

DIGESTING THE RULES FOR EATING

By DAVID TOWNSEND

YOU MIGHT well ask why St Ignatius places The Rules for Eating in the Third Week.¹ But you could answer this question with another: why not? So de Ponlevoy, writing nearly one hundred years ago,² opens his discussion of these Rules. His answer to the second question, that Ignatius did nothing by chance, heightens the importance of an answer to his, and our, first question about The Rules for Eating. At first glance the Rules have only a very external and superficial relevance to the drama of the Paschal Mystery being contemplated. Commentators for the most part treat The Rules for Eating as if they were merely matter misplaced from the Tenth Addition (on penance) or the First and Third Notes following (Exx 82-86, 87&89), and placed where they are because of an extrinsic link with the contemplation of the Last Supper at the beginning of the Third Week. My guess is that, because of the doubts concerning their proper place and function, most givers of the full Exercises, whether according to the 19th or the 20th Annotation, pass over the Rules for Eating in silence. Indeed, any reference which might be made to them probably has little to do with the contemplations of the Third and Fourth Weeks of the Exercises.

An examen on the appetites

Food and drink figure more largely in the early Directories on the Exercises than might be expected. The Autograph Directory of Ignatius has, 'Let him (the exercitant) neither eat nor drink excepting that for which he has asked'.³ This is filled out in Ignatius's short directory in Polanco's hand:

Always ask the one making the Exercises what he would like to eat, according to his devotion, and let him have it whether it be a chicken or a trifle. Let it be done this way: when he has finished lunch and the table is being cleared, ask him what he wants for supper; and similarly after supper, ask about lunch the following day. I judge this a most helpful way of proceeding.⁴

The same directive is found in the 1599 Official Directory: 'With regard to food, the retreatant should be asked what he wishes to be prepared for him, and that which he has asked for should be brought to him'.⁵ Fr Fabianus de Quadrantinus asks whether this applies also to Jesuits,⁶ whereas Fr Hoffaeus suggests that, 'Before anyone is allowed into the house to make the Exercises, find out from him whether he will be content with the food and drink of the house'.⁷ Hoffaeus also gives us the first indication of three or more brethren (*fratres*) making the Exercises at the same time (*in communi*), and suggests that they may eat in the refectory; but he also allows each to eat in his own room.⁸ Practically speaking these directives are nothing more than the implementation of the eighth Rule for Eating:

To do away with what is inordinate, it will be very helpful after dinner or after supper, or at any time when one does not feel a desire for food, to arrange for the next dinner or supper, and so every day to fix the amount that is proper for him to eat. Let him not exceed this, no matter what his appetite or the temptation. Rather, to overcome better every disorderly appetite and temptation of the enemy, if he is tempted to eat more, let him eat less (Exx 217).

In this very practical several-times-daily manner, the sixteenth-century exercitant made use of the Rules for Eating. Right from the start of the Exercises the sixteenth-century exercitant, by means of this examen made at least twice daily, is asked to make conscious and deliberate decisions on his need and use of food and drink, in order to find the mean that better suits him.

Countering consumerism

The first three Rules for Eating are summed up in the first part of the fourth: 'Provided care is taken not to fall sick, the more one retrenches from a sufficient diet, the more speedily he will arrive at the mean he should observe in the matter of food and drink' (Exx 213). The exercitant has already come across this in the tenth Addition: 'If we do away with what is superfluous, it is not penance, but temperance. We do penance when we deny ourselves something of what is suitable for us. The more we do this, the better the penance, provided only we do no harm to ourselves and do not cause any serious illness' (Exx 83). The first

note to this Addition states that 'The principal reason for performing exterior penance is to secure three effects: (1) to make satisfaction for past sins; (2) to overcome oneself, that is, to make our sensual nature obey reason, and to bring all our lower faculties into greater subjection to the higher; (3) to obtain some grace or gift that one earnestly desires' (Exx 87). The third note further elaborates on the third effect: 'When the exercitant has not found what he has been seeking . . . it is often useful to make some change in the kind of penance . . . The reason for this is that more penance is better for some and less for others (Exx 89). When the exercitant is not finding what he is seeking Miró says, 'Let him see whether a change in food or penance would be of benefit, according to the third and fourth notes after the tenth Addition in the book of the Exercises'.⁹ This fourth note concerns making the particular examen on the removal of 'faults and negligences with regard to the Exercises and the additional directions' (Exx 90). Any excessive penance which would so debilitate the exercitant as to harm the progress of the Exercises would be such a fault and negligence. It has already been noticed that the eighth Rule for Eating provides an opportunity for an examen with regard to the exercitant's need and use of food and drink. The suggestion is that the average sixteenth-century exercitant seems to be over-indulgent in food and drink, and has need of the asceticism and penance of the purgative way (Exx 10). Might the same be true of the average First-World retreatant of the twentieth century? The four-hundred-year-old question of Fabianus de Quadrantinus, 'Does it also apply to Jesuits?' might still be relevant, even if a little out of context. Might there be something here to counter the pervasive onslaught of consumerism? The fourth Rule for Eating continues to give two reasons for the principle enunciated in the first part of the Rule:

First, by thus using the means to dispose himself, he will often experience more abundantly within the soul lights, consolations, and divine inspirations by which the proper mean will become evident to him. Secondly, if he perceives that with such abstinence he has not sufficient strength and health for the Spiritual Exercises, he will easily come to understand what is more suitable to sustain his body (Exx 213).

Disposing oneself for God

According to Miró, 'At the start of our Society (of Jesus), abstinence and the use of this tenth Addition flourished to such an extent during the making of the Exercises, especially those of the First Week, that Jesuits were placed under the supervision of the infirmarian'.¹⁰ Besides the austere penances of Ignatius at Manresa and later, the ill-effects of which undermined his health for the rest of his life, we know that the early companions were equally intemperate in their penances whilst making the Exercises. Ignatius had to oblige Peter Favre to light a fire in his room and to take some food after six days without a mouthful and without heat, whilst praying in the snow in the courtyard and sleeping on the logs given for the fire. Ignatius told all this to Gonçalves da Câmara: 'No one made them (the Exercises) who did not remain several days without food, although no one urged this; but now he would not dare to consent to more than one day even for a man in robust health, although in the past he had had no scruple in permitting more'.¹¹ It will not surprise us that both Polanco and Cordeses in their Directories warn the giver of the Exercises to be on guard lest the exercitant make intemperate use of the fourth Rule.¹² The reason for this is to safeguard the exercitant's stamina so that he be able to make the whole Exercises with a certain vigour and strength.

Up to this point our consideration of the Rules for Eating does not get us beyond asceticism and enlightened self-interest. The exercitant is to be totally involved in making the Exercises, physically as well as spiritually; yet taking care not to damage his health in the process.

In the Directories, Miró is the only one to comment on the first reason of the fourth Rule: 'A sober control of food and drink greatly helps towards an elevation of mind . . . but it must be voluntary and according to each one's character'. He adds, after the passage acknowledging the austere practices of the first companions:

If on our part we better dispose ourselves by means of such penances, the limitless goodness of God will enlighten and fill our minds with a more complete awareness; nowadays it is to be feared that the neglect of penance is in part attenuating the spiritual fruitfulness of the Exercises.¹³

Finding the right mean in food and drink is a great help to prayer and to the exercitant's union with God.

The Official Directory seems completely lost as to why the Rules for Eating are part of the Third Week of the Exercises:

The rules for observing temperance in food which are set down at the end of this Week should not be given in writing, but only explained by word of mouth: amongst other reasons because they are not to be enjoined upon all in the same manner, but adapted with discretion to the character of each individual, and to his bodily strength and courage. It should be noted also that these Rules should be taught not only in this Week, but before also at some suitable time: only, if it has not been done before, let them be explained here. Possibly, indeed, they may have been deferred to this place, in order that the exercitant should not be overburdened in the earlier Weeks with so many instructions in addition to the meditations. But in this Week there are far fewer of these instructions, and so the director will have more time to explain them. It is desirable also that he should always bring with him something new when he visits the exercitant.¹⁴

We have seen that the Rules for Eating are indeed adumbrated in the tenth Addition and the following notes. The coming to a mean for those over-indulgent in the matter of food and drink can indeed be a penance. Weightwatchers and Alcoholics Anonymous give witness to this struggle with one's compulsions. Nevertheless, restricting the Rules for Eating to the purgative way, as seems to be suggested by the 1599 Directory, does nothing to explain Ignatius's placing of them in the Third Week.

