THE WAY

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PRAYER AT DEPTH

FOR AUTHORS

The Way warmly invites readers to submit articles with a view to publication. They should normally be about 4,000 words long, and be in keeping with the journal's aims. The Editor is always ready to discuss possible ideas. A Special Issue is planned for 2017 to commemorate the five hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, so articles in this area will be particularly welcome.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

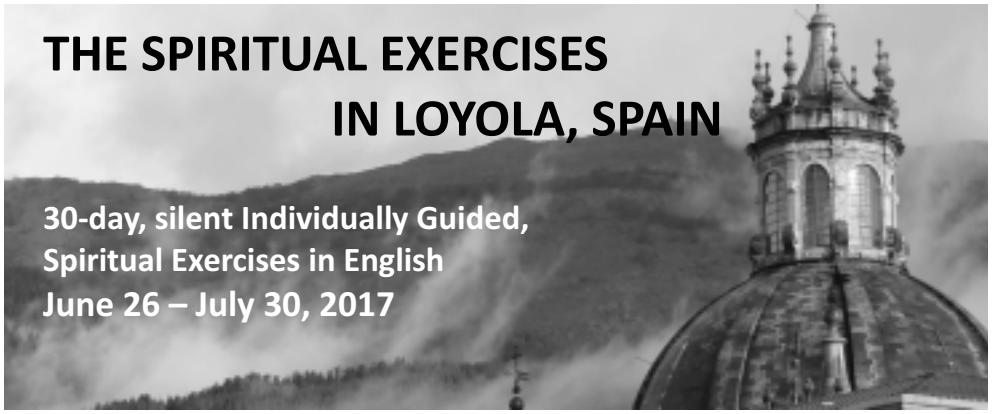
The article by Walter Fabri originally appeared in *Cardoner*, and we are grateful to the author and editors for permission to publish a translation.

ABBREVIATIONS

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

Call for Papers

The 2017 Special Issue of *The Way*, appearing in October 2017, will commemorate the five hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, by exploring the response to Ignatian spirituality among different Churches and Christian traditions. We would welcome contributions on topics in this area and the editor is happy to discuss possible ideas. Please submit texts for consideration by the end of July 2017.



The UK based Ignatian Spirituality Centre, jointly with the Jesuit *Centro de Espiritualidad* Loyola is offering the full Spiritual Exercises. The Centre is linked to the historic house where St Ignatius Loyola was born.
Prior to the retreat participants will visit the local sites associated with St. Ignatius. The Centre, in the beautiful Basque countryside, is modern and spacious with en-suite bedrooms, many prayer spaces and lovely private grounds.
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FOREWORD

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE of books introducing prayer and methods of prayer to those wishing to set out on the nursery slopes. At the same time academic journals of theology describe and analyze the work of the great Christian mystics and the phenomena that accompany their approach to God. Less, perhaps, has been written on the stages in between. How does a life of prayer grow and deepen over time? What are the different pathways that such a life might take, and how are these to be evaluated? The essays collected in this issue of *The Way* approach questions of this kind from different perspectives, but each of them has something to say about a deeper prayer and its effects.

Although the word 'contemplation' is used slightly differently in diverse spiritualities, at its core is the idea of a quiet gaze at an object, striving to become open to its reality without an excess of analysis or response. Artworks can profitably be approached in this way, and Walter Fabri's article offers a practical guide to making this process into a prayerful exercise. Poetry may also be employed like this, and Teresa White offers an example of the effects of such a discipline. Music, too, is profitable for contemplation, and Karen Howard traces ways in which the popular chants of Taizé manage to touch the lives of participants through a structured encounter.

Within Ignatian spirituality, of course, it is the Spiritual Exercises that offer the royal route to a deeper experience of God in prayer. Eric Jensen here looks specifically at that part of the Exercises, the First Week, that brings sin and forgiveness to the fore. He describes how, as he has worked with this material, it has also often brought up issues about the healing of spiritual and psychological wounds, frequently from the distant past of a retreatant's life; and he asks how this situation might best be addressed. Jim Sheppard deals with the next stage of the Exercises, which will usually involve a process of discernment. He compares Ignatius' guidelines with those of the 'observe, judge, act' process made popular by Catholic Action and the Young Christian Workers.

The Gospel of Mark is found at the very roots of Christianity. Peter Edmonds offers a comprehensive summary of that innovative work, and shows how, at its heart, there is an appeal to contemporary experience that is perennially fresh and challenging for its readers. And Rossano

Zas Friz De Col appeals to this same experience as the basis for a comparison between different strands of Christianity, suggesting that unity is more likely to be discovered at this level than in more abstract doctrinal discussion.

Tibor Bartók looks back in time to the practices of a French Jesuit, Louis Lallemant, acknowledged in his own time as a spiritual master, albeit one who remains to this day a controversial figure. The same might be said of Meister Eckhart, a mystic and writer on mysticism. In his article Louis Roy acknowledges Eckhart's shortcomings, but makes a strong case for the contemporary relevance of his understanding of detachment. Going back still further, one of the brief remarks for which St Anselm is best remembered is his definition of theology as 'faith seeking understanding'. This definition appeals greatly to George Wilson, although he uses his essay here to argue that much of its force runs the risk of being lost in translation.

Another spiritual writer, the author of *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas à Kempis, famously remarked that he would 'rather feel contrition than know how to define it'.[1] What is true of contrition is also true of prayer. Even the best-written article, most deeply rooted in experience, can do no more than point the way towards growing into an ever-deepening relationship with God. The essays gathered here illustrate a range of possible ways of achieving this goal, but can do nothing in themselves to bring it about. That requires a commitment to a practice that will have its doldrums as well as its peak moments. Our hope in publishing these pieces is that they might inspire you to begin to take the steps leading towards a deeper prayer.

Paul Nicholson SJ
Editor

[1] Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, translated by Leo Shirley-Price (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1952), 1.1.

MARK'S GOSPEL

Discipleship and Formation

Peter Edmonds

WE MUST IMAGINE MARK as a pastor addressing his flock. He is like Jesus before he fed the five thousand: he had compassion on them because they were 'like sheep without a shepherd' (6:34) and the first thing he did was to teach them many things. According to a very helpful recent commentary, 'The Gospel of Mark is a written text composed to be read aloud, all at once, in the context of a listening congregation. Mark's potent story cannot be summarised; it must be experienced ….'[1]

Who were Mark's congregation? A common view is that they were a Christian community in Rome in the time of the emperor Nero, who committed suicide in the year 68, but not before he had unleashed a fierce persecution against Christians, who were accused of involvement in a great fire in the city. If so, they had heard Paul's letter to the Romans, but now they were being challenged by another approach to the mystery of Christ—perhaps that of Peter, telling his own story of his time with Jesus through the person described at the end of the first letter of Peter as 'my son Mark' (1 Peter 5:13). Others experts on the Gospel, including Eugene Boring already quoted, prefer to think that the first hearers of this work lived in Galilee or Syria during the tense days leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. They had to learn, along with the multitudes summoned to listen to Jesus' open teaching after he had warned his disciples about his coming suffering in Jerusalem, that 'those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it' (8:35).

When teaching Mark's Gospel, I ask students which was Mark's favourite number, and I soon have them replying with enthusiasm that it

This article is an adaptation of a talk given at the Annual Conference of Catholic University Chaplains held at High Leigh in June 2015.

[1] Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 10.

was three. I want to approach the topics of discipleship and formation in Mark's Gospel in five stages, each of which will be subdivided under three headings. One cannot claim with any certainty that this schematization was what Mark had in mind originally but, as an aid to memory, it can help each of us become more familiar with this Gospel as a means of spiritual growth in our own life of discipleship and as a more effective pastoral tool when we introduce others to the joy of this particular Gospel.

These are the five stages or topics: the first is the story the evangelist tells; the second is the portrait of Christ that he offers; the third is his portrayal of those called by Jesus to discipleship; and the fourth brings together various minor characters who enter the Gospel's story only once. The fifth and final stage is the challenge that assimilation of this Gospel presents to all who hear or read it. We can approach four of these five stages in three parts.

- **The Narrative.** Each of those who heard this Gospel might be expected to be able to repeat the outline of the story it tells to those who were not present at its first reading. The narrative falls into three major parts which can be headed with geographical titles. The first part describes Jesus' activity in *Galilee*, the second his activity on *the way* from Galilee to Jerusalem, the third his final days in *Jerusalem*. These parts can also go under the headings of the *authority* of Jesus, the *destiny* of Jesus, and Jesus in *conflict* and his vindication. Introducing these three stages is a *prologue* to the narrative, and completing them is an *epilogue*.

- **Jesus**. Besides knowing the broad outlines of the narrative, those who heard this Gospel would be equipped to sketch out the character of the Jesus who dominates practically every stage of the story. Again there are three headings, roughly equivalent to the threefold character of Jesus' own self-description as Son of Man, which occurs fourteen times in Mark's Gospel. Jesus is, first, the Son of Man with *authority*, as is stated at the conclusion of the story of the paralytic: the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (2:10). Secondly, the Son of Man is one destined to *suffer*, as Jesus reveals to his disciples three times on the way to Jerusalem (8:31). Thirdly, the Son of Man is the one who is to *come in the clouds of heaven* at the end of time (14:62).

- **The Disciples**. The characters with whom the hearers of the Gospel would be expected to identify are the disciples of Jesus. Their chief and leader is Peter, and the most significant in their number are those known as the Twelve (3:14). The three headings under which we can study them are: first, as models or *examples* to follow; secondly as *warnings* of how not to behave; and finally as those *setting out* from a new beginning in the strength of the cross and the resurrection, with Jesus going before them as they move to a new life in Galilee (16:7).

- **The 'Little People'**. If we have done our work well in listing the successes and failures of those whom we may call the official disciples of Jesus, we will have discovered that the disciples come across in Mark much more as warnings than examples, and we can ask whether there are others in his narrative who might be regarded as better models for imitation than those who received a direct call from Jesus. The answer seems to be affirmative once we pay attention to characters who come on the Marcan stage only once, but who say or do something that we can treasure as a pointer to Christian behaviour. We identify twelve such people who can be divided into three groups of four, namely four women, four unnamed men and four named men. Is it a coincidence that twelve is also the number of those whom Jesus calls to be with him on the mountain (3:13)? These are the sort of people to whom the words of Jesus about one of them—the woman of Bethany—apply, 'wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her' (14:9).

- **Ourselves**. The definition of this final group may seem a little forced, but it fits in well when we gaze at the empty stage at the Gospel's conclusion. In the story that we have heard, we have learnt that Jesus was considered out of his mind by his family (3:21) and rejected in his own town (6:6), that he was betrayed by Judas (14:10), denied by Peter (14:71) and abandoned by the rest of the disciples (14:50). Just as we are starting to think that this story really is good news, thanks to the Easter message of the young man in the tomb, we learn that the women who witnessed the crucifixion from afar (15:40) and found the tomb empty (16:1), have also fled in fear (16:8). We are the only people left.

The Narrative

The beginning of the gospel …. (1:1)

The narrative of Mark can be divided into three major parts, preceded by a prologue and succeeded by an epilogue. The prologue is an introductory passage that gives us information that we need to understand what is to follow and which is unknown to the characters whom we shall meet in the rest of the narrative.

The Prologue (1:1–13)

The first verse provides a title for the whole work. It is called the beginning of the Gospel, one of many teasers which Mark offers his reader, for of what is it the beginning? It could refer to the prologue itself, Mark's Gospel as a whole, or even the beginning of our own Christian journey. As for Jesus, we are informed immediately of what it will take Peter eight chapters to learn, namely that Jesus is the Christ (8:29) and, secondly, that he is the Son of God, a truth which will first be announced with human lips by the centurion when Jesus is already dead (15:39).

But this narrative is not just about a beginning. It is the final stage of a story that was told in the Hebrew scriptures—hence the long quotation that we find in the second verse about the way of the Lord. Words from the book of Exodus (23:20), and from the prophets Isaiah (40:3) and Malachi (3:1) connect the narrative to come with the liberation from Egypt, with the return from exile and with God's promise of temple restoration: these texts introduce this last stage of Israel's history which is the story Mark is to tell.

Then the first human witness appears, adopting the garb and the diet of a prophet. This is John the Baptist, whose words announce the advent of one 'more powerful than I' (1:7). Then Jesus comes from Nazareth in Galilee seeking baptism and God speaks from heaven, identifying him as king through the words of a psalm (Psalm 2:7) and as servant through a reminiscence of Isaiah (42:1), and hinting that he is an Abraham figure by describing him as the 'beloved' (Genesis 22:2). Finally we hear a brief account of a period of forty days when Jesus is tested in the desert. Like Job, he meets Satan but, like Adam in paradise, he is looked after by angels. Only when we are familiar with the details of this prologue are we ready to hear Jesus' first words, a summons to repent and believe in the gospel because the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is near.

Act One: Galilee (1:14–8:21)

The narrative of Jesus' ministry in Galilee falls into three sections. The first begins with an account of Jesus' activities in Capernaum and its environs. We move from lake to synagogue, to house and desert, to mountain. Jesus calls his first disciples and is at once busy with exorcising and teaching. Yet already he meets with criticism and controversy, and soon the Pharisees and the Herodians are plotting to destroy him (3:6). He is sought out by his family; he is so crushed by crowds that he moves into a boat. From there he teaches many things in parables, withdrawing into a house to teach his disciples (4:34). He performs magnificent miracles (4:35–5:43), but when he goes to his home town, he finds utter lack of faith and it is said that he could do no miracles there (6:6). A third division describes the culmination of his Galilean ministry, which includes two miracles of feeding crowds with a few loaves and fishes. Its

The Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, ***by Lambert Lombard, early sixteenth century***

climax finds Jesus in a boat with his disciples for a third time, but he has to rebuke them for their hard-heartedness: 'Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear?' (8:18). The section ends with a question for those listening to the narrative, 'Do you not yet understand?' (8:21)

Act Two: The Way (8:22–10:52)

Now we concentrate on Jesus and his disciples. The crowds have gone and miracles almost cease. Cures of blind men open and close the section; we learn of the anonymous blind man of Bethsaida (8:22–26) and the blind beggar Bartimaeus (10:46–52). In contrast to teaching in parables, we now find open teaching; 'he said all this quite openly' (8:32). Three times Jesus predicts his suffering, and each time the disciples resist this truth (8:31; 9:31; 10:32–33). By contrast, Bartimaeus makes three petitions and 'followed him on the way' (10:52). Again the hearers of the narrative are challenged: are they too prepared to follow this Jesus on the way?

Act Three: Jerusalem (11:1–16:8)

Now the chronology is clear; we can identify the days of Holy Week. On the first day, Jesus enters Jerusalem (11:1–11). On the second he enters the Temple (11:12–19). On the third, he confronts his opponents and teaches his disciples (11:20–13:37). On the fourth, his enemies plot and Jesus is anointed by a woman. On the fifth, he celebrates the Passover meal with his disciples, prays in Gethsemane and is arrested; he endures a trial before the priests, elders and scribes. On the sixth, he is condemned by the Roman governor, executed and buried. On the first day of the new week, women find the tomb empty and are told that he is risen. They are commissioned to inform Peter. But 'they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid' (16:8). And this, according to the best commentators, is where the Gospel originally ended. The audience look at one another in unease.

The Epilogue: An Added Ending (16:9–20)

The style changes here, and the content seem to summarise what we know from other Gospels and from the Acts of the Apostles. The final clause, 'The Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it' (16:20), contrasts with Jesus' words that 'no sign will be given to this generation' (8:12).

Jesus: The Three Stories

Jesus Christ is true God and true man.[2]

In his reflective pastoral commentary on Mark, Brendan Byrne encourages us to ponder three stories about Jesus which always have to remain in tension.[3] This is a tension that remains in all attempts to understand the person of Jesus whom later theology defined as 'true God and true man'.

Story One

Story One is about the 'strong Jesus', the Son of Man with authority to forgive sins (2:10), called by Eugene Boring the 'Epiphanic' Jesus, the one who reveals God. He is the Jesus with the authority that belongs to a divine figure. In the first part of the narrative, this story is typified by the reports about Jesus in the synagogue (1:21–28). 'He taught them as one having authority' (1:22); 'A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.' (1:27)

In Galilee, Jesus does what God does: he forgives sins (2:10) and is Lord of the Sabbath (2:28); he feeds multitudes (6:30–44; 8:1–10) and he walks on the sea, identifying himself as 'I am' (6:48), a title reminiscent of God's words to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). In a sequence of four massive miracles, he proves himself powerful over nature by calming a storm, over the forces of hell by expelling two thousand demons at once from the Gerasene, healing a disease that had lingered for twelve years by simple touch and finally raising a child from death (4:35–5:43). On the way to Jerusalem he is transfigured on a mountain and a voice from heaven orders James, Peter and John to listen to him as 'my Son, the Beloved' (9:7). Peter recognises him as the Christ (8:29). In Jerusalem the word *authority* returns: after the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus is asked, 'By what authority are you doing these things?' (11:27–33) At the Last Supper with his disciples, he seems to exercise supernatural knowledge, warning them about what lies ahead, prophesying their apostasy and promising to meet them again in Galilee. Finally, he is confessed to be Son of God by the centurion at the cross (15:39).

[2] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 464.
[3] See Brendan Byrne, *A Costly Freedom: A Theological Reading of Mark's Gospel* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2008), 15 following.

Ecce Homo, ***by an unknown Netherlandish artist, late sixteenth century***

Story Two

This second story is about the 'weak Jesus', called by Eugene Boring the 'Kenotic' Jesus, echoing the words of Paul in Philippians (2:7). He is 'the Son of Man' who must 'undergo great suffering' (8:31). A typical text is the request of James and John, which concludes with Jesus' statement that, unlike those who rule over the Gentiles, the Son of Man 'came not to be served but to serve' (10:35–45, at 45). Thus, in Galilee, after healing the sick and feeding the hungry, Jesus needs to pray (1:35; 6:46). He is angry with the hard-heartedness of the Pharisees (3:5) and ignorant as to who has touched him (5:31); he fails in his first attempt to cure the blind man of Bethsaida (8:24). On the way to Jerusalem, he is the Son of Man who 'is to be betrayed into human hands' (9:31). He is the Servant who is to 'give his life as a ransom for many' (10:45). In Jerusalem, he is 'distressed and agitated' in Gethsemane and seeks the prayers of his companions (14:32–42). He is abandoned by his own (14:50) and perhaps

even by God (15:34). He dies the terrible death of crucifixion, jeered and mocked (15:29–32).

Story Three

There is also a third story which looks to the future, when the Son of Man will come 'in the glory of his Father with the holy angels' (8:38). He speaks of this to the inner group of his disciples outside the Temple. He tells them that they will 'see "the Son of man coming in clouds" with great power and glory' (13:26). He repeats this when on trial before the priests, elders and scribes (14:53–65), adding it to his positive reply when the high priest asks him 'are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?' (14:61) Jesus says, 'I am', again speaking the words that God used to Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). This affirmation is preceded by Jesus' promise that, after he is raised up, he will go before his disciples to Galilee—even Peter who has betrayed him (14:28; 16:7).

The Disciples: Peter, the Twelve

> He appointed twelve … to be with him (3:14).

Jesus is obviously the most important character in Mark's narrative—leaving aside for the moment the role of God. But it is no accident that, right from the beginning, Jesus is never alone, except when the disciples are sent off on mission (6:7–13). He is always accompanied by disciples, with Peter at their head, and, despite their flight when Jesus is arrested, their story resumes in the final chapter. But just as there is tension between the various 'stories' about Jesus, the same is true among the disciples. Sometimes the disciples are examples, but elsewhere their story becomes a warning to Mark's first audience. After all, it was the disciples with whom that audience was most likely to identify. We can consider them under three headings.

As Examples

In Galilee, the disciples respond to Jesus' call by the lake, Peter and Andrew leaving their nets and the sons of Zebedee their father (1:16–20; 2:14). Those appointed as the Twelve are obedient to his invitation on the mountain 'to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, and to have the authority to cast out demons' (3:14–15). To them 'was given the secret of the kingdom of God' (4:11), and Jesus explains

everything to them in private (4:34). Three of them are admitted to the intimate scene of the raising of Jairus' daughter (5:37). They go out on mission 'two by two' (6:7). On the way to Jerusalem, they follow Jesus despite their amazement and fear (10:32). Jesus does not contradict Peter when he claims to have left everything and followed him (10:28). In Jerusalem they find a donkey for Jesus (11:4) and ask for his instructions on where to prepare the Passover meal (14:12).

As Warnings

In Galilee, the disciples fail Jesus three times in the boat. During the storm, they panic and Jesus tells them that they have no faith (4:35–41). When he walks on the water they are terrified, despite Jesus' words of reassurance (6:45–51). When he warns them of the leaven of the Pharisees, he rebukes them for having eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear (8:14–21). On the way, they resist the message of the passion predictions (8:32; 9:32; 10:35). Peter is called Satan (8:33). In Jerusalem, they all fall away and are scattered, fulfilling the words of Zechariah (14:27; Zechariah 13:7). At Gethsemane, 'they all forsook him and fled' (14:50); Peter denies him three times (14:66–72).

Setting Out

But the disciples are not abandoned by Jesus, who promises to go ahead of them (14:28; 16:7). As to their future, unlike Luke, Mark gives us no Acts of the Apostles but, just as he included a large block of Jesus' teaching in his parable chapter (4:1–34), in the final part of his Gospel we read Jesus' discourse about the future, which warns of the afflictions and persecutions that await his disciples. 'They will hand you over to councils; and you will be beaten in synagogues; and you will stand before governors and kings', while the gospel will be preached to all nations (13:9–10).

The 'Little People'

> What she has done will be told in remembrance of her (14:9).

If it is true that the official disciples of Jesus turn out to be more warnings than examples for those who seek to persevere in their Christian life, we can look out for a third stratum in the Gospel which may provide us with edifying models for our own imitation. Each of these enters the

Christ and the Woman of Samaria, *by Paolo Veronese, 1614*

gospel story only once, but says or does something which is a lesson for the reader or hearer, then and now. We may distinguish three groups of four: four women, four unnamed men and four men whose names are reported.

Four Women

In Galilee, we meet the woman with the haemorrhage, who is led step by step from an external, impersonal attitude to Jesus—represented by physical touch—to a personal relationship with him. We learn how interior peace is more important than external healing (5:25–34). We also meet the Syro-Phoenician woman. She is a Gentile, with a lively, persevering and courageous faith in the person of Jesus. She is a foreigner to be accepted and admired. She challenges Jewish Christians in Mark's community to respect Gentiles and women who have accepted Christ (7:24–30).

In Jerusalem, we meet the widow in the Temple (12:41–44): her sacrifice of her whole livelihood and her perfect trust in God anticipate the sacrifice of Jesus himself, so soon to take place on Calvary. Her true generosity is contrasted with the munificence of the rich people who put large sums into the treasury. She also makes a contrast with the rich man who refused Jesus' invitation and 'went away grieving, for he had many possessions' (10:22). We meet, too, the woman of Bethany, who gives an example of personal generosity and devotion to Jesus, despite the criticism of those around. In return, Jesus comes to her defence (14:3–9).

Four Unnamed Men

In Galilee, we meet the Gerasene demoniac**,** who lives on the Gentile side of the lake of Galilee. He pleads to be with Jesus (5:18)—the only person in this Gospel to make this request—and he goes on to become the first preacher of the gospel to the Gentiles. He is given a mission to his own people (5:1–20). On the way to Jerusalem, we meet the father of the epileptic boy (9:14–29). He gives us a model prayer for deeper faith and understanding: 'I believe; help my unbelief' (9:24). In contrast, the disciples are told that they failed to cure the boy because of their lack of prayer. In Jerusalem, we meet the scribe in the Temple (12:28–34), a representative of learned Judaism who proves an ideal student and witness to the intellectual integrity of Jesus. He asks a good question, compliments his teacher, and assimilates and expands the answer from his own learning. He is told that he is not far from the Kingdom. We also meet a centurion, a Gentile, probably the head of the execution squad. After the death of Jesus he makes a confession of faith superior to that of any other person in the Gospel. He calls Jesus 'Son of God', the title with which Mark introduced him at the beginning of his Gospel (15:3; 1:1).

Christ Giving Sight to Bartimaeus, *by William Blake, c.1799–1800*

Four Named Men

In Galilee, Jairus learns that Jesus can raise the dead as well as cure the sick. Through listening to the encouragement of Jesus, his faith reaches new heights (5:22–24, 35–43). In Jericho, Bartimaeus knows what he needs and perseveres in prayer, giving up his cloak—which would have been his most precious possession—and following Jesus 'on the way'. His threefold prayer contrasts with the three times that the disciples reject Jesus' announcement of the suffering that lies ahead of him (10:46–52).

In Jerusalem, Simon of Cyrene accepts his unexpected share in the cross—he did not volunteer—and carries it behind Jesus (8:34). If Rufus, his son (15:21), is the same Rufus that Paul mentions in the letter to the Romans, we may glimpse some family pride in this participation in the passion of Christ (Romans 16:13). Joseph of Arimathea—one who, as a member of the council, had condemned Jesus—'went boldly to Pilate' in order to ensure his burial (15:43), while the disciples fail to do what disciples of John the Baptist had done for their master after his death (6:29).

Ourselves: The Last Word

> So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid (16:8).

