunderstanding and disagreement between individuals engaged in a common ministry. If authority is to be exercised as a service rather than as domination, we need to cultivate good forms of communication, through which such difficulties can be honestly explored.

There is, of course, an honourable exercise of authority within the Church. The fact that authority is sometimes dishonoured does not negate that reality. Authority's intervention is not always abusive; it can be quite legitimate. This article, nevertheless, focuses on those times when legitimate authority becomes abusive authority, and on the suffering that ensues.

A breakdown in communication often leads to an exercise of dominance on the one hand, and an experience of powerlessness on the other. Both of these can lead to real and acute suffering. To redress such a situation there is a need for those who have suffered to be able to speak. There is also a need for others within the Church to listen to this uncomfortable voice of lament—a voice that calls for a conversion in the way we relate to one another.[1]

Powerlessness is not an experience we welcome. Particularly difficult to endure is the inability to change an injustice inflicted either on ourselves or on another. But if a person who has suffered injustice is then forced to keep silent, there is radical suffering indeed. When such

[1] In another place, I have drawn attention to the difficulties of those who face powerlessness on the margins of society. Gill Goulding, *On the Edge of Mystery: Towards a Spiritual Hermeneutic of the Urban Margins* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2000).

The Way, 42/4 (October 2003), pp. 44-55

experiences occur within the Church, the deprivation is not just individual: it is the body of Christ that is profoundly affected. It is as though we are being deprived of the light we need to see or of the air we need to breathe.

The Church has a unique vocation within society to proclaim the unconditional love of God to all, and to exemplify that love. This vocation lies at the heart of true collaborative ministry. Injustice and abuse distort this vision of love, and undermine the very nature of the Church.[2] The comments and stories that follow are from men and women who are deeply committed to their ministry within the Church. They have all, to a greater or lesser extent, experienced a period of suffering, which they perceive to have resulted from an abusive exercise of authority. They all recognise and respect the authority structure of the Church, and look for signs of hope and encouragement to sustain them. None of them had been offered an arena in which to articulate their concerns, and many had been coerced into remaining silent.

The scandals of recent years involving the sexual abuse of children have brought to public attention the complex power structures within which we operate in the Church, and which we often legitimate in the name of the Lord. Although the media naturally focus on the sexual abuse of children, problems with Church power structures are not confined solely to this area; there are other kinds of abuse as well.[3] These latter instances of the misuse of power and control are not illegal, but they have still had far-reaching consequences in the memories and lives of individuals. All members of the Church are diminished when individuals suffer in this way. Indeed, in these circumstances we are all victims of a reality that damages the human community, and it is this community that must be reclaimed.

[2] Compare John Paul II, 'Confession of Sins Committed in the Name of Truth' (12 March 2000), http://www.cin.org/jp2/univpray.html; *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, n. 35.

[3] As a qualified observer of sexual abuse in Ireland has put it: 'while few [Catholics] experienced this kind of abuse themselves, many experienced other kinds of abuse by authorities in the Church': Eamonn Conway, 'The Service of a Different Kingdom: Child Sexual Abuse and the Response of Church', in *The Church and Child Sexual Abuse: Towards a Pastoral Response,* edited by Eamonn Conway, Eugene Duffy and Attracta Shields (Dublin: Columba Press, 1999), pp. 76-88.

Diminishment of Persons

Radical suffering, as Wendy Farley has put it, 'assaults and degrades that about a person which makes him or her most human'. Such an experience can insidiously undermine the person's own basic human dignity. 'Anguish effaces the very humanity of the sufferer and in this way cripples her ability to defend herself.' At its worst, it can give rise to a despair, enervating 'even the indignation that would make one realise that one had been wronged'.[4] Such radical suffering is taking place within the Christian Church today. This is not to say that the suffering is the deliberate desire of anyone in authority; nevertheless, it is a real consequence of the attitudes and actions of individuals.

The comments that follow originate in a series of interviews I conducted among individuals whom I knew to have felt mistreated in a variety of Church situations. In every case action was taken which questioned the integrity of the individuals involved. Some were removed from jobs, or parishes, or communities; others were forbidden to teach, or preach, or write. In each case there is a clear sense of an unjust action that was then concealed by a refusal to address the injustice. In many cases there was also a deliberate attempt to force the sufferer to collude in the injustice by imposing silence upon them.[5]

This silencing is described in many ways. 'I felt I had no voice', one stated; 'I was told not to talk about it', said another. 'They did not even have the decency to speak to me', exclaimed a third. 'Why is it so difficult to be heard?' yet another questioned. 'It was as though no one wished to hear what I had to say', one respondent stated, while

[4] Wendy Farley, *Tragic Vision and Divine Compassion* (Westminster, Ky: John Knox, 1990), pp. 54-55.

[5] It is interesting to reflect here on what Judith Lewis Herman has to say regarding an imposition of silence and secrecy: 'In order to escape accountability for his crimes, the perpetrator does everything in his power to promote forgetting. Secrecy and silence are the perpetrator's first line of defence. If secrecy fails, the perpetrator attacks the credibility of his victim. If he cannot silence her absolutely, he tries to make sure that no one listens. To this end, he marshals an impressive array of arguments, from the most blatant denial to the most sophisticated and elegant rationalisation. After every atrocity one can expect to hear the same predictable apologies: it never happened; the victim lies; the victim exaggerates; the victim brought it upon herself; and in any case it is time to forget the past and move on. The more powerful the perpetrator, the greater is his prerogative to name and define reality, and the more completely his arguments prevail. The perpetrator's arguments prove irresistible when the bystander faces them in isolation. Without a supportive social environment, the bystander usually succumbs to the temptation to look the other way. When the victim is already devalued (a woman, a child) she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of socially validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable': Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 8.

another said 'I was more aware that suddenly I was an embarrassment to people'. Their experience was clearly something that no one wanted publicly to admit knowing about:

> I could talk about anything else and that was OK. I was in the strange situation that individuals were happily still associating with me though they knew I was being misused in this way by a member of their own brotherhood. So long as we didn't talk about that, their lives could go on as normal while mine was disintegrating before my eyes.

The Body Bears Witness

This sense of being silenced can also manifest itself in physical symptoms. 'I felt a tremendous draining of energy'; 'I experienced a constriction in my throat'; 'It was as though I was trying to speak against a wall of oppression'; 'I felt my energy draining away through my mouth, taking away even my ability to speak'. This sense of being deprived of a voice is a most powerful deprivation and strikes at the heart of a person's ability to express themselves. Here Elaine Scarry's book, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the Word,*[6] helps us understand what is happening. Though focused on the victims of torture, her work makes clear that the silencing of any individual is a physically and personally destructive act. In the long term, such silencing can leave a legacy of trauma, inhibiting the sufferer from being able to articulate what is causing the suffering or how deep it is. Worse still is the effect of the sufferer's being forced to collude in their own oppression.

'I felt my energy draining away'

To Experience Betrayal

Betrayal is an important and recurring theme as individuals describe the powerlessness arising from what they perceive as abuses of authority. Such abuse is a betrayal of the trust that lies at the heart of commitment and human interaction, and that gives life to the individual and the community. Within the Church, an important part

[6] (Oxford: OUP, 1986)—see especially pp. 27-59.

of this betrayal may be the unwillingness of religious authorities to listen to the sufferer or to appreciate and work with the sufferer's point of view: instead they lay emphasis on submission and obedience. This unwillingness results in a threefold oppression: the original situation of suffering in itself; the refusal of authority to listen to the sufferer and dialogue with them; finally, authority's insistence upon a submission that negates the individual's experience. For the sufferer this can result in an experience of violation. For one woman, this was symbolized by an incident that occurred during a period of intense suffering arising from the immature action of a cleric. She had been forced during the ensuing conflict to move her home to a new city. Then the house in which she lived was broken into. For her, this burglary seemed to symbolize the violation:

> This action demonstrated what I had been unable to give voice to for all those months. In a strange way it spoke the truth that I was not allowed to utter.

Understanding Truth and Illusion

Here we enter the domain of truth and illusion; we need to recognise how truth is central to ethical practice.[7] For Hannah Arendt, it is characteristic of a totalitarian society that truth and fiction have traded places, and that memory has been obliterated. It may be necessary to keep alive 'dangerous memories'. Johannes Baptist Metz stresses that the memory of suffering preserves something beyond the oppressive systems of exchange, something which makes protest and resistance possible. One example of this among the respondents was given by a religious sister, describing an interview with her bishop. Her employer had made it clear to her that the bishop had caused her to be dismissed from her job. During the meeting with the sister, the bishop categorically denied that he had taken such action. When the sister began to articulate how much suffering she had endured because of his precipitate action the bishop became very uncomfortable and suddenly

Keeping alive the memory of suffering

[7] Compare again John Paul II, 'Confession of Sins'. The section on 'sins committed in the name of truth' acknowledged that 'even men of the Church, in the name of faith and morals, have sometimes used methods not in keeping with the Gospel in the solemn duty of defending truth'.

stated 'Like St Paul, what I want is your happiness'. This respondent's comment was:

> I just sat and looked at him thinking 'what planet are you on?' I saw he could not cope with being faced with the consequences of his actions and he just withdrew into a kind of fantasy caricature.[8]

Sufferers often felt that they were confronting an oppressive illusion, one that was determined by authority in advance. Recounting her meeting with a bishop, one woman reported:

> He walked into the room with a predetermined vision of the situation, and it was from this position that he spoke and acted. When my story suggested an alternative way of looking at the facts he refused to consider it.

A man experienced this sort of imposition as a black darkness; his conversation with a priest was 'so dark, terrible—there was nothing I could say to reach him'. The illusion imposed by authority seems utterly unavoidable:

> It was as though he were saying this is the way life is and it cannot be any different, and everything within me rose up to say: 'that is not true'.

How Do We Exercise Relational Authority?

The uncovering of the sexual abuse committed by some priests has led us into unknown, unfamiliar terrain, where serious questions arise about sacred authority. We need to admit that we have been brought to a situation beyond our competence. Nevertheless we can insist that authority is a 'relational reality'. It involves a series of expectations, the conferral of a certain power and the giving of service. 'The currency of

[8] Contrast the US bishops in their *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People,* 27 June 2002: 'As bishops, we acknowledge our mistakes and our role in that suffering and we apologize and take responsibility for too often failing victims and our people in the past': http://www.usccb.org/bishops/charter.htm.

authority is competence and trustworthiness."[9] Difficulties arise when authority's incompetence takes the form of a breach of trust. The following testimony powerfully illustrates how dialogue can break down. It recounts the undermining of an individual's integrity, and the calling into question of her professional competence by one less qualified in a specific area:

> The incident concerns an occasion when my judgment, as someone charged with the task of monitoring an ordinand's growth and readiness for ordination, was sidelined by a man in a position of authority. He had had little day-to-day contact with the person in question, whereas I had travelled alongside him extensively. He had seen him only 'on his best behaviour'; I had been involved in the ordinary and the real.
>
> My immediate reaction was that he was pulling rank, and this enraged me. We pretend in the Church that our ministerial patterns mirror God the Trinity, a communion of mutually respectful equals; we speak endlessly of co-operation, collaboration and mutual ministry; we follow Him who assumed the role of a servant. But when push comes to shove, we fall back on a military model whereby the 'top brass' 'command' the rank and file.
>
> That was my immediate reaction. Then I found myself feeling embarrassed at having 'stepped out of line', 'said more than I should have'. Physical symptoms included blushing—I am prone to that when embarrassed—and dipping my voice, looking at my feet and trying to 'hide'. I began to feel small and insignificant, indeed rather trivial, compared to his authoritative manner and voice. I began to convince myself that he was right—so who was I to contradict him? Maybe this was unchristian?
>
> This was immediately followed by anger at myself for colluding with his pattern of behaviour, so I reiterated my point of view more strongly and with uncharacteristic stridency, despite signals from a third party, which clearly said 'you've gone too far'. Thus I was forced into a position I would not naturally adopt nor ever wish to

[9] Here I draw on conversations with Fr Brian McDermott SJ, and on his unpublished paper, 'The Practice of Authority as Spiritual Exercise', given at the National Catholic Educational Association Convention, Seminary Department, Baltimore, 28 April 2000.

> adopt, being someone who favours dialogue, courteous listening and the forming of consensus.
>
> My unhappiness lingered till the end of the conversation; his viewpoint 'won'—there you see, that's how the conversation appeared, a battle between two warring parties! Why, I found myself wondering, is it so difficult to stay true to who I am and what I believe in, and to put that across so that others hear and respect my viewpoint? What do I have to do to be taken seriously? I felt sure he would have 'taken' the suggestion from a man. But from me it clearly seemed uppity.

Key features of this incident are the respondent's sense of her own responsibility for the task she had been assigned, and her conscientious attempt to fulfil it. She has spent time with the individual under discussion, and knows him through a variety of experiences occurring within a learning community over a period of years. She clearly understands the collaborative exercise of authority and the theological underpinning for such a way of working. Her sense of being 'put down' by the senior authority, and her initial collusion in this, appear to be classic examples of the way in which we can so often collude with someone abusive out of a misguided sense of obedience and respect for authority. Her realisation of what was happening and, following this, her more aggressive stance—which, on reflection, she felt she had been 'forced into'—served to betray the very values that she professed to hold dear. The undermining that takes place here is threefold: firstly in her initial interaction with the authority figure; secondly, in her own collusion; thirdly in her overcorrection, which leads her to abandon the very principles she held dear. The encounter made her feel diminished, and as though her personal and professional integrity had been called into question. When she was given no opportunity to discuss the way the meeting had been handled, this feeling was reinforced.

The Theological Edge

Theologians are individuals in the forefront of the Church's thinking. They undertake a responsibility to assist the Church in the understanding of doctrine and of the Christian life. They can be characterized as working collaboratively to serve the dynamic life of the Church. However, the willingness of theologians to engage in this

area of risk has stimulated increased activity in recent years on the part of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. This group has been concerned to maintain clear and unambiguous doctrine, and has instigated a series of juridical procedures. For the theologians involved, the result has often been the kind of suffering we have been discussing in this article.

One individual said that he passed through a whole gamut of emotions 'from annoyance to embarrassment, depression, and finally a sense of debilitated energies'. Another, by contrast, felt that his integrity was actually 'realised' in the process of engagement. Yet another stated: 'despite the temptation to take the matter personally I am not going to do so'. He felt the need to maintain an objective distance from the process so as to be able to make the necessary responses and continue to work on other projects.

A striking feature of the interviews with theologians was the willingness that they all showed to be self-critical, to be open to the possibility that they were wrong in some particulars. All the individuals considered themselves to be legitimately subject to scrutiny, and it is part of theologians' responsibility that they are accountable to the Church. What caused them difficulty was the form of the process that they were required to undergo. They spoke of its lack of clarity, of its secrecy, and of how they had no scope for entering into honest, open dialogue with those who questioned their writings.

This process also had profound personal implications. Individuals spoke of the effect upon their own faith life. More than one individual emphasized how the difficult process had led them to a more profound reliance upon prayer, to 'a need to seek the face of Christ within myself, others and the Church'.

Perceptions of Powerlessness

When asked to consider what it was within their situation that had made them feel powerless, respondents tended to focus on a feeling that they had no real existence for their perceived abuser. They felt de-personalised. For one individual, powerlessness 'is an ethos which promulgates a predetermined illusion as reality'. For another, it led to 'a sense of being distanced and excluded rather than welcomed and included'. A third spoke of being confronted with 'a refusal to countenance or engage with other than the predetermined view'. One

sister described experiencing 'a refusal to recognise gifts, skills and abilities as beneficial for building the kingdom'. A priest felt frustrated by what he saw as 'a focus on superficial appearances rather than the willingness to engage in depth with real issues'. A lay woman spoke of 'being treated as an object not a personal subject'. A theologian under investigation experienced what he could later call 'the implicit justification of injustice to achieve a desired end'. What made one of the lay male respondents feel powerless was authority's inability to admit it had been in error, while a woman involved in education ministry talked of 'the inability to look at the possibility of dialogue, whereby disagreeing parties might come to join in action for a common cause'. Another lay man spoke of 'the intrinsic assumption that I am wrong and that every possible means will be manipulated to prove my error', while a woman pastoral assistant experienced a painful confrontation as 'the death-knell not just of real collaboration but of any minimal attempt at consultation'.

'. . . the intrinsic assumption that I am wrong'

A Cardinal's Experience

It is not, however, just those outside the hierarchy or in lower positions within it whose voices need to be heard. When Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago was falsely accused of sexual abuse, we heard an experience of suffering from the voice of an individual in the public eye, and within the Church's decision-making processes. The way he articulates his experience echoes the words of many of the respondents in the interviews:

> The accusation startled and devastated me. I tried to get beyond the unconfirmed rumours and return to my work, but this lurid charge against my deepest ideals and commitments kept consuming my attention. . . . Spurious charges, I realised, were what Jesus himself experienced. But this evolving nightmare seemed completely unreal. It did not seem possible that this was happening to me.

The nightmarish quality of this experience is a common feature in most respondents' stories. The unreality of what occurred seemed in stark contrast to the normal pattern of life that continued around the suffering individual. Cardinal Bernardin went on to elaborate his

feelings as he faced the false allegation. 'I was very humiliated. . . . It was total humiliation . . . my feeling was that of disbelief, bewilderment.' After the bewilderment, 'it turned to anger, real deep-seated anger: "Why has this person done this to me?" And then it turned to compassion and sorrow. And that's where I am now.'[10]

In the progression of his emotions, Cardinal Bernardin's experience mirrors that of the interviewees. The reflective experience enabled by prayer and support, by space and time, can lead to a deeper compassion for those who have perpetrated perceived injustice or suffering. Those who have suffered can sense that the sacrament which is their own humanity has, as it were, been tried and proven, and is now reaching out to others.

Moving Forward

Cardinal Bernardin's story illustrates that power can be abusively exercised against authority figures as well as by them. The issue of abuse has become a challenge to our whole theology of ministry. The challenge we need to face is that of moving forward from such experiences. How can we learn from the experiences of those who have suffered from abuse, in a way that enables us to begin again? How can we begin again to focus on the central reality of ministry, on service among, with and on behalf of the people of God? How can we truly collaborate in ministry?

The stories we have heard in this paper show how we can all, to some extent, be both victims and perpetrators of abuse. We collude and deny, even if we do not actively participate. Readers reflecting upon their own stories may find points of resonance with some of the stories here, and may bring their own personal experience—their own empirical data—to interact with them. If there is to be fruitful change,

[10] Homily, 19 November 1993, in *Selected Works of Joseph Cardinal Bernardin*, edited by Alphonse P. Spilly, vol. 1, *Homilies and Teaching Documents* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2000), pp. 581-582.

there needs to be a widespread process of conversation and dialogue. It will be important to keep in mind that we can be in the wrong, as a number of respondents emphasized.

Yet being wrong is often not the most difficult issue, for being wrong can be forgiven. 'It is insisting on being right that confirms our being bound in original sin.'[11] James Alison insists that we need to be continually aware of the possible distortions within our own way of seeing reality, and gradually allow them to be corrected. Only thus can we hope to approach others in a way that is open and life-giving, not destructive:

> Our knowledge of each other is projective and in its mode already distorted. Only in the degree to which we allow our own distortion to be corrected will we be able to know the other with limpidity.

Moreover, as Alison emphasizes, there must be a real understanding of 'the efficacious revealing of the forgiveness of sins'. Alison sees this forgiveness as the 'foundation of the Church' and as 'our only way back into God's original plan for us'. If this sense of forgiveness is truly to be the root of all relating within the Church, the voices articulated above must be heard. Moreover, as we hear them, our own experience needs to come into focus. Our next step forward has to be a commitment to listening at depth. If we listen to the narratives of suffering, perhaps we can let the language of the sufferer shape our understanding. And from there we may begin to envisage possibilities for true collaboration in ministry.

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[11] James Alison, *The Joy of Being Wrong: Original Sin Through Easter Eyes* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), pp. 125, later quotations from pp. 144, 176.

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LAY ECCLESIAL MINISTERS

A Theological Look into the Future

Bernard Sesboüé

THOSE WITH PASTORAL RESPONSIBILITY in the Roman Catholic Church are faced with some complex problems at present. In the last decades, bishops have witnessed the progressive ageing of their clergy. They have managed to maintain the essential minimum of pastoral presence, but at the cost of prolonging active ministry to ages which would not be tolerated in other occupations. From now on, many elderly priests are not going to be replaced. At least humanly speaking, one cannot foresee any reversal of this tendency. The diminution in *quantity* is also taking us to a threshold where there will be a diminution in *quality*. The whole nature of pastoral relationships is changing; we are in the process of losing a particular sort of interaction and mutual nourishment that we have been used to until now.

Nevertheless, the Church cannot abandon its pastoral responsibility without denying its very self. For that reason, the bishops are sending a large number of lay people on a properly pastoral mission. These are known as 'Lay Ecclesial Ministers' (*animateurs pastoraux laïcs* in French). What are we to make, theologically, of this development, which is becoming more and more pronounced? This is the question I should like to consider, in the light of Vatican II's teaching and with an eye on the future.

Practice Contradicting Theory

What Vatican II accomplished forty years ago was, above all, a step forward in the theology of the Church, in ecclesiology. Its documents assigned a due place to the People of God. They rediscovered collegiality and the ecclesiology of *communio*. But they also stressed the hierarchical structure of the Church, beginning with the episcopacy.

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They insisted on the distinctive value of the ordained ministry. They often used words deriving from 'pastor'—a pastor or shepherd situated essentially in relationship to the community.

On the ground, however, this ecclesiology is becoming more and more unreal. There are communities or parishes living permanently without priests, and organized in a way that more or less bypasses the Church's fundamental structure. Now, Canon 517.2 of the 1983 *Code* does envisage that 'owing to a dearth of priests, a participation in the exercise of the pastoral care' can 'be entrusted to a deacon or to some other person who is not a priest or to a community of persons', with some priest in a supervisory role. Juridically, then, all is well. But what of the lived reality? This canon, which is meant to provide for the exceptional case, is at risk of describing the norm, at least in rural areas. In its own way, it is expressing a recognition that the Church no longer has the pastoral resources that official ecclesiology demands. This canon, indeed, is just one symptom of a whole series of ecclesiological anomalies.

