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MEANING IN LIGHT AND DARKNESS

THE WAY

Book Reviews

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 on teaching spirituality, so articles in this area will be particularly welcome.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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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)
GC	General Congregation, in *Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 31st – 35th General Congregations of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009) and *Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus* (Boston: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2017).
MHSJ	*Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu,* 157 volumes (Madrid and Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1898–)

FOREWORD

IN THE NORTHERN hemisphere, where it is produced, each January edition of *The Way* is compiled at the darkest time of the year. However, by the time it reaches you, the reader, the winter solstice has already passed, and here, at least, the days are beginning, almost imperceptibly, to get longer. Considerations of this kind are not incidental to the Christian faith, which employs such experiences in its presentation of God and the ways in which God works in the world. This issue of the journal considers experiences of light and of darkness, and asks what they can reveal to those who search more deeply into their meanings.

As a survivor of incarceration in Auschwitz, the Austrian neurologist and psychotherapist Viktor Frankl knew the darkness only too well. As Richard Boileau explains here, he found in the search for meaning a powerful antidote to that darkness. Rob Culhane draws on his experience of anxiety, and of the ways in which the drugs that he is prescribed for it influence his prayer and his ministry as an Anglican priest. Gabriel Mary Fiore suggests that persevering with a sense of vocation even when this leads into darkness can have a particular value, while Caroline Worsfold looks at the interplay of light and darkness in discerning a call from God.

The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius provide one forum where this interplay can be understood more deeply. Gem Yecla describes her own experience of one of the key exercises, which stages a stark confrontation between good and evil. The interplay takes time to make itself apparent, and Maurice Giuliani shows how a new relationship with time and how it is measured influenced the Ignatian world-view. Two articles challenge the idea that this process must necessarily be cool and analytical. Gerry O'Collins finds a passionate rhetoric echoing marriage vows at the very beginning of the Exercises, while Ian Coleman links this prolonged experience of prayer to the flamboyance found in sixteenth-century baroque art.

The 'temptation' into which we pray not to be led in many English translations of the Lord's Prayer is another form of darkness. We reprint here two short pieces from the British Jesuits' online journal, *Thinking Faith*, that consider how the process of translation can help to deepen the search for meaning in this most familiar of prayers, but can also impede

that search, to the detriment of the searcher. And finally Margaret Scott finds in the practice of eucharistic adoration a source of light brings us awe and wonder.

Whether you are reading these words in the dark depths of a northern winter, or the warm clear light of a southern summer, these experiences of weather and the natural cycle have the capacity to help you to a fuller appreciation of the God who always welcomes those seeking a deeper meaning in their lives. The writers in this issue of *The Way* are each engaged in a version of that quest themselves, and hope in what they have produced to offer some modest enlightenment to you on your own journey.

Paul Nicholson SJ
Editor

LIVING WITH ANXIETY, MEDICATION AND PRAYER

Rob Culhane

JUST AS I WAS LEAVING his consulting room, my doctor asked me a question. I had visited him to review the effects of an anti-anxiety drug that he had prescribed for me.[1] As I left, he poked his head around the door and asked: 'How do you think the new drug will affect your spirituality?' Ever since Aldous Huxley took mescaline in the 1950s the relationship between drugs and spiritual experience has interested many and has never been entirely resolved.[2] This question from my doctor, like the questions my spiritual director asks me, stuck in my mind and refused to go away. What effect does this medically prescribed drug, which reduces anxiety or depression, have on my life of prayer as a Christian? More particularly, does the influence of the drug enable or assist in genuine religious experience, or is it creating a false one which will disappear once I stop taking it?

My Situation

Despite all that I may know about God being a God who gives us peace (John 14:27), a God on whom we may cast all our cares (Psalm 55:22) and one to whom we can present our requests and not be anxious about our future (Philippians 4:6), I suffer from anxiety. I am a parish priest, and several acute conflicts with parishioners and bullying by them have

[1] The drug is fluoxetine, 20 mg. It is a selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI), which has become popularly known by its trade name, Prozac, although my particular brand is Lovan and may differ slightly in its composition.

[2] Aldous Huxley took mescaline in 1953 and was overwhelmed by the religious experience it produced. His account of this experience and reflections on it were published as *The Doors of Perception* (1954). An essay on the relationship between mysticism and use of mind-altering drugs then followed in his book *Heaven and Hell* (1956). They are often now published together in one volume: *The Doors of Perception and Heaven and Hell* (New York: HarperPerennial, 2009).

taken their toll on me. In the background there is also the influence of an accumulation of various historical events from my late childhood and early adulthood, which have conditioned my reactions in certain situations and contributed to my over-sensitised nervous system.

I know enough from my professional training to recognise some of the symptoms—and I also know, theologically, that we are not a bundle of discrete and independent parts which compose our humanity, but an integration of soul, spirit, mind and body in a person. What influences one part affects the others, as the apostle Paul aptly noted when making the analogy between our human body and the body of Christ, the Church.[3] Our experience of the common cold, or lack of sleep owing to a crying baby at night, confirms this often ignored but real integration and interdependence of the parts of what we might call 'the self' with our bodies.

My anxiety affected my ability to concentrate and also my memory: I began to forget things and where I had left them. My forgetfulness added to a heightened sense of losing control of myself. Bodily, I felt increasingly tense, on edge and emotionally overwhelmed by trying to manage the simple tasks of daily living. Little events would trigger a disproportionate and unhelpful overreaction, sometimes of anger or profound sadness. Various 'voices' or memories and feelings associated with what I should have said, or what others had said to me, would be rehearsed regularly in my mind. In the early hours of the morning, when sleep had fled me, I would lie awake, replaying conversations from last week, or twenty years ago. Something had to be done. After many years of putting up with it, I made enough of the right noises for my doctor to hear and he concurred: it was time to try a drug therapy.

My Practice of Prayer

Before I began taking the drug, I found it virtually impossible to sit in my regular place to pray each morning. My mind would be constantly filled with swirling thoughts which made concentration difficult. My habitual practice of centring prayer had become a struggle, as a string of thoughts crowded in and displaced any ability to sit in God's presence. Although centring prayer is undoubtedly a useful practice, my anxiety would often feed into and animate the repetition of the 'prayer word' or phrase used

[3] 1 Corinthians 12: 12–27, especially 26.

to return and anchor myself back in God's presence, and this resulted in a heightened sense of agitation. Basically, the general peace of God, which underlies daily experience and gives a buoyancy to one's outlook, had gone, and a feeling of brittleness and urgency had replaced it.

Once I began taking the drug, it seemed as if the voices and the sense of urgency or interiorised need to 'push' to get things done had receded and were separated from me by the introduction of a glass wall. This distancing was at first a little disconcerting, as I had become so accustomed to their presence as constant companions that I began to wonder whether I could function without them. Because the sense of urgency and the 'interiorised push' had been effectively disabled by the drug's impact on me, I began to wonder if I had lost my ambition and desire to fulfil the plans I had made for the coming summer and then the next year. I felt at peace, however, even if these plans were not to come to fruition. My focus had shifted from an emphasis on long-term planning—with its attendant creation of struggle to achieve goals and the risk of disappointment—to the here and now.

The positive effect of the drug has been to dull the over-sensitive and wounded conscience that rehearsed worries, conversations and negative comments in the middle of the night. However, the negative effect has been to dull my sense of a yearning for God. This yearning had been ineffable, but rested just below the surface of everyday thinking; it acted like a weathervane, pointing me towards the God who, in my deepest

self, I wanted to be with, to know and to experience. This sense of quest, of searching for God, a holy discontent with current religious practice and experience, has now been dissipated. In its place a warm emptiness fills the void, leaving me only partially content.

My sensitivity to God is only one half of what has been lost. The other half is my awareness of how this secular age smothers conversation about God in everyday life and corrosively eats away at our experience of God. Now I am often simply unaware of the ache in my heart for what is missing. My dissatisfaction with this world and the life of crass Western consumerism is now narcotized. The intellectual apparatus, fine-tuned from academic study, which acted like a Geiger counter frenetically analyzing everything, is now turned down. I feel as if I am flying without the cockpit instruments of intuition, experience and awareness or a compass that is set to true north. I am having to relearn what it is to discern without an automatic reliance on 'gut' response and re-engage with the classical rules and observations concerning spiritual discernment.[4]

The drug has confirmed to me that it is unhelpful to identify intense, fervent prayer with authentic religious experience and to value it more highly than a duller and, to all appearances, prosaic and everyday prayer of struggle, quiet thankfulness and gentle joy. These fruits might be said to characterize the practice of contemplative prayer. The drug's quietening effect now forces me to face the fact that sparks and skyrockets were no foolproof indication of the Holy Spirit's interior work. But there have been additional side effects—not all of which are so helpful. The drug has muted the colour of daily life, with its light and dark shades. The gentle ecstasy of a golden sunset reflected on a street freshly washed by rain is now drained of its intensity and joy. Whereas it might have once moved me to tears, now it is bland. Music seldom affects my soul and I become quickly bored. Comedy is more likely to elicit disdain than laughter.

I have been forced to recognise how the spirit of Romanticism had infected my Christian experience. Romanticism celebrated the view that our personal experience, unencumbered by the weight of tradition or cultural authority, determines aesthetic value and validates truth. This spirit of Romanticism had given its affirmation to my over-anxious

[4] A question which naturally arises in this discussion is whether the drug induces or facilitates the arrival of a phenomenon described by St John of Cross, the 'dark night of the soul'. The short answer is no. My love of reading scripture continues; my prayer might be flatter, but I continue in it. My love for God and neighbour remains intact. There is no sense of dereliction or abandonment, and no loss of 'the senses' we have of God.

emotions, leading me to believe that they represented the truth of reality and the presence or absence of God. But it has been exposed by the drug's quietening effect as a cultural accretion that had to fall away before I could find the light of clarity that I was seeking in the practice of contemplative prayer.

Even after taking the drug for many months, it has not entirely suppressed the cacophony of distracting emotional messages and racing thoughts when I attempt to settle into centring prayer. In this regard, I think my experience is now little different from that of a 'normal' person. It is part of the human condition that when we sit to pray—and by this I mean to open ourselves intentionally in surrender to God's love—we become aware that we are in God, and God is in us (John 14:20), yet we also become aware of the chatter going on in our heads. Martin Laird describes this as being like an '… interior soap opera, the constant chatter of the cocktail party'.[5] The difference between this self-talk before the introduction of the drug and 'chatter' and distractions now is that the former came with unhelpful emotional overtones, whereas the latter are just annoying irritations which come and go, as Laird describes it, like the clouds and mist passing the summit of a mountain. The 'mountain', that deep reality of God's life in us, remains undisturbed by their passing.[6]

Speaking generally, the emotional intensity that drove my prayer life has been quietened, but a number of nagging problems have emerged. To what degree is it God or the drug that is producing my contemplative experience? Am I experiencing the awareness of the presence of God in the deepest recesses of myself, or is it just the influence of the drug? How far can I consider my new experience to be a 'genuine' one? Finally, how can I interpret this new landscape in which I find myself, where I do not feel confident that I can recognise my new 'self' with any degree of certainty?

The subjective nature of prayer sometimes causes us to measure its value, either by standards of our own or by those of the authors we are currently reading.[7] Some people try to locate themselves within the classical descriptions of the threefold stages of mystical transformation.[8]

[5] Martin Laird, *Into the Silent Land: A Guide to the Christian Practice of Contemplation* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), 15.

[6] Laird, *Into the Silent Land*, 89.

[7] Laird notes that judging the quality of one's prayer is one of the three problems associated with distractions (*Into The Silent Land*, 85).

[8] These have been traditionally been identified as illumination, purgation and finally union with God, although there are, as both St John of the Cross and Evelyn Underhill have proposed, variations in the number of 'stages'.

Whatever the standard we apply, we may feel that our prayers are little more than the widow's insignificant copper coins, thrown into the temple treasury (Luke 21:3).

But quiet prayers are noticed by God and are just as authentic as the intense, over-anxious ones which were my experience before the introduction of the drug. Whether they are considered genuine or not, warm or cold, they reveal the condition of our hearts to us as well as to God, even if they are no longer driven by the intensity of our emotions.

Quiet prayers are noticed by God

Even if the words of our prayer are cool, or mumbled in sleepiness, God at least will know through the Spirit what our intentions were.[9] As Michael Casey puts is in his characteristic Benedictine wisdom, there are seasons in prayer: summer, winter, the quiet joy of autumn, the energy of spring. But whether we feel arid or full of God's grace so that prayer flows freely from a full heart, it does not matter. We should not allow ourselves, as he says, to '… be tyrannized by expectations about what we should be experiencing. If it is winter within, I should not punish myself for a lack of warmth.'[10]

The arrival of this drug's influence has meant for me letting go of any number of expectations about 'what should be happening', and learning to become acquainted with a gentler, quieter loving presence. It is like the experience perhaps shared between a couple in their twilight years: the fruit of their mutual sacrifice and determination to grow sweeter and more forgiving in their life together. I have had to reclaim the practice of contemplation as one which is fuelled by desire, not raw emotion—and it is desire for God. The analogy of the lover and the Loved is often employed from the bridal mystical tradition to talk about this desire and love for God. As a description of the interior life, this analogy is a helpful explanation of what is ultimately ineffable and unknowable to those who have not experienced it or who are unwilling to seek it, as it lies beyond the horizon of their awareness. It is a way of knowing God which is not reliant on emotions or moods and is certainly not a cognitive one, but one of a deeper awareness which arises from within the heart and leads to communion.

The emphasis within contemplative prayer is that one moves beyond mere words to recognise that 'Prayer is not just dialogue; it is the first stage

[9] Romans 8:26–27.
[10] Michael Casey, *Towards God* (Mulgrave: John Garratt, 1995), 125.

of surrender'.[11] Or, as I once heard it described in a prayer workshop, it is '… lying in the arms of the divine, in a relaxed state'. Images and concepts in this approach to prayer are unhelpful as a way of knowing God because they maintain God as an object of the mind to be understood in intellectual and aesthetic terms.[12]

My experience of anxiety had, to some extent, reintroduced the subject–object dichotomy through the domination of the 'voices' in my head. Their persistent commentary had introduced a threefold conversation: there was my conversation with God, now muted by the effect of the drug, and another between me and the 'voice' generated by my anxiety. It was this one which now dominated. The result was to shift my focus on to myself as subject and therefore to see God as an object, albeit one who was now remote, even hidden.

But our knowledge of God is not a result of the scientific method, by which the observer as subject seeks to gain control or mastery of the object. It is achieved by way of meditation on whom God is, a sensory perception and a participation in God's love, which dissolve the dichotomy still found in much modern theological discourse. Yes, there is, as Thomas Merton notes, following St John of the Cross, a place for words and concepts but they should be used 'after the fact'.[13]

Beyond the Dichotomy

So where does this leave me? If the practice of contemplation offers an alternative to—and method of dealing with—the noise and intrusive thoughts which are a part of everyday life, particularly when I sit to pray, why did it not prevent me from having to take the drug in the first place? There is a simple answer to this question. First, the intensity of the attacks on me and their extended duration had destroyed my protective walls. Anxiety had laid siege to those walls and battered them until a breach was made, which was then carefully exploited for maximum effect. Basically, once my walls of resistance were breached, the anxiety set about destroying what self-confidence I had inside. Withdrawal to safety became a priority, and the drug has provided some respite while I come to terms with what has occurred. Second, the anxiety used against me

[11] Casey, *Towards God*, 51.
[12] This is often called the 'apophatic' approach to prayer and is particularly advocated in the anonymous *The Cloud of Unknowing*.
[13] Thomas Merton, *Contemplative Prayer* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2005), 109.

the very prayer method that had formerly provided solace and a degree of peace and spiritual strength, by seizing control of it.

In the aftermath of the drug's effect, one way I have looked at things has been to recognise that the object (God) and the subject (me) will remain an unresolved dichotomy if I continue to place a certain amount of emphasis on my moods, reactive emotions and feelings, and the internal conversations and commentary which accompany these feelings. Both the moods and the commentary can be misleading and are likely to give me a false impression about myself, God and life. As Martin Laird and others following the Desert Tradition have highlighted, the commentary running in our minds is not our true self but our construction of a false one in the form of stories we tell ourselves.[14] Yet, these remain a part of me, even if they no longer dominate or intrude into the foreground of my prayer because of the medical effect of the drug.

In spiritual direction, a retreat leader identified this person governed by his past hurts and reactions with their commentary as 'the historical Rob'. I had recognised this person for several years, and I expended considerable amounts of energy managing him each day before the introduction of the drug. I used to joke, but in all seriousness, that the first thing I had to do each morning was supervise and care for the 'historical Rob' before I was ready to engage with life and my ministerial responsibilities. The upside of the drug has been to reduce the amount of energy I devote to this process every day, but self-awareness and the

[14] See Laird, *Into the Silent Land*, 115.

monitoring of the inner life and life with God must remain basic practices for me, and for all those earnestly seeking to be disciples of Christ. The drug must never lead me to loosen my personal responsibility for myself, for keeping God's commandments to love God and my neighbour. Remaining aware of our propensity for certain temptations is always necessary to avoid falling into sin, which risks sabotaging our professional and family life, and making a shipwreck of our Christian faith.[15]

One way in which I have moved forward and away from the irresolvable dichotomy and my own false commentary has been to shift my awareness of God in Godself, and to become relaxed about what my perceptions of God might be.[16] As Michael Casey highlights: 'God is never totally present nor absent from our lives'.[17] We are frequently left in the cultivation of contemplative prayer with a sense of unknowing, in which our hearts hear a call to move beyond the first states of the child–parent relationship with God, and to go deeper into contemplation as the place where our truest home will be found. We are restless, as Augustine knew so well,[18] until we respond to this deeper calling which is issued by God as an invitation. We are drawn towards something which might be described as a 'thirst' or 'need'. We continue on and 'persevere, secretly sustained at a level deeper than feeling, with an inkling God awaits us ahead'.[19]

My certainty rests not on resolving an unresolvable dichotomy (a fascinating subject for theological epistemology), but on God being God—a God who understands me even if I am uncertain about my own knowledge or awareness of myself. As the Psalmist writes: 'O Lord, you have searched me and known me'.[20] Thus, the focus of my attention must shift outside my self-enclosed world, with all its uncertainties, to God's perception of me and knowledge of me.[21]

Two twentieth-century authors who have expressed this struggle between uncertainty about their own motives, the reliability of their

[15] James 1:13–15 and Hebrews 12:14–17 are just a few verses which offer a sharp and sobering warning about the way in which a person can become overtaken by temptation to sin and destruction.
[16] A point discussed in passing by Janet K. Ruffing, *Spiritual Direction: Beyond the Beginnings* (New York and Mahwah: Paulist, 2000), 99.
[17] Casey, *Towards God*, 123.
[18] See Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.1.
[19] Casey, *Towards God*, 126.
[20] Psalm 139:1–4.
[21] 1 John 3:19–20. 'We … will reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything'.

self-awareness and the question of whether they are even on the right path were both theologians, but they did so by way of poetry. Thomas Merton's *Thoughts in Solitude* and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's, 'Who Am I?' both articulate the bewildering experience that we may be uncertain about our motivations, where we are going and who we are, but that does not in itself matter, because God knows.[22] There is not only simple trust in this awareness of God's knowledge, but also the assurance that our desire to please God is itself enough for God because of God's relentless grace: 'the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.'[23]

When I first read the Bonhoeffer poem, I smiled in recognition that this had been my experience too: 'Who am I? They mock me, these lonely questions of mine. / Whoever I am, thou knowest me; O God, I am thine!'[24] I had eventually settled into the position that I had arrived in this place of not knowing God through my senses or moods, and whether this was from the effect of the drug or not did not in the end matter. Whether it came from the sensory and social deprivation of Bonhoeffer's prison experience, or Merton's intellectual perplexity or, in my own case, anxiety and its treatment, was of less importance than the recognition itself: that this was where I had come, and who I was now, and that God was present. But this presence does not take the standard form of an operating knowledge that might satisfy my restless mind, with its insatiable curiosity and need to indulge in endless commentary about my experience and perceptions.

My spiritual director, having patiently listened to my monologue about all the things going on in my life and the drug's effect on it, got to the heart of the issue by asking me the classical Ignatian discernment question: 'What is God's desire for Rob?' This was followed up by 'What is Rob's desire for God?' My answer to the latter would be surrender to a God whom I will not know with the pinpoint certainty that my mind and formal theology demand, but whose life and presence are discerned interiorly.

The continuing and residual sense of restlessness, thirst, interior emptiness, desire and wistful longing are deep and powerful intimations

[22] See Thomas Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), 79, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, translated by Isabel Best (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010), 459–460.
[23] Merton, *Thoughts in Solitude*, 79.
[24] Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, 460.

which we hear in our hearts that we are seeking God. We learn to recognise this call and also its attendant cost: we will find no satisfaction until we encounter God in the daily practice of contemplation and in a lifestyle which provides the opportunity to be aware of God in our own lives and the wider world. Those responding to this contemplative call to prayer, silence and solitude will, as a consequence, guard their opportunities for silence like gold. They will also take the advice of the Desert Fathers and 'guard the heart' from distractions and unhelpful pursuits, emotionally laden conversations and mindless engagement with electronic devices which can over-stimulate our nervous systems and fill our minds with too many distractions.[25]

The dampening effect of the drug on my sensory system, and my resultant questioning of authentic religious experience have led me to consider the diverse ways through which God's love and presence might be mediated to me. The physicality of a place, memory of previous religious experience, the sacraments and reading scripture are just some. But one to which I wish to draw particular attention is the role that the liturgical prayers of the Church play in helping me focus on who God is and God's intimate knowledge of us. Reading them I am often struck by the assurance they provide that, even if I am uncertain of where I am in the journey, whatever I may understand of myself and God, God does understand, and this provides great and sustaining comfort.[26] These set prayers of our worship, too often recited without thought, were carefully constructed and draw our focus away from our own internalised, self-enclosed world, back into the spacious awareness of God's presence and being with us.

The Culture of Anxiety

We live in a culture characterized by anxiety and over-stimulation. Both these features infiltrate the individual and may combine with the personal anxiety that he or she is experiencing from over-demanding work situations, life's struggles and so on. The Church is not immune from these problems, as it often reflects the prevailing culture and imports

[25] See Evagrius Ponticus, *On Thoughts*, n. 38, quoting Proverbs 4: 23.

[26] The Anglican prayer book has the 'Prayer of Preparation' which, as its title suggests, precedes the eucharist by preparing the person's heart to become aware again of God's extrinsic relationship to us, yet sets forth a declaration of God's knowledge of us and our desire to love God: 'Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.' The source of this prayer, adapted by Thomas Cranmer, is the introduction to the *Cloud of Unknowing*. Another prayer of a similar type is the *General Confession*.

its values unconsciously in an attempt to be 'relevant' to a younger generation. It should not surprise us, then, that we have over-functioning, anxious ministers, who produce anxious and task driven congregations of exhausted disciples of Christ.[27]

Given this insidious and unrelenting undermining of our peace, the quietening effect of anxiety medication is not necessarily a bad thing, especially for ministers such as myself. My fear now, however, is not of professional failure or crashing out of ministry, but of settling for mediocrity as someone who is committed to following Christ and living each day intentionally in his presence and expressing this in a recognisable lifestyle. The regular practice of contemplation will often result in living in a place of discontent with everything, with our pathetic attempts at prayer, with feeling like is a fraud. Yet there is also the awareness that no other option is really available for those who have found the pearl of great price than to devote their lives to its pursuit, because this is to devote their lives to God, who is found in Christ. It remains an ambiguous experience, an uncertain place to try to dwell, yet it is a call which is deeper than all the other vocations we might have heard and followed, even after we have heard God's first call to come and follow God's Son. It is the call to come home and find ourselves in God.

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[27] See Stephen Pickard, *Seeking the Church* (London: SCM, 2012), 217 and 223.

MARRIAGE VOWS IN THE PRINCIPLE AND FOUNDATION

Gerald O'Collins

IN HIS LECTURES on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, Antony de Mello spoke lyrically of the Principle and Foundation (Exx 23), but recognised how for some people—he mentions Louis Evely—the 'whole idea' of the Principle and Foundation is 'ridiculous, unchristian, and pagan'.[1] According to Evely, 'we were not created to praise, reverence, and serve God, but to share in God's divine love'.[2] De Mello understood the thrust of the Principle and Foundation itself to be 'falling in love with the Absolute'.[3] Can we strengthen de Mello's argument by going beyond him and recognising how marriage vows are echoed in the language of the Principle and Foundation? Is the Principle and Foundation actually about falling in love and committing oneself in love to the Absolute? Did Ignatius, consciously or unconsciously, echo the language of the marriage vows in the Principle and Foundation?

The outstanding commentary on *Spiritual Exercises*, by Santiago Arzubialde, points out that the text of the Principle and Foundation evolved gradually, and notes echoes in the final version of works by Erasmus of Rotterdam and Peter Lombard.[4] But Arzubialde does not mention the possibility of the marriage vows being recalled by Ignatius. Can we detect such echoes?

Late Medieval Marriage Vows

In their *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy,* Mark Searle and Kenneth Stevenson cite *The Sarum Manual*, the fifteenth-century rite of the church

[1] Antony de Mello, *Seek God Everywhere: Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, edited by Gerald O'Collins, Daniel Kendall, and Jeffrey LaBelle (New York: Doubleday, 2010), 5.
[2] John J. English, *Spiritual Freedom: From an Experience of the Ignatian Exercises to the Art of Spiritual Guidance* (Chicago: Loyola UP, 1995), 24.
[3] De Mello, *Seek God Everywhere*, 9–11.
[4] Santiago Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales de S. Ignacio: historia y análisis*, new edn (Bilbao: Mensajero, 2009), 111–112. While holding that the final text of the Principle and Foundation had been elaborated by 1539, he notes a proposal that the elaboration might have continued even until 1544 (112 n. 5, 113).

of Salisbury, which 'was widely used in England and was influential beyond the British Isles'. Exemplifying 'the way marriage rites looked on the eve of the Reformation', the manual 'reveals how the Anglo-Norman structures for public betrothal and public exchange of marriage consent had now been elaborated into a rich vernacular ceremony of consent'. This liturgical service took place at the door of a church[5] and in the presence of priest and people.[6] The bridegroom took the hand of the bride as he pledged his 'troth': 'I, N., take the, N. to be my weddyd wyfe, to haue and to holde (from this day forward), for better for wurs, for richer for porer, in syckenes and in helthe tyll deth us departe'.[7] The bride then used similar language in pledging her 'troth'. This language envisaged four possible outcomes encompassed by a general outcome, 'for better for worse', which could involve particular outcomes: riches or poverty, sickness or health, and being united in life or separated by death.

Searle and Stevenson also reproduce selections from a fourteenth-century marriage rite coming from the abbey of Barbeau, a Cistercian foundation in the diocese of Sens, central France. The bridegroom declared before the priest and people:

> I take you to be my wife and my spouse and I pledge to you the faith of my body, that I will be faithful to you and loyal with my body and my goods, and that I will keep you *in sickness and in health* and in whatever condition it will please the Lord to place you, and that I will not exchange you *for better or worse until the end*.[8]

The language used in this ritual from the Abbey of Barbeau matches, albeit in a different order, three of the binary pairs found a century later in the *Sarum Manual:* sickness/health, better/worse, life/death. One might also detect a discreet reference to riches/poverty being made in the language of 'my goods'. This earlier language for marriage consent in the Barbeau rite, while less complete than that found in the *Sarum Manual*, anticipates the same binary form of commitment.

In *The Medieval Idea of Marriage*, Christopher Brooke drew on a fundamental study of marriage rituals that are found in twelfth-century 'pontificals or missals deriving from Brittany, Normandy, and England'.

[5] In the *Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer describes the Wife of Bath as having taken five husbands to the door of a church to marry them ('Prologue', 459–461).
[6] Mark Searle and Kenneth W. Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1992), 163.
[7] Searle and Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy*, 166.
[8] Searle and Stevenson, *Documents of the Marriage Liturgy*, 188–189.

Wedding ceremony, from Omne bonum *by James le Palmer, c.1360–1375*

They prescribed that the groom received the bride 'in God's faith and his own, to be kept in health and sickness as long as she lives'.[9] Their married relationship and life could bring health or sickness and the possibility of it ending with her death. The explicit outcomes envisaged by such twelfth-century rituals were only two, simpler than the scheme in *The Sarum Manual.*

Brooke reports the story of marriage promises (between John Beke and a certain Marjory) being exchanged away from church and without the benefit of clergy or any public ceremony. Taking her right hand, Beke said: 'Marjory, here I take you as my wife, for better or worse, to have and to hold until the end of my life, and of this I give you my faith'. Marjory then replied in the same words.[10] The simple language likewise envisaged only two possible outcomes: 'better or worse' and life or 'the end' of life through death. Here 'better or worse' replaced 'health and sickness'.

