THE WAY

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THE WORLD IS OUR HOUSE

Book Reviews

John Pridmore on two new books about prayer
Joseph A. Munitiz on religious faith and psychoanalysis
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Joy Elder on St Francis, the passion and the death penalty

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 discernment, 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 Jesu, 1894–)

Papal documents may be found at www.vatican.va

FOREWORD

CONTRASTING THE JESUITS with the older, more stable religious orders, Jerónimo Nadal, one of the early companions of St Ignatius, coined the phrase that forms the title for this edition of *The Way*: 'The world is our house'.[1] No one joining this upstart congregation should expect to stay in one place, or even simply to move around within his homeland. Ignatius wanted men who would go wherever the need was greatest, 'even to the Indies', and who would move on when a still greater need appeared elsewhere.[2]

Since the sixteenth century, many societies and cultures have become much more mobile and fluid, and today it is not only Jesuits who live in expectation of perhaps frequent moves. A question linking many of the articles gathered here is what spiritual resources exist to enable someone to live with this level of adaptability. In the first essay, Oscar Momanyi presents two very different experiences, of living and working in South Sudan and in the United States. Both have good and bad features; but what is it that enables him to make the transition?

Ignatius himself was willing to give advice to those facing changes in their lives, and Patrick Goujon draws on his letters to describe the kind of counsel that he offered. Helen Orchard analyses two of the key concepts employed by Ignatius in guiding others in decision-making, arguing that it is only by a passionate attachment to the facts as they present themselves that a person can hope to choose rightly. In an article reprinted from the British Jesuits' online journal *Thinking Faith*, Brian Purfield suggests that in our own attempts to discover where God might be leading us, we have much in common with the first disciples, sent uncomprehendingly to Galilee in the expectation of meeting their risen Lord.

The Christian tradition offers resources other than rational deliberation in its quest to discover how best to live a life of discipleship. Art has long been employed by many parts of the Christian church in this way—even when others have regarded that path with suspicion. Magdalena Randal offers a personal testimony to the power of a number of paintings that have moved her spiritually. Turning from the visual arts

[1] MHSJ MN 5, 54.
[2] Compare *Constitutions*, Formula of the Institute, n. 3.

to the literary, Nancy Enright considers some of the well-loved nature poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins. This takes on a particular resonance when read alongside the second encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, with its subtitle, 'On Care for Our Common Home'. It is, perhaps, those with a wide experience of the fact that 'the world is our house' who are clearest in their conviction that it is in need of our care.

For much of the time those early Jesuits sent out by Ignatius went on foot, covering prodigious distances. Teresa White believes that the process and pace of walking itself can be harnessed as a spiritual tool, and points to examples from the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral to pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostela to support her case. The process of a pilgrim walk is itself frequently mundane—putting one foot in front of the other, finding food and shelter, coping with the quirks of your fellow pilgrims (and allowing them to cope with yours!)—and Iona Reid-Dalglish emphasizes that it is precisely in the mundane details of everyday life that the risen Christ can often be encountered.

'The rest is silence.' These last words of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are echoed in the last essay offered here. Kirsty Clarke presents silence and speech (or at least its core element, the word) as contrasting essential elements of any spiritual journey. Looking at two very different classics of Christian spiritual writing, *Revelations of Divine Love*, by Julian of Norwich, and *The Cloud of Unknowing*, by an anonymous medieval author, she traces how these elements are presented very differently, yet each work finds both to be necessary.

Nadal was himself sent out by Ignatius, to help the nascent Society of Jesus in Europe discover new ways to spread the word of God, faithful to its founder's charism. Nearly five centuries later *The Way* is one instrument by which this work continues. If 'the world is our house', a spiritual approach to living in it must respect the diversity that this house contains. I hope that you continue to find, in the pages of this journal, a clear reflection of that rich diversity.

Paul Nicholson SJ
Editor

FINDING GOD IN SOUTH SUDAN AND THE USA

Oscar Momanyi

JERÓNIMO NADAL'S often-cited phrase, 'the world is our house', fascinated me the first time I came across it.[1] As a Jesuit, I have had the opportunity to live in many different contexts as I have studied and worked with people of various cultures. The richness of their cultural diversity and the depth of their love for God and God's people have been hallmarks of the Jesuits I have met so far on that journey. Nadal's words are a reality in my Jesuit life.

My most recent Jesuit journeys brought me to two contrasting worlds, one of great material deprivation and the other of great abundance: South Sudan and the United States of America respectively. Both worlds are in different ways 'frontiers' for the experience of God's presence and love. Frontiers, according to the thirty-fifth Jesuit General Congregation, are 'those physical and spiritual places' where Jesuits work but which 'others do not reach or have difficulty in reaching'.[2] These frontiers are what Pope Francis calls in *Evangelii Gaudium* the peripheries of society. He says,

> … each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey His call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel (n. 20).

I lived and worked in South Sudan for two years from 2012 to 2014 for my regency, and in the United States from 2014 to 2018 for my theological studies.[3] My journey to these frontiers helped me to grow closer to God and God's people.

[1] MHSJ MN 5, 54.
[2] Benedict XVI, 'Address to the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus', 21 February 2008, n. 2, in GC 35.
[3] Regency is a stage in Jesuit formation which involves living in a community and working in a ministry—often teaching—for two or three years before embarking upon theological studies.

I should like to reflect on the spiritual experiences I had and the lessons I learnt from Jesuits and other men and women when I lived in these two places. How did I find God in these two deeply contrasting contexts? What challenges did those contexts present to me in my quest to be close to God and the people of God?

Faith and Hope amid Material Deprivation

The Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005) destroyed most of Sudan's infrastructure and left the people with physical and emotional wounds. South Sudan got its independence on 9 July 2011. One year later, in July 2012, I was sent to work as a teacher at Loyola Secondary School in the town of Wau.[4]

In accepting this mission I remembered the message of Pope Paul VI on a visit to Uganda in 1969: 'by now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil.'[5] I had never thought seriously about mission in that way before. I had assumed that missionaries only came from Europe and the United States to work in Africa, as I had observed in my native country of Kenya. I had not thought of Africans as missionaries within their own continent.

Prayers at Loyola Secondary School

[4] This school is the first Jesuit ministry in Sudan, started by Jesuits from the former Detroit Province in 1982.

[5] Paul VI, homily at the eucharistic celebration concluding the symposium of the bishops of Africa, Kampala, Uganda, 31 July 1969.

When I received my assignment I was energized by the fact that I was going to be a missionary to my own African people. I was happy, too, that I was responding to Pope Francis's exhortation not to forget the people living on the margins of society, such as those in South Sudan.

In my life and ministry in South Sudan, I was moved by the poverty that I saw. However I could also see that people were happy. Where did that happiness, and their deep sense of dependence on God, come from? I took the vow of poverty three years before I got to South Sudan. However, arriving there, that vow took on a different dimension. I kept asking myself: how can I live my vow of poverty in a more radical way, in a way that can be more freeing and lead to this happiness that abundance cannot provide? The people of South Sudan taught me the true meaning of the beatitude, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven' (Matthew 5:3). I met men and women dedicated to the service of people in great need. Their enthusiasm for the saving work of God gave me encouragement and hope for the future of this new country. I met many people who had left their comfort zones in order to be with the poor who needed them. Sometimes it was that presence, more than any material assistance, that the local people needed.

My students at Loyola Secondary School were intelligent, creative, hopeful and full of initiative. The poverty and the precarious situation in the country made me expect to find resentful people who were without hope. On the contrary, they were full of joy and happiness even though they had so little. Most were born during the Second Sudanese Civil War, and the resilience they showed was spectacular. I was happy to be there to share my life with them. My initial fear of going to a country so recently at war dissipated when I encountered the joyful and hopeful young South Sudanese men and women at Loyola. My students' faith in God was unshakeable. They taught me how to depend on God's providence in the midst of material deprivation.

The school was unlike other Jesuit schools I had seen in Africa. The infrastructure was inadequate; the students were much older—some were over thirty; and trained teachers were difficult to find. Later, I learnt that what I was witnessing was 'emergency education' in a post-war situation—an approach to education that responds to the needs of communities affected by war in an adaptable way.

South Sudan had barely been independent for two years when violence broke out again. A civil war, mainly between the two major ethnic groups, the Nuer and the Dinka, began in December 2013 and led

to the disintegration of the country into a state of chaos.[6] At the time I was away on my annual retreat. Immediately after the eruption of the war, my provincial asked all the Jesuits assigned to work in South Sudan who were out of the country to return. On 18 January 2014, I travelled back to South Sudan from Kenya. As I was disembarking at the Juba International Airport, I saw a huge Russian Antonov aeroplane. Many people were carrying domestic paraphernalia such as mattresses, blankets, pots and pans, and were running to board the Antonov in order to be evacuated.

Watching what was unfolding that day made me feel so sad. The South Sudanese people had suffered decades of war, and now their chance of peace was about to be taken away again. I wanted to do something to help them, but there was nothing for me to do. I just surrendered the situation to God. I was afraid because the soldiers at the airport, who were wielding M-16s, looked trigger-happy. I thought that shooting could start at any time. However, deep within me, I felt God's abiding presence promising that all would be well and that I was not to lose hope.

In Juba that January I saw many NGO people being evacuated. I felt so scared and unsure whether I was supposed to be getting into the country or getting out of it like the NGO people. However, I reminded myself that I was not an NGO employee, but someone motivated by a Christ-centred mission urging me to stay with people who were suffering and oppressed at a time when they needed consolation, support and reassurance. That is what my provincial was telling me by asking me to get back to South Sudan. I kept reminding myself that, as a witness to the message of Christ, I am called to stand with the suffering people of God. That thought made my return to South Sudan easier. I felt confirmed by God that I was doing the right thing. My mission in South Sudan taught me to be a person of faith, hope and love in the midst of uncertainty and under the threat of war and violence.

Although the situation in which I was working was precarious, even threatening, I felt God's presence. It was a time to depend on God's providence and love. Many times, I felt abandoned and insecure, but thinking about the local people who had no choice but to live in that situation kept me going. As time went by I developed a deep love for the people and I wanted to journey with them in all they were experiencing.

