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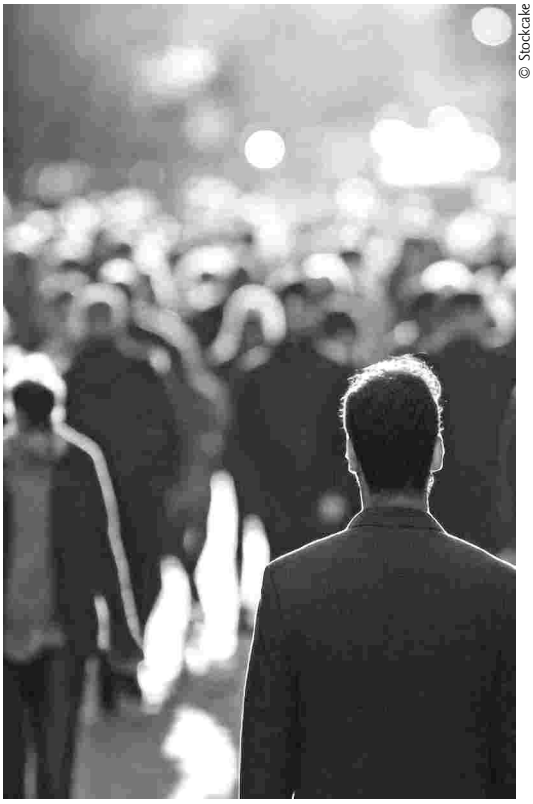
LIVING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES



How Pedro Arrupe Lived the Spiritual Exercises in Yamaguchi

121–132

Miki Hayashi-Suzuki

Many episodes in the life of Pedro Arrupe demonstrate how he embodied the Spirit he had encountered through the Spiritual Exercises. His imprisonment by the Japanese military police during the Second World War was the occasion of a profound spiritual experience.

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. A forthcoming issue is planned on writing about spirituality, so articles in this area will be particularly welcome.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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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

THE DANISH PHILOSOPHER Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) wrote, 'life must be understood backwards. But … it must be lived forwards.'[1] Those who have made the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius will understand what he meant. Once undergone, the experience can never be repeated exactly as it was, but rather gives impetus to seek out new experiences graced with all the freshness of the first. In whatever way the Spiritual Exercises have been undertaken, and in whatever measure, they provide a touchstone for the life of discipleship that follows. Their dynamics and dispositions are reworked in innumerable and ever-varied ways through the loving discernment of all those who make them.

In our first article, Nick Austin explores what is commonly called the problem of the 'Fifth Week', otherwise known as life after the Exercises. This was the theme of the 2025 St Beuno's Conference, from which several contributions, including this one, originated. He draws on a key image from the French Jesuit Dominique Bertrand, who proposes that the Spiritual Exercises evoke a spirit in search of a body—in the life and relationships of the individual person, but also in the community and the wider Church. The gift of this embodied spiritual life is central to all of the articles in this issue. Mark Rotsaert explores six of St Ignatius' many letters to draw out guidance on living out such a life. He shows how Ignatius fine-tunes his advice on discernment for different people and particular relationships, forestalling any tendency towards hard and fast rules. If we are able to manage our inner movements then the Spirit we seek can become embodied in our lives: we can learn 'how to let yourself be directed by the love that can discern what is good and find the right balance—in your prayer, but also in every activity'.

Several of the articles here indeed look backwards to seek an understanding of the experience of living the Spiritual Exercises. Marion Morgan finds that making the Exercises many years ago has been an anchor for a committed lifetime of faith permeated by discernment: 'a mission simply living in the community'. Chris and Jenny Gardner describe how the graces of the Spiritual Exercises enable them to live

[1] Søren Kierkegaard, *The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard*, selected and translated by Alexander Dru (London: Oxford U, 1938), 127. Kierkegaard returned to this theme a number of times.

their Christian vocation to the full as members of the Christian Life Community, a worldwide organization of laypeople living the Ignatian charism. Isabel Muruzábal also explores how Christian Life Community members live, wherever they are called to be, sustained by the Spiritual Exercises—'the specific source and characteristic instrument of our spirituality'. She explains the DSSE method (Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate) that helps them to accompany each other as they are sent out on mission.

Many co-workers in the mission of the Society of Jesus have found a new freedom over recent years as they have come to understand that Ignatius wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* while he was still a layperson, before he had any thought of forming the Society of Jesus. Enrique López Viguria describes the Ignatian charism as 'a spiritual pedagogy for an incarnate spirituality: from decentring ourselves to centring our life upon the God of Jesus, to live with and for others'. He opens new ground as he explores what it might mean to follow this path in the Church today. López echoes the invitation of Pedro Arrupe for us to become men and women for others; Miki Hayashi-Suzuki offers a timely reading of Arrupe's own life, demonstrating how he lived out of the call he received in the Spiritual Exercises to become a missionary in Japan, especially during his imprisonment and interrogation by the military police during the Second World War.

Both Anne Pate and Margaret Felice explore the role that narrative and memory play in appropriating the Spiritual Exercises. Anne Pate has recently completed a research doctorate based on interviews with retreat givers. She uncovers the importance of remembering consolation so that it can become a self-defining memory, helping to construct a spiritual identity that can be integrated into a new personal narrative. And Felice explores how the General Examen can enable us to imagine ourselves into a new life story with God right by our side. Simon Bishop is a British Jesuit with extensive experience of what it means to live the Spiritual Exercises. In an interview with the editor, he recalls his own story in the light of this experience, from his noviciate to becoming a novice master himself. The first time he made the Spiritual Exercises he discerned a call to be with God which has guided him to many graced moments throughout his life, from the classroom to the operating theatre.

Paul Nicholson, my predecessor as editor of *The Way* and now director of the Jesuit Institute, gives an account of his workshop from

the St Beuno's Conference, in which he invited participants to see how the life of Ignatius resonated with their own. That seems to be a good question for each one of us to ask as we seek in our experience of the Spiritual Exercises the impetus to live life forwards, with eyes fixed upon the horizon. Mark Rotsaert finds the whole Spiritual Exercises condensed in the way St Ignatius concluded many of his letters: 'I close, praying that the Most Holy Trinity by its infinite and supreme goodness may bestow upon all of us abundant grace, so that we may know its most holy will and entirely fulfill it'. May the next steps we take in life's journey be enfolded by that same grace.

Philip Harrison SJ
Editor

St Beuno's

Jesuit Spirituality Centre

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

St Beunos is a Jesuit retreat house offering the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, silent individually guided retreats and various themed retreats. We also provide courses and training in spiritual accompaniment.

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THE PROBLEM OF THE FIFTH WEEK

Nicholas Austin

J. R. R. TOLKIEN'S *THE SILMARILLION* opens with a creation myth, known as 'The Music of the Ainur'.[1] The creator, the One, creates angelic beings called Ainur, the Holy Ones, and gives them a theme to make a Great Music together. They sing and the sound goes out into the void. 'Behold your music!' he tells them, adding seeing to hearing: they see a new world made visible before them. But there is a sobering moment when the Holy Ones enter this new world:

> They were at first astounded and at a loss, for it was as if naught was yet made which they had seen in vision, and all was but on point to begin and yet unshaped, and it was dark. For the Great Music had been but the growth and flowering of thought … and the Vision only a foreshowing; but now they had entered in at the beginning of Time, and they perceived that the World had been but foreshadowed and foresung, and they must achieve it.[2]

There are a great music and a vision of a new world, but nothing is yet made real; there are a foreshadowing and a foresinging, but nothing is yet achieved.

I find this disconcerting moment in Tolkien's creation myth a good starting point for what we are considering in this issue of *The Way*. For it helps to name what I and many others, I believe, have experienced at the end of the Spiritual Exercises, or indeed of any Ignatian retreat. You get to the end of the retreat, and as you pack your bags and prepare for the journey home, the question arises: *What next?* You make some resolutions about prayer and doing the Examen. You return to the 'real' world and life happens. And you find yourself like the Holy Ones in Tolkien's creation myth. For you have been invited into a great music and a vision of a new world, but it turns out that the vision was only a foreshowing and all is as yet unshaped, only on the point of

[1] J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Silmarillion* (London: HarperCollins, 1999 [1977]), 15.
[2] Tolkien, *Silmarillion*, 20.

beginning. And you, like the angelic creatures of Tolkien's imagination, are at a loss.

We meet here what can be called 'the problem of the Fifth Week'. The phrase 'Fifth Week' has been in use at least since the 1970s, as evidenced by the title of a book by the Jesuit William O'Malley.[3] If the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises is about what we are created for and how we miss the mark with sin; the Second is about the life of Jesus; the Third and Fourth about the passion, death and resurrection he underwent; then the Fifth Week is the rest of a person's life. O'Malley's book, being about Jesuit vocation, is a collection of biographies of different Jesuit lives, different 'Fifth Weeks', of martyrs, teachers, parish priests and spiritual directors.

The Fifth Week need not be about Jesuit lives specifically, but about any life shaped by the Spiritual Exercises. People from all backgrounds make the Exercises: laypeople, priests and religious, young and old. For many, the Exercises feel like an entry into a new way of seeing, relating and living. But how, once out of the Four Weeks, does one live in a way faithful to the gift? How does one continue what has been begun?

It is tempting to dismiss what I am calling the problem of the Fifth Week by interpreting it as a problem of the Four Weeks. The Spiritual Exercises are a transformative experience: the person who leaves the retreat is not the same as the one who entered it (or is more truly him- or herself than before). Having changed, the one who has made the Exercises just *will* live differently. And if not? Well, perhaps the Exercises were not made well, or not by the right person.

This evasion of the problem of the Fifth Week is, I suggest, too quick, too easy. Anthony De Mello, in *Awareness*, tells the story of a religious sister who leaves her community to make a retreat. On this occasion, so the narrative goes, she receives a very deep grace. She senses a change within herself. It is noticeable to everyone. It is visible in her face, her eyes, her body, the way she works and relates. But then she goes back to her old community, who say, 'Oh well, she seems a little more spirited, but just wait, she'll be depressed again'. And within a few weeks she is as depressed as before. And they all say, 'See, we told you so; she had not changed'.[4]

[3] See William J. O'Malley, *The Fifth Week*, 2nd edn (Chicago: Loyola, 1998 [1976]).

[4] Anthony De Mello, *Awareness: A De Mello Spirituality Conference in His Own Words*, edited by J. Francis Stroud (New York: Random House, 1992), 116.

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree, *by Abel Grimmer, 1611*

I find this a haunting story. De Mello tells it to illustrate how we can undermine the graces others receive through our prejudices, and lack of love and hope for each other. But the story also illustrates something for every Christian, namely, that it is not enough to be given a grace. If the grace is to bear fruit, the new seed needs to be planted in good soil and mulched, watered and cultivated (see Luke 13:6–9). But how? This problem is not automatically solved by giving the Four Weeks better, or to better-suited people, but only by finding a way to live the gift received.

Not all experts in the Spiritual Exercises are comfortable with the language of the 'Fifth Week'. For some, those who have made the Exercises can find themselves in their prayer in any one of the Weeks. For example, someone accompanying a dying parent may be located in the Third Week; and another, facing his or her own waywardness in the Christian life, may be in the First Week. For others, life after the Exercises is simply a continuation of the Fourth Week. One goes on, through the Contemplation to Attain Love, finding God in all things, living according to the Spirit of the Risen Christ.

I have no objection to these approaches, but I do nevertheless want to draw attention to the distinctive spiritual character of life after the Exercises which, for me, justifies the expression 'Fifth Week'. In the Gospels, we find that there are two basic tasks of the Christian life.[5]

[5] I draw this insight from the work of the moral theologian Santiago Ramirez (1891–1967).

The first is to hear and believe the word of God: to allow oneself to be turned around by the Good News of Jesus Christ. The second, however, is to live the Word out. Jesus teaches that it is quite possible to succeed in the first task but, alas, go on to fail in the second.

The one who hears the word and keeps it builds his house on rock; the one who hears it but does not keep it builds his house on sand (Luke 6:46–49). Now, the Four Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises are, one might say, a way of hearing the Word of God; the Fifth Week, in contrast, is about keeping or living the Word that has been heard. 'Blessed … are those who hear the word of God *and* obey it.' (Luke 11:28) So there are two distinct but related tasks: hearing and obeying. To these correspond the two distinct spiritual tasks of receiving the Spiritual Exercises and living them out. In the Ignatian literature we have a lot on the first task; this issue of *The Way* focuses on the second: the living out of the Exercises.

My background in theological ethics also convinces me that the term 'Fifth Week' is necessary. Today many theologians are attracted by an ancient approach to ethics, one that is focused not exclusively on particular moral issues but on questions about what it means to live a good life. This leads to a style of theological ethics that bears a strong affinity with spirituality, since both are concerned with discipleship of Christ, or life as a journey towards union with God.[6] Indeed, ethics and spirituality need each other. Ethics without spirituality lacks an animating principle, and spirituality without ethics lacks backbone. Spirituality and ethics, as I conceive them, then, meet especially in the Fifth Week, in the task of living out the Good News. For, at its deepest root, the problem of the Fifth Week is not a problem specific to Ignatian spirituality, but to Christian living: how, having heard and been transformed by the Good News, to live it out.

Discipleship of Christ, or life as a journey towards union with God

An Image

There is an image that I suggest can serve as a kind of lodestar to navigate the topic of the Fifth Week. It is not my image but one I inherit from the respected scholars of Jesuit spirituality. Despite its importance,

[6] For an outstanding example, see William C. Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (New York: Continuum, 1999). See also my discussion of Thomas Aquinas' understanding of the ethical part of theology as 'about the motion of the rational creature into God' (*Summa theologiae*, 1. q.2, pr.): Nicholas Austin, *Aquinas on Virtue: A Causal Reading* (Washington, DC: Georgetown U, 2017), 78.

it has not been widely shared outside a Jesuit context, not even with the majority of the Ignatian family. The reason for this reticence is not that the Jesuits want to keep this treasure to themselves but rather that they have not wanted to impose something that belongs properly to Jesuit life on those with other vocations. This caution is well meaning but may be excessive.

It is common to distinguish Ignatian and Jesuit spirituality, because it is correctly recognised that the Jesuit way of life is only one way of living the Ignatian charism. Today the Exercises are made by female and male religious from different congregations, by diocesan priests and, overwhelmingly, by laypeople. Ignatian spirituality therefore has relevance to many different walks of life. Jesuit spirituality, on the other hand, while also fed by the Exercises, is about the vows of poverty, chastity, obedience; it is about belonging to the missionary body that is the Society of Jesus; it is about a specific set of ministries of the Word, including priestly ministries. The reluctance to share insights from Jesuit spirituality rather than Ignatian spirituality comes from a good place: the desire not to impose on others what belongs only to vowed, apostolic religious life.

Yet I would argue that the Spiritual Exercises, by themselves, are insufficient as a basis, not just for Jesuit but even for Ignatian spirituality. One indication of this is the way we tend to divide up the Ignatian sources. The central text of Ignatian spirituality is, no doubt, the *Spiritual Exercises*; this can be supplemented by other texts such as the *Autobiography*, the Spiritual Diary and the letters, especially those that offer spiritual counsel. The source texts of Jesuit spirituality, so the normal story goes, include, as well as these texts, at least three others: the *Deliberation of the First Fathers*, the *Formula of the Institute* and the Jesuit *Constitutions*.

The Deliberation of the First Fathers of 1538 records the discernment of Ignatius and the first companions that resulted in the intention to form a religious order. The *Formula of the Institute* is a document, included in differing versions in the papal bulls of 1540 and 1550, that established the Society of Jesus: it sets out briefly and vividly the way of life to which Ignatius and the early companions felt called. The *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, written by Ignatius and his secretary Juan Alfonso de Polanco, sets out this way of religious life in more detail. What do these texts add that is not already found in the *Spiritual Exercises*? I would say they add a guide to one way of living out the

Exercises in the Fifth Week, at least for Jesuits. And this is why they may be relevant, at least indirectly, not only to Jesuit spirituality but also to Ignatian spirituality.[7]

I claim, then, that Ignatian spirituality needs a guide to living the Fifth Week, not only in a Jesuit way, but in multiple ways adapted to the wonderful variety of possibilities offered by the Ignatian spirit. Some wisdom can be taken from the *Spiritual Exercises* themselves, but there is much that Ignatian spirituality in its different forms can learn from the *Deliberation*, the *Formula* and the *Constitutions* about how the Ignatian spirit can be lived out in the Fifth Week. Nor is it all one-way: no doubt Jesuits can and do learn more about their own charism by seeing how the Ignatian spirit is lived by those in quite different walks of life.

What, then, is the image from Jesuit spirituality that I mentioned, which I suggest may have broad relevance not only for Jesuits but also for anyone who has done the Spiritual Exercises? Its origins lie in a book, published in 1974, by the French Jesuit Dominique Bertrand.[8] He asks why the *Constitutions* are needed: why not simply make do with the *Spiritual Exercises*? His reply is that *the spirit needs a body*. That is the image: a spirit in search of a body. The spirit of the Exercises, Bertrand suggests, needs to be incarnated, made flesh, embodied. First, it needs to find flesh in concrete persons and their lives. Second, this spirit also needs to be embodied in a community. As Brian O'Leary puts it, 'The charism (which is spirit) needs a body (which is flesh and blood, inculturated and historical)'—or, more poetically, 'the spirit cries out to be enfleshed'.[9]

This image of a spirit in search of a body is a fecund one, as we strive to live in the Fifth Week. The spirit of the Exercises needs to be incarnated in a way of life and in a community. What does that look like? How does that happen? That is the topic.[10] Here I try to sketch the broad outlines of an answer, focusing on embodiment within a particular way of life. Embodiment of the Ignatian spirit in a community or institution is a second aspect of this question, one to be addressed, I hope, at a later date.

[7] For an elaboration of the use of the documents in Ignatian spirituality, see Paul Nicholson's article below, 73–79.

[8] Dominique Bertrand, Un corps pour l'esprit. Essai sur l'expérience communautaire d'après les Constitutions de la Compagnie de Jésus (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1974).

[9] Brian O'Leary, *Sent into the Lord's Vineyard: Explorations in the Jesuit* Constitutions (Oxford: Way Books, 2012), 22–23.

[10] For an excellent book-length treatment, see Margaret Blackie, *Rooted in Love: Integrating Ignatian Spirituality into Daily Life* (Oxford: Way Books, 2014).

'En todo, amar y servir'

The Spiritual Exercises are precisely that: exercises. Just as an athlete trains to prepare the body to run, so a Christian does spiritual exercises to prepare the soul for the race of discipleship. 'For, just as taking a walk, traveling on foot, and running are physical exercises, so is the name of spiritual exercises given to any means of preparing and disposing our soul' (Exx 1). The Exercises, I would say, are what the medieval scholastic philosophers and theologians would have called an 'intermediate end': while valuable in themselves, they also point towards a greater end and fulfilment beyond.

Where in the Exercises do we find this forward orientation beyond themselves? The short answer is that every spiritual exercise, whether a consideration, a meditation or a contemplation, prepares the way and readies the soul for the Fifth Week. All of its exercises are, to use Tolkien's words, foreshadowings, foreshowings, foresingings of what is yet to be attained, realised, embodied. Yet there are two exercises that stand out in bridging from the Four Weeks to the Fifth. The first is the Election, by which exercitants may choose a specific way of living their service of the Lord (Exx 169–189); the second is the final exercise, the Contemplation to Attain Love, or the *Contemplatio* for short (Exx 230–237).[11] I shall focus my remarks on the *Contemplatio*.[12]

The grace we ask for in the *Contemplatio* is that having come to a sense in the round of all the gifts we have received, we may love and serve the 'Divine Majesty' in everything (Exx 233). The phrase in the Spanish text of the Exercises (the 'Autograph') is today set to a popular Taizé-like chant: *En todo, amar y servir*. One might say, then, that this is the song that is going round in one's head as one leaves the Four Weeks of the Exercises. It is, one hopes, the soundtrack for the Fifth Week, that is, the rest of one's life: in all, to love and to serve God.

I venture a broad-brush generalisation: that in the history of Ignatian spirituality, there have been—and still are—two ways of interpreting this grace, or at least two different accents. One reading emphasizes *amar*, loving God; the other *servir*, serving God. I begin with the *servir* option: interpreting the Fifth Week through the lens of serving God in all things.

[11] For classic commentary, see Michael Buckley, 'The Contemplation to Attain Love', *The Way Supplement*, 45 (1975), 92–104.

[12] The two are closely related, since one prays in the *Contemplatio* to love and serve God in all things, and the Election can be seen as the discerned choice of one particular way of doing just that.

Serving God, Serving Others

For many years, the classic reference for Jesuit spirituality was a book by Joseph de Guibert, a French Jesuit who died in 1942. After his death, his magisterial work on the spirituality of the Society of Jesus was published.[13] In it, he famously distinguishes a 'mysticism of service' from a 'mysticism of nuptial union'. In Ignatius' writings, according to de Guibert, one finds an absence of the language of the mystical marriage between Christ and the soul so characteristic of Theresa of Ávila or John of the Cross. 'On the contrary, what pervades all Ignatius's relations with the Divine Persons and with Christ is the humble and loving attitude of the servant.'[14] Ignatius' spirituality, for de Guibert, is not one of loving embrace but of service.

Later scholars have taken de Guibert's suggestion seriously. John O' Malley puts it this way: 'The isolation of the concept of "service" as a key to understanding the spirituality of Loyola and his followers throws into plausible focus a great deal of the history and tradition of the [Jesuit] order'.[15] What light, then, can this 'mysticism of service' shed on the Fifth Week?

Christ in the House of Martha and Mary, *by El Greco, 1600*

Service is two-sided for Ignatius. It primarily means the service of God: everything is to be ordered towards the praise, reverence and service of God (Exx 23). There is no need to run through all the texts. It suffices to pick out one that is particularly enlightening: the famous Fifth Annotation.

[13] Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice. A Historical Study*, translated by William J. Young (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964).
[14] de Guibert, *Jesuits*, 56.
[15] John W. O'Malley, review of *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* by Joseph de Guibert, *Renaissance News*, 18/2 (1965), 144–145, here 144.

> The persons who make the Exercises will benefit greatly by entering upon them with great spirit and generosity [*con grande ánimo e liberalidad*] toward their Creator and Lord, and by offering all their desires and freedom to him so that His Divine Majesty can make use of their persons and of all they possess in whatsoever way is in accord with his most holy will. (Exx 5)

This is the spirit of the Exercises, the spirit of the *magis*, which not only begins the Exercises but is found on every page throughout and, especially, at the culmination, in the 'Take, Lord, and receive' of the *Contemplatio* (Exx 234).

How exactly do we serve God? In Ignatian spirituality, the instinctive answer is that we serve God by serving our neighbour. Admittedly, there are souls, such as members of contemplative religious congregations, who serve God primarily by prayer. Ignatius himself had a great regard for the Carthusian vocation. But for the majority of those who make the Exercises, prayer spills out into a life of practical ministry; contemplation overflows into action.

What does this look like in the Society of Jesus? The language used by Ignatius and the early companions is that the purpose of the Society is to serve the faith and to help souls. By 1550, the early Jesuits had come up with this list of practices of service: first, ministries of the Word of God, such as preaching and lectures; second, ministries of the interiorisation of the Word, such as giving the Spiritual Exercises, catechizing, hearing confessions and administering the sacraments; and third, ministries of giving witness to the Word, by reconciling the estranged, serving those in prisons or hospitals, or any other works of charity, for the glory of God and the common good.[16] That is already quite a diverse list of ways of helping our neighbour. Over the centuries it has grown. By General Congregation 32 in 1975, the Society had expanded its definition of its own purpose: 'To promote justice, to proclaim the faith and to lead others to a personal encounter with Christ are the three inseparable elements that make up the whole of our apostolate'.[17] Today, Jesuit mission adds to the original lists practices such as the promotion of justice, dialogue with other religious and cultures, and care for our common home.

For those other than Jesuits, service of neighbour also takes a variety of forms. It will look different, for example, for a married person

[16] For this way of summarising the early Jesuit ministries, see O'Leary, *Sent into the Lord's Vineyard*, 94.
[17] GC 32, decree 4, 'The Service of Faith and the Promotion of Justice'.

or a single layperson from how it will look for a Jesuit or a religious sister of the Congregation of Jesus. But whatever form it takes, a Fifth Week is naturally a life focused primarily not on oneself and one's own well-being but on serving God by living for the good of others.

In saying that Ignatian spirituality is a spirituality of service, it is important not to reduce it merely to a moral programme: *We ought to serve others*. This is true, but does not get to the deeper Ignatian dynamic. A life of service to others, in Ignatian spirituality, is not only an ethic but also a spirituality. The Ignatian service of others is a spirituality because, in an Ignatian life, it is a way of being united with God. This is why de Guibert rightly refers to the spirituality of the Society of Jesus not only as a 'service' but as a '*mysticism* of service'.[18]

There are two especially important Ignatian terms that express this mysticism of service: one is 'mission'; the other is 'instrument'. Ignatian mission would be an entire topic in its own right. I focus here on the second term: 'instrument'.

The Human Instrument

Ignatius wants us to aim to be well-disposed instruments in the hand of Christ our Lord. We just saw that in the Fifth Annotation: those making the Exercises offer God their whole selves 'so that His Divine Majesty can make use of their persons'. And it is a key image in the *Constitutions*, where the Society of Jesus, and those Jesuits who compose it, are referred to as a 'human instrument', united with God and wielded by the hand of Christ (*Constitutions*, X.2 [813]).

This image may not at first hearing sound too promising. As Aaron Pidel has recently pointed out, in our culture of autonomy we instinctively resist language that suggests we ought to be used by anyone, let alone a divine being.[19] Pidel explains, however, that in the medieval theology that Ignatius inherited, an instrument is not a merely passive tool, but an agent, one that works in tandem with a higher agent to produce a nobler effect than it could alone.

A classic example is that of a harp in the hands of a skilled musician.[20] By itself a harp can only produce noise—for example if it is dropped.

[18] de Guibert, *Jesuits*, 50.
[19] Aaron Pidel, 'A Neglected Aspect of Ignatian Spirituality: Becoming God's Instruments', *America*, 232/3 (13 February 2025).
[20] Reginald Lynch, 'Cajetan's Harp: Sacraments and the Life of Grace in Light of Perfective Instrumentality', *The Thomist*, 78/1 (2014), 65–106.

But when plucked by a gifted artist, the harp genuinely produces, not mere noise, but music. A harp produces music, therefore, not alone, but in tandem. This is the glory of being a harp: it is a cooperator, a co-agent, with its own contribution to make. In medieval theology the sacraments are instruments in this sense. Water, for example, by itself cannot cause grace but can genuinely channel grace in the sacrament of baptism.

For Ignatius, then, being an instrument united to God does not degrade human beings into mere tools, things to be used, puppets dangling from the hands of a divine puppeteer in the sky; rather, it elevates them, unites them to God's action, making them capable of transmitting God's grace in the world. Moreover, a person serving God is not merely an instrument united to God's action but, Ignatius says, a *human* instrument, that is, an instrument with freedom and choice. God works through a human instrument in a way suited to human nature, not bypassing human liberty but operating through it.[21] This is why, in the *Contemplatio*, the exercitant is invited to pray, 'Take, Lord, receive, all my liberty': not so that God may take our freedom away, but may work in it. This happens through a relationship of charity or friendship with God, as in Ignatius' Meditation on the Two Standards: whereas the enemy of our human nature sends out demons 'to set up snares and chains', Christ our Lord sends out his 'servants and friends' (Exx 141–142; 146). Ignatian cooperation with God is not being 'used' in the negative sense, without consent; Ignatian cooperation is the cooperation of friends.

It is easy for most to recognise that God has worked in their lives through loving, wise, compassionate people. The challenge is to personalise this insight, to apply it to oneself by recognising that *God can work through me for others*. This is what the Four Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises are about: tuning up the human harp, as it were, fitting it to Christ's hand, so that in our Fifth Week he can play the music of his Good News through us in the world.

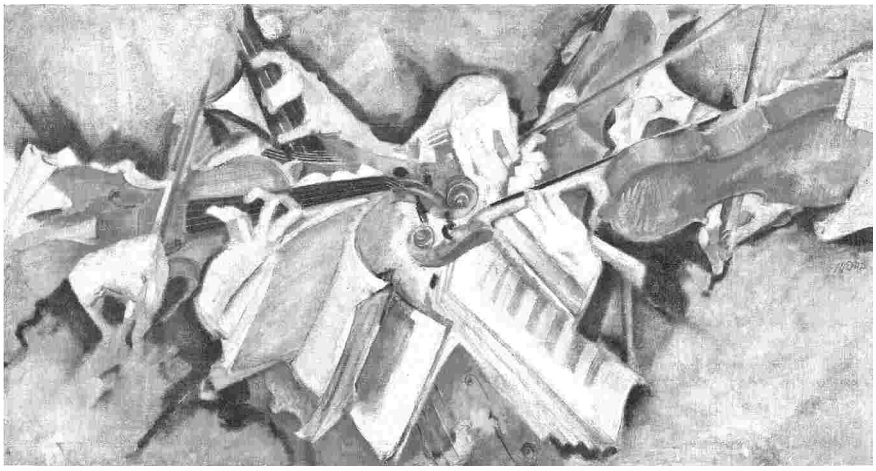
A sense of one's own weakness and fragility can become a barrier to this spirituality of being a willing instrument fitted to Christ's hand.