Avoiding vice, imitating virtue

We might remind ourselves here that the First Method of Prayer 'on the ten Commandments, the seven Capital Sins, the three Powers of the Soul and the five Senses' (Exx 238) is recommended by Ignatius to the person of the 18th Annotation and to 'those who only make the First Week of the Exercises'.¹⁵ The method supplies 'a way of proceeding and some practices by which the soul may prepare itself and profit so that its prayer may be acceptable to God' (Exx 238). The note to the second section of the First Method of Prayer suggests that the contrary virtues be considered: 'the better to avoid these sins, one should resolve to endeavour by devout exercises to acquire and retain the seven

virtues contrary to them' (Exx 245). It is not far-fetched to consider the Rules for Eating to be such 'devout exercises' with a view to avoiding the capital sin of gluttony and the acquiring of the contrary virtue of abstinence or temperance. Perhaps even more to the point is the note to the fourth section 'On the Five Senses of the Body':

If anyone wishes to imitate Christ our Lord in the use of the senses he should recommend himself to his divine majesty in the preparatory prayer, and after the consideration of each sense say a Hail Mary or an Our Father. If he wishes to imitate our Lady in the use of his senses, he should recommend himself to her in the preparatory prayer that she obtain for him this grace from her Son and Lord, and after the consideration of each sense say a Hail Mary (Exx 248).

In fact the fifth and sixth Rules for Eating do give such considerations,

While one is eating, let him imagine he sees Christ our Lord and his disciples at table, and consider how he eats and drinks, how he looks, how he speaks, and then strive to imitate him. In this way, his mind will be occupied principally with our Lord, and less with the provision for the body. Thus he will come to greater harmony and order in the way he ought to conduct himself (Exx 214).

While eating, one may also occupy himself with some other consideration, either of the life of the saints, or of some pious reflection, or of a spiritual work he has on hand. For when a person is attentive to anything of this kind, there will be less sensible gratification in the nourishment of the body (Exx 215).¹⁶

The seventh Rule helps the exercitant 'guard against being wholly intent upon what he is eating, and against being carried away by his appetite so as to eat hurriedly. Let him always be master of himself, both in the manner of eating and in the amount he eats' (Exx 216). We are beyond an application only to the asceticism of the purgative way. The principle enunciated is that the mastery of one's appetites brings them into due order, guards against dissipation and self-absorption, leads a person towards greater recollection, and renders a person capable of fuller and closer union with God. Even the necessary satisfactions of one's

bodily appetites, when mortified and well-ordered, can become the vehicle of union with God (*pía contemplación* in the *Autograph*).¹⁷

During the Election

'The way of giving the Exercises' of Fabius de Fabi tells us that 'the Exercises move naturally from less perfect to more perfect ways of behaving, that is, from behaviour needing penance to behaviour much more in balance (*ad perfectionem*)'.¹⁸ He adds later that 'the time of an Election demands the greatest possible recollection and union with God', and almost immediately continues, 'The Rules for Food, for Alms, for Scruples, and for having a sense of the Church are not to be given unless the reformation of one's state in life is being considered'.¹⁹ The Directory of Miró likewise has:

The Rules for tempering Food, the Rules for the Distribution of Alms, the Notes concerning Scruples, and the Rules for having a True Sense of the Church, are not to be given equally to every exercitant, but only when the purpose of the individual demands it, especially towards the end of the Second Week, when the exercitant is occupied with the reform of his lifestyle; for it is with this matter that these Rules deal. But they ought only to be given to those who seem to have need of them, and not to all and sundry.²⁰

These givers of the Exercises certainly suggest that the Rules for Eating have more to do with helping the exercitant to that 'greatest possible recollection and union with God', without at the same time losing any power of forming the 'mortified man' preferred by Ignatius. In his *Memoriale*, da Câmara tells us:

When the Father speaks about prayer, he always seems to presuppose the passions as being subdued and mortified, and he esteems this fact more than anything else. I recall that once when we were speaking about a good religious whom he knew, I said that he was a man of much prayer. The Father corrected me and said: 'He is a man of much mortification'.²¹

Only the person who is mortified and abstemious (as opposed to being at the mercy of the capital sins) is able to be recollected (as opposed to being dissipated), and so capable of union with God in all things (as opposed to self-absorption). Ribadeneira, Ignatius's

first biographer, has this: 'Our Father used to value the spirit of mortification more than the spirit of prayer . . . When he spoke of prayer, one could see that he supposed that the bad affections were already put down and mortified'.²²

