THE WAY

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ECCLESIAL CREATIVITY

Book Reviews

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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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ABBREVIATIONS

Autobiography	Ignatius of Loyola, 'Reminiscences (Autobiography)', in *Personal Writings*
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 *Personal Writings*
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)
GC	General Congregation, in *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) and *Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus* (Boston: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2017)
MHSJ	Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, 157 volumes (Madrid and Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1898–)
Personal Writings	*Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)

Papal documents may be found at www.vatican.va

FOREWORD

AT THE CONFERENCE of the bishops of Latin America in Aparecida in 2007, the then archbishop of Buenos Aires, Jorge Bergoglio, revealed a deep-seated intuition about 'this holy faithful people of God … enjoying the *infallibilitas in credendo*', which has determined the course of his papacy.[1] Later, as Pope Francis, he would explain:

> … all the faithful, considered as a whole, are infallible in matters of belief, and the people display this *infallibilitas in credendo*, this infallibility in believing, through a supernatural sense of the faith of all the people walking together.[2]

He has challenged us to recognise that the faith was never left in the hands of a select few, but given as a gift to many. As he explains: 'when you want to know *what* Holy Mother Church believes, go to the Magisterium … but when you want to know *how* the Church believes, go to the faithful people'.[3] Each of the articles in this issue touches upon the creativity that is necessary to reconcile the tensions between *what* the Church teaches and *how* it is believed, so that all Christians can, in Pope Francis's words, 'walk united with our differences'.[4]

In the concluding annotations to the *Spiritual Exercises*, St Ignatius offers guidelines about we are to think and feel together as a Church. A classic discourse by Peter-Hans Kolvenbach explains that, for St Ignatius, the hierarchical Church does not consist just of the Pope, bishops and priests, but of the whole people of God, each of whom is capable of mediating the grace of God from the place in the Church to which he or she has been called: 'Each person, as a member of the Church, exercises a responsibility in the work of salvation'. These guidelines are further explored in the context of the synodal Church by

[1] Jorge Maria Bergoglio (Pope Francis), 'When the Spirit of Truth Comes, He Will Guide You to All Truth', homily, eucharistic celebration at Aparecida, Brazil, 16 May 2007, in *In Your Eyes I See My Words: Homilies and Speeches from Buenos Aires*, volume 2, *2005–2008* (New York: Fordham U, 2020), 207, referring to *Lumen gentium*, n. 12.

[2] Pope Francis with Antonio Spadaro, *A Big Heart Open to God: A Conversation with Pope Francis* (New York: America, 2013), 16, referring to *Lumen gentium*, n.12.

[3] Pope Francis, intervention of the Holy Father Francis at the 18th General Congregation of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 25 October 2023.

[4] *A Big Heart Open to God*, 40.

Julie Trinidad, who offers detailed advice to spiritual directors about how to apply them; and by Kevin Leidich who reveals how they encourage the heartfelt identity cultivated throughout the Spiritual Exercises that finds a home in the mission of the Church.

Recent changes in seminary formation have sought to bring priests closer to those they serve so that they can think together with the people. This process has culminated in the promulgation of the document *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (2016) by Pope Francis. Norlan Julia explains how these changes are being implemented in seminaries in the Philippines using the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises as a guide. He reminds us of Pope Francis's comment that such formation ought to be 'a discipular experience which draws one to Christ and conforms one ever more to Him'.[5]

The last century saw the growth of many new Christian communities that thought creatively about how to live with an authentic faith. Originally founded in the wake of the First World War, the Bruderhof community began to dedicate themselves to living out their faith inspired by the Anabaptist tradition of life in common. Ian Randall describes how the tentative ecumenical growth of the community over the past century has borne continuous witness to the gospel in the changing circumstances of Europe and the world. Meanwhile, the Dei Verbum Missionary Fraternity was founded after the Second Vatican Council to evangelize through prayer, the ministry of the Word and the testimony of their way of life. James McTavish and Lucía Aurora Herrerías are inspired by Pope Francis's affirmation that the Church needs the 'deep breath of prayer' to grow in mission.[6] They describe how the movement's close connaturality with St Ignatius has led to a particular way of structuring their annual thirty-day retreat. In an article reprinted from our sister publication *Thinking Faith*, Timothy Radcliffe explores the relationship between globalisation, the diversity of Christian witness and the Church's fundamental impulse towards unity and universality.

A way of thinking that attends to human interiority is needed if the tensions between what is believed and how it is believed are to be reconciled. Patrick Riordan invites us to find words for the movements of the Holy Spirit at work within us so that the fruits of our discernment

[5] Pope Francis, address to the plenary of the Congregation for the Clergy, 3 October 2014.
[6] Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 262.

can form a basis of a theology that leads into mission. His line of thinking resonates with that of Robert Doud, who likewise discovers a foundation for interiority in philosophical phenomenology, which can become spirituality when it acknowledges that God is the author of human experience. The insights that we acquire from interiority accumulate within us throughout the trajectory of our lives and will finally become the grounds of our deepest integrity.

Finally, Louis Roy reminds us that Mary is a member of the Church just like any other. In the same way that divine grace can be mediated through her, it can be mediated through each one of us too. However, her necessary role in redemption gives her an unsurpassable uniqueness and makes her a vital affective influence on our prayer. As we think together as a Church, we recognise that we cannot think alone. The Pope, bishops and priests need to listen to the people just as much as the people need to listen to them. Each one of us must find the time to listen to God. Whenever we take steps forward, either tentative or bold, it is Mary who walks with us. She offers us the best example of how to think creatively about the future of the Church.

Philip Harrison SJ
Editor

St Beuno's

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A place of peace, prayer and beauty in North Wales

Away in the loveable west,
On a pastoral forehead of Wales,
I was under a roof here, I was at rest

Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jesuit poet

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Contact: The Secretary, St Beuno's, St Asaph,
Denbighshire, N. Wales, LL17 0AS

Tel: +44 (0)1745 583444

secretary@beunos.com

ST IGNATIUS' RULES FOR THINKING WITH THE CHURCH

Spiritual Direction for a Synodal Church

Julie Trinidad

I FIRST ENCOUNTERED THE PHRASE 'Thinking with the Church' when I attended the beatification celebrations for Oscar Romero in Rome in 2018. It was featured on T-shirts and a vast array of merchandise. The phrase had been Romero's episcopal ordination motto: *sentir con la Iglesia*.[1] Though I did not at that time give much thought to the meaning of the term, I did wonder if the phrase could really mean that decisions I might make, after careful discernment, ultimately had to be in harmony with the teachings or the magisterium of a Church which, in many ways, has lost institutional trust and credibility. Susan Wood highlights contemporary obstacles and challenges to serious engagement with such rules: 'To feel with the church in these days of ecclesiastical political intrigue and of the crisis of sexual abuse and its mishandling by bishops and cardinals is to feel pain, rage and shame'.[2]

Elizabeth Liebert and Annemarie Paulin-Campbell point out that many spiritual directors see Ignatius' eighteen 'Rules for Thinking with the Church' as outdated and lacking in usefulness, particularly for contemporary women who experience themselves as marginalised or alienated from the Church. For these reasons, such directors do not address the Rules.[3] George Ganss proposes that Ignatius meant them to be merely an appendix to the Exercises.[4] However, George Schemel

[1] See Ned Lunn, 'To What Extent Did Oscar Romero Remain Faithful to His Episcopal Motto "Sentir con la Iglesia"?', available at https://www.nedlunn.com/2021/03/24/to-what-extent-did-oscar-romero-remain-faithful-to-his-episcopal-motto-sentir-con-la-iglesia/.

[2] Susan K. Wood, 'Thinking and Feeling with the Church (*sentire cum ecclesia*)', *Ecclesiology*, 15/1 (2019), 3–6, here 3.

[3] Elizabeth Liebert and Annemarie Paulin-Campbell, 'Black Appearing White: Rules for Thinking with the Church', in *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women*, 2nd edn, edited by Annemarie Paulin-Campbell and Elizabeth Liebert (New York: Paulist, 2022), 256.

[4] George E. Ganss, 'Thinking with the Church: The Spirit of St Ignatius' Rules', *The Way Supplement*, 20 (Autumn 1973), 72–82, here 73.

and Judith Roemer urge directors not to avoid engaging with these rules entirely, and John O'Malley even sees the rules as the culmination of the Exercises.[5] Schemel and Roemer do insist that they should be engaged with in a time of spiritual consolation, given their capacity to trigger directees who have perhaps been hurt or disillusioned with aspects of the Church's life and practice.[6]

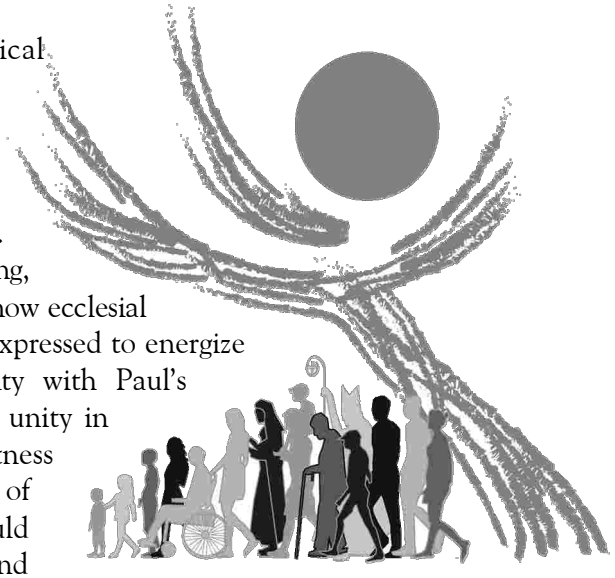
Rule 13 stands out as particularly challenging for contemporary directees and directors: 'What seems to me to be white, I will believe to be black if the hierarchical Church thus determines it' (Exx 365). As O'Malley provocatively asks: 'Do St Ignatius' "Rules for Thinking with the Church" call for blind orthodoxy?'

The Spirit of the Rules

Even as 'additional material' to the Spiritual Exercises, George Ganss believes that these rules have relevance for directors and directees in offering 'an example and a challenge to retreatants of every age to try to diagnose the chief ills of their era, and then prayerfully to devise habitual attitudes and practical procedures for living among them'. He argues that Ignatius intended the rules to be offered to ecclesial leaders for making decisions about, with or as the Church precisely with this goal. He proposes that such 'rules' are better understood as 'directives, suggestions, guides, patterns' rather than authoritarian pronouncements.[7] Ganss affirms that since the Exercises as a whole are 'a set of guidelines to be used with flexibility rather than a legal document', the Rules for Thinking with the Church should be understood in the same way.[8]

Ladislas Örsy goes further in proposing that directors actively engage in the creative act of formulating their own contemporary rules for thinking with the Church with their directees. This could strengthen their own, as well as their directees', sense of what the Church means for them today. I propose that Ignatius' descriptor of the sixteenth-century Church as *militant*, in the throes of crisis during the Reformation and the rise of humanism, would be best replaced by that of the Church *synodal*, inspired by the post-Vatican II vision of Pope Francis.

[5] George Schemel and Judith Roemer, *Beyond Individuation to Discipleship* (Scranton: Institute for Contemporary Spirituality, 2000), 145; John W. O'Malley, 'Do St Ignatius' "Rules for Thinking with the Church" Call for Blind Orthodoxy?' *America* (28 February 2019).
[6] Schemel and Roemer, *Beyond Individuation*, 145.
[7] Ganss, 'Thinking with the Church', 82, 72.
[8] George E. Ganss, 'St Ignatius' Rules for Thinking with the Church', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 7/1 (1975), 13.



The Church's logo for the Synodal Path

Örsy's creative and dialogical approach to interpreting the rules already envisions such a synodal path. He begins with St Paul's ways of thinking about the church in Corinth. For Paul, this involved considering, first in a local church context, how ecclesial unity can be understood and expressed to energize mission. In creative continuity with Paul's emphasis on the Church as a unity in diversity, Örsy calls for an alertness today to the presence and work of the Spirit. He asks: 'What should I do in my particular, concrete and personal circumstances to be one with the church?'[9] The question can be further expanded to promote synodal discernment: what should the Church do to be 'in unity' with me or with us such that our unique particularities are not erased?

Recontextualising the Rules

For Ignatius' rules to help breathe a synodal spirit into the Church today, 'to think with the Church' might be best understood as 'to sense' (*sentir*) with and as Church about the needs of our time and how we are called to make a difference as followers of Christ. Today, as in Ignatius' time, directors and directees are called to discern, where the Spirit is leading the Church and those who seek to know God's dream for Christ's body in the midst of history. How can we better know ourselves and others as on a journey, each and together endowed with a sense of faith (*sensus fidelium*) that enables and commissions us to critique, discern and act with humility and integrity? How can we think of ourselves as and with the Church today, as and with the whole People of God?

From this perspective, the Rules for Thinking with the Church can be recontextualised for our time and place. Gerald Arbuckle provides a helpful affirmation of the appropriateness of 'dissent' in the quest to 'think' or 'sense' with the Church in a recontextualised way: 'dissent is

[9] Ladislas Örsy, 'On Being One with the Church Today', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 7/1 (1975), 40, and see 31.

the prophetic move by people who genuinely love the gospel and the Church to offer reasonable alternative ways of preaching the good news to the world of our time'.[10] Dissent as a way of thinking with the Church seems the antithesis of Ignatius' rules for his time. It seems Ignatius was sensing that the Church needed greater assent to several features of Roman Catholic life and practice that were under threat. And yet, commentators agree that Rule 13 (white is black) was actually a form of dissent in the wake of emerging Lutheran doctrinal positions that denied the real presence of Christ in the outward appearance of what can only be seen as or believed to be bread and wine.[11]

Örsy's recontextualising work inspires the following possibilities for creating ways of being one with the Church today that could bring about prophetic and practical renewal of ecclesial identity and mission. I could grow in my capacity to sense with the Church when:[12]

1. I develop an interior alertness to the movements of grace in myself and in the life of the Church that come from the Spirit.
2. I am one with a mystery that exists in human form in time and space. The Church itself is both a divine mystery and a context-bound, human-inspired—and marred—phenomenon. The mystery of the Church can reveal itself to me as a call and a surprise that can be transformative.
3. I seek greater understanding of this mystery and am prophetically courageous in speaking of it.
4. I know that if I hold authority in the Church, I hold it in trust and must use it according to the heart and mind of God.
5. I honour all charisms given for the good of the Church.
6. I recognise that weaknesses in the Church need to be addressed and transformed through truthfulness, compassion and healing.
7. I know that the greater good may sometimes need personal sacrifices, including those of personal plans and cherished institutional expressions.

[10] Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Refounding the Church: Dissent for Leadership* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1993), 9.
[11] O'Malley, 'Do St Ignatius' "Rules for Thinking with the Church" Call for Blind Orthodoxy?'
[12] This list has drawn on and been developed from Örsy, 'On Being One with the Church Today', and Liebert and Paulin-Campbell, 'Black Appearing White'.

8. I hear and respond to the cries of the poor and those hungering for justice and healing of divisions.
9. I have authentic and faith-inspired reasons for the hope I offer to others and ground my hope in the story of Jesus.
10. I speak the truth as best I understand it.
11. I bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives, set the downtrodden free (Luke 4: 18–19). I am a sign of healing and reconciliation.
12. I work for unity among all in the Church, among churches and with all people of good will. I seek to heal divisions and not be a cause of division.
13. I promote cultural progress and offer ways to discern and respond to whether certain expressions of progress offer consolation or desolation to our world.

Liebert and Paulin-Campbell affirm the value and relevance of recontextualising Ignatius' Rules for Thinking with the Church within the contemporary experience of spiritual direction. Such work supports the self-understanding of spiritual directors who must realise and accept their 'inescapable role as a representative of the church'.[13] It also offers support for those who come to spiritual direction or the Spiritual Exercises seeking help relating discipleship to a relationship with the Church.

In the table that follows I have laid out the main thrust of the Rules for Thinking with the Church—as expounded by St Ignatius, by David Fleming in his *Contemporary Reading*, and by Liebert and Paulin-Campbell.[14] A fourth column is provided for recontextualising exploration between a director and directee as appropriate during spiritual direction. I offer some tentative suggestions in this column, as a potential director seeking to support directees to think or sense with the Church today in ways that can animate a spirit of ecclesial hope and service, and a sense of personal value for the life and mission of the Church.

[13] Liebert and Paulin-Campbell, 'Black Appearing White', 272, drawing on the work of Fredrik Heiding.
[14] The first column contains text from the Ganss translation of the *Spiritual Exercises*; the second is based on 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), 281–291; the third is based on Liebert and Paulin-Campbell, 'Black Appearing White'.

[352]	**To have the genuine attitude which we ought to maintain in the Church militant …**	**Guidelines for thinking with the Church today (adapted from Fleming)**
[353] (1st rule)	Be ready and prompt to obey all that the hierarchical Church teaches.	When legitimate authority speaks within the Church, listen with receptive ears.
[354] (2nd rule)	Praise confession and the Eucharist.	Encourage more personal involvement in the sacraments.
[355] (3rd rule)	Praise prayers and the Divine Office.	Praise and reverence the prayer life of the Church.
[356] (4th rule)	Praise religious orders, virginity and continence more than marriage.	Praise and esteem all vocations as God-given.
[357] (5th rule)	Praise religious vows (poverty chastity, obedience) over states of life that do not allow the perfection to which these vows lead such as being in business or married.	Praise vowed religious life as a special call to witness to God's reign in a world whose value system stands in contrast to that witness.
[358] (6th rule)	Praise relics of saints, participate in pilgrimages, indulgences, candle-lighting in church.	Have a loving reverence for the communion of saints. Pray for their support and concern for our lives.
[359] (7th rule)	Praise fasting and penances.	Respond freely to abstinence and fasting. Find ways to carry our cross daily in following Jesus.
[360] (8th rule)	Praise ornaments and church buildings. Venerate them for what they represent.	Show respect for places of worship, statues, paintings and decorations. Beautify them.

A contemporary reading of the Rules for Thinking with the Church (adapted from Liebert and Paulin-Campbell)	Preliminary suggestions for exploring rules for thinking with the Church synodal in spiritual direction
Be open and obedient to the vision of Vatican II and of Pope Francis for how the Church can be in dialogue with the contemporary world.	Pray over and respond to the reality that 'the whole community, in the free and rich diversity of its members are called together to pray, listen, analyze, dialogue, discern and offer advice on taking pastoral decisions which correspond as closely as possible to God's will'.[15]
Understand the Church to be a sacrament of unity and advocate liturgical renewal so that its sacramental life is accessible to all.	Offer mercy to the world in need. This is the mission of the Church. How can mercy be a source of healing, unity and renewal?
Advocate church renewal based on faith, individual and communal spirituality, and a holiness that transforms the world.	Affirm and encourage the *sensus fidelium* of the whole people of God. How can prayer strengthen my search for truth?
Affirm that holiness is lived out in a variety of lifestyles. Reject concepts of higher and lower states of life.	Be in inclusive and creative solidarity with the whole people of God in a spirit of commitment, humility and service.
Affirm the worth of various states of life in order to value intentional Christian living and discipleship rooted in baptismal commitment.	Respond to our call to co-responsibility for the mission of the Church. Engage in discernment, decision-making and implementation on behalf of the mission of the Church.
Confirm the importance of the communion of saints in a pilgrim Church and value the diversity of their lives and faith stories and our own.	Call upon the communion of saints whose inspiration and prayerful support accompany us on our walk together in history.
Affirm the value of spiritual disciplines as formative for Christian life.	Engage in the asceticism of respectful, humble listening to others, especially to the poor and those whose voices are silenced. Make room within myself to encounter grace and practise hospitality.
Value the sacramental and symbolic aspect of worship and recognise the whole person at prayer.	Create and inhabit places of deep encounter. Affirm that 'the path to our relation with God passes through our relation with human beings and most especially through the relation with those whom the judgement of the mighty has reduced to less than nothing'.[16]

[15] International Theological Commission, 'Synodality in the Life and Mission of the Church', 2 March 2018, n. 68.
[16] Louis-Marie Chauvet, *Symbol and Sacrament: A Sacramental Reinterpretation of Christian Existence* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1995), 187.

[361] (9th rule)	Praise all the precepts of the Church; come to their defence when they are attacked.	Maintain proper respect for the laws and rules of the Church and respond with all our heart.
[362] (10th rule)	Find good and praise in our superiors. Don't speak against them publicly, even if warranted, so as to cause scandal. Speak in private to those with whom you find fault.	Be more ready to give support and approval to leaders, both in their personal conduct and their directives, than to find fault in them. Disunity is caused by public criticism. The remedy for wrong, harmful, unjust situations is to refer them to those who can do something about them.
[363] (11th rule)	Praise scholastic learning and positive theology. The scholastic authorities are modern and help our understanding of scripture and the Church.	Praise and respect theologians in the Church, especially those who have given a positive and scholastic doctrine. They expose error and uphold the legacy of those who have gone before them such that tradition is understood to develop.
[364] (12th rule)	Be on guard against comparing those of us alive now as superior in knowledge and holiness to the blessed who have passed away.	Do not exaggerate the contribution of a particular person in our time as more holy than others who have come before them and thus exalt our own leaders and their practices as automatically superior to those who have come before.
[365] (13th rule)	To be right in everything, we ought always to hold that the white that I see is black, if the hierarchical Church so decides. By the same Spirit and our Lord who gave the ten commandments, our holy mother the Church is directed and governed.	The Spirit is present in all members of the Church and is present in a special way to guide the leaders of the Church for the good of all. We should explore why the Church teaches as it does on certain matters and be more open to acknowledge the limitations of how we see things before dismissing or critiquing official directions about those issues.
[366] (14th rule)	Be very cautious of speaking of predestination.	God wants all to be saved and God has given us freedom to choose our destiny. Do not deny either of these.

Affirm Vatican II and other contemporary statements of faith as human articulations of a search for truth and life in dialogue with the world.	Denounce life-denying power arrangements in the Church and in the world. If you exercise public responsibility, 'smell like your sheep': walk with them in their joys, sorrow, griefs and anxieties.
Encourage leadership in the Church and remind all of their responsibility to address the reasons for and consequences of harm done in the name of the Church.	Engage in discernment so that the Church as the whole People of God can speak and act with the good spirit. Contribute to the growth of ecclesial governance that is transparent and accountable to the whole and that calls members of the People of God to coresponsibility and participation.
Encourage a variety of theological voices from both the centre and the margins—all remaining in creative tension with one another and thus illuminating the dynamic mystery of God always at work among us.	Generate new ways of learning from and relating to those who have walked the journey of faith in the past, who walk with you in the present and for whom you leave a legacy for the future.
Discourage holding up present-day persons and practices for adulation so that the people and traditions of the past are disparaged.	Engage in dialogue and works of mercy among and as the people of God, including and with bishops and the Pope.
Stress the ability of the Holy Spirit to work with even the most discordant and discrepant views to draw deeper unity. The Holy Spirit works in the Church beyond individual perceptions and constructions.	Respond to the synodal vision of the Church led by Pope Francis: 'A church weighed down by structures, bureaucracy and formalism will struggle to walk in history at the pace of the Spirit, meeting the men and women of our time. "The great enemy of this process, he said, "is fear".'[17]
Encourage speaking and writing about how grace and free will work together for the salvation of the world.	Encourage reflection on the Church and our own spiritual journeys as dynamic, open to growth and led by hope.

[17] Catholic News Service, 'Pope Francis Explains: A Synodal Church Is Such because It Cultivates "Creativity Proper to Those Who Bear Witness to the Good News of God's Love"' (25 May 2023), at https://www.catholicnewsworld.com/2023/05/pope-francis-explains-synodal-church-is.html.

[367] (15th rule)	Do not teach people to believe that they are already saved or condemned and thus that there is no more they can do in terms of good works. This encourages laziness and negligence of responsibility.	We must work out our salvation over our whole lifetime and try to avoid the extremes of pessimism to the point of despair or the presumptuousness of thinking we can effect our own salvation through our own efforts.
[368] (16th rule)	Be on guard not to talk too much of faith such that people will be lazy and slothful in works.	We can so stress the importance of faith in God and God's grace for our salvation that we ignore the necessity of our daily efforts of active love for our neighbour and the world.
[369] (17th rule)	Works and free will are not to be discarded in favour of insistence on the importance of faith and grace.	We can so stress the power of grace that we can fail to take human means to remedy physical, psychological and spiritual evils. We should take responsibility for our freedom to choose among the various means for our growth and development.
[370] (18th rule)	We ought to praise God out of pure love, fear of His Divine Majesty. This helps us get out of mortal sin. Filial fear is as acceptable a way of loving God as is being at one with the Divine Love.	We can overstress the motivation of love being at the centre of our Christian lives and in this way ignore the value of Christian fear which can also motivate us toward growth and development in Christ.

When asked about his interpretation of Ignatius' expression 'thinking with the Church' for today, Pope Francis connected the image of the Church from *Lumen gentium* n.12 with his vision for the growth of a synodal Church:

> The people themselves are the subject. And the church is the people of God on the journey through history with joys and sorrows. *Sentir cum Ecclesia*, therefore is my way of being a part of this people ….
>
> This church with which we should be thinking and feeling is the home of all, not a small chapel that can only hold a small group of select people.[18]

[18] Pope Francis and Antonio Spadaro, *My Door is Always Open: A Conversation on Faith, Hope and the Church in a Time of Change*, translated by Shaun Whiteside (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 49, 51.

Avoid pessimism that leads to the despair of hopelessness or presumption that I can be transformed through my own personal efforts.	Place at the service of others my unique gifts and charisms received from the Holy Spirit. Avoid pride that my good works obviate my need for God's freeing grace.
Both faith and good words are gifts from God and complete each other.	Think of the Church as a 'field hospital'.[19]
Use our freedom of choice to select the most suitable means of development and recognise that the Holy Spirit empowers our capacity to choose.	Work for a Church and its ministries to be at the service of freedom. Be critical of all that dehumanises and oppresses.
Recognise that our motivations to love and serve God can be mixed and be grateful that God brings good out of our confused and conflicted desires.	'Don't be afraid when there is disorder provoked by the Spirit', Pope Francis said. One need fear 'only when it is provoked by our selfishness or the spirit of evil'.[20]

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach points out that the Exercises 'are meant to prepare … the retreatant … to live in relationship with the Body of Christ, the Church, sometimes harmonious, sometimes contentious'. They should connect us to the Church as a community of faith, hope and love that can practically inspire, heal and nourish all that gives praise and glory to the God of Jesus Christ: the fully alive human person. Spiritual direction for a synodal Church is not intended 'to develop a disincarnated and passive spirituality'.[21]

[19] Pope Francis first used this image in an interview with Antonio Spadaro in September 2013. See *A Big Heart Open to God: An Interview with Pope Francis* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 30–33.
[20] Cindy Wooden, 'A Church of the Many: Pope Francis Addresses Some Synod Questions, Fears', *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops* (25 May 2023), at https://www.usccb.org/news/2023/church-many-pope-addresses-some-synod-questions-fears.
[21] Peter-Hans Kolvenbach. 'The Rules for Thinking, Judging, Feeling in the Post-Conciliar Church'. *Review of Ignatian Spirituality (CIS)*, 105 (2004), 3; see below, 44, 45. And see St Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, 4. 20. 7.

Towards a Synodal Church

A year before his assassination in 1980, Romero wrote: 'St Ignatius' "to be of one mind with the church" would be "to be of one mind with the Church incarnated in this people who stand in need of liberation"'.[22] Romero was convinced that for Ignatius the Church is that which,

> … the Holy Spirit is stirring up in our people, in our communities, a Church that means not only the teaching of the *magisterium*, fidelity of the pope, but also service to this people and the discernment of the signs of the times in the light of the gospel.[23]

His own experience of the Spiritual Exercises and leadership in the Church are in agreement with Pope Francis and Kolvenbach that a 'disincarnated and passive spirituality' is not enough:

> Retreats should measure their effectiveness by the renewal that they bring about in each person. It would not be sufficient for people to feel renewed only in their individual piety, forgiven their personal sins, and with the good feeling of a tranquil conscience. They must move from an individualistic piety to a communitarian piety, to a social awareness coming out of piety and experience of God.[24]

Both the universal Church and local churches are engaged in fresh discernment about where and how the Spirit is leading us into the future. The Spiritual Exercises and, in particular, recontextualisation of Ignatius' rules for thinking, judging and feeling with and for a post-Vatican II, synodal Church, can offer an important resource at this time. In the context of the spiritual direction relationship, Ignatius' rules can strengthen a directee's deep sense of the Church as the whole people of God—all of us, on a journey together through history. The experience of Ignatian spiritual direction cannot shy away from its responsibility to be of service to the transformative work of ecclesial reform in a synodal spirit, to serve the needs of our world and offer hope for the future.

Julie Trinidad is a lecturer in Catholic studies at the University of South Australia. She also works in the Catholic Identity and Mission Team at Catholic Education South Australia. Julie holds a masters degree from the Catholic University of Leuven. Her PhD in theology and graduate diploma in spiritual direction were awarded by the Australian Catholic University.

[22] Oscar Romero. 'Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises', *The Way Supplement*, 55 (Spring 1986), 101.
[23] Romero, 'Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises', 103.
[24] Romero, 'Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises', 101.

THE MISSION OF THE SPIRIT AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Patrick Riordan

HOW MIGHT WE REFLECT theologically on the practices of spiritual direction, discernment and the giving of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius? How might these practices in turn be sources for theology: not merely a source of questions, but a source for understanding God's working in the world? Other questions are relevant to these. For what kind of theology could the practice of discernment be a source? How might the function of such a theology differ from the forms of theology currently available in the Church?

The Spirit: Forgotten or Overlooked?