The late medieval examples cited by Brooke are similar to but shorter than the fourfold possibilities spelt out in the *Sarum Manual.* This manual

[9] Christopher Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 249. The major study used here by Brooke was Jean-Baptiste Molin and Protais Mutembe, *Le Rituel du mariage en France du XIIe au XVIe siècle* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1974).
[10] Brooke, *Medieval Idea of Marriage*, 251–252.

envisaged 'for better for worse', 'for richer for poorer', 'in sickness and in health', 'till death us do part [from a living relationship]'.

Ignatius and the Language of Marriage Vows

In his Principle and Foundation, Ignatius teaches that 'we ought not to seek health rather than sickness, wealth rather than poverty, honour rather than dishonour, a long life rather than a short one' (Exx 23). Three of the four possibilities match the language of the *Sarum Manual*: 'health rather than sickness' is matched by 'in sickness and in health', 'wealth rather than poverty' by 'for richer for poorer', 'a long life rather than a short one' by 'till death us do part'. Only Ignatius' characteristic 'honour rather than dishonour' finds no counterpart in the language prescribed by the manual for the marriage ceremony.

I have not yet been able to locate and consult any studies of the language of marriage vows in the Spanish/Basque environment in which Ignatius grew up. But up to the time when he left Spain for France, he must have attended some weddings of relatives, friends or others, and heard the exchange of marriage vows. One would expect the language of those vows to have resembled somewhat that used in France and England.

His move in 1528 to Paris put Ignatius in the context of the marriage rituals presented by Brooke, Molin and Mutembe, and Searle and Stevenson. He was to study at the University of Paris until 1535, with begging journeys to England and Flanders in search of funds. It seems improbable that during those seven years Ignatius never witnessed any marriage ceremonies, which frequently took place at the door or in the porch of churches. This very public setting meant that even those who were simply passing by could see what was happening and hear what was being said at weddings. The existing pontificals, missals and, above all, the internationally influential *Sarum Manual* match substantially, albeit not completely, the four binary outcomes envisaged by Ignatius.

The parallelism is striking, and suggests that Ignatius' language in the Principle and Foundation originated, consciously or unconsciously, in traditional liturgical forms for expressing marriage consent to which he was exposed—probably during his life in Spain and certainly during seven years of life and study in Paris—before the Principle and Foundation took its final form around 1539 or a little later. In any case, texts can communicate more than their authors consciously knew or meant. Hence I propose reading this part of the text of the Principle and Foundation within the wider context of the language of marriage vows that Ignatius'

world had inherited from late medieval usage, with particular reference to the analysis of Santiago Arzubialde.

The Theme of Love Already Present in the Principle and Foundation

Arzubialde, while aware that the Principle and Foundation does not explicitly use the language of love, names the 'horizon' that Ignatius sketches as 'implicitly that of a relation of the love of friendship between God and man'. He cites what comes later in the second preamble to the Contemplation to Attain Love, when the exercitant prays to 'love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things' (Exx 233). The 'indifference' highlighted in the Principle and Foundation 'is the result of the spiritual experience of God-Love', an indifference 'full of affection'.[11]

Arzubialde continues to expound the Principle and Foundation within the horizon of love. A remarkable footnote declares: 'the experience of feeling oneself loved is the only [experience] that generates liberty' (117 n. 27). 'True liberty' comes through feeling oneself loved by God, who is 'Father and absolute security'. The revelation of divine love allows us 'to experience' the freedom to 'incorporate positively [our] affections' in the service of God and the discovery of his will in all things'. Using language that parallels that of de Mello, Arzubialde speaks of 'the Absolute' being manifested as provident love and security' (118). Correspondingly, 'indifference' means 'loving obedience to the will of the Father' (119).

In support of his case that love and the horizon of love are what shape the Principle and Foundation, Arzubialde repeatedly refers ahead to the Contemplation to Attain Love—for example, to Ignatius' theme of the 'provident love of God' (121) who 'desires to give me even his very self' (Exx 234). In the light of the Contemplation (Exx 231), Arzubialde expounds this love as mutual 'communication'—from God to human beings and from human beings to God (122). He ends his commentary on the Principle and Foundation by presenting it alongside the Contemplation to Attain Love as 'complementary' visions of God's creative and salvific design (124).

Arzubialde knows that the text of the Principle and Foundation does not explicitly mention love—not even mentioning that it will be treated later in the Spiritual Exercises. Yet he rightly introduces the horizon of love to explain the central thrust of the Principle and Foundation, an

[11] Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Spirituales*, 116–117. Subsequent references in the text.

experience of being loved that creates the freedom to be totally God-centred and disposed to serve God in all things. He goes beyond any explicitly stated connections made by Ignatius and reads the Principle and Foundation in the light of what is placed at the end of the Exercises, the Contemplation to Attain Love.

Even though the author does not expressly draw the connection, Arzubialde reads one text written by him within the horizon of another, and uncovers richer, latent meanings. This encourages me to read the section of the Principle and Foundation about health and sickness, wealth and poverty, honour and dishonour, and long life and short life in the light of texts not written by Ignatius but abundantly present in his world (the language of late medieval marriage vows). Doing this could reinforce the already strong case made by Arzubialde for reading the Principle and Foundation in the light of divine and human love, that mutual communication in which the lover and beloved give themselves to each other (Exx 231).

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THE LOGOS OF OUR LIVES

Viktor Frankl, Meaning and Spiritual Direction

Richard Boileau

THE PROLOGUE TO John's Gospel tells us something essential about the source and nature of life: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, *and the Word was God*'. The Greek term in the Gospel that is translated as 'Word' is *logos*, which can also be translated as 'meaning'.[1] Thus our earthly quest for meaning, of which so much is written nowadays, is ultimately a search for the divine source. Similarly, the desire to draw closer to God is essentially a search for meaning or, in Socrates' terms, a search for life's truth, goodness and beauty.[2] To say this is by no means a denial of the existence of God or a reduction of God's sovereignty, but simply an affirmation of the varied paths by which the divine presence can be apprehended.

Some people who present themselves to spiritual directors arrive with a clear intent to develop a more intimate relationship with God, while others seek a solution to a particular crisis, or relief from an existential malaise. Spiritual directors are encouraged to regard the latter as an expression of an unconscious need for spirituality. Among the authors who have contributed to this understanding is Viktor Frankl, who argued that the most important human motivation is the search for ultimate meaning (which he too called *logos*), even if a person is not conscious of this drive.[3] This article explores the links between meaning and spirituality with a view to providing ways of applying Frankl's insights to the practice of spiritual direction in the Christian tradition.[4]

[1] Anthony J. Kelly, 'Logos', in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1989), 601.
[2] For example in Plato's *Republic*.
[3] See Viktor E. Frankl, *The Unconscious God* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), 25–32, and Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York: Beacon, 2006), 90.
[4] See also my 2009 article in *The Way* looking at the potential contributions of psychosynthesis to spiritual direction ('Sub-Personalities and Authenticity', *The Way*, 48/1), and another a year later

Viktor Frankl and Logotherapy

Frankl was a Viennese psychiatrist of Jewish background who survived the Holocaust to found the third Viennese school of psychotherapy, known as logotherapy and existential analysis. This so-called third wave of psychotherapy was a repudiation of Freud and Adler in their emphasis on pleasure and power as drivers of human behaviour. Without denying the 'push' of baser instincts, Frankl pointed to the 'pull' of meaning, and the attendant need for self-detachment and self-transcendence: 'Only to the extent that someone is living out this self-transcendence of human existence is he truly human or does he become his true self'.[5]

Though raised a Jew, Frankl was very familiar with Roman Catholicism, which was a part of his daily life in Vienna. He was a student of Rudolf Allers, a professor at the Vienna Medical School who later immigrated to the United States to teach philosophy at Georgetown Catholic University. Allers was considered a neo-Thomist, and, while living in Vienna, he played host to intellectuals such as Edith Stein and Hans Urs von Balthasar.[6] It is through their relationship with Allers that Frankl and Balthasar came to know one another, quoting each other in their work. In *Homo patiens* (1950), Frankl introduced the concept of love starting from Balthasar's assertion that 'the meaning of being is in love'.[7] Meanwhile, in *Explorations in Theology: Man Is Created* (1986),

Viktor Frankl

('Consolation of Mind and Heart: The Search for Meaning and Happiness', *The Way*, 49/4) relating the search for happiness and meaning to the Exercises of St Ignatius.

[5] Viktor E. Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy*, translated by Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Vintage, 1986), 294.

[6] Alexander Batthyany and Jorge Olaechea Catter, 'Notes on Rudolf Allers and His Thought', in Rudolf Allers, *Work and Play: Collected Papers on the Philosophy of Psychology (1938–1963)* (Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 2009), 11.

[7] Viktor E. Frankl, *Homo patiens* (Vienna: Deuticke, 1950), 30, citing Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Wahrheit der Welt* (Einsiedeln: Benzinger, 1947), 118.

Balthasar suggested that logotherapy is 'indispensable for basically any form of therapy' that is open to a new future, a meaningful engagement with the world and environment that is perceived as meaningful as a whole.[8]

Viktor Frankl proposed that a person comprises three aspects: body, mind and spirit.[9] He made a distinction between mind and spirit because the concept of mind had been reduced to a psyche driven by impulses (pleasure and power), whereas in the dimension of the spirit, he argued, resides the capacity for a person to decide freely for unconditional love to develop. For Frankl, the dynamics of the spirit are different from the dynamics of body and mind. The spirit seeks meaning, *logos*. And in spirit there is a tension between the present and the future, 'a polar field … where one pole is represented by a meaning that is to be fulfilled and the other pole by the man who has to fulfil it'.[10]

Frankl claimed that the dynamic of the human spirit includes the capacity for self-distancing (inner dialogue) and self-transcendence (reaching out to others). Self-actualisation—personal fulfilment—is, therefore, the expression of a reality transcending the self:

> … the true meaning of life is to be discovered in the world rather than within man or his own psyche, as though it were a closed system. I have termed this constitutive characteristic 'the self-transcendence of human existence'. It denotes the fact that being human always points, and is directed, to something, or someone, other than oneself—be it a meaning to fulfill or another human being to encounter …. self-actualization is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence.[11]

Such self-actualisation occurs, he argued, in a dialogue with the conscience, which Frankl called the 'organ of meaning'.[12] Conscience guides a person towards meaning. When someone listens to the voice of conscience, he or she is effectively listening to the voice of God: 'Conscience is not only a fact within psychological immanence but also a referent to transcendence; only with reference to transcendence, only as some sort of transcendent phenomenon, can it really be understood'.[13]

[8] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology*, volume 5, *Man Is Created*, translated by Adrian Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2014), 108.
[9] Viktor E. Frankl, *The Will to Meaning* (New York: Meridian, 1988), 22.
[10] See Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 103–106, here 105.
[11] Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 110–111.
[12] Viktor E. Frankl, *On the Theory and Therapy of Mental Disorders: An Introduction to Logotherapy and Existential Analysis* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2004). 9
[13] Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning* (New York: MJF, 2000), 60.

The quest for meaning was the constant heuristic of Frankl's life. At the age of sixteen he gave a lecture to a group of philosophy students on the meaning of life.[14] Eight years later, he had identified three paths to finding meaning, 'even up to the last breath', namely 'a deed to do, a work to create; an experience, a human encounter, a love; and when confronted with an unchangeable fate (such as an incurable disease), a change of attitude toward that fate'. Throughout, he pointed to a core concept derived from direct observation and personal experience, namely capacity 'to turn suffering into a human triumph'.[15]

But it was by his experience in the Nazi concentration camps at Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and Dachau that his world-view was finally formed. In a lecture he gave following his release, he cited the example of St Maximilian Kolbe, a Franciscan friar murdered at Auschwitz, who 'found meaning within the fraction of a second when he decided to sacrifice his life, asking the SS for permission to let himself be sentenced to death instead of a family father'.[16]

Christian Resonances

Frankl's understanding of the process of finding meaning resonates with Christian teaching and practice in his accounts of the religious meaning of humanity's 'existential vacuum'; self-transcendence; free will and human responsibility; the dehumanisation of the human person in psychotherapy; and facing up to suffering and death.[17]

Self-Transcendence, Free Will and Ultimate Meaning

Though his writing is not explicitly theistic ('logotherapy is not a Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish psychotherapy'),[18] Frankl does concede:

> Human beings are transcending themselves toward meanings which are something other than themselves, which are more than mere expressions of their selves, more than mere projections of these selves. Meanings are discovered but not invented.

In this way God and truth are located both within and beyond our capacity for understanding ultimate meaning:

[14] Viktor E. Frankl, *Recollections: An Autobiography* (Cambridge Ma: Basic Books, 2000), 56.
[15] Frankl, *Recollections*, 64.
[16] Frankl, Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning, 157 n. 8..
[17] See, for example, Frankl, *Man's Search for Ultimate Meaning*, 134–135, 138; *The Doctor and the Soul*, 20–22; *On the Theory and Therapy of Mental Disorders*, 13; *Man's Search for Meaning*, 112–115.
[18] Frankl, *Will to Meaning*, 143.

> We must remain aware of the fact that as long as absolute truth is not accessible to us (and it never will be), relative truths have to function as mutual correctives. Approaching the one truth from various sides, sometimes even in opposite directions, we cannot attain it, but we may at least encircle it.[19]

The struggle with the meaning of things can be acknowledged, resisted or sublimated, but it is always present. I would argue that it is a response—more or less conscious—to God's call to wholeness and authenticity. Our response can be distorted or direct, timid or bold.

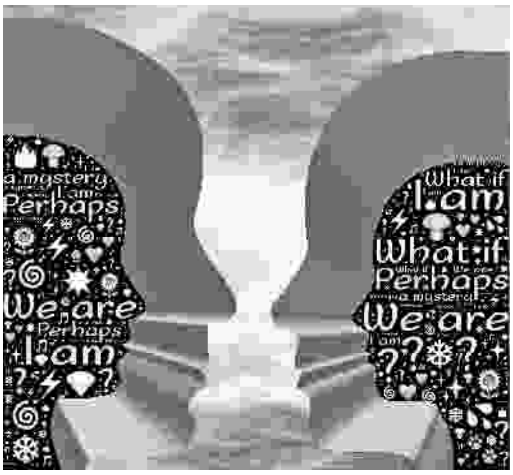
Frankl's understanding of ultimate meaning thus embraces one of the central themes of Christianity, namely free will. He wrote, 'Human beings are not one thing among others: things are determining each other, but man is self-determining'; 'Man is free to rise above the plane of the somatic and psychic determinants of his existence'.[20] Hence 'Social environment, hereditary endowments, and instinctual drives can limit the scope of man's freedom, but in themselves they can never totally blur the human capacity to take a stand towards all those conditions'.[21] In taking such a stand, human beings are open to transformation—to being 'transformed by the renewing of your minds' (Romans 12:2). Transformation occurs in the authentic pursuit of meaning, sometimes found in flashes of epiphany, but most often as a result of painstaking reflection in which persistent self-interest and lingering fears are set aside.

Fundamentally, the question of meaning is theological. Frankl quotes Einstein, a central figure in modern scientific thought, to affirm that the only satisfying answer to 'the question of the meaning of human life, or for that matter of any creature', is a religious one.[22] Answers that are steeped in convenience or self-interest in response to the large and enigmatic questions of existence—such as suffering, for example—always fall short. Meaning is also theological because it promotes the particular form of transformation that is *conversion*, which requires us to take responsibility for our response to new circumstances. More precisely, conversion aligns us with ultimate meaning and the vector of God's grace.

The question of meaning is theological

One way of looking at our yearning for meaning is to think of it as a desire for integration, a deep disposition to reconstitute our disparate,

[19] Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, xiii.
[20] Viktor E. Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism: Selected Papers on Logotherapy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967), 63, 3.
[21] Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*, 60.
[22] Albert Einstein, quoted in Frankl, *Psychotherapy and Existentialism*, 93 n. 4.



life-tattered parts into a healthy whole. Another word or image for integration is incarnation. Our spirit wishes fully to inhabit our human reality. Our being is fractured when what we are cannot be reconciled with what we were or will be. Spirituality that absorbs all aspects of human existence might, therefore, be called incarnational.

Among the foundational principles of logotherapy are teachings regarding the need for hope to support a meaningful life. Referring to his experience of imprisonment by the Nazis, Frankl wrote,

> When we spoke about attempts to give a man in camp mental courage, we said that he had to be shown something to look forward to in the future. He had to be reminded that life still waited for him, that a human being waited for his return.[23]

Though this attitude perhaps more resembles wishing than theological hope, it serves to avert the hopelessness in which no spiritual connection can be found. True hope is rooted in ultimate meaning and is, therefore, forward-looking and resilient.

The Constructivist Approach

The idea of ultimate meaning does have its detractors. Constructivist philosophers and psychologists assume that individuals are engaged, whether automatically or deliberately, in reducing the discrepancies between their global belief system and the dynamics of a particular situation by *creating* meaning through assimilation or accommodation. By this account:

> … we have no direct access to the world as it 'really is', unfiltered by our perceptions, our embodiment, our social and cultural embeddedness, and our language … even our construction of the divine bears the stamp of human meaning-making; our theories of the natural world continually evolve, as do our constructions of God or spirituality.[24]

[23] Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, 92.
[24] From correspondence with Robert Neimeyer, professor of psychology, University of Memphis.

The implications of this 'meaning-making' rather than 'meaning-seeking' approach to the human psyche, which has proved very valuable in therapy, should not be ignored.[25] I suggest there is merit in considering both in parallel when dealing with a spiritual or existential malaise. As ultimate meaning will never be fully grasped in this world, meaning that is responsibly constructed from an honest appraisal of experience does provide a refuge from the distress of meaninglessness, even though—in the experience of spiritual directors—restlessness eventually returns. While constructed meaning may provide momentary benefits, it soon enough leads to dissatisfaction or desolation, and the struggle for ultimate meaning eventually resumes. So it is important not to conflate the search for meaning as expressed in the principles of logotherapy with theories about meaning-making. While the latter provide some useful insights and pathways, the former is a safer guide in the context of spiritual direction. As Paul Wong explains:

> Contemporary meaning-making models … focus almost exclusively on the cognitive function of making sense of the world in negative situations. In contrast, Frankl's meaning-seeking model focuses more on … how to live with courage, freedom and responsibility. Meaning seeking is primarily about how to live a life of significance and purpose, in addition to making sense of life and feeling happy.

Eudaemonia: The Heartbeat of Meaning

In popular psychology, indeed, so many claims are made about happiness that some regard it as the preferred marker of physical and mental health. However, as Carol Ryff has observed, 'research on well-being, if it is to do justice to the topic, needs to encompass the meaning-making, self-realizing, striving aspects of being human'.[26] Happiness is typically limited to pleasant outlooks and outcomes. But is adversity necessarily antithetical to happiness, or can it contribute to greater satisfaction through higher levels of consciousness, functioning, maturity and personal development?

The advocates of the happiness criterion turn to Aristotle, who 'states that the highest of all goods achievable by human action is happiness (the latter term serving as the translation for the Greek word *eudaimonia*)'.

[25] See Paul Wong, 'Viktor Frankl's Meaning Seeking Model and Postive Psychology', in M*eaning in Positive and Existential Psychology*, edited by Alexander Batthyany amd Pninit Russo-Netzer (New York: Springer, 2014), 149–184, here 173.

[26] Carol D. Ryff, 'Psychological Well-Being Revisited: Advances in the Science and Practice of Eudaimonia', *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 83 (2014), 10–28, here 12.

However, as Ryff argues, in fact Aristotle looked beyond pleasant emotions for the source of true happiness. *Eudaemonia* has more to do with the human good than with hedonistic pleasure, and rests on two important concepts, namely self-knowledge and authenticity. Aristotle emphasized something that we would regard as foundational in Christian living:

> … the highest of all human goods is not happiness, feeling good or satisfying appetites. Instead, it is about activities of the soul that are in accord with virtue, which Aristotle elaborated to mean striving to achieve the best that is within us. *Eudaimonia* thus captured the essence of the two great Greek imperatives: first, to know yourself, and second, to become what you are.[27]

Happiness, therefore, is not something to be pursued directly, but is the by-product of a well-lived life. We may take a well-lived life to mean one that exhibits classic virtues, the greatest of these being love. Aquinas said something similar, that joy proceeds from love and is not a virtue in itself.[28]

Making Sense of Suffering

Frankl's observations and experience of physical and emotional suffering, of coping with a situation or condition that cannot be changed, are foundational for logotherapy. Suffering is inevitable and inescapable, so it must not be regarded as an aberration and merely tolerated. It must be given a home in our understanding of the human experience.

Various spiritual writers have endeavoured to explain its purpose. Two traditions stand out especially: Buddhism, in which *dukkha* is the foundational problem of life, and Christianity, in which the passion of Christ is an integral part of the paschal mystery. On the surface, the distinction between the two may appear stark to some people, Christianity seeming to cling to suffering whereas Buddhism appears to focus on it as a problem to be solved. Both these interpretations are naïve. For Buddhists,

> … if *dukkha* is perceived in the right way, it is said to lead to faith …. From faith, other states successively arise which are part of the path to the end of *dukkha*: gladness, joy, happiness, meditative concentration and deepening states of insight and detachment.[29]

[27] Ryff, 'Psychological Well-Being Revisited', 11.
[28] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2. 1 q. 28.
[29] Peter Harvey, 'Dukkha, Non-Self, and the Teaching on the Four "Noble Truths"', in *A Companion to Buddhist Philosophy*, edited by Stephen Emmanuel (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 31–32.

And for Christians, to cling to suffering would be to deny the mystery of Jesus' resurrection, the joy of the Good News and the power of love.

Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology of Holy Saturday gives us useful insights into the mystery of human suffering and mortality in Christianity. Holy Saturday transforms the meaning of death, the ultimate source of human anguish, loneliness and fear.

> Since this love-death of our Lord, death has taken on a quite different meaning; it can become for us an expression of our purest and most living love, assuming that we take it as a conferred opportunity to give ourselves unreservedly into the hands of God.[30]

In self-dying, we receive the gift of authenticity through self-transcendence:

Similarly, in Frankl's terms, the discovery of meaning enables us to change our attitude to suffering into something more robust and luminous.

> Frankl's theory resonates with Holy Saturday-like existence, emphasizing a sacrificial, transcendent, love-imbued meaning for suffering. We live between the present painful reality and how things ought to be. Balthasar denies Holy Saturday, as a passive enduring of utmost desolation, and for Frankl, inactive passive enduring of unavoidable suffering retains the immanent meaning of all suffering, constituting moral attainment. In logotherapy, a person's searching for meaning points beyond to transcendence, community, and ultimate love. Suffering can become a triumph and salvation through love, which is the highest goal we can aspire to.[31]

One might conclude that suffering is a gateway to meaning rather than a host to meaning. This would suggest that we are meant to find meaning in distressing situations or conditions rather than bear them passively and stoically, or even suffer in solidarity with the crucified Christ. We need to have regard for the personal and social dynamic in which the suffering is located and which calls us to discover spiritual meaning.

Logotherapy, Spiritual Direction and Bereavement

One important application of meaning theory is our adjustment to the profound experience of bereavement. The most effective interventions in

[30] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Credo: Meditations on the Apostles' Creed*, (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2000), 53.
[31] Joseph Barsuglia, 'Holy Saturday in Existential Psychology: Prolegomena Integration of Von Balthasar's Theology of Christ's Descent Into Hell with Meaning Making in Logotherapy in a Christian Context', unpublished article, Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary, 7 January 2008.

this situation have proved to be those that allocate appropriate thought and energy to the reconstruction of meaning in the process of mourning a significant loss. This has been my experience of accompanying the bereaved for more than thirty years. I have observed that the most significant changes occur in people whose narrative of a tragic episode in their lives is reframed or rephrased as a result of discovering new meaning, finding value or benefit of some sort in it (though typically such transformation involves risk and must proceed at a pace that is natural and safe).

I have often heard it said that all spiritual direction is a process of dealing with loss of some kind; discernment is often a matter of making difficult choices that involve loss. It is no coincidence, therefore, that researchers have established a link between psychological and spiritual bereavement: 'For a subset of spiritually inclined mourners, bereavement also elicits an assault to their long-held religious beliefs or spiritual ways of experiencing and understanding the world'.[32] One study revealed, 'different themes subsumed in an overarching narrative of resentment and doubt towards God, dissatisfaction with the spiritual support received, and substantial changes in the bereaved person's spiritual beliefs and behaviors'.[33] A significant benefit of logotherapy in spiritual direction is its ability to integrate the psychological and spiritual parts that strive jointly to respond to distressing situations. Religious coping and meaning-making are effective when they operate in tandem to alleviate the suffering that is experienced by those dealing with grief, whether through separation from or the death of another person, or other significant loss.

Spiritual accompaniment of the bereaved can be both challenging and rewarding. The struggle can lead to growth in faith, hope and compassion; development in religious understanding; even major transformations in outlook, values and behaviour: 'While religiousness might not in itself mitigate the pain of loss … it may nevertheless set the stage for greater growth through the experience'.[34] Regardless of the grief's cause or intensity, whether the result of something taken away or the unintended consequence of a freely discerned choice, spiritual distress deserves competent and caring attention, both in the nature of our listening and

[32] Laurie A. Burke and Robert A. Neimeyer, 'Inventory of Complicated Spiritual Grief', January 2015, 1, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287391818_Inventory_of_Complicated_Spiritual_Grief_ICSG, accessed 19 November 2018.
[33] Robert A. Neimeyer and Laurie A. Burke, 'Loss, Grief and Spiritual Struggle: The Quest for Meaning in Bereavement', October 2014, 13, available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/ 262603003_Loss_Grief_and_Spiritual_Struggle_The_Quest_for_Meaning_in_Bereavement, accessed 19 November 2018.
[34] Neimeyer and Burke, 'Loss, Grief and Spiritual Struggle', 10.

the style of our interventions. Inevitably, it calls for equal weight to be given to recovering meaning from the rubble of tragedy and awakening our consciousness to a new horizon.

* * *

Grief is only one of many challenges in life, but it does demonstrate well the need and opportunity to understand reality in ever deeper ways. It seems that we are unlikely to grow without some form of distress, much in the same way that a weight-lifter knows that development of the body does not occur without pain. Invariably, all experiences, whether they are spontaneously greeted with joy or sadness, result in the adjustment of meaning. Whether it is realised or not, each thing that is heard, seen or felt prompts the question, what sense must I make of this, and how must I adapt to this new understanding? The spiritual director can skilfully and prayerfully play a vital facilitating role in this quest to discover ultimate meaning.

The purpose of spiritual guidance is to help put people in touch with their essential and true selves by unifying all dimensions of their being and to help them develop meaningful relationships with others and with God. In other words, the faithful, hopeful and loving accompaniment of persons who explicitly or implicitly search for meaning enables them to embrace life-affirming values and to discover a path to inner freedom. Always, meaning is the key.

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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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Spirituality and Living

ADOREMUS

Discover a Whole New World

Margaret Scott

I WAS NOT YET A CATHOLIC the first time I met Jesus Christ in eucharistic adoration. I was a college student, looking for meaning. That day I discovered that eucharistic adoration is not what it looks like. It is not a static, personal time of silent reflection, spent gazing at a consecrated host. Or, at least, it does not have to be. Eucharistic adoration is much, much more. It is a dynamic encounter, a thrilling embrace, a challenging conversation and an exciting engagement. After many years as a sister, making eucharistic adoration every day, I am convinced that there are many layers to adoration.

Awe is Human

First, eucharistic adoration is about being human. God made us to adore; we all have an innate capacity for awe. Every man and woman, every child and elderly person, people of every race, nation, culture, colour, orientation and social class—each one has been given the gift of wonder by the God who is always greater and more amazing. So adoration is about who we are as human beings. It is something deeply rooted in our humanity. It is what a mother feels as she cradles her newborn baby in her arms for the first time. It is the trembling we experience when we are caught up in the overwhelming power of a storm. It is the wonder that widens the eyes and heart of a child captivated by the magic that the adventure of life promises. It is spontaneous applause or tears before the beauty of a symphony or a tiny flower. It is the admiration we feel in the face of an act of heroism.

Eucharistic adoration is a profoundly human awe that is at the heart of every spiritual experience.

The Wonder of It All

Secondly, our sense of wonder as human beings is a spiritual adventure too. It is the dynamic quality of our relationship with God, deep in our hearts,

when our littleness and fragility become dependent on God's transcendence. It is when fear becomes reverence, astonishment becomes the gaze of contemplation open to the divine mystery, and applause dies away to be lost in worship and praise. That is when wonder becomes adoration.

When I became a sister, I wanted Jesus to be the centre of my life, so adoration became eucharistic adoration. Now it was all about Jesus Christ in the eucharist. I experienced the thrilling conviction that Jesus was present sacramentally in the consecrated host. I knew in loving amazement that Jesus was really there. And so eucharistic adoration, which may seem like 'wasting time' in church, is really about recognising Jesus in the bread and feeling like dancing for joy. It is a tender embrace that opens wide to encircle the whole world. It is having your heart set on fire.