Official theologies of the Church are becoming more and more unreal

Eucharistic Services

The central symbol for the first of these anomalies is the 'Sunday Celebration in the Absence of a Priest', for which there is now an official Directory. In the short term, this innovation has had a positive effect: such celebrations have revived communities that had grown complacent with filling-station liturgy. But the celebration of the Eucharist is the lived symbolic expression of the whole mystery of the Church and its structure. If Eucharistic services without a priest become the long-term norm, there will, surely, be a contradiction between the structure which the Church says it has, and what the community is actually living. There is a risk that people's whole understanding of the Church and the parish will change. The role of the ordained minister, symbolizing Christ's initiative towards his Church, will no longer be a lived reality.

The Right of the Faithful to the Sacraments

A second anomaly centres on the right of the faithful to the sacraments, recognised in a quite interesting way by the *Code of Canon Law*:

> The Christian faithful have the right to receive assistance from the sacred pastors out of the spiritual goods of the Church, especially the Word of God and the sacraments. (n. 213)

This section of the *Code* judiciously balances the rights and the duties of the faithful. But if one stresses their *duty to participate* at the Sunday Eucharist, surely one has to recognise their *right to be able to participate.* The tradition of the early Church was that every stable, sufficiently developed community normally had a right to the celebration of the Eucharist every Sunday. What the conditions implicit here amount to is obviously a matter of judgment according to social circumstances. Jewish tradition—which the early Church undoubtedly followed—reckoned that twelve families were necessary for a community to be formed. These days a bishop may talk about fifty households.

But then there is a right to go to confession. People lament that this sacrament has been abandoned; but they forget how difficult it is for many believers to find a priest. I can think of a young woman of eighteen who was baptized as an infant and taught her catechism, but who had never had a chance to go to confession. There are plenty of young people who have never had the chance to know a priest personally. There is a dangerous falling-off simply in the personal contact between priests and people.

And then let us take something which is not a sacrament, but which believers regard as an essential pastoral service: Christian burial. People are very sad and resentful if they cannot find a priest at a time of bereavement. Someone has wisely said that a Church that cannot bury its dead is a Church that is dying.

Word and Sacraments

A third anomaly arises in the relationship between the ministries of Word and sacrament. Vatican II re-established the primacy of the ministry of the Word for bishops and priests, starting from the gospel category of 'being sent on mission'. Much stress has been laid on how three realities belong together: Word, sacrament, and pastoral care (which includes governance). But what is actually happening? The Church is showing great generosity in delegating the ministry of the Word to lay people, and great reticence with regard to the ministry of the sacraments. What this means for the image of priesthood is easy to foresee. The priest will only operate, as far as many are concerned,

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when the sacraments need to be celebrated—in other words for cultic functions in isolation from the others. Laity will look after what is the quite essential ministry of 'preaching'; and in the end, the priest will become a sacramental magician. This kind of practice will lead to a definition of priesthood in terms of what gets left over, a definition couched in negative terms and, as such, disastrous: *the role of the priest will be limited to what lay people cannot do under any circumstances*. This definition would be seriously unfaithful to Vatican II, and it provides absolutely no basis for healthy existence as a priest. But, sadly, it seems to be gaining ground.

Governance and Sacraments

A fourth anomaly occurs in the relationship between the ministries of pastoral care and governance, and those of the sacraments. In the early Church, the one who presided over the community was the one who presided at the Eucharist. Thomas Aquinas is still well aware of this link, although he formulates it the other way round: the person with power over the Eucharistic body of Christ also has power over his mystical body.

Sacraments are not just rites to be celebrated. They involve preparation, progress, pastoral relationships between specific people. The ecclesial process of preparing for baptism is already a part of baptism itself, and the same goes for the process of preparing for the sacrament of reconciliation. Similarly, the quality of the relationship between spouses, and therefore of the sacramental bond, is likely to depend a great deal on how the marriage is prepared. Thus, rite and preparation both belong essentially to the ordained ministry, to the being-for-the-Church proper to bishops, priests and deacons.

As things stand at present, however, pastoral relationships are going to involve principally the Lay Ecclesial Ministers. It is they who will decide whether or not it is appropriate to administer or refuse baptism, whether to give or refuse permission for marriage in church. We are getting to the point where the priest comes in at the request of

lay people, or even under their orders, and is unable to enter into meaningful pastoral relationships. Priests are unlikely to be able to handle this constructively. The problem lies not so much with the conflicts about power and influence that are only to be expected, but with a new kind of crisis of priestly identity. To put the point in classical terms: here surely the powers of order and jurisdiction are getting out of kilter. Vatican II said that jurisdiction arose from ordination, even if the application of that jurisdiction needed to be decided by the hierarchy. Surely the documents entrusting a mission to the Lay Ecclesial Ministers are giving them jurisdiction over believers at large *without* ordination.

Temporary Solutions Becoming Permanent

A fifth anomaly occurs when it comes to pastoral care. According to Church teaching and tradition, pastoral care, in the full sense, requires ordination; but it is now being exercised permanently by the non-ordained. If you look at the matter in these terms, it seems that the Church is being far too free in delegating the ministry of the Word and the pastoral care of souls. Or you can argue the point the other way round: if the Church has assured itself that lay people are properly trained theologically, and has made a discernment that their Christian life and their judgment are of sufficiently high quality for them to exercise satisfactorily a ministry that is truly pastoral, why does it refuse to ordain them?

Here the problem of celibacy raises its ugly head. I am one of those who esteem the vocation of the consecrated celibate within the Church, and I favour the maintenance of a priesthood living in celibacy. I am not one of those who are demanding reform on this point, and nor do I have any illusions about the ordination of married men resolving all the problems. Moreover, I am not asking this question because I am concerned about the priests; I am asking it because I am concerned about the good of the Church, just as Paul VI did at the 1971 Synod of bishops (which was against change by only a small minority: 107 to 87). Nevertheless, the question is being raised, and ever more urgently. We are in a better position to face it than we were in 1971, given the experience we have now had of married deacons, and of married convert priests. The matter deserves calm reflection, bearing in mind that priorities need to be set among the different pastoral responsibilities of the Church.

Lay Ministry of the Sacraments

Despite the Church's refusal to grant them a sacramental ministry in the full sense, Lay Ecclesial Ministers do become involved in administering the sacraments—not because they are trying to be in any way provocative or rebellious, but because they are carrying out their mission. And this amounts to a sixth anomaly.

There are cases where a lay person can act as a substitute minister. In case of necessity, a lay person can administer baptism; but, more significantly, canon law provides for an extraordinary form of marriage in the absence of a priest. Certainly the distribution of communion and presidency at Sunday Eucharistic Assemblies are Eucharistic ministries. The latter in particular is strongly symbolic: it involves being the person who convokes the Assembly and gathers it around the Word and the Eucharist.

Above all there are questions about penance or reconciliation. A religious woman who is a school chaplain, a lay man on the pastoral team in a hospital—these people receive confidences that can be compared to what happens in the confessional. Obviously neither gives absolution. The school chaplain might advise a student to approach a priest for confession, generally to no avail; the hospital chaplain cannot even do that if the sick person is bedridden. Nevertheless, in these situations the sinner is surrounded by ecclesial witnesses to the sign of freedom placed by Christ within the Church. These witnesses are involved in the cure of souls. They are helping people live out of the grace of reconciliation. Let us not forget that people perceive them as official representatives of the Church who have been sent to them.

Ecclesial witnesses to the sign of freedom

According to Thomas Aquinas, the sacrament of reconciliation consists of four acts: three on the part of the penitent, one on the part of the Church. In the situations we are imagining here, the penitent is doing everything they need to do, including making their confession. Confessions made to Lay Ecclesial Ministers are far closer to the sacramental sign of absolution than the confessions that were made in medieval times to lay people, because they are addressed to a minister sent by the Church. There is nothing stopping this minister suggesting a penance. We are getting close to the medieval situation where monks made their confessions without absolution being given. This solid tradition allows us to say that lay chaplains are indeed exercising a

version of the sacrament of reconciliation. The actual sign is somehow defective, somehow impaired, certainly; but as far as the reality of grace is concerned, it is effective. Moreover, the great tradition of the Church has always preferred a defective form of the sacrament to the absence or dearth of the sacrament altogether. But is it really a good thing that the Church is getting used to having sacraments in defective, impaired forms?

Ecclesial Status

A seventh anomaly arises when considering the ecclesial status of these permanently engaged lay people, *qua* lay people. Vatican II named certain ministries founded on baptism and confirmation that required no formal investiture, and gave these a place of honour. But what we are dealing with here is different from that: here the bishop is *sending a person officially on a pastoral mission*.

The vocabulary employed in the formal documents in France is quite significant, despite its complexity and tentativeness. Here you find words like 'pastoral responsibility' or 'ecclesial responsibility', or other terms designating pastoral ministries in the strict sense of the word: the proclamation of the Word, the administration of some sacraments, the animation of the community in a way that implies a properly pastoral relationship with it. In French, we use the word *animateurs*—animators or soul-givers—to refer to people who bring the community to life and stand in the service of its communion and unity, the third responsibility of the ordained ministry. The word 'permanent' implies someone who has a role in the institution's structure, who has a certain authority within it, and can act institutionally in its name. The term 'chaplain', used for those who minister in schools, universities and hospitals—though frequently one finds some institutional resistance to this—is glossed in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as 'the priest, clergyman or minister of a chapel'. 'Minister of a religious cult' is the term under which civil administration gathers these ministries, and even pays them. 'Sent'—a term dear to some lay ministers—ties us in to the *shaliah*, the *apostolos*, richly resonant biblical words referring to mission. All these terms express how lay ministers are actually perceived. The vocabulary suggests an acknowledgment that these people are dealing with ministries of the Church.

The question then arises: are these lay people still really lay people? Who are they? There are echoes of a controversy provoked a

generation ago by an article of Karl Rahner.[1] Writing in preconciliar language, Rahner claimed that a person could belong to the hierarchy without being ordained. At that time there were legitimate differences of opinion as to whether working with Catholic Action amounted to pastoral collaboration with the hierarchy. In our own situation, hesitation is no longer a possibility. The ministry taken on by Lay Ecclesial Ministers cannot be grounded in baptism *alone*: it arises from their having been sent on mission. They may remain lay in the eyes of society at large, but they have a role in the structure of the Church that makes them something else. They have, *de facto*, become co-workers with the bishops, just like the priests. The question indeed arises as to how we are to avoid a new form of clericalism, in the bad sense. In general, these people who are permanently engaged strive to hold on to their identity as lay people, while still asking that they should be recognised for what they are by the Church. How are we meant to distinguish them from the permanent deacons, in regard to whom the Church's call takes a sacramental form?

Lay Ecclesial Ministers have been sent on mission

Different Lay Apostolates

There is a possible conflict between two different kinds of apostolate which lay people might take on, and this constitutes an eighth anomaly. The Church that asks lay people for help with ministry is also still promoting the apostolate of those lay people whose tasks, along with participation in the life of the Christian community, consist of evangelizing all the different fields of activity that go to make up the temporal order. It encourages the various 'lay associations', and in particular—even if this is to use a rather old-fashioned language—the the movements of Catholic Action. There is absolutely no intrinsic conflict between these two forms of ministry, neither as regards the Church's mission nor practically; the same people can invest themselves simultaneously in both. They are complementary, and the boundary between the two can seem almost imperceptible. However, we need to recognise how the two forms differ in nature, in orientation and in vocation. The spiritual stance taken up by a lay person who is

[1] 'Notes on the Lay Apostolate' (1956), in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 2, translated by Karl-H. Kruger (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1963), pp. 319-352.

engaged in the world in order to bear witness to their faith in a particular field is not the same as that of another lay person who is entrusted by the bishop with a pastoral responsibility in the proper sense. And conflicts can arise once the same people are called upon from both sides. The Church needs to do some discerning so as to establish priorities. There is a complex question here, and we must avoid the temptation to meet the immediate need, and use up the apostolic reserves represented by the laity to answer merely pastoral needs, when they should be engaged in civil society at large, addressing both its positive energies and its contradictions.

Women's Ministry

There is a ninth and final anomaly about women's ministry. For most of these Lay Ecclesial Ministers are women. It would be a mistake not to acknowledge this simple fact in its own right. While the Roman Catholic Church is setting itself firmly against any version of women's ordination (at least to the priesthood), women are coming to exercise a pastoral ministry that may extend to presidency over the community. A woman may indeed preside over a Sunday Eucharist Service. Mentalities evolve fast. What we are talking about here has the potential to make the issue of women's ordination look very different.

A Historical Parallel

This series of anomalies can be compared, as a pattern of institutional functioning, with the anomalies that occurred during the crisis already mentioned regarding public penance in the sixth century: penance being avoided because it was too burdensome; penance happening once in a lifetime, but with believers asking for the possibility of repetition; penance being refused by bishops to young people, so that they would not lose their one remaining chance of salvation; second penance being allowed by the bolder bishops, contrary to Church discipline; a sacramental vacuum becoming the norm for many believers during their lives, with all the sacraments being delayed until the deathbed.

While all this was happening, the monks were offering monastic confession, responding to what the consciences of believers were looking for: secrecy, and the possibility of repetition. But they did not give absolution, which was reserved to the bishop. At one point, the bishops sought to re-establish the public penance that had formerly

been common. But they were forced to make a momentous concession, expressed in the principle, 'For public sin, public penance; for private sin, private penance'. After three centuries of 'defective' celebrations of penance, the priest could finally give absolution. The official institution came to match up with actual practice, not without undergoing an enormous change.

The Structures of Ministry: Returning to the Sources

How are we to get out of these current impasses, and to recognise the ecclesial identity of laity who are linked to a ministry that is pastoral in the proper sense? It will not do simply to think within the categories already fully established. In themselves, these categories are perfectly serviceable for thinking about ministry in the Church, but the ways in which they are currently used are too rigid. In particular, the structure of the relationship between one group, responsible for the apostolic ministry, and the community as a whole—a relationship that modern research can trace back to the New Testament—has gradually solidified into a distinction between clergy and laity.

Distinctions developed over time have become too rigid

The coupling—'one group/the community as a whole'—evokes above all a *relationship*. If you accept ordination, you are entering into a new relationship with the Church to provide a God-centred (or priestly) service to its life as a whole. There are some who are at the service of the others: their ministry is a being-for-others. Within this relationship, there are transitions from the community as a whole to the particular group: those ordained are always previously members of the Church. Moreover, at times, this relationship can provide space within which a third, renewing agency emerges, generating something original within the structure defined by the other two. The bi-polar relationship between 'one group' and 'the community as a whole' can—when it is functioning well—generate a third pole which needs to be received and accepted in its own right.

We need, then, to go back to the beginning, and to revisit how the mystery of the Church came to be, through Jesus' companionship with his disciples and through the developments that took place during the period of the apostles. We are obviously no longer living in the Church's founding period, but we can nevertheless learn from reliving

what Jesus did with those who were his own in the world in order to prepare them for being sent on mission.

When we do this, what emerges is that the institution arose out of a lived reality; it is the relationships enshrined in the Gospel which generated the institutional structures.

A Threefold Structure Emerging

From a bi-polar structure—the relationship between Jesus and the crowds whom he addressed—there emerged a third pole: the group of disciples both chosen by Jesus and freely electing to follow him. They emerged from the crowd and lived in companionship with Jesus. They began as people hearing his preaching; they then went through a process of growth that made them partners in his mission, and workers sent out to the harvest. After the initial, provisional sending of the 72, they were definitively sent out by the Risen One. They were with Jesus. There are, then, three elements in the structure: Jesus, the Twelve, and the crowd. It all emerges from what actually happens.

The process then renews itself in Acts 6:1-7, where Peter and the Eleven are now occupying the place of Jesus. At a moment of crisis between the Hellenists and the Hebraists, the structured community let a third element emerge by instituting the Seven. It chose men 'full of the Spirit and of wisdom' and known to be such in the community, to play a special role within it. Then, once again, this new existential reality led to a new institution: Stephen and Philip, who had been commissioned for service regarding food, soon gave themselves to the ministry of the Word.

The same process was repeated in the Pauline communities, between the group of Paul's companions and local ministers ('the household of Stephanas'—1 Corinthians 16:15-18). Initially there was

no official investiture: it was the lived relationship that these people had with Paul, the guarantor of their mission, which grounded their authority in the community. Only at a second stage, witnessed by the Pastoral Epistles and by Acts, does one see a role for the gesture of investiture: the laying on of hands. Much later, the role played by deacons in fourth- and fifth-century Rome illustrates the same dynamic in a slightly different way. The deacons do not become priests, but the bishops are often chosen from among them. They become a focus of creativity, with considerable influence on the Church's life.

Throughout the history of the Church, one sees the same phenomenon occurring in the emergence of consecrated life as a prophetic focus in the Church. For it would be an error to suppose that consecrated life has nothing to do with mission and ministries. The transitions and interactions between consecrated life and official ministry are always there. In the East, bishops were chosen more and more from among the monks; in the West, the initiatives undertaken by the mendicant orders (Dominicans and Franciscans) amount to the Church's response to problems arising at the time regarding the preaching of the Gospel. At a later period, Ignatius Loyola not only founded an order of apostles at the disposal of the Pope, but also gave the Church of his time an image of the apostolate in the 'reformed priest' that it needed. And this foundation served as a model for very many missionary congregations. One should also not forget the enormous ministerial significance of women's consecrated life, both in the past and in the present. It is important not to split apart the different elements in religious life, thinking of it as a composite of personal vocation with ministries, either presbyteral or lay, which in themselves are just like anyone else's. If we indulge in this kind of intellectual dismemberment, we are likely to lose what is original in consecrated life, both structurally and ecclesially.

Emergent Ministries in the Church

These historical data are not offered with the intention of calling into question the Church's ministerial structure. All they are doing is showing how a fundamental dynamic occurs within the bi-polar relationship of evangelization: how new poles of ministry are constantly generated that either remain permanently distinct, or become absorbed within the poles that gave rise to them—though in this case not without the original two having changed. Surely what we

are living through is a process of the same kind, linked to a major shift in how the Church functions in our world. *What is actually happening is providing an opportunity for Church renewal and for giving the Church the new ministerial focus that it needs.*

We are now encountering a phenomenon that cannot but be authentically and officially ecclesial, a reality of the Church in the fullest sense: male and female Christians are putting themselves forward to help the Church in its properly pastoral role, and are doing this on the strength of an official mandate from the bishop. They are offering themselves for this task out of Christian conviction, out of a desire to serve the Church and to give it a new ministerial form. And the offer is happening at a moment when the bishops are in need, because they are sadly lacking in priests, and the process of renewing the ordained ministry through the established practice of hierarchical ritual is no longer functioning well enough.

This coincidence of an offer and a request is something that the Spirit is saying to the Church. These people are usually not offering themselves for ordained ministry because they are already engaged with life's tasks and are married. Now, the Roman Catholic Church has decided, for its part, that it cannot ordain them because they are married, or because they are women. What, then, is to be said about their identity, and about how are they to be recognised? The answer to this question is difficult, because we lack the language for what is a new reality that we should not try to classify too quickly. We have not yet reached the point where we can begin to commission such people sacramentally; the time is not yet ripe, either for the people concerned or for the hierarchical Church. We are still in the phase simply of the existential reality. This is what we have to cope with and manage.

A coincidence spoken by the Spirit to the Church

From Sacramental Persons to Sacramental Situations

Vatican II presented the Church as the great sacrament of salvation, set within the world as an effective sign. This overall sign is made up of a multitude of other signs, among which we find the ordained ministry. Yves Congar used to talk of 'sacrament-persons' as opposed to 'sacrament-things': bishops, priests and deacons were 'sacrament-persons'. This expresses the link between the personal and the institutional. The Church's minister is perceived as a 'sacrament-person' on two counts: the gospel quality of how they live, and their

being sent on mission through their ordination. The former of these is necessary but it is not sufficient. Given what they are and what they represent, ministers draw on something larger than themselves, and their relationship with believers in general soon becomes distinctive. When all goes well, one can talk of their being a 'special presence of Christ' among people.

The first indications that we can draw from the pastoral ministry entrusted to laity show that these women and men are themselves recognised as 'sacrament-persons', even when it is quite clear that they are not ordained. Why? Because they are people sent by the Church, which they represent in those parishes or communities. They are in a position to forge original forms of pastoral relationship, and of openness to people's problems, in what we might call the internal forum. The reality becomes manifest in comments like, 'that's something I've never told anyone about before'. These new 'ministers' are mediating the initiative of Christ within the Church in a lived way. In their way, if they live an authentic and integrated apostolic life, they are a 'special presence of Christ'.

Forging original forms of pastoral relationship

Some 'confessions' are made to a 'sacrament-person', who is witness to a forgiveness that is ecclesial and therefore divine, even if they cannot say the ritual formula of forgiveness. In such cases, it can be that the reality of grace is lived out more fully than when perfectly valid absolution is dispensed to a believer as a matter of routine.

Recognition and Identification

Becoming an apostle in this way is a complex process involving several sets of steps. The first set is personal: the lay people involved must be aware of the relationship in which they stand to the Church, and of the Gospel demands of the mission that they receive. In this context, we might use the word 'vocation'. This takes time: time for going through a process, time for a growth in their relationship on the ground with the clergy and the bishop. For the bishop has to know personally those whom he is preparing to send on mission, at least as well as he knows his seminarians.

A second set of steps is episcopal. On the bishop's part, more is involved than a commissioning letter or a commissioning liturgy; he must also recognise a new identity emerging from the responsibility which these new apostles share with him. The ecclesial identity of the

ministries that are taken on depends essentially on the quality of relationship established with the bishop.

A third element consists in how those who receive the ministry recognise it, as already mentioned—following the New Testament criterion of a ministry being judged by its fruits. Believers are quite capable of seeing the *meaning* of the ministry entrusted to lay ministers, over and beyond the actual tasks they do.