It belongs to Catholic doctrine that the Holy Spirit 'with his graces and his seven gifts' (in the words of my childhood catechism) is given to Christians in the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. The New Testament attests to the gifts of the Holy Spirit dwelling in believers as temples, animating their just and charitable actions. Paul's letters to the Corinthians are central for this doctrine, as well as the Johannine texts. The gifts of the Spirit are distributed variously to the different members of a community for the sake of their common good (1 Corinthians 12:7–27). All members are individually and collectively designated as temples where the Holy Spirit dwells (1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19). The Spirit's presence and gifts are exhibited in certain effects, of 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control' (Galatians 5:22–23). The discernment of spirits is itself listed among the gifts (1 Corinthians 12:10).[1] In relation to the practice and fruits of discernment we might reasonably expect to find there in the experience of Christians the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit.

[1] See Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Holy Spirit: In Biblical Teaching, through the Centuries, and Today* (London: SPCK, 2013), 475–481.

According to Franz Meures, Ignatius in the *Constitutions* affirms clearly 'that discernment is a charism, a grace given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 11:10)'. He finds this affirmation in an admittedly difficult context—namely, the discussion of the conditions under which a professed member may be dismissed (II.3.A[219]). Meures notes also the silence of Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* on the Holy Spirit. It is well known that Ignatius was obliged to take extra care with references to the Holy Spirit, because of the danger of accusation by the Inquisition. The suspicion attached to anyone invoking the Spirit was of belonging to the *alumbrados*, people claiming 'direct and irresistible inspirations from the Holy Spirit'.[2]

Accordingly, in the *Spiritual Exercises*, in passages in which we might expect mention of the Holy Spirit, the text is silent. The Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx 230–237) invites exercitants to consider God dwelling in them, giving life, making them temples. These activities are usually ascribed to the Spirit, but Ignatius does not say so. The points for the Contemplation of the Annunciation (Exx 262) do not mention the Spirit, even though the Spirit's role is given in scripture. One exception is found in the points for the Contemplation on the Ascension (Exx 312): the Apostles are instructed to await in Jerusalem the promise of the Holy Spirit. The Contemplation on the Incarnation (Exx 101–109) has repeated mention of the Three Divine Persons, the colloquy may be addressed to them, there is reference to the mission of the Second Person, but no mention of the Spirit, or of the Spirit's mission.

Ignatius' silence on the Spirit and the Spirit's mission may also be due to a widely shared tendency in the western Church. Fred Crowe has suggested that the Church, and we within it, are in danger of being binatarian, and not Trinitarian, in our ordinary faith, prayer, and practice: 'Most of us are practical binitarians [sic]: not denying the third person doctrinally, but acting as if we did'.[3] He has no doubt about our orthodoxy: for the most part we profess the creeds, Apostles' and Nicene, in which the Holy Spirit gets due mention, and we sign ourselves in the name of the Triune God. But so Christocentric is our faith and corresponding discourse that we speak only, or at least for the most part, of the relation of Son and Father. The imitation of Christ is not

[2] Franz Meures, 'The Ignatian *Constitutions* and the Gift of Discernment', in *The Lord of Friendship: Friendship, Discernment and Mission in Ignatian Spirituality* (Oxford: Way Books, 2011), 134, 139.
[3] Frederick E. Crowe, 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions', in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, edited by Michael Vertin (Washington, DC: Catholic U, 1989), 331.

merely a title of a pious book, but is the programme for the Christian's life. He is the Way. We, His disciples, are to be conformed to Him. But although we are gifted with the Spirit so that we should judge and act rightly, we do not spontaneously advert to this reality.

Fred Crowe, following Bernard Lonergan, sees this tendency as an implicit denial of the mission of the Spirit. Undoubtedly there is something universally valid in the figure and history of Jesus of Nazareth, such that people of every language, place, time and culture can be his disciple. But he was of a specific time and culture. To identify that which is universal and perennial it is necessary to filter out the specific features that belong in his first-century Palestinian world. There follows, then, the task of locating and realising that perennial and universal truth in the particularities of different times and places.

The mission of the Spirit is to enable the disciples of Jesus to do just that. In the words of John's Gospel (14:15 following; 14: 26; 15: 26; 16: 12), when Jesus is gone from them they will receive the Holy Spirit as a Counsellor, who will dwell in them and lead them to complete truth, reminding them of what Jesus said and did, and teaching them to understand his words. This gift of the Spirit and the Spirit's mission is well attested in the New Testament. The Acts of the Apostles presents the work of the Spirit through the ministry of Christ's disciples, and the Pauline letters testify to the centrality of the Spirit's role in animating and guiding the community. Yet, despite this scriptural basis, and despite the development of Trinitarian doctrine through the councils, the dominant discourses of the faith have left the Spirit to one side. Crowe writes:

The Pentecost, *by Juan Bautista Maíno, 1612–1614*

> I think of the way we tacitly downgrade the reality of [the Spirit's] presence among us. It is as if we took over and gratefully applied the behaviourism of positivist psychology: the Son is really real, the Spirit not quite so really real: the Son was really sent into the world and was really here—after all he took flesh and dwelt among us—the Spirit was not quite so really sent and is not quite so really present—after all his presence is wholly interior, and the data that manifest his presence are only data of consciousness. The 'only' is the operative and revealing word.[4]

To counteract the singularity of the one centre in a Christocentric theology, Crowe uses the image of the ellipse instead. An ellipse has two centres, and its definition is the locus of a point in a plane, whereby the joint distance from that point at any position to the twin centres is a constant. A circle is an ellipse in which the two nodes have collapsed into a single centre. This image of an ellipse, Crowe suggests, is better suited to depict the reality of the two missions of Son and Spirit.

> In the image of an ellipse the two foci of Son and Spirit are distinct and complementary. Of course, our God is triune, and eventually we must find a place for the Father, but at least we have a first approximation on the way to a complete integration of the three persons in the work of our redemption.[5]

Attending to a complete Trinitarian theology, Lonergan and Crowe remark on the threefold gift of Father, Son and Spirit. This order of mentioning the three Persons is scripturally based and rooted in both pious practice and church teaching. The Father sends the Son, and Father and Son send the Spirit. The danger is that we interpret these relations and processions through the filter of what is familiar to us, namely, chronology—series in time. And not merely that, but our assumptions are conditioned by the order of discovery: we learn of the Son before we learn of the Spirit.

We learn of the Son before we learn of the Spirit

Following Aquinas's distinction between *quoad nos* and *quoad se*, Crowe suggests that we could reverse the habitual order of the missions of the Second and Third Persons.[6] Can we think of the mission of the Spirit preceding the mission of the Son in the incarnation? The Spirit is present and active in all creation, 'from the beginning', as the scriptures testify; the Spirit is present and active in the work of prophets and biblical authors,

[4] Crowe, 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions', 331.
[5] Crowe, 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions', 304.
[6] Crowe, 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions', 327.

inspiring and guiding. It is present and active, but not acknowledged as such until people have the words to speak clearly of the Spirit.

The image repeatedly used by Lonergan, drawn from the experience of loving relationship, is the change that occurs with the declaration of love. When love is avowed, it becomes the acknowledged framework or context of a relationship. From God's perspective, God first loves humankind; that loving is an outpouring of Love, a giving of divine Love, and the gift is the Spirit. The declaration of Love is God's Word, spoken unmistakeably in the incarnation, in the Son becoming human. With the profession of Love, 'God so loved the world that he gave His only Son', it becomes possible to acknowledge the reality and presence of divine Love, already present incognito, but now at last brought to consciousness. Lonergan writes:

> Without the visible mission of the Word, the gift of the Spirit is a being-in-love without a proper object; it remains simply an orientation to mystery that awaits its interpretation. Without the invisible mission of the Spirit, the Word enters into his own, but his own receive him not.[7]

This reversal of the order of the missions in our understanding brings with it the possibility of reframing the terms in which ecumenism and interreligious dialogue are conducted. At least from the Christian perspective, it is possible to see in non-Christian religions the outworking of the presence of God's Spirit in the beloved humankind, through its great variety of cultures and contexts. Adapting Rahner's notion of the anonymous Christian, Lonergan and Crowe consider the anonymity more applicable to the mission of the Spirit, so that people with religious faith can be seen to be 'anonymous Spiritans', that is, inspired and filled with divine love that is not acknowledged as such.[8]

Interiority Rather than Causation

We are seeking an appropriate theology with which to reflect on the practices and fruits of spiritual direction and discernment. Every theology will make use of a philosophy, either implicitly or explicitly. In traditional scholastic theology, the language is imbued with the model of causality. The gifts and fruits of the Spirit are treated as effects caused by the Spirit. Cause and effect are, of course, rooted in human experience, and these

[7] Bernard Lonergan, 'Mission and the Spirit', in *Collected Works*, volume 16, *A Third Collection,* edited by Robert M. Doran and John D. Dadosky (Toronto: Toronto U, 2017), 32.
[8] Crowe, 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions', 335.

Aristotelian categories have proved useful in making sense of our experience. But are they adequate to the reality of the Spirit's indwelling in believers and the Spirit's activity in Christians living out their discipleship?

Fred Crowe follows Lonergan's lead; he advocates replacing a metaphysics of cause with a philosophy of interiority to make sense of these realities.

> And if modern theologians were to transpose medieval theory into the categories derived from contemporary interiority and its real correlatives, they would be doing for our age what the greater Scholastics did for theirs.[9]

It seems plausible that a theology built on the categories of interiority would be better suited to speaking of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in individuals and in the Church. But what does that look like? What are the categories of interiority, and what kind of speech do they make possible? [10]

A wonderful example comes to mind that may help to clarify what is at stake, but from a very different discipline. Attention recently has been drawn to the significance of four outstanding women philosophers working in Oxford in the early 1940s: Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Mary Midgley and Iris Murdoch.[11] Mary Midgley worked on themes conveniently summarised in the title of the Festschrift dedicated to her: science, the self, animals, evolution and ethics.[12] In the afterword she tells something of her own story and narrates how she was led to question and reject what had been presented to her as normative in the disciplines she studied. In doing so she is exemplifying what interiority makes available—the self-awareness of doubt, question and affirmation—and she raises the question as to why such matters are excluded from what counts as science. Specifically, she records her frustration with the philosophy and biology she had studied at Oxford, and in her account of her experience we can note how she is aware of questions arising, of trying to understand and being frustrated with the incomprehension and limitation of teachers.

[9] Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works*, volume 14, *Method in Theology*, edited by Robert M. Doran and John D. Dadosky (Toronto: Toronto U, 2017), 304.
[10] Frederick E. Crowe, 'Theology and the Future: Responsible Innovation', in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, 270–272.
[11] Benjamin J. B. Lipscomb, *The Women Are Up to Something: How Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Mary Midgley, and Iris Murdoch Revolutionized Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford U, 2021).
[12] *Science and the Self: Animals, Evolution, and Ethics. Essays in Honour of Mary Midgley*, edited by Ian James Kidd and Liz McKinnell (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

> I remember coming home in deep depression from a meeting where a disciple of J. L. Austin had been examining what seemed to be the smallest of all possible verbal questions, but had been outclassed by his hearers, who had managed to find even smaller topics round which to centre the ensuing discussion.
>
> Why (thought I) did you people pick on that particular question in the first place? Did it seem to you in some way important—able to influence large issues that surrounded it? Or was it just the convenient next step on an endless mouse-wheel?
>
> It then occurred to me that this situation was much like what I was seeing in a biological context, in discussions of something called 'the scientific method'. People take this 'method' to consist only in carefully verifying your hypotheses—something that, of course, is anyway not peculiar to the physical sciences. They don't ask where those hypotheses came from in the first place, or how you decide which of them to look at. Those large issues seem to be invisible. Do hypotheses just fall randomly from the sky and sort themselves out by natural selection? Is no discussion of wider issues—fresh visions, alternative directions, varying priorities among new suggestions—necessary or possible?[13]

Midgley reveals her awareness of important questions that were systematically silenced by the biologists and philosophers—questions that she thought relevant and wanted to have addressed. Significant here is not so much the shortcomings of the professionals as her attending to these questions and her awareness that neither the standard 'scientific method' nor the typical style of analytic philosophy was useful for her own purposes. This is analogous to our situation here: is the scholastic theological language of cause and effect satisfactory for speaking of the experience of grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit within us?

This concern to develop an appropriate language for theology has motivated Lonergan's work in philosophy. From his training at Heythrop College in Oxfordshire and at the University of London he accepted the need to be empirical, to ground claims in what the evidence can support.[14] The question he clarified was what would count as evidence in philosophy and in theology. He challenged the dominant orthodoxy that confines data to the realm of public and shared experience.[15]

[13] Mary Midgley, 'Afterword: Which Way Next?' in *Science and the Self*, 226.

[14] William A. Mathews, *Lonergan's Quest: A Study of Desire in the Authoring of* Insight (Toronto: Toronto U, 2005), 32–48.

[15] Yves M. J. Congar notes the tension between 'objective knowledge of the Spirit' and 'subjective personal experience': 'A Note on "Experience"', in *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, volume 1, *Revelation and Experience of the Spirit* (London: Chapman, 1983), xvii–xviii. He does not elaborate on the subjective and personal.

Lonergan extended the empirical approach to include the evidence of personal experience. For the humanities, *Geisteswissenschaften*, sciences of the spirit or of mind, the category of data should be expanded to include also the data of consciousness. Beyond the realms of common sense and theory is the realm of interiority, of 'immediate internal experience'.[16] And so he invites readers and students to attend to their own operations of experiencing, understanding, judging and deciding—just the kind of thing that Midgley spontaneously did. He calls this approach Generalised Empirical Method: 'it does not treat of objects without taking into account the corresponding operations of the subject; it does not treat of the subject's operations without taking into account the corresponding objects'.[17] It would be too large a task to summarise the whole approach here, so I confine myself to a few critical elements.

The four operations mentioned by Lonergan are identifiable as we attend to our own experience; but beyond attending, we can also check and confirm or challenge the order for the operations that Lonergan proposes. His understanding is that there is an exigency, a dynamism of emergence, within the operations. Experience leads on to analysis and understanding, and this in turn requires a judgment which might ground a decision to resolve the issue of what is to be done. The emergence of one operation from another allows the acknowledgement of a dynamism of transcendence, a reaching beyond what is given towards truth and value—and ultimately towards complete Truth and unlimited Good.

Reaching beyond what is given towards truth and value

We are always socially placed, in relationships, with roles, orientations and commitments, and so the dynamism between the operations can also exhibit an ordering from the top down, from decisions to judgments to understanding and experience. Commitments made (*I decide to go on retreat*) then shape experiences constructed (*I follow a rhythm of prayer and other exercises*) which generate questions for understanding (*how am I to interpret these feelings of fear and anxiety as I contemplate a possible following of Christ in a challenging mission?*) and for reflection (*is this a dynamic rooted in a pursuit of my own comfort, prioritising my desire to hold on to what I have and what is familiar?*). The whole dynamism can be structured not merely by the inherent exigency of the desires to know

[16] Bernard Lonergan, 'Time and Meaning', in *Collected Works*, volume 6, *Philosophical and Theological Papers, 1958–1964*, edited by Robert C. Croken, Frederick E. Crowe and Robert Doran (Toronto: Toronto U, 1996): 114.
[17] Bernard Lonergan, 'Second Lecture: Religious Knowledge', in *A Third Collection,* 136.

and to pursue the good but especially by the prior commitment—as a married person, or a Christian, or a Jesuit.

These commitments in turn are structured by the living out of a love. This may not have had an objective until the commitment to the partner, or to the Lord, or to entering the Society of Jesus, was made. But the love—the orientation at the level of a decision responding to value, to the good—was present. Lonergan relies repeatedly on a text from Romans: 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us' (5:5).[18] He interprets this in terms of reorientation of the infrastructure of consciousness, as its various operations are ordered from above by the love—the commitment—that shapes a life.

This attention to interior movements also provides a way of speaking about two other important and relevant phenomena, namely freedom and conversion. There is the experience of freedom in making choices, normally between options that are comparable (*shall I go to St Beuno's or to Manresa for my retreat; will I take the train or the bus, plane or boat?*), that Lonergan labels horizontal freedom. But there is another type of freedom that shapes the choices that present themselves. This is vertical freedom, whereby I move to another horizon.

There is one level on which I choose between beer and wine, lager and stout, *pinot grigio* and *pinot noir*; and there is the personal choice to abstain totally from alcohol, which moves me to another level. Vertical freedom is the capacity to move to another level in this way, structuring the options presented for choice. A related concept is conversion: Lonergan distinguishes between intellectual, moral and religious conversion. These are instances of vertical freedom that reframe one's experiences and operations. In intellectual conversion a person moves from discovering the difference between what seems to be the case and what can intelligibly and reflectively be affirmed to be the case, to an abiding critical awareness that avoids hasty conclusions before addressing relevant questions. Moral conversion similarly leads to restructuring of the orientation towards value, what is truly good, away from an exclusive focus on personal gratification. Religious conversion occurs when the love of God comes to form one's life.

The language of interiority allows me to speak of my love (what draws me, what I desire): a love that shapes commitment and structures further knowing and deciding. With this language I can speak of the reality in my life of what Paul called the Love of God, flooding our hearts with the

[18] Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 101.

Pentecost, *by Morazzone, 1615*

Holy Spirit given to us. My response to Jesus, accepting his call and offer of friendship, is mine—I experience myself as doing it—and at the same time I know it is a gift, since I could not possibly have arranged all that is given. By virtue of that love, which was and is gift, my experiencing is structured, as are my questioning and my deciding. All are now taken for granted as me and mine, but they are gift nonetheless: more than purely natural capacities and orientations. My story, remembered and reflected on interiorly, the particularities of my history, reveal the working of God in my life: this is precisely what the Contemplation to Attain Love presupposes.

Other Approaches to Interiority

Lonergan's is not the only attempt to develop an appropriate language with which to express a theology grounded in interiority. Andrew Pinsent wants to interpret Aquinas on the virtues, gifts, beatitudes and fruits in the moral life, in a way that avoids merely reconstructing Aquinas as reworking Aristotle in a faith context.[19] He draws on another fundamental model, the second-person perspective, which provides an alternative to the objective, 'data-out-there' attitude characterizing much of moral theory. The second-person perspective seeks to reconstruct what is under examination from within the relationship of two subjects who together consider a particular question. It attends to what is going on within the conscious operations of persons as they engage together in some activity.

Another possible ally in the search for an appropriate theology that can draw on the practice of discernment is Charles Taylor in *Sources of the*

[19] Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012).

Self.[20] Taylor frequently mentions moral and spiritual discernment, as a person's attempt to orientate his or her life. David Parker shows how Taylor might be helpful in finding another language than those of sociology or critical studies to deal with autobiography or life-narrative, as authors try to make sense of their lives.[21] Parker argues that the language we rely on to find meaning in our lives, discerning their challenges and purpose, should feed into the language we rely on in cultural reflection, including theology. This is to be distinguished from the 'thin theoretical languages that purport to "interpret" and "explain" my life from some kind of third-person perspective quite outside the significance that I myself see in it'.[22]

These efforts by Pinsent interpreting Aquinas and Parker elaborating on Taylor echo Crowe's and Lonergan's argument for a theological language grounded in interiority as an alternative to the standard objective language based on causality. Instead of speaking of sanctifying grace and actual grace as effects of the indwelling Spirit one might narrate the experience of conversion, or of vertical freedom, or of acts of faith, hope and charity that can be acknowledged as coming from the Spirit.

In an essay written for a Festschrift to honour Edward Schillebeeckx on his sixtieth birthday, Lonergan addresses the questions of how to apprehend the economy of grace and salvation from an evolutionary perspective, and how it enters into human consciousness. He develops what he calls an 'intentionality analysis' which,

> … distinguishes successive levels of conscious operations by the type of questions they answer, as it has questions for intelligence (what? why? how? what for?) precede questions for reflection (is that so? are you certain?) and both precede questions for deliberation (is it good? is it truly good?) ….[23]

His proposal is that such an analysis 'can provide an apt vehicle for the self-objectification of the human subject' by offering a clear set of priorities for understanding the workings of consciousness.[24]

In his conclusion he notes that the apprehension of grace starts from an awareness of the need for redemption. While human progress is acknowledged as a fact, there is also the distortion of sin, in the egoism of individuals and groups. When redemption comes in this situation,

[20] Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard U, 1992).
[21] David Parker, *The Self in Moral Space: Life Narrative and the Good* (Ithaca and London: Cornell U, 2007).
[22] Parker, *Self in Moral Space*, 18.
[23] Lonergan, 'Aquinas Today: Tradition and Innovation', in *A Third Collection*, 45.
[24] Lonergan, 'Mission and the Spirit', 30.

> … it comes as the charity that dissolves the hostility and the divisions of past injustice and present hatred; it comes as the hope that withstands psychological, economic, political, social, cultural determinisms; it comes with the faith that can liberate reason from the rationalizations that blinded it.[25]

These virtues of charity, hope and faith and their results occur in consciousness, and they can be recognised as such by those who are sufficiently attentive to their interiority.

Lonergan's concluding, resounding call is not to see the experience of the Spirit's gifts as something added on to, and therefore separable from, ordinary human experience. The implication is that there is no such thing as 'ordinary human experience' as somehow given. If it is available at all, it is by way of abstraction, just as the 'data' of science are not simply given but are constructs, achieved by processes that require separation and abstraction from the rich fabric of daily life. Scientists read their data from complex machines—pressure gauges, thermometers, x-rays, ultrasound meters and suchlike. So Lonergan maintains that grace and the other gifts are not accessible as something extra, added on, but are the framework and (restructured) infrastructure of all experience. He writes:

> Experience of grace, then, is as large as the Christian experience of life. It is experience of man's capacity for self-transcendence, of his unrestricted openness to the intelligible, the true, the good. It is experience of a twofold frustration of that capacity: the objective frustration of life in a world distorted by sin; the subjective frustration of one's incapacity to break with one's own evil ways. It is experience of a transformation one did not bring about but rather underwent, as divine providence let evil take its course and vertical finality be heightened, as it let one's circumstances shift, one's dispositions change, new encounters occur, and—so gently and quietly—one's heart be touched. It is the experience of a new community, in which faith and hope and charity dissolve rationalizations, break determinisms, and reconcile the estranged and the alienated, and there is reaped the harvest of the Spirit that is '… love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control' (Galatians 5: 22–23).[26]

The Fruits of Love

Theologically we speak of the two missions, of the Son sent by the Father and of the Spirit who comes both from the Father and the Son.

[25] Lonergan, 'Mission and the Spirit', 31–32.
[26] Lonergan, 'Mission and the Spirit', 32–33.

Are there possible parallels between the two missions? If the mission of the divine Word has its realisation in the incarnation—the man Jesus born temporally of Mary being the Son begotten eternally of the Father—does the mission of the Spirit have a comparable 'incarnation'? I suggest we can speak of the myriad good actions of Christians that are the fruits of the Love poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit as the realisation in history of the Spirit's gift.

These include the many acts of faith, hope and charity mentioned above, as well as the movements in prayer: the raising of the mind and heart to God. They include the works of justice, mercy, compassion and care that make up the daily lives of Christians. And if we accept Fred Crowe's challenge to avoid a relegation of the Spirit's mission to being secondary in time to that of the Son, we can acknowledge the work of the Spirit in time and in the world before there was knowledge of Christ's saving activity and His sending the Spirit. Love can be present and operative and effective before it is acknowledged and named for what it is.

Various authors in different contexts point to the need for a different approach to the 'sciences of the spirit' (*Geisteswissenschaften*) than is available in the standard forms of objective social science.[27] Theology also experiences this need. Interiority analysis provides an account of the structure of consciousness as accessible to any reflective person. It makes available an appropriate language for speaking intelligibly of the graces and gifts of the Spirit. It overlaps with the second-person stance propounded by Pinsent and with Parker's life-narrative approach. The proposal is that discernment and its fruits can become a source for theology as knowledge of God's working in the world if practitioners and theologians apply this interiority analysis in recounting their commitments, experiences, understandings, judgments, decisions and actions.

Patrick Riordan SJ, an Irish Jesuit, is senior fellow in political philosophy and Catholic social thought at Campion Hall, Oxford. Previously he taught political philosophy at Heythrop College, University of London, and at the Milltown Institute of Theology and Philosophy in Dublin. His most recent book is *Human Dignity and Liberal Politics: Catholic Possibilities for the Common Good* (Georgetown, 2023).

[27] David Coghlan, 'Developing a Spirituality of Scholarship: A First Person Methodological Approach', *Studies in Spirituality*, 30 (2020), 33–46.

Thinking Faith

GLOBAL GODLINESS?

Timothy Radcliffe

WE LIVE IN A SOCIETY in which competition is omnipresent. Competition fuels progress and keeps us on our toes. Political parties, supermarkets, car manufacturers and football teams compete with each other. And there are various Christian denominations competing for congregations. Of course, in these ecumenical days, people deny that we would wish to lure worshippers from another Church. Surely Catholics are not out to win over followers of the Anglican brand, like Tesco competing with Aldi! Ian Stackhouse, a Baptist theologian, admits that there is a pressure to get bums on seats and be successful in that sense. Clergy keep a beady eye on church attendance figures and glance at each other's car parks on a Sunday to see which is the fullest.

It has often been argued that the reason why Evangelical Christianity flourishes in America is precisely because there is a vigorous, competitive market in religion and that the Catholic Church became corrupt in the late Middle Ages because we held a virtual monopoly, and monopolies become sluggish and slack. There seems to be something to this argument. The Catholic Church was challenged by the Churches of the Reformation to reform itself, once again to give primacy to the Word of God and renew its formation of priests and laity. It could be argued that the vast renewal of the Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council was in part because we were not the only Church on the block, and we had to be renewed or fade. And so, some will claim, it was providential that the unity of Western Christendom was broken at the Reformation. This contributed to the vitality of Christianity.

But at the heart of the Catholic tradition is a profound longing for a Church that is one and universal. That is the very meaning of the word 'Catholic'. However fruitful, as well as destructive, might have been

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the rivalries of post-Reformation Christianity, the unity of the Church across time and the globe is at the heart of our faith. We declare in the Nicene Creed our belief in 'one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church'. The gathering of all Christians into unity is not a vague aspiration for something which might be rather 'nice'. It is the hungering for what is at the core of our faith. A splintered Christianity is disfigured. Why is this?

Globalisation was in the DNA of Christianity from the beginning. Even when Christians were a tiny minority scattered in a few small cells across the vast Roman empire, already we thought of ourselves in global terms. The final words of Jesus in St Matthew's Gospel are:

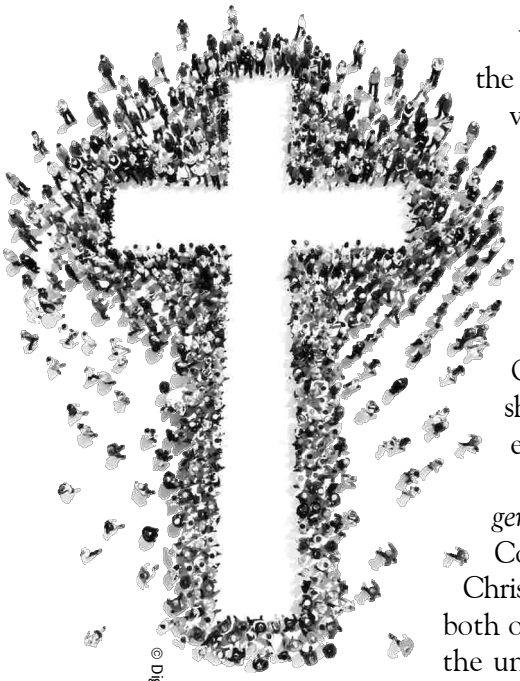
> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (28:19).

Most religions remain deeply rooted in the culture and language of their original believers. Judaism remains the faith of a particular people and is wedded to its language and traditions. Islam is rooted in the Arabic text of the Qur'an. Hinduism is profoundly identified with the cultures of India. But from the very beginning Christianity was seeking to transcend any particular culture or language. The New Testament is not written in the language of Jesus, which was Aramaic, but in the universal language of its time, a rather coarse sort of Greek that was the *lingua franca* of the Roman empire. Perhaps just 25 years after Christ's resurrection, St Paul wrote: 'there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28). It was global before it was even known that we live on a globe.

Why is this so? St Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

> [God] has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth (1:9–10).

If God wills to gather all things into one in Christ, then of course the Church must treasure unity, reaching across all ethnic and national divisions. This is not about wiping out all the competitors and regaining the monopoly. It is not claiming superiority for Roman Catholicism over other denominations. It is saying that our unity across space and time is a sign of what God wills for humanity.



Yves Congar OP, the greatest ecumenist of the twentieth century, discovered his theological vocation when he was a young Dominican friar and was overwhelmed by studying John 17, where Jesus prays that the disciples may be one as he and the Father are one. Congar called it 'the apostolic prayer of Jesus for Christian unity' and he gave his entire life to healing the divisions between the Churches.[1] Our celebrations of the feasts of the saints show that we are a community that transcends even that most radical of barriers, death.

In the opening paragraph of *Lumen gentium,* proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council, it is written that 'the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race'. Notice that the Church is a *sign* of unity. This does not mean that everyone has to become Catholic. What matters is that the Church makes visible what it means to be human: to be human is to belong to the whole of humanity, indeed the whole of creation. The Church must be one because humanity is called by God to be one.

So the Church challenges any identity which uniquely privileges our national or ethnic origins. I am a Christian before I am British or Irish or Polish. This is why tyrants have always feared and opposed the Church, from the early Roman emperors who persecuted our ancestors, through Henry VIII, Napoleon to Mao Zedong. Even in today's China, the universal community of Catholicism is seen as uniquely threatening to the rule of the Communist Party. Patriotism may be fine, the love of one's own country, but nationalism is incompatible with Christianity if it makes demands that are absolute.

