ORIGINS OF APOSTOLIC FORMATION:

Jerome Nadal and Novitiate Experiments

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IGNATIUS'S earliest legislation for the training of new recruits to the Society of Jesus is contained in the fourth chapter of the *General Examen*: a document intended for candidates to the Society, which appears as a kind of preface to the *Constitutions* proper. The image which it presents of the novitiate is altogether different from the traditional idea of manual labour in a house given over to a search for 'recollection' through exterior silence and withdrawal from 'the world'. On the contrary, Ignatius envisages novices undergoing what he calls *experiencias* both within the house and in a variety of places outside it. This term *experiencia* has a whole family of words associated with it: experience, experiment, test, probation; the underlying idea is that, as a result of them, both the Society and the man himself will learn from experience and observation how the Lord is working in the life of this unique individual.

The earliest extended commentary on the experiments specified in the *General Examen* is found in a series of talks given at Alcalá in Spain in 1561 by Jerónimo Nadal, one of the first companions of Ignatius. To him Ignatius had entrusted the task of promulgating the Constitutions in Spain and Portugal in 1554 and 1555; and he was sent again to the houses of these countries by Diego Lainez, Ignatius's successor as Superior General. Juan Polanco, Ignatius's secretary during the work of the Constitutions, wrote that Nadal understood the founder's spirit more profoundly than anyone else he knew in the Society.

It seems that the practice of the experiments, so strongly advocated in this text of Nadal, had in fact been largely abandoned by the time of Ignatius's death in 1556. Increasingly, novices came to be kept in separate establishments, away from ordinary communities; and the routine followed in these houses, even those established in Ignatius's lifetime, does not seem to have included outside activity on any regular basis. It is a matter for our own generation of apostolic religious to decide how far this suppression was justified, and how the goals which inspired Ignatius's bold original

suggestions are to be achieved in contemporary programmes of formation.

The purpose of this article is to present Nadal's discussion of the experiments, both in the context of other early writings on the novitiate, and also of what was actually put into practice. It has been found convenient to re-arrange slightly the material of the original spanish text (whose order is indicated by the marginal numbering), since Nadal spread his material over two conferences.

Introduction

152. The next point we should discuss is the particular experiences and tests which the Society lays down for the noviceship. They are all very important, and a great deal should be made of them. There are six normative forms of testing in the Society, though there are many others which may also be used at the discretion of superiors. The first is to make spiritual exercises, the second to serve others in hospitals, the third a pilgrimage, the fourth to work inside the house doing the jobs of a humble servant, the fifth to teach Christian doctrine at an elementary level to young children and uneducated people, the sixth to hear confessions, preach or lecture, depending on the talent the novice already has.

The idea underlying these experiences is that it was through these sorts of things that our Lord guided Father Ignatius, the man whom he chose to pass this calling on to others. Through these things he trained him; this was his noviceship. In addition, the process of testing establishes whether a man is suitable for our Institute, whether he manages to make something of it. To be in the Society involves prayer and dealing with prayer; and so the novice is given spiritual exercises to see how he copes with them, and what his aptitude is in spiritual matters. The Society undertakes works of charity, serving the poor, going from one locality to another in order to give help to others. The man who wants to join the Society is tested for this work as he serves in the hospital or makes his pilgrimage, and likewise with the other experiments. In this way the novices show whether they are equal to the way of life that will always be theirs.[1]

Considered in terms of the tradition of religious formation in general, these experiments clearly constituted an innovation on Ignatius's part. Furthermore, this innovation was closely connected with the equally new apostolic orientation of the Society. In 1541, Ignatius had written:

> The reason which impels us to establish greater experience and to take more time than is customarily employed in other congregations

> is the following. If someone enters a well-ordered and organized monastery, he will be more separated from occasions of sin because of the cloister, tranquillity, and good order there than in our Society. It does not have that cloister, quiet, and repose, but travels from one place to another. Moreover, if one has bad habits and lacks some perfection, it suffices for him to perfect himself in a monastery so ordered and organized. But in our Society it is necessary that one be well-experienced and extensively tested before being admitted. For as he travels about later on, he must associate with men and women both good and bad. Such associations require greater strength and experiences as well as greater graces and gifts from our Creator and Lord.[2]

The experiments specified in the General Examen can be traced back to the experience of Ignatius and the first companions in the years before the formal approval of the Society. It is a favourite idea of Nadal's that each religious Institute is given its own particular grace by the Lord, the definitive expample of which is to be seen in the life of the founder. For Nadal, Ignatius was 'the beginning of the whole thing, the one whom God used as a means for imparting this grace, the one whom he chose to pass this calling on to others (*ministro de esta vocación*)'.[3] Accordingly, certain experiences of Ignatius and the first companions come to be seen as seminal, providing norms for later candidates: the events of Manresa, prolonged travel on foot across Europe, sleeping and working in the hospitals of the day, the growing desire to 'help souls', preaching in a town's squares.[4] Perhaps less directly related to this early wandering existence is the fourth experiment, the household chores; ironically the only one, apart from the Exercises, which novices have actually undergone at all times in the Society's history. After all, the first companions had no stable common residence. However, a clue towards a connection may lie in the link which Nadal makes between this experiment and the value of obedience, the novice's abandonment of independence of judgment, so as to follow instead the mind and heart of the person whom the Society puts in charge of him.[5] Doing the everday jobs around the house can do much to promote a sense in the novice that the religious community is now home, thus fostering growth in the kind of mutuality of understanding and commitment that lay at the root of the first companions' decision permanently to preserve their union.[6]

Through these sorts of experiences it was God who led Ignatius, and it is God who leads the novice. Much of the language surrounding the experiments in Nadal's commentary, and in the General Examen itself might suggest that the novice is meant to be trying to pass some form of endurance test. However, the important question is not how well the novice does at the activity in question, but whether he can come through the experience in peace and with a sense of God's consoling presence (*anda con alegría y consolado*). Nadal would be the first to insist that the initiative in every vocation lies in the infinite power and goodness of God, 'who does this for my benefit — I count for nothing'.[7] As was said in the Instruction

of the Sacred Congregation for Religious (1969), which allowed apostolic religious Institutes to include what it called 'periods of formative activity' in the noviceship, the union of prayer and action which characterizes such Institutes, 'is not achieved simply by activity; nor is it ordinarily perceived on a purely psychological level, since it is deeply rooted in God's own love, which is the bond of perfection transcending all human understanding'.[8]

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[1] The original text is to be found in *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu* (MHSJ) vol 90, *Epistolae et Monumenta P. Hieronymi Nadal* (EN) tomus V, *Commentarii de Instituto S.I.*, edited by Miguel Nicolau S.J. (Rome, 1962), pp 379-87.
[2] MHSJ *Constitutiones et Regulae Societatis Iesu* (MHSJ Const.) I, p 60, translated in Ganss, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus (Constitutions)* (St Louis, 1970), p 96, n 7.
[3] EN V, p 262.
[4] See *The Autubiography* of S. Ignatius, *passim.* [5] Infra p 72, n 159.
[6] See the document entitled *Deliberation of the First Fathers*, MHSJ Const. I, p 1-7 translated in Futrell, *Making an Apostolic Community of Love* (St Louis, 1970), pp 187-94.
[7] EN V, p 358.
[8] *Renovationis Causam*, 5, translated by James Walsh: *Supplement to the Way* 7 (June 1979), p 26.