A study done in Paris by a lay hospital chaplain[2] analyzes in exemplary fashion the process by which this recognition comes about, and focuses especially on how people perceive the identity of the lay person who has been sent to them. This is a puzzling point that needs investigation. The expressions people used to address him are revealing: 'Father', 'Brother', sometimes 'son'. The mother of a family introduced him to her sister who was visiting with the words, 'here is my confessor'. The author recounts in detail the relationship that grew up between him and a patient, who had begun by calling him 'Father' as a joke. Then she had said, 'I shall call you, "Father", because this word links us'. The chaplain goes on to recount what happened towards the end of their encounters:

> One day, when I was praying in a low voice near her, she opened her eyes, smiled, and said several times over 'Father'. Then, without any sense of transition, she went on, 'Our Father . . .', reciting the prayer very clearly.

In this case the lay chaplain functioned as a 'sacrament-person'. The term 'Father' that had been given him quite deliberately and repeatedly had come to mediate the woman's invocation of the Father. The chaplain had been sent to the woman, and had come to exercise a Christ-like mediating function for her. The absoluteness of God had manifested itself.

The final constituent is—or would be—the recognition of the lay ministry by the priests and by the Christian people as a whole. This will be the most difficult point. If the priests in a diocese perceive lay ministers as a threat to their own identity, things will not go well. For

[2] Jean-André Noual, François Marty and Edouard Pousset, *Lectures théologiques d'un ministère en aumônerie d'hôpital* (Paris: Médiasèvres, 1989).

this reason, the emergence of a new class of ministers must occur in companionship with the priests. Words will not be enough.

Not Enough or Too Much

The Western Church is undergoing a process of change, one that touches its sense of what constitutes its very identity. Its structure must remain faithful to itself, even when there are profound displacements occurring in the particular forms this structure takes. One sign of the fruitfulness of this structure is that it is calling forth a new form, a form which has much promise. We are still at the beginning of the process. We must recognise the need to manage this process simply as a lived reality, without trying to give it the institutional ratification that it may well merit in the future. It will be crucial that the transitions here are managed well.

In the longer term, when experiences of this kind will have taken on a clear form, the Church will be faced with a dilemma. It will see either that it has done too much or that it has not done enough. If real problems arise, it will no longer entrust pastoral ministries to people who are not ordained. If things go well, the Church will echo what Peter said when the Spirit fell surprisingly on the pagans: 'Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' (Acts 10.47). It will ask: 'Do we have the right *not* to ordain those whose ministry has clearly shown the fruitfulness that comes from the Spirit?' This is not going to happen through some kind of simple rehash of the present patterns of relationship between 'clergy' and 'laity'. It will only happen when this new phenomenon, these lay ministries, have renewed both the clergy and the Christian people as a whole. But that day is yet to come.[3]

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[3] This article was initially published in the French Jesuit review, *Études*; we are grateful for the Editors' permission to publish this translation.

THE 'TIMES' OF IGNATIAN ELECTION

The Wisdom of the Directories

Alfredo Sampaio Costa

AMONG THE MOST BASIC QUESTIONS a person with a vibrant spirituality will always be asking is, 'what do you want from me, Lord?' And perhaps the whole of their life can be summed up as the search for an answer to that question, one which converges with the aim of the Exercises: 'to deliberate over the state of life to be adopted'.[1]

It is in the Election that this loving encounter occurs between the human person seeking to open themselves to the divine will and God's own self—God who, in infinite love, is seeking to make the divine designs known. Hans Urs Von Balthasar, the noted theologian, has eloquently described what is at stake here:

> At the core of the Exercises is the *Election*: the central encounter with God is an encounter with an electing God. Not with the Augustinian God of 'rest' for the 'restless heart', not with Thomas Aquinas's God of the 'beatific vision' for the 'natural and supernatural striving . . . for vision', but with the God who, electing in a freedom beyond grasping, descends on the one chosen in order to make demands of them—in a way that cuts right across any 'restlessness' or 'striving'—for purposes that cannot be foreseen.[2]

It would be difficult to find anyone today who dissented from the view that the election process is central to the dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises.

[1] A throwaway line in a defence of the Exercises against charges of error, written by Jerónimo Nadal, reproduced as an appendix to MHSJ, PolChron, 3. 525-573, here p. 573.

[2] A 1948 text reproduced in *Texte zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, edited by Jacques Servais (Freiburg: Johannes, 1993), p. 143.

The Way, 42/4 (October 2003), pp. 73-88

THREE TIMES FOR MAKING (IN ANY ONE OF THEM) A SOUND AND GOOD ELECTION

The first time *is when God our Lord so moves and attracts the will that, without doubting or being able to doubt, such a devout soul follows what is shown; just as St Paul and St Matthew did in following Christ our Lord.*

The second*, when enough clarity and knowledge is acquired through the experience of consolations and desolations, and by the experience of discrimination of various spirits.*

The third time *is quiet, considering first what the human person is born for, that is, to praise God our Lord and save their soul; and, desiring this, one chooses as a means a life or state within the limits of the Church for the purpose of being helped in the service of one's Lord and the salvation of one's soul. I said 'quiet time'—when the soul is not agitated by various spirits and uses its natural powers freely and peacefully.*

However, when people set about studying each of the 'times', we come up against a variety of interpretations. And this makes for great confusion when we come to apply Ignatius' teaching on the three 'times'. The renewal provoked by Vatican II led to many new discoveries and initiatives in the ministry of the Exercises. Perhaps influenced by Karl Rahner's study on the 'times' of the Election,[3] several authors regard the first 'time' as an extraordinary experience, so much so as not to fit within normal everyday life. Moreover, they question, or even deny, the possibility that the third 'time' might lead to 'a good and sound Election'. Nor is there any real agreement about what it meant to 'confirm' an election. Many authors state that confirmation could only come through consolation, which effectively reduced the third 'time' to the second. Preferences for one 'time' or the

[3] 'The Logic of Concrete Individual Knowledge in Ignatius Loyola' (1956), in *The Dynamic Element in the Church*, translated by W. J. O'Hara (London: Burns and Oates, 1964), pp. 84-170. For criticisms of Rahner's position in English, see Jules J. Toner, *A Commentary on Saint Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits: A Guide to the Principles and Practice* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1982), pp. 291-313; and Philip Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), pp. 176-181.

other seemed to vary according to the personal taste of one or other author. And note: we are dealing here with the Election, the centre of the Exercises, not with something simply incidental.

This article attempts to move the discussion forward by looking at the variety of interpretations of the Election to be found in the early Directories, manuals of custom and practice developed by Jesuits in the years up to 1599. It begins by tracing the process by which the Directories were written, and then by exploring what the Directories tell us about the Election and each of the three 'times'.

The Directories

Already the first generations of Jesuits were seriously interested in deepening and discussing points that did not seem sufficiently clear in Ignatius' text.

We can trace the development of this attempt at interpretation on the part of the early Jesuits by studying the documents now collected for English-speaking readers in the volume edited by the late Martin E. Palmer: *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*.[4] These documents are an authoritative treasure which has not yet been sufficiently explored. By studying the mistakes, the refinements, the nuances of the different documents, we can alert ourselves against particular styles of interpretation that seem to move away from Ignatian teaching, and counteract them.

The Society of Jesus after Ignatius' Death

Ignatius left some sketches towards his own Directories, including the Autograph Directory, which deals principally with the theme of the Election. He sought to form good directors through direct personal contact.[5] But after his death, these people had to hold down important positions, and did not have the time to give the Exercises. This ministry was thus entrusted to younger Jesuits, whose training and experience were insufficient. The book was not easily available to

[4] (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996). The originals are to be found in MHSJ *Directoria* (vol. 76 of the series).

[5] See Gérard Despatie, 'Le "Directoire des Exercices": sa genèse et son élaboration', *Lettres du Bas-Canada*, 11(1957), pp. 10-27; Ignacio Iparraguirre, *Práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio en vida de su autor (1522-1556)* (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1946), pp. 149-156.

directors, owing to the limited number of copies that had been made. This contributed to the uncertainties about the interpretation of Ignatius' teaching.

The lack of experienced directors meant that currents of spirituality alien to the Ignatian charism became more influential. The most important of these was the monastic or eremitical spirit which developed among some members of the College community at Gandía, characterized by a marked taste for endless recollected prayer, by serious rigidity in behaviour and in the interpretation of rules, and by an exaggerated practice of penance. There was also a danger of false prophecies and illuminism: witness the case of Gabriel Onfroy, and the influence of Tejeda, a Franciscan friar, which called forth from Ignatius one of his most striking documents, on discernment in connection with cases of prophecy.[6]

The fear of the Inquisition, which was concerned to suppress any trace of illuminism, brought it about that directors acted very cautiously, stressing the cerebral elements in the text, and hiding as much as they could its affective quality.[7]

[6] The text in question has been published as a letter, perhaps misleadingly: Ignatius to Borja, July 1549 (day uncertain), in Saint Ignatius of Loyola, *Personal Writings*, translated by Joseph A. Munitiz and Philip Endean (London: Penguin, 1996), pp. 210-229. For a full account of the incident, see Manuel Ruiz Jurado, 'Un caso de profetismo reformista en la Compañía de Jesús: Gandía 1547-1549', *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu*, 43 (1974), pp. 217-266, especially pp. 245-246. One should not exaggerate the importance of this case: not all the Jesuits were involved in the deviations feared or rejected by Ignatius.

Slow Developments

Diego Laínez and Francis Borja, Ignatius's two successors, were not able to do anything very specific, even though they did set up commissions of specialists who could begin to compose a Directory. Under the generalate of Everard Mercurian (1573-1580), Borja's successor, there was a sharp polarisation between two ways of conceiving the Jesuit style: one more ascetical, the other more mystical. Another tension was growing, above all in Spain, regarding prayer: some were preferring and teaching a more affective, contemplative style of prayer. Mercurian was to act decisively on this question, in particular against the movement's foremost exponents: Baltasar Álvarez and Antonio Cordeses.[8]

Mercurian began by asking Polanco, who had been Ignatius' secretary, to write a Directory. The result is one of the most balanced and illuminating documents we possess illustrating Ignatius' thought. The comments Polanco makes allow us to see clearly the personal interpretation of one who, perhaps like no other, had assimilated Ignatius' ways of feeling things, and indeed of formulating them. Polanco dedicates two long chapters to the Election: this is the finest part of his Directory.

Mercurian's ideal was that the primitive spirit of the Society should flourish anew. He wanted to secure the growth of the genuine traditions, and to expel mercilessly parasites that had begun to infect the Society over the passage of years. Mercurian found the man whom he could trust to carry out this project in the person of Fr Diego Miró, who promptly set about writing his own Directory. This latter text does not have the theological structure of Polanco's. Nor was Miró even concerned to assimilate the tendencies of his former colleagues on the

[7] See Joseph Veale, 'Ignatian Prayer or Jesuit Sprituality', *The Way Supplement*, 27 (Spring 1976), pp. 3-14: 'the fear of being charged with illuminism, and later the fear of illuminism itself . . . helped to distort Jesuit understanding of Ignatius' teaching' (p. 5).

[8] On the tensions about spirituality during Mercurian's generalate, see the profound essay by Pedro de Leturia, 'Lecturas ascéticas e lecturas místicas entre los jesuítas del siglo XVI', in *Estudios ignacianos*, edited by Ignacio Iparraguirre (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1957), vol. 2, pp. 269-331; and also two forthcoming pieces by Philip Endean: '"The Original Line of our Father Ignatius": Mercurian and the Spirituality of the Exercises', and '"The Strange Style of Prayer": Mercurian, Cordeses and Álvarez', to be published in *The Mercurian Project: 'Forming Rather Than Reforming' The Society of Jesus*, edited by Thomas M. McCoog (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute). An important text of Álvarez's has recently been published in English: 'Beyond the Train of Ideas', *The Way Supplement*, 103 (May 2002), pp. 43-54; Mercurian's rebuke of Cordeses is to be found below, on pp. 93-98.

commission appointed by Borja—not only Polanco, but also Alfonso Ruiz. Nevertheless, his Directory was widely circulated among the Jesuits of the time, anonymously and as a semi-official document.

Mercurian was in some respects excessive. He suppressed elements of an affective or mystical kind in the tradition that were nevertheless clearly Ignatian. Because of their affinity with dangerous currents, they were vulnerable to adverse interpretation. But nevertheless, his action was providential: it prevented mystical tendencies of a less correct kind from getting into the official document.

Completion under Acquaviva

It was Acquaviva who was to conclude the work. The situation had become very difficult: several different interpretations of the Ignatian method had begun to be current. Many directors were worried: the Exercises did not seem to be giving the fruits that they had given earlier. There was an atmosphere of distrust and rejection regarding anything that might be affective or mystical. The Inquisition was coming down heavily on anything looking new. In this quite difficult situation, Acquaviva was able to specify the correct doctrine of the Society regarding prayer in a significant letter dated 8 May 1590. It drew on traditions going back to Nadal to show how contemplation could be allied with a more active life.[9]

The Inquisition was coming down heavily on anything looking new

As regards the Directory, Acquaviva was not content with just revising and correcting the Directory already in existence, the text with semi-official status compiled by Miró. He was conscious of the importance of this business, and took a bold decision: to go back and take up the older documents. Many important values which had not been sufficiently acknowledged in Miró's Directory needed to be reconsidered.

Acquaviva's first measure was to send the documentation in Rome to the most senior members of the Society who were also well versed in the Exercises: Miró, Jerónimo Doménech and Gil González Dávila.

Miró reread his own Directory without opening himself to anything good that might be found in the others. Thus 'his revised Directory

[9] For a significant extract from Acquaviva's text, see 'Spirit, Contemplation and Ministry: Three Early Jesuit Texts', in this number, pp. 99-104.

was not a revision of the first, as the General wanted, but a confirmation of what had gone before'.[10] We have no record of Doménech's contribution.

González Dávila was an educated man, a good theologian, knowledgeable both about the Society and about the spiritual life in general.[11] His preferences tended towards Polanco's Directory—there was a certain affinity of character between the two men. González Dávila traces the lines of an ideal Directory. His commentary on the Election of a state of life is the fullest part of his text.

Acquaviva wanted to finalise the Directory. Much material had now been assembled: the three texts of Polanco, Miró and González Dávila; a brief Directory written in Spanish; a further text 'found in the archive' which Mercurian had written. All this was passed over to a secretary, who made efforts to bring it all together in one text. The General and his Assistants then revised this text to produce what we know as the 1591 Directory. This was sent off to the Provinces for them to make corrections, an appeal which did not meet with many responses. Then a further commission was established, chaired by González Dávila during the sixth General Congregation in 1593. This completed its work, making only tiny changes to the 1591 text. The chapters were redivided, so that the 1599 version came to have 40, as opposed to the 22 in 1591. Because of Acquaviva's many occupations, the final publication of the official Directory had to wait another five years, till October 1599, 43 years after the death of Ignatius.

The Directories and the 'Times' of Election

As we study these documents, we become aware of how they were interpreting Ignatius' teaching in a context particularly sensitive to charges of illuminism. It is also interesting to note how many of the problems raised in modern commentaries had already been considered by the first generations of Jesuits.

[10] Ignacio Iparraguirre, *Historia de la práctica de los Ejercicios*, vol. 2, *Desde la muerte de S. Ignacio hasta la promulgación del Directorio Oficial (1556-1599)* (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1955), p. 437.
[11] Gil González Dávila, *Pláticas sobre las Reglas de la Compañía de Jesús*, edited by Camilo M. Abad (Barcelona: Flors, 1964).

The First 'Time'

The Directories show a shift in the interpretation of the first 'time' of Election. Initially, there is simply a certain reticence in presenting this matter to the exercitant. There were obvious worries that the teaching could be confused with illuminist currents—there were many who fell into self-deception and subjectivism, claiming that they were experiencing direct communications from God. Gradually this shifts towards an insistence that this first 'time' is extraordinary: the official Directory holds it to be rare. When God's will is made known in this way within a person's life, this is 'most excellent'. God's will is being revealed clearly, in a way that cannot be doubted. What marks it out is the certainty it yields.

In his own Autograph Directory, Ignatius says quite expresssly that this this 'time' needs to be explained, as the first of all, to the retreatant. The one giving the Exercises must check whether or not this first 'time' is happening. It is a matter, then, of something to be received from God as a gift, as grace. In this context, the exercitant is not having to handle rules, and so this 'time' is to be mentioned to them only in passing. The terms which the 1599 Directory uses to describe this kind of first 'time' calling—'miraculous', 'such clarity', 'satisfaction of the spirit', 'illumination'—are foreign to the Ignatian texts.[12]

The Second 'Time'

In connection with the second 'time', the first contribution made by the Directories is an insistence that it be explained to the exercitant very clearly what consolation and desolation are. The efforts made in the various texts to describe these experiences are very illuminating. The comparison between them helps us understand which of them better follow the ideas already presented by Ignatius. The authors are concerned with how motions influence the affectivity of the person.

[12] In the Directories, see Ignatius Autograph, 1.10-11; Polanco, 20.81; González Dávila, 31.119; Cordeses, 32.129; Official, 43.187 (future references to the Directories will take this form, giving the author before the paragraph numbering established in MHSJ and followed in translations such as Palmer's). On questions about illuminism, see Luis Fernández, 'Iñigo de Loyola y los alumbrados', in *Ignacio de Loyola en Castilla* (Valladolid: privately published, 1989), pp. 155-264, especially p. 251. For interesting further speculation on how to interpret the first 'time', see Jules J. Toner, *Discerning God's Will: Ignatius of Loyola's Teaching on Christian Decision Making* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991), pp. 107-129.

They establish more clearly the direct contrast between the two experiences of consolation and desolation. They demonstrate what these spiritual experiences are saying regarding the growth or diminution of the life of faith, hope and love within the person.[13]

The Directories witness to a close link between the process of the second 'time' and the contemplations on the Mysteries of the Life of Christ. The confrontation with these mysteries is meant to stimulate spiritual movements within the exercitant, who thus gathers the material necessary for discernment. But the interior movements can also be present outside the times of prayer.[14] Thus the exercitant's attitude has to be one of constant openness and readiness to pick up the signals which the Lord is sending as regards God's will. The texts emphasize the importance of a deep knowledge of the rules for discrimination between spirits, and of the ability to apply these correctly.[15]

As we study the different Directories, it becomes clear how absolutely necessary it is to be precise in the definition of what consolation and desolation are. There are imprecisions and inconsistencies in the 1599 Directory, alerting us to problems that can arise when sloppiness in the use of terms prevents us from understanding the process clearly. It is wrong to say that in the second 'time' there is 'little or no reasoning of the intellect'.[16] The understanding plays a most important part as we discriminate between the different movements.

It is important to know what consolation and desolation are

The 1599 Directory is also wrong in presenting the first and second 'times' together, contrasting them with the third 'time'. This is a mistake, and contradicts what is said elsewhere. For the 1599 Directory, the first 'time' is extraordinary, and excludes doubt regarding God's will, whereas the second 'time' is more common, and requires us to discern. The 1599 Directory rejects the term 'consolation', and prefers to use 'inspirations and interior motions of the will'. This distorts what the second 'time' essentially is. If consolation is

[13] Ignatius, 1.12,18; Polanco, 20.81; Anonymous, 26.72-76; González Dávila, 31.120; Official, 43.192-193.
[14] Polanco, 20.82; Miró, 23.86; Cordeses, 32.131; Official, 43.218-220.
[15] Höfer,17.101; Anonymous, 26.78.
[16] Official, 43.188: '*sine ullo intellectus discursu, aut fere nullo*'. For other references in this and the following paragraph, see nn. 188, 190, 192.

understood as 'a natural passion given supernaturally', we lose sight of how consolation is essentially dynamic in character, and we lose the sense of how Ignatius conceived the term. The other Directories insist on the need to look for objective criteria in judging the movements that are experienced, helped by the one giving the Exercises. Thus they get us beyond understanding the second 'time' as exclusively affective, and of the third 'time' as rational in nature.

The warnings given by González Dávila and the authors of the 1599 Directory about the dangers of illusion in connection with the second 'time' are exaggerated. The problem arises because they did not really understand the true nature of this 'time', and did not understand the regulative function of the discrimination between spirits, carried out under the sure guidance of an experienced retreat-giver. In the end, they paid tribute to the fear of illuminism, and undermined the authority of the second 'time', preferring the more rational procedure of the third 'time'. They virtually ignored the first 'time'; they lumped it together with the second, and warned against the risks of illusion. They claimed that it was the third 'time' that was to be presented most fully and thoroughly.

The Third 'Time'

The Directories see the chief characteristic of the third 'time' in terms of tranquillity of soul, without movements from different spirits.[17] Polanco is quite clear that this third 'time' is fully legitimate. A person can be in this spiritual state as they enter into the Election—a state proper to the third 'time', requiring them to seek God's will using their natural powers freely, with the help of regular grace.

Ignatius' text gives us two different methods for the third 'time'. Ignatius' Autograph Directory presents the second simply as a last resort. Later documents, however, move towards claiming that we must use every spiritual resource, and hence both methods, in order to obtain as much security as possible regarding the Election made. Thus

[17] Polanco, 20.89; González Dávila, 31.131; Official, 43.200. The two versions of Miró contrast interestingly on this point: in his first version (MHSJ edition, p.403), Miró follows Ignatius and everyone else in saying that a soul agitated by various spirits cannot proceed to the Election; in the second (23.90), he insists that 'tranquillity of mind' is necessary in *whatever* 'time' the Election is taken. We can speculate as to whether this is just a matter of carelessness, or whether it manifests a serious failure of understanding.

Polanco says that after an Election has been made with the first method in the third 'time', the second method should also be used. If the two come up with the same result, this is a good sign that the right conclusion has been reached.[18] Though the Directories emphasize the cognitive aspects of the Ignatian method, this does not mean that they are unbalanced in their presentation of the third 'time'. They do not present it as a purely rational, human method. The weighing up of the different reasons occurs in a climate of patient, affective contemplation of the mysteries of Christ's life—in other words, in prayer. The contemplations are not to be interrupted so that the exercitant can weigh up the reasons, although the number of mysteries each day can be reduced, so that exercitants have the time necessary to give themselves to the Election without haste.

The reasons need to be written out[19] and weighed up outside the times of prayer, so that the possibilities to be considered will appear more clearly, and so that, too, it will be easier to address them with the director. The texts insist that all the reasons which move towards the Election need to come from above, from the love of God.