Globalisation is an ambiguous phenomenon, a blessing and a curse. It is knitting humanity into unity across the globe. We are aware as never before that we have brothers and sisters all over the planet. When I opened my e-mails this morning in Toronto, having just flown across the Atlantic from England, I found an e-mail from a Japanese writer asking about

[1] Yves Congar, 'Letter from Father Yves Congar, OP', *Theology Digest*, 32/3 (1984), 213.

the translation of one of my books, a message from a Ukrainian writing in Italian, and an invitation to go and speak in Colombia! Globalisation has lifted millions of people out of poverty, especially in China and India.

But the global market has also produced vast inequalities of wealth and wounded the unity of the human family. The poor are confronted every day with the images of a paradise from which they are excluded. 'Advertisements for ice cold Coca Cola, redolent of youth, vitality, happiness and the wealth of the United States, look down on societies where only the rich can afford clean water.'[2] Corruption is globalised, too. 'We are living through an unprecedentedly corrupt period in world history. It has, admittedly, always happened but not on the same scale.'[3] Think of FIFA. Globalisation is often experienced as the imposition on everyone of Western and especially American culture, and as the humiliation and subversion of ancient cultures and civilisations. It fuels the violent aggression of ISIS as well as empowering it through social media.

What about Christian globalisation? This has often been experienced as oppressive and imperialistic. Missionaries of God's word were often also apostles of Western culture. But we have come to see with ever greater clarity that true Christian globalisation should be about cherishing the common good to which every culture contributes. We cannot ultimately flourish apart from each other. Catholic Social Teaching is about much more than good and just politics and economics. It is an expression of humanity's shared destiny in Christ.

Louis-Joseph Lebret, a French Dominican economist who profoundly influenced Pope Paul VI, wrote that 'the spiritual common good' is:

> The potential of intelligence, scientific understanding, wisdom and social skills; of intellectual, moral, artistic and pedagogical traditions; the potential of humanity's material masterpieces and its institutions as well. It is culture, humanism—all of it leading to an eternal destiny. God is in fact the absolute and transcendent common good for all human beings, just as God is their origin and their fulfilment. Christ is the common good of humanity.[4]

And yet many Christians who are not Roman Catholics, and some who are, may have a fear that a global Church easily becomes oppressive of

[2] Ian Linden, *A New Map of the World* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2003), 95.
[3] Zoe Cormack, 'Everyone's at It', *Times Literary Supplement* (27 September 2013), reviewing Laurence Cockcroft, *Global Corruption: Money, Power and Ethics in the Modern World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013).
[4] Louis-Joseph Lebret, *Découverte du bien commun. Mystique d'un monde nouveau* (Paris: Economie et Humanisme, 1947), 169.

difference. In recent centuries the Church has been held together in unity by a structure of centralised power which has often been intolerant of dissent.

First of all, it is easy to underestimate the vast diversity within the Church, even when it has most sought to exercise control. Catholicism is nowhere near as monochrome as many suspect. People forget that the Roman Catholic Church includes 23 autonomous Churches, each with its own rites and canon law, from the Coptic Catholic Church in Egypt to the Syro-Malabar Church in India. These are all just as much part of the Catholic Church as the members of the Latin Rite. There is also the extraordinary diversity of theological and spiritual traditions: Benedictine, Franciscan, Dominican, Carmelite, Ignatian. The Church holds within itself Catholics from every nation of the earth who think, pray and gather in their own ways. In our Father's house there are many dwellings.

Catholicism is irreducibly plural and inalienably one. Indeed from its beginning, the extraordinary gift of God's grace has been the Church's ability to hold together diversity and unity. We have four gospels in a single New Testament, and they do not by any means say the same thing. A friend of mine was trying to explain to a group of prisoners why the Gospels contradict each other. One of them said: 'Of course they disagree. If they didn't everyone would suspect that it was a put up job.' Jesus Christ in his very person embraces the biggest difference imaginable, one person who is divine and human; the doctrine of the Trinity is all about difference in unity.

Secondly, it must be admitted that the Catholic Church, especially since the Reformation, has often been fearful of diversity. Original thinkers, such as the Dominicans and Jesuits who prepared the way for the Second Vatican Council, often were silenced unjustly. The Church was nervous of the new. But the Holy Spirit, at work in all of the baptized, has ensured that renewal does take place, and Pope Francis above all is eagerly working for a Church in which the vitality of the Spirit is not repressed. The global unity of the Church is so central to its identity that it must always be treasured, whatever the cost.

Timothy Radcliffe OP is a well-known preacher and speaker, and former master of the Order of Preachers. He founded Dominican Volunteers International and played a key role in helping to establish the Franciscan-Dominican representative offices at the United Nations. He has an honorary doctorate from the University of Oxford and twelve other universities, and his books have been translated into 24 languages.

THE RULES FOR THINKING, JUDGING, FEELING IN THE POST-CONCILIAR CHURCH

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES are not meant to be read but to be done. The text is the fruit of one experience, that of Ignatius, offered as one way of many to enter into communication with God. They lead to a personal encounter in the liberty of the Spirit, showing the right way to follow and indicating the obstacles and dead-ends that lead nowhere. The Exercises help to attain true freedom in God through a text well organized in Weeks and days, preludes and points, Examens and repetitions. To this text are added a number of diverse rules, on discernment, on distribution of alms, on how to deal with scruples, and on thinking, judging and feeling with the Church.

Are these rules integral to the text or are they meant to be used at the discretion of the director? There is no doubt about the rules for discernment. There is less certainty about the rules on scruples or on almsgiving, less generally applicable although still important. There is even less accord on the rules on thinking with the Church. Specialists agree that they are of a later date, written by Ignatius partly in Paris and partly in Rome. Their context seems to be rather outdated. Ignatius is clearly referring to the sixteenth-century Church threatened by humanism and Protestantism. He is seeking to help people immersed in this humiliating and discouraging situation.

Yet the phrase itself, *sentire cum ecclesia*, is the most widely known of any in the Exercises. In this talk, I intend to argue that these rules are relevant to the life of the Church of the Second Vatican Council, as they were to the life of the Church of the Council of Trent. The rules are part and parcel of the movement of the Exercises.

God 'became a human being in order to save the human race' (Exx 102), so our following of God, our spirituality, must be incarnated

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in that particular 'state or way of life he may call us to in his service' (Exx 135, 6) and it must be lived in union with the spouse of His Son, the Church, by which 'he governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls' (Exx 365, 2).[1] Ignatius, who defines spirituality as service—'a greater service'—uses the image of spouse to describe the relationship between Christ and the Church. We, on our part, must be 'disposed and ready to be obedient in everything to this true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our holy Mother, the hierarchical Church' (Exx 353). Love of Christ goes with love for the Church and must be expressed in concrete acts. 'Loving union with God': these are the last words of the Rules for Thinking with the Church and the final words of the *Exercises* themselves. This union cannot be lived independently of the Church.

Like all other gifts, the Church descends from heaven, from above (Exx 237), and it is essentially linked to the incarnation mystery of Christ's total self-giving. This is Ignatius' belief. In his description of God's people in these rules, Ignatius does not see the people as perfect and faultless. He refers to murmuring and speaking evil against superiors and officials (Exx 362), bad conduct, neglect of good works and other helps to salvation, loss of zeal and a fatalistic outlook on life which expresses itself in the statement that it makes no difference whether I conduct myself well or badly (Exx 367).

Ignatius' view of humanity is not idealistic. His Church is made up of people who are strong and weak, saints and sinners. They are God's chosen people, gathered in the Church given from above and offered as spouse to His Son (Exx 365). Everything comes from above but, after the incarnation, everything is lived here below. This Church gratefully received from above and fully present in this world is, in Ignatius' words, 'our holy Mother, the hierarchical Church' (Exx 353). Translators add the words 'orthodox and Catholic', which are not in the text called *Autograph*, but may be in the text you are using.

We must take care to avoid misinterpreting Ignatius when he speaks of 'the hierarchical Church'. He does not take it to mean the world of popes and bishops, ecclesiastics and clergy. It would seem that Ignatius was among the earliest to appreciate the hierarchical Church as a Church of *mediation*. The divine grace that is given to the world is *mediated* by each believer, of high and low estate, according to his or her life and place (Exx 189). Each person, as a member of the Church,

[1] Quotations from the *Spiritual Exercises* occasionally modify the George Ganss translation.

exercises a responsibility in the work of salvation. Thus Ignatius' perception of the Church is that of a body with a head and limbs, each part fulfilling its proper role as God wills. The head cannot say to the feet, 'I do not need you'. Is a part of the body suffering? The other parts suffer along with it. Is one person honoured? All the others share the joy (see 1 Corinthians 12:18–26). Ignatius looks on the Church as a whole of which nothing can be ignored: neither its ecclesial hierarchy nor the rest of its members, neither its charismatic expression nor its canonical discipline, neither its holiness nor its sinfulness.

Hierarchy of the Church, *by Robert Vaughan, 1652*

Our holy Mother the Church is the source of life. Our attitude towards it is that of faith which enables us to see beyond the immediate with a heart-centred sensitivity to what is true and right. In the meditation on the Two Standards, Ignatius presents the Church as a gathering of persons: apostles, disciples, servants and friends sent by the Lord throughout the whole world to spread his doctrine (Exx 145).

Without ever having developed a full and proper ecclesiology, Ignatius proposes some guidelines for living the spiritual adventure of the Exercises in full freedom within the Church, militant and hierarchical. He invites us to a seemingly impossible living out freely of a personal call to embrace the Creator's will out of love as he shows us the way which will enable us to serve him better in the future (Exx 15).

Now, to turn to the text of the rules themselves at the end of the *Exercises*, Ignatius proposes these rules for developing a genuine attitude to the Church militant by inviting us to look with respect on all sorts of liturgical and pious practices, and to a rather radical acceptance of doctrinal and disciplinary precepts. Ignatius is aware of the seeming opposition between the spiritual freedom that the Exercises help us to attain and the obedience appropriate in the Church. He himself had experienced the difficulty of reconciling these two, but he does not see any

insurmountable obstacle to reconciling them, for 'between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, his Spouse, there is the one same Spirit who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls' (Exx 365, 2).

In this context, Ignatius stated that we must praise not only God—human beings are created for that purpose—but also church practices, some of which were the subject of much controversy. Eight of the rules begin with the word 'praise' (Exx 354–361). One rule (Exx 356) invites us to praise consecrated life strongly and, less so, marriage. Another states that we should praise chant, psalmody and long prayers inside and outside the church (Exx 355). In the last of these eight rules, Ignatius states that we should be ready to look for reasons to defend the precepts of the Church (Exx 361).

Let me say here that 'praise' does not necessarily mean that we should adopt the practices he mentions. Ignatius, as we know, placed firm limitations in the Society of Jesus on practices such as these. What he deplores is a tendency to attack and ridicule them. A representative of this tendency was Desiderius Erasmus, who died in 1536. He and his disciples were not heretics. They shared with Ignatius a firm faith in Christ and a contemplative approach to the Gospels. But a reading of the *Enchiridion* of Erasmus brings out a negative and critical attitude, one contrary to the way of thinking that Ignatius developed from experience. In the sixth Annotation, Ignatius expresses concern about the retreatant 'who is not experiencing any spiritual motions or is not being moved one way or another by different spirits' (Exx 6, 1). This describes Erasmus, a man not truly pious, never undergoing any deep spiritual crisis, never travelling along the road to Emmaus. The reason was that he conceived typical Christian life as a matter of the intellect, spiritually so elevated that there was no need for liturgy, pious practices and the consecrated life. The Church is accepted in so far as it lives at the level of the Spirit. It is criticized for many of its human expressions, especially the weaknesses and failings of its leaders.

The Ignatian View: Optimistic, Realistic

Ignatius' view of the Church is 'diametrically opposed' (Exx 325, 6) to that of Erasmus, which explains why he forbade the reading of his books. Ignatius sought 'to keep himself right in all things' (Exx 365, 1). In his rules, he encourages praise for relics and penances (Exx 358–359), church buildings (Exx 360) and all that is prescribed by the Church (Exx 361).

Praise is more than beautiful chant or well-phrased speech. What is essential is an inner disposition of selflessness. The biblical image of

praise is the dance of David before the Ark of the Covenant. David sets aside his regal dignity and vestments. Praise is reverence for God and for godly things in the Church, in a spirit of thanksgiving for grace received. It is not enough for Ignatius that the person who gives the Exercises is a person of the Church, or that the one who does them is simply in harmony with 'our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church' (Exx 353). There must be fervour in our adhesion to the Church, for how can we love the Lord more intensely and distinguish ourselves in total service to Him if we are lukewarm and sceptical towards His spouse?

It might be objected that this passion of Ignatius for all that is churchly, above all, for unquestioned support of the Vicar of Christ on earth, is like averting one's eyes from an often less-than-glorious reality that causes discouragement and even despair among those who are ready to suffer for the Church but unwilling to accept the suffering it causes them, and who therefore distance themselves from it. Some suffer because they feel that the Church does not make as much progress as they wish in the liturgy, or in who may minister, or in opting for the poor. Others suffer because they feel that the Church has abandoned many precious gifts and graces. Are not many of these ardent adherents to the Church in fact dreamers insisting on a perfectly reformed Church according to their passionate desires, or seeking to restore at all costs a Church of the past that is irretrievable?

Ignatius is not among these. He is a realist. The Church that he refers to in his rules includes within its ranks people holding high office whose 'acts are not or were not praiseworthy' and who are guilty of 'bad conduct' (Exx 362, 2, 4). His ecclesial faith does not focus on these negative aspects. He believes in a future in which he who is coming continues to bring salvation. A true prayerful quest for a positive attitude to the Church does not dwell on the supposed perfection of the past. It is expressed in a trust in new beginnings, often small and fragile, yet not illusory. Thus we have liturgical renewal, new scripture discoveries, new ecclesial movements, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, options for the poor, the Exercises in daily life, the promotion of the laity, synods and a council. It may be that these modest beginnings do not draw as much attention as other headline-making happenings in the Church. Yet they promise 'delicate, gentle, delightful' growth, 'like a drop of water penetrating a sponge' (Exx 335). It is not a question of being falsely or artificially optimistic about the Church. There is so much to praise and rejoice over, provided we open our eyes to the paschal reality, to the whole mystery of our Mother, the Church militant.

There is so much to praise and rejoice over

The Critical Balance of Faithful Love

After having given seven rules about praising God's presence in the real life of the Church, Ignatius offers at least four others that suggest how we should talk about matters of doctrine with reserve and caution in our affirmations on certain delicate points such as faith and grace (Exx 366–369). For 'by speaking much and emphatically about faith, without any distinction or explanation, we may give occasion to ordinary people to grow listless and lazy in their works' (Exx 368). The caution is that our speech, even critical, is to be informed by faithful love for what God has done and is doing at the heart of the Church. Then we are more likely to present balanced and impartial teaching. This does not prevent us from speaking the truth: the whole truth. Ignatius lived in a time when emphasis was on certain aspects of doctrine, whether grace, the scriptures, works, tradition. Throughout the Exercises, Ignatius tries to avoid overstressing or exaggerating things, and tries rather to integrate the three aspects of Creator, creation and created human beings (Exx 23), where there is exchange and communication (Exx 230–231) and a union of love (Exx 370). In the Exercises, he leads us through the history of sin, of which we are all guilty, to the paschal history of the suffering and resurrected Lord and finally to the spousal mystery of Christ and his Church, our Holy Mother, the Catholic Church, the Church which approved the Exercises.

The one who guides the retreatant witnesses to his encounter with Christ and accompanies him throughout the election, ensuring that all is done according to the mind of our Mother the Church (Exx 170). Following on his experience of the Exercises, which of themselves are meant to prepare him for it at the deepest level, the retreatant is called to live in relationship with the body of Christ, the Church—sometimes harmonious, sometimes contentious. Keeping a balanced approach is not always easy. Ignatius gives us examples that were particularly debated in his own time: though already chosen, we are expected to cooperate in our spiritual development (Exx 367); it is not enough to believe; the Lord expects actions which are expressions of that faith (Exx 368); all is grace and yet the Lord has granted us free will (Exx 369). It would not be difficult to give examples in our time of unilateral stances and proclamations of the Word that tend to lead away from union with the Church that the Lord desires. We are called to respect others' consciences, called to live in a pluralistic religious world, confronted with complex problems variously interpreted by theologians. It is enough to reduce us to silence. But for Ignatius, a genuine attitude towards the Church militant requires us not

only to praise what God is doing in His Church but to speak out as the occasion demands as members of that Church. As St Paul says, without the Spirit our speech is vain, but without us the Spirit has no voice.

The Exercises are not intended to develop a disincarnated and passive spirituality. Rather they dispose the retreatant to serve in the Church militant by rendering praise to God for the gift of that Church and to proclaim the Good News which fosters love for that Church. It is not a question of turning a blind eye to situations of crisis in the Church. True, when faced with the scandals of his time, Ignatius preferred to keep silent (he was always afraid that in attacking the authorities we could destroy authority, on which all society rests), yet he thought it 'profitable to speak of bad conduct to persons who can bring about a remedy' (Exx 362).

In our day, this can mean that it is appropriate to make a scandalous situation public if there is no other way to correct it. Ignatius believed that if our love for Christ, inseparable from love and solidarity for the Church, his Spouse, prompts us, after a prayerful discernment, to speak out, the result will always be constructive. We must take care that the denouncing of bad conduct, whether social or political, is always done with reference to the salvific act of the incarnation. In the third point of the meditation on the incarnation (Exx 108), Ignatius invites us to look at the destructive action of humanity in conjunction with the salvific act willed by the Trinity. Criticism should be done with reference to the mystery of the saving Church and marked with respect and real love for the person or persons concerned.

Also we must take into account the ordinary people of God (Exx 362) who, being ill prepared and insufficiently formed, may be drawn into error by our criticism (Exx 367). The temptation is always strong to emphasize one aspect of ecclesial life to the point that it becomes an absolute. Thus, Ignatius says about one controversy in his own day that by placing too much stress on grace 'we generate a poison harmful to freedom of the will' (Exx 369). In the same way, a proclamation of faith can undermine ecumenical and interreligious dialogue, and the promotion of justice can affect inculturation. We should heed Ignatius' recommendation in the rules that 'great caution is necessary in our manner of speaking and teaching about all these matters' by striving to present balanced views and to avoid taking Church teaching out of context (Exx 366). As we saw, Ignatius is convinced that by placing too much emphasis on grace we can produce the undesirable result of weakening the faith of the people.

For this reason, at the end of the *Exercises*, Ignatius says 'we should value above everything else the great service which is given to God out

of pure love' lived with the Son of God in an incarnate spirituality of a servant who recognises his sinfulness and yet knows that he is called to be son with the Son. This state lived in the Spirit helps us to keep in balance contradictory realities such as love and fear, just and sinner, son and servant, the lights and shadows of the Church. We believe that 'between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, his Spouse, there is the one same Spirit who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls' (Exx 365). This Spirit that unites in love the Bridegroom and the Spouse is the Holy Spirit that leads us through the Exercises and through the process of discernment. And that makes us spiritual people and people of the Church.

Ignatius gives the startling example of the situation where, inspired by what seems the angel of light we are convinced that something is white, because of our faith in the Spirit working in the Church we will accept to see it as black because the hierarchical Church says so (Exx 365). This well-known statement shocks many in this time of reason and science, but when we celebrate the Eucharist, this greatest sign of God's love (Exx 289, 5), we see the bread and wine but we believe with the Church that it is the body and blood of Christ. Is it not the 'good' Spirit that throughout the whole experience of the Exercises has deepened my faith in the union of my sentient and rational being, my whole person, with the body of Christ that is the Church?

I have tried to suggest that the rules *sentire cum Ecclesia* are as relevant to the life of the Church of the Second Vatican Council as they were to the life of the Church in Ignatius' day, the day of the Council of Trent. They are a help to live the mystery of reconciliation that is every disciple's ministry. During the Fourth Week, the Lord introduces us to the office of consoler towards our brothers and sisters in the world. The Exercises do not leave us 'looking up to the sky' (Exx 312, 4), but invite us to continue on the road of praying discernment. With open and generous hearts, we give unto God all our liberty, memory, understanding, and will so that he may dispose all I have according to his will. We accept putting aside our own judgment (Exx 353) so as to 'keep ourselves right in all things' (Exx 365) in the service of the true Spouse of Christ, our Lord, our holy Mother the hierarchical Church, in the one and same Spirit of love (Exx 365).

Peter-Hans Kolvenbach SJ was superior general of the Society of Jesus from 1983 to 2008. He died in 2016.

CATHOLICS, ANABAPTISTS AND THE BRUDERHOF

New Spiritual Patterns

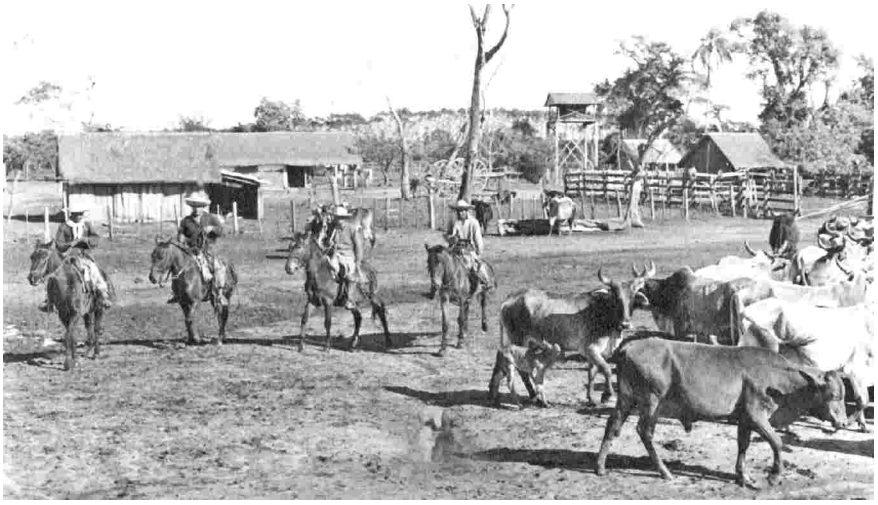
Ian Randall

THE BRUDERHOF ('place of brothers') community traces its origins to the work of Eberhard Arnold, his wife Emmy and her sister Else von Hollander, in Germany in the early twentieth century. The core group which formed the first community in 1920, in Sannerz, a village north-east of Frankfurt, was shaped by a vision of Christian life held in common. As Markus Baum notes in his biography of Eberhard Arnold, the group wanted to draw together people who 'radiate the spirit of Christ—people who witness for Christ with their entire being', and who 'give up everything to live simply and solely for love and for productive work'.[1]

The tradition that inspired the Arnolds, especially when living in the Tyrol before the formation of the community, was Anabaptism. The Tyrol was an area where Anabaptist groups were present in the early sixteenth century until forced out by persecution, and the Arnolds found inspiration in Radical Reformation and Anabaptist figures such as Balthasar Hubmaier and Jakob Hutter.[2] The Hutterite Anabaptists were distinctive in the way they implemented community of goods.[3] Hutterites saw themselves as part of a spiritual tradition: Peter Walpot, the leader of the Hutterites after the death of Hutter himself, cited patristic authors to situate communitarian Anabaptism in the wider Christian story.[4]

The Bruderhof community in Germany in the years up to the mid-1930s grew to about seventy people, but their refusal to accept Nazi ideology led to them being forcibly dissolved by the Gestapo in

[1] Markus Baum, *Against the Wind: Eberhard Arnold and the Bruderhof* (Rifton and Robertsbridge: Plough, 1998), 126.
[2] Emmy Arnold, *A Joyful Pilgrimage: My Life in Community* (Rifton and Robertsbridge: Plough, 1999), 17–18.
[3] For the early Hutterites see, for example, *The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren*, volume 1, edited and translated by the Hutterite Brethren (Rifton: Plough, 1987); and *Jakob Hutter: His Life and Letters*, edited by Emmy Barth Maendel and Jonathan Seiling (Walden: Plough, 2024).
[4] Peter Walpot, 'True Yieldedness and the Christian Community of Goods', in *Early Anabaptist Spirituality: Selected Writings*, edited by Daniel Liechty (New York: Paulist, 1994), 194–195.



Cattle ranching at the Bruderhof community in Paraguay, 1940s

1937.[5] Community members found refuge in England, where they attracted large numbers of British people.[6] Further resettlement took place as a result of the Second World War: first to Paraguay, where they were helped by Mennonites (a branch of Anabaptism), and then in the 1950s to the United States. By the 2020s, the Bruderhof had spread to seven countries, with over 3,000 people—families and single people—living in over thirty intentional communities.[7]

A very significant recent move for the Bruderhof has been the establishment of their community life in Austria. This arose from an invitation received in 2017 from the interconfessional association *Weg der Versöhnung* ('Way of Reconciliation', also known as the Round Table) in Austria to found an Anabaptist community in the country, the first with the Hutterite communal ethos to be founded on Austrian soil in almost 400 years.[8] I am writing especially, although not exclusively, about threads of spirituality that, woven together, have produced new patterns within this Austrian community.[9]

[5] See Emmy Barth, *An Embassy Besieged* (Eugene: Cascade, 2010).

[6] This story is in Ian Randall, *A Christian Peace Experiment* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2018).

[7] Clare Stober and Danny Burrows, *Another Life is Possible: Insights from 100 Years of Life Together* (Walden and Robertsbridge: Plough, 2020).

[8] See Kim Comer, 'Der Bruderhof unter den Freikirchen in Österreich', in *Die gesetzliche Anerkennung der 'Freikirchen in Österreich'* (Vienna: Lit-Verlag, 2023), 339–346.

[9] This study would not have been possible without the hospitality of Bruderhof members, and especially Kim and Ulrike Comer, who took us to meet the people mentioned in this article.

The Round Table and Its Impact

The first thread is the Round Table itself. In the mid-1980s 'circles for unity' began to emerge in Austria, supported by both Roman Catholics and Free Church people, mostly those involved in charismatic renewal. The Free Churches—Baptist, Pentecostal, Evangelical and Mennonite—had grown in the country since the Second World War, although Baptist life in Austria dated back to the mid nineteenth century and Pentecostals to the early twentieth century.[10]

Two large 'March for Jesus' events were held in Vienna in the early 1990s and an association was formed in 1995 with the aim of fostering encounters between Churches. A year later a leading Catholic deacon and theological lecturer, Johannes Fichtenbauer, was asked by Christoph Schönborn, archbishop of Vienna (and later cardinal), to open up conversations between the Catholic Church and representatives of the Free Church. Some conservative evangelicals, who had been anti-ecumenical, were so impressed by Schönborn that they began to speak of 'our brother in Christ'. In May 1997, an 'Encounter Conference' took place, chaired by Fichtenbauer, with Stuart McAllister (general secretary of the European Evangelical Alliance) as the main speaker. McAllister encouraged those present to form a Round Table (*Runder Tisch*) for Austria, its model being the informal type of *Stammtisch* gathering, rather than the structures associated with the World Council of Churches.[11]

Johannes Fichtenbauer was ideally positioned to chair the Round Table, which took concrete form in 1998.[12] From a Catholic background, against which he rebelled, he had come to personal faith in Jesus at the Tulpengasse church in Vienna, founded by the Mennonite missionaries Abe and Irene Neufeld. Johannes was preparing for baptism there, but at that point he understood the Holy Spirit to be saying *Go back to your Church*. In the later 1970s he and his wife became involved in a Catholic charismatic group and an ecumenical covenant community. He also undertook theological studies and started teaching lay Catholics, becoming director for the training of permanent deacons in the archdiocese of Vienna. He became increasingly convinced that he was

[10] Frank Hinkelmann, 'The Evangelical Movement in Austria from 1945 to the Present: A Critical Appraisal', *Kairos: Evangelical Journal of Theology*, 14/1 (2020), 97–116, especially 111–113.
[11] Paul M. Miller, *Evangelical Mission in Cooperation with Catholics* (Oxford: Regnum, 2013), 71–75.
[12] For the history, see *Meilensteine auf dem Weg der Versöhnung: 20 Jahre 'Ökumene der Herzen' am Runden Tisch für Österreich*, edited by Johannes Fichtenbauer, Lars Heinrich and Wolf Paul (Vienna: Selbstverlag, 2018).

being called to a larger vision for Christian unity. His initiation of a circle of unity, together with his experience of the Holy Spirit, meant that he was ready for the new development of the Round Table. Seventy people were at its first meeting and covenanted to 'walk together'.[13]

New initiatives both broadened and deepened. On a large scale, a meeting was held in St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna in January 1997 which attracted 2,500 from across the denominations, mainly young people. Schönborn, who was created cardinal in the following month, stated, 'the Church is as wide as the roof of this very cathedral'.[14] A Vineyard group led songs of worship; there was a Catholic dance troupe; and the sermon was given by a Baptist youth pastor, Dietrich Fischer-Dörl—the first time a Baptist had preached in St Stephens.[15]

In the following year, at a similarly large pan-denominational event, Cardinal Schönborn made an unprecedented statement about the 'bloody persecution of Christians of other confessions' in Austria, underlining that it was 'representatives of the Roman Catholic Church who bear the principal guilt of these persecutions'. He read out examples, including the execution in Linz in 1528 of Pastor Wolfgang Brandhuber and many members of his Anabaptist congregation; several hundred Anabaptists were executed throughout Austria that year. The cardinal's deeply moving speech led to people from all the Christian confessions present publicly expressing regret for their mistrust and mistreatment of other Christians.[16] It also directed national attention to the Anabaptists in a way that had not happened before. After their expulsion, the history of Anabaptist communities in Austria had been largely forgotten. This 'remembering' would play an important part in the Bruderhof coming to Austria.