[6] See John Ashworth, 'South Sudan: How is the Church Responding to Africa's Forgotten War?' *The Tablet* (12 January 2017).

Living out of my comfort zone helped me grow in my trust in God's providence. When I felt insecure, I kept remembering that I was on God's mission and not my own.

It was disturbing to realise that the problems of South Sudan cannot be solved in the near future. Living with that reality was hard. However, God granted me the grace to realise that my presence and solidarity with the South Sudanese was what was important. Christ continually calls each Christian to be a witness to the gospel through a positive presence in challenging situations. Christian friendship and hospitality are the most important gift that the people of South Sudan need. The people of South Sudan radiate humanity, are full of dignity and warmth. They welcome newcomers as strangers who must become friends. It was an honour to serve them and to share my life with them.

Coming to America

I saw the Eddie Murphy comedy *Coming to America* while I was in high school in the 1990s. Murphy plays the role of the young and extremely pampered Crown Prince Akeem of the fictional African kingdom of Zamunda. He hates his privileged but constrained life and wants to be free to follow his deepest desires. When his parents present him with a bride whom he has never met, Akeem decides to look for one he can love. He and his friend travel to the New York City borough of Queens and rent a filthy apartment in Long Island, where they get their first experience of culture shock. I, like most of my high-school mates, had a dream of going to the United States, the land of the free, just like Crown Prince Akeem. When I got to the USA, the romantic Hollywood idea that I had about it disappeared. I noticed that the challenges I faced back in Africa are also found in the US, but in a different form. I realised that the USA as depicted in Hollywood movies is not the real USA.

Going to the US to study theology—at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California—was my first time living outside the African continent. Being away from my own culture was rough in the beginning, and the culture shock took many months to overcome. My first encounter with the many different US cultures—African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, among others—was overwhelming. It was humbling to see how the USA is a kind of mosaic of people from all over the world. I had lived for a significant period in three African countries other than Kenya, but could still identify with the different African cultures that I

encountered. There were many similarities between my Kenyan culture and those I found in South Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, and so I did not experience a significant culture shock.

It was also my first time living with Jesuits from all over the world: from India, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Russia, Japan, Hungary, Slovakia, Burkina Faso, Germany and Croatia, among other countries. It was an enriching experience to see how these diverse people from diverse cultures could come to live together in harmony. Studying in such an international environment helped me appreciate the Society of Jesus as worldwide reality. I learnt in the novitiate that, in theory, I had joined the whole Society of Jesus, not merely a Province. That theory became a reality to me when I saw the Jesuits in my community from all over the world who were 'friends in the Lord' brought together in 'union of hearts and minds'.[7] The experience made me feel open to being sent to work in any part of the world where there is a need for me to work for the greater glory of God.

Being a Black, Non-American Jesuit in the United States

The first thing that surprised me when I got to the USA was how race was a controversial subject. I had never been so conscious of my blackness when I lived in Africa, but a few months after my arrival in the US an African American friend told me 'the moment you stepped into the US, your race became an issue for debate'. That shocked me because I had heard about racial tensions in the United States, but did not know what the debates around race and racism in the US were.

My first frightening experience was learning about the police killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island in July 2014. That incident and the protests around it traumatized me for months.[8] Even after the tragic death of Eric, cases of police brutality, including the shooting of black people, have continued to occur.[9] Afterwards, I heard about the Black Lives Matter movement and its activities nationwide, but also about those who were responding with the slogan 'All Lives Matter!' I was so confused and

[7] Antonio M. de Aldama, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: An Introductory Commentary on the Constitutions* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1998), 265.

[8] Eric Garner died when New York police placed him in a chokehold while arresting him for a minor offence. Despite the death being ruled as a homicide the officer involved was not indicted for manslaughter, leading to widespread protests.

[9] See Josh Hafner, 'Police Killings of Black Men in the US and What Happened to the Officers', *USA Today* (30 March 2018), available at https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/03/29/police-killings-black-men-us-and-what-happened-officers/469467002/.

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scared about what was going on. What if I walked down the block and got shot just because I was black? Back home in Africa my family and friends kept asking me: are you safe in the USA? Paradoxically, they never asked me that question when I lived in South Sudan. They knew that, somehow, I would be safe. But the new situation of racism in the US scared them so much that they thought that I would die. While I lived in a war situation in South Sudan, I did not feel as scared as I felt in my first few months in the USA because of the colour of my skin.

Two years after my arrival, the Jesuit School of Theology began a series of reflections on racism that I found very insightful. They helped me as an African not only to begin to appreciate how the racism in the US affects me as a black non-American Jesuit, but also to think about the vice of tribalism that is endemic to Africa. Racism and tribalism are both forms of exclusion that need to be challenged by the Christian value of inclusivity.

A question that nagged at me was: why do we only have about fifteen African American Jesuits in the United States? I was invited to attend a formation gathering in Clarkston, Michigan. At that meeting, I felt lost because I was the only black person in the room. It felt like sitting in an exclusive club. There were a few Asian Americans and some Hispanic Jesuits present at the meeting, but no one else black. A scholastic asked the provincial why there were no African Americans in formation at that time. I was not convinced by the answer given that day. I did not understand why there are almost no black vocations for the Society in

the US, even though the Jesuits have high schools and other institutions dedicated to the education of black people. Since there are very few African American Jesuits, it was almost impossible for me to have a meaningful conversation with fellow black Jesuits of the US Society of Jesus and hence I felt that I did not grow in my understanding of the African American Jesuit experience.

I was invited to preach on Black History Month 2018 at St Patrick's Church in West Oakland, California, where I worked for three years.[10] I was worried because my experience and culture as a black non-American are different from that of African Americans. I had to struggle to understand African Americans although we have the same skin colour. How could I preach about black history in the United States, when I am so ignorant of that history? My first instinct was to say no: I said to myself, 'the fact that I am black is not good enough to justify my preaching on black history in the USA'. But, after wrestling with that thought for a while, I took up the challenge; by then I had four years of experience of being a black person in the United States, and I also knew that I could draw on my experience from Africa in ways that could illuminate black experience in the US. I believed that the Spirit would lead me through the whole process.

Discovering the Black theology of James H. Cone, Jaime Phelps, Shawn M. Copeland, Cornel West, Brian N. Massingale and other African American theologians was an eye-opener.[11] I began to understand the plight of African American people theologically. I also endeavoured to put Black theology into conversation with African theology as I studied; that was one great gift I received in the US. I was surprised by how the two are so different, reflecting their different contexts. Black theology, as I have come to understand it, has its starting point in the experience of slavery and racism in the United States, while African theology begins from the perspective of the colonial and post-colonial experience of the continent.[12] I had an initial resistance to Black theology since I felt that racism is not part of my experience as a non-American

[10] 'Black History Month is an annual celebration of the achievements of African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of blacks in US history. The event grew out of "Negro History Week", the brainchild of the noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every US president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history': https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month, accessed 2 January 2018.

[11] For more on Black theology see James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997).

[12] Bénézet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 17–20.

black but, as I continued to live in the US, I realised that I was not cushioned from racism, and thus I had to do something about my naïveté. I soon felt that being in the USA as a black person without confronting racism is to be complicit with racist attitudes inherent in the country. Therefore, I started to take discussions of race seriously.

The suffering and discrimination that African American brothers and sisters endure in the USA have helped me to understand the meaning of hope and resilience in new ways. African Americans undergo many little deaths in their lives, times when they feel that all hope is gone, but there are many resurrections too. As I interacted with my fellow black people in the US, I could see these resurrections in their families, workplaces, schools and communities. These people know how to celebrate life; the brightly coloured clothes, the drums, the dancing, the music, the food and all that was showcased during Black History Month every February were signs of hope for a better future. African American people's faith in God moved me just as the faith of the South Sudanese had. They taught me to believe that everything is in God's hands. God walks with the suffering people; God is always on the side of the oppressed.[13] I believe that the suffering that black people endure will not last forever, a day will come when all men and women, whatever their race, 'will be able to sit down together in the table of brotherhood and sisterhood'.[14]

God is always on the side of the oppressed

Jesuits Owning Slaves?

I was shocked to learn that the Jesuits in the US had owned slaves. The question that kept nagging me as an African Jesuit was: how am I complicit in that dark history? As a member of the Jesuit order, I am not outside the social sin committed by the Society of Jesus. That reality affects me although I am removed by many years from the sin itself. Being part of the race that was oppressed by slavery, I nevertheless find it hard to condemn the Society to which I belong for the sins it committed against black people who came from Africa. The fact that US Jesuits had owned slaves was shocking to me; but it did not blind me to the reality that the US Jesuits have also done good things in Africa—such as founding the Loyola Secondary School where I worked in South

[13] See James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997).
[14] Martin Luther King, 'I Have a Dream', speech given at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, August 1968; published edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 22.

Sudan. This is the ambivalent history with which I am called to live as an African Jesuit. I am part of an order that is capable of both good and evil. This fact helped me to reflect on my own capacity for good and evil and thus to be attentive to the movements of the spirits in my life in order to avoid evil and do good.

Georgetown University's apology for owning slaves moved me. On 18 April 2017, it apologised for its role in the 1838 sale of 272 enslaved individuals for the university's benefit. The apology took place in the company of more than a hundred descendants of slaves.[15] As an African, I felt that that was a good move in the right direction. However, as a black non-American Jesuit, I felt that it had come too late in history; as people who examine our consciences frequently, I think that the Jesuits should have apologised many years ago.

I believe that this sin affects me as a black Jesuit and I feel called to solidarity with the black people in the USA who suffer from the consequences of slavery. In my work at St Patrick's Church in West Oakland, I tried to reach out and be in solidarity with the African American community as a way of standing with people oppressed by a sin that my order committed against their ancestors. This was my small way of saying that I am part of the problem, and thus I am sorry and ready to confront that past.

Living Religious Vows Contextually?