For me, eucharistic adoration is about identifying with the Son, who adores the Father and loves us too. It seemed to me that, like Jesus himself, adoration is about giving new and abundant life to all around us. It is a passionate need to care deeply about others, about people, about the world we live in, and about the whole of creation. It is wanting to make a difference—ready to be fully committed, as bread that is broken in God's hands for everyone, for always, in the eucharist.

The Power to Connect

Gradually I came to connect adoration with my ministry. Adoration is ministry, because to adore Jesus in the eucharist also means being involved in his cause, following his style of life and walking in the path of his destiny. It is to meditate on the words: 'this is my body which will be given for you', and to rejoice in his redeeming action made present in each eucharist. It is to nourish in ourselves the desire for self-giving. It is to learn to commit ourselves and to give our lives for our brothers and sisters. It is learning to fall in love, a love without limits. It is praying for all those we hear about and get to know through television and news headlines on the internet, and for all those whose suffering is ignored or denied.

To adore Jesus in the eucharist is also to become completely immersed in the power of forgiveness. Many years ago now, I was making adoration late one night, on the eve of a new chapter in my life. As I sat there quietly with Jesus in the eucharist, thinking about all that had been and looking forward to what was to come, the face of one person, who had made life more than a little difficult for me, came into my prayer. Somehow it seemed that the power of forgiveness was flowing gently out from the eucharist into my mind and my heart, embracing her fondly and lovingly

freeing me from resentment. I heard Jesus repeating his prayer in my heart: 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing' (Luke 23:34). And I made his prayer mine: Father forgive us—all of us who suffer and make others suffer, sometimes without knowing it, sometimes without wishing to.

To adore Jesus in the eucharist is to enter into the reality of the bread, which earth has given and human hands have made—the hands of people of our time and in our country, and all over the world. It is a space where we can allow ourselves to be touched by a greater spirit of solidarity, to become one with all people, as Jesus did. When I adore Jesus in the eucharist, I make room next to me for all the poor people who have befriended me in so many parts of the world: Juan, the undernourished Chilean boy with cancer of the throat; Maria, emerging from the forest in East Timor where she had been hiding with her children after her husband was shot and killed for voting for independence from Indonesia; Eufrasie who, with her family, escaped the genocide on the Congolese border of Rwanda. There are so many names and faces, and I leave adoration energized to talk about them, write about them and work on their behalf.

Less is More

To adore Jesus in the eucharist is also a lesson in littleness. To contemplate Jesus is to look at one who was rich but made himself poor; the all-powerful one who made himself weak; the great God who became a child,

a man, a piece of bread. It is to contemplate the one who fills the universe but who emptied himself. It is to look with pure eyes and a clean heart that sees God in the poor and vulnerable. It is to discover the beauty that is hidden in humility. We leave eucharistic adoration and bid farewell to Jesus, perhaps a little smaller in our own eyes.

The Body of Christ

For me, eucharistic adoration is so many things but, above all, it is an appointment, a date, time spent 'hanging out' with Jesus Christ and with all that he was and all that he is—just being with him, present in the host. It is time, too, spent with the whole of humanity, with all that it is and all that can be—an appointment that places us at the heart of reality and at the centre of history.

I experienced this presence of Christ in a very moving way while I was living and working in Cerro Navia, a poor area in Santiago, Chile. One afternoon as I was about to go to the chapel for my hour of eucharistic adoration, an elderly man came to the door to ask if someone could take his blood pressure. He came in and I took it. Then we chatted over a cup of tea, Chilean style, and eventually he toddled happily away. I made it to adoration a little late, but as I knelt on the floor gazing at Christ in the host, he seemed to say to me: *Margaret, that was me!* Never before had the gospel words seemed so powerfully real: 'Just as you did it to one of the least of these … you did it to me' (Matthew 25:40). But that is not the end of the story. The following Sunday at Mass, as I was distributing Holy Communion, the old man approached me and, as I looked at him and said 'The body of Christ', his face broke into a smile and he winked!

Hidden beneath the surface of eucharistic adoration is a whole new world. Eucharistic adoration cannot be separated from who we are as human beings and spiritual beings created by God and followers of Jesus Christ. But it is up to us to explore and gradually discover what it is and what it is not.

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ST IGNATIUS EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Maurice Giuliani

A FEW WEEKS AGO, I was invited by a friend to visit an exhibition of watches and table clocks at the Louvre. I was filled with admiration as I discovered the advances in instruments for measuring time that occurred at the beginning of the sixteenth century. In particular, the mainspring was invented, superseding the water-clock and the hourglass, and enabling the making of small clocks that could be transported. I learnt about how Francis I, around 1530, made a gift to his grand chancellor of two table clocks, at the time new instruments, that would, as it were, bring time into the chancellor's house and indeed into his office. Time was taking on a portable, constantly measurable form. The year was 1530: the very moment when Ignatius Loyola was listening to lectures at the Sorbonne.

This made me think that it might be useful to analyze how Ignatius dealt with time. Running through the sixteenth century, and all the cultural energy generating by the Renaissance, were three major currents. The first emerged from the great geographical discoveries, opening up ever wider spaces. The second arose from the printing press, which set artistic and intellectual expressions within stable forms that could be circulated. The third is my theme here: the sense of time, the feeling for time. Obviously these three currents interacted, but I would like to focus especially on the third. This is because, it seems to me, we have not yet spoken sufficiently of how far Ignatius' passions were mobilised by the time in which he lived. He shared his generation's burning concern to make something fruitful of life's moments. And we find ourselves in our own time with desires and questions very like his.

What I want to say can be summed up under three headings, and it is these that will structure what follows. First: the discovery of one's own time. Secondly: responding to one's own time accurately and judiciously. Thirdly: embracing the future. These name three aspects of Ignatius' attitude to his time. Moreover, they help us sense what his relationship to God might have been.

The Way, 58/1 (January 2019), 41–59

Discovering One's Own Time

An Interplay of Extremes

The discovery of the present, as something to be received in its complexity and totality in faith from God was a vital need for Ignatius. This is the starting point. Without this discovery, he would have died. We know his passionate temperament. It could easily be led to extremes; it quickly transformed the very strong movements that were always within him into decisions and actions; it was quick to make prophetic connections, but it was also sensitive to the details of getting things done. All these traits marked the conquistadors who at the time were pushing back the limits of the known world. But these qualities had their reverse side: a desire to be the very best; a will to power did not find it easy to let itself gently be transformed into acceptance and humble service; an attention to detail that could become compulsive. No doubt these qualities and defects explain why some were attached to him almost viscerally, while others, particularly those weaker than him, rejected him as impossibly demanding.

Be that as it may, Ignatius, within himself, was balanced. This balance of different tendencies made him a man of action, a man in control of his own life, a man able to establish a lasting legacy. The balance turned on his capacity constantly to take account of the realities around him and their demands: realities of time and space, of the historical situation given to him; realities shaped by forces to be kept under control or evaluated. This was for him what one might call his 'grace', in both senses of the word. It was a human gift, keeping under control a temperament threatened by conflicting forces that could have destroyed it. It was also, and at the same time, a divine gift of God, keeping him constantly focused on how the gospel Kingdom can be found in the details of human lives.

As you look at his life, you sense that Ignatius was under pressure from two forces, arising from a distant and mysterious heritage. And both were pushing him towards an extreme. On the one hand there was the universal, the *magis*, constantly suggesting something beyond, the opening up of frontiers, with all the risks that entailed. On the other, there was the quest for the one specific place in which to settle; a precise commitment to the art of the possible, a taste for being at home; low-key, humble service. These desires pulled his imagination in different ways, but they were both powerfully present, and interacting, at the time when Ignatius lived. When they were in harmony, the combination sustained action without and preserved affective stability within. When, however, they were in conflict, they would lead to excess and failure. It was only because

Ignatius was rooted in his own time, with all the needs and echoes that marked people's lives, that the conflicting tendencies within him found constructive rather than violent outlets.

This makes us understand why Ignatius' first message to us is an invitation to 'look at' the time in which we live. *Mirar*—'look at': we should note this word well, which is found so often on his lips and in his writings. To look at what is really there, without fear, without illusion. To look at it in the way God does. But also, and at the same time, to look at it in a human way, to look in a way that will enable us to mobilise all our creative powers.

Thus, when so many new paths were opening up for sixteenth-century society, Ignatius did not ignore any of them. When Christianity was becoming more open to everyday reality, he could enter into the new secular, humanist world without it making him any less Christian. He took on board all the ideas that were being thrown up, provided only that they served God's glory. And he 'looked' also, with the same intensity and the same concern for the truth, at the movements of the heart sustaining human freedom as it moves towards decisions that will give it fulfilment and peace.

This is what makes Ignatius insist so strongly that each person should find his or her own way amid the pulls of so many 'means'. These means are at once divine—created by God, as he puts it in the Principle and Foundation—and also human—we use them to shape the time in which we live. To untangle the forces that dwell within us, to clear the mists in which our half-engagements disguise themselves, to perceive where our interior struggle is occurring, to reach the point where our desires can be integrated—that, for Ignatius, is both to look at and to love the time in which we live, and also to find within it the point where all our energies can be integrated.

To look at and to love the time in which we live

The Path of Exercising

It is in this perspective that Ignatius suggests his Exercises. He did not invent the term, but the pedagogy that gives the different exercises value and significance is very much his own. The spiritual exercise is a way of discovering the full reality of the present time.

Within the duration of the ordinary day, the exercise has a beginning and an end. Little by little, more and more clearly, the practice of the exercise enables us to become actively aware. The exercise creates, as it were, an interior time, which gives rise to its own movements, cycles and alternations. Exterior time, which serves as the basis of the exercise, of course continues to exist. But it is opened up to this other time within, the

time of awareness. Gradually the awareness becomes deeper, allowing what was in darkness to come into the light, what was unspoken to be expressed and what were hitherto unknown energies within to be harnessed. These energies bring a new self into being.

Ignatius is fond of distinguishing 'times'—not just the 'times' of election, the different experiential structures that can lead us to a sense of what is right, but also times of examination and of discernment. He carefully distinguished the times of consolation from the times that follow. But it was not just on exceptional occasions that the process of exercising involved distinguishing between different moments in time. It ceaselessly draws us into our own inner timeline, where awareness has its highs and lows, its calls and its moments of solitude, its moments of harvest and of barrenness. Ignatius' favourite words for this reality are *profit* and *fruit*, *relish* and *disturbance*, *plucking* and *feeling*. These are not just images. The essential point is to see that the particular time span of the exercise serves as a way of radically intensifying our ordinary time, and of giving meaning to each successive moment.

It is a mistake to think here of privileged or particular moments, coincident with the different times of prayer. When Ignatius tells us what a spiritual exercise is, he is quite clear: he includes 'every other spiritual activity' (Exx 1). Even an ordinary activity, however banal and anodyne it might seem, can become an 'exercise' and, as such, an occasion for discovering the 'interior time' that I have just been describing. The exercise isolates a moment of human activity or of human affectivity, with both a beginning, before which you have to prepare yourself, and an end or purpose, which is the fruit you gain from it. And between these two there are various successive states, which give the exercise form and structure. When you follow this structure, you are allowing it to reveal the extraordinary richness of meaning borne by this moment, despite the fact that no one was paying it any attention.

But perhaps I have been wrong in using the word 'isolate'. True, the exercise requires that time be set aside, clearly and consciously. But the point of this time set aside is that that we become more present to ourselves and commit ourselves with greater clarity. In short, it is about living life to the full: the whole of life, with moral sincerity, fully involved with others and taking all the risks involved in our daily choices. When we repeat this sort of exercise, then the moments fall into a pattern and the history of our life gradually takes shape. Each moment takes its place within a continuum that represents a person's destiny.

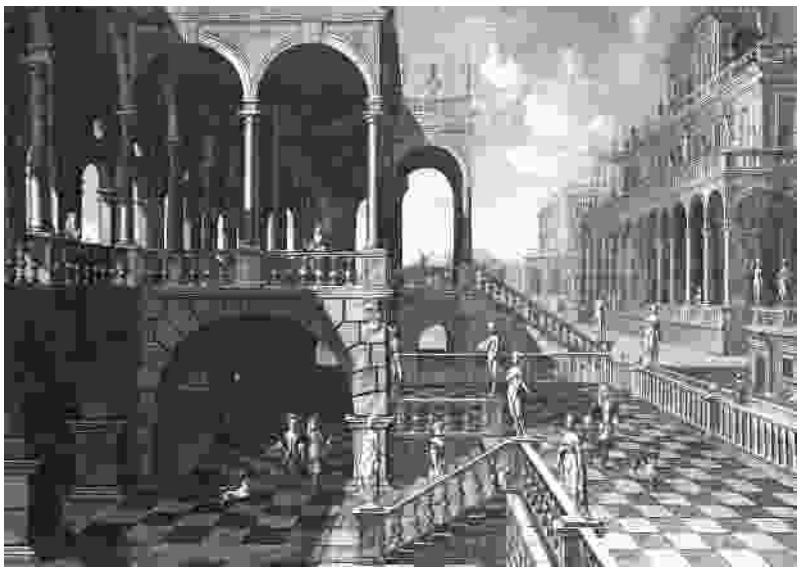
An authentic fidelity to the present moment—it is that to which we are being invited. But what came before the moment of the spiritual exercise is no longer simply over and done with. What comes to the surface in the exercise is more than a disconnected fragment out of our psyche. On the contrary, the exercise gives us access to a fullness of life: everything comes together, everything becomes a source of energy.

Thus it is that Ignatius comes close, at a deep level, to one of the great movements of his time. I have already mentioned it: the Renaissance brought about a revolution by bringing time right into the home, by increasing greatly the technical means of measuring time, by putting time at the service of navigators through devices that made them less dependent on the stars. This corresponds to the revolution that Ignatius brought about in the way human beings could listen to God. He was no longer dealing with the monastic sequence of hours, marking out in chant the rhythm of nature and the cosmos. Rather, he was attending to the moments of interiority that emerge as crucial in a human being's moral and personal history. The path of exercising, far from representing a diversion from lived life with all its details and immediacy, presupposes that we are entering fully the reality of our lives, with ardent trust in the given moment that is ours to live out.

Of course, this way of exercising can lead us astray and miss the real point. Ignatius invites us to perceive how God visits the devout soul (Exx 15); others will tell us just to make the best of the present. Montaigne sees two kinds of time given to us: 'I spend time when it is bad and disagreeable; when it is good, I don't want to spend it, I savour it, I hold on to it.'[1] Montaigne's humanism can lead us to take pleasure in blithe self-centredness. Nevertheless, between Ignatius and that current of broad openness to all that is human, there is one fundamental point of agreement: it is through the authenticity of how we live our lives that we discover the richness within the present moment. For Ignatius, this is about God's gift—a gift to be received and then transformed into acts of charity.

This path of exercising seems to me radically different from another path that was one of the Renaissance's temptations: that of 'utopia', this 'non-place' where time ceases. Creating imaginary cities, erecting false facades, multiplying royal entities, making the dream of ideal societies

[1] [Trans.] Montaigne, *Essays*, book 3, chapter 13, 'On Experience', towards the end. The wordplay makes translation uncertain: 'Je passe le temps quand il est mauvais et incommode; quand il est bon, je ne le veux pas passer, je le retaste et je m'y tiens'.



An imaginary city, architectural capriccio by Jacob Ferdinand Saeys, c. 1690

burn within the heart and captivate the eye—all this, no doubt, enabled a whole generation to exercise a certain creativity. The element of diversion here enabled the expression of needs that otherwise would have been repressed. But Ignatius ignored this temptation—or at least he overcame it (for it may be that for him the attraction of going to Jerusalem represented the utopian impasse from which he needed to break free).

For Ignatius, it is not about imagining how things could be other than they are. Spiritual fidelity is first of all, and necessarily, a fidelity to the present time. There is an inexorable duty not to avoid any of the constraints placed on us by reality. Let us take just one example that Ignatius gave in a quite low-key way to the Jesuit students at Alcalá:

> Let us never delay good works, no matter how small, even a small one, with the idea that we will do greater works at another time [*en otro tiempo*]. For it is a very common temptation of the enemy that we place perfection in future things [*cosas futuras*], and encourage ourselves to undervalue present things.[2]

Greater things at another time! This is the deadliest of illusions, because it turns us away from the present.

[2] Ignatius, *Monita generalia* (n. 7015), MHSJ EI 12, 676.

Responding Precisely and Judiciously

St Ignatius is concerned to integrate and deploy our human energies for the particular moment in time in which it is our task to live. This can only happen fully when we ourselves give this moment of time a shape, an expression, through an act or decision which, once and for all, lets go of any sort of dream and roots us in the here and now that is at once, inextricably, ours and God's. This is why Ignatius is so extraordinarily concerned to understand how we get to that moment when things take shape and announce themselves. He observes the different moments of the inner life: how they follow on from each other, what their emphasis is, how they vary. In each case he is interested in what is distinctive, in how it arises and how it disappears. He presents this kind of repeated observation as a way of progressing in contemplation—a contemplation that lets us discover the Spirit's action in our awareness.

To establish the point, we can refer to just two major texts. In *Spiritual Exercises* we can clearly see a very attentive pedagogy, which takes people through series of points to remember and note, through times to be compared, through successive processes, through experiences of things feeling more or less appropriate. And all this is aimed at discovering the precise point where, finally, everything falls into place and the heart has discovered what it was seeking all along.

Besides *Spiritual Exercises*, we can also turn to the notes that we call—inappropriately—Ignatius' Spiritual Diary. These notes were, in fact, words that he quickly jotted down each day, even several times a day, as a way of reminding himself of the 'motions' he had experienced and of interpreting them—motions from his prayer or from any other moments of the day. These motions created in his soul tendencies, inclinations, convictions. They bore fruit in action, an action marked by complete self-confidence.

We are often tempted to regard Ignatius' examens and exercises as too finicky. Indeed they are, unless we see their purpose: that of pinpointing the genuinely spiritual moment, and designating the decisive point in our encounter with God and our interior journey. There are three key features of this 'hour', this *kairos*. Things come together; mere 'circumstances' take on a new significance; decisions are taken.

Finding the Point of Convergence

The *kairos* is a point where all the energies making up our human existence come together. These energies make themselves felt in how our body reacts: in our health, our physical resistances or weaknesses. They also

work through our affective capacities, which vary with the experiences we undergo: our age, our problems, the sources of our desires. Finally, they work in what we actually do, which is bound up with the whole range of 'means' from which we make either aids or obstacles. If we can draw on all these energies, assembling them, measuring them, assessing them, we will discover the right point of balance, of a fidelity to God in and through a clear discernment of what is possible. And our judgment is then either confirmed by how it works out in daily life, or else, by contrast, it is shown to be illusory—because it lacks foundation in the truth of what we are.

Lending Significance to the 'Circumstances'

The 'hour', the *kairos*, is marked out also by the combination of circumstances that accompany an event. I use this word 'circumstances' because it comes up so often in Ignatius. When, for example, he recounts what happened to him on the way from Loyola to Barcelona, he tells us that he was,

> … not considering anything within himself, nor knowing what humility was, or charity, or patience, or discernment in regulating and balancing these virtues. Rather, his whole purpose was to do these great exterior deeds because so the saints had done them for the glory of God, without considering any other more individual circumstances. (*Autobiography*, n. 14)

Possessing virtue is one thing; being able to discern in a way that regulates and measures this virtue is quite another. Similarly, the revelatory event is one thing; the combination of circumstances which gives this event its weight, its range and its meaning is quite another. We might say that Ignatius' life was marked by an ever more lively perception of the exact 'circumstances' that mark an event when it becomes spiritual, that is, when it becomes a matter of how we respond faithfully to God.

When setting out the first sketch of the Society of Jesus for the Pope in 1539, Ignatius notes firmly that the candidate, in his response to the grace that the Spirit imparts to him, should take care that his zeal remains *secundum scientiam*—with due regard for knowledge. In other words, it should remain within an exact perception of what is asked of him, with nothing beyond and nothing besides. And in the Society's *Constitutions*, there comes up often, as the final requirement for action, the obligation to evaluate 'according to the circumstances of times, places and persons'. These circumstances bring in an element of the relative, the momentary, of people's subjectivities, of the way thing evolve. But nevertheless,

through all these human nuances, which often call for flexible judgment and delicate understanding, the life of the Holy Spirit is being engaged. Everything is seen, perceived, in terms of a specific history of 'ways of going forward', of wondering about the significance of the circumstances moving us from one situation to another, from one decision to another.

In this light, we can better understand the force of the answer Ignatius once gave to Fr Olivier Manare, whom he was sending as superior to the college in Loreto. Manare asked Ignatius about how he should discharge his responsibility. The answer is well known, but we can quote it anyway. Manare himself tells us.

> He gave me only some instructions so that I would know how to conduct myself with the governor, the canons, and other externs. I was asking what rules to observe for, I said, the rules of the Roman college, apart from a few exceptions, were not suitable for this college, given the circumstances of this holy place and the large number of pilgrims. And those of the professed houses were hardly going to be applicable. He replied: 'Olivier, act in accord with what you see and with how the anointing [of the Holy Spirit] will teach you. Match the rules to the situation in the way you can.' I asked him about how to distribute the responsibilities among the people he was sending with me. He replied briefly along the same lines. 'Olivier, cut your coat according to your cloth; how you act and learn "will be taught" ….'

The manuscript breaks off with the sentence unfinished, indeed in the middle of a word. But that last half-word is part of the verb *docere*, to teach, and surely implies the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Manare goes on:

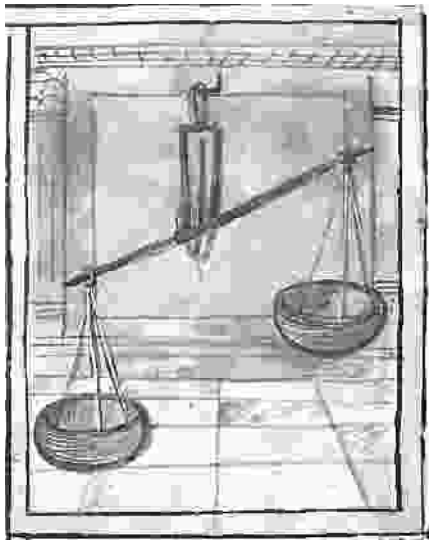
> It once happened that I went against a written order of his. I told him that I had done this …. 'A human being', he replied, 'assigns the function; but God gives discernment. I want you to act in whatever you do without scruple, as you will judge what is necessary in the circumstances, despite the rules and regulations.'[3]

The Act of Decision

We have been talking about things coming together, and a respect for 'circumstances'. We must immediately add a third element that adds precision to the process: the act of decision and commitment. We know that the moment of the Election is at the heart of the Exercises. But it

[3] MHSJ FN 3, 434.

is also at the heart of daily life. An Election enables us to express, firmly and publicly, what God is asking of us, the thing on which we accept that we can stake our life. In Ignatius' view, the Election is nothing other than the affirmation of a conviction: this is what, today, at this hour, in the circumstances that are mine, I judge to conform with what I am discovering about God in my life; this is what 'suits me', this is the right response that I can and must bring to God. At this definite moment of Election, our hearts stop being ambivalent in the face of our different desires and the varieties of possibility before us. These latter give way to integration, freeing all our energies for action.



Ignatius' image for expressing all this is not that of hands marking out the time on a clock-face, but of the needle in a balance which oscillates before coming to rest once the weights loaded on the two sides are equal. The different texts of *Spiritual Exercises* give various formulations: holding oneself in a balance between two sides; not inclining in one direction or another; holding oneself at the centre. But the point of all this is that the action should, so to speak, burst forth. I should try to be in the middle of a balance, 'having meanwhile prepared my spirit so that my whole self will be carried to that side, there indeed, once I have recognised it as more fitting for God's glory and my salvation' (Exx 179).[4]

However, temporal imagery is also there. The Third Class of Persons wait, 'putting their strength into not wanting either this or anything else' (Exx 155). What are they waiting for? They are waiting for full light to be shed on what will then appear as better. They are waiting for motives to be purified, so that all they want is to serve God. When the decision comes, it thus puts an end to this time of waiting. The conscience's 'yes' is the precise reply, today's reply, to God's grace.

[4] [Trans.] Fr Guiliani here uses the striking language of the 1548 Vulgate, which for once is stronger than the 1544 Autograph, now standard: 'potius interstitio et aequilibrio subsistere, parato interim animo, ut in eam ilico partem totus ferar, quam novero divinae gloriae et saluti meae fore aptiorem'.

Embracing the Future

I have just been talking about an end point, the culmination of a process of waiting. But there is no question of this favourable time in the present being shut in on itself. The energy mobilised—in submission to the Spirit of God and in fidelity to the task undertaken—continues to bring forth its fruit. The *kairos* opens up on to the future, a future constantly demanding that we embrace it. This is my third point—one at which I have been too long arriving. But just think. What would be the point of uncovering the *kairos* and finding our own precise way of expressing it, unless it was also the path opening us up to the future—our own, and that of humanity as a whole? There is more to be said. We need to be able to live the present, but in such a way that, from within it, the future gradually reveals itself in a new encounter with God.

St Ignatius' attitude to this is very enlightening The present moment never provoked in him a response of stoppage or closure. He was able to live in the present while allowing the contours of what was to become his destiny gradually to emerge. There are three tendencies that seem to me to convey his general attitude. He was able to manage uncertainty; he was able to discern particular occasions; he was able to live within God's time.

Managing Uncertainty

Let us begin with his capacity to manage uncertainty. At every stage, Ignatius' life was shaped by decisions that had been taken in the light of immediate circumstances but which always opened up on to a new path. This is what made Jerónimo Nadal write the formula which became famous: 'he was being led to where he did not know, gently' (*deducebatur quo nesciebat, suaviter*).[5] Gently: this does not mean that there was no darkness. It means rather that Ignatius was trusting in God who would make a new stage grow out of fidelity to the previous stage. And 'gently' indicates something else as well. The decisions were not so abrupt and clear-cut as to rule out other possibilities. What drove them still left room for uncertainty.

We need really to study in detail all the situations where Ignatius found himself having to take a decision. But here I just take one. On 15 August 1534, at Montmartre, Ignatius and his companions pronounced a vow that committed them for life. But its content was very complex. They had to think about what was sure and what was less sure, about their differences in temperament and culture, about the motives that were

[5] MHSJ FN 2, 252.

impelling each of them to go to Jerusalem, to stay there or not, and to prefer one or other sort of apostolate. 'We did not know with certainty', says Ignatius, 'where we could better serve and praise God our Lord'.[6]

In the end, they did not opt between the different tendencies, but invoked a new basis for solving the issue: they entrusted themselves to the Sovereign Pontiff in his role as guarantor of universality. And on this they all converged. The points on which they were sure were affirmed. But where they remained unsure, they did not make a firm decision that might have proved fatal. Rather, they opened up a path to something else. As things turned out, this something else became fruitful: it was to become the institutional basis of the Society. Indeed, what was originally secondary, introduced in order to avoid settling a question, became primary, which decisively shaped what Ignatius did in future years.

Ignatius' life was marked by many decisions of this kind: decisions that combine fidelity to the demands of the present with openness to a future not yet revealed. He had to respect the mystery of this future until events, or some clear internal impulsion, enabled him to recognise the path that was opening up. For example, the apostolate of the order that Ignatius founded in 1540 was orientated directly towards the 'propagation of the faith'. Subsequent events in the life of the world and the Church (in particular the development of the Protestant Reformation) led them to define themselves some years later in terms of 'the defence of the faith'. This was more than an external evolution in the different versions of the institution's founding documents. It expressed, rather, a spiritual quality of availability, an openness to the needs of the present of such a kind that it could perceive the future that was on its way, and take it on board through, so to speak, a new decision.

One can see the same attitude in Ignatius on a point that was to become important: the apostolic effort exerted through the colleges for teaching the general public. At the beginning this activity was not in Ignatius' list of ideals. But the appeals became pressing. Finally, he accepted and fostered action of this kind. It is not that he was constrained by circumstances. Rather, he recognised that this new future was the unfolding of a present, and that the present had a dynamism within that had not yet fully revealed itself.

It is easy to see the very high level of interior freedom required for a person to remain at once attached—even passionately so—to the

[6] MHSJ Const 1, 160.

demands of the present and yet detached regarding all the forms that this present might take tomorrow. We have perhaps an extreme example in the story recounted by Gonçalves da Câmara in his *Memoriale*, his diary of life with Ignatius:

> Once when the doctor had told him he should avoid any bout of melancholy, because that would harm him, the Father said afterwards, 'I have considered what might cause me melancholy, and I have not found anything, except if the Pope were completely to undo the Society'.[7]

There must have been some detail unknown to us shared between Ignatius and his doctor that made the latter speak of a threat of 'melancholy'. But Ignatius does not seem to have been on the road to depression. He reflected in his own characteristic way—through an examination of consciousness that made him review what might have aroused this dark spirit—and he concluded, calmly, 'nothing'. Nothing, unless someone destroyed the project in which all his human energies, underwritten by God's grace, had been invested. It is good that Ignatius was made to confide this to us. The present in which he was living was so open to the future that he could accept its destruction as the means through which something else, still invisible, was being constructed.