We have noted above how in the final verses of Mark (16:9–20) the style changes and we learn nothing new. Most authorities conclude that these verses are the work of a person who was uneasy with the abrupt ending constituted by the words, 'for they were afraid'. If this is correct, then vv.9–20 represent a later addition and we must treat the report about the fear and flight of the women as the authentic conclusion of the Gospel. Eugene Boring helps us here as he concludes his commentary.

> Now, the readers stand at the brink of the incomplete narrative in which all have failed, and with terrible restraint, the narrator breaks off the story and leaves the readers, who may have thought the story was about somebody else, with a decision to make ….[4]

The late Cardinal Martini used to speak of Mark's Gospel as the Gospel for catechumens: a document to be given to those contemplating

[4] Boring, *Mark*, 449.

offering themselves for baptism and becoming Christians. Could they accept, with Peter in Galilee, Jesus as the Christ (8:29), and could they confess, with the centurion at the foot of the cross, the crucified one as the Son of God (15:39)? Could they run the risk of discipleship along the path trodden by Peter and the Twelve? How did they reply to Jesus' question, 'do you not yet understand?' (8:21) Were they prepared, with Bartimaeus, to leave their post and follow Jesus on the way that led to Jerusalem (10:52)? And did they flee in fear with the women who fled at the end of the story (16:8)? Did they realise that the Gospel was really about themselves?

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THE CONSOLATION OF POETRY

Teresa White

WAKING UP TO A NEW DAY, we find out what is going on, perhaps by listening to the news on the radio or watching it on breakfast television. Today the news may be good—accolades in the realms of sport or fashion or music or even, sometimes, in politics. And week after week, in many countries, people win lotteries and become rich overnight. But so often the bad news seems to predominate. The ice caps are melting, we hear, sea levels are rising, glaciers receding. In different parts of the world, we learn of fires, floods and droughts, typhoons, hurricanes and earthquakes. The news drags on: wars, with towns and villages devastated; terrorist attacks; ethnic and religious clashes; serious accidents; economic ills with their unhappy effects on livelihoods; trafficking in people and drugs; theft and murder; the spread of organized crime. In the midst of all this, people lose loved ones, homes, jobs, possessions, their own lives, their sanity or even their very humanity.

How do we react when we hear these things? Do we feel connected to what is going on? Sometimes we are overwhelmed with 'compassion fatigue', so we look away, unable to face these terrible happenings. Is this the kind of world in which we want to live—a beautiful world, yet often disfigured by thoughtless or deliberately destructive human activity? Is this a way of life we want to pass on to our children—a threatened environment and troubled human communities, some living in fear or hunger or poverty, many growing only in anger and hate? Can we build a better world? These are challenging questions, and it seems to me that poetry, which opens our eyes to see things with a clarity that is more than purely physical, can help us to think about them. Poetry reminds us, as Elizabeth Barrett Browning memorably said, that 'Earth's crammed with heaven / And every common bush afire with God'.[1]

[1] Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'Aurora Leigh', in *Aurora Leigh and Other Works* (London: Penguin, 1995), 265.

The consolation of poetry and its power to touch and enlighten the reader have been brought home to me over recent months through my contact with a fellow parishioner, Fred, whom I meet each day at Mass. Attendance at weekday Masses in most churches fluctuates a little from day to day, and ours is no exception. Nevertheless there is a nucleus of regulars, of whom I am one, and after many years of praying daily together, a genuine community spirit has grown among us. Several of us are retired, so we have time for short, often lively conversations after Mass, as we update one another on a variety of physical ailments, birthdays, family joys and sorrows, parish and local news.

Fred, a thin, upright East Ender in his late 80s, a widower of nine years, is rarely absent. When I arrive for the 9.30 a.m. Mass, he is nearly always sitting at his place in our so-called 'weekday chapel', praying silently. Every so often, and at least two or three times a month, he hands me a poem, sometimes more than one. He does this with gleaming eyes, as if he cannot wait to hear what I think of his offering. I now have a good-sized sheaf of these poems, each one handwritten in block capitals on a large sheet of yellowing, lined paper torn out of a foolscap-sized jotter. I have put all these into a special red folder marked 'Fred's Poems', and I take delight in adding to the collection and, from time to time, rereading some of the poems.

Fred's love affair with poetry began many years ago, when he was a schoolboy in top primary. His teacher read Wordsworth's *Composed upon*

Composed upon Westminster Bridge

Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour valley, rock, or hill
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will.
Dear God! The very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

William Wordsworth

Westminster Bridge to the class and he responded, heart and soul. He can still recite it word for word—as he did spontaneously on the day he told me about it. The poem draws him into another world, he says, not just because he is a Londoner and loves that wonderful vision of the awakening city, but because the words raise his spirit, so that he too experiences the 'calm so deep' of which the poet speaks. Ever since then, and especially since he retired, he has continued to read poetry.

Fred knows he is lucky in having easy access to books, for our London borough, Tower Hamlets, is exceptionally well served by its libraries. He tells me that he goes to our local library about once a month. He can borrow up to eight books, and he always makes sure that at least one of these is poetry. He favours anthologies, because they offer a wide range of poets and cover a variety of historical periods. He picks out what he wants to read fairly randomly, looking at titles and authors, and following his intuition. Having found a poem that attracts him, he reads and rereads it meditatively. He is not put off by archaic language, indeed he seems to relish unfamiliar words, taking delight in guessing their meaning and comparing them with their modern equivalents. He has persevered with Chaucerian English, and loves the opening lines of the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales.

Most of the poems in Fred's folder are not explicitly 'religious' or 'spiritual', but all of them delve beneath the surface of things and probe the deeper questions about who we are and why we are here. So, in reading poetry, Fred finds himself grappling with deep thoughts and ruminating on layers of meaning. Sometimes he warns me that a particular poem is not easy to understand, and advises me not to give up on it. 'Read it slow!' he says, adding that if I do not get the point the first time round, I must keep on rereading the poem until the meaning reveals itself—for, in his experience, it always does!

Poetry calls for a singular attentiveness to words and thoughts, and, as Fred has discovered, it invites the reader to be for a time inwardly reflective, to contemplate profound realities. Poets seem to have a sixth sense, an innate gift, which somehow opens a door into the momentary but not illusory experience of (as Francis Thompson so beautifully puts it) knowing the unknowable, viewing the invisible, touching the intangible, clutching the inapprehensible.[2] Poetry, with its special characteristics,

[2] See Francis Thompson, 'In No Strange Land', in *Poems of Francis Thompson* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), 299.

including rhythm, imagery and sometimes rhyme also, is far more than a collection of memorable sound bites. It conveys a concentrated awareness of the here, the now, the fragile, the fleeting. Using words alone to communicate its message, poetry creates its own inward 'landscape' and atmosphere, and through it, the soul is expanded and reminded of its spiritual cravings and needs. At its core is the quest for wisdom of heart and mind. Fred, as he reads his poems contemplatively, has been drawn into this quest and finds himself consoled.

Among Fred's collection of poems, 'The Things I See' by Jenny Joseph is a special favourite of mine. This poem, although written long before *Laudato si'*, shares some of Pope Francis's perceptions about life and living in our time. 'Nature', says the Pope, 'is filled with words of love, but how can we listen to them amid constant noise, interminable and nerve-wracking distractions, or the cult of appearances?' He might be echoing Jenny Joseph's words as he continues, 'Many people today sense a profound imbalance which drives them to frenetic activity and makes them feel busy, in a constant hurry which in turn leads them to ride rough-shod over everything around them'.[3] Jenny Joseph gives the same message, reminding us that it is the capacity for wonder which takes us to a deeper understanding of life, and opens our eyes to see things as they really are. In a few telling words, she describes some of the beautiful things she has seen and would have missed had she been in too much of a rush. With deliberate ambivalence, the last lines of the poem bring together both hurriedness and leisureliness, as the poet rejoices in,

> All the things I see
> As I hurry hurry hurry
> To work, but slowly, slowly.[4]

Yes, hurry if you must, she seems to say, but, as the old Latin tag has it, *festina lente*, hurry slowly ….

Poetry comforts the soul by opening up the heights and depths—and the humdrum middle ground—of human life and living, by pointing towards a new way of seeing things, hearing things, touching things. It arises from those flashes of insight that lead the poet creatively to interweave the material and the spiritual, the beautiful and the ugly, the human and

[3] Pope Francis, *Laudato si'*, n. 225.
[4] Jenny Joseph, 'The Things I See', in *All the Things I See: Selected Poems for Children* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

the divine. In construction and expression, the language of poetry can be opaque, can appear to be more than superficially impenetrable, and is often ambiguous. But, as Fred learnt through personal experience, at some deep level, the effort needed to wrestle with the challenging or perplexing meaning of a poem satisfies the soul's need to encounter the mysterious, to trust the inexplicable, as it searches for truth and beauty and integrity.

I do not know whether Fred would agree with me (although I suspect he would), but it appears to me that his experience of reading poetry has much in common with what W. H. Auden calls *the technique of prayer*:

> To pray is to pay attention to something or someone other than oneself. Whenever a man so concentrates his attention—on a landscape, a poem, a geometrical problem, an idol, or the True God—that he completely forgets his own ego and desires, he is praying.[5]

For so many of us today, our lifestyle does not prepare us for contemplation, and often we pass over the present as we race towards the future. Perhaps we sometimes forget that in human life, as in music, the silences are as important as the sounds. Just as any symphony, any song, includes both silence and sound, so in our daily living, there must be space to breathe, space to be, as well as bustle and activity and commotion. Our lives can be cluttered by a multitude of distractions and opportunities, our attention seized and our consciousness invaded, not only by trivial occupations but by a plethora of serious concerns as well. Reading poetry, or writing it, can lead us into stillness, as Pablo Neruda seems to say when he calls poetry 'an act of peace'. 'Peace', he said, 'goes into the

[5] W. H. Auden, *A Certain World. A Commonp1ace Book* (London: Faber and Faber, 1970), 306.

making of a poet as flour goes into the making of bread'.[6] A poem written from that place of peace, a poem which is the fruit of contemplation, is also a prayer.

Some spiritual instinct, some innate sensitivity to the power of words, has led Fred to discern the rich vein of gold in what some might regard as the rock that poetry, with its unfamiliar language and syntax, sometimes presents. Undeterred by such things, he has come to see that poetry offers an atmosphere in which we can ponder our desires and become aware of our fears and longings. It encourages us to be for a time inwardly reflective, to value the here and now, to live in the present. In reading a poem, we may find ourselves momentarily uplifted by the beauty, complexity, simplicity and power of life, and then lessons in spirituality will pour into us without any effort on our part.

Poetry puts us in touch with the providence that shapes and guides our lives; it seems to have the power to open the door of the heart to all the seasons of human life. As we walk through that door we are sometimes led to encounter the mystery of God in the concrete experiences of day-to-day living, to touch the springs of hope and rediscover the grace and energy to be all we can be. Poetry can lead us to become more keenly aware of the depths within us of laughter and tears, of joy and love, of trust and faith. In the words of Seamus Heaney, it 'encompasses the desolations of reality, and remains, like hope, an indispensable part of being human'.[7] When we are invited to face, in God's presence, such 'desolations of reality'—doubt,

[6] Pablo Neruda, *Memoirs*, translated by Hardie St Martin (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 137,

[7] Seamus Heaney, 'Bags of Enlightenment', *The Guardian* (25 October 2003), available at https://www.theguardian.com/books/2003/oct/25/poetry.highereducation.

discontent, restlessness, despair, longing—poetry can strengthen the life of the spirit within us. A poem, or a few lines from a poem, can for a moment shed a transforming ray of light which helps us to see the way forward with greater clarity, and 'to savour the sweetness of the Lord' (Psalm 27:4) along the road of life.

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LOUIS LALLEMANT AND JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

Tibor Bartók

THE *SPIRITUAL DOCTRINE* of the French Jesuit Louis Lallemant (1588–1635) is an excellent place to start in understanding how Jesuit spirituality and identity developed in the period following the foundation of the Society.[1] And the vicissitudes of Lallemant's life help us to form a clearer vision of the challenges of a period in which the Society of Jesus passed through one of the most profound transformations of its history: a moment of immense growth, both in membership and in mission. My aim here is to present Lallemant and his work in historical perspective. However, I also hope that a fresh view may help readers understand more deeply the spiritual challenges that still face Jesuits—and others—today.

Discovering Lallemant: Past and Present

Louis Lallemant joined the Society of Jesus in 1605 in Nancy (Lorraine), which was part of the Province of France at that time. After his studies at the university of Pont-à-Mousson and his tertianship in Paris, he taught at the Jesuit colleges of La Flèche, Bourges and Rouen. In 1622 he was appointed novice master in Rouen, then professor of theology in Paris. In 1628 he returned to Rouen as instructor of tertians. Lallemant was responsible for this final year of Jesuit formation for some 57 Jesuits between 1628 and 1631.

Lallemant's conferences were noted down and preserved. More than fifty years later, Pierre Champion, another French Jesuit, published these notes under the title *Spiritual Doctrine*.[2] The reading of Lallemant's

[1] The most recent French edition is Louis Lallemant, *Doctrine spirituelle*, edited by Dominique Salin (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2011). I am using the English translation, *The Spiritual Doctrine of Father Louis Lallemant*, edited by Alan G. McDougall (Westminster: Newman Book Shop, 1946).

[2] For the book's complex history see Dominique Salin's introduction to his edition, *Doctrine spirituelle*, 12–18.

Doctrine as a mystical interpretation of Jesuit identity, seems to have been popular among French Jesuits from its first edition in 1694. An edifying biography (the 'Life') was written by Champion and included in the same volume as the *Doctrine*. It presented the figure of a saintly Jesuit living in perfect conformity with his teaching and helping people, mostly other Jesuits, to find their way to spiritual perfection.

This image was greatly reinforced in 1920 when a book about Lallemant and his teaching was published by Henri Bremond.[3] Bremond was a former Jesuit, expelled from the Society in 1904 for his radical views on modernism and his contacts with its representative figures. Bremond presented Lallemant as the founder of a Jesuit mystical school ('école de Lallemant'), in sharp contrast to a more ascetic interpretation of Jesuit spirituality that started, at least according to Bremond, with a Spanish Jesuit, Alfonso Rodríguez (1538–1616).

Although Bremond's criticism of Jesuit spirituality as being too ascetic and regulated at the beginning of the twentieth century was not ill-founded, his interpretation of Lallemant's *Doctrine* was tendentious and was strongly contested by his former Jesuit confrères. The bitter dispute between Bremond and the Jesuits did not really lead to a deeper understanding of Lallemant's teaching but, paradoxically, it did contribute to the *Spiritual Doctrine*'s status as one of the most important syntheses of Jesuit spirituality. Thus its author gained unquestionable authority in the field.

Though Champion's biography of Lallemant mentioned certain criticisms of his personality and teaching, the extent of these issues was not appreciated until 1927, when a German Jesuit, Alfons Kleiser, published a letter by Fr General Muzio Vitelleschi (1615–1645) complaining about Lallemant's mystical teaching.[4] Some forty years later the French Jesuit scholar Michel de Certeau shed more light on Lallemant's sympathies with a mystical movement among some young French Jesuits.[5] This

[3] Henri Bremond, *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, volume 5, *La Conquête mystique. L'école du Père Lallemant et la tradition mystique dans la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1920). Bremond's work has recently been republished with a new bibliographical structure (Grenoble: Jérôme Million, 2006).

[4] The letter can be found in Alfons Kleiser, 'Claude Bernier S.J. (1601–1654): ein französischer Mystiker aus dem 17. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik*, 2 (1927), 155–164.

[5] Michel de Certeau, 'Crise sociale et réformisme spirituel au début du XVII^{e} siècle: Une "Nouvelle spiritualité" chez les Jésuites français', *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*, 41 (1965), 339–86, especially 379–381. This study was reworked in *La fable mystique XVI^{e}–XVII^{e} siècle*, volume 1 (Paris: Gallimard, 1982), 330–373.

group was certainly not an 'école Lallemant', but a spiritual (and partly quite naïve) reaction to the Society's critical expansion mentioned above. Lallemant could be seen as an emblematic figure of this movement, rather than its source. Finally, in the 1980s the Chilean Jesuit Julio Jiménez Berguecio published a huge number of documents concerning Lallemant's activity as novice master.[6] A summary of these discoveries will give an historical overview of both Lallemant and his epoch.

Denounced and Defended

The troubles surrounding Lallemant can be deduced from two denunciations sent to Fr General Vitelleschi. The first was made in 1625 when Lallemant was novice master in Rouen. Even though the letter of denunciation no longer exists, we are able to reconstruct the story it contained from the missives of Fr Vitelleschi sent to Lallemant's Provincial, Fr Pierre Coton, asking for a serious investigation.

According to these missives, Lallemant had fallen under the influence of an excessively pious man who inspired him to get the body of a dead novice dug up and taken at night into the chapel of the novitiate, where mass was celebrated in the hope that the dead man would revive. The story seems too macabre to be true. Jiménez believes the person who informed the General, Fr Denis Bertin, assistant to the novice master, acted out of envy. It is possible that Bertin nourished strong resentment against his colleague. In fact, they joined the Society in Nancy in the same year (1605), but Bertin, who was much older than Lallemant and probably less talented, was not allowed by his superiors to complete the full Jesuit formation programme. He became a so-called *coadjutor spiritualis*, whereas his classmate was promoted as a 'professed Jesuit'—a fully fledged member of the Society. Bertin, being subordinate to Lallemant as his assistant and feeling humiliated, may have invented an incredible story in order to take revenge on his confrère and tarnish his reputation.

Such was the essence of the first denunciation. Jiménez suggests that we take it as the result of Bertin's malicious intent and, all things

For an English translation, see *The Mystic Fable*, volume 1, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, translated by Michael B. Smith (Chicago: U. of Chicago P, 1992), 241–270.

[6] Julio Jiménez Berguecio, *Louis Lallemant, S.J., 1588–1635: Estudios sobre su vida y su* Doctrine spirituelle (Santiago: Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, 1988), 238–309.

considered, I agree with him. Nevertheless, such an apparently unbelievable story is not at all unbelievable given the religious mentality of that time. Jesuits of the seventeenth century were often influenced by uneducated or psychologically disturbed people, whose piety and mysticism, often mingled with pathological phenomena, could impress them greatly. Sometimes they became victims of their own striking naïveté, such as the two novice masters in Nancy who, along with several other Jesuits, fell completely under the spell of a formerly possessed woman, Elisabeth de Ranfaing, in the 1620s and 1630s. She inspired them to spread strange and even superstitious religious devotions inside and outside the noviciate.[7] One of these novice masters, Fr Nicolas Javel, had in fact been a fellow novice of Lallemant and Bertin in the same formation house at Nancy some thirty years before.

Lallemant was cleared of Bertin's accusations, but one thing remained undeniable: he had had contact with someone fanatically devout in Rouen, introducing this man often into the novitiate, much to the annoyance of some of those there. The Provincial, Fr Coton, ordered him to break contact with the man in question. This is the one fact that seems to be certain.

Supposed levitation of Elisabeth de Ranfaing

After having been novice master in Rouen, Lallemant was appointed professor of scholastic theology at Clermont College in Paris, the most prestigious school in the *Provincia Franciae*. As Certeau has shown, in the 1620s Clermont was a hotbed of the mystical movement among young French Jesuits, which worried Fr General Vitelleschi. This movement belongs to the series of French mystical trends

[7] See Etienne Delcambre and Jean Lhermitte, *Un cas énigmatique de possession diabolique en Lorraine au XVII^e siècle: Elisabeth de Ranfaing, l'énergumène de Nancy, fondatrice de l'Ordre du Refuge—Étude historique et psycho-médicale* (Nancy: Société d'Archéologie Lorraine, 1956), 35–48.

at the beginning of the seventeenth century described by Bremond as the 'mystical invasion'. But it is also a continuation of mystical developments in the Society of Jesus itself which had started around Fr Baltasar Álvarez in Spain in the 1570s and continued later to some slight extent among Italian Jesuits. Their leader, Fr Achille Gagliardi, was heavily influenced by the mystic Isabella Berinzaga.

As for the French Jesuit mystical movement in the 1620s, those involved did not hesitate to criticize Jesuit activism and absorption in apostolic life, notably in the colleges, whose increasing number burdened the Jesuits in France more and more, as they did the rest of the Society. These Jesuits, mostly young scholastics still in formation, were enthusiastic readers of mystical writings, especially the books of Teresa of Ávila. They were also committed promoters of an exaggerated devotion to Saint Joseph as the patron of mystical life.[8] They practised contemplative prayer, and some claimed to have direct access to the true spirit of the Society and its founder, St Ignatius. Wanting to return to the original ideals of the Society, they preferred an itinerant apostolic lifestyle to teaching grammar and rhetoric to schoolboys. Some displayed excessive contemplative tendencies, while others were marked by striking pathological characteristics. Certeau's investigations show that Lallemant was closely linked to Claude Bernier, the main proponent of the movement at Clermont College.

Lallemant certainly shared the ideas of his young confrères, though in moderation. His return to Rouen as tertian instructor in 1628 soon brought to light something of his mystical inclinations thanks to a new denunciation. Lallemant was criticized once more, this time by one of the Provincial's consultors, Fr Louis Grimald, as a *totus mysticus* (wholly mystic) instructor, who intended to lead his tertians in the spiritual life by *extraordinari modi*, unusual practices of prayer and devotion. Such practices, in the view of Fr General Vitelleschi, did not correspond to the common way of Jesuit spirituality; the General had decreed that this should produce solid virtues, especially obedience and the observance of every aspect of religious life.

As with the first denunciation, the French superiors cleared Lallemant of these new accusations. The *Spiritual Doctrine* that we can read today

[8] Georges Bottereau, 'Saint Joseph et les jésuites français de la première moitié du XVII[e] siècle', *Cahiers de Joséphologie*, 29 (1981), 807–808.

reflects Lallemant's teaching after the second denunciation. Perhaps the instructor gave up the more embarrassing features of his teaching, especially those which promoted mystical devotion to St Joseph. In the current text of Lallemant's *Doctrine* there are only seven short passages where the putative father of Jesus is mentioned. Lallemant treats him as an interior guide for the spiritual life, sharing the role of the Holy Spirit.[9]

Suffering from a serious illness, Lallemant had to leave Rouen in 1631 and retired to the College of Bourges. He seems to have had a close relationship in Bourges with the prestigious princely family of Bourbon-Condé, whose elder son, Louis, the future Grand Condé, was educated at the Jesuit college. At the informal request of Louis's father, Prince Henri Bourbon II, Fr General Vitelleschi appointed Lallemant rector of the College in 1634. His deteriorating health allowed him only eight months of rectorship. In April 1635, Lallemant sent his adieu to the prince from his deathbed, promising to pray for him and his family in heaven.[10]

Tensions are evident between Lallemant's spiritual tendencies and institutional expectations. However, it would be erroneous to conclude that Lallemant's teaching represents a secret resistance to the mainstream of the Society. In fact, the *Spiritual Doctrine*, on the whole, is a mystical—though perhaps exaggerated—understanding of the spiritual reform that Fr General Claudio Acquaviva, the predecessor of Vitelleschi, tried to instil into the ranks of the Jesuits.

Lallemant and Acquaviva

The generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (1581–1615), the longest in the history of the Society of Jesus, was characterized by a spectacular growth in the number of Jesuits and by the enormous social influence of their apostolic works, mostly in the field of education.[11] Acquaviva recognised very quickly that the external increase of the Society did not run parallel with internal spiritual growth. On the contrary, a serious spiritual decline

[9] On this subject see my article, 'Saint Joseph, dans la mystique de Lallemant', *Christus*, 251 (July 2016), 96–105.

[10] See Georges Bottereau, 'Autour d'un billet inédit et de la *Summa vitae* du P. Louis Lallemant, S.I.', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 45 (1976), 293–295.

[11] Two years before his election the Society numbered some 5,100 Jesuits and ran 144 colleges throughout the world. In 1616, less than forty years later, the number of Jesuits was over 13,100 and the number of colleges had reached 372, without counting some 187 smaller residences, professed and probation houses. See *Synopsis historiae Societatis Jesu* (Leuven: Typis ad Sancti Alphonsi, 1950), cols. 82 and 146.

plagued the whole Order. A huge number of Jesuits could not find time for prayer or any interior life. They spent all their time at work—teaching, preaching or visiting people. Several of them were involved in political affairs in European courts, giving the impression that the Society was trying to build an international network of power and influence. The General often denounced these phenomena in his letters and tried to provide 'remedies' for the ailments of the Jesuits with his famous *Industriae*, as well as with his instructions and commands.[12]

Claudio Acquaviva

Like Acquaviva, Lallemant complained about Jesuits who were so absorbed in their studies and work that they paid no attention to prayer and the spiritual life. These religious, he maintained, live,

> … in complete forgetfulness of themselves, a multitude of objects passes every day through their thoughts, and their heart being carried out of itself and intoxicated, as it were, with the whirl of outward things, in its absence, the mind continually deceived by the illusions of nature and of the devil.[13]

This was the inevitable consequence of a *magna effusio ad exteriora* (excessive absorption in external things). This expression and its equivalents often appear in the General's writings, as well in the memoranda that

[12] See Claudio Acquaviva, *Industriae ad curandos animae morbos,* in *Regulae, Ratio studiorum, ordinationes, instructiones, industriae: Exercitia, directorium,* Institutum Societatis Iesu, 3 (Florence: Ex Typographia a SS. Conceptione, 1893), 414–415; English version as *Therapy for Illnesses of Soul*, translated by Mary Patrick (Jersey City: Program to Adapt the Spiritual Exercises, 1972).