Concerning the capital sins, Ignatius and his commentators are well in the mainstream of the Christian tradition.²³ Gluttony has appeared regularly at the head of the list of capital sins since Evagrius Ponticus. The Church Fathers follow the New Testament teaching that bodily excess dulls the heart and mind. This teaching is perhaps epitomized in Luke's parables of the rich farmer (12,15-31) and of the rich man and Lazarus (16,19-31). Self-absorption has an immediate effect on a person's physical, psychological and spiritual availability. This is seen both towards others in terms of service (the corporal and spiritual works of mercy), and towards God in terms of capability of making spiritual progress, even of receiving salvation. Simon Tugwell in a passage very reminiscent of Ignatius Loyola, speaks of the capital sins of Evagrius Ponticus as so entrapping the mind that a person

cannot concentrate on the actual reality of his own life . . . bit by bit one drifts away from what one is supposed to be doing into a world of fantasy . . . We are trapped into living in a false human world, wrongly structured around ourselves, and leading to a wrong God. And so they (the capital sins) are all designed really to ensure that we cannot approach the true God in anything like genuine prayer.²⁴

The Rules in the First and Second Weeks

Summing up so far, we see how the Rules for Eating may be of use in the First and in the Second Weeks of the Exercises. The Principle and Foundation highlights right order in the use of created reality for the greater praise, reverence and service of God (Exx 23). The tenth Addition gives focus to penitential asceticism for coming to due and temperate order (Exx 83). Its first and third notes (Exx 87 and 89) show how asceticism may be expressive of greater earnestness and self-forgetfulness in seeking what is desired from God. Its fourth note (Exx 90) adds the dimension of conscious awareness and decision-making to the appetitive drives. With these helps, under the providence of God, the exercitant in the course of the First Week moves from an existence characterized by drift, lack of real purpose in life, and even of destructive purpose, to an

existence in which the divine is increasingly the centre, in which he finds himself better centred and better able to approach to true God as Saviour. Genuine prayer opens up. Less self-focussed, by means of the Second Week contemplations, the retreatant can more easily and affectively enter into the experiences of Jesus. During the Election or reformation of lifestyle, by making the mind and heart of Jesus more his own, the exercitant is better able to come to decisions which embody more adequately the values, attitudes and relationships of Jesus. Certainly the Rules for Eating should not be restricted to the Third and Fourth Weeks of the Exercises.

What of the Third Week?

More recent commentators point out that these Rules may be extended to govern the other appetites and passions of the natural senses. Roothaan maintains that many of the things contained in the Rules and applied to food may be applied with general usefulness to the right ordering of any action and affection.²⁵ Such an extension of the Rules finds some support in a possible translation of the Vulgate's *ad victum recte temperandum* as 'Some Rules for a correct self-restraint in one's way of life.'²⁶ This translation would certainly embrace a present coming to that correct self-restraint in the light of the exercitant's Election (Exx 169) or reformation of life (Exx 189). The heading of the *Versio Prima* might be translated 'Rules for gradually remoulding the person with regard to food and drink'.²⁷ The *Versio Prima* clearly centres on food and drink, as opposed to lifestyle generally. It also seems to be foreseeing a process, which although it starts in the present, will continue into the future. Such indeed is the literal meaning of the Autograph: 'Rules for putting order into one's eating with a view to the future'. 'Therefore, brethren, be the more zealous to confirm your call and election, for if you do this you will never fall' (2 Pet 1,10: cf vv 3-11). Is this the clue as to why the Rules for Eating are placed at the end of the Third Week?

Before we look at the content of the Third Week, we need to see more clearly the place of the exercitant on the threshold of the Third Week. With the ties of badly-ordered attachments weakened, the exercitant achieves a certain degree of spiritual freedom. This new-found freedom renders him capable of being illuminated by the Jesus of the gospel. There grows a desire to love and follow his Saviour more closely (cf Exx 104). As the Second Week

proceeds he prays increasingly: 'I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor, rather than riches; insults with Christ loaded with them, rather than honours; I desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in this world. So Christ was treated before me' (Exx 167). With this desire for the third kind of humility, the exercitant makes his Election or amendment of lifestyle, conforming himself to his greater knowledge, deeper love and closer following of Christ. The exercitant offers his choice to the Lord 'that the divine majesty may deign to accept and confirm it if it is for his greater service and praise' (Exx 183).²⁸

The contemplations of the Third Week

Very significant for our discussion of Ignatius's Rules for Eating are the words John the Evangelist puts into Jesus's mouth in his chapter 4. The Samaritan woman gets the cold shoulder from the returning disciples. Wanting Jesus to eat, he replies to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know' (v 32). Hardly surprisingly the disciples do not understand. So Jesus explains, 'My food is to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work' (v 34). In the Passion narratives we contemplate Jesus facing the outcome of this commitment. The exercitant, at this stage in the Exercises, will have sensed that this 'food' is concretely for himself, and will be seeking confirmation in order 'to do the will of him who sent me, and to accomplish his work'.