[18] Ignatius Autograph, 1.20. Contrast Polanco, 20.83; González Dávila, 32.135; Official, 43.223.
[19] Polanco, 20.83; González Dávila, 31.131; Cordeses, 32.137; Official, 43.225.

There is a question as to whether or not interior movements occur during the third 'time'. The Directories tend to say not. The texts suggest that an exercitant should not use the third 'time' when moved by different spirits.

As for whether it is possible for an Election of state of life to be made in the third 'time', all the different Directories answer this question affirmatively.[20] The third 'time', indeed, is regarded more highly than the others, in that it is the safest path towards a good Election.

Confirmation of the Election.

The exercitant may receive signs from the good spirit that confirm an Election made in the third 'time'—signs that are in themselves appropriate to the second 'time'. If they examine these signs according to the Rules for Discernment, they are likely to be more satisfied, and more assured that they have found the divine will. If the signs, on examination, point in the other direction, this indicates that there was something wrong with the Election, and that it needs to be redone. Polanco, however, states that it is possible for nothing remarkable to happen at all, and for God to manifest the divine will through reason—a possibility which the 1599 Directory accepts.[21] The search for confirmation needs to be open to any sort of communication that the Lord might want to give, as Ignatius' experience in the *Spiritual Diary* confirms.

The Relationships Between the Different 'Times'

There are then questions about how far the three 'times' can be used on their own. The texts regard the first 'time' as quite clearly self-sufficient, on the ground of the certainty it can give; but it is considered also, as we have seen, as out of the ordinary. The position they take up on the second 'time' is more nuanced. When the second 'time' leads the soul to complete peace and satisfaction, it can move forward, since it is being illuminated by a light which is better than that of human reason. Polanco goes as far as saying that it would be superfluous in this case to look for the will of God through the third

[20] See, for example, Ignatius Autograph, 1.19-20; Polanco, 20.83, 85, 88; Official, 43.207.
[21] Polanco, 20.90; Official, 43.229-232.

'time'.[22] However, the 1599 Directory, as we have seen, runs together the first and second 'times', and does so quite explicitly when discussing this particular point. The terms it uses to describe a first or second 'time' Election not requiring recourse to the third 'time' ('soul . . . firmly established and settled . . . no desire for greater certitude') seem in fact proper only to the first 'time'.

'If it is not evident that the spirit moving the exercitant is from God . . . then it can be tested by the two methods of the third "time"'—so Polanco puts the matter, in a very measured formulation. However, some Directories go further: where Polanco speaks of a possibility or a suitability, and always in the context of the second 'time' not giving sufficient certainty, Miró, González Dávila and the 1599 text state that a person must always move to the third 'time', thereby undermining—at least in practice—any claim that the second 'time' can function on its own.[23]

The Directories are generally optimistic about the self-sufficiency of the third 'time', although there are some statements that seem to put this in doubt. Some say that this 'time' must be confirmed by inspirations or motions proper to the second 'time'. Polanco nevertheless seems to think that this is not necessary.[24]

Ignatius' own Autograph Directory seems to indicate, with regard to the combined use of two or three 'times', that there is no need to move on to another 'time' if enough certainty has been found in one. You only go to the third 'time' if the second has not brought sufficient light—and in this case a person is using the two lights (natural and supernatural) to arrive at a good Election.[25]

What happens if the second and third 'times' yield conflicting results? Then the weight of the reasons has to be judged, and the movements have to be reinterpreted following the discernment Rules. If the reasons are stronger, and the motions are not clearly proceeding from God, it is the third 'time' result that is to be followed. If the reasons are not very strong, and if proper scrutiny of the movements

[22] Polanco, 20.85; González Dávila, 31.129; Official, 43.198.

[23] Miró, 23.87—'elections should normally be made not only in the second but also in the third "time"'; Official, 43.203—'it is generally rather dangerous for a person to wish to be guided solely by the movements of their will and particular interior feelings, without adding appropriate reflection'.

[24] Contrast Polanco, 20.90, with González Dávila, 31.141; Cordeses, 32.138; Official, 43.229.

[25] Ignatius Autograph, 1.18-20; Polanco, 20.85.

suggests that they are indeed indicating God's will, then the second 'time' result should be followed.[26]

On the question of which method is superior, the principle we find implicit in the Directories is that the 'times' are ranked according to the guiding principle behind each one. The texts do not consider the first 'time' at length, but they do discuss far more the relationship between the second and third 'times'. Polanco states that in the second 'time' God shows the divine will in a more immediate way, and therefore this 'time' is superior to the third.[27]

The Directories do not directly address the question of the kind of certainty that can be attained in each of the 'times', but they do give us some indications which will help us understand better Ignatius' teaching on this point. The first 'time' does indeed give certainty, though its occurrence is quite out of the ordinary. The concern of the Directories is with the different levels of security offered by the second and third 'times'. They claim that the second 'time' is better, and therefore intrinsically able to give a higher degree of certainty, given that the manifestation of God's will is more direct and immediate than in the third 'time'. On the other hand, they then—in actual practice—reduce the certainty that can be attributed to the second 'time', on the grounds that this 'time' is subject to a range of possible deceptions. For this reason, the third 'time' is the one presented as the safest, and to be preferred, or at least to be used to confirm the second time.

On this point, the latest of the Directories (Miró, González Dávila, 1599) move away from the Ignatian teaching preserved by Polanco and in Ignatius' own Directory. Ignatius had confidence that all three 'times' could lead to a good and healthy Election, and that consequently we were in no position to decide which way was better or safer. We simply had to be open to accepting God's will in the 'time' in which God might choose to reveal it. The Directories do not deny this reality, but rather—given the difficult context of the danger of illuminism—stress another point which is not only true but also very

[26] Polanco, 20.88; González Dávila, 31.142; Cordeses, 32.139. The Official Directory puts the same point within a rather confused and unnuanced discussion of why all human decision-making is unreliable (38.203-207).
[27] Polanco, 20.85; Cordeses, 32.132; Miró, 23.87.

To obtain God's gifts three things are necessary:

- **a generous spirit**
- **appropriate means or tools**
- **our co-operation**

ALL THESE come through the EXERCISES

Juan Alfonso de Polanco

Ignatian: the exercitant needs to do all in their power to find the will of God and embrace it lovingly. Polanco opens his Directory with a fine page describing the sense of working with God out of which an exercitant in search of God's will should be living.[28] The Directories are convinced that if we play our part, God will do what needs to be done to reveal to us the divine will.[29] Everything else rests on this certainty that we derive from our faith.

Summary and Conclusion

We can conclude, then, by setting out a number of insights that this study of the Directories yields:

- It is important to be able to distinguish what is characteristic of each of the 'times', and to understand their fundamental rationales.
- It is necessary to get beyond a false contrast between a second 'time', arising from affectivity, and a third that is more rational. In different ways, heart and head are present in both these 'times'.

[28] Polanco, 20.5-6. The saying in the box is a pithier version, found in manuscript (MHSJ edition, p. 277, n. 11).
[29] See for example González Dávila, 31.110; Official, 43.204. For further analysis of the speculative issues, see Toner, *Discerning God's Will*, pp. 274-315.

- It is not for us to decide which 'time' of Election is to be used: we need to accept with humility the 'time' that God chooses to give us.
- To understand Ignatius' teaching, we need to look at his life experience as it comes to us through his writings, and through the testimony of those who were closest to him and could most profoundly grasp his inner life.
- It was when the ascetical tendency predominated, and when people were suspicious of anything mystical, that the third 'time' was privileged. When the mystical tendency was stronger, people preferred the first or second 'times'.[30]

This essay has tried to suggest something of the process by which this spirituality was appropriated, differently in different historical contexts. The questions which preoccupied Jesuit retreat-givers in the sixteenth century are still, as we have seen, topics for discussion today. There are issues about heart and head, about nature and grace, on which we are still uncertain. We need to read and appropriate the Ignatian tradition, and carry on exploring these realities, in an ever new creative fidelity.

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[30] See Manuel Ruiz Jurado, 'El Padre Orlandis, comentador de los Ejercicios', *Cristiandad*, 57 (2000), pp. 107-111.

SPIRIT, CONTEMPLATION AND MINISTRY

Three Early Jesuit Texts

Alfredo Sampaio Costa's study of the Three 'Times' of Election is a careful piece, and discourages us from easy generalisations. Nevertheless, it shows how the second generation of Jesuits became increasingly cautious about the presence of God in the human heart. This change was important and influential, and one from which we may still be recovering. This issue's **From the Ignatian Tradition** *brings together three texts that may help us to understand the issues at stake: one from Ignatius' lifetime, by Jerónimo Nadal; one from 1574, by Everard Mercurian, fourth Superior General of the Jesuits; and finally an extract from a letter written in 1590 by Mercurian's successor, Claudio Acquaviva, on prayer and penance.*

A

JERÓNIMO NADAL REFUTES TOMÁS PEDROCHE, 1554?

Although the Exercises were formally approved by Paul III in 1548, they were controversial in Spain, and appeared suspect to more repressive prelates and theologians. The Archbishop of Toledo, Juan Martínez (known as Siliceo), set up a commission under the leadership of the Dominican theologian, Tomás Pedroche (d.1565), to study the text. Pedroche reported back in 1553, very critically. Shortly afterwards, sometime before 1556, Jerónimo Nadal (1507-1580), who was very close to Ignatius, produced a long counter-attack, which was not published until modern times. The brief passage reproduced here shows

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how robustly and passionately Nadal was prepared to defend the assertion that God deals directly with the human heart.

An open letter, written by Juan de Polanco, Ignatius' secretary, and placed as a preface to the 1548 edition of the **Spiritual Exercises**, *had claimed that Ignatius had written the text 'not so much from books as from the unction of the Holy Spirit and from internal experience, and from his practice when dealing with minds and hearts'. Pedroche had seen an affinity here with groups that by now were falling foul of authority in Spain—the so-called* **dejados** *(abandoned ones) and the* **alumbrados** *(illuminated ones, illuminists):*

> *This sounds very like the source used by the* **dejados** *and* **alumbrados**, *who deposit, write down, what has been revealed to them in books, and then remit themselves, entrust themselves, to what the Spirit says to them within their hearts, and hold as infallible whatever the Spirit of God says to them. However this is against: 'do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God'.*[1]

Nadal reproduced the charge both in the original Latin and in Spanish (there are some minor discrepancies in the manuscripts and the translations). Then he made his own case.[2]

I SEE WHAT YOU ARE MAKING A MISTAKE ABOUT, what you are afraid of. You don't dare experience the spirit of God, or the divine inspirations that the *dejados* followed before falling into errors and ill repute. You're afraid that, if you encourage interior inspirations, you too will be thought to be one of those whom people of your country are so massively frightened of. For the devil, by deceiving some people like the *dejados* of Toledo and Magdalena de la Cruz,[3] into whom his spirit instilled well known errors, has made sure that true spiritual exercises have become things of hatred, of ill repute. And among whom? Among

[1] 1 John 4.1.

[2] The beginning and end of Nadal's quite substantial *Apologia* are to be found in MHSJ MN 4, pp. 820-873, with a break at p. 826. The intervening passage is in MHSJ PolChron 3, pp. 527-573. Pedroche's criticisms are reproduced in MHSJ PolChron 3, pp. 503-524, and the passage under discussion here comes on pp. 504-505. For discussion of the general background, see Ignacio Iparraguirre, *Práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio de Loyola en vida de su autor (1522-1556)* (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1946), pp. 91-113.

[3] A noted *alumbrada*, who recanted publicly in 1546.

those who are used to doing quite a lot legally because of the fear of ill repute.

But how are you making your case? Out of suspicion, nothing else. For if you tried to make a legal or a logical case, you'd just be laughed at, to say nothing of people becoming indignant and attacking you. What arguments are you using? '"More from the unction of the Holy Spirit" as it says above, than from the books that he ignored or neglected.'[4] But who told you that Ignatius deserted his books or put them behind him? Against that you can set what it actually says in that letter, 'he drank of the Spirit, not without books'. Indeed he drew *more* on the Spirit than on books; but your *dejados* don't bother with books at all, and don't submit to anyone what they say is revealed to them by the Spirit, while Ignatius submitted everything to many learned and holy men, and finally to the Apostolic See. Or does he count as a *dejado* because he never consulted *you*?

But just look at what you're saying. If it's supposed to be suspicious when Christians are taught more by unction than by book, what are you going to make of Jeremiah, of John, of Paul, of the holy teachers? How about what is said by your Thomas, and ours, about how the gospel law is established? How was this law infused into the hearts of the apostles and the evangelists? What are you doing restraining the hand of the Lord? Casting aspersions on the prophets? What do you make of what Paul says: 'each one has a psalm . . . a revelation'?[5] What are you doing forbidding the distribution of the Spirit?

Answer this, please. Can God directly illuminate the hearts of human beings? You can't say no to that. And if God acted in that way, would the person in question be a *dejado*, under suspicion of heresy? But that's what you're saying—rash as you are in doing so. For see this: you're not denying that Ignatius had the unction of the Spirit. But what, then, can you attack him on as suspect, when you're not denying that he had the unction? The attack has no truth in it.

Perhaps you say, 'I'll show you later that it wasn't unction but error'. So you haven't really been able to say anything confirming your

[4] The actual text runs: 'These documents and spiritual exercises, which our Father in Christ Master Ignatius . . . taught not so much by books as by the unction of the Holy Spirit and from experience within (*experientia interna*) and usage when dealing with minds and hearts, brought together (*composuit*) . . . ' (MHSJ Exx 1969, pp. 79-81). Nadal is quoting directly from Pedroche's attack.

[5] 1 Corinthians 14.26 (Vulgate).

suspicions so far, with your points about the unction of the Spirit more than letters and so on? What happens when *you* have some inspiration from God? Do you really not say that you receive this more from the Spirit than from letters?

On what basis do you study theology? Surely the books lead you to revelations, to the Spirit? Are you a human theologian, and yet claim you have just *no* inspiration, *no* divine enlightenment? What do I hear you say? That you've got these truths more from books than from the Spirit? Aren't texts meant to be the helps—as indeed more often they are—for the Spirit of truth itself?

Moreover, Ignatius *did* have recourse to books and reflected on the whole structure of theology, at least when he decided to edit those exercises, so that all the theological books and all the sacred texts could confirm what he took more from divine inspiration than from books. Surely he's not a *dejado* just because he took more from the Spirit than from books? Is *that* meant to make him like the *dejados*? If he's a *dejado* because this is what he did or this is what he said, then who among you and the holy teachers *isn't* a *dejado*? Do remember that you preach just the same things to us about your sainted Thomas. And surely these things don't make *that* most holy man one of the dirty effluent of *dejados*?

'But I suspect that this and that in Ignatius is *dejado*.' I can well believe you suspect. But your suspicions are slanderous. Forget your prejudice and your instinctive aversion. Think about what's actually true, about the authority that comes from the Apostolic See, from worldwide agreement, from the good people that are the fruit, from those who live in the Society—how they behave, the quality of their teaching, and so on.

Do you really think Ignatius didn't test the Spirit? He couldn't have done it more carefully—through Scripture, through the Church, through good and learned men.

I don't think you've got anything left on this point that might afflict you with a scruple. For my part, I'm happy. But let's go on to other things.

Given the stress in early Jesuit tradition on mortification and self-control, it is refreshing to witness such a rollicking style in one of Ignatius' closest associates. In the opinion of Ignacio Iparraguirre,

however, Nadal's **Apologia** *as a whole is in fact overinfluenced by the mentality of people like Pedroche.*[6] *Perhaps even this passage, precisely in its anger and bluster, gives evidence of some insecurity. Moreover, it is an important part of Nadal's defence even here that Ignatius' teaching is confirmed by authority—a line of argument which rather betrays the point really at stake: the ability of the Spirit to speak in ways that can go beyond what authority prescribes, however ecclesial in the richest sense they remain.*

B

EVERARD MERCURIAN REBUKES ANTONIO CORDESES, 1574

Our next text comes from thirty years or so later. Antonio Cordeses, who had been in positions of authority for some fifteen years and was now Provincial of Toledo, had been teaching a form of prayer that was affective, contemplative, perhaps influenced by approaches to spirituality that by this stage had been condemned by the Inquisition. Various complaints had been sent to Rome about his style of teaching and government, and the issue came to a head shortly after Everard Mercurian was elected as Superior General in 1573, the first non-Spaniard to hold the post. Mercurian asked for documentation, had it studied, and finally wrote this letter, which at least on the surface seems both repressive and spiritually philistine.

In Ignatius' time, the anxieties about illuminism were being expressed by the Jesuits' opponents. By this stage, however, Jesuit authorities were making some of the concerns behind such attacks their own. The reasons were not entirely bad ones. The question of affective prayer had become mixed up with that of how a way of consecrated life could be dedicated to ministry. Despite Cordeses' seniority in the Society of Jesus, he had probably never made an Ignatian retreat: with a little charitable imagination, Mercurian can be read, not as proscribing the contemplative life as such, but rather as insisting that the Jesuit version

[6] Iparraguirre, *Práctica de los Ejercicios*, p. 113.

of it be somehow distinctive, somehow Ignatian. Moreover, whereas Ignatius had developed the Exercises and the Society's way of life in a small circle of mature men who already had considerable education behind them, the early Jesuits very quickly had to consider how to form young men whom they had accepted as adolescents and in large numbers. Nevertheless, Mercurian's text contains an unmistakable element of what early modern Church historians now call 'social disciplining', far more emphatically than any document on prayer that Ignatius wrote for formed Jesuits.[7]

ALTHOUGH THROUGH THE LETTER which I have received from you and through what you have written for me about your style which you have in prayer, Our Lord has given me consolation, as I see the promptitude you show in the matter of obedience, I think, having talked with these Fathers[8] with some thoroughness about the points on which you touch, I should tell you the following.

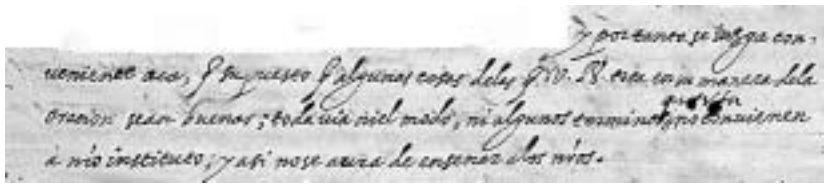
The Virtue of Brevity

Just as every religious institute or order has its own style for attaining its end, so the Society, having its own, could not but stumble if it were diverted away from the right path which guides it to that end, as this seems to be. Therefore, granted that some of the things you touch on in your manner of prayer are good, it is here judged fitting, nevertheless, that neither the style nor some of the terms you use are fitting for our Institute, and so they are not to be taught to our people.

In the chapter in which you talk of the favour, relishes and gentleness which God our Lord gives in meditation, in no way, it seems, should this matter be explained or set out at such length to those who are to pray, or meditate, or contemplate according to the

[7] The text has never been critically edited; the manuscript is ARSI *Tolet.* 1, 28*r*-29*v*, transcribed in Antonio Astráin, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Asistencia de España*, 7 volumes (Madrid: Razón y Fe, 1902-1925), vol. 3, pp. 190-193. The text was clearly prepared carefully; an earlier, incomplete and crossed out version, with some interesting variants, can be found on 27*v*. On the general background, see Philip Endean, '"The Strange Style of Prayer": Mercurian, Cordeses and Álvarez', to be published in *The Mercurian Project: 'Forming rather than Reforming' The Society of Jesus*, edited by Thomas M. McCoog (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, forthcoming).

[8] The manuscript is an office copy of only part of the text. It is not clear who 'these fathers' are.



From the manuscript[9]

Society's style, bearing in mind that we have a rule, which is, that the person giving to another the method and structure of meditating or contemplating should propose the points or stories briefly, leaving the rest to God our Lord.[10] It is enough to tell those who need it how the powers of the soul should be applied in order to meditate on the material proposed: that is how we should teach our people prayer and meditation, following what is written as given by Fr Ignatius in the book of the Exercises.

You might say that what you write in the said chapter about the favour given by God our Lord in meditation has happened to some people—not only have they not fallen into error, but they have attained greater light and profit in this matter. However, one should not form a general teaching or rule from the experience of one person or of a few, nor should one teach it. Quite apart from the fact that a doctrine of this kind exposes people to different sorts of illusions and to dangerous errors. The saints, having set out many grades of prayer, conclude, as you well know, that in contemplations, relishes and visions 'evil can be underneath'.[11] In this, what Ignatius taught us in the said book is enough; it is sufficiently clear, without anyone taking occasion from one or two words that might be found in the Exercises

[9] Transcription: *Y por tanto, se juzgue conveniente acá, que supuesto que algunas cosas de las que V. R. toca en su manera de la oración sean buenas, todavía ni el modo, ni algunos términos que usa, no convienen a nuestro Instituto, y así no se habrá de enseñar a los Nuestros.*

[10] Texts by Cordeses have survived, and there is a volume of his *Obras espirituales*, edited by Antonio Yanguas (Madrid: Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas, 1953). The *Tradado de oración mental* contains a treatment of something very like Second Week contemplation. It begins by mentioning what Ignatius says as very good, but then goes on to say how it could all be done 'more explicitly'! There follows a long theological disquisition in five parts: on the substance of the mystery; on its purpose; on three sorts of cause; on its effects; and on its circumstances.

[11] The *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas contains a question (II-II, q. 1, a. 3), establishing with due caution that error cannot '*subesse*' (lie under) true faith. The doctrine is alluded to in the Council of Trent's Decree on Justification, n. 9.

to insinuate another manner of prayer that might not be in conformity with our Institute.[12] Believe me: some of our people may have emerged with some light from a style of prayer not in conformity with our Institute, but they would have emerged with much more profit if they had applied themselves in conformity with the Society's Institute.

I say this all the more because of the appropriateness of what follows in your text: meditation takes us to contemplation, and puts us into a disposition where we can rest in just looking, in contemplation, in lovingly pondering, in feeling, in affection, and in relish for one thing alone, etc.. There is no reason to *teach* this to our people either in public or in private. For, apart from the reasons mentioned, lots of problems with this have become evident. And, moreover, you have to leave this work to God, who gives it when He wants.