Further Threads—Creating New Patterns

Increased recognition of the sixteenth-century Anabaptist communities had several results, creating new threads which, woven together, produced new patterns. Efforts were made by Round Table members and others to ensure that exhibitions, monuments and information boards were created in places where Hutterites had lived. Initiators wanted to bring Hutterite faith foundations and their history of persecution

[13] I am indebted to Johannes Fichtenbauer for giving my wife and myself a full afternoon of his time.
[14] *KathPress* (20/21 January 1997), 5–6.
[15] I am grateful to Dietrich Fischer-Dörl, now pastor of the Baptist church, Mollardgasse, Vienna, for time with him.
[16] Miller, *Evangelical Mission in Cooperation with Catholics*, 76–77, cites and translates what was said.

into greater public awareness. Leaders of evangelical churches were active.[17] Robert Hochgruber, a Catholic religious education teacher, chaired the Hutterite Working Committee, Tyrol and South Tyrol. This worked to create awareness of Anabaptist history in the region and made transatlantic connections with Hutterites.[18]

International links were to prove important for the Bruderhof. Cardinal Schönborn and Johann Christoph Arnold, the international leader of the Bruderhof communities, met in 2001 and a deep bond and growing 'ecumenism of hearts' emerged from this encounter.[19] Also Fichtenbauer, continuing under the direction of the cardinal, became president of the European Network of Communities, an ecumenical organization of religious communities established in London in 1997. Others who had international connections and were involved in reconciliation and renewal included Bruce Clewett from the USA, serving with Youth with a Mission, and Peter Hocken, a Catholic priest who lectured in Birmingham, produced a PhD on the early charismatic movement and spent years with the Mother of God Community in the USA. He moved to Austria in 2008.[20]

Peter Hocken was one of the Catholics in Austria who became deeply involved in planning that began around 2011 for a major prayer gathering in Wittenberg in 2017, 500 years after the date associated with Martin Luther and the impetus for Protestant Reformation. Two others from Austria who were crucial in this were Hans-Peter and Verena Lang, an academic couple who had long-term involvement in Catholic charismatic renewal and in reconciliation.[21] An international planning group was formed, including Thomas and Amy Cogdell (he a Protestant and she a Catholic) from the USA, and George Miley, for years a leader in the international mission organization Operation Mobilisation.[22]

There was a concern in this group, reflected in the theme 'Unity through Repentance', that the gathering should incorporate recognition

[17] See Reinhold Eichinger and Josef F. Enzenberger, *Anabaptists, Hutterites and Habans in Austria* (Nuremberg: VTR, 2012).
[18] See Jesse Hofer, 'Part IV—Hutterpark', *Hutterian Brethren* (30 January 2013), at https://hutterites.org/news/part-iv-hutterpark/, accessed 12 August 2024.
[19] 'Ecumenism of hearts' is one of the four pillars of ecumenism defined by the Brazilian writer José de Piava Netto.
[20] William K. Kay, 'Peter Hocken: His Life and Work', *Pneuma*, 37/1 (2015), 82–110.
[21] See Verena Lang, 'Story: My Father Was a Nazi', *My Story*, at https://www.mojpribeh.sk/pribeh/verena-lang-moj-otec-bol-nacista/?lang=en, accessed 12 August 2024 .
[22] See Thomas Cogdell, *Unity through Repentance: The Journey to Wittenberg 2017* (Pasadena: William Carey, 2022).

of the Anabaptists, whose sufferings had often been forgotten. In the light of this a range of descendants of Anabaptists, Mennonites and Amish, with representatives from the Bruderhof, were invited to join in the events in Wittenberg in 2017. Hocken was unusual among leaders in the charismatic movement in seeing the outpouring of the Spirit as not being primarily for power but rather for spiritual unity.[23]

A few weeks after Wittenberg 2017 some of those from the Roman Catholic Church in Austria, who had been there to pray and discern God's will, asked on behalf of the Round Table and also of Cardinal Schönborn if the Bruderhof would consider forming a community in Austria. At that point the Bruderhof did not have an active interest in such a move, although they did have a wider intention of increasing their presence and witness in continental Europe. It was a new thought that a contribution to healing of memories could be made by founding a Bruderhof in Austria.

Against this background, the Bruderhof felt that the movement of the Spirit in Wittenberg could not be ignored. Nor was the invitation a short-term reaction to the coming together experienced in 2017. There had been a deepening desire, among those in the Round Table and others, to see the witness of the Hutterites, expressed through the Bruderhof, welcomed in a country where they had suffered so much. Exploration by the Bruderhof took place and they met warm responses from all those they met: leaders in the Free Churches, the Lutherans, the Swiss Reformed and, in a very particular way, the Catholic leadership.[24]

In the meantime, moves were afoot to deal with the invidious situation by which the Free Churches in Austria did not have full legal recognition. The Round Table invited representatives of several Free Churches, the Austrian branch of Iustitia et Pax (the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace) and the Evangelical Alliance to join them in considering possible ways forward. A working group was set up, which Hans-Peter Lang chaired. The recommendation that emerged was for a 'union' of Free Churches. At a meeting with high-ranking government officials, it was agreed that 'Free Churches in Austria' (FKÖ) would be fully recognised by the Austrian government. This took place in 2013. The FKÖ was formed of five denominations: the Baptist Union, the

[23] Miller, *Evangelical Mission*, 90.
[24] Kim Comer and others, 'PloughCast 34: Classics, Race, and Religious Reconciliation: Hope in Apocalypse, Part 4', *The Plough* (19 July 2022), at https://www.plough.com/en/topics/faith/anabaptists/ploughcast-34-classics-race-and-religious-reconciliation, accessed 12 August 2024.

Association of Evangelical Free Churches, the Pentecostal movement, the Mennonite Free Church and Elaia Christengemeinde, a charismatic denomination. The arrangement was seen as 'unique worldwide'.[25] When the Bruderhof became established in Austria in 2019, they did so as part of the Mennonite Free Church. There was a shared Anabaptist identity.[26]

The Bruderhof and Ecumenical Spirituality

The Bruderhof, over the course of more than a century, has continued to be influenced by the thinking of Eberhard Arnold. From talks he gave in the 1930s there is evidence that he had sympathy with aspects of the Roman Catholic Church. In one talk, in 1933, he stated that a Bruderhof community

> … can be compared with some ways of living that have always been known among people as community; for example, with the Catholic orders in their purest and best time when they began, especially with the simplest and lowest order of the Franciscans.[27]

He was glad to see any expression of 'the living power of faith', and continued, rather surprisingly: 'We are no closer to the Evangelical [Lutheran] than to the Catholic Church …. In many ways we feel nearer to the Catholic confession.'[28] On another occasion, however, when given the opportunity to speak in a Catholic church he refused, saying the Church was guilty of too much blood, and spoke outside. Nonetheless, in a talk in 1935 he expressed admiration for Catholic ecclesiology with its 'ecumenical vision' (ecumenical in the sense of worldwide), describing it as 'a community spread over the whole earth'. The Catholic Church, he continued, 'wants to embody the community of the saints as a Church in sacred corporeality'.[29]

Another example of this broad spiritual vision is Bruderhof thinking about the Communion of Saints. In 1934 Eberhard Arnold wrote in a letter to his mother (who was not a Bruderhof member) about unity

[25] John D. Doss, 'Unique History, Unique Opportunity: Evangelicalism in Austria since 1945', *Eleutheria*, 4/2 (2015), 16–19; and see Hinkelmann, 'Evangelical Movement in Austria', 112–113.
[26] I am grateful to Reinhard Kummer, who was presiding officer of the Mennonite Free Church of Austria, for time spent with him. The Mennonite congregations have a similar indirect historical connection to the Mennonites of the sixteenth century as the Bruderhof has to the Hutterites.
[27] Eberhard Arnold, meeting transcript, 2 April 1933, EA 92. 20126122_36_S., Bruderhof archive, Bruderhof Fox Hill community, NY state, USA.
[28] Arnold, meeting transcript, 2 April 1933.
[29] Eberhard Arnold, meeting transcript, 14 August 1935, EA 44. 20126204_33_S., Bruderhof archive.

with 'spirits that have passed away'. He continued: 'I know how often you must be thinking of our beloved father, your faithful Franklin'. Eberhard's father had died in 1927 and his brother, also mentioned in this letter, was killed in the First World War. The letter stated:

> I believe that from eternity he [Franklin], together with … Hermann, sees all things as Jesus Christ sees them. How he will be rejoicing with you in all that has been given spiritually to your children and grandchildren through the years!

Arnold concluded with a vision of the 'Upper Jerusalem', or what has often been termed in the Bruderhof the 'Upper Church', with his confidence that his mother would experience 'the abundant rays from this city of light. To all who have faith, these rays come down from the Upper Jerusalem, the mother of us all.'[30]

The publishing arm of the Bruderhof, under the name 'Plough', has published ecumenically throughout its history, including a range of Catholic authors. In the 1950s Dorothy Day visited the Bruderhof's Woodcrest community, in Rifton, New York, and Woodcrest supported the Catholic Worker movement. Over several decades, Bruderhof young people served in Catholic Worker houses of hospitality. There were, however, some counter-currents in that a number of Bruderhof members had formerly left the Catholic Church and found it hard to reconcile their convictions with the closer Bruderhof–Catholic relationships which became evident from the mid-1990s. Nonetheless, there was an openness to learning how the Bruderhof might work more with the Catholic Church in common concerns.

In 1995 Cardinal O'Connor, archbishop of New York, met Johann Christoph Arnold with other Bruderhof members and was given books including a copy of *The Hutterian Chronicle*. Christoph Arnold expressed his hope that Catholics would recognise the persecution of Anabaptists in the 1500s and the need for reconciliation. This led to many further meetings, in the USA and internationally.[31] A significant occasion, marked by the desire for deeper mutual understanding, was that between Cardinal Ratzinger, as he then was, and Bruderhof members in the same year.[32]

[30] Eberhard Arnold to Elisabeth Arnold, 19 September 1934, BHA Coll_0288_02, Bruderhof archive. For more see Ian Randall, 'The Communion of Saints and an Anabaptist Community: A Study of the Bruderhof', *Theological Reflections: Eastern European Journal of Theology*, 20/1 (2022), 59–72.
[31] Art Wiser, 'Bruderhof/Catholic—Working Together: 1995–2001' (unpublished paper, 2001).
[32] 'Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger and the Bruderhof: A Conversation', partial transcript of conversation on 24 June 1995 in Rome, at https://www.bruderhof.org/s/Disciples-Together.pdf, accessed 16 August 2024.

Events moved further. In June 2004, Johann Christoph Arnold and other Bruderhof members had a private audience with Pope John Paul II. The welcome message by the Pope expressed thankfulness for the Bruderhof tradition 'in which Christ's call to discipleship finds expression in common life in the Spirit and in daily witness to the evangelical law of love'.[33] Arnold referred to those in the twenty-first century who were descended from Anabaptist martyrs of the sixteenth century and were 'very bitter against the Catholic church'. However, he believed that there was an opportunity to recognise what had been done and to forgive. The meeting with the Pope, he explained, was the culmination of nine years of discussions with Catholic leaders.[34] These included, three years earlier, Cardinal Schönborn. In 2013, Bruderhof members presented Pope Francis with a copy of the recently published statement of Bruderhof beliefs and practices, *Foundations of Our Faith and Calling*.[35]

An opportunity to recognise what had been done and to forgive

This crucial statement resulted from an extended exercise of drafting and redrafting of the text by Bruderhof members, which culminated in all members worldwide adopting the text.[36] While it clearly expresses Bruderhof convictions, it also makes clear the ways in which Bruderhof spirituality connects with the wider Christian Church. For example, the first item in it is the Apostles' Creed. The page that follows this states: 'We stem from the Anabaptist tradition, but feel akin to all who are pledged to full discipleship of Jesus. We recognize his power to work in all people, regardless of their creed or walk of life.' This ecumenical vision is reiterated a few pages later: 'Our church community is only a small part of the universal church. This universal church is the body of Christ, made up of all who belong to him; it is his bride, set apart for him alone.' Citing the testimony of *The Shepherd of Hermas*, the Church is described as,

> … a work of God, not of man. Ordained from the beginning of creation, it includes the apostles, prophets, martyrs, and believers from every age who are with God as the 'cloud of witnesses' from every nation, tribe, and race.[37]

[33] John Paul II, address to the members of the Bruderhof community, 26 June 2004.
[34] Jesse J. Smith, 'Bruderhof Elder Meets with Pope', *Daily Freeman* (30 June 2004).
[35] *Foundations of Our Faith and Calling* (Rifton and Robertsbridge: Plough, 2012).
[36] The sections of *Foundations* are: basis of our faith; our calling; heritage; church order; church actions; and life in community.
[37] *Foundations of Our Faith and Calling*, 1, 9.

As a result of time I spent with the Bruderhof in 2013–2014, I wrote and published, at their request, a study of Bruderhof spirituality. I took my title, *Church Community Is a Gift of the Holy Spirit*, from a phrase in *Foundations*. As well as examining how this spiritual dynamic has been evidenced in Bruderhof history, I spoke to a number of members of the community about their spiritual lives. Those I talked to were at different stages of life, from the twenties to sixties, and were involved in different roles in the community.

The stories I heard spoke of experience of Jesus that 'changed my life'; 'prayer as a life line'; a 'journey to a deeper inner life; 'openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit'; seeking to be 'biblical' and to read the Bible; feeling free in deciding to be baptized; 'finding joy'; knowing 'open sharing' in the community; being 'led in a certain direction'; 'unity of heart and peace over issues'; embracing the 'Great Commission' to spread the 'good news'; 'working in this world'; not 'living for self' but 'serving'; and community as 'a wonderful gift but not an end in itself'.[38] All this signified that members were on a journey in spiritual experience on which they could readily walk with those from other confessions.

Continuities in Witness

The tradition of Catholic religious orders in Austria has meant that a community of faith such as the Bruderhof, sharing property, is readily comprehensible there. The continued backing of Cardinal Schönborn has been of significant help in finding property. He knew of a former Dominican monastic site in Retz, near the Czech border. The Bruderhof im Gutshof was founded in 2019. Many other Bruderhof settlements have chosen light manufacturing (furniture, wooden toys, signage) as a primary income stream, but this property came with a three-hectare field, and the new Bruderhof community took up organic market gardening. The advantages were apparent: integration into the neighbourhood community of farmers as Bruderhof members asked for advice on climate, pests and regulations, or to borrow the occasional piece of equipment; and integration into the local economic fabric through participation in farmers' markets, all under the brand name Gutes vom Gutshof.[39]

[38] Ian M. Randall, *Church Community Is a Gift of the Holy Spirit: The Spirituality of the Bruderhof Community* (Oxford: Centre for Baptist History and Heritage, 2014), 39–40.

[39] Andrew Zimmerman, 'The Bruderhof in Austria: An Anabaptist Homecoming', *The European Conservative* (7 August 2022), at https://europeanconservative.com/articles/essay/the-bruderhof-in-austriaan-anabaptist-homecoming/.

Bruderhof im Gutshof, Retz

The aim is usually that a Bruderhof should grow over time to 150–250 people. The other Bruderhof community which has opened up in Austria more recently is in Stein, located less than an hour from Vienna, in the Vienna Woods near Eichgraben. This is currently home to around 40 Bruderhof residents, a mix of families and singles, with the hope of growing to about 150. What is now Bruderhof am Stein was formerly a convent of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary, and one of the aims in the Stein community is to find ways to affirm the outstanding missionary history and heritage of these sisters. Their own wish, when their numbers were too low to sustain their life, was that witness would continue in the house they had, and they prayed for this.[40] In addition to the living space, there is to be a community centre where the community will gather for church services and meals, and where occasional public events (such as concerts and lectures) will take place. The vision is to establish a kindergarten and an elementary school at this Bruderhof. In a carpentry workshop in Eichgraben, a sub-contracting business for the international Bruderhof company for the production of playground equipment is to be brought into operation.[41]

Although the Bruderhof communities in Austria have been giving attention to building up in new places—in continuity with those in the

[40] For background, see Heather Weedon, 'The Evolving Missiology of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary' (PhD thesis, University of Divinity, 2017).
[41] See www.communityplaythings.de.

sixteenth century and with more recent witnesses, such as the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary—they wish to continue to be committed more widely in Austria. In November 2021, they were involved in an event at St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, co-sponsored by the Catholic archdiocese. A panel of Catholics and Protestants built on previous discussions regarding religious freedoms and how to mend the rifts of the past, and a public worship service in the cathedral ended with a joint prayer from Cardinal Schönborn and a Bruderhof pastor. There is continued commitment to the Round Table and the FKÖ, with different spiritual threads being woven together. The Bruderhof wish to be involved in this as well as in community-building. People from these different groups came together for a *Gedenkfahrt* (journey of awareness or remembrance) in August 2023, in which paths taken by Anabaptists at the height of their persecutions in the sixteenth century were taken again and their witness was remembered.[42]

The Bruderhof see themselves as enjoying many fruits of what has happened in Austria in areas of interconfessional reconciliation. The invitation to the Bruderhof to come to Austria helped to create a new pattern, building on what had already been done. In their short life in Austria, the two Bruderhof communities have already welcomed guests from all over Europe, all longing, to a greater or lesser extent, for deeper community. The Bruderhof wish to offer, in community, experiences of ecumenical reconciliation and a vision of the future for the Church. While receiving from others, they want to offer that which could enhance the spiritual lives of those in other traditions. They seek, as one leader in Austria put it, to 'witness through our common life to the spirit of Jesus, which has inspired generations of Catholics and which actually kindles in every human heart a longing for discipleship and community'.[43]

Ian Randall is a Senior Research Associate at the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide. He is the author of a number of books and many articles related to the history of movements of spiritual renewal, community and mission.

[42] My wife and I were able to join this journey and had valued conversations with Eduard (Edi) Griesfelder of the Pentecostal Churches in Austria and with Hans-Peter and Verena Lang.

[43] Andrew Zimmerman, 'Former Web Developer Moves to New Bruderhof Location in Austria, Where Anabaptists Once Faced Persecution', *Another Life Is Possible*, at https://www.anotherlifeispossible.com/themes/seeking-and-making-peace/andrew-zimmerman, accessed 17 August 2024.

PHENOMENOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY

Insight, Intuition and Introspection

Robert E. Doud

PHENOMENOLOGY IS A TREND or school in philosophy that relies on the description of events and things, and not on causal explanations, to provide the mind with truth about itself. Phenomenology is also about the body: how it knows things and how it springs into action in the world.[1] The mind, for phenomenology, is installed, embedded and enfleshed in the brain, which is the centralising and commanding part of the body.[2] Pleasure resides in the pleasure centres of the brain, and is resolvable into electrical impulses and chemical exchanges. Meaning is enshrined in currents along synapses. Spirituality also happens in the brain. However no one can explain how abstract information is stored in physical tissues.

The mind is usually considered to be the part of us that deals with whatever aspects of knowledge and motivation transcend the physical brain. Nevertheless, the mind seems not to function at all without the brain. All the functions of mind are correlated with conditions and changes in cerebral areas. It is not a great exaggeration to say that we are our brains. To study human mentality and human personality is to study the brain. How does the brain receive its instigations, either towards goodness, in cooperation with grace, or towards evil, perhaps by way of pride or self-indulgence? Our choices are made in the brain, and the brain is the seat of our emotions.

So, philosophy as phenomenology is about the brain as it studies itself. Religion is about the brain's yearning for a meaning that transcends

[1] See Monika Langer, *Merleau-Ponty's Phenomenology of Perception: A Guide and Commentary* (Tallahassee: Florida State U, 1989), xvi. 'The subject's way of living its body is decisive for the manner in which it apprehends the world.'

[2] John F. Bannan, The *Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967), 49: 'Mind "is not a new sort of being, but a new form of unity, it cannot stand by itself" and is inseparable from the very orders that it integrates'. (Quoting Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Structure of Behavior* translated by Alden I. Fisher [Boston: Beacon, 1963], 181.)

itself. It is about being's yearning for something beyond being, while knowing that there can be nothing beyond being itself. Faith pushes being far from itself and then worships pure being as God. Worship is the acknowledgement we make of being's completeness, and the fact that we ourselves are a small participation in the enormity of being. Theology is the way a particular denomination or religion construes divinity and the universe for itself. Theology comes into its own at last when it transcends its particularity and considers primarily its relations with other religions and the meaning of religion as such.

Phenomenology is the kind of philosophy that describes our mental development, our perceptions, our inner spurs to action. It involves thought about the body's interaction with the world and the bond of perception that connects them. Phenomenology brings to appearance or greater realisation matters and things that might otherwise remain concealed or overlooked.[3] It supports an approach to spirituality that is descriptive and discerning, rather than rule-bound and legalistic. At length, phenomenology becomes an ontology that contemplates being and the ways being self-manifests.

An approach to spirituality that is descriptive and discerning

The Growth of the Mind and the Growth of the Spirit

The mind needs to grow. It grows by reading, study and experimentation. But the mind also grows by insight, the new increment of understanding that illumines previous knowledge or experience. It grows by intuition, or the easy and lucky absorption or penetration of a new idea or lesson. And it grows by a more immediate experience of the brain and its processes, that is, by introspection. The spiritual mind looks at these moments and processes of growth as gifts given by God, even as they may occur under influences from surrounding nature and ambient culture.

Insight is the realisation of a deeper meaning or new connection to a person, thing or event that had less meaning before. Insights can come gradually and build upon one another. Intuition is a hint or surmise that something is true based on little or no evidence. It is an immediate advance in knowledge that seems to have no previous growth process within the mind. When I meet a person for the first time and know I can trust her and that she will be a friend—that is intuition. Or, when

[3] Martin Heidegger, 'General Introduction: The Question of Being', in *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1977), 82.

a teacher explains an algebraic problem on a whiteboard, and I follow it easily as he presents it—that is a kind of intuition.

Introspection means looking into one's own mind to gain knowledge, rather than looking out of the mind and into worldly experience. A religious person is given a definition of grace, for example, but will never adequately understand it until she has her own inner experience of grace. Or a student may be given a definition of prayer, but will not fully understand what prayer is until he begins to pray on his own. Again, how could we understand what it means to experience something, except by having recourse to our own experience of that thing? Certainly, most knowledge has both an inner and an outer aspect to it.

Psychology, for instance, can be learnt by empirical methods that absorb statistical data and projections, but this must be enhanced by personal insight and reflection. I always knew more or less what the unconscious was, but after having a certain dream, I knew cogently that there was a process within myself that lived by fantasy, independently of my conscious experience. On the conscious level, I was having an insight, but I followed this up with a process of introspection. I now realise that the brain evolves as it gains insight into itself, and that this is a physiological process as well as a mental process of growth and maturity.

Now, imagine how these processes work in connection with one another. I have an insight into intuition when I realise that intuition is an immediate brightening of the intellect without preparation by study or focus of attention. I have an insight into a passage in scripture when I appreciate the context of the event or the reason why it is placed where it is in a certain book of the Bible. I intuitively experience the truth about nature when I read the work of the Romantic poets. By intuition, I experience the harmony between my own heart or deep source of inner feeling and the feeling that is manifest in the marvels of the natural world.

Spirituality entails a blend—indeed a changing, growing mixture—of intuitions, insights and introspections. It also involves perceptions, observations and judgments. Spirituality demands prayer and sustained attention to the instigations given to me by God for action and involvement in the world. Indeed, it involves insight into the partnership I enjoy with God in creating or shaping the emergence of the world. *Contemplation in action* is the apt phrase that describes the balance of inner and outer work comprising spirituality.

Human psychology and spiritual capacity grow in direct, not inverse, proportion to one another. Nature and grace are not opponents, rather, they are partners in our growing maturity and spiritual advancement.

Biblical inspiration itself is a gift or set of processes affecting the inspired writers to do what they do—even as mediated by social events and influences—but also as guided by a divine influence and intention that pervades and directs them. (This realisation came to me as a grand epiphany many years ago, when, as a student of theology, I was reading Karl Rahner's book *Nature and Grace*.)[4]

Modern theology and understanding of the faith grow by illumination from history, social theory and psychology. But this will not mean very much if it is not accompanied by internal spiritual growth in human individuals! I am writing this article in the Christmas season. Insight is represented by my eighty years of compounding, thinking again of the journey of the young couple to Bethlehem in obedience to the secular Roman decree. It strikes me that the incarnation blends with secular justice. Intuition is represented as I see new phases in the lives and health of dear friends and family members. It strikes me intuitively that incarnation is a process and an evolution that includes the phases of our own lives. Introspection takes note of times of enjoyment and hints of decline in my own health.

The past few years of the COVID-19 epidemic have been times of enormous growth in the fields of virology and vaccines. Great strides are also being made in ecological science, battery technology and nuclear fusion. Where experimentation is involved, insight is built upon insight as the science accumulates. New data shed light on previously accumulated

[4] Karl Rahner, *Nature and Grace: Dilemmas in the Modern Church*, translated by Dinah Wharton (London: Sheed and Ward, 1963).

data. Intuitions occur as new ways of seeing and manipulating the data occur to scientists and philosophers. Some of the new data apply to the lives and minds of the people involved, and thus introspection is fostered and stimulated. All these processes have social ramifications as researchers communicate their insights, intuitions and inner reflections to others.

What an insight it must have been when the first scripture scholar realised that the words *Yahweh* and *Elohim* could be used to identify two different strands of tradition in the Pentateuch! And again, what an insight occurred when it first dawned on another scholar that the Sayings or *Logia* of Jesus may have been preserved in a source that preceded the composition of the Gospels. And was there a distinct Samaritan source for many of the parables in the Gospels? An insight can arise as a question. Does the parable of the good Samaritan have a literary relationship to the parable of the Samaritan woman? Were parables real events before their stories were retold as parables? Or, were certain stories refashioned by gospel writers to appear as parables in the Gospels? What is the overall relationship between fiction and history in the Gospels? Insights cause us to explore new paths and to dismiss some others as blind alleys.

Knowledge is often intuitive before it is verified as having a foundation in historical fact. To what extent is the ancient Qumran community certifiable as a monastic community, or as a group of Essenes? Were all its members Essenes, or were there others as well? When did the Johannine evangelist first intuit the connection between the cosmic Logos, the pre-existent Christ and the human Jesus? When did Matthew make the connection between Jesus, son of David, and Emmanuel in the Book of Isaiah? As they composed their Gospels, what marvels of introspection occurred for each of the four evangelists? As we ponder these things in our hearts, we are brought to ever deeper places of self-realisation.

Languages and Mental Growth

We add words and expressions to our vocabulary constantly. Each time we add a new word, an insight occurs within our brains as to how a word or sound is connected to a certain meaning. If we are learning a new language, a correlation is formed between the word in our first language and the word and sound in the language we are learning. One morning I woke up and the words occurred to me: *farfall, mariposa, butterfly, papillon*, *Schmetterling*! Looking by introspection, and only semi-consciously, into five different sectors of my brain, I had correlated, by at least four different insights, five sounds with one meaning. I should not say that I performed

this act of correlation. I was unconscious of the agency involved. The correlation simply occurred, and I am simply reporting it. It was in an unearned intuition that four bits of knowledge had been aligned.

So too, in my study of sacred scripture, certain words of great spiritual value may occur to me in correlation, and this may bring an elevating feeling of religious satisfaction. An example of such a correlation would be: *peace, pax, paz, eirene* and *shalom.* The experience might involve a blend of insight, intuition and introspection. My own deepest religious satisfactions and consolations might be dredged up to accompany examples of introspection. Introspection is more than mere memory; it involves the stirring of a reservoir of meaning that flows into my heart or centre as a person. The word *heart* may carry slightly different connotations or vibrations for me when I hear it spoken in different languages or in different contexts. Hence, we might say: *heart, Herz, kardia, leb, corazón.*

Primordial Words

The theologian Karl Rahner's notion of *primordial words* or *Urwörte* is of importance here.[5] These are poetic words with power to strike to the heart of the person who hears them. A poetic utterance is a combination of sound, meaning and rhetorical power. Especially in the context of poetry or in poetically attuned fiction, primordial words not only stir the emotions, but stir the depth of a human person. Rahner thinks of the word *heart* as it arises in devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. He knows, too, of the use of the word *heart* in romantic fiction and in the ordinary parlance of people who are bound to each other by serious affection.

A person using the word *heart* is recollecting or retrieving other uses of that word, ones in which he or she has expressed love and affection for lovers, family members or others who have been dear to that person in the course of his or her life. Such a person experiences accumulated insight into a relationship and trust in his or her beloved. A deep intuition into the nature of living and into the meaning of *heart* is involved. The primordial word is a poetic and an evocative word. Rahner thinks of the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, and mentions other examples of primordial words—home, gate, path, bridge, fruit tree, brook, pond—to illustrate his meaning.[6]

[5] Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, volume 3, *Theology of the Spiritual Life*, translated by Karl-Heinz and Boniface Kruger (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1967), 322–331.

[6] See the ninth of Rilke's Duino Elegies in Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Duino Elegies and the Sonnets to Orpheus: A Dual Language Edition*, edited and translated by Stephen Mitchell (New York: Vintage, 2009), 57.

Many readers of literature will connect the word *home*, when they read it in a poem, to their deepest memory of their own home, or even to other uses and descriptions of home situations in other examples of literature. Such words and experiences, even as used in popular songs or sentimental dramas and entertainments, can evoke immediate and powerful emotions that strike to the hearts of their audience. Interfused with the poem or the power of these words may be memories of our own which are conjured up by introspection. Thoughts of persons with whom we have shared these memories will arise and rekindle the unique feelings shared in the past.

