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Robert Doud was a Roman Catholic priest who subsequently left the priesthood and married the woman he had come to love. He experienced this decision as God offering him freedom in a path of self-determination. Here he takes a philosophical look at how experiences such as this can be understood while retaining a meaningful notion of commitment.

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FOR AUTHORS

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.

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Thanks to Peter Brook SJ for illustrations. The scripture quotations herein are generally from the New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

ABBREVIATIONS

Autobiography	'Reminiscences (Autobiography)', in *Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)
Constitutions	in *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
Diary	'The Spiritual Diary', in *Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)
Dir	*On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*, translated and edited by Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
Exx	*The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, translated by George E. Ganss (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992)
Jesuit Life and Mission Today	*Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 31st – 35th General Congregations of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009)
MHSJ	Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, 157 volumes (Madrid and Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1898–)

FOREWORD

ARISTOTLE BELIEVED that virtue was to be found at the midpoint between two extremes, one representing excess and the other deficit. He thus opposed extreme asceticism as much as self-indulgence. This is an idea that has not always found favour in the Christian Churches, which have sometimes seemed to come down heavily on the side of fasting, harsh discipline and other forms of self-denial. Yet much modern psychology finds itself in basic agreement with Aristotle, and his outlook also underpins many contemporary patterns of spirituality. In different forms, it is one that is reflected in most of the contributions to be found in this issue of *The Way*.

This is perhaps clearest in the article by Gerald O'Mahony, reprinted from the online journal of the British Jesuits, *Thinking Faith*. He draws on personal experience to encourage his readers to work at maintaining a balance in their own inner worlds. When Ignatius of Loyola was composing guidelines for those coming to the end of his Spiritual Exercises, to help them maintain healthy approaches in their ongoing spiritual journeys, one of the topics with which he concerned himself was eating. Long before our modern preoccupation with counting calories and balanced diets, he advocated a path that was neither gluttony nor total abstention from the pleasures of the dinner-table. Gemma Simmonds and Elizabeth Delbridge offer complementary views of these guidelines.

Frequently today science and religion are presented as opposite poles in terms of knowledge, particularly by those who want to argue that only the former is valid. Paul Younger is an engineer and research scientist who has published more than 400 papers in his field. He argues powerfully that, far from being antagonistic to each other, scientific method and religious faith are both necessary if we are truly to know the world as it is. In a very different vein, Ruth Agnes Evans describes the way in which her father came to faith by a combination of rigorous enquiry into the Gospels and an empathetic appreciation of the stories that they tell. A similar combination can be found in Caroline Worsfold's article, describing how she has helped school chaplains to a deeper encounter with the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John: 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.'

Robert Doud, a regular contributor to this journal, arrives at an idea of balance in exploring the concept of commitment. How can the intention

of making long-term, even permanent, commitments to other people and to God be reconciled with the transitory nature of human existence and with our call to respond to God in the unfolding circumstances of our lives? Doud offers a philosophical perspective on this question, albeit one deeply rooted in his own life experience. This presentation can be usefully read alongside Marcel Uwineza's thinking on the value of the human person, as exemplified in the theology of Karl Rahner.

The challenge of finding a proper balance in fashioning a virtuous life is not restricted to individuals. The way each of us chooses to live has profound social and political implications. One of these, of great concern at present, is how creation as a whole is to be cared for. Pope Francis wrote of this extensively in his 2015 encyclical *Laudato si'*, and Nancy Enright finds an anticipation of these concerns in the Middle Earth fiction of J. R. R. Tolkien. Eric Jensen returns our attention to the Spiritual Exercises, and the parable of a king whose call to arms is reinterpreted as one to transform the world.

Aristotle's thought sprang from close observation of the natural world. His philosophical system was rooted in what we would today call the life sciences. There, points of balance are rarely static, but undergo constant readjustment as the world around them changes. The same is certainly true for those who aim to live a virtuous life. Even if the goal is to attain some midpoint between extremes, this will involve endless adaptation. As John Henry Newman said in his 1845 *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 'To live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often'.[1] Taken together the essays in this issue present a variety of ways in which a healthy balance in life may be sought and, at least at times, even if fleetingly, attained.

Paul Nicholson SJ
Editor

[1] John Henry Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London: James Toovey, 1845), 39.

'WAY BEYOND ALL SCIENCE'

A Scientist's Perspective on Knowing God

Paul L. Younger

> … su ciencia tanto crece,
> que se queda no sabiendo,
> toda ciencia trascendiendo ….
>
> St John of the Cross[1]

AN ATMOSPHERE OF HOSTILITY towards religion in general, and not least Christianity, has been expanding through contemporary culture in recent decades, especially in affluent northern Europe. This hostility has been nurtured by a swathe of popular books written by zealous atheist proselytizers. One of their most common assertions is that science has demonstrated the non-existence of God and that therefore every aspect of religion, faith and spirituality is now redundant.

Authoritative rejoinders to these atheist polemics have been published by so many eminent scientists, theologians and philosophers that there is no need to rehearse their arguments.[2] Indeed, for a large majority of erudite scientists—whether agnostics, atheists or believers—the most irritating aspect of the atheist propagandists is their casual disregard of basic principles of the philosophy of science. For formally, science cannot adjudicate over the existence or non-existence of God, because the domain of science is Nature, and metaphysics lies beyond the scope and techniques of scientific method. Thus, if scientific investigations were your

[1] '… his science grew so much / that he was left unknowing / way beyond all science …' (my translation), 'Coplas del mismo hechas sobre un éxtasis de harta contemplación' ('stanzas concerning an ecstasy experienced in high contemplation'). See *The Collected Works of St John of the Cross*, translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez (Washington, DC: ICS, 1991), 53.

[2] See, for example, *Real Scientists, Real Faith*, edited by R. J. Berry (Oxford: Monarch, 2009); *The Lion Handbook of Science and Christianity*, edited by R. J. Berry (Oxford: Lion, 2012); the peer-reviewed, international academic journal *Science and Christian Belief*, at www.scienceandchristianbelief.org, jointly published by Christians in Science and the Victoria Institute; Alister E. McGrath, *Dawkins' God: From the Selfish Gene to the God Delusion* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015); Terry Eagleton, 'Lunging, Flailing, Mispunching', review of Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, *London Review of Books*, 28/20 (19 October 2006), 32–34.

sole recourse, then your only honest position on the existence of God would have to be agnosticism. To embrace faith, or to espouse atheism, requires value judgments to be made, which simply fall outside the domain of science.[3] Disingenuous over-claiming on the scope of science is not only mischievous; it deliberately misleads those who are unfamiliar with the philosophy of science. I am occasionally challenged by non-scientists, emboldened by this loud misinformation, to reconcile my scientific profession with Christian faith.

It seems to me that much of the 'argument', if it takes place at all, is increasingly sterile, repeating worn-out clichés *ad nauseam*. Rather than rehearsing this stale polemic, therefore, I shall focus here on Christian spirituality from the perspective of a career-long research scientist. While this topic may be more amenable to poetry than to prose, it is consistent with a spirit of genuine enquiry to present my perspective in the form of answers to some of the familiar questions.

'How can a scientist believe in God?'

Before answering this question, my scientific training tells me to specify my terms of reference. By any definition, the concept 'God' embraces infinity and eternity, and any reality beyond that. Given that humans are finite, and constrained by language and culture, it is simply beyond our grasp fully to understand and articulate what 'God' might signify. This does not mean that we *cannot* talk about God, but it *does* mean that all discussion about God depends on analogical language.[4] To resort to analogy does not restrict us to theology or metaphysics: analogical techniques are commonplace in many branches of science, especially where direct observations are impossible (for example in deep igneous processes). So analogical language is not only useful, but vital. Yet when it comes to God, analogies alone simply cannot take us to the frontiers of human understanding in encountering the divine.

Notwithstanding this prior disclaimer, for my part the interface of science with faith is expressed by my heartfelt responses to three fundamental questions, which are at once simple yet infinitely profound:[5]

[3] See McGrath, *Dawkins' God*, especially 155–157.

[4] This is a fundamental principle in the thinking of St Thomas Aquinas, and therefore in that of many orthodox Christians. The principle has been very well expounded in the writings of the late Herbert McCabe; see, for instance, *The McCabe Reader*, edited by Brian Davies and Paul Kucharski (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), especially 65, 271–272 and 276.

[5] See Tom McLeish, *Faith and Wisdom in Science* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), especially 183–207.

- Why is there *anything* as opposed to nothing at all? (Hebrews 11:3; Revelation 4:11)
- Why is the universe intelligible, as opposed to complete chaos? (compare Genesis 1:1–2; Psalm 18 (17):5–15; John 1:1; 1 Corinthians 14:33)
- Why do we encounter deep love, in people's hearts and actions, despite terrible horrors? (Ecclesiastes 3:11; Psalm 36:5–7; Jeremiah 31:3; Ephesians 3:17–19; 1 John 4:16)

It is in pondering these questions that I find my mind and heart captivated by God the Creator, who not only calls forth order out of chaos (Genesis 1:1–2), but sustains existence from each moment to the next. I am not particularly interested in intellectual considerations. Rather, I conceive my encounter with God as a sustained relationship. For me, this finds expression in the sacraments and in daily practice, of *lectio divina* (prayerful scriptural reading), the Examen (reviewing the blessings and challenges of each day) and silent meditation. As a scientist, my instinctive predilections attract me to prayers of gratitude for the beauties of Nature, seeking opportunities to contribute to God's providence for all creatures and nurturing the habit of living one day at a time.

So often, I feel that sincere discussions over the 'existence' of God end up bedevilled by talking at cross-purposes: very frequently, people who regard themselves as atheists are 'not denying the existence of some answer to the mystery of how come there is anything instead of nothing …'. Rather, they are,

> … denying what [they] think or have been told is a *religious* answer to this question …. that there is some grand architect of the universe who designed it … a Top Person in the universe who issues arbitrary decrees for the rest of [us] and enforces them because He is the most powerful being around. Now if denying this claim makes you an atheist, then I and Thomas Aquinas and a whole Christian tradition are atheistic too.
>
> But a genuine atheist is one who simply does not see that there is any problem or mystery here, one who is content to ask questions within the world, but cannot see that the world itself raises a question.[6]

[6] Herbert McCabe, *God Matters* (London: Continuum, 1987), 7.

Like very many other scientists who are Christians, I feel compelled to face the fundamental questions about existence, intelligibility and love in the full awareness that my scientific knowledge and techniques will not avail me in my quest. It is in personal encounter with God that I accept the Lord's invitation to proceed 'way beyond all science'.

'But surely you aren't a creationist … ?'

The term 'creationist' has become synonymous with a minority of Christians who deny the existence of evolution, on the grounds that they consider the scientific narrative to be in conflict with the scriptures, especially Genesis 1. These 'creationists' are largely confined to small, non-orthodox, pentecostalist Churches, predominantly in the USA and their mission territories. Small pockets of the tendency *can* be found in some Nonconformist Churches, though this is by no means the norm.

One of the most revered pioneers of palaeontology, the Scottish geologist Hugh Miller (1802–1856), wrote profuse theological reflections on his field observations, eloquently expounding the consistency between different sources of truth.[7] It is unfortunate that the self-styled 'creationists' appear to deny the precept that there *cannot* be any conflict between valid

[7] See Hugh Miller, *The Testimony of the Rocks, or, Geology in its Bearings on the Two Theologies, Natural and Revealed* (Cambridge: SMP, 2001 [1857]).

human reason and divine reason. To insist on such a conflict is to betray a concept of a god who is far too small. To argue that God might be impugned in debates on dispassionate reason is to attempt to constrain God's attributes within puny human categories. This denial of evolution is, of course, a gift to the atheistic zealots, who seize on it as evidence of irrational thinking and then try to generalise this minority position as the norm in mainstream Christian thought. On the contrary, for mainstream Christians truth simply cannot be in conflict with truth: *Nil hoc verbo Veritátis verius*.[8]

Following in the tradition of Hugh Miller and countless subsequent scientists, many Christians have contributed to scientific discoveries in the unravelling of the history and processes responsible for evolution, including the pioneering geneticist Gregor Mendel (1822–1884), the palaeontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin SJ (1881–1955) and his present-day heirs, and those responsible for decoding the human genome.[9] By the time I studied geology at university, any perceived conflict between scripture and science was long dead. I recall discovering that an eminent visitor was a lay preacher; I prayed with him in thanksgiving for the myriad wonders of rocks, fossils and landscapes.[10]

Meanwhile, scholarship at the interface between science and theology continues to advance, not just in relation to evolution, but throughout the natural sciences—from molecules to the entire expanse of the universe.[11] The more we discover about the universe, the more human awe expands (Psalm 8: 1–5). To be a scientist is to have a particularly

[8] St Thomas Aquinas, 'There is nothing truer than this word of Truth', from the hymn 'Adoro te devote', in *The Aquinas Prayer Book: The Prayers and Hymns of St Thomas Aquinas*, edited and translated by Robert Anderson and Johann Moser (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute, 2000), 68.

[9] See, for example, *Reading Genesis after Darwin*, edited by Stephen C. Barton and David Wilkinson (Oxford: OUP, 2009); Martina Kölbl-Ebert, *Geology and Religion: A History of Harmony and Hostility*. (London: Geological Society, 2009); Amir D. Aczel, *The Jesuit and the Skull: Teilhard de Chardin, Evolution and the Search for Peking Man* (New York: Riverhead, 2007); Simon Conway Morris, *Life's Solution: Inevitable Humans in a Lonely Universe* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004); Simon Conway Morris, *The Runes of Evolution: How the Universe Became Self-Aware* (West Conshohocken: Templeton, 2015); Francis Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006).

[10] The late Professor Dick Owen of the University of Swansea; see Thomas Richard Owen, *Geology Explained in South Wales* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1973).

[11] See, for example, *Evolutionary and Molecular Biology: Scientific Perspectives on Divine Action*, edited by Robert J. Russell, William R. Stoeger and Francisco José Ayala (Vatican City: Vatican Observatory, and Berkeley: Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences, 1998); Denis Edwards, *The God of Evolution: A Trinitarian Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1999); Francisco José Ayala, *Darwin's Gift to Science and Religion* (Washington, DC: Joseph Henry, 2007); McLeish, *Faith and Wisdom*; and, for a highly readable astronomical discussion, Guy Consolmagno and Paul Mueller, *Would You Baptize an Extraterrestrial? … and Other Questions from the Astronomers' In-Box at the Vatican Observatory* (New York: Image, 2014).

privileged access to the profundities of Nature. Hence my daily prayer commences with thanksgiving for the senses which enable us to delight in creation.[12]

So, to answer the question: obviously I am not a 'creationist' in the narrow-minded sense in which a false nostrum is erected to oppose evolutionary science. But I *am* a joy-filled worshipper of the sole Creator God, who continues to act through countless secondary causes.[13]

> *'Enjoying nature is all very well, but how can you reconcile a loving God with pain, suffering and premature death?'*

If the militant atheists have what they regard as a 'killer question' for Christianity it is that of suffering.[14] Yet even the most cursory engagement with the New Testament—and much of the Jewish Bible—reveals sustained exposition of God's response to suffering and death.[15] The passion and resurrection of Jesus are the fulcrum of all Christian thought and experience. Strikingly, Jesus does not waste time asking *why* suffering occurs, but rather:

1. notes that random events do not discriminate between the virtuous and the villainous (Matthew 5:45), and hence suffering afflicts both the just and unjust, whether this results from human violence (for example Luke 13:1–3), chronic diseases (John 9:1–3) or accidental catastrophes (Luke 13:4–5);
2. sets about healing and redeeming the afflicted (see, for example, Matthew 14:14) and, in the process, demonstrates God's desire to do the same. The Lord's Prayer itself makes clear that God's benevolent will is fulfilled in the Kingdom of Heaven, in stark contrast to the frustration of God's will in our world (Matthew 6:10)—especially by evil (Matthew 6:13).

[12] Think of prayers such as the 'Breastplate of St Patrick', in Philip Freeman, *The World of Saint Patrick* (Oxford: OUP, 2014), 49–54, and St Francis's 'Canticle of the Creatures', in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, edited by Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann and William J. Short, volume 1, *The Saint* (New York: New City, 1999), 113–114.

[13] See Denis Edwards, *How God Acts: Creation, Redemption and Special Divine Action* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010); and Edwards, *God of Evolution*.

[14] See, for a recent instance, the well-known public figure (though non-scientist) Stephen Fry: Ian Paul, 'Stephen Fry and God', at https://www.bethinking.org/does-god-exist/stephen-fry-and-god, accessed 13 March 2018.

[15] Especially the Psalms, much of Isaiah, the Babylonian exile and the Book of Job; see Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Random House, 1981); also McLeish, *Faith and Wisdom*, 102–148.

Despite this clear teaching, many Christians continue to misunderstand God's loving will. The Lisbon earthquake of 1 November 1755 has often been cited as a devastating blow to Christian beliefs, and thus a boost to Enlightenment atheism.[16] Yet Jesus' teaching on such events has always been clear (Matthew 5:45; Luke 13:4–5). Divine providence and evil coexist in our finite world (see for example Matthew 13:24–30). We are not promised that suffering will be fully vanquished in *this* world: 'The Son of God suffered unto death, not that humans might not suffer, but that their sufferings might be like His'.[17] Yet Jesus continues to heal, and to redeem the sin that arises from the temptation to despair, when suffering and death threaten to undermine our trust in divine love.[18] It is understandable that self-aware creatures deplore the suffering that is encountered in our finite world; but, then again, so does God: 'Our responding to life's unfairness with sympathy and with righteous indignation, God's compassion and God's anger working through us, may be the surest proof of all of God's reality …'.[19]

Of course it is easy for an atheist to reject this reading of the world: 'Only a capricious, mean-minded, stupid god [could] create a world that is so full of injustice and pain …'.[20] Yet, from a scientific viewpoint, it is very far from obvious that the universe could have been arranged in a better way. This is, essentially, God's riposte to this challenge, as expressed in the Book of Job (38:1–18). To modern science, ever since Einstein's deduction of relativity and the subsequent discoveries around quantum mechanics, it is clear that the universe expresses both apparently 'stable' structures (which venerable Newtonian physics can still describe accurately in many cases) and random physical processes, which are formally referred to as 'stochastic' processes.[21] But it is now clear that interactions between stochastic processes give rise to the very structures that we regard as 'stable'. Hence it turns out that 'capricious', stochastic processes are indispensable if we are to have the universe we know (and we *cannot* know any other).

[16] Most of the packed congregation at the All Saints' Day Mass in the cathedral were killed when the building collapsed. The historiography is far more complex than is usually acknowledged; see Agustín Udías, 'Earthquake as God's Punishment in 17th- and 18th-Century Spain', in *Geology and Religion*, edited by Kölbl-Ebert, 41–48.
[17] George MacDonald, *Unspoken Sermons* (London: Alexander Strahan, 1867), 41.
[18] See Herbert McCabe, *The New Creation* (London: Continuum, 2010 [1964]), 81.
[19] Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, 191.
[20] Stephen Fry, quoted in Paul, 'Stephen Fry and God'.
[21] See McLeish, *Faith and Wisdom*, 183–207.

Stochastic processes occur on all scales in space and time, from stellar nebulae to the cells in every living organism. For the most part, stochastic dynamics generate structures of breathtaking fecundity. Nevertheless, from the perspective of vulnerable, short-lived humans, many familiar stochastic processes threaten life. For instance, lightning strikes can kill. Yet if lightning did not exist, the Earth's atmospheric ozone layer would be lost, exposing all animals to fatal solar radiation and hypothermia as heat would be lost to outer space. Over longer timescales, the absence of stochastic plate-tectonic processes, such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, might be welcome, but all life would eventually become extinct, as nutrients would be mineralised. In our own bodies, stochastic processes are indispensable in cell division, without which no life would continue; and yet the same processes give rise to cancer. While it is understandable to feel aggrieved, from a scientific perspective it is irrational angrily to curse all 'capricious' processes, for in their absence none of us would exist to complain in the first place.[22] Of course, one might claim that the balance between stochastic processes and stable structures is poor, albeit there is no scientific basis to reach that conclusion. What we *do* know is that numerous physical constants are poised precisely at the magnitudes required to allow life to emerge.[23]

[22] See my 'Lost for Words: An Ignatian Encounter with Divine Love in Aggressive Brain Cancer', *The Way*, 56/3 (July 2017), 7–17.

[23] This is the so-called 'anthropic balance'; see *Lion Handbook of Science and Christianity*, 124–125.

So our world emerges as an inherent mixture of blessings and misfortunes. Whether an individual judges this mixture positively is subjective. I get the impression that most humans view the balance favourably. For my part, as I undertake my Examen daily, I always find a surfeit of blessings over desolations, even on the very darkest days. Admittedly, I have yet to endure the extremes of spiritual devastation.[24] Yet the more I persevere with the Examen, the more positive becomes my appreciation of God's loving gifts and graces.

'Next you're going to tell me that you believe in miracles …'

Before considering 'miracles', it is important to acknowledge that healing exists—most prominently through the work of health professionals. Given that all humans are creatures of God's love, health care is integral to divine healing. Furthermore, a wider spectrum of suffering is healed by the ministry of the Church community:

> To bring to the patient a sense of the presence of Christ and of his fellow Christians, to strengthen his faith and his awareness of the love by which he is surrounded, to restore to him a sense of belonging to a community in which his life matters; all these things might be expected to help his recovery.[25]

I have repeatedly experienced this divine healing at first hand.[26]

But what of 'miracles'? Many instances are documented of prayer preceding spectacular healing.[27] Yet from a scientific perspective, it is difficult to categorize a given case of healing as 'miraculous' on the grounds that medical science does not currently have any explanation; after all, science is advancing continually, and fresh explanations may yet emerge for events that were previously inexplicable.

To obsess about identifying 'miracles' risks missing a crucial precept. If we truly believe that God is present in all things, as St Ignatius Loyola emphasizes, then God works in natural processes. But given that God remains sovereign—notwithstanding voluntary self-limitation—then God can overrule normal processes. But this does not constitute a violation of creation, because (as St Thomas Aquinas explained),

[24] See also Gerald G. May, *The Dark Night of the Soul: A Psychiatrist Explores the Connection between Darkness and Spiritual Growth* (New York: HarperCollins, 2004).
[25] McCabe, *New Creation*, 88.
[26] See Younger, 'Lost for Words'.
[27] See, for example, Rex Gardner, *Healing Miracles: A Doctor Investigates* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1986).

> God … cannot literally intervene in the universe because He is always there—just as much in the normal, natural run of things as in the resurrection of Christ or in any other miraculous event. [Hence] a miracle is not a special *presence* of God; it is a special absence of natural causes—a special absence that makes the perpetual presence of God more visible to us. Since God is there all the time, and since He doesn't need to be mentioned when we are doing physics or biology, or doing the shopping, we are in danger of forgetting Him. So a miracle is … an exuberant gesture, like an embrace or a kiss, to say, 'Look, I'm here; I love you', lest in our wonder and delight at the works of His creation we forget that all we have and are is the radiance of His love for us.[28]

This is precisely my understanding of what Jesus meant when he said that the sick are healed 'so that God's works might be revealed' in them (John 9:3).

'So what difference does it make for you to be a scientist?'

At one level, to be a scientist makes no difference at all: anyone from any walk of life is invited to embrace God's love. But given that I am a scientist, it would be ungrateful to discard my experience and expertise as I accept the Lord's invitation to communion with the Trinity. So I am called to be the most conscientious scientist I can be; to proclaim my gratitude and praise for all of the wonders of the creation that I have the privilege to observe. But beyond that, I am called to proceed 'way beyond all science', to rejoice that 'my sole occupation is love'.[29]

Paul L. Younger, who is married with three sons, is a well-known research scientist. He has been honoured with fellowships of the Royal Academy of Engineering and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In 2015 he completed the Spiritual Exercises at the Ignatian Spirituality Centre in Glasgow.

[28] Herbert McCabe, *Faith within Reason* (London: Continuum, 2007), 101–102.
[29] St John of the Cross, 'Coplas del mismo hechas sobre un éxtasis de harta contemplación' (my translation), and 'The Spiritual Canticle', stanza 28, in *The Complete Works of St John of the Cross*, translated by David Lewis (London: Longman Green, 1864), volume 2, 151.

THE IGNATIAN RULES FOR EATING IN A CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Elizabeth Delbridge

DURING MY FORMATION as a giver of the Spiritual Exercises I was introduced to the Rules for Eating as part of our exploration of the Third Week. Three years later, I was suffering in a stressful leadership role and my doctor strongly encouraged me to change my diet—her goal was to ensure that what I ate would not undermine my energy (adding to the stress on my body) but sustain me properly every day through a challenging time. After all, 'every human activity accomplished in a day gets accomplished because people consume food'.[1] I thought I ate a healthy diet, but feeling chronically tired and with regular migraines I had the motivation to change.

The first six weeks were drastic, as I eliminated many foods regarded as normal and realised, as I did so, that I had become dependent on them. Now I had to listen to my body to discern what it was that I really needed. For example, no longer drinking tea because of its caffeine content, I had to ask myself what I had been seeking from it—refreshment, relaxation or rejuvenation. Gradually I discovered which herbal teas would meet these different needs. Freedom from migraine was a strong motivation to stay on the diet, even though I found it challenging. I struggled to let go of long-held patterns of behaviour and learnt what people mean by 'cravings'. Sometimes I resented the changes and felt frustrated that I had to prepare much of my own food because manufacturers included ingredients that were unsuitable. I remembered the Rules for Eating and wondered if they might provide a framework within which I could understand my experience.

Reading the Rules with the knowledge I now had was illuminating—phrases seemed to leap off the page! Eating was about an ordered future

[1] Lisa Graham McMinn, *To the Table: A Spirituality of Food, Farming, and Community* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2016), 5.

Rules to Put Oneself in Order for the Future as to Eating

***First Rule**. The first rule is that it is well to abstain less from bread, because it is not a food as to which the appetite is used to act so inordinately, or to which temptation urges as in the case of the other foods.*

***Second Rule**. The second: Abstinence appears more convenient as to drinking, than as to eating bread. So, one ought to look much what is helpful to him, in order to admit it, and what does him harm, in order to discard it.*

***Third Rule**. The third: As to foods, one ought to have the greatest and most entire abstinence, because as the appetite is more ready to act inordinately, so temptation is more ready in making trial, on this head. And so abstinence in foods, to avoid disorder, can be kept in two ways, one by accustoming oneself to eat coarse foods; the other, if one takes delicate foods, by taking them in small quantity.*

***Fourth Rule**. The fourth: Guarding against falling into sickness, the more a man leaves off from what is suitable, the more quickly he will reach the mean which he ought to keep in his eating and drinking; for two reasons: the first, because by so helping and disposing himself, he will many times experience more the interior knowledge, consolations and Divine inspirations to show him the mean which is proper for him; the second, because if the person sees himself in such abstinence not with so great corporal strength or disposition for the Spiritual Exercises, he will easily come to judge what is more suitable to his bodily support.*

***Fifth Rule**. The fifth: While the person is eating, let him consider as if he saw Christ our Lord eating with His Apostles, and how He drinks and how He looks and how He speaks; and let him see to imitating Him. So that the principal part of the intellect shall occupy itself in the consideration of Christ our Lord, and the lesser part in the support of the body; because in this way he will get greater system and order as to how he ought to behave and manage himself.*

***Sixth Rule**. The sixth: Another time, while he is eating, he can take another consideration, either on the life of Saints, or on some pious Contemplation, or on some spiritual affair which he has to do, because, being intent on such thing, he will take less delight and feeling in the corporal food.*

***Seventh Rule**. The seventh: Above all, let him guard against all his soul being intent on what he is eating, and in eating let him not go hurriedly, through appetite, but be master of himself, as well in the manner of eating as in the quantity which he eats.*

***Eighth Rule**. The eighth: To avoid disorder, it is very helpful, after dinner or after supper, or at another hour when one feels no appetite for eating, to decide with oneself for the coming dinner or supper, and so on, each day, the quantity which it is suitable that he should eat. Beyond this let him not go because of any appetite or temptation, but rather, in order to conquer more all inordinate appetite and temptation of the enemy, if he is tempted to eat more, let him eat less.*

for mission; inordinate attachment to bread was a craving; I was eating and drinking what was helpful and discarding what was harmful. I learnt to be contemplative in my eating, paying attention to and appreciating food, and slowing down the pace. I had to plan ahead so that appropriate food was in the house at all times.

What I was doing was good for my health, but revisiting the Rules for Eating gave me a bigger purpose in terms of living a contemplative life and making daily decisions that would enable my ministry. Becoming more aware of the attention in the media to eating issues, I realised that the encouragement that I had experienced might be of benefit to others. Now, six years on, I have the opportunity to highlight what the Rules offered me.

The Ignatian Background

Within the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius developed five sets of 'rules', given at the discretion of the director according to the needs of the retreatant, of which the Rules for Eating are the first. As the translator George E. Ganss explains, by rules, Ignatius meant 'Directives, guidelines, norms, suggestions, or models as when he wrote that Christ is "our model and rule"'.[2]

Ignatius places the other sets of rules at the end of the Exercises, in the supplementary material, but the Rules for Eating are located at the end of the Third Week. By this point retreatants are aware of human appetites being disordered, so Ignatius is offering the opportunity to examine their situation thoughtfully, reorder their behaviours and plan for a better future. However, the rules can actually be presented at any time, again at the discretion of the director. The first four rules explore eating and drinking as such, while the last four focus more on spiritual benefits.