The divine acceptance and confirmation makes itself known to the exercitant in contemplating his Saviour's acceptance of the consequence of his own self-offering to the Father. The Passion aspect of the total Paschal Mystery is opened up and signified by Ignatius, following the Evangelists, through two contemplations, the Last Supper and the Agony in the Garden (Exx 190-203). Luke has Jesus say: 'I have earnestly desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer' (Lk 22,15), sharing a cup among the Twelve. Immediately Luke has the institution of the New Covenant in the body and blood of the Lord, together with the dominical command 'Do this in remembrance of me' (v 19). Following the dispute over pre-eminence among the Twelve and the treachery of one of them, Jesus prays 'Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; nevertheless let your will be done, not mine' (v 42). The offering is consummated on the cross (cf Lk 23,46) and vindicated in the Resurrection (cf Lk 24,26). The exercitant

is desiring and seeking confirmation of his Election. His Election encapsulates his free self-offering to the Father. Contemplating Jesus struggling with the desires and repugnances of his self-offering to his Father, the exercitant finds himself drawn into ever closer union with his Saviour. In the contemplation of Jesus in his Passion (and, we need to add, his Resurrection) the exercitant finds himself and the future pattern of living his election-offering. He also discovers the Lord living in him the pattern of his Paschal Mystery. Continuing to contemplate the Passion, the exercitant realizes that it is one thing to make a choice and to desire to live that choice in life. But it is quite a different matter actually to engage in the struggle to bring about this new way of life in the present real circumstances of his living. Contemplating Jesus in the struggle which is the unfolding Passion narrative, the exercitant experiences a strengthening in facing the challenge of his own struggle. The *Anima Christi* is expressive of this Christian tradition: 'Passion of Christ strengthen me . . . From the wicked foe defend me'. The temptation is to turn, perhaps even ever so subtly, from this high point of freedom (cf 2 Pet 2,10-22).

The Third Week points and preludes

The foregoing paragraph explains the force of the three extra points and the note to the colloquy that Ignatius wants considered in the Third Week. In the fourth point the exercitant considers 'what Christ our Lord suffers in his human nature, or according to the passage contemplated, what he desires to suffer' (Exx 195). An aspect of 'what he desires to suffer' is the suffering involved in the retreatant's change of life in order to live his Election. 'I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the Church' (Col 1,24). 'The divinity hides itself . . . but leaves the most sacred humanity to suffer so cruelly' (Exx 196). Christ's will cleaves to the Father's will, and the power of God 'is exerted in the form of not interfering. It is the weakness of God, which is rather his supreme power, in the service of life for all men. God alone does what he wants by letting men do what they want; he does it precisely through his Son's Passion and cross'.²⁹ Pousset goes on to suggest that this is something sleeping disciples, perhaps including the exercitant, do not know how to recognize, and yet do need to come to recognize. 'Why do you sleep? Rise and pray

that you may not enter into temptation' (Lk 22,46). H. A. Williams was impressed by a sermon which

made the point that it is the nature of human privations and sufferings of all kinds to feel like dead-ends. But human suffering, the more of a dead-end it feels like, the more it is an invitation to join in Christ's sufferings, and in him to help bring life and light and healing and liberty to mankind. So the cruelly destructive and negative nature of suffering can be seen, if only in a glass very darkly, as charged with positive and creative possibilities. Of course it isn't calculable. It's a mystery, which means it's too real for precise definition.³⁰

The sixth point is 'to consider that Christ suffers all this for my sins, and what I ought to do and suffer for him' (Exx 197). The exercitant, drawn into the closest of union, is affectively aware that Jesus is expressive of the third kind of humility in the Passion, and that for him. John Veltri calls the third kind of humility the 'act of the heart'.³¹ In this affective embrace of union, the exercitant is moved to respond with a desire to live his Election with a similar intensity of heart 'in order to imitate and here-and-now to be joined to Christ our Lord'.³² As Pousset puts it, 'At the end point, there is only union: "what I ought to do and suffer for him"',³³