Primordial words are freighted with insights which arise anew, intuitions into novel situations, and introspections which clear away residues covering up delicate places in our hearts. We are thus rejuvenated and reinspired by primordial words, holding dear some old poem, novel or perhaps film, as we do so. The brain treasures certain memories, including words and phrases. These may well up unexpectedly in dreams or in waking life. We can attune ourselves to them, so that we continue to welcome inspiration when it arises spontaneously from our own deep inner resources. There are memories I have of visiting Trappist monasteries in my youth and young adult life, while discerning my own vocation, and memories of holy places visited, especially in Europe, continue to inspire me.

Epiphany

I do think the Church should have a respectably long season of Epiphany, manifestation and revelation of the mystery of the incarnation, and not relegate its feast to a single Sunday! We might well condense Lent, with its penitential tone, into a shorter time. I remember the times of Septuagesima, Sexagesima and Quinquagesima Sundays in the pre-Vatican II liturgy, when, it seemed, we could not wait to get into the dismal season of Lenten fasting.

The period of Vatican II itself and immediately following was itself a great epiphany for the Roman Catholic Church, rediscovering its sources and projecting itself into a future that it would create for itself. That epiphany comprised inspired documents, great theologians, novel insights and intuitions, a renewed contemplative movement and invigorating introspection. The Second Vatican Council was a time when we rediscovered the joy of a liturgy centred on the mystery of the resurrection and on a Eucharist of thankful and transformative remembrance.

Epiphany, like resurrection and pentecost, is and was one of the main themes of the council. Accordingly, the Church had then moved to a model of ecumenical expansion and welcome, rather than conversion of others to itself and conservative self-preservation. Faith in the Holy Spirit and in loving creativity surpassed the feeling of being threatened by heresy and inaccuracy. To a great extent, I fear we have lost the enthusiasm of the *aggiornamento* and the zeal of the New Pentecost. Soon after Vatican II, the Church had restored its traditional mood of plodding bureaucracy and penitential exaggeration. Nevertheless, the voice of the New Pentecost has not lost its echo in the modern Church, and hope springs eternal, even when not always voiced by official authorities.

A great series of theological epiphanies have appeared in the Catholic Church in the work of Teilhard de Chardin, a French Jesuit priest and palaeontologist, and one to whom the harmony of ideas between creation and the evolution of species occurred. Karl Rahner developed an evolutionary Christology and theological anthropology that incorporated Teilhard's ideas. Edward Schillabeeckx, a Dutch Dominican priest, developed a sacramental theology in which the Church is viewed as the most basic sacrament, and Christ himself as the primordial sacrament, or grace-giving sign, in which the mystery of the incarnation became the sacramental principle. The core of all Christian introspection became a sense of the mystery of participation, rooted in the sacred liturgy, wherein the ordinary Christian encounters Christ as friend and saviour.

Change and Technology

Perhaps the most important issue or problem in philosophy today is the problem of change. Technology and the pace of its advance are a global issue. The philosopher Martin Heidegger has provided us with a phenomenological description and evaluation of technology that predicts the information age.

> The sciences now establishing themselves will soon be determined and steered by the new fundamental science which is called cybernetics. This science corresponds to the determination of man as an acting social being …. Cybernetics transforms language into an exchange of news. The arts become regulated-regulating instruments of information …. Philosophy is ending in the present age. It has found its place in the scientific attitude of socially active humanity.[7]

[7] Martin Heidegger, 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking', in *Basic Writings*, 376.

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We can see on our own that the hardware side of technology is forever changing and creating new markets for its products. On the softer side of technology, misinformation and disinformation are forming and shaping public opinion, and ever more skills in critical thinking are required to sort out what is true, valid and helpful in the discussions and opinions that are offered to the public by the media.

This is happening while, perhaps, education is failing to keep up with its obligation to instil the values of enlightened thinking, that is, thinking about human rights and acting for the common good. In the West basic civics and government are neglected in our schools, while information about entertainment, popular culture and sports is readily available—and, indeed, imposed upon us at every turn. Data flow in at a great pace, while critical values are neglected and overwhelmed. The media often pander to our baser instincts, while the insights and intuitions we are offered are concerned with trivial and superficial matters. Are Western people neglecting their intelligence and wasting their cognitive powers on matters of little importance and value?

Education and Critical Thinking

What we should desire, now, are insights into the situation with change and with technology, and critical introspection as to how we will make our stand in this hyper-communicating universe. A friend of mine with a rather conservative bend of mind suggests that the solution to this lies in the return to classical education, indeed, in a relearning of the Latin and Greek classics. These works, often concerned with wars, strategies and heroes, can be reread from a fresh perspective that is orientated towards peace and against violence. The ancient ethical systems can be studied again—Epicureanism, Stoicism and eudaemonism. What is the nature of happiness, justice, the true, the good and reality itself?

Each of the ancient Greek ethical systems had a different insight into reality and into good behaviour. Hedonism found our basic human motivation in pleasure. Epicureanism agreed, but made its primary strategy the avoidance of pain rather than the direct pursuit of pleasure. The

Stoics aimed at a life of tranquillity, but also viewed us all as citizens of the world, with an obligation to rise above the tensions of petty politics. Plato thought that citizens all had an obligation to build the best possible city or state, each contributing to the common good. While learning these things, we would all gain a smattering of Latin and Greek and thus learn the bases of many European languages.

In the Age of Enlightenment, education in Europe was still heavily based in the classics, especially as centred around the writings of Marcus Tullius Cicero. Religious writings were largely those of Augustine and Aquinas. Several translations of the Bible were then available in vernacular languages. Universities were well established. The Protestant Reformation had occurred, and the importance of individual conscience had been asserted. The Renaissance had produced a renewal of interest in classical art, languages and learning. The sciences were expanding and growing, and scientific method was becoming the norm and model for critical thinking.

The science of psychology was born, perhaps, out of the philosophy of René Descartes. For him, not only reliable truth, but psychological certitude, was important as a foundation for all thinking. Our thinking was, and is, the proof to each of our minds that we exist. Each of us is a *thinking thing* or thinking self. The idea of God was the most basic of all our *innate ideas*. How could God not exist if the idea of God was a universal concern in all human minds? God indeed must be the cause of our innate idea of God. Our certitude about God's existence was a close neighbour to the certitude of our own existence. Proofs were important because certitude is important in establishing our ideas as true and valid.

Faith and Spirituality Today

Today, the idea of God is more like the beginning of a hypothesis, a hypothesis that invites or incites our act of faith. Evolution, no longer merely a theory, is supported by the accumulation of evidence from palaeontology and geology. The idea that God exists is backed up by the thought that there must be something and not just nothing at all. My own mind and brain are not simply my own to enjoy, but are the organs by which being contemplates itself. Being is the agency by the power of which, or by the power of Whom, all things happen, evolve, change, adapt and improve. My mind is an opening in being—and so is your mind—in which the knowing self-consciousness of being happens. It begins as wonder and becomes the hypothesis that God exists.

Spirituality involves the choice we make to make worship: our primary choice in facing the universe. Philosophically, the choice not to worship in faith is always available. Atheism, to the modern mind, is a valid choice. Spirituality, however, prefers to believe that faith and worship are the more authentic choices in a universe which both veils and reveals a holy mystery. Theology constructs a rational scheme that builds itself upon personal experience and a spiritual world-view. Theology is built along confessional or denominational lines, but appeals constantly to philosophy to establish the rational basis of the option for faith. Always connected to faith is the further option for goodness as the key to happiness, and for the integrity of life.

Integrity of life entails integrity of thought. Integrity of thought implies the accumulation of insights that enhance the options to worship and to make consistent choices for love of neighbour and for the common good. There will also be conversion events and experiences in which grand epiphanies well up from inside ourselves to confirm and illuminate our life trajectories. Introspection helps to centre these insights and intuitions in our hearts, the deepest and most self-determining parts of ourselves and our brains. In this sense our hearts and our brains are virtually the same thing. Spirituality is the authentically self-defining trajectory that is chosen consistently in our brains. Our desires and affects may be sifted through in order to descry incentives offered us by guiding divinity.

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 to offer insight into philosophy and philosophy as a tool in interpreting 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*.

THE DEEP BREATH OF PRAYER WITH THE WORD

James McTavish and Lucía Aurora Herrerías

SINCE THE APPEARANCE OF COVID-19, we have all probably become more conscious of our breathing. We notice more readily a person coughing in public. We might be more attentive if we are out of breath or more easily fatigued. Fatigue can arise in our apostolic work, too, where we also feel the need for 'inspiration' in our mission endeavours.[1] Therefore, it is interesting to reflect on a phrase of Pope Francis in *Evangelii gaudium* (n. 262): 'the Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer'.[2] We would like to tease out this phrase, and look more deeply into its spiritual implications, especially in the context of spiritual exercises such as those of St Ignatius and those practised in the Verbum Dei community.[3]

The Deep Breath

To give some theological content to this notion, our first port of call is sacred scripture, the soul of theology.[4] In the Gospels, John describes the moment Jesus breathed on his disciples (John 20:22). The Greek word used for 'he breathed' is ἐνεφύσησεν. From the root verb, ἐμφυσάω (*emphusaó*) we derive the word for the medical condition emphysema, which results in shortness of breath and difficulty in breathing.

Jesus' breathing on the disciples gives us a graphic image of closeness: it is impossible to breathe on someone at a distance. Proximity is required, like the nearness of a mother blowing gently on the face of her smiling

[1] 'And who is man? The being which can be inspired.' Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *The Christian Future: Or, the Modern Mind Outrun* (New York: Harper and Row, 1946), 116.
[2] In various other languages (Spanish, Italian, French, German and Portuguese) the phrase used in the Vatican translation speaks of the 'lung of prayer'. In English, this does not render well. The phrase 'deep breath' is well understood; less anatomical, but provoking a more evocative image.
[3] The Verbum Dei missionary fraternity is an international Roman Catholic missionary community formed of missionary women, men (priests and brothers) and married couples. It was founded in 1963 by Fr Jaime Bonet in Mallorca, Spain, and received pontifical approval from Pope John Paul II in 2000.
[4] Paul VI, *Dei verbum*, n. 24.

The breath of life: God creating Adam, by Maître de la Dame à la licorne, from **Bible historiale moyenne complétée,** *1351–1375*

baby. Jesus' breath transmits the Spirit, the breath of God. The parallel with the divine, life-giving breath in the book of Genesis is obvious, 'Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being' (2:7). The human person only comes alive when filled with this breath of life.

Without this breath, we remain lifeless. For this reason, the prophet Ezekiel was shown the vision of dry bones and then challenged to prophesy, to bring them to life again (37:1–10). 'Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live."' (4–5) The prophet faithfully obeys and prophesies as he was commanded. 'I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.' (8) But there was no breath in that flesh—it still needed to be animated by the spirit of life.

> Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord God: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live'. I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude. (9–10)

Perhaps we have all felt dryness in some moments of our life and mission. It is as if our enthusiasm, hope and energy have all shrivelled up. Even at times we may feel breathless because we see our brothers and sisters going through so many dramatic situations every day that it takes

our breath away. Prayer teaches us how to breathe more easily in all these moments, and we need that deep breath of prayer to reanimate us.[5] It is a pervasive Christian image. 'Prayer is the oxygen for our soul', in the celebrated phrase attributed to St Padre Pio. And when the environment is toxic, Christ must be the air we breathe: 'fear them not, but rather ever breathe Christ', as St Athanasius said.[6] Jaime Bonet, the founder of the Verbum Dei community, has a similar prayer to the Holy Spirit, 'Ayúdame, Espíritu de Amor, a respirar a tu aire'.[7] My English translation would be, 'Help me, Spirit of Love, to breathe at your rhythm'.

Interestingly, this gesture of Christ breathing on us is captured beautifully in the liturgy for the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday.[8] The bishop may place his mouth over the opening of the jar of chrism oil, and then breathe into the jar. This gesture of the outpouring of the Spirit brings us back to the moment when Jesus transmitted the life-giving spirit to his disciples in that tender gesture of breathing on them in the upper room.

How Can Prayer Give Life?

We start from the image of the body of Christ outlined by Pope Pius XII in his 1943 encyclical *Mystici corporis Christi*, written at the height of the Second World War—a moment when the world waited, holding its breath, for the final outcome of the battle between the Allies and the Axis powers. The Pope commented on how this 'long and deadly war' had 'pitilessly broken the bond of brotherly union between nations', but called on all the members of the mystical body of Christ to live so that 'the same spirit of faith breathes in all'.[9] Pius XII also exhorted all the faithful to sacrifice, and underlined that the salvation of many depends on the prayer of the few.[10]

The world at that time, as now, needed the deep breath of prayer, of love, brotherly communion and peace. When a person stops breathing,

[5] Pope Francis, Catechesis on Prayer 32: Contemplative Prayer, 5 May 2021: '… prayer enters into play as an act of faith and love, as the "breath" of our relationship with God'.

[6] St Athanasius, *Life of St Anthony*, n. 91, translated by H. Ellershaw, in *Select Works and Letters* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 220.

[7] Jaime Bonet, *A solas. Oraciones de un evangelizador*, edited by Isabel Fornari (Palma de Mallorca: Fundación Barceló, 2015), 69.

[8] For pastoral reasons, this celebration is often held on less busy days of Holy Week.

[9] Pius XII, *Mystici corporis Christi*, nn. 6 and 71. At the time of writing war continues in Ukraine after the Russian invasion and there are numerous other sites of conflict worldwide such as Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria, Palestine and elsewhere.

[10] *Mystici corporis Christi*, n. 44.

the body can be resuscitated through what is termed the 'kiss of life'. The body of Christ can benefit from the 'kiss of life' of prayer, in line with the petition of the lover in the Song of Songs (1:2), 'Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth!'

Jaime Bonet talked of prayer being like a blood transfusion in the mystical body of Christ. He writes:

> An afternoon of prayer is … a transfusion of blood into the mystical Body of Christ, which is poisoned by the sin of humanity. It is to apply myself to the Body of Christ, so that its haemorrhage stops. It is to be an artery in his Body through which his blood may abundantly circulate and flow. He has arranged it so.[11]

In another moment, Fr Jaime uses a different medical image to express the power of prayer and the good it can do—that of the surgeon in the operating room:

> Christ the Head leads you to observe everything. You see the doctor who stands in the operating room, with the lamp and with that powerful light. Attentive. Everything, including him, is well disinfected. Then, he and his entire team attentively, with their eyes fixed on the patient, begin the operation. There you neither speak nor open your mouth. All well disinfected, looking, attentive. This is our mission, this is prayer! And you throw yourself in, because you find many urgent cases.[12]

Prolonged Moments of Prayer

Understanding prayer as a deep breath one can readily grasp the importance of prolonged moments of prayer as life-giving for today's world. Pope Francis underlines the value of such moments:

> The Lord speaks to us in a variety of ways, at work, through others and at every moment. Yet we simply cannot do without the silence of prolonged prayer, which enables us better to perceive God's language, to interpret the real meaning of the inspirations we believe we have received, to calm our anxieties and to see the whole of our existence afresh in his own light. In this way, we allow the birth of a new synthesis that springs from a life inspired by the Spirit.[13]

[11] Jaime Bonet. *Así será tu descendencia. Oración, vida y predicación* (Siete Aguas: Fraternidad Misionera Verbum Dei, 2017), 140. Thanks to Fr Michael Cheong FMVD for the English translation.
[12] Jaime Bonet, *Familiares de Dios. Ejercicios espirituales para matrimonios* (Siete Aguas: Fraternidad Misionera Verbum Dei, 2000), 536–537.
[13] Pope Francis, *Gaudete et exsultate*, n.171.

But how long is 'prolonged'? The *Constitutions* of the Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity stipulate the life of prayer expected of its celibate members:

- three hours of personal prayer daily;
- four continuous hours of personal prayer in the weekly retreat;
- monthly to dedicate an entire day to prayer in complete retreat starting from the evening of the previous day;
- annually to practise the month of Spiritual Exercises.[14]

The Verbum Dei *Statutes* use precisely this adjective, 'prolonged', to describe the longer time of prayer in the community's thirty-day Spiritual Exercises.[15]

The Verbum Dei Annual Spiritual Exercises

The Verbum Dei community is an Institute of Consecrated Life in the Church and has a thirty-day retreat annually. For Verbum Dei, the annual month of spiritual exercises in complete retreat focused on the Word of God is the centre, core and nucleus of our spirituality. According to the Statutes:

> The Spiritual Exercises of the month in complete retreat, which we practise every year in Verbum Dei—now as an invariable norm—are not really the typical Ignatian Exercises. Perhaps they retain the fact that they are in full retreat, in so far as they are lived in the greatest recollection and rigorous silence. The theme and approach differ, as does the fact that they can be practised as often as one wishes, with all normality and increasing benefit. The Fraternity practises them every year.[16]

The Verbum Dei *Statutes* also express the richness of the sources contributing to these Spiritual Exercises:

> The Spiritual Exercises characteristic of Verbum Dei, based on the Word of God, in addition to the imponderable constant richness of Ignatius of Loyola's spirituality, have also drunk from the very rich sources of John of the Cross, Teresa of Ávila, Francis of Assisi, Augustine, Thérèse of Lisieux, the Magisterium of the Church, the

[14] Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity, *Constitutions* (Rome: privately printed, 2012), 29.
[15] Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity, *Statutes* (Siete Aguas: privately printed, 1989), 259.
[16] Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity, *Statutes*, 256.

> daily Doctrine of the Vicar of Christ. Such a confluence of living water, of yesterday, today and always, provides us with an abundant spring of solid and growing spirituality which is renewed every year.[17]

Jaime Bonet desired that the annual Spiritual Exercises be carried out as a means to allow the Spirit to shape and mould the community continually. Looking at his very words, one can readily grasp their fundamental importance to the Verbum Dei spirituality and mission:

> The annual Month of Spiritual Exercises is God's gift to the Verbum Dei Fraternity which, with greater clarity, points out to us our specific mission in the unconditional service of the Church of Jesus. The month of the Exercises gives our preaching an experiential character. It is the best guarantee of a faithful transmission of the living Word of God. Not only theoretically learnt, but in loving contemplation, personally tasted and abundantly lived. For the 'Verbum Dei', the annual Month of the Exercises is the unique forge of our Christification, bringing us very close to the figure of Christ. It is the burning flame of the fire of infinite Love that our Master came to kindle on earth. Our lives, however they may be, become embers with the quality of the same fire. They will ask to become torches which will spread the fire of God in all hearts.[18]

Later Bonet explains:

> Therefore, when people hear that we have a month retreat every year, they are very surprised, especially if they think that we follow exactly the plan of the Exercises of St Ignatius. But this is not the case; our Exercises have their own purpose related to the Verbum Dei charism, which emphasizes the centrality of the Word of God. The Church's insistent call to spread the faith throughout the world makes us aware of the relationship between faith, prayer and preaching. The Word prayed during the month of the Exercises in full retreat is shaping the physiognomy of Verbum Dei as being contemplative, apostolic and missionary.[19]

In the Verbum Dei *Statutes* we are told:

- There is no doubt that the Verbum Dei spirituality has received a very powerful influence of far-reaching transcendence from the annual month of Spiritual Exercises in complete retreat (n.255).

[17] Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity, *Statutes*, 257.
[18] Jaime Bonet, extracts from notebook 37-C, 197–198, 2 August 1992, General Secretariat, Rome.
[19] Bonet, *Así será tu descendencia*, 258.

- The Spiritual Exercises offer a profound and periodic renewal (n. 258).
- The Spiritual Exercises are the unique instrument with which the Holy Spirit has been forging and shaping our community and its members year after year (n. 258).
- From these prolonged and intense times of prayer, the charism proper to Verbum Dei has emerged progressively and decisively: as a contemplative-active-missionary Fraternity, called to live prayer, and teach people to pray until they reach a personal union with God (n. 259).

The Relationship with the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius[20]

Alone with God

In the twentieth Annotation to St Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* it is noted, 'the more we keep ourselves alone and secluded, the more fit do we make ourselves to approach and attain to our Creator and Lord' (Exx 20). As part of its ministry of the Word of God, the Verbum Dei spirituality values its own Spiritual Exercises as a way to,

> … achieve in the person in the best and quickest manner the detachment—the desert—from everything, from everyone and from their own self, allowing only God to speak to the heart so that they may know Him and be betrothed to Him forever.[21]

The Verbum Dei exercises of thirty days are lived in complete silence and contemplation.

Theme

The Ignatian Exercises, with their four Weeks, generally follow the life of Christ. The Verbum Dei Exercises are rooted in the Word of God—often in the life of Christ, but also drawing on the richness of the whole scripture. Since the Verbum Dei Exercises are done every year, the topic of the one-month retreat can vary. It can sometimes focus on a particular Gospel or part of sacred scripture, such as the Acts of the Apostles or a Pauline letter.

[20] The authors would like to thank Sr Paula Jordão, a fellow Verbum Dei missionary, for her most helpful insights in this section.
[21] Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity, *Constitutions*, 50.

In recent years, the whole community worldwide has explored the four principal sources of Christian spirituality in depth—the indwelling of the Holy Trinity, the mystical body of Christ, the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. We may also pray with a church document or theme, such as the Word of God in the life and mission of the Church. In 2024, the theme for our Exercises worldwide is 'Communion, Participation and Mission', in line with the synodal journey of the whole Church. The content of our retreat may vary, but we frequently incorporate elements from the Ignatian Exercises, such as giving the various rules for the discernment of spirits.

Structure

The Exercises were originally made individually, with the meditations given by the person accompanying the retreatant, but throughout the world today there are many different ways of making an Ignatian retreat, both personally and in a group. Normally, there is close accompaniment of the retreatant's prayer and help in discernment of spirits.

The Verbum Dei Spiritual Exercises are usually done in community; all the missionaries in a given country or even continent will gather together. They are virtually always directed by Verbum Dei members. A day might begin with the morning prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours, followed by the first meditation, perhaps at 7.00 or 7.30 a.m. This is typically around 30 to 40 minutes in length and given to the whole community. Afterwards, each participant is left to pray individually. A communitarian rosary might end the morning, and the afternoon might begin with the second meditation, In the early evening would be the Holy Eucharist, and the day would end with the night prayer of the Church

The Holy Spirit Watches over a Congregation, *by William Brassey Hole, published 1908*

and a guided examination. The accompaniment of prayer is usually offered every second day.[22]

The preaching during the Verbum Dei Exercises is typically carried out by a team, usually a priest or brother and a sister. As Verbum Dei also has a branch for married couples, it may be that a couple joins the team resulting in three preachers, sometimes one principal preacher and two supporting. It is very enriching to receive reflections from men, women and married couples, often of different nationalities and cultures!

Election and Sharing the Word

A person undertaking an Ignatian retreat may wish to make a good discernment about a life choice or decision. He or she may desire the fruit of freedom from attachments to be able to know the will of God and carry it out. The participants in the Verbum Dei Exercises may also wish to make a life choice, but since the Exercises are made every year, they may often already be living out that life choice, but may still be faced with ongoing discernments regarding mission apostolate, a new situation in the family, specific callings and so on.

It is interesting to note that in his experience of founding the Verbum Dei community, Jaime Bonet did indeed make the Ignatian thirty-day retreat several times. These were in the very special moments when he had to make big decisions such as at the start of his parish ministry and when the Verbum Dei foundation was at the beginning. In this way, the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius not only marked Jaime's life and ministry but also inspired the whole Verbum Dei in its full-time dedication to prayer and ministry of the Word (see Acts 6:4).

The annual experience of spiritual exercises means the members are bathed in the Word for a whole month so as later to be able to share it with others as part of our evangelizing mission. Without falling into a pure functionalism, the members are on retreat to pray and to receive the Word of God that they will later be able to share with others.

[22] We have described a typical structure although it may vary according to local needs. For example, on some days of the week the rosary may be personal. Accompaniment of prayer is part of spiritual accompaniment, but we do not want retreatants to feel obliged to share all the issues from the internal forum, as the one accompanying their prayer in the retreat is usually never their spiritual director in daily life.

> The annual month of Spiritual Exercises in complete silence is, for Verbum Dei, the singular instrument with which the Holy Spirit configures and permanently actualises its physiognomy and proper character: a House of prayer and permanent School of the prayed Word, which is preached. From this evangelisation, fruit of our daily exercise of prayer and our life of prayer, Verbum Dei's own charism as contemplative-apostolic-missionary is nourished and spread in order to live and teach to live prayer, which bears the fruit of the preaching of the living Word of God. From this missionary activity, the universal Fraternity will be formed in the very love of Christ.[23]

A Life of Prayer

The Verbum Dei members thus participate in the thirty-day retreat to pray, to renew the experience of God and also to be well nourished to share the bread of the Word during the ensuing year. The annual Spiritual Exercises are thus an essential and life-giving moment for the Verbum Dei charism. We can say that our apostolic year is guided and driven by the month of the Exercises.[24] The experience of prayer is renewing and recreative for each retreatant and the whole community but for this prolonged moments of prayer are needed.[25] The prolongation can lead to a *vida orante*—a life of prayer—in line with the exhortation of St Paul, 'Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you' (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18).

Without prayer, we tire easily and cannot work.

> Prayer—which is the 'breath' of everything—remains as the vital backdrop of work, even in moments in which this is not explicit. It is inhuman to be so absorbed by work that you can no longer find the time for prayer.[26]

Often our lack of energy and even burnout can result from a poor quality of prayer life. We are so busy running, but we forget to breathe more.[27] We can easily become fatigued, as Pope Francis has noted:

[23] Verbum Dei Missionary Fraternity, *Constitutions*, 32.
[24] See Jaime Bonet, notebook 10a, Siete Aguas, Spain, 17 August 1981, 4–6: 'It may be said that our apostolic year receives its orientation and impetus from the month of Exercises'.
[25] See Bonet, notebook 10a, Siete Aguas, Spain, 17 August 1981: 'a re-creation of the whole person'.
[26] Pope Francis, Catechesis on Prayer 37: Perseverance in Love, 9 June 2021.
[27] 'Meditating, so to speak, is like stopping and taking a breath in life': Pope Francis, Catechesis on Prayer 31: The Meditation, 28 April 2021.

> The problem is not always an excess of activity, but rather activity undertaken badly, without adequate motivation, without a spirituality which would permeate it and make it pleasurable. As a result, work becomes more tiring than necessary, even leading at times to illness. Far from a content and happy tiredness, this is a tense, burdensome, dissatisfying and, in the end, unbearable fatigue.[28]

He later gives the remedy:

> What is needed is the ability to cultivate an interior space which can give a Christian meaning to commitment and activity. Without prolonged moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the word, of sincere conversation with the Lord, our work easily becomes meaningless; we lose energy as a result of weariness and difficulties, and our fervour dies out. The Church urgently needs the deep breath of prayer.[29]

These prolonged moments of prayer give us the grace and strength continually to monitor the signs of the times. 'Our mission to bring the Word of God throughout the world … needs to be always attentive and open to the signs of the times'.[30] This aligns with the call of the Church in its social teaching and commitment to the world of today.

> It must not be forgotten that the passing of time and the changing of social circumstances will require a constant updating of the reflections on the various issues raised here, in order to interpret the new signs of the times.[31]

A Breath of Fresh Air

We all need that deep breath of prayer—moments where the Spirit can animate and inspire us. If we are not regularly inspired, we might expire! Sometimes we feel that the help we can give is rather small, but it can add up if we all do our part.[32] The moments of prolonged prayer can renew, revive and even resuscitate us.

[28] Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 82.
[29] *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 262.
[30] Lucía Aurora Herrerías, 'La centralidad de los ejercicios espirituales en el Verbum Dei', in *Amigos de Dios y profetas en un nuevo milenio. Actas de la I Convención de ejercicios espirituales Verbum Dei*, edited by Maria del Rosario Dos Reis Becerril and Lucía Aurora Herrerías (Madrid: privately printed, 2021), 16.
[31] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 9.
[32] 'No single act of love for God will be lost, no generous effort is meaningless, no painful endurance is wasted. All of these encircle our world like a vital force …' (*Evangelii gaudium*, n. 279).

Seeing the necessity of prayer, the Verbum Dei charism is fully dedicated to teaching the lay faithful to pray. All around the world, we hold 'Schools of the Word' to help people learn to pray and to be faithful to a life of prayer, including moments during the year of more prolonged prayer with the Word of God in spiritual exercises and retreats. The celibate members commit to prolonged times of prayer during the year, especially marked by the annual thirty-day retreat. This month is essential, to be bathed in the Word for an extended period, so as to have the Spirit's guidance in the year ahead.

The annual retreat really is thus a breath of fresh air, reviving drooping spirits and breathing new life into our consecration. When we are running out of puff, prayer can infuse us with life and vigour—instead of feeling hypoxic (lacking oxygen), we can forge ahead well oxygenated! Pope Francis beautifully alludes to this in his General Audiences on Prayer, reminding us to be grateful and thankful. 'Giving praise is like breathing pure oxygen: it purifies the soul, it makes you look far ahead, it does not leave you imprisoned in the difficult and dark moment of hardship.'[33] Indeed the Church, each and every member, urgently needs the deep breath of prayer.

James McTavish FMVD is a Scottish missionary priest with the Verbum Dei community. Before entering consecrated life he studied medicine at Cambridge University then worked as a surgeon in the NHS. He is currently assigned as a general counsellor in Rome. His ministries include teaching moral theology and bioethics, and giving retreats. His latest book, *Jesus the Divine Physician*, has just been published.