[13] *Spiritual Doctrine*, 53.

Jesuits sent to Rome at the beginning of the seventeenth century about the spiritual deficiencies of the Society.[14]

Lallemant also blamed older Jesuits who, although respectable by reason of their age and their office, gave bad example to the young, 'setting high value on great talents and situations of distinction', rather than on virtue and piety.[15] In this way, he said, religious life was adopting secular features and turning itself into a secular world dominated by 'esteem of human talents; preference for employments, offices and stations of importance; the love for distinction and applause, or repose and easy life'.[16] Elsewhere he complained about social discrimination in Jesuit schools: 'If in our classes we appear to treat the children of the rich with peculiar attention on account of their advantages of fortune, we shall do very wrong'.[17] Acquaviva was denouncing the same phenomena of secularisation. His letter 'De recursu ad Deum in tribulationibus et persecutionibus' (Of the Resort to God in Trials and Persecutions; 1602) provides a long list of the worldly and unspiritual behaviours that public opinion imputed to Jesuits at that time: too much involvement and dissipation in secular matters, greed, love of honours and reputation, libertinism in teaching and hasty judgment about others.[18]

Absorbed in the world and seduced by its values, some Jesuits had become more and more proud of themselves and of their Society. The ancient motto of religious, *amor propriae excellentiae* (the desire to stand out from others), had begun to apply to the Jesuits in a way strikingly different from how the earlier religious tradition had understood it. Patristic and medieval authors had used it to describe pride in overcoming all worldly attachment and becoming like angels. By contrast, Jesuit pride seemed to be based not on spiritual achievement and detachment from the world, but on the development of natural talents and competences, and on the social influence to be gained from them. All this produced self-centred apostolic agents whose performance was certainly amazing, but whose reputation was tremendously repugnant.

It is not surprising that in Acquaviva's *Industriae* one chapter is devoted to seeking remedies for the disease of 'pride and honour' in Jesuit

[14] See Certeau, 'Crise sociale et réformisme spiritual', 346.
[15] *Spiritual Doctrine*, 156.
[16] *Spiritual Doctrine*, 187.
[17] *Spiritual Doctrine*, 79.
[18] *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium ad patres et fratres Societatis Jesu* (Ghent: T. V. J. Poelman-de Pape, 1847), volume 1, 285.

behaviour.[19] Similarly Lallemant attacks Jesuit pride with a self-torturing rhetoric:

> We think only of exalting and aggrandising ourselves. Our own excellence is the centre in which all our thoughts, all our desires, all the movements of our heart terminate; … and that vain-glory, that height we aspire after, is, in fact, the depth of degradation; that distinction and worldly greatness after which we seek is nothing but misery and poverty.[20]

The tone of this extract, to which many other passages of the *Doctrine* could be added, is clearly Augustinian and is typical of several spiritual writers of the seventeenth century in France. However, Lallemant's rhetoric is more than an Augustinian flourish. Using it, Lallemant creates, maybe unwittingly, an alarm system to waken Jesuits from their too obvious self-centredness. The Flemish and Rhenish mysticism clearly recognisable in Lallemant's teaching has a similar role.[21] By presenting God as 'All' and creatures as 'nothing' or 'emptiness', the instructor is waging a war against exaggerated confidence in human means, the perceived disease of the Jesuit soul at that time. Lallemant's view of God and the world differs from that of Ignatius but, paradoxically, this and other serious differences between the founder's mind and that of Lallemant contribute to an understanding of Jesuit identity.

Acquaviva's Reform as Interpreted by Lallemant

Lallemant's criticism unveils, maybe involuntarily, a deep conflict between two dimensions of Jesuit identity which in the mind of St Ignatius were still in harmony. The founder wanted Jesuits to strive not only for their own spiritual perfection and salvation, as had been traditional in religious life, but also for the perfection and salvation of their neighbour, as he explained in the Jesuit *Constitutions*. For Ignatius, any approach to one's neighbours and work for their perfection required Jesuits to possess not only spiritual qualities but also natural means, such as intellectual talents, rhetorical and organizational skills, learning and so on.

[19] Acquaviva, *Industriae*, 414–415.
[20] *Spiritual Doctrine*, 249–250.
[21] See, for example, the First Principle of the *Doctrine*, given the title 'The Consideration of the End', a kind of mystical reinterpretation of the Principle and Foundation of the *Spiritual Exercises*: *Spiritual Doctrine*, 27–31.

However, Ignatius wanted to ensure that Jesuits were primarily instruments of God, united with God by spiritual means, as he explained in the *Constitutions* (X.2 [813]). Such means are, he explains, 'for example, goodness and virtue, and especially charity, and a pure intention of the divine service, and familiarity with God, our Lord in spiritual exercises of devotion, and sincere zeal for souls'. These means are also described there as 'solid and perfect virtues' and 'spiritual pursuits' (*las cosas spirituales*). The use of human and acquired means, whose importance is recognised by Ignatius in *Constitutions* X.3 [814], should be founded on virtues and prayer which give efficiency to these means.

This ideal, based on the holistic mystical experience of Ignatius at Manresa on the banks of the Cardoner,[22] seems (as we have seen) to have been under challenge from the time of Acquaviva or earlier. It comes as no surprise that the General tries to highlight with all his strength the importance of *Constitutions* X.2 [813]. In one of his early letters to the whole Society, he claims that this paragraph should serve as the basis of Jesuit life.[23] In another letter, on the missions, he expresses the hope that the words of X.2 [813] be impressed deeply on the hearts of Jesuits by the Holy Spirit.[24]

It is no exaggeration to say that Acquaviva's entire spiritual reform was inspired and justified by this paragraph in the Jesuit *Constitutions*.[25]

To establish a culture of interiority among Jesuits

With it he tried to preserve the spirit of the Society. A number of Acquaviva's instructions and commands, such as the establishment of the juniorate and tertianship, the annual eight-day retreat and the three-day recollections for the renewals of vows, reflect the General's aim to establish a culture of interiority among Jesuits. Acquaviva gave his approval to the practice of contemplative prayer—quite a controversial issue under his predecessor.[26] He also enlarged the list of spiritual readings recommended

[22] Ignatius claims that in this experience 'he understood and knew many things both spiritual and matters of faith and of learning (*letras*), and this was with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him'. *Autobiography*, n. 30.

[23] 'De quibusdam mediis ad Societatis conservationem facientibus' (1587), in *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium*, 186–187.

[24] 'De fine missionis in Indiis orientalibus' (1590), in *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium*, 222.

[25] See Joseph de Guibert, 'Le généralat de Claude Acquaviva (1581–1615): Sa place dans l'histoire de la spiritualité de la Compagni de Jésus', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 10 (1941), 59–93; William J. Burke, *The Spiritual Direction of Claudius Aquaviva, S.J., General of the Society of Jesus, 1581–1615: A Study of Ascetical Tradition* (Jersey City: Program to Adapt the Spiritual Exercises, 1969).

[26] 'Quis sit orationis et poenitentiarum usus in Societate' (1590), in *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium*, 248–270.

to Jesuits, in order to make them love the interior life and religious abnegation.[27] This list contained a number of books by Jesuit spiritual writers, such as Luis de la Puente, Diego Álvarez de Paz, Bernardo Rossignoli, Francisco Arias and others.

However, Acquaviva's institutionalisation of spirituality went along with an increasing emphasis on obedience and the observance of rules, orders and instructions, whose number continued to grow under his generalate and constantly challenged the daily life of Jesuits. The reinforcement of superiors' authority also led to resistance. Acquaviva tried to maintain the Ignatian ideal of the superior as strong and gentle at the same time, but his measures contributed more and more to the emergence of too paternalistic a figure of the superior.[28]

Lallemant is closely related to this complex phenomenon of Acquaviva's reform. Firstly, the paragraph of the *Constitutions* (X. 2 [813]) identified as the inspiration and justification for Acquaviva's reform is certainly at the centre of Lallemant's teaching, but in a twofold way. In the chapter 'Of the Spirit of the Society of Jesus' he gives an impressive christological explanation of paragraphs X. 2–3 [813–814].[29] According to this, spiritual and natural means, interior attitudes and exterior apostolic work are joined harmoniously together in Jesuit identity like the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. The harmony springs from a zeal for souls, which is, he affirms, the culminating point of Jesuit perfection.

Nevertheless, this harmonious vision of the interior and exterior does not seem to permeate the rest of his teaching. Lallemant sometimes emphasizes excessively the spiritual dimension of Jesuit identity: the importance of the interior life and the need for recollection, not only during the tertianship but throughout a Jesuit's life. His proposals can at times surprise us. He claims, for instance, 'St Ignatius desires that the professed [Jesuits] and those who have taken their final vows should give to prayer all the time they have remaining, after fulfilling the duties of obedience'.[30] In fact, Ignatius never expressed such a desire for Jesuits, even if he himself would pass several hours each day at prayer. Acquaviva himself, although strongly encouraging prayer and occasional recollections,

[27] See Pedro de Leturia, Lecturas ascéticas y lecturas místicas entre los jesuitas del siglo XVI', in *Estudios ignacianos*, volume 2, *Estudios espirituales* (Rome: IHSI, 1957), 269–33.
[28] See *Constitutions* IX. 2. 4 [727].
[29] *Spiritual Doctrine*, 293–297.
[30] *Spiritual Doctrine*, 187.

refused to oblige Jesuits to more than one hour of daily meditation, as had already been sanctioned by the Fourth General Congregation.

In Lallemant's view, a Jesuit should not be allowed to undertake major work until he has become entirely contemplative. For Jesuits to be truly efficient in apostolic work a high degree of contemplative life is required. It is 'when the soul acts no longer through the imagination … but wonderfully enlightened by God by means of mental species or intellectual illuminations'.[31] Lallemant goes so far as to identify the mystical life of Ignatius, based on his experience at the Cardoner, with this type of contemplative life, even if this is hardly defensible: we know from the *Spiritual Diary* of Ignatius that his mystical life did not exclude imaginative elements.

Lallemant's rhetoric and metaphors often praise the contemplative life at the expense of the active life. To some extent the context of tertianship and the crises of activism in the Society explain his preference for contemplation, but only partly. In reality, Lallemant and many other spiritual writers of his time, including Jesuits, were reflecting within the concept of the *vita mixta*, a life based on an *alternation* of contemplation and action. This conception of religious life has difficulty in coping with the novelty of Ignatian spirituality, which conceives of contemplation in the midst of action, as one of the first interpreters of the Jesuit vocation, Jerónimo Nadal, wrote.

A Second Conversion

Dominique Salin suggested that the true core of Lallemant's teaching consists of three spiritual attitudes: humility, purity of heart and recollection, each of these finding its archetype in a member of the Holy Family.[32] This threefold attitude empowers a Jesuit to be constantly attentive to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and to follow them without hesitation. Salin calls this immediacy between divine action and human reaction 'discernment in real time', in contrast to retrospective discernment.

Valuable as Salin's suggestion clearly is, an addition is needed. In fact, Lallemant puts the strongest stress on purity (and custody) of heart, as a condition for living permanently under the guidance of the Spirit. Thus the essence of his teaching could be summarised around two

[31] *Spiritual Doctrine*, 277.
[32] See Salin's introduction to the most recent French edition of the *Doctrine spirituelle*, 26–30.

poles: purity of heart (freedom from futile and frivolous thoughts and feelings) and obedience to the motions of the Spirit. This double understanding of the spiritual life is characteristic of the Desert Fathers, whose writings were widely recommended to Jesuits at that time. What Salin called 'discernment in real time' is quite similar to the *nepsis* (a kind of constant watchfulness) of the Desert Fathers and less identifiable with Ignatian discernment, which supposes retrospection, that is, taking a temporal distance from interior motions and reflecting on them. The search for one efficient spiritual attitude or method which includes or replaces all the rest and so simplifies the spiritual life is a characteristic feature of several sixteenth- and seventeenth-century spiritualities.[33] It also marks certain Jesuit spiritual writers, especially Francisco de Arias.[34]

To strengthen his teaching, the instructor refers to the scholastic doctrine of St Thomas about the gifts of the Spirit; these permit a person to recognise divine inspirations easily and to live a contemplative life. Aquinas's scholastic teaching was certainly helpful to Lallemant as it gave authority to his own teaching about obedience to guidance by the Holy Spirit. In fact, this access could have been readily misinterpreted as an *alumbrado* pretension, all the more so as the edict of Seville condemning *alumbrados* had been published in France just a few years before Lallemant became instructor of tertians.[35]

Lallemant tried to reconcile the guidance of the Spirit and obedience to superiors, but he could not help criticizing here and there the multiplicity of orders and the low spiritual calibre of certain superiors. Tensions between the spirit and the institution are certainly noticeable in his conferences, but he maintains, of course, the principle of religious obedience. The goal of the tertianship, which in Acquaviva's mind was a 'plena et absoluta sui ipsius abnegatio' (perfect and total abnegation of himself), becomes for Lallemant a second conversion, a radical and definitive act of self-renunciation, and a total consecration to the quest for perfection.[36]

[33] See Paul Renaudin, *Un Maître de la mystique française: Benoît de Canfeld* (Paris: Spes, 1956), 101.
[34] Arias's spiritual method is the constant remembrance of God's presence, as he expounds in his treatise, *Exercicio de la presencia de Dios*, edited with other treatises in his *Aproueachamiento espritual* (Valladolid: Diego Fernandez de Cordoua y Ouiedo, 1593).
[35] The *alumbrados* ('enlightened ones') were a heretical movement in sixteenth-century Spain who believed in a mystical union with God that rendered the external forms of worship and Christian life superfluous.
[36] Acquaviva, *Industriae*, 265.

The combination of Ignatian with other sources provides a counterweight to tendencies in Jesuit life which sometimes threaten to destroy it. Lallemant's Jesuit ideal may appear at times too eremitical and unlike that of Ignatius, and could be criticized on several points. However, Jesuit identity needed in the seventeenth century, and probably still needs, input from other spiritualities so as not to be overwhelmed by its own apostolic stimulus.[37]

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[37] This article is a summary, written with the help of *The Way*, of my French doctoral thesis (defended in Paris at the Jesuit theological faculty) due to be published in Rome by the Gregorian University Press.

THE SPIRITUAL GLOBALISATION OF CHRISTIANITY

Rossano Zas Friz De Col

THE TERM 'SPIRITUAL GLOBALISATION' has several possible meanings, but there are three that concern us here: the globalisation *of spirituality*, spirituality as *globalising* and spirituality as itself *globalised*—this last being the one presented in this article. However, some explanation of the other two will help to clear the terrain.

When the globalisation *of spirituality* is mentioned, reference is being made to a phenomenon typical of our own days. In place of the doctrine and rites of traditional religions, some would emphasize the experience of the 'spiritual' that is characterized by the search for a feeling of psychosomatic well-being to be found on the margin of any established religious tradition. It is a personal spirituality that justifies one's conduct with a view to one's own well-being. There is a sort of tautological circle thanks to which a mentality is built up with no thought for any transcendent relationship or love for the other. Everything is concentrated on the search for personal satisfaction. Instead of choosing a religion in any traditional sense, a form of behaviour is adhered to which aims to ensure the greatest personal happiness, corporeal and psychological. To justify such a way of life, a line of reasoning is adopted which mirrors, to some extent, the body of doctrine to be found in recognised religions. Thus a 'spirituality' emerges, defined by the practice of what one's own spiritual experience suggests.

As part of this, all spiritualities, whether religious or not, are supposed, very democratically, to be identical in so far as they seek the greatest well-being, no matter what is meant by 'well-being'. Each person decides for him- or herself what best satisfies his or her personal needs. And then it makes no difference which spirituality is chosen because the primary aim is to satisfy what one feels *in oneself* rather than by any reflexive analysis. The criteria used to evaluate the life one leads are

drawn from personal experience alone. The criteria vary as the experiences vary. Such a mentality can be maintained thanks to a form of secular fundamentalism (*soft* fundamentalism) which has become widespread in the popular imagination. Spirituality is, then, any way of thinking, feeling and acting which is directed towards ensuring the greatest psychosomatic well-being.

The second meaning of the phrase (spirituality as *globalising*) is backed up by religious fundamentalism (now, however, *hard* fundamentalism). This implies the imposition of a religious doctrine as the norm for any spiritual experience. Such an imposition is presented as the only possible social option for the general well-being in all its dimensions. It is the one, necessary and most appropriate means by which the believer who adheres explicitly to it can 'save' his or her soul. Therefore it should be obligatory for all. In this case also, love is not esteemed as the primary criterion; instead, this is considered to be adherence to an external form. Thus there is a gap between social formalism and personal interiority. Clearly, for the common good of 'souls', no alternative to the norm can be admitted.

The third meaning of the phrase 'the spiritual globalisation of Christianity' (spirituality as *globalised*) emerges specifically in the case of Christian spirituality. It refers to the mutual collaboration among scholars investigating the reality of Christian living, trying to find academic foundations for it based on the personalised experience of the transcendent divine love revealed historically in Jesus Christ. Thus, I am attempting to do two things here: to unify efforts to improve the study of such an experience; and to adopt a perspective which is both interdisciplinary and interconfessional. What is proposed is a somewhat different form of ecumenical dialogue, one that is based on an analysis of lived experience, which does not exclude the dogmatic dimension of that dialogue, but which seeks to undertake it from a point of view that emphasizes the experiential.

Ecumenical dialogue ... based on an analysis of lived experience

The aim of this project is to share a common methodology in the study of how Christianity is lived by pinpointing how the actual experiences of qualified witnesses in the various denominations coincide or differ. Will it be possible to establish a method, among the specialists who study how Christianity is lived in different denominations, to analyze exactly the spiritual experience undergone by Ignatius of Loyola, Luther and Calvin? Such a method would enable us to say precisely what the details are of

actual lived experience they do—or do not—have in common. Then from there we might consider how differences developed over time. In this way we might advance beyond the usual doctrinal analysis that evaluates theoretical pronouncements. Instead, some insight might be gained into the lived experience of those who were influential in each of the different denominations.

I shall show how this project works by presenting some of the progress made in the academic study of lived Christian experience connected with this method. My main aim is to make the method known in the hope that it will be used for the study of the three persons mentioned above. To do so fully would require an interconfessional team of experts, each approaching one of the three from their own point of view but sharing the same method. But I hope that I may help to encourage work along these lines here. In what follow an outline of this *theologico-experiential* method is presented in its three phases (phenomenological, theological and pedagogical).[1] The aim is to offer the method as the most suitable for the investigation of the interconfessional Christian lived experience.

The Starting Point: A Phenomenological Analysis

The mystery of God's revelatory presence in history has been shown forth in different ways, but these reached their culmination in the person of Jesus. From the first moment of the incarnation to the end of time, his presence is active in human history. It is a presence that intervenes in history using means that human beings can feel and understand. Otherwise no dialogue would be possible.

The means used in such a dialogue must respect the rules both of divine transcendence and of human immanence. This means that the Mystery reveals itself as mystery, and what is understood is the revelation of the Mystery, not the Mystery revealed. The historical person of Jesus and his message are understood thanks to the action of the Spirit, but the Father remains inaccessible.

This dynamism of divine action in history is not limited to the historical activity of Jesus, but is representative rather of the 'normal'

[1] See Rossano Zas Friz De Col, *La presenza trasformante del Mistero. Prospettiva di teologia spirituale* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical, 2015), 117–157; Jesús Manuel García Gutiérrez, 'Il metodo "teologico esperienziale" della teologia spirituale', *Mysterion*, 9/1 (2016), 5–17, available at http://www.mysterion.it/Mysterion_1-2016.pdf; Jesús Manuel García Gutiérrez, *Teologia spirituale. Epistemologia e interdisciplinarità* (Rome: Libreria Ateneo Salesiano, 2014), 217–265.

activity of God in history. In other words, thanks to the incarnation of the divine Word, the Father is active in history because the Holy Spirit discloses the Mystery of the incarnate Word, who is the Father Himself. Such a disclosure takes place in the personal history of each man and each woman, something unique and unrepeatable because in each case there occurs a personal and individual history of salvation, one which resembles and mirrors the great history of salvation. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify some constant features, seen from different points of view.

Thus, for example, and without the need for exact detail, it is a fact that the Presence of the Mystery of God causes an interior motion,[2] which is always produced, directly or indirectly, by God. It is the divine 'touch' which appears as a personal revelation, stimulating the person to realise the great values—both Christian and shared by all humanity—such as love (to mention the most important). And love here is understood to be the gratuitous giving of self for the good of others, with no other motive but that of disinterested gift (a Christian would say, 'following the example of Jesus'). Now, if God lets Godself be felt by means of motions, how does it happen that a person can advance from these to the decision to offer his or her own life in a disinterested fashion?

To answer as concisely as possible, by means of a phenomenological analysis of a spiritual motion: once it has entered into consciousness, the person can interpret its origin and discern if it comes from the good or the bad spirit. Next, reflection is needed to ascertain its meaning and its relevance for his or her life, so that a decision may be taken that answers to God's wish (as shown in the motion); this response gives a theological slant to the person's existence. These various steps need to be explained.

Conscious Acceptance and Interpretation

On becoming conscious of a spiritual motion, the person simultaneously realises that it has happened and that he or she has not caused it;

[2] A motion is 'an alteration in the mind, something that occurs in a person's interior world, but which does not imply in itself the notion of "agency of movement" …. A motion is an alteration, a movement in the spirit of the person but one which does not entail that a person has to move towards one or another option in the real life of the person.' Again: 'Here the word "motion" does imply movement but not to anything in particular but in itself. A motion is simply "something"; it is a something that is happening to me and which alters (moves) me in my way of seeing or knowing or wanting, or simply in the world of my intentions and desires.' José García de Castro, *El Dios emergente. Sobre la 'consolación sin causa (EE 330)'* (Bilbao and Maliaño: Mensajero and Sal Terrae, 2001), 118–119.

and, being aware of this, the person tries to find its origin. This is the process of discerning spirits to discover the source of a motion according to the method of St Ignatius of Loyola (Exx 313–336).

St Ignatius of Loyola

The experience of a spiritual motion allows one to affirm that God does communicate in a concrete historical fashion, and that therefore a person can communicate effectively with God by means of the reply given to the felt motion. Obviously the person who has experienced the motion can interpret it in many ways because it is always granted in a way open to free choice: it waits for a personal reply. But there are clear rules that help in discerning the motion.

Whoever experiences a motion does so while belonging to a specific cultural tradition, and interpretation takes place within that tradition. Any experience requires an interpretation that is formulated in a language. Only thus can it be understood in categories that are shared in a society and only thus can it be communicated in existential terms, while always respecting the context of mystery.

Reflection and Theological Decision

Once the motion has been interpreted and understood as a sign of God's revelation *in a particular place and time* that are historically limited, reflection is needed to discover what it may say and mean with reference to personal life. Clearly the personal cultural context of the individual is still relevant, but what he or she now has to discover is the relevance of what has been understood about the motion to his or her personal and social existence.

In normal circumstances, the outcome of such a reflection is the making of a decision related to what has been felt, to the motion received. A reply is needed which will require a stronger or weaker link with the Mystery revealed. With the decision, a personal reply is made to the motion that has been felt from the Mystery. What is important is that one should be clearly and surely aware, as far as that is possible, that a manifestation of the mystery of the divine will has been granted, and that some reply is needed. This may take the form, quite simply, of being moved towards an act of love for God, or it may orientate someone to make decisions for the future. But it is always by means of a decision that a personal link with God is established, making possible the growth of theological life or its decline.

The Method: Both Synchronic and Diachronic

Clearly every spiritual motion is preceded by a gestation period and is linked to the concrete occasion of its occurrence. Thus it comes within the context of a developing personal history and this in turn is found within a wider social context which inevitably has an influence on it. Moreover, as in any history, there is never a single motion but several; it is important to bear in mind that a reason for such a succession has to be found. That is why the analysis of an experience (such as has been outlined up to now) can never be simply synchronic. Some consideration is also needed of the transformation that occurs as the succession develops diachronically.

Such a sequence of spiritual motions gradually produces a spiritual outline of the person receiving them. It then becomes possible to identify through the known lived experiences a spiritual history of the person. From all this, the method presented here has both a synchronic aspect and one that is diachronic. With the first, an analysis is made of the most important decisions and with the second a meaning may be found for the temporal succession in which they occur.

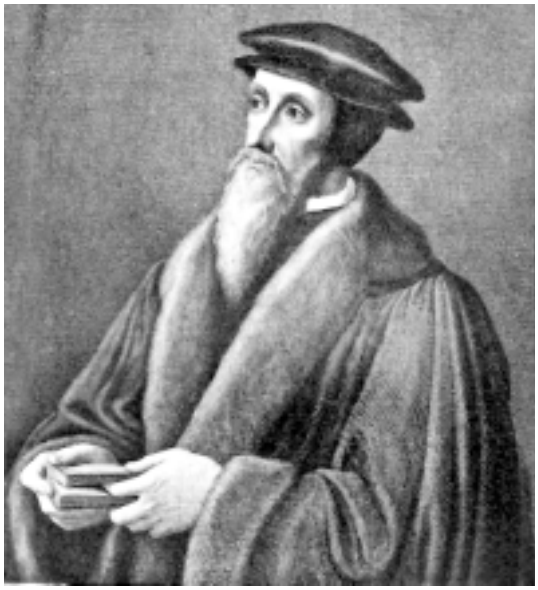
Theological Analysis

The analysis of those experiences, which enables one to form a personal outline, is what corresponds to the phenomenological stage: its aim is to appreciate as realistically as possible what were the motions experienced, so as to understand them in their context. There follows a second stage of

analysis in which the question, using the criteria proper to each tradition, concerns theological aspects. The data that have been collected in the first stage are now subjected to a theological evaluation. It is important to note that such an evaluation has two phases: one is deductive and the other inductive. In the first, a given experience is evaluated according to a theological tradition. Whereas in the second, it is the tradition that is evaluated in the light of what has become evident in the experience of certain motions. In this way it may be possible to renovate a tradition (the inductive aspect) and also to stress the continuity of that tradition (the deductive aspect).