[21] Biblical sources for this spirituality of free cooperation include John 14:8–14. See also 1 Corinthians 15:10: 'But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.' Important theological background to the Ignatian spirituality of cooperation is found in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.2 q.113, a.3 corpus. Aquinas says: 'God moves all things according to the mode proper to each' and so moves humans according to their nature as beings of free choice. Indeed, God 'moves the free choice to accept the gift of grace'. A human action can be simultaneously free and moved by God. Grace and free human action are not in competition, not opponents in a 'zero-sum' game.

However, for Ignatius, it is not sinful pride to recognise that one can be an instrument of God when the glory is given to the one who originates, empowers and sustains this service.[22] Ignatius urges Jesuits to pray that God may dispose those for whom we work 'to receive his grace through the weak instruments of this least Society' (*Constitutions*, VII.4.3 [638]). The Lord knows how to work even through imperfect means.

Ignacio Boné Pina once shared an image that I believe can help with this Ignatian spirituality of instrumentality.[23] It comes from a 2012 film entitled, *A Late Quartet*, starring Christopher Walken. The movie is about an elite New York string quartet. The cellist, played by Walken, is the senior figure who announces to his colleagues that the next concert will be his last, as he has been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. The group is to play Beethoven's Opus 131, a late quartet. The challenge in performing this extraordinary piece is that its seven movements are to be played without break. Walken's character explains that, inevitably, the instruments begin to go out of tune during the performance. What can the musicians do? It would not be right to stop and retune. Somehow, they have to adjust mid-flow to their own instruments and those of their colleagues.

In the film, the late quartet is a metaphor for the relationships among the instrumentalists, which begin to go out of tune. For example, the



String Quartet, *by Max Oppenheimer, 1948*

[22] See Ignatius's letter to Teresa Rejadell of 1536, in *Personal Writings*, 130–132.
[23] Ignacio shared this during the tertianship programme 2013–2014 at Cardoner House, Dublin.

second violinist becomes fed up with literally playing second fiddle and asks to replace his wife as first violinist. Their relationship begins to fall apart, as do those of others. Will the performance go ahead, and will the quartet survive these challenges? In the Fifth Week, as in *A Late Quartet*, we cannot always stop to retune our instruments. The point is not to aim to be perfectly well-tuned. We can do our best to be ready but inevitably we, too, go out of tune. But Christ has the power and sheer skill to play effectively even through 'weak instruments'. *En todo, amar y servir*.

Loving God

There is much to be said for the classical viewpoint, that Ignatian spirituality is a mysticism of cooperation, of instrumentality, of service, not of nuptial union. But it may not be the whole truth.[24]

The Jesuit moral theologian Edward Vacek has drawn attention to a phenomenon in the modern Church, which he calls the 'Eclipse of the Love of God'.[25] This eclipse is often noticeable when a preacher expands on the two great commandments. The first great commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind and strength; the second is to love your neighbour as yourself (Matthew 22:37–39). How, though, does one fulfil the first commandment? How does one love the Lord? The answer most commonly given is that one loves the Lord by loving one's neighbour.

This response no doubt has its truth. If done as a way of serving and loving God, service of one's neighbour can be a way of loving God. 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25:40b) But notice what has just happened: the love of God has been eclipsed, because the first great commandment was collapsed into the second *without remainder*. And this is a loss because it neglects the importance of a direct relationship with God. As Vacek puts it provocatively, just as taking the rubbish out for sick neighbours is no replacement for developing a relationship with them, so too doing good works is not a complete substitute for loving God directly. Vacek explains:

[24] See the critique of de Guibert in Michael J. Buckley, 'Ecclesial Mysticism in the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius', *Theological Studies*, 56/3 (1995), 441–463.

[25] Edward C. Vacek, 'The Eclipse of Love for God', *America*, 174/8 (9 March 1996), 13–16. This article summarises the more sustained argument of Edward C. Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington, DC: Georgetown U, 1996).

> I want to argue that love of creatures is not enough …. We are essentially relational beings. We are stunted when our relational potentials are unfulfilled. We have a native desire for God, and our hearts will shrivel up unless they beat for God. Hence, in order to become fully who we are, we must be growing in love for God.[26]

This apposite warning about the contemporary tendency to eclipse the love of God by reducing it to neighbour-love, and the recognition that we need to love God immediately and directly, are of foremost importance to spirituality. A spirituality of service, such as de Guibert describes, always risks becoming a kind of activism, focused primarily on what we do with our lives rather than the prior question of our relationship with God. Such a spirituality would then be an avoidance of intimacy with God, encouraging workaholism or care without respite for the carer. The love of God is eclipsed by an exclusive focus on the love of neighbour, and our hearts may shrivel.

An alternative way of looking at the Four Weeks of the Exercises, then, is that they are primarily not preparation for service but first a school of prayer, of intimacy with God, to be deepened in the Fifth Week. This is suggested especially in Annotation 15, which encourages the one handing on the Exercises 'to allow the Creator to deal immediately with the creature and the creature with its Creator and Lord' (Exx 15). This direct relationship suffuses all the Exercises. In the Four Weeks, we learn how to stand in the gaze of God gazing at us with love (Exx 75); express our deepest desires to God (Exx 48); learn an intimate knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord who became human out of love for each of us (Exx 104); converse with Christ face to face as a friend talks with a friend (Exx 54); and learn to discern the action of the Spirit in our hearts and our world (Exx 234–237; 313–336). The soul may even be led, at times, 'to be inflamed with love of its Creator and Lord. As a result it can love no created thing on the face of the earth in itself, but only in the Creator of them all.' (Exx 316) Throughout the Exercises, there is a priority given to loving God directly.

This recognition points to an alternative interpretation of the grace of the *Contemplatio*, as not so much that of cooperative union, as the union of intimacy and love. The Four Weeks are a school of intimacy with the Lord and the main task of the Fifth Week is simply to continue to fan the flame of this relationship, through the ups and downs of life.

[26] Vacek, 'Eclipse of Love for God', 14.

Service will come, but it will flow out of the relationship with the Lord. Representatives of this tradition include Bernard Lonergan and, in a different way, more recent spiritual writers such as William Barry and Peter Hannan.[27]

Too often Ignatian, and especially Jesuit, spirituality has focused exclusively on the Third Point of the *Contemplatio*: 'consider how God labors and works for me in all the creatures on the face of the earth'. It has eclipsed the Second Point, to, 'consider how God dwells in creatures … how in this way he dwells also in myself' (Exx 235). A myopic focus on a God who labours—in wilful ignorance of a God who dwells—is a recipe for a spirituality of activism and burnout. The labouring God needs to be counterbalanced by attention to a God who dwells, who remains, who relates to us directly, not only practically but with intimate love. 'Come and see', Jesus tells the prospective disciplines who ask him where he is staying; 'and they remained with him that day' (John 1:39).

Living the Offering

So where does this leave us? *En todo, amar y servir.* One interpretation emphasizes *amar*, loving God; another interpretation accents *servir*, serving God. In Ignatius, the two are not separated but conjoined. *En todo, amar y servir.* In all things, *both* to love *and* to serve.

I do not pretend to be able to offer a full answer about how to integrate love and service within Ignatian spirituality. To understand that is no doubt the fruit of a lifetime of living the Exercises in the Fifth Week. But it is easy to see that the integration of the two is desirable as well as authentically Ignatian. For the two complement each other; they offer counterbalance, preserving each other from going off the rails. Without love of God, service risks becoming instrumental and workaholic; without service, love of God risks becoming self-centred and sentimental. It can be a fruitful exercise in its own right to review moments in one's experience when the two come together, where one becomes contemplative also in action.

[27] See William A. Barry, *With an Everlasting Love: Developing an Intimate Relatonship with God* (Mahwah: Paulist, 1999); and Peter Hannan, *The Quiet Revolution: Rediscovering Adult Faith in the Modern World* (Dublin: Columba, 2010). Gordon Rixon comments: 'While it can be obviously argued that neither a mysticism of service through love nor a mysticism of transforming union are mutually exclusive, Lonergan's discussion of the Spiritual Exercises makes a clear option for the priority of union and assimilation as the principles from which service might consequently flow' (Gordon Rixon, 'Bernard Lonergan and Mysticism', *Theological Studies*, 62/3 [2001], 479–497, here 487).

That the spirituality proper to the Fifth Week is a spirituality of both love and service is suggested, not merely by the grace of the *Contemplatio*, but by the culminating offering of this Exercise in the *Suscipe*, the 'Take, Lord, receive'. Contemplating God's gifts and God's desire to give even Godself to us, we are led to make an offering of ourselves to God. As Saint Robert Southwell sounds it, in the defiant key of a martyr, 'God is my gift, himself he freely gave me./ God's gift am I and none but God shall have me.'[28] That self-gift in response to God's self-gift is the core of the *Contemplatio*, the core of the Exercises. Is this gift of self the intimacy of love, or is it the gift of service? It is both.

Note, however, that this Fifth Week grace and task, that of loving and serving God in all things, resists reduction to some aspect or other of the Four Weeks, even the *Suscipe* of the *Contemplatio.* The reason is quite simple: to live out the *Suscipe* is a grace and action distinct from the making of that offering in the Exercises. This is evident from the parallel with the formula of vows a novice makes at the end of his novitiate, asking that, 'just as you gave me the grace to desire and offer this, so you will also bestow abundant grace to fulfil it' (*Constitutions*, III.1.3 [247]). What one asks at the end of the Exercises in the *Contemplatio* is a Fifth Week grace: not only to *make* an offering, but to *live* that offering, that is, to love and serve in all things. 'Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord", will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven' (Matthew 7:21).

The spirit cries out to be enfleshed. What the Four Weeks of the Exercises give us is a spirit of contemplating, loving and serving God in all activities. This spirit is made flesh in the Fifth Week in an embodied spirituality of cooperative and loving union. These are not two separate spiritualities, one of service and one of love, but an integrated spirituality of love and service. *En todo, amar y servir.*

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[28] Robert Southwell, 'The Nativity of Christe', in *Collected Poems*, edited by Peter Davidson and Anne Sweeney (Manchester: Carcanet, 2007), 7.

A SPIRITUALITY FOR DAILY LIFE

The Letters of Ignatius of Loyola

Mark Rotsaert

MUCH HAS BEEN SAID and written about the spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola and especially about the *Spiritual Exercises*, which may be called the Principle and Foundation of that spirituality. Whoever makes the Exercises discovers that they are a school of prayer. By contemplating the life of Jesus in the gospel, his or her intimate relationship with Christ grows day by day, becoming the touchstone of spiritual experience. This inner relationship will guide the person who does the Exercises in discerning God's will in his or her life. So, the Spiritual Exercises are also a school of discernment.

The *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* make clear how the spirituality of the Exercises can give form to the life of a specific religious order, especially concerning its apostolic mission and its particular lifestyle. The study of the *Constitutions*—their history and spirituality—went through a significant boom in the 1950s, especially in Europe. Recent studies have been more interested in their theology.

The Spiritual Diary is a third important Ignatian text. In his Diary Ignatius describes his spiritual experience, in his prayer life and in celebrating the Eucharist. It was not a text written to be read, but we study it nevertheless because it contains his most profound spiritual experience. At the centre of his Diary Ignatius describes—so far as possible—his illumination concerning the inner life of the Holy Trinity. It is a mystical text, not easy to read, but it remains a central document for understanding how important the Holy Trinity is in the spirituality of Ignatius.

The most familiar, well-known writing of Ignatius is his *Autobiography*, in which he tells a Jesuit companion how God led him after his conversion at Loyola (1521) in his travels as a pilgrim through Spain, Italy and the Holy Land until he arrived with his first companions in

Rome in 1538. These seventeen years are a succession of greater and smaller discernments—always searching for God's will.

Unlike these texts, the letters of Ignatius are not well known by a wide public. A total of 6,815 letters have been preserved and edited in 12 volumes.[1] The great majority of these—5,301—are addressed to Jesuits: individual Jesuits, Jesuit communities or the whole Society. This shows Ignatius' desire to promote by his correspondence the unity of Jesuits dispersed all over the world. He asked his secretary to make circulars out of the letters he received with news and to send them to Jesuits everywhere, to give them a better knowledge of what other Jesuits were doing and to help them feel conscious of all being together as a united group.

The other 1,514 letters were send to various different recipients. It is amazing to see to how many categories and kinds of people Ignatius wrote letters: to the Pope, cardinals, bishops, kings, princes, university rectors, city mayors, friends (both men and women), his former confessor, the prior of the Carthusians in Cologne, a priest hoping to enter the Society, the mother of a novice, his family and so on. The content of each letter was, of course, appropriate to the person to whom he addressed it: it could be about spiritual life, or an apostolic mission, or the foundation of a school or some problem in a family. Other letters discussed international policy or finance, or how to solve a conflict between cities or in a family. The circular letters were also sent to important people in the Church and in the civil society. It was a means to make the new order known to as many people as possible. During his years in Rome, Ignatius collected an enormous mailing list. This also helped in finding addresses for fund-raising: many letters express his gratitude to benefactors of the Society.

In what follows I present extended passages from six letters that illustrate different aspects of Ignatian spirituality in daily life. They are only a few examples of the human and spiritual governance of Ignatius and cannot give a complete sense of the richness of all the letters written by him or his secretary, Juan de Polanco, but they are representative. They were sent to persons in different situations: a young Jesuit still in formation on his way from Rome to Cologne, a businessman and friend of the society in Naples, a difficult young Jesuit in formation, the Jesuit provincial in Portugal, the king of Portugal (another friend of the Society) and the viceroy of Sicily after the death of his wife.

[1] See MHSJ EI.

Letter to Arnold van Hees, 23 May 1551

Arnold van Hees was born in 1517 in Lummen (in modern Belgium). In 1551 he is a young Jesuit, still in formation, travelling from Rome to Cologne. He has asked Ignatius' permission to leave Rome and continue his studies in Cologne for health reasons. He is accompanied on the journey by Leonard Kessel, who was born in Leuven in 1518 and would later found the Jesuit college at Cologne. As we will see, the letter is addressed to both and was written by Polanco at Ignatius' behest. What does Polanco write?

> If you decide to go straight to Cologne without stopping, be sure not to overtax your body on the journey. Go by carriage, horse, boat (where you have a chance to travel by water), or whatever other means will best preserve your health. If you find agreeable company for making this trip, by all means take advantage of it ….
>
> … make use at Cologne, or wherever you are, of the spiritual arms granted you by Father General, in whatever way you judge best in consultation with Father Leonard; Father General has considerable confidence in the Lord in the discretion of you both.[2]

It has to be noted how gracious Ignatius is concerning the way the two Jesuits are to travel. Everything is possible provided it is good for van Hees's health. The importance of physical health will come back in the next passage. It is also interesting to see the great confidence Ignatius has in his Jesuit companions. He knows that this will help them, in turn, to have confidence in him. The letter continues:

> Warn Father Leonard (and consider the same as said to yourself) not to overwork himself, even out of genuine charity, to the point where he appears to be neglecting his bodily health. Even though situations sometimes occur where an extra exertion is unavoidable, he should nevertheless not deprive himself of sleep by spending the night in prayer or staying up much of the night, as those close to him report to us he is doing. What holds for sleep applies also diet and whatever else is needed, as I have said, for the preservation of health. Moderation has staying power; what puts excessive strain on the body cannot last. Understand, then, that Father General's mind on this matter is that, in whatever spiritual, academic, or

[2] Ignatius to Arnold van Hees, 23 May 1551, in St Ignatius of Loyola, *Letters and Instructions*, edited by Martin E, Palmer, John W. Padberg and John L. McCarthy (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), 333–335; MHSJ EI 3, 484–486. We are grateful to the Institute of Jesuit Sources (now based at Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts) for permission to reprint the excerpts in this article.

> even bodily exertions you undertake, your charity should be guided by the rule of discretion; that you safeguard the health of your own body in order to aid your neighbors' souls; and that in this matter each of you should look out for the other, indeed, for both of you.

At the centre of this second passage Ignatius speaks about the *discreta caritas* so important in his governance.[3] Real love knows how to discern what is good. Anyone may go to extremes in prayer or in apostolic commitment. Without the right measure neither prayer nor commitment will last. In a long letter of 1547 to the Jesuit students in Coimbra, Portugal, Ignatius wrote: 'discretion is needed here to hold a person's virtuous practices between the two extremes'.[4] The emphasis on good health in the letter to Arnold van Hees certainly reflects Ignatius' own bad experience during his stay in Manresa, where he prayed too much and practised excessive corporal austerities which affected his health for the rest of his life. The last sentence in the passage above shows how Ignatius wanted *correctio fraterna* to be put into practice. In a letter of 1546 to the three Jesuits send to the Council of Trent he wrote:

> One man each evening should ask the others to give him any corrections they think needed; the one being corrected in this way should make no reply unless they ask him to give an account of the point on which he has been corrected.
>
> The second man will do the same the next evening, and so forth, so that they can all be assisted in greater charity and good reputation on all sides.[5]

The letter to Arnold van Hees continues with some suggestions about organizing his studies, and finishes with encouragement to make a strategic plan for the promotion of vocations in Cologne.

Letter to Girolamo Vignes, 17 November 1555

Girolamo Vignes, the son of an important family in Naples, has two brothers in the Society of Jesus, Michele and Fabrizio. Girolamo also wanted to enter the Society, but had to care for his parents. He became a friend of the Society and of Ignatius. Ignatius allowed Girolamo to make the first vows of Jesuit students, but he was to live them out in

[3] See Mark Rotsaert, '*Discreta caritas* in the Writings of Ignatius Loyola', *The Way*, 63/1 (January 2024), 73–85.

[4] Ignatius to the fathers and scholastics at Coimbra, 7 May 1547, in *Letters and Instructions*, 172; MHSJ EI 1, 506.

[5] Ignatius to the fathers of the Council of Trent, 1546, in *Letters and Instructions*, 131; MHSJ EI 1, 389.

ordinary daily life. Girolamo became a businessman, and in this way placed himself at the service of the Society. He was of great help to the Jesuits in Naples, buying land, carrying out notarial acts and looking after their finances.

A regular correspondence between Ignatius and Girolamo has been preserved. We will read a passage in which Ignatius is concentrating his attention on Girolamo's personal problems and not on material affairs.

> Concerning the prayers which Your Lordship seeks, you certainly partake of them in many ways, both in general and in particular. Moreover, I think that Your Lordship ought to make up your mind and then do whatever you can, calmly and gently. Do not be anxious about the rest; leave it to God's providence to take care of what your own cannot provide. And while God is pleased with our care and moderate solicitude in attending to what we ought to take care of by way of service, he is not pleased with anxiety and mental affliction, for he wishes that our limitations and weakness should lean upon his strength and omnipotence, and that we should trust that he in his goodness will make up for what is lacking in our imperfection and infirmity. Even a person who has to handle a great deal of business, even though [he does so] with a holy and good intention, needs to make his resolution to do what he can, and not get upset if he is unable to do all that he wishes. Following the dictate of his conscience, he should do all that a person can and should do; and if other things are left undone, one must have patience and not think that God our Lord demands what man cannot accomplish or that he wants a person to be distressed. And if one satisfies God, which is more important than satisfying men, there is no need to overexert yourself; make an adequate effort to do what is needed and leave the rest to him who can do all that he pleases May it please his divine goodness always to communicate the light of his wisdom, so that we may always see and fulfill his will in ourselves and in others. Amen.[6]

In this letter we see Ignatius full of compassion for Girolamo, who seems to be an anxious person. Ignatius encourages him to trust in God more than in his own potentialities, and gives him some pointers to discern the right way to go: anxiety and dejection are not coming from the good spirit. God is more in consolation and peace.

Ignatius finishes this letter with a formula he uses in 992 of his letters. As long ago as 1536 he concluded a letter to sister Teresa Rejadell thus: 'I close, praying that the Most Holy Trinity by its infinite

[6] Ignatius to Girolamo Vignes, in *Letters and Instructions*, 605–606; MHSJ EI 10, 155–156.

and supreme goodness may bestow upon all of us abundant grace, so that we may know its most holy will and entirely fulfill it'.[7] This formula may be seen as a condensed description of what the Spiritual Exercises are all about.

Letter to Bartolomeo Romano, 26 January 1555

There is correspondence concerning this young Jesuit in formation at the Jesuit school in Ferrara (Italy) which makes it clear that Bartolomeo was a rather difficult young man. His superior complains that he has a refractory character. Ignatius nevertheless wishes to take more time and to hear the young man himself before taking a decision. He asks Polanco to write a letter to Bartolomeo asking him, in turn, to write a letter to Father General explaining what the problem is. Bartolomeo writes his letter, and a week later he seems more quiet. But two months later he is the difficult young man again: the superior does not do his duty; the community is not a real community; the older Jesuits at Ferrara do not help the young ones. Bartolomeo asks to be transferred to another Jesuit school. Now Ignatius sends him the following letter:

> Dear Brother Bartolomeo,
>
> From your letters and also from those of others, but mostly from your own, we understand what your condition is, and we are all the sorrier about it since we desire your spiritual good and eternal salvation. You are much mistaken in thinking that the cause of your unrest, or lack of progress in the Lord, is the place where you are or your superiors or your brethren. It comes from inside, not from without: from your lack of humility, lack of obedience, lack of prayer—in a word, from your lack of mortification and fervor in advancing along the way of perfection. You can change residence, superiors, and brethren; but unless you change your interior person, you will never do well; you will be the same wherever you are until you become humble, obedient, devout, and mortified in your self-love. And so this is the change you should seek, not the other: I mean, you should try to change the interior man and recall him to God's service. Give up the thought of any external change; you will either be good in Ferrara or in none of the colleges, we are all the more certain of this because we know you will be able to be helped better in Ferrara than any place else.
>
> I give you one piece of advice: go to your superior in heartfelt humility, ask his help, open your heart to him in confession or

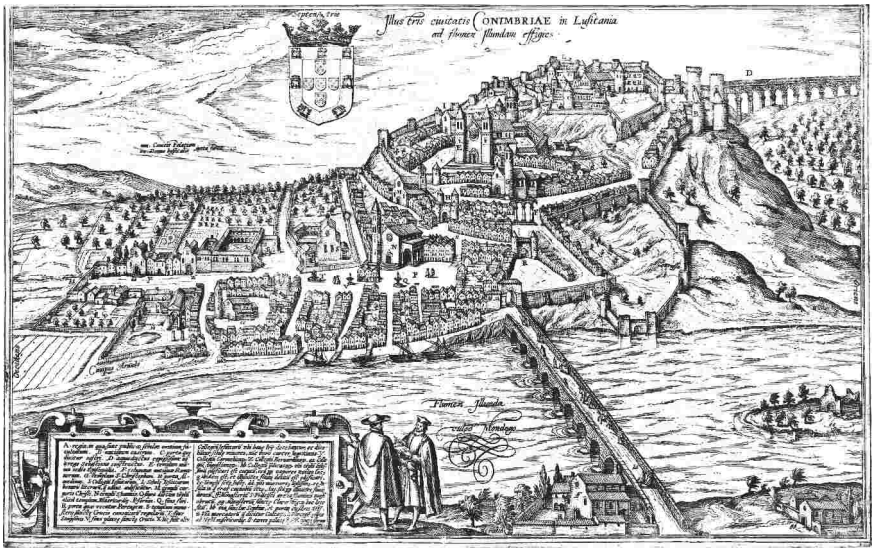
[7] Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, in *Letters and Instructions*, 22; MHSJ EI 1, 107.

> however you like, and accept with devotion whatever remedies he may give you; busy yourself with examining and bewailing your own imperfections rather than with contemplating those of others. Try to give more edification in the future, do not try the patience of those who love you in Christ our Lord and would like to see you his good and perfect servant. Every month write a few lines on how you are doing in humility, obedience, prayer, and desire for your own perfection; and [write] also on how your studies are going.
>
> May Christ our Lord keep you.
>
> Ignatius[8]

Ignatius does not take a decision without having heard the man in question; of course, this is a quality of good governance. It is clear that Ignatius has some psychological and pedagogical abilities. He can be severe and tenacious in his decision. And even if the letter is written in a severe tone, Ignatius remains an understanding father ready to help his young companion.

Letter to Diego Mirón, 17 December 1552

In the years 1551–1552 the Jesuit province of Portugal was in a profound crisis, especially the formation house in Coimbra where about eighty



A View of the City of Coimbra, *by Frans Hogenberg c. 1598*

[8] Ignatius to Bartolomeo Romano, in *Letters and Instructions*, 535–536; MHSJ EI 8, 328–329.

young Jesuits were preaching a kind of 'revolution'. They wanted more hours for prayer and a more austere life with many corporal exercises. This was not what Ignatius envisaged when he founded the Society of Jesus. But the provincial of Portugal, Simão Rodrigues, one of the first companions of Ignatius, did not intervene. Finally Ignatius dismissed the provincial and appointed Diego Mirón in his place. But if Rodrigues was too lazy in his governance, Diego Mirón was too strict. Ignatius wrote to him:

> It is not the business of the provincial or general superior to keep such close account of the details of affairs. Indeed, however capable he might be of doing so, it is better that he assign them to others; these can later report to the provincial what they have done, and he, having heard their opinion, can make whatever decisions are his responsibility. In cases where he can leave to others both the handling and the decision, this would be much better, especially in temporal matters, but also in many that are spiritual. This is the procedure that I follow, and I experience that it gives me not only help and relief but even a greater peace and security of soul. And so, as your office demands, devote your love and concern to the overall good of your province, and when making necessary arrangements in individual matters, listen to those who in your opinion might have the soundest judgment on the topic.
>
> Do not meddle with the execution of orders or get personally involved in them. Instead, act as a universal mover, setting the individual movers into motion. In this way you will get more things done, and better done, than otherwise—and things more appropriate to your office. Moreover, if your subordinates do anything badly, it will be less harmful than if you do. It is more appropriate for you than for them to rectify their mistakes—or for them to rectify mistakes made by you which would happen all the time if you meddled more than you should in the details of execution.
>
> May Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, grant to all of us the grace always to know his most holy will and perfectly to fulfill it.
>
> Ignatius[9]

This is a letter about leadership. Good leadership supposes that you are able to delegate. In this letter Ignatius describes how he himself finds the right way of doing so in governing the Society.

[9] Ignatus to Diego Mirón, in *Letters and Instructions*, 401–402; MHSJ EI 4, 558–559.

Letter to King John III of Portugal, 1 January 1552

There exists a large correspondence between Ignatius and King John III of Portugal (1521–1557). Many of these letters show how privileged the relation was between Ignatius and the king. Portugal became the first Jesuit province, and Simão Rodrigues, himself Portuguese, the first provincial. The young province flourished thanks to the support of the king. The biggest formation house of the order was located in the university city of Coimbra. Many young Jesuits were send from all over Europe to receive their formation at Coimbra. On 1 January 1552 Ignatius wrote John III the following letter:

> My Lord in our Lord,
>
> May the sovereign grace and eternal love of Christ our Lord greet and visit Your Highness with his most holy gifts and spiritual graces.
>
> Since I am not able to travel to Portugal, I send Doctor Torres, rector of our college at Salamanca. He will deliver you this letter. He will humbly kiss your hands in my name and he will inform you about some affairs from which I am sure they will contribute to God's honour and the help of the souls in the kingdoms of Your Highness in which service I am. The infinite and greatest Wisdom—which will judge me—knows the affection he gave me for Your Highness. This affection was also given to the whole body of the Society. The Society remember very well how you, as first of all the Christian sovereigns—and much more than all other sovereigns—have looked after our affairs and continue to do so, and how you consider them as your own. And so, the Society considers itself as the affair of Your Highness in Christ our Lord. The Society will always consider you with great affection as its most important patron. Our desire is to be at your service in all your kingdoms in helping the souls which the divine kindness has entrusted to your care.
>
> To come back to the beginning of this letter, I ask humbly to Your Highness to give audience to Dr Torres, because what he will present you is of high importance. Give him the standing you would give to me. I trust Your Highness.
>
> Finally, I want to say you that I ask the divine and highest kindness to give all of us the perfect grace, so that we always may know his most holy will and that we may entirely fulfill it.
>
> Ignatius, humble and for always servant of Your Highness in our Lord.[10]

[10] MHSJ EI 4, 52–53.