Lucía Aurora Herrerías FMVD is a Verbum Dei Missionary who was born in Mexico. She has worked as a missionary in Spain, Australia, the Philippines, Italy and Mexico. She finished her theological studies in Santo Tomas University (Manila), and a doctorate in philosophy at the Gregorian University (Rome). She taught philosophy for 25 years at Verbum Dei Theological Institute in Mexico and Spain. She was also the worldwide president of the Verbum Dei community from 2012 to 2018. Her current ministries are mainly spiritual direction and guiding Spiritual Exercises and retreats.

[33] Pope Francis, Catechesis on Prayer 21: The Prayer of Praise, 13 January 2021.

SEMINARY FORMATION AND THE SECOND WEEK

Norlan H. Julia

IN 2016, THE CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY published the new *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* which now provides the general guidelines for seminary formation in the Roman Catholic Church.[1] The congregation then held fora and conferences to launch the *Ratio* in various parts of the world. Seminary formators, spiritual directors, vocation directors and bishops were invited to attend. It was an opportunity for those involved in seminary formation to familiarise themselves with the spirit and content of the new *Ratio*. In this context, I would like to explore how the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises can serve as a framework for understanding the goals and objectives of the configuration stage of seminary formation, in which relationship with Christ helps to shape the seminarian's developing identity as a priest (68).[2]

In the two diocesan seminaries in the Philippines under the tutelage of the Jesuits, St John Vianney Theological Seminary in Cagayan de Oro City and San José Seminary in Quezon City (where I am rector), making the full thirty days of the Spiritual Exercises is a significant experience that marks the spirituality of the seminarians. This happens in their third year, during the configuration stage. A closer reflection on the goals of the configuration stage and of the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises shows how the Exercises, particularly the Second Week, could serve as a framework for understanding this stage. It may be said that the entire Spiritual Exercises could be a framework for the whole journey of formation from the basic stages in the seminary to ongoing formation in the ministry. However, I shall focus on the Second Week and explore how its themes and dynamics relate to the configuration stage.

[1] Available at https://www.clerus.va/content/dam/clerus/documenti/ratio-2026/Ratio-EN-2017-01-03.pdf. Subsequent references in the text.

[2] 'Configuration stage' is the preferred term of the new *Ratio* to refer to the 'theology stage' of seminary formation prior to priestly ordination.

Genesis of the New Ratio

This new *Ratio* of 2016 is the second updated version of the original text issued in 1970. The first updating was undertaken in 1985 in view of the new Code of Canon Law promulgated in 1983. The initial draft of the latest update was prepared by the Congregation for the Clergy in 2014. It was then circulated to the various conferences of bishops around the world to solicit their comments and suggestions. In November 2015, an international conference was organized by the Congregation for the Clergy in Rome to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the conciliar documents *Optatam totius* and *Presbyterorum ordinis*. It was an opportune time to gather feedback on the draft of the new *Ratio*. The comments from the conference participants were considered and integrated into the revised draft. This draft was then circulated to the various dicasteries and congregations in Rome. Finally, the definitive draft was presented to Pope Francis for approval and was officially released on 8 December 2016.

Alongside the *Ratio*, magisterial teachings on seminary and priestly formation continue to guide formators in fulfilling this specific ministry of forming future priests. Two of these are John Paul II's *Pastores dabo vobis* (1992) and Benedict XVI's *Ministrorum institutio* (2013). In the former, John Paul II presented a unified vision with the integration of the four pillars of formation: spiritual, human, intellectual and pastoral. Meanwhile, Benedict XVI emphasized the continuity between initial seminary formation and ongoing formation after priestly ordination.

The Journey of Formation

In describing the formation process, the *Ratio* uses the image of a journey. It speaks of an itinerary of formation, a 'pedagogical journey'. To correct the notion that formation ends with ordination to the priesthood, the *Ratio* takes up the idea of Benedict XVI that formation is 'one unbroken missionary journey of discipleship … divided into two principal moments: initial formation in the seminary and ongoing formation in priestly life' (54–56). The priest continues to be 'in formation', even in active and full-time ministry, until his retirement. Formation is a lifelong process. It is 'a single and integrated journey that starts in the seminary as basic formation and continues beyond ordination as ongoing formation' (53).

This journey of formation has a communitarian character. The seminarian who will later on become a priest undertakes his formation,

not by himself but with the community. He undergoes the formation itinerary with fellow travellers along the same path. First of all, his vocation itself arises from the community of the Church within which the birth, discernment and fostering of vocations happen (13–15, 30–31).[3] For the seminarian, his community is an experience of the Church. In a real sense, the seminary community is a domestic church. Hence, the *Ratio* asserts that community life 'must make an impact on each individual, purifying his intentions and transforming the conduct of his life as he gradually conforms himself to Christ'. Formation happens in the 'interpersonal relationships, moments of exchange and discussion which result in the development of that "fertile soil" in which a vocation matures concretely' (50).

The *Ratio* also highlights the missionary character of formation. It recalls:

> The Christian community is brought together by the Spirit in order to be sent out on mission …. This missionary drive concerns those called to the ministerial priesthood even more particularly, as it is the goal and the horizon of all formation. Mission is another thread that binds (cf. Mark 3:13–14), animates, and gives life to the dimensions already mentioned. It allows the priest, who has been formed humanly, intellectually, spiritually, and pastorally, to live his ministry fully. (91)

In his audience with the clergy of Rome, Pope Francis reminded them that missionary zeal,

[3] Compare John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis,* n. 34.

> … frees ordained ministers from the comfortable temptation of being [more] anxious about the opinion of others and of their own well-being, than inspired by pastoral love—in order to proclaim the Gospel, to the remotest peripheries.[4]

The entire process of formation, starting from the seminary and continuing throughout the priest's life, is a single continuous journey of missionary discipleship. Hence, the priest is 'always a disciple throughout the whole of life, constantly aspiring to configure oneself to Christ, by exercising pastoral ministry' (57, 68). Again, Pope Francis reminded his clergy that formation is 'a discipular experience which draws one to Christ and conforms one ever more to Him'.[5] Hence, 'one is always a disciple throughout the whole of life, constantly aspiring to configure oneself to Christ, by exercising pastoral ministry' (57).

Configuration to Christ as the Goal of Formation

Previously called the philosophy stage, the initial period of seminary formation is now called discipleship stage. These early years aim at accompanying the candidate as he enters into the *sequela Christi*—following in the footsteps of Christ. Upon completion of this stage, formation then focuses 'on the configuration of the seminarian to Christ, Shepherd and Servant, so that, united to Him, he can make his life a gift of self to others' (68). This period of formation, formerly known as the theology stage, is called the configuration stage in the new *Ratio*. The new terminology intends to emphasize that the objective of this stage is not simply to acquire theological concepts and ideas. Instead, configuration 'demands that the seminarian enter profoundly into the contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, sent as Shepherd of the People of God' (68).

The *Ratio* specifically elaborates what this entails:

> Gradual configuration becomes an experience which causes the sentiments and attitudes of the Son of God to arise in the life of the disciple …. This stage allows the gradual grounding of the seminarian in the likeness of the Good Shepherd, who knows his sheep, gives his life for them, and seeks out the ones that have wandered from the fold. (69)

[4] Pope Francis, address to the Congregation for the Clergy, 3 October 2014.
[5] Pope Francis, address to the Congregation for the Clergy.

Hence, the whole of seminary formation must have a specifically pastoral character and orientation. 'The seminary which educates must seek really and truly to initiate the candidate into the sensitivity of being a shepherd.'[6] The programme and structures of formation, particularly in the configuration stage, are geared towards forming in the seminarians 'the Heart of the Good Shepherd', zealous in pastoral charity manifested in acts of compassion, generosity and love for all, especially the poor (119).

The importance of the other pillars of formation notwithstanding, spiritual formation takes priority in the configuration stage. With human formation as the foundation, pastoral formation as the orientation and intellectual formation as the vision, spiritual formation serves as the interior depth from which springs the motivation to serve the people in pastoral charity. Hence, the *Ratio* insists:

> This configuration demands that the seminarian enters profoundly into the contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of the Father, sent as Shepherd of the People of God. It will make the relationship with Christ more intimate and personal and, at the same time, will lead to an awareness and an assumption of priestly identity. (68)

The Discipleship Stage and the First Week

A seminarian enters the configuration stage after having completed the discipleship stage, in which,

> … all possible efforts are expended to root the seminarian in the *sequela Christi,* listening to His Word, keeping it in his heart, and putting it into practice …. Special attention is given to the human dimension, in harmony with spiritual growth. (62)

The task in this stage is to undertake,

> … systematic work on the personality of the seminarian, in openness to the Holy Spirit …. The holiness of a priest is built upon it and depends, in large part, upon the authenticity of his humanity. The lack of a well structured and balanced personality is a serious objective hindrance to the continuation of formation for the priesthood. (62)

If this is so, then the discipleship stage appears to correspond to the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises, in which exercitants confront

[6] *Pastores dabo vobis*, n. 58.

the reality of themselves, their giftedness and their sinfulness, as well as the sinfulness of the world around them. First, they meditate on the Principle and Foundation. They are presented with an overall framework for what it means to exist and to be human amid God's creation and in God's greater scheme of things. They reflect on the role of created things vis-à-vis the goal of their existence as created beings themselves (Exx 23). They then meditate on the reality of sin within and outside them. They realise how sin has pre-existed their own birth and how it has taken root in the history and structure of this world (Exx 50–51). They pray over their own history of sin and their miserable and condemnable condition in relation to all other creatures and before God's very self (Exx 55–59).

The First Week, however, ends with a deeply felt experience of God's mercy and compassion. The exercitants place themselves before the crucified Christ, the concrete symbol of God's unconditional love for them. They ask themselves, 'What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?' (Exx 53). They marvel with amazement at the realisation of God's incredible mercy. Exercitants are asked to reflect on how they have been allowed to live until now despite the many sins they have committed (Exx 60). The First Week, then, reflects how the *Ratio* understands the goal of seminary formation:

> The process of formation is intended to educate the person in the truth of his being, in freedom and in self-control. It is meant to overcome all kinds of individualism and to foster the sincere gift of self, opening him to generous dedication to others. (63)

The Second Week as Framework for the Configuration Stage

Exercitants come out of the First Week with a deep sense of their sinfulness, but with an ever deeper sense of God's unfathomable love for them. Now they are ready to embark on the next phase of the journey: turning more closely to the person of Jesus Christ and His mission. The focus in the configuration stage, as in the Second Week, is no longer the self of the seminarian or exercitant per se, but on Jesus Christ, who calls the seminarian to a life of total self-gift in the ordained ministry.

Hence, the configuration stage aims at developing in the seminarian the heart of the Good Shepherd. The *Ratio* affirms: 'the heart of spiritual formation is personal union with Christ, which is born of, and nourished in, a particular way by prolonged and silent prayer'

(102).[7] This personal union with Christ is a union of friendship with the Good Shepherd and of docility to the Holy Spirit (101).[8]

The Call of the King

At the beginning of the configuration stage, the seminarian is asked to review and revisit his vocation story: the beginnings and development of his call. Seminarians usually look back to their days as altar servers as the period when they first felt the desire to become a priest. As altar servers, they assist the priest in the Mass. They accompany the priest in visiting mission stations to celebrate weekly or monthly Masses there. They witness how the priest relates with people and how people are joyful whenever the priest is with them. These experiences awaken the desire in their hearts to become a priest so that they can also do what their priest is doing: bringing the Eucharist to the people and becoming an instrument of joy and salvation for them.

This is the theme of the mediation on the Call of the King. The exercitants are asked to meditate on Christ the Eternal King, who says:

> My will is to conquer the whole world and all my enemies, and thus to enter into the glory of my Father. Therefore, whoever wishes to come with Me must labor with Me so that through following me in the pain, he or she may follow me also in the glory. (Exx 95)

They are asked to consider carefully the demands of this call. St Ignatius says that those who intend to respond to the Call of the King 'will not only offer their persons for the labor, but go further still. They will work against their carnal and worldly love, and they will make offerings of greater worth and moment.' (Exx 97)

The Contemplation on the Incarnation

Throughout the configuration stage, seminarians are given opportunities to immerse themselves in the realities of society, witnessing poverty, injustice, oppression, violence. These experiences take place under the pastoral formation programme. Besides serving in the usual parish context, seminarians are also given assignments in prison ministry, houses for orphans and the abandoned elderly, centres for the homeless and hospitals. The *Ratio* explicitly says:

[7] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2709–2719.
[8] See *Presbyterorum ordinis*, n. 12.

> Special attention must also be given to preparing seminarians for the particular requirements and methods of pastoral accompaniment for children, young people, the sick, the elderly, the disabled, those who live in situations of isolation or poverty, perhaps by virtue of being migrants, and for prisoners (124).[9]

In the Contemplation on the Incarnation, exercitants are asked to contemplate,

> … how the three Divine Persons gazed on the whole surface or circuit of the world, full of people; and how, seeing that they were all going down into hell, they decided in their eternity that the Second Person should become a human being, in order to save the human race (Exx 102).

A seminarian in the configuration stage should be keenly aware of the realities of the world into which he will be missioned as a priest. By constantly contemplating the realities around him as well as the response of the Triune God to the misery of the world, the seminarian's desire to offer himself to the divine plan of salvation grows stronger.

A good amount of time in the daily routine of seminarians in both discipleship and configuration stages is taken up by studies. They are in the classroom for most of the day. If there are no actual lectures, they are expected to be doing their own reading or research, writing papers or preparing other academic requirements. However, as the *Ratio* says,

> Intellectual formation is a part of the integral formation of the priest … [it] contributes to the growth of the priest as the servant and witness of the Word in the Church and in the world …. Intellectual formation helps priests to listen profoundly to the Word, and also to the ecclesial community, in order to learn how to read the signs of the times. (117)

In the Second Week, exercitants spend several days contemplating the life of Christ, starting from His birth and continuing throughout His public ministry. The key grace for which the exercitants ask in this Week is 'interior knowledge of the Lord who became human for me, that I may love Him more intensely and follow Him more closely' (Exx 104). In contemplating the mysteries of the life of Jesus Christ, seminarians

[9] Compare *Evangelii gaudium* n. 270.

likewise seek to develop familiarity and intimacy with the Lord whom they wish to follow and serve in His people.

> Day after day, he will internalise the spirit of the Gospel, thanks to a constant and personal friendship with Christ, leading him to share His sentiments and His attitudes …. In contemplating the Lord, who offered His life for others, he will be able to give himself generously and with self-sacrifice for the People of God. (41)

The Two Standards

In some seminaries and dioceses, seminarians are asked to take a mandatory gap year outside the seminary. Usually, this period is called regency, but sometimes ministry year or pastoral year. During this time—which lasts for at least one year—the seminarians experience ordinary life outside the seminary. They usually take up a job in teaching, campus ministry or community organizing. Some try to enter the corporate world through call centres or to engage in small businesses. While on this gap year, they earn their own money, interact with male and female colleagues, live with their families or on their own in a rented space. They experience the real world outside the confines of the seminary. Often they find themselves in situations where there is conflict or a clash of values between what they learnt in the seminary classrooms and how transactions and relationships are conducted outside the seminary.

These situations illustrate the dynamics of the meditation on the Two Standards, in which exercitants are faced with the opposing strategies and values of Satan and of Jesus Christ. In the mediation, they ask,

> … for insights into the deceits of the evil leader, and for help to guard myself against them; and further, for insight into the genuine life which the supreme and truthful commander sets forth, and grace to imitate Him (Exx 139).

This open confrontation between contradictory values is crucial in the formation journey because here it becomes clear that this single journey of discipleship is holistic and integrative, aiming to help the seminarian integrate his graced self and his sinful self, 'under the influence of the Holy Spirit, in a journey of faith and of gradual and harmonious maturity. In this way, he is freed from fragmentation, polarization, excesses, superficiality, or partiality.' (28)

To … integrate his graced self and his sinful self

Three Ways of Being Humble

In the formation programme of some seminaries in the Philippines, there is a year of intensive focus on the human and spiritual pillars of formation, in addition to the gap year. This is commonly called the spiritual pastoral formation year; other variations on the name are spiritual integration year, Galilee year and pre-theology year. Here, seminarians undergo module workshops on family relations, sexuality, community building and psycho-spiritual integration. They also spend some days or weeks visiting the sick in hospitals and persons deprived of liberty in prisons. They live with families of informal settlers in poor urban areas and with indigenous peoples in rural areas. In these modules inside the seminary and engagements outside the seminary they are challenged to enter more deeply into the,

> … journey of transformation that renews the heart and mind of the person …. Indeed, the gradual inner growth along the journey for formation should primarily be aimed at making the future priest a 'man of discernment', able to read the reality of human life in the light of the Spirit. In this way, he will be able to choose, decide, and act according to the will of God. (43)

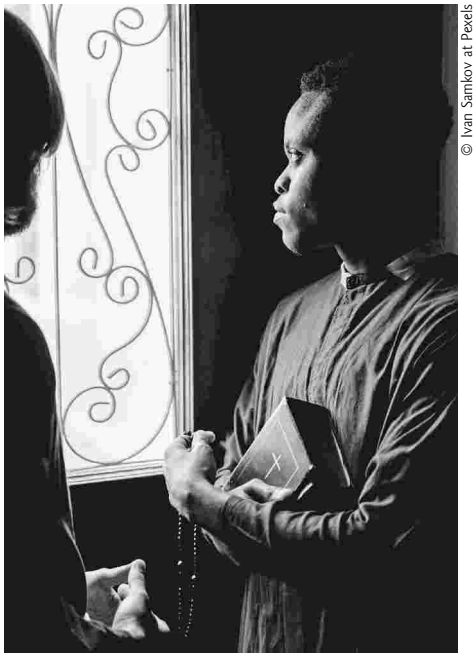
In the Second Week, another important meditation is the Three Ways of Being Humble (Exx 164–168). As Ignatius says: 'an exercitant who desires to become lovingly attached to the genuine teaching of Christ our Lord will profit much from considering and pondering the three ways of being humble' (Exx 164). The first way of being humble seeks to comply with all the laws of God, refuses any honour the world offers, and avoids mortal sin at all costs. The second way, more perfect than the first, does not feel strongly attached to wealth, honour or long life with all things being equal. It also seeks to avoid any venial sin. The third way of being humble is the most perfect of the three. Spurred by desire for greater imitation of our Lord and to be more like Him, here and now, the exercitants desire and choose 'poverty with Christ poor rather than wealth; contempt with Christ laden with it rather than honors' (Exx 167). By desiring the third way, both exercitants and seminarians aspire to closer configuration to Christ as poor and humble. As the *Ratio* says: 'the priest is, therefore, called to form himself so that his heart and his life are conformed to the Lord Jesus, in this way becoming a sign of the love God has for each person' (40).

The Election

The Second Week culminates with the Election. St Ignatius introduces the section on the Election by recalling to the exercitants the Principle and Foundation. He reminds them of the purpose for which they are created, that is, 'to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls' (Exx 23). Furthermore, whatever Election is made should help them achieve this ultimate goal. As Ignatius says, 'nothing whatever ought to move me to choose such means or deprive myself of them except one alone, the service and praise of God our Lord and the eternal salvation of my soul' (Exx 169). Ignatius ends the section on the Election with this note: 'everyone ought to reflect that in all spiritual matters, the more one divests oneself of self-love, self-will, and self-interests, the more progress one will make' (Exx 189).

After the configuration stage, the seminarian moves out of the seminary in the pastoral or vocation synthesis stage, which has a twofold purpose: induction into pastoral life with a gradual assumption of responsibilities in a spirit of service; and preparation for ordination as a priest, with proper accompaniment. During this stage, 'the candidate is asked to declare freely, consciously, and definitively his intention to be a priest' (74). This is the moment when the seminarian concretises the Election he made in the Spiritual Exercises.

He has heard the Call of the Eternal King inviting him to participate in His saving mission. He has followed the life of Christ from birth to public ministry. He has meditated on the values and strategies of Christ, which are diametrically opposed to the priorities and methods of the world. In various experiences away from the seminary, he has seen the realities of people and of the world suffering and in need of God's saving intervention. Despite the attractive offers of the world, he chooses to be with and to be like Christ poor and humble. By signifying his



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intention to serve in the ordained ministry, he is confirming the Election he made during his retreat. The grace of configuration for which he has been asking and working in the seminary will begin to bear fruit as he gradually enters into full-time ministry, first as a deacon and, later, as a priest.

Ongoing Formation and Third and Fourth Weeks

I have emphasized that formation is 'a single and integrated journey that starts in the seminary as basic formation and continues beyond ordination as ongoing formation' (53).

> The priest not only 'learns to know Christ' but, under the action of the Holy Spirit, he finds himself within a process of gradual and continuous configuration to Him, in his being and his acting, which constantly challenges the person to inner growth (80).

By immersing himself in pastoral works, by encountering people—particularly the poor—in their actual realities and making his own their hopes and joys, their griefs and anxieties, the priest's union with Jesus Christ deepens even more. The pastoral charity and the priestly heart of the Good Shepherd burn even more ardently within him and he feels ever more united with Christ the Good Shepherd. Thus, the dynamic of the Third and Fourth Weeks—that of union with Christ in his passion, death and resurrection—reflects the movement within the priest as he gives himself more and more fully in his actual priestly ministry.

Norlan H. Julia SJ is the rector of San José Seminary in Quezon City, Philippines; he was formerly rector of St John Vianney Theological Seminary in Cagayan de Oro. From his ordination to the presbyterate in 2005 until the present, he has worked with diocesan seminarians as a theology professor and formator. From 2009 to 2013 he took up doctoral studies at Heythrop College, London.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SAY THAT MARY IS MOTHER?

Louis Roy

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL spoke of a hierarchy of truths in these words: 'When comparing doctrines with one another, [theologians] should remember that in Catholic doctrine there exists a "hierarchy" of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith'.[1] This is likewise true for a hierarchy of devotions, whereby devotion to the three Persons of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, comes first. Devotion to Mary is in second place and she herself would insist on this. I shall attempt here to show the scope of devotion to Mary, while taking my cue from the New Testament's restraint on this question.[2]

Mary in History: A Few Milestones

Mary, the mother of Jesus, appears in chapters 1 and 2 of the Gospel according to Matthew; nevertheless, for Matthew, Joseph is the more significant character. In chapters 1 and 2 of Luke's Gospel, Mary is the most important character. In his letter to the Galatians, Paul writes: 'God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law' (Galatians 4:4b); but the context here is a belittling of the law, whose position is well beneath that of grace. It would thus be a misunderstanding to suppose that Mary had a place in Paul's faith; her status is similar in the rest of the New Testament—apart from the first two chapters of the Gospel according to Luke.

In fact, devotion to Mary began to develop only in the second century. In his symbolic approach, Irenaeus of Lyons understood Mary in terms of Eve: just as the sinless Christ is the antitype of sinful Adam,

[1] *Unitatis redintegratio*, n. 11.

[2] There is a trove of information to be found in *Dictionnaire historique de la Vierge Marie*, edited by Fabienne Henryot and Philippe Martin (Paris: Perrin, 2017), and in Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New Haven: Yale U, 2010).

so too the sinless Mary is the antitype of sinful Eve. (At the beginning of the twentieth century, the poet Charles Péguy takes up Irenaeus' beautiful theme again: Mary, the new Eve.)[3] At about the same time, the apocryphal Gospel of James introduced two traditions about which the New Testament is silent and which are not part of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception: the life of child Mary in the Temple, and the preservation of her virginity in childbirth. The latter presumably goes back to the Hebrew view that sexuality—in this case labour and delivery—is impure.

It is interesting to note that Blessed Jordan of Saxony, St Dominic's successor as master of the Dominican order, speaks a great deal of the Holy Spirit but never mentions Mary in his fifty letters to a Dominican nun, Diana d'Andalo.[4] This was in the thirteenth century, the era of Albert the Great, Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas, whose Marian theologies were balanced. But a century later, Catherine of Siena recommends trusting Mary, leaving to one side the Holy Spirit who provides, as the New Testament affirms, all the help necessary for salvation.[5] In the twentieth century, our Orthodox brothers and sisters frequently reminded us that the Holy Spirit had been largely forgotten by Westerners. In his book *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Yves Congar devotes a few pages to the overlooking of the Holy Spirit whose place was taken, in the West, by the eucharistic adoration, the Pope or the Virgin Mary.[6] Congar provides examples from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; nonetheless this tendency was evident as early as the fourteenth.

After the Second Vatican Council, Paul VI instituted the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, on 1 January, overlooking the fact that the *beginning* of the year would have been a good opportunity to celebrate the *beginning* of God's creative act. At the same time, the Octave of Pentecost was eliminated, thereby reducing to a single day the Church's meditation on the Holy Spirit. And during his pontificate John Paul II began to multiply feasts and memorials for Mary.

[3] See Charles Péguy, *The Mystery of the Holy Innocents and Other Poems*, translated by Pansy Paclenham (New York: Harper Brothers, 1956), 123–124.

[4] Jordan of Saxony's letters to Diana of Andalo are available in Gerald Vann, *To Heaven with Diana!* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1965).

[5] See Denis Vincent Wiseman, *Jesus Christ Crucified and Gentle Mary: Salvation and Mary in the Life and Writings of Catherine of Siena* (Dayton: U. of Dayton, 2006).

[6] Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy* Spirit, translated by David Smith (New York: Crossroad, 1997), volume 1, 159–166.

For several decades now, Mary has often been presented in liberation theology as the bold woman of the Magnificat who dares to proclaim a great social upheaval in her canticle:

> … the Mighty One … has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. (Luke 1:49–53)

Mary's True Role

Mary is not the 'mediatrix of *all* graces', as some within the Church would argue, for Christ alone is the mediator of all graces.[7] As Marie-Thérèse Nadeau noted, Vatican II uses the expression 'mediatrix' only once in connection with Mary, in a list of several titles that denote her intercessory role, to which we shall return.[8] Consequently it would be theologically sound to say that Mary is mediatrix of *countless* graces, as is every person of good will, especially the saints, among whom she occupies a pre-eminent place. Let us not forget that all holy people are mediators or occasions of graces, but the Holy Spirit alone is mediator of *all* graces, received by the Spirit from the Father and the Son, and passed along to the faithful. Thomas Aquinas wrote: 'The Holy Spirit

Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, *by Adriaen Isenbrandt, c.1530*

[7] A movement has existed for more than a century for this to be declared church dogma. See Gloria Falcão Dodd, *The Virgin Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace: History and Theology of the Movement for a Dogmatic Definition from 1896 to 1964* (New Bedford: Academy of the Immaculate, 2012), 51–52.

[8] Marie-Thérèse Nadeau, *Quelle Marie aimons-nous?* (Montreal: Médiaspaul, 2000), 34. She cites *Lumen gentium*, n.62.

is closest to us, since all gifts are given to us by the Spirit himself [*per ipsum*]'.[9]

Some believe Mary to be mediatrix of all graces because she is the mother of God. This claim is ambiguous: she is not the mother *of God*, for she is not a goddess, but she is the mother of Christ in his humanity, the mother *of Jesus,* and since Christ is divine, we can say with the Council of Ephesus that she is the mother of God.

Similarly Mary is certainly co-redemptrix, not in the same way as Christ, but in a way that is contingent on the salvation that God has conferred on us in the incarnate Son. We must therefore refrain from placing her on the same level as Christ. As St Paul writes, 'in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church' (Colossians 1:24b) and 'I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory' (2 Timothy 2:10). In keeping with this statement all those who love truly—sometimes at a very high price—cooperate in salvation and are co-redeemers. This is what has been traditionally called 'the communion of saints'. And, in addition, all those who dared stay with the crucified Jesus cooperated in the salvation of the world.[10]

Of course, since she is both mother of God and without sin, Mary is co-redemptrix to a superior degree. In accordance with Simeon's prediction that 'a sword will pierce your own soul too' (Luke 2:35b), she was most especially so at Calvary where her Son was crucified. At that moment she lived the greatest possible compassion for him, embracing not only his physical sufferings but also his anguish in the face of what seemed to be the failure of his mission.

Earlier on, in her response to the Angel Gabriel, 'let it be with me according to your word', Mary accepted God's mysterious plans for her, and she showed herself to be a woman of faith. By uttering her 'yes' she became a model of receptivity for us; the Holy Spirit thereby transformed her into the disciple par excellence. Thus Augustine states about Mary: 'It means more for Mary to have been a disciple of Christ than to have been the mother of Christ'. He then refers to a passage in Luke's Gospel where a woman said to Jesus: 'Blessed is the womb that

[9] St Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis Magistri Petri Lombardi*, 3, d. 2, q. 2, a. 2, qc. 2, ad 3.
[10] See Matthew 17:55–56, Mark 15:21, 39–41, Luke 23:26–31, 39–43 and 47–49, and John 19:25–27.

bore you', and Jesus replied: 'Blessed, rather, are those who hear the word of God and obey it' (Luke 11:27–28). Augustine adds:

> So that's why Mary too is blessed, because she heard the word of God and kept it. She kept truth safe in her mind even better than she kept flesh safe in her womb. Christ is truth, Christ is flesh; Christ as truth was in Mary's mind, Christ as flesh in Mary's womb; that which is in the mind is greater than what is carried in the womb.[11]

Does Mary Protect Us?

Mary does not confer on us any favours calculated to increase our happiness and decrease our unhappiness; rather, she intercedes, that we might receive the one who strengthens us in our trials, namely the Holy Spirit. Jesus says to us, 'If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!' (Luke 11:13). In the Angelus, a prayer that is recited three times a day, we ask: 'pray for us, Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ'. What is the foremost among these promises? Just before his passion (John 15:7–15), Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to his disciples; this loving Spirit would sanctify them by allowing them to take part in the life of the Trinity (John 17:26). As Peter declared in his speech on the day of Pentecost, 'Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you both see and hear' (Acts 2:33).