The three extra points are added to the usual three: the first, to see who are the participants in the drama contemplated; the second, to become aware of their converse with each other; the third, to become aware of how they interact and what they do. Helped by the first prelude the exercitant recalls the history of the mystery to be contemplated. He also recalls his own history to this point. During the Third Week this history is that of one seeking confirmation in his Election-offering in the deepest possible consolation-union with Jesus. The first prelude leads immediately to the second, the place. Guided by the second prelude the exercitant considers 'the way' Jesus travelled to the place of this particular mystery (Exx 206). In this way the exercitant naturally becomes aware of the journey that he needs to make to be with Jesus in the same place. He becomes aware of the 'way' he needs to travel and the kind of way it is, if he is to be with Jesus, and if he is to face the implications of his Election. His personal 'way' can be uphill and difficult, beset with danger or peopled with circumstances that would deflect him from fully implementing the Election in life. Equally the 'way', or parts of it, can be easy and

smooth, peopled by those who encourage and assist the Election's implementation. Chewing over the interplay of history, place and the six points, the third prelude forms: to ask for what I desire.

The Third Week colloquy

Now we see the force of the note to the colloquy:

One should talk over motives and present petitions according to circumstances. Thus he may be tempted or he may enjoy consolation, may desire to have this virtue or another, may want to dispose himself in this or that way, may seek to grieve or rejoice according to the matter that he is contemplating. Finally, he should ask what he more earnestly desires with regard to some particular interests (Exx 199).

The exercitant spends time with a Jesus struggling with the strength of his desire to do the Father's will, and struggling with the natural revulsion to the certain outcome of taking that way. The exercitant contemplates Jesus struggling to live the third kind of humility. With his affective attention centred on Jesus, the exercitant, according to the particularities of his Election, will be making known his desires to Jesus, and talking over his motives in colloquy. He may be tempted to turn away from the full offering of his Election, or he may enjoy the consolation of encouragement. He may see clearly the need of a particular virtue if he is to follow through earnestly in his Election. He may see that a radical change in orientation is required, or that the Election can only be fruitfully lived if he is prepared to alter his self-disposition. As this colloquial intimacy with Jesus suffering continues, he may more clearly understand what needs to be given up, or what will be gained ('to grieve or rejoice'). Ignatius sums it up: 'he should ask what he more earnestly desires with regard to some particular interests'.

The Rules for Eating take their strength from this growth in intimate union with Jesus suffering. Jesus is the exemplar of the full vigour of the third kind of humility. It has been seen that the Rules explicitly look to the future. Contemplating the unfolding drama of the Passion it is no longer merely a question of necessary penance to bring a person from a disorderly manner of life. Now it is a question of daily and constant exercise of due temperance and abstinence necessary to foster that closest of unions with Jesus, and in Jesus, with the will of the Father. For the exercitant the

Father's will is expressive in the acceptance and confirmation of the Election. The Rules for Eating impress upon the retreatant, as he continues to contemplate the Passion, that only such a daily concern for temperance will safeguard his fidelity to, and the completeness of, his Election in the future. Any lack of temperance will undermine his self-offering, will jeopardize his union with the Lord, and weaken the vigour of his living the Election. Without temperance the exercitant would become less open to living the third kind of humility in the unceasing tension between desire and repugnance. The Rules give guidelines for future living enabling a person, whilst exercising his daily and necessary appetites, to guard against any temptation to pander to self-seeking. Such self-seeking would gradually undermine his commitment to his new way of life. But beyond this the Rules suggest a method of heightening his contemplative attitude in the very satisfying of his appetites. Hence the Rules, if used in the Third Week, provide for the future a means of increasingly incorporating a person's daily and necessary affairs into his vocational commitment. Appetites, which could give scope for evil, become a means of fostering union with God and an expression of that union.³⁴

Why a food and drink focus?