John III of Portugal, *by Cristóvão Lopes, 1550–1560*

At the centre of this letter is the intimate relationship between Ignatius and the king of Portugal, which also becomes a relationship between the whole Society and the king. The correspondence makes clear how profound that relationship is: both have received their mission from God. The form of address testifies to this: 'My Lord in our Lord'. Ignatius considers himself to be a humble servant. Many letters show the great confidence the king had in Ignatius, but even Ignatius would never take a decision about a mission in Portugal without his assent. Another characteristic of this whole correspondence is Ignatius' gratitude to the king.

Letter to Juan de Vega, Viceroy of Sicily, 12 April 1550

Juan de Vega (1507–1558) was viceroy of Navarre from 1542 till 1543, when he became Charles V's ambassador to the Holy See. His wife Eleonor worked in the Martha house for prostitutes, which was an initiative of Ignatius; Eleonor made the contact between her husband and Ignatius. A deep friendship developed between Ignatius and the viceroy, his wife and daughter. When Juan de Vega was appointed in Sicily in 1547 he and his wife became great collaborators of the Jesuits on the island. They promoted spiritual as well as liturgical renewal. With their support Ignatius founded the first Jesuit college for non-Jesuits in Messina in 1548. In 1550 he founded the first independent novitiate in the same city and appointed as its novice master Father Corneel Wischaven from Leuven.

The following is a letter of condolence written by Ignatius after having heard of the death of Eleonor:

> My Lord in our Lord:
>
> May the sovereign grace and eternal love of Christ our Lord greet and visit Your Lordship with his most holy gifts and spiritual graces.

> Last night, Friday, I learned from a letter dated March 30 that God our Creator and Lord had taken to himself your dearly beloved lady, Doña Leonor, whom he had so loved and enriched in this life with special graces and virtues and had permitted to send such a great treasure of good and holy works before her to his heavenly kingdom. May our Lord be always blessed for all that his most holy providence disposes.[11]

The next few sentences make it clear how much Eleonor takes part in the fruits of the death of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Lord. The text invites us to feel within 'what fills and satisfies the soul' (Exx 2). The words that follow are full of consolation, grandeur, grace and gratitude.

> For certainly, if we look only to Her Ladyship, the tenderer and truer is the love towards her to which she bound us while alive, the fewer are our grounds for grief, in that her life and works leave us no room for doubt that their most generous and merciful Rewarder has placed her among his elect and blessed saints. If we look to ourselves who are left behind, the absence of someone whose presence was so good and desirable cannot help leaving profound sadness—although I am convinced in our Lord that she will aid us all from heaven not less but far more than from here on earth, since her charity and power are magnified the more she is united with the infinite charity and power of her Creator and Lord.
>
> As for Your Lordship's own person, I am confident that you will accept this visitation from his hand with that magnanimity and fortitude of mind with which the Author of all good has endowed you.
>
> May his sovereign Clemency be pleased to communicate itself to Your Lordship and guide your household and all the affairs of your government in such a way that you may know and experience that this matter lies entirely in the providence and hand of his Dine Majesty, under whose rule and government Your Lordship can find rest and consolation in all your affairs.
>
> As for ourselves—more by way of fulfilling in some measure the gratitude we all owe towards so much love and so many kindnesses than with the idea that a person who lived and died as she did needs this sort of assistance—over and above the Masses and prayers of the whole house here, we will write to every part of the Society to do the same, for all of them are aware of our immense obligation, one which we rejoice constantly to owe in our Lord.
>
> May he in his infinite and sovereign goodness grant his most holy peace and never ending glory to those whom he takes from

[11] Ignatius to Juan de Vega in *Letters and Instructions*, 306–307; MHSJ EI 3, 13–15.

> this world; to Your Lordship and to all of us still here in it, may he deign to grant his abundance grace, so that we may always know his most holy will and perfectly fulfill it,
>
> Ignatius

The letter finishes with the formula we have already read in some of the other letters. But the penultimate paragraph concerns the gratitude of Ignatius towards Eleonor. The deep relationship between the viceroy and the Society shows an important aspect of the spirituality of Ignatius, of which the letter to John III was also a clear example. Such gratitude towards benefactors is clearly confirmed in the *Constitutions*, IV.1.6[318]:

> The Society should deem itself especially obligated to the benefactors and to their dear ones, both during their lifetime and after their death. It is bound, by an obligation of charity and love, to show them whatever service it can according to our humble profession, for the divine glory.

Human Relations 'in Our Lord'

There is no simple formula to express the richness of the spirituality of Ignatius. Here we have seen Ignatius in relationship with very different persons in diverse situations. Each gives him the chance to share what he has learnt—what God has taught him—with those who have asked for help.

Different texts concern spiritual discernment, how to manage inner movements and how to let yourself be directed by the love that can discern what is good and find the right balance—in your prayer, but also in every activity. Sometimes Ignatius surprises us by being at the same time paternal and fraternal, full of goodness and empathy, but also severe and decisive in his determinations. He invites us to humility as the most secure way to find and execute God's will—since he is always looking for God's greater glory and not his own honour. Ignatius knew by experience that you may not force the soul or the body if you want to be of some help to souls. We have seen an Ignatius with a liberal spirit, giving a lot of confidence to his companions. Gratitude is another aspect of relating to other people. He expects his companions to excel in gratitude—a gratitude that is the fruit of a humble spiritual attitude—for every help they receive and to thank God, the source of every good.

The passages from the six letters above show how the spirituality of Ignatius unfolds itself in many situations, depending on the person addressed. The choice of these letters is, of course, arbitrary. There are so many other letters that might have been chosen. But the last letter could not have been left out. This letter shows, more than the others, how a human relationship 'in our Lord' can generate deep human friendship. This approaches the heart of Ignatian spirituality—the heart that gives life to the Society of Jesus. The experience of the Spiritual Exercises gave a new depth to the companions Ignatius brought together in Paris. The companions became a group of 'friends … in the Lord', as Ignatius called them in a letter to Juan de Verdolay.[12] The expression 'in our Lord' is used more frequently than any other by Ignatius in his letters. The foundation of Ignatius' relationships with men and women of his time was an ever-deeper knowledge of Christ.

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[12] Ignatius to Juan de Verdolay, 24 July 1537, in *Letters and Instructions*, 29; MHSJ 12, 320–323.

ECHOES OF GRACE

The Gifts of the Spiritual Exercises in the Fifth Week

Anne Pate

THAT LOVE HAS NEVER LEFT ME. Visibly moved, Helen expressed wonder and awe at the enduring transformation in her capacity to love, originating in a gift received during the Spiritual Exercises. She remembered how her feelings of anger vanished as she was suddenly filled with God's love for the people around her. The memory of *a very deep experience of love* was vividly recalled, gratefully reflected upon and savoured in the telling. Helen began to understand it as a spiritual consolation without cause: a gift from God that broke in on her unexpectedly and swept her up entirely into God's love (Exx 330). This beautiful spiritual consolation continues to shape how Helen 'grows in loving in the way God loves' many years later.[1] Remembering and telling the story of her experience evokes gratitude for the transforming work of God and helps her discern the way forward.

Helen shared her story in a research interview for my recently completed PhD studying the 'Fifth Week' of the Exercises.[2] The Fifth Week—what happens after someone makes the Spiritual Exercises—has been largely neglected in scholarship, especially among those who are not Jesuits. My research on how five givers of the Exercises living in Australia reflect, talk and write about retreat experiences stepped into this unmapped terrain. Having felt the transformative power of the Exercises in my own life and given the Exercises to others, I had often wondered about the ways in which a retreat shapes subsequent life.

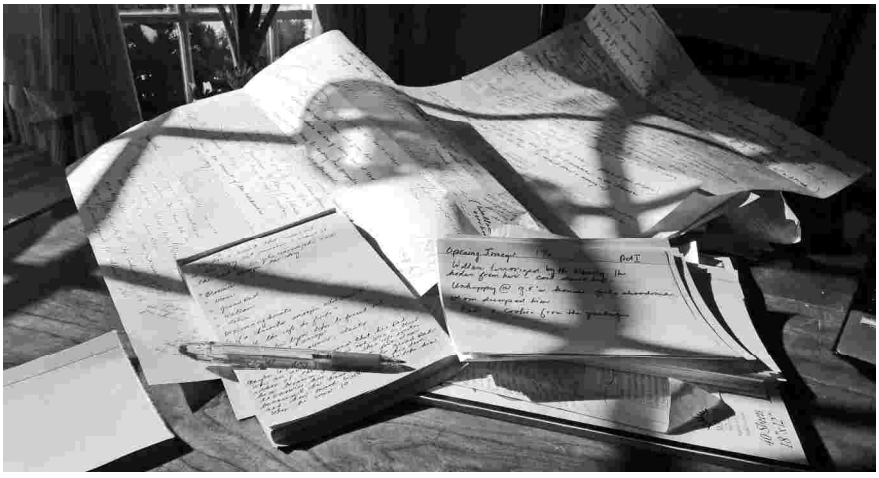
[1] The names of participants in my research have been changed to protect their privacy. It is interesting that Helen's experience occurred shortly after she had prayed the *Contemplatio*, the grace of which is to 'grow in loving in the way God himself loves': Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary. A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 170.

[2] Anne Pate, 'Echoes of Grace: Remembering and Storying the Gifts of the *Spiritual Exercises* in the Fifth Week' (PhD dissertation, University of Divinity, 2024), available at https://repository.divinity.edu.au/entities/publication/135dfecb-7bae-4d08-81be-28626b271b60, see especially chapters 5 and 6.

The notion of a 'Fifth Week' is helpful because it emphasizes the connectedness between the Exercises and the rest of life. Yet the nature of the connection remains under explored.

I would like to show how remembering and storying the gifts of the Exercises (Exx 234) sustains and deepens the spiritual transformation that Ignatius intended would be the retreat's outcome (Exx 1). I use 'remembering' to denote a reconstructive activity in which events, including spiritual experiences, are brought to mind through the filter of the present.[3] 'Storying' encompasses meaning-making, and verbal and written storytelling. Everyday activities such as remembering and reflecting on a gift received, speaking with a trusted friend or reflective writing, contribute to the ongoing transformation initiated by powerful experiences such as Helen's. If God the giver of all good gifts is at work in the transforming experiences of the retreat, then God is surely also active in the narrative practices of the Fifth Week.

The five participants in my research were ordinary people who had been drawn to the Exercises by the desire for a more intimate relationship with God. They found that the Exercises reshaped their images of God, self and world, reorientating them within a more truthful vision of reality. All five increasingly live from an understanding of themselves as receiving gifts and being called. I invited them to describe their most significant experiences on retreat and to reflect on their



[3] The reconstructive view of remembering is supported by researchers in diverse fields, including neuroscience, psychology and cultural studies. Charles Fernyhough, *Pieces of Light: How the New Science of Memory Illuminates the Stories We Tell about Our Pasts* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014), offers an accessible introduction.

subsequent narrative practices. They also provided existing written narratives from spiritual direction formation papers and journals. I used a qualitative methodology combining interpretative phenomenological analysis, which seeks to understand how individuals make sense of their experiences, and narrative analysis, which shows how and why stories are told. My interpretation drew on theories of narrative identity, within a theologically informed understanding of the human person and of the God from whom all gifts come.[4]

The Challenge of the Fifth Week

In whatever form they are made, the Spiritual Exercises are an intense and special time, set aside from ordinary life. We begin by 'preparing and disposing our souls' (Exx 1) to collaborate with the liberating work of the Spirit in our souls. Our hearts are tested and refined (Proverbs 17:3) as we journey with Jesus in his life, death and resurrection. As flawed human beings, we naturally experience both desire and resistance. Spiritual movements of consolation and desolation are usually more marked during a retreat than at other times (Exx 6). The word 'exercises' reflects the intentionality with which we 'seek' and 'find' God's desire for our lives (Exx 1), allowing ourselves to be broken open and changed.

We know we cannot live forever in the transforming crucible of the Exercises. Yet adjusting to a different rhythm of prayer and life after the retreat can be challenging. The desire to stay where God has been met may lead to feelings of loss and disorientation. Nicholas Austin's memorable phrase 'the problem of the Fifth Week' captures the complexity of living out of the foundational experience of the Exercises. Austin observes that we cannot assume authentic spiritual experience 'just will' bear fruit in a person's life.[5] In the context of the gospel call not only to hear the word of God but also to obey it (Luke 11:28), this is indeed a problem. After all, the Exercises are orientated towards finding God's desire in the specific life choices we face (Exx 1). They are not simply about receiving gifts or experiencing a sense of closeness with God. How, then, do we move forward?

[4] My methodology was informed by Philip Endean's distinction between the method and goal of interpretation: Philip Endean, 'Christian Spirituality and the Theology of the Human Person', in *The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality*, edited by Arthur Holder (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 237.

[5] Nicholas Austin, 'Spirituality and Virtue in Christian Formation: A Conversation between Thomistic and Ignatian Traditions', *New Blackfriars*, 97/1068 (2016), 205. And see Nicholas Austin, 'The Problem of the Fifth Week', above 9–24.

Although he viewed the Exercises as foundational, Ignatius understood the need for further experiences to deepen transformation. The *experiencias* described in the Jesuit *Constitutions* test, shape and purify a Jesuit's developing spiritual ideals.[6] What does Ignatius' intuition imply for the Fifth Week journey of persons who are not Jesuits? How do they (we) embrace in daily life the *magis*, 'the more universal good' that Ignatius wants us to choose? Retreatants' situations are diverse, so it is difficult to recommend a one-size-fits-all approach to deepen the retreat.[7] Some find a context and a pathway for integrating the graces of the retreat within a spiritual direction formation programme. Such programmes involve sustained reflection on one's personal journey through the Exercises, and invite the sharing of remembered experiences in a community that can appropriately and tenderly hold the stories that are told. However, many former retreatants lack such opportunities. 'Living the Spiritual Exercises' in the Fifth Week is especially challenging for persons who are not part of a community that cherishes the Ignatian way of being and upholds them to live out the graces of the Exercises.

An Ongoing Process of Conversion

A recent special edition of this journal focused on the new contemporary understanding of conversion as an ongoing process, reframing the relationship between the Exercises and the rest of life.[8] Understanding conversion or transformation like this provides a fresh way to think about the challenge of the Fifth Week and what is required for the graces of the retreat to be lived out. For example, Marion Morgan considered how significant, dramatic events, which convert us from what and who we are at the time to a new direction, relate to the rest of life, arguing:

> The dramatic events—the breaking wave—are what draw the attention; the real work carries on for years beforehand and a lifetime afterwards. 'Transformation' covers the whole process, including those special events which break straight into ordinary time and ordinary lifestyles. We need them—oh yes! But we need also to look at what led up to these events and what follows afterwards.[9]

[6] William J. O'Malley, *The Fifth Week*, 2nd edn (Chicago: Loyola U, 2003), 116–117.

[7] Paul Nicholson, 'Exercises, Experiments and Experiences', *The Way*, 47/4 (October 2008), 77–92, at 88. Nicholson suggests four factors that can support continuing growth for persons beyond the Jesuit order, including being part of a discerning community and having opportunities to share experience.

[8] See *The Way*, 61/3, 'Conversion' (July 2022).

[9] Marion Morgan, 'Conversion: A Continuing Journey', *The Way*, 61/3 (July 2022), 57–62, here 60–61.

I quite agree. Dramatic or special events are just one aspect of the dynamic of transformation. The 'real work' includes our stumbling steps as we alternate between desiring and resisting the invitations of God: the Spirit-led preparation (Exx 1) which opens us to receive the gift that is offered. The real work continues after a retreat, as we incarnate our consolation in action, live out the implications of discerned choices and respond to emerging invitations from God. Mission undertaken in the Fifth Week can also lead to further conversion.[10] Remembering and storying gifts received during the Exercises is another dimension of the continuing work by which we dispose ourselves for God's grace in the Fifth Week.

Gifts Given and Remembered

Dramatic events such as the one Helen remembered have been variously described in spirituality literature as 'peak experiences', 'convictional or transforming moments', 'conversion experiences' and so on.[11] Within the Ignatian tradition, 'spiritual consolations' (Exx 315) and 'particular' gifts (Exx 234) are similar in meaning to these ideas, denoting moments or episodes of encounter with God. The Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx 230–237) invites retreatants to recall these gifts in detail, with feeling, and reflect upon them. As Michael Ivens points out, particular gifts encompass the gifts of the Exercises themselves as well as the salient events of personal faith-history.[12] When we remember, ponder and reflect we contemplate not only the gifts, but 'the Giver who offers Self as well'.[13] Crucially, the reflective process increases freedom to *respond* with heartfelt love.[14]

The reflective process increases freedom to respond

Integrating the graces and inspirations of the retreat is itself a grace and cannot be forced. Gemma Simmonds refers to a time-lapse,

[10] Philip Endean, 'Ongoing Conversion: A New Ignatian Ideal?', *The Way*, 61/3 (July 2022), 37–50, at 40–43.
[11] See for example Abraham H. Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences* (New York: Penguin, 1964); and James E. Loder, *The Transforming Moment*, 2nd edn (Colorado Springs: Helmers and Howard, 1989), 21–26.
[12] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 174.
[13] Elizabeth Liebert and Annemarie Paulin-Campbell, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women*, 2nd edn (New York: Paulist, 2022), 198.
[14] William A. Barry, *Letting God Come Close: An Approach to the Spiritual Exercises* (Chicago: Loyola, 2001), 176. Barry observes: 'profound gratitude arises when I realise through God's grace that everything I have is gift, and gift undeserved; it is, perhaps, the foundational religious attitude and, Ignatius hints, it enables love for the giver to be born and to grow'.

potentially lifelong, while we 'adapt to the promptings of grace'.[15] John English describes an increasingly contemplative movement through which we discover the pattern of God's personal communication with us, take responsibility for our lives, and become freer to follow God's invitation into the future. [16] This is the work of the Fifth Week.

Narrative Practices and the Exercises

Ignatius' emphasis on remembering, pondering and reflecting within myself (Exx 234) resonates with the contemporary view in Western cultures that human persons are essentially narrative. In this understanding, to have a life is to have a story we can tell.[17] Autobiographical construction of identity, through everyday storytelling, internal self-talk and the act of writing, is seen as a common and fundamental 'practice of the self'.[18] Contemporary makers of the Exercises bring this habitual 'practice of the self' to the retreat, and to the Fifth Week.

For the Christian, personal identity is constructed within an already storied tradition which honours and remembers a God of events, a God who is present in time.[19] David Perrin argues: 'the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus form the backdrop for the narrative self of every Christian'.[20] The events of Jesus' story are to be engaged with, to inform, compose and shape Christian lives.[21] However, the postmodern context creates challenges for those seeking to put on 'the mind of Christ' (1 Corinthians 2:16).[22] Ruffing persuasively argues that in such contexts we are all required to appropriate ourselves and our religious traditions in ever more personalised ways through a relational project of identity creation.[23] The word *relational* is important. We are not the sole authors of our lives, and God can never be fully subsumed into a life story.[24]

[15] Gemma Simmonds, '"The Readiness Is All": Time and the Spiritual Journey', *The Way Supplement*, 96 (1999), 54.
[16] John J. English, *Choosing Life* (New York: Paulist, 1978), 136.
[17] Ulrike Popp-Baier, 'Life Stories and Philosophies of Life', in *Autobiography and the Psychological Study of Religious Lives*, edited by Jacob A. Belzen and Antoon Geels (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 40.
[18] Jens Brockmeier, 'Lifetime and Eternity', in *Autobiography and the Psychological Study of Religious Lives*, 19.
[19] Janet K. Ruffing, *To Tell the Sacred Tale: Spiritual Direction and Narrative* (Mahwah: Paulist, 2011), 49–50.
[20] David B. Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 137.
[21] Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 137.
[22] Lieven Boeve, 'Theology and the Interruption of Experience', in *Religious Experience and Contemporary Theological Epistemology*, edited by Lieven Boeve, Yves de Maeseneer and Stijn van den Bossche (Leuven: Leuven U, 2005), 34–35.
[23] Janet K. Ruffing, 'Spiritual Identity and Narrative: Fragmentation, Coherence, and Transformation', *Spiritus*, 12/1 (2012), 63, 68.
[24] Ruffing, 'Spiritual Identity and Narrative', 70.

The Exercises are a powerful resource for contemporary persons engaged in the relational project of identity creation. I agree with Brendan Patrick Busse that 'Ignatian spirituality includes stories (narratives) and storytellers (narrators) … it recommends a narrative way of being (narrativity) and relating to God'.[25] In societies where the Christian message has become less intelligible, the Exercises offer an important pathway for the appropriation of Christian identity.[26] When retreatants turn their contemplative gaze on their own life experiences and those of Christ, each is seen through the lens of the other.[27] Of course, the narrative journey of the Exercises is rarely smooth. Images of God, self and world may require criticism, repentance or revitalisation.[28] As the research participants' stories demonstrated, particular gifts are rarely comfortable experiences. What Ruffing terms the 'in-breaking activity of God' can be challenging, disrupting our self-authored stories and requiring narrative reworking in an extended process over time.[29]

Stories from the Fifth Week

Conversion has been described as involving a 'habitual rereading of a life' such that it is integrated into the history of salvation.[30] A common thread among the diverse gifts received by the five participants in my research was that they transformed previous self-understandings but also reflected God's activity in the soul before the retreat. Helen commented that the gifts she received during the Exercises came not as *some shock out of the blue* but related to lifelong aspects of her identity. When God's love overwhelmed her, *in that moment, like it was so full, for me, it was so full in that it contained everything, really*. Helen's lifelong desire for justice was both reflected in and transformed by the

[25] Brendan Patrick Busse, 'Imagination and Articulation: Ignatian Narrativity and the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola' (MA dissertation, Comillas, 2016), 21.
[26] Roger Haight, 'A Theology for the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola', *Spiritus*, 10/2 (2010), 158. Haight argues that Christians in parts of the developed world live on the boundary between faith and a desacralized world. The Christian message has become unintelligible in postmodernity, requiring them to make sense of Christian faith in the world in which they live and to which they are committed.
[27] Brian O'Leary, 'Ignatian Mysticism and Contemporary Culture', *The Way*, 52/4 (October 2013), 44–56, at 51.
[28] Robert J. Egan, 'Jesus in the Heart's Imagination: Reflections on Ignatian Contemplation', *The Way Supplement*, 82 (1995), 67. In relation to the need for criticism of the primary imagination, Egan points out that the imagination may be a place full of good or evil spirits.
[29] Ruffing, 'Spiritual Identity and Narrative', 80.
[30] Rowan Ireland, 'Reflections on Some Spiritual Conversions', *The Way*, 34/4 (October 1998), 304–313, at 310.

gift received. As she remarked, *God has been shaping me in this way, taking who I am, and all my experiences, right through my life, but this was—um, the pinnacle, if you like, experience, the high experience*. After the retreat she continued to reflect on the gift, interpreting it in the context of her whole life narrative.

Listening to Helen, I was reminded of Ignatius' words about his formative experience at Cardoner, when he 'received a great clarity in his understanding', so that 'it seemed to him as if he were a different person, and he had another mind'. Clearly this was a foundational moment. It was also a moment Ignatius returned to in memory, and that he looked back on in light of his whole life story: 'he does not think, gathering together all the helps he has had from God and all the things he has come to know (even if he joins them all into one), that he has ever attained so much as on that single occasion' (*Autobiography*, n.30).

Remembering and storying the graced experiences of the Exercises allow them to speak into life now. As one woman reflected, *it's just this endless mine of gift*. Remembering may happen spontaneously in response to an external event or stimulus. On a visit to Ireland, Catherine saw a beautiful bronze sculpture of a sleeping woman made of leaves, representing the earth at rest, and knew immediately that this was the Third Week. Gazing at the woman's form, she was *transported to the experience of being in the tomb with Jesus*, which, she said, *feels like gift*.

Sleeping Woman, *by Linda Brunker, Brigit's Garden, County Galway, Ireland*

These moments of being taken back into an experience seem to be common among former retreatants.

Remembering may also be intentional. During the Exercises, John had a powerful experience in the context of prayer about God's name and image for his life (a *consigna*). God gave him his name, which appeared as *an arrow coming from the heart to a word called service. And then from service, back to the heart. From love, through service, returns to love*. John distinguished different purposes for remembering. Sometimes he intentionally recalls an experience as a source of encouragement when self-doubt or external pressures threaten to lead him into a spiral of desolation. He recalls, reflects on and relives the moment, *so that you can actually almost feel the physical element of it*. Emotions and bodily sensations correspond to those felt at the time. He remembers that he is special to God, and that God has a name for him. By reliving the moment, John becomes grounded in God's love for him, and in the identity given him by God.

An experience may be remembered to aid discernment. In the relatively tranquil spiritual situation Ignatius calls the 'First Way' in the 'Third Time' (Exx 177, 183), John weighs the advantages and disadvantages of a particular course of action, guided by his fundamental desire for 'the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my soul' (Exx 181). As he reflected:

> *When I apply it, I look at things and go, OK, does this come from love? Is this a service? And what love is returned to love through this service? And before you actually engage. So it might be, err, I'll think about particular elements of practice, it might be—do I want to take on this person as director? So, what's my motivation? Is my motivation from love, from God; is this person being presented to me from, by God, from God? Am I engaging in this as ministry, as service?*

Love, service, returned to love: these words reflect the gift John received during the Exercises. *Applying* helps John make authentic decisions aligned with his identity and mission. In his words, *my* consigna *has become the key to my decision-making and a blueprint for my discipleship*. Remembered experience provides a touchstone for discernment.

Ignatius recorded a similar experience in the Spiritual Diary. During a period when he was seeking to discern whether to choose complete poverty, Jesus came into his thoughts when he was preparing for Mass, so that he felt impelled to follow. As he continued to pray

and seek confirmation, 'it seemed in some way to be from the Blessed Trinity that Jesus was shown or felt, and I remembered the time when the Father put me with the Son'.[31] Remembering the vision at La Storta (*Autobiography*, n.96) confirmed Ignatius in his decision to follow Jesus into his poverty.

While the detail of events during the Exercises was often the focus of remembering, Catherine returned more often to a *sense of the graces* received, rather than the episode itself. She reflected that graces might appear in a variety of ways:

> *Sometimes it might come as, as words; sometimes it's a feeling; sometimes it's encountered through another person; but it's that, it's returning to that same, that same place, that same sensation of what it is that I really need to receive in that moment. Yeah, and it always comes back to that same thing.*

It was difficult for Catherine to articulate the experience of *returning to that same place*, but I had impression that an essence of the original episode could be recognised in new experiences.

Self-Defining Memories

God is the source of all human acts of experiencing, knowing and loving.[32] Moreover, those seeking to live lives of faith go with God into their memories in a conscious and prayerful way. As Paul reminded the Corinthians 'now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God' (1 Corinthians 2:12). Without reducing the experience of grace to psychological concepts, we can still draw on insights from psychology to illuminate remembering processes.

The concept of 'self-defining memories' proved helpful for interpreting the research participants' acts of remembering. Self-defining memories are memories of specific episodes which relate to critical themes of a person's narrative identity, often capturing a central conflict or desire within the self.[33] They are vivid, affectively intense and frequently recalled. A self-defining memory represents other memories that share its

[31] Diary, 23 February 1544.
[32] Bernard McGinn, 'Mystical Consciousness: A Modest Proposal', *Spiritus*, 8/1 (2008), 47.
[33] Jefferson A. Singer and Pavel Blagov, 'The Integrative Function of Narrative Processing: Autobiographical Memory, Self-Defining Memories, and the Life Story of Identity', in *The Self and Memory*, edited by Denise R. Beike, James M. Lampinen and Douglas A. Behrend (Hove: Taylor and Francis, 2004), 123, 119.

plot, emotions and themes.[34] Self-defining memories endure in meaning and remain affectively powerful over time. The leading proponents of the theory argue, 'if narrative identity is the autobiographical text of an entire life, self-defining memories are uniquely eloquent passages that dramatize the major themes of the overarching narrative'.[35] This observation resonates with me when I reflect on my own acts of remembering in the Fifth Week. A detailed, vivid and emotionally intense memory of the love in Jesus' eyes as he returned my gaze continues to attract my attention, evoke strong feelings and inspire action. The episode itself, the 'uniquely eloquent' passage, reflects an enduring theme of my life story.

It is surprising that the importance of remembering spiritual experience for ongoing transformation has received so little scholarly attention.[36] One exception is Valerie van Mulukom's ground-breaking anthropological paper on remembering religious rituals.[37] She proposes that because certain religious rituals such as initiation are highly emotional and centre on transitional events they are likely to generate self-defining memories. These memories are lasting reminders of what is valuable and what is not, guiding behaviour in the present.[38]

Van Mulukom's observations are pertinent for those living the Spiritual Exercises in the Fifth Week. Memories of spiritual experience during the Exercises can become self-defining at this time, dramatizing major themes of the overarching life narrative and giving meaning, structure and coherence to self-understanding. The literature on self-defining memories opens a rich and novel way to understand how particular gifts—given by God so that we may come to love God more fully—shape lives of discipleship.