The teaching of most Catholic spiritual masters holds that mature Christians should not ask for favours, least of all to be delivered from sickness or physical calamity. Teresa of Ávila seems to be an exception to this rule: she speaks a great deal of favours she has received from God, but happily these favours are spiritual illuminations. She says that they came from 'His Majesty', much as people spoke at the time of 'His Majesty' the all-powerful King Philip II of Spain, who granted favours to his subjects according to his priorities. On the other hand, she does not recommend *seeking* favours from God:

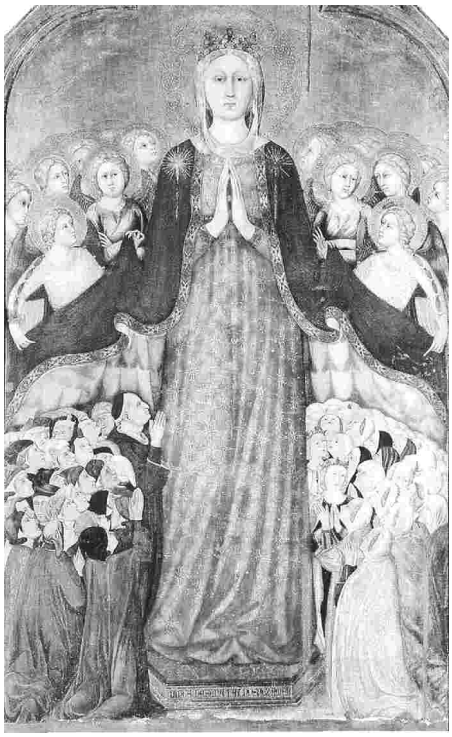
[11] St Augustine, sermon 72A, n.7, in *Sermons, III (51–94) on the New Testament*, translated by Edmund Hill (Brooklyn: New City, 1990).

> I … advise you strongly that when you learn or hear that God grants these favours to souls, you never beseech him or desire him to lead you by this path, … although this path may seem to you very good, one to be highly esteemed and reverenced.[12]

After having listed six reasons in favour of this position, she concludes:

> In sum, Sisters, besides these reasons there are others; believe me, the safest way is to want only what God wants. He knows more than we ourselves do, and he loves us. Let us place ourselves in his hands so that his will may be done in us.[13]

Let us note that God protected neither Jesus, nor the martyrs, nor the millions of Jews killed by the Nazis during the Second World War, nor the refugees exploited in our day by smugglers, by land or at sea. Nevertheless we should plead with the Spirit to protect us, not against all the events we may happen to fear, but rather against events that could separate us from the will of God: 'And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one' (Matthew 6:13). Of course Jesus carried out healings, but this was to help people understand that the fulfilment of God's reign was beginning, and to strengthen faith. As Jesus said to the father of an epileptic child, 'All things can be done for the one who believes'; the father cried out, 'I believe; help my unbelief!' (Mark 9:23b–24). Thus we can ask Mary to intercede for us that



Madonna of the Recommended, *by Lippo Memmi, 1310–1315*

[12] St Teresa of Ávila, *The Interior Castle*, 6.9.14–15, in *The Collected Works of St Teresa of Ávila*, translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, DC: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2010), volume 2.
[13] St Teresa of Ávila, *The Interior Castle*, 6.9.16.

we may be protected against any connivance with evil and against any lack of faith.

How Is God a Father?

It will be helpful to speak a little of God's fatherhood so as better to understand Mary's motherhood. In the distinctions among the divine Persons, the name 'Father' is proper to the one who is the origin with respect to His Son whom He begets.[14] God is similarly called 'Father' with respect to all beings, that is, with respect to the universe which God creates and sustains in existence. We are speaking here of the natural order. It is apropos to add that God is called 'Father' with respect to those whom God makes sons and daughters by grace. Here we speak of the supernatural order—of our participation in the very life of the Trinity.

To clarify this question even further, let us take our cue from the distinction that Thomas Aquinas teaches—a distinction that he is not the first to make—between what is said literally and what is said metaphorically about God.[15] That which is expressed 'literally' (*proprie*) is meant in a strict sense; that which is expressed 'metaphorically' (*metaphorice*) is said in a figurative way, one which is truthful but which we should not take in a literal sense. An all-important instance is the passage in which Aquinas states, about 'the divine Word': 'He is properly and not metaphorically called "Son", and his Principle is called "Father"'.[16]

In the Bible, God is called 'Father', but is sometimes indirectly presented as a mother. Thus the psalmist affirms: 'If my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up' (Psalms 27:10). In the same vein, God says to Zion: 'Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you' (Isaiah 49:15). Let us observe that, according to these biblical texts, God is not declared to be a mother in the strict sense of the word. What is affirmed is that God behaves towards us *like* a mother. Thus, strictly speaking, God is father; metaphorically speaking, God is compared to a mother.

[14] St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 33, a. 2.
[15] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1, q. 13, a. 3.
[16] Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1, q. 33, a. 2, ad 3.

How Is Mary a Mother?

In John 19:26–27, the evangelist John informs us that close by the cross of Jesus stood 'his mother'. If we continue to employ St Thomas' categories, we can understand that here Mary is *properly and strictly* called 'mother' with respect to her son Jesus. Afterwards, when Jesus says to Mary 'Woman, here is your son', the title 'son' is applied metaphorically. Similarly, when he says to his beloved disciple 'here is your mother', the title 'mother' is applied metaphorically. Jesus thus invites his disciple to think of her and relate to her *as if* she were his biological mother.

Thus Mary is a mother to us in the broad sense because she acts like a mother towards us. This is the case for all people of good will, Christian or not.[17] God places them in a relationship of son or daughter with respect to Mary, who acts like a mother in the order of grace. If, then, Mary is not a mother who gave birth to us naturally or even supernaturally, nonetheless she is certainly a mother in the sense that she loves us maternally, she thinks about us, she is in solidarity with us in our trials, and she intercedes on our behalf in a way that pleases God greatly. This is what she did at the wedding of Cana when she said to Jesus: 'They have no wine', and when she also said to the servants: 'Do whatever he tells you' (John 2:3 and 5).

The New Testament tells us that it is the Holy Spirit—not Mary—who gives birth to us supernaturally, as Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.' (John 3:5–6) It is the Spirit who gives new birth. Like the angels and like the other saints, Mary does not give us grace: she intercedes that God might give us grace. This is part of God's universal plan for humanity. It is comforting to know that the angels and saints intercede for us, for God has ordained that such intercession should contribute to our salvation. This intercession, properly understood, is quite different from the attitude of those who speak as favourably of Mary as they do of the Holy Spirit, not realising that their main trust and their frequent prayer are in fact directed not to that Spirit but rather to Mary.

Moreover, since the New Testament underscores the immediacy of our relationship to Jesus, it is inaccurate to say 'to Jesus through

[17] See Louis Roy, 'World Religions and the Christ Event', *Heythrop Journal*, 63 (2022), 977–983.

Mary'.[18] What Christians live is access 'to the Father through *Jesus*'. So what becomes of Mary? She has an affective influence on the environment, the climate, in which we encounter Jesus. She, the 'humble servant', is a model of faith, discipleship, courage and interiority in the midst of adversity. In like manner, she is a model of prayer: 'But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart' (Luke 2:19); 'His mother treasured all these things in her heart' (Luke 2:51b).

Thus we can surely conclude that, even though it would be a huge mistake to worship Mary as if she were a goddess, it is of the utmost importance to venerate her, knowing that in intimacy with God she is higher than all the saints. Practically speaking, in terms of my own experience I have found very inspiring the contemplation of Mary thanks to beautiful images, icons and statues that great painters and sculptors have provided for us.

Louis Roy OP holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge. He is professor of theology at the Dominican University College in Ottawa. He is interested in intellectual, affective and mystical approaches to God, in religious experience and faith, and in interreligious dialogue. He has published several articles in *The Way* and one of his recent books is titled *Revelation in a Pluralistic World* (Oxford University Press, 2022).

[18] This formula is most closely associated with St Louis de Montfort (1673–1716). See *True Devotion to Mary with Preparation for Total Consecration*, translated by Frederick William Faber (London: Catholic Way, 2013).

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SENT ON MISSION

The Rules for Thinking with the Church

Kevin Leidich

WHEN GIVING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES, should a director incorporate Ignatius of Loyola's Rules for Thinking with the Church into the retreat experience? Is this set of Ignatius' rules central to the overall dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises?

In 2004, Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach addressed the discretionary inclusion of the Rules for Thinking with the Church:

> Are these rules integral to the text or are they meant to be used at the discretion of the director? There is no doubt about the rules for discernment. There is less certainty about the rules on scruples or on almsgiving, less generally applicable although still important. There is even less accord on the rules on thinking with the Church. Specialists agree that they are of a later date, written by Ignatius partly in Paris and partly in Rome. Their context seems to be rather outdated. Ignatius is clearly referring to the sixteenth-century Church threatened by humanism and Protestantism. He is seeking to help people immersed in this humiliating and discouraging situation. Yet the phrase itself, *sentire cum ecclesia*, is the most widely known of any in the Exercises.[1]

This long-held contrary judgment—that directors consider the Rules for Thinking with the Church discretionary, as an optional afterthought written by Ignatius to sustain sixteenth-century church followers—was the standard thinking until quite recently. For example, what the theologian Avery Dulles proposed in his 1994 commentary on the rules is that they can be overlooked or ignored unless the retreatant demonstrated a specific personal or pastoral need for them as an aid to developing a balanced spirituality.[2] Such an opinion can also be applied

[1] Peter-Hans Kolvenbach. 'The Rules for Thinking, Judging, Feeling in the Post-Conciliar Church'. *Review of Ignatian Spirituality (CIS)*, 105 (2004), 1. See above, 39.

[2] Avery Dulles, 'The Ignatian *sentire cum ecclesia* Today', *Review of Ignatian Spirituality (CIS)*, 25 (1994), 19 and 21.

to an individual benefitting from the Notes on Scruples (Exx 345–351), or the Rules for Eating (Exx 210–217) or Giving Alms (Exx 337–344).

I once regarded the Rules for Thinking with the Church as superfluous or anachronistic, and routinely omitted their presentation to retreatants making the Spiritual Exercises. Every paragraph required additional theological explanation and their ecclesiology seemed extraneous to the overall dynamics of the Exercises. However, experience has led me to consider them as equally central to the Spiritual Exercises as the First Principle and Foundation, the Rules for Discernment of Spirits and the Three Modes of Humility. Now I never omit the Rules for Thinking with the Church, but always include them.

When presenting the varying views of the Rules for Thinking with the Church, I emphasize to retreatants they are not an Ignatian 'measuring stick for orthodox doctrine'. Nor do they represent the 'characteristics of loyal members of the Church', a guide for the spiritual renewal of individuals or a strategy for 'strengthening unity with the Church'.[3] The rules do not need to be brought up to date as a stand-alone consideration, as some commentators have suggested.[4] Nor are they primarily or simply a response to the disputes of the Reformation, although the selections were points of contention in the religious climate during Ignatius' time in Paris. The rules are not meant to propose a hierarchy of approved religious practices. Nor is Ignatius merely expressing 'concern for living faithfully in three areas of our Church life: observing worship; dealing with authorities; and evaluating preaching and teaching'.[5]

In 2019, the Jesuit historian John O'Malley placed the rules into a narrow context with specific pastoral purposes:

> For all four [sets of] rules, the advice is the same: They are to be given only to those who seem to need them. More specifically for the 'Rules for Thinking with the Church', they are especially to be given to priests who minister in places where heretics are numerous. In other words, they are intended to promote prudent pastoral practice. They are a pastoral afterthought to the Exercises. In his vast correspondence and other writings, Ignatius never makes mention

[3] Dulles, 'Ignatian *sentire cum ecclesia* Today', 20; George Ganss, 'St Ignatius' Rules for Thinking with the Church', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 7/1 (January 1975), 16; Ladislaus Örsy, 'On Being With the Church Today', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 7/1 (January 1975), 23.

[4] Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: text and Commentary. A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 250.

[5] David Fleming, *Like the Lightning: The Dynamics of the Ignatian Exercises* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources. 2004), 148.

> of them. He composed them in Paris, 1534–35, just as he was finishing his degree there. They are the last piece of substance added to the Exercises. The date and the place are crucial for understanding their genesis.[6]

Although the varied perspectives of Kolvenbach, Dulles and O'Malley each have merit, none of their explanations reveal the integral connection between the rules and the overall dynamic of the Exercises.

These familiar approaches and traditional explanations of the rules presuppose that they are primarily doctrinal in intent and scope. The perspective that Ignatius is making a doctrinal or catechetical statement, or commenting upon the various traditional devotions in the Church, is an inadequate and narrow approach to the rules. Regarding the rules as primarily doctrinal or catechetical would be foreign to the overall purpose and approach of the Spiritual Exercises. The aim of the Exercises is not to reinforce or present right doctrine nor to bolster a particular devotion or set of religious practices, but to deepen the identity of the exercitant with Jesus and to prepare the exercitant to engage in the mission of Jesus—wherever Jesus may call the person.

In a 2005 symposium on Ignatian spirituality at St Louis University addressing all the sets of rules composed by Ignatius for the Spiritual Exercises, David Fleming posed and responded to essential questions that I have not found addressed in any of his subsequent writings, nor in any other forum: 'What is the relationship of the Rules for Thinking with the Church to the entire dynamic of the Exercises?' and 'Why are the rules placed at the very end of the Exercises?'

Praise

Two specific observations about the text itself give us clues as to how to respond to these questions concerning the dynamic nature of the rules and their significance. First, in Rule Eleven two contradictory approaches to theology down through the centuries are identified: the positive approach, which emphasizes the theology of the heart found in many early Christian writers and which influenced many theologians at Vatican II; and scholastic theology, which is based on the application of reason. Through the centuries, both fundamental approaches to theology were competing, even up until the deliberations of Vatican II. Yet both

[6] John W. O'Malley, 'Do St Ignatius' "Rules for Thinking with the Church" Call for Blind Orthodoxy?' *America* (28 February 2019).

are 'praised' in Rule Eleven. This Rule sees both approaches—heart and intellect—as mutually complementary (Exx 363).

Secondly, the majority of the eighteen rules either begin with or emphasize the word 'praise', which has a specific meaning for Ignatius. According to the Ignatian scholar Michael Ivens, 'praise' does not merely mean to speak well of the other. This observation is echoed by Kolvenbach: 'Praise is more than beautiful chant or well-phrased speech. What is essential is an inner disposition of selflessness.'[7] Ivens is more specific in his definition of 'praise'. 'God is praised … when we so live that in our heart and behaviour God is acknowledged to be God ….'[8]

In short, as Ivens explained to me in conversation, 'praise' is 'to name the other in honesty'. The initial sentence of the First Principle and Foundation states that 'Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord' (Exx 23). This is not an exhortation to flatter, exaggerate or underestimate the Lord. But 'praise' expresses an essential element of love. The Trinity in the First Contemplation, looking down on the world and naming the world in honesty, is a clear example of praise. The Trinity models correct discernment: naming what is good and thereby is a reflection of God's grace, and identifying what is disordered. The Trinity models the vocation to 'praise'.

The Spanish word for 'praise', either as the noun *alabanza* or the verb *alabar,* is found 32 times in the *Spiritual Exercises*.[9] In most places, the call to 'praise' is a direct reference to the First Principle and Foundation, where our purpose is directed to praise God, or some other descriptive name for God such as the Divine Majesty. However, the word 'praise' occurs thirteen times in the Rules for Thinking with the Church where we are exhorted not to praise God specifically but to praise some aspect of devotion or expression of Christian life.

This is a shift in the usage of 'praise' that is significant. The Spirit of God calls us to recognise the explicit goodness in the many expressions of the Christian life, such as various devotions, ways of praying, personalised vocations, types of church structures, and so forth. We are called to name them in honesty, as reflecting the goodness of the Divine Majesty, even though we may not be specifically invited to adapt them to our own personal spirituality. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach explains:

[7] Kolvenbach. 'Rules for Thinking, Judging, Feeling in the Post-Conciliar Church', above, 42.
[8] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 29.
[9] Joseph Rickaby, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola: Spanish and English* (London: Burns and Bates, 1915), 133.

> Let me say here that 'praise' does not necessarily mean that we are invited or expected to adopt all the expressions of Christian life that Ignatius mentions. Ignatius, as we know, placed firm limitations in the Society of Jesus concerning [certain church] practices. What he deplored was the tendency to attack and ridicule them. A representative of this tendency was Desiderius Erasmus, who died in 1536.[10]

Loving Union with God

The well-known spiritual director Pat Carter stresses that the title Rules for Thinking with the Church is a mistranslation:.

> The word that has been translated as Rules is better translated as Guidelines. This is consistent with the other uses of the same word in the Exercises. Also the word 'Sentido' which has been translated as 'Thinking' is a form of the verb *sentir* which Ignatius uses consistently throughout the Exercises to communicate not an intellectual activity but a felt-knowledge, a knowing with the heart, an affective activity. Within this context, these Guidelines then, become more of a way of living in a Church that is both divine and human with both affection and critical loyalty.[11]

Carter goes on to quote the Ignatian scholar David Fleming:

[10] Kolvenbach, 'Rules for Thinking, Judging, Feeling in the Post-Conciliar Church', above, 42.
[11] Pat Carter, 'Ignatius Loyola—Model for Lay Spirituality', *Harvest*, (Summer 2006), 14–17, at 17.

> In the midst of the confusion and turmoil of the sixteenth-century church of his day, he knew the difficulty of maintaining a mature balance, a clear-headed judgment, and a loving reverence for both tradition and change. The guidelines which he proposed were meant to be internalized by the retreatant, just as the guidelines with regard to eating or the guidelines for the discernment of spirits.[12]

Further clarifying the intentionality of Ignatius, Kolvenbach explains,

> His broader understanding of the Rules draws one to love more deeply and more expansively. Love of Christ goes with love for the Church and must be expressed in concrete acts. 'Loving union with God' these are the last words of the Rules for Thinking with the Church and the final words of the Exercises themselves. This union cannot be lived independently of the Church.[13]

Ignatius intended the Rules for Thinking with the Church to be an extension of the Rules for Discernment of Spirits (Exx 313–336).

How the external world ... is influenced by the Spirit of God

The Rules for Thinking with the Church are an integral part of the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, providing a further application of the Presupposition (Exx 22) and the Rules for Discernment of Spirits—not just interpreting how an individual is influenced through his or her decisions about external choices, but how the external world, especially the world of spirituality and religious practice, is influenced by the Spirit of God.

The Rules for Thinking with the Church encourage us to observe, verify and cooperate with how God is working in manifold ways for all people, thereby focusing our desires to see clearly. Ignatius builds the rules upon essential themes from the dynamics of the Exercises: the Presupposition, which forms a basis for dialogue and relationship; the First Principle and Foundation to notice, to give witness, and to praise what is of God; the two sets of Rules for Discernment of Spirits; and the example of the Trinity in the First Contemplation, looking upon the world and distinguishing what is truly good from what is disordered (Exx 101–109).

The rules are also an application of the First Annotation, which recognises the activity of the Lord in making use of 'any means of

[12] 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), 281, quoted in Carter, 'Ignatius Loyola—Model for Lay Spirituality', 17.
[13] Kolvenbach. 'Rules for Thinking, Judging, Feeling in the Post-Conciliar Church', above, 40.

preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul' (Exx 1). The rules 'praise' each of the means that God may choose to invite us to be co-partners in the mission of Jesus.

Mission

The rules are meant by Ignatius as an introduction to 'mission', a theme in many of his 7,000 letters, in the Jesuit *Constitutions* and in his dictated *Autobiography*. The rules are clearly mission-orientated, encouraging us to apply the sensitivity and gifts received in the Exercises to daily external decisions and situations and to help others to discern. St Pierre Favre, one of the first companions of Ignatius Loyola, is the model of one who exemplifies the right attitudes fostered by the rules. Pierre longed to meet and converse with the German reformers so that he could seek goodness in them, love them through that goodness, and thereby to establish bridges and labour to change hearts.[14] This was quite different from the customary polemical rhetoric of those times!

The Rules for Thinking with the Church are most appropriately presented by the retreat director at the conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises, assisting each retreatant with transition to daily life and relationships. Because the rules are complementary to the sensitivity of the 'Contemplation to Attain Divine Love', they support the desire to deepen retreatants' awareness of how God labours on each person's behalf in all situations. In the words of Cardinal Avery Dulles, the rules 'are not abstract norms to be used by the public on any and all occasions', nor are they 'a necessary stock of orthodox doctrines, but with sentiments, attitudes, and ways of speaking and acting that are characteristic of loyal members of the Church'.[15]

How does the retreat director notice the retreatant's desire for the grace of the Rules for Thinking with the Church near the conclusion of the retreat? In the retreatant's prayer, one may be drawn to questions such as these: *What happens after the Spiritual Exercises? How do I identify the mission that Christ desires to entrust to me? What qualities, talents and*

[14] See Pierre Favre to Diego Laínez, 7 March 1546, in *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre: The Memoriale and Selected Letters and Instructions*, translated by Edmond C. Murphy and Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 379–381 (MHSJ MF 399–402).
[15] Dulles, 'Ignatian *sentire cum ecclesia* Today', 20.

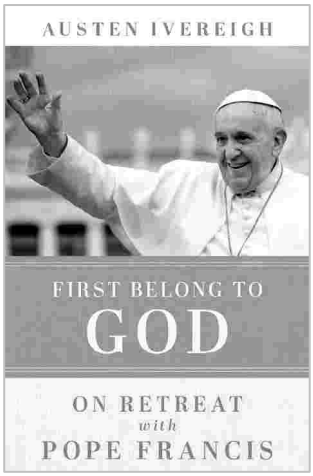
sensitivity am I called to bring to that mission? For the retreatant who fears returning to ordinary life and losing the perspective or dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises, or who desires an awareness of how Christ is calling him or her to mission, the Rules for Thinking with the Church are an effective means to allow Christ to answer these questions.

The Rules for Thinking with the Church provide an encouragement to mission: applying the sensitivity and the gifts of the Exercises to everyday external decisions and situations and assisting others to discern God's presence in our lives. For these reasons, I now never omit introducing the Rules for Thinking with the Church to each retreatant who nears the completion of the Exercises.

Kevin Leidich SJ is a member of the pastoral staff of the Jesuit Retreat Center of Los Altos, California, where he presents weekend retreats and gives individual direction. He also oversees the centre's summer thirty-day programme of the Spiritual Exercises. In addition, Kevin teaches on the Favre Program, which trains directors in the Spiritual Exercises.

RECENT BOOKS

Austen Ivereigh, *First Belong to God: On Retreat with Pope Francis* (Dublin: Messenger, 2024). 978 1 7881 2669 4, pp.240, €17.50.



A house number identifies a particular house from many that look alike on a street, but a number cannot tell you anything about the family that lives inside. In the same way, the identities generated by our culture cannot be compared to the deeper sense of belonging that comes through faith. A weekend retreat with a group of students from the Manchester Universities Catholic Chaplaincy provided a good opportunity to road-test *First Belong to God* by Austen Ivereigh. Many of the young people were searching for an identity. Some of them came away recognising that they yearned for something deeper.

Ivereigh originally devised this retreat outline for Jesuits in Britain just before the onset of the pandemic. He has written it up as a book for anyone who wants to become a follower of Jesus using the writings of Pope Francis as a guide. It is divided into the customary eight days of an Ignatian guided retreat. It contains points for reflection and exercises for each chapter, as well as a guide and summary of the retreat with suggested texts for reflection. The quantity of written material indicates careful selection or adaptation to a series of spiritual encounters in everyday life. However it is used, it is intended it to facilitate 'what Francis calls the "primary encounter", that is, a direct experience of God's love and mercy, which leads to a choice and commitment' (181).

The retreat begins at the point of 'fresh possibility' in which we discover that we are not only created by God, but continually held in God's loving regard, and therefore recreated in each and every moment (1–5, 15–18). Ivereigh constantly draws upon the scriptures, the *Spiritual Exercises*, and the writings of Pope Francis as well as his notable influences. He invites us to stop running away from belonging and to discover how it gives us a purpose as agents of the plan that God has devised for humanity: 'just like healthy plants above the soil that reflect a complex mesh of interconnectedness underneath these people are rooted in networks of belonging, bound in with others, giving and receiving' (7). Many of the reflections resonated

with the students on the retreat as they navigated their own sense of identity and belonging.

Ivereigh situates the interconnectivity that characterizes our world as a substrate of the community of the Church which, as Pope Francis has repeatedly stated, must *salir de sí misma* ('go out of itself') in order to prevent the paralysis of self-referentiality (21–26). As the retreat progresses through material from the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises it invites us to seek forgiveness for this tendency towards narcissism, among other sins that inhibit our yearning to belong (26–36). Once relieved of this tendency we can rediscover the dignity of the interconnections between us. If God is merciful in this respect, it is only to propel us outwards to a deeper interconnectivity through genuine encounter with those in greatest need of knowing God's love. Once we know ourselves to be forgiven, we know that that mercy cannot be kept to ourselves (36–41).

Where the community of the Church has rested in self-referentiality, it has become 'worldly', in the sense that dependence upon grace has been supplanted by assumed spiritual perfection constituted by structures of power, wealth and knowledge (45–49). This 'worldliness' can be counteracted by attending to how God enters the world at the incarnation, which is 'the participation in the power of God, which is a power of service, with and for the people' (51). Here, Ivereigh gives us a beautiful series of exercises, based on the Spiritual Exercises and inspired by Pope Francis, to help us rediscover the freshness of grace and the way in which the incarnation continues in our own lives (52–63).

The dynamic of the retreat continues into the Second Week as Ivereigh weaves together the Call of the King with the Meditation on the Incarnation (65–73), culminating in an invitation to 'contemplate—discern—propose', a useful formula that encourages us to become agents of Christ in the Kingdom of God (69–85). As we are led out of our own self-referentiality, we begin to open our eyes to the rest of creation that God sees too with eyes of great love. This moves us towards redressing the damage done through ecological degradation. Here, Ivereigh is not naïve about the challenges, but has faith that the necessary shift in values and assumptions can be achieved if we rediscover our primary sense of belonging to God (87–108).

If we belong to God then we must belong to God together. The synodal Church has offered us a way to realise this belonging. Through it we have discovered that 'God is doing something new and sought to understand and respond to it' (113). It has given us the generosity to respond to God in ever deeper ways. Ivereigh describes how Pope Francis's invitation, *salir de sí misma*, resonates with the Ignatian notion of the *magis* ('the greater'):

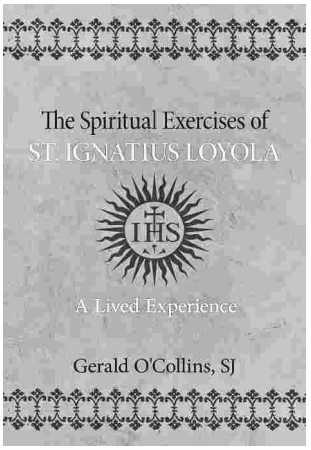
> If the spirit of sufficiency makes us stingy, the *magis*—desiring what is more for God's glory—is the antidote that opens our hearts …. The *magis* does not mean 'more' in a crude sense as if everything depends upon us and our efforts, it is more like falling in love, when we think more of the needs of our beloved than our own, desiring to do what they want rather than what we want (120).

If we belong to God, then this is the change that can be effected in our deepest selves.

The final chapter touches on the Third and Fourth Weeks. It reveals our place at the foot of the cross, where pangs of suffering can bring life: 'In embracing humiliation and pain and ultimately death, Jesus shows definitively where God stands in relation to suffering' (138). The moment when all appears to be lost is the moment where we return to the point of 'fresh possibility'. Something from outside our human experience erupts into creation: it comes from God; it is the resurrection. As the students using the material on their retreat began to recognise that their lives were bound to this moment, they began to say honestly to each other: 'We belong to God first'.

Philip Harrison SJ

Gerald O'Collins, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola: A Lived Experience* (Mahwah: Paulist, 2023). 978 0 8091 5640 5, pp.200, £23.99.



What do Palestrina's *Stabat Mater*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *In the Heat of the Night* have in common? The answer is, as the renowned Jesuit scholar Gerald O'Collins demonstrates in a dramatic way, that they all show us something of the divine. He echoes the famous dictum of James Martin, in *The Jesuit Guide to (Almost) Everything: A Spirituality for Real Life*, that the key to Ignatian spirituality lies in discovering how God can be found in everything.

O'Collins, who sadly died in August 2024, produced no fewer than 75 books about post-conciliar theology. In this, one of his last works, acknowledging his debt to recent Ignatian scholarship, he writes to guide both spiritual directors and retreatants in the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola. Rather than commenting on every paragraph of that text, he instead reflects creatively on the major themes, following the Exercises' structure by dividing his own work into four thematic 'weeks'.

The author draws on the secular world with aplomb: his book is crammed with a bewildering array of artistic, musical and literary references, and each

chapter is garnished with a generous supply of biblical quotations. The result is a gallimaufry of the curious and the significant. At the same time, we are constantly aware of the cadences of O'Collins's voice as the catalyst for this project is revealed: his own life-changing encounter with the Spiritual Exercises and his desire to share something of that experience with others.

This book's encyclopaedic range of references comes most obviously to the fore in the discussion of the Third Week. Over the centuries, O'Collins proposes, many composers of sacred music have shown a particular sensitivity to the tragedy of the passion and crucifixion, the 'heartbreaking beauty' of which can be perceived in works such as Palestrina's *Stabat Mater*. This hauntingly moving motet, he argues, has led many thousands into a profound sense of solidarity with the suffering of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and he therefore recommends it as a powerful resource for retreatants.