The Spiritual Exercises

153. The Exercises are given not only to train the man in prayer and the ways of the spiritual life, but also to find out experimentally what his capacity is in spiritual matters. Though we do give the Exercises to outsiders, it is simply for training them, and not for this additional purpose. With those who are to join our Society, however, we find out what benefit they gain from prayer and the particular ways in which they feel themselves to be most helped. A man could be so ill at ease with interior things that he would not do for the Society.

155. I am spending a lot of time on the novices, and it is a topic I like dealing with, because it is a source of great consolation to speak about these things which are so conducive to our spiritual growth. We looked at them in the last talk, and there is still more to say in this one. I began to put before you the experiences through which the novices are trained, and become the sort of people who are fit for the Society's work. I said that the first testing experience was that of the spiritual exercises; and, although in our papal documents this refers to spiritual exercises in general, here, in this paragraph of the General Examen (65), it means our own Spiritual Exercises; this particular way which our Lord has given to the Society of dealing with spiritual and interior matters. Through them a person reveals what he is like; it becomes clear how well he gets on in the things of prayer and how it helps him to grow. The Society then sees how this man will best be able to serve God and along which of the

spiritual ways he will be most sustained, for there are different paths along which a person may travel. It is thus that the Exercises come to be an experiment, and if the person who gives the Exercises is to pick up what is required accurately, he needs great discernment. Furthermore, the superior should use the knowledge gained in this way as a basis for guiding the man forward.

In the General Examen, the Spiritual Exercises experiment is described as follows:

> The first experience consists in making the Spiritual Exercises for one month or a little more or less; that is to say, in the candidate's examining his conscience, thinking over his whole past life and making a general confession, meditating upon his sins, contemplating the events and mysteries of the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ our Lord, exercising himself in praying vocally and mentally according to the capacity of the persons, according to what will be taught to him in our Lord, and so forth.[1]

All the extant sources stress Ignatius's own treatment of new recruits in the early years of the Society as remarkable in its sensitivity to the distinctive needs of each individual.[2] Schemes of formation were thought of as norms, freely to be adapted in each case; the experiments 'may be advanced, postponed, adapted, and in some cases where the superior approves, replaced by others, according to the persons, times, places, and their contingencies'.[3] For example, according to his autobiographical account, Nadal's own noviceship experiments were limited to three: the Exercises, various household chores and being minister of the house, though we know from another source which will be quoted below that he also preached in the squares of Rome. The Exercises are seen here, not merely as a means of spiritual growth and a test of a person's ability to pray, but also as revealing the particular and unique ways in which an individual becomes open to the action of God. Nadal tells us that his own election was extremely difficult; and it is not surprising that when he emerged from the Exercises, 'Father Ignatius began by treating me very gently, very often calling me to his table, coming to my room or taking me on walks. I think he did this because he realized I was rather fragile and that he needed to go easy with me in this way'.[4] The detail of Ignatius's perceptiveness is well illustrated by a comment he is reported to have made just before hearing the general confession made by Nadal in the course of the Exercises. He is said to have told Jerónimo Domènech, who was directing Nadal's retreat:

> That man we are going to find difficult, because he is full of melancholy — you can tell it even from his eyes. If God does not call him to stay with us, I'm worried in case the melancholy will take over completely, and that he'll lose his reason. At the moment he wants to serve God but can't. But I'm hopeful. He must give thanks to God

for the good things he has received and pray for perseverance and fidelity. Although he will have difficulties — even quite heavy ones — God will help him.[5]

The requirement that the director of the Exercises 'should inform the superior of what he thinks of that exercitant for the end which the Society seeks' might seem to violate an important principle of confidentiality. It should be remembered, however, that the fourth chapter of the General Examen is in effect a list of conditions which the candidate is required, at least at some level, to accept before being admitted.[6]

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[1] *Constitutions* [65]: Ganss, p 96.
[2] Cf Ruiz Jurado, *Origenes del Noviciado en la Compañia de Jesús* (Rome, 1980), (Origenes), pp 16-27, for an account of Ignatius's treatment of Guillaume Postel, Nadal himself and Benito Palmio. This commentary is at many points indebted to Fr Ruiz Jurado's clear and comprehensive study.
[3] *Constitutions* [65]: Ganss, pp 95-96.
[4] EN 1, p 23. [5] *Ibid.*, p 21.
[6] *Constitutions* [73]: Ganss, p 99.

Hospitals

154. After the Exercises, there comes another way of testing, a way which is very much in keeping with our Institute and our way of doing things. Our prayer has to be not something just for ourselves, but something which helps others. A man comes out of the Exercises, comes out with great ardour and fine intentions. We want to find out how strong these really are, and so we put him to works of charity, sending him to a hospital where there will be ample scope for him to carry out all sorts of acts of kindness. For this is what he will have to do later: keep a sense of prayer while doing things that are not directly spiritual, working at the various ways of helping other people. And this, furthermore, has to be the whole aim of our prayer: to work for others' benefit. Once we see that putting a novice in a hospital does not cause him either to lose his prayerfulness, or become agitated or get upset, but rather that he goes about happily, gifted with an inner consolation, we have established the reality of the desires and the ardour with which he came out of the Exercises.

Notice also — a point we touched on in the last talk — how well the different experiments fit in with each other. The spiritual benefit gained in the course of the Exercises is not for a person simply on his own, not something to be received by him in isolation from others. The benefit is given, rather, as a means towards the attainment of the Society's purpose. Thus, when a man has finished the Exercises,

an experiment is carried out to test the strength of his intentions: the novice is put in hospital, where there are opportunities for him to prove his humility, his patience and his charity. In this way it becomes known what sort of person he is, and how much progress he has made in spiritual matters. Moreover, during this test, he is also trying to find ways and means of maintaining an awareness of the holy and an intensity in prayer while being engaged in working for the benefit of others.

For Ignatius, the idea of a hospital would suggest something much closer to a lodging house for vagrants than a hospital in the modern sense:

> Naturally, this experiment has to be seen in the light of the sanitary conditions of the sixteenth century. If we think today of a hospital, we spontaneously imagine a great building of glass and steel, with an abundance of highly qualified doctors and nurses, with operation theatres and spotless wards, true temples of antiseptic cleanliness and hygiene. But in the sixteenth century things were very different indeed. The descriptions of the hospitals at that time make us shudder; we can well understand why people were so deadly afraid of ever going there. Yet Ignatius sent his novices not just to any hospital, but to hospitals of the poorest of the poor, the incurables, the outcasts of society, who in indescribable conditions of filth and neglect could do practically nothing but suffer and await with fear, bitterness or resignation the end of their pains and earthly sufferings.[1]

The fullest early account of a hospital experiment is to be found in what is perhaps rather an idealized memoir of Cornelius Wischaven,[2] who had joined the Society at Leuven in 1543 inspired by Pierre Favre, and was summoned to Rome by Ignatius in 1547, seemingly for further testing. This may have been because he was later to be one of the first specifically designated Masters of Novices, both in Messina and in Rome. Shortly after his arrival, Ignatius sent Wischaven and a companion to the Consolazione hospital, where the two of them had to put up with quite unduly harsh treatment from the manager. Only on one night in the week were they allowed unbroken sleep, and only on Sundays could Wischaven say Mass: during the rest of the week there was not even the time to hear someone else's. The food was also woefully inadequate. One of their duties was to dig graves for those who died in the hospital; and at one point they were so desperate that they even chose burial places for themselves, each agreeing that, were the other to die, he would see that a decent funeral was carried out. We are also told, however, that none of the sixty patients who died during their two-month stay were left without spiritual comfort, and that, in the end, the manager was converted, made his confession to Wischaven, and even asked Ignatius to admit him to the Society.