As an African Jesuit living in the USA, I noticed the difference in how Jesuits lived the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty in the two different contexts. These vows, especially obedience and poverty, are lived contextually. The form of the vows is the same in all contexts, but their interpretation and living out are slightly different from one situation to another.

An example will suffice. One day I overheard a US Jesuit asking a Jesuit from Africa: 'do you have a villa house in your Province?' I was amused by the question because, in a country such as South Sudan, where ordinary people are struggling to survive, the Jesuits cannot have the luxury of a villa house—a place set aside for rest and relaxation: that would not be feasible contextually. Furthermore, many provinces in Africa

[15] See 'Georgetown Apologizes for the 1839 Sale of 272 Slaves, Dedicates Buildings', https://www.georgetown.edu/news/liturgy-remembrance-contrition-hope-slavery, accessed 2 January 2018.

do not have the resources to own such a house. Things such as the villa house, which would be considered as acceptable within the vow of poverty in the USA, may not necessarily be viewed in the same way elsewhere in the Jesuit world. This fact reminded me of the need for adaptability and flexibility in understanding the contexts in which Jesuits live.

I had heard about consumerism in the United States while I lived in Africa. Consumerism, from a sociological perspective, 'is the belief that personal well-being and happiness depends to a very large extent on the level of personal consumption, particularly on the purchase of material goods'.[16] Living in the US, I saw its effects first-hand. There was always a temptation and pressure to follow what was the dominant trend in society. I was surprised by how frequently some Jesuits changed their phones. I bought an iPhone 5 which, at the time when I bought it, I felt was too expensive. Four years later, some people were shocked that I still had the same phone. That experience made me reflect on how I live my vow of poverty in a consumerist society. As I lived in the USA, I prayed for the grace to resist the consumerist culture and live a frugal life for the greater glory of God. At the same time, I noticed that most people in the US are not rich and consumerist, as I had thought. They live modest lives and sometimes struggle to make ends meet.

On the vow of obedience, I was amazed by the amount of trust that superiors in the USA had in the Jesuits, and their openness to the work

[16] Rachel Dwyer 'Expanding Homes and Increasing Inequalities: US Housing Development and the Residential Segregation of the Affluent', *Social Problems*, 54 (2007), 23.

of the Spirit through prayer and discernment. I was equally surprised to learn for the first time that in the USA Jesuits apply for jobs like any other person and are sent to work in specific missions by the provincial only once they have been hired after a long interviewing process. My experience of mission in Africa was that Jesuits discern with the provincial and then he sends them directly on a mission without this application process. I had to understand that mission, too, was done contextually and that my experience was limited.

Moving as a vowed religious from Africa to the United States was both joyful and challenging. Negotiating contextual differences was difficult for me, and I needed a lot of spiritual capital to understand the new context in which I was living instead of making rash judgments.

On Personal Relationships: American and African Ways

I grew up in a context in which an African communitarian ethos was the norm, in which people derive their identity from personal relations in the community. Communal belonging defines a person's identity.[17] It is in such a communitarian context that African concepts such as *Ujamaa* and *Ubuntu* emerge. These focus on a person as he or she is related to the community and not just as an individual.

Ujamaa is a Kiswahili word which connotes familyhood, togetherness and fraternity.[18] It was popularised by Tanzania's first president, the Venerable Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.[19] In articulating the meaning of *Ujamaa*, Nyerere used other expressions alongside *familyhood*, such as caring, well-being, reciprocity, togetherness and universal hospitality.[20] In *Ujamaa* spirituality, a person becomes fully human when he or she is in communion with others. Conversely, *Ubuntu* is derived from the Xhosa people of South Africa. It is a 'worldview based on the primary values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion, and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in the spirit of family'.[21] Both *Ujamaa* and *Ubuntu* focus on the communal aspects of a person first before considering him or her as an individual.

[17] See Laurenti Magesa, *What Is Not Sacred? African Spirituality* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2013), 45–46.
[18] Oliver Alozie Onwubiko, *The Church in Mission in the Light of Ecclesia in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2001), 34.
[19] A Cause for the canonization of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere is ongoing. See http://www.catholicstandardgh.com/beatification-cause-for-julius-nyerere.html.
[20] Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford UP, 1968), 1–12.
[21] Johann Broodryk, *Ubuntu: Life Lessons from Africa* (Tshwane: Ubuntu School of Philosophy, 2002), 56.

As I lived in the USA, I felt that my African communitarian ethos was undermined by an individualist ethos within US culture. I knew about US individualism before I arrived, but I did not understand it until I started living there. Relationships in the US, according to my experience, centre around individual freedom and self-reliance, and decisions are made on an individual basis with little influence from the community. This was very difficult to understand for a person who comes from a communitarian culture. I also felt that most people in the US used 'I' too much in their conversations. I was surprised by that because in Africa 'we' predominates over 'I'. Most Africans believe in the maxim, 'I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am'.[22]

I think that a dialogue between the African communitarian ethos of *Ujamaa* and *Ubuntu*, and the US individualist ethos can be mutually enriching. Both world-views have their merits and demerits. On the one hand, excessive communitarianism can stifle creativity. On the other, excessive individualism can destroy personal relationships. A moderate amount of individualism, coupled with what Kwame Gyekye refers to as 'moderate communitarianism', which values creativity and freedom, can help Jesuits and others from both worlds to grow in becoming authentic 'friends in the Lord'.[23]

While in the USA, I developed a habit of taking a bus or a train instead of driving a car in order to be close to the ordinary people. Encountering people in this was illuminating. I felt God's presence by just looking at people's faces and observing what was going on. Sometimes, I encountered people with mental illness or under the influence of hard drugs. Being on a train or a bus was an opportunity to experience the joys and struggles of the people by just being present and aware that God was always there in the midst of the challenges that people experience.

What surprised me in most buses and trains in the United States was how people minded their own business. Everyone was on the phone or had a book to read. No one seemed to care about others unless he or she knew them. This felt like a world of isolation such as I had not experienced in South Sudan or Kenya. In Kenya, *matatu* minibuses are

[22] John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990), 141.

[23] Kwame Gyekye argues against extreme communitarianism by advocating for a moderate form of communalism. He affirms that human persons are rational, capable of virtuous conduct and can make moral judgments. He further argues that the community does not create these 'mental features', but only discovers and nurtures them. They play a major role in who a person can become; therefore, personhood is not wholly bestowed on the individual by the community. See Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), 53.


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the common means of transport.[24] In a *matatu,* people talk, crack jokes and laugh with one another even if they are strangers. There is a lively spirit in *matatus,* especially in the countryside. When I travelled in the USA I missed this spirit.

My Ministry at St Patrick's Parish

I liked working as a high-school teacher in South Sudan, and I longed to find a place where I could do some form of ministry when I came to the US to study theology. While I was studying I had the opportunity to be part of the church community at St Patrick's parish in West Oakland, a poor neighbourhood in the San Francisco Bay area. St Patrick's is a teaching parish for the Jesuit School of Theology, where students learn contextual theology.[25] I learnt how to be a minister and to journey with people on the margins of a wealthy society during my time at St Patrick's.

St Patrick's parish was established in 1887 to serve the needs of Irish immigrants who were employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company in Oakland. By the 1950s, it had slowly become a mixed parish, with Mexican immigrants and African Americans joining the community. In 1999, the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley took up the responsibility

[24] *Matatu* is a Swahili word connoting 'three'. The original *matatus* were covered pickup trucks which had three benches with people sitting facing one another. Therefore, they had to talk to each other, or at least make eye contact.

[25] For more on contextual theology, see Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002).

of running the parish. By this time it was populated by African Americans and people from various Latin American countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. The Irish population had moved out of the neighbourhood by the time the Jesuits took over the parish.[26] Throughout its history, St Patrick's parish has always been welcoming to people of different ethnicities. I, too, felt welcomed there as a newly arrived African student who was trying to find a place in the US ecclesial context.

During my time, the parish was about two-thirds Hispanic and a third African American. The two communities at St Patrick's worshipped separately. This was my first encounter with the idea of a 'shared parish', where people from different ethnicities worship in their own languages while having minimal interaction with members of the other language groups. Shared parishes occur in multi-ethnic contexts where racial and cultural communities use one worshipping space. Brett Hoover argues that the co-location of distinctness in a shared physical space creates a dynamic that suggests more than integration or mixing. It entails a renegotiation of resources, time, space, participation and leadership models. This level of interaction reflects a 'sharing' that has sociological implications and theological import. Viewed this way, 'the shared parish offers an alternative means of understanding cultural diversity beyond paradigms of multiculturalism and assimilation'.[27]

It was fascinating to witness such a shared parish in the USA because in Africa most parishes are homogeneous. Although tribal differences occur in African parishes, there is enough commonality between tribes at the level of culture and language that it is easy for churches to operate in homogenous ways. It is unimaginable in much of Africa to think of a shared parish in the US sense. The experience I had at St Patrick's widened my horizons about what it means to belong to a parish. Since globalisation, urbanisation and immigration continue to affect the whole world, I think some African parishes, especially in urban areas, may soon become 'shared parishes' like St Patrick's. I am glad that I learnt how to be a minister in such a context, in case I may be called to work in a shared parish in Africa.

[26] For a detailed history of St Patrick's parish see Jeffrey Lewis, *After Changes Upon Changes: A Centennial History of St Patrick Parish* (Techny: Divine Word Missionaries, 1987).
[27] See Brett C. Hoover, *The Shared Parish: Latinos, Anglos, and the Future of US Catholicism* (New York: NYUP, 2014).

My first encounter with Hispanic culture and spirituality was at St Patrick's. Even though I did not know Spanish, I was attracted to the Hispanic liturgies and how the Hispanic people are so devoted to the Church. The Hispanic community taught me the value of popular piety and devotion to Our Lady, which had not been a central part of my spirituality. The Hispanic parishioners' devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe transformed my relationship with Mary. There were two images of Our Lady in the church: one of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the other of Our Lady of Africa. Praying in that church reminded me how central Mary, as a mother figure, is to both communities. Our Lady continues to pray for the people of God whatever their ethnicity and race, and they all identify with her motherly care.