What Jesuits Are For

To understand the matter better, you need to look carefully at what the distinctive end of our Institute is. This Institute does not look simply to a person's own consolation in the understanding or will, but principally to external ministries and activities, in which its people employ themselves for their own benefit and that of their neighbours. For this reason it uses its own distinctive manner of prayer, which moves towards the same end, and which should normally be ordered towards it, bearing in mind that the Society's Institute, with prayer, meditation, other exercises and many different experiences, sets about making preparation and provision for its people to make themselves more suitable for ministries—ministries that are ordered towards bringing profit to the neighbour, for the glory of God our Lord.

And the other manner of praying, meditating and contemplating may seem more appropriate for Institutes which, by virtue of their end, look only to their own relationships with God; however, there is no doubt that it commonly diverts and distances those in the Society from the operation and application of our ministries. The more easily a person is contented by being able to rest in vision, contemplation, pondering, feeling, affection, relish for one thing alone, the more they

[12] Cordeses appealed regularly to Ignatius' teaching about not moving on once we have found what we were seeking (Exx 76.4); arguably, however, his account of the grace to be sought was rather different from Ignatius'.

flee from what impedes this rest and contentment, not considering that it is not to this rest that God our Lord has principally called us. And therefore, as I have said, if anyone has that manner of prayer which is alien to our Institute, or if anyone is using our way and ends up in unsuitable places connected with that manner, it is necessary to bring them back into line, and to be careful about illusions, as one of our Constitutions says:[13] he should not be diverted, as does happen, from the main thing, which is his vocation. There really are many spiritual authors who have been reprimanded for having written and taught to others the ways which God gave them personally.

Nor should a universal rule be given concerning the measure of time for different exercises of virtue, a point on which Cassian is reproached by the Fathers. For this does not consist so much in effort, skill or time, being as it is a work of the special grace and providence of God, 'who divides among each one as he wishes and when he wishes';[14] rather it consists in helping each one to cooperate for their part with the divine direction, and to remove things that impede the grace of the Lord.

Mortification

And as the foundational[15] part of the Christian life is the mortification of our appetites and the abnegation of our judgments and of our own wills, our Father Ignatius therefore places complete abnegation as the foundation of the whole building and of the solid virtues that our Institute demands, as is shown in the *Examen* and *Constitutions*. Therefore, not just our other activities (*ejercicios*) but also our prayer should help towards, and guide themselves according to, our total mortification. This is where Christ our Lord puts the foundation of Christian perfection: 'they should deny themselves'.[16]

I have no doubt but that you will see that prayer is neither our chief end nor chief foundation, as it is with some forms of consecrated life; rather, it is a universal instrument with which, alongside other activities, we are helped to obtain virtues and to carry out our

[13] *Constitutions* III.1.10 [260.1]. Note that both Mercurian's direct references to the *Constitutions* in this letter written to a serving Provincial come from what Ignatius wrote about novices.
[14] The references to early Christian literature here need further research.
[15] *principal*—it could be translated 'most important' or 'initial'.
[16] Matthew 16: 24.

ministries for the Society's end (III.1.20).[17] These virtues and skills are not obtained with prayer or meditation alone. On the contrary, it is evident that many, having put their main effort into the latter, have not got rid of their disordered appetites and affections, and have been very difficult when it has come to abandoning their own judgment at times when superiors have wanted to dispose of them for the greater glory of God in what was not agreeable to them or not in accord with their dictate.

If in time there is need to give some direction in the Spiritual Exercises and in the Society's manner of prayer, it seems it may be more in keeping with the order of divine providence that this be sent to the provinces from here, rather than that it should happen in some other way. Thus I trust in the goodness of God our Lord that you will come to judge that this manner of prayer which you are writing about is not in accord with the Institute of the Society, and that you, as a good religious, will faithfully see to it that Ours do not take a manner other than what I have said above to be in conformity with our Institute. And with this I commend myself greatly to your prayers and holy sacrifices.

From Rome, 25 November 1574.

[17] *Constitutions*, III.1.20 [277], and its declarations, set the Spiritual Exercises within other aspects of novitiate formation. 'III.2º.20' in the manuscript is an error.

C

CLAUDIO ACQUAVIVA TO THE WHOLE SOCIETY OF JESUS, 1590

Claudio Acquaviva, born in 1543, became Superior General following Mercurian's death in 1580. He made two influential contributions to the discussions about contemplation and ministry: the publication of the **Official Directory** *in 1599, and a long letter to all Jesuits on prayer and penance. In both these initiatives, he appears to be correcting the functionalism that had become dominant under Mercurian. Here is an extract from the 1590 letter.*[18]

WE HAVE FROM TIME TO TIME HEARD that a few souls are in doubt concerning the interpretation and practice of the rules and constitutions regulating penances and prayers. Therefore, I have decided that the best thing to do, in the concern which lies with me by virtue of my office, is to explain some principles, as far as possible briefly, regarding this matter.

The goal of our Society is first to attend to our own salvation and perfection, and then carefully to work for the salvation and perfection of our neighbour.[19] But there is a distinction to be made between these two ends: what concerns ourselves is to be considered more important than what is concerned with our neighbour. This is so because of the obligation arising from each person's commitment, because of the structure of well constituted charity, and most of all because care for

[18] Text in *Epistolae praepositorum generalium ad patres et fratres Societatis Iesu*, 4 vols. (Brussels: Belgian Province, SJ, 1908-1909), vol. 1, pp. 248-270. This is the first modern language translation of even an extract to be published. For general background, see Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, translated by William J. Young (St Louis: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1986 [1942]), pp. 239-242.

[19] Acquaviva here alludes to *Examen* 1.2 [*Constitutions* 3]. The controversy about the relationship between the two ends has been continued more recently. See François Courel, 'The Single Aim of the Apostolic Institute', *The Way Supplement*, 14 (Autumn 1971), pp. 46-61—originally published in 1966; and Michael C. McGuckian, 'The One End of the Society of Jesus', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu*, 60 (1991), pp. 91-111. Both Acquaviva's separation and Courel's identification of the two goals represent interpretations of Ignatius' text. The published English translation adds to Ignatius' text a suggestion that the grace of ministry is one and the same as that by which a Jesuit's soul is saved; Ignatius himself had simply said that both personal salvation and ministry were dependent on grace.

neighbour comes subsequently, and is supported by a prior care for self as if by a foundation—if care for self is destroyed, care for neighbour will inevitably sink and collapse. Our blessed Father Ignatius, therefore, has taught us as many as he could of the principles that help us attain our own salvation and perfection. But nothing of what he commended to us is more effective than prayer and mortification, about which I am now going to say something. Those of our Fathers with longer memories, very holy men taught by long experience, have left us witness that these principles are very valid.

Acquaviva begins by discussing the amount of time his people should give to prayer. He repeats the teaching of the Ignatian **Constitutions** (VI.3 [582-594]) *and explains that the subsequent decision, stipulating that all should spend a continuous hour in prayer each morning, was not intended in principle to preclude longer periods. Then he moves on to 'contemplative prayer'.*

Concerning the Mode and Method of Prayer[20]

For those who have already exercised themselves rather often in those devout considerations, and who by long familiarity have acquired a facility in praying, it does not seem that any fixed rationale or particular approach should be prescribed. For the Spirit of the Lord, who is normally carried through the loosest of regulations along innumerable ways that enlighten souls and draw them tightly to Himself, is not in this way to be held back, as if with a bridle, to preconceived purposes. And we—as Fr Nadal of happy memory once said in this regard both devoutly and prudently—are meant to follow the divine teacher; it is not right that we anticipate.[21] Therefore it would be absurd, and contrary to prudent lawmaking, to prescribe with any specification for people in our Society that they should penetrate the mysteries of the divine nature, explore in all ways the infinite attributes of the Most High God, or search into and examine the Trinity's threefold unity of Person and simplicity of nature. But

[20] This subheading, unlike the others, comes from the text.

[21] MHSJ MN *Orationis observationes*, n.73: 'do not go before the Spirit, but let yourself be led and moderated by Him in truth, and learn to co-operate with grace'. One surviving manuscript of this text was prepared 'for our Fr General Claudio in his room'.

similarly it would be most absurd of all to forbid anyone these matters for consideration, as being alien to our Institute.

However, we do not deny that sometimes bad things arise from this style of meditation in those who use it badly and less prudently. I am referring to when they arrive at a result from it which is quite obviously perverse: for example, when they report their own high reputation for speculating on sublime things, and a lower reputation about the one who explores simple, less recondite things; or a stubborn judgment in discerning; or an obstinate mind when it comes to relishing the spiritual pleasures with which the mind is filled in that state. For these things introduce harm into obedience, and a weakening in zeal for souls. People of this sort, therefore, are to be dealt with not as contemplatives but as the opposite—people who are trapped, while they are contemplating, in what are most certainly snares: moreover, for the moment, they are to be kept away from that futile, false contemplation and brought back into line. But contemplation is not on this account to be disparaged or forbidden to our people, or its truth resisted, or the experience of the holy Fathers—authenticated as it is to the highest degree—called into question. For, in the opinion and witness of very many of the Fathers, scrutiny and examination have shown that true and perfect contemplation is more powerful and efficacious than any other method of pious meditation; that it breaks and bruises people's haughty spirits; that it encourages the lazy to carry out more vigorously what their superiors have enjoined; that it fires up the languid to seek more ardently the good of souls.

Prayer and its Fruits

Many often claim that the power and effectiveness of our prayer is to be applied to something else, and that there should be no commitment to a contemplation that is solitary and a good in itself. This view, rightly understood, is beyond all possibility of reproach—and, moreover, my predecessors' replies and writings have also sometimes in some way indicated what I am about to expound.

Virtues

Firstly, our people are not simply to stay in this contemplation, and hold on to that internal relish of prayer, to the tiny sweetness of what has been described, without deriving further fruit from that place for

themselves, for forming their lives and behaviour aright, and for acquiring virtues for themselves. For example: those who previously might have been agitated by impulses of impatience or pride might ponder in thoughtful contemplation the Servant of Humanity. And then, after they have considered the fervour and zeal for souls that so passionately inspired him, and then carefully worked through how he was rejected, they might find the patience which shone out during the cruellest execution, steadfastly bearing the pains. This real way in which the fruit of prayer is to be applied to something else is one that all religious people share, and needs to be practised by all who give themselves to contemplation.

Radiance

A second way comes when our mind burns during contemplation with the fires of divine love, and is carried by flaming love into God, whom it understands to be supremely good, supremely lovable. And then that flame of sharp desire leaps up from self-love, flying away from its chains and guards, and waiting upon God, the Greatest of All, faithfully in every respect; and at the same time also striving with every effort that a Good that is so great and of such a kind, so much to be sought, should be known thoroughly by all and loved by each one.

However this is subject to the law that they willingly separate themselves from that gentleness, and from that delightful feeling of contemplation, when they recognise that this would please God, that the norm of their Institute requires it, that it would be helpful, or in the ultimate case that they are ordered to do so; then they should apply the after-effects with great spirit to their work. And those ardours that have arisen from that furnace of piety should both inflame the person to action, and fire up with the example of a praiseworthy and religious life those for whom they act. But as for those who have committed themselves to monastic life and who pursue a religious life of solitude—when *they* recognise that this of God is within their heart

in such a way that they should relish it thoroughly in that most peaceful repose, 'empty themselves and see that the Lord is sweet'[22] in the way appropriate for that kind of life, they should consider it enough, shut within the confines of their cell, to make their neighbour a sharer in the fervent recourse which is their prayers.

Teaching

Finally, the third way in which this kind of prayer can be applied is this: we may meditate on what is sensed from the sacred pages, or on the true principles of our faith, in such a way that we understand these with the mind, and then by speaking and teaching instil them into the souls of ordinary people.

However, someone may hold that the fruit of our meditation should indeed refer to something else in this final sense, but in such a way that the meditation should not, of its own nature, extend also actually to loving or knowing *God*. This person would in fact be claiming that it is never right for a person in the Society to love or understand God alone in prayer, but rather that meditation should at all times be organized in such a way that the one praying is always in fact thinking about something else. Nor would the one praying be free to meditate on anything which did not have a direct application elsewhere.

There is no doubt that such a person is wrong. They are twisting this point so as to change its meaning from what the authority of the learned and the nature of contemplation will allow. For no one is speaking rightly who says, 'God is loved by me so that I can accomplish something pleasing to God': on the contrary, it should rather be, 'I shall think I can accomplish something because I love God and I am impelled by the stimuli of God's love to undertake and carry through this deed'.

Acquaviva then develops further the contrast between the prayer of one called to ministry and that of a monk (though few monastics would recognise themselves in what Acquaviva and other Jesuit figures write about the monastic vocation). The text then offers various suggestions for maintaining prayerfulness within a busy life. Mercurian's policy had

[22] Psalm 34:8. Some medieval versions of the Vulgate—quoted by Bernard and Thomas—read *vacate* (make space) instead of *gustate* (taste).

been shaped by important considerations about formation and about openness for hard work. Acquaviva certainly recognises that these considerations sometimes specify and limit the life of prayer, but he also vehemently recovers a sense that relationship with God has a value in itself. It is one thing to say that authentic prayer has effects beyond itself in how we live our lives; it is another to reduce prayer simply to a means.

The standard Jesuit textbooks present Acquaviva as restoring balances: Mercurian's overcorrections were providentially rectified by his successor.[23] *Clearly, there is much truth in this view. But there is an alternative interpretation, put forward by the French historian of spirituality Henri Bremond. For Bremond, Mercurian's interventions with Cordeses and Baltasar Alvarez mark a profound change. Whereas Ignatius saw the direct touch of the Spirit as almost a normal reality, now the touch of God is something exotic, rarefied—it occurs in 'mystics', honoured exceptions who, as such, are irrelevant to the everyday.*

Acquaviva's disagreement with Mercurian on the compatibility of 'higher prayer' with a life of service is, for Bremond, not significant. The real disaster was that for both sides the life of the Spirit had become defined in terms of 'higher prayer', restricted to the extraordinary or even paranormal.[24] *The creative religious ferment of early modernity hardened, and the holy came to be located outside ordinary experience—in rules, in hierarchies reinforced by a discipline of celibacy, in the unusual. Everyday life became profane, a Godforsakenness to be lived through in faith. In Ignatius' time matters were otherwise. The creator could deal immediately with any creature making the Exercises. Overcoming the dualisms that set in after his death is still our task.*

[23] So De Guibert, *The Jesuits*, pp. 239-242; Ignacio Iparraguirre, *Historia de la Práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio*, vol. 2 (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1955), pp. 531-534—significantly placed at the end of the volume, as if to mark the culmination of an era.

[24] Henri Bremond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France, depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, 12 vols. (Paris: Bloud and Gay, 1924-1936), vol. 8, pp. 270-271: 'One must not think that Acquaviva's decree . . . purely and simply revoked the indefensible verdict of Mercurian. Rather, it vindicates it—not perhaps its expressed content, but at least its deep philosophy. From now on, of course, contemplation is no longer forbidden to the Jesuit, as something contrary to the Exercises and the spirit of the Society; but that does not make it any less a special prayer, accessible only with difficulty to the average religious. . . . ' A fundamental mistake sets in: that of defining mysticism as 'necessarily delightful, fertile in revelations and visions, strewn with ecstasies'. 'Such is certainly not what this great man [Acquaviva] thinks, but as he digs a kind of ditch between contemplation and ordinary prayer, he gives credit, willy-nilly, to this dangerous teaching.'

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THE SILENCE

Joseph Veale

Joe Veale, who died in October 2002, was an influential figure in English-speaking Ignatian circles. He had moved into the ministry of the Exercises and into Ignatian scholarship after some twenty years as a charismatic teacher of English in Dublin. One of his final articles was published in the Irish Jesuit Province's internal journal, **Interfuse**. *It can now be seen as his epitaph: it combines Joe's passion for Ignatius' central conviction with a concern for honest, direct language.*[1] *We had invited Joe to rewrite the piece so that it could be shared with a wider readership in* **The Way**, *but his death, sadly, intervened. What follows, by kind permission of the Irish Jesuits, is a guess as what Joe's response might have been. Even if what we read here must lack the incisive touches that only he could have provided, it can stand as a token of the gratitude that many, both directly and indirectly, owe to Joe. May he rest in peace.*

WE KEEP LOOKING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. We keep asking sociologists, cultural analysts, pundits, to tell us about what is out there in the world we are meant to be evangelizing. In one way or another liberal-minded people in the Church have been doing this for the last thirty years. We have been over and over that ground so often. And we come back a few years later to much the same discourse from a different expert. We listen or read politely; we pay attention; we are stimulated by one or two new insights; we allow two or three familiar questions to surface. The answers are familiar too. Sometimes we have a lively discussion. We are good at that. But then we leave the meeting or put the book down and get back to whatever it is, our jobs, our capsule of responsibility. There is no follow-up. Has anything changed? Are we changed?

[1] In Joe's funeral homily, his rector, Noel Barber SJ, who had been both a pupil and a colleague of Joe's during his time as a teacher, told those assembled, 'I still am unable to use the word "very" without a tremor of guilt and without hearing him say, "'Very' does not strengthen, it weakens the proposition"'. A number of Joe's other pupils shared similarly vivid memories.

The Way, 42/4 (October 2003), pp. 106-117

Fairly rarely, someone speaks or writes from a deeper level of experience. They may be listened to respectfully. But sooner or later, the wider body turns to safer ground. The person is rarely responded to. The next contribution is often a conceptual statement that cuts across the possibility of a follow-up and knocks the tennis ball far outside the court. More or less consciously, the unacceptable has been sidelined. We continue, privately, to carry a dull feeling of unease and unsatisfactoriness, and a wan dismay in the face of indifference and irreligion.

There is a place for description and analysis. It is indispensable. But it cuts no ice until some other level of experience is stirred and attended to. Then the subsequent analysis can bear fruit.

Jadedness and Second-hand Language

There is a deadness in Western Europe, and it is there also in the Church and in the Ignatian family.

The institutional Church in Western Europe is by and large written off, even by the devout. Its language is no longer being heard. The Church institution (and religion in general) invites yawns or condescension or indifference or contempt. As soon as you open your mouth about God you have the handicap of being associated with a discredited Church. (There—I am falling into the trap of rehearsing most of those cultural analyses we have been reading for years.) But the very familiarity here can mask a pain we can all too easily deny, the pain of wondering how to speak of God from within the crumbling walls of a discredited institution.

The problem is that the language has gone stale. The only language that has any chance of getting through is first-hand language. The trouble with most attempts at religious communication is that they are couched in a language that is tired, in tired images, in a churchy idiom that is remote from life and has grown repulsive. (Do we not ourselves, honestly, find much religious talk repulsive? I do.) Many of our words about God are second-hand, third-hand, reach-me-down, ready-made.

First-hand words are those that come from a level of experience that is sensed to be in touch with God. Never mind how fragile, how filled with doubt or dread, how inadequate. People only hear words that are freshly minted, that come from intimacy and contact.

If a speaker has been given the gift (a kind of poetic gift) of discovering fresh images, that is good. But few have it. Even older words, older idioms, strike home when the speaker speaks from some core, where God is a familiar presence. Otherwise our words fall dead. It is no great matter—it is almost certainly better—if the contact with God is a wrestling and contention with God, a cry from a disbelieving ache, a groan of the spirit out of darkness. It can be heard because it is real. That God is real.

Against such thoughts we protect ourselves. All too easily we say: 'Yes, yes, of course. We should all be more prayerful. (And stop making me feel more guilty about it.)' But we know that. We've been told it. It serves as a conversation stopper. It allows us to turn to more manageable levels of discourse that we find easier. Nothing happens. The talk turns to the palpable, to what our education has made us good at, to more words, to the intellectual analysis of a culture or a situation.

But the focus needs to be elsewhere, on our own unbelief. If we were able (not just once, but continually) to come clean, to share the anxieties and denials of our fogged sense of belief, of our unbelief, we might begin also to grasp what is ill in the private and public life of the West. Immersed as we Christians are in our culture, we ourselves may be the best laboratory specimens for examination. It is easy to make general statements. General statements are not wholly useless, God knows. But what cuts the ice are the particularities, the differences, of our personal experience. If we can explore these, perhaps together we might begin to get in touch with what is happening in Europe.

The focus needs to be on our own unbelief

Are we ready yet to begin to answer the questions put to Europe by the events of 11 September 2001? The clear question about the spiritual contamination Islam experiences from the West? One of the strengths of Islam is its unselfconscious ability to say the simplest things about God in the simplest way. The average devout Muslim is not lumbered with a baggage of theological debris. What they have is a daily, familiar, taken-for-granted relationship with God, an easiness (rare among equally devout Catholics that I know) with spontaneous words to speak of God.

Desolation

Another way of perceiving our present apostolic experience is to see it as desolation. To rehearse the obvious: desolation is a movement of the spirit in a direction away from God. Or shuttered from God. Desolation moves inward. It gets trapped in the self. It likes privacy. ('Don't tell anyone'—Exx 326.) Desolation is confused, in the dark, in twilight, in avoidance. It is dispersed; its single focus has been lost. It wriggles so that it can escape facing reality. The mechanisms of avoidance include escape, escape into words, into semantic parsing and analysis. Impeccable reason is its stoutest ally. Avoidance will do anything so as not to make a decision. It marks time. It postpones the pain of giving up, of giving in. It clings to the dull discomfort of its condition, rather than facing the sharp pain that may liberate it into peace. Its fruit is lassitude. It feels there is no point to doing anything. It is good at masking torpor with an energetic semblance of vitality, with business. It is busy about good works. Good works are an effective cushion between the spirit and God. Desolation thrives on faction and division.

The individually directed retreat over the last thirty years has (we hope, but we do not know) helped many individuals to a deeper conversion. But that has failed to flow over into a revitalised and shared sense of mission.

A British Jesuit admonished me some years ago, and told me I should not be so hard on the people closest to me. There were plenty of good reasons why they could not be more active. The Irish Church itself was in trauma. Vocations, at least in the conventional sense, had dried up. He may have been right. If he was, the desolation he picked up in me will remain so long as it is not attended to, not acknowledged. But at the same time, those external realities could be experienced in consolation. What has to change for that to come about?