In these paragraphs, we see Nadal attempting to formulate the nature of a religious consecration in which apostolic work plays a central part,

requiring thus some scheme for relating the values of personal holiness and the service of others. On the one hand, we have phrases which cannot in the end avoid the suggestion that, no matter how praiseworthy the service may be in itself, it is none the less essentially a diversion from what really matters: union with God in formal prayer. Rather grudgingly as it were, the novice has to try and hold on to a sense of prayer while being occupied in things that are not directly spiritual (*conservar las reliquias de la oración en las obras exteriores y occupaciones de ayudar al próximo*), and the implication is that the work always constitutes some form of distraction. Then Nadal seems almost to correct himself: the work, far from being a diversion, is in fact the whole purpose of the prayer. The underlying difficulty here is that the vocation of an apostolic religious implies a radical qualification of the traditional notion of religious consecration as some form of separation from the world. Indeed, Nadal's importance lies chiefly in the fact that his writings embody the most sustained attempt to develop the theology of religious life in such a way as to accommodate the experience of the early Society.

It is illuminating to compare Nadal's rationale of the hospital experiment with that given in the General Examen:

> The second experience is to serve for another month in hospitals or one of them. The candidates take their meals or sleep in it or in them for one or several hours during the day, according to the times, places and persons. They should help and serve all, the sick and the well, in conformity with the directions they receive, in order to lower and humble themselves more, thus giving clear proof of themselves to the effect that they are completely giving up the world with its pomps and vanities, that in everything they may serve their Creator and Lord, crucified for them.[3]

Though the setting is apostolic, the object of the experiment is a growth in holiness expressed in terms which centre exclusively on the relationship between the individual and the Creator and Lord; the service of others is far less prominent than in the Nadal text. It may be difficult to specify what exactly is meant when Ignatius says that the aim of the experiment is for the novices to 'lower and humble themselves more', and how this value relates to other Ignatian spiritual ideas, but it is clear that this humility is seen only very indirectly, if at all, as an apostolically related virtue. The stress in this paragraph of the General Examen is paralleled throughout Ignatius's *Autobiography* although the desire to 'help souls' recurs frequently, it always seems in one way or another subordinate in Ignatius's mind to a growth in holiness and attachment to Christ which centres on the individual. The first companions were unanimous in emerging from the Exercises resolved to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The impulse towards apostolic service is in each case a more or less fully articulated afterthought which becomes central only when the pilgrimage is abandoned.[4]

It would, of course, be quite wrong to suggest that dedication to the apostolate and personal holiness and unselfishness are in any way separable. As Francois Roustang writes, commenting on this hospital experiment:

> If one is to be able to help others, one must have set aside every desire to dominate, every trace of that pride which leads us to impose ourselves on them, every wish to promote oneself at the expense of the people one meets, every attempt to arouse esteem.[5]

The important point is that the grace of an apostolic calling leads one to a complex integration of personal holiness and service to others, which, given the theological tradition they inherited, the first companions found difficult to formulate. However, the love fostered by the Exercises shows itself in deeds rather than words;[6] for all the stress that the relevant paragraph of the General Examen seems to be putting on personal spiritual growth, Gonçalves de Câmara tells us that, when people came back from experiment, Ignatius's interest lay, 'not in their prayer, but in what it gives rise to'.[7] Thus he would ask for reports to be submitted by people who had seen the novices at work, even though often these people could not be expected to understand what was going on from a spiritual point of view.

In these talks given at Alcalá, Nadal intergrates personal submission to God and apostolic service in a vision of religious life as the response to a divine call, which, for each Institute, has a specific quality. According to Nadal's understanding, the distinctive feature of a Jesuit's calling is that whatever grace the Lord gives him is such that it not only fosters his own personal growth, but also — and inescapably — that of others. The spiritual benefit of the Exercises is not given to a man in isolation, but in order to help him work for the purpose for which the Society was founded; which, as Nadal has explained earlier in these talks, is to promote the glory of God through the service of others:

> This is the specific quality of the grace of this Institute; that it sustains both ourselves and others as well. This particular grace has been given to each one of you first so that you can help others with it. If you don't have that purpose in view, don't expect any private help for your own personal growth; you have cut yourself off from your Institute, and consequently from the grace which is proper to it.[8]

Personal holiness and the service of others are identified; formal prayer becomes a means to an end.

However, though this approach represents the most extended attempt in the early Society to relate these two elements of Jesuit experience, it is not the only one. When Francis Xavier left Goa for China in 1552, among the instructions he left for Caspar Berze was the following:

> With the people you take in, always concentrate on training them in true selflessness, and in a mortification of their passions which is from the heart rather than a matter of flashy externals. If, in order to foster this inward mortification, you do give them some outward practices, they should be the sort of things that have a good influence on others and help them to grow (*couzas que edifiquem*), like working in the hospitals or begging for the poor and so on — not things that provoke laughter and ridicule on the part of outsiders, and vainglory and vanity in the individuals concerned.[9]

Here the relationship between the two values is quite different from that in the Nadal text. The ultimate value is a holiness conceived in terms of the individual himself; the forms of mortification that have a good effect on others are recommended, not for that reason as such, but rather because such forms will also tend to be those that promote more authentic inner growth. Though there may well be objective reasons for judging one theory more adequate than another, perhaps the most important conclusion to be drawn is that different formulations will appeal to different people at different stages. Even Nadal, earlier in 1561, talking to the community at Coimbra, could see the purpose of the noviceship as fostering 'mortification together with the growth of a person in humility and a low reckoning of himself'.[10] There is room for plurality in the ways in which the individuals within a religious family articulate their charism.

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[1] P. Molinari, 'Formative Activity in the Novitiate', in *Supplement to the Way* 8 (November, 1969), pp 214,-15.

[2] Cf Tacchi Venturi, 'La prova dell' indifferenza e del servizio negli ospedali nel tirocinio Ignaziano', in *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* 1 (1932), pp 17-21; and *Storia della Compagnia di Gesù in Italia*, II, ii (Rome, 1951), pp 32-35.

[3] *Constitutions* [66]: Ganss, p 97.

[4] Cf J. Osuna (tr. N. King), *Friends in the Lord* (London, 1974), pp 55-56.

[5] F. Roustang, 'Expériences et Conversion', in *Christus* 10 (1963), p 345.

[6] Exx 230.

[7] MHSJ *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis* (FN) I, p 677.

[8] EN V pp 331-32. [9] MHJS *Epistolae S. Francisci Xaverii*, II, pp 401-02.