I was fascinated to see how the Hispanic community integrated their faith and culture. I first witnessed a *quinceañera* ceremony and the symbols that accompany it at St Patrick's. The *quinceañera* liturgy and the festivity afterwards are a celebration of a girl's transformation from girlhood to young adulthood.[28] In most parts of Africa, such cultural rites of passage are separated from the Church. Encountering the Hispanic community at St Patrick's I learnt that some African practices involving the initiation of boys and girls into adulthood, are also sacred and could be integrated into the church liturgy as a way of finding God in all things. The Hispanic people at St Patrick's taught me that faith and culture are not separate.

The African American community was also exuberant, with gospel music and a lot of dancing. The English Mass went on for two and a half, sometimes three, hours. That style of Mass was very different from what I was used to in Africa. I took a long time to get accustomed to the gospel songs and the long preaching. I learnt, as I continued to immerse myself in the black Catholic community at St Patrick's, that most black Catholics in America are converts, especially from the Baptist and other Protestant Churches, and they come to the Roman Catholic Church with their former worship styles. I was accustomed to long, lively liturgies in Africa, but those I experienced at West Oakland were different. I had to become inculturated in this new liturgical environment. The West Oakland context helped me discern how to be a minister who takes cultures seriously, that is, a minister who does 'culture-sensitive ministry'.[29]

[28] See Julia Alvarez, *Once upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in America* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2007).
[29] See Kenneth McGuire, Eduardo Fernández and Anne Hansen, *Culture-Sensitive Ministry: Helpful Strategies for Pastoral Ministers* (New York: Paulist, 2010).

The two St Patrick's communities experienced some tensions, which are inevitable when two cultures meet. Learning to navigate cultural tensions yet remaining faithful to the message of Christ was an important lesson for me. As an outsider, I was alien to both the Hispanic and African American cultures, but I slowly learnt aspects of them through observation and interaction with the parishioners.

I was shocked by the fear I saw in the parish, in both communities, after the rise of Donald Trump to the US presidency in 2016. The xenophobia, white supremacism and exclusionary policies—such as the ban on people from certain Muslim countries entering the US—that undermine the dignity of minorities were disturbing. In one of my confirmation classes, I asked my Hispanic students what they wanted to change in their lives during Lent. One of them said, 'I would like to change Trump!' The immigration issue in the larger Bay Area, which is considered a sanctuary for immigrants, continued to baffle me. What could I do, as a foreigner who has no say in the policies of the country? The only response to my helplessness was to be in solidarity with the people in my church community who were threatened by unjust immigration laws.

However, despite the uncertainty and fear of deportation, there remained a sense of home and family in the parish; there was social support among people who would otherwise have nowhere to feel secure. It was common to see people eating together and enjoying lively conversations after Mass. A variety of Latin American foods were served: Salvadorean *popusa*, and Mexican *tacos* and *enchiladas* among others. I was happy to enjoy these foods. which I had never seen in my life before, with a people whose culture I was barely starting to understand. I felt a sense of togetherness and communion as we ate together.

I experienced black hospitality as I worked at St Patrick's, too. As an African, I brought with me the idea of Church-as-family which the African bishops desired for the Church in Africa after the First African Synod of 1994.[30] At St Patrick's I was able to see the family model of Church in practice. Community-building activities and initiatives, such as eating together, emphasizing the sign of peace during the Mass and so on, made the black community at St Patrick's a welcoming one to a person coming from Africa. I met some parishioners who travelled over fifty miles to come to the church because they felt that they belonged to

[30] See John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in Africa and Its Evangelizing Mission towards the Year 2000* (Nairobi: Paulines, 1995), n. 63.

Mass at St Patrick's

St Patrick's—that was their home. I was enriched by the resilience of the black community and the value they placed on their culture even amidst the threat of exclusionary narratives and racism.

St Patrick's provided an opportunity for me to get out of the classroom at the Graduate Theological Union and experience what Vincent Donovan calls 'grassroots theology': a non-academic lived theology that comes from people's experience.[31] 'For whom am I doing theology?' was one of the fundamental questions that I asked myself, and the St Patrick community helped me to understand that I did not do theology for its own sake, but for the sake of the people of God. I also learnt, in a practical way, about collaborative ministry while at the parish. I noticed that in the US Church collaborative ministry between the laity and the clergy is given priority. Where I have worked as a Jesuit in Africa such collaborative ministry was not emphasized. Working at St Patrick's, I was able to see collaborative ministry up close and make it a ministerial skill that I would take back home to Africa. I learnt that laypeople are not subordinate to the clergy, but equal partners in the proclamation of the reign of God.

Some Lessons from Both Worlds

Even though people in South Sudan are poor, they share the little resources they have in the spirit of communalism. It was difficult to find

[31] See Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1978).

people living in destitution on the street. The people knew how to pull together and help those who are struggling. Witnessing homelessness in a country of abundance such as the United States shocked me. I could not understand how the country's great technological and economic advancement could coexist with the crisis of homelessness. I think US society can learn from developing countries such as South Sudan about the value of sharing.

During my stay in the United States, I had a chance to visit Red Cloud Indian School at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Pine Ridge is located in Shannon County—one of the poorest counties in the United States.[32] Visiting the various churches where the Jesuits minister on the reservation made me think that I was not in the US any more. The poverty I saw there was comparable to what I saw in South Sudan. Even in parts of the wealthy USA, poverty is as endemic as it is in developing countries. I was inspired to see the solidarity of the Jesuits at Pine Ridge with the Oglala Lakota people. They were helping to break the vicious circle created by the injustices done to the native people over the centuries. I felt a deep connection to these Jesuits since they were working in conditions not unlike those in which I worked in South Sudan. Thousands of miles apart, on two different frontiers, Jesuits were living in solidarity with the poor.

While I was in South Sudan I was confronted by insecurity and gun violence because of the civil war. I had to rely on God's protection and stay out of harm's way as much as I could. Many local people lost their lives. When I arrived in West Oakland, however, gun violence was also a common occurrence. One night, a few months before I arrived there, a gang member had been shot a few blocks from St Patrick's parish, and his body lay where it fell until daylight. Such incidents in the Bay Area itself, and reports of gun violence in other parts of the US were frightening. Seeing violence in both South Sudan and the US taught me that God is the one who protects. Even in the wealthy and seemingly peaceful USA it is possible to die through a random act of violence. I learnt that wherever I am, trust in God's protection is what is important.

Things were always uncertain in South Sudan, and the predictability and precision of some things in the USA surprised me. Using the internet to get directions or phone apps to get real-time departure and arrival

[32] For details about the work of the Jesuits at Pine Ridge, see Ross Enochs, *The Jesuit Mission to the Lakota Sioux: A Study of Pastoral Ministry, 1886–1945* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1996).

times for public transport was new to me. Where was divine providence in all that? It was difficult to see God's guiding hand when things were so predictable. I felt that predictability could tempt people to be too independent of one another, and too independent of God and God's action in the world. The mostly unpredictable life in South Sudan helped me to trust in God's providence.

Living alongside US Jesuits, I felt enriched culturally and challenged to think differently. But I think that my presence and that of other African Jesuits sharing our lives, culture and experience enriched the US Jesuits too. The experience of living in South Sudan and in the United States has helped me to appreciate the need for adaptability and flexibility in relation to the cultures that a Jesuit encounters. I learnt how to negotiate new cultures and manage culture shock, and about the challenges that both deprivation and abundance bring. I also learnt that frontiers are not only to be found in countries where there is material deprivation, but also in wealthy ones.

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SPIRIT PAINTING

Magdalena Randal

AT THE AGE OF SEVEN I pushed open a heavy mahogany door. It was the entrance to of Our Lady of Sion school on Chepstow Villas in London, England. That morning God arrived in me.

For my memory of opening that door is not one of watching my child self but of being my true self. Seeing my own hand press on the door, seeing, through my own eyes, the cavernous foyer where there hung a huge painting of Jesus and some of the disciples in a boat.[1] Returning to that moment, I am myself yet more: animated by a feeling of wonder that I still pursue. There have been other times, along this spiritual journey that is my life, when my memory of an experience seems as if I was watching myself from outside. I recall those occasions as if I were seeing with God's eyes, feeling with God's heart. I also feel peace and a yearning for more wonder: the wonder of art.

Much of my seeking has been in the creation of artworks. I have made 'cinema poems' following on some moment's inspiration—sort of like the way a glimpse of peace provokes me to more prayer. I have worked to develop instants of grace into an honourable expression of the Mystery that keeps inviting me onwards. Four years ago my spiritual seeking and the cinema I create came together. I had reached an end point with a film I was composing about what I thought was my own spiritual journey. I was ready to abandon the project as I turned my focus to theology. I stood at attention for three years, listening intently to teachers at the Jesuit faculty in Paris. My sense of God as mystery deepened and I began to return to completing the film as a way to express that Mystery to which I was feeling closer and closer: the Holy Spirit.

[1] Probably a reproduction of the *The Storm on the Sea of Galilee*, a 1633 work by Rembrandt which was the subject of a massive and as yet unresolved investigation after it was stolen from the Isabella Gardiner Museum in Boston in 1990.

But back to the first heave-ho moment to set the scene. I was beginning my education at a Roman Catholic school simply because my agnostic parents thought it was the best place for me when our family moved to London for my father's work. I was excluded from 'religious education' parts of the school days at the request of my parents. They felt it would be hypocritical to have me follow something they did not. When the rest of the class went off to celebrate, I always felt a longing to belong. I liked celebrating! And when everyone in class was gathered together, it was as if we were all in that boat I had stood before, the one depicted in the dramatic painting in the school's front hall.

Art and spirituality have been intertwined for me ever since. The power of art to reveal truths and encourage further seeking still urges me on in my pilgrimage through this life. So, all these years later, as I began adult studies, I returned to a church where a nun had accompanied me on previous visits to the city of light. There I had been enchanted by a painting in the St Louis chapel of the St Thomas D'Aquin church. First, I saw myself—or so I thought—in the rose winged angel holding the crown of thorns above a very effeminate depiction of King Louis IX. As I continued listening to theology, I kept returning to the painting. I saw myself in each of the characters depicted, until the only part of me I had not explored caught me out.