So it is that he could add: 'and even this, I think, if I were to recollect myself in prayer for a quarter of an hour, I would be as happy as before, and even more so'.[8] What is this joy? It is quantified: 'even more so'. There certainly would have been sadness, but a sadness overcome, and the heart would have been freer than it was before—freer, because it would have moved beyond every temptation to close itself in, and hold on selfishly to the present.

Discerning the Moment

What Ignatius confided here was an extreme case. In everyday life, things were no doubt less dramatic. Ignatius' inner freedom in the present was linked to a habit of discernment regarding what he calls the 'occasions'. He often comes back to this. He uses such phrases as 'occasions that must not be missed', 'occasions that God gives us', 'occasions that present themselves to us'. In all these, he sees signs addressed to us. They enable

[7] *Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The Memoriale of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara*, translated by Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005), n. 182.
[8] *Remembering Iñigo*, n.182.

our living present to enter into an activity responding better to the criteria of the more universal, the more pressing, the more necessary.

It is not that Ignatius had a taste for novelty. On the contrary, he distrusted it, instinctively. He would turn away from a theologian who, like Erasmus, seemed ambiguous in his positions. He set aside the works of Savonarola for an interesting reason:

> Some hold him to be a saint; others think he was rightly burnt, and that is the more common opinion. And thus the Society, given that there are so many books by good authors who are not controversial, does not want people to have a controversial author in their hands. But it does not condemn him, nor censure him.[9]

There is no condemnation, but a refusal to take a risk. Or rather, it is not so much a matter of risk as of a concern, within the mission entrusted, to do what has been specified better and more fully. The *magis* requires that our engagement in the present should be submitted to spiritual discernment. This may always be calling things into question, and even prompting a new decision.

Ignatius explains the point clearly in the *Constitutions*, in a paragraph (VII.1.7[616]) written in a way that shows meticulous concern for balance. The paragraph is about the spirit that should inspire a Jesuit engaged in a place or on a task by virtue of the mission entrusted to him. Here he is in one place. Can he go somewhere else? Here he is working on one thing. Can he do something else? These two questions boil down to just one: the one with which we are dealing here—how can he, within the present time, embrace the future?

Ignatius' response is, as usual, low-key. A person working in a particular area might make a few excursions elsewhere, but there are four conditions:

1. such excursions must be feasible 'without prejudice to the principal mission';
2. they must be practically possible;
3. 'it appears … they could be fruitful in service to God our Lord';
4. afterwards, the companion must 'return to his residence' in order to come back to the usual place.

Look at what is being implied here about discernment. The text speaks of 'excursions' in the plural. This presupposes the repetition of experiences,

[9] Ignatius to Cesare Helmio, 23 December 1553 (n. 4003), MHSJ EI 6, 80.

like 'repetition' in the Exercises. We are also reminded of two criteria: what is possible, and the fruits one can hope to obtain.

Regarding such possible activity, the Jesuit on mission '… can and should consider … in what other things he can employ himself for the glory of God and the good of souls, not losing the opportunity for this which God sends him'. Here, too, discernment is required. He is not to neglect what he has been specifically charged to do 'for other opportunities in the divine service, even good ones'. This last phrase was written by Ignatius in the margin, in his own hand. The idea of an opportunity, an 'occasion', brings up the difficult confrontation between what one is doing as a mission received, and what one discovers by researches and excursions beyond the frontiers of the task undertaken.

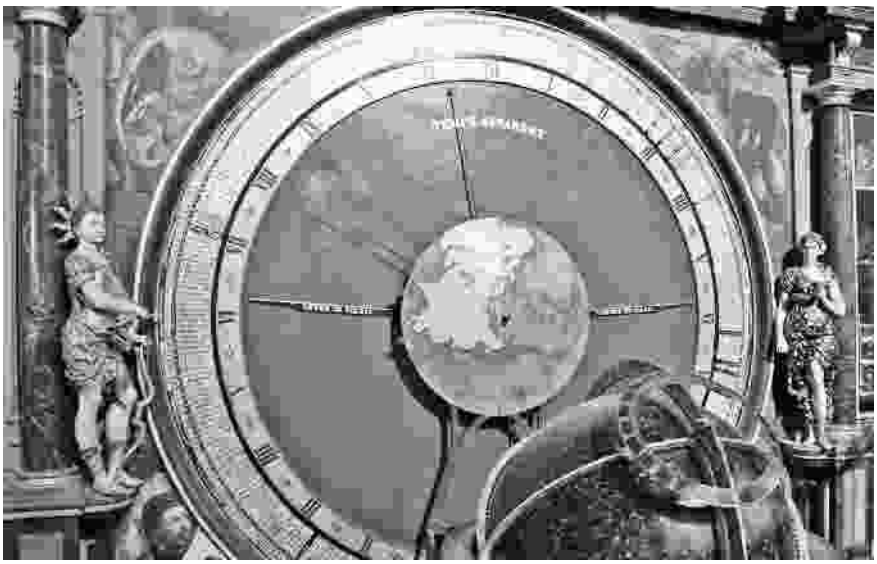
But is this really a confrontation? I was wrong to use such a word with its apparent implication of conflict. The point is that we should do our assigned task without being locked into it. We should be looking out for the needs that appear beyond the responsibilities given to us. We should stay sensitive to the opportunities God sends, in and through the initiatives we takes for ourselves. We should keep our spiritual judgment sufficiently enlightened to see what is 'expedient in the Lord'. Weighing up all these elements will then be the central point of the communication between the one sent and the superior responsible for the mission. From this dialogue a decision will arise—a decision which is not the implementation of a plan of action, but rather an acknowledgement of what the Spirit of God has people sense as a means towards what Ignatius calls 'the good of souls'.

I have spent a little too much time on this text. But it seemed to me that it has a significance beyond its setting in the context of the Jesuit *Constitutions*. It brings to light an attitude that each of us, whether Jesuit or not, can make our own: that of finding at every moment the point where the present needs to make room for something which is not yet mature—something which then becomes a proposal for action, and finally a gift. In the conditions of discernment that I have described, this future, as it appears through the reading of signs spiritually received, is at once a human quest and a gift of God.

Living God's Time

We are touching here, it seems to me, on Ignatius' ultimate secret. Embracing the future freed up his energies and constantly renewed them. It also opened him fully to God's Spirit.

The present time, the right time (*kairos*), the future time: these are the three points that I have been trying to get us to think about. But as



Astronomical clock, Strasbourg Cathedral, 1843

we have moved through them, we have arrived at the centre that throws light on the whole. This reality of time—always something to be better defined, already freighted with a time that is new—this time is nothing other than the time for encountering God. Or rather, to preserve the Ignatian vocabulary, it is here, and here alone, at this point of precise truth, that the human person 'finds God'. Not in a contemplation that would take us away from our human task, but in a submission to the Spirit that purifies us completely of selfishness and places us in the service of souls.

St Ignatius, as we know, never stops repeating that 'God does not make use of people only when they are praying'. Otherwise, he continues, 'prayers for anything less than physically possible in the 24 hours of the day would be too short, for everyone must give themselves as completely as possible to God'.[10] He himself confided at the end of his life that he was 'always growing in devotion, i.e. in facility in finding God, and now more than ever in his whole life. And every time and hour he wanted to find God, he found him.'[11] This was the experience that was constantly filling him: even when 'placed with the Son', even when being drawn into the bosom of the relations between the divine Persons, 'in all things,

[10] Ignatius to Francisco Borja, July 1549, *Personal Writings*, 227; MHSJ EI 12, 632–652 (appendix 6, n. 3).
[11] *Autobiography*, n. 99.

actions, conversations, he felt and contemplated the presence of God and the attraction of spiritual things'.[12]

Nadal, whose testimony I have just cited, continued: 'Truly, this grace and light of his soul, as if in a certain splendour of his face, we saw to be unfolded in the transparency and rightness of his actions in Christ'.[13] This clarity, this certitude—these are the signs that, within everyday activity, holy time has been clearly marked out. All the elements have been weighed; the decisions have been taken as a consequence of 'what is appropriate' and of 'what has been discerned according to the Spirit'. Human tasks undertaken and pursued in charity have become the way of expressing fidelity to God through fidelity to the demands of the body, of the work, of the task to be accomplished, and of all the 'circumstances' whose evolution we must constantly keep in view. It is in this fidelity that Ignatius finds his joy and his peace.

Ignatius tells us how he grew in fidelity in finding God. This experience has its source in the graces received at Manresa, when, on the bank of the Cardoner, his eyes began to be opened and he began 'understanding and knowing many things, spiritual things just as much as matters of faith and learning'.[14] This was an illumination which made 'another human being' of him, because from then on he apprehended in one single vision the God who is the source of all good and the world which emanates from God's creative hands. With the years, he progressed in this unifying vision, contemplating in the infinite goodness of God 'the beginning, the middle and the end of all our good'.[15] In the notes to his Spiritual Diary, we can overhear, through a few words opening on to an experience beyond measure, how the grace of 'a lover's humility' that carries him towards the Trinity is also that which carries him towards creatures.[16] The same experience of faith makes him love God radically and exclusively, and also, at the same time and out of the same love, the world where God's glory lives and acts.

It is at this level of spiritual truth that we can sound the depths of the significance of human time for Ignatius—the human time in which God's time is perceived and received. Seen in the light of faith, each person, each situation, each created thing has its own place. And future time leads us deeper, as we calmly accept the decisions to be taken, the obstacles to

[12] MHSJ MN 4, 651.
[13] MHSJ MN 4, 651.
[14] *Autobiography*, n. 30.
[15] Ignatius to Borja, late 1545, *Personal Writings*, 160 (translation modified); MHSJ EI 1, 339 (n. 101).
[16] Diary, 30 March 1544.

be overcome and the actions to be taken at the 'right time', the time of God's presence, the time that enables us to 'taste' that presence as a gift.

One can thus explain why Ignatius was so free and so astonishingly at ease in the society and amid the problems of his time. He dealt with the great and the humble with equal willingness. The currents of contradiction flowing through the first half of the sixteenth century did not stop him from acting. The conflicts between persons, in particular between princes, between men of the Church, between the different people responsible for taking decisions—these conflicts did not become obstacles for him. We do not hear from him regrets, or fears, or negative judgments. He talks calmly of 'our times', of the 'times where we are'—never in such a way as to condemn them, always to receive them as positive givens within which he has to act. In *Spiritual Exercises* he makes one reference (Exx 369) to 'times as dangerous as our own', in connection with the relations between grace and freedom, a point on which the Roman Catholic faith was particularly threatened. But this expression is exceptional. Normally Ignatius accepts the times we are given as calls to discernment. Writing to Diego Laínez, for example, regarding the promotion of language study, and particularly that of Latin, he speaks of the times as 'delicate [*delicados*] in this regard', such that now 'when everyone wants to know these languages, a person who did not know them would have little authority'.[17]

* * *

How can we conclude? Rather than have recourse to Ignatius' words, I would prefer to evoke the last days of Ignatius' time as a human being. It seems to me that there we find what was the secret of his life, expressed even unto death.

The place was Rome, on the afternoon of a summer's day. Ignatius was ill, but people did not think his condition very serious. But all of a sudden he sent for his secretary, Juan de Polanco. He told Polanco that he was in extremis, 'without hope or almost without hope of temporal life' (I am quoting the narrative written by Polanco himself). He added that it would be good to go and inform the Pope. But Polanco was not so convinced that the matter was urgent, and he asked if he could go the following

[17] Juan de Polanco to Diego Laínez, 21 May 1547 (n. 174), MHSJ EI 1, 523; see *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions*, translated by Martin E. Palmer, John W. Padberg and John L. McCarthy (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), 139: 'The times … that are so delicate; this very expression points us towards the sensitivity, at once practical and accommodated to circumstances, required for what is at once effective action and a submission to the Holy Spirit's action in our human history'.

day, the Friday. He had letters to write that afternoon for Spain, because the courier was leaving that very Thursday evening. Ignatius replied, 'I would prefer today to tomorrow, or I would prefer it to be done as quickly as possible—but do what seems to you best—I yield myself to you, in all freedom'. The doctors were consulted, and confirmed that the matter could wait.

The afternoon came to an end. Ignatius had his evening meal and, Polanco says, 'he ate better than he normally did'. He took part in a conversation on various topics, particularly the acquisition of the house needed for the expansion of the Roman College. Ignatius was sure that he was in his last hours, but he behaved completely normally. He had handed over the responsibility of notifying the Pope to someone else. He knew that sending the post out was important. And he continued to be involved, to the extent that his energy allows, in the day's business. So much so that, when night came, it was thought that he could be left on his own. A brother in the room next door heard him gently sigh, 'Ah, my God'. In the morning, about 5.00 a.m., people went in and found him dying. Polanco left in haste to notify the Pope. But when he got back, Ignatius had breathed his last.

It seems to me that this final evening, this last night, show that Ignatius had become detached even from his own death, and had handed himself over completely to his brothers and to God. His last human conversation, on matters of business, was not something different from his conversation with God—it was just the divine conversation's visible aspect. There was no distance, so to speak, between the urgency of catching the post, the problem of acquiring a house and the dialogue pursued with God. Ignatius was not divided. Death's immediate proximity in no way undermined his presence to human details, but it did give these details an infinite breadth, for God's action continued to pass through them. That night, the time of death was for Ignatius the time to come—but he maintained his total fidelity to the present moment.

Maurice Giuliani SJ (1916–2003) was the founding editor of *Christus*, the French Jesuit journal of spirituality, before serving as an assistant to Pedro Arrupe in Rome. He was centrally influential in developing the Spiritual Exercises in Daily Life, and served as principal editor for the standard French edition of Ignatius' writings, published for the jubilee celebrations in 1991. The present piece was written for a the launch of that significant volume.

translated by Philip Endean SJ

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THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES AND THE JESUIT BAROQUE

Ian Coleman

A CERTAIN SENSE of bewilderment must come upon anyone who studies the history of the Society of Jesus. The particular bewilderment I mean lies in the apparent gulf between the famous austerity of the foundational text of the Society, Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, and the extraordinary cultural flowering that accompanied its growth and success, a movement which is often termed the 'Jesuit Baroque'.[1] My aim will be to show that this gulf is not, after all, so wide, but that our perception has been somewhat skewed by the ways in which the Exercises and Ignatian spirituality in general have often been represented, or misrepresented.

St Ignatius of Loyola is famous for two things: the foundation of the Society of Jesus and the composition of *Spiritual Exercises*. These serve as a double window into the saint's soul, and have arguably had more impact on the Church than any other foundational acts since apostolic times. However, the effect of these two crucial actions of Ignatius' life has been surprisingly complex and difficult to evaluate, right from the earliest days. Following the Second Vatican Council's call for a *ressourcement* or return to the original charism of their founder,[2] the Society of Jesus, and the wider Ignatian family, have become very mindful of a maxim expressed succinctly by David Lonsdale: 'Ignatian spirituality is prior to Jesuit spirituality, and, in a certain sense, more fundamental'.[3]

At the same time, the history of the Exercises and the history of the Society of Jesus have naturally proved inextricably bound up with each other. Chronologically speaking, it is certainly the case that 'Ignatian

[1] For a comprehensive account of this style or category, see Rudolf Wittkower, *Baroque Art: The Jesuit Contribution* (New York: Fordham UP, 1972).
[2] *Perfectae Caritatis*, n. 2.
[3] David Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990), 3.

spirituality' preceded 'Jesuit spirituality': we have accounts of Ignatius 'giving' the Exercises, the fruit of his own spiritual experiences, in Manresa in 1522 and to various people during his time spent at Barcelona, Paris and elsewhere, while the Society was not formally founded until 1540.[4] But the Exercises are difficult to pin down; as Brian O'Leary has written:

> The brevity, conciseness and even density of the text of the Spiritual Exercises were as apparent and problematic to the contemporaries of Ignatius as they have been to subsequent generations. In 1552, [Juan de] Polanco was expressing the hope that Ignatius would complete the Directory of the Exercises which was so much needed. But it seems to have been difficult to get Ignatius to commit his ideas to paper, and so the ideal of having a full Directory written by the author of the Exercises was never realised.[5]

Despite many attempts, both during Ignatius' lifetime and after his death, the definitive version of this Directory only appeared in Florence in 1599, under the supervision of his indefatigable successor, Claudio Acquaviva. In the meantime, of course, the Exercises were used, given and received, in many different formats—sometimes somewhat chaotically.[6]

And yet, the impression one gets from actually reading *Spiritual Exercises* is at first one of order, not to say rigidity. To take one example:

> SPIRITUAL EXERCISES
>
> **To Overcome Oneself, and to Order One's Life, without Reaching a Decision through Some Disordered Affection** (Exx 21)

The apparent rigidity of this 'chapter heading', though, may be balanced by a quite different definition from earlier in the work:

> By the term Spiritual Exercises we mean every method of examination of conscience, meditation, contemplation, vocal or mental prayer, and other spiritual activities, such as will be mentioned later (Exx 1).

This is by no means the only apparent contradiction in the text. What, exactly, is the intent of the Exercises? What is to be their goal?

[4] Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, translated by William J. Young (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972), 113.
[5] Brian O'Leary, 'The Third and Fourth Weeks: What the Directories Say', *The Way Supplement*, 58 (1987), 3.
[6] See Gerard W. Hughes, 'Forgotten Truths of the Spiritual Exercises', *The Way Supplement*, 27 (1976), 71; reprinted in *At Home in God* (Oxford: Way Books, 2015).

The answers that have been suggested to this question tend to fall into one of two categories, which can be summarised with reference to two Jesuit commentators. Léonce de Grandmaison (1868–1927) took *Election*, meaning a choice made after due discernment, as the Exercises' central aim; while Louis Peeters (1868–1937) considered it to be *spiritual unity* with God.[7] Most modern commentators, like Grandmaison, take it for granted that Election, including the all-important idea of discernment of spirits, is the centre of the Exercises. And, again according to David Lonsdale:

> … discernment is at the heart of discipleship, because when we walk a disciple's path we are constantly faced with changing situations, in which we have to discover how to be faithful to the Gospel, and the leading of the Spirit, and true to ourselves.[8]

Furthermore, as Gerard W. Hughes engagingly put it: 'By "gawking" at our own experience in the Review of the Day [the Examen] we can slowly begin to distinguish what is creative in our lives from what is destructive'.[9]

This approach, then, draws together three strands of the Exercises:

1. the Examen of Conscience, to be made twice a day (Exx 24–43);
2. Application of the Senses, in which the events or scene to be meditated upon are brought to the mind's eye, taste, touch, smell and so forth (Exx 121–126);
3. Colloquy, in which the person making the Exercises speaks directly to the figures present in the meditation—most strikingly, of course, to Christ on the Cross (Exx 53).

It is fair to say that these three 'pillars' of Examen, Application of Senses and Colloquy are the foundation of what is usually termed 'Ignatian spirituality' today; they can easily be extracted from the bulky and sometimes confusing text of *Spiritual Exercises* and used to great advantage in a looser context—as, indeed, Ignatius himself suggests in the celebrated Nineteenth Annotation. This begins: 'A person who is involved in public affairs or pressing occupations but educated or intelligent may take an hour and a half each day to perform the Exercises' (Exx 19). Equally

[7] De Guibert, *The Jesuits*, 122.
[8] Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear*, 81.
[9] Gerard W. Hughes, 'Ignatian Spirituality', in *The Bloomsbury Guide to Christian Spirituality*, edited by Peter Tyler and Richard Woods (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 149.

significant is the previous Annotation: 'The Spiritual Exercises should be adapted to the disposition of the persons who desire to make them, that is, to their age, education, and ability' (Exx 18).

Above all, there is an assumption made by Ignatius that there will always be a 'giver' of the Exercises and a 'receiver', and that this should be done one-to-one. But the logistical challenge of this format—once the Society of Jesus had seen its exponential growth in the latter part of the sixteenth century—led to a further loosening of the structure: the phenomenon of 'preached retreats'. This is where a director gives the Exercises to a large group, with or without individual direction. Although the format has proved very durable and popular, it is questionable as to whether it was ever in the original spirit of the Exercises.[10]

So, already, even before the death of Ignatius in 1556, two factors had intervened in the continuing story of the Exercises: first, the inability of Ignatius himself to compile a definitive Directory, and secondly, the growth of the Society beyond the ethos of the 'First Companions'. This has made the process of Ignatian *ressourcement* more than usually challenging, and must bring us to ask once again what the Exercises really are. As well as the density, elusiveness and inherent flexibility of the text, another challenge is raised by the very experiences of Ignatius and his first companions, which involved expectations of extreme asceticism.[11] The marks of this asceticism are to be found everywhere in the Exercises: in the First Week, the first meditation (of five to be made each day) is scheduled for midnight, and is supposed to last at least an hour (Exx 72).[12] The subsequent exercises are prescribed at different times, and retreatants are encouraged to modify their surroundings to suit the subject of their meditation—notably by shutting out the light from the room, not laughing, and 'restrain[ing] my sight' (Exx 79–81).

To ask once again what the Exercises really are

Even when the Exercises move from the penitential First Week into the consideration of the life and passion of Christ that occupies the Second and Third, there is still a large ascetic component, not least in the demands of 'The Kingdom of Christ' and 'The Two Standards'—two meditation set-pieces that appear to be unique to Ignatius (Exx 91–100, 136–148). These ascetic elements constitute the tight structure of the

[10] See Hughes, 'Forgotten Truths of the Spiritual Exercises', 74.
[11] *Autobiography*, n. 25.
[12] In the 'Additional Directives' it is also suggested that fifteen minutes be spent reviewing each meditation (Exx 77).

Exercises, and a *ressourcement* which seeks to capture the Exercises' original charism cannot avoid taking account of them.

Moreover, the additional notes, suggestions and directions seem to multiply as one approaches the Election, towards the end of the Second Week. Recalling that most commentators consider this the central point of the Exercises, it is very instructive to read the perceptive (but unmistakeably hostile) commentary of the French philosopher and critic Roland Barthes:

> The invention of a language, this then is the object of the *Exercises*. This invention is prepared for by a certain number of protocols, which can be assembled under a unique prescription of isolation: retreat in a place shut away, solitary, and above all unaccustomed, lighting conditions (adapted to the subject of the meditation), dispositions of the room where the exercitant is to stay, positions (kneeling, prostrate, standing, sitting, gazing upwards), facial expression, which must be restrained, and above all, of course, the organisation of time, completely governed by the code, from waking to sleeping, including the day's most ordinary occupations (dressing, eating, lying down, sleeping). These prescriptions are not confined to Ignatius' system, they can be found in the economy of all religions, but in Ignatius they have the special quality of preparing the exercise of a language.[13]

Barthes remains perhaps the most astonishingly incisive critic of the Exercises; in his devastating analysis, they come across as a totalising regime of control, the invention of a new and, to Barthes, artificial language. Merely by aligning Ignatius with the utopian Charles Fourier and the notorious libertine the Marquis de Sade, Barthes makes his point:

> From Sade to Fourier, sadism is lost; from Loyola to Sade, divine interlocution. Otherwise, the same writing: the same sensual pleasure in classification, the same mania for cutting up (the body of Christ, the body of the victim, the human soul) ….[14]

The ambiguity, density and difficulty of the text of *Spiritual Exercises* are no accident to Barthes: for him, there is, in fact, no one text: instead there are four—that of Ignatius to the Director, that of the Director to the Exercitant, that of the Exercitant to the Divinity, and that of the Divinity

[13] Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, translated by Richard Miller (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), 48–49.
[14] Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, 3.

to the Exercitant—which he neatly categorises as Literal, Semantic, Allegorical and Anagogic respectively.[15] By this token, we can perhaps see why Ignatius was reluctant to provide a Directory for the Exercises. Some may even find this reluctance somewhat sinister; certainly Barthes' analysis casts considerable doubt on the 'authenticity' of any Election made under the preconditions of such an 'invented language'.

Is there then a way of redeeming the Exercises from the totalising tendency that seems woven into their extreme asceticism? Thankfully, there is, by considering their other aim, the one put forward by Louis Peeters: spiritual unity. It is here, perhaps, that we can start to see how, unwittingly, the reading of *Spiritual Exercises* that has often prevailed has actually limited and distorted its overall character and efficacy. In the quest for an ever more authentic and fundamental text—figuratively speaking, in the quest for that Directory of the Exercises which Ignatius himself never wrote—Ignatian commentators have tended to downplay those aspects which may seem secondary or disordered. And the aesthetic element—the element which was the inspiration for the 'Jesuit Baroque'—clearly comes into this category.

Taking a step back from the Exercises themselves, it is good to ask once again how it was that the Society of Jesus, immersed in such a 'totalising spirituality', helped to engender that most joyous and wonderful of cultures, the Christian Baroque. Ironically, it is another hostile witness, the theologian Catherine Pickstock, who gives us a clue here: 'Baroque architectural space can be seen to repeat the structure of the Cartesian city whose interior has no exterior, and whose centre is both a universal and a *punctum*'.[16]

Pickstock's dense and magisterial treatment of 'the liturgical consummation of philosophy', to borrow the subtitle of her book *After Writing*, takes a very dim view of the Baroque, as, indeed, of the philosopher René Descartes. Descartes, who, somewhat unjustly, lent his name to the epithet 'Cartesian', was himself educated by the Jesuits, and his famous *ego* bears more than a passing resemblance to Roland Barthes' solitary Ignatian retreatant, constructing his own language, the language of *je pense, donc je suis*. Pickstock inveighs against the baroque forms of *trompe l'oeil* and foreshortened perspective, so characteristic of the seventeenth-century 'Jesuit' architecture, and their inherent 'duplicity'. For her their

[15] Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, 43.
[16] Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 1997), 84.

The Apotheosis of St Ignatius, *by Andrea Pozzo, 1685–1694 (detail)*

implicit aim is the denial of 'exteriority', just as the Cartesian *ego* seeks a rationality with no external reference.[17] Although the parallels are not exact, her objection is based on similar grounds to Roland Barthes' analysis of the construction of an 'artificial language' in *Spiritual Exercises*. Both the Exercises and the baroque style are, for these commentators, to do with 'shutting out'.

But are baroque forms actually duplicitous? And do we have to consider the careful control of the environment, either by the Spiritual Exercises or baroque perspective, as being inherently dishonest or artificial?

Let us take, by way of comparison, an example drawn from baroque music, where there is '*trompe l'oreille*' as opposed to *trompe l'oeil,* for instance in Claudio Monteverdi's appropriation of *cori spezzati* (multiple separately placed choirs) and the reassignment of acoustic space; is this duplicitous?[18] Were the newly invented baroque forms of opera and oratorio 'totalising'? It should be noted in passing that the Society of Jesus was an enthusiastic patron of the baroque musical style just as of the Baroque in architecture, and produced a minor, but nonetheless highly

[17] The ceiling of the church of Sant'Ignazio in Rome, executed by the Jesuit lay brother, Andrea Pozzo, is perhaps the *ne plus ultra* of *trompe l'oeil* effects.

[18] For example, in the 'Ave Maris Stella' from the Vespers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p8pc4Env4xA.

talented exponent in the person of Domenico Zipoli.[19] Could it be that the 'reinvention' of space, be it spiritual, architectural or musical, which both Barthes and Pickstock characterize as somewhat sinister, is merely a particular aesthetic approach?

Some may find the idea of considering *Spiritual Exercises* in purely aesthetic terms demeaning—even, perhaps, sacrilegious. But what is missing from all that has been said so far is the idea of celebration, and this is by no means absent from *Spiritual Exercises*:

> I will consider how all good things and gifts descend from above; for example, my limited power from the Supreme and Infinite Power above; and so of justice, goodness, piety, mercy, and so forth—just as the rays come down from the sun, or the rains from their source (Exx 237).

This, from right at the end of *Spiritual Exercises*, is the Contemplation to Attain Love (*Contemplatio ad amorem*), containing the famous prayer 'Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will …' (the *Suscipe*). We know from the early Directories that this Contemplation was often made on each evening of the Fourth Week, and had the same pride of place as the Three Methods of Prayer.[20]

Here, surely, we have found the spiritual well-spring of the Jesuit Baroque, with its imagery of light-rays and fountains and the opening up of our limited power to the infinite power from above. *Trompe l'oeil* and *trompe l'oreille* techniques may well have been pressed into service as representations of the divine power 'descending' into the limited powers of the human being at prayer, but the *Contemplatio* incites the very opposite of interiority. If it is a language that is being constructed, it is nevertheless a consummately relational and celebratory language, and this must have been decisive in the formation of the first Jesuits. Moreover, in the *Contemplatio* we perceive the echo of the (decidedly Thomist) *Principium* with which the Exercises commence: 'Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls'.