As a result of the theological analysis, those elements in a tradition that give it continuity can be identified, and at the same time those elements that renovate it. Obviously some clear criteria are needed which will be sufficiently open not to impede recognition of what is new, while not so lax as to admit elements to enter that are harmful. This is where ecumenical dialogue can play its part, but on the supposition that any dialogue concerning continuity or discontinuity must take into account the lived experience that is being studied in the testimony of those figures considered exemplary. It is a question of evaluating not propositions but rather lived experience, examined synchronically and diachronically, using the same method.

Concretely, in light of the phenomenological and theological analysis of the lived Christian experience of the three key persons mentioned, one may pose the question as to which decisions led to the break with the Catholic tradition that had been dominant until the beginning of the sixteenth century, and which decisions led to its renewal. How were such decisions made, what was the context and what were



John Calvin

the presuppositions? However, a further question is worth raising: given today's socio-religious context and presuppositions, are what were then seen as a break and a renovation still to be seen as such? This question brings into focus a further consideration based on the two preceding analyses: this is the final step in the theologico-experiential method.

The Pedagogical Dimension of the Method

The distinguishing feature of the third, pedagogical phase is the articulation of concrete guidelines—based on the previous analysis of lived experiences—that can help the faithful along their road. In this case, the proposed project would give believers in the three denominations shared pointers that will be valid guidelines, five hundred years after the experiences studied. They would be intended to improve and perfect the personal relation with the Lord whom believers want to serve in disinterested love, from within their own denominations.

For such a method to employ its full force in the final phase, so that nothing is lost of what has been gained in the two previous phases, it is absolutely necessary not only to keep in mind the phenomenological approach, with a full appreciation of the religious originality of the experiences of the three individuals mentioned, but also to eliminate ideological perversions from the gaze brought to bear on the situation. Then it becomes possible to make the most use of those aspects of the lived experiences that best fit the starting point of the enquiry. The sole perspective has to be one of sincere and disinterested desire on the part of all for the openness and dialogue that can lead to unity.

Martin Luther

Experiential Ecumenical Dialogue

When we consider the three persons mentioned above, Ignatius of Loyola, Luther and Calvin, what can be affirmed about their lived experience of God? It is their experiences that interest us now, not the formulae that over the centuries have been linked to their names as the expression of their respective identities. If anything can be said about those experiences, it will be in the light of the method used to study them. Here what is proposed is to collect data (the first, phenomenological phase), which can be evaluated (the second, theological phase), so that in a third phase pedagogical guidelines can be proposed to assist believers to follow the example of those judged to be their guides. Are there elements in the experience of these men—considered exemplary—which today will be of profit for both Catholic and Reformed together?

If we were to imagine for a moment that the method (in its three phases) has been used with regard to all three persons (who represent three of the best-known Christian denominations),[3] and we suppose that conclusions have been reached which indicate a number of coincidences and differences in their Christian lived experience, surely those conclusions should be the prime matter in any dialogue concerning the actual spiritual and ecclesial experience to be found in the three denominations. It is by the analysis of the lived experience of the persons who stand at the origin of the divisions in Western Christianity that the three denominations involved can reflect on them to recognise what continues to separate them and what might serve to motivate union. After all, the three beliefs are based on the experience of Jesus Christ. That is the experience relived in the three exemplary representatives. It is from an acknowledgement of this fact that a dialogue between the denominations becomes possible.

A shared desire to overcome differences, inspired by the love for Jesus Christ, should lead to a rejection of the motives which even today foment separation. The criteria for such a rejection will emerge in the light of the conclusions reached by applying this method to the three characters. For it will become clear how each of them responded to the inspirations they received. On that base, one can reconstruct both the divisions that split Western Christianity and possible points of contact. Such a reconstruction requires on the part of the three denominations an ability to separate the

[3] As was said earlier, the present article is intended simply to present the method as a possible instrument of analysis; the participation of an interconfessional team would be needed to apply it in practice.

Pope Francis commemorating the Reformation with Lutheran church leaders at the Together in Hope meeting in Lund, Sweden, October 2016

wheat from the straw—in such a way that the new wine of reconciliation can be poured into jars made anew by a common understanding that wishes to overcome differences. It has to be recognised that this desire comes from the Spirit, which blows towards unity. That is why it is most important that the method be put into practice collegially. The spiritual theologians of all three confessions have to work together, accepting mutual correction. Before that can be done, there has to be a basic agreement on a real will for union and on the acceptance of professional competence.

Spiritual Globalisation

Christianity, seen as globalised spirituality, does not stand for a 'globalisation *of spirituality*', as if all that mattered were the dimension of interior experience, leaving to one side the doctrinal or ritual dimension. Neither is it to be understood in a fundamentalist sense as if Christian spirituality was called to be the '*globalising* spirituality' that englobes all spiritualities. Instead it indicates the search for the lost unity of Christianity starting from the experience of Jesus Christ. That means the academic study of a lived experience, one that unites the different denominations. By uniting them it globalises them in the experience of the Lord. Hence the term, the *spiritual globalisation* of Christianity.

To reach the goal that is desired a shared effort will be needed by the different Churches so that the common experience of Jesus Christ—to be found in the religious experience of Ignatius of Loyola, Luther

and Calvin—can be discovered thanks to the phenomenological analysis described above and the subsequent theological evaluation. The next step would be the formulation of a pedagogical spiritual proposal acceptable to all three denominations. That could serve as a reference base for the construction of a unity which is really alive in the shared experience of Jesus Christ. The desire for unity would then take concrete shape in a shared method of study that points the way, in a new and original fashion, to a common identity capable of overcoming differences.

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translated by Joseph A. Munitiz SJ

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

Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jesuit poet

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IMAGES THAT LEAD TO PRAYER

Walter Fabri

Praying with a Scripture Text

YOU WOULD LIKE TO PRAY, so you make up your mind where and for how long you are going to pray. First, you tune into the One you want to meet in prayer: you adopt a good body posture, and you gather all your physical and mental capacities to focus on your conversation with the Lord, how to speak, listen, pray. Anything which distracts will be kept at bay.

You have chosen your text in advance. This will first be read several times, once preferably out loud. During the reading, you emphasize some words and let them acquire focus. The words become stepping stones to get you to Our Lord. They point the way, clarify who he is, reveal Jesus in action.

You pause over words to savour them, taste them inwardly. Words are themselves invitations to penetrate further into clarity: one word leads to an insight. The person praying approaches his or her Lord. Or rather: the Lord approaches the one praying through words and images. The words and the circumstances in which they were spoken help to establish contact between God and the one praying. The scripture text gives rise to images: Jesus with his disciples, the persons who feature in gospel passages, historical characters named in the Old Testament. Anyone who has made the Spiritual Exercises recognises these suggestions as coming from Ignatius.

All that Surrounds Us

However, passages from scripture are not the only source of images. In fact, everything that surrounds us can serve as a point of departure, an 'image' that leads to prayer. A newspaper may offer images for prayer: shocking cries of misery, the knocking at the gate of whoever needs help;

The Way, 56/1 (January 2017), 57–62

consoling images too: young people helping children with their homework, nurses on a mission abroad. Publications, books, magazines can be pointers to arrive at silence, listening, conversation and prayer.

Nature is an inexhaustible treasure-chest of occasions for prayer: is there a place which better invites us to feel the mystery of our own existence? It may suffice to observe a starry sky at night. Attentive observation of the progress of seasons is a constantly recurring source of wonder, of participation in life—of gratitude, too, for the great organic whole in which we are allowed to live as a human beings.

Praying with Art

What is relevant for praying with scripture texts is also relevant for praying with art. You would like to pray, so you decide to remain with Our Lord or to come closer to him using images or sounds. First of all, you select a work of art and, to make things easy, you begin with religious forms of art: representations of gospel passages, Jesus in action in the midst of disciples and listeners, biblical scenes in which precursors of the gospel occur. This is possible, but not indispensable: so-called abstract works can also contribute to prayer.

Praying in an Art Gallery

That which holds true for praying with scripture texts also holds true for praying in a gallery. Do you want to pray? Do you wish to remain with Our Lord or to come closer to him using the 'images' that you will see?

You choose a place to pray in the gallery. Walk through all the rooms on arrival. One work of art will appeal to you more than another; one is more expressive than the other. Choose. Decide: I will use *this* work of art to pray. Place yourself in front of it; if there is a bench in the room, use it. Do you have a stool with you? Use that to adopt a reverential posture and simultaneously a posture which you can maintain for a considerable while. You may like to just sit on the gallery floor.

Once you have decided to incorporate this sculpture or this painting into your prayer, focus your attention on it. Let yourself be distracted as little as possible by other visitors or by other objects in the room. First take time to look globally: what do I see? What is the subject? Who or what is depicted? Is it a portrait, a landscape? Are persons, animals or objects in it? Who or what is central in the piece? What is happening? Is there any action? What does the piece tell me? Do I see any possible connections to the life of Jesus, or not?

'Through the Little Gap between Your Fingers'

My mother always said: 'My boy, in order to see anything well you have to look through the little gap between your fingers'. She was right. If you look through the little gap between your fingers, you focus all your attention on to a small area. You concentrate your abilities of observation on to a small surface. In this way, certain details will strike you, your attention will be roused by something which escaped your notice previously.

A painting, a sculpture, a group of sculptures can be approached in the same way as a fragment of the Bible. As an example: come and join me in the Museum of Fine Arts in the Citadelpark in Ghent. In the round upper corridor, there is Constantin Meunier's sculpture *The Prodigal Son*. It is cast in bronze: a seated father and a son who leans on him. It is almost life-size. You can look at it from three angles. A first key to praying with such a work of art is: take time for it. Take plenty of time. Look at the work from different viewpoints: high, low, left, right, far, close. Go and sit close by. Soon, many things will stand out to you. First, their posture. The father sits. This gives him a tranquil dignity. He has taken the son's head into his hands. The son's head leads to the father's eyes: loving eyes, full of sorrow. His face is turned towards the son, close by. The son himself almost lies in the father's arms, with his right arm on the father's shoulder as a support, giving himself wholly, without fear, to his father's invitation. To judge from the boy's clothes, he has suffered, has known poverty, has ended up in misery. Those who look at Meunier's group sculpture will understand much better why the father will cover his son with such abundant

The Prodigal Son*, by Constantin Meunier, 1892*

generosity: new clothing, a ring, sandals. They will also understand better the party that will follow. The father's face says why: it betrays no reproach at all. The fearful waiting is over. The face speaks of reunion, of love, of desire for life.

How can the prayer continue further? You can get under the skin of both men: what does the father feel? What does he say to his son? How does he see the future? Imagine the son. What was going on in him before his departure from being a keeper of pigs? What was he feeling during his journey? What is happening to him now that his father receives him in this way? What does he say, or stammer?

Figurative or Abstract?

Can only figurative work be used in prayer? No, certainly not. Abstract painters and abstract paintings can point us to our Lord. Some examples: the Tate Modern in London has in one of its rooms a bronze bar welded on to a metal ground plate. When one looks attentively, one notices that this bar has some imprints on its sides, as if the sculptor had pinched it with his thumb. One can wonder: do I allow myself to be shaped by our Lord? Do I say: *No, don't touch me! I am made of metal?* Or the wish can be uttered: *Form me, mould me*.

Several years ago, Anthony Caro exhibited his work on the lawns of Middelheim in Antwerp. He laid down heavy, brightly painted metal H-, L- and I-shapes on the grass. A wandering visitor might well have wondered about the possible reason for this arrangement. Later, the memory would remain with him or her.

Elsewhere, in a video work, a big lime-tree can be seen with a house in the far background. Seemingly nothing is happening, until your eye discovers how the outer leaves of the tree gently wave in the wind. Again, in a work by Bill Viola, from his Quintet series of videos, five figures—four men and one woman—look at something, someone, that cannot be seen. All sorts of feelings can be read from their faces: sadness, surprise, pain, rejection, pity.

You arrive in another room in Tate Modern and see an almost wall-sized painting: *Eve*, by Barnett Newman. It is a big red canvas, bordered on the right-hand side by a dark purple line. At first the work irritates: it is uniform red, big and monotonous. But after a while, associations

St Pancras Station, London

appear: red, blood, love, struggle, spirit. A demarcated domain or a battlefield. Could this be my life? Am I alone in this battle? After some time looking at it, the line on the side is noticed, the purple line. Am I then not alone after all? Perhaps a conversation starts from this discovery. This kind of work of art can provide a certainty: I am not alone in life; I am not alone facing issues. There is always Someone on the sideline, supporting me, wherever I am and wherever I go.

Beyond the Gallery

After the gallery visit, you go home. While at the station, your eye is caught by the forms supporting the glass roof: Caro in your own town! You see the people waiting on the next platform. How do they look, what occupies them, what worries them, what makes them sad or joyful? The trees outside wave in the light breeze. Your eye catches a wheelchair-user who struggles to get along the footpath. Strangers with luggage move slowly, inaudibly past. You see them. They touch you.

Prayer in a gallery can sharpen your awareness. It helps you to look; it practises close attention, involvement. It brings that which is other,

the Other, into your world, into your daily rhythm. There are more connections, more openness: there is a break in your little circle.

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translated and adapted by Wouter Blesgraaf and Joseph A. Munitiz

TAIZÉ, CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Karen L. Howard

> Please wood, let Grandpa Georgi make you into a violin for God …. Do you hear me? Wood?
>
> The wood was soft and warm in my fingers … like living flesh. I didn't dare open my eyes. It seemed to me that a low, melodic sound filled the room, coming from below my fingers. And some kind of fragrance rose from there. The wood was singing. (Victor Paskov, *A Ballad for Georg Henig*)[1]

THE MUSIC OF TAIZÉ is of a kind that invites its listeners to stillness. Religious services that employ this type of music activate the senses in a way that may be unparalleled in our modern, technologically inundated society. Through the Spirit, they summon us to meet the Divine, one person at a time, whenever and wherever we are, and yet they do so collectively. It is something wonderful.

Taizé is actually a small village in France where an ecumenical community of monks came together just after the Second World War. The movement and the community were started by Brother Roger Schutz, a Protestant, who was convinced of the importance of Christian unity. He envisioned that reconciliation and unity could be built among all the factions that existed after the Second World War by bringing together men who were committed to living in such a spirit. Paying special attention to the Holy Spirit, they chanted prayers, often psalms, three times a day, interspersed with silent periods of meditation.

[1] Victor Paskov, *A Ballad for Georg Henig*, translated by Robert Sturm (London: Peter Owen, 1990), 87–88. This is a Bulgarian novella about an old violin-maker who decides that his last work will be to make a violin for God that only God can hear.

Soon, people came to visit and pray with them. In an effort to include visitors who were arriving from many different countries and faiths, the monks began to reframe their chants as short pieces of music, often sung in French or Latin, and superimposed cantor lines over them in the languages of the people who were visiting. Young people began to flock to Taizé in tens of thousands—and still do. At the time, Brother Roger was not sure what to do with all these young people, but the monks relied on the Holy Spirit to guide them. They welcomed the young visitors to the village and not only prayed with them but began to listen to them, one-to-one, to answer their searching questions about faith. The monks also began to offer bible classes and teach their simple chants. Today, those chants are recognised worldwide simply as 'Taizé music', and over a hundred monks, from thirty different countries and various Christian denominations, continue to live together, pray together and welcome people from all over the world to this small village.

An Experiment

Taizé services began at my own parish, St John Neumann in East Freetown, Massachusetts, USA, about two years ago, after a conversation between the pastor, Father Gregory Mathias, and myself. We had been talking about contemplative prayer, and he asked if I had ever heard of Taizé. He explained it a bit and said he had always thought that this form of prayer might be the perfect remedy for the sorts of lives people live in the United States today. He also said that faith is fed by contemplation and prayer, but modern life often compels us to move too fast for either of them.

St John Neumann has a great choir and it sounded as though they could introduce this prayer form effectively. After we had explored the ways in which such services were organized in Taizé itself, and also at Boston College, where I teach, a committee was formed to prepare the environment. Long panels of red and orange fabric were hung to symbolize the presence of the Holy Spirit; icons were displayed; and lots of candles were ordered.

The church offered its first candlelit Taizé service on Palm Sunday, 2014. The service included scripture readings, chanting and periods of silence. While Father Greg welcomed people at the beginning of the service, and different people read the scriptures, the choir functioned as leader, even though they sang sitting down and off to the side. No one was to draw attention to him- or herself. After the initial welcome, the service simply unfolded according to the printed programme that

participants were given when they arrived. Taizé is ecumenical, so the congregation came from various other local churches as well.

The parish offered its second Taizé on Pentecost the same year and even more people attended. They seemed to be hungry for this type of prayer. That first year, the services were held monthly, and more and more parishioners became involved in setting up and taking down the environment, in publicity and in fellowship afterwards. Even the Boy Scouts helped take down the fabric sails after services. The choir was learning the music and people seemed mesmerized by the silence, the candles and the repetitive chanting.

By the second year, wonderful new ecumenical ties had been created and many parishioners were involved. Different local pastors began to offer the readings. At the heart of Brother Roger's ideas about unity and reconciliation was the activity of the Holy Spirit. People began to pray directly to the Holy Spirit, especially the choir members, even apart from the service itself, and they began to incorporate silent prayer into their practice at home between services. They wanted to know more about silence as a part of their prayer.

From a small village in France to a small town in the United States, it seemed that the Spirit had begun to direct events. Choir members remarked again and again how the Spirit seemed to be in control. People who attended the services said they could palpably feel the Holy Spirit's presence when they came, and many spoke about being changed by the

Decorations for the Advent Taizé service at St John Neumann

service. Something powerful seemed to be going on. One Protestant pastor said what was going on at this Catholic parish was 'pure gospel'.

A Project

As Taizé unfolded at St John Neumann, a research project began as well. People attending the services seemed to be becoming more comfortable with silence and contemplative prayer. Perhaps Taizé could be used to teach contemplative prayer and an appreciation for silence not only to parishioners but to Boston College students as well. This might afford them new and deeper understandings of the Holy Spirit. Father Mathias gave me permission to use the parish, which is in the countryside about fifty miles from Boston College, as a subject for research, and this project owes a great debt of gratitude to him for his graciousness. The research departments at Boston College were also extremely supportive.

The project began at the start of 2015, and proposed interviewing parishioners who had attended Taizé at St John Neumann to see if it had changed their prayer life, and then bringing some Boston College students to the services and asking them to reflect and write about their experiences. Parishioners would be asked questions about their prayer patterns, what they called God, and if they prayed to the Holy Spirit in particular or to the Trinity in particular. Did they have any images of God? Did the Spirit speak to them? Did God move or stand still in their experiences? Had they any explicit experiences of the Holy Spirit, and what impact had the silence, candlelight and chanting music of Taizé had on their prayer, if any?

By this second year, the schedule had been cut back and Taizé services were only being offered five or six times a year. The choir, like most choirs, was made up of volunteers with limited hours for rehearsals, and there were other liturgies and seasons to prepare. But new reflections on the value of silence had begun to fill the gaps. A three-part BBC television series entitled *The Big Silence* was shown, about five men and women who sought to learn how to incorporate more silence into their everyday lives through a retreat at St Beuno's spirituality centre in north Wales.[2] After viewing this series, parishioners wanted to try a day of silence themselves, so the parish began to offer one-day silent retreats.

[2] *The Big Silence*, produced by Dollan Cannell (London: BBC/Tiger Aspect, 2010). DVDs of the series are available from The Way Ignatian Book Service; please contact the editorial office.

Three Taizé brothers came to visit Boston College from France that spring, and one of them, Brother Emmanuel, came to the parish on the day it celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation. He attended all the liturgies of the day and then gave an informal talk on contemplative prayer that evening at a pot-luck supper, completely captivating his audience. The week before, the first class of Boston College students had come to St John Neumann for a Taizé service—they attended their second the next week at St Ignatius Church on campus. The day after that service, Brother Emmanuel came to their class and answered any questions they had.

In the autumn of 2015, two more classes from Boston College came to experience the service. The young people from all three classes were absolutely overwhelmed by the silence, the mesmerizing effect of the chanting, the candlelight and, above all, the freedom to explore silence and prayer as they wished and at their own pace. Like many university classes today, each contained a mixture of students from around the world, with different religious traditions in their history, and many without a religious tradition at all. To make the experience more meaningful for them, prayer petitions were written for the Year of Mercy, taken from Pope Francis' papal bull on mercy, *Misericordiae vultus*, and paired with prayers of mercy from other Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu sources.

The freedom to explore silence and prayer as they wished

The students not only went away enriched, but surprised that Taizé had touched them in the way it had. The two autumn classes did not have Brother Emmanuel to answer their questions when they returned to campus but, technology being what it is, the IT team at Boston College set up a video conference with Brother Emile, one of the other two brothers who had visited with Brother Emmanuel earlier in the year, and he responded to them from the monastery in Taizé. These students posed new questions, having become so accustomed to the interfaith dimensions of the world. They wanted to know how Taizé planned to incorporate non-Christian religions. Brother Emile replied that this was indeed one of the current challenges, since they were now hosting some Muslim immigrants within their community, and other religious traditions were coming. Once more they were going to rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them through this development.

Insights from Parishioners

The parishioners who agreed to the interviews were extremely open; one felt one should remove one's shoes as the ground was indeed holy. Beyond the basic questions, participants were grouped only by gender

and age group; they were about half men and half women, with a range of ages from the twenties to the seventies.

People were first asked what names they used for God in prayer and while the usual ones—Lord, God, Jesus, Father, Holy Spirit and Brother—surfaced, a few unusual salutations were also put forward: Daddy, Papa God, the Great I AM, and even 'Pépère', a French word for 'grandfather'. One man prayed to God as Spouse since he saw himself, as a member of the Church, as the bride of Christ. A few prayed to the Trinity, but for most, this was not a common practice.

The majority of participants said that they did pray directly to the Holy Spirit; some had started only after coming to Taizé, but others did so before. Some had had experience with Cursillo retreats, 'Life in the Spirit' seminars, or the charismatic movement of the 1980s, and credited their heightened awareness of the Spirit to those experiences.[3] Participants reported that they had been profoundly touched by the Holy Spirit, or were newly recognising that touch. Many prayed to the Spirit for guidance or begged the Spirit to pray through them. They felt that the Spirit was telling them something and that they received answers that guided them in making decisions. Some felt the Spirit communicating more profoundly in groups, or speaking through the voices of others, though most talked about individual communications. One man described the Spirit's intensity almost as if it were a different type of consciousness.

In addition to the interviewees, other parishioners began to come forward and relate how they felt healed after attending, especially those who had lost loved ones. People were coming back to the church who had not been in a church in years. Others reported becoming calmer, their anxieties just melting away as soon as they entered the church. Many cited the silence as their favourite part of the service.

For most, God was on the move; God did not sit still. God is an active God. Some equated the experience of the active God with grace; and if it was grace, then it was the Holy Spirit. One felt that God was coming closer, like a sparkling light; others felt that there were times when they needed to move towards God, and God was standing still, waiting, ready to welcome them. Most associated movement with the Spirit rather

[3] 'Cursillo' retreats, from the Spanish for 'short course', originated in Majorca in the 1940s as a form of Roman Catholic spiritual development and leadership training over three days. They have since become popular in the United States and among other Christian denominations. 'Life in the Spirit' seminars are associated with the charismatic renewal within the Catholic Church and seek to help participants realise and experience the gifts of the Spirit over a number of weekly sessions.

than other persons of the Trinity. One felt that sometimes God moved softly and at other times like a hurricane; another felt that God enveloped her or wrapped her, over and over again. Almost all the interviewees felt that when the Spirit moved over them, something powerful was going on.

When asked about silence and sound, and other sense experiences, almost all the participants thought the best part of the service was the silence, closely followed by the music and chanting. The chanting brought them to a deeper place where they could touch God. If biblical words were used they provided a grounding for the experience; most liked shorter chants. Many preferred the violin, flute and keyboard to trumpets or louder percussion instruments, and most preferred the slower chants to uplifting music or praise. One said that music 'opened the heart'; another particularly loved singing psalms. The sense of smell triggered memories, especially incense to indicate prayers rising to God and spring flowers, which brought joyous memories of Easter.

Two of the interviewees were actually college seniors who had been involved with Taizé for all of their four years at Boston College. One had travelled to Taizé itself and intended to go back there; she found that sometimes a simple memory of a chant was now enough to bring her to prayer. The young man said that at first he saw Taizé as monastic, but the prayer form had changed his life over four years, and it was now a practice of prayer that he would always have with him. He has since been trained as a mindfulness instructor, and intends to help others find what he has found. Overall, the parishioners interviewed loved Taizé; one said that she cannot stay away whenever she hears it is being offered. They have particularly valued the opportunity for stillness.