St Louis Dispensing Justice under the Oak of Vincennes, *by Luc-Olivier Merson, c. 1888*

During the last months of my studies, I noticed an element in the work of which I had previously not been aware. There, in the top left corner of the image, was a barely visible sprite or misty presence perched in the leaves of a spreading oak tree. I kept returning to look at the presence, so deftly represented by the painter

in an otherwise gaudy, two-dimensional scene filled with personas I had tried inhabiting at various times: I was Religion, weighed down with a chalice, a scroll of theology and a processional crucifix. I was King Louis, sitting imperiously on my throne. I was the portly St Thomas Aquinas handing over the church in silence after bulking myself up on wordy explanations.

But none of these personas was the real me. Then, one early evening in the Jardin de Luxembourg, I felt I understood what I am really made of and a part of. A God who just is: a rising and falling Breath; the mysterious in and out, taking in and letting go; that action that welcomes and then releases the spirit the way real friends can welcome and then release each other without possessing one another. I sat in the garden in the springtime of my last year of studies and saw the very mist I had recognised in the painting drifting across one of my favourite vistas. *There I am. Here we are*, I thought, and I felt a deep yearning just to dissolve into the greenery. To be a peaceful, invisible presence in the world ….

I was ready to disintegrate into the unknown—for that is what the Spirit keeps doing. Whether it is the energy we see departing as a loved one leaves our current existence, or the astonishing spirit sense that is exhaled in nature, and between friends who discover they are kindred spirits. The Spirit, the energy that animates, says *Come along, keep advancing*, as it fades into the air, before re-emerging elsewhere. My journey through that painting ended, marking the opening up of my heart and mind to the rest of the world. I did not need to go back to that fanciful decorative artwork any more. And instead of seeking out a new touchstone for contemplation, I let my being remain empty as the last sessions of my courses were fulfilled.

One morning during the final month of my studies, I awoke wondering 'what if Mary Magdalene was the author of John's Gospel?' I knew I could not be the only one to have arrived at this insight. I was sure there must be some more academically gifted soul who had examined the writing in a way that was more systematic than my own intuitive pondering. After some searching I came upon a rather thorough argument by someone who had had the same thought over twenty years before, Ramon K. Jusino.[2] When I ran the idea by a Jesuit systematic theologian,

[2] Ramon K. Jusino, 'Mary Magdalene: Author of the Fourth Gospel?' (1998), available at http://ramon_k_jusino.tripod.com/magdalene.html.

he chuckled and said it was worth exploring—especially since it would upset a few apple carts. Doesn't all imaginative risk-taking upset apple carts—reminding people that with God all things really are possible?

My way of exploring the Mystery keeps bringing me back to the concrete experience of being before art. I knew I had to wait for another invitation from the Spirit to come as I proceeded along my artist's way. I knew it would happen at some moment when I was least expecting it. I was pretty sure it would not give me any cut-and-dried answers—just beckon me further into faith as the sight of the boat had done at such an important moment when I was a child.

A few weeks later, a friend in Nova Scotia sent me an e-mail with an image of the Pietà of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon by Enguerrand Quarton, accompanied by the words 'Is this the greatest religious work of art?' I went to the Louvre to look at it and see. A fellow artist and I slipped into the museum, very near closing time on a Friday evening. Long ago my MA research director took me to the Louvre to show me how to visit the museum. 'You go to look at one painting at a time', he counselled. So that is exactly what my friend and I did. We resisted the temptation to dawdle before any of the other artworks along the hallways that led to the painting in question. We were on a mission. When we got to the painting, we stood for a very long time gazing at it: simple, austere and haunting. To describe it further would ruin the experience to be had by going to see it. What I will communicate is a mystery conveyed by the artist. In the painting John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalene are the same person.

Here was a confirmation of my intuition. Ever since seeing this remarkable painting I have wondered whether truly dedicated artists are, like priests, drawing people into the mystery of God's way through their devotion to fulfilling the vision of the Mystery they have. I felt God, I saw through God's eyes the wonder that is that painting. The experience has prompted more and more questions.

Why is the Holy Spirit represented by two people who are one and the same in this painting? Why has no one else commented on this aspect of the painting before? Colleagues at the Jesuit faculty assumed that I am interested in gender when I started to talk about the possibility that a being historically described as male might actually have been female. I prefer to say that I believe the organ does not define the person. The person who is the Holy Spirit is sometimes male, sometimes female. Perhaps all in one! But why does an artist do this? Why did the painter

Pietà de Villeneuve-lès-Avignon, *by Enguerrand Charonton,* c.*1460*

of that artwork not make the two characters distinct? They could have had differently coloured hair, differently coloured eyes, contrasting features. Instead they are identical, just clothed differently. And is that not the state of each and every soul on earth? Really, in the spirit that animates us, we are identical, just clothed in different experiences.

Magdalena Randal's work combines creative writing with religious contemplation. Some of her compositions are at work in various publications while others are resting here: https://magdalenarandalwrites.wordpress.com/.

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REACHING EQUIPOISE

The Relationship between Indifference and Discernment in the Spiritual Exercises

Helen Orchard

DAVID LONSDALE HAS OBSERVED, 'It is not always recognized that discernment lies at the heart of Christian spirituality. People are even suspicious about the word "discernment".'[1] If this is the case for *discernment*, how much more will it be so for *indifference*, with its modern connotations of cool disengagement or even boredom? Nevertheless, I would like to argue not only that discernment and indifference are central to the Christian spiritual life, but also that indifference is anything but impassive. Indeed, it is the practical outworking and lived experience of passion, in the fullest sense of the word: the desire for God and the embrace of the cross. We see this clearly in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius, particularly in the sections where Ignatius outlines the way in which decisions, or *elections*, are to be made. The *Spiritual Exercises* are, after all, 'one great inquiry after the most holy will of His Divine Majesty'.[2]

Discernment and Indifference

The centrality of the Ignatian process of discernment to everyday Christian living is affirmed by those who know it and use it. Reflecting on when discernment is most appropriate, the theologian Christina Astorga concludes that the common (though not universal) view is that it should be employed frequently, even daily, since Ignatius made no explicit statement restricting the approach to particularly significant life events.[3] Edouard Pousset goes further, suggesting that Exx 189 ('Towards

[1] David Lonsdale, *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1990), 63.
[2] Karl Rahner, 'The Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World', in *Theological Investigations*, volume 3, *Theology of the Spiritual Life*, translated by Karl-H. and Boniface Kruger (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1967), 277–293, here 287.
[3] Ma. Christina A. Astorga, 'Ignatian Discernment: A Critical Contemporary Reading for Christian Decision Making', *Horizons*, 32/1 (2005), 72–99, at 74.

amending and reforming one's own life and state'), demonstrates that Ignatius envisaged his methods having a universal bearing on decision-making in any circumstances. He affirms:

> They are valid not merely for the macro-decision that involves an entire life, nor even merely for a decision of moderate magnitude that plans a reform. They are also suited for directing the multitude of choices implied in the running of a household, the carrying out of a profession, and all our relationships with others, even if it is a question of saying or not saying a *word*.[4]

In short, there is no micro-decision in our daily life, however tiny it may be, that does not fall within their competence.

This is discussed in more detail by Jules Toner, who emphasizes the importance of an attitude of indifference as a precursor for all Ignatian decision-making in every circumstance. To fulfil the end for which we were created, as set out in the Principle and Foundation, 'we need to become electively "indifferent to *all* created things" in "*all* that is left to the liberty of our free will"'. He concludes: 'the idea that God cares only about a few important decisions is foreign to the Ignatian perspective and even in direct conflict with its fundamental shaping principle'.[5]

It is clear, then, that if one is to practise Ignatian discernment it must, by its own internal logic, be applied to all of life rather than just to specific areas. Indeed, it is only by the all-inclusive application of this practice that a truly transformative impact can be made on an individual's life which, as a consequence, becomes consistently and continually reflective.

Having established the importance of the method of discernment, let us consider in more detail what is meant by the term 'indifference', and where it appears within the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, before exploring the role it plays in their dynamic. The Spanish word employed by Ignatius, *indiferente*, is not particularly beloved of translators. Louis Puhl comments,

> I should like to get rid of this word because of the ambiguous meaning in English, but it is too deeply rooted in spiritual literature, especially that of the Exercises. Further, *detached*, the correct word, presents difficulties in the context.[6]

[4] Edouard Pousset, *Life in Faith and Freedom*, edited and translated by Eugene L. Donahue (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1980), 130 (emphasis original).
[5] Jules J. Toner, *Discerning God's Will: Ignatius of Loyola's Teaching on Christian Decision Making* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991), 31 (emphasis original), 32.
[6] *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius*, translated by Louis J. Puhl (Chicago: Loyola, 1951), 168.

We shall return to the use of the word 'detached', but first it is helpful to understand where and in what context the original Spanish word appears.

Indiferente occurs four times in the *Spiritual Exercises*, in paragraphs 23, 157, 170 and 179. However, the low frequency of the term's usage here (and elsewhere in Ignatius' writing), belies its importance as a concept. Though the actual expression may not appear many times, the state of mind and spirit that it encapsulates underpins a number of other sections and exercises.

We are alerted to the significance of indifference by its inclusion in the Principle and Foundation (Exx 23), that succinct description of the nature and purpose of the human person in relationship with God and creation. Every word in this section, described in the Directory of 1599 as 'the basis of the whole moral and spiritual edifice', is carefully chosen.[7] That 'to make ourselves indifferent' is described there as 'necessary' should alert the reader to the significance of this process. Even before this statement in the Principle and Foundation, the idea had been broached in Exx 21, which provides a summary of the Exercises as a whole, having as their purpose 'to overcome oneself, and to order one's life, without reaching a decision through some disordered affection'.