[34] Pavel S. Blagov and Jefferson A. Singer, 'Four Dimensions of Self-Defining Memories (Specificity, Meaning, Content and Affect) and Their Relationships to Self-Restraint, Distress, and Repressive Defensiveness', *Journal of Personality*, 72/3 (2004), 483.

[35] Singer and Blagov, 'Integrative Function of Narrative Processing', 132, 123.

[36] A recent publication disputes the assumption that religious beliefs are formed in the moment in response to religious experiences, and highlights the role in belief formation of reflection on episodic memories of religious experiences: Daniel Munro, 'Remembering Religious Experience: Reconstruction, Reflection, and Reliability', *Philosophy and the Mind Sciences*, 5/17 (2024), 1.

[37] Valerie van Mulukom, 'Remembering Religious Rituals: Autobiographical Memories of High-Arousal Religious Rituals Considered from a Narrative Processing Perspective', *Religion, Brain and Behavior*, 7/3 (2017), 6. Van Mulukom notes the lack of empirical anthropological studies into the relationship between memory and ritual, arguing that researchers have incorrectly focused on the accuracy of memories rather than their significance and emotionality (1–2).

[38] van Mulukom, 'Remembering Religious Rituals', 6.

Insights for Spiritual Directors

Remembering and speaking about the gifts of the Exercises in spiritual direction brought renewed consolation to the participants in my research. Direction is often the first place where significant spiritual experience is shared. Directors invite their directees to elaborate and richly describe encounters with God that they do not yet understand, or that challenge and disrupt their sense of identity. A memory first shared tentatively with the director may later become self-defining for the directee's overall story. Memories of gifts received in the Exercises, described in spiritual direction during a retreat and afterwards, become tied to long-term goals, inspiring commitment. Spiritual direction supports the formation of self-defining memories and helps directees incarnate their consolation in action.

Spiritual directors should also be alert to the presence of existing self-defining memories in a person's life narratives. Directors can learn a lot about directees from these stories. Research suggests that self-defining memories raised by psychotherapy clients are an effective source of understanding and evocative communication between client and therapist.[39] Similarly, self-defining memories recalled in spiritual direction can help the director listen for the story God is telling in the directee's life. Self-defining memories offer insight into the person's images of God and self, for example.

In the discerning context of spiritual direction, remembered experience can become more integrated into personal narrative identity.

[39] Singer and Blagov, 'Integrative Function of Narrative Processing', 120.

The privileged narrative situation of spiritual direction supports the directee not simply remembering an experience of God, but reflecting on its meaning: to 'draw some profit' (Exx 106). In this way, spiritual direction facilitates the 'continual process of reinterpretation of the directee's past experience from the perspective of the present'.[40] If telling a story is a co-construction between teller and listener, spiritual directors have a special responsibility to join directees in the meaning-making process.[41]

Remembering and 'the More Universal Good'

How does my emphasis on remembering and storying gifts received align with the Ignatian understanding that spiritual progress involves moving forward in the praise, reverence and service of God?[42] Ignatius wanted the Jesuits to live with 'one foot in the air ready to hasten from place to place': to be continually open to the new.[43] János Lukács calls this a 'dynamic vision of a person constantly on the move', always ready to embrace 'the *magis*' (the more universal good).[44] All this is true. However, within the Ignatian tradition there is also strong support for the benefits of remembering and storying. 'Noting, remembering and pondering God's gifts' are powerful tools which underpin Ignatian discernment and help us to find God.[45] In a climate of prayerful discernment, exercises of memory such as the Examen prayer and journaling, can be fruitful. What matters is the goal of these activities, as Ignatius makes clear (Exx 233). We remember the good received so that we may love and serve God more wholeheartedly.

We remember the good received so that we may love and serve God

[40] Ruffing, *To Tell the Sacred Tale*, 136.
[41] Hubert J. M. Hermans, 'Voicing the Self: From Information Processing to Dialogical Interchange', *Psychological Bulletin*, 119/1 (1996), 38.
[42] Nicholas Austin, 'The Ignatian Art of Moving Forward', *The Way*, 61/3 (July 2022), 8–22, at 15. Austin observes that Ignatius provides his own interpretation of the tradition of spiritual progress. Growth in the spiritual virtues is not the final goal for Ignatius.
[43] (Ignatius to Mateo Sebastián de Morrano, 22 February 1549, in St Ignatius of Loyola, *Letters and Instructions*, edited by Martin E, Palmer, John W. Padberg and John L. McCarthy (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), 263.
[44] János Lukács, *Ignatian Formation: The Inspiration of the Constitutions* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2016), 18–19, cited in Austin, 'Ignatian Art of Moving Forward', 15–16. See also Barton T. Geger, 'What *Magis* Really Means and Why It Matters', *Jesuit Higher Education*, 1/2 (2012), 16. Geger concludes that 'the more universal good' is the best definition in terms of practicality, fidelity to the sources, and correspondence to other Ignatian themes.
[45] Jos Moons, 'Remembering as a Crucial Spiritual Tool', *The Way*, 55/2 (April 2016), 71–81, here 81.

Ignatius' story shows us the value of remembering and storying gifts given by God. The reflective notes on his conversion that he made at Manresa evolved over time into the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* published in 1548. Ignatius refined the text as he developed a more sophisticated understanding of his own experiences and became, through theological study, more aware of the preceding spiritual tradition.[46] Giving the Exercises also challenged and reshaped his understanding, leading him to modify the Guidelines for Discernment of Spirits (Exx 313–336), for example.[47] Endean concludes:

> Whatever Ignatius experienced at Manresa impelled him to share that experience with others, and thus to grope towards new understanding of the original experience. It is this untidy process that underlies all the rewriting.[48]

Ignatius' experience, because it was an experience of God, was generative, giving rise to new ways of appropriating or making meaning of the original event.[49] The narrative practices of the Fifth Week are not self-indulgent. They enable the former retreatant to understand better and to respond more fully to the gift received, and to find the *magis* now.

An Endless Mine of Gift

In the lifelong journey of discipleship, the Exercises are but one 'means' (Exx 1) towards conversion and greater intimacy with God. However, the transforming crucible of the Exercises opens us up to receive God's gifts, and many people within and beyond the Jesuit order can testify to their power. The Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx 230–237) at the end of the Exercises expresses Ignatius' desire that interior knowledge of the many blessings received during the retreat will evoke gratitude and issue in loving service.[50] In the Fifth Week, remembering and storying the gifts of the Exercises is an important dimension of ongoing conversion, and these practices deserve more attention. The renewed

[46] W. W. Meissner, *To the Greater Glory: A Psychological Study of Ignatian Spirituality* (Wisconsin: Marquette U, 1999), 101.
[47] Philip Endean, 'Discerning behind the Rules: Ignatius' First Letter to Teresa Rejadell', *The Way Supplement*, 64 (1989), 37–50, at 47.
[48] Endean, 'Discerning behind the Rules', 46.
[49] Endean, 'Discerning behind the Rules', 47.
[50] Wilkie Au, 'Ignatian Service: Gratitude and Love in Action', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 40/2 (Summer 2008), 10–11.

consolation felt by participants in my research as they remembered and spoke about gifts received during the Exercises was profoundly moving to witness. Noting, remembering and pondering God's gifts also has benefits beyond the purely personal. The echoes of grace felt by contemporary makers of the Exercises expand our understanding of God's presence and action in the world today, if we will but listen.

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LIVING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

A Conversation with Simon Bishop

Simon Bishop and Philip Harrison

This conversation between Simon Bishop SJ and the editor took place at the Jesuit North West European noviciate in Birmingham, UK, where Simon lives and works. It explores his own experience of living the Spiritual Exercises in his Jesuit formation as well as how Simon has shared that experience with others, especially during his time as novice master. There are few other people in Britain today who have lived the graces of the Spiritual Exercises so deeply.

Phil: I would like to start by asking you about your experience of the Spiritual Exercises. What difference did it make to your life when you first made them?

Simon: When I entered the Jesuit noviciate, the thought of making the Exercises was both exciting and very daunting: it felt like this enormous mountain that needed to be climbed. I was wondering, *Do I have the resources to do it? Do I have the right boots? Will I need a tent or will I not need a tent?* I was asking those sorts of questions in terms of spiritual life as well as human qualities. So I remember entering into it kind of tentatively, and then just being wonderfully helped by what Ignatius says at the beginning: really all you need to be able to make the Exercises is this bigness of heart, this magnanimity and generosity.[1] And so that was a great encouragement to say, *Okay, Lord, I don't know how to get up this mountain, I don't know how you want to lead me, but I am here and open, and I want to be open and willing to be lead in whatever way you wish.*

I think the other thing that was helpful was the novice master saying that for each person it would be a unique experience, so there was no

[1] Exx 5: 'The persons who make the Exercises will benefit greatly by entering upon them with great spirit and generosity toward their Creator and Lord'.

need to compare or to worry about how the others were climbing the mountain. They were going by a different route, and I should be happy with that rather than thinking that there would be one particular way I needed to go. And, again, that was a great release—not to worry.

That said, it was funny because, at the end of the Exercises, the other novices and I had a time of reflection on what the experience had been like. At some point in the making of the Exercises, Ignatius says that for some people it might be helpful to get up in the middle of the night and do a night meditation as a way of praying over a particular contemplation.[2] There we were, sharing about the deep experiences that we had had, and one of the other novices said, 'I heard you, Simon, getting up in the middle of the night, every night, and I thought, if Simon is getting up to do those midnight meditations, then so will I!' I said to him, 'well, in actual fact, I didn't do one, I was just going to the loo!' So it was quite funny how our different experiences could help him in a different way, with me also having a sense of freedom. Ignatius often proposes that something might be helpful but might not, so I could trust that the Lord was leading me in a particular way that would be most helpful.[3]

Phil: Jesuits also do the Spiritual Exercises at the end of formation during a period called tertianship. How did the experience when you did them for the second time compare with that first experience?

Simon: One of the books we were asked to read in the noviciate was this beautiful simple little book by Herbie Alphonso SJ in which he talks about your own personal, unique vocation.[4] And I had it in the back of my mind, wondering if there might be a little phrase that I could take with me into the future and, to my great surprise, the first time I made the Exercises, the phrase that stayed with me was *Be with me always*. Somehow the Lord was saying, 'Be with me'.

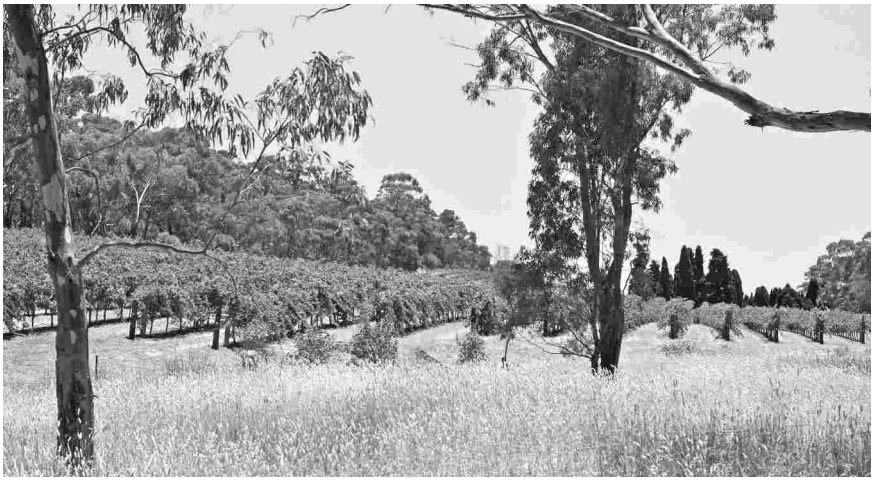
[2] The first meditation of the day is to be made at midnight throughout the Exercises (Exx 72, 128, 148, 159 and so on). For what this means in a modern retreat, see Paul Nicholson, '"On You I Muse through the Night": The Midnight Meditation in the Spiritual Exercises', *The Way*, 52/4 (October 2013), 23–30.

[3] See, for example, Exx 89: 'God our Lord knows our nature infinitely better than we do … he often enables each of us to know what is right for ourselves'.

[4] Herbert Alphonso, *The Personal Vocation: Transformation in Depth through the Spiritual Exercises* (Rome: Gregorian U, 2002). Alphonso speaks of the personal vocation as summed up in a short phrase: 'the formulation in words of the "personal vocation" sounds very general to those who read it or hear of it. What it says, however, to the particular individual whose "personal vocation" it is, is unrepeatably unique.' (32)

And, I suppose, as a young, energetic and enthusiastic novice, I was thinking that there were things that needed to be done. How could we help the world to be a better vision and experience of God's Kingdom? What was it that the Lord wanted me to do? I was very taken aback. Then I thought about how, when the Lord called the apostles—it's almost a phrase that you could ignore and not notice—the Lord asks the apostles 'to be with him' (Mark 3:14). Afterwards they are to go to the nations, and to preach the good news and to baptize, but the primary vocation to which Jesus called them was 'to be with him'. And so, especially as a Jesuit—the informal title of the Society of Jesus being companions or friends of the Lord—I was to be with him always.

Then, about ten years later, I made the Exercises for the second time. It was in Australia, and it was a wonderful gift because, as one of my co-novices said when he described the experience, 'it was a three-month programme crammed into seven months'! We had lots of space to enjoy being in Australia as well as renewing our earlier commitment by reading the *Constitutions* and some of the founding documents of the Society. The particular retreat house, at Sevenhill in South Australia, was a vineyard, so it was an extraordinary location. You could be out at dawn or dusk and there would be kangaroos just nibbling away or bouncing along, and beautiful sunsets or sunrises. Again, I was quite surprised by a phrase that came to me then, which was, *There is nowhere else that I would rather be*. Perhaps in a place such as Sevenhill it was relatively easy to say—*gosh, yeah there is no place I*



Vineyards, Sevenhill, South Australia

would rather be—but making that deep connection again with my first experience of the Lord saying, *Be with me*, by responding, *There is nowhere else that I would rather be*, was to be more deeply with the Lord in His companionship and friendship.

I suppose my Jesuit life has changed, and I have been asked to be in different places and do different things. Most recently I have needed to go to hospital for various treatments and, lying on an operating table or in surgery or follow-up treatment with a necessity for all sorts of other treatments, in the quiet there, I have found myself saying that simple prayer: *There is nowhere else that I would rather be*. Somehow the Lord is asking me *to be with Him* here in this place at this time. I don't understand it; I don't know why; maybe I could be somewhere else, perhaps I would prefer to be somewhere else, but there is this same trust that the Lord is leading in this experience as well. I want to be with the Lord, here in this place, together with all those around the world who are suffering and who, perhaps, are feeling abandoned by God, who are thinking or feeling that God is not with them in their place, offering myself with them to the Lord in the prayer which Ignatius suggests both at the beginning and the end of the Spiritual Exercises: 'Take Lord, all …' (Annotation 5 and Exx 234) So it has been a beautiful bookending of my first and second experiences of the Exercises, seeing how that has flowed into daily life as well.

Phil: You were saying that the call of the Apostles was to be with Jesus, and yet that leads to so many different areas of human experience, so many things that you have been asked to do as a Jesuit and so many challenging and difficult situations. The trust that God's presence will be with you in those different moments and your promise to be with the Lord have changed the experience that you have had. What kind of practices from the Spiritual Exercises have you found to be interwoven in your life?

Simon: Ignatius was very straightforward and practical in his way of approaching the spiritual life. We often talk about the Ignatian hour. Again, as a novice, I was helped to structure an hour's prayer, and then, I suppose, I realised over time that this structure applied not only to the time of prayer, but also flowed into daily life.

Ignatius suggests that when we go to pray, we pause 'for the length of an Our Father' (Exx 75) to see how God is gazing at us. So, immediately, there is a sense that for Ignatius our focus is on God first of all. What is

it that God is seeing, that God is desiring, that God is wanting? Waking up in the morning and making that the opening response to the new day, *the Lord is gazing at me*: gratitude springs from that. And then, secondly, we can move from that prayer of the recognition of God's love to this preparatory prayer: *I don't know what this prayer or day is going to be like, maybe I will feel nothing or even that it is fruitless, but whatever happens I am here and I want to direct it for your greater praise, reverence and service*. I find that so liberating: *I'll do my best but it is not up to me in terms of outcomes and successes*. The goal is not to have profound spiritual experiences or to do great things for the Lord; the goal is to be at the disposition of what the Lord wants. So I use that preparatory prayer, for example, when I am writing an e-mail! Colleagues and friends joke about the way I still write AMDG, *Ad Maioram Dei Gloriam,* even at the top of text messages. But somehow that desire—that theme tune—sings through in all that is done in a day. This really is, Lord, for your praise and reverence and service.

And then something that is very particular to the Exercises is the grace for which we are praying. Every day, in every time of prayer, Ignatius is saying, 'What do you desire?' And you might say, 'Surely God knows; I don't need to say that again, do I?' And Ignatius responds, 'Yes, maybe God does know, but do you know what it is that you desire?' So today, what is it that I desire? What is it that I am hoping for in the meetings that I will have, the encounters that I will have and the unexpected moments that I desire and am hoping for? And then there is, as he puts it, this colloquy—this conversation—in which prayer is our desire, but it is also profoundly about listening. In the coming day, how am I going to be expressing my desire, but also listening to others? In the prison cells, or schools, in university chaplaincies, or hospitals, what is it that people are wanting to say? What is it that they are not saying? Our society is so noisy; everyone is trying to grab our attention. The louder people are, the more they hope that they will succeed. How do we listen in to that very gentle, quiet voice of the Spirit?

That very gentle, quiet voice of the Spirit

And then, at the end of the prayer, there is the review of the prayer. Or at the end of the day there is the Examen prayer: this is what I was hoping for, this is what I was desiring—how did the Lord respond? What is he saying to me? Where is he asking me to move in a new direction, or in a new way? I ask the Lord to show me more clearly where He was, those moments for which to give thanks and praise and the things

that I didn't do well, or I didn't hear, or I was blind to, so that, God willing, that is something I can take into my prayer, and in the morning when I wake up there will be a new start, with fresh eyes and ears. So, it's amazing that somehow Ignatius' prayer can fill out a whole day and a whole attitude to life, really.

There was someone in the local parish recently who was received into the Church, a young man who came from a very difficult background. I am told that he did not know his father, who was a heroin addict, until he was fourteen. He had a really difficult and challenging upbringing. And I don't quite know how it was that he came into contact with the Catholic Church: it's quite possible that it was through the Sisters of Mercy who lived in his neighbourhood. His expression was that in the Church he had discovered 'a new way of being'—beautiful. There is another way of living, and I think that in the Exercises Ignatius is proposing one that is deeply human.

Phil: The conclusion of the Spiritual Exercises is the *Contemplatio*, the Contemplation to Attain Love. Do you think that it provides a blueprint for what prayer can be after the Spiritual Exercises in the way it speaks about finding God in all things?

Simon: Probably my favourite passage from the Exercises is precisely in that contemplation (Exx 233): 'to ask for interior knowledge of all the great good I have received, in order that, stirred to profound gratitude, I may become able to love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things'. What an attitude! When Ignatius then opens that out, the whole of creation is, in the words of Hopkins, filled with God's grandeur. It is in the material things of life, in people, in myself, that God's presence and the Holy Spirit are at home. If we really believe that—that somehow we are this place where the Lord can be, and the Lord is also at home in you, in me, in those we meet, in our world—how could we destroy our world? How could we do or say something harmful to another person?

As you say, there is this vision of life and of the world that is unfolded in that contemplation at the end. It's a bit strange because perhaps my second-favourite phrase from the Exercises comes in the First Week: 'shame and confusion' (Exx 48). You'll remember that when we are contemplating our sinfulness in the light of God's goodness, of God's love, Ignatius says to ask for the grace of shame and confusion. Interestingly, it's not about guilt; it's about, *How could I possibly act in this way? How could I possibly do those things when God is so loving? How*

could I not love God? Or creation, or other people? Why do I do that? We talk about the mystery of evil: *How are we capable of this evil?* There is a mystery about it.

And then, at the end of the prayer, asking for the grace of shame and confusion at the mystery of evil, Ignatius places this exclamation of wonder, this cry of wonder.[5] It is the mystery of love. Knowing that I am like this, knowing that I can be like this, how is it possible that God still loves me, that God is still merciful, that God still comes to me and to others and to our world to love us? The Contemplation to Attain Love at the end of the Exercises is, also, an exclamation of wonder, to see: 'how God dwells in creatures … how in this way he dwells also in myself … making me his temple' (Exx 235); 'how God labors and works for me in all the creatures on the face of the earth' (Exx 236); 'how all good things and gifts descend from above' (Exx 237). It's the fulfilment of the experience of God's love we have had in the First Week.

Phil: You are giving us a way into understanding what Jerónimo Nadal, one of the first companions of Ignatius, meant when he invited us to be 'contemplatives in action': to be aware that God is present within us, present within creation, present in other people, and then to act according to that presence?

Simon: Yes, that is exactly right, Phil: it is a way of seeing as well as a way of being. And what do we see? I suppose there is something that becomes more clear in the Second and Third Weeks of the Exercises. What sort of God are we looking for? Who are we searching for? What are we contemplating? And, there again, I think Ignatius has a very particular vision of God, or experience of God: this God who is lowly and humble, and in one sense is almost hidden; and in another sense it's as if we can touch and see, taste and smell God's loving presence. This is made particularly vivid in the Contemplation on the Nativity when Ignatius invites us 'to smell and to taste … the infinite gentleness and sweetness of the divinity' (Exx 124). There is a particular way of living and loving that I think Ignatius presents to us in the Second and Third Weeks. There is, for example, that beautiful moment in the Call of the King when Ignatius presents Jesus as this earthly king who takes

[5] Exx 60: 'An exclamation of wonder, with intense feeling, as I reflect on the whole range of created beings'.

his stand on the plains of Jerusalem in a spot that is lowly, beautiful and attractive.

Phil: And that is the place where he stands with us in those moments of challenge in our life, when we are called to serve someone or help someone, in those moments of friendship and love which we encounter every single day if we are there to look for them. He stands with us in that lowly place and invites us to join him there, so that stirred to profound gratitude, we may become able to love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things (Exx 233).

Philip Harrison SJ is the editor of *The Way*. After studies in English language and literature at the University of Leeds, he worked for three years as a volunteer with the homeless in Glasgow and people with disabilities in Liverpool. His formation included training as a teacher in Scotland, studying theology in Latin America, and completing a licentiate in sacred scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome. He is currently serving at the Manchester Universities Catholic Chaplaincy.

Simon Bishop SJ was born in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, because of his father's work with UNESCO, and went to Stonyhurst College before reading theology at Cambridge University. He qualified as a social worker at York University and then worked with homeless teenagers in London before entering the Society of Jesus. He has been a school chaplain and a volunteer chaplain in a number of prisons. On completing his Jesuit formation he became Catholic chaplain at Oxford University before taking on the role of director of spirituality for the British province and then novice master of the Jesuit North West European Novitiate in Birmingham, during which he gave the Spiritual Exercises to novices and accompanied them in living the Exercises afterwards. He now, assists as a member of the formation team.

THE IGNATIAN CHARISM

A Lay Perspective

Enrique López Viguria

Points of Departure

Thanksgiving

WHEN I RECEIVED THE COMMISSION to write this article I did not at first express my gratitude. It was a generous proposal, both appealing and challenging. I accepted after much hesitation and delay. I was encouraged by a certain commitment to the project and to the Society of Jesus that had invited me. I couldn't refuse such a request from someone within the Society to which I owe so much and am so grateful. My gratitude has grown thanks to the gifts that came from undertaking it. This is not down to the result, which is modest, but to the exercise in introspection it made possible, bringing life to the fore and the experience of what is considered most personal, intimate and touching. It is from that source that my gratitude springs.

Modesty and Humility

In my case, the modesty I feel is linked to a certain lack of facility with speaking and writing about something so closely linked to my personal experience, and which demands all possible sincerity and an authenticity that seems to me unattainable. It is very likely—there are many who attest to this—that humility is not my most notable attitude. But never do I desire it more strongly than when, as in this case, I have to step into the 'intellectual arena' to address a matter of which I can barely grasp the map of my ignorance. I will approach almost anything I understand to be connected with the topic, but I am not an expert on any of it.

One Person's Life

As a young man, I even said that God, for me, was 'the God of the Jesuits'. Let me explain. I studied at the San Ignacio school in Pamplona and there I discovered Jesuits and the Society of Jesus. A local scout

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troop would also open a vital horizon for me in Catholic scouting. I am so much in debt and so grateful to certain Jesuits that I could not explain my journey and many of my choices without them, as much in my family and personal life as professionally and socially. My life has been deeply connected to the people and works of the Society of Jesus. Of course there are Loyola, Sant Ignasi-Sarrià, Ocongate, ESADE, Manresa, UNIJES, and so many places, works and communities taking different pathways throughout the world.[1] This is my true spiritual homeland.

The Layman Ignatius

A few decades ago, I used to participate in the meetings of Jesuit school directors in Raimat, Catalonia. I remember a good colleague started calling me 'The Layman López'. At first, it was a friendly nickname in private, but it soon crept into our public conversation. It was funny, and led to other colleagues being called 'layman' or 'laywoman'. Now I also find it funny to remember this anecdote because of its potential significance. It was a time when the role of the laity was a particularly prominent issue.

I was working in a Jesuit institution, and the issue of collaboration with or among laypeople quickly went from being emergent to recurrent. With responsibilities to the international Catholic scout movement, I participated in the Congress of Catholic Laity in Rome, 'Witnesses of Christ in the New Millennium' (2000), organized by the Pontifical Council for the Laity. The topic of the laity was firmly on the agenda. It served to recapitulate the progress made since the Second Vatican Council and to give it new impetus. It offered a potential challenge for a more vigorous development of their role in the Church and the world. It also provided a response to the shortage of religious vocations. Fundamentally it constituted a call to the laity in the context of the new evangelization. As John Paul II stated:

> A great venture, both challenging and wonderful, is entrusted to the Church—that of a re-evangelization, which is so much needed by the present world. The lay faithful ought to regard themselves as an active and responsible part of this venture, called as they are to proclaim and to live the gospel in service to the person and to society while respecting the totality of the values and needs of both.[2]

[1] Sant Ignasi-Sarrià is a Jesuit school in Barcelona; Ocongate is a town in Peru with a Jesuit parish and a fine Baroque church; ESADE (Escola Superior d'Administració i Direcció d'Empreses) is a Jesuit-inspired business and law school based in Barcelona; UNIJES is the network of Jesuit universities in Spain. [Ed.]
[2] John Paul II, *Christ fideles laici*, n. 64.

In this context I became more aware of the lay Ignatius than I had been before. By emphasizing the role of the laity, I rediscovered something obvious: a lay Ignatius of Loyola, before becoming a Jesuit, someone who did not belong to the clergy or a religious order. My many experiences with the Jesuits had never touched so directly on the secular nature of the person who originated the spirituality with which I was so familiar.

At Pamplona Ignatius was a knight and a pilgrim, a man in an encounter with the world, whom God discovered wounded. This wound gave way to a personal experience of vulnerability, something so common yet so radically human. It was an experience of stopping along the way that questions direction and meaning. At Loyola he felt a dissatisfied stillness that ultimately hears the echo of the mystery and the call of God: a call to embark again with greater truth on the pathway of life, a passion discovered and a life transformed. At Manresa there was a profound gratitude, a horizon opened up by a living desire to love and serve in order to please the Divine Majesty. And then there were Jerusalem, Barcelona, Alcalá, Salamanca, Paris, Rome … and the Society of Jesus.

Ignatius was a layman stirred up by God, a man of the world and a knight of his vanities, a man of his time who cast off the shackles of the world to journey toward the divine will, a converted Christian ready for new exploits. He was a knight who wanted to serve God in his own way, until he discovered that the initiative had to be with God, and that it was for him to serve God, and to help souls through word and service. He was a layman with God, for the world.

Ignatius' spirituality sprang from a personal encounter with God, based on pure spiritual practice, with all that it entails in terms of mystery, shadow, light and flashes of insight. It arose in the space between prayer and penance, in the battle between the dominant ego and one's own lack of centre, in a struggle between the good and the bad spirit, with the Two Standards at its heart. It came from a way of discerning, a Contemplation to Attain Love, a new perspective on things, a spiritual sophistication, a new expertise, a contemplation for action: from a better Ignatius, more spiritually worldly—a saint.