Insights from Students

The students involved in the project also loved the service, and many cited the silence and the chanting as their favourite parts. One said he was touched by the silence in a way that he had never thought possible; a young woman said she encountered an inner peace she had never felt before. Students felt welcomed and part of the community as soon as they walked into the church; some commented on the sense of community while people around them were singing, and a feeling of solidarity with total strangers.

No one had a dominant role during the service—there was no preaching—and students appreciated that as well. It left them the freedom to explore on their own terms what silence, or the possibility of prayer, might be all about. Several students thought back to their families, whom

they had not seen in months after leaving for college, and were overcome with gratitude as they began to reflect on how they had got to the places where they were that evening. Some found the silence helped them to understand their emotions, and to step back and think things through. For others it fostered an interior monologue that left them with a type of clear-headedness, but also with a sense of community. More than one student walked away saying, 'I learnt something about myself this evening'.

Many felt calm, renewed and at ease after the service—often something they did not expect. Several commented on the calming effect of the chants and music, and one spoke of a powerful connection that was new to him—he felt all the negative energy leave him. Some focused on the candlelight, one thinking about how during most of human history the only light we had was from the sun or from candles, and how this candlelight recalled the past in a comforting way. Another wrote: 'I stopped thinking of all the daily stresses of my addictive technology. It motivated me to find out more about my own [Jewish] religious tradition.' The inclusivity of the service was appreciated: all religious and non-religious backgrounds were welcome. Race, age and gender no longer seemed to matter. It was equal opportunity meditation.

One student commented that the music was lovely, and because he could not see the choir, he was able to concentrate more on the sound and the candlelight, which had an almost hypnotic effect on him. A young woman who was raised as an atheist began 'people-watching', and marvelled at how dedicated those who attended must be—probably coming to worship every week of their lives, from childhood to old age. This made her begin to think about what had given her support in her own life, and whether that was simply faith in herself or whether she did indeed have faith in a higher being. A young man wrote that he felt the presence of something so much larger than himself, in a way he did not think he would ever forget. He felt drawn in, accepted, thanked and loved by people he had never met before.

There were several separate periods of silence during the service after readings, and many commented on how that allowed them to pick up on one word or phrase and really give it some thought, by contrast with the way other church services move on immediately from each reading to the next part of the ritual. One student thought of silence as generally 'cold', but not at Taizé: it was in community with others, and when he looked around and saw so many different people all worshipping in silence in a single ceremony, he felt humbled. Another, who had no religious

affiliation, wrote that he was really touched by the experience of everyone, with all their different beliefs, coming together without a single word to place their candles at the end of the service. Yet another affirmed 'I never thought I would be interested in a topic based on silence, but I was completely wrong'. A young man spoke of how the silence helped him to face things that he usually tried to keep out of his head, and showed him new ways to think; another felt that the room was breathing as if it were a single person and he could almost hear its breath, which left him feeling connected to everyone present. Another wrote: 'At no other time in recent memory have I felt so in touch with my inner self'.

Taizé and Contemplative Prayer

In the BBC television series *The Big Silence*, Father Christopher Jamison states, 'Silence is the gateway to the soul, and the soul is the gateway to God'. He argues throughout the series that if we lose silence, we may be in danger of losing connection with our own souls and ultimately with God. Since society has become so inundated with noise, all kinds of people are beginning to reexamine the value of silence. Even schools are adding short periods of silence to the day, and find that test scores go up and discipline problems go down.[4] Businesses increasingly encourage

[4] Cynthia McFadden, Tim Sandler and Elisha Fieldstadt, 'San Francisco Schools Transformed by the Power of Meditation', *NBC News* (1 January 2015), at http://www.nbcnews.com/nightly-news/san-francisco-schools-transformed-power-meditation-n276301.

silent meditation among employees, and texts are emerging about its benefits in the secular world.[5] Groups are forming everywhere to teach meditation and contemplation.[6] Christian meditation, along with yoga, tai chi and Buddhist mindfulness training, is often seen as a place to start.

Contemplation can be defined simply as reflective or profound thought about something, or a way in which one can develop the mind to improve focus and attention, reduce stress, enhance creativity, explore meaning and develop empathy. In the context of Christianity, contemplation is often viewed as a type of meditation; but it can differ from meditation in that meditation often focuses on images or stories, for example from the Bible, whereas contemplation tends to be a self-emptying form of prayer, devoid of images and leading to union with the Divine. 'Infused' contemplation differs from 'acquired' contemplation in that the latter is an effort under some rational control, but the former is grace-laden and more in control of the Divine. But these definitions may be mixed and quite fluid for the average Christian or Taizé participant.

Instructions on how to begin to meditate often include sitting straight in a quiet place and breathing evenly so as to calm the body. Sometimes meditation pillows are used or short kneelers in which it is possible to kneel and still sit back with a straight posture. St John Neumann is a semi-circular church with curved benches, and there are floor cushions provided for those who wish to use them. Once participants are sitting quietly they can concentrate on listening, to words or music—or even to the most minute sounds, such as birds chirping, or a leaf falling, or a room breathing in unison, or to silence.

Taizé is a powerful sense experience. Everyone who attends services will tell you that. You enter the church in darkness apart from the candles, so the sense of sight is immediately stimulated in a unique way. Icons are frequently displayed, allowing the eyes to be captivated by a particular image in the candlelight. At St John Neumann, candles are distributed in small votive glasses and held, imparting a warmth and contact to the hand throughout the whole service. Hearing, however, is the sense that is affected most powerfully during Taizé, from the hypnotic, calming effect of the chanting, and the melodies of voices and instruments that impart a feeling of solidarity in worshipping together, to the silences with no sound at all.

[5] See, for example, *Spirituality in Business: Theory, Practice, and Future Directions*, edited by Jerry Biberman and Len Tischler (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[6] See *The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society*, http://www.contemplativemind.org/ and *The World Community for Christian Meditation*, http://wccm.org/content/john-main, accessed 4 November 2016.

Taizé is rooted in the classical Christian spirituality and theology of the Spirit found in the scriptures, the patristic tradition and the saints, but these services appear to be a new and fresh exploration of an ancient practice: experiencing God as Spirit, and experiencing that Spirit within a community. It can open a window or a gateway from the ordinary sense experiences and perceptions of individuals participating in the services to the 'mystical' or 'spiritual senses' that mystics have been describing for centuries. The idea that the Spirit can transform our ordinary senses and make them more spiritual as a way to access the Divine has long been recognised, especially in the Eastern tradition. Taizé may be a good example of how the Spirit actually does this: the sense experiences of people at Taizé become spiritual sense experiences. Taizé opens a gateway to the immanent world of being: to the Trinity itself. When we reach the other side, we are invited into contemplative prayer.

The Mystics and the Indwelling Spirit

There are multiple definitions of what a mystic is, but the Carmelite Vilma Seelaus gives us a straightforward one: 'mysticism is simply living in a constant consciousness of God'.[7] This constant consciousness

A gateway … at St Beuno's Ignatian Spirituality Centre, in north Wales

[7] Vilma Seelaus, personal communication during several conversations before she went home to God in January 2012. This is also a definition of mysticism in Sufi Islam.

acknowledges that there is an indwelling in the soul—that God is found there (John 14:17; 1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Titus 3:5; 2 Peter 1:4; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:27; 1 John 4:15), and that we may meet God's presence there and enjoy union with God. Mystics are found in every religious tradition; they are the ones who experience union with the Holy One and are often responsible for letting others know what that experience looks like.

The theologian Origen (AD 185/186–*c.*254) was one such mystic. He experienced contemplation as 'both knowing God and being known by God; it is union with God, a union that is never ending …. By contemplation, one becomes divinized ….' The idea of divinisation—becoming divine at God's invitation—is familiar, especially in the Eastern Church and has often been understood through the 'mystical senses'. For Origen,

> Mystical senses represent the richness and variety of the soul's experiences in contemplation of the Spirit, the Incarnate Word and the Father. Christ and the Triune God can be spiritually seen, heard, tasted, touched and smelled, as attested to in Scripture.[8]

Didymus the Blind (AD 313–398), a well-known theologian who in part followed in Origen's footsteps, was also a mystic and wrote his own theology of the Spirit.[9] He lost his sight at the age of four, and all his learning was amassed through the sense of hearing—by listening to others read to him and instruct him; his writings had to be dictated to someone else. For Didymus, sound must have been very important. One can only imagine the profundity of his prayer of union as he was consoled by the Comforter and how he accessed the Divine through the mystical sense of hearing.

Bernard of Clairvaux, a twelfth-century monk, expressed his prayer and mysticism in terms of the Divine 'kiss', or through the sense of touch. In his commentary on the Song of Songs, he wrote that one encounters the Divine in three stages: first by kissing the feet of Christ, then by kissing the hands of Christ, and then through the kiss or very 'breath' of the Spirit.[10] Bernard also turned to the Spirit as Comforter, relating

[8] Harvey D. Egan, *Soundings in the Mystical Tradition* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2010), 16.
[9] See Athanasius the Great and Didymus the Blind, *Works of the Spirit* (Yonkers: St Vladimir's Seminary, 2011).
[10] Elizabeth A. Dreyer, 'An Advent of the Spirit: Medieval Mystics and Saints', *Advents of the Spirit*, edited by Bradford Heinz and Lyle Dabney (Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 2001) 123–162; Harvey D. Egan, *An Anthology of Christian Mysticism* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1991) 353–364.

how the sweet inner voice of the Comforter brings joy and gladness to the ears, and this sweetness is not recognised until one 'tastes' it: 'Taste and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 33:8). Touch, sound and taste are all included in his prayer.

The Contemporary Need for Contemplative Prayer

The British systematic theologian Sarah Coakley argues that what is called for today is a return to serious contemplative prayer: prayer that comes out of stillness and meditation, that is disciplined and purified and has the potential for bearing much good fruit. In her book *God, Sexuality and the Self*, she describes a 'contemporary trinitarian *ontology of desire*—a vision of God's trinitarian nature as both the source and goal of human desires'. Freud, she maintains, must be tipped on his head: for it is not physical sex that is basic and God ephemeral, but the other way around. God is basic and the desire for God is an ontological category belonging primarily to God and only secondarily to humans, since humans are made in God's image.

Through contemplative prayer, the Church Fathers utilised their mystical senses and encountered those Pauline readings that are full of charismatic passion and *eros*, and came away with what Coakley characterizes as an ontological eroticism: an incredibly powerful force drawing each of them to God through the mystical senses. Like Christians today, the Fathers were dealing with Church issues, political issues and gender issues, and they were at the cusp of developing doctrine. Yet through the force of their incredible desire in contemplative prayer, the Spirit helped shape their theologies for them.

The attractiveness of Taizé may arise from its functioning, like the 'mystical senses', as a sense experience that touches the ontological. It is teaching contemplative prayer by tapping into people's senses. They are being drawn through the stillness into an overwhelming desire for God. The Spirit has been called upon directly in Taizé and the Spirit does not disappoint. *Veni Sancte Spiritus!*

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MEISTER ECKHART'S CONSTRUAL OF MYSTICISM

Louis Roy

ECKHART OF HOCHHEIM was born in Thuringia, Germany, in about 1260, joined the Dominicans around 1275 and died, probably in Avignon, in 1328. A master in theology, he taught in Paris and Cologne; he was also prior provincial in Germany and preached to nuns and beguines. He was thus both *lesemeister* ('master of lecturing', hence his academic title *Meister*) and *lebemeister* ('master of life', since he was recognised as a spiritual master). Nowadays, Eckhart has become more and more read in the West and even in Eastern countries such as Japan.[1] Numerous Christians—and Buddhists—rank him among the greatest mystics. It is my hope here to assist readers in exploring his complex set of themes.

Eckhart's theological writings, his biblical commentaries and quite a few of his sermons are in Latin, whereas his spiritual treatises (three of them) and most of his sermons are in German.[2] However, contrary to what several commentators have suggested, his shift from Latin to German did not entail a significant change in his theological thought.

In 1329 the papal bull *In agro dominico* listed seventeen articles from Eckhart's work that 'contain the error or stain of heresy', and eleven articles 'suspect of heresy, though with many explanations and additions they might take on or possess a Catholic meaning'.[3] Before his death,

I thank Jeremiah Bartram for offering me, at my request, remarks which have improved the style of this article.

[1] See Louis Roy, *Mystical Consciousness: Western Perspectives and Dialogue with Japanese Thinkers* (Albany: SUNY, 2003).

[2] Four treatises were included in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*, edited and translated by Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn (New York: Paulist, 1981). Later, however, in *The Harvest of Mysticism in Medieval Germany* (New York: Crossroad, 2005), 166, McGinn stated that the treatise *On Detachment* was 'not by Eckhart'.

[3] See 'Selections from Eckhart's Defense' and 'The Bull *In agro dominico* (March 27, 1329)', in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 71–82.

and hence before this condemnation was issued, Eckhart had theologically defended his orthodoxy, while submitting to the Church's eventual verdict. Consequently his person was never condemned and, over time, his significance has been reassessed. Indeed, in 1985, Pope John Paul II quoted from his work, declaring:

> Did not Eckhart teach his disciples: 'All that God asks you most pressingly is to go out of yourself—and let God be God in you'? One could think that, in separating himself from creatures, the mystic leaves his brothers, humanity, behind. The same Eckhart affirms that, on the contrary, the mystic is marvellously present to them on the only level where he can truly reach them, that is in God.[4]

Detachment

Undoubtedly Eckhart's principal theme is detachment (*abegescheidenheit*), that is, serenity in abandonment (*gelâzenheit*),[5] spiritual poverty, purity, bareness, the desert, emptiness—all terms he employs as symbols of non-reliance on external means. This mystical attitude consists in a letting-be, a letting-go, a complete receptivity to a self-giving God. 'As much as you go out in forsaking all things, by so much, neither less nor more, does God go in, with all that is his, as you entirely forsake everything that is yours.'[6]

Eckhart especially recommends detachment concerning sweet emotions felt in prayer: 'You must know that God's friends are never without consolation, for whatever God wills is for them the greatest consolation of all, whether it be consolation or desolation'.[7] He denounces,

> … all those who are possessively attached to prayer, to fasting, to vigils and to all kinds of exterior exercises and penances. Every attachment to every work deprives one of the freedom to wait upon God in the present and to follow him alone in the light with which he would guide you in what to do and what to leave alone, free and renewed in every present moment, as if this were all that you had ever had or wanted or could do.[8]

[4] John Paul II, audience, September 1985, quoted in *Osservatore Romano* (28 October 1985).
[5] The spelling is High Middle German, as with other key words.
[6] 'Counsels on Discernment', counsel 4, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 250. I have sometimes modified English translations from the German or the Latin, to make the language more inclusive.
[7] 'Counsels on Discernment', counsel 10, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 259.
[8] Sermon 2, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 178. All the sermons to which I shall refer in this article were written in German.

More than an ascetical renunciation—which Eckhart takes for granted on the part of his audience—detachment is the result of a philosophic awareness. In a disputed question debated at the University of Paris, he argues that the intellect, understood as Aristotle and Averroes understood it, must be empty so as to be able to receive representations: 'Aristotle says … that the intellect is not a natural form so that it can know all forms'.[9] Thus, intellect amounts to an epistemological emptiness.

The innermost depths of the soul, underlying its potencies, are reached whenever the intellect's activities are suspended.

> How much more then should we withdraw from all things in order to concentrate all our powers on perceiving and knowing the one infinite, uncreated, eternal truth! To this end, then, assemble all your powers, all your senses, your entire mind and memory; direct them into the ground where your treasure lies buried. But if this is to happen, realise that you must drop all other works—you must come to an *unknowing*, if you would find it.[10]

Eckhart equates the *intellectus* (which he translates as *vernünfticheit* in German) with Augustine's *ratio superior*—the higher reason that is directed towards eternal truths. He multiplies images, in Latin and in German, to designate this spiritual place in which the soul is united with God: 'the being of the soul' (*esse animae*), 'the naked essence of the soul' (*nuda essentia animae*), 'the ground' (*fundus, grunt*), 'the ground without a ground' (*gruntlôs grunt*), 'the intimate room' (*intimum*), 'the summit' (*superius, supremum*), 'the peak' (*apex, vertex*), 'the spark' (*scintilla, vünkelin*), 'the little fortress' (*castellum, bürgelin*), 'the secret alcove of the mind' (*abditum mentis*), 'the something' (*etwaz*) in the soul that is one with God.

While sometimes Eckhart considers the intellect as a power (or faculty) of the soul along with the will, he often declares that the intellect is the same as the soul, although distinct from the soul's powers. According to two different spatial representations, the intellect is alternately said to be 'above' or 'underneath' the soul's powers. God is met beyond the normal functioning of these two faculties, which, in fact, are inactive whenever the soul realises its identity with the Godhead.

[9] Meister Eckhart, *Parisian Questions and Prologues*, question 1, translated by Armand A. Maurer (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1974), 43–50, here 50.
[10] Meister Eckhart, *Sermons and Treatises*, translated by M. O'C. Walshe (Shaftesbury: Element, 1987), volume 1, 19 (translator's italics).

The Re-formation of the Soul

According to Eckhart, the human soul must be 'de-formed' (*entbilded*), then 'in-formed' (*îngebildet*) and finally over-formed' (*überbildet*) by acquiring a uniformity that allows it to be entirely one with God. These three verbs, which play with the word *bilde* (image, form), are found, for instance, in sermon 40: 'In joining himself nakedly to God in loving, a person becomes unformed, informed, and transformed in the divine uniformity in which he is one with God'.[11] Mystics consent to let their self-image be totally remoulded, in order to conform to Christ. As St Paul wrote: 'All of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit' (2 Corinthians 3:18). Eckhart referred to this text three times in his defence at Avignon.[12]

Meister Eckhart, Town Hall, Cologne, 1407–1414 (restored)

Thus, if Eckhart commends emptiness, it is for the sake of plenitude: letting God the Father engender the Son in the divinised soul, for Eckhart is bold enough to assert that the soul itself *is* the Word, from everlasting to everlasting. Eckhart's argument finds support first in a metaphysics: the eternal presence of creatures in God's mind. This view comes from Augustine, who had repositioned the seemingly independent Platonic forms into God's mind. The second support is eschatological: the believers' divinisation is envisioned as a return to the divine unity, as the Greek Fathers, Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas taught. The third support is christological: halfway between the divine and the human, Christ, who possesses both divine and human natures, exercises the role of the Mediator.

[11] Sermon 40, in *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher*, edited by Bernard McGinn with Frank Tobin and Elvira Borgstadt (New York: Paulist, 1986), 302.
[12] See *Die lateinischen Werke* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1936–), volume 5, 281, 314 and 340–341.

> The Wisdom of God deigned to become flesh in order that Incarnation itself, being, so to speak, the middle between the procession of the divine Persons and the production of the creatures, could experience the two natures. As a result, the Incarnation images the eternal emanation and it is the exemplar of the whole inferior nature.[13]

Non-duality

For Eckhart, mysticism consists in abolishing any duality, which, following Plotinus, he rejects as dualism. He frequently praises non-duality, or indistinction, between God and creation. He asserts not only that *Deus est esse* ('God is being'), but even that *esse est Deus* ('being is God'). Is this stance a kind of pantheism? It is not—provided we take into consideration its metaphysical, eschatological and christological frame of reference.

Let us see how he envisions non-duality between God and the soul:

> As truly as the Father in his simple nature gives his Son birth naturally, so truly does he give him birth in the most inward part of the spirit, and that is the inner world. Here God's ground is my ground, and my ground is God's ground …. It is out of this inner ground that you should perform all your works without asking, 'Why?'[14]

This identification of the soul with God explains Eckhart's practice of talking about the soul and about God in the same fashion, that is, using the same terms. Indeed, for him there is identity, more than union, between the two. Thus, in 'The Book of Divine Consolation' he notes, 'Our Lord prayed his Father that we might become one with him and in him (John 17:11), not merely that we should be joined together'. Or again, in the same work: 'Heart to heart, one in the One, so God loves. Everything that is alien to the One and far from it God hates. God invites and draws to the One.'[15] Numerous mystics, including John of the Cross, report that *psychologically* they had the impression of being one with God, while adding that *ontologically* they were actually in union with God, as two distinct beings.[16]

Let us remember that Eckhart's conviction is mainly christological:

[13] Commentary on the Gospel of John, n.185; my translation, from *Die lateinischen Werke*, volume 3, 154.
[14] Sermon 5b, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 183.
[15] 'The Book of Divine Consolation', n. 2, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 222 and 230.
[16] See, for instance 'The Spiritual Canticle', 22.4 and 31.1, in *The Collected Works of St John of the Cross*, translated by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez, rev. edn (Washington, DC: ICS, 1991).

> The first fruit of the incarnation of Christ, Son of God, is that the human person be, by the grace of adoption, what he is himself by nature, according to what is said here: 'He gave them power to become sons of God' (John 1:12).[17]

The Breakthrough to the Godhead

Eckhart must be situated within the Neoplatonic tradition, both pagan (Plotinus) and Christian (Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite), that extols the apophatic (or negative) approach to the One, succeeding the kataphatic (or affirmative) approach. After the kataphatic and the apophatic, a third stage consists in entering into ineffability—into a state without language. This ineffability characterizes the soul as much as the Godhead.

> This simple one [the soul] is without manner and without properties. And therefore, if God were ever to look upon her, that must cost him all his divine names and the properties of his Persons; that he must wholly forsake, if he is ever once to look into her. But as he is simply one, without any manner and properties, he is not Father or Son or Holy Spirit, and yet he is a something that is neither this nor that.[18]

Eckhart audaciously contrasts God (*got, deus*) with the Godhead (*gotheit, deitas*). He invites us to move beyond the affirmative stage—in which words such as 'God', 'the Father', 'the Son', 'the Holy Spirit' represent the ideas of God that a human being can obtain from the perspective of the world's relation to the Creator—and to move beyond the negative stage—in which the words we negate are still present. In the third stage, the Godhead designates God apart from the world before it was created, hence as unrelated to it.

> Before there were any creatures, God was not 'God', but he was what he was. But when creatures came to be and received their created being, then God was not 'God' in himself, but he was 'God' in the creatures …. So therefore let us pray to God that we may be free of 'God', and that we may apprehend and rejoice in that everlasting truth.[19]

[17] Commentary on the Gospel of John, n. 106, in *Die lateinischen Werke*, volume 3, 90–91.
[18] Sermon 2, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 181.
[19] Sermon 52, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 200.

The soul's breakthrough (*durchbruch*) to the Godhead means that she (*anima, die Seele*)[20] goes down into her ground where the Godhead resides. Eckhart underlines the incomprehensibility of the undifferentiated Godhead. It is apprehended as nothing (*nihil, niht*)—that is to say, as non-being—because it is totally different from any being. Therefore, beyond our language about God, he recommends the silence thanks to which we identify with the Godhead. He prefers a non-conceptual unity to the plurality of our ideas about God, although he does not state that the Godhead is more perfect than the Trinity. We must guard against interpreting such considerations as ontological, since they are epistemological, that is, typifying the soul's passage from her own ideas about God to the unknown Godhead.

According to Eckhart, divine immanence is twofold. First, there is God's presence everywhere. 'People should accept God in all things, and should accustom themselves to having God present always in their disposition and their intention and their love …. To them God shines in all things.'[21] He adds:

> In all their activities and under all circumstances they should take care to use their reason, and in everything they should have a reasonable consciousness of themselves and of their inwardness, and find God in all things, in the highest degree that is possible.[22]

Second, besides finding God in all things, Eckhart extols the possibility of finding the universe in God: 'If someone seeks nothing, that person will find God and all things in God, and they will remain with that person'.[23] Although, as a good Augustinian, Eckhart mentions the immanence of God in the human spirit, he prefers emphasizing the human spirit's immanence in God.

Eckhart's Limitations

Eckhart's first limitation is the fact that his exegesis of the Bible is purely allegorical, not taking into consideration the literal sense and the context.

[20] The Latin and German words for 'soul' here are both feminine.
[21] 'Counsels on Discernment', n. 6, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 252 and 253.
[22] 'Counsels on Discernment', n. 7, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 254.
[23] Sermon 62, in Eckhart, *Sermons and Treatises*, volume 2, 75.

Page from a manuscript of Eckhart's German sermons, 1484

Moreover, he is overwhelmingly interested in Christ's divinity and rarely mentions his humanity, apart from very few exceptions.[24] His second limitation is that, if we compare him with other medieval Dominicans, such as Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Henry Suso and Catherine of Siena, his thematic range is restricted. He does not talk about ethics, history, politics or about the dramas that affect individuals and societies; we can find in his works neither allusions to the deleterious effects of social disorders in his own time nor the idea that human beings contribute with the Holy Spirit in perfecting the world. Preaching in

[24] These are always very short passages, for instance, 'The Book of Divine Consolation', n. 2, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 231–232, Latin sermon 12, n. 1, in *Die lateinischen Werke*, volume 4, 11, and Latin sermon 45, nn. 461–464, in *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher*, 231–232.

the fourteenth century, an epoch of immense distress, he sheds no light whatsoever that might alleviate the spiritual disarray of his contemporaries. He writes beautiful things about love of one's neighbour, which he identifies with the love of God, without ever addressing the concrete difficulties to be encountered in the practice of love and of the virtues.