Having finished his studies in Paris, Ignatius went to Venice towards the end of 1535 to await the arrival of the Companions, whom he welcomed in January 1537. In June all were ordained priests, and subsequently Ignatius experienced great consolations. Santiago Arzubialde suggests that it was at this time, informed by access to monastic texts, that Ignatius began the revision of the *Spiritual Exercises* that included the Rules for Eating.

[2] *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, a Translation and Commentary*, edited and translated by George E. Ganss (Chicago: Loyola, 1992), 181 n. 10.

> Thus between 1536 … and 1541, when the final version of the *Spiritual Exercises* is ready, Ignatius is working out a pneumatological cycle based on criteria from the traditional teaching in *diakrisis* (John Cassian?) … including discovery of the mean (the ordering of one's life as regards eating) or moderation.[3]

Moderation was an important lesson for Ignatius, as immediately after his conversion his 'ambitious self-help way to holiness', which included excessive fasting, became detrimental to his health.[4] Gradually he realised that he had to care for his body, so the austerity he had inflicted on himself is not evident in the Rules for Eating. What does carry through is the goal of self-mastery. Mortification was an essential aspect of his spirituality which Ignatius reiterated to those around him with the two words, 'conquer yourself'.[5] Early Directories show that,

> The sixteenth-century exercitant … is asked to make conscious and deliberate decisions on his need and use of food and drink, in order to find the mean that better suits him ….
>
> The suggestion is that the average sixteenth-century exercitant seems to be over-indulgent in food and drink and has need of the asceticism and penance of the purgative way. Might the same be true of the average First-World retreatant of the twentieth century?[6]

Self-mastery means giving up things that are pleasurable, which we do not want to do, so it is easier to ignore the issue. The ordinariness of eating may lead us to dismiss it as trivial and not think of it in relation to the spiritual life. However, Ignatius thought otherwise, following the scriptural injunction, 'So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God' (1 Corinthians 10:31). The guidelines for eating not only lead us towards contemplative eating but also give us a daily opportunity to fulfil the essential goal of the Exercises—to overcome ourselves and make decisions for an ordered

[3] Santiago Arzubialde, 'The Development of the Exercises: Recognising the Spirit', *The Way*, 50/4 (October 2011), 92. It is not clear from this comment whether the Rules for Eating were already in the earlier draft of the Exercises or whether they were added at this time.

[4] Budiarto Gomulia, 'A Study of the Development of Mortification and Discernment in the Autobiography of Saint Ignatius of Loyola' (MA thesis, University of Divinity, 2010), 38, 42.

[5] *Fomula of the Institute*, n. 4. The practice of mortification is the context in which the Rules for Eating occur. However, the word is a technical term that I find unhelpful with retreatants. Some have never heard the word while others misunderstand it, so I prefer to use phrases such as self-mastery, overcoming oneself or self-contol.

[6] David Townsend, 'Digesting the Rules for Eating', *The Way Supplement*, 58 (1987), 87–88.

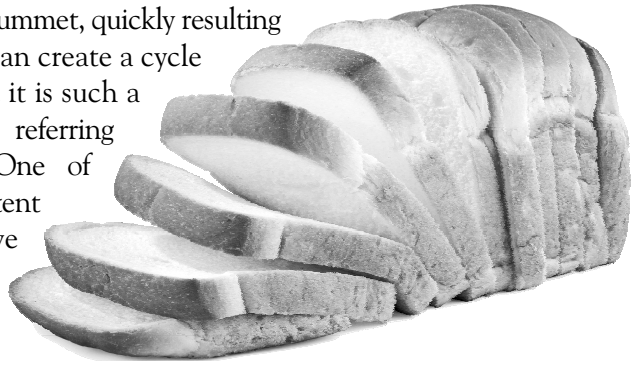
life (Exx 1), within the overall context of the First Principle and Foundation, 'to praise, reverence, and serve God' in all things (Exx 23).[7]

Reviewing Mealtimes

The First Rule

In his First Rule (Exx 210), Ignatius is stressing abstinence or limitation rather than avoidance, and he begins by considering bread. In the time of Ignatius, bread was the staple diet of the poor and was considered sufficient for nutritional needs.[8] It was certainly more nutritious than bread is today. The organically grown wheat had not been bred for high gluten; the stone-ground flour was not damaged by the heat of metal grinding and, being wholemeal, it retained the bran and nutrient-packed germ. The raising process used fermentation (sour dough) rather than bakers' yeast, so the grain was partly broken down by bacteria, reducing gluten content. This bread had a nutty flavour and a dense, chewy texture, maintained its nutrients and kept well. Being wholegrain it was filling and slow to digest; Ignatius rightly observed that the appetite was less insistent with bread than with other foods.

What Ignatius could not have imagined is the change that has happened to bread in the intervening centuries. Bread is still the food of the poor. However, we eat more white bread, made with flour from which the bran and germ have been removed, than any other type, despite the current interest in whole grains. It is easy to eat too much white bread. The fast-acting carbohydrates break down into sugars, causing blood glucose levels to spike then plummet, quickly resulting in a craving for more. This can create a cycle of overeating; I suggest that it is such a cycle to which Ignatius is referring when he talks in Rule One of inordinate appetite and insistent temptation. These days we might use the language of addiction.[9]



[7] The translation of the Spiritual Exercises used here is that by Elder Mullan, reprinted in David L. Fleming, *Draw Me into Your Friendship: The Spiritual Exercises. A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

[8] Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 161.

[9] Robert E. Rakel and David P. Rakel, *Textbook of Family Medicine*, 9th edn (Philadelphia: Elsevier Saunders, 2016), 869.

Judging from the tone of the other rules, Ignatius would be alarmed by this development. He would probably apply Rule Three to bread as well as to other foods: noticing what is harmful and what is helpful and adjusting accordingly. Adapting Rule One is necessary in this era when abstinence may well be necessary for some and complete elimination of bread necessary for others. The sugar spikes are not as high when eating wholegrain sourdough bread, so removing processed bread and grains from the diet and replacing them with wholegrain makes a difference.

The Second Rule

The Second Rule (Exx 211) refers to abstinence in relation to drinking, and focuses on self-care and personal observation. By Week Three of the Exercises, the exercitant will be practised in the examen process so will recognise Rule Two as a form of examen—what drink was helpful today? What drink was harmful today? Exercitants are invited to notice what drinks they are consuming, when and in what circumstances, and to what effect. After this observation, as with any examen, Ignatius encourages more of what is helpful and less of what is harmful. For example, when I realised that drinking wine with the evening meal reduced my concentration the next morning, and hence my attention to prayer, I decided to stop drinking alcohol.

In many countries popular interest in monitoring alcohol intake is increasing at a community level. In Britain there is 'Dry January', inspired by the charity Alcohol Concern; in Australia we have 'Feb Fast', 'Dry July' and 'Ocsober'. Participants in Dry July are sponsored to give up alcohol for a month to support people with cancer—as well as improving their own health: 'Taking part in Dry July gives you the chance to also focus on yourself—notice your own drinking habits and the value of a healthy, balanced lifestyle, increased energy levels, a clearer head and clearer skin!'[10] People are thus already taking the time to consider what is harmful and what is helpful in relation to alcohol and taking beneficial action.

But the Second Rule applies to any beverage. Many people are sensitive to caffeine and limit their coffee or tea intake. Currently there is concern at a public health level about the amount of sugar in soft drinks; a recent advertising campaign in Australia has encouraged us to 'rethink sugary drink' and enjoy the benefits of water.[11]

[10] Dry July Foundation, 'About Dry July', at https://www.dryjuly.com/about, accessed 15 March 2018.
[11] See 'Rethink Sugary Drink', at http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/, accessed 15 March 2018.

Seeking an Ordered Life

The Third Rule

In the Third Rule (Exx 212) Ignatius suggests practical ways of focusing on everyday foods. Ignatius contrasts other foods with bread as a staple—intending to limit consumption of more attractive or luxury foods. He uses the word 'abstinence' twice, emphasizing not penance or austerity but to be in a 'right temperance' with food.[12] This is an expression of the overarching intention whereby, 'The Exercises have to do with the *conversion* of affectivity, with letting the Spirit enter into our affectivity, change it and act through it'.[13] The emphasis on practice allows retreatants to decide in freedom what to eat.

Ignatius would be gratified to learn that modern dietary guidelines recommend the same approach. But these guidelines exist because the population does not naturally follow this way of eating. Such a variety of food is plentifully available in the developed world at any time of day or night that the expectation of eating the 'delicate foods' of which Ignatius speaks gradually increases. At the same time serving sizes of 'coarse foods' also increase in a subtle movement towards excess.

Observing the times of deliberate or unconscious excess may offer us clues as to the reason behind the 'disordered' appetite of which Ignatius speaks. What is occurring for me when I feel this appetite? Am I craving sugar? Do I want more of a delicious flavour? Is it the novelty of trying new foods? Is it social pressure to eat as others eat? Is it expectations about behaviour in specific situations? Is it seeking comfort in a stressful life? For me a gentle dissection of what is going on and how my body is feeling at such a time has led to more freedom.

A few years ago I realised that I was at my most vulnerable to eating too much on Sunday afternoons. At the time I was a parish priest, so I would have led two services, with all that that entails, and spoken to innumerable people. I would come home ravenous and exhausted, eat a healthy meal, but then 'graze', returning to the kitchen for snacks frequently during the afternoon. While food could satiate my body's hunger, it could not restore the energy depleted by stress or the psychospiritual reserves that had been drawn upon that morning. I had to find ways of addressing each of the three aspects.

[12] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 161.
[13] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 2.

Gradually, with the support of an integrative medical practitioner, I experimented with meals that sustained me for longer periods. I discovered that foods that appeared to appease in the short term, such as sandwiches, cake or desserts, would give me a blood-sugar spike followed by a slump that I experienced as 'fog brain' and further exhaustion. In terms of the stress, I learnt more about the effects of adrenaline and cortisol, and found ways to cooperate with the body's natural recovery pattern, ensuring that I had plenty of rest, listening to soothing music and doing routine low-adrenaline activities. For spiritual rejuvenation I would meditate once or twice over the afternoon and perhaps read uplifting literature. This way each aspect of my appetite was acknowledged and given what it needed, thus changing my relationship with my body and with food.

The Fourth Rule

The introduction to the Fourth Rule (Exx 213) begins with a qualification: not to become ill through lack of food. We know that this happened to Ignatius from overzealous fasting and now he is careful to protect others from the danger, encouraging the exercitant to find 'the mean which he ought to keep in his eating and drinking'. The purpose of cutting down on food is to arrive at this mean, in an example of deliberately 'going against' a disordered tendency:

> This is an application of the principle of 'going against' *(agere contra)*: a disordered tendency should be dealt with by a deliberate emphasis on its opposite, in order eventually to find the mean. The principle appears in the Exercises frequently …. It operates against excess in both rigour and indulgence.[14]

What we might think of today as a sufficient diet may actually be overeating. Ignatius' suggestion to reduce intake and observe the effects is a timely reminder of good stewardship and self-responsibility. With too much food available, most people in the West end up eating it—over

[14] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 12.

60 per cent of them are unhealthily fat—or throwing it away.[15] Moreover eating highly processed, unhealthy food is regarded as normal.[16] When the norm is over-consuming there is room to pull back safely without falling sick and without becoming anorexic. The point is to find 'the right mean': the optimum intake for health and vitality for that particular personal environment.

The second part of the Fourth Rule offers two ways towards discerning the mean and makes clear the purpose behind all the rules for eating: first, to be open to receiving the joys of consolation and secondly, to have the stamina to complete the Exercises. Basically it is about what is excessive or undermines the spiritual life and what is conducive to the spiritual life. The Camaldolese Fr Cyprian Consigilio tells the story of taking lunch to one of the recluses living in his community. In those days the community had dessert only with the midday meal on Sundays. As Cyprian handed over the tray of food, old Fr Joseph said to him, 'Watch what you eat on Sunday, Brother, it will affect your prayer on Monday'.[17]

Ignatius desires the exercitant to extend the relationship between the body and food to include the Spirit, recognising that when we act irresponsibly with our bodies (our personal environment), we are actually putting at risk the temple in which God dwells. 'Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.' (1 Corinthians 6:19–20)

Imitating Christ

The Fifth Rule

The Fifth Rule (Exx 214) reminds us of the 'know, love, follow' pattern learnt in Week Two as Ignatius encourages exercitants to imitate Christ. The first part of this rule is about imagining Christ eating with the disciples and noticing the manner in which Jesus approaches his meal and the community with whom he is sharing it. This contemplation should permeate the exercitants' own approach to meals. The second part of the

[15] See World Health Organization, 'Prevalence of Overweight among Adults, BMI ≥ 25', *Global Health Observatory Data*, available at http://apps.who.int/gho/data/view.main.BMI25Cv?lang=en, accessed 15 March 2018.
[16] See, for example, Jennifer M. Poti, Michelle A. Mendez, Shu Wen Ng, and Barry M. Popkin, 'Is the Degree of Food Processing and Convenience Linked with the Nutritional Quality of Foods Purchased by US Households?', *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 101/6 (June 2015), 1251–1262.
[17] Personal communication with the author, used with permission.

rule focuses on the immediate outcome of this process: that the exercitants are thinking about Jesus rather than their bodies. The third part of the rule reiterates the original goal of the Rules for Eating and the ultimate goal of the Exercises—ordered and harmonious living. This is why David Fleming highlights rule five as the overarching general principle of the Rules for Eating.[18]

By Week Three, exercitants have considerable experience with imaginative contemplation of scripture, so imagining Christ eating with the disciples is within their reach. There are various accounts of Jesus eating that can be recalled, and many exercitants will already have contemplated Jesus at the wedding at Cana, Jesus at table with Zacchaeus, Jesus blessing the food to feed the Five Thousand and Jesus attending the meal at Simon's house. During Week Three the exercitants are contemplating the Last Supper so that will take priority. Exercitants should notice the demeanour of Jesus and intentionally allow that demeanour to reshape their own manners so that ordered conduct emerges. This has the effect of placing the focus less on food as assuaging our hunger and more on the manner in which it is approached.

I am reminded of 'taking strength from his Creator and Lord' (Exx 324), one of the means of handling desolation, since allowing Christ's demeanour to permeate our own is a form of taking strength. I am also reminded of the 'Three Methods of Prayer' that Ignatius prescribes to encourage prayer at other times, specifically (Exx 248) for those who want to imitate Christ in the use of their five senses. The contemplation here focuses on the sensations of the bodily creature and how they might be used for God's glory, thus insisting 'that it is the whole person—the person as bodily and sensate as well as endowed with the higher Powers—that must be assimilated into Christ'.[19]

In eating a meal, Jesus is using each of the senses—hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting, touching. Noticing how Jesus uses his senses illuminates the attitude that Jesus has to his own body and this is important because, as Sam Keen observes, 'Our body is our bridge to and model of the world; therefore, how we are in our body so we will be in the world …. Thus the danger of not loving one's body. Love of both neighbour and cosmos rests on love of self.'[20] Imitating Christ as he cares for his body by eating

[18] Fleming, *Draw Me into Your Friendship*, 161.
[19] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 186.
[20] Sam Keen, *To a Dancing God: Notes of a Spiritual Traveler* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1970), 148, 150.

allows us to care for our own body. Caring for our body is the basis of living the two great commandments, loving God (in the cosmos) and loving neighbour. Eating has far-reaching implications!

The Sixth Rule

The Sixth Rule (Exx 215) is about staying attentive to Christ and his passion or, after the Third Week, maintaining a more general spiritual focus rather than being distracted by eating for the sake of it. Ignatius uses the word consideration (*consideración*), which reminds me of the Prayer of Consideration, a form of prayer that calls on our reason and understanding.[21] The Prayer of Consideration offers us creative options for mealtimes, the simplest of which is noticing what occurs as we eat, observing a process that is usually taken for granted. This experience leads us to attend both to the food and to our manner of eating. The desire to eat more slowly may develop, which is explored in Rule Seven.

Another dinner table consideration is to remember the various 'memberships' to which we belong: 'Eating … establishes a membership that confirms all creatures as profoundly in need of each other and … God to provide life's nutrition and vitality'.[22] We belong to God. We also belong to each other as members of the human race. We belong to the earth, being made from the same elements. We belong to the animals, particularly mammals. We belong to the plants on which we depend for oxygen and food. We belong to our unique microbiome; our gut contains about 100 trillion bacteria.[23] A sense of these connections can be heightened by eating outdoors. In remembering our memberships we realise that we are sustained by the sacrifice and work of the earth and its produce as well as by the people who harvest, process, deliver and sell that produce.[24] So begins the development of an ecological consciousness.[25]

[21] See Joseph A. Tetlow, *Making Choices in Christ: The Foundations of Ignatian Spirituality* (Chicago: Loyola, 2008), 65–67.

[22] Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2011); and see McMinn, *To the Table*, 23.

[23] See Guilia Enders, *Gut: The Inside Story of Our Body's Most Under-Rated Organ* (Melbourne: Scribe, 2014), 137.

[24] At a retreat entitled 'Responding to Creation's Love for Us' held at Loyola House, Guelph, Ontario in April 2017, a plaque was displayed on each dining table. It read 'In this food I see the presence of the entire Universe supporting me'.

[25] See Ilia Delio, 'Food, Ecology, and Consciousness', Woodstock Theological Centre, Georgetown University, 2010, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywiegm8H6Lc.

In many retreat centres music is played during meals as an aid to reflection; this can also be done at home during the Retreat in Daily Life. Personally I find that spiritual reading at breakfast is an inspiring start, heightening my attention to spiritual matters as the day progresses. All such considerations are helpful in creating a focus at meals beyond simply the gratification of hunger.[26] Avoiding attachment to a particular food, whether for pleasure or emotional support, is the goal here, not a dualistic dismissal of matter as bad. We can pay thankful attention to food and eating as an enjoyable contemplative practice without being attached to the food; this is important to the Ignatian goal of spiritual freedom.

Seeking Consolation

The Seventh Rule

The Seventh Rule (Exx 216) highlights the challenge of self-control both in demeanour and in actual consumption. The phrase 'guard against' reminds me of the Second Week Discernment of Spirits, through which the soul may 'guard for the future' (Exx 334), alerting me to the possible place of the bad spirit in affecting the eating behaviour of exercitants. What movement of the spirit is occurring when someone is preoccupied by eating or 'absorbed' by eating? Gentle exploration of the interplay of thoughts and feelings behind the eating can lead to naming the bad spirit and disempowering it.

Ignatius does not want exercitants to be preoccupied with eating, but that does not mean they should be dismissive of eating and food. He uses the image of relishing or savouring food as a key metaphor in understanding the spirituality of the Exercises, when he talks about what 'contents and satisfies the soul' (Exx 2).[27] He also shows regard for the sense of taste among the five senses (Exx 69, Exx 124). Appreciating tastes implies that the manner of eating should be attentive and reflective rather than hurried. When we are ravenous we tend to eat quickly to satiate the feeling of hunger, and could well overeat as a result. Ignatius suggests that curbing that initial rush strengthens self-control in the exercitant. Aware of eating too quickly myself, while on retreat I resolved to slow down. As it takes ten minutes for the feeling of hunger to dissipate after eating, slowing down means I feel satiated sooner, which means I eat less.

[26] Fleming, *Draw Me into Your Friendship*, 165.
[27] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 4.

The social aspect of eating with others also needs consideration:

> Accounts of Ignatius eating with his companions suggest that, however little he ate, he took his time and never finished before his companions. He paced himself in harmony with the conversation and with the eating habits of those around him, 'giving the impression that all along he had been eating with them'.[28]

Keeping pace with others provides another strategy for slowing down as well as strengthening the sense of community at meals.

In terms of controlling the amount consumed there are some simple measures, such as refraining from second helpings, stopping eating before we feel completely full, using a smaller plate, serving smaller portions and deciding in advance what to eat then sticking to that decision—which lead to the eighth and final rule.

The Eighth Rule

The Eighth Rule (Exx 217) offers a practical strategy for deciding how and what to eat. Rather than stumbling from one meal to the next, driven by hunger pangs that often result in our eating more than we need of the wrong food, Ignatius urges forward planning. 'When one feels no appetite for eating' is the opportune time to consider what to eat. As this is a time of consolation, it is wise to make a decision about what it will be good to eat in the future—and stick to it. Ignatius discourages changing decisions in times of desolation, in this case when hunger or craving is dominant.

This is the idea of 'precommitment': 'limiting our own choices while we're safely distant from the temptations we suspect we can't otherwise handle'.[29] Dan Buettner, originator of the Blue Zones health and longevity project, observes that among the world's most long-lived communities 'the healthy choice wasn't just the deliberate choice; it was the unavoidable choice', since the only foods available were healthy ones.[30]

The second part of this rule is more challenging to the modern ear. When we find ourselves wanting to eat more than we planned, Ignatius

[28] Phillip Shano, 'Dining with St Ignatius of Loyola: Rules for Regulating One's Eating', *The Way*, 52/4 (October 2013), 19, quoting the *Memoriale* of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara.
[29] Daniel Akst, *We Have Met the Enemy: Self-Control in an Age of Excess* (New York: Penguin, 2011), 34.
[30] Dan Buettner, *The Blue Zones of Happiness: Secrets of the World's Happiest Places* (Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2017), 23.

asks us to eat less! This follows the principle of *agere contra*, counter-attack, where the best defence is offence.[31]

Using the Rules for Eating with Retreatants

In their book on the Exercises, George Schemel and Judith Roemer suggest that, when considering the Rules for Eating, retreatants should also ask themselves, 'What are your particular pain killers? Alcohol, tobacco, food, T.V., tranquilizers, mall shopping, conversation, chitchat, busyness, sleep? … They all soothe consciousness and one needs to be careful how they are used.'[32] What is there in my daily life that will hinder me from fully living into God's personal call to me, or the Election made during the Exercises? What aspects of my life prevent a full embrace of the way of life offered by Jesus? Am I more attached to created things than to God?

The season of the Exercises offers an opportunity to experiment by applying the Examen to various different aspects of life, thus becoming conscious of our frailties and abilities. After reflecting on this experience with a spiritual director and evaluating the consolation after each change, retreatants can plan for returning to ordinary existence, keeping what is helpful and preventing what is harmful, then and into the future.

In applying the principles of the Rules for Eating to other aspects of life, however, we should not neglect food, as 'food and drink are the areas where "spiritual" people are most likely to be intemperate'.[33] I have noticed in parish life a move away from abstinence with food during Lent towards other responses—a workaholic takes quiet walks, an avid shopper only buys the necessities of life. Although broadening the scope of abstinence might be useful, I wonder about the loss of focus on food in an era when chefs have become celebrities, every television station has food programmes and fast food is ubiquitous. I wonder if the Church feels a degree of embarrassment to be speaking about abstinence in Lent in the midst of a cultural expectation of consumption. Are we colluding with our culture? Are we in denial about the likelihood of intemperance?

[31] Gomulia, 'Study of the Development of Mortification and Discernment', 12. The practice of *agere contra* reflects Ignatius' military background.
[32] George J. Schemel and Judith A. Roemer, *Beyond Individuation to Discipleship: A Directory for Those Who Give the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius* (Scranton: Institute for Contemporary Spirituality, 2000), 254.
[33] Townsend, 'Digesting the Rules for Eating', 99.

Discussing food as Ignatius does may be counter-cultural today, yet there are sympathetic tendencies in secular life. There is a growing fear in the community of the effects of processed food, and detoxification regimes are increasingly popular. How we eat and drink is certainly topical, and it remains a valid subject for attention during the Exercises, provided a person is ready to give that attention. Towards the end of Week Two and moving into Week Three, exercitants come to realise that they want to reform their way of life as followers of Christ.[34] They understand that 'the whole person is what/who is meant to be transformed in the spiritual life, so that no aspect of one's being is left behind'.[35] It behoves directors to be alert to the need and desire of their exercitants, offering them support for the transformative process in the areas where they are able to progress and only giving the Rules for Eating to those ready to undertake them. Offering them as early as Week One is conceivable if desire and readiness have clearly arisen from the retreatant's experience of God's love.

Introducing the Rules for Eating occurs naturally either in Week Two, when the desire for a more balanced life is expressed, or in Week Three, when discussing the ethos of that week or the prayer on the Last Supper. In conversation the director can discern what is relevant to the exercitant's need and explain it. A reminder about the Principle and Foundation (Exx 23) can be timely, as that is the context in which the Rules occur: 'it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things …. desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created.' Simply put, our daily habits either help or hinder us in our purpose, 'to praise, reverence, and serve God'. This broadens the perspective of the exercitant, to see eating as serving not just for sustenance, or enjoyment or health but also as an act of worship and service that benefits not only the individual but the world.

Eating … as an act of worship and service

These rules are important because of the repetitive everyday event of eating. Eating is an accessible activity to which we can begin applying aspects of the Exercises, such as exploring attachments to particular foods and noticing the influence of the bad spirit on eating behaviours and decision-making. Why wait for big life decisions when the small

[34] Townsend, 'Digesting the Rules for Eating', 92.
[35] Cyprian Consiglio, *Spirit, Soul, Body: Toward an Integral Christian Spirituality* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2015), 2.

choices made about eating give the exercitant daily practice and have far-reaching consequences? If a person is praying for, say, an hour a day and eating three meals a day, those two activities may be the mainstays of his or her life.

Ignatius entitles these rules 'Rules to Put Oneself in Order for the Future as to Eating' (Exx 210), which means working in the present to secure the future. Although the short-term emphasis is on stamina for making the Exercises, the long-term goal is stamina for continuing apostolic ministry. Placing the Rules in Week Three makes them a bridge into Week Four and beyond into ordinary life. As the exercitant moves into the resurrection stories, two of which involve sharing food with Jesus, further opportunities arise for reflection on how Jesus engages with people and food. This is followed by the Contemplation to Attain Love in which reflections on God's indwelling (Exx 235) and God's working and labouring (Exx 236) specifically mention the plants and animals from which we derive food to be received as divine gift (Exx 237). What a wonderful place of gratitude to end the Exercises and go forth to live the resurrection life with eating as a contemplative practice.

Elizabeth Delbridge is from Melbourne, Australia. She is a spiritual director and novice blogger (www.sustainingspiritspace.com). She was formerly a social worker and then trained as an Anglican priest, leading a suburban parish for fourteen years. Elizabeth is married with two adult children; she enjoys listening to music, especially piano, and creating an indigenous garden.

Thinking Faith

RULES FOR EATING

Gemma Simmonds

THIS LENT I HAVE BEEN STRUCK by the number of articles and conversations I have engaged with on the subject of giving things up, especially in the food line. Some writers remark on how people they know who have given up all other practices of religion continue to observe some sort of Lenten fast. Others looking from a secular perspective at the problem of non-sustainable consumption decide that maybe the Christians have a point. Still more disagree altogether. 'Where's the real spiritual benefit or meaning in all of this?', asks a philosopher colleague, who is never short of a killer question backed up by the sort of relentless thinking that has me reaching for the migraine tablets. 'It's like a sort of reverse Christmas, where people look forward to getting all these goodies. Except for Lent they give up whatever it is they really like, safe in the knowledge that in six weeks' time they can go back and stuff their faces. In fact it probably makes them indulge even more, because during the six weeks they'll have lost a bit of weight and given their liver a chance to recover so they don't need to worry about the consequences. It's like a fad diet followed by compensation.'

This is not an unreasonable observation and tackles a highly topical subject. In a decade, deaths from liver disease in the UK have risen by around 25 per cent; 90 per cent of those deaths occurred among the under-70s and many of them among the under-40s.[1] In the prison where I volunteer there are more people serving life sentences for murders committed under the influence of alcohol than under the influence of drugs. We are binge-drinking ourselves and other people to death. We

First published by *Thinking Faith* (28 March 2012), at http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/ 20120328_ 1.htm.

[1] See *Deaths from Liver Disease: Implications for End of Life Care in England* (London: National End of Life Care Network, 22 March 2012), available at http://www.endoflifecare-intelligence.org.uk/view?rid=276, accessed 15 March 2018.

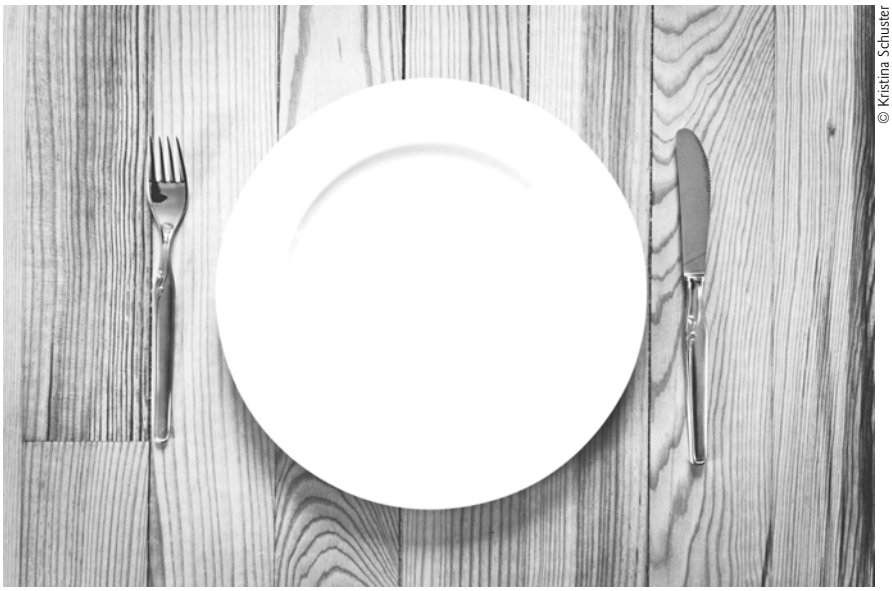
are also eating ourselves to death. Statistics show that over 60 per cent of adults and 30 per cent of children are overweight: 1 in 4 adults in England are classified as obese, with as many as 30,000 people dying prematurely every year from obesity-related conditions.[2] 'The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom', says William Blake in his 'Proverbs of Hell', 'You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough'.[3] The trouble, it seems, is that we don't know what is more than enough, or if we do, we cannot or will not do anything about it. If the road of excess does in any way lead to the palace of wisdom, the danger is that we will be too inebriated to walk straight and too fat to fit through the doorway once we get there.