The Ignatian Charism

According to dictionaries, the word *charism* has two meanings: 1. a special capacity of some people to attract or fascinate; 2. a free gift that

God grants to some people for the benefit of the community.[3] God grants charisms as 'free gifts' for the common good, for the renewal and usefulness of the Church. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says:

> Whether extraordinary or simple and humble, charisms are graces of the Holy Spirit which directly or indirectly benefit the Church, ordered as they are to her building up, to the good of men, and to the needs of the world. (n. 799)

The signs and gifts of the Spirit are many, as are the charisms. They are a source of service. Saint Paul refers to them as follows:

> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. (1 Corinthians 12:4–10)

The Descent of the Holy Spirit, *by the master of 1518*

There is a diversity of charisms and one and the same Spirit. For Ignatius, 'to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good'. What is the charism that Ignatius receives? And what about its usefulness? Ignatius' charism is a giftedness and a gift, both of which are spiritual.

His spiritual giftedness was received by way of sincere and radical search,

[3] OED places the second meaning first: 'A free gift or favour specially vouchsafed by God', and then the more recent one, 'only in form *charisma* … the capacity to inspire devotion or enthusiasm'. [Ed.]

in a personal foundational experience. It is a divine endowment for Ignatius that enriches the Church and opens out for the benefit of humanity. A layperson discovers with God a new way of looking at all things, of making them new and beloved: the discovery in Jesus of the incarnate God, the mirror in which to look, and look at oneself, the divine gaze. It is a way of desiring and following, of understanding profoundly and savouring interiorly (Exx 2)—giftedness as spiritual exercise.

And this giftedness is Ignatius' greatest gift to the world, and the greatest treasure of the Society of Jesus. The Spiritual Exercises offer an ever-original itinerary for encounter with God which is followed in an unequivocally personal way. The Exercises are based on the foundational experience of someone who has entered into the depths and felt the hand of a God who is love, and who forgives and embraces us—someone who found in the solitude of a cave the signs that would make his later pilgrimage bear fruit. What is his particular charism? Is it not a relationship with God that is incarnated and realised in the following of Jesus and unconditional attachment to him, and which Ignatius was able to write down and propose as an itinerary and spiritual exercise for others? If so, this charism is truly beneficial and may be understood deeply by those who have lived the experience of the Exercises.

If the Ignatian charism is based on Ignatius' mystical experience, which he then brought together and transmitted through the Exercises, a significant question arises. Without the personal and profound experience of God in one's own process of making the Exercises, how can one come close to the Ignatian charism? Undoubtedly, placing God at the centre of one's life is already a way into that charism and opens a door to the Spirit. Thereafter seeking and finding God's will in the disposition of one's own life is to share in the charism of Ignatius.

The experience of the Exercises leads us to walk hand in hand with God through our innermost depths, to look at ourselves in God's Son and conform ourselves to Jesus. The experience consists of four weeks in which to enter deeply into reconciliation, gratitude, communion and surrender. Ignatius received a gift with a singular usefulness, a very special charism. At Manresa and in the 'illumination at Cardoner' he experienced a spiritual pedagogy for the encounter with God and for loving and following Christ, so as to love and serve in all things. It is a pedagogy with the true Pedagogue. As Herbert Alphonso has pointed out:

> Everything that Ignatius ever thought, said, did or wrote after God himself had educated him in the school of the Spirit bears witness to his overall outlook on the world, on human persons, on life itself. What was this 'worldview' to which God had educated him from his bed of convalescence at Loyola, through what he liked to call his 'primitive Church' at Manresa, and on through his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, then through the period of studies—Barcelona, Alcalá, Salamanca, Paris—and finally on to Rome?[4]

The Ignatian charism implies entering into the pedagogy of that 'divine pedagogue' through whom life is illuminated from a different perspective. All reality comes from God and returns to God. An incarnate spirituality also implies living a life centred on God—the God of Jesus—and at the same time living for others and with others. It is an experience offered to us so that we can overcome ourselves through indifference, with complete trust in God. As Brother Gárate said, 'I do what I can and the Lord, who can do all things, sees to the rest'.[5] There is strength in an awareness of our finitude, in gratitude for gifts received and in freedom already prepared for mission.

All reality comes from God and returns to God

Years later, the experience at La Storta became for Ignatius a graced confirmation of the charism he had received: 'God the Father was putting him with his Son' (*Autobiography*, n.96). He responded by showing his willingness to serve Christ, bearing his cross in the Church alongside his companions. The gift and grace in the life of Ignatius, the Ignatian charism is the root and origin of the charism of the Jesuits: to be those who are placed with Jesus, in his company.

One Charism and Two Ways of Life: Religious and Lay

Vatican II renewed our understanding of the charismatic dimension of the People of God. The Spirit is manifested in many charisms, and in gifts received by pastors, laypeople and religious. The charism is universal and goes beyond the ecclesial sphere. The Spirit acts and renews the presence of Christ in the Church and in the world.

The charism of Ignatius, a gift received as a layperson, led him to change course and embark on a pilgrimage with a new meaning. A

[4] Herbert Alphonso, 'The Jesuit/Ignatian Charism: A Personal Synthesis and Tribute to Fr P. Arrupe', *Review of Ignatian Spirituality (CIS)*, 38/3(2007), 50–75, here 51.
[5] *Butler's Lives of the Saints*, new edn (London: Burns and Oates, 2000), 87.

child of his time, after a process marked by conversion, formation and a deepening of his purpose in life to praise and serve God, he founded the Society of Jesus with a group of friends. Paul III's approval of the Formula of the Institute (1540) established for the first time the goal or mission of,

> … a Society founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the defense and propagation of the faith and for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, by means of public preaching, lectures, and any other ministration whatsoever of the word of God, and further by means of the Spiritual Exercises, the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity, and the spiritual consolation of Christ's faithful through hearing confessions and administering the other sacraments (*Constitutions*, Formula of the Institute, 1).

But the Ignatian charism also instils meaning and is realised with a common mysticism in other ways: in the life of many female religious congregations, in the lives of priests, religious and countless laypeople. I do not believe it is possible to evaluate the greater or lesser intensity with which this charism is embodied, nor to specify the multiple links to the Society from different walks of life—least of all in relation to the life of the laity, in which we can find people who are connected by the experience of the Spiritual Exercises, or a have a specific professional relationship, or who are integrated into the Christian Life Community or the apostolic community of certain works. There are multiple expressions of the laity, and varied approaches to the Ignatian charism, without 'formats' comparable to that of the Jesuits. As Josep M. Rambla states:

> The difference is fundamentally due to the limited nature of human life: the same unique life of faith, leaning toward a more secular way of life, cannot achieve a lifestyle so focused on actions that visibly express God's freely decisive action in the world and vice versa. These are not two mutually exclusive types of life.[6]

There is one charism and two ways of life. The vocation to religious life is 'consecrated' and structured for ecclesial and evangelical service that opts, with its significant renunciations, for a way of life with

[6] Josep M. Rambla, 'Ignacio de Loyola, seglares y jesuitas. "Perfección en cualquier estado o vida"', *L'Escola Ignasiana d'Espiritualitat (EIDES)*, 48 (November 2006), 7.

constitutive elements such as availability, poverty, common life and goods, chastity and obedience. For their part, the lay vocation and life are more embedded in the world, in a secular reality—realities such as family and marriage, profession, social and cultural activity, civic commitment and so on. In all of these an unequivocal evangelical and ecclesial service can be expressed and lived. In both ways of life, for laypeople and Jesuits, the Ignatian charism is the beating heart that gives light for 'seeking and finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul' (Exx 1).

There is one charism that becomes two distinct and complementary approaches that, at the risk of oversimplification, can be formulated in this way:

- For the Jesuits, the mission (of the Society), spirituality (Ignatian) and the body (apostolic, as a Society) form an integrated axis of meaning and life that totalises and synthesizes their religious vocation and their service as is appropriate according to 'times, places and persons' (*Constitutions*, Preamble [136]).

- For a broad group of laypeople, mission (shared with the Society), spirituality (Ignatian) and connection to the body (apostolic) form an axis of meaning that reinforces their vocation of service in a life integrated into marital, family, professional and social commitments.

In short, these are two distinct paths, profoundly unified in the mystery of the Church's communion and nourished by the same spirituality, which can be dynamically coordinated in a shared mission and potentially developed into a common Ignatian body. These are two distinct ways of living and proclaiming the Gospel, united in paths of service an open to holiness. As Pope Francis stated:

> The important thing is that each believer discern his or her own path, that they bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:7), rather than hopelessly trying to imitate something not meant for them. We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness.[7]

[7] Pope Francis, *Gaudete et exsultate*, n. 11

Clergy and laity, detail from **The Church Militant and Triumphant***, by Andrea Di Bonaiuto, 1365–1367*

Notes, Questions and Urgent Considerations from the Lay Perspective

With the aim of continuing dialogue and opening pathways among all those who embrace and wish to cultivate the Ignatian charism with authenticity, as well as deepen collaboration between Jesuits and laypeople, I propose, in all freedom and humility, some questions from the 'lay perspective'.

An Unabashed Affirmation of the Role of the Ignatian Laity

Ignatius was a layperson who, from his conversion to his ordination as a priest, shows us a model for the laity in seeking and finding God in all things. He was an apostle of Jesus, called by the Spirit with many signs. Today, lay people living 'in the Ignatian way' are here to stay. They are on an equal apostolic and ecclesial footing, sharing a mission with the Jesuits, invigorating and sustaining works and projects within the Society. Acting as multipliers they are finding a different way to become a 'body'.

The initiative belongs to God since the two ways of life, Jesuit and lay, are united in seeking and doing God's will. Ignatian spirituality is fertile ground for lay life because it encourages inner freedom, contemplative

capacity and commitment to action. It allows us to enter into the world without clericalism and with the capacity to break boundaries, without fanaticism and in a spirit of communion.

An Express Recognition of the Society's Openness and Willingness

The lay perspective cannot ignore the Society's constant and growing willingness to open the doors of collaboration and shared mission with the laity. There is much evidence in practice, as well as explicit formulations from recent General Congregations and the teachings of Fathers General.

General Congregation 34 emphasized the need for 'Ignatian apostolic networks'.[8] It envisioned a territory opened up to creative fidelity, with a real readiness to seek and discover new ways of welcoming, accompanying and collaborating with the laity. The recent General Congregation 36 did not dwell on this, but a pathway has been opened up for exploration.

A Society on the Emerging Frontier of the Laity

This is a pathway that leads into frontier territory for the Society. But the laity can be considered a 'frontier' that is already a heartland. There is a challenge and an opportunity, with a shared mission and missions to share. It also implies sharing in deliberation, discernment, decision-making and governance. Participating and collaborating in a network is not the same as being an apostolic body. How can we reframe the body, the Society, the apostolic subject? How can we establish links that are instruments of service to the mission while preserving the Ignatian charism and its respective ways of life? How can an Ignatian body be built for shared mission?

The Radical Necessity for Jesuit Spiritual Mastery

If anything is relevant to sustaining the journey of laypeople and Jesuits together in so many shared missions and works, it is the radical need to rely on 'masters in the Spirit'. These are Jesuits with expertise in the things of the spirit—by tradition, by formation and by vocation. Who is able to offer this if not the Jesuits? And this is a critical issue, for the Society and everything around it. If there is one permanent and

[8] GC 34, decree 13, nn. 355–356.

central need in any of our endeavours, it is to rely on those who can accompany and help us discern. The Jesuits are key to this more than any other endeavour—not only in the area of the Spiritual Exercises, where lay men and women can already be found accompanying others, but especially among the people, works, missions, initiatives and projects that go hand in hand with authentic personal and communal discernment. Thus the search for a practice of God's will springs from the contemplation of Christ, 'just as if I were there' (Exx 114), as he continually invites us to the task of becoming more human.

Two-Way Formation, Collaboration and Accompaniment

Lay men and women have their primary field of commitment in marriage and the family. But we also live with commitments to many other areas: in education and culture, science and technology, in social and political life, in artistic creation and humanistic reflection. A lot of talent is available and willing to be deployed; even without the long and consistent Jesuit formation, they are sufficiently prepared. The dynamics of collaboration, formation and accompaniment are mutually dependent upon one another. Just as in formation and spiritual accompaniment, Jesuits may predominate, but in practices of collaboration and human accompaniment, I believe that we laypeople have some advantages, especially laywomen. In any case, a spirit of Ignatian leadership needs to be engendered in love and service.

In Conclusion: The Missio Dei *Continues*

Ignatius offers us a spirituality that springs from a personal encounter with God. He bequeaths us a charism, a way of exercising ourselves in the Spirit. It is a spiritual pedagogy for an incarnate spirituality: from decentring ourselves to centring our life on the God of Jesus, so as to live with and for others. The Ignatian charism imbues the life and spirituality of Jesuits and laypeople with meaning. There are still some pending questions, and even urgent needs to be addressed. But from a lay perspective there are ample reasons for hope. As Father Arturo Sosa, Superior General of the Society, states:

> By renewing our trust in God, we want to move forward as a global network with a universal mission. The challenges before us are many, but the apostolic possibilities can be greater. We need to detect them. God continues to work to create and save. The *missio Dei*

continues. This faith encourages us to take on the path of apostolic audaciousness that makes the impossible possible.[9]

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translated by Philip Harrison SJ

[9] Arturo Sosa, 'Keynote Address', in *Fr General at the International Congress for Jesuit Education Delegates* (Rome: Society of Jesus Secretariat for Education, 2020), 23.

IGNATIUS' FIFTH WEEK

Paul Nicholson

CARRYING OUT THE WILL of God might seem comparatively straightforward to anyone who is actually going through the process of making the full Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in their thirty-day form. The book itself lays out a detailed programme of prayer, reflection, rest, recreation and so on, and retreatants meet with individual guides each day so that this can be applied or adapted as suits their own circumstances best. Although the experience may well, and indeed should, be challenging at times, someone keeping to the guidance being offered can be reasonably certain, for that month at least, that they are acting in accordance with God's will.

What happens, though, in the time after the retreat, in that 'Fifth Week' (the title of the 2025 St Beuno's Conference) which is the rest of life? What guidance is available then, to enable someone who has made the Exercises to live in accordance with all that the thirty days have revealed? Of course, such guidance is not lacking. Church teaching, society's ethical and legal norms, the former exercitant's own moral belief, and the demands of daily living will all help to shape life beyond the Exercises. But what kind of guidance might Ignatius himself have offered, and indeed offer, today? My aim is not so much to answer this question in specific detail as to consider what resources are available in the Ignatian tradition to help someone begin to respond to it, and how those resources might best be employed. I shall draw on three exercises that were used at the conference.

The *Spiritual Exercises* make up only a small portion of the writings that Ignatius left after his death in 1556. There are, in addition, his Spiritual Diary, the Jesuit *Constitutions*, the document often called his *Autobiography*, and nearly 7,000 extant letters and instructions that he composed with the help of a succession of secretaries, most notably Juan de Polanco. Furthermore, much of this mass of material concerns itself with how one can best live a life orientated to the will of God since, after his conversion, this was Ignatius' principal desire for himself and for those who sought his guidance. In addition, the book of the

The Way, 64/3 (July 2025), 73–79

Exercises contains many pointers towards practical ways to implement subsequently what has been experienced while making them.

Remembering Ignatius' Life

Imagine, for a moment, that you are gathered with a small group of Ignatius' friends sometime early in August 1556, shortly after his death and burial. You find yourself swapping stories of the things that you remember he said and did, as is usual at a funeral reception or wake. This was the opening exercise of the workshop and you, the reader, might like to try it for yourself now. From what you know of the life of Ignatius Loyola (however much or little), pick out one incident and spend some time recalling it, 'savouring it', as he himself might have said. When you have done that for a few minutes, come back to the present moment and ask yourself why you chose that particular story from his life, what its significance is for you, and also perhaps what it could mean for those with whom you might choose to share it.

The work that we now know as the *Autobiography* (or sometimes, the 'Reminiscences') was largely forgotten, and indeed officially taken out of circulation, from the late sixteenth century onwards, when more polished histories of Ignatius' life were prepared as part of the process promoting the cause of his canonization. After it had been rediscovered in the nineteenth century, it came to be regarded as an unvarnished and personal telling of his story, 'straight from the horse's mouth', as it were, and so to be preferred to the then current (often rather hagiographical) biographies. Only slowly did those studying the text become more aware of the careful way in which Ignatius had chosen to shape this account that he dictated, towards the end of his life, to Gonçalves da Câmara. Apart from other considerations, the work describes in detail less than two decades of his life (he lived to the age of about 65), from his conversion in 1521 to his arrival with his first companions in Rome in 1538, two years before the Society of Jesus would receive its first official papal approbation.

Nevertheless da Câmara's introduction tells us that, in the view of Jerónimo Nadal—the Jesuit who had been entrusted by Ignatius with the task of promulgating drafts of the Society's new *Constitutions* throughout Europe— getting Ignatius to tell the story of these years in his own words was 'truly to found the Society'. This is because, as Philip Endean has pointed out, the *Autobiography* is shaped by a belief

that would be taken up again at the Second Vatican Council.[1] The decree on the renewal of religious life, *Perfectae caritatis*, stated:

> It redounds to the good of the Church that institutes have their own particular characteristics and work. Therefore let their founders' spirit and special aims they set before them as well as their sound traditions—all of which make up the patrimony of each institute—be faithfully held in honor.[2]

There is something in the way that God works with those called to establish religious congregations ('the spirit and aims of each founder') that remains definitive for the later members of those congregations.

In the *Autobiography*, then, Ignatius told the story of the years between his conversion and the founding of the Jesuit order in such a way as to bring out the parallels with the formation programme that he laid down for those wanting to follow this particular 'pathway to God', almost all of whom would have made the Spiritual Exercises and would therefore be living in the 'Fifth Week'. The years of study with the aim of being better able, eventually, to be of service to others; the steady growth in the knowledge and practice of discernment; the discovery of those similarly called, and the ability to work fruitfully with them; the need to reconnect periodically with the original inspiration, represented here by the First Companions' time in Venice and by the final year of training (the 'tertianship') shared by Jesuits to this day: all are highlighted in turn as Ignatius dictates his life history.

The clear expectation is that Jesuits of subsequent generations, and indeed all those seriously attracted to Ignatian spirituality, will find aspects of their own experience mirrored here and be able to draw fruit from pondering upon the reflections that Ignatius shares. The aim of the first workshop exercise is to invite participants to consider why they remembered a particular incident from Ignatius' life, and to notice its particular resonances with their own lives and practices.

Ignatius' Guidance Today

Perhaps the main concern that Ignatius himself had, between the official establishment of the Society of Jesus in 1540 and his death sixteen years later, was to compose *Constitutions* that would govern the life and

[1] Philip Endean, 'Who Do You Say Ignatius Is? Jesuit Fundamentalism and Beyond', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 19/5 (1987).
[2] *Perfectae caritatis*, n. 2.

development of this new religious order. It is unsurprising, therefore, that much of the guidance he offered for life after the Exercises was focused on the experience of the male, celibate members of this innovative Society, living a communal apostolic life. At the same time he and his early recruits, were offering the Exercises to many others, men and women, lay and religious. Much of the guidance that he left is thus more widely applicable, even if at times it requires a level of adaptation.

As noted above, within the book of the *Spiritual Exercises* itself there is much to suggest how those making them might appropriately shape their lives subsequently. The second exercise of the St Beuno's workshop looked at this by focusing on the Rules for Distributing Alms (Exx 337–344). These take some of the suggestions already made for use within the retreat itself and apply them to deciding, later on, when and how to employ some of our resources for the good of others. They thus represent direct guidance from Ignatius about how to live in the 'Fifth Week'—but the more specific the advice offered by Ignatius is, the more it runs the risk of seeming outdated nearly five centuries later.

Few today are likely to be greatly swayed by the examples given here of the decrees of the Third Council of Carthage (despite the participation of St Augustine) on the furnishing of bishops' residences, or the supposed decisions of the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary on the disposal of their household income—see the seventh rule (Exx 344). The workshop therefore invited participants to consider what functional 'rules' we might offer today, along with ways in which contemporary directors of the Exercises might make use of these and how they might approach other guidelines offered by Ignatius within the text.

One protracted example of dealing with this challenge is found in the 'Complementary Norms', now usually printed alongside current editions of the Jesuit *Constitutions*. Unlike the constitutions of other religious congregations, those of the Society of Jesus have not been regularly updated. Rather, the decrees of General Congregations (periodic meetings of representatives of the order which have the Society's highest legislative authority) stand alongside the *Constitutions*, giving authoritative guidance for applying them in any given period. In 1995 the 34th General Congregation approved the Complementary Norms, drawn from the Congregations up to that date, which laid out how Ignatius' various stipulations in the *Constitutions* were to be understood today.

Patterns of Prayer

The final exercise of the workshop took one example of how this process of adaptation and application has worked. The Exercises, as laid out by Ignatius, stipulate prayer of up to five hours daily, in addition to preparation beforehand and reflection afterwards, and attendance at Eucharist and perhaps other church services. It seems unlikely that most of those who have made the Exercises would want, or even be able, to build this particular pattern of prayer into their subsequent 'Fifth Week' lives. How, then, does Ignatius suggest that they do pray afterwards?

One answer is that the Exercises entail an expectation that those who have made them will grow in their ability to discern, and may well be able (perhaps with the help of spiritual directors, and some trial and error) to find suitable patterns of prayer for themselves. While acknowledging this, workshop participants were also invited to consider three documents from the Ignatian sources that throw further light on the matter.

The first was that paragraph in the *Constitutions* where Ignatius charts his expectations for a Jesuit's prayer during his time of studies, that is, after he has made the Exercises for the first time:

> Consequently, in addition to confession and Communion every eight days and daily Mass, they will have one hour, during which they will recite the Hours of Our Lady, examine their consciences twice each day, and add other prayers according to each one's devotion to fill out the rest of the aforesaid hour. They will do all this according to the order and judgment of their superiors, whom they oblige themselves to obey in place of Christ our Lord. (*Constitutions*, IV.4.3 [342])

The second was the commentary and updating taken from the 1995 Complementary Norms (n.67):

> 1. Our members during the entire time of their formation should be carefully helped to grow in prayer and a sense of spiritual responsibility towards a mature interior life, in which they will know how to apply the rule of discerning love that St Ignatius prescribed for members after the period of their formation.
>
> 2. To foster this growth, the Society retains the practice of an hour and a half as the time for prayer, Mass, and thanksgiving. Each one should be guided by his spiritual director as he seeks that form of prayer in which he can best advance in the Lord. The judgment of superiors is normative for each.
>
> 3. Each one should determine with his superior what time he gives to prayer and preparation for it.

And the third was an extract from a letter written by Ignatius to Francisco Borja, countering an opinion seemingly gaining ground in parts of Spain at the time that all Jesuits should continue, as during the Exercises, to pray for at least five hours daily.

> Seventhly, how much more time does he in fact want students to give to prayer, students who are studying for the service of God and the good of the Church as a whole, if they are meant to keep their mental faculties in shape for the work of learning, and to keep their bodies healthy? It would be good for him to reflect that God does not make use of people only when they are praying. If that were the case, prayers for anything less than physically possible in the 24 hours of the day would be too short, for everyone must give themselves as completely as possible to God. But in fact God makes more use at appropriate times of other things than of prayer. If it is God's pleasure that prayer should be left aside in favour of these things, then all the more so when it comes merely to shortening prayer. Thus one must understand properly the obligation to pray at all times without ceasing as the saints and the wise understand it.[3]

Each of these three documents approaches the question of prayer time from a different angle, and each throws light on how similar issues might be resolved today, not simply by trainee Jesuits, but by anyone struggling with a similar practical question. This worked example can illustrate how it can be useful to bring together a number of different Ignatian sources in coming to a view on a particular contested issue.

[3] Ignatius of Loyola to Francisco Borja, duke of Gandia, July 1549, in *Personal Writings*, 227. 'He' was François Onfroy, a young Jesuit priest who was part of a voluble group in Spain highly critical of what they regarded as the lack of prayer in the recently founded Society.

Going Deeper

The idea for the conference workshop originated in a new course being run this year online and at St Beuno's itself, and its final session reviewed this course. Called 'Deepening and Integrating Our Ignatian Formation', it is being offered initially to an invited group of people who have made the full Spiritual Exercises, are already engaged in some form of ministry and desire to grow further in their Ignatian living. It starts with two linked questions:

- If the *Constitutions* are how a Jesuit lives the Exercises, what will help a wider group of people do this?
- What are the primary sources that can help participants deepen their Ignatian charism?

The course has ten monthly sessions, the first and last of which are weekend residentials, and the others half-day online meetings. After an overview of the early Ignatian source materials (and a comparison with the work of Mary Ward, as an example of a woman's approach to these same questions), the later sessions each take one Ignatian document (or a specific concern, such as discernment) and consider it from these perspectives. Participants are then invited, in groups, to link this to their own practice as spiritual accompaniers and as individuals drawing on Ignatian spirituality to feed their own lives of faith. Obviously a single, hour-long conference workshop could not cover all this material at the same depth. But it was able to offer a 'taster' of the Ignatian sources and of how they might be used in these ways.

The Fifth Week St Beuno's conference as a whole reviewed a range of sources offering guidance of how to live life after the Spiritual Exercises. This particular workshop did not claim priority for documents directly attributable to Ignatius himself over other sources. But it did act as a reminder of the wealth of material of this kind that is available, and of ways in which, by consulting it and applying it to different circumstances, as Ignatius demonstrates within the experience of the Spiritual Exercises itself, these 500-year-old reflections still have much to offer.

Paul Nicholson SJ is a former editor of *The Way*. After ten years as Socius (assistant) to three Jesuit provincials, he recently became director of the Jesuit Institute, co-ordinating that part of the spirituality work of the British Province of Jesuits that is done outside its formal centres.

LIVING THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

As a Married Couple and in the Christian Life Community

Chris and Jenny Gardner

WE WERE INTRODUCED to the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius over forty years ago, when we joined a Christian Life Community (CLC) and began meeting regularly to share our lives and our faith. The General Principles and General Norms of the Christian Life Community declare:

> We hold the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius as the specific source and the characteristic instrument of our spirituality. Our vocation calls us to live this spirituality, which opens and disposes us to whatever God wishes in each concrete situation of our daily life.[1]

The ever-deepening wellspring of Ignatian spirituality has opened up to us over the many intervening years and become integral to our way of life as a couple. We made the full Spiritual Exercises in daily life in our group with Sr Joan Smith RSM. At different times we subsequently both completed the Arrupe Program, the formation programme for Ignatian spiritual directors provided by the Australian province of the Society of Jesus. As trained Ignatian spiritual directors, we have each accompanied people through the full Spiritual Exercises in daily life and currently offer spiritual direction in a private practice. We find this ministry to be a real joy and a source of ongoing growth for each of us.

In essence, it is the graces of the Spiritual Exercises that enable us to live out our lives to the full. The Exercises call us first to pray daily, to use the Examen to reflect on the spiritual movements in our day, to discern important decisions and to live in the service of others with joy and gratitude. Ignatius' maxim of 'finding God in all things' means that

[1] *General Principles and General Norms of the Christian Life Community* (Rome: World Christian Life Community, 2020), 1.5.

everything is sacred in our lives. We find enormous freedom in this way of being. As a couple, our family and home are central, and offering hospitality to others is an ongoing source of joy and gratitude for us.

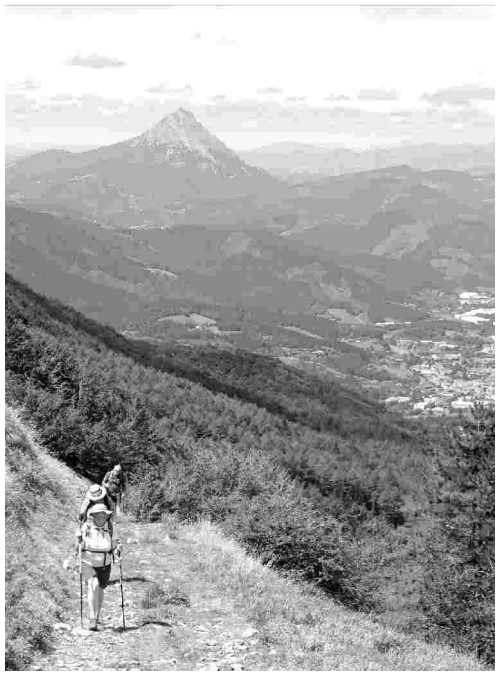
When we look at the Spiritual Exercises, the big picture of the Four Weeks offers us a way of viewing our lives. Within it the Principle and Foundation provides a framework for living as a couple and family. The call to live with an attitude of indifference and to seek God's will in the context of our deepest desires is central. And the notion of disordered attachments—the things that stop each of us from being a loving person—is very important and helpful to our psychological well-being.

The First Week reminds us of our humanity, our tendency to sin, the need to face our own truth and God's ever-loving mercy (Exx 55–61). In a marriage and a family we come face to face with our own sinfulness daily in ourselves and others. Recognising our shadow side, individually and as a couple, has been important, especially in the context of our life cycle from youngsters in love, through beginning a family, parenting, watching our children become adults, becoming grandparents and looking towards the end of our lives. At each stage there have been different challenges which have inevitably led us back to the First Week and seeking the grace of being loved by God in our sinfulness.