[10] M. Nicolau (ed) *Pláticas Espirituales del P. Jeronimo Nadal en Coimbra (1561)* (Granada, 1945), [*Coimbra*], p 103.

Pilgrimage

157. There is a further test, that of making a pilgrimage. Each of these tests usually last a month, and can be repeated afterwards. It is common in the Society to send a man on pilgrimage as an experiment, because Father Ignatius used to say that he had been helped greatly by his own pilgrimages, and also because our occupation is in fact just this: moving about from one area to another in the service of souls. A person could turn out to be so ill-equipped for this exercise that we would decide that he was unfit for our Institute. The basis for this judgment is contained in the relevant paragraph of the General Examen. On pilgrimage the novice has numerous opportunites to carry out acts of kindness and to show how strong his resolutions are. He is poor, alone, without human support or comfort, without money for travelling. One day they won't let him in; another they insult him. At these points, and at others like them, it becomes clear that only God is to be sought,

only in him can confidence be placed. The novice now has real circumstances in which his good resolutions can be put into practice, a chance to suffer hunger and thirst and to see how he copes with them.

The relevant passage in the General Examen reads as follows:

> The third experience is to spend another month in making a pilgrimage without money and even in begging from door to door, at appropriate times, for the love of God our Lord, in order to grow accustomed to discomfort in food and lodging. Thus too the candidate, through abandoning all the reliance which he could have in money or other created things, may with genuine faith and intense love place his reliance entirely in his Creator and Lord.[1]

Nadal himself echoes the reply given by Ignatius, when Gonçalves da Câmara asked him why he recommended a pilgrimage: 'because I myself experienced how useful it was, and really found myself in doing it'.[2]

From Coimbra there survives a document containing two sets of guidelines for pilgrims, written in Portuguese and Latin. These were probably composed by Simão Rodrigues in 1545 or 1546. A Spanish translation also survives, and the MHSJ editor conjectures that this was made in connection with the visit during which Nadal delivered these talks. The document echoes the account given in the General Examen, seeing the overall purpose of the pilgrimage as a growth in reliance on God:

> . . . since I shall have frequent experience of how the Lord is 'our helper in all that befalls us', I shall not be anxious about what may happen, 'because the Lord is at my right hand'.[3]

However, the chief value of the Coimbra document lies in its extended presentation of the pilgrimage as a means of applying the spiritual teaching of the Exercises to a concrete situation. If the pilgrims find themselves in a town for the night, they are to sleep in a hospital, which provides a setting for Nativity contemplation:

> When I go into the hospital, I shall be aware that I am entering God's house, remembering that he was born in a stable, in the presence of animals, and that it was in this stable that the shepherds and the Magi kings found Christ. . . . [In the hospital] I will see the disfigured Christ present in the poor. I will observe how these souls are liberated from the world's honours, and I should be glad that I am in the most despised placed in the world, where I can be safe from its normal concerns . . . I will remember that, were God on earth, I should find him in this place rather than in palaces or the houses of kings, 'because those who are in the houses of kings wear soft raiment'. Therefore I shall not be at all ill at ease in the place where the king of kings was. I will feel for the plight of the poor, wishing them well from

> the bottom of my heart, and, looking at their poverty, I will ask the Lord that they may realize how he sees them and thus use their situation in order to grow spiritually. I will realize that they have been poor for a long time — some perhaps through no fault of their own — and that it is a great kindness which I have received from the Lord to be able to choose poverty of my own will.[4]

The pilgrimage is an opportunity for growth in 'an intimate knowledge of our Lord':[5]

> Every time I set off in the morning, leaving aside every other thought, I should try hard vividly to imagine and contemplate the fact that I am taking Christ as my companion and that all the heavenly court follow him. . . . Sometimes I will be glad with him, at others I will weep, remembering how much he suffered for me; I shall become aware how little it actually is that I suffer for him . . . I will think of what Christ would do when he was tired, and how his disciples would behave, how they would be joyful in their difficulties, how they would be comforted by seeing Christ's face, and how, seeing his endurance and his fatigue, their own troubles would seem insignificant. I will try and make all this a living reality for me. . . . Some days will be mild and others very cold. There will be some days when I will find nothing to eat, nor anywhere to sleep sheltered from the elements. Yet, at a deeper level, when I see that I am in the Lord's presence, my problems will not bother me:
>
> Thou in toil art comfort sweet,
> Pleasant coolness in the heat,
> Solace in the midst of woe
>
> and that he is well pleased and content with these difficulties of mine.[6]

There will be a chance also to learn from experience 'the deceits of the rebel chief':[7]

> I will be faced with many great difficulties, with much sadness and desolation, and it will seem to me that I have no way out. I will find that all kinds of different thoughts and new ideas will come to me, together with good reasons for abandoning this way of life. What before I thought good will now appear to me of no value. Nevertheless, I must try and keep my eyes on God, however strong the attacks are, and so conquer them . . . I should remember that all those other things are false — only the semblance of truth, and that they can last only a short time, for what is not real cannot endure.[8]

Finally, this experiment reproduces in the concrete the characteristically Ignatian seeking after what is uncongenial, not as a value in itself, but as a realistic means towards achieving an honest acceptance of whatever God might want:[9]

> If I wish to achieve the spiritual freedom necessary for living for the Lord's glory rather than to follow my appetites, I must also be willing to take the steps that will help me towards this. So, if I am looking for stronger faith and hope, I must also look for hardship, because it is through hardship that I will acquire these virtues.[10]

An account of the pilgrimage experiment as practised in the early years of the Society is to be found in a letter of Pierre Favre from Speyer in 1542 to Ignatius, concerning Juan de Aragón, a recruit of Favre's from the Spanish court:

> May it please Jesus Christ our Lord to give us grace to realize the great kindness which, in his power, he has done us — and in a way that has helped very many people — by giving him [Juan] so much spiritual growth during a pilgrimage of this kind. A lot of people were saying here that there was no possibility of his coming back home. They have been proved wrong, to the glory of God and of our Catholic faith. He tells us that, when he got to Mainz, there was a great deal of discussion among the city council, the outcome of which was that no one would let him into the city, for they were particularly nervous about foreigners. It was by then late, and he was not going to be able to get anywhere else that day. When he had travelled some distance from the town, along came a young man of some rank behind him, who shouted to him to come back, saying that he would not be able to sleep in the open because of the dangers of the night. Juan told him that he didn't dare return, because they had forbidden him entrance to the city, but the young man promised him that there would be no danger, for he himself would come back with him. And so he managed to get Juan to return, and took him from street to street without anyone asking questions, with the result that our pilgrim felt humbled at such kindness on the part of the young man, who had fetched him while it was raining and had left him well provided for. To this day, Juan marvels about this young man, and he cannot make up his mind whether he was sent from heaven or the town hall.
>
> A further thing which happened to him in another town was that he got in a boat with a lot of people, without any money to pay for the long journey by river to Cologne. There was a Lutheran there, who never stopped making fun of his pilgrimage, and saying all sorts of things against the Church, with Juan telling him off. When they got to the end of the journey and it was time to pay, the woman who owned the boat demanded from Juan either the money or his cloak, much to the amusement of the Lutheran and others. Juan got up and asked this Lutheran, who knew Latin, to tell them that, since he had no money, he was asking them for alms for the love of Christ our Lord. The poor Lutheran was quite embarrassed, but was too kind-hearted not to act as interpreter; in the end, when he got the alms, he presented it to this rather rude woman, whereupon she was touched by grace and became confused, so much so that she wouldn't dare take a single coin, but rather was asking him to forgive her and pray

to God for her: she would never take anything from him, even if he forced her. At this the Lutheran and the others were amazed; it seemed to them miraculous that the woman would ever turn down money in that way.[11]

NOTES

[1] *Constitutions* [67]: Ganss, p 97.
[2] FN I, 609-10.
[3] MHSJ Const. IV, p 94, quoting (Vulgate) Pss 9, 10; 15, 8.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp 108, 110, quoting Mt 11, 8.
[5] Exx 104.
[6] MHJS Const. IV, pp 104, 96, 98, 100. [7] Exx 139.
[8] MHSJ Const. IV, p 98.
[9] Exx 16, 157, 168.
[10] MHSJ Const. IV, p 94.
[11] MHSJ *Fabri Monumenta*, pp 175-77.