So is my philosopher friend right in thinking that the Lenten fast is mostly pointless as a spiritual exercise, an unbalanced spiritual version of starve/binge bulimia? I think it would be if viewed in these spiritually bankrupt terms because, as such, it remains within the offending addictive cycle. But St Ignatius Loyola had other ideas. In the *Spiritual Exercises* he slipped in a curious little page called the 'Rules on the Taking of Food'. It comes at the end of the Third Week of the Exercises, which begins with the Last Supper and ends with Christ's death and burial in the tomb. The Rules are overlooked easily by retreatants exhausted by the Wagnerian magnitude of the drama in which they have been involved and going full steam ahead towards the resurrection. They are also avoided by some directors, uncomfortable with the medieval feel of it all and the potentially scruple-inducing details about fasting. But Ignatius did nothing by chance, and this page lies at the heart both of the Exercises and of the passion itself, because it is all about how we deal with a disordered appetite at source.

The purpose of this restraint of the appetite is twofold. It is to avoid excess, disorder and temptation, but also to provide an effective way of praying and living sacramentally, with the totality of ourselves, in an outward sign of the inward grace we are desiring, which is true freedom of heart. Ignatius was no stranger to fasting-induced illness and conceded later in life that this, too, is a form of compulsive disorder. Using the power

[2] See Health and Social Care Information Centre, *Statistics on Obesity, Physical Activity and Diet: England, 2016* (London: Office of National Statistics, 2016), at https://digital.nhs.uk/media/28728/Statistics-on-Obesity-Physical-Activity-and-Diet-England-2016-Report/Any/obes-phys-acti-diet-eng-2016-rep, accessed 15 March 2018; J. R. Speakman, J. R. 'Obesity Part One: The Greatest Health Threat Facing Mankind', *Biologist Journal*, 50/1 (2003), 12.

[3] William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, in *The Complete Poems*, edited by W. H. Stevenson, 3rd edn (London: Routledge, 2007), 113.



of the imagination—in a method familiar to today's diet hypnosis gurus—he emphasizes the harmony and order that come with making balance and restraint the stuff of our daily living. The whole page is an exercise in *agere contra*, Ignatius' idea that pulling gently in the opposite direction of an impulse run wild helps us to regain our balance. It connects with the very first paragraph of the Exercises, which talks of 'preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections' in order better to seek and find the will of God and with it the fullness of human flourishing.

And so we return to the notion of Lenten penance and its connection with the celebration of the passion. Throughout the Exercises, as throughout the gospel narratives, runs the thread of making choices. We see the choices we make, both great and small, in the light of the choices made by Jesus: on entering into our world and living as the Word made flesh, during the temptations in the desert, in proclaiming the Kingdom and modelling a particular type of messiahship, in the garden of Gethsemane, in the manner of his dying. They are all choices of a foolish God whose folly is wiser than our wisdom and who displays power through letting it go. Our world is in thrall at the systemic level to unsustainable consumption. For good or ill we are all enmeshed in the economic systems that both create and are the product of the consumer juggernaut. They thrive on drivenness: the drivenness of those whose daily grinding toil makes it possible for the minority world to live beyond its need, and the drivenness of those who are straining to maintain an unsustainable lifestyle bloated by affluence.

The consumer culture and the driven lifestyles adopted by many as the price of living within it produce a whole array of addictive and compulsive habits. If these happen at the level of the body, so must our counter-cultural spiritual habits. Eating is hugely problematic for women dominated by the body image insisted upon by the fashion culture and, for both genders, food is often deeply embedded within routine compensation mechanisms. People often talk of their relationship with food in terms of addiction. Though not an addiction in the proper sense, we can have eating habits that are dominated by compulsion and feel out of control.

Food has the added challenge of being the one thing on which we cannot go cold turkey. We have to eat to live, even if we struggle to know and control the difference between what is enough and what is more than enough; and fasting, in its proper spiritual context, is not an end in itself. As retreatants emerge into the focus on resurrection and the power of the Spirit in the Fourth Week of the Exercises and life beyond, the idea is to incarnate as fully as possible an experience of prayer that has stripped them of deeply embedded illusions and compulsions and liberated them towards being able to choose, on a daily basis, the end for which God created them. This finds expression in transformative discipleship in whatever way of life best presents itself. It has implications for how we live down to the smallest detail.

The Rules for Eating, then, are about both penance and temperance. Ignatius notes that the principal reason for doing penance is to make satisfaction for our sins, to overcome disordered appetites and to obtain some grace or gift earnestly desired. At the heart of penance lies a lucid knowledge of what drives our disordered lives. Such insight is a gift worth praying and fasting for. The dysfunctional appetite of many may not be for food but for power, money, status, image, success, addictive work patterns or fun, illusory needs in pursuit of illusory ambitions, all of which involve fleeing from the truth of ourselves.

The compulsive compensation mechanisms that kill the pain of modern living may be television, sport, the internet, shopping, even the pursuit of the spiritual as if it were a lifestyle choice or accessory. We need to sit lightly to these as much as to any other drive that has us in its grip. The crucifixion of Christ stripped his followers bare of many illusions and gave them an insight into the extent of their own poverty. Ignatius' Exercises put us in touch, at the level of feeling and imagination, but also at the level of our senses and our living flesh, with the dynamic of our own operative mechanisms. It is this truth with which we try to get in touch during Lent, with a view to seeing ourselves more clearly through the power of the risen Christ.

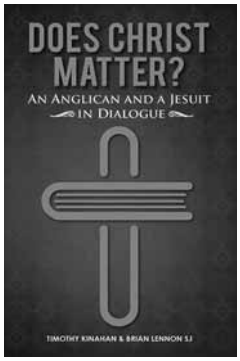
The resurrection appearances are a further process in shedding illusions, even the most cherished illusion of how God characteristically operates. The disciples of Christ crucified and risen become able to see themselves and their place in the general order of creation with the eyes of the loving creator. It becomes possible to live in the dynamic of resurrection, learning to be led in willing poverty of spirit, against the grain of the drive to control, security and self-gratification. This becomes part of the liberation of the earth itself from its subjection to the futility of our unsustainable ambitions and consumer desires.

As the Church moves into the contemplation of the passion in Holy Week, many of us may be coming towards the end of our Lenten fast for this year and gearing up for the celebrations of Easter, tasting and seeing that the Lord is good. But it is worth remembering Ignatius' comment when he heard his biographer, Gonçalves da Câmara, talk admiringly about someone as a man of great prayer. 'He is a man of much mortification', Ignatius corrected.[4] It may be that it is the road of restraint rather than that of excess that in fact leads to the palace of wisdom.

For many the term 'self-denial' is problematic, because it sounds like a form of self-harm. In fact we are talking about the enrichment of self which comes when we are no longer at the mercy of our appetites. I am not denying myself when I resist my appetites; I am denying myself when I stuff my face or indulge any other compulsive appetite. Nietzsche thought of Christianity as self-denial, masochism and the sadism of enjoying watching people suffer. In those terms the ultimate sacrifice of Christ or the martyr and the small sacrifices of the penitent are seen as the inflicting of punishment. But Ignatius saw the reordering of the appetites as a route to self-knowledge and to liberation from compulsions. Like prayer, it deserves to be something that is woven into the fabric of our lives all the time rather than being dusted down once in a liturgical while. In that respect my philosopher friend turns out to have been right after all.

Gemma Simmonds CJ is a lecturer in pastoral theology and director of the Religious Life Institute at Heythrop College, University of London.

[4] *Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The Memoriale of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara*, translated by Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005), n. 195.



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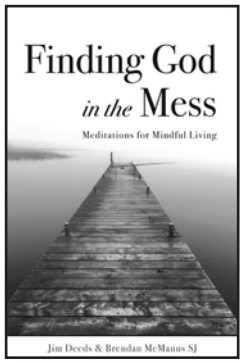

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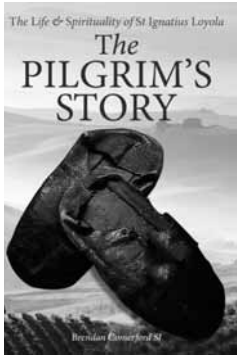

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Thinking Faith

THE SPIRITUALITY OF REST

Gerald O'Mahony

I HAVE BEEN ASKED TO EXPLORE the biblical, Ignatian and other foundations of a healthy and positive approach to rest and holidays, encouraging readers really to make the most of whatever break they may be intending to take. One thought that comes to mind is that many people will be reading this as they try to find courage and focus to keep going at their daily work with a holiday on the horizon. But it is perhaps best to start at the beginning.

The Bible starts with the story of creation; and after six days of work God had a rest, we are told. God is pictured as setting us an example, and sure enough the liturgical and legal week thereupon consisted of six days of work and one day of rest called the Sabbath. So far as the Old Testament is concerned it is proper to have one day of rest to every six days of work.

One Old Testament practice of rest and recreation gets a mention in the Gospels: the parents of Jesus are said to go up to Jerusalem for certain feasts and they go as pilgrims in caravans, the women in one camp, the men in another. As in all pilgrimages the world over there is socialising and diversion, and change from normal routines. Coming to Jesus himself, the most obvious rest break he took was to sail away with the twelve to find a lonely place so that they could be by themselves for a change. We know that it did not work out, because instead of getting a rest from the crowds they had been dealing with, they found an even bigger multitude waiting for them on the shore. However, Jesus clearly thought that going away for a break was a good plan in itself. Another

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appealing habit of Jesus seems to have been to escape to Bethany when life got fraught, to the house of Martha, Mary and Lazarus.

The Sabbath day was moved to Sunday, but continued to be a day of rest for Christians. The Gospel of Mark is the first one to detail what Christians know as Holy Week, starting from late on Palm Sunday and ending on Easter Sunday morning. Sunday became the holy day, the day the disciples rested from work; Sunday was the climax of the week of re-creation, so God's day of rest was observed on that day. As Christianity moved on into the early Middle Ages, many more days, about forty in all, were designated as Holy Days, on which employers were directed to let their employees have a rest day. Once the 'weekend' idea took over, most of these privileged feast days were demoted again, being remembered simply as Days of Devotion—but they had served their purpose with poor people.

Now, to Ignatius and the Spiritual Exercises: what does Ignatius say about rest and holidays? One obvious thing is the fact that he places a space between the Weeks of the Exercises themselves, and also that he tempers the amount asked of exercitants according to how busy he has kept them, and their age and state of health. The thrust of the whole thirty days is to leave the exercitant in consolation, and consolation is more restful than desolation, every time.

I am fond of mathematics, and once I devised a mathematical way of talking about consolation and desolation. Picture a scale from 0 to 10:

0 1 2 3 4 ((5)) 6 7 8 9 10

On the scale, numbers zero to three represent moods of depression, from absolute zero to number one getting better, to number two better still, to number three, nearly normal. Four, five and six represent consolation. Seven, eight, nine and ten represent working too hard, number ten being the worst—breaking point. These seven-to-ten states may be either manic or panic. The best place of all to be is number five, which I call the Still Point. If I am depressed, I take steps to improve up towards five. If I am working too hard, or getting carried away in some enterprise that is unreal or manic, then the thing to do is to stop, relax and slow down. Take a holiday.

Of course it follows that there are two kinds of desolation, but only one kind of consolation. My numbers zero to three are depression, but they are also desolation. My numbers seven to ten are veering towards panic over a task too great or over some manic scheme that has lost touch

with reality. Seven to ten are also moods or states of desolation, but the way down to number five is the opposite of the way up out of depression. The Still Point is difficult to hold, but anyone working towards it, either from up or down, is in a place of safety. To find the will of God for me, the best strategy is not to work myself to the bone and do without holidays or rest, but to aim sensitively at reaching number Five, the Still Point.

A gospel emphasis to bear in mind is that merit has its drawbacks. The elder brother of the prodigal son had slaved away in his father's field year after year, only to find that his father made more of a fuss of his wastrel young brother—the father's desires being equated by Jesus, the storyteller, to what matters most to God. Merit was not everything. Again, the 99 sheep in another story had been good as gold, never straying at all, when back comes the shepherd making a great fuss of the lost one, calling on his friends and relations to rejoice over the find. The 99 must have felt cheated, but then, merit is not everything. Yet again, the labourers in the vineyard who had toiled all twelve hours of the day felt cheated that those who had only clocked on in the last hour received the same wage as they did. Merit was not everything. The Pharisee who had ticked all the boxes, praying at the front of the Temple and telling God how he had fasted and given alms, would have been astonished to know that in Jesus' eyes the one who went away from the temple justified was the one who did not justify himself, the sinful tax-collector. Merit is not everything. It is better by far to step back a little and reflect on what it is that God really wants.

Another set of gospel images can help us not to set too much store by success in work or success in business. It is not flattering, but it is very valuable to bear in mind as the bottom line. Consider: there are two sides to a lot of the images used by Jesus. For example, there are sheep, and there are shepherds. Now I may be a poor specimen as a shepherd, but I am still loved as one of God's flock of sheep. I may be a poor 'light of the world', but God's light still shines on me. I may be a poor servant of God, but I am still God's beloved child. I may be less than rock-like, but God is still a rock for me. I may be a poor collector of 'coins' (people with God's image stamped on them), but I am still a precious coin myself with God's image on me. I may not be a great guide, but Jesus continues to show me the way to go. And so on—I could name several more paired images. All it needs is a firm faith to cling on to the basic gift of God, in which one is passive, and just to do one's best with the active, apostolic side.

Take the strange tale told in chapter 17 of Matthew's Gospel, about the time when the tax-gatherers of the Temple asked Peter whether his Master paid the temple tax or not. Peter said, 'Of course he does', but then went to ask Jesus if he did in fact pay. What it then comes to is Jesus saying that he and Peter, as children of God, do not have to pay taxes to God. But still he told Peter to go fishing and raise the money for them both as a voluntary contribution. The story of Adam and Eve had been interpreted to mean that work was a tax or burden imposed by God (see Genesis 3:17–19). Jesus here in Matthew's Gospel is now saying that God does not impose taxes on his own children, so therefore work is a voluntary contribution asked of a child of God, and no longer a tax.

Holidays can of course involve hard work themselves, but let it be something-different-from-work hard work. People deciding to walk the Camino de Santiago de Compostela have to have stamina. All sorts of sports and pastimes, such as skiing, involve exercise or skill. My own favourite holiday over the years was to hire a four-berth yacht in Maldon for a week and sail with three companions down the River Blackwater, out to sea, along the coast and in to visit various other rivers. It took skill and good luck, but it was completely different from anything else in my life (except that dealing with tides and winds was ultimately an object lesson in discernment!).

There are of course major obstacles that can stand in the way of taking rest, or of enjoying a holiday. What if you are poor, scarcely able

to make ends meet? What if you are homeless, unable to do anything but beg on the streets? What if you are married with three small children—you can perhaps afford a holiday, but a fortnight at the seaside may be more work than being at home, and more of the same? What if you are a millionaire, able to afford a luxury holiday anytime? Is that all right by God? The questions posed in this paragraph should not, I think, be allowed to spoil whatever holiday my readers may be planning. Enjoy the break, then come back refreshed ready to cope with awkward questions. So it seems to me.

Gerald O'Mahony SJ is a writer and spiritual director.

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MY FATHER AND THE HISTORICAL AUTHORITY OF JESUS

Ruth Agnes Evans

MY FATHER'S FAMILY was working class, from the north of England, and he imbibed a rich popular culture from his mother, aunts and uncle, his two sisters and his friends. His influences included the cinema, radio programmes, the local repertory theatre and flourishing local rugby team. As an adult, he took on the music and lyrics of Leonard Cohen and Bob Dylan. Songs such as 'All along the Watch Tower' and 'Señor' were deeply in tune with his understanding of life.[1] These songs poetically express the plight of the human being who, exposed to many risks and sorrows, struggles through uncharted tracts of time, not defiant but bewildered. They are great songs about the burden of existential experience. At the same time they are by no means hymns to futility. The overall effect of these penetrating lyrics, combined with their poignant music, is uplifting. They hint at a mystical purpose within the struggle.

My father knew what this struggle felt like. But he also knew about the delight of experience. As a student at Durham University in the mid-1950s, he fell deeply in love with my mother. In the early years of their married life, anxious to secure their love, they resolved to search together for the Christian Church that represented the full intention of Christ when he said to Peter, 'And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church' (Matthew 16:18). My mother had a serious

This article is dedicated to the memory of my father, William James Evans, who died on Ash Wednesday, 1 March 2017. It is indebted to both his and my mother's writings.

[1] Bob Dylan, 'All along the Watchtower', *John Wesley Harding* (Columbia, 1967), lyrics available at http://www.azlyrics.com/lyrics/bobdylan/allalongthewatchtower.html; Bob Dylan, 'Senor', *Street-Legal*, (Columbia, 1978), lyrics available at http://lyrics.rockmagic.net/lyrics/bob_dylan/street_legal_1978.html

intention of discovering a Christian life within a Christian fellowship. But it was my father's tireless intellect which led them into the Roman Catholic Church. The inexhaustible joy of this discovery, together with its intellectual excitement, was with him until the last hours of his life, when he continued to review his writing on the subject. He used to say of the good news of Jesus, 'It is too good not to be true'.

Love and the Search for Faith

And so my father's life was not ultimately a story about moral bewilderment. Nonetheless, he was scarred by the confusing experiences of his childhood, which were the result of his parents' unhappy marriage. Out of this, there came both an understanding of human vulnerability and a profound need for certainty and truth.

His vision of life was softened by tenderness and joy, above all, I think in his experience of falling in love with my mother. She came from a different background from his. He was working class and had discovered his passion for English literature through the resources of an excellent local grammar school which was eager to further the potential of local lads and enrich their options. (His two sisters, who were equally promising, did not receive the same encouragement to go to university. It was widely assumed that they would leave school and work locally, which they did.)

My parents on their wedding day, 25 July 1959

Dad did not have the practical aptitude that would have suited him to acquire a trade. The excitement of discovering his intellectual gifts enlarged his horizons. As a result, fortunately both for my father and for the local shipyard, he left the home town he loved and went to Durham to study English literature. My mother was from a cultured middle-class family which had made the advantages of literature, the London theatre and

opera available to her from childhood. No doubt the stimulus of understanding each other and their differing perspectives was part of the attraction. Despite the disparities in their backgrounds, they formed a union which would support my father through his existential journey.

As a young, recently married man soon to have a child, my father experienced a deepening of his need to rediscover the resource of Christian faith. It was, I think, the experience of falling overwhelmingly in love which fuelled his search. His youth had exposed him to the fragility of every encounter in life, underpinned, as he knew everything to be, by human frailty and potential loss. The more precious the relationship the more deeply he felt this fear, and he wanted to secure his love with my mother on the rock of Christian faith.

The problem was that they did not know which version of Christianity to choose. My father and his siblings had been sent to the local Methodist Sunday School, chiefly to give their mother some necessary space in their cramped terraced home. This planted the seed of Dad's love for the human Jesus, but it did not satisfy him intellectually. My mother came from a background of mixed influences. Her mother was Jewish and an atheist; and her father was a lapsed Catholic. Mum's schooling inclined her to accept Christianity as presented by the Church of England, a solution which would have appeared to satisfy her religious nature without too unduly distressing her mother. Dad's suggestion that they make enquiries about the nature of Catholicism was initially so shocking for Mum that it was a while before she could accompany him. Dad's mother was, in her quiet way, not happy about it either.

Mum writes,

> *I was prejudiced against the Catholic Church, partly because of my mother, who was Jewish, feeling her race had been persecuted by the Church and partly because I had imbibed a biased attitude to Catholicism at the Anglican school I attended—particularly in the history lessons about Henry VIII and Elizabeth I—so when Bill suggested looking into the Catholic faith, I wept, thinking that what I had believed would further strengthen our marriage might in fact prove to be an obstacle. But Bill, who also had inherited prejudices from his Methodist background, said, 'I do think we have to look at the largest of the Christian Churches in intellectual honesty, even if it is to discover that there are valid grounds to reject it'.*
>
> *A little later, Bill noticed that some Jesuit priests were giving a course of lectures on the Catholic faith at Corby Hall, and we decided to attend,*

with an open mind. I remember being surprised by how many people were there, and by the sincerity and enthusiasm of the priests giving the lectures. These were followed by discussions in which people felt free to question and dissent. The priests did not seem intolerant or fanatical, as I had imagined they might be, but listened with respect to the views expressed; then they often quoted from Jesus' words in the Gospels to support the Catholic position. I remember we read the Gospels again afterwards and felt that they overwhelmingly supported the Real Presence and the Catholic positions on the founding of the one true Church with Peter at its head and on the forgiveness of sins. Gradually, over the course of the lectures I found my perception of the Catholic Church was changing and so was Bill's.

Meanwhile the quest took on a life of its own. Here Dad describes the atmosphere of their first Mass.

Shortly before Christmas, 1959, we decided we would go to Mass together. We chose to go to the evening Mass at St Mary's, the church in the centre of Sunderland, thinking that there would be very few people there. We were in for a shock. The church held about six hundred people and it was jam-packed. Not only was it jam-packed, but it was full of the sort of people I'd never seen in Protestant churches. It was like the crowd at Roker Park, the local football ground …. I felt throughout, particularly at the consecration and immediately afterwards, that there was a reverence, a depth and intensity of inward prayer there which I had never experienced before. The faith and devotion near the altar were almost tangible; you could cut it with a knife. The booklet from the Catholic Enquiry Centre had already introduced me to the idea of the Mass as a sacrifice. Here I had my first experience of it as a reality.

My parents both felt indebted to the excellent catechetical instruction they received at Corby Hall. Mum was received into the Church not long before she had my sister Mary, on 9 February 1961. But Dad continued to read and study scrupulously. He pursued his enquiry to an extent that astounded the young parish priest, Fr Caden, who gently hinted: at a certain point, why not just give in!

The issue of the intention of Jesus when he established what he described as 'my church' was central to this search. Thus ascertaining the truth about the Church which most comprehensively represented the authority of Jesus while he acted as a man upon this earth took precedence for Dad above all issues. This did not mean that he rejected the insights that came from his Methodist past and my mother's Anglican

lessons at school. Father Caden left it to Dad to decide when he was 'ready to give himself up', as he put it humorously, but suggested that a point might come when he should yield to grace. Dad came to feel this just before my birth. His painstaking initial enquiry into the Catholic faith ended then with a joyful reception into the Church about a year and a half after Mary was born. By now it was September 1962, within two weeks of my birth on September 8 and then my baptism.

This was the beginning of a passion for Catholicism which lasted until the end of my father's life and in the course of which he attached huge importance to the teaching resources of the Church. As he grew older he felt troubled that this teaching, for which he was so personally grateful, had lost some of its clarity and thoroughness. This was not in its essence, to which his loyalty never wavered, but in the way it was being presented. One of the sources of his anguish was the state of modern scripture scholarship. My parents had turned to scripture to see if it backed up the interpretation of the Church they were discovering from the local Jesuit programme. An assumption about the essential historicity of the Gospels—that the Gospels are not fictionalised documents—was a prerequisite for this kind of analysis. In fact, without this assumption it is difficult to see how they could have taken this approach at all.

As an older man Dad became distressed by the trend in modern scholarship that seemed to question the historicity of almost every incident in the Gospels. He found it corrosive. If many of the recorded sayings of Jesus were devised by his followers for their own purposes, rather than being what he actually said, ascertaining the intentions of Jesus becomes ambiguous. The premise of Dad's original search for faith, however, was that the intentions of Jesus did and do exist and are discoverable. While recognising that the Gospels come down to us through a collection of human recollections and resources, he was distressed to see the straightforward faith of some of his fellow Catholics, many of whom did not have the advantage of his own painstaking enquiry into the grounds of belief, disturbed. Although my father had studied the faith in depth there was nothing sceptical about his own conclusions. This, together with his working-class background, gave him sympathy for the plight of the 'man in the street', who knows his or her Catholic faith without intellectual self-confidence and feels worried by the scepticism of academics.

For example, my father liked the story of the three wise men and did not understand why it, along with many other details of the infancy

The Adoration of the Magi, *by Albrecht Altdorfer, c.1530–1535*

narratives, had become the focus of so much scholarly attack. This illustrated for him an increasing and troubling divide between modern scholarship and the consolations of the believer. Rather poignantly, these disputed narratives are at the heart of many believers' traditional celebration of Christmas, and Christmas was one of the few days in my father's childhood when he could be sure of family harmony and happiness. Once, to support him, I said I thought that God becoming a human baby was a more astounding story to swallow than the one about the three wise men. Was it really so difficult to believe that a few men of integrity, dedicated to truth within their natural lights, should have been guided on a journey by God to the scene of the Son's nativity?

I think my father may have identified with the predicament of the Magi who, passionate for a truth they did not yet possess, had to rely upon a mysterious star, their natural acumen and the wisdom they had inherited as a guide across the desert. My father's enquiring mind and the inherited insights of his Methodism, together with an increasing awareness of Catholic practice and belief, were the resources that he used to guide him towards the Church. His motives were personal, but his tools were rational and academic; he depended on his intellect to guide him. He assumed that if God had established his truth on this earth through his Son, then that truth must be objectively available to the enquiring and sincere intelligence. He was not in sympathy with the kind of relativism that is satisfied with what 'feels like the right thing for me'.

Family Discussions about Jesus

Dad often said that the greatness of the figure of Jesus outstrips the literary context that portrays him, for example in the Gospel of Mark. In other words, there is nothing to suggest that anyone involved in the process of recording the gospel stories had the genius necessary to create the character of Jesus. Now I know that the Gospels are more skilled and complex as teaching narratives than they appear. But my father's point was that they would not be great literary works without the central figure they portray. If Jesus did not in fact live and breathe as described, where did the genius to describe him come from? Not from the imaginations of his disciples who underestimate and misunderstand him at every turn (Mark 4:38, 5:31, 6:37, 8:16–21, 10:13–14; Luke 9:54–5).

My father would speak of the apparent contradictions in the character of Jesus. What writer of fiction would have dared to let Jesus collapse at Gethsemane, overwhelmed by the very thing he has said that he must do? After all the exalted encouragement he has showered on his disciples, Jesus can barely overcome his own weakness (Mark 14:33–34). What writer of fiction would have had the audacity to present this broken, trembling man as the Son of God? But the absence of ostensible godlikeness in episodes like this has the effect of bringing the personality of Jesus to life. He possesses the inconsistencies and vulnerabilities of actuality. The contradictions in his personality ring true, they make him cohere, not as an idea but as a human being.

I always liked the story of the woman taken in adultery, and once I asked Dad why Jesus, confronted by her accusers, had merely stooped and written in the sand (John 8:6). It seemed to me a strange thing to do at this tense moment when the onus was on him to resolve the crisis by his teaching stature, his courage and his intellectual and moral brilliance. My father simply said that he thought Jesus was embarrassed by her situation. We can only guess, of course, at what Jesus felt as he stooped. But I have never forgotten the ease with which my father attributed to Jesus this capacity for an ordinary and natural human reaction. It moved me far more than if he had offered a lofty explanation for Jesus' behaviour. I realised that not everything Jesus did and felt had to be extraordinary. It is, of course, quite plausible that Jesus experienced stress and shame at the sight of a woman who was being humiliated and threatened in public, and that he needed to pause. Anxious at her peril and his responsibility to avert it, what could be more natural for him than to bend and stir the sand while he composed his thoughts?

It is also probable that Jesus needed a strategy to relieve the ugly excitement and was repelled by the onlookers' voyeuristic enjoyment of the woman's plight. I understood then that Jesus was a sensitive man, and the sight of a helpless and threatened woman could distress him. We may tend to attribute to Jesus the exalted reactions which seem to us consistent with the grandeur of his godhead, but there is a danger that, in so doing, we forget that his experience included the range of simple human reactions that are familiar to us. I am sure I owe the fact that I had this insight about Jesus from a young age partly to my father.

Dad knew that in Jesus he was searching to understand an unfathomably great human being and that Jesus' humanity was united to the nature of God. But he also understood that Jesus really was a human being, capable of need. Both in Sunderland and then back in his home town of Barrow-in-Furness, Dad worked as a teacher; he was gifted, but he found it stressful. He was not practical himself but he could imagine the solace and stability of the trade of an artisan who worked on wood with his hands. He spoke once of how he thought the unambitious manual trade of a carpenter was a sound basis for someone who needed to develop the resources to carry out the demanding mission of Son of God. Jesus needed balance, security, agreeable work and a manageable routine. He needed to prepare his strength and his capacities. It was better, Dad thought, that he was not over-taxed in childhood.