Dispersed Focus

Church institutions keep trying to plan. We come up again and again with more or less the same priorities. They are diverse; there is no cohesion. There is no one focus that would alert or excite or unite us. There is nothing there to fire the belly, nothing that would send us to the barricades. We lack passion. Diffusion and confusion are signs of desolation.

In the 1970s, many were inspired by liberation theology to strive for the promotion of justice. They hoped that the Church might become excited, united around one objective. All that certainly had positive fruits: there was a shift towards the poor, the oppressed, the demeaned. But we need to assess the deficits too. Talk of justice was also divisive. More recent shifts in emphasis surely indicate some unease with how it all worked out in practice.

Vatican II was, in fact, quite preoccupied with atheism, and Paul VI gave the Jesuits a formal mission to address it. I do not think we have looked plainly at our response to Paul VI's mission. We walked away from it. We did not know what to do with it. Perhaps that avoidance was a silent or submerged acknowledgement of an unbelief in ourselves? If so, then the concern with justice in the 1970s was perhaps itself an avoidance mechanism, a makeshift? We could pretend that this was the *real* response to atheism. We could turn in relief from the discomforts of not knowing what to do about the unbelieving world, the West. (Where the East and the South are not yet contaminated, God is there. Palpably.) Justice was mercifully concrete, manageable; it promised visible results; you could *do* something about it.

None of these reflections are offered in a dogmatic spirit. But the question is there to be looked at. Have we ever seriously faced it? It may be the wrong question. Even so, to stay with it might throw up insights that we are not seeing.

Since 1970 the clerical Church in Europe has been crumbling. There is nothing new in that, goodness knows. It has been shedding credibility. For thirty years there has been a visible haemorrhaging of faith. Meanwhile many believers have been investing a great deal of their energy and talent in justice—not an enriched justice that is seen to be rooted in a personal faith, but rather an impoverished concept of economic justice. The faithful listen, take in the message, assent to it, but are ultimately unimpressed.

Good has come of the commitment to justice. But the field has now long since been won. Many who count in the Church are long since converted. Equally, committed people outside the Church have no need of Christians to alert them to concern for the poor. But during all those thirty years and more we have been doing nothing about the haemorrhaging of faith.

Mission and Maintenance

Over the last thirty years I have met many well-intentioned people in a variety of countries. Most of them have been and are competent, more than competent, at maintenance. Within that rubric they are active and creative. But not in mission. We have been good at what we are good at, and are comfortable with the ministry to the believer. But there have been no new, creative risks, no bold assertions of God. God for the committed Christians I know became what God was rapidly becoming in European culture more generally: the loony relative always kept in the kitchen and never mentioned to the guests.

And perhaps that provokes a wider question. Where was the effort to look together, unblinkingly, at the areas of fading faith? At the growing numbers for whom contemporary Western religion was becoming incredible, unworthy of trust, an intolerable burden on the spirit, ringing false? We had articulated the ideals all right in the 1970s. The Jesuits, for example, were 'by a creative effort of faith . . . to find a new language, a new set of symbols . . . and that for our own sake just as much as for the sake of our contemporaries' (GC 32 d.4 n.26). But we had missed the urgency. Might we attempt now to wonder together how that was so, how we were so uncreative in addressing waning faith? So unaware, really, of that question at all? Might that cast some light on how our own faith has dimmed?

Calls from Scholars

Three eminent scholars have drawn on the *Spiritual Exercises* to challenge us. In 1978 Karl Rahner adopted the persona of Ignatius in order to speak to the Jesuits of his time:

> I should now say more expressly—particularly for you repressed, covert atheists of today—how a person can meet God. . . . As you know, I wanted—as I used to say then—to 'help souls': in other words, to say something to people about God and God's grace, and about Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen one, that would open up and redeem their freedom into God's. . . . Why? I was convinced that I had encountered God, at first incipiently during my sickness at Loyola and then decisively during my time as a hermit at Manresa; and I wanted to communicate such experience to others as best one could.[2]

John O'Malley, coming at the same reality as a historian, finds the same focus of desire in the early Jesuits. They saw all their pastoral work as a ministry of consolation. They 'wanted to live according to such consolation themselves and to help others to do the same' (p. 82). It was the dominant conviction governing their whole 'way of proceeding'.

> They sought to be mediators of an immediate experience of God that would lead to an inner change of heart or a deepening of religious sensibilities already present. With varying degrees of clarity, that purpose shines through all they wrote and said as the ultimate goal they had in mind when they spoke of helping souls.[3]

Cardinal Martini sees a similar need in our own world. It has to do with freedom. Commenting on the text of the Two Standards, Martini hears Christ saying, 'help all without exception, liberate them, free them . . . loosen them from their chains'.

> In other words, make them live like me; make them live the Sermon on the Mount; teach them that true liberty of heart which all

[2] Karl Rahner, 'Ignatius of Loyola Speaks to a Modern Jesuit', in *Ignatius of Loyola* (London: Collins, 1979 [1978]), pp. 14, 11. Translation taken from a new version by Philip Endean for publication in the Orbis Books *Modern Spiritual Masters* series.

[3] John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard UP, 1993), quotations from pp. 83, 19; see also pp. 370-375.

> need—the baptized and the non-baptized, the practising and the non-practising, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists as well as atheists, agnostics, progressives, conservatives and the indifferent. Because all are called to enter into the liberty of Christ.[4]

'Into the liberty of Christ.' It is clear the Cardinal is not speaking of corralling into a Church. That is the task of the Holy Spirit, something for the Spirit's timing.

The first Jesuits had a focus. Whatever they were doing they had a clear desire and the same objective. Karl Rahner has St Ignatius say that the Exercises were not for an elite:

> I certainly didn't think that the grace of Manresa . . . was a special privilege for a chosen, elite individual. That was why I gave exercises whenever this kind of offer of spiritual help looked as if it might be accepted. I even gave exercises before I'd studied your theology and had managed with some effort (I laugh) a masters degree from Paris. And also before I had received priestly and sacramental power from the Church. And why not? The director of the Exercises is . . . just giving (when they can) support from a distance, very circumspectly, so that God and humanity can really meet immediately. . . . God is able and willing to deal immediately with His creature; the fact that this occurs is something that human beings can experience happening; they can apprehend the sovereign disposing of God's freedom over their lives . . . [5]

One Aim, One Focus

Cardinal Martini sees the Sermon on the Mount as the disclosure of freedom. That is what the Exercises are about too. Karl Rahner sees the disclosure of God's sovereign freedom as the unifying focus of all our scattered enterprises, of all our scattered selves:

> . . . your pastoral care must have this goal in sight always, at every step, remorselessly . . . the awakening of such divine experience is not in fact indoctrination with something previously not present in the human person, but rather a more explicit self-appropriation,

[4] Carlo M. Martini, *Letting God Free Us: Meditations on Ignatian Spiritual Exercises*, translated by Richard Arnandez (Slough: St Paul, 1993 [1992]), p. 112.
[5] Rahner, 'Ignatius of Loyola', pp. 13-15.

> the free acceptance of a reality of the human constitution that is always there, normally buried and repressed, but nevertheless there inescapably. . . . This realisation I wanted to pass on to others through the Exercises that I gave. . . . Do you understand me now when I say that the central task for you Jesuits, around which everything else is centred, has to be the giving of the Exercises? Of course this doesn't mean beginning with official and organized ecclesiastical courses, given to many people at once—still less is that the main point. Rather it means *mystagogical* help, so that others don't repress God's immediacy but come to experience it clearly and accept it.

'The central task for you Jesuits, around which everything else is centred, has to be the giving of the Exercises.' Neither Rahner nor, in his ventriloquist's voice, Ignatius, is saying that 'the giving of the exercises' means 'retreat houses'. All these voices, rather, are pointing us towards a streetwise ease in using our bread-and-butter familiarity with the experience of the Exercises to create a pedagogy of freedom. When love is liberated at a profound level, then God is found to have been there all along. You don't have to 'give retreats' to engage in that ministry. It is what the Exercises are about.

There is thus no question here of our abandoning the other good things which the Church does. As Rahner's Ignatius puts it:

> I'm also not devaluing all the other pastoral, academic and political enterprises that you've thought you needed to try in the course of your history. But all this other stuff should really be understood as a preparation for, or as a consequence of, the ultimate task, a task which must remain yours in the future: helping people towards the immediate experience of God, the experience where it dawns on a human being that the mystery all grasp that we call God is near, can be spoken to, and enfolds us with blessing precisely when we don't try to make it something under our control, but hand ourselves over to it unconditionally. Everything you do you should be constantly testing to see if it serves this goal. If it does, then a biologist among you can also investigate the mental life of cockroaches.[6]

[6] Karl Rahner, 'Ignatius of Loyola', pp. 15, 16. At the end, Rahner is referring ironically to the work of his colleague, Adolf Haas, a notable biologist and also a significant Ignatian scholar.

To subsume all our energetic and efficient apostolic enterprises under that overarching aim would focus our mission and harness our diverse employments.

But what the Ignatian tradition challenges us to do really is embarrassing. You have to talk about God. You cannot enter with your partner in conversation (Muslim or Jew or recovering Catholic or agnostic or whatever) at that level, unless your own experience of God is alive. Nothing else will do. Your experience is alive if it is in pain, in aridity or darkness or despair. And of course it can be alive if it is freed from that agonizing or dismay. But it is not alive if it is in desolation.

The Silence

None of this has anything to do with political or ethical questions. It touches all of us who are believing Christians today, wherever our integrity asks us to stand, on the left or on the right, as a traditionalist or as a progressive. These are no more than labels which the media have conditioned us to use as a way of seeing our own reality.

We need to help each other, wherever we stand. We need to emerge from a strange blanket of silence. We need to wonder about the great silence of these last thirty years. To speak simply about God. We are good at talking *about* faith. We are not good at *expressing* faith. We may, rightly or wrongly, feel that the word 'God' cannot be used any more, because it has been so cheapened by its pious users. We may feel the same about most of the language of our religious ghetto. That vocabulary may carry with it so black a cloud of attendant woes, and remind recovering Catholics of so much intolerable guilt or religious boredom, that we cannot stomach it ourselves. Do we listen, ever, to contemporary religious talk and recognise how boring it is?

Yet the word 'God' is not a dead word. We have all heard it luminous and alive when the simplest believer (who may be Muslim or Jewish or whatever) speaks limpidly of a

person, of persons, of a familiar presence, and in speaking has no designs on the hearer but is just voicing the reality that cannot be contained. It is not the vocabulary (primarily) that is faulty. It is the people who use it. It would serve the Kingdom of God if religious people would simply place an embargo on themselves and refuse to say words they do not mean, to voice sentiments they do not believe.

Nevertheless, there remain questions about our public utterances. Can we ask why we try so hard to be inoffensive? Is it that we are trying to keep our voices down in the presence of our betters? Do we secretly feel that the secularisers know better, that they are more intelligent than we are? Do we feel we're not up to them? Browbeaten? Do we baulk at being labelled by the media as belonging with the extremes of right or left? Is it time to speak out? To be heard again? To help, with many others, to discover a fresh gospel language that attracts? A language that rings true?

To be Met with Silence?

And suppose no one pays the slightest attention? Just a shrug and an amused turning away? Suppose we emerged from silence and encountered another great silence? Our words not even heard? Does it matter? Is effectiveness always a measure of God's will? There are times—and perhaps our time is one of them—when it is enough to say the truth. The truth may or may not strike home. But at least God would have been let out of the kitchen and shown to the guests. The effect is not our business. The Exercises and our mission call us to be free from the need to see results. You do what God wants you to do and stand free from the need to be effective. The results are God's business.

Never mind the words. They may be freshly minted, or they may be old and tired. If they come from a God who is a familiar, experienced reality, they will be first-hand, new enough to disclose in those among whom we are thrown an affinity that is already there before we open our mouths, a presence of the Word already operative in whomever we encounter.

These days Church people often talk about the gap between faith and culture. We wonder about our faith and about the resistance of so many to the words we use. But is it unjust to think in terms of we who have it, as opposed to those out there who do not have it? Us and

them? It is clear that there is no us and them. We are in it together with them. The gap is not between dumbfounded Ignatian disciples and clever infidels. Or between those who have made the Exercises and the switched-off devout. The gap is within ourselves. The gap is between the spiritual famine and our own incapacity to speak to the hunger.

We stand there disarmed, unmanned, speechless. All that is needed is something very simple.

Joseph Veale SJ, a few weeks before his death

RECENT BOOKS

Tina Beattie, *Eve's Pilgrimage: A Woman's Quest for the City of God* (London: Continuum, 2002). 0 86012 323 5, pp. xi + 224, £9.99.

Tina Beattie's highly original work, *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate*—previously available only by contacting the publisher directly—has recently been re-issued by Continuum. It deserves to be widely read, and anyone familiar with Beattie's earlier writing will not be surprised to read that this more recent work, *Eve's Pilgrimage*, is a perceptive book with strong arguments, but one that refuses to toe a party line. It does not make the same academic demands upon the reader as does *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate*, and should therefore reach a much broader audience. *Eve's Pilgrimage* emerges out of a visit to Rome, and examines some of the less-than-eternal city's famous sites through the eyes of a woman concerned to see what its monuments encode about the history of women in Catholicism. The book is erudite without being technical or difficult to read, and is constantly both surprising and thought-provoking.

Beattie visits the Sistine Chapel, the Colosseum, the Pantheon, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Santa Maria Maggiore and the Villa Borghese, St Peter's, the Catacomb of Domitilla, and the Paul VI Concert Hall, loosely tracing a pattern from creation (with Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling), through the history of the Church, to final chapters on death and resurrection. The book gives a kind of Catholic feminist's eye view of the history of western Christianity by a consideration of notable buildings and works of art.

Certain themes run throughout the work: a deeply held belief in the essential truth and goodness of the Christian religion, a conviction that much ancient paganism was violent and bloodthirsty, a rejection of the Protestant Reformation, a dissatisfaction with modern Catholicism, and a scepticism towards North American feminism.

Beattie sees Christianity as a religion which at heart is concerned with the nobility of each human person and with the sanctity of the whole creation, both physical and spiritual. This is the basis of her approach to the sites she visits, and of her appraisal of other scholars' work. For example, Beattie suggests that some of the contemporary Christians who are most keen to defend the goodness of the physical world will be the first to deny the doctrine of bodily resurrection. Beattie notes the irony in this,

and sees the doctrine of Mary's bodily Assumption—whereby a Jewish woman is the first to occupy a place in Heaven, next to Christ—as a strong Christian confirmation of the potential holiness of all people, and, implicitly, of all creation. Similarly, she is inspired by Fazzini's statue of the Resurrection in the Paul VI Concert Hall to write of Christ summoning the cosmos to join him in the dance of redeemed creation. The poor-quality photograph in the book is just about adequate to show the reader what the author is getting at.

The chapters on Santa Maria in Trastevere and Santa Maria Maggiore draw attention to the strong maternal symbolism that was once an everyday part of Catholicism, but which came to be lost in the early modern period. The ancient mosaic of the nursing Madonna with female attendants at Santa Maria in Trastevere expresses the honour in which a woman's body could once be held, whilst Bernini's absurdly sexual statue of St Teresa of Avila is rightly compared with his violent paintings depicting the rape of the pagan goddesses, Daphne and Proserpina—all three are images designed to titillate the male viewer. Beattie sees this development as tied to wider changes in attitudes to women and the physical world—changes by which both women and nature gradually came to be seen less as sources of life and more as objects for subjugation.

This masculising tendency is also attacked in Beattie's comments on the Reformation and on Vatican II. Both of these reform movements 'purged Christianity of its material and its maternal dimensions'. However, Beattie finds in the monuments of Rome much that can help Catholicism discover or recover a reverence for womanliness and for the physical creation. Contemplating the iconography of the Virgin Mary with her mother St Anne, Beattie writes: 'Images of Mary's birth are a rich resource for re-visioning the Christian story in a way that is expressive of women's experience but still faithful to the Catholic tradition'.

Inevitably, such a rich book provokes questions. Perhaps Beattie might have given more attention to Christianity's own collusion in some of the abusive behaviour which her book describes, including witch-burning and ecological destruction. Beattie may be overly influenced by the French cultural theorist René Girard (whom she quotes more than once), for whom Christianity is a peaceful religion which brings an end to the violence and bloodshed of many pagan cults. Yet we now live in a world that is filled with violence and bloodshed, much of which is produced by Christians and by people who are heirs to Christian culture. We might interrogate the monuments of Rome to find out why Christianity has not yet succeeded in bringing an end to these horrors.

Beattie is also, perhaps, rather sweeping in her claims that the image of Christ today is fraught with an 'essential masculinity' in a way that was not the case in earlier ages. This seems less than plausible. If you remove the beard from the average depiction of the Sacred Heart, you are left with the face of a woman. Christ's overall emphasis on peaceful relationships and his opposition to conflict might also be cited as examples of his conforming more to cultural notions of what is 'feminine' than what is 'masculine'. I suspect that the real issue here is not about Christ at all, but about the contemporary ideology that claims maleness is somehow necessary to the office of Christian priesthood (a subject which gets a whole chapter in *God's Mother, Eve's Advocate*). But the whole subject needs more unravelling than Beattie has the space to do in *Eve's Pilgrimage*.

Despite my cavils, however, this book has great strengths. I went to Rome once, and, since I didn't like it, I have never bothered to go back. This book might persuade me to change my mind.

Sarah Jane Boss

Katherine Dyckman, Mary Garvin and Elizabeth Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed* (New York/Mahwah NJ: Paulist Press, 2001). 0 8091 4043 8, pp. xv + 366, £22.95.

The *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola is a text that has been used for over 400 years by individuals who wish to deepen their relationship with God and respond more fully to God's action in their lives. Although Ignatius wrote at a particular time and in a particular culture, he speaks to many people whose life experience is vastly different from his. The Exercises are not meant to be given in exactly the same way to each person, but rather applied to the specific situation and needs of the individual. For many, the text of Ignatius is accessible and helpful, but for others the language and imagery stand in the way of appropriating the many graces possible from the experience of the Exercises. *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed* is written both for those 'who are captured by the vision and spirit of the Spiritual Exercises', and for those 'who passionately resist elements of the Spiritual Exercises or the ways in which they have been interpreted' (p. ix). As is clear from the title, the writers are particularly, though by no means exclusively, addressing women who find Ignatius' text unhelpful.

It would, I think, be a misunderstanding of the writers' intention to see what they have produced as a feminist rewriting of Ignatius; rather they are

using a feminist hermeneutic to uncover what is already there for anyone who wishes to use the Exercises as a way to God. One of the ways in which this is done is through sections in each chapter entitled 'Problems and Possibilities', where they outline particular concerns—many of which come from the experience of women making the Exercises—and then creatively address how the text can be interpreted in a way that meets those concerns while remaining faithful to the dynamic of the Exercises. Some of the 'problems' addressed include: a cosmology centred on men as dominant in creation; the literal interpretation of passages such as 'the corruption and foulness of my body' (Exx 58.4); the language of chivalry; and the inadequate understanding of humility.

The first part of the book outlines the way in which the writers use the experience of women as a starting point for their work, interpreted through feminist theory. They stress that they are not attempting to describe any 'normative' experience for all women, but simply offering one perspective. It is useful for readers of this book to remember that the writers stress this point, since the desire not to generalise about the experience of all women does seem to get lost when 'women's experience' is discussed. After their method has been outlined, the writers turn to some of the women who were present at the beginnings of the Exercises, both those who supported Ignatius in his early years as a pilgrim, and those who were themselves spiritual seekers. The overview of these women's stories is a helpful reminder of the many different ways in which the Exercises have been experienced as 'a way of liberating intimacy with God' (p. 21).

The second part of the book then moves on to the process of the Exercises—the Annotations and Additional Directions, the Principle and Foundation and the Methods of Prayer. The reading of the text here is described as 'non-hierarchical, dynamic, cyclic, fluid and process-oriented' (p. 80). In particular, the authors want to avoid any sense of unhealthy dependence of the one receiving the Exercises on the director. The stress is on adaptability, staying faithful to the heart of the Exercises while offering ways of praying and reflecting that are relevant to the experience of the person making the Exercises. Embodiment and imagination are also discussed in terms of their central place for many who make the Exercises. Addressing the Principle and Foundation, the writers examine the worldview that was dominant when the text was being written, a worldview which they describe as 'static, ordered, hierarchical, dualistic and anthropocentric . . . also male-centred' (p. 94). In response to the many subsequent developments in the way the world is perceived, the writers offer helpful ways of reframing the Principle and Foundation within

a cosmology that takes into account advances in science, and within the understanding of the self in interconnectedness with all creation.

The third and fourth sections of the book deal with each of the four Weeks, the Rules for Discernment, decision making, and the Rules for Thinking with the Church. As with the previous sections, there is a strong dynamic which involves starting from the stories and experiences of women and then using them to find ways of interpreting the text from a different standpoint. With regard to the four Weeks, some of the issues examined include: images of self and God, a feminist perspective on sin, women and a male saviour, imagery and myth in the Two Standards, and the place of Mary in the Exercises. The authors outline some of the important questions for anyone making the Exercises: 'Where do you stand? With whom will you work? What are you willing to struggle for, to die/live for?' (p. 209). In their discussion of discernment and decision-making, the question of identity is regarded as central—how to become fully oneself, and the price that that might entail. In looking at an individual's sense of self from a developmental perspective, they focus on the level of self-reflection that is necessary to the Exercises.

Many of the points made in this book are already familiar to those who give the Exercises, whether women or men—particularly the insistence on adaptability and on the interpretation of the Exercises for a new generation, alongside the necessity of remaining faithful to Ignatius' intention of drawing people into their own unique experiences of God. However, at a time when so many people from diverse situations desire to make the Exercises, this contribution to the understanding of the text is still useful, particularly to those who find some of Ignatius' language and imagery a stumbling block.

By 'uncovering liberating possibilities for women', this book seeks to encourage women to begin again with Ignatius. Let us hope it succeeds.

Ruth Holgate

Herminio Rico, *John Paul II and the Legacy of* Dignitatis Humanae (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 2002). 0 87840 889 4, pp. xv + 273, $59.95 US.