The general scheme

158. It is not required that the experiments be done in this order — the superior can switch them around as seems appropriate to him — but, in the order in which Father Ignatius sets them down, they do follow on from each other very naturally. The first test is carried out during the exercises, where the novice has maximum support and the least to do. Then the hospitals, where, though they are outside the house, the novices still receive help from the Society: they go and visit the local community, and, in turn, those in the community come and see them. The pilgrimages are more intense experiments: they go on their own to places where the Society has no presence, and where there is more scope for demonstrating patience and many other good qualities.

In giving this general account of the interrelation of the experiments, Nadal, interestingly enough, limits himself to the first three. Furthermore, in the earliest surviving document of any substance dealing with initiation into the Society (dated 1539), the first companions seem to have envisaged that these first three experiments should precede a year of probation before definitive co-option into the Institute,[1] though no specific form of activity is laid down for that year. According to this 1539 scheme, admission to the Society's house follows the first three experiments. It is in the earliest text of the General Examen (dated 1546), that we find the addition of the second three experiments, and these are specified for the period after admission to the house, whereas the first three can be done either before or after entry.[2] The guidelines which Nadal, on his earlier visit to Spain in 1553-54, set out for the Master of Novices, as well as his formal commentary on the

Constitutions, seem to envisage the hospital or the pilgrimage experiments after admission as exceptional.[3]

However, the scheme put forward in 1539 probably presupposed the kind of adequate general formation in learning and virtue which the first companions would have had by the time that they left Paris. The opening paragraph of the 1541 document concerning the foundation of colleges shows that this had proved to be unrealistic, and that the Society had realized that it must take responsibility for the full spiritual and intellectual formation of its recruits.[4] No longer, then, could the process of initiation afford to concentrate exclusively on features particular to the new order. The early training would also have to embody a balanced and well-rounded spiritual formation, drawing far more on traditional sources. Whereas the General Examen is still relatively strongly influenced by the earlier understanding, part III of the Constitutions, composed substantially in the late 1540s, presents the noviceship much more in quasi-monastic terms, and the experiments are not discussed. Fr Ruiz Jurado has convincingly demonstrated the process by which Ignatius and Polanco drew on Dominican legislation in writing this part.[5] The early novitiates seem to have drawn unsystematically on both schemes, without there being any attempt in the early years to integrate the two approaches in a single piece of legislation. By the mid 1550s, possibly for reasons that are discussed in the comment on the next paragraph, the scheme outlined in the Constitutions had come to prevail almost exclusively. The only experiments which remained were the Exercises and the household chores.

Nadal was enforcing this policy throughout Spain and Portugal during this 1561 visit, recommending for example a minutely detailed timetable for the Coimbra noviceship in which experiments outside the house seem to have vanished entirely.[6] It may be his reflections on the relationship between prayer and apostolic action, greatly expanded for the talks given during this visit, which have led him to believe that there is something of importance in the older understanding which should not become forgotten. If we remember the slant given by Nadal to the hospital experiment, the idea that the pilgrimage is the culmination of the three original experiments must be connected with the similarity, mentioned earlier by Nadal, between the pilgrimage and the apostolic life in general. This is an emphasis quite foreign to the paragraph in the General Examen dealing with pilgrimages, and also to the Coimbra document. In these two, the stress is on trust in God and companionship with Christ respectively. Nadal's emphasis is not, however, unparalleled: a suppressed draft of a Declaration on the General Examen, dating from 1548, states that a long journey made under obedience to someone in the Society could substitute for all six of the experiments.[7]

The only simple answer, then, to the question, 'what constitutes an Ignatian noviceship?' is that Ignatius would do whatever he thought happened to suit an individual. When the Society's thirty-first General Congregation restored experiments in something approaching their original form, it cited a note penned by Gonçalves da Câmara in the margin of his memoir of Ignatius, twenty years or so after the founder's death:

> The novices used to show what they were really like — they were well known and their mortification was something real because at that time they had a freer régime — I mean without all these laws and outward ceremony behind which a person can hide his natural bent.[8]

However, the reasoning which all but suppressed the experiments was not unaware of the apostolic purposes of the Society. It would be simplistic to attribute it to an excessive monastic influence. In a document submitted by Juan de la Plaza, Master of Novices at Córdoba, to Diego Laínez during the first General Congregation, which Fr Ruiz Jurado has shown to form the basis of the legislation which remained in force from the time of Claudio Aquaviva (fifth General of the Society, 1581-1615) till recently, it is argued, in a way that cannot be dismissed simply as crass or reactionary, that the life of a Jesuit demands, at the outset, some withdrawal and enclosure:

> . . . at the beginning the greater need in every case is for a person to look after his own growth rather than that of others. Moreover, they need to be trained and instructed in the interior recollectedness that underlies prayer, so that they can maintain it while working in what is not directly spiritual, something which is achieved only with great difficulty if a person is busy at that work from the start.[9]

NOTES

[1] MHSJ Const. I, p 12.
[2] MHSJ Const. II, pp 56; *Constitutions* [64], [68]: Ganss, pp 95-96, 97.
[3] *Origenes,* p 218; MHSJ Const. IV, p 396; Ruiz Jurado (ed.) *Scholia in Constitutiones S.I.,* by Jeronimo Nadal S.I. (Granada, 1976) [Scholia], p 54.
[4] MHSJ Const. I, pp 49-51.
[5] *Origenes,* pp 39-42, 50-58. [6] *Ibid.,* pp 188-91.
[7] MHSJ Const. I, p 253.
[8] FN I, p 678. *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis, 1977), pp 101-02; *Decreta Congregationis Generalis XXXI* (Rome, 1967), d. 8, n 14, pp 64-65.
[9] *Origenes,* pp 175-81, 185.