Dad never took the sacraments for granted. He always saw them as a tremendous gift and aid through life, lovingly bestowed by a merciful God, following his own arduous search for the truth. I have never met anyone more reverent of Jesus than my father. Often in my adult life I would feel moved by the profound reverence with which, in our sceptical age, I saw him approach the Eucharist. And again I understood that reverence for Jesus as Son of God did not exclude the effort to understand Jesus as a man.

Dad liked the story of the wedding feast of Cana. It struck a chord with him; he himself loved times of festivity, plentiful good food and wine. He would make the point that the first miracle of Jesus was about social joy and community, an act of pure generosity which affirmed our times of celebration. Dad had an extravagant streak, no doubt a response to the poverty of his childhood. He would buy in more food and wine for family gatherings than we could possibly need. When Mum challenged him on this he would say, 'Look at Jesus, a hundred and twenty gallons!' Although the story is funny, I actually think it contains an interesting

point. Jesus was abundantly generous, not only as the source of elevated spiritual gifts, but in the human encounters that he shared with us. There are stories which confirm his capacity for asceticism (Matthew 4:1–2), but there are also incidents like this one which confirm his love of merrymaking (Matthew 9:10, 11:18–19). He needed the things that we do: celebration, laughter, interaction, festive community to lift his spirit.

Dad loved Mary the Mother of Jesus and he was aware of her human predicament. One of his favourite prayers was the Rosary. He told me that the phrase that struck him most forcibly from the annunciation story was, 'And the angel left her' (Luke 1:38; NJB). After the ecstasy of the angelic announcement there was this experience of loneliness which, for her, must have felt close to abandonment. At this moment, the suffering of her unique destiny, notwithstanding its joy, could not entirely have escaped her thoughts.

Dad felt the sorrow of the passion. He understood deeply that, at the human level, it was a story about betrayal and humiliation. He would always say that it all rang so true to the way human beings behave; the cruelty, the envy, the cowardice, the betrayal of greatness. I think the heartbreak of the story was with him, although we did not speak of it a great deal.

Faith, Conversion and Salvation

My father was a traditional and loyal Catholic but this did not mean his attitudes were exclusive, and he certainly would not have had sympathy with any tendency to use the moral teaching of the Church as an excuse, say, for homophobia or a lack of respect for gay couples. He appreciated the social developments that he saw in his lifetime which gave people from minority groups a better access to the rights and opportunities of this society. He also appreciated the growth of an egalitarianism, coinciding at its height with his young adulthood and midlife, that gave people from backgrounds such as his own access to the good things of life through education and improved wages. He rejoiced in the welfare state, the great achievement of Clement Attlee's Labour government, which used to offer badly needed security to vulnerable members of our society.[2]

I do not know where Dad got the insight as a young man to define his search for the Church in such pure and objective terms, and with such

[2] In July 1945, Clement Attlee succeeded Winston Churchill as Prime Minister of Britain. His reforming government created the welfare state.

laudable deference to the intentions of Jesus. I guess that his intellectual integrity and longing for the truth were strong motivations. Also, he had an enquiring love for Jesus that he owed to his Methodist upbringing. It was his conviction about the historical truth of the revelation that comes to us in Jesus that marked Dad's Catholicism. His discovery of Catholicism, together with embarking on his happy marriage, were the defining events of his life.

Dad left behind an unfinished manuscript on his conversion and was still working on it a few hours before he died. Perhaps the grace of his conversion gave him the tranquillity necessary for this. Despite its intellectual strength, there was something childlike about the faith my father acquired. He had a tremendous confidence that, through what Jesus did for us, we have been saved. In the last year of his life, knowing how poor his prospects were, I saw him glance at a picture of the annunciation. He looked at me and said, 'Something wonderful for us was accomplished there'.

When Dad died it was not just our family and friends who were saddened. It was also local taxi-drivers, neighbours, the milkman and his companions in hospital. Former colleagues and pupils came to his packed funeral. They all appreciated my father for his kindness and generosity, and for the way he shared with them a passion for sport, in particular football, rugby and cricket. I do not think they would have recognised my father as a deeply pious man. Although Dad did attend occasional retreats, on the whole he did not seek out specialised religious environments. He drew on the local resources of the Church: the parish Mass, the sacraments, discussions, days of recollection and a prayer group provided through the parish. This illustrated his confidence in the everyday provision of the Church and his affinity with the local community where he grew up. He did not need a rarified atmosphere to believe he was on the road to salvation. He needed the parish Mass which filled his heart with awe as a young man and to which he entrusted himself and his family.

Ruth Evans is a writer on matters of spirituality and social justice.

TOLKIEN, MIDDLE EARTH AND *LAUDATO SI'*

Nancy Enright

IT MIGHT COME AS A SURPRISE that the timely and hotly contested topic of climate change can be related to the fantasy fiction of the beloved Oxford professor J. R. R. Tolkien, who set his *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* in the quasi-medieval world of Middle Earth. Middle Earth is actually conceived as being our own world, thousands of years ago, in a mythical time when there was 'less noise and more green', as he describes it in the first chapter of *The Hobbit*.[1] Tolkien is often regarded as being 'conservative'; however, his views on the environment would be considered progressive in today's terms, more so than those of many politicians who see themselves as environmentalists. In fact, Tolkien's commitment to the natural world, grounded in his Roman Catholic faith, goes far beyond the stereotypical categories of politics.

Others have written on the connection between Tolkien and Pope Francis's encyclical on the environment, *Laudato si'*. Archbishop Chaput of Philadelphia interestingly explores how Tolkien—and his fellow fantasy writer C. S. Lewis—show a respect for nature that grew, in part, out of their experience of the horrors of the First World War, as well as out of the overriding influence of their Christian faith.[2] As Archbishop Chaput argues, at the root of Tolkien's view of nature is his vision of it as the creation of a holy God. Nature did not invent itself, nor is it without intrinsic and spiritual significance, in either Tolkien's personal view or his mythology. God (the One, or Eru, in Tolkien's system) is the creator of the natural world in the beginning, described in *The Silmarillion* through the poetic myth of the worlds being sung into existence.[3]

[1] J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Hobbit* (London: HarperCollins, 1996 [1937]), 5. And see also Tolkien to Charlotte and Henry Plimmer, 8 February 1967, in *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien: A Selection*, edited by Humphrey Carpenter (London: HarperCollins, 2006), 376.

[2] Charles Chaput, 'Praise Be to You, Lord', *First Things* (16 August 2015), at http://www.first things.com/web-exclusives/2015/06/praise-be-to-you-lord, accessed 23 March 2018.

[3] J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* (London: HarperCollins, 2004 [1977]), 3–5.

J. R. R. Tolkien

Joshua Hren, in an article in *New Blackfriars,* looks at the parallels between *Laudato si'* and Tolkien's dislike and distrust of what he calls 'the Machine', that is, technology as an externalisation of power: 'use of external plans or devices (apparatus) instead of development of the inherent inner properties or talents'.[4] This dislike is rooted in a deep respect and reverence for nature, 'the real primary world'.[5] Hren explores the connection between Tolkien's depictions of the destruction of nature and the instrumental 'technocratic paradigm' which informs the modern world, and which is criticized by Pope Francis in *Laudato si'*. He quotes Pope Francis: 'Science and technology are not neutral; from the beginning to the end of a process, various intentions and possibilities are in play and can take on distinct shapes'.[6] Intentionality is key to understanding the evils that can be imposed by technology. In Tolkien's world, as Hren explains, there are close links in this respect between technology and the evil use of magic, which is inherently coercive: 'its desire is *power* in this world, domination of things or wills'.[7] Hren's analysis delves deeply into the dangers of technology when it is disconnected from the spiritual realities of what exists and from love. Tolkien's fantasy, like *Laudato si'*, does the same.

[4] Tolkien to Milton Waldman, late 1951, quoted in Joshua Hren, 'Tolkien and the Technocratic Paradigm', *New Blackfriars*, 99/1079 (January 2018), 97–107, here 98.
[5] Tolkien to Milton Waldman, late 1951, in *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 145.
[6] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 114, quoted in Hren, 'Tolkien and the Technocratic Paradigm', 103.
[7] J. R. R. Tolkien, 'On Fairy Stories', quoted in Hren, 'Tolkien and the Technocratic Paradigm', 105.

A closer look at Tolkien's writings will reveal more parallels with the Pope's encyclical, showing, moreover, how a lived respect for nature is crucial to moral goodness for Tolkien, as it is for Pope Francis.

Nature and Morality in Middle Earth

In Tolkien's most famous books, *The Hobbit* and, particularly, *The Lord of the Rings,* good characters are invariably shown as respectful of nature and close to it, whereas evil characters are often revealed as such by their disregard for and abuse of nature in pursuit of power and greed for wealth or other material things.

In *The Hobbit*, the protagonists are helped by Beorn, a shape-shifter who can take the form of a bear or a human. He offers them a vegetarian feast served by 'wonderful' and intelligent animals.[8] The wood-elves, who are, like all elves, essentially good creatures, 'mostly lived and hunted in the open woods, and had houses or huts on the ground and in the branches', close to the earth and loving the forest.[9] Eagles are depicted as noble and brave; they offer the hobbit and his friends a natural sanctuary in their eyrie when attacked by evil wolves, called 'wargs', and goblins, which represent a corruption of nature. In *The Lord of the Rings* the good wizard Gandalf observes that wargs are 'no ordinary wolves hunting for food in the wilderness'.[10] And goblins (called 'orcs' in *The Lord of the Rings*) were created by the evil Dark Lord Melkor from elves, 'by slow arts of cruelty … corrupted and enslaved'.[11] The dragon Smaug, who hoards jewels and gold under the Lonely Mountain, displays an indifference to living things and willingness to destroy them: 'Soon he would set all the shoreland woods ablaze and wither every field and pasture'.[12]

The topic of nature is explored more deeply in *The Lord of the Rings* than in *The Hobbit*. The elves, in Tolkien's mythology the highest of all creatures, are presented in *The Lord of the Rings* as profoundly connected with the natural world. The Fellowship of the Ring, the brotherhood dedicated to destroying the evil Ring of Power, is formed at Rivendell, the home of the elf king Elrond and his daughter Arwen. Rivendell lies in a peaceful valley in the woods, surrounded by natural beauty. The beauty

[8] Tolkien, *Hobbit*, 162.
[9] Tolkien, *Hobbit*, 207.
[10] J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, volume 1, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (London: HarperCollins, 2005 [1954]), 299.
[11] Tolkien, *Silmarillion*, 40.
[12] Tolkien, *Hobbit*, 300.

of the elves themselves, personified in Arwen perhaps most of all, is linked intimately with nature; the first description of Arwen, as seen by the hobbit Frodo, is full of nature metaphors:

> Blue was her raiment as the unclouded heaven, but her eyes were grey as the starlit evening; her mantle was sewn with golden flowers, but her hair was dark as the shadows of twilight. As the light upon the leaves of trees, as the voice of clear waters, as the stars above the mists of the world, such was her glory and her loveliness; and in her face was a shining light.[13]

Lothlorien, another elf kingdom to which the Fellowship travel, is the home of the Galadrim or 'Tree People', ruled benevolently by their king and queen, Celeborn and Galadriel. Lothlorien is described in prelapsarian terms, retaining a poignant beauty that has been lost in the world beyond its borders. Frodo experiences it as if he had 'stepped through a high window into a vanished world':

> All that he saw was shapely, but the shapes seemed at once clear cut, as if they had been first conceived and drawn at the uncovering of his eyes, and ancient as if they had endured forever …. No blemish or sickness or deformity could be seen in anything that grew upon the earth. On the land of Lorien there was no stain.[14]

No pollution or corruption has occurred in the world of the Galadrim. Galadriel, likened by Tolkien himself and others to Mary, the mother of Jesus, embodies this pure landscape in an idealized and ethereal form: 'She shone like a window of glass upon a far hill in the westering sun, or as a remote lake seen from a mountain: a crystal fallen in the lap of the land'.[15] She resists the temptation to accept the Ring from Frodo, because she knows its tendency to turn all things and every bearer to evil, with the more powerful being the more vulnerable to its influence.

Other good creatures, such as hobbits and dwarves (despite the latter's love for gold and jewels) are linked in one way or another with a reverence for the land—for mountains, for trees and gardens, for the earth. Hobbits 'love peace and quiet and good tilled earth'; and the dwarf Gimli extols the caves of Helm's Deep as 'glades of flowering stone'.[16] The Ents, those

[13] Tolkien, *Fellowship of the Ring*, 165.
[14] Tolkien, *Fellowship of the Ring*, 393.
[15] Tolkien, *Fellowship of the Ring*, 288.
[16] Tolkien, *Fellowship of the Ring*, 1; J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, volume 2, *The Two Towers* (London: HarperCollins, 2001 [1954]), 183.

ancient and odd creatures created by Tolkien as the 'Shepherds of the Trees', reflect a particular love for trees. This love is expressed deeply and majestically when the Ents go to war against the corrupt wizard Saruman to protect them.

Saruman and the other evil characters in *The Lord of the Rings* also show the significance of nature for Tolkien; their abuse of it reveals the twistedness of their value systems. Speaking to Gandalf early in *The Fellowship of the Ring*, Saruman advocates joining forces with Sauron, the second Dark Lord and the most powerful evil figure in the trilogy, to gain 'Knowledge, Rule, Order', 'power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see'.[17] Gandalf recognises the tyrannical nature of such 'order', and refuses.

The Ent Treebeard describes Gandalf as 'the only wizard who really cares about trees'; Saruman, by contrast, has 'a mind of metal and wheels'.[18] Saruman has created an army of orcs to rival the armies of Sauron. Orcs are themselves an abuse of nature, in that they are a corruption of elves; Saruman's use of them shows his willingness to accept what was originally created as beautiful and good but has now become ugly and evil. Saruman encourages the orcs to devastate the landscape, cutting down trees—sometimes to 'feed the fires of Orthanc', the tower in the fortress of Isengard where Saruman lives and where he is, significantly, building machines—but often for no reason at all.[19]

This destruction is what enrages Treebeard, whose anger and grief at the loss of trees he has known since they were seedlings reflects Tolkien's own dismay over the ravaged landscapes of industrialised England. He himself once expressed grief over the cutting down of a tree (in the foreword to his book *Tree and Leaf*) and gave up driving because of the effect of cars on the environment.[20] Of a plan to build a road cutting through Christ Church Meadow in Oxford, he wrote: 'The spirit of "Isengard", if not of Mordor, is of course always cropping up. The present design of destroying Oxford in order to accommodate motor-cars is a case.'[21] Tolkien's actions and words seem ahead of their time, even prophetic, in the era of climate change and mass extinctions, in recognising the abuse of nature as evil.

[17] Tolkien, *Fellowship of the Ring*, 259.
[18] Tolkien, *Two Towers*, 74, 84.
[19] Tolkien, *Two Towers*, 86.
[20] J. R. R. Tolkien, *Tree and Leaf*, in *The Tolkien Reader* (New York: Ballantine, 1978), 32; Colin Duriez, *The J. R. R. Tolkien Handbook: Comprehensive Guide to His Life, Writings, and World of Middle-Earth* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 179.
[21] Tolkien to Michael Straight, undated, *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 235.

The horrors of what that evil can do are seen most clearly in Mordor, the realm dominated by Sauron who, as the titular Lord of the Rings, is threatening all of Middle Earth. The land surrounding Mordor is described as a 'desolation' in *The Two Towers*. The description is chilling:

> Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and gray, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about.

Mordor is a land completely destroyed by Sauron's regardless attacks upon nature. As Frodo and his companion Sam approach it, they are literally sickened by what has been done to the natural world. All growing things are blighted, water is polluted, ash and poison cover the once beautiful landscape, now become 'a land defiled, diseased beyond all healing'.[22]

In *Before the Flood*, a 2016 documentary film on climate change, land destroyed by the extraction of oil is described by the narrator, Leonardo DiCaprio, as looking 'like Mordor'.[23] Through its continuing popularity, renewed by Peter Jackson's film adaptations, Tolkien's fantasy still provides us with the vocabulary and images to talk about the environmental devastation of our own world.

Mordor: an oil sands mine in Alberta, Canada

[22] Tolkien, *Two Towers*, 243.
[23] *Before the Flood*, directed by Fisher Stevens, starring Leonardo DiCaprio (National Geographic, 2016).

Tolkien, Laudato si' *and St Francis*

Tolkien, who died in 1978, would have been horrified by how the natural world he loved has continued to be carelessly and ruthlessly despoiled in the decades since his death: by climate change, bringing with it the loss of glaciers and rising tides, by the destruction of forests and other wild places, and by the extinction of so many creatures.

Tolkien's reverence for nature was deeply linked to his Catholic faith, so he would, however, have been profoundly gratified that a pope has taken this issue to heart, as has Pope Francis in *Laudato si'*. In this extremely important statement, Pope Francis links a reverence for nature with reverence for God. As Francis points out, this is not new; the two preceding popes, Benedict and Saint John Paul II, both emphasized the need for respect for nature and concern for the environment.[24]

Ultimately the source of the relationship between nature and faith can be found in scripture—as far back as the first chapters of Genesis, rightly interpreted as a celebration of the variety of creation, with humans seen not as dominating lords but as nurturing caretakers. It is St Francis, of course, as the Pope makes clear in his text—even in the title, since *Laudato si'* is the first line of Francis' beautiful hymn of praise to God for the gifts of nature, often called 'the Canticle of the Creatures'—who represents the right attitude toward nature for believers in Christ: a humble and reverential one, viewing the creatures of the natural world as 'brothers and sisters'.[25]

St Francis responded to the natural world with love and respect, akin to that of the good peoples of Middle Earth. Part of what Tolkien's fantasy does in reinventing a mythical past is to turn away from a modern world which has lost the sense of the majesty of nature that is epitomized in the attitude of St Francis. St Francis never lost sight of that majesty and continually looked to God as its source. *Laudato si'* will be remembered long beyond the current age because Pope Francis is writing about a timeless view of nature, rooted in the spirit of St Francis. Though it is deeply pertinent to the current crisis of climate change, it goes deeper and wider than the mere fact of our abuse of the environment and the appropriate response to that abuse. St Francis has an important role in returning us to the right understanding of nature itself: 'Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which

[24] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, nn. 5, 6.
[25] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, nn. 65–67, 92.

transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human'.[26]

Looking to St Francis as a model, Pope Francis both warns and encourages us:

> If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously.[27]

A moral response to the natural world comes out of a moral, indeed a deeply spiritual, attitude toward it in one's heart.

Pope Francis articulates a powerful connection between how we treat non-human creatures and the way we treat one another. He says,

> When our hearts are authentically open to universal communion, this sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one. It follows that our indifference or cruelty towards fellow creatures of this world sooner or later affects the treatment we mete out to other human beings. We have only one heart, and the same wretchedness which leads us to mistreat an animal will not be long in showing itself in our relationships with other people.[28]

This is an important response to the excuses that are often made for the abuse of nature in terms of putting human beings and their welfare first. Abuse of the earth and its creatures leads to the abuse of fellow humans; in fact, the greatest victims of environmental destruction are the human poor, as Pope Francis eloquently points out. He explains how the wealthier countries have caused the most pollution, but the poorer ones suffer the consequences:

> A true 'ecological debt' exists, particularly between the global north and south, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment, and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time.[29]

[26] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 11.
[27] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n.11.
[28] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 92.
[29] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 52.

Furthermore, Pope Francis never suggests that humans are *not* more important than other creatures, but rather that our greater dignity, being made in the image of God, brings with it greater responsibility. We are called to be caretakers and nurturers of the earth and its creatures.

Pope Francis, the Jesuits and Tolkien

Once a teacher of literature, Pope Francis has clearly read and appreciates the works of J. R. R. Tolkien. In a 2008 address to teachers in Argentina, the then Cardinal Bergoglio used Tolkien's hobbits Bilbo and Frodo as examples of heroes called to walk a particular path and, in so doing, to come to terms with good and evil.[30] It makes sense, too, that there might be an affinity between the Jesuit Pope and Tolkien.

In 1953 Tolkien wrote to his good Jesuit friend Robert Murray, who had received a pre-publication copy of *The Lord of the Rings*:

> You are more perceptive, especially in some directions, than any one else, and have even revealed to me more clearly some things about my work …. *The Lord of the Rings* is of course a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision. That is why I have not put in, or have cut out, practically all references to anything like 'religion', to cults or practices, in the imaginary world. For the religious element is absorbed into the story and the symbolism.

Tolkien went on to bare his feelings about the book's release: 'I am dreading the publication, for it will be impossible not to mind what is said. I have exposed my heart to be shot at.'[31]

It is understandable that Tolkien should have found in a Jesuit such a close and sympathetic friend. Tolkien was scholarly—an Oxford professor—and he was also comfortable interacting with the non-believing world, intelligently and respectfully, while always remaining strong in faith, a combination of qualities characteristic of the Jesuits. Finally, the Jesuit motto *ad majorem Dei gloriam* (for the greater glory of God) clearly resonated for him. As he wrote in another letter:

> The chief purpose of life, for any one of us, is to increase according to our capacity our knowledge of God by all the means we have, and

[30] Cardinal Bergoglio, message to educational communities, 23 April 2008, available at http://aica.org/aica/documentos_files/Obispos_Argentinos/Bergoglio/2008/2008_04_23_Comunidades_Educativas.html, accessed 25 March 2018.
[31] Tolkien to John Murray, 2 December 1953, in *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 172.

> to be moved by it to praise and thanks. To do as we say in the *Gloria in Excelsis*: Laudamus te, benedicamus te, adoramus te, glorificamus te, gratias agimus tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam. We praise you, we call you holy, we worship you, we proclaim your glory, we thank you for the greatness of your splendour.[32]

Fantasy literature is often called 'escapist' and criticized for being irrelevant to the problems of our greatly troubled contemporary world. However, as we have seen, Tolkien's works of fantasy speak powerfully to many of the problems in the twenty-first century, including, very importantly, that of the environment. Devastation of the natural world in Tolkien's two most famous works, *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, is inextricable from the destruction of people (humans, hobbits, elves, dwarves and others). In our world, as Pope Francis explains, the assaults on nature are ultimately attacks on human beings, and the negative effects are felt most strongly among the poor, those least guilty of creating the problems but most vulnerable to the environmental havoc caused by them. Repentance, a religious word not often used about political issues, is necessary with regard to what we have done to our world. President Trump's repudiation of the Paris accords and denial of climate change have made the need for attention to this topic—and action—even more urgent and morally compelling. Those who deny the reality of climate change are like the characters in Tolkien's mythical world who deceive themselves that the Ring is not really evil and can be used without doing anyone harm. Such self-deception is culpable in Middle Earth, as it is in our world. The fantasy works of Tolkien speak powerfully to the same need that Pope Francis expresses, for a spirituality that awakens a call to renew the earth, with reverence and honesty.

Nancy Enright holds a PhD from Drew University, Madison, NJ, USA. She is an associate professor of English at Seton Hall University in New Jersey, USA, and the director of the University Core. She is the author of two books, an anthology, *Community: A Reader for Writers* (2015), and *Catholic Literature and Film* (2016) and articles on a variety of subjects, including the works of Dante, Augustine, J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis.

[32] Tolkien to Camilla Unwin, 20 May 1969, in *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, 400.

THE MYSTERY OF COMMITMENT AND OUR COMMITMENT TO MYSTERY

Robert E. Doud

IN MY EARLY THIRTIES, faced with decisions that would affect my career and private life, I was concerned with the idea of commitment. At that time, I thought of a commitment as a series of decisions by which one shapes one's life and existence in ways that are both moral and metaphysical.[1] In some sense, so I thought, I create myself; I do so by deciding things in ways that show loyalty, not only to certain other people and groups, but to myself and to the directions I have already set for myself. Most human beings, so I thought, are faced eventually with a crisis in which they may alter a commitment, break a promise, reset a direction, and remake their identity out of the fragments of loyalty and decency that are left.

For me, that crisis included leaving the Roman Catholic priesthood. It meant marrying a woman I had grown to love. It meant giving up a career teaching in a seminary. I had come to a point in life, existentially, when I had to decide where my future happiness lay. It involved prayer and discernment, but it also involved the conviction that God had turned over the power of decision-making to me. Perhaps, for some, such a decision would be made in terms of old-fashioned obedience, or of fidelity to an unbreakable vow. That was not the way it seemed to me; it seemed that God was opening up a path of freedom and leading me in the way of self-determination. I struggled in this situation for about eight years.

As part of my discernment process, I spent several days at a Benedictine monastery, where I mulled over the roots of my vocation. I did not see

[1] By *metaphysical*, I mean that our free and deliberate actions affect our inner identity in such a way that we add to our own personal identity and may be said to help create ourselves. Our choices are more than moral or accidental in their significance; they augment and determine the very essence of who we are.

my priesthood as a way of life that was all plotted out for me in advance. I felt that I was always in charge of my own existence and situation in life. I felt that my life and its key decisions were in my own hands. On that retreat, I decided to stay in the priesthood and to remake my life in fidelity to that commitment. It was some time later that I decided to leave and to be married. On the retreat, I wrote an article on the decision-making process that appeared soon after in *Review for Religious*.[2]

How firm and determinative can any decision be? One prays for the grace and fortitude to maintain one's chosen course in life but, even then, signs may keep coming that our continuing discernment is taking us elsewhere. Particularly if, after persevering in one's commitment for some time, one finds that joy and excitement lie in the call to do something different, one may relent, relax and begin following a different course. So it came to be for me. I eventually left the priesthood, married and continued my career in college teaching and in writing. Peace and joy returned to my life, confirming me in the choice to revise my course and trajectory.

Our key and self-shaping decisions are made and remade over time. We sift through our experiences, pray over them, discern and rediscern, and our decisions may then change, even radically. Our philosophy and our moral vision must allow for these changes in the process of individual moral emergence, it seems to me. My perspective back then, those forty and more years ago, as it is even now, was shaped in part by the philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead.[3] Whitehead's is a philosophy of world process and of relational self-growth within that process. We shape the world and the world shapes us. God provides the aims and instigations that guide the process. God absorbs into God's divine *consequent nature* all the achieved perfection of the ever-emergent world.[4] God inspires the world and redirects the energy of evil towards the good.

Also, at the time when I was deciding these things, spanning the beginning and middle of the 1970s, the Catholic Church was absorbing the shock of novelty resulting from the Second Vatican Council. Not only

[2] See Robert E. Doud, 'Identity and Commitment in a Process Perspective', *Review for Religious*, 33/3 (1974), 620–626, and reprinted in *Religious Experience and Process Thought*, edited by Bernard Lee and Harry James Cargas (Paramus: Paulist, 1976), 387–395.

[3] Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, edited by Donald W. Sherburne and David Ray Griffin (New York: Macmillan, 1978), xii: 'Also, it must be one of the motives of a complete cosmology [philosophy] to construct a system of ideas which brings the aesthetic, moral, and religious interests into relation with those concepts of the world which have their origin in natural science'.

[4] See John B. Cobb Jr, *A Christian Natural Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1965), 162: ' … every achievement of value in the temporal world is preserved everlastingly in God's consequent nature'.

was there a euphoria that came especially to young Catholic men and women in formation, but there was an instability brought by the heady freedom now announced by the Church, by the new theology, and by the humanistic psychology being brought into formation programmes. Some religious communities that had not done so in the past were now encouraging their members to pursue higher degrees in various disciplines. It was a great time to be young, well educated theologically, and well formed in the Church. It was also the time of the 'emerging layman', as lay leadership was advancing and critical thinking growing among clergy and laypeople alike.[5]

A vision of Church had emerged that was open-ended rather than *traditional,* where the word *traditional* might carry the sense of not having an emergent and developmental sense of itself. A new notion of tradition was then abroad that saw the Church as handing on the gospel and its message, but also as being transformed by the world and by the new situation in which the good news was being received. As we tended to think at the time, a static notion of tradition as passing on only stuffy and predictable messages, rather than as being the life and vitality of a dynamic and emergent Church, was no longer sufficient. The importance of relevance and timeliness had tempered the idea of the Church's message as eternal, unchanging truth.

Time, Decisions and Commitment

My article in *Review for Religious* articulated the Whiteheadian idea that each moment of time is a moment of life. Each moment bears its own original aspect of decision, and decisions accumulate successively into a commitment. Each decision is a moment of self-creation, and each commitment is a self-identical and self-identifying trajectory. Each decision happens in the present, but also anticipates further decisions as they may happen along the continuing line of its trajectory. Morality is a matter of commitment; it is a matter of self-determining emergence along a trajectory that cares about *maintaining* morality. One's identity is one's trajectory. Each self-defining moment absorbs and inherits each previous moment of self-identifying decision along the trajectory.[6]

[5] See Donald J. Thorman, *The Emerging Layman: The Role of the Catholic Layman in America* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 17: 'The layman must see the world whole and he must see himself in the context of the world and the Church. He has a foot in both camps; he has an allegiance to both.'

[6] For more on Whitehead's philosophy, see my 'Ignatian Spirituality and Whitehead', *The Way*, 48/3 (July 2009), 47–60.