It is unsurprising, then, that the concept of indifference plays a prominent role in preparing for the decision and making it; indeed, indifference runs like a thread through the meditations of the Second Week. Mentioned specifically in 'Three Classes of Persons' (Exx 149–157), it also forms the subject matter of 'Three Ways of Being Humble' (Exx 165–167), before the exercitant arrives at the point of election itself, for which comprehensive guidance is provided (Exx 170–189). After the decision has been taken, indifference recedes into the background, though hints of it can be discerned in the Rules for Eating (Exx 210) and the Rules for Discernment (Exx 316). It can even be glimpsed in the detachment which enables the exercitant to pray the *Suscipe* in Exx 234, which implies an attitude of indifference through the renunciation of all things and states of being.

The concept of indifference plays a prominent role

The prominence of indifference in the earlier stages of the Exercises, when the exercitant is preparing for 'the offer', shows the close relationship it has with discernment and decision-making. Nicholas King notes, 'the

[7] Dir 12. 1.

proper use of the technique of Ignatian decision-making involves … the quality of indifference both as a presupposition and (as is less often realised) as an effect'.[8] Let us, then, examine in more detail the work that must be undertaken for a state of indifference to be reached.

Achieving Indifference

As I have mentioned, one of the problems which arises with the concept of indifference is that it can be perceived as a negative state: it may be seen to indicate apathy. In this understanding it comes to represent a deficiency or impoverishment, implying a lack of interest or commitment. For this reason it is sometimes awarded a more positive adjective, to alert the reader to the fact that something else is indicated: 'holy', 'active' or 'elective' indifference.[9] A proper understanding of the term reveals that, rather than being conceived in terms of what is present or absent (excess or privation), it is rather about the ordering, or ranking, of things within the context of relationship.

How is it that one can be indifferent to any person or thing? This is not necessarily because of a lack of interest *per se*, but rather because that person or thing ranks below someone or something else in the order of one's affections. It is, in a comparative sense, less important, or even irrelevant. This does not mean that the object of indifference has no redeeming features, but simply that another relationship takes precedence. We learn this from Principle and Foundation, which establishes that the purpose and end of human beings is found in relationship with the Creator. All other aspects of creation are intended to support this relationship.

Indifference, then, is about a right understanding and ordering of our relationships. It is at this point that it is, perhaps, helpful to remember the influence of Augustine on Ignatius. Augustine had a grounded understanding of his own sense as a created being, acknowledging, 'My God, I would not exist, I would not be at all, were you not in me. Or should I say, rather, that I should not exist if I were not in you, from whom are all things, through whom are all things, in whom are all things.'[10] It

[8] Nicholas King, 'Ignatius Loyola and Decision-Making', *The Way Supplement*, 24 (1975), 46–57, here 46.

[9] See Toner, *Discerning God's Will*, 81, where he distinguishes elective indifference from affective apathy. Rahner likewise distinguishes 'active indifference from a resigned passivity': Declan Marmion, *A Spirituality of Everyday Faith: A Theological Investigation of the Notion of Spirituality in Karl Rahner* (Louvain: Peeters, 1998), 211.

[10] Augustine, *Confessions*, 1.2.2., *The Confessions*, edited by John E. Rotelle, translated by Maria Boulding (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1997).

is because Augustine knew himself to be a creature alongside other created things that he understood how to interact with creation in a way that enhanced his relationship with the Creator. Everything is in relationship with God and will point us back to the God we are seeking, if only we maintain an appropriate attitude to it:

> To all the things which stood around the portals of my flesh I said, 'Tell me of my God. You are not he, but tell me something of him.' Then they lifted up their mighty voices and cried, 'He made us'. My questioning was my attentive spirit, and their reply their beauty.[11]

An appreciation of this truth enables us to remember that, rather than having a narrow focus on choice or decision-making, as Jules Toner concludes, 'discernment deals always with relationship'.[12] Further, this is not simply our relationship with the Creator, but with the entire creation in its own relationship with the Creator

It is here—in terms of relationship—that we can identify the principal driver for attaining an attitude of indifference. The driver that will enable a free choice is *desire*.[13] The Exercises begin and end with love, given and received between Creator and creature, with exercitants encouraged to identify and ask for what is *desired* throughout the process. Commencing with a reminder of the natural direction of desire, in accordance with 'the end for which we were created', the Exercises function to reveal and hone the individual's desires so that they are more fully directed towards the Creator, with the creation falling away (in so far as it does not aid in this

God resting on the seventh day of creation, from Guyart des Moulins,* Bible historiale, *c.1420

[11] Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.6.9.
[12] Toner, *Discerning God's Will*, 34 following.
[13] Again, the terrain of desire brings us back to Augustine, with hearts unquiet, or restless, until they find their rest in God (*Confessions*, 1.1).

process), resulting in indifference. Outlining this process in a positive way, in an exploration of the Exercises written specifically for women, Katherine Dyckman, Mary Garvin and Elizabeth Liebert comment:

> The convoluted issue around 'making myself indifferent to all created things' cannot be dealt with as simply a question of willpower. Indifference presumes passion. Women cannot act with indifference in any positive sense until they have identified their desires and passions. Indifference demands liberation. Detachment follows from attachment to Someone whose love empowers with blessed freedom.[14]

That 'detachment follows from attachment' is simply another way of stating that indifference is a result of desire. Or, as Robert Doud expresses it, 'One is not indifferent at all about the basis of one's indifference, which is unconditional love of God'.[15]

Ignatius does not encourage the development of desire merely by stating that it should be a factor in the decision-making of human beings created for this end. Despite the fact that this is, indeed, what he believes (as evidenced by Exx 23: 'we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created'), he is astute enough to know that a simple exhortation will not suffice. Rather, he ensures that the meditative exercise placed directly before the beginning of the Second Week, 'The Call of the King', brings exercitants into the position of being able to say, 'I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision' to imitate Christ in their condition of life, if that will better serve God (Exx 98).

The ensuing two exercises in the Second Week, 'Three Classes of Persons' and 'Three Ways of Being Humble', as I have mentioned, focus particularly on developing a stance of indifference. This is approached first through an examination of attitudes to possessions, and secondly through the more subtle exploration of the grace of humility.[16] Both exercises, through the experience of positive and negative emotions, attraction and resistance, work to identify and sift the deep desires of the exercitant ('desire … is tested by desire'), leading to a desire that is authentic: one

[14] Katherine Dyckman, Mary Garvin and Elizabeth Liebert, *The Spiritual Exercises Reclaimed: Uncovering Liberating Possibilities for Women* (New York: Paulist, 2001), 101–102.
[15] Robert E. Doud, 'Ignatian Indifference and Today's Spirituality', *The Way*, 52/4 (October 2013), 94–105, here 94.
[16] Though this exercise does not actually mention the word *indiferente*, so key is it to its undertaking that 'indifference' is inserted, almost as shorthand, by Louis Puhl in his translation of Exx 166.

that is 'consonant with the fundamental Spirit-given desire for God'.[17] The quality of indifference is thus directly related to the depth and authenticity of desire.

As a practical exercise in seeking indifference from possessions, 'Three Classes of Persons' (Exx 149–157) emphasizes not simply the end that is wanted—freedom to be able better to serve God—but also the stance that is required to enable this: perfect balance. Balance is achieved by desiring neither to retain nor relinquish a sum of money that has been acquired, but only desiring 'to will' or 'not will' as inspired by God (Exx 155). From this position of equilibrium the creature can most easily be led in one direction or another by the Creator. Such 'equipoise', as Michael Ivens calls it, comes into its own when we arrive at a moment of election.[18] It is the desire for God that holds all things in balance, rendering the desire to have-or-not-have, to act-or-not-act, irrelevant in the face of a far greater longing. This results in the freedom to move quickly either way on any decision. Hugo Rahner interprets Ignatius thus: 'Retain in all things freedom of spirit …. Keep your spirit so inwardly free that you could always be ready to do the very opposite.'[19] Indifference facilitates the lightness which comes with true freedom.

Ignatius even provides advice on what to do when indifference, and therefore balance, cannot be achieved. Pleading with God for the opposite of something to which we are attached will loosen the attachment and overcome the repugnance we may feel for an 'undesirable' outcome, restoring balance and resulting in freedom (Exx 157). When we are poised equidistantly from two courses of action, and can genuinely inhabit a place of freedom where the outcome is effectively irrelevant since our only desire is to do the will of God, then what will swing the pointer in one direction or the other is the action of the Holy Spirit rather than our own sublimated wishes. In this way, the balance generated by indifference is essential for right discernment.

That this is, frequently, a less than straightforward process can be seen by the amount of detail Ignatius provides when the moment comes to make an election (Exx 169). Of the three 'times' when such a

[17] Michael Ivens, 'Desire and Discernment', *The Way Supplement*, 95 (1999), 31–43, here 33, 38.
[18] Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary. A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 31.
[19] Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian*, translated by Michael Barry (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 24–25.

decision may be made—consolation without previous cause, discernment via consolation and desolation, and in a time of tranquillity—it is the last which calls specifically for indifference in order to 'find myself in the middle, like the pointer of a balance' (Exx 179). Here, as Ivens notes, 'the *make myself indifferent* of the Foundation has become *be indifferent*'.[20] There can be no movement one way or the other until indifference has been reached. Otherwise the action of the Spirit cannot rightly be discerned because human desire confuses the issue.

This raises the question of how the state of indifference can be reached when motives may be so conflicted. Doud argues that it is a gift from God, a kind of grace, but also that 'in so far as we practise indifference or try to increase it in ourselves, it is a virtue'; moreover, that indifference may even be considered a 'charism'.[21] The practice of this virtue requires us to develop an attitude of indifference towards our own self-interest and self-importance in order to discover the will of God. The higher the quality of the indifference, the more securely grounded the decision will be. When it is found, the effect of indifference to everything but the will of God is 'a kind of confident freedom to go ahead regardless'.[22]

Indifference, Kenosis and Mystical Death

Having demonstrated the role that indifference plays in the first part of the Exercises—the Principle and Foundation and the Second Week—bringing the exercitant to the point of making an election, it might be felt that there is little more to say. However, the Third Week moves us on to a different level of contemplation by providing a lived example of the role of indifference in making a choice; indeed, it is not merely an illustration but a critical element of the passion narrative, which establishes the pattern for all Christian decision-making.