Around the house

159. The fourth test is to work inside the house, doing the jobs of a humble servant. For our people this is a very suitable test. I have always strongly advocated — and still do — that our people should be put through these tests exactly as the General Examen describes them. I have no doubt that, if this were done, there would be great advantages all round. Throughout the time that he is in the house, the novice should live under obedience, and should be given jobs in which he can concentrate simply on growing in goodness, such as the tasks of a servant. Obedience entails a good measure of

submission and deference to people other than the superior: for example to the sacristan, if one is sent to assist him, and likewise to the cook or the person in charge of obtaining supplies. The novice has many people put in charge of him, and they should keep an eye on him: the minister, the subminister, the syndic: all these can criticize him, all can impose a penance on him with the authority of a superior, both for things in which he is at fault and for things in which he is not. In this way the goodness of each person is thoroughly tested: we see whether he wavers in his vocation, whether he shows impatience, or whether he goes about happily, gifted with an inner consolation. Moreover, there is no deficiency which does not come out into the open and begin to be put right.

The corresponding passage in the General Examen reads as follows:

> The fourth experience consists in the candidate's employing himself, after entrance into the house, with complete diligence and care in various low and humble offices, while giving a good example of himself in all of them.[1]

Ignatius's stipulation that the novices should do routine housework has to be understood in the context of a far deeper ingrained sense of social rank than that to which modern readers are accustomed:

> Princes and other members of the highest aristocracy who may be had never set foot in a kitchen, sons of rich merchants just as much as priests and scholars, who wanted to join the Order, were subjected to this severe test, so that they and their Superiors might find out whether their *Suscipe*, and their willingness to follow Christ in his poverty and obedience, would really stand up under trying conditions; or whether it would fail under the strain of heavy toil and fatigue and humiliations of all kinds, or perhaps wear thin under the subtle temptation that their talents were being wasted in lowly activities so alien to their former way of life, and so remote from what might have seemed to them to be the meaning of their religious and apostolic vocation.[2]

A detail which brings out the point is that in the Coimbra college in 1553, there were seven African servants, and the novices would be sent over to make their beds.[3]

Part of the autobiographical fragment by Nadal quoted earlier takes the form of a diary. We begin after the retreat is finished (November 1545):

> On the 29th, I was received into the Society's house. On the same day, Fr Ignatius said to me that I was to become assistant to the cook two days later, and that I was also to help the gardener. Each day I was to read a chapter of Gerson[4] and meditate on it . . .

> For two days, I was also invited to Fr Ignatius's table, and sat in the refectory with the Father himself . . .
> On St Stephen's day, Fr Cristobal de Mendoza, the minister, told me that I was to leave the kitchen and go and serve in the refectory. Consolation continuing, despite ill health. Every day a greater confirmation in my calling. Special consolation on vows . . .
> Great joy when Fr Doménech gave me a piece of the true cross. I was given a broom made out of tree cuttings to sweep the kitchen floor; I couldn't sweep with it very easily, and I found it trying. Father Ignatius told me to dig in the garden, wearing a coat lined with fur; Meanwhile he walked up and down with Dr Torres. Consolation in the refectory, that God was sustaining me.[5]

Nadal's stress on obedience to people other than the superior echoes the General Examen:

> When anyone begins to perform the services of the kitchen or to aid the cook, with great humility he must obey him in all things pertaining to his office, by always showing him complete obedience. For if he should not do this, neither, it seems, would he show this obedience to any other superior, since genuine obedience considers, not the person to whom it is offered, but him for whose sake it is offered; and if it is exercised for the sake of our Creator and Lord alone, then it is the very Lord of everything who is obeyed. In no manner, therefore, ought one to consider whether he who gives the order is the cook of the house or its superior, or one person rather than another. For, to consider the matter with sound understanding, obedience is not shown either to these persons or for their sake, but to God alone and only for the sake of God our Creator and Lord.[6]

Again we need to recall the rigid class distinctions of the time, if we are to understand how these stipulations indicate the decisive nature of the step taken by the novice:

> Therefore it is better that the cook should not request the one who aids him to do this or that, but that he should modestly command him by saying 'Do this' or 'Do that'. For if he requests him, he will seem more to be speaking as man to man; and it does not seem right and proper for a lay cook to request a priest to clean the pots and do other similar tasks. But by commanding him or saying 'Do this' or 'Do that', he will show more clearly that he is speaking as Christ to man, since he is commanding in his place.[7]

The minister is in overall charge of the material arrangements within the house, and generally deputizes in the absence of the superior. The term 'syndic' denotes a minor official in an educational establishment whose job it is to supervise the students, particularly on points of domestic routine: Ignatius would have found the term both in the usage of the university of Paris and in Dominican legislation.[8]

It might seem strange that Nadal, echoing Ignatius,[9] should regard as perfectly legitimate a penance imposed for some action which is not blameworthy. However, in the Spiritual Exercises, the role of penance is not limited to that of making satisfaction for sin; it can also be both a means 'to bring our lower faculties into greater subjection to the higher' and a way of disposing oneself 'to obtain some grace or gift that one earnestly desires'.[10] Gonçalves da Câmara tells us that in later years Ignatius was wont to treat Nadal himself very harshly.[11]

Nadal's advocacy here of a more strict adherence to the text of the General Examen must be seen in the context of a situation in which the practice of experiments outside the house had all but lapsed. At the end of a long series of questions, Gonçalves da Câmara once asked Ignatius why the pilgrimage had been abandoned; the reply was that when it was seen that people became sick and so on, it had been decided to proceed more gently, and the matter had been left to the discretion of superiors. When pressed further, Ignatius had said, 'It is tied up with something which happened to me at Manresa'.[12] The allusion to Manresa surely indicates that such prudential reasoning is not to be seen as a decadent concession to weakness, but rather as something grounded on a characteristically Ignatian sense of the connection between natural reasoning and graced enlightenment. Already in 1547, Rodrigues is writing from Portugal to Ignatius:

> All the students whom we sent on pilgrimage became sick: I think because they were not used to walking. I have tried the experiment both in summer and in winter, but, whatever the time of year, they become weak and take a lot of time over it. If you can find some procedure which both preserves the brothers' health and satisfies the Society's demands, for the love of our Lord let me know.[13]

By 1552, Polanco is bringing to Ignatius's attention the fact that, in Rome, the only experiments actually done are the exercises and the domestic chores;[14] while, in an official letter which he wrote in 1554 on Ignatius's behalf to Diego Mirão, Rodrigues's successor as provincial in Portugal, the policy outlined is quite different from that suggested by the General Examen:

> (Ignatius) rarely puts those two experiments — pilgrimage and hospitals — into practice, except in the cases of people who are half way towards being got rid of; with these he tries them as a remedy. Experience has shown that the good ones take their obligations very seriously, work themselves too hard, put up with too much, and contract illnesses. Consequently, with those who are good and a helpful influence, these experiments are used only to a small extent. With those who are not so good, again it does not seem advisable to send them into hospitals either, at least not in the name of the Society, because they can leave a bad impression. However, sometimes with these people it is possible to use the pilgrimage, and one can be sure that either they will, under God, leave altogether, or, if they do come back, that it will have done something for them, and they will be more docile.[15]

NOTES

[1] *Constitutions* [68]: Ganss, p 97.
[2] Molinari, *art. cit.*, p 212.
[3] *Origenes*, p 134.
[4] That is, *The Imitation of Christ.*
[5] EN I, pp 19-20.
[6] *Constitutions* [84]: Ganss, pp 101-02.
[7] *Ibid.*, [85]: p 102.
[8] See *Consitutions* [271] with footnote; *Origenes*, pp 52-54.
[9] *Constitutions* [269]: Ganss, p 160.
[10] Exx 87. [11] FN I, p 587. [12] *Ibid.*, p 610.
[13] MHSJ *Epistolae PP. Paschasii Broet, Claudii Jaji, Joannis Cordurii, et Simonis Rodericii S.J.*, p 562.
[14] MHSJ *Polanci Complementa* I, p 85.
[15] MHSJ *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Epistolae et Instructiones* (*Epp*), VI, p 203.