This, it seems to me, signals a different strand of spiritual experience from the controlling asceticism that borders, in the Meditation on the

[19] Zipoli was one of several composers who contributed to an opera based on the life of St Ignatius and written at the Jesuit mission in Paraguay.
[20] De Guibert, *Jesuits*, 130 n. 38.

Two Standards, on the militaristic. The retreatant, rather than relying on the triad of Examen, Application of Senses and Colloquy, starts with his or her place in the order of creation, and is led, through the aesthetic contemplation of the life of Christ and the Paschal mystery, to the holy exchange of gifts so delicately expressed in the *Contemplatio*.

It is this binary structure, undoubtedly present in the Exercises, which has been neglected, maybe because it accords less well with the individualistic impulse of much spirituality, Christian and other, which has held sway since the nineteenth century. Such a spirituality has an inherent distrust of the 'aesthetic', because, on the level of the individual, it can too easily lead to self-indulgence. At root, and not without a certain irony, both our hostile commentators also exhibit a distrust of the Baroque which is puritanical: the 'prescription of isolation' that Barthes sees in the Exercises equates to the 'structure of the Cartesian city' that Pickstock bemoans in baroque architecture.

But the aesthetic, liturgical and ecclesiological possibilities of the axis of *Principium–Contemplatio* seem to offer a much more propitious way forward for a fractured and divided world, as indeed, for fractured and divided individuals, because the *Principium* situates the individual in a worshipping community ('Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord'), while the *Contemplatio* invites the individual to offer in return what St Paul called a 'reasonable worship' (Romans 12:1). A tiny hint of this ecclesiological and liturgical dimension of the Exercises (the very phrase seems at first self-contradictory!) can be found in a much-neglected clause of Ignatius' Twentieth Annotation, the one which describes the desirable conditions for someone to make the entire Exercises over thirty days:

> … an exercitant will achieve more progress the more he or she withdraws … for example, by moving out of one's place of residence and taking a different house or room where one can live in the greatest possible solitude, and thus be free to attend Mass and Vespers daily without fear of hindrance … (Exx 20).

Why Vespers? The most obvious answer is that Mass and Vespers were seen conventionally at the time of Ignatius as the standard elements of regular liturgical practice and this may, indeed, be what was in the saint's mind when he added this clause. But it is difficult to square such a conventional formula with the punctilious and perceptive approach Ignatius adopts to the Exercises in general. Could it be that Vespers adds

an additional aesthetic element to the retreatant's experience? One thinks, in particular, of the regularity and yet diversity of the book of Psalms as it occurs in the Office of Vespers; does this, perhaps, add the objective exteriority that Barthes found totally lacking in his analysis?

However this may be, any aesthetic endeavour implicit in the binary axis of *Principium–Contemplatio* is redeemed from self-indulgence precisely by the action of reasoning contemplation. To over-simplify somewhat, the Exercises, viewed from this perspective, aim to give retreatants the experience of 'This is what God has done for me—what then should I do for God?' For a direct manifestation of the reality of this 'holy exchange of gifts', one can do no better than contemplate the ceiling of Sant'Ignazio in Rome, or marvel at the finesse of that admittedly somewhat boastful work, the *Imago primi saeculi*, produced by the Jesuits of the Belgian Province in 1640, the supreme example of the emblem-book genre that the Society embraced as yet another strand of the Jesuit Baroque—and one which sheds a rather different light on Barthes' multi-textual language!

The fact that there was more than one, or maybe more than two, or even more than a hundred ways of making the Exercises is also, perhaps, part of what prevented Ignatius from drawing up a 'proper' Directory for their implementation. It may be tendentious to assert that, in the effort to recapture a supposed 'original charism' (the laudable search for that elusive *ressourcement*) one might fall prey to the very vices to which Roland Barthes and Catherine Pickstock are alerting us. But perhaps we can permit ourselves the tentative conclusion that, in the face of the fractured societies and the fractured and divided Church of our own day, Ignatius, in his inscrutable way, is calling us all to be more baroque!

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Thinking Faith

ON NOT QUENCHING THE SPIRIT

Nicholas King

YOU HAVE TO BE CAREFUL about words. There were ruffled feathers when the Pope indicated a certain dissatisfaction with the Italian translation of the Lord's Prayer, 'do not lead us into temptation', indicating that the God whom we address as 'Father' could not possibly do such a thing. The French bishops, meanwhile, have changed 'do not submit us to temptation' into 'do not let us go into temptation'. Probably it is best to think of the Greek word in question as signifying 'testing' rather than 'temptation'; that makes it more like 'seeing what we are made of' than 'alluring us to make evil choices'.

In the second reading for the Third Sunday of Advent, taken from the earliest document of our entire New Testament, there is a warning against 'quenching the Spirit'. That may be the context in which to contemplate this issue, for the Spirit was the very tangible force that all the New Testament authors knew so well that they never troubled to define it. They knew that Jesus had brought it, and that human beings are often a bit frightened by it. At the point at which we join it in the reading, Paul is very nearly at the end of his First Letter to the Thessalonians and is, in effect, just 'signing off'. He achieves this with a series of eight imperatives, which might be translated as 'rejoice all the time, pray unceasingly, give thanks … don't quench the Spirit; don't disdain prophecy; test everything; hold on to what is beautiful; steer clear of every form of evil'.[1]

Now, unfortunately, the word for 'test' here is different from the one translated as 'temptation' or 'testing' in the Lord's Prayer; in 1 Thessalonians it is the word you use for checking whether gold is pure or not, whether it is the real thing. So it is not really connected with the

[1] Scripture translations in this article are the author's own.

issues that were so widely bruited after the Pope's comments. But there is something important going on in this set of imperatives and prohibitions: there is an openness about the former to the unceasing work of God, the exhortations to 'rejoice', 'pray' and 'give thanks' (from which we have our word 'eucharist'). The prohibitions, on the other hand, warn us against closing down that work; the Thessalonians (and we) are not to 'put out the Spirit's fire', nor to 'regard prophecy as insignificant'. Instead, our task is to listen out for what 'rings true', and to 'hold fast to what is noble'. Do you see how in all this we are being warned not to close our hearts to the Spirit?

And there lies the clue; in this early, heady time of the first preaching of the gospel, our forerunners, and especially Paul, were aware of the freshness that had broken into the world in the shape of Jesus' gospel, and above all in the decisive event of the resurrection. You cannot legislate for that, only try and keep the windows open for the powerful wind that is the Spirit, or keep the flame burning, not give in to our temptation immediately to quench it. Words matter very much indeed; and they can exercise a heavy weight, resisting the Spirit's gentle whisper, unless we keep our lightness intact. For Paul, as for his beloved Jesus, the function of the divine Word is to set us free, not enslave us; but when we get too

Pentecost, *by Simon de Wobreck, sixteenth century*

exercised about meanings, we can too easily forget that our task is to rejoice, pray and give thanks.

That important function of words in part accounts, of course, for the anger that has been provoked by the recent hapless translation into English of the Roman Missal; both the outcome (the language in which it ended up) and the process (the ostentatious refusal to consult) seemed to go against the freedom that is certainly the mark of the Spirit. There were those who thought that after a while people would get used to the new translation; but that is now manifestly not the case. Words matter; and so does the freedom that Jesus and the Spirit bring.

Finally, to return to the question where we started, of God leading us into temptation: sometimes we need to gaze in humility at the words of a difficult text and see where freedom lies. The fact that a text is difficult can never be an excuse for getting rid of it or ignoring it, or trying to change it; our task is to stay with it, and wrestle with it, to see what God might be saying. Above all, let us apply the Pauline injunction from what he says to his Thessalonians, and 'test everything, and hold on to what is beautiful'. If we do that, then we shall not be far from what God is seeking to say to us and, above all, we shall be refusing to quench the Spirit.

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Thinking Faith

TRANSLATING THE 'OUR FATHER'

Joseph A. Munitiz

THE BEST-KNOWN PRAYER, used by Christians everywhere, is a translated text: we no longer have, if it was ever in common use, the version spoken by Jesus Christ in Aramaic or Hebrew. Our earliest version is in Greek, and that version presents a series of problems to any translator.[1]

A distinction is needed here between a translation and an exegesis (explanation): the translator's task is (roughly) to express in the words of one language what the words of another language are saying, though clearly excessive literalness may not achieve this. But in some cases the meaning of those words in the target language may not be clear. A good example are the words 'in heaven' that follow the address to God the Father in the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9–13). Strictly, the Greek here says 'in the heavens' (plural), and the recent translation of David Bentley Hart respects this. But the problem remains. The meaning here is not obvious: people in the first century were working with a notion of 'heaven' very different from that common today. The translator may feel that to convey what Christ *meant* here it would be better to write 'in the universe', but that would be to go beyond the task of the translator into that of the exegete. Similar problems arise with regard to many of the terms found in the prayer: 'name', 'kingdom', 'will', and so on.

If the translator simply tries to be faithful to the Greek words, the major problem is with the word *epiousion* (standardly translated as 'daily'), which is a *hapax*, or at least a word rarely found in other Greek texts. Etymologically it is related to the notion of *what is coming*. But Liddell and Scott, in the standard Greek–English dictionary, explain this to mean 'and so current day'. The Greek fathers, conveniently listed and quoted

[1] Notable recent translations include Nicholas King, *The New Testament* (Buxhall: Kevin Mayhew, 2004) and David Bentley Hart, *The New Testament: A Translation* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2017). The translation into modern Greek, very different from New Testament Greek, was published by the United Bible Societies, Athens, in 1985.

in the great patristic dictionary edited by G. W. H. Lampe, are divided: some, notably Origen, think it pertains fully to the future ('of the world to come'), but others, among them Gregory of Nyssa, opt for today ('daily'). In modern Greek, the Bible Society translation gives boldly 'necessary for life', with a footnote alternative 'of the new world', both of which seem to be exegetical in character. Of two modern English versions, one gives 'for the day ahead' (Hart) and the other 'for the coming day' (Nicholas King).

But there are two further points where doubts arise: Pope Francis has drawn attention to the first when he suggests abandoning 'Lead us not into temptation' as being false both to the Greek and to the notion of a kindly God. Hart supports him and offers, 'And do not bring us to trial', which corrects the Latin *et ne nos inducas in tentationem*, and is faithful to the Greek. But the final words, *tou ponérou*, are also worth attention: 'from the Evil One', suggests King, which is probably correct given the role of the Evil One in Matthew's Gospel (5:37; 13:19, 38); Hart gives a less 'diabolical' version, 'from him who is wicked'—so anyone who might do us harm.

Of course, when we pray a much-loved prayer few people pay much attention to the nicety of the words: *cor ad cor loquitur*, 'heart speaks to heart', as Newman reminded us. However, we are people with minds and it is good to reflect occasionally.

Joseph A. Munitiz SJ, a Byzantine scholar and editor of Greek texts, has also translated a selection of the writings of St Ignatius and the *Memoriale* of Gonçalves da Câmara; he has worked in Leuven and Oxford, and is now living in London.

IGNATIAN PERSEVERANCE

Guidance from St Ignatius of Loyola for Those Tempted to Abandon a Permanent Vocation

Gabriel Mary Fiore

AT THE TIME of Ignatius' death, the Society of Jesus had almost one thousand members—an astonishing amount of growth in the sixteen years since its foundation.[1] Despite this success, the first decades of the Society also saw numerous departures.[2] 'For Italy between 1540 and 1565 there is reliable indication that about 35 per cent of the candidates left or were dismissed', including about 30 per cent of members already with the Society for ten years or more.[3] While Ignatius understood some departures as a normal part of the discernment process, scholars have suggested that concern over defections from the Society motivated the *Autobiography*'s heavy emphasis on perseverance.[4] The text describes the pilgrim overcoming strong temptations to abandon his vocation.

Ignatius occasionally advised religious in situations of crisis, such as a young scholastic dissatisfied with his conventual life, a middle-aged nun despairing over her own lack of spiritual progress and the faults of her sisters, a group of brothers convinced that the Society was not prayerful enough and needed reform, and a convent of nuns deeply divided over issues of observance and reform.[5] One sister from this troubled convent desired only to 'get away from all this chaos and confusion'.[6]

[1] George Ganss, 'General Introduction', in *Ignatius of Loyola: The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works* (Mahwah: Paulist, 1991), 46.

[2] Barton Geger, 'Hidden Theology in the "Autobiography" of St Ignatius', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 46/3 (2014), 5; John O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard UP, 1995), 58.

[3] O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 56. Final vows were usually made after ten to fifteen years.

[4] Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 5.

[5] See Ignatius to Bartolomeo Romano, 26 January 1555; to Teresa Rejadell, October 1547; to Francisco Borja, July 1549; and to Jeronima Oluja and Teresa Rejadell 5 April 1549, in *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions*, translated by Martin E. Palmer, John W. Padberg and John L. McCarthy (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), 535–536, 208–209, 266–283, 263–264.

[6] Teresa Rejadell to Ignatius, 5 November 1549, MHSJ *Epistolae mixtae ex variis Europae locis ab anno 1537 ad 1556 scriptae* 2, 308, as cited by Fredrik Heiding, *Ignatian Spirituality at Ecclesial Frontiers* (Oxford: privately printed, 2012), 138 n.106.

So, what should a consecrated person do if religious life becomes unbearable and his or her entire commitment feels like a mistake? What spiritual teachings does Ignatius offer to a consecrated person questioning his or her vocation?

I have selected five texts from Ignatian sources which provide helpful responses to this common spiritual problem. From his own temptations and his accompaniment of struggling souls, Ignatius gained a wisdom about perseverance that is valuable for religious—and for all Christians committed to permanent vocations. My primary aim is *historical*, that is, to present Ignatius' own response to specific difficulties of the spiritual life. Still, the texts gathered here are themselves *pastoral* and should be useful for contemporary spiritual directors, formators and religious.

Permanent Vocations and the Call to Self-Amendment

The Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises culminates in the 'making of a sound and good election' (Exx 169–189). A well-discerned choice incarnates a person's ultimate purpose into his or her present circumstances (Exx 169). However, some matters are no longer open to a new discernment and choice. Stable states of life, 'such as priesthood, marriage, and the like', are examples of what the saint calls 'an unchangeable election' (Exx 171).

For someone deep in the throes of a vocation crisis, Ignatius' words may be painfully sobering: 'In the case of an unchangeable election, once it has been made, there is nothing further to elect, since the first cannot be undone' (Exx 172). While some may dive into permanent states without sufficient discernment or moved by disordered affections, a poor initial choice does not dispense them from following through with their commitments. A person feeling regrets is invited 'to repent [of past motivations] and then explore how to lead a good life *within the decision made*'. Ignatius' firmness on this point should be kept in mind when employing his other rules for discernment. If the principle of 'unchangeable election' is taken seriously, it is hard to conceive how use of the Exercises could lead a person to walk away from a permanent vocation.

Joseph A. Tetlow addresses this issue in his practical handbook on giving the Exercises:

> Are the Ignatian Exercises a good context to … decide whether to withdraw [an] original permanent commitment? Probably not, judging from experience. Those who begin the Exercises determined to

> decide whether to honour a permanent commitment that they made validly but badly seem almost without exception to withdraw from the commitment.

By contrast, he reiterates Ignatius' own recommendation:

> Rather, when I find that I have made a permanent commitment for poor motives, I would do well to … recommit myself, hoping to grow into better motives …. I show my sorrow and repentance to the Lord …. I plan ways to make amends to God and others …. And then I set myself to live out my permanent commitment.[7]

At the end of the section of the Exercises on election, Ignatius returns to persons in a permanent vocation. Where a change of state is not possible, they should seek instead to amend their own life (Exx 189). The first step is to envision the chosen state anew in the light of their ultimate purpose: the glory of God and eternal life. Ignatius invites retreatants to see an 'unchangeable election' not as a dead end but *as a positive means* to personal fulfilment. Even a painful situation, such as a troubled marriage or a decadent conventual life, can become a place of personal sanctification and heroic service to God. Exercitants are asked to consider possibilities for transforming their current situation in light of this purpose. Instead of hoping to change circumstances beyond their control, Ignatius invites retreatants *to reform themselves*: 'In all spiritual matters, the more one divests oneself of self-love, self-will, and self-interests, the more progress one will make' (Exx 189).

In his government of the Society, Ignatius seems to have been fairly consistent in maintaining this principle of unchangeable election, while at the same time tactfully dealing with individual cases of vocational crisis. An eyewitness account from 1555 describes the saint as 'very gentle' with troubled novices (before First Vows) but 'very rigorous' with members already under religious vows and who had been with the Society for a long time. When a Jesuit was questioning his vocation, Ignatius sought first to help him to resolve his issues, find peace and peacefully resume his commitment. However, for those who persisted in their decision to leave, Ignatius stressed that they be treated with utmost respect and love. Ignatius allowed a few Jesuits to transfer to other religious institutes. Some professed members were expelled, usually for obstinacy, but no cases are

[7] Joseph A. Tetlow, *Choosing Christ in the World: A Handbook for Directing the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola according to Annotations Eighteen and Nineteen* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1999), 159.

narrated of members being dismissed after Final Vows nor of priests leaving their ministry altogether.[8]

Contemporary directors may feel that greater flexibility than Ignatius observed is called for when assisting persons committed to permanent vocations. Indeed, some situations may be more complex than those encountered in the sixteenth-century sources. Ignatius' teachings and pastoral practices are presented here as a point of reference.

Ignatius' Three Temptations and the Grace of Perseverance

Soon after his conversion, Ignatius was himself troubled in his own vocation. Barton Geger sees in the *Autobiography* three distinct temptations against Ignatius' calling 'to follow Christ without reserve'.[9]

The saint's *first temptation* took place at Loyola at the end of his convalescence. An elder brother, Martin, led Ignatius around the family home, speaking 'with much feeling' about his promising future and family duties. 'With the purpose of detaching him from the good desire

Loyola Castle, Ignatius' family home

[8] *Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The Memoriale of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara*, translated by Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz (Leominster: Gracewing, 2005), 251. About a dozen cases are described in detail, referenced under 'temptations against vocation'.

[9] Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 11–19.

he had', Martin begged Ignatius not to throw his life away. Without debate, the saint 'slipped away from his brother' (n. 12). Martin's attempt was no sinful seduction but rather presented a panorama of the honest goods promised by a privileged professional and family life. Thus, Ignatius' first temptation was a possible return to 'normal life' with the best things that the world had to offer.[10] Resolutely fixed on Christ, the pilgrim persevered in his pursuit of evangelical perfection.

After a few peaceful months at Manresa, a *second temptation* assailed the new convert. Ignatius had frequent visions of a hovering serpent, luminous and beautiful. Appearing on and off, the spectacle captivated Ignatius' attention and emotions, derailing the pilgrim's interior peace. About the same time, a troubling interior voice pestered him: 'And how are you going to be able to stand this life the seventy years you're meant to live?' Barton Geger observes that 'this life' was a favourite expression among the First Companions for their apostolic life, which makes it clear that Ignatius' new religious vocation was again under attack.[11] The tempter isolated the demands of a devout life from its heavenly source and finality. Like all temptations, this ploy contains a partial truth: Ignatius could not sustain this life alone. However, the enemy deftly tried to turn the pilgrim *away from* God's grace and *towards* his own insufficient strength.[12] Ignatius' response is swift and firm: 'Sensing that it was from the enemy, he answered with great vehemence, "You wretch! Can you promise me one hour of life?" And in that way he overcame the temptation and was left calm.' (*Autobiography*, n. 20)

Soon after, a *third temptation* took the form of an intense trial of depression and scruples lasting some two months.[13] He found himself 'sometimes so much without relish that he found no savour either in praying or in hearing mass or in any other prayer he made ….' (n. 21) Despite a three-day general confession at Montserrat, acute scruples

[10] Saint Anthony's first temptation was similar and may have been known to da Câmara: 'First, he tried to drag Anthony away from the life to which he had committed himself. He made Anthony remember his wealth, his sister's protection, and his family's social status. The devil tried to stimulate in Anthony a desire for material things, the short-lived honors of the world … and the many other attractions that belong to an indulgent life.' (Athanasius, *Life of Saint Anthony*, translated by H. Ellershaw, n. 5, in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, volume 4, *St Athanasius: Selected Works and Letters* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957])

[11] Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 13.

[12] A similar strategy is employed against Saint Anthony: 'He reminded Anthony of the great difficulty in obtaining the life of virtue. He also reminded him of the body's weakness. [Thus,] he created great confusion in Anthony's thoughts, hoping to call him back from his intentions.' (Athanasius, *Life*, n. 5).

[13] June to July 1522 according to Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 378 n. 9.

constantly raised doubts about his confessions (nn. 22–23). At times he shouted out to God for help and was often tempted to throw himself down from some height (n. 24). Finally, the dread of his own sins became so burdensome that 'there came to him some feelings of disgust for the life he was leading, and some impulses to cease from it' (n. 25). Since Ignatius had already rejected suicide, this repulsion 'for the life he was leading' must refer once more to his religious vocation.[14] Despite his most sincere efforts, the convert remained a sinner. Disgusted with himself and disillusioned with the devout life he had chosen, Ignatius was ready to call it quits. Then, suddenly, God delivered the pilgrim, so that 'he woke up as if from sleep'. With new clarity, Ignatius recognised his scruples as an evil spirit and never felt them again, 'holding it for certain that Our Lord in his mercy had willed to liberate him' from this final temptation (n. 25).

Three aspects of the temptations narrative are of special importance to our theme. One, all three temptations take aim at Ignatius' newly adopted vocation. The enemy does not simply attempt to lure the young convert *into* a base life of sin, but rather seeks to turn Ignatius *away from* his dedication to Christ. The first temptation presents the goods of the secular life he had given up for a radical gospel lifestyle. The second temptation stresses the rigorous demands of that calling and the devotee's inadequate capacities to sustain it. The third temptation attacks the very desire for perfection that drove Ignatius' vocation. The saint only emerges victorious by surrendering to God both his own sinfulness and his will for perfection without, however, renouncing his fundamental commitment to following Christ.

Two, these temptations become valuable learning experiences which help the saint to live his vocation better. After the third, for example, the *Autobiography* describes the pilgrim recognising 'the means through which that [evil] spirit had come'. Lucidity about his struggles led Ignatius to a stronger will and greater freedom. The saint translated the wisdom he gained from these temptations into useful counsels for other souls.[15]

Three, the virtue of perseverance is emphasized throughout the temptations narrative. Geger observes that the verb 'to persevere' appears seven times in the *Autobiography*,[16] all around the period when the young convert is tempted (nn. 12–25). Ignatius 'perseveres' in spiritual reading,

[14] Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 16.
[15] The lessons learned became Rules 1 and 2 of the First Week and Rules 4 and 6 of the Second Week in the Exercises. See Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 19.
[16] See *Autobiography*, nn. 11, 15, 20, 21, 23, 25, 27.

in resisting disordered passions, in regular confession and communion, in set times of prayer, in fasting and so on. Repetition of the verb invites the reader to connect Ignatius' perseverance with his growing stability and happiness (n. 20). The spiritual tradition has understood perseverance as both a grace and a virtue.[17] In the life of Ignatius, an extraordinary grace delivered him from depression, while grace also inspired his steadfast discipline and piety.

Letter to Sr Teresa Rejadell and the magis *Principle*

An early letter of Ignatius to Sr Teresa Rejadell develops a key theme implicit in the temptation narrative. In 1536 the Benedictine nun wrote to the saint, requesting spiritual direction. At the time, Sr Teresa was not yet experiencing a major vocation crisis. Some years later, however, bitter divisions in her monastery, as well as despair over her own faults, brought the nun to the point of wanting to leave.[18]

In his first letter to Sr Teresa, Ignatius identifies the strategies by which 'the enemy is causing you confusion'. At first, the devil's temptations do not aim at leading a religious directly *into sin* but rather 'to draw you away from [God's] *greater* service' and from her own inner peace. With devout souls, 'who desire and have begun to serve God our Lord', the enemy seeks to wound their resolve by raising obstacles and sowing doubts. As in Ignatius' first temptation, the devil evokes the loss of goods such as family, friends and comforts. As in the second, he questions a religious' ability to maintain an ascetic life:

> This is the first weapon with which he attempts to wound them, namely, 'How are you going to live your whole life amid such penance, with no enjoyment from friends, relatives, or possessions, leading a lonely life and never having any ease? There are other, less perilous ways you can save your soul.'[19]

[17] On perseverance as virtue, see Antonio Royo-Marin, *Theology of Christian Perfection* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2012), 471: 'The virtue of perseverance inclines one to persist in the practice of the good in spite of the difficulties involved in this continued practice'. On perseverance as grace, compare Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2.2 q. 137 a. 4: 'Perseverance has a double meaning. First, it denotes the habit of perseverance which is a virtue. And as a virtue, it requires the gift of habitual grace as do the other infused virtues. Secondly, it may be understood as signifying the act of perseverance which endures until death, and in this sense, it requires not only habitual grace but also the gracious help of God, which sustains a man in good until the end of life.' Of course, every act of infused virtue implies an actual grace (Royo-Marin, *Theology of Christian Perfection*, 42).

[18] Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, October 1547; Teresa Rejadell to Ignatius, 5 November 1549.

[19] Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536, in *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions*, 18–19.

The demonic device that Ignatius unmasks is subtle. Leveraging the sacrifices of a consecrated life and clouding over its graces, the enemy seeks to lure the religious away from what is 'greater' for a life that is 'other' and 'less' demanding. Ignatius elaborates in *Spiritual Exercises*:

> We should pay close attention to whole train of our thoughts …. If it ends up in something evil or diverting, or in *something less good* than what the soul was originally proposing to do … all this is a clear sign that it comes from the evil spirit …. (Exx 333)

As he explained to Sr Teresa, Ignatius encouraged exercitants and disciples 'to desire the ever greater, to go "from good to better" in the divine service'.[20] This *magis* principle (from the Latin for 'more' or 'greater') signifies 'a striving for excellence, a determination to do more, an unwillingness to settle for the familiar'.[21] For the Jesuit Pope Francis, 'the *magis* is the fire, the fervour of action that rouses us from slumber'.[22] In the *Spiritual Exercises*, the *magis* is invoked in key passages: true 'knights' of Christ, 'those who desire to show greater devotion and to distinguish themselves in total service to their eternal King and universal Lord, will not only offer their persons for the labour, but go further still', in freely accepting sufferings and privations (Exx 97). The meditation on 'Three Types of Persons' (Exx 149–157) is made 'as an aid towards embracing what is *better*' (Exx 149) and 'what will be *more* pleasing to the divine goodness' (Exx 151).

A move in the opposite direction, from a better good or state to a lesser, 'wounds' the spiritual life, even if the matter is not objectively sinful. A consecrated person considering a return to secular life or relaxing religious discipline clearly fits into this category. Ignatius encourages Sr Teresa to 'resist' such 'arrows' by 'refusing to consent to the enemy's suggestions'. He invites religious to combat such thoughts and hold fast to what is objectively 'better', even if the fire to strive for the *magis* is momentarily dormant. Thus, Ignatian perseverance involves not only fidelity to one's vocational commitment but also resisting the temptation to settle for what is easier rather than striving for God's greater glory.

Resisting the temptation to settle for what is easier

[20] Ignatius to Teresa Rejadell, 18 June 1536; and see Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 21, citing Exx 331 and 335.
[21] Jim Manney, *Ignatian Spirituality A to Z* (Chicago: Loyola, 2017), 169. The *magis* principle appears in the *Autobiography* for the first time in n. 36.
[22] Pope Francis, address to the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, in GC 36.

Letter to Bartholomew Romano and Resisting the horror loci

An exchange of letters between Ignatius and a Jesuit scholastic highlights another challenge common among religious. Bartholomew Romano's troublesome behaviour had been reported by his local authority to Ignatius as Superior General. Ignatius wrote, gently reprimanding him but opening the door to further dialogue.[23] Romano wrote back, complaining about his college and requesting a transfer to another location. Ignatius answered promptly, explaining that Bartholomew's real problem lay not in his location but in himself.[24]

One of the great teachers of western monasticism, John Cassian, exercised a considerable influence on Ignatius.[25] Cassian's classic list of eight 'principal vices' which hinder monks from attaining contemplation includes *acedia*, a feeling of lassitude and 'disgust of the heart' (*taedium cordis*) towards one's vocation.[26] Cassian observed that unhappy monks tended to transpose their own spiritual sadness on to the place where they resided.[27] According to Evagrius Ponticus, a teacher of Cassian, *acedia* leads to a growing dissatisfaction with where one is and for one's chosen state of life:

> *Acedia* instills a dislike for the place and for his state of life itself and the idea that love has disappeared from the brethren and there is no one to console him … leading him to desire another place … reasoning that pleasing the Lord is not a question of being in a particular location.[28]

Cassian brilliantly describes the *horror loci,* the distaste of a religious for his or her current community and dream of a better life elsewhere:

> A monk makes a great deal of far-off and distant monasteries, describing such places as more suited to progress and more conducive to salvation, and also depicting the fellowship of the brothers there as pleasant and of an utterly spiritual cast. Everything that lies at hand, on the contrary, is harsh … and there [is] nothing edifying among the brothers who

[23] Ignatius to Bartholomew Romano, 24 November 1554, in *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions*, 526.
[24] Ignatius to Bartholomew Romano, 26 January 1555, in *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions*, 535–536.
[25] Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 23–24. See also Javier Melloni, *The Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola in the Western Tradition* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2000), 20.
[26] See John Cassian, *The Institutes*, translated by Boniface Ramsey (Mahwah: Paulist, 2000), books 5–12; Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 24. See also Jean-Charles Nault, *The Noonday Devil: Acedia, the Unnamed Evil of Our Times* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2013), 51.
[27] Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 25.
[28] Evagrius, *Practicus* 12.5, as cited in Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 25.