This can be found in Exx 290: the agony in the garden. Here we see Jesus engaged in his own election, in which he embraces indifference while struggling with the choice before him: whether to drink the cup he has been offered. At the beginning of the Third Week the exercitant has already been invited to reflect on the way in which God chooses to act: 'Consider how his divinity hides itself; that is, how he could destroy

[20] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 139. Ganss gives 'find myself indifferent' rather than 'be indifferent'.
[21] Doud, 'Ignatian Indifference', 94, 97.
[22] King, 'Ignatius Loyola and Decision-Making', 50.

his enemies but does not, and how he allows his most holy humanity to suffer so cruelly' (Exx 196).

Christ on the Mount of Olives, *by Hans Burgkmair, 1505*

In facing our own choices, we are always to set before us the example of God, whose decisions are governed by love for, rather than destruction of, enemies. Now, at Gethsemane, we see how Christ inhabits this choice, 'to suffer so cruelly' for love of the Father and of the world. The path of costly obedience and self-sacrifice which has been set before us in our own election is one that has already been walked by Jesus. Here we see him faced with a decision so agonizing and terrifying that 'he sweated blood so copiously that St Luke says, "His sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground"' (Exx 290). Imagining Gethsemane, Ignatius specifies the words of Jesus that the exercitant is to contemplate:

> Accompanied by St Peter, St James, and St John, he prayed three times to the Lord, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will'. And being in agony, he prayed the longer.

In these words Jesus is able to express his own desire—'let this cup pass from me'—yet in the same breath voices a greater desire that the Father's will be done. Though not a created being, Jesus demonstrates what it means to praise, reverence and serve the Father through his loving obedience. It is evident that his indifference is not devoid of passion—it could not be more impassioned—yet he is sufficiently detached from his own fears and motives, to make his offer to the Father, 'Your will be done'. Even at this point of *extremis*, Jesus demonstrates complete equipoise. He is able to drink, or not drink, the cup. What is not possible,

however, is to take a course of action which is at odds with the Father's will. Jesus shows us that it is letting go of one's own will and embracing God's in an act of complete self-emptying which enables the right choice to be made, regardless of the cost. This is the pattern of *kenosis* that we see at Gethsemane: Christ emptying his love into the Father, who has emptied his love into us through the giving of his Son.

The connection between indifference and *kenosis* is significant. It is only the person who has poured out his or her own desires (and will) in preferring God's will who can reach equipoise. Crudely put, the 'empty' life is the balanced life. This language of kenotic emptying is the language of death as much as of love. It is for this reason that indifference has been linked to the ongoing laying down of one's own life. The Exercises provide a framework for making an election and, in the process of so doing, for experiencing the immediacy of God's presence. But, as Philip Endean points out,

> This experience of God also leads to a detachment from one's own survival. Even if one continues to live in a biological sense, the experience anticipates death; Jesus serves as an example of death in Godforsakenness.[23]

The death-to-self-for-love-of-God which is necessitated by genuine indifference is viewed by Karl Rahner as a 'mystical death'. The indifferent person has an understanding of the world which is reached by means of this mystical death, and in which everything can be held valuable because there is not very much value in anything.[24]

There are those who feel that Rahner over-emphasizes indifference, exalting its importance beyond what Ignatius envisaged. By suggesting that we can experience a transcendence of all particular objects, Rahner makes our capacity for indifference part of the essential structure of mental life, part of the metaphysics of mind.[25] But, given that the outworking of indifference is, for Rahner, not only enacted through self-emptying love but also coupled with a seeking of God in all things (since no one thing is preferable to any other), it is difficult to see how it

[23] Philip Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality* (Oxford: OUP, 2001), 15.
[24] Karl Rahner, 'Ignatian Spirituality and Devotion to the Heart of Jesus', in *Christian in the Market Place*, translated by Cecily Hastings (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966) 119–146, here 125.
[25] Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, 18. See also Peter Joseph Fritz, *Karl Rahner's Theological Aesthetics* (Washington: Catholic U. of America P, 2014), 143.

veers far from the spirit of Ignatius. Indeed, indifference was such a fundamental feature of Ignatius' attitude that it even dictated his approach to the cross. Rahner explains that, for Ignatius, 'even the passionate love of the Cross and of sharing in the ignominy of the death of Christ is still ruled by indifference: the Cross, yes, if it should please his divine Majesty to call to such a death in life'.[26] As for Christ, so too for Ignatius: 'Your will be done'.

To conceive of indifference as a form of 'mystical death' in this way is a natural extension of the thought of Ignatius, in that it reflects the action of Christ and aids in the process of election. Because indifference originates in and governed by love, it is Trinitarian in form and kenotic in operation. That Rahner concludes that there is a basic indifference (*Grundindifferenz*) written into the human person seems uncontroversial.[27] It is simply another way of explaining that it is an elemental feature of the *Imago Dei*. Admittedly, it is not the work of a moment, but part of a slow process of detachment, a shedding of attachments and idols which mar the *Imago* deep within the individual. The Exercises enable exercitants to dispose themselves to this indifference by underscoring the continual dying in the midst of life that is an essential part of this process.

> The distancing, the existential casting-off of the individual reality of my existence—this is not something that I can just summon up and then it is done. Rather, it is a difficult, slowly executed, mystical development. Where at least this begins in this slow way, where there is death, where there is renunciation, where the straightforwardness of the world slowly crumbles in a night of the senses and the spirit—there will a person slowly … feel and experience the transcendence of humanity towards God as it really is, and not merely as the unavoidable condition under which our categorical dealing with the world is possible.[28]

Christina Astorga begins her article on Ignatian discernment by reflecting that decision-making is at the heart of the human project. She continues, 'We are human in the measure that we are capable of making decisions'.[29] While this may contain truth, however, it is not the whole

[26] Rahner, 'Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World', 291.
[27] Though see Declan Marmion for a discussion on this point: *A Spirituality of Everyday Faith: A Theological Investigation of the Notion of Spirituality in Karl Rahner* (Louvain: Peeters, 1998), 212.
[28] Endean, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, 127, quoting from Rahner's 1978 article 'Mystik-Weg des Glaubens zu Gott'.
[29] Astorga, 'Ignatian Discernment', 72.

truth. Our humanity is defined not by our rational capability, but by our ontology. We are those who are made in the image of God, created for a purpose—which is the praise, reverence and service of that God. We fulfil this purpose best by conforming to the pattern of behaviour shown us by Jesus Christ, who has made God known to us. Jesus can only act in accordance with his own nature, which is characterized by unity with the Father ('The Father and I are one', John 10:30). His kenosis reflects the perichoretic pattern of continual emptying and receiving of love within the Trinity, of which he is the second person.

Decision-making is at the heart of the human project

Ignatius, through the Exercises, aims to enable us to join in this pattern of kenotic self-emptying in the way he tutors us to make both the great and small decisions of life, aligning our desires with the will of God. This is the point to which he brings us at the end of a retreat when he leads us to make the great prayer of offering. The *Suscipe* is itself a prayer which reflects the action of the Trinity, a pouring out of love into the other: 'Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will—all that I have and possess'. It is matched by a receiving of love poured in from the other: 'Give me love of yourself along with your grace, for that is enough for me'. It is, in this way, a prayer of incorporation within the Trinity. As Father, Son, and Holy Spirit pour themselves into each other in divine circumincession, so the exercitant is drawn in, embracing the end for which he or she was created, and in doing so finding liberation and salvation.

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Thinking Faith

RETURN TO GALILEE

Brian Purfield

AS A GENERAL RULE, the Gospels end on a note of triumph. In the popular imagination, at least, the Gospels end as the faithful women trudge in darkness to the garden where, in Zeffirelli-like fashion, brilliant light and a blonde-haired angel emerge from the tomb to say that everything is going to be all right.

Mark's Gospel, however, ends on a rather more sombre and subdued note. The last words of Mark's Gospel are, 'for they were afraid' (Mark 16:8).[1] Yes, the stone is rolled back and there is an angelic messenger. But there is no risen Jesus, no lakeside barbecue, no traveller on the road who stays for supper, no mysterious gardener who knows our name. Only the message that Jesus is resurrected, the command to tell Peter and the others to go back to Galilee, and three terrified women who may or may not tell anybody anything.

The fact is, Mark 16:8 is exactly the right ending for this Gospel, written, as it was, for Christians under persecution who were themselves faced with martyrdom and focusing, as it does, on the cross. It is the right ending for us, too. This is where we live: after the resurrection but before the return, entrusted with a message that is wonderful, but the import of which we do not quite understand. If we are honest with ourselves, Mark 16:6–8 is the space most of us inhabit.

> But he said to them, 'Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him,

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[1] There are two endings to Mark's Gospel, a longer (Mark 16:9–20) and a shorter ending (Mark 16:1–8). The longer ending is so different from the rest of the Gospel in style that few scholars are convinced that it is original to the Gospel.

> just as he told you.' So they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

In a similar fashion, Matthew's account of the good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:1–10) begins with the journey of the women to the tomb at dawn on the day after the Sabbath. They go to the tomb to honour the body of the Lord but, as in Mark, they are met by an angel who says to them, 'Do not be afraid' (Matthew 28:5), and orders them to go and tell the disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee' (Matthew 28:7). At this point, Matthew elaborates on the Marcan account. Matthew, like Mark, says that the women quickly depart, but he adds that on the way Jesus himself meets the women and says, 'Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me' (Matthew 28:10). 'Do not be afraid': these are words of encouragement to open their (our) hearts to receive the message.

'I will go before you to Galilee.' (Mark 14:28; Matthew 26:32) With these words, we are also meant to recall where we last saw the disciples—back in Gethsemane. On that occasion, they 'all of them deserted him and fled' (Mark 14:50; Matthew 26:56), after they had so enthusiastically joined in Peter's protests of loyalty (Mark 14:29–31; Matthew 26:33–35). It seems they are forgiven; and so is Peter who, the last time we saw

The shore of the Sea of Galilee

him (Mark 14:66–72; Matthew 26:69–75), was swearing that he had no idea who Jesus of Nazareth might be. The message Jesus gave them at that time was: 'You will all become deserters … but after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee' (Mark 14:27–28; Matthew 26:31–32). At that time, however, their minds were on other things, and they had clearly not taken it in.