But why are the rules centred on food and drink? All commentators point out the link with the Last Supper which opens the contemplation of the Third Week. At a deeper level, food and drink are the areas where 'spiritual' people are most likely to be intemperate. Christian tradition places gluttony at the head of the capital sins. The same tradition sees a gradual and progressive ensnarement from gluttony and the other capital sins to pride.³⁴ Ignatius's meditation on Two Standards will have put the exercitant in real and affective touch with the dynamic of his own operative tendencies. He will have heartfelt knowledge of his 'way' to being placed under the Standard of Christ, and he will have similar knowledge of what actually deflects him from this way of Christ towards the camp of the enemy. 'As you once yielded your members to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now yield your members to righteousness for sanctification' (Rom 6,19). Seeing the Rules for Eating in the context of gluttony and the other capital sins should warn the director not to lock the exercitant into a consideration of food and drink only. The Vulgate's *victum* can mean 'manner of life' or 'lifestyle' as well as 'food'. Ignatius

says as much in the fifth Rule where the exercitant is urged to consider not only how Christ eats and drinks, but also 'how he looks, how he speaks and then strive to imitate him . . . Thus he will come to greater harmony and order in the way he ought to conduct himself' (Exx 214). The imitation of Christ, as the Lord lives his self-offering to the Father, descends to all the ordinary daily particulars of the retreatant.³⁶ Such particulars are the retreatant's care for himself, such as eating and drinking, and his dealings and relationships with others, typified by his looks and his words. Peters suggests that contemplating Christ's prayer in the garden might lead an exercitant to reflect on his own prayer, especially when under stress. Again, contemplating Jesus before Herod the exercitant might reflect on his own eagerness to be appreciated, praised, esteemed and honoured.³⁷ The Rules are placed at the end of the Third Week because they are intimately concerned with the contemplation of that Week in the context of the exercitant's Election or reformation of life. The Rules are Ignatius's way, in tune with Christian tradition, of grounding the Election in the nitty-gritty experiences of ordinary everyday life. It can only be in the real socio-cultural settings of the person's life that the Election will come to fruition or not. According to Peters:

Only a mystic will be able fully to comprehend the unfathomed depths of contemplative prayer in this Third Week and fully understand the language used by Ignatius. It is a good director's task to penetrate what Ignatius had in mind and then to open the road for the exercitant to the heights of prayer and the depths of affliction with Christ. He must on no account make the Third Week into a series of exercises on the Passion of Christ and reduce it to a time in which resolutions made in the Second Week are confirmed.³⁸

Into the Fourth Week

In the notes at the end of the Fourth Week, Ignatius advises that 'instead of penance, to attend to temperance and moderation in all' (Exx 229). The exercitant will only be able to enter fully into the joy of his risen Lord if he is willing to moderate his insistent inner drives to self-gratification. Only continual mortification will allow scope to his desire to be of greater service to the Lord.³⁹ Hence the third prelude of the Fourth Week asks for that selfless 'grace to be glad and rejoice intensely because of the great joy

and the glory of Christ our Lord' (Exx 221). The exercitant contemplating the Resurrection aspect of the Paschal Mystery is still the same person, still seeking encouragement in the practical living of the Election. He is still faced with the same struggle between the opposing tugs of desire for the fulfilment of the Father's will and of the desire for self-gratification. Continuing to contemplate Jesus in the Paschal Mystery the exercitant begins, with the Evangelists and with Paul, to glimpse the glory of God shining through the Cross of Jesus (cf 1 Cor 1,18). This is the purpose of the extra fourth point (Exx 223). He is also increasingly able to allow the risen Lord to console him in his living commitment to the Election. This is the purpose of the extra fifth point (Exx 224). The practicalities of the Rules, as we have elaborated them, retain their force and point into the Fourth Week and beyond into the future living of the exercitant. The Exercises pass from being merely a retreat to becoming a way of ordering ordinary life 'that filled with gratitude for all, I may in all things love and serve the Divine Majesty' as the Contemplation to Attain the Love of God has it (Exx 233).

Back to everyday life

Achille Gagliardi, one of the great sixteenth-century Jesuit spiritual masters, deals with the Third and Fourth Weeks of the Exercises together as equally pertaining to the unitive way. He has been accused of error and turning aside from the mind of Ignatius in attributing the Third Week to the unitive way.⁴⁰ Hopefully, from the foregoing, we might have more sympathy with Gagliardi. Let him have the last word, as he hammers home the principle that union is authentic only if it is incarnate in real living:

The way of union takes in every moment of time and every action, even the smallest. It embraces every state of soul, even the greatest desolation, dryness and abandonment, in imitation of Christ in the garden when he began to be afraid and was distraught, when he prayed 'Not my will but yours be done'. It takes in every place, every kind of person, and every state; no-one is excluded. It includes every way of life, whether active, contemplative, or mixed. The way of union is beneficial, free from care, delightful, and open to everyone, because we can enjoy it at any time, in any place, and in any labour.⁴¹

Every time we take a drink, or have a meal, every time we sit with friends or betrayers, every time we speak or keep silent, every time we look on another, can be a fostering of our union with God—these are the very actions mentioned explicitly in the Rules for Eating. ‘So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God’ (1 Cor 10,31).