> dwell there …. Therefore, he says that he cannot be saved if he remains in that place ….[29]

Among the various remedies for *acedia*, the early monks stress *holy tears*, the recognition of one's need for salvation and *perseverance*: fidelity to one's daily routine and rule of life, resisting the urge to flee one's cell or local community.[30]

Ignatius drew wisdom from attention to his own experience as well as from Cassian and the monastic tradition on *acedia* and the *horror loci*. In his second letter to Bartholomew, Ignatius insists that the causes of the scholastic's spiritual 'unrest' lie not in his location but in his own soul. Romano will not progress until he abandons dreams of a transfer and recognises his own need for conversion, recalling the two monastic remedies for *acedia* mentioned above.

> You are much mistaken in thinking that the cause of your unrest, or lack of progress in the Lord, is the place where you are or your superiors or your brethren. It comes from inside, not from without …. You can change residence, superiors, and brethren; but unless you change your interior person, you will never do well; you will be the same wherever you are until you become humble, obedient, devout, and mortified in your self-love. And so this is the change you should seek, not the other; I mean, you should try to change the interior man and recall him to God's service. Give up the thought of any external change: you will either be good there in Ferrara or in none of the colleges ….[31]

This firm exhortation should not be taken as a blanket condemnation of all transfers by religious to other locations or even to other institutes. Nonetheless, the spiritual teaching of Ignatius, and of the monastic tradition, is poignant. A struggling religious will often tend to project dissatisfaction with his or her interior life on to the outer environment. Changing the 'interior person' may be harder than changing locations, but Ignatius believes that it is sometimes necessary.

The Contemplation to Attain Love and the Grace of Renewal

While the texts considered thus far have addressed various challenges to a religious vocation, the Contemplation to Attain Love, or *Contemplatio* as

[29] Cassian, *Institutes*, 10.2, as cited in Geger, 'Hidden Theology', 30.
[30] Nault, *Noonday Devil*, 37–38 and 41–42. Cassian, for example, recommends the repetition of Psalm 70:1, 'Be pleased, O God, to deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me!'
[31] Ignatius to Bartholomew Romano, 26 January 1555.

it is sometimes called, is entirely different. It is a meditation which appears in *Spiritual Exercises* at the close of the Fourth Week (Exx 230–237), placing retreatants before the mystery of God's love and inviting a personal response.[32] I believe that this meditation could be of help to someone shaken in his or her religious vocation and seeking renewal. I shall approach it from three angles: eschatological, contemplative and active or missionary.

First, the *Contemplatio* may be used as a sort of anticipation of personal eschatology. The 'First Prelude' invites exercitants to imagine themselves standing before God amid the heavenly court of angels and saints (Exx 232). The particular judgment that awaits each person at death represents the end of a soul's temporal journey and active response to God's grace.[33] The separated soul will probably see how God's presence, gifts and providence were at work in his or her life, with nothing left to do but surrender to God's loving mercy. This culminating act is anticipated in Ignatius' *Suscipe* prayer: 'Take, Lord, and receive … all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you, O Lord ….' (Exx 234)

For the consecrated person, this eschatological meditation puts the current situation in proper perspective: *What is the value of this present choice or problem in light of eternal life?* Ignatius uses this meditative device elsewhere in the Exercises as an aid to discernment.[34] A reminder of their final end might help struggling religious to relativise the pull of secondary goods and to avoid the allure of a temporary escape from present hardships. Moreover, the eschatological setting of the First Prelude gives a particular colour to Ignatius' usual invitation to 'ask for what I desire' in the Second Prelude.

In the context of meeting God face to face, this prompt recalls the first moment of Christian discipleship: 'When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?"' (John 1:38). The meditation may inspire a religious to embrace anew his or her chosen state as a response to God's gifts: *I chose this path, this community, these counsels and rule for you, Lord, in answer to your call and your gifts, in order to be with you for all eternity.* Ignatius' *Suscipe* gives voice to the core offering of any religious consecration. The prayer places the believer before God

[32] For differing views on when the *Contemplatio* should be used, see Ian Tomlinson, 'The Contemplation to Attain Love', *The Way*, 50/4 (October 2011), 65–66 and Michael Buckley, 'The Contemplation to Attain Love', *The Way Supplement*, 24 (Spring 1975), 92–104.
[33] See *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1021.
[34] See Exx 153 and 186–187.

with open hands, just as we will enter heaven.[35] 'Give me your love and your grace, for that is enough for me.'

The Second Prelude gives a decidedly contemplative accent to this final meditation, requesting 'interior knowledge' of the goods received from God (Exx 233). Throughout the Exercises, Ignatius invites exercitants to meditate upon God at work *in the life of Christ*. This final exercise turns their gaze towards God at work *in the life of the exercitants themselves*.[36] For Ignatius, a fresh, contemplative outlook on one's life is sure to inspire 'profound gratitude' (Exx 233).

The First Point asks me to 'ponder with deep affection how much God our Lord has done for me' (Exx 234). The entire divine economy, as well as my baptism and religious vocation, can all be viewed as part of one 'divine plan' by which God has shared with me his own blessed life, 'even his very self'. This truth provokes both 'deep affection' and the desire to offer the Lord, in turn, 'all my possessions and myself along with them' (Exx 234). The Second Point stresses God's indwelling presence in all creatures and in myself as God's special temple. The Third Point presents God actively at work on my behalf, loving me and providing for my well-being. For someone in crisis, Ignatius' insistence that God is present (Exx 235) and at work on my behalf *in all things* (Exx 236) shines a ray of hope on a difficult situation: 'We know that *all things* work together for good for those who love God …. *In all these things* we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.' (Romans 8:28, 37) The Fourth Point views all good things in this life as descending from above: 'By starting with a love that descends from God above, retreatants will view all created reality as being on its way to God … [and] will find God in all things and by means of them'.[37]

Thus, in the school of St Ignatius, the soul learns to contemplate God *in all things*, goods and hardships alike, and to make use of both as an occasion for self-offering. The *Contemplatio* places religious before the original and continual source of their vocation. Religious consecration is a free response to the gifts of God, discovered as gifts *to me*: 'What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people.' (Psalm 116:12–14)

[35] See *The Prayers of St Thérèse of Lisieux: The Act of Oblation*, translated by Aletheia Kane (Washington, DC: ICS, 1997), 54.
[36] Tomlinson, 'Contemplation to Attain Love', 70.
[37] Ganss, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 419, n.113.

Finally, some commentators see an *active* and even a *missionary* dimension in the *Contemplatio*. Ignatius expects that meditation on God's goodness will not only fill the soul with affection and gratitude but will also prompt a total offering to God in return. From the outset, the *Contemplatio* emphasizes that true love is not only affective but effective: 'Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words …. Love consists in a mutual communication between persons. That is, the one who loves gives what he has ….' (Exx 230–31) Already the *Suscipe* prayer expresses the retreatant's desire 'to give himself or herself to Christ … a total giving that may include a reformation of life or a new calling'.[38]

For someone already committed to a permanent vocation, the offering of self to God will take the form of the life already chosen. Thus, a renewed gift of self, for religious, will probably involve some amendment of life (Exx 189)—a more faithful observance of things that have been lost over time, or the choice of new means of loving Christ and their brethren. For Ignatius, this active or effective dimension of love is a vital part of the 'unitive way' of the Fourth Week: 'Discernment, decision-making and doing the will of God develop union with Christ …. Decision-making is the main unitive factor in Ignatian spirituality'.[39] Ignatius does not prescribe *how* retreatants should respond to divine love but trusts in the power of God to lead the soul to both contemplation and action. One scholar believes that the *Contemplatio* offers an experience that is analogous to the grace of Pentecost: an 'overwhelming experience of God's love' which 'calls forth from the individual a full return of love' and 'sends the retreatant forth into the world like the disciples at Pentecost, with a new sense of purpose in life … with a new sense of personal mission'.[40]

[38] Tomlinson, 'Contemplation to Attain Love', 71.
[39] Tomlinson, 'Contemplation to Attain Love', 72
[40] Joseph Bracken, 'The Contemplation to Attain Love as an Experience of Pentecost', *The Way*, 52/4 (October 2013), 72 and 74.

Ignatian Perseverance

St Ignatius' gifts of discernment and his Spiritual Exercises have made him one of the great spiritual directors in church history. From personal experience, spiritual direction and monastic traditions, Ignatius gained practical wisdom about the temptations common among religious. The five texts presented above provide valuable insights for perseverance in a permanent vocation. Although permanent vocations, such as marriage or religious life, are no longer open to election, consecrated persons still exercise discernment and freedom *within* their chosen state, by amending their life, remaining faithful to their promises, resisting temptation and creatively seeking out ways to love *more* or *better*.

Spiritual trials may at times push a consecrated person to the brink of wanting to give up and walk away from his or her vocation. Ignatius' voice, throughout these texts, is both gentle and firm: *You will either be a saint* there *or not at all*. However, as an experienced director of souls, Ignatius' assistance is not limited to exhortations to reform oneself and persevere. His pastoral genius shines differently in the *Contemplatio*, where the saint places the consecrated person before the very source of his or her vocation. Contemplating God's loving gifts with renewed faith and gratitude, a religious, no matter how fragile and tried, cannot but pray, together with Ignatius: *Take, Lord, and receive … all that I have and possess. You, Lord, have given all that to me. I now give it back to you again …. Give me your love and your grace, for that is* still *enough for me ….*

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MINISTRY IN LIGHT AND MINISTRY IN DARKNESS

Discerning a Vocation

Caroline Worsfold

IN THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES there are significant moments in the life of Jesus and the apostles that are located specifically in the light or in the dark. By focusing upon these events, and thinking about them using insights from my own ministry as a hospice chaplain, I should like to draw out some aspects of the stories that could constitute a 'ministry in light' and a corresponding 'ministry in darkness'. Other key events in Jesus' life will then be examined that further expand an understanding of these two differing types of ministry. Both are needed to make known the life and witness of Christ, but I argue that their differences may offer a framework for helping Christians to discern what specific path is right for them.

Ministry in the light is concerned with telling a specific story of God's covenantal relationship with God's people. In Christian terms it is about making disciples and building up the Church. There is an element of teaching and establishing the community of believers. Whereas the stories that happen in the dark tell of momentary but significant encounters with people from whom we never hear again. The themes that we find in these stories are the universal ones of birth, suffering, death and what lies beyond death.

Darkness and the Cross

At the beginning of creation God takes the initial action of dividing the day into two parts. God called light 'day' and darkness he called 'night'. 'And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.' (Genesis 1:5) There is darkness and there is light; both are needed for the first day to exist but there is a distinctiveness about both parts of the time frame, which is extended on the fourth day by the appearance of two lights; 'the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night' (Genesis 1:16).

The Way, 58/1 (January 2019), 91–100

Darkness is the place where the day begins, as is recognised in Judaism when the start of the sabbath is marked by the lighting of candles on Friday evening. The darkness in the Gospels evokes most obviously for me the experience of Jesus on the cross on Good Friday. 'From noon on, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.' (Matthew 27:45) When Jesus is nailed to the cross, darkness falls at the time when the sun should be at its midday peak. The fact that the 'greater light' is obscured makes evident the significance of this crucified person and the cosmic impact of his death. Darkness is a real experience of the lack of strong light but it is also a metaphorical experience of despair, loneliness and the ultimate abandonment that parting from loved ones can bring. The cross remains an image of suffering with which some people identify in their use of language. In difficult times—illness, accidents or personal tragedy—they may talk about a 'cross to bear' or a feeling of being 'crucified'.

The Crucified Christ, *by Peter Paul Rubens, 1610–1611*

As people approach the end of their lives they may be acutely aware of their own physical diminishment as they move from activity to passivity, from being the one who is in control to the one to whom things are done. Here, too, they have an experience of becoming like Christ in his passion. This is explored fully by W. H. Vanstone in his book *The Stature of Waiting*, which charts the movements of Christ from his appearance before the Sanhedrin to his journey to the cross in Mark's Gospel, and shows how the text moves from using active to passive verbs in describing what happens: 'now He is no longer there as the active and initiating subject of what is done: He is there as the recipient, the object, of what is done'.[1]

[1] W. H. Vanstone, *The Stature of Waiting* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1982), 20.

Dying may be a physical place of darkness as a person slips into weariness, with longer periods of sleep, then into a coma and finally into death. There is a corresponding withdrawal from the activities of everyday living and a different way of relating to family and friends. The cross, too, is preceded by the darkness of the agony in the garden. John's short sentence before the farewell discourse, 'And it was night' (13:30) is both a physical acknowledgement of the time of day and a metaphorical allusion to darkness as a time of turbulence, betrayal and impending death.

Darkness and Resurrection

There is another story in the Gospels that stands in contrast to the despair and agony evoked by the crucifixion. More surprisingly, the resurrection also happens in the dark. We read, 'Early on the first day of the week, while it was *still dark*, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb' (John 20:1). Unlike Jesus' death, the resurrection falls within the natural order of the day. The raising of Jesus has happened at some point over the sabbath, but the time it begins to be acknowledged is during the darkness. In fact, all of John's resurrection stories happen either at dawn or at dusk; and Luke's Emmaus story states that it was evening when Jesus was 'recognized' (Luke 24:31).

With the resurrection story, darkness takes on new connotations. It becomes the place of hidden growth, new life, rest and re-creation. The dark is not only suffused with pain and loss, but now contains other elements too. There can be a sense that a new understanding is developing; that life can come from the trauma of old wounds or that dying, for some people, is a great release into a new stage of the journey. Darkness can represent a 'dark night of the soul', in which 'spiritual darkness can indicate that a person is in a process of transition from one stage of spiritual development to another'.[2] And although Ignatius is clear in his Rules for Discernment that desolation is related to 'darkness [*escuridad*]' and 'disturbance' of the soul (Exx 317), he can also say that 'desolation is meant to give us a true recognition and understanding' (Exx 320) so that we know our need of God and God's grace.[3]

Charlotte had been profoundly disabled from the first days of her life, when she had contracted meningitis.[4] She had little speech and needed

[2] Agneta Schreurs, *Psychotherapy and Spirituality: Integrating the Spiritual Dimension into Therapeutic Practice* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2002), 43.
[3] Translation of Exx 317 modified; Ganss gives 'obtuseness of soul'.
[4] Charlotte's story is used with the permission of her parents.

twenty-four-hour help in order to live. At the age of 37 she entered the hospice where I work with an undiagnosed terminal illness. She continued her weekly practice of receiving the precious wine of holy communion, brought to her by her mother after Mass. On Easter Day, incredibly frail and thin, she went to the chapel with her parents and received communion. She took a sip from the tiny chalice while her mother prayed for her. 'More', she said. There was still wine in the chalice and she received another sip, but her mother felt that in that word 'more' she was also communicating to them her belief in the fullness of life to come: more life, more freedom, more of everything that is good in this life. Charlotte died the next day. It was utterly dark for her family but the darkness did not hold only grief; it held that moment of hope for Charlotte that she had entered into the 'more'. She was teaching them that pain, disability and death were not the final words on her life.

Light and Transfiguration

If the cross and the resurrection are set in the darkness is there a corresponding ministry in the light? Two signature places of light in the Christian scriptures are the transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–9; Mark 9:2–10; Luke 9:28–36) and the conversion of Saul (Acts 9:2). In the transfiguration story Jesus' presence is illuminated by a bright light so that his face shines and his clothes dazzle the disciples. This event occurs within a wider narrative; it is the story of God's covenantal relationship with his people, exemplified in the transfiguration story by the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Olives. Moses represents the law of God, given in the first five books of the scriptures, and Elijah represents God's living word spoken through the mouth of the prophets. The timing of this event is also linked to the covenantal relationship when Peter talks about making three booths, one each for Jesus and the two prophets. This links the transfiguration to the Feast of Tabernacles, a time when the Israelites remembered how they were wanderers in the desert (Deuteronomy 16:13).

Light and Conversion

The conversion of Saul is the singular call to make the gospel known to the Gentiles. It is such a key moment in the life of the early Church that Luke tells it three times in the Acts of the Apostles (9:2, 22:6, 26:12). In all three accounts a light shines around Saul and he falls to the ground,

The Conversion of St Paul, *by Juan Antonio de Frías y Escalante, 1660–1670*

temporarily blinded. Christ communicates through light and sound, and in Acts 26:16–18 the light is linked to the revelation of Jesus:

> I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you to serve and testify to the things in which you have seen me and to those in which I will appear to you. I will rescue you from your people and from the Gentiles—to whom I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light ….

The commission Saul receives is reminiscent of commands given in the Hebrew scriptures to Jeremiah—'I appointed you as prophet to the nations' (Jeremiah 1:5)—and to the Suffering Servant in Isaiah, who is called to open the eyes of the blind (Isaiah 42:7). Saul's calling is clearly in line with the tradition of the great prophets before him, but Christ dramatically intervenes to call him to become a follower of the Way. This calling is also signified by the change in his name from Saul to Paul. As Saul has been the name for the zealous person defending Judaism so now Paul's mission is about building up the Church in previously unexplored areas; he will convert others to discipleship of the Way and prepare some to become apostles for mission.

The people that we see in these stories of light we will encounter again in the early Church: Peter, James, John and Paul all feature significantly throughout the New Testament.

Ministry in the Dark

The three most striking features of the stories that happen in the dark are the fleeting nature of the characters within them; the profound experience of being witnesses to events in the life of Christ; and the universality of the events that happen.

The stories in the dark are about chance encounters with often unnamed people of whom we do not hear again. The Roman centurion at the cross correctly identifies the significance of Jesus, but we do not know what happened to him as a result of his experience because we do not meet him again. There are named and unnamed women at the cross, but even the ardent follower Mary Magdalene does not make an appearance after the resurrection narrative in the Gospels. She is not mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles, which is remarkable given that she was the first to undergo the profound experience of seeing Jesus after his death and the 'apostle to the apostles'. Of all the women at the cross only Jesus' mother is mentioned in Acts, at the beginning of the Church, the feast of Pentecost. Often the people who feature in the stories of darkness are limited to a tiny vignette, just one or two lines in the narrative.

This is resonant with my own ministry of chaplaincy. Chaplains often have brief and chance encounters with people whom we never see or hear of again. Ministry in the dark can be fleeting—a conversation with a student in a corridor; a prayer with a patient at the bedside; a cup of coffee with a soldier or policeman in the canteen. We may not remember their names, although the impact of their stories remains long afterwards. They may never have had any relationship with organized religion, but we share with them a profound spiritual or personal experience that has touched both of us deeply. The witness of the centurion reminds us that this ministry can happen with people who have a different cultural background from our own. Ministry in the dark is about witnessing to the presence of God in the present moment.

Witnessing to the presence of God in the present moment

The cross and resurrection of Jesus have a universal resonance. They point us to the life experiences of pain, suffering and death, and the hope beyond death. Ministry in the dark is about facing the universal themes of life with people across a wide spectrum of belief, from those professing a faith to those people who are sincerely agnostic. Often ministry in the dark is difficult to quantify. This is a dilemma in chaplaincy when we are called upon to show the relevance of our ministry. We often feel that what is least demonstrable is also the most important aspect of our work.

In a ministry in the dark one of our most profound gifts is our ability to *be with* others. Sam Wells writes about this experience in his book *Living without Enemies*:

> … being with is not fundamentally about finding solutions, but about companionship amid struggle and distress. Sometimes the obsession with finding solutions can get in the way of forming profound relationships of mutual understanding, and sometimes those relationships are more significant than solutions.[5]

If we can bear not to be 'productive', not to have the answers and willingly be able to go with people into the dark places, then we can be most available to others. Being present to another person in careful attentiveness, with no agenda, means we are more able to listen to what troubles and disturbs that person.

We can be disciples at the foot of the cross, watching helplessly as we listen to the terrible stories of people's lives. Or we may ponder the practical impossibilities, knowing that we cannot move the heavy stone away, but we have decided to be near the suffering and grief of others with no solutions. We may have nothing specific to offer except our own presence to stay and witness events and our promise to be with the other. Being with people in their journey is not so much about what we can *do* for others but about seeing what their experience offers us and where God is in the situations into which we are invited to enter.

Ministry in the Light

Three striking features of the stories of light relate to the covenantal relationship that God has with the chosen people; key figures in the stories are people we will meet again after their significant encounter with Christ; and the purpose of the encounters may be said to be about encouraging disciples who can then focus upon sharing the covenantal story and building up the Church.

Interestingly the two stories of transfiguration and conversion concern figures who are crucial in spreading the gospel story. They are disciples (followers) who become apostles (messengers), and their focus and commission is to make more disciples. Ministry in the light is primarily

[5] Sam Wells, *Living without Enemies* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011), 30. And see also his more famous book on 'being with', *A Nazareth Manifesto: Being with God* (Chichester: John Wiley, 2015).

about proclaiming the story of God's love for God's people, and inviting them to make a commitment to enter into relationship with the divine. It is a ministry that is concerned to create stable communities into which more members can be welcomed. Most importantly it is the locus of keeping alive a shared story through its reading of scriptures and discerning how the community should live and flourish.

The building of the booths in the transfiguration story is not only a link with the festivals of the Jewish community; it is a reminder that buildings, however temporary, tell a story. Parish churches and parish halls are a place for the worshipping community to gather as well as providing space for wider communal events. Ministry in the light is possible to quantify; we can measure it in terms of the numbers of baptisms, confirmations, communions on a Sunday, parish statistics, house-group attendances or electoral roll numbers.

Ministry in the dark is a recognition that the saving acts of Christ speak to the universal condition of being human. The darkness is not only a place of pain and death; it is also a place where growth happens. Resurrection happening in the darkness is joyful, although initially it can be very disorientating: the Risen Christ is a gardener for Mary Magdalene (John 20:15); he is a potential fisherman with good local knowledge for Peter and the disciples (John 21:6); and he is a complete stranger to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:16). Conversely, ministry in the light is not all sunshine and affirmation; it, too, can be disorientating and can include temporary blindness such as Saul experienced (Acts 9:8). The disciples also felt fear in the presence of God on the mountain at the transfiguration and had to turn their faces downwards (Matthew 17:6).

Light and Darkness

Ministry in the darkness is not only about suffering, and ministry in the light is more than personal conversion. The two ministries are held together in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and against the backdrop of the whole of God's narrative as we discover it in the scriptures. A further key event in Jesus' life that happens in darkness is the Last Supper. But this does not fit the neat schema of ministry in the dark. It is a story that happens in the context of the specific Israelite narrative of covenant. It would therefore seem to be a religious observance building up the community of faith, and so be more appropriate to thinking about ministry in the light. Yet at the heart of the Last Supper there is the universal

The Last Supper*, by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, 1664*

theme of remembering, orientated towards the suffering and witnessing that characterize ministry in the dark. Jesus pursues his love of humanity even into the heart of Roman and Jewish authority and hostility, finally offering his life as a pattern of love and obedience, and, through the symbol of broken bread, asks for this action to be remembered.

The Last Supper is a particular event in the Christian story, but with this universal theme of remembrance. It can be part both of the ministry in the light and ministry in the dark, as both ministries ultimately lead to the same place, that is, to the Heavenly Kingdom, which 'has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb' (Revelation 21:23).[6] In the heavenly city, we are told, 'Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more' (Revelation 21:4). The universal themes of pain and death are resolved through the presence of God and the particular story of covenant culminates in the welcome to the heavenly city where all division, conflict and faithlessness are brought to an end:

> … the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him; they will see his face …. And there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light …. (Revelation 22:3–5)

[6] Compare Isaiah 60: 1–2, 19 and Zechariah 14: 6–7, 18.

At the end of the Christian scriptures, the separation of day and night that began the story of creation is no longer needed. Heaven is the place where divisions no longer exist. It is the place where creation is redeemed and we are transformed.

Discerning Our Vocation

Apart from the conversion of Saul, all the bible stories I have discussed here feature in Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*. The gospel narratives are given at specific times during the Exercises, and all the passages are food for meditation. The purpose of meditation is to praise God (Annotation 177) and to place oneself at the Lord's disposal, 'so that His Divine Majesty can make use of their persons and of all they possess in whatsoever way is in accord with his most holy will' (Annotation 5). It may be that as retreatants ponder these gospel narratives they find echoes that reflect back to them the type of ministry in which they are already involved or to which they are called.

In the Second Week, Ignatius directs retreatants to think about their calling in an extended passage about how to discern making a good choice. Here the spiritual guide may help them to consider whether they are called to be involved in the specific role of making disciples, say through catechesis, or whether their ministry is a call to accompany people largely outside the Church. It may be that their personality types have much to do with how they choose to live out that ministry. A careful listening to what they see and hear in the scripture passages and to the stories that attract them may give vital clues in the accompaniment of those who are discerning what God wants of them. The stories in the darkness may be as attractive for some people as stories of light are for others.

Both ministries in the light and ministries in the darkness fundamentally seek to work out where God is with us. For some of us—and this is my personal experience of chaplaincy—the stories of the cross and resurrection will echo most strongly and may be the way we have primarily been guided to be with God and with our neighbours, but in the end all our stories lead to the transforming of experience and the hope of heaven where we are with God in glory.

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FOR THE LOVE OF CHRIST

A Critical Reflection on the Two Standards

Gem Yecla

I MUST ADMIT that I have struggled with the key meditations of the Spiritual Exercises—especially the Two Standards. As I stay with and listen to what is going on inside me, I realise that there is a part of me that is attracted to the values of the world. I might not be drawn to the materialistic and consumeristic appetites of contemporary society, but the lure of being independent, efficient, sufficient and esteemed has surreptitiously crept into my value system.

However as a student in formation, preparing to be a giver of the Spiritual Exercises, I need to know this meditation by heart, be firmly convinced by its teaching and live it out with God's grace; only then will it be possible for me authentically and effectively to impart it to another person. It is my belief that using my own experience of struggling and coming to terms with the meditation on Two Standards will enable me to find a way of sharing it with others as a spiritual director.

George Ganss writes:

> The Exercises are a school of prayer. In their entirety, they are addressed only to willing or eager exercitants, whom they stimulate to open themselves to the Holy Spirit's advances; to seek God's will and carry it out with vigor; to come to big decisions like the choice of a state of life without being moved by disordered affections; to desire to know, love, and follow Christ, come pleasure come pain, without being moved by disordered attachments, and to cooperate with Him in achieving His redemptive plan; to carry on by one's own inner energies in cooperation with God's grace.[1]

I take this as the basis for the kind of disposition with which an exercitant has to be graced as he or she makes the Exercises. Without this initial willingness and eagerness to follow God's will as the result of experience

[1] George E. Ganss, 'The Authentic Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius: Some Facts of History and Terminology Basic to Their Functional Efficacy Today', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 1/ 2 (November 1969), 7.

of God's love and rootedness in that love, it will be very difficult to talk about the Two Standards.

According to George Aschenbrenner:

> The meditation on the Two Standards proposes for your serious pondering a conflict swirling around in the consciousness of each of us. Though this conflict is enacted daily in your heart, its influence is much more extensive. What you meet in the privacy of your own heart flashes publicly across the whole universe in cosmic proportions: it is a confrontation of good and evil.[2]

Likewise, Michael Ivens underlines the significance of the meditation:

> … the Two Standards is one of the permanent resources of Ignatian spirituality, and its doctrine will continue to yield meanings and applications as it is integrated with time into the person's developing experience and reflection.[3]

The importance of the Two Standards cannot be overestimated, not only in the overall dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises but also in the entire lives of both the giver and the receiver of the Exercises. It is relevant to every human person.

The Content of the Meditation

The thirteen paragraphs of the Two Standards (Exx 136–148) flow smoothly from the title through the three preludes and the two parts, each containing three points, to the triple colloquy, ending with a note explaining how many times and when the exercise should be done. Steadily and methodically, exercitants are led into a deeper commitment to discipleship and identification with Christ while simultaneously opening their awareness to the vastness and seriousness of what this commitment will entail. This is a carefully crafted meditation which occupies an important place in Ignatius' development:

> Frs Nadal and Manareus (Mannaerts) both tell us that at Manresa Ignatius occupied himself chiefly with two exercises: the Kingdom and the Two Standards. Nadal goes on to say that it was from these two exercises that the idea of the Society was born.[4]

[2] George Aschenbrenner, *Stretched for Greater Glory: What to Expect from the Spiritual Exercises* (Chicago: Loyola, 2004), 88.
[3] Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary. A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 106.
[4] William Yeomans, 'Two Standards', *The Way Supplement*, 1 (1965), 14–27, here 15.