Eckhart concentrates on the non-temporal, the eternal, the soul's entry into the Godhead. He adopts a Neoplatonic stance vis-à-vis multiplicity, which in his eyes amounts to a sort of Fall (as Plotinus and Proclus had taught). He states: 'Any sin is multiple in itself, even when it happens only once, because the multiple is a fall from the one and consequently from the good, which is convertible with the one'.[25] In contrast to Catherine of Siena and other exceptions, in this Eckhart is a man of his time; indeed, withdrawal from active participation in society is a characteristic of most mystical writings of the fourteenth century.

Although he follows Aquinas in his doctrine of grace, Eckhart's third limitation is that his conception of language regarding God—borrowed from Plotinus, Maimonides and Thomas, hence from disparate sources—lacks coherence and balance. He does not seem to have noticed that one cannot accept at the same time Maimonides' equivocity and Aquinas' analogy.[26] For the former thinker, when two senses of a word—for example a good person and the Good—are unrelated, human language always remains equivocal and consequently totally inadequate concerning God; whereas for the latter the two senses remain analogically connected and human beings can enunciate true statements concerning God.

In the fourth place, Eckhart's provocative declarations may raise misunderstandings if we do not grasp the role of his rhetorical strategy, which amounts to bewildering and shocking his listeners so that they realise the extraordinary grandeur of the divine gift. He was aware of effectuating this outcome:

> It must be observed that some of the propositions, questions and expositions that will follow will seem strange, doubtful or false at first sight, but will appear differently if they are studied with subtlety and more carefully.[27]

[25] Commentary on the Gospel of John, n. 114, in *Die lateinischen Werke*, volume 3, 100.
[26] See his commentary on the book of Exodus, nn. 37–53 and nn. 70–84, in *Die lateinischen Werke*, volume 2, 43–57 and 73–88, where he refers to these two authors without discerning contradictions between them.
[27] 'General Prologue to the Tripartite Work', n.7, in *Die lateinischen Werke*, volume 1, 36.

Interestingly, in 1325—when Eckhart was still alive—Barnabé Cagnoli, then Master of the Dominican Order, asked the friars not to preach 'subtleties' to 'the uneducated'. Before this advice was uttered, Eckhart had written:

> Saint John narrates his holy gospel for all believers and also for all unbelievers, so that they might believe, and yet he begins that gospel with the most exalted thoughts any individual could utter here about God; and both what he says and what our Lord says are constantly misunderstood.[28]

We must pay attention to Eckhart's fundamental intention. He confides:

> When I preach, I am accustomed to speak about detachment, and that we should be free of ourselves and of all things; second, that we should be formed again into that simple good which is God; third, that we should reflect on the great nobility with which God has endowed our soul, so that in this way we may come to wonder at God; fourth, about the purity of the divine nature, for the brightness of the divine nature is beyond words. God is a word, a word unspoken.[29]

Suso and Tauler, disciples of Meister Eckhart, while insisting that he is orthodox, bring in helpful nuances. On certain delicate points Ruusbroec is clearer than he. However, was it not easier for them, writing, as they did, in his wake? His genius was intuitive and original; he was the creator of spell-binding phrases. Without belonging to the genre of the Zen Buddhist *koan*, his aphorisms are close to it and they trigger similar personal insights.

Eckhart's Strengths

Today's readers are rightly impressed by Eckhart's central theme of detachment from images, thoughts, desires and imaginative or bodily experiences (visions, auditions, ecstasies)—phenomena in which he was not in the least interested. Essentially, he stressed the divinisation of the believer through grace. He endeavoured to communicate his fascination for God and God's project of divinisation by insisting on giving up

[28] 'The Book of Divine Consolation', n. 3, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 239.
[29] Sermon 53, in *Meister Eckhart: The Essential Sermons*, 203.

everything incidental that society might offer. He thus sent out a message addressed to,

> … the good and perfect people who already have so absorbed and assimilated the essence of all virtues that these virtues emanate from them naturally, without their seeking; and above all there must dwell in them the worthy life and lofty teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ.[30]

His mysticism is neither one of interpersonal love (*Minnemystik*) nor a nuptial mysticism (*Brautmystik*), but a mysticism of essence (*Wesenmystik*), which emphasizes the identity of essence between the human person and God. Consequently, he ignores the mysticism of an amorous love inspired by the *Song of Songs*. Whenever he evokes love, he does so by wishing that the human will might be one with the divine will. This wish is perhaps more disinterested than the prolonged complaint of the enamoured woman in the *Song of Songs*, who seems to be in a great measure the captive of her emotions. By contrast, according to Eckhart, mature love is steadily turned towards God alone, without concern for itself. This kind of love imitates a God who loves with no other motive than love itself. 'All things have a "why", but God does not have a "why". And the person who asks God for anything other than himself reduces God to a "why".'[31] In the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairvaux had already glimpsed this possibility: 'For when God loves, he wants nothing but to be loved; he loves for no other purpose than to be loved, knowing that those who love him are blessed by their very love'.[32]

Wishing that the human will might be one with the divine will

To conclude, I would say that, despite his limitations, Eckhart's strengths ensure that he will remain very helpful to countless people in need of encouragement and spiritual guidance concerning God's presence in their lives, which may seem so obscure and puzzling at times. Although, in contrast to many mystics, he does not explicitly start from his personal experience, I am convinced, after having perused his writings for many years, that he knows by experience what he is talking about. His thinking is an original and incisive retrieval of the Greek Fathers'

[30] Sermon 101, in Eckhart, *Sermons and Treatises*, volume 1, 6.
[31] Sermon 59, in *Meister Eckhart: Teacher and Preacher*, 307.
[32] See sermon 83, n. 4, in Bernard of Clairvaux, *Selected Works*, translated by G. R. Evans (New York: Paulist, 1987), 272–273.

apophatic tradition, handed on to the Middle Ages through Dionysius. Eckhart synthesizes Dionysius' view of mysticism and the German philosophical-theological current marked by the Neoplatonism of Albert the Great. Furthermore, the spiritual attitudes that he proposes are congruent with his vision of Christianity, and this is an advantage for those whose faith is in search of coherence.

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THEOLOGIA

Digging Deeper

George B. Wilson

FIDES QUAERENS INTELLECTUM. The phrase might be recognised even by people who are all but unversed in Latin. It was St Anselm's motto, a succinct way of defining *theologia*. It slides smoothly off the tongue, a benefit that doubtless contributed to its wide circulation across the ages. Anselm seems to have mastered the Madison Avenue practice of 'branding' long before that famous street ever existed.

Faith seeking understanding is the straightforward way the phrase is ordinarily translated. Fair enough: the translation does render faithfully the minimum meaning of the original. But how much of its potential for rich spiritual meaning has been sacrificed in the laudable effort at concision? If we were to mine the deeper vein of ore hidden within the phrase, what gold might we uncover?

In the first place, we might note that the verbatim transposition leaves out the agent who engages in the act of theologizing. According to such a reading, *fides* has no home in a human being; it is rather some sort of free-floating, bloodless abstraction. In reality, theology is both the act and the product of a process that engages a flesh-and-blood human person. Its reality is conditioned by all the other variables that shape the unique spirit of the person challenged by its demands.

Besides obscuring the significance of the person who is pulled back and forth by the questions that inevitably arise in the enterprise, I would suggest that each of the three words in the motto calls for further elaboration. Why? Because the power of each is easily diluted through frequent repetition in the vernacular. We can lose the profound contribution they might bring to our life in the Spirit. What if we were to slow the rush of easy usage and, instead, pause to inhale their rich meaning, one by one?

But before we engage the terms themselves, I need to add a note on my method. In the reflections that follow I will retain the original Latin words rather than their English versions. Why? It is a way of signalling

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that, over the years, the stereotypical English translation of each word may have inadvertently gathered to itself associations that obscure or even distort the power of the original Latin. Over time, errant assumptions attach to traditional concepts, much as barnacles gradually grow and cling to the bottom of a lovely but unattended boat.

Fides

To *fides*, then: this is all too commonly identified with 'belief', which is itself frequently further shrivelled into a purely mental activity. At its worst, the whole business is then transmuted into '*the* faith'—represented, practically, by a body of propositions which have, in common parlance, been 'handed down'. *Fides* comes to mean 'I assent to a body of propositions put before me by a religious institution as a condition for membership'. Dry bones indeed. In that shrivelling process three essential components of *fides* have been lost.

The Pentecost, *by Pier Francesco Mazzucchelli, c.1615*

The first thing that slips away is the appreciation that *fides* comes to the believer in the form of *gift*. The reality is not some object we might happen to find along the roadside. Nor is it something earned by human labour, much less an object we have fashioned. In the Christian view of life within which the reality of *fides* is situated, it arrives as something freely given and received: a light—or even a fire—from without. It comes as a new energy infusing a human, embodied person.

That *fides* involves the human intellect is doubtless true. But surely the human commitment it represents engages more than just our intellect. The second reality

blurred by the pedestrian translation is that *fides* is a form of *life*. The acceptance of the gift calls for a whole reorientation of one's being. The human person becomes newly situated within the swirling energies of the cosmos. The acceptance of the gift results not merely in a consciousness illuminated but a person transformed. 'Everything old has passed away' (2 Corinthians 5:17).

The awesomeness of the gift becomes clearer still with the recognition of the giver: the one whose life is poured out in the giving, Jesus, the Christ. *Fides* is the beginning of an interpersonal relationship, a sharing of human and beyond-human energies with an embodied person who once walked the roads of Galilee and, through his resurrection, has broken the limits of time and space, engaging intimately—now—in the life of each one who accepts his gift of himself.

And that gift brings with it a further relationship that is left unnamed in the traditional definition: the gift links its recipient to the whole body of Jesus' followers, the people of 'the Way'. *Fides* is not the possession of an isolated individual, clasping it in the corner of a secluded nook (or of someone buried in a computer in a wi-fi-enabled library cubicle, for that matter). It is social in its essence because, in responding to Jesus the Gift, the believer is inserted into the web of all life in a new way. The gift of *fides* brings with it the blessings, but also the challenges, of moving beyond ourselves and into a human community. The contours of the gift and our response to it are inescapably conditioned by the needs and offerings of those with whom we walk the Way. Life lived out of *fides* is ecclesial: energy is put to mission with other followers similarly blessed. A me-and-Jesus spirituality represents a distorted response to the gift of *fides*.

Intellectum

What are we to say then of the *intellectum* that might satisfy the urging of *fides*?

The gift that is *fides* may be enriching but it is also unsettling. It shapes us and enables us to walk in a new way in this world. But the light it provides is not sight. The light does not bring the kind of certitude that compels assent and ends the journey. It does not allow us to settle down. Instead, it brings with it a further impulse—but towards what? The easy answer, the goal indicated in the common translation, is 'understanding': 'Faith seeking understanding'.

Once again, the temptation is to reduce the end to a purely mental achievement. At its worst, this desiccating takes the form of parsing concepts—or not even concepts, but mere 'terms'. The sense of wonder and gratitude evoked by the original gift, not to mention its connection with a Giver, evaporates. Gospel becomes dissertation.

If the gift of *fides* was, in its origins, a newly incarnate form of life, the *intellectum* that is its aim must be equally enfleshed. *Intellectum* is cognitive in nature, to be sure—but not solely. As evocative as the term 'understanding' is, it is too limited to convey what the impulse invites us to. We are dealing with a relationship to a person, after all. How are we to describe what the fuller appreciation of a personal relationship with Jesus the Christ brings? 'Insight', perhaps? 'Personal transformation?' 'Intimacy?' Whatever imperfect term we may settle on, the quest initiated by *fides* embraces all the facets of human growth at once: fascination, attraction, energy, intuition, imagination, sensory awareness, vitality, wonder, the fulfilment of human desire, insight—all that we imply when we speak of *the spirit.* Henri Bergson attempts to capture the reality with his *élan vital.* John and Paul put the matter simply: 'love'. If what is called 'theology' does not impel its practitioner into the mystery of love, one of two things is going on. Either the originating impulse was not really *fides*, or else the person who started out on the pilgrimage was seduced along the way by some shiny object and took a detour towards a different goal.

At this point I have a confession to make. In my effort to mine the two nouns in Ambrose's motto—*fides* as the beginning impulse and *intellectum* as its satisfying term—I almost overlooked what is the key to the whole enterprise: the nature of the drive at work all along the way.

Quaerens

The pedestrian translation in this case is 'seeking'. *Fides* seeking *intellectum.* And indeed, 'seeking' involves the effort to eliminate a gap of some sort. The correlative term for seeking—'finding'—can be exciting or even thrilling. But everything depends on the quality of the seeking. Sometimes we may find a thing haphazardly, with no prior search on our part. Such an experience has its own form of excitement, but it is surely another matter entirely when gold is discovered after a passionate search.

If theology originates with God's action in communicating divine life in Jesus, to describe its appropriate response as 'seeking' sounds much

too bland, too generic. The *quaerens* that issues out of the gift of *fides* is not a dispassionate looking-for-something. It is rather the panting, sweaty energy of the deer about to expire if it cannot reach the clear stream that alone can slake its thirst. It is the feverish energy of the woman whose last coin has gone missing. It is the pent-up energy of the diver who holds out for one final second before the pearl miraculously appears. Augustine famously gave us the picture of a heart—'restless' until it is led to peace by the One who stirred it in the first place. And centuries before him Luke caught the essence of *quaerens* in the words of the disciples who experienced the power of his presence on the way to Emmaus: 'Were not our hearts *burning* within us?' (24:32)

The Parable of the Lost Drachma, *by Domenico Fetti, 1618–1622*

These musings have brought us a long way from 'faith seeking understanding'. Perhaps too far? Might Anselm have a reasonable case that I am guilty of fraudulent misrepresentation of his brand? Perhaps. To face such a formidable adversary on such a charge in court would be daunting indeed. My only defence lies in the reminder that Anselm was not only a theologian but, more importantly, a genial saint. He would probably cavil with some of my phrasing. But it is my fond hope that he would appreciate my core concern: *caritas Christi urget nos*.

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FORGIVENESS AND HEALING

Confession and the Spiritual Exercises

Eric Jensen

SOME WEEKS AFTER Íñigo de Loyola set out, at the end of February 1522, on his way to the Holy Land, he arrived at the Benedictine abbey of Montserrat and put himself under the guidance of a French confessor, Jean Charon, one of the monks of the abbey.[1] He spent three days examining his conscience and writing down his sins in preparation for a general confession relating to his entire past life. Íñigo's confessor was probably guiding him with the help of a manual, the *Compendio breve de ejercicios espirituales*,[2] based on a work by Montserrat's former Abbot García Jiménez de Cisneros (cousin of Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros). This guidance is probably what influenced Íñigo to delay his pilgrimage. He would spend almost a whole year at the nearby town of Manresa, making Cisneros' Exercises and being instructed in different methods of prayer by his confessor. This little manual seems to have influenced the pilgrim's prayer profoundly and left its traces in the notes that he was compiling as well as in the title that he gave them.[3]

Confession and the Spiritual Exercises

The first spiritual exercise in the *Compendio* is a general confession of the sins of one's whole life, which is precisely the exercise first assigned

[1] See Cándido de Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola, Founder of the Jesuits: His Life and Work* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985), 49, 53.

[2] Javier Melloni, *The Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000), 8–11. And see Joseph A. Munitiz, 'Introduction: How Did Iñigo Learn to Pray?', in *Ignatian Spirituality: A Selection of Continental Studies in Translation*, edited and translated by Joseph A. Munitiz (Oxford: Way Books, 2015), 1–25, which includes a partial English translation.

[3] See Melloni, *Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola*. In his introduction, the author states that his intention 'is not to establish the literary genesis of the text, but to consider the sources as foundational layers in the Exercises themselves' (ix–x).

to Íñigo.[4] In examining the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, we find such a full confession explained in the context of the General Examen of Conscience (Exx 32). This explanation is placed after the Principle and Foundation (Exx 23) and the Particular Examen (Exx 24), near the beginning of the First Week. However, because, in giving the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius came to see that, in making the First Week, 'sins and their malice are understood more intimately', he recommended that the general confession itself be 'best made immediately after the Exercises of the First Week' (Exx 44), rather than before beginning those exercises.

Thus, though no longer given first place (as in the *Compendio*), sacramental confession has nonetheless an important place early in the Ignatian Exercises, and an elaborate explanation of how to prepare for it is given in the text. Though 'the love of the Eternal Lord' (Exx 65) is what underlies the exercises of the First Week, they do focus largely on sin and disorder in creation and in the life of the one who makes them, and so Ignatius suggests that the general confession be made after one has experienced the conversion of mind and heart that comes from a better understanding of sin, of self and of God's mercy (Exx 61).

To ask about the place of confession in the Spiritual Exercises, however, is to enquire not merely about its *placement*, its location in the text, and about the importance that Ignatius attached to this sacrament; it is to seek also to discover for our own times the *purpose* and importance of sacramental confession in the Exercises. This in turn requires a brief look at how the sacrament has developed since Ignatius' day.

Confession in the Church's History

Ladislas Örsy's valuable little book, *The Evolving Church and the Sacrament of Penance*, gives an understanding of the sacrament in the context of a Church that is developing over time.[5] In its long history, sacramental confession has undergone more profound changes than any of the other sacraments. These changes are partly reflected in how the sacrament has been named.

Originally (and still sometimes) known as the sacrament of penance (by association with the severe public penances imposed in ancient times

[4] Melloni, *Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola in the Western Tradition*, 2–3.

[5] Ladislas Örsy, *The Evolving Church and the Sacrament of Penance* (Denville: Dimension, 1978), 18–51. The author stresses 'the dynamics of change, especially of the development of doctrine and the evolution of the capacity of human persons to know' (41).

The Sacrament of Penance, *detail from the* Seven Sacraments *altarpiece by Rogier van der Weyden, 1440–1445*

for public sins), it came to be called confession (after private confession was introduced for private sins). It is sometimes also called the sacrament of conversion, since it makes present the gospel summons to conversion, and it is called the sacrament of forgiveness, because it grants pardon for our sins; in our own day it has come to be called the sacrament of reconciliation.[6] In classifying it as one of two sacraments of healing (the other being the anointing of the sick), the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church* focuses on the healing of our relationship with the Christian community, wounded by our sins, and on the healing of our relationship with God, who loves us and welcomes us home.

Confession and Healing

Though healing is one of the effects of the sacrament, it is not mentioned in the ritual formula, and the celebration of the sacrament is focused almost exclusively on the forgiveness of sin. Part of the difficulty with confession as a sacrament of healing lies in making, not an examination of moral conscience (as Ignatius understood it), but rather an examination of *consciousness* or awareness, as the Examen is usually understood in our own day.[7]

An image that some have found helpful is that of a tree from which we are removing dead or diseased leaves. Examining the leaves is somewhat like going over our objective acts, and then carrying a list of defective, dangerous or deadly ones to a confessor. But leaves are connected to branches, and branches are connected to the trunk, and the trunk has roots, some of which are partly above ground but mostly deep below the

[6] *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ottawa: Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1994), nn. 305–306.
[7] See Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 40 n. 38.

surface. It is by going down to the roots of our thoughts and actions—to our earliest experiences, to what is half forgotten or just below the level of consciousness—that we are sometimes able to get in touch with the wounds of our childhood years, to have them healed to some degree, and to be freed from some of our compulsions and disorders—that is, from some of our sinfulness. In making the Spiritual Exercises over thirty days (or thirty weeks in daily life, according to Annotation 19), when we are encouraged to reflect on our entire life history (Exx 56), we may sometimes recall or discover with 'an exclamation of wonder' (Exx 60) the hidden workings of grace bringing wounds to consciousness for healing.

In the First Week's third exercise, the triple colloquy (Exx 63) seeks three graces: the first is to 'feel an interior knowledge of my sins and a hatred for them'; the second is to 'feel the disorder of my actions, so that, hating them, I may correct myself and put myself in order'; the third is 'knowledge of the world in order that, hating it, I may put away from me worldly and vain things'. The movement from sinful actions to the disorder in myself is significant. The sinful actions are what need forgiveness; the disorder requires healing.

The wounds that emerge in making the Ignatian Exercises—and also in other kinds of retreat—are often what precede the deliberate sins and divine mercy that are examined in the First Week. Such wounds may have been caused by rejection (even before birth), abandonment, neglect or abuse (physical, psychological, sexual); or they may have resulted from even mild childhood punishments, which can damage trust in love itself, or from the absence of the affirmation that a child needs from both father and mother. When such things become the source of shame or of misplaced guilt, it can be healing to bring them to a spiritual director. The experience of being really listened to, of being heard and understood, can already bring a measure of healing. To be prayed over with a laying on of hands by a director attuned to the workings of the Spirit can bring even deeper healing. To receive all this in the context of confession celebrated as a sacrament of healing can be more powerful still.

An Experience of Hearing Confession

Some years ago I was introduced to a little booklet entitled *The Power in Penance*.[8] It encouraged reflection on one's life in order to discover

[8] Michael Scanlan, *The Power in Penance: Confession and the Holy Spirit* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria, 1972). The author notes, even at the time of writing, a growing trend: 'Priests and laity are frustrated

one's wounds and then bring them to the sacrament for healing. I was making a retreat at the time, and I was led to look at my own wounded relationship with my sister and to seek healing in this area of my life. Shortly after returning home, I was invited to celebrate a late morning Mass daily for a dozen young religious during the final ten days of a month-long retreat and reflection on the rule of their founder. Towards the end of that time, when I was asked if I could come a little earlier on the following day in order to hear the sisters' confessions, I mentioned at Mass that they might prepare for the sacrament by reflecting on the wounds of their childhood, and I spoke briefly of the need for healing in my own relationship with my sister.

The next morning, Friday, I heard confessions before Mass and after lunch, again on Saturday morning and afternoon, and finally on Sunday morning. I must have spent 45 minutes or more with each of these women. Much of what they brought to the sacrament had little to do with sin. Without violating the seal, I can say that reflecting on the

Image of sorrow carved on a confessional, Church of Our Lady, Bruges

by the seemingly limited effectiveness of the practice of regular confession', and he concludes that 'the expectation of reconciliation would be better fulfilled if both priest and penitent approached confession with a definite anticipation of results and with reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit to change the life of the penitent' (12, 14).

wounds of their childhood freed these young women to talk about things that they had never been able to share with anyone before. To do so in the context of the sacrament, and then to be prayed over both for healing of whatever wounds were still there and for forgiveness of any sinful disorder that might have come from their childhood experience, was something that brought them much relief.

In some cases the healing began during their day or two of reflection on their history in preparation for confession, and was all but completed even before the celebration of the sacrament. What was most conducive to the whole experience of healing was, of course, the month of prayer (in a non-Ignatian retreat) that disposed them to be open to the power of the Spirit at work in their lives and that gave them the 'courage to receive new gifts'.[9] After this experience of hearing confessions, I was left deeply moved and thoroughly persuaded of the power in penance.

The Matter for Confession

This brings us to what is called the matter of the sacrament (as opposed to the form), usually defined as some sin, present or past, which is brought for forgiveness.[10] I would suggest that sin can be seen not simply as a thought, word or deed that is morally disordered, but also as *sinfulness*: a disorder (such as toxic shame)[11] that arises out of wounding experiences. If so, then this kind of disorder can also be included under the rubric of matter for confession. In the Triple Colloquy of the third exercise in the First Week (Exx 63), Ignatius uses the word *disorder* (*el desorden*) as something resulting from sin and almost synonymous with it. Disorder, for Ignatius, is understood in light of the Principle and Foundation (Exx 23), as a matter of the end (God our Lord) and means (all other things on the face of the earth). To choose health or riches or honours as the end for which I live, and to make God into the means of attaining these (through prayer or whatever) is a sinful disorder, a perversion of the order established in creation. However one defines sin, it would seem that,

[9] Karl Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964), 82.

[10] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, III, q. 84. 2, states that sins are the remote matter of penance, the proximate matter being the acts of the penitent in confessing them. See also 'Confession, Frequency of', *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), volume 4, 132–133.

[11] See John Bradshaw, *Healing the Shame that Binds You* (Deerfield Beach: Health Communications, 1988). In his preface, the author says 'shame as a healthy human emotion can be transformed into shame as a state of being. As a state of being, shame takes over one's whole identity …. Once shame is transformed into an identity, it becomes toxic and dehumanizing.' (vii)

while we seek forgiveness for sin, we also need healing for wounds, and in the sacrament we should ask specifically for the healing that we need.

There is, of course, matter that may require the expertise of a counsellor or a psychotherapist, and occasionally a spiritual director may have to refer a person for this kind of help. Someone who has been sexually abused, someone with a serious addiction, or someone suffering from post-traumatic stress will need care that is usually outside the competence of a spiritual director. But well-managed direction may greatly assist in the healing process, because it explicitly brings God into that process and it is ultimately God's love that heals. In the case of sexual abuse, we are not dealing with someone who has sinned but with someone who has been sinned against. Surely this kind of experience, which is often so shaming, is in need of healing and may be brought for confession. Because there are often many layers of wounding, many layers of healing are also needed. Someone who has been sexually abused should of course seek the help of psychotherapy, which also has a spiritual dimension, but there is a power in the sacrament of penance that goes deeper than psychotherapy. Even while they make use of other therapeutic practices, people must feel free to bring their wounds again and again to the sacrament for healing, without being told, 'You have already confessed this'.