The Second Week gives us the model of Jesus' life on which to pattern our own lives. The grace of the Second Week—'to ask for an interior knowledge of Our Lord … that I may love him more intensely and follow him more closely' (Exx 104)—helps us live the call to a simple and prayerful lifestyle, to focus on listening both to one another and to others, to notice and respond to the needs of the marginalised, to value and build community wherever we are and to live out our faith as a witness to others.

Reflecting on the Third Week: 'the grace we seek in accompanying Christ through his suffering is compassion'.[2] We have found in Jesus' suffering echoes of our own and a place to be united with Christ in moments of feeling despair and abandonment. In earlier years, facing the suffering of infertility, the darkness of depression and major mental health challenges in the family, we have learnt compassion in the realities of life. But the encouragement of the Spirit and the love of Jesus and the Father have enabled us to find a way forward in these challenging times.

[2] Kevin O'Brien, *The Ignatian Adventure: Experiencing the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in Daily Life* (Chicago: Loyola, 2011), 216.



The Ignatian Camino

We now believe that we are called to live in the Fifth Week of the Exercises—to be imbued with a deep sense of gratitude for God's love in our daily lives and wonderment at the beautiful world in which we live. It is in and through the graces of the Spiritual Exercises that we live our lives with God's help. Such graces enable us to respond in love to situations that we face, to follow Ignatius' guidelines for the discernment of spirits and to focus on the consolations in our life with a deepening awareness and gratitude for God's faithful presence.

In 2015 we had the privilege of walking the Ignatian Camino, 500 kilometres across Spain, with a group of Australians under the guidance of José Luis Iriberri SJ. The camino was planned as a thirty-day retreat as well as an opportunity to walk in the steps of St Ignatius. We were deeply moved by this experience of seeing the places that Ignatius visited and where he lived, and understanding more deeply the context and culture of his life. Ignatius' idea of us being pilgrims on a lifelong journey resonated for us in this experience.

The Christian Life Community

Being members of the Christian Life Community has been both formative and central to our living out of the Spiritual Exercises. Membership is primarily a call to faithfulness and to introducing others to this spirituality wherever we have the opportunity, through our parish, the ministry of the First Spiritual Exercises and our wider community.[3] 'The mission of CLC, is first of all, to live in the light of the gospel in those "places

[3] The First Spiritual Exercises are an adaptation of the Exercises according to the Eighteenth Annotation. See Michael Hansen, *The First Spiritual Exervises: Four Guided Retreats* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria, 2013).

and circumstances" where only I, if I am a lay person, can make my contribution.'[4] So the context of our role as laypersons is very important, as is the notion of discernment.

Discernment is central in the Spiritual Exercises and has been important to us at a personal and communal level. As members of the Christian Life Community we have participated in communal discernments at an international level, at the World Assembly (Chris in Lebanon in 2013 and Jenny in Buenos Aires in 2018), at a national level in the National Executive, at a local level in the State Executive and in our own small group, where we most recently discerned the decision to place a focus on understanding the needs of refugees in Australia. On a personal level, discernment is part of our decision-making as a couple.

A key discernment for both of us took place in 2014, when we decided, along with fourteen others, to make a permanent commitment to the Christian Life Community. The decision to make this public commitment through a process of discernment is not a religious vow, but a spiritual decision made in inner freedom; it can sometimes be linked to the election in the Second Week of the Exercises. We see it as a visible sign of our commitment and our desire to live the charism and follow the community priorities. CLC in Australia currently has three nationally discerned priorities, which we believe are totally in keeping with the graces of the Spiritual Exercises:

- forming our members and sharing Ignatian spirituality;
- caring for God's creation;
- walking with the excluded—we follow Jesus, imitating his special concern for the poor, marginalised and excluded.

Our long-standing involvement and commitment to the Christian Life Community has led us to be involved in sharing Ignatian spirituality in many different ways. A primary way has been through the ministry of the First Spiritual Exercises and as Ignatian spiritual directors. We have also been part of initiating a small group called ISWA (Ignatian Spirituality Western Australia) with the aim of offering the charism to our wider community in Western Australia, after the formal departure of the Jesuits from our state about eight years ago. This continues to be a challenging area of involvement for us.

[4] David Harold-Barry, 'Consecrated Life is for Lay People Too', *Progressio* (2015) n. 2, 22–24, here 24.

Caring for God's creation emerges out of 'the grace of wonder at God's ongoing creation; gratitude for the gift of God creating me and creating the world'.[5] Immersed in the teachings of Pope Francis's *Laudato si'*, we have been led into the area of eco-spirituality, developing reflections on nature: leading reflective walks, Clean Up Australia programmes and tree planting.

> Ignatian spirituality has always been about justice, the marginalised and being mission-oriented. In CLC we have the gift of discernment and the imperative to be open to the signs of the times. Both of these have drawn us towards care of creation as a priority.[6]

A concern for the marginalised and excluded has always been important to us. During our working years, we were both employed as professional social workers. Jenny worked in schools, hospitals and disability services, eventually moving into pastoral care; Chris worked mainly in residential childcare and mental health services. In our shared professional background, we were committed to issues of social justice. We currently volunteer, Chris in a programme for Indigenous boys and Jenny with a shopfront for the homeless.

In completing the full Spiritual Exercises originally, we each made different elections. Jenny's election focused on giving priority to the needs of the family. With further discernment Chris has explored the idea of a personal vocation as described by Herbert Alphonso:

> … the single greatest grace of my life is that … I discerned my truest and deepest 'self', the unrepeatable uniqueness God has given to me in 'calling me by name' …. my own personal experience and my ministry of the Spirit have taught me that the deepest transformation in any person's life takes place in the actual living out of this very 'Personal Vocation'.[7]

Alphonso suggests that the Election—seeking and finding God's will in the arrangement, ordering or orientation of my life for salvation—is the purpose of the Exercises. He describes how we become aware of growing inner freedom of God's personal design or plan for us, so that we can accept it profoundly in our lives to live it out faithfully and generously.

[5] O'Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*, 45.
[6] 'Ecological Conversion: An Interview with Jenny and Chris Gardner', *Progressio* (2018), n. 1, 28–31.
[7] Herbert Alphonso, *The Personal Vocation: Transformation in Depth through the Spiritual Exercises* (Rome: Gregorian U, 2002), 14.

It is not only my state of life but the unique, unrepeatable call from God. Chris has discerned a personal vocation of accompanying those in an emotional wilderness—for example, children in residential care, those dealing with mental health issues and latterly refugees.

In conclusion, we, like others, are human and so mired in the sinfulness that we all share. What we have described above are our efforts to live the Spiritual Exercises as a married couple and in community. We often miss the mark and so are continually in need of God's grace. We do have a desire to live as God calls us to live in the service of others and to offer ourselves individually and as a couple in the loving partnership that we share. We see the fruits in our family life with our two daughters and their families, in their expressions of their values of compassion and justice. We are always learning, always growing in faith and always understanding more of what it means to live the Spiritual Exercises in our everyday lives. Since July 2022 we have been living in a retirement village, and in this new community and as we embrace the aging process, we continue to live with gratitude and joy.

> When applied to the everyday, it can be said we all live in God's service, where all is gift, in gentle indifference we stand before all things, places and circumstances ready to move forward or choose only that which is good and that for which we are created.[8]

Chris and Jenny Gardner are members of the Christian Life Community and spiritual directors living in Perth, Western Australia. Ignatian spirituality has profoundly shaped their understanding of discernment, reflective practice and the pursuit of a life centred around faith and service. They are connected to Jesuit and Ignatian Spirituality Australia (JISA) which is a national community of people formed in the way of Ignatian spirituality.

[8] Martin Scroope, 'Call to Holiness', unpublished notes, June 2024, 3.

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THE EXAMEN AND IGNATIAN IMAGINATION

Margaret Felice

AS THE FIELD of Ignatian spirituality has developed and its themes and practices have been articulated for a lay audience, the five-point Examen has emerged as one of the more popular practices from the Ignatian tradition. Though its use is often far removed from the context in which Ignatius originally presented it, it remains a practice that promotes many of the hallmarks of his spiritual approach: the prayerful use of imagination in reflection, the rejection of past sins, and the evolution of one's dispositions and self-understanding. The particular combination of movements—looking back and looking forward, guided by the imagination—can aid in the moral growth of the individual, encouraging a commitment to moral principles and the development of a virtuous self-image. This dynamic has implications for the presentation, facilitation and use of the Examen by educators, ministers and those who access this experience to deepen their prayer.

The Spiritual Exercises include many opportunities to imagine. Guided by a spiritual director and dealing directly with the Creator, the retreatant composes scenes, considers paradigmatic figures and ponders how he or she might respond to God's call. St Ignatius of Loyola shares his five-point process for a General Examination of Conscience (Exx 43) in this highly imaginative context. Intentionally using the imagination in the Examen prayer can deepen one's prayer, particularly in the fifth step of making amends and looking forward. The Examen, however, is not solely a forward-looking enterprise. Both in and out of the context of the Exercises, the Examen involves a call to reject one's past sins and to put the imagination in the service of growing in the love of God. The Examen can be a way for people to see beyond what they think their moral and spiritual capacities are. The structure of the prayer helps situate this vision on the way of discipleship as an extension of one's previous activity.

The Way, 64/3 (July 2025), 87–97

Ignatian Imagination in Practice

Ignatius' conversion put imagination front and centre. During his convalescence after the battle of Pamplona, Ignatius read the *Life of Christ* and lives of the saints, and began to picture himself doing great deeds as St Dominic and St Francis had.[1] His creative use of the images he encountered left him with a feeling of rightness and satisfaction. Images were key to the subsequent illuminations God granted him at Manresa (*Autobiography*, nn. 28–30). These were not willed imaginings, but revelations that engaged Ignatius' senses and imagistic way of knowing. He understood God as a musical chord and as qualities of light; each of these became part of his spiritual vocabulary. Just as the images of Christ and the saints expanded Ignatius' self-understanding at Loyola, the images that were part of the illuminations expanded his understanding of God.[2]

While at Manresa, Ignatius began writing out what would become the *Spiritual Exercises*.[3] Many contemplations and meditations throughout the Four Weeks of the Exercises begin with composition of place, inviting retreatants to call to mind a certain situation in their prayer.[4] Ignatius introduces the practice in the first exercises of the First Week thus:

> The First Prelude is a composition made by imagining the place. Here we should take notice of the following. When a contemplation or meditation is about something that can be gazed on, for example, a contemplation of Christ our Lord, who is visible, the composition will be to see in imagination the physical place where that which I want to contemplate is taking place ….
>
> When a contemplation or meditation is about something abstract and invisible, as in the present case about the sins, the compositions will be to see in imagination and to consider my soul as imprisoned in this corruptible body, and my whole compound self as an exile in this valley [of tears] among brute animals. I mean, my whole self as composed of soul and body. (Exx 47)

[1] *Autobiography*, n. 5. These books were Ludolph of Saxony's *The Life of Jesus Christ* and Jacobus de Voragine's *The Golden Legend*.

[2] In this sense they are distinct from the representational visions that Ignatius experienced, such as that of Mary and Jesus at Loyola (Exx 10). Ignatius did not expect the Exercises to involve mystical visions, but he seems to have been influenced by the instructive potential of images in helping to illustrate the ineffable.

[3] Cándido de Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits: His Life and Work* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985), 64.

[4] Although these practices are not limited to retreats, I preserve the use of the word 'retreatant' when discussing the movements of the Spiritual Exercises. Some of these contemplations end with a related imaginative technique, the application of the senses. This has been subject to more controversy and varied interpretations than composition of place. See Philip Endean, 'The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses', *Heythrop Journal*, 31 (1990), 391–418.

Retreatants may use images they have already encountered, such as a place, or new images that are either suggested or constructed. There is an expectation that God may move retreatants through imaginative exercises, and these are part of a process which includes petitionary and conversational prayer.[5] The First Prelude, beginning each meditation, is bookended by prayer: first a preparatory prayer for grace and then the Second Prelude, asking God for what one hopes to understand by the current meditation. The meditations conclude with a conversation, or colloquy, with Jesus, Mary or one of the persons of the Trinity.

Though many of the meditations are rooted in scripture, the Spiritual Exercises also include imaginative exercises from outside the biblical tradition. In the Kingdom Meditation, retreatants 'place before their mind' a just temporal king to stir their feelings, and then consider a divine king, contemplating how much more they would be willing to sacrifice for the divine king.[6] By imagining committing themselves to the divine king, they use their imagination to deepen their devotion. By placing themselves in the practice, they come to identify with the actions they imagine themselves taking or attitudes they are beginning to hold.

Christ the King, detail from the Ghent Altarpiece by Jan van Eyck, 1432

[5] In Exx 62 the retreatant is told to repeat the previous exercises with attention to 'those points where I felt greater consolation or desolation, or had a greater spiritual experience', implying that those reactions are ways that God moves the retreatant through the meditations.

[6] Exx 91–99. The Call of the King is one of the more anachronistic meditations, hearkening back to Ignatius' chivalric era with its emphasis on social hierarchies. Regardless of where one stands on 'kingship' language, one can still consider the wisdom of its construction and placement in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

The Kingdom Meditation exemplifies forward-looking imaginative spirituality, and is a model for how to inhibit the tendencies towards narcissism and fantasy that can come up in one's imagination. It keeps God at the centre of the retreatants' vision while naming the challenges and temptations of the world. 'They will work against their human sensitivities and their carnal and worldly love' to 'imitate you in bearing all injuries and affronts, and any poverty, actual as well as spiritual, if your Most Holy Majesty desires to choose and receive me into such a life and state' (Exx 97–98). The retreatants desire to follow God's will, and imagine enduring certain hardships for God's glory, if that is God's will. This meditation resists self-centredness by placing them in the role of followers; they are less likely to be distracted by their fantasies of heroism when focused on the one who leads. Those praying can see the future for which they hope, in ways not so specific that they becomes attached to their detailed vision, but personal enough to shape their commitments and actions. That this is done with the guidance of a spiritual director provides another check on fantastical or narcissistic imaginings.

The complexity of this meditation in the context of a retreat helps to reveal the parameters of Ignatian imagination, which is always in the service of 'that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created', to 'praise reverence and serve Christ our Lord, and by means of doing so to save our souls' (Exx 23). Peter-Hans Kolvenbach writes, 'The application of the imagination is always for Ignatius inserted into a concrete spiritual movement'.[7] It serves this movement, but is also an indispensable part of it:

> The importance which Ignatius gives in the Exercises to the field of the imagination indicates at least that he intends disposing the whole person to enter into the mystery of God. This entry will not be real unless the imagination is also integrated into the spiritual movement that such an entry supposes.[8]

The images that arise during the Exercises are interpreted in light of what one already knows about God through scripture, tradition and prayer.

These interpretative influences include the movements already experienced during the retreat. Retreatants engage in the Kingdom Meditation after having prayed the First Week, when they recognise

[7] Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, 'Images and Imagination in the Spiritual Exercises', *Review of Ignatian Spirituality (CIS)*, 18/1 (1987), 16.
[8] Kolvenbach, 'Images and Imagination in the Spiritual Exercises', 12–13.

themselves as loved sinners and reject their previous sins. The reference to human sensitivities and worldly love in Exx 67 may call to mind the sins on which they have reflected. Occurring at the beginning of the Second Week, the Call of the King is a bridge from the purgative way of the First Week into the illuminative way of the Second, when retreatants seek better to understand and commit themselves to the Kingdom of God.[9] The imagination is informed by the past and present while being orientated hopefully towards future union with God.

Both the *Autobiography* and the *Spiritual Exercises* reveal Ignatius' insights into the role of the imagination in the spiritual life. The imagination works with the images it has and grows when we are exposed to new information. Images can help people to understand spiritual truths. The imagination should be exercised in the service of God and in the context of prayer to avoid negative or misleading imaginings. When used in this way, the imagination can help a person envision the path of discipleship and begin to pursue it.

The Contemporary Examen

The *Spiritual Exercises* offer various methods of examining one's conscience (Exx 24–44). This concept long pre-dated Ignatius; he adds to this tradition the five-point method in Exx 43:

> The first point is to give thanks to God our Lord for the benefits I have received.
>
> The second is to ask grace to know my sins and rid myself of them.
>
> The third is to ask an account of my soul from the hour of rising to the present examen, hour by hour, or period by period; first as to thoughts, then words, then deeds, in the same order as was given for the particular examination.
>
> The fourth is to ask pardon of God our Lord for my faults.
>
> The fifth is to resolve, with His grace, to amend them. Close with an Our Father.

Initially intended as preparation for confession, these five steps were for many years used to check off one's sins throughout the day.[10] Joseph

[9] For a more detailed account of the role of the imagination in the weeks of the Exercises and the purgative, illuminative and unitive ways, see Frederick G. McLeod, 'The Use of the Imagination in the Ignatian Exercises', *Review of Ignatian Spirituality (CIS)*, 18/1 (1987), 33–92.

[10] See Joseph A. Tetlow, 'The Most Postmodern Prayer: American Jesuit Identity and the Examen of Conscience, 1920–1990', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 26/1 (January 1994).

Tetlow recounts that the Examination of Consciousness was falling out of favour among mid-twentieth-century Jesuits because they had come to see it as a chore rather than as a method of growing closer to God.[11] He connects this decline in practice to the changes in US Roman Catholicism during the early twentieth century, and a move away from the purgative piety of devotional, immigrant Catholicism.

In 1970 George Aschenbrenner wrote a landmark piece reframing the Examen as a way of discerning God's presence, which was a response to this changing spiritual landscape. He agreed with Tetlow that 'though we were always told that examen of conscience in religious life was not the same as a preparation for confession, it was actually explained and treated as though it were much the same'.[12] Aschenbrenner presents the Examen as practice in discernment, one that is less concerned with adjudicating specific actions than with discerning God's presence and one's relationship with God. In time, discernment becomes a perpetual practice. 'The specific exercise of examen is ultimately aimed at developing a heart with a discerning vision to be active not only for one or two quarter-hour periods in a day but continually.'[13] This initiated what Tetlow terms the 'Aschenbrenner shift', changing the focus of the prayer to recognising God in one's daily life and, with repetition, learning to see God throughout the day.

Aschenbrenner's work was a response to what he viewed as an overemphasis on acts, both in the culture and in Christian moral thought. He describes,

> … the great need for interior quiet, peace, and a passionate receptivity that attunes us to listening to God's word at every instant and in every situation and *then* responding in our own activity. Again, in a world that is founded more on activity … productivity and efficiency … this faith view is implicitly, if not explicitly, challenged at every turn in the road.[14]

In a world obsessed with *what one does*, the Examen can create space to consider *who one is* in relationship to God. This need not result in an abandonment of moral growth; rather, building a disposition of recognition

[11] Tetlow, 'Most Postmodern Prayer', 1.
[12] George Aschenbrenner, 'Consciousness Examen', *Review for Religious*, 31 (1972), 14.
[13] Aschenbrenner, 'Consciousness Examen', 16.
[14] Aschenbrenner, 'Consciousness Examen', 19.

affects one's ethical subjectivity, which in turn leads to renewed and transformed acts.

Since Aschenbrenner's time, the Examen has become popular in Jesuit apostolates and beyond. It is an adaptable format with distinct steps which can be made appealing to an ecumenical or secular audience. One element of this 'new' Examen is its encouragement to 'look toward tomorrow' in the fifth step, which explicitly invokes the imagination while tempering the move away from an acts-orientated understanding.[15] Many contemporary versions use this language, calling forth vision and commitment.[16] Envisioning the future is not made explicit in the text of Exx 43, but the Exercises' broader emphasis on imagination and concrete action supports this development.[17] A person praying this Examen as part of the Spiritual Exercises (or as part of Jesuit life) would have experience engaging the imagination through contemplation of place and other prayer practices. Ignatian prayer experiences outside the Exercises benefit

Portrait of a Seated Lady, *by Ivan Pavlovich Pokhitonov, 1893*

[15] This was introduced in Dennis Hamm's influential version of the Examen, published in 'Rummaging for God: Praying Backward through Your Day', *America* (14 May 1994), reprinted in *An Ignatian Spirituality Reader*, edited by George W. Traub (Chicago: Loyola, 2008), 104–110, here 108.

[16] The Examen has been particularly popular in the move toward prayer-based apps. The Hallow app—which bills itself as the '#1 prayer app' and the '#1 Catholic app' and was, as of early 2025, ranked ninth among all reference apps on the app store—includes the Examen, as does the online men's ascetical programme Exodus 90. Among Jesuit-affiliated initiatives, Loyola Press has an app called Reimagining the Examen and the Jesuit Prayer app includes a daily examen. Each of these has a forward-looking prompt in the fifth step.

[17] In 'The Twenty-First Century Construction of Ignatian Spirituality', John W. O'Malley and Timothy W. O'Brien write: 'Of course, because there is no evidence that Saint Ignatius understood the Examen as we now understand it, to describe these initiatives as the recovery of an "Ignatian Examen" is to describe a non-recovery. Still, when placed in the larger context of Ignatius' spiritual heritage, today's Examen has no problem vindicating its legitimacy, given that our current understanding of it has resulted from a new grasp of that larger context.' (*Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 52/3 [Autumn 2020], 34.)

from attentiveness to the context in which they were initially imagined (the process of the Four Weeks of the Exercises). As noted above, the meditation on the Call of the King takes place as part of a process which includes the dialectic of rejecting past sins and making a commitment to the future. The Examen prayer has the potential to encourage both the purgative and the illuminative movements, containing within it the balance of looking backward and looking forward that is embedded in the full programme of the Exercises.

The balance of looking backward and looking forward

Moral Imagination in the Fifth Step of the Examen

Our imaginative activity influences the way we live our lives. The fifth step of the Examen can actively engage the productive imagination to construct new combinations of available images for a vision of the future.[18] Philip Keane highlights the relationship between the images we work with and 'abstract universal knowing' as 'we turn to our concrete experiences as persons who are open to a profound horizon of meaning'. He defines imagination as 'the basic process by which we draw together the concrete and universal elements of our human experience': a definition which, when applied to the movements of the Examen, further demonstrates its imaginative thrust.[19]

First, the Examen brings together concrete and universal elements: there is a specific recalling of one's day, engaging the reproductive imagination in a process that deliberately ponders the ultimate horizon of transcendence. Recollecting the day is a form of composition of place, integrating memory and attentiveness to see what occurred from a different perspective. The third step of 'giving an account of my hours' works with images of what one has already experienced. Since the past has already been 'seen' in this practice, one can move seamlessly into 'seeing' the future. Ideally this is done in a time set aside for this activity, allowing free time and space for 'playful suspension of judgment' which characterizes one's reflection on the relationship between the concrete and the abstract.[20]

[18] On productive and reproductive imagination see Immanuel Kant, 'On the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding', in *Critique of Pure Reason*, edited and translated by Allen W. Wood and Paul Guyer (Cambridge: Cambridge U, 1998), 219–266.
[19] Philip S. Keane, Christian Ethics and Imagination: A Theological Inquiry (New York: Paulist, 1984), 80, 81.
[20] Keane, Christian Ethics and Imagination, 81.

Second, imaginative activity lends itself to narrative. 'If imagination calls on us to playfully suspend judgment, stories clearly will help us to make this suspension and to play with our ideas.'[21] The use of story in the Exercises demonstrates this; in the Examen we are using the imagination to continue writing the story of our own life. Appropriating the vision of future virtuous action—or, to use Aschenbrenner's lens, future response to God—is made easier by envisioning this action as a continuation of the story we have already recalled in previous steps of the Examen.

Alasdair MacIntyre, identifying the fragmentation of the self in modern life, describes an alternative, narrative model of selfhood: 'A concept of self whose unity resides in the unity of a narrative which links birth to life to death as narrative beginning to middle to end'.[22] This narrative unity includes a teleological vision. MacIntyre writes:

> There is no present which is not informed by some image of some future and an image of the future which always presents itself in the form of a *telos*—or of a variety of ends or goals—towards which we are either moving or failing to move in the present.[23]

The Examen presumes a *telos* of relationship with God; when situated in the wider teleological tradition of Ignatian spirituality that *telos* is specified as the praise, reverence and service of God (Exx 23). Deliberate imagining is an invitation to interrupt patterns of living that are orientated towards other ends.

Imagination is to be distinguished from fancy. Keane clarifies that imagination leads to truth because it is 'looks for deeper and more appropriate unities in our experience', calling on the use of metaphor as a comparable truth-seeking use of images.[24] Just as the metaphor ultimately reveals something true by bringing images together, so does the work of true imagination. This, then, has implications for the ethical life, regarding both moral principles and the development of virtue. Keane describes how the use of the imagination aids in the learning, deepening and applying of moral principles, which 'cannot accomplish their purpose unless they spring from and move us toward a continuous process of

[21] Keane, Christian Ethics and Imagination, 82.
[22] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame, 1981), 205.
[23] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 215–16.
[24] Keane, Christian Ethics and Imagination, 83.

moral imagination'.[25] Following MacIntyre, the understanding of ourselves as a narrative unity with a *telos* makes it possible to have a virtuous self-understanding. Whether we are imagining how we will live in accordance with a particular precept, or how we will live as a particular kind of virtuous person, the narrative momentum of the Examen links that imagining more closely to our concrete reality.

There is always a danger when working with the imagination that we can be led by voices other than God's. Ignatius includes guidance on listening in the *Spiritual Exercises*, listing his Rules for the Discernment of Spirits so that the hearts, souls and minds of retreatants may not be misled (Exx 314–327). In the context of the Examen there are also safeguards against deception. First, the repeated petitions for God's grace invite the Spirit into this prayer. Secondly, the imaginative work begins in the concrete memories of daily life. The prayer starts from rootedness in what is and connects what we hope for with reality. When we imagine who we might be as we look towards the next day, we will already have treated our current reality pragmatically and asked God to guide our prayer.

The Examen will not be the same every time we do it. Aschenbrenner notes: 'if it did happen in the same expression each time, it would be a sure sign that we were not really entering into the previous four elements of the examen'.[26] Including an imaginative prompt can open a fruitful potential avenue through the last step of the Examen, as we can attempt to envision who we will be in the future. In what virtues will we have grown? How will those enable us to respond to the uncertainties of the future in a more Christ-like way?

As we resolve to amend our faults, as Ignatius puts it in Exx 43, who will we be once those faults are healed? How will we be better able to encounter God in the day to day? When we look towards the future in the fifth step, we are not trying to predict the future, but to imagine a version of ourselves that has grown closer to God and expresses that closeness through love of neighbour. Prayer and discernment are not solely to effect a personal, interior change, but a change of habits and behaviour, manifesting love in deeds more than words (Exx 230).

Explicitly integrating reflective imagination into the final step of the Examen puts it into a brief, repeatable framework that allows for

[25] Keane, Christian Ethics and Imagination, 93.
[26] Aschenbrenner, 'Consciousness Examen', 20.

self-reflection and variety. One does not imagine the future once and for all and leave it at that. Each day one can integrate the experiences of that day and continue to refine the vision in light of circumstance. As the Examen becomes routine it affects the way a person sees the world, but the daily variety within the routine keeps it a living practice. The Examen can be a prayerful use of the imagination, asking God to guide our vision and integrating the experiences we already have. Developing a personal, integrated vision of who we hope to be in the future helps us commit ourselves to living out that vision. The Examen, as a part of the Ignatian tradition that has evolved to address contemporary spiritual trends, is poised to engage the imagination fruitfully and to help us cooperate with God's guidance as we look towards tomorrow.

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DISCERNING THE LAY IGNATIAN VOCATION

The Christian Life Community

Isabel Muruzábal

History

ST IGNATIUS, together with his first companions, created groups of laypeople centred on the person of Jesus, who lived and shared a profound apostolic sensibility. These groups were the predecessors of the Sodality of Our Lady, in which the Christian Life Community (CLC) has its roots. The sodality was founded in 1563 at the initiative of the Jesuit Jean Leunis and students from the Roman College, who were eager to follow in the footsteps of lay groups that had sprung up in various parts of the world thanks to the work of St Ignatius Loyola and his companions.

In 1948, after Pius XII's apostolic constitution *Bis saeculari* offered religious congregations guidelines for their apostolates, renewal became necessary. In 1952 the World Federation of Sodalities was born, forming and then giving way to the Christian Life Community. Its general principles were approved in 1971 and it was recognised by the Holy See as an International Catholic Organization. The principles were subsequently reviewed in 1990.[1] This allowed it to respond more faithfully to the challenges facing the Church in the world after Vatican II. As a non-governmental organization, it has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). On 3 December 1990, the Pontifical Council for the Laity decreed the establishment of the Christian Life Community as a 'public international association of faithful, of pontifical right'.[2]

This article first appeared as 'Discernir la vocación laical ignaciana', *Manresa*, 95/4 (2015), 341–351. It was written for the fortieth anniversary celebration of the first Constitutive Assembly of the Christian Life Community in Spain in 1983.