The Victory of Joshua over the Amalekites, *by Nicolas Poussin, c.1625*

The first two preludes of the Two Standards, the history (Exx 137) and the composition (Exx 138), inform us that there are two forces in the world, good and evil, that are in direct opposition to one another at all times and in all places. 'There is a battle being waged for the love and loyalty of man. Christ calls and wants all men under His standard; similarly, Satan tries to gather all men under his.'[5] The exercitants are led to realise that the two opposing forces are present before them at the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. The battlefield represents both the heart of each human person and the entire world in all its reality. 'By means of the two preludes', according to William A. Peters, 'the exercitant is brought to see a world full of men who are the object of divine compassion and at the same time the object of hatred by Satan, who as the enemy of human nature, hates whatever is human'.[6]

I pause for a while and reflect on this. Is this really true? Is the world really a battlefield for the two opposing forces of good and evil, in the ancient and enduring theme that pervades art, literature and history? Or is it just the working out of the natural process of evolution? As I look around and observe what is happening, read the newspapers, watch the news on television and pay attention to the movements and stirrings in my heart, I know that the first two preludes contain an undeniable

[5] William Peters, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius: Exposition and Interpretation* (Rome: CIS, 1980), 91.
[6] Peters, *Spiritual Exercises*, 92.

truth about the reality of the world and my own reality as a human being: the presence of these 'two titanic forces at work in the world, both driven from within to dominate'.[7] Christ moves towards love, freedom and integration; Satan towards hatred, enslavement and fragmentation.

The third prelude (Exx 139) now leads the exercitants to ask for what they desire: this is to know the deceits of the enemy, Satan, and to guard themselves against those deceits, 'and, further, for insight into the genuine life which the supreme and truthful commander sets forth, and grace to imitate him'. It is only by becoming like Christ that I can guard myself against the deceits of the enemy. As Michael Ivens emphasizes, 'The grace requested is *knowledge*, that is to say, faith-enlightened knowledge of the ways in which Christ and his adversary work in human affairs'.[8]

St Ignatius presents the Standard of Satan to us first, describing the 'leader of all the enemy' as 'seated on a throne of fire and smoke, in aspect horrible and terrifying', exposing the pervasiveness and magnitude of his malicious impact in the world and enumerating his tactics of deceiving and, ultimately, destroying the human person through the temptation to covet riches, honour and pride (Exx 140–142). Monty Williams cleverly captures the dynamics of Satan's approach: 'evil is shown to operate by terrorizing us and then offering us a way of coping with our terror by seductive techniques of ego-maintenance'.[9] According to Peters,

> The remarkable thing about this procedure is that no action is taken against God: He is not even mentioned. That is exactly where the subtlety comes in. Satan encourages the self-satisfied, independent man, who, therefore, thinks he is without need of God.[10]

But once the human person is left to his or her own devices, full of pride and entitlement, then he or she is vulnerable and defenceless against the attacks of the evil one.

After exposing Satan, his nature and wiles, St Ignatius now turns to the second part of the meditation, on the Standard of Christ. Once again using three points, he asks the exercitants to imagine Christ, 'the supreme and true leader' in contrast to the deceitful rebel chief. Christ stands in a place that is 'lowly, beautiful and attractive'. He calls his

[7] Joseph Tetlow, *Choosing Christ in the World: A Handbook for Directing the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Loyola according to Annotations Eighteen and Nineteen* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1999), 156.
[8] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 107.
[9] Monty Williams, *The Gift of Spiritual Intimacy: Following the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (Toronto: Novalis, 2009), 144.
[10] Peters, *Spiritual Exercises*, 96.

followers 'friends' and makes known to them his doctrine, which he wants them to help him spread throughout the world and to all humanity so that they, too, will have a full and integrated life. His ways are absolutely opposed to Satan's, leading through poverty, insults and contempt to humility and thence to all other virtues (Exx 146).

'Christ's recruiting tactics begin with the desire for spiritual poverty.'[11] Initially, this sounds unattractive, even repulsive, to a world conditioned to look up to the glamour of material success. But Dermot Mansfield clarifies the central importance of Christ himself in this model: 'the pattern of poverty and insults would be grotesque without him … because apart from Christ or because the light of his love is not perceived. Everything prayed for makes sense only in being with him ….'[12] The most important thing to remember here is our desire to imitate Christ because we love him. Without that love relationship with Christ—instilled in the Spiritual Exercises as exercitants meditate on Christ dying to save them from sin (Exx 53), deepened in the Second Week and intensified especially in the Third Week—Christ's 'recruiting tactics' will not attract followers.

Spiritual poverty is a matter of depending upon God, rather than upon our own resources. As Aschenbrenner explains,

> The total dependence on God does not produce an immature passivity. The realisation that you are nothing on your own, rather than deflating your spirit, stretches your heart. You wait in hope and gratitude for all the other gifts that accompany life. Everything about you belongs to God.[13]

With this stance in life, our sense of gratitude is evoked and draws us to seek God's presence in each and every experience of our encounter with humanity and creation, always with a sense of awe and wonder at how every event, whether pleasant or unpleasant, is capable of giving us the gift of the divine touch.

The Place of the Two Standards in the Spiritual Exercises

The meditation on the Two Standards is pivotal to the content and dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises as a whole. Michael Ivens calls it 'a major juncture within the Exercises'.[14] Before the Two Standards, exercitants

[11] Aschenbrenner, *Stretched for Greater Glory*, 96.
[12] Dermot Mansfield, 'Presenting the Two Standards I', *The Way Supplement*, 55 (1986), 27–33, here 30.
[13] Aschenbrenner, *Stretched for Greater Glory*, 96.
[14] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 106.

are introduced to a sinful world and a sinful humanity, but they are saved, loved and forgiven. Within the Two Standards meditation, they are exposed to a world of both good and evil, and they are required to discern so as not to be ensnared by evil forces. This meditation is like a door that opens and widens our faith-vision into a much closer identification with Christ and a deeper commitment to discipleship.

The meditation on the Two Standards will eventually pave the way for exercitants to enter into union with Christ in suffering—the main grace asked during the Third Week—so that they can also enter into union with Christ in joy, in his resurrection in the Fourth Week. Without union in suffering, the union in joy with the Risen Christ will not be authentically possible. Beyond the Spiritual Exercises, the meditation serves as a guide to one's way of being and living in the world along a lifetime's journey: 'The meditation on the Two Standards extends the invitation to follow the pathway of discipleship, focusing not so much on choice as on the discernment essential to making choices'.[15]

My Personal Experience of the Two Standards

I first made the Exercises nineteen years ago, as a novice preparing to be a religious sister of the Congregation of Our Lady of the Retreat in the Cenacle. The thirty-day retreat and election were part of our formation. It was a grace-filled retreat and, although it was a difficult process, I discerned that the religious life was not for me. I am attracted to the Cenacle Sisters' ministry of spiritual direction and facilitating retreats, but I am not cut out for the religious community life. I left the congregation six months after making the Spiritual Exercises, but the desire to journey with people, to awaken and deepen their faith and relationship with God, has remained with me all through the years. This is the reason why I am in Melbourne doing a master's degree in spiritual direction.

What I recall from my experience then is that the image of Christ as a commander (*capitán*) did not appeal to me. I grew up at the height of the martial law years (1972–1986) in the Philippines and the military under the Marcos regime was used as an instrument of oppression, abuse and torture. I tend to associate anything connected with the military, soldiers, commanders, even banners, with abuses and repression. And so entering into the Two Standards meditation was a struggle for me initially.

[15] Katherine Dyckman, Mary Garvin and Elizabeth Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women* (Mahwah: Paulist, 2001), 195.

Returning to the meditation now and reading the text closely, I found myself uncomfortable with places such as Jerusalem being identified with the good and with Christ, and Babylon with evil and Lucifer. Even if these images are biblical, they can be problematic, especially in the light of religious tensions today. There is a need for greater sensitivity towards other faith traditions and the places associated with them. I believe that the language and the images used in this meditation need to be adapted and modified, without altering in any way the core of its message, so that it can connect more effectively with the exercitants of the twenty-first century and facilitate their experience of the exercise.[16]

It took me a long time to write this. In prayer, I realised that I was struggling with poverty, both spiritual and actual. I want prosperity for myself, my family, my people and my country. There are so many poor people in the Philippines, even if our country is very rich in natural resources; this is something that has baffled me for a long time now. One desire of mine is to be able to use spiritual direction and the Spiritual Exercises to help change the unjust social and economic structures in my country which, I believe, are contributory to, if not the major cause of, poverty and the ever-widening divide between the rich and the poor.

In my continuing reflection though, I discovered that this is also what God wants for God's people, for us, and that there is really no conflict of desires. Through poverty God is inviting me to a greater freedom to seek God first in all that I do, to stay close to Christ and to follow his ways in my manner of proceeding. Kenneth Becker says,

> When Ignatius commends 'poverty' … he is confronting the survival need for things, including abstract things such as intellectual and psychological security. I need them, but they do not determine who I really am. Survival is keeping what I am. The poverty that is the freedom to love is giving what I am, to the point of risking loss.
>
> By commending 'insults' Ignatius is confronting social survival needs—my accomplishments, reputation, relations and connections, roles. I need them, but they do not constitute my personal identity and value. Love's free invitation risks your rejecting me, my ideas, and even my best wishes and hopes for you. All that I have and all that I am become ways that I am living love.[17]

[16] I personally find Joseph Tetlow's adaptation of the meditation on the Two Standards (*Choosing Christ in the World*, 156–157) helpful for the giver of the Exercises.
[17] Kenneth L. Becker, 'Beyond Survival: The Two Standards and the Way of Love', *The Way*, 42/3 (July 2003), 125–136, here 135.

The meditation on the Two Standards remains a very hard and trying one for me. But writing about it has allowed me the opportunity to enter into a difficult but ultimately freeing process. It has given me the chance to trust in God's love in the midst of a poverty of ideas and insights, when nothing was surfacing for me to write. It has taught me to stay with my commitment to the task at hand, to have patience and perseverance, and to trust in God's inexhaustible grace. The triple colloquy reminds me that this is God's work, not mine. However, I need continually to be attuned to God so that I can follow where God leads. As Brian Grogan insists,

> … the primary preparation must be prayer: the more fully the giver of the exercise is won over to the way of Christ—which is the point of the Two Standards—the more helpful she will be to the exercitant. We communicate what we are.[18]

The Two Standards is a very relevant meditation in today's world if it is given to the right person in the right way and at the right time, trusting in God's grace that is at work. This is the work that God initiates, the spreading of Christ's doctrine, and it can be given to anyone who is moved and graced by God to receive it. The process of learning to give the Two Standards may take a long time, even a lifetime, but it definitely has the power to disturb our hearts, challenge the views of the contemporary world and transform anyone who is open and in love with Christ. Grogan writes,

> … falling in love with the person of Jesus … can be quite gentle and unnoticed and the quiet fruit of a good upbringing: it is in the Two Standards that the painful implications of the relationship are starkly unfolded. One may feel trapped: 'I never realized that discipleship could mean this!' One desires Christ but fears the demands of being with him …. Yielding to the attractiveness of Christ makes it possible to yield to the non-attractiveness of his way of poverty and insults.[19]

Christ, therefore, is the starting point and the end point of the meditation on the Two Standards. It is for the love of Christ that we enter into this meditation, to embrace Christ's teachings and to share Christ with others.

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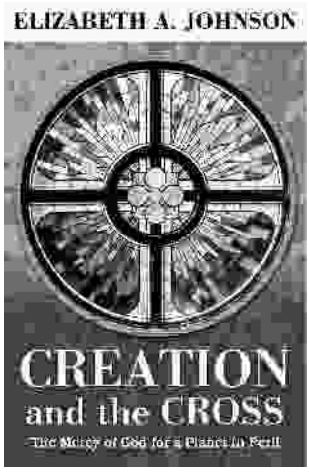
[18] Brian Grogan, 'Presenting the Two Standards II', *The Way Supplement*, 55 (1986), 34–40, here 34.
[19] Grogan, 'Presenting the Two Standards II', 35–36.

RECENT BOOKS

Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2018). 978 1 6269 8309 0, pp. 256, $28.00.



For years I have faced questions when I am teaching such as *Why did God send the Son to such a terrible death?* or *Doesn't it say something horrible about God that God needed the Son to die for us to be forgiven?* So many prayers in our liturgies suggest that without Jesus' death on the cross we could not be saved: 'God' needed Jesus to die so we could be saved! One can stress that it was unjust religious and political systems and official misuse of power that crucified Jesus, not God requiring that outcome. Rather, God's all-encompassing love and forgiveness are shown in not letting such evil have the final word. However, the questions remain. What does being saved mean? How do we reconcile this with a God who could have arranged it otherwise?

In her clear and carefully grounded manner, Elizabeth A. Johnson addresses these questions head-on. Her starting point is the thesis which set the ball rolling in the eleventh century. St Anselm wrote a treatise, *Cur Deus homo*, asking why God became human. It is in the form of a dialogue with a student and addresses the reason that Jesus had to die on the cross. Written in a feudal society, in which the honour of the great was so important, the treatise argued that God's honour was the highest possible, and since our sin offended God, it needed someone of equal rank to make satisfaction.

Later preaching and writing built on his idea, and it became embedded in Western piety and theology. The problem with Anselm's reasoning stems from the fact that he posed the question in terms of Jesus' death on the cross, ignoring his ministry and preaching as well as the resurrection. Whatever sense his argument made in feudal times, what it does today is to make God the Father appear as a tyrannical, not to say petty-minded, patriarch and to place a horrific act of violence as the lynchpin of the message of salvation, which is then presented as 'good news'! Only Jesus' death in agony could win our salvation. Since Vatican II theologians have

been at pains to disavow this theology, but it seems encoded into the DNA of Western Christianity, where the focus on sin has been more pervasive than it has been in Eastern Orthodoxy.

Elizabeth Johnson sets out her exploration in a manner similar to Anselm's. She is in dialogue throughout the book with a student who is seeking understanding for today, in a world in ecological peril: do the life, death and resurrection of Jesus have anything to say about the myriad of life-forms that the human species is currently depleting at alarming rates? This is such a core concern for us today; does the central tenet of our faith have any wisdom or insight to offer? She works to answer this question at the end of the book, having passed through a series of steps that explores the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament writings. Are God's love and saving power only given to us because Jesus met this fate?

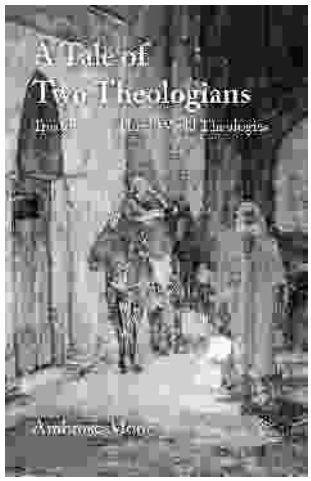
Johnson shows how God has been saving, forgiving and reaching out in incomparable mercy and compassion from the times depicted in the 'stories of origin' through Isaiah, the Psalms and the Wisdom books, with the message coming as a clarion call in the life of Jesus. If Jesus is God's message to us, then 'if this is God, God is thus'. We can trust the mercy of God as shown in so many encounters and triumphing in the resurrection of Jesus, a sign that the fragility and suffering through to death are not the final word, for Jesus or for all flesh. She presents a theology of accompaniment: God accompanying Jesus, and Jesus is accompanying his brothers and sisters in an outreach of love and compassion.

Unpacking Pauline and other New Testament texts on the incarnation, she explores recent theology that notes that the Word/Wisdom of God becoming flesh has implications for *all* flesh, not just human flesh. This concern for all living matter and valuing of it can be traced throughout the length of the scriptures. It places us humans on this small blue planet, hurtling through space, within a network of relationships, not at the top of a pyramid of importance. Her work draws strongly on Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'*. She is likely to upset some people because, while recognising the prevalence and importance of sin, and the devastation it causes, she does not make sin the fulcrum for our understanding of the meaning of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Creation and the Cross is not too hard a read and offers much food for thought. I can assure you it will make you even more uncomfortable with many prayers that are in our liturgies, but will also lead you to some beautiful passages and ideas, and hopefully assist in the slow movement towards ecological conversion.

Christine Burke IBVM

***Ambrose Mong, A Tale of Two Theologians: Treatment of Third World Theologies* (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2017). 978 0 2271 7658 0, pp. 200, £25.00.**



Ambrose Mong's *A Tale of Two Theologians* compares the thoughts and struggles of two contemporary theologians from the developing world, Gustavo Gutiérrez from Peru and Michael Amaladoss from India, in order to reveal how implementing the gospel imperatives of caring for the poor and announcing the Kingdom of God has to be different in Asia from elsewhere in the world. In the West, Christianity is the majority religion and intellectual life is shaped by Greek philosophy. In the East, Christianity is a minor religion and younger than the majority religions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism, which come with their own philosophies that provide the basis of understanding and evaluating truth claims in the public forum.

Since the dominant forms of Christian thought have developed in the West, Gutiérrez—educated in Europe and working in Peru—works within the established intellectual norms to remind the Church that God shows a preferential option for the poor, so Christianity needs to be mindful of their plight and look to the wisdom of the poor for essential insights into gospel truth. To empower the poor, Gutiérrez promotes basic Christian communities to discuss how the gospel might be incarnated better in society to benefit them.

By contrast, in Asia, Christian teachings need to be recast using Asian philosophical frameworks if they are going to be understood by the majority of people. Further, in a culture where the vast majority of the poor are not Christians, Christianity must enter into dialogue with other religions if it is to hear the voice of the poor. Thus Amaladoss, working in India, enters into dialogue with Hinduism and the other great religions of the East. He works to bring their insights into Christianity and he advises Christians to work together with people of other religions to address the social ills of society rather than walling themselves off from the broader society in a Christian-only discussion. He believes that other religions are valid paths to the absolute and have scriptures that can teach us about God's larger plan for the world.

As we have come to expect from Ambrose Mong, the book is very well researched and written. It is clear and concise, and excels in three areas: first, it presents a concise explanation of the most important theological

concepts of Gutiérrez and Amaladoss; second, it shows the need for developing new Christian theologies based in Asian thought; and third, it is an important cautionary tale about the theological moment that we are in.

The presentation of the theologies of Gutiérrez and Amaladoss includes biographical sketches of each theologian, showing how social context and personal history affect the theological vision of each author. Mong explains these theologians' most important ideas and how they connect to other important voices of the day—who their inspirations were and whom they inspired. I would recommend the book for anyone who would like to understand the basic ideas of either Gutiérrez or Amaladoss and why their theologies are important in the Church today.

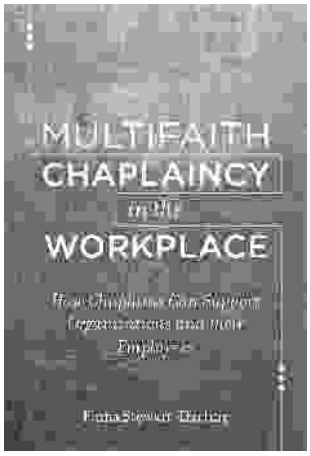
Gutiérrez challenged the Church to work with the poor in order to remake the world in the image of the Kingdom of God. By placing these two theologians side by side, Mong reveals that in order to do this important work effectively in Asian Christianity will need to surrender some of the hegemony of Greek philosophy and the air of superiority that has inserted itself into Christian theology in the West. In his explanation of the theological journey of Amaladoss, Mong makes clear that Christianity will have to enter into dialogue with Eastern religions as an equal or even as a younger brother if it is going to be heard at all, and that the barriers against expressing Christian insights in terms derived from Eastern religions—seeing Jesus as guru, avatar or Dao—owe more to Western prejudice than solid reasoning. Western theologians assume the superiority of their own philosophical heritage over all Eastern philosophies before even beginning to come to know them. This same prejudice has caused the gospel to fail to take hold in Asia since the beginning, and if we want different results, we need to try a new approach.

This brings us to the third thing *A Tale of Two Theologians* has to offer, perhaps this book's unique contribution—its cautionary tale about the barriers to change. Instead of threatening theologians who bring the gospel into dialogue with Asian religions and philosophies for not being sufficiently Western, the Vatican should be applauding and encouraging such innovation. But most Vatican theologians lack the ability to understand the finer points of Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism or Confucianism, and so cannot appreciate or properly judge the work of Asian theologians who pursue interreligious dialogue. Worse still, many, including Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, believe that the Hellenistic framework for Christianity that has been developed in the West is actually providential and should not be altered. Unless this changes, theologians such as Gutiérrez who work within a Western framework will be heard, but those who do not, such as Amaladoss and other Asian theologians, will continue to be marginalised.

In the end, the moral of *A Tale of Two Theologians* is this: can the Church change for the sake of preaching the gospel effectively in Asia, or will we continue on the path towards blissful irrelevance?

Scott Steinkerchner

Fiona Stewart-Darling, *Multifaith Chaplaincy in the Workplace: How Chaplains Can Support Organizations and Their Employees* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2017). 978 1 7859 2029 5, pp. 178, £16.99.



Canary Wharf is a cluster of gleaming towers on a bend of the Thames, housing the headquarters of major banks and international financial institutions. Most of us are only vaguely aware of what goes on within these high places. Here, we are told, they traffic in trillions of dollars, girdling the globe at the speed of light in electronic transactions which have their impact on all our little lives, albeit in ways we do not begin to understand.

Canary Wharf has its chaplains, which will perhaps come as a surprise to those who see its towers as temples to Mammon. Fiona Stewart-Darling, the creator of the Canary Wharf Multifaith Chaplaincy, tells the remarkable story of how those chaplains came to be there and how, after initial misgivings, their presence on the Wharf has come to be appreciated. It is a fascinating story and in these pages it is well told.

Workplace chaplaincy began with the Church's belated awakening to the fact that it had lost touch with manufacturing industry. Those employed in factories no longer went to church. The Canary Wharf chaplains, however, have nothing in common with their distant predecessors whose crass overtures to those on production lines ('How are you enjoying your work, my good man?') did not always go down well.

Ministry anywhere must take account of its context. Stewart-Darling makes clear to us that the context in which she and her colleagues exercise their ministry imposes particular requirements and constraints. London is a global financial capital and Canary Wharf its centre. One click of a mouse at a desk in one of those towers can cause tremors across the planet. Those who work on Canary Wharf form an international community. In such a context it was essential that from the outset any overt religious presence had to be multi-faith—unlike the early industrial chaplaincies which were wholly Christian initiatives.

Religion is not to be ignored—even on Canary Wharf. Stewart-Darling shows how chaplains can help companies to see that faith has to be acknowledged as a factor in the workplace. Their cloth allows them tactfully to point out that people of faith do not leave that faith at home when they set off for work on the 7.46 from Surbiton. Stewart-Darling's story is of the patient, painstaking building of relationships with companies and company bosses, men and women understandably suspicious of the motives of religious professionals proposing to establish a bridgehead in their territory. She cannot emphasize enough how imperative it was—and remains—that chaplains in such a workplace as Canary Wharf do not proselytize. It is a tribute to her and her chaplaincy colleagues' sensitivity that they have the trust of those working on the Wharf. It is a trust they would immediately forfeit if they were seen as out to make converts.

It could be said that nothing is made on Canary Wharf apart from instant coffee and instant decisions. Chaplains can help with the coffee-making but we wonder how they can contribute to the decision-making. Stewart-Darling's response is to remind us that those who make the momentous decisions on Canary Wharf are human beings. They are men and women who above all need wisdom. Many world faiths have their wisdom traditions and these are rich reservoirs to draw on. Stewart-Darling persuasively argues that chaplains schooled in these traditions have wealth to share in the workplace.

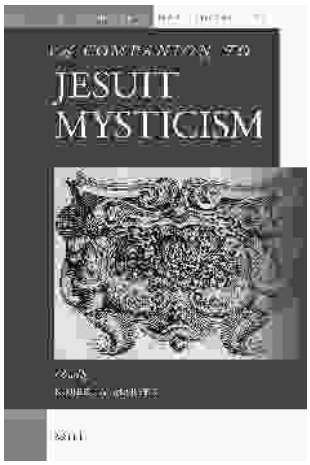
Wealth to share. That phrase brings us to a nettle not perhaps sufficiently grasped. Early on, Stewart-Darling tells us that she does not intend 'to provide a critique of the banking culture' (p.37). (I write this review in a week when four former directors of Barclays Bank have been charged by the Serious Fraud Office.) Nor does she offer any personal criticism of the capitalist project more generally, apart from acknowledging that 'many would suggest'—not, notice, '*I* would suggest'—'that the market at its worst is unjust, abusive, destructive and prone to crisis' (p.146). On the whole, she thinks, the market does more good than harm.

The fundamental problem for Stewart-Darling is that, as a chaplain on Canary Wharf, she must not only refuse the role of proselytizer, she must also decline the mantle of prophet. Capitalism works by sanctioning and encouraging our desire to break the tenth commandment. Notwithstanding the altruism of a Bill Gates, it a fundamentally selfish system. The prophet Amos, active in eighth-century BC Israel—already a capitalist society—certainly did not subscribe to the comforting fantasy that the wealth of the few somehow 'trickled down' to enrich the impoverished many.

Stewart-Darling's seminal study certainly provides us with much on which to reflect. But the prophets did not suggest 'issues to ponder' (p.149). They warned us to repent before it is too late.

John Pridmore

***A Companion to Jesuit Mysticism*, edited by Robert A. Maryks (Leiden: Brill, 2017). 978 9 0043 1013 1, pp. 393, £195.00.**



This volume, part of Brill's 'Companions to the Christian Tradition' series, brings together thirteen essays under the heading of 'Jesuit mysticism'. The contributions, some of which are adaptations or translations of articles published previously elsewhere, come from a strongly interdisciplinary group of scholars. The majority of the authors are non-Jesuits, reflecting the increased interest in 'Jesuit studies' outside the order itself. Though written by active scholars, the essays in the volume are accessible to non-specialist readers; indeed, though the specialist has something to learn from these texts, they are probably most valuable for newcomers to this field.

Each of the essays presented in this book treats the subject of mysticism in the life and/or writings of a member of the Society of Jesus (or, in one case, of a woman religious accompanied by a Jesuit). Several of the figures discussed will already be well known to those interested in the practice or study of Christian spirituality: Ignatius Loyola (1491?–1556), Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955) and Karl Rahner (1904–1984) spring to mind. The innovation of this volume is to give scholarly attention to more obscure historical personalities, including some who generally appear only in hagiography. In this category are Baltasar Álvarez (1533–1580), Luis de la Puente (1554–1624), Achille Gagliardi (1537–1607), Louis Lallemant (1588–1635) and Jean-Joseph Surin (1600–1665), Claude de la Colombière (1641–1682) and Marguerite-Marie Alacoque (1647–1690) and, lastly, Jean-Pierre de Caussade (1675–1751). There are also chapters on more contemporary figures such as Henri Bremond (1865–1933), Henri de Lubac (1896–1991) and Hugo M. Enomiya-Lassalle (1898–1990).

Each chapter concludes with an appendix, offering extracts from primary source material written by the figure studied in the chapter. This is a considerable service given that several of these authors—let alone the texts they wrote—are virtually unknown to anglophone readers. These appendices also allow readers to discover the author him- or herself, rather than relying strictly on second-order scholarly discussion.

Unlike other recent editions published by Brill on the subject of Jesuit history, the present book is not the fruit of a preceding conference. The resulting volume is valuable as a compilation of standalone portraits, even

if the thematic convergences and connections between the figures discussed are not fully developed. In this respect, the book implicitly sketches a path for future work exploring precisely these links. Occasional footnotes indicate that one author was aware of another, and the nature and extent of these ties are an important next question.

Indeed, many of the mystics discussed in this volume knew each other personally and at times exerted profound spiritual influence over each other. This is true, for example, of four key figures discussed here: Baltasar Álvarez and Luis de la Puente, and Louis Lallemant and Jean-Joseph Surin. In both pairs, the former was responsible for directing a key stage in the latter's spiritual formation (known in Jesuit parlance as 'tertianship'). This in turn has implications for thinking about the reality of 'Jesuit mysticism' and its transmission: it is not only a question of texts, it is also one of relationships and, perhaps, of a kind of spiritual filiation from one generation to another.

As noted already, one of the virtues of this edited volume is that it offers an intellectually accessible point of departure for non-specialists. One important example of this is that the book uses the term 'mysticism' without being overly self-conscious about it, that is, without getting lost in scholarly debates about the content of the term and how mysticism is best studied academically. At the same time, some additional precision might have helped with the coherence of the volume overall. While each chapter treats a Jesuit and his connection to 'mysticism' broadly speaking, the nature of this connection can vary rather widely. Those presuming on the basis of the title that this book is only about Jesuit mystics are likely to be somewhat disappointed.