NOTES

- ¹ The Rules for Eating are found in Exx 210–217. Unless otherwise indicated, the translation used is that of Louis Puhl, S.J. (Chicago, 1951). Henceforth references to the Spiritual Exercises will be included in the body of the paper.
- ² *Commentaire sur les Exercices Spirituels* (1889), p 311.
- ³ *MHSJ* vol 176, p 71; similarly Polanco, p 290.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p 79; similarly Vitoria, p 93 and Miró, p 387.
- ⁵ Longridge, W.H.: *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola*, 5th Edition (London, 1955), p 285—chapter IV, 6 of the Directory.
- ⁶ *MHSJ* vol 76, p 770.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p 224.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 225 and 230.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, p 378.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p 386.
- ¹¹ In Joseph de Guibert, S.J., *The Jesuits: their spiritual doctrine and practice*, (St Louis, 1972), pp 78–79.
- ¹² *MHSJ* vol 76, pp 320–321 and pp 558–559.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p 386.
- ¹⁴ Longridge, *op.cit.*, p 339—chapter XXXV, 12 & 13 of the Directory.
- ¹⁵ *MHSJ* vol 76, p 81.
- ¹⁶ *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, ed. George Ganss, S.J. (St Louis, 1970), sections 251 and 252, p 156.
- ¹⁷ *MHSJ* vol 100, p 296.
- ¹⁸ *MHSJ* vol 76, p 433.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p 436.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, p 403–404; similarly ‘The brief Directory’ pp 457–458 and Cordeses, p 550.
- ²¹ In de Guibert, *op.cit.*, p 89, footnote 50.
- ²² *MHSJ* vol 73, p 364.
- ²³ A discussion of ‘spiritual gluttony’ would unduly lengthen this paper, Yet ‘spiritual gluttony’ or self-centred spiritual covetousness is obviously not unconnected with Ignatius’s Rules for Eating and the Christian tradition on ‘gluttony’. Anyone who has made the Spiritual Exercises or any beginner in the interior life is likely to meet this vice. Here the teaching of John of the Cross is pertinent. Cf also *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, tome 6, cols 612–626, ‘Gourmandise et gourmandise spirituelle’, by William Yeomans S.J. and André Derville, S.J. I thank the late James Walsh, S.J. for drawing my attention to this article.
- ²⁴ Tugwell, Simon: *Ways of imperfection*, (London, 1984), pp 25 and 27–28.
- ²⁵ Nonell, Jaimé: *Ars Ignatiana*, (1888), pp 196–200.
- ²⁶ *MHSJ* vol 100, p 294.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p 295.
- ²⁸ Ignatius speaks of one making his offering as doing like one tempting a prince to various dishes to find which is acceptable, *MHSJ* vol 76, pp 76–77.

- ²⁹ Pousset, Edouard: *Life in faith and freedom*, (St Louis, 1980) p 155.
- ³⁰ Williams, H.A.: *Some day I'll find you*, (London, 1982), p 177.
- ³¹ Veltri, John: *Orientalisms vol I*, (Guelph, 1979), p 97.
- ³² This, I believe, is Hugo Rahner's rendering of Exx 167, but the reference eludes me.
- ³³ Pousset, *op.cit.*, p 157.
- ³⁴ Cf Jaimé Nonell, S.J., *Los Ejercicios Espirituales*, (1896), pp 371-377.
- ³⁵ See 23 above.
- ³⁶ Cowan, Marion & Futrell, John: *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola*, (Denver, 1981), p 115.
- ³⁷ Peters, William: *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius: exposition and interpretation*, (Rome, 1980), p 140.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p 143.
- ³⁹ Cf the end of the 'General Examen' in Ganss, *op.cit.*, sections 101-103, pp 107-109.
- ⁴⁰ Denis, Anthony: *Commentarii in Exercitia Spiritualia*, Tomus Tertius, (1982), p 135.
- ⁴¹ Gagliardi, Achille: *Commentarii seu explanationes in Exercitia Spiritualia*, (1882), p 105.