In the final chapter, on the resurrection, O'Collins offers invaluable and sometimes unexpected resources for meditation. In *The Lord of the Rings*, J. R. R. Tolkien describes the reaction of Gandalf's friends to the old wizard's return as one of 'wonder, joy, and fear'. O'Collins suggests that Tolkien appears to have been inspired by the women at Jesus' empty tomb, who feel 'fear and great joy' (Matthew 28:8). Such insights build on those in O'Collins's earlier work *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation*.

O'Collins also draws parallels between the parable of the prodigal son and modern (predominantly secular) film, both of which, in his view, display a poignant awareness of the transformative power of practical action. A touch of Hollywood glamour follows as we are treated to an exploration of *In the Heat of the Night*, a film set in the US South at the height of racial conflict, focusing on a white sheriff and a visiting black detective from Philadelphia. By the closing scenes, the men's experience of working together has succeeded in breaking down the barriers of prejudice between them and enabled a cautious respect and affection to develop. O'Collins's discussion here is vivid and captivating; nevertheless, I felt it would have profited from linking the practical action in the film to Catholic Social Teaching.

Though much of contemporary society suffers from what Matthew Arnold called a sense of uncertainty in the wake of the death of God, the divine presence can be readily discerned in many areas of secular culture. O'Collins affirms that this culture is not in conflict with the Church's message: indeed, both proclaim the need to build what Pope Paul VI called 'a civilization of love'. This insistence on a holistic vision of Christianity is, of course, a sign of the great debt that O'Collins owes to the Second Vatican Council.

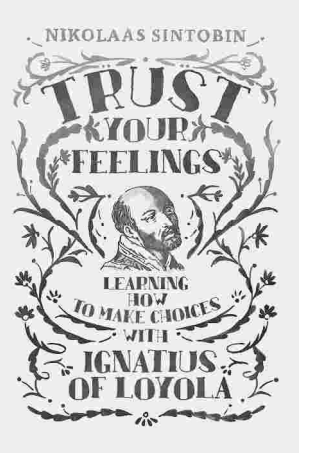
The beautifully evocative reflections in this book make the point that authentic spirituality is deeply rooted within the world, sharing its woes as well as its joys and hopes and deepest longings. We may discern a Franciscan

current here, recalling Richard Rohr's comment that 'everything belongs'. Or we may think of the work of the late literary critic George Steiner, who saw the arts as constituting 'real presences' of the divine in our midst—a comparison which O'Collins would himself surely recognise.

Gerald O'Collins's experience of practising Ignatian spirituality over many years clearly gave him an acute degree of spiritual perceptiveness. And in displaying such an extensive range of interests, he has succeeded in pulling off an impressive feat: Ignatian spirituality really can serve as a guide to (almost) everything. This is a volume to be savoured and approached in the same careful, prayerful way as *lectio divina*.

Jonathan W. Chappell

Nikolaas Sintobin, *Trust Your Feelings: Learning How to Make Choices with Ignatius of Loyola* (Dublin: Messenger, 2022). 978 1 7881 2523 9, pp. 96, €12.95.



In his *Reminiscences*, dictated towards the end of his life, Ignatius recalled how he learnt the elements of discernment by paying attention to what went on in him when he read the lives of Christ and of the saints, and daydreamed about living in a similar way himself. Even when these daydreams faded, he remembered; he remained enthusiastic and energized. By contrast, waking dreams of striving for earthly glory, entertaining while they lasted, left him dry and listless afterwards. Nikolaas Sintobin, presenting this decision-making process for a contemporary readership, starts from a similar experience.

'In my youth I studied a lot. I thought that the top ten centimetres of my body were by far the most important' (7), Sintobin writes. It took him some years, as well as the influence of his more spiritually experienced friends, to discover the importance of feelings and intuition in coming to decisions. *Trust Your Feelings* is intended to be a very down-to-earth guide to what this means in practice, how feelings can be noticed more fully and better interpreted, and how the making of important choices, individual and communal, can benefit from this process.

There is a strand of Christian spirituality which has deep reservations about feelings, or at least about the value of relying on them for decision-making. That outlook would see them as too ephemeral, too prone to distortions

coming from outside influences and inner compulsions, to be a sound foundation on which to build Christian discipleship. Better to stick to the intellect, cool and undistracted! Such a viewpoint is not to be rejected out of hand. It has valid points to make about the distortions that the heart (as contrasted with the head) can present, ensnaring those who would seek to know and follow the promptings of God in their lives. Sintobin's method is not to ignore these objections, but in recognising the truth of them to view them as factors that can and must be taken into account, and he offers advice throughout the work on how this can be achieved.

It is true that the Jesuit Pope Francis has succeeded in making the topic of discernment currently fashionable, in particular as a key element in his 'synodal pathway', and much has been written on the subject in the last decade. *Trust Your Feelings* is marked out from the mass of these by its practicality. One chapter, for instance, is entitled 'Discerning in Particular Situations', and offers brief pointed guides to how to proceed when you are angry, or in doubt, or don't feel anything, or are afraid, or are even 'in seventh heaven'. They echo the kind of practical advice that Ignatius himself offered in the Annotations to his *Spiritual Exercises*. Equally importantly, they are presented with invented case studies, drawing on the author's decades of pastoral experience, which bring a helpful immediacy to his presentation.

A very brief chapter takes up the topic of communal discernment, acknowledging that most of the book has been dealing with the art as practised by individuals. It recognises that introducing a communal dimension makes discernment of this kind particularly complicated, but describes a process of contemplative dialogue that can be of great assistance here. It also points to the value of bringing in external facilitators at times to accompany the process. These are seeds of ideas to consider, rather than fully worked out methods, but useful seeds at that.

Another distinctive feature of the book is its illustrations, line drawings of a rather comic character. These are by Paris Selinas, who has worked on other books produced by Messenger Publications. They are well chosen, and should help with the appropriation of the topics that they accompany. This appropriation becomes, by the end of the book, not simply a deepening of the process of making isolated choices, but a way of life, a constant awareness of and listening to 'the voice that speaks in your heart [that] Christians believe … is the voice of God' (118).

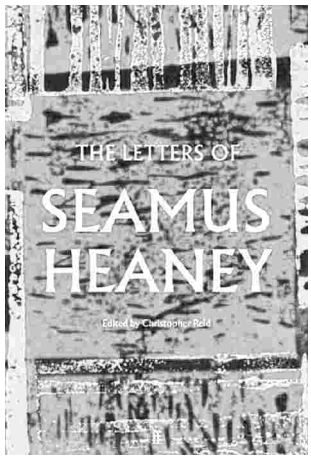
There can be few Christians today who would deny that discernment in one form or another, that is, the coming to a deeper recognition of God's will, whether for an individual life or the whole of creation, is an important dimension of any life of faith. But the process by which it is to be carried out remains for many rather mysterious and perhaps even intimidating. *Trust*

Your Feelings offers both a very accessible beginner's guide to how this can be undertaken, and a useful pointer towards the practical outcomes that might be expected from the attempt to live a more consciously discerning life.

Paul Nicholson SJ

Copies of *Trust Your Feelings* may be purchased from the Way Ignatian Book Service, at www.theway.org.uk/BookService.shtml, or by contacting the editorial office.

***The Letters of Seamus Heaney*, edited by Christopher Reid (London: Faber and Faber, 2023). 978 0 5713 4108 5, pp.848, £40.00.**



Fortunately, some publishers remain open to producing collections of letters—both the letters of outstanding authors themselves and their correspondence with other authors. In these cases, letters throw welcome and vivid light on the life and work of leading contributors to the cultural, political and religious history of the human race.

This selection from the letters of Seamus Heaney (1939–2013) opens in November 1964 (when Heaney was 25). It is enriched by photographs of him in the company of those to whom he wrote, and records his life and development from the inside. Christopher Reid shows persistently good judgment in presenting the writers (often poets) and others with whom Heaney corresponded or who turn up in his letters. Reid explains most of the obscure references, even if inevitably a few continue to evade him. He sets an admirably high standard in meticulously editing this volume, issued to mark the tenth anniversary of Heaney's death.

Reid's introduction offers a brilliant piece of writing that brings out the highly personal nature of Heaney's letters, especially those to fellow poets. Sometimes characterized by 'high spirits' and a 'comic flair' that delighted in nicknames (xi), Heaney constantly reveals a 'joyful mastery of the language' (back cover) and an exuberant sense of its possibilities in poetic form. He was driven not only by a loyal desire to keep up friendships but also by the decision to fulfil his public duty as a poet—a conviction clearly manifested in his role as professor of poetry at the University of Oxford and his 1995 Nobel Prize acceptance speech.

This volume of Heaney's letters deserves the tributes it is receiving. But why should a journal of Christian spirituality sing its praises and warmly

recommend it? First, the collection pictures graphically what genuine friendship can mean and produce in a highly creative and grateful life, lived under the tragic cloud of the Troubles in Northern Ireland (see the letter to Brendan Hamill, 8 January 1973). Very few human beings have received anything like the gift of poetic insight and language that came the way of Heaney. That very specific gift facilitates an appreciation of how such individual 'charisms' should function to bless countless others. Heaney's life and work enriched the world of his readers. Friendships bring out the best in us—a truth that Heaney graciously exemplified. Personal charisms flourish in the setting of friendship.

Second, Heaney often wrote his letters at airports or on planes, recording at times the flight number as his address (for instance, the letter to Brian Friel of 31 March 1980). This habit, along with visits to Lough Derg and Santiago de Compostela, walking in search of the Welsh mystical poet Henry Vaughan (1621–1695), travelling to the grave of Tollund Man (an Iron Age bog body) in Denmark, and imaginatively joining Aeneas in searching for his dead father all embodied the deep and lasting symbol of human existence as a journey. Occasionally adopting the language of pilgrimage (see the letter to David Constantine of 5 June 1993), Heaney evoked a sense of Christians as being those on 'the Way', or, as we might say today, people of the *camino*.

One should recall that Reid never aimed at publishing a complete edition of Heaney's letters, but only a major selection. It contains no letters to his wife, children or siblings, and there are many more letters from Heaney preserved by individuals and small archives. Too late to make the correspondence available for Reid, I recently came across in two archives in Melbourne, Australia, 33 letters from Heaney to the Jesuit priest-poet Peter Steele and 23 from Steele to Heaney. A letter to a mutual friend (13 October 2012), written by Heaney a few months after Steele's death, sums up their close friendship. It began in 1984 and flourished until the death of Steele in June 2012:

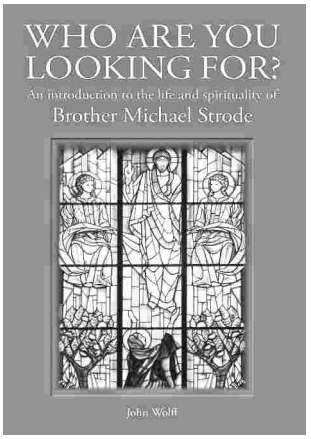
> I first met him in Loyola University Chicago and took to him immediately. In fact, from that moment he was like a spiritual director to me—not that he catechized, he simply was his steady, learned, merry, moral self, and his homilies (which would arrive with the poems) were nonpareil, a braiding of faith and intellect.

When the Heaney–Steele correspondence is published, as well as a major work by Gary Wade, we will have a richer picture of Heaney struggling nostalgically for a Christian faith that had been shaped forever by growing up in a wonderful, loving family in the rural setting of County Derry.[1]

Gerald O'Collins SJ

[1] Gary Wade, *Seamus Heaney and Catholicism* (Cambridge: Cambridge U, forthcoming late 2024).

John Wolff, *Who Are You Looking for? An Introduction to the Life and Spirituality of Brother Michael Strode* (Rugby: CBMC, 2023). 978 1 3999 4760 2, pp.272, £15.00.[2]



Readers of *The Way* may often have pondered the strange mystery that we call 'sainthood' or 'holiness'. Here is a book designed to help them go deeper into the mystery, a life of Brother Michael Strode. As a doctor, Brother Michael founded the still-thriving Hosanna House and Children's Pilgrimage Trust (HCPT), which has been taking children (and indeed some adults) with physical and mental disabilities to Lourdes ever since 1954. Even after COVID, it continues to do so in great numbers, creating unforgettable memories for those who have been on the pilgrimage.

There is an immense need today for a holiness that you can touch and test, of which you can say that it is 'for real'. HCPT offers children a fresh experience of living together as a family, something that for many of them is very new indeed; they live in hotels, not in hospitals, sharing all the group's activities together. They can combine a holiday with a religious experience and the sense of being part of a family, a rare and precious gift today. And from its very beginning, this has been a lay-led enterprise, not one run by priests.

What is evident from the whole story, both the history of HCPT and the life of Michael Strode, who passed his last 25 years as a monk of Caldey, is the extraordinary power that comes from allowing God to take charge. The message that comes out of his life is, again and again, the absolute importance of prayer for getting things done. What mattered to him above all was the centrality of prayer. Michael chose a single life, though he had been attracted to two women at various stages in his life, but thought that living family life was the most creative thing that one could do.

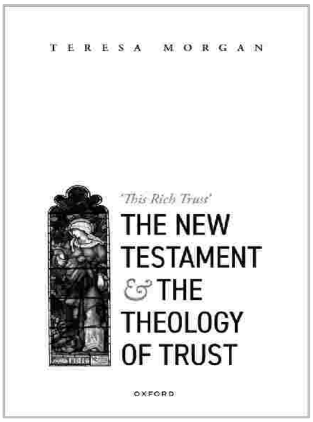
The fact is that Michael was 'for real', a human being utterly given over to God with a dedication which was inevitably expressed in terms of service and of attention to the sacraments also. Michael was a very attentive reader of scripture and had, along with that, an evident gift for friendship. There is a useful chapter in this book on his shortcomings, and that clearly has its place; no human being is perfect—although, when you read that chapter, you may feel that if this was the worst he could do, then he was not doing too badly. Certainly he was gifted with a remarkable and

[2] *Who Are You Looking For?* is available from https://www.charitycardshop.com/HCPT/product/1.

strikingly unselfish generosity, although at times he was perhaps over-scrupulous, for example when he first accepted and then turned down the award of an MBE. Was he a saint? That will be for others to decide, but John Wolff, who knew him very well indeed, has presented an account of a most agreeable and genuine human being, a man whom it was a pleasure to know. Read this book and decide for yourself.

Nicholas King SJ

Teresa Morgan, *The New Testament and the Theology of Trust: 'This Rich Trust'* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2022). 978 0 1928 5958 7, pp. 480, £117.50.



Teresa Morgan—recently Oxford's loss and Yale's gain—has long been established as one of today's most insightful historians of the Greco-Roman world. Ordained in the Church of England, Morgan complemented her academic work in Oxford with ministry in the parish of Littlemore (a context with close links to another highly significant fellow of Morgan's college, Oriel, St John Henry Newman), before taking up a chair in New Testament and early Christianity at Yale Divinity School. Having produced significant monographs on education in antiquity and on popular morality in the Roman world, Morgan has moved easily across the false divide between 'ancient history' and 'New Testament studies'. Her hugely impressive volume *Roman Faith and Christian Faith* (2015) offers a comprehensive discussion and investigation of the concepts and vocabulary of faith and trust (*pistis, fides)* in Greek and Latin sources from the centuries around the beginnings of Christianity. This work—*The New Testament and the Theology of Trust*—is the second in what will be a four-volume series, with *Trust in Atonement* already in press, and *The Invention of Faith* forthcoming.

Roman Faith and Christian Faith showed that Christian uses of the words we tend to translate as *faith* did not diverge from standard contemporary usage until as late as the fourth century, and that when the writers of the New Testament use the word *pistis* and its cognates, they almost always do so 'to refer to relationships of trust, trustworthiness and faithfulness—mostly, though not always, between God and/or Christ and human beings' (4). This study builds on that significant shift in the understanding of New Testament ideas, arguing that a recovery of the centrality of 'trust' in the New Testament presents some important revisions in our readings of

familiar texts, and challenges theologians with a 'theology of trust in the New Testament'—a theology which has significant implications for our understanding of Jesus as well as of Paul. In drawing out those implications Morgan develops a new model of atonement, stressing the divine initiative while offering a substantial role to human beings in the relationships created by God's restoration of trust between humanity and Godself.

A thorough contextual and methodological outline is followed by an exploration of the '*pistis* of God', first in the Pauline corpus and then in other New Testament texts. God's trustworthiness in fulfilling God's promises defies expectation ('salvation has not come … as a result of Israel's attitude or behaviour towards God, whether good or bad'; 44), but invites a response of *pisteuein*: a combination of believing and trusting. The trust between human beings and God arises as a result of what God had done through Christ, and the third chapter—'The Exalted Christ and the Faithful'—presents the multiplicity of ways in which the trustworthiness of Christ is the source and the object of human trust.

Morgan goes on to outline her model of atonement, by which human beings are freed from the sin and suffering closely linked with the failure of trust, through Christ who trusts and is trustworthy to God. Jesus' ultimate act of trustworthiness and of trust is his submission to suffering and death, by which Christ 'accompanies human beings on their death to the power of sin and suffering' (34). The Pauline language of dying and being raised with Christ is cast in this nexus of trust.

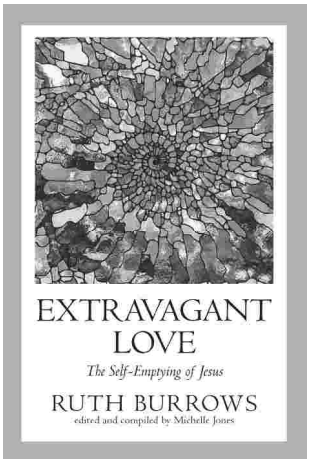
Chapters five and six concentrate on the earthly life of Christ as presented in the Gospels, noting the precarity of miraculous evidence as an inadequate basis for trust on its own, and looking closely at the process of coming to a relationship of trust through the narratives of healing and the salvific language and imagery on which they rely. The book's final two chapters first undertake an investigation of human entrustedness by God, and then offer an acute analysis of the neglected concept of propositional trust, and its role in Christian understandings of restored relationships between divine and human. The inherent risk in the act of trusting, 'trusting that, or being willing to entrust oneself to a proposition', is a risk which follows from the encounter with God in Christ, one which has proved 'as life-changing, stimulating and enriching for many people down the centuries as it did … for those who encountered Jesus in his earthly life' (353).

This book is a magnificent achievement and will repay detailed study. The fact that it is only the second in a four-volume project leaves the reader in both awe and anticipation. Morgan's command of the ancient history of ideas, of the text of the New Testament and of apparently innumerable writings which surround and ground it, is quite extraordinary. Her work

presents a challenge to biblical studies and to Christian theology generally, and anyone seriously interested in either will only benefit by engaging with it.

Peter Groves

Ruth Burrows, *Extravagant Love: The Self-Emptying of Jesus* (Mahwah: Paulist, 2022). 978 0 8091 5580 4, pp. 98, $10:95.



Ruth Burrows was the pen name of the Carmelite nun Sister Rachel, prioress of Quidenham from 1965 to 1974. She was the author of some dozen books, explorations of the spiritual life whose readability belies their depth and penetration. Sister Rachel died, aged 100, on 10 November 2023. We welcome *Extravagant Love*, as we have welcomed all she has written, though our gratitude is now tempered with the sadness with which we necessarily receive a bequest.

What are we to make of this slight volume, of a mere 75 pages, edited and compiled by the Australian scholar Michelle Jones? Sister Rachel herself would certainly have disliked the publisher's back-cover reference to 'this stunning book'. This gracious lady did not seek to stun anybody. She tells us that what she has written should be seen rather as 'a study booklet to provoke and stimulate prayerful pondering, either individually or in community discussion'. Perhaps the most fruitful context for reflecting on this late work will prove to be the small group with a shared faith commitment. After all, that's how it all began. *Extravagant Love: the Self-Emptying of Jesus* was originally Sister Rachel's gift to the Carmelite Sisters of Jesus of Nazareth in Chegutu, Zimbabwe, her 'dear African sisters' as she called them. We would like to know more about this 'back-story', about the history of this unlikely friendship between a Norfolk religious and an obscure community of Carmelites in a remote region of central Africa.

The subtitle sends us back to St Paul and his summons to the church at Philippi to emulate the 'self-emptying'—the *kenosis*—of Jesus of Nazareth (Philippians 2:5–11). The brief chapters of this short study will take an hour or two to read but a lifetime to take to heart. Here we can only note some of the ways in which Sister Rachel illuminates the gospel she lives by.

There is her appeal to scripture, always imaginative, never far-fetched. Christ's word to us echoes that of Ruth: 'Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge' (Ruth 1:16). There is a boldness, even audacity, in

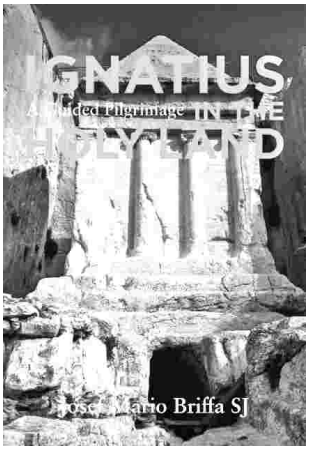
Sr Rachel's use of language. 'God is not the eternal celibate', she tells us. If old words no longer serve to tell the old, old story, then new ones must be minted and deployed. So the Son of God, we read, is 'ungodded' in the womb of a village girl of no consequence.

What makes Sister Rachel such an effective teacher is her recognition of the first educational principle that what we truly learn is not what we are told but what we find out. What she has done, she tells us, 'is little more than to indicate half-opened doors'. It is of course the method of Jesus, whose mysterious parables come to us in the guise of simple images and narratives but which disclose so much more to those who follow where they lead.

These meditations are in prose passing into poetry. On some pages the prose writer in Sr Rachel yields wholly to the poet. So we have the lovely lyrical lines beginning 'I made garden for God …' Our little book ends on a note of praise, a brief poem simply entitled 'A Song of Love'. That is Sr Rachel's gift to her African sisters and to us all.

John Pridmore

Josef Briffa, *Ignatius in the Holy Land* (Dublin: Messenger, 2023). 978 1 7881 2617 5, pp.120, €19.95.



The *Autobiography* reports that Ignatius of Loyola experienced great consolation upon seeing Jerusalem, and that same spiritual movement continued for him 'during the visits to the Holy Places'. The recent publication *Ignatius in the Holy Land: A Guided Pilgrimage* by the Jesuit historian and archaeologist Josef Mario Briffa guides the reader to those sites in Jerusalem where the pilgrim Ignatius found such devotion. Yet Briffa, in this beautiful publication by Messenger Press, not only takes the reader to the places that Ignatius and his fellow pilgrim companions would have seen in 1523, but offers an itinerary for a spiritual pilgrimage in the Holy Land, so that visitors might experience their own devotion as they visit biblical sites so revered in the Jewish and Christian traditions.

The book, clearly designed to be in the hands of visitors to the Holy Land, indicates three basic itineraries—Jaffa to Jerusalem, Jerusalem, and around Jerusalem. Briffa, however, does not adhere to the order in which Ignatius would have visited the sites, but explores them according to his own evident familiarity with the place. Even for this reader, unacquainted so far with

Jerusalem, it was easy to detect the author's vast knowledge and his experience of having guided groups there. His narrative descriptions of biblical sites are clear, agile and informative. Moreover, the book offers practical information such as phone numbers, hours for visiting sites, and indications for how to find lesser-known places. In short, the book is useful and its size amenable to the pilgrim-tourist.

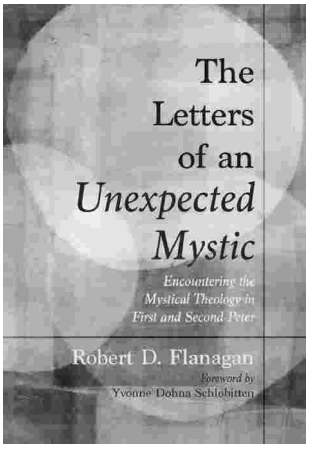
As the subtitle indicates, Briffa also has provided a 'guided pilgrimage' that takes the traveller into the mystery of the places that he or she will see. He provides a scriptural passage for each site visited as well as a brief description of what Ignatius may or may not have seen at each place. On this last point, the reader will be delighted to discover that the Aedicule of the Ascension, the site where Ignatius returned to verify the direction in which Jesus' feet pointed when he ascended, does not look very different today from how it did at the time of Ignatius. The reader is invited to enter into the first contemplation of the Fourth Week of the Exercises at the Chapel of the Apparition to Mary in the basilica of the Holy Sepulchre where ancient tradition maintains that Jesus appeared to his mother. Indeed, Briffa encourages the visitor to Jerusalem to live his or her trip to the Holy Land as a spiritual exercise.

In such a spiritual exercise, the pilgrim-tourist will hardly need to compose the place, as it will be before him or her. And it is in this constitutive element of prayer in the *Spiritual Exercises* that the reader can detect Briffa's own surprise at the importance of place in the Christian tradition. Scattered throughout the book are comments that reveal his wonder that 'each mystery needs be marked with its own location'. At times he clarifies for the reader that 'it is important not to confuse the specific object with the place and the mystery it represents'. Such caveats are helpful—a certain fundamentalism ignores the immense changes that these places have undergone in history.

Yet in publishing this book—a tremendously helpful resource for devotees of the Ignatian charism—the author reminds the reader of a guiding idea that formed a part of Ignatius of Loyola's conversion and spiritual experience: place matters. Place can be a source of devotion, that inner movement that awakens us to the presence of the Lord. And one hopes that upon feeling devotion in Jerusalem, the pilgrim guided by Briffa's spiritual, historical and geographical orientation will return home as Ignatius did, with the dawning realization that the journey of finding and doing God's will in all places has just begun.

Christopher Staab SJ

Robert D. Flanagan, *The Letters of an Unexpected Mystic: Encountering the Mystical Theology in First and Second Peter* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2022). 978 1 6667 0505 8, pp. 200, £25.00.



Is there a mystical theology embedded in the letters of Peter? Robert Flanagan, an Anglican priest and theologian, firmly believes so. In this spiritual-exegetical study, the author claims that Romani Guardini's approach to artistic appreciation is a helpful framework for rediscovering the spiritual depth of Peter's epistles. Flanagan believes, particularly, that the Petrine corpus of the New Testament offers contemporary Christians a source of spiritual renewal and the possibility of encountering an active God who expresses care for humanity through mercy.

In the first three chapters, the author aims to lay out the theological foundations from which he will interpret the Petrine corpus. First, he defines mysticism as every human experience of God resulting in a radical change in life. Then, Flanagan develops Guardini's approach to artistic contemplation, suggesting that gazing at an artwork is parallel to how a believer can 'gaze' upon scripture. In this regard, Flanagan characterizes this threefold process as spiritual (mediated by the Holy Spirit), textual (in its active engagement with biblical text) and polyhedral (meaning nuanced by the context in which the message is received). Lastly, the author discusses the notion of *dianoia* as spiritual insight: 'a disposition of one's mind and heart as intuition, understanding, or even imagination' (36). By doing so, Flanagan claims that *dianoia* is closely linked to spiritual discernment. Moreover, the author considers that the reception of spiritual knowledge requires discernment as a prudent and progressive decoding of the received divine message. With these theological considerations considered, Flanagan proceeds to do his spiritual-exegetical work.

In the subsequent three chapters, the author attempts to use Guardini's threefold approach to a selection of key passages that involved (or are attributed to) the apostle Peter. First, Flanagan interprets the vision of Peter in Acts 10 as an experience of mystical *ectasis* in which the apostle experiences three movements: he encounters God; beholds the Divine presence; and receives spiritual wisdom. Through this exegesis of Acts 10, Flanagan proceeds to interpret the first letter of Peter. He suggests that the motifs of mercy, regeneration and peace in this Petrine epistle express Guardini's

understanding of beholding and *dianoia*. In the second letter of Peter, Flanagan's exegesis suggests that motifs of goodness (*arete)* and fullness of knowledge (*epignosis*) offer a way to understand human participation in the Divine nature. Particularly, Flanagan considers that such participation can only be achieved through spiritual maturity, ethical action and a growing desire to know Christ. Through his exegetical work in selected parts of the Petrine corpus, the author goes on to reflect on the relevance of Petrine spirituality for our times.

In the final four chapters, Flanagan offers us his spiritual-theological articulation of Petrine mysticism and how the spirituality contained in the letters of Peter could be a source of renewal for the twenty-first-century Church. First, the author establishes that conversion (*metanoia*) is only achieved after beholding and *dianoia*. In doing so, he claims that *metanoia* is not about a new vision of the world but rather a deep awareness of God's activity in it and God's gift of love to creation. Consequently, Flanagan revisits the studied passages of the Petrine corpus to present us with an understanding of a God who communicates with believers in a very personal and fluid way. Finally, Flanagan tries to reframe Petrine mysticism in the twenty-first-century context. Particularly, he claims that the Christian spirituality contained in the letters of Peter could be an antidote to the modern spiritual ailments of reductionism and objectification of the human condition.

As a project that brings together spirituality, biblical studies and other theological disciples, this study of the Petrine corpus in the New Testament is a very accessible work to non-specialists. However, because the author attempts to discuss such a wide range of spiritual, philosophical, theological and anthropological themes, Flanagan does not achieve a convincing argument in favour of the pertinence of Petrine mysticism for our times. In particular, the study does not succeed in justifying the relevance of Guardini's artistic epistemology as a suitable framework to do spiritual exegesis. Nevertheless, Flanagan's exegetical work is very thorough and worthy of consideration. For those who seek a creative way to read the letters of Peter, it may offer an enlightening and even consoling approach. However, as a spiritual-theological study, *The Letters of an Unexpected Mystic* leaves specialised readers with questions regarding the suitability of the Guardinian artistic approach as a means to do exegetical work.

Carlos Chuquihuara SJ