The Second Vatican Council marked a significant change in how the Roman Catholic Church understood its relationship to the world at large: the ideal of a confessional, Catholic state was abandoned. It thus opened a new theological agenda, within which we can situate this fine new book by

the Portuguese Jesuit, Herminio Rico. Rico has studied for many years in the United States, and he has produced this book on the basis of a doctoral thesis directed by the noted ethician, David Hollenbach; he is now editor of *Brotéria*, the Portuguese Jesuit cultural review.

The title well reflects the book's concerns: John Paul II, and the Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom. The book describes Karol Wojtyla's contribution to the Council's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, and the way in which he applied the Council's teaching as Archbishop of Kraków. It then traces the theme of religious freedom through the extensive body of teaching that he has produced as Pope. It also shows how *Dignitatis humanae*, the Council's declaration on freedom, was a carefully thought-out document: it did not come about by chance, still less was it a haphazard committee compromise. The Council Fathers were fully aware that the Church, if it accepted *Dignitatis humanae*, would be rejecting some standard positions in canon law and even in ecclesiology itself. *Dignitatis humanae* may be one of the Council's shortest documents, but it is also—as Paul VI once publicly said—one of the most important.

The first chapter sets out three key themes: firstly, religious liberty as somehow superseding an account of Catholicism as a state religion; secondly, the Church's own need for freedom in the face of atheistic Communism; thirdly, the challenges posed by secularism, by relativism, and by the privatisation of religion. The United States Constitution exerted a powerful influence on the discussion, in particular the First Amendment—'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion'—and the separation of powers enshrined in the Constitution. This contrasted with the model offered by the Latin countries of Europe, notably Franco's Spain, where Roman Catholicism was the official religion of the state.

In Rico's book there is another major intellectual protagonist: the US American Jesuit theologian, John Courtney Murray (1904-1967). Called to the Council as an advisor to Cardinal Spellman, Archbishop of New York, he became one of the chief authors of *Dignitatis humanae*. His early death, less than two years after the Council, was a sad loss, but in no way diminishes the significance of his accomplishments before and during the Conciliar period.

Rico's many years of living in the United States have enabled him to use a study of Murray's work as a way of exploring the struggles about religious liberty among Roman Catholics of the period—a method which proves creative and fruitful. Murray's achievement helps us to understand very well the principles underlying the Council's teaching, as well as the ideas that were rejected or left in need of further development.

Rico isolates a 'French school' and an 'American school' among the commentators on the Declaration. He gives us a fine exposition of the immediately post-Conciliar debate—in which Murray could still participate—that is at once original enough to interest specialists, and sufficiently lucid and brilliant to capture the attention of a broader public. He brings out three approaches to the text. Firstly, there was a line of reasoning that was political and juridical in nature: people should be free in religion, immune from coercion by civil authority. This, for the 'American school' represented by Murray, is what is decisive in *Dignitatis humanae*—there are more metaphysical and theological considerations in the background, but these are secondary, and out of place in a document directed even to non-believers. Secondly, he describes the critique offered by the Dominican theologian, Philippe André-Vincent, who was demanding a more overtly theological approach, going beyond mere social and political considerations, and involving an account of freedom not in terms of immunity but rather of a living spontaneity transformed by Revelation. Thirdly and finally, there was the middle position offered by Pietro Pavan (1903-1994), later a Cardinal. This stressed the need to read the Declaration as an integrated whole, with the idea of the dignity of the human person as the key to the whole document. With this brilliant analysis, Rico moves beyond existing accounts that stress the conflicts on the Council floor itself, with Cardinals Ottaviani and Bea ranged against each other.

The debate between the so-called 'French' and 'American' approaches also helps us to situate the contribution of John Paul II. It is interesting to note that 'liberty' and 'truth' are central terms, both in *Dignitatis humanae* and in John Paul II's most important encyclicals. But whereas the Declaration refuses to play these two values off against each other, the Pope—especially in his moral encyclicals *Evangelium vitae* and *Veritatis splendor*—subordinates liberty to truth. Only in the light of truth can freedom avoid the decadences of Western society. The 'new evangelization' is a part of this programme: secularism is to be overcome; the Church's teaching authority in moral matters is to be strengthened; and civil law must harmonize with moral law so as to counteract a 'culture of death'. Rico shows that the Pope has distanced himself from the kind of argument put forward by Murray, with its stress on the Church searching for truth in and through dialogue with the world, and has begun to think much more along the lines of the 'French school'.

People who think this way may still argue strongly in favour of religious liberty and indeed consider it the primary human right (pp. 124-125). But this advocacy of religious freedom will be part of an approach to moral

theology that begins with biblical and theological language in order to ground objective and exceptionless moral norms, and to claim that even the objective moral order and the natural law are grounded in the Bible. If done in any other way, moral theology loses its counter-cultural character, and fits all too comfortably within the individualism and subjectivism of modern Western culture. The implications for the Church's role in society are clear—especially since the most significant factor is not *what* the Church actually says, but *how* it says it, *how* it presents itself in a pluralist, relativist and secularised society.

For Rico, Murray's approach remains more congenial. Defensiveness is fundamentally a temptation; the alternative can be summarised in Rico's epigraph, 'in freedom, through dialogue, seeking truth'. The Church should foster humane communication through a ministry of empowerment. Firstly, it should commit itself to work for the conditions that enable true mutual exchange and encounter. It should support institutions that foster public dialogue, and denounce—when necessary—prejudice, arbitrary discrimination, and tendencies towards totalitarianism. Secondly, it should be seeking all the time to make the truth available to people, through patient persuasion, and to create spaces in which people can confront this truth, freely and responsibly. Thirdly, it should live out of a strength rooted in hope—a strength that is not afraid of the truth's being rejected, that trusts in the power of the truth which it serves to win out in the long term, as well as in the force of the call within each person towards seeking the truth and entrusting themselves to it.

The Conciliar debates about truth, dialogue and liberty are still very much alive, and we do well to revisit past contributions such as *Dignitatis humanae* and *Gaudium et spes*. And this magnificent book will be a worthy guide.

Julio Luis Martínez SJ

Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). 0 19 820773 5, pp. xii + 348, £50.00.

When the Queen Mother was buried last year, the service included what sounded like a prayer for her soul: '. . . grant her peace; let light perpetual shine upon her; and in thy loving wisdom and almighty power work in her the good purpose of thy perfect will'. I was stunned. Nothing like this is to be found in the Church of England's official books; no other king or queen had been buried with prayers publicly prayed for their soul in Britain since

Mary I in 1558. Even now, English culture shows serious ambivalences on the point. A few years ago, a University sermon was given in Oxford by an Anglican priest commending prayer for the dead. One distinguished member of the congregation was annoyed, and afterwards upbraided the preacher: 'a few years ago letters to *The Times* would have been written about *this*'.

For Roman Catholic readers particularly, prayer for the dead may seem quite unproblematic; moreover, there seems to be a natural human instinct not to leave the dead behind. But the sixteenth-century Reformers really did want to leave the dead to themselves. How people in early modern England thought they could relate to the dead is the subject of Peter Marshall's insightful and luminously written *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England*. It is in the sixteenth century, during the Protestant Reformation, that the conflicts on the subject came to a head in England, and what happened then still reverberates in the English-speaking world today.

The late medieval and early modern Catholic world maintained the ancient belief in purgatory. Nothing marked by hatred for God or indifference to God could enter the eternal divine presence in heaven; but, for those still weighed down by their sins, there was purgatory, a state or place after death where one could prepare for the eternal life to come. Prayer for the dead—especially the Mass, in which Christians participated in Christ's one redeeming sacrifice on the cross—and good works such as fasting and charitable deeds could aid the dead in that preparation for paradise.

The Protestant Reformers denied the scriptural foundation of purgatory; Luther and his fellow Reformers excluded II Maccabees, which provided a proof text for purgatory, from the Biblical canon (12. 43-46). Perhaps more significantly, English Reformers decried what they called 'purgatory-pick-purse': the dead did not need masses; they could do without clerics enriched through mass-stipends, vestments, vessels, statues, windows, chapels and churches, or alms intended for the poor. Previously, rich and poor alike had made provision for such things, in the hope that those who came after would follow the often explicit request, '*ora pro nobis*—pray for us'—pray for the deceased souls of the benefactors. For the Reformers, by contrast, Christians were predestined to heaven or hell through no will or merit or charitable deed of their own. This central tenet of the Protestant Reformation drove the Reformers in their determination to destroy purgatory and to proscribe intercessory prayer for the dead (p.187). There was no purgatory, and there was nothing that one could do for the dead, once they were dead, except to emulate their virtues and

avoid their vices. The Reformers denied the value of charitable giving on behalf of the deceased (p. 56). Indeed, prayer and good works offered for the dead were proclaimed to be 'uncharitable'; implicitly, people said, it detracted from aid to the living (pp. 146-147).

Marshall carefully and fully describes how the Reformation of religious practices regarding the dead was long in coming (p. 127). It took decades after the Elizabethan Religious Settlement of 1559 for the English to give up prayer and benefactions on behalf of the dead, to stop ringing the death-knell or bells at the feasts of All Saints', to abolish the feast of All Souls, or to desist from erecting tombs or funerary monuments inscribed with '*ora pro nobis*' or 'pray for us'.

But at the same time, Marshall argues—in general convincingly—that what made this transition possible was the very malleability of Roman Catholic practices regarding the dead. Sermons on Protestant themes provided by the deceased could occupy the space of the 'month-mind' and of annual masses for the dead; bell-ringing to remind people to pray for the dead became a signal that someone had died; funeral doles of food and money continued as 'a significant status-maker' among Elizabethan Protestant elites before they died out in the seventeenth century (p. 168). Late Elizabethan funeral monuments, indeed, could still ask for God's mercy, though I think Marshall may be making too much of this fact: the formula 'pray for us'—which is something rather different from a prayer for *God*'s mercy—did almost completely cease to appear on tombs. But Marshall plausibly points out that the emphasis on 'remembering' the dead—especially their virtues—served 'almost a surrogate for those unpronounceable prayers' (p. 308). Perhaps something similar can be said of the brief formula recited in most parish churches on Remembrance Sunday today.

Still, the Reformers could not absorb or transform every element of traditional Catholic belief with ease, even if those elements were suspect among some Roman Catholics themselves. Belief in ghosts is an interesting case in point. For Catholics, spectres were often interpreted as restless souls begging—or demanding—prayers to ease them through purgatory and so come to eternal rest. For Protestants, they were the devil in disguise, attempting to terrify the faint-hearted into false—usually Catholic—belief. The popular resistance to the Protestant attack on ghosts 'suggests the ways in which emotional claims and cultural leverage exercised by dead ancestors could prove intractable to the dictates of Protestant orthodoxy', and it could even force Church of England prelates to muddy their theology (p. 234).

For Christianity, however, all this talk of 'the dead' has to be placed within a belief in eternal life—a belief that can be richly documented from every period of Christianity, and indeed from beyond Christianity. The cadaver-tombs of the Catholic Middle Ages, the magnificent funerary monuments of Elizabethan and Stuart Protestants, the memorials to those who perished in New York on 11 September 2001—all these may have something of the macabre about them, but they have an important religious significance. Christianity is a cult of the living, not of the dead. Dying is a part of life, and Christians look forward to a life in which they are even more 'alive' than they are now. As Cardinal Basil Hume put it in quintessentially Catholic terms, in a 1997 text reprinted at the time of his own death two years later, God 'waits for us to come home to Him. He receives us, His prodigal children, now contrite and humble, with an embrace. In that embrace we start to tell Him our story, and He begins that process of healing and preparation which we call Purgatory.' Peter Marshall tells us much about different religious practices in his persuasive *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England*. But the crucial question is whether the cult is really about the dead at all. For, in the light of the resurrection, the cult of purgatory is the cult of the living.

William Wizeman SJ

Herbert McCabe OP, *God Still Matters* (London: Continuum, 2002). 0 8264 6191 3, pp. 264, £16.99.

This book has an attraction peculiar to works—the Bible included—which unashamedly want to change your life and mine. It is trying to speak directly of what is ultimate, and to address what really matters. In one way, therefore, it converges with deservedly popular spiritual works such as Scott Peck's *The Road Less Travelled*, Gerard Hughes' *God of Surprises* and Thomas Moore's *Care of the Soul*. However, *God Still Matters* is different from these in three significant ways. Firstly, it is (like its precursor, *God Matters*) a collection of essays, and therefore it is inevitably diffuse. Secondly, it is a posthumous work. Thirdly, the author understands the world from a Thomistic perspective—and, as Alasdair McIntyre's foreword says succinctly, 'It is not easy to be a Thomist'. Thomas may be a great philosopher and theologian, but he is complex and not easily accessible. Moreover he comes from a medieval world, albeit resplendent with its own theological complexities, but somehow needing translation in order to

address the complexities of our world. If we use its idiom slavishly or defensively, we become dogmatic, overidealistic or glib.

McCabe, however, was a brilliant interpreter and a brilliant communicator. He had the gift of being able to carry Thomas into our times. He avoided the temptation to use Thomas as a disciplinarian who might restore order to the anarchies of the post-modern spiritual classroom. Like any good teacher or spiritual director, McCabe knew that the very anarchy of the spirit is often, paradoxically, its life—a life to be approached respectfully, through the trusting and shaping of half-formed desires.

A good example is found in the collection's first article, called simply, 'God'. Here McCabe speaks about God as love. Now love, of course, is a craving of every heart, but what can remain to be said about it? McCabe manages to be immediately interesting and specific: God is love, but love understood in a quite particular sense: as a movement towards equality. 'In a sense to love is just to see the equality of another. . . . Christianity, among other things, is the movement of mankind away from hierarchy and in the direction of love.' (pp. 6-7) A thought, this, with much spiritual 'juice'. Readers will inevitably question themselves: 'how much of my "loving" of others would pass muster under this definition?' But McCabe sees the problem with his own idea: how, on this account, can *God* love? For surely God cannot recognise another as an equal. The answer evokes the need for the Trinity, whose three persons are *co-equal*:

> God cannot, of course, love us as creatures, but 'in Christ' we are taken up into the exchange of love between the Father and the incarnate and human Son, we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we become part of the divine life. (p. 7)

This problem solved, other theological categories can fall into place. Sin is our settling for 'simple creaturehood' when, in Christ, we are destined for divinity (p. 7); grace is our liberation from a servant-master relationship with God, so that we can participate in the divine life itself (p. 9). Creation is 'not an interference with things', but 'the giving of a world in which things and ourselves can be' (p. 11).

McCabe offers Thomistic teaching in a style that combines spiritual passion, systematic rigour, and the directness of a good television report. It is no surprise to hear McIntyre say that 'McCabe's best writing took the form of homilies, essays and lectures' (p. ix).

In this first section of the book, entitled 'God' like the first of its chapters, perhaps the most attractive of the remaining pieces is 'The Trinity and Prayer'. McCabe does not directly tackle the more tricky

questions relating to intercessory prayer as such: why we need it, given that God knows everything; whether it works, given that it often seems to be ignored by God; whether it is not presumptuous, given that God already has a will about the matter in question. Instead he asks what prayer in general is. 'If we ask what it is, maybe we shall find we know how to do it.' (p. 55) In pursuing this 'what', McCabe is never less than immensely conversational, confident, and as cajoling as prayer itself. He contrasts metaphorical language about God with its literal counterpart, before concluding that God is a mystery. But this does not mean that God is remote. We cannot 'literally approach God, or get nearer to God for God is already nearer to us than we are to ourselves' (p. 59). This God is also in a perpetual position of answering prayer, in so far as that prayer is itself part of Christ's prayer on the cross: '[to pray] is to ask for what we want and ask in the name of Christ so that our asking is one with his asking, his prayer of the Cross' (p. 63). This argument does not directly address the standard problems raised regarding intercessory prayer, but it does set them in a new and creative context. Whether or not it is answered, prayer always has a meaning in its making, since the cry becomes incorporated into the trinitarian life:

> So the first thing to say about our prayer, Christian Prayer, the prayer of the Church, is that it is just the life of God, the life of the trinity lived out in us. (p. 62)

The remaining three sections of the book are entitled 'Incarnation and the Sacraments', 'People and Morals', and 'Sermons'. Brian Davies has done an excellent job as editor in thus grouping the pieces, and the titles fulfil their promise, even if several of the pieces might easily have been located in different sections. This observation about classification points to something more significant. The texts are united by a certain interest in *language*: specifically, the question of how language about God (or to God), or about the Incarnation, or sacraments, or morals, is possible at all, and the issue of what this language might bring about as it gives Christian faith a voice within a demandingly unfolding world. McCabe is not just arguing with his fellow philosophers of various stripes, but also trying through his arguments to coax—in line with his Dominican heritage—both his own heart and those of his hearers away from alienation and towards Christ. Though some of his concerns might carry the whiff of an era now more remembered than encountered, that is, in the end, by the by. For the underlying questions are perennial, and they are discussed here in an unfailingly engaging way.

McCabe is no detached philosopher. He constantly retrains the philosophical questions in your direction and mine, no matter how sophisticated we are. What is new in this—or long-forgotten, and so as good as new—is McCabe's wholly unapologetic intent to make Christ and the things of Christ attractive for his hearer, for his hearer's sake, and in his hearer's terms. For these concerns Herbert McCabe was both well known and deeply loved. Earnestly, persistently, charmingly, he was trying to change our lives.

John Martis SJ

William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (London: John Knox Press, 2002). 0 664 22502 0, pp. xiv + 274, £15.99.

Many readers of *The Way* make use of the Psalms. Some are accustomed to pray some form of the breviary, which sets out all 150 of these ancient hymns (with the less edifying passages carefully, and perhaps unwisely, excised). Others find in the Psalms almost any mood in the thirsty human search for God. Those who have dipped their toe into the chilly waters of Old Testament studies may well have discovered scholars talking in terms of the form-critical classification of Psalms into individual and communal, lament and thanksgiving, and so on. But such writing is fundamentally unsatisfying as a lead into these mysterious and rather remote poems. Surely there is more to the Psalms than this? For form criticism brings on indigestion, and indigestion is bad for prayer. As Brown dryly points out in this book, 'statistical studies and the identification of generic components do not, at the end of the day, foster either reverence or righteousness—the Psalter's clear and stated aims' (p. 15). Readers may, at times, have wondered if it is possible to understand what is going on in the Psalms without a knowledge of Hebrew. They may (or may not) be reassured to learn that a knowledge of the language of the Psalms only serves to show us how little of them we can in fact understand, despite the deceptive smoothness of most vernacular translations.

Now here is a book for such readers. It is far from easy reading, and it is aimed more at specialists in the field than at the 'ordinary reader'; there is some moderately heavy literary theory to cope with, and the Introduction is particularly demanding. But if you struggle over this first hurdle, you will find great riches opening up before you.

The author, a distinguished Old Testament scholar, does an excellent job of re-reading the images in which the Psalms abound. He points out

how odd it is that Judaism, so fierce in its rejection of icons of God, has so many metaphors for divinity, especially in the treasure-chest that is the Psalter. In many cases Brown offers a new translation of a Psalm, and prints (in Roman rather than in Hebrew type, the reader may be relieved to learn) the Hebrew roots that underlie the text. His translations I found wholly illuminating, so that Psalms I thought I knew quite well suddenly offered an astonishing wealth of meaning.

He also has some very shrewd observations to make on the shape of the Book of Psalms as a whole, the different and at times conflicting editorial 'frames' that the hymns have been given by those who collected them. I found chapter 6, on the importance of animals in the theology of the Psalms (notably but not wholly as metaphors for the dangers posed by 'the wicked'), especially pleasing. Brown's reading of the astonishingly varied metaphors in the Book of Psalms is thorough, interesting and attractive, and there are some appropriate challenges for modern readers; it is not mere antiquarian interest that drives this book. We look to the Psalms to speak to us of (among other things) the nature of God; and chapter 7 on the 'incomparability of the divine', a discussion of 'God's anatomy in the Psalms', is very good, as is chapter 8 on inanimate metaphors for God, such as light, beauty, and various images of protection. A concluding piece, 'In Defense of Iconic Reflection', is a reading of Psalm 139 which will give pleasure to many.

Let me end with a few sentences from Brown's postscript, to give readers a feel for what the book does, and to whet their appetite for more:

> Word and image coalesce in Psalms. Sound and sight are set on an equal footing. Far from dogmatic or abstract, the language of the Psalter is palpably incarnational. It breathes with pain and glory, and thereby remains remarkably alive, resurrected for every generation of readers. (p. 214)

So buy and read this book, if you are prepared for a journey that will be far from easy.

Nicholas King SJ

Daniel G. Groody, *Border of Death, Valley of Life* (Lanham, Md: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002). 0 7425 2241 5, pp. xvi + 192, £18.95 ($24.95 US).

Daniel G. Groody CSC, an assistant professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame, has worked closely during the past fifteen years with Mexican immigrants living in the United States, especially along the US-

Mexican border. His experience has pushed him to examine more closely how the immigrants typically relate to God, and to study the values emerging from those relationships. This thoughtful and moving book, written with both scholarly care and pastoral commitment, documents the suffering, hope and spirituality of poor Mexican immigrants in the United States. You will not need to be a specialist to learn much from it: it evokes the humanity and humility of honest people as they search for better, more dignified lives.

To develop his analysis and discussion of Mexican spirituality and conversion, Groody focuses particularly on the work of the Valley Missionary Program, a Roman Catholic organization located in the Coachella Valley, Southern California. The Program addresses the personal struggles and spiritual aspirations of Mexican immigrants and others who come to it for guidance. Groody examines the Program itself and the spiritual-cultural setting of the immigrants. He looks at how the immigrants move through a four-day retreat called the Missionary Encounter, before finally reflecting on the theological principles implicit in the retreat and in their different personal responses.

The retreat changes the lives of all, leaders and participants alike. It provides immigrants with a space in which to take time from their busy lives and encounter God. Sixty people work on the retreat as team members; sixty are there as participants.

Groody's direct experience of the reality he describes, and his academic gifts, lend a rare authority to his writing. At every point you can feel his admiration, respect and love for these vulnerable people—people who have suffered violations of mind and body before, during and after their journeys north, and yet triumph over hardships most of us cannot imagine. As Virgilio Elizondo eloquently and correctly notes in the foreword, Groody's is not a '. . . hollow idealism, but rather a genuine "pathos" for the people'.