Time is experienced as a sequential flow from moment to moment. *Cosmic time* is the impersonal flow of movement that goes on in the universe. Astronomical bodies perform and undergo actions that can be measured against one another. We grow to understand time to begin as cosmic movements, which become measurable objective time. Time then becomes for us *cultural time*, as it recurs in repeating cycles, and *personal time*, which helps us to fix the moments for various activities in our culture and to plan our personal lives. Commitments structure our personal time into resolutions that are renewed and carried out in practice over the course of our lives. And, like St Augustine, we can also wonder about God's eternity and about the relationship between time and eternity.[7]

A commitment lives in its renewals. Traditionally, we have usually seen commitments as ironclad promises made in the past that are binding in the present and onwards into the future. But on the *process* or Whiteheadian view, a commitment is seen as a relatively binding promise that is a matter of emergent self-creation and self-identity. Each new vocational decision on the span or trajectory of the commitment is

[7] Augustine, *The Confessions*, 11.7, translated by Henry Chadwick (New York: OUP, 2008), 226: 'everything is uttered in a succession with a conclusion, but everything is said in the simultaneity of eternity'. For Augustine, time is ultimately a mystery and is unexplainable. See Chadwick's note, 230–231.

relatively the same as previous decisions, and is relatively different or divergent as well. In a novel decision along the line of commitment, there is concern to preserve the precious sameness of past decisions, but also to welcome new modes of interpretation and enactment that may arrive with novel decisions.

It would be unhealthy (and unresponsive to God's novel inspirations) to screen out these new modes of enhancement. New situations bring new opportunities and so the kind of *false fidelity* that excludes as much novelty as possible may also be screening out opportunities for self-augmentation and personal enrichment. Time is a mystery in which the past passes away and the future arrives—constantly and instantaneously. Commitment is based on this mysterious aspect of time, including the realities of evanescence and emergence. Good things and good times pass away but new opportunities for self-interpretation and enhancement arise. Seen spiritually, each present moment is a gift from God; the past is an accumulation of previous gifts, and the future promises ever-novel ones.

So considered, commitment involves partnership with God in an ever-growing relationship. There are freedom and responsibility on both sides. There is mutual persuasion arising on both sides. God inspires each trajectory with hints and graces. Human trajectories or spans of commitment respond with prayer and noble actions. God sometimes surprises people with novel hints of direction or inspiring aims; people can surprise and delight God with generous prayers of praise and thanksgiving, or with heroic deeds of charity and valour. This partnership is mutually enhancing. God designed the world primordially to be this way. In mature faith, humans respond to this and enjoy constant enrichment by grace and providence.

Covenant and Commitment

The spirituality of biblical covenant relationships is the basis of our mutually persuasive relationship with God. God is the ground of our freedom, and gives us the independence to initiate our own responses to God. Within the global perspective of God's covenant with all of God's people, there are also individual covenants that God initiates with each of us. We are created for covenant with God, and are given freedom to discover and invent ourselves in authenticity and to return thanks and appreciation to God. Trusting in God's loving-kindness, we can then make ourselves loving and trustworthy to one another. Our spans of commitment carry out the covenant relationship which, as John L. McKenzie points out

in his definition of *covenant*, lives in its renewals rather than in once-and-for-all irrevocable promises.[8] The biblical book of Jeremiah, after all, speaks of a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31), and Ezekiel of God creating a new heart in us (Ezekiel 36:26).

Our sense of commitment and the forms or styles it takes are refined and streamlined over time. In commitment and covenant renewal, we structure our time, interpret it, shape and sculpt it, more in the way of art than of law or science. New decisions launch us forward in relative continuity and in relative discontinuity. There is always novelty, accommodation to new circumstances and invitation to new opportunities. Some decisions are more planned and anticipated; some are more spontaneous or instantaneous.

Commitment always also exists in a social context, involving fidelity to other persons and groups. Fidelity is always *creative* fidelity; obedience involves attentive listening and generous accommodation. Discernment tells us how much continuity will be maintained and how much novelty may be allowed. In prayer we appeal to God for guidance, and descry which aims and instigations come from God. Discernment measures our most personal inclinations, values and preferences in relation to the wishes and goals of others. The pattern of commitment is always shifting. On the process view of reality, it is a brand new universe in every instant.[9]

The pattern of commitment is always shifting

God gives us hints, orders and suggestions, second by second, in this microscopic and emergent teleology. Our job is to stay attuned, with abiding attention, vigilance and prayerful service, in dedication to the divine. God often gives us wiggle-room or widget-room in our manner of response or obedience. A God of persuasion, not coercion, God allows tragedies and travesties. All-powerful, God sets limits on the use of God's own power, allowing the laws, and indeed, the vagaries and vicissitudes, of nature to run their course. It is all a mystery, and yet it is not entirely a mystery to the faith that is assured of God's love and ultimate benevolence.

God gives us room to solve our own problems, make our own mistakes and form our own attitudes. We learn, and at times do not learn, from our experiences. God may seem sometimes not to be present to us and

[8] John L. McKenzie, 'Covenant', in *Dictionary of the Bible* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1965), 153–157. McKenzie points out the wide variety of covenants enacted in the Old Testament, and the fact that covenant is a theme that covers many circumstances.

[9] Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 94: 'Every actual entity, in virtue of its novelty, transcends its universe, God included'.

with us, but our faith supervenes this thought and assures us that God is always near and always concerned. At times our lives seem like a mess and a muddle, as if God wills it to be so, as if God allows or even intends our lives to seem chaotic, at least for a while. We are powerfully struck by the impermanence of all things and the evanescence of all conditions in this world. But Whitehead gives us hope for a lasting personal inclusion in the *consequent nature of God*, which is his idea of heaven.

In relation to God, our commitment is always one made to prayer, to a life of prayer, to the discernment of God's ways and God's aims for us. Our role is to sanctify time: *to redeem time*, in T. S. Eliot's words; to direct each moment of time into the embrace of eternity.[10] In relation to our conscience, commitment also entails a concern to keep improving, and at the same time to remain faithful to whatever is fundamental to our commitment. There will be adjustments and accommodations along the way, but we hope and intend to avoid destructive discontinuities in our process of emergence. Each new decision has a binding concern to maintain the direction of the core commitment. The fuel that energizes our forward thrust and our self-stabilising trajectory is hope. Hope is grace that loves the future and descries its destiny in the consequent nature of God.

Authenticity and Commitment

In the thought of another philosopher, Martin Heidegger, meaning and significance are experienced in terms of our awareness of time and our care or concern for the world and its components. In Heidegger, just as concern is always a concern *for* something, so time is always a time *for* something. Remotely, at least, Heidegger bases his philosophy on the ideas about time that are expressed in the *Confessions* of St Augustine. Of course, Augustine is interested in God and in our conversion as turning away from creatures as we turn towards God. Heidegger is ultimately interested in exploring the meaning of being, although he is not often ostensibly interested in God or in being as including the reality of God.

For Augustine, the goal is to turn towards God and eternity as we turn away from creatures and from the finite world. A more modern Christian view of reality and of our place in the world would turn towards the world

[10] See T. S. Eliot, 'Ash Wednesday', in *T. S. Eliot: The Complete Poems and Plays, 1909–1950* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1967), 64: 'Redeem the time, redeem the dream / The token of the word unheard, unspoken'.

and towards creatures in a way that finds God within them and that orders or reorders things in accord with God's plan and God's will. Heidegger's moral perspective is one that can be read as at least implicitly in accord with the modern Christian view of reality, of nature and of morality.

To express his moral view, Heidegger uses the terms *authentic existence* and *anticipatory resoluteness*. Authentic existence is my existence as I take charge of it over time, making my life and career an expression and realisation of the unique self that only I can be. Anticipatory resoluteness is the cutting edge of my commitment. It is a self-projection or trajectory that carries me into the future, which I both create for myself and sculpt out of the materials supplied by the conditions of my existence. We create the meaning of our lives as we shape each moment in time by a decision that we make and by a commitment that we maintain.

The idea of anticipatory resoluteness affirms Heidegger's emphasis on the primacy of the future. The future is created by our decisions, and our decisions are made in time. In the present moment of time we project ourselves forward into the future. As we make various decisions in the course of our lives, we are concerned about our own finally decisive choice, one that will bring us to completion and show the resoluteness and direction of our integrated and authentic trajectory.

Eucharistic Commitment

As a source of grace and means of maintaining nearness to God, Catholics celebrate Mass and receive the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. The celebration of the Eucharist is the best means we have of consecrating the very material elements of the universe, including ourselves, into the body of Christ.[11] As the Church launches itself into the future, as its circumstances continue to change, I believe it will become more aware of itself, essentially, as a eucharistic community. Christians will become more aware of themselves as people who are committed to Christ in the Eucharist as the sacrament that brings him ever closer to us and ever more active within us, both as individuals and as a community.

In the future, we will live ever more consciously in a process of eucharistic transformation. In the eucharistic liturgy we celebrate the commitment of Christ to remain with us in this way until the end of

[11] See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*, 17; '… mysteriously and in very truth, at the touch of the supersubstantial Word the immense host which is the universe is made flesh. Through your own incarnation, my God, all matter is henceforth incarnate.'

the world. Each member of the community renews in the Mass his or her personal commitment to God, to the Church and to the Eucharist itself. The Eucharist can thus be understood in terms of covenant and commitment. As covenant, it binds us together and, as commitment, it expresses a pledge to continue celebrating the presence of Christ with us and to perform all the good works that flow from this commitment.

In the Eucharist, according to St Augustine, *we become what we receive*.[12] It seems to me that this dictum applies to everything about life, not just to the Eucharist. As each moment of our life's span comes into existence, we receive input from God and input from the universe and from our surrounding situation. What we receive we shape instantaneously into a moment of selfhood that Whitehead calls an *actual entity*.[13] It becomes part of us.

By the same token we also become part of other people. We enter into them and become a part of their existence. Again, all this makes sense in Whitehead's view of reality. Each person is a *commitment-self*. Day by day, decision by decision and moment by moment, we become the selves we are meant to become. Our commitment-self receives into itself input from our own past decisions and moments, and offers achieved and

[12] In his Easter Sermon, n. 227, St Augustine says of the Eucharist: 'if you have received worthily, you are what you have received' (Sermon 227, in *Sermons on the Liturgical Seasons*, translated by Mary Sarah Muldowney [Washington, DC: Catholic U. of America P, 2008], 196).

[13] See Cobb, *Christian Natural Theology*, 28–29; 'Rather than being a continuous flow, experience comes to be in discrete and indivisible units. These momentary occasions [actual entities] succeed each other with a rapidity beyond any clear grasp of conscious attention.'

finished moments of ourselves for acceptance by other persons, that is, by other commitment-selves. Christ's divine–human trajectory (his own commitment-self) continues through time, influencing all of ongoing creation. Christ's commitment or trajectory is absorbed into our human trajectories, and our trajectories or commitments are absorbed into Christ's ongoing pattern of emergence.

Thus, there is an interwovenness of Christ's life and our lives. Thus, there is an interweaving of many lives into the one body of Christ. We become cosmically what we receive eucharistically, and the mystery of the Eucharist, ever expanding as the Body of Christ, becomes one with the mystery of the universe. Through our commitment to Eucharist, the Church renews itself constantly, and, through the metaphysical dynamic of commitment, Christ becomes all in all, and we become partners and participants in the *christification* of everything. The mystery of faith is the mystery of this interwovenness.[14]

Robert E. Doud is emeritus professor of philosophy and religious studies at Pasadena City College in California. He has a particular interest in bringing together philosophy and poetry, using poetry as material offering insight into philosophy and using philosophy as a tool in the interpretation of poetry. His articles have appeared in *Process Studies*, *Review for Religious*, *The Journal of Religion*, *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Philosophy Today*, *The Thomist*, *Religion and Literature*, *Horizons*, *Soundings* and *Existentia*.

[14] See Ilia Delio, *The Unbelievable Wholeness of Being: God, Evolution, and the Power of Love* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2013), 127: 'Christification is personalization of the universe by which love unifies and rises in consciousness'.

THE HUMAN PERSON IS THE QUESTION TO WHICH GOD IS THE ANSWER

Humanity in the Theology of Karl Rahner

Marcel Uwineza

CONSIDERING THE LOSS OF LIFE that has occurred over the past century as a result of two world wars, the Holocaust, the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, other tribal and civil conflicts, and slavery in all its forms, to name but a few causes, we are left to ask: why have human beings become so disposable? In 'Searching for Peace and Achieving Justice', M. Cherif Bassiouni writes:

> During the course of the twentieth century it is estimated that conflicts of a non-international character, internal conflicts, and tyrannical regime victimization have resulted in more than 170 million deaths. This is compared with an estimated 33 million military casualties.[1]

The total number of these violent deaths is thus approximated at 203 million. The numbers get even higher if we add those who have died from treatable sickness and abortion. The twenty-first century has already seen thousands of deaths in Syria, Iraq, South Sudan and other places. How do these facts reflect upon our sanity and our humanity?

While we can agree that statistics have their limitations, we cannot ignore the fact that these are not just numbers to archive in libraries for future research, necessary though that may be. These deaths ought to haunt the conscience of the human race. They affirm that the hatred and killing of the vilified and defaced other is a denial of ourselves, of our

[1] M. Cherif Bassouni, 'Searching for Peace and Achieving Justice', *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 59/4 (Fall 1996), 10.

humanity. This is what we call sin: a denial of the source of all that there is, the Absolute Mystery—God.

In this context, can theology offer us a way of reimagining the human? What should be at the centre of such a theology? Edward Schillebeeckx rightly challenges us: 'What does it mean that I, as a Westerner who believes in God, claim to find salvation in my belief in God when two-thirds of humankind is unfree, enslaved and starving to death?'[2] How do we make sense of the fact that, beyond all the terrible sufferings that are inflicted on many people, the human person remains a mystery and indispensable? Karl Rahner contends that the human person is *the question* to which God is *the answer*.[3] Who are we as human beings, therefore, in relationship to God? What exactly is the question in the first place?

Karl Rahner's Answer to the Human Question

Uncreated Grace

Before Rahner attempts to explore what human beings can or do know about God, he considers the human capacity to receive God. This is captured in the concept of *potentia obedientalis*, the human potential to hear the Word of God, which is grounded in God's uncreated grace, that is, God's own self-gift.[4] Human beings have an orientation towards God, the Absolute, the Ultimate, and this is what offers them the possibility of hearing and participating in God's revelation, while knowing that anything that they say about God will always fall short of who and what God is.

For Rahner, the starting point is therefore the subject (the human being) who seeks to know, rather than the object (God) who is to be known. We, as human beings, are creatures who hear and experience God's self-communication. Rahner thus connects the human intellect with human experience. God is not learnt as a concept but experienced as the horizon

[2] Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God*, translated by John Bowden (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 54.

[3] See Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, translated by William V. Dych (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 225.

[4] See Karl Rahner, 'Nature and Grace', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 4, *More Recent Writings*, translated by Kevin Smyth (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), 186. On created and uncreated grace, see Declan Marmion, *A Spirituality of Everyday Faith: A Theological Investigation of the Notion of Spirituality in Karl Rahner* (Louvain: Peeters, 1998), 164: 'Since Aquinas, the term *grace* denoted primarily what has been called "created grace", that is, the habit or quality of the human soul infused by God. This sanctifying, created, grace focused on the effects in an individual of God's self-communication. Alongside this, there was the concept of "uncreated grace", which referred to God himself present to, and indwelling in a person.'

(*Vorgriff*) to which humanity is orientated.[5] Harvey D. Egan, a Jesuit who specialised in Rahner's mysticism, notes: 'To Rahner, God's self-offer as holy mystery, revelation, and love actually constitutes human identity. To be human in its most radical sense means to be the addressee of God's offer of self.'[6] The human person is defined as one to whom God sends God's own 'personal letter' and with whom God enters into communion.

Our experience of self as beings orientated towards the transcendent 'constitutes the personal development of the experience of God, and *vice versa*'.[7] This implies that the definition of humanity in relation to God means that God can never be an alien reality for us. At the same time, we are transcendentally orientated towards God, not because of our merits, but because God is first orientated towards us through God's grace. 'The capacity for the God of self-bestowing personal love is the central and abiding existential of man as he really is.'[8] God renders the human being intelligible and gives him or her ultimate, radical value and meaning. Therefore, there is a unity between the experience of self and the experience of God.

Rahner's conception of uncreated grace is fundamental for understanding our own graced creation. For Rahner, there is nothing in existence that is not the self-expression of God. The whole of God is present in what God creates. Uncreated grace—another way of speaking of God's self-communication—is not a matter of God giving information about God, but God given as Godself. Uncreated grace does not depend on human response. It is the free gift of God's self-revelation to human beings. It is constitutive of all human beings. But the human person can accept or reject it through the exercise of freedom, and the rejection of God's offer of Godself is an aberration of our humanity—the real meaning of sin.

Love of God and Love of Neighbour

The unity between the love of God and the love of neighbour is another strong rationale for proposing that God is the answer to who we are. For Rahner, 'the essence of love of God is already almost inevitably

[5] Karl Rahner, *Hearer of the Word: Laying the Foundations for a Philosophy of Religion*, translated by J. Donceel (New York: Continuum, 1994), 22.
[6] Harvey D. Egan, 'Introduction' in Karl Rahner, *The Need and Blessing of Prayer,* translated by Bruce W. Gillette (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1997), xi.
[7] Karl Rahner, 'Experience of Self and Experience of God', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 13, *Theology, Anthropology, Christology*, translated by David Bourke (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), 126.
[8] Karl Rahner, 'Concerning the Relation between Nature and Grace', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 1, *God, Christ, Mary and Grace*, translated by Cornelius Ernst (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1961), 312.

misunderstood when that love is thought of as the observance of an individual, particular commandment—one commandment among others'.[9] It is misunderstood because God is not one object among many, which we may choose to love or not to love. God is *the only option*; to place loving God on the same level as other aspirations is to deny who God is.

> The love of God is the totality of the free fulfilment of human existence. It is not, in the last analysis, the content of an individual commandment, but is at once the basis and the goal of all individual commandments. And it is what it must be only when God is loved for God's own sake ….[10]

Loving God is the only way of affirming who God is. This happens primarily through the love of neighbour because 'love for God only comes to its own identity through its fulfilment in a love for neighbour. Only one who loves his or her neighbour can know who God actually is.'[11] Love of God and love of neighbour are mutually inclusive. The human person finds answers to his or her question in loving because the least wrong way of knowing who God is, is that God is love.

Theology and Anthropology

At the heart of Rahner's theology is the idea of God's self-offering of Godself, God's disclosure in love. For Rahner, however, while everything that exists is the self-expression of God—even though God remains incomprehensible Mystery, always beyond our human capacity to understand—the human person is the only creature that is able to receive God, to enter into a relationship with God. Creation remains an act of God's love, but only the human person is able to receive God.

Theology and anthropology are thus closely involved. First, this is because human beings are created in the image and likeness of God. Second, the human subject is the only gateway through which we can even start to talk and think about God in analogical language. Third, the human person is a 'a being of transcendence towards the holy and absolutely real mystery'.[12] Therefore, theology deals with questions of human existence. It is at the same time anthropocentric and theocentric:

[9] Karl Rahner, *The Love of Jesus and the Love of Neighbour,* translated by Robin Barr (Slough: St Paul's, 1983), 69.
[10] Rahner, *Love of Jesus*, 70.
[11] Rahner, *Love of Jesus*, 71.
[12] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 217.

> As soon as man is understood as the being who is absolutely transcendent in respect of God, 'anthropocentricity' and 'theocentricity' in theology are not opposites but strictly one and the same thing, seen from two sides. Neither of the two aspects can be comprehended at all without the other.[13]

How does Rahner then conceive of human nature?

> When we have said everything which can be expressed about ourselves which is definable and calculable, we have not yet said anything about ourselves unless in all that is said we have also included that we are beings who are oriented towards the God who is incomprehensible.[14]

What makes us human is that we are able to enter into a relationship with God; it is the realisation that only God and nothing else can be our fulfilment, and that nothing about who we are is outside our relationship with God. This is what Rahner calls the 'supernatural existential' and it explains why, for Rahner, humanity is graced, defined by openness to God.

While God remains our ultimate fulfilment, the human person concretely finds himself or herself in his or her relationship with fellow human beings. 'Man experiences himself by experiencing the other *person* and not the other *thing*.'[15] The human person is not one thing among others at the material level, as one might think of one lobster among other lobsters. No, the human person is the inconceivable being who is open upwards to the Mystery of God, made concrete through the experience of and the love of neighbour. And this love was made incarnate in Jesus Christ who reveals what God intends for humanity.

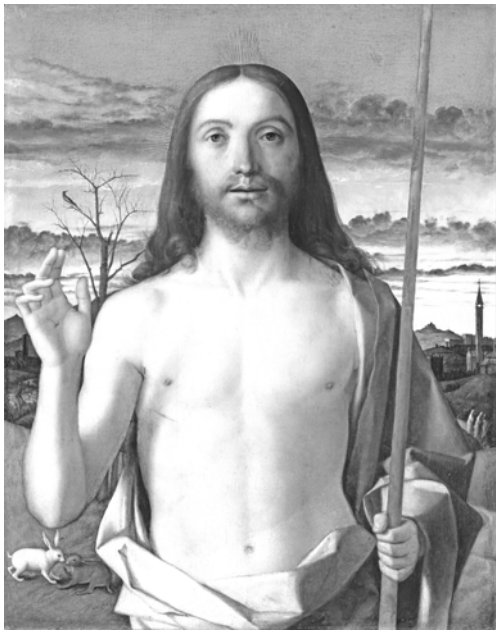
Christology and Anthropology

The Incarnation

So humanity is defined by its encounter with God, as this encounter is revealed in Jesus Christ. God graced humanity in such a way that God became one of us. 'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.' (John 1:14) God's grace is the grace of Jesus Christ.

[13] Karl Rahner, 'Theology and Anthropology', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 9, *Writings of 1965–67, I*, translated by Graham Harrison (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972), 28.
[14] Rahner, 'Theology and Anthropology', 216; see also 'On the Theology of the Incarnation', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 4, *More Recent Writings*, 108.
[15] Rahner, 'Experience of Self and Experience of God', 126.

The incarnation of the *Logos* grounds the idea that God is the answer to the questions we ask about the human person. The point is that when the Word became flesh, the human and the divine became one in a unique way. Therefore, there is a mutual alliance between christology and anthropology. 'The Incarnation of God is the unique and highest instance of the actualization of the essence of human reality.'[16] The incarnation of the *Logos* is God's affirmation of what God intends for humanity. Jesus is *the perfect human being* that humanity aspires to be, with a perfection that is possible only through God's action, not ours. Jesus is the plan and goal of all creation. He is not a 'Plan B' to remedy God's failed 'Plan A'—the Fall and original sin. He is not a quick fix for a broken humanity, but the climax of God's self-communication to the world. 'The Logos *became* man … the changing history of his human reality is *his* own history: our time became the time of the eternal, our death the death of the immortal God himself.'[17]



Christ Blessing, *by Giovanni Bellini, c.1500*

Christ is the exemplar of a graced humanity that all humans share. In Christ, God's self-communication takes place fundamentally in all humanity. 'The incarnation of God is therefore the unique, *supreme* case of the total actualization of human reality, which consists of the fact that man *is* in so far as he gives up himself.'[18] This does not make us sharers of Jesus' hypostatic union—the unity of his two natures as God and man—but 'the hypostatic union takes place insofar as God wishes to communicate himself to all men in grace and glory'.[19] God proclaims Godself

[16] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 218.
[17] Rahner, 'On the Theology of the Incarnation', 113.
[18] Rahner, 'On the Theology of the Incarnation', 110.
[19] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 201–202.

as love as God decides to empty Godself to manifest Godself in the ordinary way of humanity.

In Jesus Christ, God fulfils God's promise unconditionally and demonstrates irreversibly that God desires salvation for all. 'Each individual stands before an offer of God which transcends an ambivalent situation of freedom on God's part.'[20] In Christ, humanity benefits from the 'decision of God's will to impart himself to that which is other than himself and not divine'.[21] In Christ, we experience 'the *ultimate* possibility of human existence'.[22] God is the answer to the question of the human person because 'if God wills to become non-God, man comes to be, that and nothing else, we might say …. Man is brought back to the region of the ever incomprehensible mystery'.[23]

God Finds Us Where We Are

As a result, we have no reason whatsoever to belittle ourselves—on the contrary, because in doing so we belittle God. 'Man is forever the articulate mystery of God. He is a mystery which partakes for ever of the mystery on which it is founded, and must always be accepted in a blissful love as the undecipherable mystery.' This mystery has its root in a God who is close to the human person and *finds us where we are*. 'The God whom we confess in Christ we must say that he is precisely where we are, and can only be found there'.[24]

This is beautifully illustrated in the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). Here the Lucan Jesus tells us that whoever you are, wherever you are in life, God is near you. The two disciples who met Jesus were not in Jerusalem, not in the upper room, not near the garden tomb. They were on an ordinary road, travelling to a small village, mentioned only once in the Bible. The message is that God can join us wherever we are. We do not necessarily have to be in the great spiritual centres of the world, as good as that may be. God, revealed in Jesus Christ, can be part of our life wherever we are, here and now. The 'where' of the Emmaus story is a nameless road, any road, every road where we are! Christ is there with us.

[20] Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 299.
[21] Karl Rahner, 'Christology in the Setting of Modern Man's Understanding of Himself and His World', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 11, *Confrontations 1*, translated by David Bourke (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), 219.
[22] Karl Rahner, '"I Believe in Jesus Christ": Interpreting an Article of Faith', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 9, *Writings of 1965–67, I*, 167 and see also *Foundations of Christian Faith,* 308.
[23] Rahner, 'On the Theology of the Incarnation', 116.
[24] Rahner, 'On the Theology of the Incarnation', 116–117.

This ratifies Rahner's point that God's grace is there before, above, below and behind us. On the road that we are travelling now, Christ is travelling with us. Consequently, to accept our own humanity is to accept that *we* are accepted by God, who is near to us because God has accepted the human person in the Son of God. In him, God has made Godself neighbour to humanity. God is the answer to humanity's question because, beyond God's incomprehensible mystery, God uttered this mystery in the human person as God's own.[25]

The Task of Christology

What, then, is the task of christology? It is to underscore God's free, abiding and loving initiative, rather than any need for God to 'correct' creation. In Jesus Christ, God's *kenosis* is bestowed and God's acceptance by the world is manifested historically. The Christ-event is 'the point to which the becoming of the world in its history is from the outset striving to attain'.[26] Christ is the *telos* of what creation aspires to be. Saint Paul put it well: 'For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority' (Colossians 2:9–10).

Christ is the telos of what creation aspires to be

There is a link between christology, anthropology, soteriology and eschatology. We hope to be like Christ and see him as he is (1 John 3:2). Christology will fulfil this task knowing that God remains for all eternity the *Mystery*, yet God has come to meet us in a radical way, even in death, surrendering Godself in love and as love.[27] Humanity could certainly never attain salvation by its own efforts; God alone can accomplish this and has done so in the incarnation: 'revelation has progressed to the express awareness that the perfect gift of salvation is not only a gift from God, but is God himself'.[28]

What, then, is the difference between Christ and ourselves, since God graces us all? Although nothing of who we are is outside our relationship with God—Rahner's uncreated grace—and our contact with the supernatural is the defining feature of our humanity, for Rahner our grace is the grace of Jesus Christ. The difference between humanity

[25] Rahner, 'On the Theology of the Incarnation', 120.
[26] Karl Rahner, 'Christology in the Setting of Modern Man', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 11, *Confrontations 1*, 227.
[27] Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 305.
[28] Karl Rahner, 'Theology and Anthropology', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 9, *Writings of 1965–67, I*, 32–33.

and Christ is that the latter's response to God's self-communication is *the* perfect and complete expression of our incomplete and imperfect expression. Any realistic person who knows his or her weaknesses and limitations knows how often we accept and reject the offer of God's grace, but Christ was always in complete and perfect accord with God. The question now is how one can make sense of Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection. In what ways do these respond to our human quest?

The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ

The Defeat of Death

Do the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus offer any answer to the questions of the human person? For Rahner, they have given meaning to the meaninglessness of human death. In Jesus' death, humanity contemplates God's hospitality *par excellence*. Jesus' crucifixion and death disclose God's embrace of the unspeakable suffering of the victims of human cruelty. God accepted death to break the power of injustice and death.

> When the vessel of his body was shattered in death, Christ was poured out over all the cosmos; he became actually, in his very humanity, what he had always been by his dignity, the heart of the universe, the innermost center of creation.[29]

Christ's death transformed the human condition in order to divinise us and, through his descent into hell, he established an open relationship to the world allowing all things in the universe to communicate with each other.

It is not only in Jesus' death that humanity is accepted by God. The whole of Jesus' life, death and resurrection form a unity in their redemptive significance. We cannot focus only on the cross and forget that the whole was a self-offering in obedience to God, obtaining new life for all. 'Those who have died in faith are not "dead in Christ" only because they lived in Christ, but also because their dying itself was in Christ.'[30] The death of a Christian can be understood as a dying with Christ as it gathers the whole personal act of a human life into one fulfilment. It is an entry into life. The distinction between Christ's death and ours is that

[29] Karl Rahner, *On the Theology of Death* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), 66.
[30] Rahner, *On the Theology of Death*, 69.

Christ Triumphant over Sin and Death, *by Peter Paul Rubens, after 1616*

his death transformed the emptiness of humanity to welcome God's plenitude. 'Death became life; visible condemnation became the visible advent of the Kingdom of God.'[31] With the resurrection, death has been defeated. Resurrection is the overthrow of those whose power depends on their ability to deal in death.

The Power of Hope

Christ's death and resurrection ground human hope, Hope is trust in the promise of God as our absolute future. It is an act of surrendering ourselves to that which lies beyond us, but it is also an acknowledgement of the limitations of human planning. This may explain why placing any limits on hope denies hope.