Elementary teaching

160. After these, there are other forms of testing, which follow the pattern of the growth and progress of Father Ignatius. For, as time went on he felt he wanted to help others; this was itself a testing experience, an experiment for him, and our Lord guided him towards what has become the goal of the whole Society. So it is that in their later tests our novices also begin, on probation, to help others. They teach christian doctrine to small children and simple people, adapting themselves to their capacity by expounding it simply and in a straightforward way, not just for a day or two, but over a long period. This form of service, though it is of great importance and significance, does not appear as such on the outside. Consequently, it gives us a way of assessing a person's good will and dedication, together with the sincerity of his attraction to the Society's ways of serving others. In many cases, this activity has given us evidence of great value. If a person perseveres in it and does well, we take it as a very good sign. We do not send them out on their own, but rather with a companion whose judgment can be trusted, so that he can keep an eye on them and point out where they fall short.

The corresponding passage in the *Examen Generale* reads as follows:

> The fifth experience is that of explaining the christian doctrine or a part of it in public to boys and other simple persons, or of teaching it to individuals, in accordance with what the occasion offers, and what seems in our Lord more profitable and suitable to the persons.[1]

In 1539, the first companions decided that all members of the Society should instruct children for forty days in each year in the rudiments of the faith. This instruction was to last an hour, and the obligation was to bind under mortal sin.[2] The education of children and simple people is specified as a work of the Society in the papal bulls which approved it, and the formulae for the final vows of all priests includes a promise 'to have special care for the instruction of children'.[3] A Declaration on the final vows of the professed Fathers makes it clear that the promise is seen as constituting a guarantee of disinterestedness in choosing forms of service, rather than a specific obligation to teach in kindergartens.[4] Both accounts of this experiment given by Nadal in 1561 indicate that his understanding of it has come closer to that of the Constitutions; on his earlier visit to Spain, he had interpreted it much more in terms of the need to meet the challenge of Lutheranism.[5]

An additional reason why this aspect of the tradition came to be considered so important may be that the 1539 decision on this matter was the first to be taken by the companions without unanimous agreement. Bobadilla had been unwilling for the obligation to be that of a vow binding under mortal sin.[6] Elementary teaching may have come thus to symbolize a still more important value: that of obedience to due authority within the community, even when the individual disagrees with what has been decided.

Nadal's emphasis on the apostolic nature of this fifth experiment implies that previous ones have been in some way less directly apostolic. This seems rather at odds with what he has earlier said about working in hospitals. The inconsistency probably indicates the early Society's lack of a generally accepted theory which would integrate the traditions underlying the first stages of formation: such an understanding emerges only with the suppression of the most innovative aspects.

NOTES

[1] *Constitutions* [69]: Ganss, p 97.
[2] MHSJ Const. 1, pp 11-12; *Formula of the Institute* [3]: Ganss, p 63.
[3] *Constitutions* [527], [532], [535]: Ganss, pp 238, 239, 240.
[4] *Ibid.*, [528]: Ganss pp 238-39.
[5] EN V, pp 74-75: *Coimbra*, 102. [6] *Osuna*, p 117.

Down to Work

161. The sixth experiment is for the novice to hear confessions, preach or lecture according to his talents. Suppose someone enters the Society with a doctorate. Having gone through the other experiments, he begins to get experience in applying his knowledge. Under probation he hears confessions, and, similarly on probation, he preaches, so that we can see how he gets on. All this has to be done under supervision, with someone around who can take note of what is happening. This is the responsibility of the master of

novices, a position of great importance in the Society. When the novice has to hear confessions, someone should tell him what the Society's normal practices are in this matter. He should also take advice on the cases that come his way, so that he gets a general idea of how things are done — preserving, however, the seal of confession, which we should keep perfectly, even refraining from what would be licit for other priests. It is in this way that he is to be prepared for the activities he may have to carry out.

The corresponding passage in the *Examen Generale* reads as follows:

> In a sixth experience the candidate, after having been tested and found edifying, will proceed further by preaching or hearing confessions, or by labouring in both together in accordance with the times, places, and capacity of all.[1]

In a letter dated April 12th 1546, written to Rodriguez by Bartolomeo Ferrão, at that time Ignatius's secretary, we are told:

> Some, for example Father Nadal, go and preach in the squares to those who will not come and hear a sermon in church. People are drawn by the word of God to come to confession in such numbers that we must praise the divine goodness.[2]

Among the rules promulgated by Nadal during his 1553-54 visit to Spain, a few deal specifically with the hearing of confessions of the general public. They should, if possible, be confined to mornings, and, if one has to leave the house in order to hear them, express permission is required from the superior. Quoting Ignatius's provisions for the Roman College, Nadal stipulated:

> Every confessor should see to it that the penitents are placed to one side, so that neither party can see the other's face. This is to promote a more genuine freedom and attentiveness. They should use one hand to shade their face from the penitent, turning their ear towards them enough to be able to hear.[3]

Nadal's stress in this 1561 text on correct training might seem rather out of place in a discussion of the noviceship.[4] In the *Autobiography* of Ignatius, public preaching seems to be almost a reckless expression of trust in God. In Vicenza, Ignatius, Favre, Laínez and Cordure 'went to four different piazzas on the same day and at the same hour, and began to preach, first by shouting out to the people and waving their hats at them'.[5] Moreover, Nadal appears to be all but contradicting an important principle of the noviceship:

> It should be stressed that this formative activity, whose purpose is to round off the novitiate training, is not to be confused with the

> education needed to equip the novice with the technical skills and services demanded by particular forms of apostolic work.[6]

The study in the noviceship should be rather that which leads 'towards further growth in virtue and devotion'.[7]

In this connection two points need to be made. Firstly, a clearly marked distinction between novices and scholastics is a comparatively late development. It appears that the ordinary practice in Ignatius's lifetime was for the novices to spend a few months concentrating on spiritual growth, and then privately to take what are termed 'vows of devotion'.[8] Then they would begin studies, technically, however, remaining novices until two years had elapsed, when they would take first vows formally and in public. Moreover, they had the option of remaining under the full noviceship régime throughout that period. We have an abstract of a letter written by Ignatius when the first separate novitiate house was being founded at Messina in 1549, under the direction of Nadal. He seems to be quite undecided as to whether the novices should give half their time to study and the rest to exercises of humility and mortification, or rather all their time to the latter. With a particular group of novices whom he was sending to Sicily, he recommended four to six months strictly on spiritual things before they moved on to studies.[9] Only after the 1565 General Congregation does it become exceptional — a matter reserved to the provincial — for a man to be dispensed from spending two full years in the noviceship as such before resuming or starting his academic training. A couple of weeks before Ignatius's death in July 1556, we find Gonçalves da Câmara, who was minister of the house in Rome, writing:

> It cannot be said to be against the Constitutions that those who enter the Society remain on probation for two years; but neither is there anything wrong with their studying during that time, especially those who have shown themselves to be satisfactory. Similarly they can give sermons, teach christian doctrine or give lessons in the college. This is indeed what we do here . . . partly because of shortage of people and partly because it is good for them. The testing that these things give them is no less than that which they get in the noviceship houses.[10]

At this stage, there is a much less rigid separation between the scholasticate and the noviceship than later; this sixth experiment involves pastoral training, and, similarly, the elementary teaching mentioned by Nadal in n. 163 is considered as a noviceship experiment, even though it takes place during studies.