It is ultimately God's love that heals

Confession with Young People

Occasionally student leaders, mostly about seventeen years of age, gather at Loyola House where I work for a weekend retreat led by their own chaplains and counsellors, and two or three priests join them at the end to hear their confessions. Because these boys and girls are so young, their wounds are still close to the surface. It is heart-rending to discover how much pain many of them are carrying. They need to talk this out and weep it out, which they do during the weekend, usually seated in a large circle. The confessors then spend twenty or thirty minutes listening to each one before praying over them individually for healing and giving them absolution.

In some Jesuit schools and colleges, students are not only making weekend retreats but are being encouraged to make the Spiritual Exercises in daily life: it should not be assumed that the Exercises are open only to adults. Staff have been trained to give the Exercises in this way (as suggested in Annotation 19). But it is important to remember that readiness is all, and preparation is paramount.

Confession and the Spiritual Exercises Today

From all this it becomes clear that, in giving the Spiritual Exercises, the celebration of sacramental confession should take place at the moment when it is most needed. Shifting the focus of our attention from forgiveness alone to forgiveness *and* healing, that moment should come when wounds have come to the surface, and when both the director and the one being directed feel there is a need for some sort of spiritual healing. This can happen in any kind of retreat—long or short—that provides a safe setting and that encourages reflection on one's life experience. However, since reflection on one's *whole* life is what Ignatius encourages in the Spiritual Exercises, it is especially in the making of the Exercises that a director should expect wounds of childhood to come to consciousness. Though this often happens during the First Week of the Exercises, it can happen later as well. The one who accompanies the person making the Exercises needs to be attentive to what is going on and needs to find some appropriate way to bring healing to bear when it is needed, whether through a prayerful laying on of hands by a non-ordained director, or through referral to a priest for a healing celebration of sacramental confession, or both.

There are gifts and skills involved, of course, and the most important skill is that of deep listening, a skill which must be acquired over time. The most important gift is trust: trust in the power of the Spirit, which is present and at work, both in the one making the Exercises and in the one giving them. Openness, finally, and the courage to receive new gifts are what is needed by retreat-givers—especially priests, but not only priests, since so many lay people are also involved in giving the Exercises.

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'SEE, JUDGE, ACT' AND IGNATIAN SPIRITUALITY

Jim Sheppard

THE 'SEE, JUDGE, ACT' method of discernment is as old as the Bible itself. Whenever anyone noticed a problem and then asked the Lord for help, he or she was following this method, one way or another. We are hardly ever told that there was a process of discernment going on, yet something along these lines must have been happening, no matter how crude and primitive it might have been. I believe it is safe to assume that whenever we encounter the expression 'The Lord said to … [whoever it was]' there must have been discernment—about which we are told nothing—but in this process of discernment the individual concerned came to understand that it really was the Lord speaking, and that the message could be trusted.

The story of Gideon is perhaps one of the more colourful episodes of this sort of discernment (Judges 6:11–24). The Midianites have overrun the territory of Israel, and Gideon is threshing his wheat secretly when an angel accosts him. It takes him a while to realise who the angel really is, but then, slowly and reluctantly, Gideon sees that he is the one who is called to do something about the situation. He then reinforces his original discernment by laying a sheep's fleece on the ground and leaving it out overnight, saying to God 'if there is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will deliver Israel by my hand, as you have said' (Judges 6:37). All this is what today we would call discernment. And, specifically, it is a public response to a public problem.

The 'See, Judge, Act' Method

It was Mgr (later Cardinal) Cardijn who gave the 'see, judge, act' method its current name. This is always, without exception, an objective response to a public situation, such as Gideon's. It is never 'dreamed up' by anyone's private consciousness. There always has to be something objective for

someone to observe. And usually what is observed is problematic, and what we search for is a practical and workable response. We see a problem in the world, discern what to do about it, and go into action.

This was what Cardijn used for his workers' Catholic Action groups (especially Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne), using Catholic social teaching as the fundamental hermeneutic for decision-making. But he was also extremely apodictic. He *told* his people what they should observe, he *told* them how to evaluate the situation, and he *told* them what to do about it. His discernment was from the top downwards. Today we are much more cautious about this sort of authoritarianism.

The method and its name have survived the collapse of Catholic Action, principally through Basic Ecclesial Communities, who still use this method today,[1] as much of the rest of the Church in Latin America does. 'See, judge, act' also underlies several of Pope Francis's encyclicals. So it is still a popular and widely used method of discernment. I intend to compare it to the principles of Ignatian discernment and also to show how the two methods can complement each other.

In Basic Communities the discernment using this method is always communal: the whole community has to be involved. Indeed most situations where this method is used involve a communal process, whether in a bishops' conference, a pastoral team or, in the case of a papal encyclical, the entire Church. Always, however, we must have the facts of the situation before us, and those facts have to be correct.

Joseph Cardijn in 1934

[1] See my book *The Word for Us: Spirituality and Community* (North Charleston: CreateSpace, 2013) for a history of this development.

What we *see* (or choose to observe) is not quite as obvious as we might think. Ideology plays a major role in what we allow ourselves to notice and what we choose to ignore Take the case of climate change: in spite of overwhelming evidence to the effect that we are confronted with a major crisis of epic proportions, there are still 'climate-change deniers' in our midst, most of them heavily invested, one way or another, in the fossil-fuel business.[2] Other current examples could include how concepts such as terrorism or political legitimacy are defined. Self-interest often has a blinding effect on our ability to engage with facts objectively, as do culture and tradition.

The hermeneutic involved, by which we *judge* (discern) what we have observed, again presents us with some interesting questions. Basic Communities take their time over this. Their hermeneutic is based on the Bible, as presented in the Sunday readings. And over a process of many sessions, in which the objective reality of their everyday lives is continually confronted by the ideals of the gospel, they gradually formulate a common response to the world around them. The way a method of interpretation develops in this sort of context is very similar to Newman's theory of 'illative sense' (what he calls the mind's 'power of judging about truth and error in concrete matters'), which also has a heavy emphasis on practical wisdom.[3] But I have said more about this in my book on Basic Communities,[4] so there is no need to repeat it all here. It must be mentioned, however, that for this method to succeed in Basic Communities, there has to be consensus in the group.

It is interesting that in ecclesial documents such as the Latin American bishops' Aparecida document, the hermeneutic used depends very much on what has been observed. After a survey of Latin American social problems, the rights and wrongs of the situation are pretty well obvious, and so is the subsequent action. In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis's outline of contemporary environmental difficulties again dictates how his *judgment* of the situation will be developed. His principal interest, in the section where he *sees* what is going on, is in the difficulties that poor people will experience through climate change: that concern influences everything else that follows.

[2] See Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014), chapter 1.
[3] John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (Cambridge: CUP, 2010 [1870]), 346.
[4] Sheppard, *Word for Us*, chapter 14.

The *action* that we need to undertake is conditioned by several factors. One of these is the concerns of the group. In Basic Communities, where a communal response is called for, the action has to be something of which everyone approves, and usually this is something close to home and right around the corner: setting up a food bank or a soup kitchen or something similar. Episcopal documents can call for response in more general terms. But action there has to be, otherwise the whole process is a waste of time. Interestingly, as we react with our environment, we also change it. This leads to a continuing cycle of reflection and response that has profound and far-reaching effects in many Basic Communities.[5]

Feeding the Five Thousand

> The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, 'Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while'. For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things. When it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat'. But he answered them, 'You give them something to eat'. They said to him, 'Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?' And he said to them, 'How many loaves have you? Go and see.' When they had found out, they said, 'Five, and two fish'. Then he ordered them to get all the people to sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before the people; and he divided the two fish among them all. And all ate and were filled; and they took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and of the fish. Those who had eaten the loaves numbered five thousand men. (Mark 6:30–44)

[5] See Sheppard, *Word For Us*, chapter 8, on the 'Prayer Spiral'.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand is a discernment story. The disciples go to Jesus to ask him what to do, and he tells them news they are very unwilling to accept. First of all, they see the problem: a huge crowd with nothing to eat, and no easy solution in sight. So the disciples ask Jesus to make the problem go away: 'Send them away to … buy something for themselves to eat'. Today, we are just the same. We would rather the poor were moved somewhere out of sight rather than be confronted with their suffering. We call our projects 'Neighbourhood Improvement' or 'Urban Renewal', but it always involves the same thing.

Jesus is blunt. 'You give them something to eat'! And the panic begins. The disciples begin by worrying about money: just as we do today, they think money is the solution to everything. But Jesus then asks them to take stock of what they do have. 'How many loaves have you? Go and see.' In other words, he challenges them to look at what resources they do have at their disposal. Then he tells them to organize the crowd into groups of fifty and a hundred. Then the miracle takes place. And we have to ask ourselves how many wonderful apostolates have started up in the history of the Church in exactly the same manner. We begin with fear and panic over the sheer size of the problem, but as we pray (discern) over this we discover a few little loaves and fishes that we do actually have, and so we begin a little organizing. Everything else follows from there.

This passage also reminds me powerfully of the discernment sessions I have lived through with so many Basic Communities. Almost always, we begin with panic and denial. The problem is just too big for us—it is global—or it is altogether beyond our capacity to solve, and so on. But of course the problem does not go away. So we begin with some humble measures, and are amazed at how they grow into something we never imagined we were capable of producing.

Anawim House in Victoria, British Columbia, is a good example of this. The original Basic Community flourished some forty years ago, and was involved right from the beginning with helping street people. Overwhelmed by the problems of alcoholism, drug abuse and mental illness, the people they wanted to help also had to struggle with unemployment and homelessness. It was hard to know where to begin, and their sense of helplessness, the community told me, was a major problem. So they did a survey of those who needed help, and were told that what would be most valuable was some sort of facility for homeless

Breakfast at Anawim House

people to wash their clothes, have a shower and get a cup of coffee when it was wet and cold outside.

This was a very significant step in the community's discernment. Rather than treating the poor as merely the objects of the discernment, they involved them in the process. The homeless people were also discerners along with the Basic Community. In the words of the final document of the Puebla conference, the people need 'legitimate self-determination. This will permit them to organize their lives according to their own genius and history'.[6] So the community rented a small apartment where they could do what was required, and it was so popular they quickly discovered that they needed to expand. Next they did some very successful fund-raising with the local business community, and today Anawim House is a splendid facility catering to large numbers of homeless people, with an important healing programme for alcohol and drug abusers. It is, of course, no longer run by the original Basic Community, but is now an independent organization with its own board of directors. But it

[6] Document of Puebla n. 505, available at http://www.cpalsj.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Puebla-III-CELAM-ESP.pdf, accessed 13 November 2016. And see also the letter from Pope Francis to Cardinal Marc Ouellet, president of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America, 19 March 2016: 'We must do this by discerning with our people and never for our people or without our people. As St Ignatius would say, "in line with the necessities of place, time and person".' (Available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160319_pont-comm-america-latina.html.)

was the original group who *saw* the problem, *judged* or discerned correctly, and *acted* according to the Holy Spirit.

Ignatian Spirituality

True Ignatian discernment is always based on the cycles of consolation and desolation that individuals experience: even if the object of our discernment is a public question, we still need to make time for a shift to interiority in which we listen to the intensely private and intimate inner movements of the heart, to try and find the call of the Holy Spirit.[7] This is at one and the same time the strength and the weakness of Ignatian spirituality: strength, because of the depth and intimacy that becomes possible when we discern the Divine Will, and weakness because of the subtlety involved. Too many people either do not take the time required, or have simply given up on—or never really accepted—the practice of the discernment of spirits.

Teaching the Rules for Discernment in the Spiritual Exercises is always challenging. In my experience, retreatants must first clearly understand the difference between consolation and desolation (and not everyone succeeds here), and must then come to see that this is actually useful, that in fact it really is possible to discern the movements of different spirits in their own life, and that this helps their decision-making. Again, not everyone makes the grade here. There is yet a third step to be made, when they come to trust their own reading of the movements of the different spirits in their own experience, so that they can actually make a decision based on that reading. And, once again, many people never really do trust their own discernment. So is Ignatian discernment only for a few? Certainly, to the extent that only a minority are really interested.

Ignatius himself, of course, was well aware of the problem here, and suggested what many refer to as the 'four column' method of making a decision 'when the soul is not being moved one way and the other by various spirits' (Exx 177):

> I should consider and reason out how many advantages or benefits accrue to myself from having the office or benefice proposed, all of them solely for the praise of God our Lord and the salvation of my

[7] See Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: U. of Toronto P, 1971), 265–266.

> soul; and on the contrary I should similarly consider the disadvantages and dangers in having it. Then, acting in the same manner in the second part, I should consider the advantages and benefits in not having it, and contrarily the disadvantages and dangers in not having it. (Exx 181)

Three other approaches are also proposed: one of imagining how we would counsel another person in the same situation; a second of imagining ourselves on our deathbed, looking back on the decision we are about to make; and the third of considering how we will be judged on the Last Day. Much prayer of different kinds is suggested in the text here, but these methods do not require the discernment of spirits. However it is not impossible (and may sometimes be advantageous) to combine them with the usual cycle of consolation and desolation. It is noteworthy that Ignatius clearly intended the last three methods for individual, rather than communal, discernment.

Suggested Synthesis

To work with both Ignatian discernment and 'see, judge, act' together we must have a public question that needs an active response. Preferably, this should involve the whole community, of whatever kind. So, suppose the question is: should we install solar panels on a house that we have to renovate? The first steps will involve careful research into the availability, price, performance and installation costs of these panels, along with whatever related questions need to be explored (for example the possibility of selling surplus electricity into the local grid, and what the related legislation might be). The information gathered has to be correct: there is no room for subjective opinion at this stage of things.

Then we would bring the community together and share the information acquired. In communal discernment I believe it is helpful to have some sort of 'filter' in place. Not everyone (even today) really believes in communal discernment, and those who reject it do not help the process along. So it is important that everyone concerned has accepted the process and is willing to cooperate. Each person who has received the information would then be asked to pray over it. This is where the whole cycle of consolation and desolation comes into play, and where each individual has to be very sensitive to the movements of the different spirits in his or her soul. This is also the time at which personal attitudes, prejudices and ideologies need to be prayed over to discern, yet again,

which are inspired by the Lord and which by some other influence. We should take whatever time is necessary for this, and not be rushed into a hasty decision.

The final step consists in sharing the content of our prayer with the rest of the discernment group. It is good to repeat this at least a couple of times, so that each member has an opportunity to reflect on what the others have said, and to get an idea of how the cycle of consolation and desolation is working within the discerning group. After this, usually, the group is ready to make a decision.

So the whole process begins with a dispassionate, objective examination of a public reality or question. The relevant data are researched and shared with the discerning group. The group, however, examines the data from another perspective entirely, that of the intimate working of the Holy Spirit in the depths of our souls. Ignatius spells out how all this works so well in the Spiritual Exercises that it would be redundant to do so here, except to remember that he lays such emphasis on our desire and the importance of conforming this to the Divine Will.

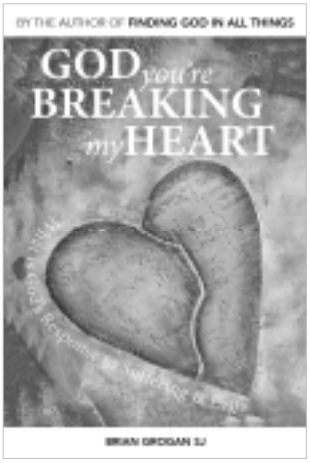
In practice, this is how a great many decisions with public import get made in communities anyway. So do we need formally to combine 'see, judge, act' with Ignatian spirituality? I believe it is always helpful

to spell our procedures out clearly, so we have a better idea of exactly what we are doing. Discernment has to be informed, and all the data have to be available to whoever is doing the discerning. And the 'see, judge, act' spirituality has so much to offer us today. We live in a secular world, where faith and religion are endlessly crowded out of the public sphere and reduced to mere private phenomena. Even in the Church there is a glut of private, individualistic spiritualities that have no social dimension whatever. So it is vital to have an explicit method, such as we have in 'see, judge, act', that confronts our faith with the world out there and gets Christians involved, as Christians, in the issues of the day. How can we be more Ignatian than that?

Jim Sheppard SJ is a member of the Anglo-Canadian Jesuit Province, who has been directing the Spiritual Exercises for many years. He has a particular interest in Basic Ecclesial Communities, on which he has recently published a book, *The Word for Us*.

RECENT BOOKS

Brian Grogan, *God You're Breaking My Heart: What Is God's Response to Suffering and Evil?* (Dublin: Messenger, 2016). 978 1 9102 4815 7, pp. 152, £8.99.



Broadly speaking, objections to Christian faith are fourfold—philosophical, historical, scientific and moral.

Some philosophers maintain that foundational Christian beliefs, such as that God exists, are neither verifiable nor falsifiable and thus are vacuous. Historians have argued that much of the scriptural story is fictional. Scientists frequently object that Christianity requires us to believe far too many things before breakfast that we now know are impossible—miracles great and small, for example. Objections to Christian claims from these three quarters—the philosophical, the historical and the scientific—have one thing in common. They are all refutable. Such objections are certainly formidable but they are not lethal.

The moral objections to Christianity, faced in Fr Brian Grogan's latest book, are of a different order. If, say, we find that the ontological argument for the existence of God is fallacious, the worst we suffer is some slight annoyance that we must think again. But if our child drowns in a river of mud sliding down a mountainside, our heart is broken. If we believe that God is both all-loving and all-powerful, such innocent suffering challenges our faith more deeply than our difficulty in believing, as St Matthew would have us do (Matthew 21: 7; Greek text), that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on two donkeys at once. Staying with the children, as we must when discussing the problem of suffering, the screams of the little child lacerated by a barrel bomb threaten our faith more fundamentally than our doubts about whether Elisha could have caused an axe to float (2 Kings 6: 1–7) or whether polar bears could have made it into the ark.

It is this ultimate problem of suffering and evil that Father Grogan is bold enough to address. He has no answers and we would not have trusted

him had he offered any. Certainly we cry 'Why?', but our real need is not for explanations but for grace to bear and light for the next step. Grace and light we must seek, and grace and light, as Father Grogan argues in his wise and warm-hearted little book, are to be found.

We begin with the image of the jigsaw. Once the edges are done we have a boundary, a framework, within which we can be sure that all the pieces, so meaningless as we look at them one by one, will eventually fit perfectly. We can be sure that when the jigsaw is finished we shall see the whole picture, one in which even the darkest pieces have their place. That big picture will show that, all along, God was always working to bring good out of evil. God brings good out of evil. That is both the premise and the conclusion of Father Grogan's argument. It does not follow that his argument is circular. We recall a greater essay on the mystery of our afflictions and its conclusion that '... the end of all our exploring / will be to arrive where we started'.[1]

There is much in this little book that surely reflects the author's own experience as a pastor, a preacher and a teacher—not least the recognition that, if one dares to talk or write or talk about the mystery of evil, there is a limit to how much anyone can be expected to take in at once. So we are advised to take these reflections 'in small bites'. We are given plenty of stories. These are told, not to make sure we are listening, but because the author knows that narrative is always a more effective vehicle of communication than theory.

Fr Grogan—a master of the arresting remark—reminds us that 'on a dark road even a small torch can help you read the signposts and struggle along in the right direction' (p. 15). It is not to belittle the value of his brief book to think of it as just such a 'small torch'. On the contrary. Big torches offering more illumination in this area—we think above all of Simone Weil—are unwieldy on the hard road many must tread. We are glad enough of candlelight if it saves us from stumbling and sees us home.

Systematic theology does not provide relief, still less a cure, for our suffering. That said, there are two theological questions so crucial to the problem of evil that they cannot be avoided in even a brief discussion of the issue. First, will all be saved? Secondly, does God suffer with us—specifically, does God the Father suffer with us?

In response to the first question, Grogan concludes, 'We can reasonably hope that hell may be empty' (p. 146). One suspects that, off the record, he

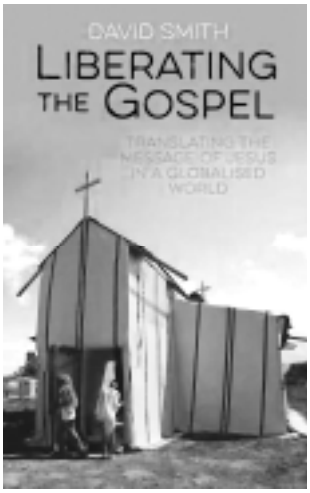
[1] T. S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding', in *The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber, 1969), 197.

would say, 'hell *will* be empty'. As for the second question, Grogan's cautious comments—guarded by a careful 'perhaps'—sent your reviewer back to Helen Waddell's *Peter Abelard*: '"The Patripassian heresy', muttered Abelard mechanically, "But, O God, if it were true."' The current of Grogan's argument is moving irresistibly to Abelard's conclusion: 'There is something at the back of it that is true'.[2]

This book is a kindly hand held out to those who suffer, whether with their own pain or that of others. Many, touched by that hand, will take courage. That being so, it is perhaps churlish to find fault. Nevertheless not every reader will be persuaded by the high view taken here of what Fr Grogan calls 'the radical goodness of the cosmos' (p. 58). Our estimate of the goodness of the cosmos will probably depend on which corner of it we inhabit and on what, at any time, it happens to be throwing at us.

John Pridmore

David Smith, *Liberating the Gospel: Translating the Message of Jesus Christ in a Globalised World* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2016). 978 0 2325 3233 3, pp. 256, £12.99.



Before you have read a word of this book, it already has a great deal going for it: a cover photograph of a church built in the Calais refugee camp, and a passionate foreword by the eminent New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham. The title itself is a challenge, and the book should carry a health warning. For this is very strong stuff, as befits a work that proposes to take the gospel seriously, and to invite us to 'read the New Testament with first-century eyes and twenty-first century questions' (pp. xi–xii).

Smith places emphasis on the need to set the gospel free from the modernist constraints of recent centuries, and to take seriously the three levels of political and religious power in first-century Palestine (Roman-imperial, Herodian and the religious authorities of Palestine). He

[2] Helen Waddell, *Peter Abelard* (New York: Henry Holt, 1933), 165.

also refuses to go along with recent attempts to downplay the poverty of Jesus. Smith is in touch with modern radical scholarship, which makes for challenging reading; many readers will be taken out of their comfort zone by his approach as he sets the story against the 'boiling kettle' that was the Galilee that Jesus knew. He points out, quite correctly, that a wandering popular preacher would look decidedly radical to both hungry crowds and the ruling classes, and that Jesus will have known where it was all going to end: death was what happened to prophets who challenged the apostasy of the religious leaders.

This is the picture sketched in the first two chapters. Then, in chapter three, we are introduced to the explosive figure of Paul, who picked up an openness to those beyond Israel that originated in the lifetime of Jesus himself; what Luke calls 'the way' had already spread into Diaspora Jewry and beyond the boundaries of the empire. Paul was a 'town boy', and the conversion he experienced was not to another religion, but to the person of Jesus Christ—in his own familiar urban setting, with its contrast between splendid Roman architecture and civil engineering, and squalor, overcrowding and violence. Paul is dealing with a multi-storey universe, with gods for absolutely everything; and his message is that Christ has conquered them all. When Paul proclaims the lordship of Jesus, he is being highly subversive, at a time when the emperor was starting to be called 'Lord and Saviour'. The Romans used all their artefacts to proclaim the message that they had brought peace and salvation. Paul, however, brings quite another message, one that arises out of his profoundly Jewish conviction that, first, all power belongs to God and, second, the true destiny of the world is in the Kingdom of God.

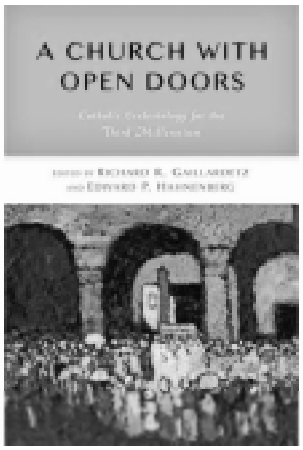
Smith also makes radical use of that most incendiary of documents, the Book of Revelation, in which Rome (thinly encoded as 'Babylon') is the destroyer, whose monstrous power was given its most convincing demonstration in the terrible destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple in AD 70. John of Patmos fears that his seven churches are trying, like many religious people before and since, to serve both God and Mammon. We have to face the possibility that we may all be Laodiceans in the world of white male privilege. The slain Lamb around whom Revelation is gathered is presented as the victim of imperial violence, and our glimpse of the heavenly liturgy does not remove all pain. In this chapter there is an excellent final section on how to hear the gospel today.

A last chapter, 'Liberating the Gospel', brings together three important elements in the book. First, Smith's stress on the first-century context

illuminates many of Jesus' sayings and helps us to understand how it was that he came to die on the cross. Secondly, Paul's urban background is of immense importance for the way in which he articulated his gospel. Thirdly, the Book of Revelation, and the history of its reception, remind us of the importance of the Christian use of the imagination in challenging the foundations of modernity and looking for different ways of thinking about the world, given the mess in which we currently find ourselves. Smith describes this admirably as a world of 'liquid modernity where strong social bonds are eroded' (pp. 167–168). He offers a 'new catholicity' to overcome the splintering that came after the Reformation (he is himself from the Reformed tradition), by way of a 'deep listening' to the message of the Bible. This is a book to be read with great care by a wide range of Christian readers.