Hope is not a soothing drug amidst earthly trials. Rather, it empowers humans 'to have trust enough to undertake anew an exodus out of the present into the future'.[32] This requires humility, because we recognise that we do not know, much less own, the future. It does not necessarily have to make us unhappy, but we have to accept our limits and live with

[31] Rahner, *On the Theology of Death*, 70.
[32] Rahner, 'On the Theology of Hope', 257; and Karl Rahner, 'Utopia and Reality: The Shape of Christian Existence Caught between the Ideal and the Real', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 22, *Humane Society and the Church of Tomorrow*, translated by Joseph Donceels (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1991), 34.

them in freedom.[33] Hope thus urges us to commit ourselves in thought and deed to the incomprehensible mystery of God. Rahner says this well: 'Christians have no right to be satisfied with a fulfilment that would be less than God'.[34]

Hope is a theological virtue founded on the premise that our daily commitments and decisions are of ultimate significance. Like Rahner, we can safely say that 'we only know who God is and who man is when we hope', in our commitment to God as our absolute future. This requires self-surrender to the Holy Mystery, and we have to beware that despair comes partly because someone has refused 'to abandon oneself to the incalculable and the uncontrollable'. The person who has hope, by contrast, is able creatively to make his or her contribution to the transformation of this world, to plan for the future, however provisional, knowing that this planning is instrumental for his or her well-being, with the knowledge that his or her definitive consummation is God.[35]

The Significance of Karl Rahner's Theology

Silence and the Ordinary

One of the prominent effects of Rahner's theology is that it helps us to fall in silence before God as Holy Mystery. Silence here does not refer only or primarily to the limits of understanding. It is also an affirmation that we are faced with a God who has fallen in love with what God created. Further, it makes us understand that none of us can comprehend the reality of who God is. Before God, we are faced with the ineffable Mystery. As Paul D. Murray argues:

> God will necessarily always elude exhaustive comprehension, even in the beatific vision. In God there is always more. Consequently, if theological understanding is not to fall into idolatry it should be held permanently open to this more in the recognition that what we presently know will inevitably require expansion and rethinking.[36]

Rahner's theology also accords high value to ordinary experience which, Murray writes, has a,

[33] Karl Rahner, 'The Question of the Future', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 12, *Confrontations 2*, translated by David Bourke (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), 198.
[34] Rahner, 'Utopia and Reality', 33.
[35] Rahner, 'On the Theology of Hope', 255, 259.
[36] Paul D. Murray, 'The Lasting Significance of Karl Rahner for Contemporary Catholic Theology', *Louvain Studies*, 29 (2004), 22.

> … pervasive capacity to reveal God's self-gifting and call, understood as implying that there is no situation and no state of life that is not of intrinsic theological significance and, hence, cannot profitably be drawn upon in theological reflection.[37]

Philip Endean has beautifully argued how Rahner's genuinely dynamic view of the mystery of God and his theological vision of the ordinary transformed by grace 'provide vital theological resources for giving experience its proper place in theology'.[38] This helps us wrestle with the Holy Mystery without claiming to have the definitive and final word. Theology remains an ongoing search and should lead us to keep reflecting on our experience of God—something very liberating for theologians.

The Human Question

Rahner's anthropology challenges and deepens our use of the word 'God'. Besides the fact that it is a word we have received from others anyway, it does not give us power over God. It is not a word that contains who God is, or confines God in a semantic box. It is a demanding word and a symbol pointing to deeper meanings. What the word 'God' does is to remind us of the incomprehensible mystery of God. It affirms our limitations because we are not the equals of God. But it also invites us to a relationship with God, who sustains humanity's longing desire to find its rest in God. Augustine's *Confessions* express this in their acknowledgement of the grandeur of God, our nature as creatures and our orientation towards God:

> You are great, Lord, and highly to be praised (Psalm 47:2): great is your power and your wisdom is immeasurable (Psalm 146:5). Man, a little piece of your creation, desires to praise you, a human being 'bearing' his mortality with him (2 Corinthians 4:10) …. Nevertheless, to praise you is the desire of man …. You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.[39]

The definition of the human being as one who has an infinite horizon—a being to whom God is the answer—has far-reaching implications. First, God is our fulfilment, and our longing turns towards God. This transcends any other longings, which are ephemeral, be they material, financial, social,

[37] Murray, 'Lasting Significance of Karl Rahner ', 20.
[38] Philip Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 202.
[39] Augustine, *Confessions,* 1.1, translated by Henry Chadwick (Oxford: OUP, 1992), 3.

sexual or whatever. Second, the human person must not be taken as disposable. To turn human beings into things that can be disposed of at will is not only a denial of our own humanity; most importantly it is a sin against God. This is foundational for the human right to life, which is not a favour bestowed by those in power, but a divine entitlement. The God who has revealed Godself in Jesus Christ says it better: 'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.' (John 10:10) As human beings, we have a common inheritance bestowed by the Creator, which is the gift of life. The US 'Black Lives Matter' movement and the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights can thus find a theological grounding in Rahner.

Christ and the Church

Rahner presents Jesus Christ as *the* symbol of God's loving communication with humanity. In Jesus, God is never a concept or an abstract ideal.[40] God revealed Godself in history as a God to whom we can relate. In Jesus, God's grace remains with us as one who offers us Godself and invites us to surrender ourselves to God. Jesus is 'the sacrament of the encounter with God'. In the incarnation of the *Logos*, the human person is 'that which ensues when God's self-utterance, his Word, is given out lovingly into the void of god-less nothing'.[41] The lasting significance of Rahner's christology is that humanity is fully humanity only through God's self-communication. We 'do not possess within ourselves what we essentially need in order to be ourselves'.[42] But through Christ, 'we experience that our existential need is met and that the mystery of man which includes the absurdity of guilt and death is not under our control, but it is hidden in the love of God'.[43]

Granted our God-given capacity to experience God, humanity realises that no single individual can pretend to encompass God. The God who has revealed Godself in history continues to reveal Godself in the Church. The Church is to be understood within the whole process of God's revelation as a means of encounter, by means of the Holy Spirit, with

[40] Karl Rahner, 'Brief Observations on Systematic Christology Today', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 21, *Science and Christian Faith*, translated by Hugh M. Riley (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1988), 236–237.
[41] Rahner, 'On the Theology of the Incarnation', 116.
[42] Karl Rahner, 'Thoughts on the Theology of Christmas', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 3, *Theology of the Spiritual Life*, translated by Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1967), 31.
[43] Karl Rahner, 'The Two Basic Types of Christology', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 13, *Theology, Anthropology, Christology*, 215.

the grace of God that we come to know in Jesus Christ. It is a sacrament. It offers some answers to our questions about who we are as human beings who experience the forgiveness and love of God.

The Church offers a social context for the faith in handing on the Word of God, passing on Christ to others. This handing on is celebrated through the Church's sacraments, particularly baptism, holy Eucharist and anointing of the sick, which make us partakers of Christ's death and resurrection.[44] Through the Church's entire sacramental life, we come to understand how Jesus' life is telling us that the essence of salvation is not primarily to be saved from physical death, but to be in an 'exodus', on our way to the Father.

Through the Church, humanity is made aware of what transcends us—God. While the Church is not and will never be God's equal, it is nonetheless 'the historically and socially constituted assembly of those who have the courage to believe' that there is something bigger than themselves.[45] The Church, with all its joys and pains, its strengths and limitations, is *the* symbol that reveals the Mystery of God. Though we will never be able fully to comprehend God's essence, we human beings form a community of God in our love for one another and at the same time this Church reminds us that the ultimate and final word belongs to God. As a gathering of those who continuously surrender themselves to God, the Church responds to the human longing to be part of a community and to communicate God to others. Rahner puts it attractively: 'I heard about him [Christ] only through the Church and not otherwise .... Attachment to the Church is the price I pay for this historical origin.'[46]

God Believes in You

The misery and suffering of God's people, the loss of life that we have witnessed in the twentieth century and throughout history, *ought* to challenge our belief in God. Edward Schillebeeckx says it beautifully: 'the existence of the poor and oppressed, in a subcontinent like Latin America, lands which have been dominated by Christians for centuries, is a scandal for any belief in God'.[47] One of the missions of the Church is therefore

[44] Rahner, *On the Theology of Death*, 74.
[45] Karl Rahner, 'Dogmatic notes on "Ecclesiological Piety"', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 5, *Later Writings*, translated by Karl-H. Kruger (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), 345.
[46] Karl Rahner, 'Dream of the Church', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 20, *Concern for the Church*, translated by Edward Quinn (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981), 9.
[47] Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God*, 54.

to liberate people from injustice and oppression, to offer them hope and reasons to live dignified lives, and to set people free from fear. Given the significance of the human person in Rahner's theology, we can also say that keeping memory of those who have died is not only a human imperative, but a theological one. To be orientated towards God is also to be a people who remember that even after death we do not fall into a meaningless void. God is our absolute future, already present in the present.

There is a story of a priest in Russia confronted by an aggressive young physicist who rehearsed all the reasons for atheism and arrogantly announced: 'I do not believe in God'. The priest, not put off at all, replied quietly, 'Oh, it does not matter. God believes in you.'[48] This is the point that I have sought to make here through Rahner's theology: God *does* believe in us; and that is the fundamental object of our Christian hope and the answer to the questions humanity asks. We find true and lasting meaning when we turn to God, who is never distant from us. We are defined by our orientation towards God, not because it is of our making, but because of God's grace. This grace was made explicit in Jesus Christ who, historically, became God's self-communication and remains the exemplar of humanity. The Church continues to reveal God's grace to humanity and to enlighten pilgrims journeying towards God. Rahner's theology moves from God to humanity and *vice versa*, in order to show their irreducible connection to each other. His positive view of humanity is, fundamentally, his positive view of God, and his theological and anthropological questions will always be worth asking.

Marcel Uwineza SJ is a Jesuit priest from Rwanda and a doctoral candidate in systematic theology at Boston College (USA). Uwineza is also a part of the Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Catholic Social Teaching and the Global Future of Development Project. He is particularly interested in the relationship between the Church and human rights, religion and international politics.

[48] This story was originally told by the Orthodox archbishop Anthony Bloom. It is quoted in Desmond Tutu, *Hope and Suffering: Sermons and Speeches* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 144.

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THE RESURRECTION APPEARANCES IN JOHN

Insights for Chaplains

Caroline Worsfold

'I AM THE WAY, and the truth, and the life.' (John 14:6) These are familiar words to me as a hospice chaplain, spoken during the many funeral liturgies that I have conducted for patients who have died over the years. The image of Jesus preparing a place for us and then returning to collect us and guide us to the way home feels very comforting: 'And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also' (John 14:3). But I have often wondered if the reply that Thomas received when he asked for clarity about the place of which Jesus was speaking left him as baffled as I feel by those words, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life'.

It was during the liturgical readings at Mass after Easter that I had an insight as to what Jesus might have meant when he defined himself in this threefold manner. In the three post-resurrection stories in John, three different apostles meet Jesus and these meetings help to clarify the images that Jesus presents to Thomas in chapter 14. In John 20:1–18, Jesus meets Mary Magdalene and shows himself to her—resurrected—as the Life. She cannot immediately recognise him, and the straightforward reason for this is that it is still dark, but when he speaks her name she finds comfort in her grief. In John 20:19–29 Jesus appears to the disciples once again as resurrected Life, but the central apostle with whom he speaks is Thomas and, in convincing him of the resurrection, Jesus presents himself as the Truth, challenging Thomas's doubt and confronting him with evidence. Finally Jesus meets the disciples again, in an epilogue to the Gospel, chapter 21, and the central character this time is Peter, with whom Jesus discusses the Way. Jesus encourages Peter to move on from his old way as a fisherman and to take up a less familiar journey as a shepherd.

The Way, 57/2 (April 2018), 91–100

The Retreat

During a retreat for school chaplains that I led a few months later, I made these resurrection stories the focus for us in thinking about the nature of our role, starting by paying attention to our inner lives as we read the scriptures. By gently listening to our own experiences of meeting Jesus in the scriptures, and considering the encounters between Jesus and Mary, Thomas and Peter, the aim of the retreat was to model for us a way to respond to the inner lives of the children and young people for whom we care. Over the 24 hours there were three sessions, so we took one of the stories from John for each session, as well as looking at a contemporary author or experience to enhance our thinking.

We began by exploring the word 'chaplain' itself, which derives from the story of St Martin of Tours. As a poor soldier Martin once encountered a beggar and, having nothing to give him except his cloak, Martin cut the cloak in half and gave one half to the beggar. His act of charity was generous at a time when he had little himself, but more significant was the dream he had that night, in which Jesus met him wearing the part of the cloak that he had given to the beggar. It was largely in response to this dream that Martin persisted in his vocation to serve Christ as a monk. The word *chaplain* is derived from the word for one who cares for the cloak, Martin's half of which was preserved as a relic.[1]

Chaplains are good at focusing on the charitable and practical aspects of Christianity. Many of the primary school chaplains on the retreat had set up a 'Mini Vinnies' scheme (a junior group of Vincentians for children aged between eight and eleven),[2] in which children are encouraged to fundraise for local, national and international projects as well as finding a way to belong to a community of prayer. School chaplains have various strengths as counsellors, but they often have little focus upon the inner life of children as a way to meet Jesus, which (as St Martin discovered through his dream) is where our vocation becomes clearer and where our relationship with God develops. St Ignatius is clear that a guide is necessary to explore the inner life, but that the guide should seek to enable a person to be open to his or her own understanding of God: 'For what fills and satisfies the soul consists, not in knowing much, but in our understanding the realities profoundly and in savouring them interiorly'

[1] The story is told by the church historian Sulpicius Severus (*c.* 363–*c.* 425) in his hagiography of St Martin. See *Sulpicius Severus' Vita Martini*, edited by Philip Burton (Oxford: OUP, 2017).
[2] See http://www.minivinnies.org.uk/.

(Exx 2). The scriptural study of the post-resurrection stories was welcomed by the chaplains on the retreat as an opportunity to engage seriously with these texts and discover the truth of the gospel stories for themselves.

At each of the three sessions, a chaplain read the passage of scripture to be discussed, and we had five minutes of quiet to meditate upon what the passage was saying to each of us. In pairs we shared something of what had been shown to us. Those who wished to do so were invited to offer their insights to the wider group. There were sometimes similarities in the points people raised but it was noticeable that there was a breadth of understanding that enriched each of us. The chaplains knew each other well and this helped to create an atmosphere of trust and respect.

Jesus and Mary Magdalene (John 20: 1–18)

We began by reading the account of Jesus meeting Mary Magdalene in the garden in John 20. What had commanded my attention was that it is not Jesus' voice that Mary recognises; he speaks to her several times before she knows him. It is the sound of her name that restores her 'vision'. Jesus shows himself to Mary as the Life, but it is his personal address that enables her to hear him. He moves from addressing her as 'Woman' to the specific and intimate 'Mary'. He recognises something of her emotional state when he asks why she is weeping, but he makes a connection with her only when he addresses her personally.

***Noli me tangere*, by Agnolo Bronzino, 1561**

As chaplains I suggest we have to do two things if we are to bring this Life to our students: we have to help them recognise something of their feelings and we have to speak to them personally about their specific situation. An additional guide to our thinking at this point was Kathleen Norris, who

explains how she uses the psalms to help children recognise difficult emotions that are often seen as unacceptable to others, such as sadness and anger. Having read the psalms she invites them to write their own psalm poems that express how they feel. She describes one boy who wrote a poem entitled 'The Monster Who Was Sorry'. She writes:

> He began by admitting that he hates it when his father yells at him; his response in the poem is to throw his sister down the stairs and then to wreck his room and finally to wreck the whole town. The poem concludes, 'Then I sit in my house and say to myself, "I shouldn't have done all that" ….' The boy made a metaphor for himself that admitted the depth of his rage and also gave him a way out.

She adds that if the boy had lived in the fourth century the desert hermits might have helped him to see that he was in a state of repentance and that, in recognising his feelings, he could show that he was human, not a monster, after all. 'If the house is messy they might have said, why not clean it up, why not make it into a place where God might wish to dwell?'[3]

We could substitute for the desert hermits in this story the chaplains in our schools, or retreat guides who help us with the Spiritual Exercises. We follow the example of Jesus in recognising emotion and speaking to it in a personal way, but there is also a third action that follows, and that is to give guidance. Jesus offers Mary a role: to be an apostle. Kathleen Norris suggests (through the hermits) that the boy tidies his house. As chaplains, we too may find it appropriate to give guidance about how to manage the feelings by which students and patients sometimes feel consumed. This threefold action of reflecting, speaking personally and guiding appears again when we read the story of Jesus meeting Peter in John 21:15.

The first session ended with each of us thinking of a difficult situation in our work life, concentrating on the emotions that the situation evoked in us and finding a metaphor to carry something of our feelings. We wrote our own psalm poem and shared as much as we wanted in pairs.

Jesus and Thomas (John 20: 19–29)

The second session started with a similar exercise, reading the text in John and waiting in silence to let it permeate our thoughts. Thomas desires evidence as a way of discerning the truth, but the aural evidence the disciples give him is not enough. He wants to handle the evidence and touch

[3] Kathleen Norris, *Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith* (New York: Riverhead, 1998), 69–70.

Jesus physically. Jesus offers him what he wants, but Thomas recognises, with shame perhaps, the folly of his persistence. Discovering the truth, therefore, is not solely about physical evidence, and maybe 'the doors were shut' (John 20:26) is a metaphor for not being able to discern the truth within us or hear the truth from those closest to us. For many differing reasons we persist in thinking that our way is right and therefore corresponds to the truth. We probably think of ourselves as truthful people, but there are times for all of us when hearing or sharing the truth is painful, and we close the door to receiving it, as Thomas does. There are other times when we might take up the role of the rest of the disciples in telling the truth or helping others who are seeking the truth. This resonated strongly with the school chaplains.

Discovering the truth ... is not solely about physical evidence

Alex was a five-year-old boy whose mother came to the hospice where I work for symptom control, but it soon became clear that her disease was progressing and she would die in the hospice.[4] When Alex learnt that mummy was very poorly, he asked his daddy: 'Can you fix her?' Daddy is a paramedic, and so when the little boy was told that daddy could not fix mummy, he asked: 'Not even if you had your ambulance?' 'No, not even then', his daddy told him. 'Mummy is far too poorly and everyone has tried very hard but mummy is not getting any better. Mummy is going to die.' The boy went off to play but was back a few minutes later asking, 'Who is your boss?' You could hear his mind working. If daddy is not all-powerful, he must have a boss who is, and who can help daddy out.

The wonder of a five-year-old's openness in being able to ask the difficult questions is matched by the sensitivity of the father who could answer his child's question with the truth. The price of falling from the pillar of omnipotence in his son's eyes is to be in the same place of helplessness as the child. It feels like a long way to fall for an adult—no wonder so many parents explain that they wish to protect their children from the truth. But this father could bear to say that he no longer had the power to save mummy and admit that no one else could either. Alex might have felt anger that it had to be that way—that mummy would die when he was only five—but at least he knew the truth. He was kept in the picture, together with his brother and sisters who were making the same journey.

As chaplains it may not always be our role to answer every question with the truth—we have to protect other people's confidentiality at times—but we can assure a child such as Alex, if he were to ask us about

[4] The name has been changed but permission has been given by the family to use their story.

The Incredulity of St Thomas, *by Peter Paul Rubens, 1613–1615*

whether his mummy was dying, that it is a good question and we might help him to find an answer. Sometimes it is important to know that you have someone to journey with you as you seek the truth. Thomas refuses to trust the knowledge of his peers and has to follow his own path.

Reading this scripture passage slowly allowed us to place ourselves alongside Thomas and think about times when we had been challenged by the pain of having to receive the truth. Or, by putting ourselves in the place of the other disciples, we could identify with the frustration of having others discard our experience and instead persist in wanting to validate the truth from their own evidence.

In the first session one of the chaplains had asked us why we thought Jesus tells Mary not to cling to him, and in this session we noted that the opposite happens, and Jesus invites Thomas to touch him. Once we had looked at the story of Peter we could offer some explanation as to why Mary is encouraged to turn outwards but Thomas is invited to draw closer.

Jesus and Peter (John 21)

The third session began with a prayerful reading of John 21. Peter is the main character in this post-resurrection story. Peter is like his own fishing net, empty and unfulfilled, and so he goes fishing. He encounters Jesus, who is on the shore. The invitation from Jesus to throw the net out to starboard helps to make Peter the best fisherman he has probably ever been. He catches 'large' fish (every fisherman's dream); his net is full to capacity but not broken (no wasting time tomorrow mending it; see Mark 1:19); the haul is landed safely although Peter has to strain hard to drag the net ashore. It is not clear if the catch provides the breakfast, but we know that fish was on the menu. This haul is counted and it may

be that it is one of the best of Peter's life. He has reached the pinnacle of his fishing career—and immediately Jesus asks him to stop being a fisherman and start being a shepherd!

Richard Rohr, in his book *Falling Upwards*, explains that in the second half of life we may have to go on a journey that is about letting go of what is known and finding a new path. He uses the latter part of the *Odyssey* to show how Odysseus is called to make a second journey 'that is barely talked about, yet somehow Homer deemed it absolutely necessary to his character's life'.[5] And, Rohr adds, 'You cannot walk the second journey with first journey tools. You need a whole new toolkit.'[6]

Here we have Peter giving up fishing, his 'first world of occupation and productivity', as Rohr describes it, and learning a new path (shepherding).[7] Rohr lays out the prototype for those embarking on a 'heroic journey':

> 1. They live in a world that they presently take as given and sufficient ….
> 2. They have the call or the courage to leave home for an adventure ….
> 3. On this journey or adventure, they in fact find *their real problem*. They are almost always 'wounded' in some way …. and the great epiphany is that the wound becomes the secret key, even 'sacred', a wound that changes them dramatically, which … is the precise meaning of the wounds of Jesus! … Their world is opened up and the screen becomes larger, and so do they ….
> 4. The first task, which the hero or heroine thinks is the only task, is only the warm-up to get to the real task. He or she 'falls through' what is merely *his or her life situation* to discover his or her *Real Life* which is always a much deeper river, hidden beneath the appearances …. This deeper discovery is largely what religious people mean by 'finding their soul'.
> 5. The hero or heroine then returns to where he or she started and 'knows the place for the first time', as T. S. Eliot puts it, but now with a gift or 'boon' …. As the last step of Alcoholics Anonymous says, a person must *pass the lessons learned on to others—or there has been no real gift at all*. The hero's journey is always an experience of an excess of life, a surplus of energy with plenty left over for others. The hero or heroine has found the *eros* or life energy, and it is more than enough to undo the *thanatos*,

[5] Richard Rohr, *Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011), xxxii.
[6] Rohr, *Falling Upward*, xxxv.
[7] Rohr, *Falling Upward*, xxxv.

> the energy of death …. The hero lives in deep time and not just his or her own little time.[8]

Rohr's explanation of this journey is like a blueprint for Peter's life. Peter leaves his home in Galilee and goes on a momentous journey to Jerusalem with Jesus. He is wounded several times along the way, but perhaps most profoundly in his denial of Jesus. His woundedness becomes the key to this encounter in John 21. From this moment he begins his second stage of life.

In Rohr's example, Odysseus has several people who help him undertake his second journey. The first is Teiresias, 'the blind visionary', who gives him the initial message that he is to undertake a second journey. Once he has set out, Odysseus knows he has reached the end of his second journey when he meets a wayfarer. Teiresias and the wayfarer are guides for Odysseus. In our journeys, too, there will be key people who guide us, and as chaplains we may have various roles to play for our students as guides.

A theme that Rohr talks about in *Falling Upward*, and explores further in his later book *The Divine Dance*, is that of 'mirroring'.[9] The concept was originally developed by the psychologist Heinz Kohut, who argued that children need three responses from their early caregivers in order to develop a healthy sense of self.[10] The first is *mirroring*: 'a need to feel recognised and affirmed; to feel accepted, appreciated and responded to'.[11] A second is for someone whom they can *idealize* and look up to, so that eventually that person's qualities can be absorbed into the child's own life. Thirdly, children need an essential alikeness to the caregiver so that, by imitating someone like themselves, they can learn how to live for themselves, in a process called *twinning*.

When Jesus questions Peter as to whether Peter loves him, the Greek word Jesus uses for love is *agape*. But when Peter responds, saying, 'Yes Lord you know that I love you' (John 21:15, 16), he uses the word *philos* for love. Twice Jesus offers him the *ideal* of love—*agape*, the love that means laying down your life for your friends—and twice Peter is unable to match the high expectation and example of love that Jesus offers. The third time Jesus asks, however, he *mirrors* Peter. He asks, 'Do you love

[8] Rohr, *Falling Upward*, 18–20.
[9] Richard Rohr with Mike Morrell, *The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation* (New Kensington, Pa: Whitaker House, 2016), 49.
[10] See Heinz Kohut and Ernest Wolf, 'The Disorders of the Self and Their Treatment: An Outline', *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis,* 59/4 (1978), 413–425.
[11] Ernest Wolf, 'Selfobject Experiences: Development, Psychopathology, Treatment', in *Mahler and Kohut: Perspectives on Development, Psychopathology and Technique*, edited by Selma Kramer and Salman Akhtar (Northvale: Jason Aranson, 1994), 67–96, here 72.

[*philos*] me?' And Peter responds 'Yes, Lord you know that I love [*philos*] you' (John 21:16). Jesus offers him the ideal, but he understands that Peter cannot promise that yet—so he lets Peter know he has heard him and asks with the word that Peter himself uses.

As Teiresias was for Odysseus, so Jesus is for Peter, giving him the divine command to start out again on the second half of life. According to an early tradition, Peter meets a wayfarer as he is leaving Rome to escape from the authorities. The wayfarer is Jesus. 'Quo vadis?' asks Peter, 'Where are you going?' 'To Rome, to be crucified again' is the response from Jesus and, at this point, Peter knows that this is the end of his own journey. So Peter goes back to Rome to be crucified himself, showing his love (this time *agape*) by laying down his life for his friend.[12]

As Peter is commanded to move into the second phase of his life by feeding the flock, as a shepherd rather than a fisherman, so we can see that Mary Magdalene, too, has been given a new mandate. She is no longer a follower of Jesus; instead she is to go before him announcing his ascension. Is this why she is not allowed to cling to Jesus? She is to move into her second journey, whereas Thomas is still stuck in his first phase and still needs to draw close to Jesus before he can begin the second phase of his life.

The Handing Over of the Keys, *by Raphael, 1515*

[12] This story is told in the second-century apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, chapter 35; see the English translation by Robert Franklin Stoops (Salem, Or: Polebridge, 2012).

The Way, the Truth and the Life

As chaplains we may be in the position of offering an idealized self to our students through the authenticity of the lives we live. We are certainly responsible for showing them the example of Jesus and others they can look up to. But we have another vitally important role, which takes us back to Jesus meeting Mary Magdalene in the garden. We have to name and, in so doing, 'mirror back' to our students the feelings they show us, and hence affirm what they feel. Mary finds the compassion of Jesus through hearing her name and having her grief mirrored back to her. Kathleen Norris helps a little boy discover, through reading the psalms and writing his own poem, that his angry feelings can be heard and tolerated, and are even mirrored to him by the scriptures. Peter, too, finds himself liberated to start the second stage of his journey having been granted both the ideal of love and the accepting mirror of his current emotional state.

These post-resurrection stories flesh out what it means to encounter Jesus as the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. When we read scripture reflectively during the retreat we saw it as a mirror reflecting back to us something of our own situation, in dialogue with the Spirit and hearing its resonances in our lives. When we shared our experiences with one another we were offering each other guidance in responding to the Spirit in the here and now of our lives and work. When scripture was read to us at Mass we listened to the ideal of God's love revealed to us in Jesus. The contemporary guides we took with us on the retreat helped us to relate what we had learnt to how we live out our lives and ministries as chaplains. Experiential learning was fostered because we are a community of like-minded people who listen and respect each other's stories. Rohr says, 'We really do find ourselves through one another's eyes and only when that has been done truthfully can we mirror others with freedom, truth and compassion'. [13]

The richness of this retreat was in the exchange of our own stories and I know I have a fuller understanding of Jesus' words and a stronger appreciation of the paths that Mary Magdalene, Thomas and Peter walked as they were challenged by Jesus to go out and live the gospel.

Caroline Worsfold is an Anglican priest working as the chaplain at St Benedict's Hospice, Sunderland. She is also qualified as a Group Analyst.

[13] Rohr, *Falling Upward*, 157.

THE KINGDOM EXERCISE

Two Suggestions

Eric Jensen

THE GIVING OF Ignatius' Kingdom Exercise (Exx 91–99) presents a number of challenges.[1] The first part of the exercise, the parable of the crusader king, is meant to prepare exercitants to meet Christ in a new way. And yet, though Ignatius Loyola has put a great deal of his own heroic idealism into the parable—from his early service of a great lord and of Spain's Roman Catholic monarchs, to his readiness to suffer and to risk his life in battle, to his fixation on Jerusalem and the Holy Land—'it fails for many reasons to be effective in the way it was when it touched the collective unconscious of an age'.[2]

Jesus the Messiah King

Some have suggested that we omit the introductory parable and 'place ourselves right away in the presence of Jesus … the first-born from the dead, the definitive messiah …', moving directly to the call of the risen Christ, the eternal King.[3] However, in an attempt to keep Ignatius' *a fortiori* structure, and picking up on another suggestion that the mythical king of the parable be replaced by the biblical Messiah King, I would suggest that the mythical king be replaced instead by the historical Jesus at his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, on what Christians now call Palm Sunday.[4]

[1] See Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 77 n. 6: 'The commonly accepted title of the exercise, "The Kingdom", is derived from the [Latin] Vulgate translation …. In the body of the text the word "kingdom" does not appear in either the Autograph or the Latin versions. The meaning of the phrase "Kingdom of God" is equally conveyed by "reign of God".'