[1] See *General Principles and General Norms of the Christian Life Community*, *Progressio*, supplement 75 (Rome: World Christian Life Community, 2020). This and other CLC documents are also available at https://cvx-clc.net/en/official-documents/, accessed 20 May 2025.

[2] Pontifical Council for the Laity, 'Decree', in *General Principles and General Norms of the Christian Life Community*, 11.

Identity

The Christian Life Community 'is made up of Christians: men and women, adults and youth, of all social conditions who want to follow Jesus Christ more closely and work with him for the building of the Kingdom'.[3] In response to Christ's call, we try to realise this unity of life from and within the world where we live. Our lifestyle is that of laypeople who enter into a shared personal and communal experience. Our link with the Roman Catholic Church entails a vocation that is Christian and Ignatian, personal and communal, universal, ecclesial and apostolic, with a preferential option for the poor and disadvantaged in our society (n.4).[4]

This personal vocation is preceded by a process of growth through which we become people of discernment in an apostolic mission. We discern our vocation and ask ourselves about its meaning and the implications of our mission and responsibility in the Church, always moving towards the frontiers that are opening up before us in society. We feel called to live our adherence to Jesus Christ through the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, which are 'the specific source and characteristic instrument of our spirituality' (n.5). In them we find ourselves with the Lord and alongside a community joined in prayer, personal and communal

[3] *General Principles and General Norms of the Christian Life Community*, n. 1 (subsequent references in the text).
[4] See *The CLC Charism*, available at https://cvx-clc.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Charism.pdf, accessed 20 May 2025.

discernment, daily examen and spiritual accompaniment, which allows us to discern our way of proceeding in order to seek and find God's will.

The figure of Mary is central as a model for our collaboration in Christ's mission (n.9). Every year on 25 March, the feast of the Annunciation, we celebrate World Christian Life Community Day. On that day in 1976, Pope Paul VI approved the General Guidelines of the World Federation which would later become known as the World Christian Life Community—with all the implications of being a community rather than a federation. Mary gathers us and invites the whole World Community to seek constantly for the Kingdom of God that we might 'do whatever he tells you' (John 2:5).

When we speak of laypeople, we often speak of a 'vocation and mission in the Church and in the world'.[5] John 15:5 ('I am the vine, you are the branches') suggests a call and a response. Jesus discovered his mission through prayer, the relationships he established and the circumstances he encountered. In this way, he engaged in the discernment of spirits. This discernment led him to the Jordan. We feel confirmed when we contemplate life and at the same time live it out in a contemplative way. We contemplate Jesus poor and humble, and we hear the call to live according to his simple way of life. We contemplate the apostles with Jesus and the desire to be companions in their mission is born within us. This intimate pathway is the hallmark of our journey as lay adults in the Church and in the world.

Ecclesial Co-responsibility

We are co-responsible for the mission of the Church (n.6).[6] Our *General Principles* were written along these lines and contain a good summary of what the Second Vatican Council taught about the apostolate of the laity:

> As members of the pilgrim People of God, we have received from Christ the mission of being his witnesses before all people by our attitudes, words and actions, becoming identified with his mission of bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, setting the downtrodden free and proclaiming the Lord's year of favour …. The field of CLC mission

[5] John Paul II, *Christifideles laici*, n.8.
[6] See *Lumen gentium*, n.30.

> knows no limits: it extends both to the Church and the world, in order to bring the gospel of salvation to all people and to serve individual persons and society by opening hearts to conversion and struggling to change oppressive structures. (n. 8)

The New Testament reminds us that we are the people of God, invited to be saved (1 Timothy 2:4) and that 'there is no longer Jew or Greek … for all of you are one in Christ Jesus' (Galatians 3:28).

'The apostolate must be woven into the ecclesial fabric', so we can speak of ecclesial services and ministries entrusted, or yet to be entrusted, to the lay faithful.[7] Our apostolate arises from an apostolic call and has a missionary character that can be lived out in many ways within the Church. As laypeople, we desire to participate in the discernment of the Church's mission, making ourselves available to receive missions from the apostolic community.

Our Spirituality: A Lay Charism

For us the election of a state of life entails choosing a temporal life, whether married or celibate, while adding a nuance which imbues that choice with meaning. We know that Ignatian spirituality was born as a lay charism, established by St Ignatius with the specific methodology of the Spiritual Exercises, which he conceived while he was still a layman and from a lay perspective. It was as a layman of his time that he discovered God's call for him in the experience of his life being directed towards God's service. He lived through a process of discernment and left us the key and foundation of Ignatian spirituality.

The Ignatian charism, in its early stages with Ignatius, sought to affirm the men and women of his time; later it sought to affirm all the men and women who live in the world with the desire to follow Jesus Christ. At the same time, it proposes a way of living out an experience of God in daily life, in temporal affairs. We desire to order our affections and our desires: 'The laity, by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God'.[8] We laypeople are called to order these affairs with

[7] José Reyes, 'Ser laico: vocación y misión. Intimidad y extroversión', 5, available at https://jesuitas.lat/archivo/biblioteca/biblioteca-cpal/archivo-documental/ser-laico-vocacion-y-mision-intimidad-y-extroversion, accessed 21 May 2025.

[8] *Lumen gentium*, n. 31.

greater responsibility than religious, and we need help to build and rebuild new ways of humanising them: 'For what fills and satisfies the soul consists, not in knowing much, but in our understanding the realities profoundly and in savoring them interiorly' (Exx 2).

Therefore, as Ignatian laypeople who live immersed in the world, we are called to nourish ourselves and incorporate Ignatian spirituality into our lives, to enter into it and allow ourselves to be transformed by Jesus Christ, who calls us to be with him to live on mission (Exx 93). By Ignatian means, we learn to live in an attitude of continual search for God's will, always aware of those opposing forces that appear within us, which sometimes direct us towards God's desires and at other times distance us and overwhelm us with darkness.

An attitude of continual search for God's will

We feel invited to live our charism with greater fidelity and perseverance, in order to transmit to others our sense of what it is to follow Jesus Christ, which is born out of the vocation to which we have been called and summoned. Likewise, we are called, from our sense of being Church with everyone else, to make known and transmit to society all that we have received from Ignatian spirituality.[9]

Attentive to the Needs of Society

We form apostolic teams to reach out more effectively to the whole of society. We ask that we, as laypeople immersed in this broken world, be sent on mission in acceptance of the invitation we receive from Jesus to follow him in the mission and service presented to us. It is essential for the Christian Life Community to articulate our way of proceeding as laypeople to be witnesses to the love of Father and Son in all areas of life.

We enter into a profound dialogue with the 'other' in order that each one of us and the whole of society might become aware that we live among great diversity, and work to unite our efforts to serve God more and better. Likewise, we desire to transmit Ignatian spirituality, with all that it entails, to the whole of society, especially to those who are searching and those who have never heard of it.

Ignatian spirituality becomes for us a way to live life and temporal affairs from a new and grateful perspective, from a more penetrating

[9] 'Documento final de la Asamblea CVX en España Pamplona 2019', 5, available at https://cvx-e.es/documentos/, accessed 21 May 2025.

and compassionate perspective. It is a way of learning to read more deeply into our life and our history, living in the present so that we can walk together on mission. We are helped by the discernment that is part of our vocation, a personal and accompanied discernment which is sometimes also communal and apostolic. At the same time, we must increasingly strive to live from a united spirit, feeling ourselves joined together in the same vocation to love and serve more fully.

We are called to have eyes to see as Jesus does, entering into a different way of looking at the world. We offer our own vision of the world: that of the laity. Our vocation is born with the contemplation on the Incarnation (Exx 101–109). This way of contemplating the world leads us to desire to live the preferential option for the poorest. Living like this among the poor and sharing their circumstances, we are all invited by Jesus, through his unconditional love for us, 'to give ourselves continuously to God and to bring about unity within our human family' as a call from the Spirit to move towards the fulfilment of God's plan (n. 1).

In the Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx 230–237), at the end of the experience of the month of exercises, we are invited to feel how all the gifts we have received descend from God and how God is present in all creation, in all things, in all creatures, and in each and every one of us. At the same time, we become aware not only of how God is present, but also how God works in everything and in everyone.

We discover the call to live in an attitude of reconciliation within ourselves, with others and with God, accepting the office of consoler to which we are invited in the Fourth Week of the Exercises at his resurrection (Exx 224). It is a call to live consoling the most needy and vulnerable whom we meet in any sphere of life and society.[10]

The Apostolic Polynomial of the Christian Life Community

In the 1990s, the World Executive Council presented us with a survey document that facilitated a process of formation: *Growing in Christ Together the Better to Give Life to Others*. It presented the path of the Exercises so that the group would be aware of the moment when they were experiencing the Exercises as a group.

[10] The video *Una manera de estar en el mundo* (A Way of Being in the World) demonstrates our vocation in its different aspects; see https://youtu.be/64KdKw_8sy0, accessed 21 May 2025.

Years later, the DSSE (Discern, Send, Support, Evaluate) method appeared, which helps us to embrace the mission we have received from the Father through the community. The four-word polynomial has great apostolic power. It deals with four functions that the community fulfils at its different levels in order truly to be an apostolic body. The presentation below includes a first part related to the world, national and regional community, and a second part related to the local community or small life group.[11]

Function	In the world, national or regional community	In the local community or group
Discern	• read reality • gather experience • formulate apostolic orientations and priorities • lead the process • connect with the Church • identify places, works, settings, relationships	• foster apostolic orientations and priorities • share individual experiences about them • listen to the Word of God • contemplate Jesus in action • share spiritual movements • clarify what is heard and experienced • ask ourselves what to do as a result • draw personal or communal conclusions
Send	• confirm (or not) formal apostolic initiatives and commitments • ensure and organize the presence of CLC members in the different places and works identified • cover the whole range of apostolic orientations and priorities • establish links with the hierarchical Church and the Society of Jesus about missions given to some members	• confirm (or question) personal options in ordinary life • connect members' experiences with apostolic priorities (edit and print the apostolic commitment of each member)

[11] José Reyes, 'El Polinomio apostolico de la CVX. Discernir—Enviar—Apoyar—Evaluar', available at https://jesuitas.lat/biblioteca/biblioteca-cpal/archivo-documental/el-polinomio-apostolico-de-la-cvx-el-deae, accessed 21 May 2025.

Support	• give spiritual, intellectual, apostolic and human formation • connect members with similar apostolates effectively • create support structures • support leadership and vision • disseminate documents and means to obtain help, and so on • gather people beyond CLC for apostolic collaboration	• take on board concrete difficulties, personal needs, disillusions, questions and give accompaniment • give each member what he or she needs: advice, encouragement, specific help, confirmation, and so on • pray for each other and for the mission of each • study and deepen understanding of some specific aspects as needed
Evaluate	• promote and channel self-evaluation and self-criticism about apostolic effectiveness within CLC • gather and systematize successful and unsuccessful experiences • channel critical contributions from the Church, the Society and other associations • prepare and model good examples of evaluation, discernment and planning • manage the objective parameters of the apostolic commitment of the CLC and its members	• practise giving advice and fraternal correction • support interventions and inputs to leaders or commissions at the national and international level • value the apostolic life of each member, with an attitude of gratitude • refocus continually with respect to the apostolic life of the members of the CLC

Our Growth Process for Discerning Vocations

The current process was preceded over previous years by the World Assemblies and various formation plans, among those the plan for the community in Spain approved in the assembly of Muguía in 2004. Today the formation process is not presented linearly through different stages (initiation, foundation, vocational discernment and apostolic life), but rather as a spiral in which the stages are transformed into periods of time.[12]

The community welcomes and accompanies those who wish to discern their vocation in the Church, whether it be within the Christian Life

[12] *Ser CVX. Una vocación laical ignaciana para más amar y servir en el mundo y en la iglesia*, (Seville: Comunidad de Vida Cristiana en España, 2023), 72–96.

Community itself or any other vocation they may discover in the process and which helps them to follow Jesus Christ. They begin a process of growth in which they are given the opportunity to go deeper into their experience of God, community and mission. Everyone passes through the 'times' at several points, but they do not encounter them in the same way as they did at first because, having been changed by life's journey, they are not the same people; they discover aspects they had never perceived before. They experience the times like this rather than going through successive stages. We recognise the importance of personal accompaniment in discovering that the Christian Life Community is the vocation to which they are called by God and thus determining and making a permanent commitment to it. Accompaniment within the Life Groups into which people are integrated is equally key, according to the form, circumstances and organization of each community.

In each of the times through which they pass there is growth in spiritual life, in community life and in the life of mission. To this end, there is an initial moment of welcome, in which they are invited to begin a process of discovering if this is the path to which God is calling them within the Church. It is a process accompanied by the community, and by a guide with a deep experience of his or her own Ignatian vocation and growth in the Christian Life Community. (The times are described in more detail in other documents.)[13]

[13] See *The Process of Growth in CLC: Guidelines for Formation*, *Progressio*, supplement 64 (Rome: World Christian Life Community, 2008).

A Time to Desire: Initiation

> Where are you staying? (John 1:38)
>
> They said to each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?' (Luke 24:32)

The objective is to detect how the desire to follow Jesus is being lived out around the three dimensions previously mentioned: spiritual life (with the introduction of the Examen and accompaniment), community life and life on mission. *This is the time of Jesus in Nazareth*, recognising the gift and the intuition that something is developing within him, experiencing desire.

A Time to Seek: Foundation

> 'Come and see' (John 1:39).
>
> When Jesus came to the place he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' (Luke 19:5)

This corresponds to the First Week and the Call of the King in the Spiritual Exercises (Exx 9 following). It is a time to delve into the process of understanding the Christian Life Community way of life: a time of searching, starting with the Exercises, community meetings, and experiences of service and contact with poverty. The first steps are taken with DSSE as a way of proceeding in the different moments of discernment, mission, accompaniment and evaluation. Those discerning are learning about our documents, the *General Principles and General Norms* and the *CLC Charism* as well as the Common Apostolic Project. *This is Jesus' time in Bethany*, in search of friendship, with a strong feeling of receptiveness in going out of oneself and seeking and finding God in all things.

A Time for Discovery: Discernment of Vocation and Reform of Life

> What ought I to do for Christ? (Exx 53)
>
> For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. (John 13:15)

This is a time to learn to discern, to name one's vocation. The Exercises mark a *before* and an *after*. In community life, we feel united by something greater: the desire to build the Kingdom in 'the Ignatian way', discovering the need to respond to all the good we have received. We offer a shared reading of some parts of the *Autobiography* of St Ignatius. There are experiences of life and mission accompanied in the community so as

to see how they are situated alongside the option for the poorest, to encourage participants to share their impact and to delve deeper into the causes of poverty through a critical analysis of social reality.

The primary service that the Christian Life Community is called to offer today is the promotion of justice in light of the preferential option for the poor. *This is the time of Jesus in Galilee*: it is mission, seeing people through the eyes of God, acting and even fighting for justice. But it also involves visiting the desert and climbing the mountain, relocating things, coming down and continuing onward. These are powerful moments to enter into the doctrine on the laity in the Church and the experiences of the month of the Spiritual Exercises.[14]

A Time for Confirmation: Apostolic Discernment

> The great service which is given to God because of pure love. (Exx 370)
>
> This is the message you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. (1 John 3:11)

This is the time for receiving confirmation that the Christian Life Community is a person's vocation: *This is where I am called to live and follow the Lord*. Life is lived as an apostolic mission that we receive from the Father through the community.[15] We are responsible for the progress of the local, national and global community. It is daily life in personal, community, family, professional, social and ecclesial mission, and apostolic life in all its fullness: discerned, supported and evaluated in common. Personal accompaniment organizes and reorders the affections so as to enter into mission. The person lives in communion with the Church in mission. Permanent commitment is undertaken when the person experiences the call to live out of this vocation. *This is time of Jesus in Jerusalem*: the meaning of life. It is death and resurrection. It is celebration, communion, prayer and dedication. Love has the last word.

The person commits him- or herself to:

- live from below, in the real world;
- live a life of depth and integration into mission;
- live out of the constant and renewed experience of the Spiritual Exercises, which helps us to pay attention to seeking and finding God's will in our everyday lives;

[14] See *Christifideles laici*.
[15] *CLC Charism*, n. 190.

- share life in community, journeying with others and helping them to grow in the three dimensions of spirituality, community and common mission, through discernment, sending, support, and evaluation of what we do and where we do it;
- live from an 'enthusiastic fragility',[16] recognising our own weaknesses and those of the community, welcoming, accepting and integrating;
- live among diversity as a gift and opportunity for growth;
- live attentively to the signs of the times and strive to ensure that our attitudes, words and actions promote justice and reconciliation.

In making our commitments, we freely present ourselves before the Lord and the community. We publicly express an already confirmed discernment and an oblation made within us. We publicly express that the Christian Life Community is the vocation in which we are called to live the charism of Ignatian spirituality.

The Three Fundamental Principles of our Commitment[17]

1. *The trinitarian theological foundation*: the root of commitment in the Christian Life Community is not in ourselves but in God, who establishes an irrevocable covenant with his people. The Lord is the first to commit himself permanently and visibly, as is revealed to us in the incarnation.
2. *The anthropological foundation*: we are human and need our deepest experiences to be expressed through our bodies, through our senses. Our relationship with the mystery of God is best expressed through visible and sacramental signs.
3. *The communitarian-ecclesial foundation*: we live our vocation in community, and before this community of friends and companions in the Lord, we proclaim that we feel ourselves to be in and with the Church. The community has the right to see, hear, feel and taste our commitment. This helps us to live consistently the lifestyle to which we have committed ourselves.

[16] This is a phrase from the poem 'La Herida' by José María Rodríguez Olaizola, written to commemorate the Ignatian year 2021–2022 [Ed.].
[17] *CLC Charism*, nn. 168–170.

The Permanent Commitment

Freedom of spirit is the true foundation of commitment and one of its fruits. True freedom has to do with the direction of one's life. For this reason, when we come to the conclusion that bringing Christ and His Good News to bear on human realities is what 'I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision' (Exx 98), we know that the Lord has guided us along a lengthy journey. Freedom is a capacity for oblation only in so far as it is a capacity for choice. Oblation is a 'yes' in which we abandon ourselves to God in complete trust.[18]

A Public Commitment

In bearing witness to our permanent commitment before the community, we ask the Lord for grace to give a generous response to his fidelity. We ask the community for help and accompaniment. The external expression of this internal oblation has, in a certain sense, a sacramental character. For the rest of the community, it is a sign that the spirit of the Lord is acting to lead each member to a greater commitment to the mission that has been received. It is thus a sign that builds and consolidates the community in following Christ Jesus, the one sent by the Father.[19]

In the same spiritual tone, Ignatius says:

> Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will—all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord. All of it is yours. Dispose of it according to your will. Give me love of yourself along with your grace, for that is enough for me. (Exx 234)

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translated by Philip Harrison SJ

[18] *CLC Charism*, nn. 193–196.
[19] *CLC Charism*, nn. 197–200.

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES FORTY YEARS ON

Marion Morgan

IT MUST BE NEARLY FORTY YEARS since I last made a directed retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises. What has happened since? Where am I now?

The last retreat I made was too soon after the death of my father and the selling of the family home and, though in many ways helpful, it actually put me off arranging another one. In any case, I was by then looking after someone and we also had a dog, so it was nearly impossible to fit in. Instead, we rented cottages and I made private retreats from there, using the *Spiritual Exercises* or another helpful book and drawing on past experiences and daily prayer and meditation. It was not the same, but served me well over the years. With my own failing health and energies and also the pandemic, these breaks came to an end. The person for whom I was caring died in 2021 and since then I have lived alone (although I currently have a student staying with me). I have been, and still am, continuously involved in my parish, St Mary-on-the-Quay in Bristol.

My contacts with the Jesuits gradually dropped away. They left the parish (which is now staffed by Divine Word missionaries and doing well) and other contacts ceased. I was in touch through Jesuit Missions and online occasionally and, of course, remained a subscriber to *The Way*. I have a very good friend who is a member of the Christian Life Community and has a group some distance away, but the timing and travel are difficult and we both meet for coffee in central Bristol instead.

So I should be all right. And I am, basically, But when visitors from Preston arrived who were also from another former Jesuit parish, we related immediately. The Ignatian charism had gone deep, and still lives deep inside. I cannot now be truly at home in another tradition.

Daily Life after the Exercises

The Exercises are no longer uppermost in my mind, but they have somehow been integrated into the very way I live my life. They are an

anchor—or maybe a rail to hold on to as I continue to walk forward. The practice of discernment, in a gentle way, permeates most of my decisions. Just occasionally, if a big decision looms, I might spend special, focused time on it. Similarly, the Exercises underpin me, especially through the daily Examen; thinking back over what has happened: what was helpful, what actually distanced me from God. Where, I think, I find Ignatian spirituality most helpful is in practical daily life.

Attending a church which has been under different, non-Jesuit priests for 25 years now, and whose congregation has almost completely changed, raises many challenges. The congregation is absolutely multicultural, as in many cities. St Mary-on-the-Quay is in the centre of Bristol where buses from all over the city pass through. We currently have two regular priests and, in the event of absence, replacements from London or Ireland. This means that our Mass times are frequent and reliable. With the scarcity of priests in the other Bristol parishes (except for Clifton Cathedral), St Mary's is easy to access and many people crowd in from elsewhere. There are also extra devotions and extra events. The church is open daily from 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. and there is a daily 12.15 Mass. So I personally have a choice. How much time shall I actually spend physically in the church? How often shall I attend the daily Mass? Shall I take part in all the social events? Shall I help on the cleaning rota? And so on.

Yet the Ignatian influence—and my own prayer—tell me that I also have a mission simply living in the community. There is much to do just by being a good neighbour. I make time for an exercise class (strength and balance) and in attending make many friends and have good conversations in the coffee room afterwards. A surprising number of people are interested in my way of life and worship practices. Similarly, I have joined a community choir at the local city farm. It is open to everyone (whether or not they can sing!) and the leader does not mind mistakes. She just wants us all to enjoy singing, and the results are surprisingly good. She runs another choir which gives concerts, but our choir is simply for well-being.

I cannot do everything. I am getting older. I am often asked to come to extra events at the church, but say 'no' because the energy simply doesn't run to further engagement with the church as well as 'outside' activity. The same principles apply to joining in family events. Of course I enjoy them; of course I am asked to join in. My family are important to me but they are very considerate when I have to say 'no'

to some events—usually those out of Bristol. But Ignatian spirituality, as expressed in the Exercises, helps me to find the necessary balance and not to feel (too) guilty about missing out on events with the family, or missing out on events at the church—because God is present in *all* things and events.

Increasingly I find that God comes through conversations, through sheer wonder at the beauty of creation and the beauty of God's plans. God comes also through my frequent exhaustion. When I simply have to rest, to recharge batteries after a particularly busy time, I find God quietly at home—in reading, in television, in playing on the mobile phone, in doing jigsaws on the computer. Of course it feels as though I am wasting time. Of course sometimes the balance gets out of hand, one way or another. So back I have to go to the Examen. At other times, I feel I have 'slipped my moorings' and so eventually I make time to do a meditation in the imaginative way. The storm at sea is especially helpful in these circumstances.

Living the Fourth Week

The training and detachment which are foreseen and taught in the First and Second Weeks have helped me in all sorts of different situations:

Christ on the Sea of Galilee, *by Eugène Delacroix, 1853*

losing money in a scam; coping with the many ups and downs of ordinary life. But the contemplation of the Fourth Week, is, I find, invaluable. In Michael Ivens's book *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* we are invited to consider God as '*bestowing* his gifts, *present* in his gifts, *working* in his gifts, *source* of his gifts'.[1] The third point here includes the idea of God working and labouring, which incorporates coping with suffering and difficulties.

Here we recollect once more the importance of our realisation that God created the whole world and ourselves with a purpose, as affirmed in the Principle and Foundation of the First Week. We now return to considering and wondering at this marvellous Truth, and are inspired to play our part more fully than ever before, according to our strengths and weaknesses, and individual personalities and gifts.

Maybe the essence of the Fourth Week is the 'Take, Lord, and receive …' prayer (Exx 234). That commitment has stayed with me always. I am now officially a consecrated woman in the Church (OCV). But how does that play out in the context of the Fourth Week? How do we live the resurrection? How do we 'see God in all things'? To do this, when we live busy and full lives, means taking extra time to ponder on the day's experiences—in other words, praying the Examen. As we ponder, we pray to see where we experienced wonder and what we found distasteful. As we ponder, over the years, we learn much more of God's love for us, and we learn also about ourselves. We find ourselves pondering more and more on all aspects of God's almighty Creation, and ourselves as part of it. We learn to appreciate that everything of good in ourselves and others is a reflection of God.

So this can lead to an increasing interest in the world and its activities—national, international, local, domestic. Because the more we know and learn and think, the more we gradually increase our knowledge and love for the Father. And, crucially, we can offer the beginning of an interpretation to those who are simply bewildered and lost. We can be sowers of the seeds of Hope—that there is meaning and joy in creation, and even suffering need not destroy this hope. There are many examples of love, faith and joy which have endured extreme suffering and have not been overcome. Peace and joy are also realities which exist.

[1] Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary. A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 170–171.

In Later Life

The period in Jesus' life between the resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit at pentecost is especially helpful for those in later life to ponder. Most of us will have gone through dark times. And most of us will experience a decrease in our energy. It is a time for handing over our vision and our mission thoughts to the generations following us, as Jesus finally handed over to the disciples his ongoing mission. Like them we need to be totally committed to his will. Like them, we are to be open to the strengthening and healing gifts of the Holy Spirit. But our life gradually takes on a different motivation. No longer are we seeking for more active participation in projects. Instead, we have a ministry of quiet, one-to-one gentle sharing of what we have learned over our lifetimes with the Lord, as a means of encouraging these younger followers.

We can also pass on our hope, in spite of all the obvious troubles both worldly and domestic which surround us. We have been through dark times before and we know there is always reason to hope. Our providential God remains in charge, despite all appearances. God is able to bring good out of all experiences, and does. God works from a perspective impossible for our human minds to understand and follow.

And then there is Joy! The resurrection is a time of joy and a pointer to the eternal existence of joy in our future. We can share this joy now with others by refusing to be brought down by difficulties: by indulging in humour, by delighting in art, music, beauty in all its forms. This is the time when we can really enjoy God's creation—in nature, of course, but also in human activities and achievements, successes. We are encouraged to see and wonder at God's intricacies and mighty power, and the beauty and tenderness in the whole of Creation. And this perspective also brings encouragement and relief to those who are struggling.

The eternal existence of joy in our future

Not that that means we belittle the struggles. Ignatius stresses that Jesus consoled his disciples, and this mission of consolation—often simply a silent presence—is invaluable. And we 'oldies' have time to do this. As we read in the Fourth Week, Jesus spent time after the resurrection consoling, reassuring and encouraging his disciples (Exx 224). That is a ministry we can all practise, however old and frail we are. There is a desperate need for people who will listen, and people who believe there is always cause for hope. If we are alert to the possibility of such encounters, they can occur anywhere—waiting in a queue, sitting on a bus, a meaningful encounter with an unknown person at a social occasion.

Although we can foster this deep awareness of God, we cannot always be conscious of it. That is why we need 'time apart' so this can be accepted, recognised and nurtured. But we can be increasingly aware of the Holy Spirit working in our conversations, our encounters, and our own thinking. Living in the Lord, so that he flavours every part of our life, is what the new Life in Christ is all about.

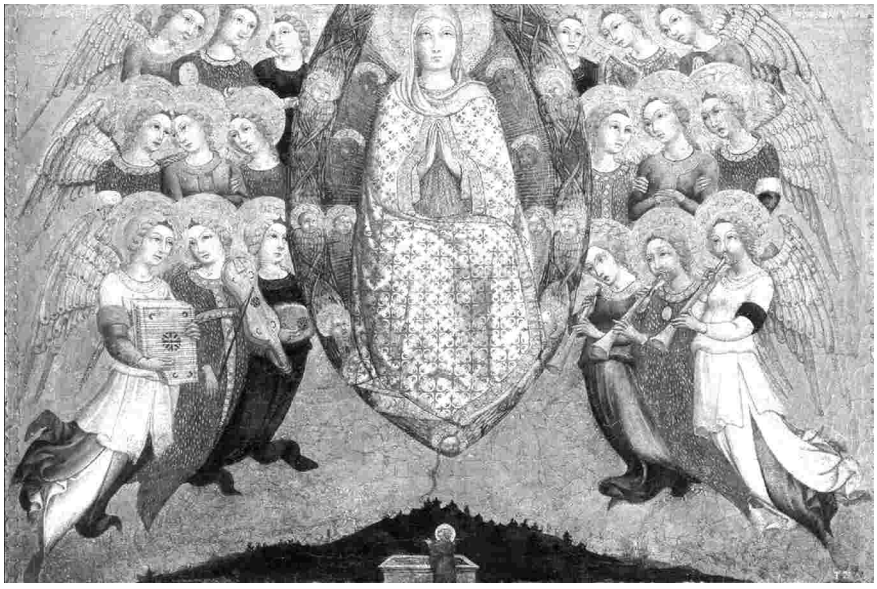
As we grow older, we may begin to ponder our past life. The inclination to recount our experiences, funny moments, to share memories seems to come to the front of our minds. The understanding that has come through the Exercises, especially the Fourth Week and the glorious fact of the resurrection, helps us to put a new construction on some of the many dark times. This is a time of deep healing—as the time between the resurrection and the ascension was for the distressed disciples.