Secondly, Nadal's stress on the need for the novice preacher or confessor to be well trained is chiefly informed by his characteristic sense of the specific nature of the jesuit calling. In an earlier talk, Nadal had pointed out that the noviceship of the Society does not only rid one of various sinful or perverse habits, but also:

> . . . something which will seem odd to you, and yet is a truth of great importance: he [the novice] should abandon the private methods he had of doing things that are good when these do not fit in with the

> way of approaching things in the Society. They are good in themselves, but they are no good here: they distract you from what you have resolved, and prevent you from achieving it. Also, if you are bright, if you are sensible and have some experience of how things run, once you enter religion you have to subject this common sense of yours to this way of life, and let it take your skill over and inform it. Thus it is that your common sense will become perfect, taken over by this grace.[11]

This sixth experiment can thus be seen as giving the novices a chance to use their talents in the context of the Society's work, 'to help the novices to see clearly the demands made upon them in the midst of this kind of activity by their religious vocation, and how they are to remain faithful to it'.[12] In this context, we might note that in his commentary on the Constitutions, Nadal stipulates that those who are not priests or qualified to give sermons should find some appropriate substitute for this experiment, according to whatever talent they have. He notes that the original Spanish *en todo* has been mistranslated into Latin *in utroque*, 'labouring in both (preaching and confessions) together'; it would have been more accurate to say 'doing any kind of work'.[13]

NOTES

[1] *Constitutions* [69] : Ganss, p 97.
[2] Epp 1, p 373-74.
[3] MHSJ Const. IV., pp 388-92.
[4] EN V, 851-61.
[5] W. Young, *St Ignatius's own story* (Chicago, 1956), n. 40.
[6] *Renovationis Causam*, 5; *loc. cit.*, p 26.
[7] *Constitutions* [289] : Ganss, p 165.
[8] *Origenes*, pp 113-14, *Constitutions* 283 : Ganss, p 163.
[9] Epp III, p 195.
[10] Epp XII, p 129.
[11] EN V, 365-66.
[12] *Renovationis Causam* 5, *loc. cit.*, pp 25-27. [13] *Scholia*, p 25.

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162. For each of these experiments, a month is set aside, and then they can come back and repeat some or all of them as the superior thinks fit. If a person did not seem satisfactory in the Exercises, he should go back to them again, and similarly with pilgrimages. But, in general, it is good that the novices be employed in the humble chores around the house, and then every so often go out on a pilgrimage or to work in the hospitals.

163. There are additional tests besides these normative ones which I have been discussing. Once other experiments had enabled him to be sure of a novice, our Father would often make him superior or minister, as a testing experience in itself. This makes a very good

experiment, because, when he is a superior, a man can reveal a great deal of himself, and it becomes possible to see how far he has grown. The superior has overall responsibility for the house, and must keep an eye on everything. He has to make sure that perfection is being sought in whatever goes on. It is thus a searching test of a man when they make him superior. At other times, Father would test a man by putting him in a variety of jobs at the same time, so that he would have to cope simultaneously with spiritual and temporal affairs. For instance, he might have to preach whilst also being in charge of supplies, or attending to other matters of business, or doing some writing.

Later, since there are also grammar lessons in the colleges, it can be a good test to put someone in charge of the lowest class so that he has to teach little boys the elements of grammar, subject-matter which is not in itself attractive. In this one can see the dedication and charity of each individual: whether he goes through with it happily, without looking for reasons to cry off or becoming upset.

This test is very similar to that of teaching christian doctrine, which we discussed earlier. To sum up, any experience which the superior thinks will be helpful is a legitimate test, and the superior is empowered to impose it.

In paragraph 162 we have once again an illustration of how an experiment was understood as something to be adapted to the needs of each individual. None the less, the statements made here do seem very curious: possibly Nadal is drawing on some forgotten local incident. By 1561, it was a rarity for a novice to make a pilgrimage once, let alone twice; and, as we have seen, it had come to be thought of more as a way of easing out unsuitable candidates than as a genuine means of formation. In his definitive history of the Exercises, Iparraguirre only finds one sixteenth-century case of a novice repeating them, a certain Luis Alvarez at Córdoba in 1554. The retreat was abandoned at the end of the first day.[1]

As the matters raised by the reference to grammar lessons have already been dealt with, we may end by quoting two rather rueful pieces of autobiography:

> Father Ignatius decided that I was to become minister, more or less four months after I came to the Society. I managed that side of things as best I could, given my limited understanding, but I was too forceful, and so annoyed the community.[2]
>
> In some cases our Father would occasionally send a man on business with people of rank in view of the mortification that it would make him feel. He did this with me, and sent me to go and talk to Cardinal de Carpi. When I got there, I felt very awkward, until the Cardinal himself, realizing what was going on, took my hand and reassured me. Moreover, sometimes our Father would ask a person who had

> been in contact with an outsider for a full account of everything that had passed between them. Though this was very disconcerting, it was also helpful for growth in the Lord.[3]

NOTES

[1] I. Iparraguirre, *Historia de los Ejericios de San Ignacio*, II (Rome, 1955), p 274.
[2] EN I, p 24.
[3] *Coimbra*, pp 102-03.

Conclusion

It will be clear that the tradition is nothing if not complex. From the founder we have two documents, the *General Examen* (effectively 1546) and the third Part of the *Constitutions* (composed 1547-49), which, on this matter at least, appear to diverge quite sharply. In practice, Ignatius seems increasingly to have followed the later understanding, but he never formally retracts or qualifies the earlier one. This text of Nadal's, then, represents not so much a description of the experiments or a commentary on them, as a call for their restoration; few, if any, of his audience are likely to have done them in full. Ribadaneira, one of the first teenagers to join the Society, gives us the best indication of why Ignatius may have changed his mind:

> Although he wanted the novices to set about mortifying themselves wholeheartedly, none the less, at the beginning, he went very gradually indeed, and, wherever holy and gentle discernment indicated, he would go along with weakness of fragility (FN III, p 612).

The experiments as set out in the General Examen were, as we have seen, very demanding. As such they might well seem excessive for adolescents just beginning their formation, however appropriate they might be for the exceptionally gifted or those who are already fully grounded in the spiritual life. It seems safe to say that the experiments done in the course of the noviceship nowadays are far gentler than anything envisaged by the Ignatius who wrote the General Examen. The present practice thus embodies something of a compromise, drawing on both traditions and adapting them 'according to the persons, times, places and their contingencies'. (*Constitutions* [64], Ganss, pp 95-96). And it is surely this same procedure of discernment and accommodation that Ignatius himself and the early Society followed in setting up the traditional novitiate, even if in our case it comes up with something that may look quite different.