[2] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 78. And see my *Ignatius Loyola and You: Learning to Become a Reflective Christian* (Toronto: Novalis, 2018), chapters 1–2.

[3] Carlo-Maria Martini, *Letting God Free Us: Mediations on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises* (Slough: St Paul's, 1993), 83, quoted in Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 80 n. 17.

[4] Hervé Coathalem, *Ignatian Insights: A Guide to the Complete Spiritual Exercises* (Taichung: Kuangchi, 1961), 134–135, quoted in Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 79 n. 16.

Christ's Entry to Jerusalem, *by Lippo Memmi, fourteenth century*

Jesus deliberately chose his day to enter Jersualem (from the east) with full knowledge that on the same day Pilate, the Roman Governor, would be entering Jerusalem from the west, coming up from Caesarea Maritima, where he lived in the splendid palace built by Herod the Great.[5] Jesus chose the season: Passover, with its week-long celebration of Israel's Exodus, as he went to his own exodus and passing over.[6] He chose the means: he rode a donkey, the poor man's beast of burden, and not a horse, the beast of war that Pilate rode. Pilate entered with chariots and heavily armed soldiers, with trumpets and drums, in a great show of military might in order to convey an unmistakeable message: Rome will crush any attempt at an uprising during this festival. It was a time when pilgrims from throughout the diaspora crowded into the Holy City to celebrate Israel's liberation from the power of Egypt, and when revolt against the occupying Roman power was always a real danger.

Jesus entered Jerusalem, through the Sheep Gate (now called St Stephen's Gate or the Lion's Gate) after crossing the Kedron Valley in his descent from Bethphage and Bethany and the Mount of Olives (Mark 14:8). For the first time in the synoptic Gospels he allowed his followers to hail him as Messiah: 'Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our ancestor David! Hosanna in the highest heaven!' (Mark 11:9–10) His procession marks a deliberate contrast with what was happening on the other side of the city. Pilate's entry embodied the power, glory and violence of the empire that ruled the world. Jesus offered an alternative vision—the Kingdom

[5] Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, *The Last Week: The Day-by-Day Account of Jesus's Final Week in Jerusalem* (San Francisco: Harper, 2006), 2; Ann Wroe, *Pontius Pilate* (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 76–77.

[6] See Luke 9:31, 'speaking of his departure', his *exodos* in the Greek.

of God. This contrast—between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Caesar—is central not only to the Gospel of Mark, but to the whole story of Jesus and early Christianity. Holy Week is the narrative of this confrontation.[7]

The crowds were aware of the situation and its significance. 'When he had entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil …. Then Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple ….' (Matthew 21:10, 12) In one great prophetic gesture, Jesus challenged both the political power of the divine Caesar and the religious power of the politically appointed priesthood.[8] He did what many of his followers had been hoping all along that he would do, but he did it his own way, a non-military way.

What makes Jesus such an attractive leader in this moment is the clarity and intentionality with which he acted, with full knowledge of the terrible consequences that would follow. What makes him such a compelling leader is the passion with which he acted. The word *passion* in English means enthusiasm, love and commitment as well as suffering:

> In this sense, a person's passion is what she or he is passionate about …. The first passion of Jesus was the kingdom of God …. It was that first passion for God's distributive justice that led inevitably to the second passion by Pilate's punitive justice.[9]

If this clear-eyed Jesus, passionate for the Kingdom of God, is made to replace the mythical figure in the first part of the Kingdom Exercise, who would not want to follow him? Surely *this* passion, this desire is what drew the crowds to him on that first Palm Sunday. It is *this* passion also that can draw people today to the Church, first of all in a renewed understanding of the liturgy of Palm Sunday (as I can personally attest), and then to a renewed and deeper desire to follow Christ in daily life. As Jesus on Palm Sunday lays claim to Jerusalem, the city of David, the city of messianic hope, he fulfills God's 'hope for the world, God's dream for the world'; and in employing the crusader king of the parable,

[7] Borg and Crossan, *Last Week*, 4–5.

[8] Richard A. Horsley, *The Liberation of Christmas: The Infancy Narratives in Social Context* (New York: Continuum, 1993), 50: 'To avoid any threat to his own regime, Herod [the Great] placed his own creatures in the high priesthood'. Also Borg and Crossan, *Last Week*, 13: 'Herod appointed and deposed seven high priests during his thirty-three years as king'.

[9] Borg and Crossan, *Last Week*, viii.

'Ignatius was deliberately appealing to dreams'.[10] The Jesus of Palm Sunday, however, is a dream fulfilled—the dream of a long-expected messiah king. The people followed him then with joyful enthusiasm; with renewed understanding, they can also follow the risen Christ today into however uncertain and threatening a future.

A New Vision of Possibilities

What about the second part of the Kingdom Exercise, the call of Christ? It, too, needs a new vision. Monika Helwig has argued persuasively that 'conversion of the world to justice and peace involves a thoroughly new vision of possibilities and actualities in political, economic, social and cultural affairs'.[11] I would suggest that just such a vision is offered to Jesuits in decree 1 of the Thirty-Sixth General Congregation, 'Companions in a Mission of Reconciliation and Justice'. Paragraph 29 is worth quoting in full:

> Pope Francis has emphasized the fundamental connection between the environmental crisis and the social crisis in which we live today. Poverty, social exclusion, and marginalization are linked with environmental degradation. These are not separate crises but one crisis that is a symptom of something much deeper: the flawed way societies and economies are organized. The current economic system with its predatory orientation discards natural resources as well as people. For this reason, Pope Francis insists that the only adequate solution must be a radical one. The direction of development must be altered if it is to be sustainable. *We Jesuits are called to help heal a broken world, promoting a new way of producing and consuming, which puts God's creation at the centre.*[12]

I have italicised this last sentence because I believe it expresses in a new way the call of Christ the eternal King for our time. Jesuits, and all our co-workers, must find a way to incorporate this new call into our giving of the Exercises: we must put God's creation at the centre. To do so is not to displace Christ, but to find him in all creation and at the

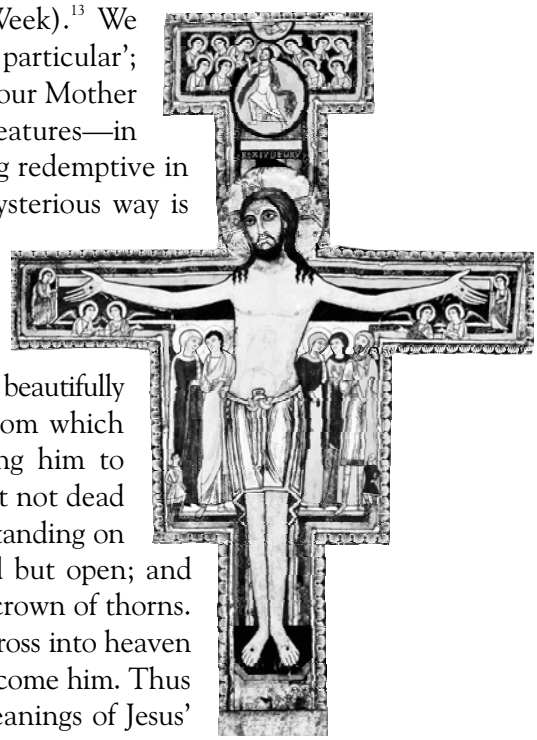
[10] Borg and Crossan, *Last Week*, 10; William Connolly, 'Story of the Pilgrim King and the Dynamics of Prayer', *Review for Religious*, 32 (1973), 268–272, quoted in Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 78 n. 10.

[11] Monika Helwig, 'The Call of the King' and Justice, in *The Way of Ignatius Loyola: Contemporary Approaches to the Spiritual Exercises*, edited by Philip Sheldrake (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991), 77.

[12] *Documents of the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus*, n. 29, available at www.mdsj.org/gc36decrees.

centre of all things (Exx 235–236). And so I would suggest that we reinterpret the words that open the call of the eternal King ('My will is to conquer the whole world and all my enemies …'; Exx 95) expressing it thus: 'It is my will *to save the Earth and overcome all her enemies* and so to enter into the glory of my Father ….'

If those who follow Jesus in the Kingdom Exercise are ready to go with him as he enters Jerusalem and to accompany him as he moves inevitably towards the cross (anticipating the dynamic of the Third Week), how much more ready should they be to follow the risen Christ as he calls them to labour with him in this crucial enterprise of our time: to rescue the Earth from destruction. Such a shift in understanding the text would move from the language of conquest and war to that of compassion (anticipating the graces of the Third Week).[13] We ('all the world … and … each person in particular'; Exx 95) are now being called to be with our Mother the Earth and her children—with all creatures—in their suffering, and to make this suffering redemptive in the suffering of Christ, who in some mysterious way is still on the cross, still suffering with all those whom the world crucifies.



This theology of the cross, implicit in the colloquy at the end of the first exercise of the First Week (Exx 53), is most beautifully imaged in the cross of San Damiano, from which Christ spoke to Francis of Assisi, calling him to rebuild his Church.[14] There we see Christ not dead but alive; not hanging on the cross but standing on a little platform; his eyes are not closed but open; and around his head is a halo of glory, not a crown of thorns. Above him in a circle, Christ carries his cross into heaven as the Father's hand reaches down to welcome him. Thus are captured iconographically all the meanings of Jesus'

[13] The full title of the exercise in the Latin Vulgate translates into English as 'Contemplation of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ through the likeness of an earthly king calling his subjects to war' (Exx 91; in *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius,* translated by Pierre Wolff [Liguori: Triumph, 1997], 29). See also my Study Edition at http://www.ignatiusguelph.ca./docs/resources/The Spiritual Exercises Eric Jensen, SJ.pdf, 40. And see Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 147.

[14] For reflections on the meaning of this cross, see Susan Saint Sing, *Francis and the San Damiano Cross: Meditations on Spiritual Transformation* (Cincinnati: St Anthony Messenger, 2012). See also Leonard von Matt and Walter Hauser, *St Francis of Assisi: A Pictorial Biography* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1956), 13.

words: 'So must the son of Man be lifted up …' (John 3:14). In this complex image, Christ is lifted up in crucifixion, lifted up in resurrection, lifted up in ascension, lifted up in glory, and yet he remains on the cross, living and alive.

In such a renewed Kingdom Exercise we would meet Christ in a new way, in his compassion not only for the poor but for the whole Earth: 'The compassion of the Lord is for every living thing' (Sirach 18:13). Christ is with us and compassionates with us and with all living things as we join him in the struggle to rescue our home, the Earth, from a catastrophe that could bring an end to the divine creative experiment that began in the garden of Eden. There is, of course, a real possibility that, if God did not spare God's own Son from death on a cross, God may allow the Earth itself to suffer death in order to bring forth a new heaven and a new Earth (Revelation 21:1). In asking not to be deaf to his call we would need to ask also for awesome courage, great faith and enduring love, as well as the trust that Christ will be with us to the end of the age (Matthew 28:20). This future may seem apocalyptic, and so it is, provided we remember that the Book of Revelation ends not with a funeral but with a wedding (Revelation 21:2). And the wedding is followed by a proclamation:

> See, the home of God is among mortals.
> He will dwell with them as their God;
> they will be his peoples,
> and God himself will be with them;
> he will wipe away every tear from their eyes.
> Death will be no more;
> mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
> for the first things have passed away (Revelation 21:3–4).

Our home, the Earth, is the home of God. This is the home that, with the Christ of the Exercises, we are being summoned to help heal and save.

A New Interpretative Lens

What, then, are the implications of these changes for the giving of the Spiritual Exercises? The Kingdom Exercise contains 'important elements of spiritual doctrine and provides a lens through which to interpret the exercises that follow'.[15] How would a renewed Kingdom Exercise provide a new interpretative lens, and would it be a distorting lens?

[15] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 74.

It may seem at first that to use Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as part of the Kingdom Exercise is to pre-empt material from the Third Week. However, the Third Week begins with the preparations for the Last Supper (Exx 190), not with the triumphal entry. Palm Sunday (Exx 287) is mentioned as merely one among many 'Mysteries of the Life of Christ Our Lord' (Exx 261) of which a director may make use as needed. If the triumphal entry becomes a major element of a renewed Kingdom Exercise and is given force through a new and deeper understanding of the historical event, it becomes not pre-emptive but preparatory—indeed a powerful preparation for the contemplations of the Third Week that will come later. This is, in fact, the exercise's function: it is not meant to replace what follows; it is not even meant to be a full meditation or contemplation.[16] Nonetheless, at the start of the Third Week, the triumphal entry could indeed be given as a full contemplation in order to deepen the understanding of the passion narrative and to draw us more fully into the disciples' admiration of Jesus and their love for him.

With its acceptance of the consequences that will follow upon Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, a renewed Kingdom Exercise may, again, seem to move us immediately into the passion of the Third Week before we have had time to absorb the grace of the Second Week: 'an interior knowledge of the Lord … that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely' (Exx 104). But this Second Week grace is sought, in what is only the second exercise of the Week, by reflecting on God's *purposes* in bringing Jesus to birth: '… that the Lord may be born in greatest poverty; and that after so many hardships of hunger, thirst, heat, cold, injuries, and insults, he may die on the cross! And all this for me!' (Exx 116) Since Jesus' death on the cross is mentioned explicitly in the contemplation of his birth, no 'spoiler alert' is needed because we already know Jesus' story and how it ends. This rhetorical technique is not very different from what we find in the Gospel of Matthew where, in the infancy narrative, Old Testament reminiscences of Joseph, Moses and Balaam have 'been worked into a unified anticipation of the passion and resurrection narrative'.[17] The effect of this technique, in both the Gospel and the *Spiritual Exercises*, is to deepen our understanding, to intensify our feelings.

[16] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 77.
[17] Raymond E. Brown, *An Adult Christ at Christmas: Essays on the Three Biblical Stories, Matthew 2 and Luke 2* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1978), 13–14.

The Third Week is implicit in the Second Week; the Second Week anticipates the Third Week and prepares us for it. But it is the function of the Kingdom Exercise, as a kind of preface or introduction to the Second Week, to prepare us for *everything* that follows—the birth and the mission, the suffering and the glory (Exx 95).[18] The focus is first of all on the Messiah King, on the Jesus of history, to arouse our admiration for him. The Kingdom Exercise is 'the generating place of enthusiasm and personal loyalty to Jesus Christ, cost what it may. Therefore the Exercise should be made in joy and elevation of spirit.'[19]

The call of Christ the eternal King is a call to imitate him in humility, generosity and poverty—actual as well as spiritual poverty, provided he 'choose and receive me into such a life and state' (Exx 98). In the Exercises these qualities are to be sought not in some personal quest for perfection but 'in relation to the call made to every Christian to the service of the Kingdom, a service which is a sharing in Christ's own continuing mission to the world'.[20] It is a call to each individual person and to all. Christ's mission can only be accomplished if we all work together. 'The ecological conversion needed to bring about lasting change is also a community conversion.'[21]

The divine persons are subsistent relations, and the world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships.[22] This leads us not only to marvel at the manifold connections existing among creatures, but also to discover a key to our own fulfilment. Human persons grow more, mature more and are sanctified more to the extent that they enter into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures.[23]

Conversion is the aim not only of the First Week but of the Exercises as a whole, as we are moved deeper and deeper into love.[24] Though it can come about on different levels, it is 'a graced process of personal integration, a process which Ignatius understands in terms of the faculty theology of his time', but which, in contemporary terms, is understood as 'a

[18] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 74 n. 1.
[19] Joseph Rickaby, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola: Spanish and English with a Continuous Commentary* (London: Burns and Oates, 1915), 83, quoted in Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 85.
[20] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 76.
[21] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 221.
[22] According to St Thomas Aquinas the persons of the Trinity are 'subsistent relations', that is, they are defined as—they are identical with—the relationships between them. See *Summa theologiae* 1, q. 40, a. 2.
[23] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 240.
[24] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 264.

transformation of the subject and his world …. It is as if one's eyes were opened and one's former world faded and fell away.'[25]

Conversion comes about on different levels of consciousness. On the level of loving, a religious conversion can result from falling in love with Jesus, but it is on the level of deciding and acting that moral conversion arises, and so it is on this level that ecological and community conversion must come about. On this level we deliberate, choose and act responsibly, both as individuals and as communities, and what we choose are what Bernard Lonergan calls 'terminal values': 'true instances of the particular good, a true good of order, a true scale of preferences regarding values and satisfactions'.[26]

Choice and decision are central to the Exercises, which have as their purpose 'to order one's life, without reaching a decision through some disordered attachment' (Exx 21). It is for such a decision or election that the Kingdom Exercise also has a preparatory function at the start of the Second Week:

> Both knowledge and affectivity are mobilized and worked on from the beginning of the Exercises. Both converge on the act of election, where knowledge of the will of God is converted into a volitional impulse of the exercitant to commit him- or herself to it.[27]

For someone who has become aware of the environmental–social crisis and is seeking to discern a call or make a decision about where to direct his or her energies, the Exercises can be a powerful means of arriving at the freedom needed for decision-making, and all the more powerful with a renewed Kingdom Exercise.

Eric Jensen SJ has been a teacher and pastor, and now guides individually directed retreats and training programmes at Loyola House, Ignatius Jesuit Centre, in Guelph, Ontario. He is the author of *Entering Christ's Prayer: A Retreat in 32 Meditations* (2007), and of the forthcoming *Ignatius Loyola and You: Becoming A Reflective Christian* (2018). His most recent article in *The Way*, 'Forgiveness and Healing: Confession and the Spiritual Exercises', appeared in January 2017.

[25] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 43, 72; Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 130.
[26] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 51.
[27] Javier Melloni, *The Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000), 54.

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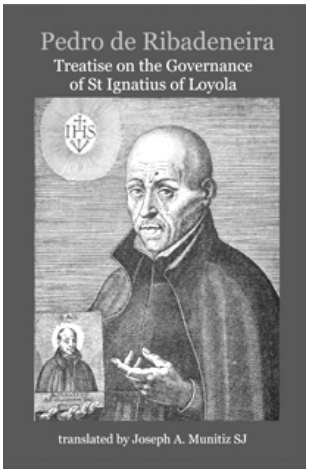
RECENT BOOKS

Pedro de Ribadeneira, *Treatise on the Governance of St Ignatius of Loyola*, translated by Joseph A. Munitiz (Oxford: Way Books, 2016). 978 0 9047 1747 1, pp. xxi + 59, £8.00.



Pedro de Ribadeneira was a boy of thirteen when he met Ignatius Loyola in September 1540, nine days before the Society of Jesus received the blessing of Pope Paul III. In the years that followed he had many opportunities to observe how Ignatius conducted himself as Superior General of the growing order. He noted, in particular, how the saint behaved in his daily round of prayer, work and community life. Later this detailed knowledge informed his writings about Ignatius, including the biography that he completed in 1569.

Towards the end of his long life he put pen to paper again to record his recollections of how Ignatius had exercised his authority as a superior. The finished manuscript was found in a drawer of his desk when he died in September 1611. Now, four centuries later, it has been rendered into English by Fr Joseph Munitiz, who has done so much over the years to make the Ignatian sources available to English-speaking readers. The translation, meticulous in its accuracy, is accompanied by an introduction and scholarly footnotes that clarify the text.

Ribadeneira explains that his purpose in writing is to show superiors how to govern the Society by placing before them the principles on which Ignatius acted and the example that he left. The saint expected all Jesuits to practise obedience in will, judgment and deed, and in that way to preserve unity. But he expected superiors to attend to the needs and aptitudes of each individual in their care, and thus to respect diversity. For him the authority required to govern effectively came not from one's status in the world or one's natural gifts but from one's virtue. And the virtue to be cultivated especially was prudence, which enables one to judge what is appropriate to a person's needs, character and situation.

Ribadeneira's recollections of Ignatius show that he exemplified these norms. He treated his subordinates with a discriminating love that prompted them to obey him willingly. Whenever possible he granted their requests;

he protected their good names; and if they were unwell in mind or body he attended to their needs. When admitting novices he bore in mind their natural gifts and their potential usefulness to the Society, but once they were accepted he placed their health and well-being above their use and fruitfulness. And if it became necessary to expel someone from the order, his firmness did not exclude concern for that person's needs and dignity. But his kindness coexisted at times with severity. He treated his close associates (Polanco, Nadal, Laínez, Diego de Eguía) with a harshness that Ribadeneira finds astonishing. In this respect, he comments, Ignatius is to be admired rather than imitated.

The translation of the *Treatise* is followed by an afterword in which Fr Mark Rotsaert reflects on what Ribadeneira's text has to say to the Jesuits of our own time. His thoughtful remarks are informed by his knowledge of early Jesuit history and his experience of governance in the Society. He draws attention to the fact that Ignatius was shaped by a world very different from ours. This is apparent, for instance, in Ribadeneira's story of how he refused to admit a novice who had a twisted nose. To us his decision seems scandalous, but it reflects the norms of the court culture of the Renaissance in which he had been trained. Similarly his harshness to his associates appears to indicate his understanding of St Paul's teaching (to which Ribadeneira alludes) that those who have reached maturity in the spiritual life may be offered 'strong meat', for 'solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil' (Hebrews 5: 14).

Ribadeneira's treatise belongs to its own time also in the importance it accords to the ascetical interpretation of Ignatian spirituality that developed after the Council of Trent. Ignatius was resolved, we are told, to foster virtue in those under his care; he measured their progress in virtue by the effort they made to master themselves; and he devised practical means, when necessary, to help them eradicate bad habits. The emphasis on human effort may surprise modern readers familiar with the saint's *Reminiscences* and *Spiritual Diary*, where his interior union with Jesus and his reliance on divine inspiration are to the fore.

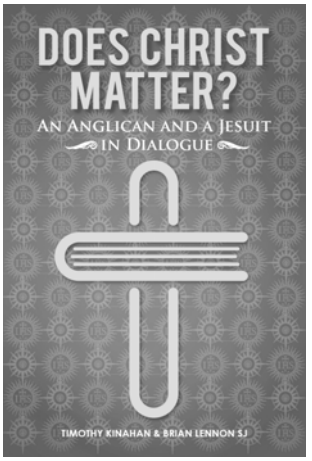
But there are moments when the ascetical note gives way to a broader view in which the action and presence of God are paramount. We are reminded that in his undertakings Ignatius 'made use of every human means available', yet never ceased to depend on divine providence as if such human measures alone were 'of no avail'. And Ribadeneira affirms that superiors should so arrange things that their charges may 'get ready by their good works to receive the grace of the Lord'.

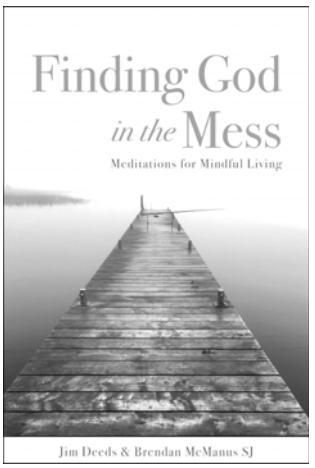
Terence O'Reilly

Treatise on the Governance of St Ignatius of Loyola *is available from The Way Ignatian Book Service. Please go to www.theway.org.uk/bookservice or contact the editorial office.*

Timothy Kinahan and Brian Lennon, *Does Christ Matter? An Anglican and a Jesuit in Dialogue* (Dublin: Messenger, 2017). 978 1 9102 4842 3, pp. 144, £11.99.

Jim Deeds and Brendan McManus, *Finding God in the Mess: Meditations for Mindful Living* (Dublin: Messenger, 2017). 978 1 9102 4884 3, pp. 128, £8.95.





The Bishop of Fulham has recently written, 'Eyes can glaze over and heads nod as ecumenical work unfolds slowly'.[1] For half a century ARCIC (the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission) has been issuing its communiqués, but the goal of 'a Church fully reconciled' seems as far off as ever. Fortunately the glacial speed of official conversations between the Churches is not the only measure of ecumenical progress. While the interminable talks go on, Christians of different traditions are already banding together to get things done.

Two such Christians are the joint authors of *Does Christ Matter?* Tim Kinahan is an Anglican and the rector of a parish in the Church of Ireland. Brian Lennon is a Roman Catholic and a Jesuit priest. The two are fast friends, their friendship transcending both the ecclesiological differences over which ARCIC agonizes and the communal hostilities of Northern Ireland. Their friendship has deepened over the decades and through many dark hours. Their joint quest—a quest which we are invited to join as we turn these pages—is to understand the relevance of Jesus of Nazareth to the fractured society they serve and to our wider broken world.

Their book falls into three sections, the first of which is headed 'What Is God Like?' Kinahan and Lennon insist that, whatever else God may be, he is not *bland*. (Or perhaps we should say, as they do occasionally, *she* is not bland.) Notwithstanding their question, our authors spare us an abstract discussion of the divine attributes. Their approach is not to peer into the mist in search for God but to look to Jesus and what he requires of us. There is, they claim, 'a pattern in Christ's life of friendship,

[1] 'The Anglican–Methodist Proposals on Holy Orders', letter, *Church Times* (9 Feb 2018).

teaching, healing, table-companionship, personal prayer and worship' (p. 52). This is the exemplar for our Churches to emulate.

The next question and the theme of the second section of their book ('Critique of the Churches') is blunt, if not brutal—'How well do we do this?' Their frank answer is 'not very well'. Each of our authors now speaks in turn. Brian Lennon first offers what amounts to an indictment of the Roman Catholic Church, a critique to which his Anglican friend Timothy Keenan then responds. The latter then says what he thinks of the Church of Ireland, an appraisal on which his Jesuit companion comments.

At one level Father Brian's criticisms of his own Church are familiar. The Church has failed fully to learn and implement the lessons of the Second Vatican Council. There is the malaise of a continuing clericalism and the consequent exclusion of laypeople, especially women, from effective governance in the Church. There is the 'abysmal' new English translation of the liturgy (p. 84). But the roots of what is awry, Lennon maintains, lie much deeper, in a misunderstanding long predating the sundering in the Church of East and West or of Catholic and Protestant. 'The early church', he writes, 'in its struggle to make sense of the cross gave precedence to the image of Christ as priest over that of Christ as prophet' (p. 69). In Lennon's view, it is this elevation of priest above prophet that has allowed the abuse of children in the Church to go unchecked for so long.

Tim Keenan is rather milder in his strictures on his own communion. That said, he recognises that Anglicans too defer too much to their clergy, especially to their bishops. The latter need to be cut down to size. People expect too much of the clergy, an expectation with which clergy themselves, not always sure of what they are there for, collude by their hyper-activism. Crippling historic ties with the establishment, Keenan holds, compromise the Church's witness.

In Section Three, Kinahan and Lennon turn to Church and society. For both of them the context of ministry has been a deeply divided region where violence—albeit in decline since the Good Friday Agreement—is an ever-present threat. In a chapter tersely entitled 'The Past', our authors skilfully disentangle the matted skeins of Ireland's tragic history. The legacy of 'the Troubles' is angry wounds whose healing will require a stubborn commitment to the pursuit of justice and peace, always recognising the tension between those two ideals, never supposing that their realisation will be other than long and costly.

The writing of this book was overtaken by Brexit, the UK's decision to leave the European Union—a decision which our authors clearly lament. They offer an admirably dispassionate and cool-headed analysis of a devastating turn of events which clearly will do nothing to promote the social healing they seek.

Lennon and Kinahan, best of friends, end by asking each other whether the issues they have been discussing matter 'when life hurts' (p. 184). Their

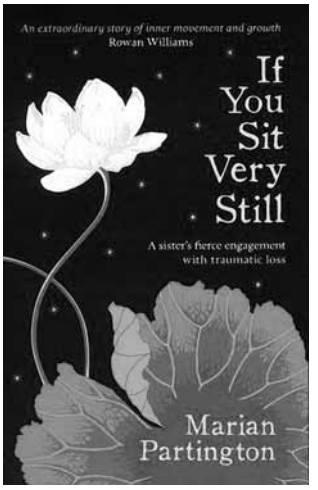
answer is a guarded 'yes'—guarded because these two good men, authors of a wise and deeply-felt book, distrust anything too easily said.

Two other friends whose home is Northern Ireland are the Jesuits Jim Deeds and Brendan McManus. They too seek peace and meaning in a broken world. But *Finding God in the Mess* is a very different book from Kinahan and Lennon's. Deeds and McManus offer no analysis of the specific history or personal circumstances out of which they write. Instead we have a sequence of simple mediations on how life—despite everything—can be rich and fulfilling.

This brief book is based on the spirituality of the 'limping pilgrim' St Ignatius. Its fourfold framework is provided by the mysteries of the Rosary. The attractive coloured photographs accompanying the text—all but two taken by Father Brendan—make the book a pleasure to handle. Each reflection is followed by questions intended to guide the individual reader or to prompt group discussion. Many will surely find this an engaging and helpful little book—though it is probably not for those awkward customers found in every congregation, who are prone to say, 'Yes, but ….'

John Pridmore

Marian Partington, *If You Sit Very Still: A Sister's Fierce Engagement with Traumatic Loss* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2016). 978 1 7859 2140 7, pp. 208, £18.99.