Groody points out the irony in the so-called 'illegal status' of a great number—calculated by some to be close to 5 million—of Mexican immigrants in the US. For the truth is that the US both wants and needs this population in order to support the economy. The book made me examine the limits of my own understanding and appreciation for how these poor immigrants live—and indeed die. Both the media and public opinion, Groody rightly points out, are partial in their treatment of different immigrant groups. Between 1961 and 1989, eighty people were killed trying to cross the Berlin Wall into West Germany, and were considered heroes in the United States. By contrast, over 2,000 poor Mexicans have died between 1995 and 2002 while fleeing from poverty,

political strife, and ongoing violence; and yet these refugees are often seen as insignificant, even as criminals. Any sensitive reader will be jolted by such comparisons, and challenged to take responsibility for analyzing and criticizing the ways in which convention encourages us to think.

Groody did not simply read reports of what happens along the US-Mexican border to poor immigrants. Instead he personally met and spoke with immigration officials, with paid smugglers, and especially with immigrants, whether in detention facilities or elsewhere. He not only documents his findings in the way proper to a research report, but also weaves the voices of the immigrants into all of the chapters in the book. We hear and feel the fear, loneliness, shame and hope of the immigrants. We are humbled by their humility and by their strength.

Many who come in contact with poor immigrants have one-dimensional perceptions of them, both positive and negative. Either immigrants are the hard workers who do jobs that no one else is willing to do, or else they have come to take away our own livelihoods, and might even be criminals. Groody's book moves us beyond these stereotypes. It gracefully portrays the depth and humanity to be found in Mexican immigrants. This invisible population comes provocatively alive for us. We learn much too about a fine and creative retreat programme, and are left hoping that it can spread to wherever people have suffered from similar hardship, isolation and fear.

Anna Marie Gallagher

Gordon Lynch, *After Religion: 'Generation X' and the Search for Meaning* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2002). 0 232 52429 7, pp. xii + 132, £10.95.

Gordon Lynch concedes that his concerns in *After Religion* are intensely personal. A lecturer in Practical Theology at the University of Birmingham, he describes how, having moved away from a committed Evangelical Christian faith, he has been left with the question of how to make sense of his life without a clear set of religious beliefs. This deeply personal aspect of *After Religion* accounts for its strength, as Lynch combines autobiography with an intelligent use of sociological study as well as with theological reflection. He plausibly argues that his own experience may in some way be representative of that of many others, as people in the Western world are increasingly engaged in a personal search for meaning

which takes place beyond organized religion. Lynch sets out to understand this contemporary search for meaning, and what might help in the search.

To help him in this task, Lynch uses the concept of 'Generation X', an idea which originated in the work of the novelist Douglas Coupland (author of *Generation X* and *Life after God*). A growing academic literature has seized upon this concept in an attempt to describe the common traits, experiences and attitudes of a new generation of young people. Lynch, however, is critical of attempts to define 'Generation X' sharply as a particular generational group, born between 1961 and 1981. Attempts to find the common character traits of such a group lead easily to stereotyping and over-generalisation, as for example the perception that the band REM are important spokespersons for the whole generation. Instead, Lynch sees 'Generation X' as a particular attitude or way of seeing things that emerges in 'late' or 'post-' modern culture. The 'Generation X' view of the world is 'one in which there is a profound sense both of the need for meaning and of the difficulty of finding ultimate meaning within contemporary culture'. Scepticism about the received truths of churches, political parties, or commercial organizations, and disappointment or failure in establishing meaning, can lead to an ironic approach to life. But, for 'Generation X', there remains a deep commitment to the pursuit of personal meaning.

Lynch goes on to trace the forms that the 'Generation X' search for meaning is taking. He discusses the emergence of the 'post-evangelical' and the growth of 'alternative worship' as manifestations of a 'Generation X' desire for personal authenticity and distrust of authority. He examines the idea that popular culture functions as a set of 'religious texts' that help people make sense of life. Lynch looks in particular at the film *The Matrix*, which contains recognisable religious images and theological themes. In an original and well-researched chapter, Lynch also explores the idea that club culture, with its blend of repetitive music and recreational drug use, might constitute a new form of 'religion' or 'spirituality'. Lynch describes how clubbers variously report 'deeper connection' with themselves, an ability to express a non-verbal aspect of themselves, and an experience of freer and more intimate relationships with others. However, he points out that identifying these aspects of popular culture as 'religious' is problematic, since they are rarely interpreted by participants in this way.

Reflecting theologically on 'Generation X', Lynch draws again on the novels of Coupland to suggest threads of a 'Generation X' spirituality. Coupland describes 'fragmentary experiences of meaning' which are often physical in character and perhaps reflect the theological notion of 'grace'. Glimpses of hope and meaning may come through a spontaneous hug from a group of children with learning disabilities, or seeing a dust storm caught

in rain and sunshine, or the sensation of floating in an ice-cold mountain pool. Here Lynch makes an important distinction between the existentialist idea that in a meaningless world we are left to create our own meaning, and Coupland's picture of a world in which meaning is 'given' to us in ways that are beyond our control. Coupland's fiction therefore 'offers the possibility that we may discover some meaning beyond ourselves, even if our glimpses of it are only partial and fleeting'. Finally, Lynch suggests that Paul Tillich's concept of God as 'the ground of our being', which can break into our awareness at times to give us a sense of greater meaning and value in life, may offer a way in which the notion of 'God' can have significance for the 'Generation X' search for meaning.

While focusing on a search for meaning outside the institutional church, Lynch does not altogether dismiss institutional Christianity. He does, however, warn that the 'Generation X' search for meaning will not be helped by institutions that seek to impose a predetermined set of religious ideas and attitudes, however innovative the manner in which these ideas are communicated. Rather, 'those with a "Generation X" view of life are more likely to be drawn to groups and situations in which diverse, personal experience is recognised and valued, and in which they have some opportunity to gain an experience of a reality greater than their individual lives'. A highly readable book of exceptional clarity, *After Religion* represents a valuable contribution to sociological and theological reflection on religion and spirituality in contemporary society.

Nicholas Austin SJ

Edward Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowledge and Selfhood* (New York: Crossroad, 2002). 0 8245 1943 4, pp. xii + 212, £29.99.

'What is the "experience" that is called "mystical", and what makes this experience different from "ordinary experience"?' (p. 1) With this question Edward Howells begins this immensely valuable, impressive study, and he goes on to explore the answers given by John of the Cross and Teresa of Jesus, the two great Carmelite figures of sixteenth-century Spain. Both wrote of states of knowledge which are, in their language, purely 'spiritual' or 'supernatural'. Unlike ordinary knowledge, this knowledge does not come from what we know of the outside world through the senses. Instead it is 'interior'; it comes through our own sense of identity: spiritual growth involves a deepening and transformation within the self. The rupture that

occurs as 'mystical knowing' begins by breaking through our ordinary knowing, and leads into a state best understood in terms of the central Christian dogmas: 'The soul enters the inner life of the Trinity and is formed habitually within the Father-Son relation', thus becoming 'divine' (p. 119). The individual soul attains a consciousness like Christ's: at once divine and human. Then this immediate union in the 'interior' part of the soul overflows, so to speak, enabling the person to act in perfect conformity with God's will. In this final state, 'mystical knowing' and 'ordinary knowing' are integrated.

Howells' study is essentially an exposition of John and Teresa. His own voice obtrudes relatively little, although the learning and the power of synthesis informing his account are formidable. The main text is concise; the endnotes and appendices may well indeed be longer, and they provide abundant resources for readers wanting to explore issues further. It is a demanding book, with hardly a word wasted—Howells avoids admiring piety, and pays his authors the compliment of taking them with the seriousness they deserve. Along the way you will find many good things: critically cogent presentations of the modern secondary literature in the major European languages; admirable discussions of modern feminist writers on Teresa (Alison Weber, Gillian Ahlgren); nuanced accounts, both historical and theoretical, of the relationship between Teresa and John; illuminating paragraphs on the precise senses in which Teresa and John do and do not believe that we experience God; sound historical material; a clear account of how Teresa's vision developed. For anyone reading the great Carmelites in an academic setting, this book is going to be indispensable, because, despite its brevity, it makes so much good scholarship available and organizes it so well. And many outside academe will find that Howells' text richly repays the effort it requires.

Howells presents John and Teresa in their own terms theologically: 'the mystical is . . . a change from our natural relation to God to a wholly graced, supernatural relation' (p. 1). As Howells is well aware, a problem arises with such talk. How can these two relations co-exist in the one person? Does the new life, so understood, make any difference to the ordinary life we lead? If we want to say that God in some sense becomes present to us only at a certain stage of the spiritual life, then what are we saying about the claim that God does not change, or about the divine presence in our lives prior to our reaching that stage? You can deal with these questions by saying that the narratives of change and transformation are not accounts of what *really* happens under God (because our identity under God is secure and permanent), but rather accounts of what it *feels like* as we appropriate that permanent identity. If grace builds on nature—

an axiom which John at one point explicitly rejects (*Ascent* 1.6.4, Howells, pp. 20-21)—then the dualism in John's presentation has to be attenuated. Howells seems to reject the 'explanation of the division as merely psychological' primarily because it is not how John and Teresa present the matter:

> . . . unless there were *something* of an ontological separation between the two parts of the soul, 'mystical theology' would lose the unique status that Teresa and John fully intend to give it. (p. 3)

However, the question, 'what did Teresa and John consciously intend regarding mystical transformation?' is not the only one we need to ask. There is also the question: 'what can truly be said regarding mystical transformation?', a point on which the accounts given by John and Teresa may be incomplete. Howells does not directly face this question about the truth and coherence of his authors' vision, though he implies that the account of God as the self's 'transcendent ground' found in a Thomist like Lonergan fails to do justice to 'the dislocating effect that God has on the self' (p. 149, n. 18). The serene certainties of creation theology seem too glib, too gentle, when placed against the searing, paschal process that is God's transformation of the self. And yet any attempt—however venerable or traditional—to replace that theology quickly becomes caught in contradictions; hence the permanent tendency, or temptation, tacitly to read John in Thomist terms.

Perhaps a way out of the impasse lies in recognising the difference between the distinctive literary genres developed by Teresa and John on the one hand, and what can be said in systematic theological language on the other. Teresa and John do not offer directly a 'theological anthropology', but rather narrate a process. Neither of them commit themselves to any one particular theology: the power of Teresa's work depends often on how her chatter ranges over conflicting theologies simultaneously, and John wrote his dry scholastic prose—something which dry theological commentators too often forget—as commentaries on his great lyric poetry. However true it is that God's presence to us is unchanging, we humans only appreciate that constancy of God through the *in*constancies of time, through continual processes of death and rebirth. And if we try to fix the reality in a formula, we falsify it—just as we miss something in Jesus' parables if we reduce them to simple illustrations of moral principles. Howells is surely right to note a discrepancy between the calmness of a coherent creation theology and the tempestuous experiences John and Teresa evoke. But we do not respond to the

Carmelite witness by losing confidence in what is—so far as theologies go—a perfectly good theology. We respond by entering the Dark Night, 'fired into love with yearnings'; we allow ourselves to be purged by God's radical otherness; and so we become *amada en el amado transformada*—'the lover transformed into the beloved'.

Philip Endean SJ

John D. Green, *'A Strange Tongue': Tradition, Language and the Appropriation of Mystical Experience in Late Fourteenth-Century England and Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Leuven: Peeters, 2002). 90 429 1236 7, pp. viii + 228, £19.95.

Paul Mommaers, *The Riddle of Christian Mystical Experience: The Role of the Humanity of Jesus* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003). 90 429 1232 4, pp. 292, €18.00.

Here we have two rich, baggy books—both published by the Leuven firm, Peeters; both drawing on a wide range of classic spiritual texts; both seriously addressing, if not quite solving, central issues in the theory of Christian spirituality.

After a working life in industry, John Green returned to study, focusing explicitly on his lifetime's preoccupation with 'the process of religious conviction', and in particular with the influence of Augustine on subsequent Western tradition (p. vi). *'A Strange Tongue'* is a descendant of his doctoral thesis at the University of Melbourne, and it explores the theme of discernment in five major authors: three English mystics (Julian of Norwich, the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Walter Hilton); and two important figures from sixteenth-century Spain (Ignatius Loyola and John of the Cross). There are also enthusiastic excursions into Dante, Chaucer and Cervantes. Augustine's conversion, as he recounts it in the *Confessions*, was occasioned by his hearing a child chanting '*tolle, lege*—take, read', and by his then opening the page of the Bible at Romans 13.13-14:

> . . . not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

From there all shadows of doubt dispersed; Augustine's mind was flooded with something new. Any style of Christianity influenced by Augustine

thus has to face the question of discernment: how this new life is to be recognised, and in particular how true grace is to be distinguished from counterfeits (p. 194).

Green's conclusion is rather conventional. Ignatius is concerned with an 'election . . . in all its emotional, sensory and intellectual drama'; John, by contrast, 'did not present a choice. He presented a way; a way which was every bit as hard and difficult . . . but which offered not a vista of additional elections and hardships in defence of the Kingdom, but a fulfilment of surpassing joy in the heart of the Kingdom.' (p. 200) We are close to the familiar distinction between affirmative and negative ways, kataphatic and apophatic spiritualities. With the medieval figures, the result is equally predictable: Julian is an affirmative figure; *The Cloud* an apophatic text; and Hilton a kind of compromise. Green remains content with these categories, and does not raise questions either about their coherence or their mutual relationship.

Green's writing is committed and learned, and his book may certainly fulfil the aim stated in the blurb: to help us 'wonder about the question posed within our own consciousness, hitherto unheard or dismissed as simply "strange"'. But there is also a sense of the book not quite managing to arrive. The preface recalls its origin as a study of Augustine's influence, but also suggests that the framework imposed by such an approach was ultimately too constricting. Although Augustine's influence was ubiquitous, the approach through Augustine 'did not explain the mystics "turning" as they experienced the divine presence in their lives', and obscured 'the personal contribution of individual mystics' (p. vi). The change in strategy came too late for Green to develop a credible alternative to Augustine as the unifying theme, and the book comes over as a collection of essays rather than a coherent study.

The Riddle of Christian Mystical Experience contains what must be an expanded version of Paul Mommaers' D'Arcy lectures, given from Campion Hall in the University of Oxford in 1998. As the subtitle indicates, Mommaers—an expert on Ruusbroec who has been heavily involved with the editing of his texts—addresses the question of how 'the humanity of Jesus' can play a central role in mystical experience. The issue is problematic because so often mystical experience is articulated in terms which, at least at first sight, seem to exclude the bodily, the material and the relational. Moreover, now that a dialogue of experience seems an attractive strategy in inter-faith relations, Christianity's stress on the fleshly Jesus seems embarrassing.

Though Mommaers begins with a systematic question, his mind seems more that of the cataloguer or the textual editor. The highpoints of the

book come in masterly analyses of Flemish figures: Ruusbroec (who takes up three of the seven chapters), Hadewijch, and a later minor figure, Maria Petyt (1623-1677). Mommaers is aware of 'a vertical view of the divine that seems to be ingrained in human consciousness' (p. 263), a view that can easily trap Christian thinkers into 'the fallacy of ecstasy', into patterns of spiritual thought much preoccupied with ladders up to heaven and more or less untouched by the idea of incarnation. In different ways he finds that Teresa, Bernard, Bonaventure and Richard of St Victor are bedevilled by this problem, while Julian, a figure 'for whom Christocentrism and theocentrism go together as a matter of course' (p. 43), is as such not much help.

One element in the solution that Mommaers finds in the Flemish mystics is the placing of mystical 'imagelessness' not in some other-worldly state understood in terms of a journey's end, but rather in Christ's coming to shape our *whole* identity, and therefore becoming all-pervasive in consciousness, precisely not an image to be looked at. This version of mystical union in no way excludes, and even demands, right action: these high contemplatives become, as it were, 'God's humanity' (p. 260). To borrow the words of Maria Petyt:

> When I speak, or do something, it is the Spirit of Christ who does it through me . . . union with Christ proves so strong that the soul does not remember herself anymore. . . . In this kind of union I seldom lose the full use of my senses and limbs, nor does it carry me along into rapture, but the soul remains free and able to do everything. (p. 104)

Hadewijch and Ruusbroec both deploy rich linguistic strategies within medieval Dutch, and fine poetic imaginations, to articulate the full Christian vision. Ruusbroec, for instance, can take Luke's story of Zaccheus coming down the tree as indicating that those climbing up to see Jesus must yet descend in order fully to meet him, to share in the divine self-emptying. So Ruusbroec's Christ says:

> 'Go down quickly, for high freedom of spirit cannot keep on standing except in lowly obedience of mind. For you must know me and love me as God and human: highness above all, and brought low below all.' (p. 261)

For her part, Hadewijch is able to make telling paradoxical use of two similar Dutch words: *ghebruken*—'to enjoy'; and *ghebreken*—'to fail'.

Whether Mommaers offers a solution to 'the riddle' is questionable. Indeed, 'solution' may be the wrong word: we can never understand *why* God should be as Christianity proclaims, and indeed *why* a rational, self-

sufficient God should bother with creation at all. The unanswerable question here lies at the heart of the problems of all Christian theology; Ruusbroec and Hadewijch may be presenting intricate poetic descriptions of the reality rather than explanations of it.

But nevertheless there remains an interesting line to be explored further: what might happen if systematic theology were to appropriate the Flemish mystical contribution so richly presented in this book? If Christ ceases to be external to us, then this has serious and salutary implications for most accounts of Christian salvation, which speak of some kind of transaction occurring on Calvary, and hence 'externally'. Much, too, might be said of the problem which the Chalcedonian definition leaves unsolved: how the divinity and the humanity of Christ interrelate, both historically and speculatively. Some creative work has been done in recent years by systematic theologians—Mark McIntosh and Iain Matthew, for example—who have tried to use the spiritual tradition as a fruitful source for the renewal of speculative theology. Let us hope that this fine work by Paul Mommaers can give that movement a powerful stimulus.

Philip Endean SJ

José García de Castro Valdés, *El Dios emergente: sobre la 'consolación sin causa'* (Bilbao: Mensajero, 2001). 84 271 2422 8, pp. 359, €19.35.

Ignasi Salvat, *Servir en misión universal* (Bilbao: Mensajero, 2002). 84 271 2446 5, pp. 300, €17.00.

Dominique Bertrand, *La política de San Ignacio de Loyola: El análisis social*, translated by Francisco Goitia (Bilbao: Mensajero, 2003). 84 271 2504 6, pp. 701, €37.00.

Readers of Ignatius can easily be fascinated by his teaching on a consolation that comes from God alone, 'without preceding cause', a consolation that cannot deceive (Exx 330, 336). Amid the uncertainties of our experience, it appears to offer us a fixed point of assurance. Since Karl Rahner's essay on Ignatian discernment in the 1950s, a number of detailed studies have been written on the topic, and now José García de Castro, a young Jesuit teaching in Madrid, has taken the discussion forward in his fine new study of 'the emerging God'.

Ignatius' text is brief and cryptic. It would seem to have connections with the first of the 'times' of Election—an equally problematic notion.

There are two famous passages in his writings which may or may not exemplify this special sort of consolation: Ignatius' giving up vegetarianism in response to a vision of meat (*Reminiscences*, n.27); and his description of an irresistible movement of the Spirit in the 1535 letter to a sister called Rejadell. Beyond those texts, we have no primary evidence regarding Ignatius' thought on this subject. There are then problems about just what is meant by 'without cause', given that *any* human action and cognition is situated within multiple chains of cause and effect, and given that Christianity is supposed to involve serious engagement with the world in discipleship of a God who is incarnate. Finally, there are issues about the kind of certainty at stake here, and about the influence of the unconscious. Different positions on these broader issues lead to different views on how frequent such a consolation might be.

García de Castro is an able, competent guide through the complex literature. In the first part of his book he analyzes the text, arguing that the 'causelessness' must be understood strictly in the terms Ignatius specifies: it is not that there is some miraculous intervention, but rather that there is no connection between the consolation itself and the person's mental state immediately before (for example, whatever they might have been doing in Second Week contemplation). The rule about 'consolation without preceding cause' is close to the account of consolation *simpliciter*, earlier in the Rules, in terms of 'being inflamed with the love of God' and thereby, in the same motion, loving creatures rightly (Exx 316).

As interpretation of what Ignatius himself thought, this account seems cogent, and to converge with what some other authors have put forward. In the second part of the book, García de Castro offers a theological interpretation of this kind of experience in terms of a divine call towards simplicity. I am not convinced, however, that this account, fine though it is as far as it goes, fully answers the sceptical question as to how we *know* that a particular experience really is of God. This question becomes particularly urgent if we take seriously the hints in the Rejadell letter that 'consolation without preceding cause' can lead to particular choices, choices that could all too easily turn out later to have been mistaken. My suspicion is that both Ignatius—whose texts on the matter seem to me to point in different directions—and most of his commentators are mistakenly seeking to locate the assurance of faith in one particular experience. Seductive though that dream might be, it is an illusion. God in Christ gives us a promise, fundamentally about what will be, not about what is. Our ideas of God and of ourselves under God may be permanently prone to error and subversion, but the resurrection mediates to us a promise that it is worth struggling to *seek* truth, and that God *will* ultimately bring things right. But in this life,

absolute certainty regarding any experience purporting to be of God is unavailable. Nor does the assurance of Christian faith, rightly understood, require it.

García de Castro's study is part of a remarkably useful series produced in Spain in affiliation with the Jesuit spirituality journal, *Manresa*. Two other new books in the series are worth a brief mention, even though they are both re-issues. Ignasi Salvat's important study of mission in the Jesuit charism was first published in the 1970s; for this edition, it has been extended considerably to take in contemporary developments. Meanwhile Dominique Bertrand's monumental study of Ignatius' correspondence, offering a social analysis of the early Jesuits, has now been translated into Spanish by Francisco Goitia, a Mexican Jesuit. Betrand's French is not easily accessible to foreigners, and this Spanish version may help make his important material more widely available even in the English-speaking world.

Philip Endean SJ