Nicholas King SJ

***A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium*, edited by Richard R. Gaillardetz and Edward P. Hahnenberg (Collegeville: Michael Glazier, 2015). 978 0 8146 8304 0, pp. 240, $19.99.**



Ecclesiology, long a neglected member of the theological family, has emerged from the shadows in the decades since the Second Vatican Council. Its earlier neglect resulted primarily from the perception that there were few, if any, questions in ecclesiology that required sustained theological research and debate. In Roman Catholic circles, that perception owed much to the fact that official pronouncements touching on the Church focused almost exclusively on its structures and mechanisms of authority, all of which were regarded as having derived their form directly from Jesus himself, and so as being beyond dispute. While Pope Pius XII's *Mystici corporis Christi* (1943) opened the door to broader ecclesiological reflection, it is to Vatican II's *Lumen gentium* that contemporary scholars of 'the Church' are most indebted.

Viewed against the works on ecclesiology produced in the first half of the twentieth century, what is perhaps most remarkable about ecclesiological studies subsequent to Vatican II is that the meaning of 'the Church' itself

has become a matter of considerable interest. The present book reflects that interest. It arose from a symposium held in Boston in September 2014, to which forty prominent ecclesiologists currently working in the United States were invited.

The goal of the symposium was to analyze those factors that the authors judged to be exercising a significant influence on current formulations of 'the Church'. The symposium, and the book, were dedicated to the Dominican scholar Thomas O'Meara, whose own wide-ranging publications reflect a commitment to engaging the theological tradition with the questions and challenges of contemporary culture. Not surprisingly, therefore, the impact of 'context' on ecclesiology features prominently in this collection.

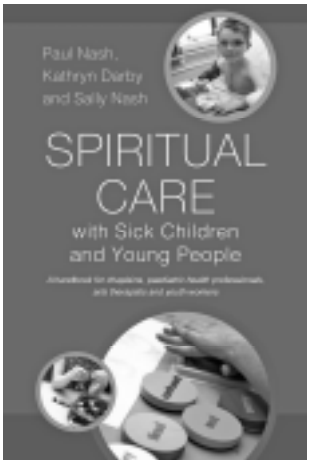
The collection as a whole will benefit all those interested in thinking about the Church and its mission in today's world. Although some chapters will resonate principally with US-based readers, their discussion of 'context' has implications for the manifold venues of the Catholic community. Thus, Natalia Imperatori-Lee's essay on Hispanic Catholics, a topic with powerful reverberations in the US Church, raises critical questions about inclusion and exclusion when we refer to 'the Church'. These questions are certainly relevant for readers outside the United States, even if the specifics of local experience are always particular. Similarly, Stephen Bevans's focus on 'mission' and Paul Lakeland's discussion of the impact of demography have application to every context.

As already noted, this book has a distinctly Roman Catholic emphasis, but this includes a properly ecumenical vision, a vision represented well in the chapters by Susan Wood and Michael Fahey. While grounded in current experience, the book is written with an eye to the Church's future, especially in relation to the practice of authority (Richard Gaillardetz), the shape of ecclesial ministry (Edward Hahnenberg), women's participation in the Church (Mary Ann Hinsdale), and the dynamics of the Church's engagement with culture (Vincent Miller).

The debates in theology and the wider ecclesial community during the last few decades underscore that ecclesiology is unlikely to return to its earlier 'dogmatic slumbers'. For that reason, the Church as a whole needs rich resources as communities grapple with complex questions. This book is such a resource. Indeed, this book could be a model for ecclesiologists in other countries wishing to undertake a similar study of their local Churches.

Richard Lennan

Paul Nash, Kathryn Darby and Sally Nash, *Spiritual Care with Sick Children and Young People: A Handbook for Chaplains, Paediatric Health Professionals, Art Therapists and Youth Workers* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2015). 978 1 8490 5389 1, pp. 224, £14.99.



This excellent handbook, which emerged from the spiritual care practice of the chaplaincy team at Birmingham Children's Hospital, will be welcomed not just by its specified audience, but also by anyone who may be called upon to engage spiritually with sick children. Although designed as spiritual care practices, its ideas can also be applied and developed for use in religious contexts, such as the parish, or at home. The book offers core principles, support and encouragement to anyone who wishes to engage holistically with sick children and young people. It should help the reader to understand more deeply the potential spiritual issues faced by them and leave him or her 'better equipped and [more] confident in engaging in spiritual care in an intentional way' (p. 10).

Through their research the authors learnt that 'spiritual care is much easier to explore than to explain' (p. 12), and this handbook contains a range of very useful, practical resources that will help any practitioner to engage naturally and fruitfully with children and young people. The first two chapters explore the field of spiritual care from a multidisciplinary perspective, especially in a paediatric setting, and present a set of best practice principles for spiritual care.

The authors stress the importance of creating space for spiritual care to take place, where children can give voice to the many existential concerns that can arise in the context of ill health—pain, trauma, fear, grief, separation and loss, including loss of autonomy—or to simpler, yet still important, concerns such as boredom or lack of privacy. Creating space involves building relationships through 'an attitude of openness and acceptance, treating children and young people with respect, being fully present, listening attentively and taking them as you find them' (p. 20). They identify empowerment and autonomy as core values in enabling meaningful participation and emphasize the power of metaphor as a way of helping children to make connections and meaning in spiritual care. In the context of ill health, questions of identity take on a heightened significance and may need to be addressed; with younger children this can be done vicariously, for example, through stories about 'Teddy Going to Hospital'.

Chapter 3 introduces the authors' concept of 'episodes of spiritual care' or 'interpretive spiritual encounters', and describes how they can be led intuitively by the practitioner in response to the emerging needs of the child. It explores some examples of such spiritual encounters, and their related activities are detailed in an appendix. Such spiritually playful encounters require the practitioner to be flexible and open to being led in unplanned directions by the patient, so that process takes precedence over result.

A significant lesson for the authors from their research was that assessment and intervention were integrated activities—they found often that an activity designed for assessment became, in the doing, an intervention, a meaningful episode of spiritual care. The authors use a variety of intentional activities which are appropriate for children and young people across a wide range of developmental levels, conditions, abilities and interests. Each spiritual encounter is dynamic, clear in its intention but not prescriptive in content. Each one is an opportunity for young people to engage with how they are feeling about their condition and situation, a chance for them to give voice to whatever concerns are uppermost at the time of the encounter.

The authors discovered that some activities work best in particular circumstances and they suggest specific activities for a first meeting with a child. They also found that children respond readily to the opportunity to choose an activity, and once it is under way there is no need to explain what the practitioner hopes to achieve from the session. The focus on the activity helps the conversation to flow naturally, enabling young people to make the connections that are important for them at that moment. An interesting finding is the extent to which an encounter can affect both parties—practitioners regularly gained insight and spiritual growth from their engagement with a child or young person.

Chapters four to ten focus on specific issues in spiritual care, and each contains examples of the activities in practice, as used and described by a diverse range of spiritual care practitioners—play facilitators, nurses, chaplains, youth support workers and spiritual care volunteers. Each chapter follows a pattern of explication interspersed with practical examples and each concludes with a simple summary; this format, together with the helpful appendices, makes it a very easy book to dip into and facilitates searching for relevant examples.

Chapter four looks at the question of identity, which can be challenged when serious illness strikes; this can be particularly important for adolescents. Chapter five deals with best practice in creating safe spaces for spiritual care; while chapter six examines the question of meaning-making with children and young people, individually and in groups. Chapter seven explores spiritual care with families, including the potential 'new family' encountered in the

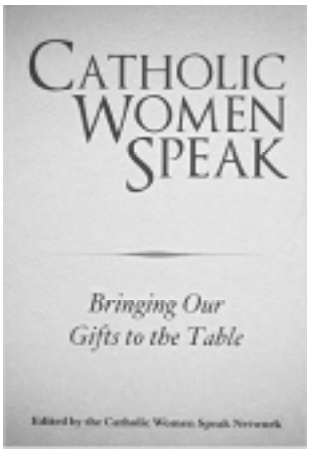
hospital setting; it includes sections on handling loss and bereavement, working with visiting siblings and engaging with special-needs children. Chapter eight describes the use of mindfulness and visualisation practices, before looking at more specifically religious practices, including various forms of prayer, the use of songs and music, engaging with faith stories and celebrating religious feasts and ritual; the use of Godly Play is also mentioned.

Chapter nine explores some of the tensions that inevitably arise in a multidisciplinary setting: whose job is spiritual care, when are referrals appropriate, how do we find the right balance between encouragement and empowerment, and how do we balance the wishes of the child against those of his or her family? It also stresses the importance of self-care for the busy practitioner and the need for practitioners to reflect on their own spiritual journey. The final chapter looks at models of spirituality with a view to helping spiritual care practitioners to conceptualise how they go about their work. There are sections, too, on facilitating spiritual conversations, in particular on paying attention to non-verbal expressions of spirituality and dealing with spiritual distress.

This very accessible handbook offers sound advice and practical support to those who offer intentional spiritual care to children and young people in any setting, but especially with longer-term patients in hospital. It is a valuable and very welcome resource.

Noel Keating

***Catholic Women Speak: Bringing Our Gifts to the Table*, edited by the Catholic Women Speak Network (Mahwah: Paulist, 2015). 978 0 8091 4974 2, pp. 176, $16.95.**



This quite excellent anthology of essays by Catholic women was written in preparation for the 2015 Synod on the Family. By dint of the most extraordinary effort, its editors were able to make it available to the bishops as they sat in Synod. The variety of voices represented from different cultures, contexts, ages and stages of life is truly impressive. Also striking is the clarity and power of each individual piece—all the more remarkable given the brevity of each contribution.

Graphically portrayed in these accounts is the disconnection between the actual reality of

women's lives and the theoretical constructs of marriage and family life that form the basis of episcopal and papal writings. In one extreme example Astrid Lobo Gajiwala states quite starkly that for a substantial proportion of women in India,

> Marriage … is a burden … 'the desire to marry and form a family' is not a choice (*Lineamenta* XIV 1). [Marriage] is a prison sentence, replete with marital rape, domestic violence, isolation, subservience to the point of slavery, and unplanned pregnancies that have fatal consequences for both mother and child. (p. 141)

Equally powerful are the many distressing accounts of the suffering that has resulted from teachings of the Magisterium, and the revulsion that the Church's perceived lack of compassion has engendered in younger generations.

One account is written by a Roman Catholic convert from Anglicanism, married at the age of twenty to an Irishman. She details the heroic and totally unsuccessful efforts on her own and her husband's part to use the rhythm method of contraception. With just over six years between the birth of her first and her fifth child, she decided, after confession, that she and her husband could now only practise total abstinence. This decision precipitated a nervous breakdown from which it took her five years to recover. 'I suffered, and it deeply—and adversely—affected family life.' (p. 100) Olive Barnes records that, after her Irish mother had had five children and two miscarriages, the only way she could prevent further pregnancies was through an absolute absence of physical intimacy. 'I NEVER saw my parents cuddling or being in any way physically warm to each other.' (p. 98)

Ironically, in so many instances, the greatest sadness of these truly heroic women was to see their own children and grandchildren turned away from the faith, repulsed by stony indifference of the priests and bishops to the consequences of their teaching. Alison Kennedy tells the story of Martin. His mother was 'a saint', married with seven children to an adulterous husband who eventually abandoned her after 35 years. Later she began to recover from the emotional damage caused by her marriage through the love of another man. After marrying this good man in a register office, she was further humiliated by being barred from communion. None of her children now consider themselves Catholic. 'Their mother had shown them a God of love, but the Catholic Church had witnessed to them a God of rules and regulations, lacking compassion and mercy in holding her to the unreciprocated wedding-day promise.' (p. 78)

Several different perspectives are offered on same-sex love. Patricia Stoat and Eve Tushnet have both embraced the celibate life. Tushnet believes that 'by leading lives of fruitful, creative love, we can offer proof that sexual

restraint isn't a death sentence' (p.118). Yet she also says that the Church is painfully far from being a home for gay people. She calls for a renewal of the Christian understanding of friendship. Against Tushnet, Katie Grimes uses virtue theory to argue that 'gayness cannot be good as sexual identity but bad as sexual activity' (p.122).

It may be that Ursula Halligan's account is the most telling in relation to the 2015 Synod's unwillingness to engage with questions to do with same-sex love. Now political editor of TV3 in Ireland, Halligan relates the agony of growing up in the 1970s, plagued by the fear that she was a lesbian. She records how homophobia was so deeply embedded in her soul that she 'had become a roaring, self-loathing homophobe' resigned to go to her death with her shameful secret (p.115). I find it impossible not to ask how many priests with a similar upbringing continue to spend their years in fear and isolation, stoking the homophobia that was instilled in them in childhood.

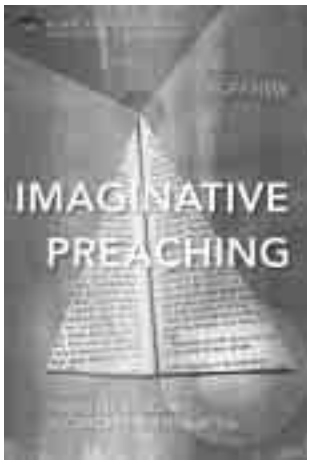
Many contributors lament the fact that not only the experiences of women but also the wisdom of women has been almost entirely lacking from the deliberations of the bishops in the recent reflections on the family. Clare Watkins reflects on the Church as 'teacher and mother'. Maternal reasoning knows that 'lessons' are first of all unconditional love and total care. Watkins wonders why 'we persistently hear the teaching of our Mother Church as the handing down of rules' (p.63). The mysterious love we practise as parents means we cannot turn off our love for our children when they make choices that are not our choices for them. Rather it is precisely when our children 'cross the line' that 'some of the most profound parental learning takes place' (p.65). Tina Beattie revisits the medieval devotion to St Anne, God's grandmother, noting that today in sub-Saharan Africa it is often the grandmother who holds the family together.

Lucetta Scaraffia writes that without the active participation of women in deliberation on matters of concern, 'the Church breathes with only one lung', that is to say, 'badly and with difficulty' (p.164). The suggestion that the Church needs a 'theology of women' is rejected; rather the Church needs a deeper theology of the human that can only be developed when women and their experiences are included in the process of theological reflection.

This anthology represents merely 'a partial snapshot … many voices are still to be heard from within the abundant diversity of the global church' (p.49) Nonetheless it should form essential reading, an absolute minimum requirement for anyone with the awesome responsibility of pronouncing in the name of the Church on matters to do with family life.

Anne Inman

Geoff New, *Imaginative Preaching: Praying the Scriptures so God Can Speak through You* (Carlisle: Langham, 2015). 978 1 7836 8899 9, pp. 178, £8.99.



Imaginative Preaching is a stimulus to thinking about ways of using the Bible in preaching. It presents an important argument, includes the story of a research project and contains helpful resources for preachers wanting to enrich their preaching.

At the outset it argues for the importance of the imagination in the way preachers engage with the biblical text. There is no desire to abandon historical-critical insights, but rather to complement them by a prayerful, imaginative encounter with scripture. Thus the author asserts:

> *Lectio divina* and Ignatian Gospel Contemplation present themselves as veterans providing the means for Christians to interpret the biblical text throughout the ages and hear the voice of God. They honour the primacy of God; they honour the two levels of understanding when studying and reading Scripture; and they advance the godly use of the imagination as a result. (p. 24)

Readers of *The Way* may not need much convincing about the value of these prayerful ways of reading scripture, but it is interesting to note that this plea for the use of *lectio divina* and Ignatian contemplation is being made by a writer with an Evangelical standpoint.

The book tells the story of a four-month research project when the author and seven other preachers, based in New Zealand, agreed to integrate *lectio divina* and Ignatian contemplation into their normal rhythm of exegetical and theological preparation for preaching. The reflections on their experience included in the book demonstrate clearly that all of the preachers found this exercise spiritually enriching, as it helped them engage with the Bible and their congregations at deeper levels than before. One slight disappointment is that there does not appear to have been a parallel exercise seeking feedback from members of their congregations; but that would have required a much larger project.

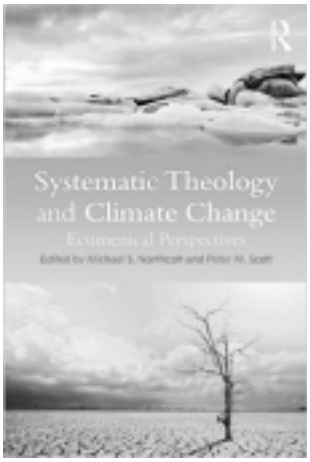
Another way in which *Imaginative Preaching* is a helpful resource for preachers is that it reproduces in an appendix the 'Preacher's Manual' given to all the participants in the research project. Anyone wishing to

experiment with using Ignatian contemplation or *lectio divina* as ways of enriching their preaching would benefit from following the guidelines contained in this manual.

This book's significance resides in its potential to alert a new constituency to the value of some classical spiritual disciplines for the challenging task of preaching. In thinking about the role of the imagination in preaching more broadly it would be useful to read this text alongside Kate Bruce's recent contribution, *Igniting the Heart: Preaching and Imagination* (London: SCM, 2015).

Peter K. Stevenson

***Systematic Theology and Climate Change: Ecumenical Perspectives*, edited by Michael S. Northcott and Peter M. Scott (London and New York: Routledge, 2014). 978 0 4157 4279 5, pp. 190, £24.99.**



This collection of essays is well worth reading, not only by those with an interest specifically in climate change but also by anyone who is interested in Christian teaching about human responsibility for the natural environment and, more generally, by those with a concern for the connections between systematic and moral theology. The authors do assume some prior knowledge of Christian doctrine, but not of detailed theological debate.

The contributors are predominantly Protestant theologians, but there are also Roman Catholic and Orthodox contributions, and all the authors write in a manner that shows awareness of theological traditions other than their own. Broadly speaking, the topics of the essays are those that one might expect to find in a work of broad systematic theology: the Trinity (Timothy Gorringe), christology (Niels Henrik Gregersen), the Holy Spirit (Michael S. Northcott), creation (Celia Deane-Drummond), creatures, as distinct from the act of creation (Rachel Muers), humanity (Peter M. Scott), sin and salvation (Neil Messer), the Church (Tamara Grdzelidze) and eschatology (Stefan Skrimshire).

The volume's general approach is to ask what Christian teaching about God's relationship to humanity and creation signifies for our duties in respect of other creatures. Some of the essays argue that our understanding

of human responsibility for other people should, in certain respects, be extended to include non-human creatures as well. Among other points that arise more than once is one of theodicy: how it is that God can allow the wanton destruction of the world that God has created. The essays also draw attention to the importance of our recognising the fact of death and the transience of things, because, ironically, our pursuit of limitless gain in this present world is precisely what makes us destroy it.

The contribution I enjoyed most was that of the Georgian Orthodox theologian, Tamara Grdzelidze, on the topic of the Church. She quotes the work of Margaret Barker in order to argue that God has made a covenant with humanity by which we are bound to act in ways that bring justice and peace to the whole created order. But humanity has broken this covenant. Quoting Barker, Grdzelidze writes: 'The seven sins—pride, envy, gluttony, lust, anger, greed and sloth—have now been rebranded and become socially acceptable … sin has been redefined'. She then asks what the Church can do in such a situation, and answers that 'churches must reveal their true political nature' (p.143), since, for the Church to be true to its spiritual core—its covenant with God—it must oppose the political and economic practices that perpetuate sin and thus harm both humanity and the world we inhabit.

Drawing specifically on the writings of St Maximus the Confessor, Grdzelidze contends that humanity has a responsibility to draw all creation into union with God. Traditionally, this is argued from the notion that the human person is a microcosm, containing both the bodily and the spiritual realms, and is thus uniquely placed to represent and embody the whole creation. Grdzelidze does not make this connection explicitly, so the underlying rationale for humanity's unitive task may not be immediately obvious to every reader. However, she sees the Eucharist—the central action of the Church—as being the event that is also the centre of the reconciliation of all things in God. The human action of the gathered Church, through which God becomes uniquely present in bread and wine, is the source and image of men and women acting rightly towards one another and towards other creatures. It also shows the end to which all creation is called.

A rather different style of argument is found in Celia Deane-Drummond's contribution to the collection, on the subject of creation. Most of the essay is given over to a clear exposition of Thomas Aquinas's teaching on *creatio ex nihilo*—creation out of nothing—and a comparison of this with the arguments of some modern theologians, most notably Catherine Keller and Jürgen Moltmann. According to Deane-Drummond's presentation of Aquinas

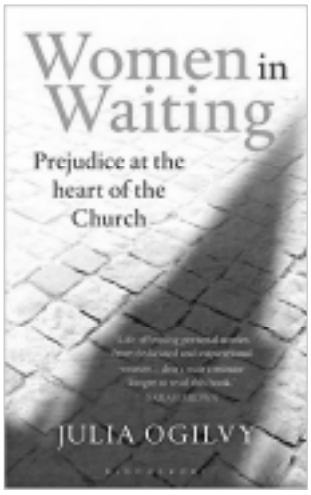
(which I do not think is controversial), he holds that the being of the created world is neither continuous with the being of God nor totally unlike it. Rather, when we say that creation has *being*, we use the term in a sense that is analogous to that in which we speak of the *being* of God, so that the creation has being, as it were, in its own right, although constantly dependent upon God's creating and sustaining it. This means that 'nature'—that is, what goes on in the creation—can follow the laws and the freedoms with which God has endowed it (pp. 74–75).

Against what appears to be Aquinas's position, which shows God's absolute transcendence, Keller and Moltmann, to different degrees, want to argue that God is intimately involved with the world God creates. Deane-Drummond, however, affirms that it is imperative to understand that creatures are made to be constantly drawn through love towards God, and that this is not possible if God is barely distinguishable from that which God is creating. Furthermore, she shows how, in Aquinas's teaching, God creates the world through love and wisdom, and that the Holy Spirit gives life to all things and guides them to their proper end. 'The goal of creation is therefore drawing creation towards its own life; its inner dynamism reflects the dynamism of the life of the Trinity.' (p. 79) The essay goes on to draw on Moltmann's work in order to suggest that the goal of creation is the sabbath rest that is described in Genesis as the Seventh Day, the world's final end. This is a goal that is beyond human beings (created on Day Six), and is the end that we should have in mind in all our dealings with God's creation.

A question that is not properly discussed by any of the contributors to this volume is whether Christian theology itself has not in some measure contributed to humanity's destructive attitude towards other creatures. With hindsight, we might think that it is not a very big step from the doctrine of creation out of nothing (in the sense of 'no thing of any kind at all') to the idea that the world can be cut free of its divine origins altogether. Again, the central position that human beings hold in Christian doctrine has not noticeably encouraged us to have a sense of responsibility towards other creatures so much as a sense of having rights in them. For those of us who are part of the Christian tradition, this volume is very helpful for setting God, humanity and the world in their proper perspectives; but I am left wondering whether the tradition has the resources to sustain these perspectives with the absolute conviction that is demanded by our present circumstances—not least, that of climate change.

Sarah Jane Boss

Julia Ogilvy, *Women in Waiting: Prejudice at the Heart of the Church* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014). 978 1 4729 0177 4, pp. 224, £14.99.



On 26 January 2015 the Right Reverend Libby Lane was made a bishop in York Minster. She had been ordained priest in 1994; her ministry symbolizes a long wait for women in the Church of England.

It had taken far longer than anyone had predicted for women to be consecrated to the order of bishop in the Anglican Church. At the time of the first ordinations of women to the priesthood in the spring of 1994 (Libby was among that first group of women) one bishop predicted the Church would consecrate a woman as bishop within ten years. In the end it took over twenty.

Women in Waiting draws attention to this long wait through the experiences of twelve women. They represent differing traditions, ages, experiences and ministries, lay and ordained, within the Church. Some were ordained deaconess and then deacon without knowing if ordination to priesthood would be possible for women in their lifetime. Others are the inheritors of the changes inspired by the generation before them. Unsurprisingly, even among such a diverse collection of women, common threads run through this volume: trust in God and love of the Church, joy in ministry, and the unceasing hard work at finding a place within a man's world.

The subtitle of the book, *Prejudice at the Heart of the Church*, underlines the shadow side of each story. There is joy in faith and ministry and there is sorrow, pain and anger at prejudice. There are no rants, just very measured voices speaking from hard-won experience. The contributions read with humour and honesty, fulfilment and frustration. There are no rose-tinted spectacles in sight, but plenty of realism, and that is perhaps what makes this a compelling and valuable contribution. You come away from this text with a pretty realistic understanding of the grit, determination and tenacity demanded by faith.

This is well reflected in the biblical women chosen and named by each contributor at the end of their chapter. We find Ruth, Deborah, Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalene and, repeatedly we find Martha, the sister of Mary and Lazarus: she is often criticised, yet she has the courage to challenge Jesus when needed, and she has the faith of an apostle. The Church of

England needs just such courageous faith as it continues to challenge prejudice within and without.

Although the wait is over, at least in some senses, this collection of reflections will continue to be inspiring for a long time to come. For with the ordination of women to the episcopate, the Church of England has rejoiced and it has protested. It has experienced deep bonds of unity and it has experienced the deepening and hardening of lines of division. The stories in this slim volume of faith, hope and charity—and indeed courage—are as necessary now as they were in the years immediately before that momentous day in January 2015. In the words of the Venerable Sheila Watson, taken from her contribution to this book: 'Making things all right on paper doesn't always solve the actuality' (p. 30).

Jennifer Cooper