What does it mean to live through long years of anguish, trapped in fearful uncertainty because someone you love has disappeared without a trace? What does it mean eventually to face the horror that the one you love has been subjected to imprisonment, torture and systematic sexual abuse before being killed and dismembered, and her remains hidden? How do you chart a way through the confrontation with loss and horror to a place of reconciliation and peace? Marian Partington provides a deeply moving and honest account of that journey. She reflects from the vantage point of a hard-won tranquillity on a struggle that has occupied almost her entire adult life. Her story is particular and personal but it ends in compassion, hope and a continuing work of forgiveness that embraces and redeems agents of violence.

Marian's younger sister Lucy was a bright, witty, creative English student in her final year at university. One who took life joyfully but seriously, she

had found herself drawn to become a Roman Catholic that year. One night, just after Christmas in 1973, she failed to return to the family home in Gloucestershire. The fruitless search for her lasted seven years. After that all the family could do was get on with life, paralyzed by her absence. But then, twenty years after her disappearance, in a blaze of nationwide publicity, they learnt that Lucy had been one of the victims of Fred and Rosemary West.

Marian challenges standard narratives of horror and vengeance that trap her sister in her victimhood. She frames her story as a spiritual journey. She herself was also an English student and, though she did not share Lucy's Catholicism, she did share a deep understanding and love of the language and its literature, along with a clear yearning for transcendence. Her own pathway would lead her to the stillness of the Quakers and the intense, transformative practices of Chinese Buddhism. So she was well able to recognise the universal themes in the medieval meditation on a father's grief for a dead daughter, *The Pearl*, which was in Lucy's bag on the day she disappeared.

For Marian, that coincidence is more than a sad irony. It is a rich and life-giving *Realsymbol*, one of many in the course of the book, through which her sister, from beyond the grave, points towards a meaning that transcends the pain and horror of what was done, towards a deeper, connected reality of life and compassion. The dream journey of the father in poem, through self-absorbed misery to painful self-knowledge, to a new vision of the beloved and a new gladness, provides, at the outset, the framework for interpreting the journey of Marian herself, and makes it no longer just a personal journey, but one that belongs to every human being.

This spiritual progress is hard won. Though the different phases of loss, grief, anger and depression are punctuated with intimations of hope, and though she is able to identify the pivotal moments of progress, it is not until 25 years on from the discovery of her sister's body that she finds the serenity that allows her to write a letter of authentic forgiveness to Rosemary West, fulfilling a desire that arose in her at the time of the West trials. For it was already then that she realised this was the only way that her grief would be brought to a good and beneficent end.

The book recounts how she discovered that the gateway to forgiveness was an honest confrontation with herself and her own self-absorption, to recognise her own hurts and to see their effects in her own failures in love. Her grief needed to be purified. For a culture that straightforwardly honours grief and demands just retribution for violent wrongs, it is a counter-intuitive but vital insight that grief can need a process of purification and that a judgmental, self-absorbed and vengeful grief can become an inexhaustible source of misery that afflicts the lives of those around us.

With an attentive eye, she notes and describes the distorting effects of that first twenty-year wait—the 'Not Knowing'—on her own inner world,

on her relationships and on the behaviour of her family. After the crisis of the discovery, though, supported first by the Quaker movement and later by the practice of Chan Buddhism, she goes deeper and explores the earlier hurts of her parents' divorce, noticing how it had already made her capable of indifference, harshness and hidden acts of violence. She notices accidental conjunctions of time and place that link her and her sister with the Wests, but the core of her insight is that she is not *radically* different from them. A standard response to acts of appalling human cruelty is absolute condemnation from a safe distance. She, however, acknowledges the commonality. Those whose lives have been twisted by cruelty and abuse can be driven by rage and pain to inflict similar cruelties and similar abuse in turn, and we are they.

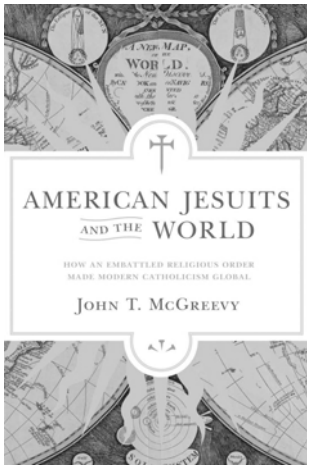
As this awareness deepens, she recognises that there is a self of which she has to let go if she is to break a cycle in which she too is implicated. In the wake of a Buddhist retreat and in the sort of pivotal moment that those who have done the Spiritual Exercises may understand, she is brought to an intense, overwhelming sense of her own desire and capacity to kill and to destroy. She shares the violence of a violent world. But that inner revelation then becomes another significant step towards a new depth of compassion, with a universal significance, out of which will (eventually) grow the forgiveness that she wants to give.

Like the father in *The Pearl* she is taught through powerful symbolic dreams and in powerful symbolic moments that she must let go of the grief-laden memory of her dead sister, abandon the deceptive hope 'of a better past' (p. 62), in order for her sister's death and her own grief to find their true meaning: new, powerful and redemptive. In the end it is words spoken by her Buddhist mentor which bring her release: 'just know that your suffering is relieving the suffering of others' (p. 135). It is in the wake of this that she eventually begins her prison ministry as part of the 'forgiveness project'. Her personal journey becomes a gift for all, reconciling and liberating, helping perpetrators of violence in the prisons of the world to recover their lost humanity.

The book is utterly honest. It is written in a rich, evocative language, filled with an attentive observation of nature and the inner world of human beings. Lucy herself fills the story with her poems, her intelligence, her suffering, her tokens and her half-glimpsed presence in dreams. It is a fragment of one such dream that gives the title of the book—and transforms the final meaning of the irreducible horror of what happened to her. In the dream Lucy, sitting by a pond of childhood memory, says, 'If you sit very still, you can hear the sun move' (p. 6).

John Moffatt SJ

John T. McGreevy, *American Jesuits and the World: How an Embattled Religious Order Made Modern Catholicism Global* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2016). 978 0 6911 7162 3, pp. 320, £24.95.



In a discourse delivered on 26 October 2016 to Jesuits assembled for the Thirty-Sixth General Congregation, Pope Francis quoted Ignatius' instruction that 'our vocation is to travel through the world and to live in any part of it where there is hope of greater service to God and of help of souls' (*Constitutions,* III.2.G[304]). Citing Jerónimo Nadal, he explained that the whole world was a Jesuit's home. Nadal famously characterized 'journeys' as the distinctive mark of the Society and its most perfect residence. Jesuit mobility and exchange of news have recently been highlighted as early examples of 'globalization'. John T. McGreevy deftly shows how this globalization affected the self-identity and role of nineteenth-century American Jesuits.

Pope Pius VII's universal restoration of the Society of Jesus in 1814 did not end the Society's tribulations. Targeted as the enemy of nationalism and liberalism, the Society was expelled—often more than once—from Switzerland, sections of Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, France, Mexico (only foreign Jesuits), El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay. In the United Kingdom, as the government pondered Catholic emancipation, the expulsion of the Society was seriously considered as a *sine qua non*. John Adams, the second US president, and Thomas Jefferson, the third, famously denounced the restored Society in their correspondence. With considerable reluctance Adams conceded: 'Our System however of Religious Liberty must afford them an Asylum' (p. 1).

In this monograph one encounters many fascinating characters and intriguing incidents, from the miraculous apparition of the blessed John Berchmans to Mary Wilson at Grand Couteau in Louisiana, to the tarring and feathering of the Swiss John Bapst in Maine, to the educational policies of another Swiss, Burchard Villiger, in Philadelphia. Each is clearly set amidst the virulent anti-Catholicism prevalent not only among the 'Know Nothing' movement but among abolitionists. The author has eschewed a traditional comprehensive narrative in favour of tantalising vignettes that often return to the same problems of loyalty, patriotism and accommodation.

Exiled European Jesuits travelled to the United States to serve as missionaries to Native American tribes or as pastors to Catholic immigrants. From their arrival they were suspect: did they embrace the fundamental

principles of their new country? Or had their experience of anti-clerical liberals left them significantly more apprehensive of all secular government than their native-born colleagues who extolled these values? Jesuit education predated the arrival of the exiles—Georgetown was founded in 1789—but they encouraged the proliferation of Jesuit institutions to form, educate and protect immigrants. Bapst served as the first president of Boston College; Villiger was the fourth president of Santa Clara (California) and fifth president of Saint Joseph's (Pennsylvania).

Jesuit concentration on education alarmed Protestants and liberal Catholics. The abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852), feared the deleterious cultural and political influence the Society could exercise through its colleges; the *Chicago Tribune* proclaimed the Society of Jesus as 'the most virulent and relentless enemy of the Protestant faith and Democratic government' (p. 150). The liberal Catholic convent Orestes Brownson bemoaned that the education of Catholic youth was entrusted to an order 'so destitute of loyalty that it could look on with indifference and see the nation rent asunder' (p. 93). Other Jesuits argued that the Society should focus on parishes instead of colleges: this debate continues.

By 1900 American Jesuits were running 24 colleges. (McGreevy erroneously lists 25 but the Society did not assume administration of the University of Scranton until 1942, more than 50 years after its foundation [p. 151]. I also note erroneous dates for the foundation of the Maryland–New York province, 1879 and not 1892; the Missouri province, 1863 and not 1892; and an independent New Orleans mission in 1888 and not 1893 [p. 169].) With instructors often barely intelligible in their non-native English, Jesuit colleges offered a classical education rooted in the revised *Ratio studiorum*. Villiger even insisted that Jesuit education be *gratis* as Ignatius Loyola desired, but rising costs, and a gnawing suspicion among parents that anything freely given was not worth taking, resulted in the introduction of tuition fees.

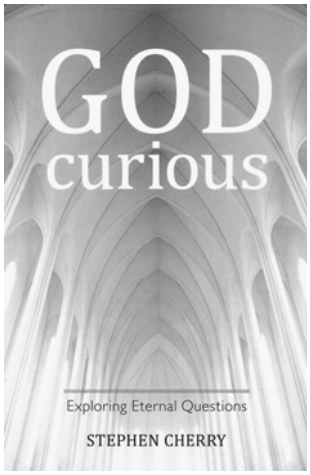
Throughout the nineteenth century, Jesuits waged an educational war on two fronts. Refusing to accept graduates of Jesuit colleges in its law school, the Harvard president Charles W. Eliot dismissed the 'uniform prescribed education' as found in 'Moslem countries' and 'Jesuit colleges' and argued in favour of student choice and elective courses. On the other hand, the Roman Catholic Archbishop John Ireland, believing in the fundamental compatibility of US and Catholic principles, disapproved of Catholic efforts to set up and maintain a parallel educational system: 'The Free school of America! Withered be the hand raised in sign of its destruction.' (p. 160) Exiled Jesuits found Ireland's acceptance of the good will of a central government at best naïve.

Many may have been attracted to the Society out of a desire to be missionaries. Although US provinces did embark on foreign missions at the end of the nineteenth century, they remained committed to the educational apostolate. The command *Ite inflammate omnia* and a desire for life on the

frontiers was often localised to the classroom. Most Jesuits found themselves prisoners of a lecture hall and tied to an academic calendar instead of being enterprising missionaries in an exotic, and perhaps dangerous, foreign land. Their missionary journey, in the words of John Courtney Murray, was 'a voyage into the heart of all problems of American democracy' (p. 211). These colleges established the Jesuit brand in the United States. 'Had it not been for the schools', John W. O'Malley recently argued, 'the Society of Jesus would, within one or two generations, have become barely distinguishable from other religious orders, such as the Dominicans'.[2] McGreevy well recalls the ministries of overlooked Jesuit pioneers who interjected a critical evaluation of the American enterprise, a legacy, one hopes, that is maintained through the educational institutions.

Thomas McCoog SJ

Stephen Cherry, *God Curious: Exploring Eternal Questions* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2017). 978 1 7859 2199 5, pp. 128, £8.99.



Stephen Cherry describes how at school he was fascinated by science, but more deeply concerned to learn wisdom. Having found religious education highly disappointing, he feared that his studies at theological college, which incidentally he calls 'vicar school', would be equally so. He anticipated that no one would get down to the matters of life and death, meaning and purpose. Yet on reading Augustine's *Confessions* he at last discovered the subject for which he had been looking. Cherry found seductive in Augustine the combination of the quest to understand the world—how memory works, what time is—and his interest in God.

Cherry proposes that there are two main differences between science and theology: the subject matter and the lack of an agreed method in theology. With regard to the latter he suggests that apophatic or negative theology is rather like scientific enquiry. He recommends it as a means of scraping away much nonsense that has gathered round the idea of God over the years. Part of theology, he says, is to identify what should not be believed by people of faith.

Cherry considers that we should engage with theology because it is fascinating, fun and important. However, before elaborating on the positives,

[2] John W. O'Malley, 'The Distinctiveness of the Society of Jesus', *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 3 (2016), 1–16, at 14–15.

he continues in negative mode, giving what he calls five not very good reasons for not engaging in theology. In this section he seems to conflate theology with religious studies, and to suggest that theology can be removed from the context of faith. The strength of this book, however, is Cherry's enthusiasm for his subject—the pursuit of wisdom through exploration of life-and-death questions. His stories are persuasive. For example in his reflection on joy, Cherry cites a Filipino priest, Benigno Beltran, who lived with scavengers on a garbage heap in Manila for over thirty years. Beltran repeatedly returned to the reality of fun and laughter in the midst of squalor, seeing this joy in the midst of suffering as a challenge to disbelief and agnosticism.

Having described Richard Dawkins as a paradoxical figure for not believing in God and yet thinking that religion can be a good thing, Cherry says that some contemporary atheists behave like religious believers in a variety of ways—apart from the confession of sins. He asks who is the madder: those who behave in a religious way because they believe in God, or those who behave in a religious way because they *don't* believe in God?

Abhorring fundamentalism, Cherry emphasizes that the way to engage in theology is by being open to others, sharing the conversation that has been going on since the dawn of human questioning, without being dogmatic. He strongly encourages the reader to join in the conversation, and to that end he writes in straightforward, accessible English, covering issues such as the translation of religious texts in an elementary fashion which would be useful to newcomers to religious topics. His 'History of Christian Theology in Fewer than Twenty Tweets' is equally useful and accessible.

As an introduction to his tweets, Cherry quotes one from Timothy Radcliffe, from @StPaulsLearning—'Baptism is saying "Yes" to our liberation in Christ, in a society which often sees our greatest freedom as going shopping'. Cherry tells us that this works at a number of levels and is a genuine and constructive theological tweet. Each of his own tweets is followed by a short explanation. His first comprises the opening words to the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20:2–3, tweet 4 is about Peter's recognition of Jesus as the Messiah. By tweet 7 Cherry has moved outside the Bible to Augustine's, 'O God, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you'. His subsequent tweets borrow from Thomas Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, Martin Luther, George Herbert, John Henry Newman, Karl Barth, Gustavo Gutiérrez and Elizabeth Johnson. In fact he stops at fifteen tweets, before condensing the message even further to fifteen hashtags.

Moving on from words and characters, Cherry discusses the way in which he thinks that religious images can be used in the exploration of theological questions, once separated from the original teaching or bible story that inspired them. He cites Neil MacGregor's exhibition 'Seeing Salvation', suggesting that such images, like Orthodox icons, can be seen as windows into the

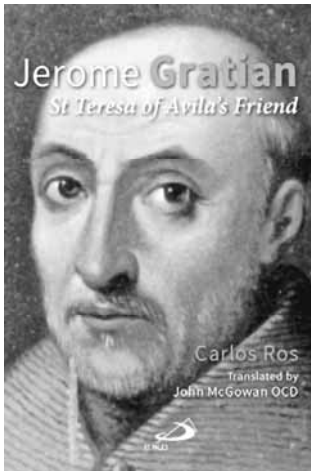
transcendent. To those tools which are indispensable to theology, Cherry adds poetry. He reckons that theology will become increasingly contemplative in the future, and that the visual and the poetic will become ever more important to it.

Ending on a personal note, Cherry tells how his mother's dementia has taught him that there is more to life, more to love, more to relationships than we might ordinarily recognise. The theologian will be concerned to go beyond scientific enquiry and to push the horizon of meaning and purpose back, and to consider the bigger picture, the deeper issues, the longer-term perspective—the eternal questions.

God Curious could be a useful book for anyone seeking to explore those perennial questions about life and death, the world and beyond. The style is easy and engaging, there is a surprising amount of introductory information about Christianity and other religions, and the author's passion for his subject is never in doubt.

Anne Inman

Carlos Ros, *Jerome Gratian: St Teresa of Avila's Friend*, translated by John McGowan (London: St Pauls, 2016). 978 1 9103 6515 1, pp. 415, £19.99.



This is a fascinating and important book. It tells a tale which has been largely unknown for four centuries, although closely related to the well-known story of St Teresa of Ávila and her achievement as founder of the Discalced Carmelites, or 'reformer of Carmel'. Moreover it is part of the age-old drama of bitter strife between 'the letter' and 'the spirit', a drama at the heart of the gospel narrative and still very much alive today. Readers of *The Way* may be interested to know that the main character, Jerome Gratian, was one of the witnesses for the beatification of St Ignatius Loyola.

Gratian was St Teresa's closest friend and collaborator, and became her spiritual director. It is not surprising that he suffered, as she and St John of the Cross did, at the hands of the Calced Carmelite friars, who deeply resented the Teresian reform. But it was a bitter surprise that after her death he was maliciously slandered and finally expelled from the Discalced Carmelites by the very members of the Order that he had helped her bring to birth. It was only in December 1999 that Fr Camilo Maccise, General of the Order, together with his General Definitors, officially revoked the Sentence of Expulsion. The following year the Cause of Jerome Gratian's beatification was launched.

The earlier archives of the Discalced Carmelites named St John of the Cross as founder, since it was considered out of the question for a woman to found—or reform—a male Order! And he had indeed been one of Teresa's first two founding friars. (Gratian entered a few years later, and was thirty years younger than Teresa.) But even after Teresa was accorded her rightful place in history, it has always been the name of St John of the Cross that was most closely associated with hers. There is no question of denying his unique contribution to the Teresian Carmel, for both nuns and friars, and indeed for the whole Church; but his influence has been primarily spiritual, whereas that of Jerome Gratian was primarily practical. Indeed it is hard to see how Teresa could have managed without him. It was he to whom she made a vow of lifelong obedience, having had a vision of Christ joining both their right hands and telling her that 'he desired that I take this master to represent Him as long as I lived, and that we were to agree together in everything …. Twice more the Lord returned to tell me in different words not to fear since He gave Master Gratian to me'.[3]

It was Gratian who had been promoted, almost as soon as he came out of the novitiate, to carry out Visitations and resolve difficulties. Almost from the beginning, the friars had been afflicted with a novice-master who envisaged 'perfection' in terms of extraordinary and exaggerated penance, whereas Teresa stood by the Primitive Rule of Carmel which declared that 'Common sense is the guide of the virtues'. Her spirit was primarily one of love, and not of 'bitter zeal', and Jerome Gratian understood this well.

In addition, his family had lived and worked in the court of the Spanish king; and he had gained a real ability for diplomacy, which was invaluable in the tense encounters between Calced and Discalced Carmelites until they eventually separated into independent Provinces. Both Jerome Gratian and John of the Cross were imprisoned and severely treated by their Calced brethren, as being destructive forces within the Carmelite family. But when the separation—which was Teresa's goal and dream—was eventually achieved, it was Gratian whom she chose, and persuaded others to choose, as the first Provincial.

From our viewpoint, Teresa's judgment of character seems strangely naïve with regard to another friar, Nicholas Doria, whom she persuaded Gratian to take as his second in command. When Gratian's term of office expired, it was Doria who was elected in his place, ominously declaring that his very bones would cry out 'Regular Observance, Regular Observance!' He immediately began to denounce Gratian as 'lax', firstly with regard to food, clothing and bedding, but then, more seriously, as being on unsuitably intimate terms with some of the nuns. The scale of the denunciations and consequent retributions grew steadily worse, and eventually included the

[3] Teresa of Ávila, *Spiritual Testimonies*, in *Collected Works*, volume 1, translated by Kieran Kavenaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, DC: ICS, 1976), 406.

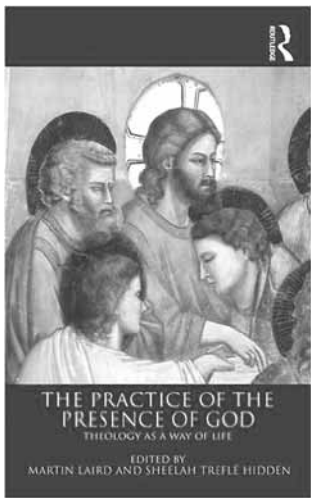
allegation that he had fathered three children with Mother Mary of St Joseph, whom Teresa, before she died, had hoped would succeed her. One of their so-called 'children' was in fact a younger sister of Fr Gratian, who had become a Carmelite nun at an early age.

Eventually, when Gratian's public reputation had been ruthlessly destroyed, Doria and his Council expelled him from the Discalced Carmelite Order. However he still had friends and colleagues who understood the truth, and one of the Roman Cardinals employed him as his personal theologian. Having lost his Discalced habit, he was finally allowed to join the Augustinians; but that very day he embarked on a ship bound for one of Spain's African colonies—only to be captured by Moorish pirates, who immediately stripped their captives and claimed them as slaves. He was eventually ransomed; and although the Discalced Carmelite friars still ostracised him, the Calced friars welcomed him into their houses with great respect and courtesy. He finally died in one of their priories in Belgium, wearing their habit.

The author writes: 'This may all seem somewhat fanciful, but it is true'. And perhaps this is one reason why he quotes so much from primary sources. While it is excellent to hear the actual words of Fr Jerome and his contemporaries, it is not always easy to follow the main storyline because of the multiplicity of detail. The translator is to be commended for rendering such a complex story in clear and simple English!

Mary Pia oed

***The Practice of the Presence of God: Theology as a Way of Life*, edited by Martin Laird and Sheelah Treflé Hidden (London: Routledge, 2016). 978 1 4724 7832 0, pp. 168, £32.99.**



At least since the thirteenth century, theologians have been worrying about the apparent divorce between theology as theory and its practice—or, as we would say, between theology and spirituality. If they have slipped apart, how can they be reconnected, or be seen in some way as belonging together, as integrated parts of a 'way of life'? The title of this book recalls Brother Lawrence's 'practice of the presence of God' in the kitchen of his Carmelite monastery, and also the French philosopher Pierre Hadot's recent book, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, which seeks to respond to the problem of modern philosophy's divorce from practice. The approach here is rather different, not advocating a

particular view of practice or theory to reunite the divided realms, but simply inviting some leading theologians to reflect on the topic as they wish, producing a variety of contributions.

The book began as a conference at Heythrop College, London, in January 2014. Some speak of their own experience of a division between their professional and private lives, some of academic ways of thinking through the problem, and some of exemplary figures from the past who seemed to combine theology and spirituality particularly well. The result is an engaging and readable collection, though it is weakened by a lack of sustained analysis and response. But any doubts are more than set aside by the sheer quality of the individual contributions, and one wonders how the organizers succeeded in gathering such a group of people together in one place: James Alison, Sebastian Brock, Luigi Gioia, Martin Laird, Andrew Louth, Margaret Miles, Brian Robinette, Nikolaï Sakharov, Rachel Smith, Rowan Williams and Frances Young.

Most of the contributions relate the problem, at the deepest level, to the basic existential issue of human dividedness from God, self and the world, requiring no less than divine grace in response. In the life of faith, this dividedness is experienced in tensions between the heart and the head, and between sinful and God-directed desires. Theologians are no different from humanity as a whole in this respect, and the response is the same for all. James Alison, Rowan Williams, Martin Laird and Luigi Gioia, in different ways, attend to these underlying issues, noting the need for repentance and an attitude of receptiveness to the divine gift when engaging in thought about God and God's relations with the world.

Gioia has an especially nice reflection on the challenge to theology presented by the recommendation in the Rule of Benedict to remember one's death daily. In the light of death, Christians must admit that they can see no more of human destiny than non-Christians. Their life projects will remain as incomplete as any other, lacking the satisfaction of speaking the last word on what it has all amounted to. For the theologian this is especially challenging, because it cuts away at common perceptions of the 'expert' as having privileged knowledge, greater than that of others. What can the theologian offer, if not knowledge of the final meaning of human life? Gioia suggests that it is the paradoxical situation of sharing in human vulnerability and incompleteness, while also receiving the revelation that God loves this reality and will make it meaningful, that demands the theologian's attention. The theologian seeks to express and understand this situation critically, resisting too-easy resolutions in the direction either of religious self-satisfaction or irreligious nihilism. Acknowledging the incompleteness of the human condition, the mundane fact of one's death, is a gift in this respect, keeping the theologian grounded in the real arena of God's presence in the world, 'awake, alert, discerning, and waiting' (p. 127). The same approach also keeps theology and practice in close dialogue.

This holistic attempt to reconcile theology and practice at the deep level of human existence is a theme which recurs in the chapters on historical figures. Sebastian Brock, writing on the fourth-century theologian St Ephrem, makes the important point that ancient and medieval writers were seldom concerned to convey ideas or practices alone in their spiritual writings, but rather a 'mode of perception by which we can live' (p. 110). They describe a process of human growth into a transformed perception which joins the self, the natural world and God together. Certain kinds of practice and ethical behaviour ('purity of heart') are stipulated, as well as 'right belief', but it is the capacity to see reality truthfully and with love that is sought, beyond practices and ideas.

Andrew Louth, examining the Orthodox liturgy, encapsulates the point nicely by emphasizing the priority of movement in the liturgy. It is not the individual practices or words of the liturgy which define it, important as they are, but its character as movement—a movement which draws its participants into certain ways of seeing God and the world, extending into their lives as a whole. You do not reconcile theology with practice merely by adding some practices, or thinking bigger and better ideas, but through an expanding your understanding and relation to the world and God in every area—intellectual, practical, emotional, aesthetic, interpersonal—to give a new perspective on all things.

Other chapters approach the question rather differently, turning to the tensions in professional academic life which can militate against this holistic, integrated role for theology. Margaret Miles describes how she lost touch with her own experience as a young academic, thinking, in her naïve understanding of the academic method thinking that she must distance herself from her study entirely, while at the same time receiving some animosity from her fundamentalist father, whose views she felt bound to reject. Only gradually did she come to see that theology offered a greater personal integration, though it was one which, once embarked upon, would require her to face up to the divisions in her family. She started to regard her academic sources in a new light when she turned to them for help with this personal integration—help which she found especially in Augustine.

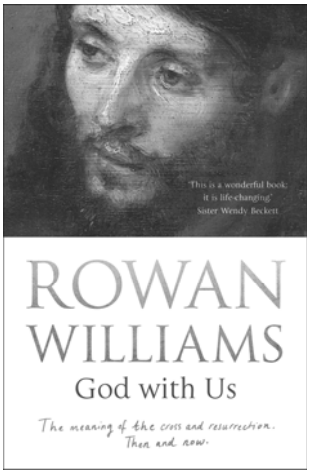
Frances Young, also writing autobiographically, speaks of the challenges of bringing up a severely disabled child while becoming aware of the tensions between her own church tradition and her academic work in biblical studies. Again, she discovered an enlarged view of theology by bringing her pressing personal questions into closer dialogue with her academic study, aided by the discovery of valuable resources in theological traditions other than her own, which resulted in a new integration between her academic work and her life as a whole.

This is a very rich collection of essays. It lacks a consistent method, analysis, argument or structure, but a remarkable unanimity emerges. The transformative dimension of theology, which lies in its capacity to move us

from one way of being and of seeing the world to another, requires a subjective openness and participation on the part of the theologian, but once this is introduced, theory and practice are held closely together.

Edward Howells

Rowan Williams, *God With Us: The Meaning of the Cross and Resurrection—Then and Now* (London: SPCK, 2017). 978 0 2810 7664 2, pp. 128, £6.99.



It might seem a trite thing to say but, when I read *God with Us* I could hear Rowan Williams's voice all the way through. This should not be surprising since this slim volume brings together three Holy Week addresses given at Canterbury in 2006, two Lent lectures from Winchester in 2008, and a sermon delivered at St Andrew's Holborn, London, in 2009. Yet, so often, when a preacher or lecturer reproduces the spoken word in a written form, the former is so mangled that it is impossible to discern the beauty or the force of the original and much can be lost. This is not so with the present publication. Moreover, it is an unexpected joy and privilege to discover how the former archbishop's theology has developed since the first public appearance of these pieces.

Each of the first three chapters, headed 'The Sign', 'The Sacrifice' and 'The Victory', looks back to the communities of the first Christians and also at our own day with an enviable sense of balance and proportion. The next two chapters, too, balance each other, one exploring Christ's resurrection 'then', the other Christ's resurrection 'now'. The reader is offered three questions at the end of each chapter for reflection or discussion. In the epilogue Rowan Williams takes us back to the world of two of his earlier books, *Ponder these Things* (2002) and *The Dwelling of the Light* (2003), with a meditation on the subject of a new Orthodox icon of the Resurrection painted by one of the sisters of the monastery of Vallechiara, some thirty kilometres south of Rome, which was blessed during the parish Eucharist at which Dr Williams preached. It is a pity that the illustration of the icon is in monochrome only.

God with Us is very much in the same vein as *Being Christian* (2014) and *Being Disciples* (2016). As a trilogy these books explore basic concepts of the Christian faith with such exemplary simplicity and depth that both the general reader and the experienced follower will benefit from Dr Williams's wisdom and insight—mainly, I suspect, because of his respect and inclusive love for both.

Luke Penkett