At Home with the Exercises

Am I living the Exercises? No, not really. I am trying to live a fully Christian life, rooted in the sacramental ministry of the Church and daily prayer and contact with our loving Lord, in the context of God's all-encompassing Creation. The Exercises are nevertheless my spine and my trellis. I return to them for additional help and support. I constantly draw on their wisdom for advice and direction. They influence all my decisions and actions, and I am immensely grateful for them, and all the help I have received both directly from them and from those dedicated priests and people they have formed. They have helped me to discover my true authenticity and the direction in which I hope I am still growing.

I enjoy living alone. I have my little house the way I want it and things remain where I put them. And then the challenge came to let a PhD student from Nigeria have my spare room. She was left without accommodation in early September—a time when it is impossible to find anywhere vacant and available in Bristol. After trying desperately to find someone else who would take her in, I gradually came to realise it was up to me. But it has worked out beautifully. We get on well and it is of benefit to both of us.

Without the positive view of ordinary life which is implicit throughout the Exercises I would be lost. I am not naturally pious: I even find it difficult to say the rosary as my mind takes off in other directions and I do not like being tied to a routine for twenty minutes. But I pray in other ways, and see Mary not only as a loving mother but also as an



The Assumption of Mary, ***by Sano di Pietro, 1448–1452***

active participant in ordinary life. No doubt she performed all her devotional duties, but was obviously a lively member of her community as well—inevitably.

It seems to me that it is no coincidence that the dogma of Mary's Assumption has been pronounced in comparatively recent times. Because Mary is taken into heaven, body and soul, and her works on earth are celebrated, value is given to all our own efforts as well—not just to those done openly in the name of the Church. So 'seeing God in all things … working and labouring' is a long-lasting reality to be lived out way beyond the special graces of a retreat. The writings and teaching of the Fourth Week validate all our intuitions and serve as a long-term way of seeing earthly reality and trying to live it out in full.

I relish the sacramental theology of the Roman Catholic Church. The sacraments inevitably unite God's Trinitarian self with humanity in all its rawness. As St Paul said in his letter to the Romans (8:18–22) all creation is groaning in its desire for liberation from sin. Years ago I was also inspired by the vision of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in *The Mass on the World*.[2] To me, this underpins the Exercises, again especially

[2] See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Mass on the World*, in *The Heart of Matter*, translated by René Hague (London: Collins, 1978 [1946]), 119–134.

the Fourth Week. Surely the transformed body of Christ in the eucharist is the first fruit of this new creation of the whole world. This we receive, and then, through us, creation itself is also transformed (eventually). Chardin's vision speaks of our role in offering up ourselves and the world we live in so that all may be transformed. This gives increased value to creation itself and justifies all of our attention to it—regardless of the fact that it was all made by God our Creator!

I use the influence of the Exercises most of all when I am exploring the new life in Christ with potential new members of the Church in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA). Ignatius' teaching on matters of penance, daily life and ways of prayer is still sound and valid for our times. But, inevitably, I draw on other traditions as well. Enquirers come from many different countries and backgrounds, and have experienced many different versions of Roman Catholicism. Often they come from different denominations or different religious traditions. It is demanding—in terms of knowledge and creative but valid explanations and, often, of language. There are sizeable Chinese and also Hong Kong Chinese communities in Bristol, as in so many other cities, not to mention those from other continents. I find the Ignatian tradition very adaptable, but need to include the more familiar contemplative traditions, as well as the other great spiritual paths.

The Ignatian tradition is where I feel at home, and the Exercises are a constant source of support and guidance—well supplemented by different books and publications. But in meetings of the RCIA, in general life, in encounters with friends, family and strangers, another way of expression is often more appropriate. The sharing of well-thought-out experience and opinions in understandable language, and occasionally an honest expression of one's own personal faith, based on informed biblical study, is the day-to-day currency of evangelism.

An increasing interest in religion is, I believe, becoming apparent. Maybe the programmes on television about pilgrimage and other religious practices are having an effect. Pope Francis's witness to genuine Christian values and thinking has spoken to the entire world. But this also implies a knowledge of what is going on in the world, which means that if Christians want to speak with other people, we also need to be aware of global events and have opinions that are genuine and honest, and do not give the impression that we know all the answers. We need to listen. And all this applies to all flavours of Christianity and not just to those who have experienced the Spiritual Exercises!

At the end of a retreat, in spite of the joy of resurrection considered in the Fourth Week, it can be very hard to leave the retreat house, especially if we have experienced deep consolation. We may feel extreme tiredness—a retreat is not always a rest! And it is also hard to leave our homes, where we have lived and prayed and enjoyed companionship, maybe for many years. In later years, this may sometimes be unavoidable. But in spite of being uprooted, we may still find joy in that, in the Spirit, even when old we may still be 'green, full of sap, still bearing fruit' (Psalm 92:14). Like the Jews in exile, at any age we may long for the blessings of the religious atmosphere and practices that we so enjoyed and have had to leave behind.

I shall finish with a very personal story.

One morning recently I woke up feeling quite bereft. I thought of things past and the times at St Beuno's, the friends I had made (mostly now in heaven) and the permeating atmosphere of Jesuit life in past times. But the next morning, on waking, I had this lovely picture of the Jesuit large boat, or maybe a steamer or liner, on to which I had in previous years been invited and allowed to stay many times. But it was steaming ahead of me. I was in a much smaller boat behind it. But it was a sturdy boat and well equipped and going in the same direction. The larger boat went ahead (the people on board were waving) and I remained steadily going ahead, more slowly, on my own course which led in the same direction—the harbour to which we were all headed. I looked round and saw I was surrounded by many other boats, both large and small. I found it all immensely consoling.

At the recent requiem Mass we celebrated for Pope Francis at St Mary-on-the-Quay I was asked to play the hymns. I sneaked in the old Jesuit hymn 'Knight of Our Lady' to pay tribute to his Jesuit identity, as a voluntary before the Mass started. The congregation has changed so much since the pandemic I doubt if anyone noticed or recognised it. But I did, and enjoyed it and gave thanks for all I had received from the Ignatian tradition.

Marion Morgan OCV has been living lay life as a consecrated woman for nearly 55 years, involved in ecumenism, caring for an autistic adult and many other activities. She now lives alone but is fully involved at St Mary-on-the-Quay, Bristol. She enjoys writing, sings in a community choir and goes to a strength and balance class!

HOW PEDRO ARRUPE LIVED THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES IN YAMAGUCHI

Miki Hayashi-Suzuki

MANY WHO READ THIS will not be surprised that Pedro Arrupe lived the Spiritual Exercises. After he survived the atomic bomb in Hiroshima he saved many lives, and he went on to become Superior General of the Society of Jesus, bravely navigating the rough seas after the Second Vatican Council and preparing the way for the Society's commitment to social justice and the preferential option for the poor. It is often assumed that his experience of the atomic bombing was decisive, but he himself testified that he had his most important spiritual experience in Yamaguchi prior to that.[1] I would like to explore here how he lived the Spiritual Exercises during that time, drawing on his own accounts and on the biography by Pedro Miguel Lamet. He lived his life in accordance with the Spiritual Exercises, spreading this spirit to those around him, and learned about being with Christ through the lay people he encountered.

Born in Bilbao, Spain, in 1907—in the Basque Country, where the veneration of Mary was especially strong—young Pedro witnessed the miracle of Lourdes on his way to pursue a career in medicine and changed his mind, joining the Society of Jesus in 1927. Through the Spiritual Exercises, he felt the call to be sent to Japan. Under the pressure of the Second Spanish Republic, in 1932 he was forced to leave his country because he was a Jesuit; he studied in Valkenburg in Netherlands, close to the German border, where he encountered the Nazi mentality—'a great culture shock'.[2]

After his ordination in 1936, Arrupe went to the USA to complete his studies at St Mary's College, Kansas. He interacted with Spanish-speaking people and found the opportunity to speak his native

[1] See Pedro Arrupe, *One Jesuit's Spiritual Journey: Autobiographical Conversations with Jean-Claude Dietsch, SJ* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1986), 21.
[2] Arrupe, *One Jesuit's Spiritual Journey*, 19.

language a comfort to him. He also worked as a prison chaplain in New York, visiting Hispanic prisoners and building a relationship of trust with them. When the decision was made to send Arrupe to Japan, the prisoners bade him farewell by singing for him. His experience at the prison convinced him 'that there was no better apostolate than just loving people and being their friend'.[3] At the end of September 1938, his ship sailed from Seattle for Japan, arriving at Yokohama two weeks later.

Ministry in Japan

Arrupe first studied the Japanese language and culture. He had a challenging time with the language because the grammar and the characters were so different from European languages and extremely complicated. He even felt as if he might not succeed.

Arrupe was appointed as priest of the church in Yamaguchi while his predecessor, Moises Domenzain, travelled to Spain to report on the situation in Japan and collect donations. Newly arrived, Arrupe was eager to make Yamaguchi a base for missionary work in Japan, like St Francis Xavier, who had first evangelized it. He received many books from Europe, including the works of various Church Fathers and Jesuits. He referred to these books while teaching the Spiritual Exercises, and there are many quotations from them in his book in Japanese, キリストの道 (The Path to Christ), published in five volumes between 1949 and 1955. It is assumed that he responded to the letters sent with the books from different countries, and that the correspondence continued. Those letters were one of the reasons why he was charged with espionage in the following year.

When Arrupe arrived at the Yamaguchi church, the number of laypeople gathered for Sunday Mass was extremely small. In addition, militarism heavily influenced Japanese society; even priests were forced to wear national uniforms and gaiters, and sisters were forced to wear *monpé,* agricultural work-trousers. Churches were required to provide water for fire protection and air-raid shelters. Bread and wine for Mass were not available. Arrupe had to accept each of these unexpected circumstances.

[3] Pedro Miguel Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe: Witness of the Twentieth Century, Prophet of the Twenty-First*, translated by Joseph V. Owens (Chestnur Hill: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2020), 108.

Pedro Arrupe celebrates Mass in the shadow of Mount Fuji, 1938

It must have been quite uneasy or discouraging to live in an environment surrounded by non-believers for virtually the first time. In later years, he wrote about his experiences in Japan, describing what he felt about the state of Roman Catholicism among the non-believers.

> A parish among the pagans is not the same as an established Church with many priests filling all the ranks of the hierarchy. A parish is like an island in the sea, or an oasis in the desert, where shipwrecked people live amidst difficulties and problems as if they were staring at the sky on the same rock, and feel the same anguish and the same joys, as a members of the caravan lost among a sea with waves of sand.[4]

He was not discouraged, however, and made various attempts to attract more people to the church. During the summer holiday season, he offered a venue for 'radio exercises'—that is, light physical activity with music and guidance from a radio broadcast. He also held a concert at which he sang tenor and Fr Hugo Lassalle, who lived in Hiroshima, played the cello. He held a Christian art exhibition at a department store that attracted 6,000 visitors in a few days, where he explained the paintings and spoke about the life of Christ and the teachings of the Bible.

Reflecting the region's thriving shipping industry, Spanish was one of the subjects offered at the Yamaguchi High School of Commerce,

[4] Pedro Arrupe, *Este Japon increible: memorias del P. Arrupe* (Bilbao: Mensajero, n.d.), 128–129.

and Arrupe went there to teach it. The students would gather at the church and discuss diverse topics. Gradually, the number of participants in catechism and Bible study groups increased, leading to baptisms. Later, from among them, Shogo Hayashi and Takao Moriwaki became Jesuits. Arrupe's efforts were truly *tantum quantum*—all that he did was orientated towards 'the end for which we are created' (Exx 23), in accordance with Ignatius' Principle and Foundation!

In Yamaguchi, where there was no other European resident, the Spanish priest's energetic activities must have been recognised by many people, including non-believers. In addition, he gained the trust of the faithful. He later described the faith of lay people in an environment where Christians were a minority:

> Living among pagans, it is necessary to understand how it encircles and squeezes the Christians, and how the surrounding emptiness of a world with antagonistic criteria forces them to unite so that an insignificant group manages to awaken their strength in conscience. And it is the missionary who enlivens all these efforts to remain united around a truth and a Creed. And because Christians know this, they love and venerate him with a faithful affection that entails sacrifice.[5]

Life in Prison

On 8 December 1941, the day the Pacific War broke out, Arrupe was arrested by military police while celebrating Mass for the Immaculate Conception at the church. He was taken to a detention centre without being told what the charge was.

All Arrupe took with him was a razor, a Japanese dictionary and a breviary. He himself had been aware for some time that he was being watched by the police. He had received many letters from Europe and the United States in various languages, so it was not surprising that he was suspected of spying. He answered sincerely in his interrogation, but the military police could not understand his thorough service to an invisible God.[6] At the same time, the laypeople were frightened because expressing Christian faith was regarded as worshipping God rather than the Japanese Emperor, who was regarded as a god—therefore, they were considered disloyal.[7]

[5] Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 129.
[6] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 139; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 107.
[7] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 139.

His first night was spent on a *tatami* mat placed in a corner of a gymnastic or kendo hall, where he was not given a cover or futon and was too cold to sleep. The prison guards called him 'Spain' instead of using his name and threw his food at him: he was treated in a humiliating manner. He waited for God to determine his fate. The next morning, his hope of celebrating Mass gradually faded, and he came to understand that he had been detained.[8] The charges were political and religious, and they were based on the reports of the Special Police, who had been monitoring him beforehand. He was relieved that he had not been slandered by believers. Arrupe told the interrogator, 'As Christians, we are taught that we should be humble. I have many defects and a very poor view of myself, but I'm not so bad as all that!'[9]

In accordance with the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises, in which one reflects on the past and recalls the blessings of God, Arrupe immersed himself in ruminating on his memories in his cell. But as time passed, despite his innate optimism, the future appeared to him very dark. The soldiers deprived him of his tranquillity, but he was given some magazines and continued to study Japanese with his dictionary.[10]

The soldiers began to approach Arrupe and include him in their discussions. He led the conversation with them to more general topics and through them to God. When he gave the contents of Roman Catholic theology, the soldiers told him how they understood it in their own words and expressions. There were always divergences and contradictions, but Arrupe strove to achieve mutual understanding. Through these spiritual conversations, he became aware once again of the enormous abyss that existed between Eastern and Western cultures. But, gradually, this process 'developed into true friendship, though of a strange and rather paradoxical kind'.[11] One of the officers even consulted him about his parents' decision on his marriage.

Although life in prison was severely restricted, two of the soldiers once took him to a public bath. For Arrupe, walking down the street covered in filth 'was enough to be teach me a little of Christ's suffering when he was twice led from the Roman courtyard to the Jewish one, with his hands cruelly tied'.[12] In this way, he superimposed Jesus' experiences

[8] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 140; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 109.
[9] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 141; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 112.
[10] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 141; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 112.
[11] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 142; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 113–114.
[12] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 143; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 114.

on to his own and used them as the starting point for imaginative contemplation. This is the idea of composition of place:

> When a contemplation or meditation is about something that can be gazed on, for example, a contemplation of Christ our Lord, who is visible, the composition will be to see in imagination the physical place where that which I want to contemplate is taking place. By physical place I mean, for instance, a temple or a mountain where Jesus Christ or our Lady happens to be, in accordance with the topic I desire to contemplate.. (Exx 47)

In the Spiritual Exercises, a scene is imagined for meditation, but here Arrupe contemplates it more deeply by overlaying his own experience with that of Jesus.

On Christmas Eve, half a month after his arrest, Arrupe woke up in his cell and felt great pain at not being able to say Mass on this holy day. like the solitude of Jesus in Gethsemane on the eve of his passion. All he could hear was the sleeping breathing of the guards. Suddenly, Arrupe was startled by a strange sound coming from outside the window. The sound reached his ears as if many voices were quietly murmuring for fear of being overheard. What he heard was the soft strain of the Christmas carols that he had taught the people. The laypeople had sung them, with touching tenderness and sincere affection, to comfort Arrupe without regard for the risk of being imprisoned themselves.[13]

Arrupe could not contain his tears. There was a sharp contrast between the solidarity of these faithful Christians and the injustice of the military police who were falsely imprisoning him. A few minutes later, the Christmas carols faded into darkness and the area fell silent again. Arrupe felt his soul united with theirs before the altar where Jesus was to descend. He felt the presence of Jesus and, that night, he experienced the greatest spiritual communion of his life: 'that primitive cell had all the glory of the manger of Bethlehem'.[14]

The greatest spiritual communion of his life

Uncertainty continued over the New Year. On 11 January, at midnight, the prison door was abruptly opened and the officer in charge appeared with several of his subordinates. The interrogation started with questions about Arrupe's daily routine, including his sleeping hours,

[13] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 144; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 115.
[14] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 144.

praying of the breviary and his morning meditation. As usual, he answered the questions confidently and carefully.

> During my interrogation, I became aware of the extraordinary impression my answers were causing in them. In their treatment of me, they gradually showed more respect, more puzzlement, and less hostility. They were always courteous, but eventually they began to be quite deferential.[15]

The interrogation then turned to doctrinal matters. Arrupe dreaded the question about 'the emperor-god'. Later, looking back on this time, he confessed that he feared for the effect of his answers on the Christian faithful.

> 'Very well. So that you see that I have no problem in treating this topic, I am going to do so in exactly the same way as I do with my catechumens in the church.'
>
> The tribunal agreed, and Arrupe explained some basic ideas about God and creation. Then he asked them bluntly: 'Do you believe that the emperor is the creator of the world?'
>
> At that time the emperor was recognized as a 'god' who was a descendant of 'gods' and a begetter of 'gods', but the Japanese term *kami* was very vague in meaning, and it seemed difficult to accept that the emperor had existed for millions of years and had created the world. Arrupe thus put them in a predicament: if they answered 'no', they were unfaithful to the emperor; if they answered 'yes', they would appear unreasonable.
>
> So they answered, 'We don't understand anything about philosophy'.[16]

Arrupe 'then dealt with each of them personally, asking them about their own lives', which made them uneasy.[17] This approach reflects the 'Introduction to the Consideration of the States of Life' in the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises (Exx 135), when those making the Exercises prepare to decide 'in which state or way of life' they should serve God.

Arrupe watched as the official report of his interrogation was written. He called it 'the most beautiful personal confession of faith'; during the 37 hours of interrogation, there was not a single instance in which his

[15] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 144; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 115.
[16] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 145; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 117.
[17] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 145; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 117.

intentions differed from the official's understanding. Arrupe asked the official if he could have a copy of this document but was refused. He signed it; half an hour later, the commanding officer summoned him and released him. When Arrupe asked why his detention had been so prolonged, it was explained that a crucial factor had been to observe his conduct during that time: his obedient attitude and devotion to study and prayer.[18] He replied,

> My statements make it clear that I am dedicated to preaching the Gospel of Jesus and that I have come to Japan to suffer for the Japanese. For a Christian, suffering is not a cause of shame or hatred. Jesus Christ suffered much more than any other human being. A believer has no fear of suffering with him and in the same way he suffered. You are the person who has helped me most in this way. I have no hard feelings toward you. Rather, I feel gratitude to you, as to someone who had done me a great favor.[19]

These words, which recall Ignatius' Three Ways of Being Humble (Exx 165–168), made a strong impression on the official, who urged him: 'Preach, preach that admirable religion that is yours'. Arrupe could hardly believe what he was hearing and noticed that the official's eyes were 'wet with tears of emotion'.[20]

When Arrupe said goodbye before leaving the prison, the soldiers, who had heard many of his teachings, could not hide their emotions. Arrupe said:

> They felt an undefined, vague yearning for something that they couldn't pin down. They thought they were sad because I was leaving, but such was not the case. It was Christ that was leaving them. Can there be any other explanation for their sadness?[21]

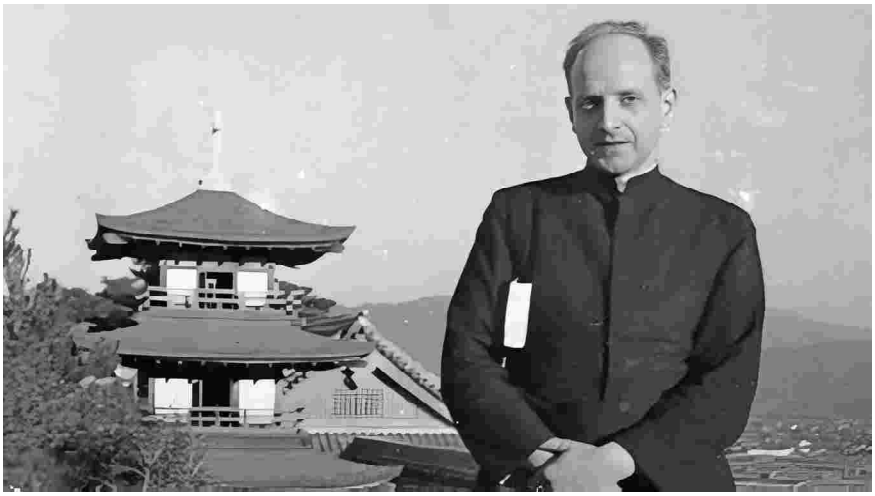
He had presented the image of Christ to them, truly a way of being a Jesuit, a friend of Jesus, living like Christ. This farewell to the soldiers recalls the time when the prisoners in New York said farewell to Arrupe with a heartfelt song. Saying goodbye to those who were in a completely different position, but with whom he had built a strong relationship of trust and friendship, was symbolic of Arrupe's charisma—so much so that he was united with Christ.

[18] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 146; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 118.
[19] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 147; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 119.
[20] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 147; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 119.
[21] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 147; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 119.

He was nevertheless greatly relieved to leave the prison. 'He enjoyed walking again amidst the small houses of Yamaguchi' and hurried to return to his chapel. Yuriko Moriwaki, who had been his cook, burst into cheers when she saw him approaching. His fellow Jesuit Arnold Lademann, who heard her shouts, came out and hugged Arrupe tightly. He was in charge of the Yonago church in Tottori prefecture at the time, but was staying there to assist the faithful without a pastor.[22]

Immediately after his release, Arrupe celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving. He then gradually returned to his ordinary life, but after his incarceration the support from the people was stronger than before. More than twenty military police officers he had met in prison began to greet him as 'Arrupe-san' in a friendly manner on the street. On 18 January 1942, six days after his release, Yuriko Moriwaki's son, Takao, and five others were baptized by Arrupe.[23]

Upon his return to the church, Arrupe learned that the Society of Jesus had not abandoned him during his detention. Hugo Lassalle, his superior, had contacted Shibata, a chemistry professor in Hiroshima and a graduate of the military academy, who interceded for his release. Lassalle visited Yamaguchi on 9 March and proposed that Arrupe become master of the Nagatsuka noviciate near Hiroshima.[24] Many Jesuits were



Arrupe in Nagatsuka in 1946

[22] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 148; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 124.
[23] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 149–150; Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 124.
[24] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 148, 151.

being evacuated to Hiroshima to prevent arrest by the police and to avoid air raids. Arrupe was initially reluctant because of his limited ability in the Japanese language, but on 11 March he received a telegram from Lassalle instructing him to travel immediately to Hiroshima.

The faithful of Yamaguchi hurriedly organized a farewell party as best they could. At that time, Arrupe felt how close the ties that bound the faithful Christians and the missionary. In his memoirs, Arrupe wrote, 'because he knows those whom he has engendered to the life of Christ, and knows what are their difficulties and their problems, he feels to leave them, in a separation that contains for him the greatest of sacrifices'.[25] At the end of the farewell party, the faithful prepared a sign for Arrupe that read, 'I will not leave, but will be here with Xavier', and when he saw it, he burst into tears. The faithful also understood the importance of Yamaguchi, where St Francis Xavier lived 400 years before Arrupe.

Feeling nostalgia for Yamaguchi, he offered and gave himself to the Divine Majesty, and headed for Hiroshima, taking his sufferings as a new offering to God in the spirit of the Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx 234). In the green valley where St Francis Xavier had started it all four centuries earlier, Arrupe also had the special experience of preaching the gospel among his beloved people. With a heavy heart, he headed for Hiroshima. What happened next is beyond the scope of this article.

Arrupe's Reflections on His Prison Experience

Arrupe spoke of his experience on several occasions in later years.

> How many things I learned during that period: the wisdom of silence, interior dialogue with 'the guest of my soul'. I think it was the most instructive period of my whole life.[26]
>
> I myself personally experienced this deep sense of pain for the lack of the Eucharist during the thirty-three days that I was imprisoned in Japan, but there was also at the same time a feeling of the faithful and consoling presence of Our Lord.[27]

He understood that the reason for his detention was the antagonism of the military police, who witnessed many young people trying to convert

[25] Arrupe, *Este Japon increible*, 129.
[26] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 143.
[27] Pedro Arrupe, 'The Eucharist and Youth', in *Other Apostolates Today: Selected Letters and Addresses—III* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1981), 298.

to Christianity. It was a very painful experience, of anxiety and suffering without explanation, loneliness, concern for the faithful, poverty, physical discomfort and cold, long interrogations and so on. Nevertheless, he followed the example of the Gospel: 'when they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time'. (Matthew 10:19)

This prison experience remained burnt into Arrupe's memory until his later years, and even after he suffered a disabling stroke he recalled it, repeating, 'how beautiful!' In his lectures, he emphasized how profoundly mystical the experience of solitude with Christ was for him. 'There was nothing in my cell. I was alone with Christ.'[28] As the *Spiritual Exercises* affirm:

> The more we keep ourselves alone and secluded, the more fit do we make ourselves to approach and attain to our Creator and Lord; and the more we unite ourselves to him in this way, the more do we dispose ourselves to receive graces and gifts from his divine and supreme goodness. (Exx 20)

His loss of the Eucharist during his imprisonment renewed his veneration for it. He recalled this experience in a lecture to young people, saying, 'The moment when one loses something is also the moment in which its worth is best known'.[29] In the same lecture, Arrupe spoke about a conversation with a lay woman who was praying before the Eucharist and what he learnt from her. While Arrupe was in Yamaguchi, he noticed a woman of about twenty kneeling alone before the tabernacle, sometimes for hours at a time. One day he met her coming out of the church:

> I asked her: 'And what do you do in so much time before the tabernacle?' Without hesitation, as if she had already prepared her answer, she told me: 'Nothing' …. At last she said: 'What do I do before the tabernacle? Well, I am there.'[30]

She was 'there', just as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, sat at Jesus' feet (Luke 10:38–42), just as the Mother of Jesus stood near the cross of Jesus (John 19:25–27). Through this conversation with the young lay woman, Arrupe understood more fully how to stay intimate with Jesus

[28] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 143; and see Arrupe, 'Eucharist and Youth', 298–299.
[29] Arrupe, 'Eucharist and Youth', 300.
[30] Arrupe, 'Eucharist and Youth', 300.

in the Eucharist, and that the simpler the method of prayer, the deeper it would be.

He concluded his speech:

> Learn to go and see Him, to visit Him, to 'remain' with Him, and you will see how many things you will learn. It is a wisdom which He alone can give you, the true knowledge which makes men wise, holy, and even happy. All that we need for our life is gradually attained with a pouring forth from heart to heart. 'Tell me with whom you associate and I shall tell you who you are.' If you go with Jesus, if you remain with Jesus, you will certainly become yourself another Jesus.[31]

Arrupe learned from his experience of being with Christ during his imprisonment, put it into practice and continued to urge more people to seek a similar experience. St Ignatius likewise shared his own spiritual experiences with many people by writing the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Arrupe had originally planned to become a doctor, but after witnessing several miracles he decided to become a Jesuit. Each of his experiences in his youth was different from what he had expected. However, looking back, he realised that God had a great plan for him beyond them. It seems that Arrupe himself discovered this in the midst of suffering from material and spiritual poverty in his solitary cell in Yamaguchi. It was the encouragement of the laity that saved him from that suffering. Because Arrupe himself lived a life based on the Spiritual Exercises, they responded in the same way, with unconditional love. Even after he became Superior General, he would recall the experience of feeling fulfilled from nothingness.

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[31] Arrupe, 'Eucharist and Youth', 300