Some of the people discussed were, indeed, mystics in the strict sense (that is, those who claim an immediate, experiential sense of God's presence). Others, however, were scholars interested in reflecting intellectually on the reality of mysticism. This diversity generally enriches rather than impoverishes the volume, even though some of the editorial choices about which figures to include seem decidedly idiosyncratic (for example, including a chapter on the great twentieth-century century Jesuit theologian Henri de Lubac while leaving out the great twentieth-century Jesuit historian of mysticism Michel de Certeau).

Unfortunately, the great virtue of intellectual accessibility that distinguishes this book is offset by its utterly prohibitive cost. Its steep price virtually guarantees that it will remain unknown except to specialists or to those with ready access to a well-resourced research library.

Timothy W. O'Brien SJ

Hilary Davies, *Exile and the Kingdom* (London: Enitharmon, 2016). 978 1 9103 9217 1, pp. 112, £9.99.

When a poet who is also a specialist in French language and literature gives a collection of poems (her fourth) the same title—*Exile and the Kingdom*—as a book of short stories by Albert Camus, readers infer that homage is being paid and look for connections. There is a possible link in the fact that many of the characters in Camus' stories are on a journey or living away from home, experience a meeting with people, practices, rituals or a culture which is strange, 'foreign', always 'other', and are changed by the encounter. Likewise, Hilary Davies' most recent collection brings together poems about a number of journeys she has made at different times: as a girl travelling with her parents westwards from their home in South London; walks in the Lee Valley, an almost-rural oasis in North London; her first journey alone as a teenager—'far now / From mother's and father's arms', then 'very far now from father's and mother's arms'; travels with her husband, first into love and later into grief at his illness and death. A recurring motif in these travels and encounters is the poet's own hesitant journey from unbelief into Christian faith and then, in the last section—which gives the whole book its title—a trajectory from an intense awareness, with horror, shame and sorrow, of personal sin, through an encounter with the darkness of doubt, into a profound experience of forgiveness and love.

All these journeys contain precise evocations of places visited, which appeal to all the senses. Here, too, the sounds of the chosen words are deployed to reinforce the sense:

> The geese rise in the night,
> They cry beneath the moon.
> Out on the water a sound like snakes
> Slides nearer, and black life
> Breaks under the pontoon. ('By the Dark Lake', p. 47)

In these passages Davies seems to be interested in 'particularity' and succeeds in rendering not only the physical features of a place which make it distinctive but also its significance and value, whether personal ('In the Valley of the Lot'), historical ('Blücher Encamps at the Rhine'), political ('Godesia') or religious ('Lauds'), for those who have visited it or been involved in incidents that took place there:

> The Angels are praying in Abney Park
> Here in the city trade is empire:
> Sweet fruits in the market, the broad coster cries
> Jerky chicken, linguine, halva, cinnamon, kosher,
> The blood of the five seas salts our lullabies. ('In Abney Park', p. 29)

And water, in various forms—rivers, lakes, waterfalls, the sea and its shoreline—is often present, either as a significant feature of the place or as an image which carries forward the poem's meaning:

> All that we had was rolling in on the shingle
> And the road away from this headland
> Led for me only out along its darkening foreshore
> Where your love's face scattered into farewell against the coming
> stars. ('Crossing the links at St Andrews', p. 45)

Davies has an ear finely attuned both to the sounds of words and to their multiple layered meanings, and in fact her poems are most satisfying when read aloud. Her style is sparse, minimalist at times: one has the impression that each word is chosen for its precise meanings, associations, sound and weight. Yet along with the sparseness, the poems are not parsimonious but rich with striking, colourful images while the rhythms of the syntax slow or quicken in step with the sense. Davies uses a variety of verse forms and metres, but mainly blank verse with lines of varying length and numbers of stresses. Variations of metre within a poem are used to good effect, as for example, when, in the middle of a poem in blank verse, we suddenly come across:

> For the days go in and the days go out
> The cars and the buses and the trains round about
> All our doings, and there's a myriad reasons not to stop,
> The daily bread and the weekly shop ….

… and so on for another four lines, and then:

> Until that night which throws us on our knees
> And we lean out, retching, over the abyss.
> Lord, do not leave me in this dreadful place. ('Nocturnes', p. 96)

In many of the most satisfying poems in this collection, beauty—both sensory and intellectual—is to be found in the skilful way in which several different images are woven together to form a pattern by which the poem moves forward. For example, in 'Bongasse 20, 16 December 1770', Davies knits together, with impressive skill, a description of a building in a winter landscape, images of Jacob's ladder and Jacob wrestling with the Angel, and musical metaphors ('the spirit's descant', the dance of the spheres)—to close with a cry of faith and hope in the power of grace and human creativity:

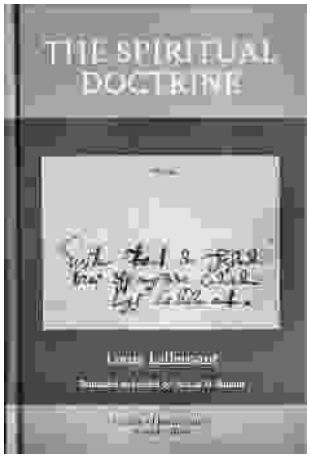
> Not sight—listen!—our sinews, plucked, compose
> Chords to break apart heaven and carry her dance
> On the fragile soul's song rising amidst stark fugues of angels. (p. 88)

And in 'The Corpus Christi Clock', the different meanings of each separate feature of this installation in Cambridge are woven together with images of the body of Christ to form a profound meditation on the Big Bang, love, time and eternity.

It is tempting sometimes for readers of philosophical or religious poetry to try to cut through the images and music to the 'truth' that they contain, as if images, rhythms and the sounds of words were no more than decorative clothing for the more important content hidden within them. That would be a big loss in reading Hilary Davies. Here the medium *is* the message; the 'delight' and the 'wisdom' (to use Seamus Heaney's words) are one and the same, inseparable.

David Lonsdale

Louis Lallemant, *The Spiritual Doctrine*, translated and edited by Patricia M. Ranum (Boston: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2016). 978 0 9972 8233 7, pp. 357, $45.00.



Readers with an interest in Jesuit spirituality and mysticism will certainly welcome this completely new edition of Louis Lallemant's *Spiritual Doctrine*. This book has been known in the Anglo-Saxon world since its first translation in 1855. However, the old-fashioned linguistic style of Frederick W. Faber and the recovery of some missing parts of the *Doctrine* have meant that a new English translation has been needed for a long while. This is now available, thanks to the accurate work of Patricia M. Ranum. Based on the last French edition of the *Doctrine* by Dominique Salin (2011), her translation also includes three missing treatises, as well as five letters of Lallemant. Ranum's rhetorical and linguistic approach to presenting and interpreting the *Doctrine* follows and even builds on that of Salin, not only in the introduction, but also in the critical apparatus.

The French Jesuit Louis Lallemant (1588–1635) definitely did not intend to publish his spiritual exhortations when he was preparing them in Rouen in the late 1620s and early 1630s. He gave these talks, as an instructor, to Jesuits who were going through their final stage of formation, the so-called tertianship. Lallemant's mystical thoughts about Jesuit life, its spirituality

and challenges reach us through the notes and copies of two of his tertians, Jean Rigoleuc and Jean-Joseph Surin. Their tertianship records were edited in 1694 by another Jesuit, Pierre Champion, under the title *Doctrine spirituelle*. A life of Lallemant, written by Champion, was added to the *Doctrine* and reproduced with it in almost every edition. Though Lallemant's work had been appreciated since its first edition, it became really famous when Henri Bremond dedicated to it in 1920 the fifth volume of his monumental study of French spirituality (*Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France*).

Reading the *Doctrine*, we should guard against seeking in it a formal interpretation of Ignatian foundational texts, such as *Spiritual Exercises* or the *Constitutions*. Certainly, the great Ignatian paradigms are here and there recognisable in the *Doctrine*, but they are coloured and sometimes even transformed by Augustinian pessimism, patristic and Desert literature, Northern and Spanish mysticism and other spiritualties which shaped the French mystical landscape of the 'Grand Siècle' after the long decades of the French Wars of Religion.

A mystical movement among French Jesuits—of which Lallemant was an emblematic figure, but certainly not the founder—was directly nourished by this eclectic mysticism. Lallemant justifies the confluence of different spiritual traditions. He claims that '[the] spirit of the Society renders us independent in such a way that we can take part in the spirit of other orders and in their devotions, without doing anything contrary to the spirit of the Society' (p. 294). This principle of Jesuit universalism, although true to a certain extent, sometimes produces contradictory assertions about Jesuit identity in the *Doctrine*. However, the book reveals that boundaries between spiritualities—Ignatian and other—were hardly firmly fixed in the first Society, despite the efforts of some Generals, especially Mercurian, Acquaviva and Vitelleschi.

Lallemant's exhortations will acquire substance and meaning if we bear in mind the massive spiritual crisis that the Society of Jesus was going through at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This crisis emerged from the rapid growth of the Society and from the multiplication of its works. This external expansion gravely lacked spiritual foundations. Good spiritual formators and superiors were wanting and missionary zeal—the essence of Jesuit vocation—risked degenerating into pure activism and selfish careerism.

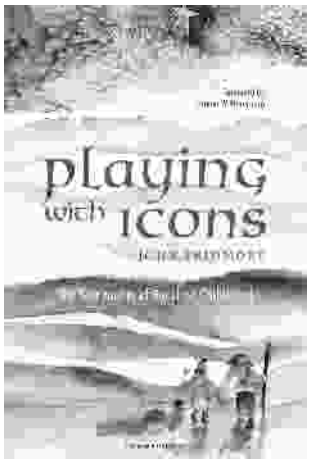
Lallemant does not cease to criticize Jesuits who are fully absorbed in their tasks, acting without any interior spirit. General Acquaviva, some thirty years earlier, in his letters, had often evoked the same problem and tried to make Jesuits aware of the spiritual foundation of all their activities: the union with God by virtues and prayer, as it is required by Ignatius in *Constitutions* X.2 [813]. In Lallemant's interpretation this union is achieved especially by the purification of the heart and the obedience to the motions of the Holy

Spirit. The first is a kind of mental asceticism, preparing a mystical capacity to follow promptly God's movements in the soul. Both are involved, as Lallemant shows, in the *garde du cœur* ('guard over the heart'), a sort of constant spiritual watchfulness over one's interior movements. Lallemant's *garde du coeur* is exercised immediately, as a capacity to identify instantly the true nature of a spiritual motion. It seems to be close to the *nepsis* of the Desert Fathers, whose writings were warmly recommended to Jesuits at that time. Certainly, *nepsis* can complete Ignatian discernment, but it cannot replace it.

Lallemant's contribution to Jesuit spirituality, with all its limitations, remains important. It continues to remind us that God's presence is scarcely perceivable—either in prayer or in action—without developing a culture of interiority, based on the capacity to stop and to question our thoughts, feelings and motivations of action. Building such a culture, using the ideas of Lallemant or those of others, is the only way to resist the grave negative impact of a multitasking lifestyle, the common plague of Lallemant's time and of our own.

Tibor Bartók SJ

John Pridmore, *Playing with Icons: The Spirituality of Recalled Childhood* (Denver: Center for the Theology of Childhood, 2017). 978 0 6928 3985 0, pp. 208, £19.99.



The author of this book (not to be confused with the John Pridmore of *From Gangland to Promised Land* fame) has spent a great deal of time looking at children's spirituality, most notably through his study of the nineteenth-century fantasy writer George Macdonald, who explored the spirituality of childhood through both fiction and non-fiction. Like Macdonald, Pridmore sees childhood as a condition to which to aspire rather than a stage in life to be left behind, because, he says, 'I am haunted by the words of one who tells me that, unless I become as a little child, I shall not enter the Kingdom of God (Matthew 8:13). Surely I must know who this child is, if I am to shape my life after his or her likeness.' (p. 21)

The author acknowledges at the outset the debt he owes to Dr Jerome Berryman, the creator of Godly Play, an immensely creative development in the nurture of children's spirituality. It was Dr Berryman, indeed, who had the foresight to enable this book to be published.

Pridmore explores the question of what it is like to be a child by surveying the work of some of the many who have written about their own childhoods. The insights he draws from them are encouraging and cautionary, inspiring and challenging. He states in the preface that he feels the project will have been worthwhile if 'from its eccentric viewpoint, it helps me to understand a little better the child I once was, the child I must nurture and the child I must become' (p. 19). It certainly did that for me and would, I am sure, do the same for any reader of good will. I would go so far as to say it should be compulsory reading for anyone who cares about children's flourishing—or their own flourishing, for that matter. In the opening chapter, Pridmore tells us that we need to '"wrestle with the angel of childhood", till he tells us his secret … because what it means to be a child is the pattern of our discipleship'. This is an urgent task because children are playing less than ever before: 'the heartbeat of childhood is still beating, but that heartbeat is faltering' (p. 35).

Pridmore begins by narrating how his authors write about *thaumasia*, experiences of immense vividness which are a source of wonder to children, though they may seem unremarkable to adults. He observes how the memoirs 'record a mode of awareness which was once ours' but that, sadly, 'a world too much with us has desensitised us to the transcendent' (p. 73) In later chapters he looks at the effect of suffering on children and suggests 'a profound correspondence between the passion of Jesus and the distress of the child … an equivalence rarely recognised and little explored' (p. 97). He looks at the positive effect of the natural world on writers who claim that their relationship with nature as children 'amounted to a symbiosis, a fusion of their own life with that of the living things in which they delighted' (p. 106).

In a chapter entitled 'Prince of the Apple Towns' (a quotation from Dylan Thomas), Pridmore investigates what are often called 'peak experiences'. I prefer the term 'moments of annunciation', used by John V. Taylor uses in his wonderful book *The Go-between God*. Either way, these are times of 'epiphany and promise' in which people are 'touched by the transcendent' (p. 131), as Pridmore puts it, when God, though hiding things from the wise and prudent, reveals them to infants (Matthew 11: 25–26). In a disturbing chapter we are reminded how 'representatives of religion can come close to quenching the child's spirit' (p. 151). More cheeringly, in the next chapter, 'Laughter and Prayers', the positive effect of religion in fostering spirituality is explored, as is the profoundly beneficial effect of music in the one following. Pridmore defines spirituality, sensibly in my view, as 'our awareness of the other and the beyond' (p. 25), which, drawing upon the work of David Hay and others, he is clear is not illusory. Play is not unconnected with spirituality, hence his title.

Pridmore feels that all the testimonies he has gathered have one lesson, more fundamental than any other, to teach us: 'that these children saw

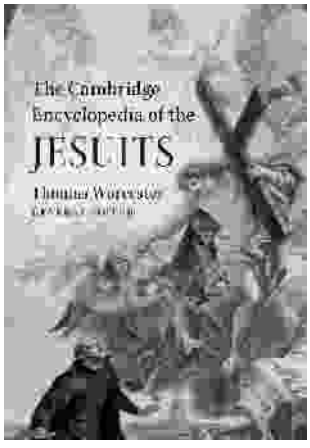
truly, recognising that of which they could only later speak, that our human condition is ultimately one of estrangement, that we are all natives of another land'. He continues: 'if that be so, spiritual nurture should not be arduous, for both teacher and taught are going with the grain of all that is. Together we are heading home.' (p. 197)

At the heart of this excellent book, which I wholeheartedly commend, is a wonderful anthology of some very affecting passages from authors' recollections of their childhood. I therefore conclude with a passage from Pridmore's favourite, Percy Lubbock's *Earlham*, in which Lubbock recalls his saintly grandfather's sermon:

> There was nothing in it at all a child might be supposed to understand; and a child accordingly, listening in a dream, scarcely heeding or apprehending a word, was brought without check into the mind that could worship in spirit and in truth …. The barriers that are about us in the world, separating soul from soul, seemed to be as nothing; and even the chasm that encircles our small humanity, that isolates it in the midst of the illimitable unknown, had vanished for an hour—freely, freely, our imprisoned thought could escape to the truth beyond the stars. (p. 167)

John Inge

***The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the Jesuits*, edited by Thomas Worcester (Cambridge: CUP, 2017). 978 1 1390 3278 0, pp. 911, £160.00.**



I dare say that academic libraries will more or less automatically add this volume to their stock. It is an impressive undertaking. But it is not cheap, and potential private purchasers among *The Way*'s readers may hesitate before ordering it for themselves, whether in hard copy or as a Kindle download. Fortunately, however, by visiting Amazon they can consult its preliminary materials before taking the financial plunge: here are listed its 600 entries, 70 illustrations and 110 contributors, among whom figure both well-known scholars and up-and-coming ones, including persons of other faiths or none.

Amazon further gives free access to the texts of all entries from 'Acosta' to (most of) 'Art Patronage', among which is James Menkhaus's article on Pedro Arrupe, and it reproduces in its entirety the book's admirably thoughtful introduction by its general editor, Thomas Worcester, who was also responsible for *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (2008). Here are

lucidly set out the editors' criteria for what is in and what is not. Broadly speaking, and as one would expect, coverage embraces individual biographies—of missionaries, martyrs, rogues and many more—key concepts, distinctive terminology, significant places, institutions and events. Happily, decent attention is given to Jesuits and the arts. In all this, Worcester emphasizes an editorial concern not just with *what*, but *how* ideals have been lived out. There is no ducking of 'awkward' areas, either. Thus, for example, articles are devoted to topics such as 'Anti-Semitism', 'Scandals', and 'Sexual Abuse by Jesuits'. (There is an affirmative and tactful entry about Heythrop College.) Although this is not reproduced by Amazon, the book contains a satisfactory index.

Plainly the encyclopedia's treatment of centrally important topics, such as St Ignatius himself (filed under L—Spanish names are treated somewhat capriciously) or the Spiritual Exercises, will prove immediate draws. Nor, I think, will readers be disappointed by them. The latter, after all, is masterfully written by Philip Endean. Others, again, will be grateful for its authoritative overviews of large and complex areas, for example the Society's presence in interreligious dialogue, superbly covered by Michael Barnes.

To this may be added the 'bowl of cherries' effect: you start looking up one topic in particular, then other subjects mentioned in that initial article lead you on. Or unrelated contiguous entries catch your eye; curiosity is stimulated, and next you find an hour or two has passed …. What sets you browsing may be a beguiling title—'Moon (Craters and Jesuits)' is surely irresistible, especially authored by Guy Consolmagno—or an unusual topic mentioned in the main list, such as Dalits, Paccanarists, or the Society's presence in Lithuania. The entry on 'Reviews / Journals' includes (I am glad to report) mention of *The Way*.

All articles were commissioned from 2013 onwards, the whole work being dedicated to Pope Francis, 'with joy and gratitude'. They vary in length from 300 to 3,000 words and incorporate cross-references. Most include a brief bibliography. One might sometimes wish for more leads here, as when a 'survey' entry has simply mentioned names without further indications. In such cases, should one resort to Wiki? Nor will you find entries listed under individual contributors' names. If you wanted to see a list of all the articles by Antoni Uçerler or Clare Robertson, say, you must proceed by guesswork.

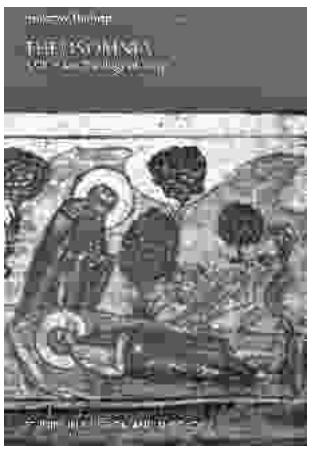
This encyclopedia is not, and could not have been, a one-stop shop. There is bound to be the occasional subject that one reader or another would have liked to be included or else handled differently. In what follows, therefore, I register merely personal responses. North American contributors predominate, so as a preliminary caution I made a list of some two dozen British topics that I hoped I would find covered. Of these, the majority were present. More than national pride, I hope, though, led me to wish that the

'United Kingdom' entry had had more space allotted to it, since the UK (now the Society's British Province) here looks suspiciously as though it refers to England only. There is no separate mention of St Beuno's—except in passing, in the article on Hopkins—or of the Jesuits' links with nearby Holywell. Scotland seems not to feature. To this I add regret at the absence (unless the index is at fault) of St Nicholas Owen, as well as Plater, Martindale and Gerard W. Hughes. One might have sought the last-named in the article on 'Pilgrimage', or—had there been one—on spirituality. (For the latter, one finds one needs to look for 'Asceticism and Mysticism', or to hit upon a passing remark in the entry *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*. Readers of *The Way*, take note.)

The printed book is heavy, but not uncomfortable to hold. Its font size and page layout are reader-friendly. It is, however, glued, rather than bound in sections, so time alone will show how durable it proves—from a material point of view. This is not the place to venture comparisons with O'Neill and Domínguez's four-volume *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* (2003), its complement or, possibly, competitor. I can in any case readily imagine myself reaching it down from library shelves, to consult it on specific points of information, or for authoritative and up-to-date appraisals of more familiar areas. (I have detected no bias or polemic purpose in those articles I have read so far.) As a private individual, on the other hand, I am not sure I would have purchased the encyclopedia for myself, given both its bulk and price. Other readers of *The Way* will, though, know what is best for them, given their own interests and needs.

Eric Southworth

Andrew Bishop, *Theosomnia: A Christian Theology of Sleep* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2018). 978 1 7859 2218 3, pp. 168, £45.00.



If sleep became a subject of science and sociology not so long ago, the God-talk—theology—of sleep, of which *Theosomnia* forms a significant example, must be very recent indeed. Much of this book retells an old, but unfamiliar or unknown, story found in Christian texts and practices. The author seeks to systematize and, it is to be hoped, advance serious thinking on, the theology of sleep, deriving from sleeping figures such as Adam, Jonah and Eutychus (Acts 20) and inherited through writers from Augustine and Cuthbert to G. K. Chesterton and Karl Rahner, among many others.

Constructed not unlike *insomnia*, the word *theosomnia* simply means 'God-sleep', that is,

> … hallowed sleep … sleep that is intentionally open to God; is blessed by God; and is offered to God. Typically, this is sleep consciously committed to God, for example in Compline, other prayers before bed or a prayerful awareness of God's presence, 'both waking and sleeping', or through a spiritual exercise such as the Examcn of Consciousness. (p. 24)

Curiously this description barely seems to refer to the actual sleep that follows night prayer or Examen. But if it may even extend to 'the cessation of sleep through waking expectantly', *theosomnia* cannot but include sleep proper; it is, indeed, 'the sleep of the disciple drawn from the sleep seen in Jesus as he slept in the boat … during the storm'. Charmed by this 'christological posture', a Christian has every right to resort to sleep as 'a time when God can work deep within the self, when control is lost and the ego, like the storm, is stilled' (p. 24).

Andrew Bishop begins with Sir Thomas Browne, as an early *theosomniac* who considered praying before sleep as 'an half adieu unto the world' (p. 25). Learning from such basic prayerful reflections on sleep in Browne's *Religio medici* (1643), and drawing from the writings of Augustine, Bede and Thérèse of Lisieux (among others), Bishop proceeds to construct his systematic study (or theology) of sleep, which, as he affirms, must relate not only to falling asleep and sleeping but also to waking and waking life (pp. 28–29), as the titles of his chapters indicate.

The first of these, 'Into Your Hands, O Lord, I Commend My Spirit', deals with the preparation for sleep; it includes, obviously, prayer receptive to the gift of sleep. But since 'the grace nature of sleep is not uncontested' by the Protestant work ethic (p. 35), it sees as all the more urgent the biblical conviction that God 'gives sleep to his beloved' (Psalm 127:3). Bishop finds Rahner persuasive: 'falling asleep could be seen as relating to the inner structure of prayer, which is equally a letting-go, an entrusting of one's own inner conviction to the providence of God which one lovingly accepts' (p. 36). More simply, as G. K. Chesterton puts it through his priest-detective, Father Brown, 'everyone who sleeps believes in God … for it is an act of faith'. This accords well with the creation story, in which the day begins in the evening rather than in the morning! So, Bishop can argue: 'sleep is the first thing we do in the rhythm of our lives and not the last' (p. 37), and it 'takes us deep into our interior lives to become more the person God made us to be' (p. 40).

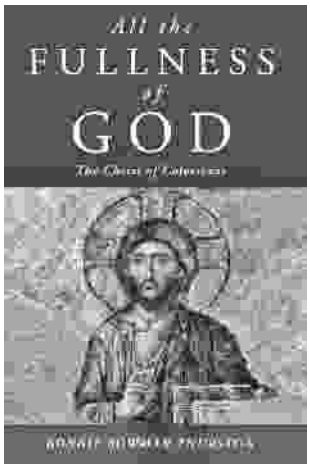
The second chapter, 'I Will Lie Down and Sleep', deals with sleep as we know it—in some ways, and, of course, as we do not know it, too. Here again, a Christian finds Christ as the model: his sleep is the source from which the

theosomniac may learn to enjoy sleep (p. 55). St Thérèse contemplated the sleeping Christ not only as a child but also as an adult, identifying him with the one 'whose heart watches even when he sleeps' (p. 67; Song of Songs 5: 2). That celebrated verse refers to no ordinary sleep, but the sleep of love that knows how to be awake too. So, Browne could affirm: 'We are somewhat more than ourselves in our sleep, and the slumber of the body seems to be but the waking of the soul' (p. 78). Such insights, and greater ones from mystics such as Augustine, Gregory the Great and Bernard of Clairvaux (pp. 69–79) will certainly whet our appetite for a greater grace of sleep.

Chapter 3, 'Be Sober, Be Vigilant', discusses sleep in relation to living both in time and beyond time, with vigilance—following Jesus, therefore, not only sleeping in the boat but keeping vigil at Gethsemane. By his own wakefulness he makes it possible, in principle, for everyone to follow him in time of temptation so that they may learn to sleep trustfully in daily living (p. 107). If 'Christian theology has a story to tell about sleep', the end of that story must include 'an account of the act of waking as much as the act of sleeping' (p. 108), not only in our daily living but end-time living. This raises issues of eschatology and, in particular, resurrection and the life after life and death. If all this is inspiring, the conclusions that Bishop draws will be quite enough to invite us to be at once human and holy in a busy world: for 'sleep, as a gift of God, has a sacramental quality' (p. 132).

Paul Dominic SJ

Bonnie Bowman Thurston, *All the Fullness of God: The Christ of Colossians* (Eugene: Cascade, 2017). 978 1 5326 1539 9, pp. 160, £17.00.



This book is something of a labour of love; the author is passionately committed to Colossians, and to its message, which for her is that Christ is the standard against whom all is measured, in a pluralistic word very much like our own. It is not, let it be said, a commentary, but a series of essays on the individual sections of the letter (if letter is what it really is: the author makes at least a bow in the direction of the questions that the text raises for contemporary scholarship). The essays are then followed by nine reflections or meditations, aimed at bringing academic exegesis within the compass of the ordinary reader.

What Colossians does, Thurston claims, is to bring out the implications of Jesus' resurrection, not just for the reader (though he or she is very much in Thurston's sights), but (rather more ambitiously) for the whole of creation. Very properly, she deals with the text as it is, and gives some helpful introductory details about the city of Colossae, its decline from former greatness, its cosmopolitan nature, the multiplicity of cults found there, and its Jewish population. As far as Paul (or 'Paul'; for our author is open on the question of authorship, though, like many of us, she would prefer it to be from the hand of the Apostle), is concerned, he is positive in his attitude to the Colossians (in contrast, say, to what he thinks of the Christians in Galatia or Corinth). As so often in Paul, there is real concern with church unity, and he urges on his hearers the importance of holiness of life and ethical codes. 'Colossians shows us how Pauline thought developed', she observes, neutrally enough (p. 17).

For her the centre of the letter is its christology, mainly as expressed in the 'hymn' (1:15–20). She sums up her view in these terms: 'the letter to Colossae is about the beauty, majesty, and power of Jesus Christ and the relationship of that to how Christians live their lives' (p. 20). This book is admirably attentive to the text of the letter, and you are strongly advised to read it with Colossians open in front of you. In the second part of the book there are some hints about how to pray Colossians, including praying for those whom we do not know; there are also some hints about 'discernment'—very topical under the present Pope—and about appropriate ways of behaviour for all levels of the Colossian community, and the need to avoid 'controversial visibility'. Christians ought not to attract criticism from non-Christians for failures in morality, and outsiders should be able to 'see the order, peace and beauty of Christian lives' (p. 123).

So this is in places a very moving book; but, to be honest, in places it is somewhat untidy; there are occasional mistakes in transcribing Greek, on p. 53 for example. The book at many points needed much closer copy-editing, and as a whole it comes across almost as though it had been written in a hurry, and not sufficiently checked over. However it is certainly worth reading for its insights into this important early Christian text, which the author knows well and loves.

Nicholas King SJ