After the death of the Master, the disciples had scattered; their faith had been shaken, everything seemed over, all their certainties had crumbled and their hopes had died. But now the message of the women, incredible as it was, came to them like a ray of light in the darkness. The news spread: Jesus is risen, as he said! And then there was his command to go to Galilee; the women in Matthew's account heard it twice, first from the angel and then from Jesus himself: 'Let them go to Galilee; there they will see me'. 'Do not be afraid' and 'go to Galilee'. These words indicate how the disciples are to discern the way ahead after the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord.

What is the significance of returning to Galilee? Galilee is the place where everything began. They are to return there, to return to the place where they were first called. In Galilee, Jesus had walked along the shores of the lake as the fishermen were casting their nets. There he had called them, and there they had left everything and followed him (Mark 1:16–20; Matthew 4:18–22).

To return to Galilee means to reread everything on the basis of the cross and its victory, fearlessly: 'Do not be afraid'. To reread everything—Jesus' preaching, his miracles, the new community, the excitement and the defections, even the betrayal—starting from the end, which is a new beginning, from this supreme act of love.

Twice the women are told to tell the disciples to go to Galilee, where they will meet Jesus for themselves. The women do as they are asked and the disciples set out for Galilee. What a desolate journey that must have been for them. Believing the extraordinary story of Mary Magdalene and her companions, the disciples set out in fear of their lives, and in the hope of seeing Jesus raised from the dead. There were no reassurances from anyone's previous experience, no guidebooks or instructions about what to look for at the end—not even a promise from Jesus himself, just an instruction, 'Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead, and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him"'. (Matthew 28:7)

The idea of the Easter journey being about new sight and insight is a rich one. In this respect, we may recall the beautiful Lucan account (Luke 24:13–35) of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus and their encounter with the Risen Lord, and how their eyes were gradually opened to recognise the Lord's presence in their midst. But each of the disciples has a journey to make in this regard.

Every Good Friday, we listen to John's account of the passion being proclaimed. During the narration, several questions are asked: 'Who are you looking for?' (John 18:4, 7), 'You are not also one of his disciples, are you?' (John 18:25) and 'What accusation do you bring against this man?' (John 18:29) The fact that the middle one of those three questions is addressed to Peter is interesting. Although Peter wanted to remain faithful to Jesus, fear got the better of him. Most of us can feel for him. Faced with a choice between cutting and running on the one hand and possible death on the other, how many of us would choose death?

How many of us would make the choice of Lieutenant Colonel Arnaud Beltrame, who volunteered to take the place of a hostage during a terror attack at a French supermarket and subsequently lost his life after being shot three times? Because actions always speak louder than words, every time we compromise the goodness of God within us, or work to undermine another person's rights to dignity and life, we join Peter around the fire denying that we are Christ's disciple. But the hapless, fickle and impulsive Peter found his way to Galilee and that is where his discipleship began to come into its own. Some of us need a while for the Risen Christ's call to settle and mature, as well as some space to reflect upon the choices that have brought us to this moment. Then we can see which choices might lead us to see greater days ahead.

For each of us, too, there is a 'Galilee' at the start of our journey with Jesus. 'Go to Galilee' means rediscovering our baptism as a living spring, drawing new energy from the sources of our faith and our Christian experience. To return to Galilee means, above all, to return to that blazing light with which God's grace touched me at the start of the journey.

In the life of every Christian, after baptism there is also another 'Galilee': the experience of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ who called me to follow him and to share in his mission. In this sense, returning to Galilee means treasuring in my heart the living memory of that call, when Jesus passed my way, gazed at me with mercy, and asked me to follow him. To return there means reviving the memory of that moment

when his eyes met mine, the moment when he made me realise that he loved me.

The experience of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ is at the heart of Pope Francis's apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*—'The Joy of the Gospel'. The Pope begins with a challenge:

> I invite all Christians everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day.[2]

Where is my Galilee? Galilee does not have to be a place for us. It is a situation, a frame of mind, or a choice we make. Our particular Galilee could be the desolate journey of physical, emotional, sexual or spiritual pain. It could be dashed promises, broken relationships or unrealised hopes. It may simply be the unremarkable circumstances of our everyday lives. Whatever it is, the joy-filled and hope-filled message of Easter is the promise made to us that Christ is not only there when we arrive, he has gone ahead of us, to that desolate place, so that we might have loving arms in which to fall at journey's end.

There the Lord is waiting for you. Do not be afraid, do not fear, return to Galilee! The gospel is very clear: we need to go back there, to see Jesus risen and to become witnesses of his resurrection. This is not to go back in time; it is not a kind of nostalgia. It is returning to our first love, in order to receive the fire that Jesus has kindled in the world and to bring that fire to all people, to the very ends of the earth. Go back to Galilee, without fear!

Brian Purfield is a member of the Mount Street Jesuit Centre team and teaches short courses in theology.

[2] *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 3.

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Thinking Faith

THE RISEN CHRIST, THE CONSOLER

Iona Reid-Dalglish

POPE FRANCIS, in a recent address to his Jesuit brothers, encouraged them to pray persistently for consolation for themselves.[1] Initially we might respond in surprise at that sort of petitionary prayer. It doesn't seem very selfless. 'God, please console me', can come across as selfish and thoroughly me-focused, generally not traits held up as Christian virtues. So what is consolation, and why do Ignatius, the Pope, the Jesuits, place so much emphasis on choosing to follow its path?

I would like to suggest four key things that Ignatian spiritual direction might tell us about encountering the risen Christ, which offer a possible answer. First, that we encounter Christ in the reality of our lives. Secondly, that Christ enters into that reality as consoler. Thirdly, that this consolation is how Christ enables people to live lives of discipleship. Fourthly, that Christ calls us to collaborate in that same consoling action of his today. If these are the case, then they invite a response. By opting for the path of consolation, indeed asking for the grace of consolation, Ignatius, the Pope and the Jesuits are choosing to find and respond to the action of the risen Christ in the world.

I would like to begin unpacking this idea with a thought experiment. Imagine someone comes to you and says something like the following:

> *I'm really struggling at the moment. I am so busy after a recent promotion at work meaning much longer hours, with three kids at home, not to mention the dog. When I get back from work I am mostly knackered and all I want*

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[1] Pope Francis, address to 36th Congregation of the Society of Jesus, 24 October 2016, GC 36.

is a glass of wine and to zone out. And I'm getting up so early to get into work that there's just no time for prayer. I miss spending time with God. The weekends aren't much use either because they're the only time I get to spend with the kids and my husband. I don't want to be taking myself off somewhere alone to pray in the few precious hours I get with them. It all feels a bit hopeless: what can I do?

What would your initial response be to this person?

Most people would feel for her, and want to help find a solution, fix the problem. You might suggest a series of options she has not thought of, or explore whether she needs to rethink her work–life balance. Or if you're an Ignatian person, how about *Pray as You Go*?[2] It's perfect for busy people! All of these are legitimate responses. However, they would not necessarily be thoroughly Ignatian responses, or at least they would not be the first port of call or prime focus in Ignatian spiritual direction. Why not? Because Ignatius had a firm conviction that the first thing anyone should do when paying attention to another, or indeed themselves, is to look for where Christ seems to be with that person now, and what Christ might be up to there.

In Ignatian language, we are looking for the 'spiritual consolation', or a more contemporary translation describes it as looking for the 'movement of God' (that which moves us towards rather than away from God). Importantly, Ignatius assumes that Christ is already active and doing something with each person, regardless of how busy he or she may be, or how distant he or she may feel from Christ at the moment—Christ is there and is active. One of the core roles of an Ignatian spiritual director is to hold on to that fact, to the hope that Christ is present and active, particularly when it feels as if the opposite is true.

So we encounter the risen Christ in the present reality of our lives, not in some fantasy of how we might like our lives to be, or feel they ought to be in order to encounter Christ. The risen Christ comes into the mess and complexity of real life. As Gerry W. Hughes puts it, 'God is in the facts'.[3] Similarly, Walter Burghardt describes prayer or contemplation as a 'long, loving look at the real'.[4] Again, the important word in this sentence is 'real'. The risen Christ is active and present in the reality of my life and the world, despite how often it may seem to be far from the case.

[2] See https://pray-as-you-go.org/.
[3] Gerard W. Hughes, *Cry of Wonder: Our Own Real Identity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 107.
[4] Walter Burghardt, 'Contemplation: A Long, Loving Look at the Real', *Church*, 14 (Winter 1989), 15.

Secondly, Christ enters into this reality as consoler. In his *Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius of Loyola had a very clear notion of the primary way in which the risen Christ meets and works with people: namely 'in the office of consoler'. Towards the end of the Exercises, he invites retreatants to use their imagination to pray with the gospel accounts of encounters with the risen Christ and to, 'Consider the office of consoler which Christ our Lord carries out, and compare it with the way friends console one another' (Exx 224). We see the women in Matthew's Gospel, 'filled with awe and great joy' at hearing the news (28:8). The two disciples on the road to Emmaus move from 'faces downcast' as they talked of all that had happened, to exclaiming in wonder, 'did our hearts not burn within us as he talked to us on the road?' (Luke 24:32). The disciples, having seen the risen Christ, 'went back to Jerusalem full of joy' in Luke's Gospel (28:52). John's Gospel describes Mary 'standing outside the tomb, weeping' and then an instant of recognition and transformation when she hears him say her name, 'Mary!' (John 10:16); and the shift in the disciples from fear to being 'filled with joy at seeing the Lord' (John 20:20). There is a distinct change in the affective experience of those who knew Jesus when they encounter his risen self: from grief, sorrow, fear and hopelessness at his death, to hope, life, joy and the energy to go out and tell others after his resurrection.

Noli me tangere, ***by Paolo Veronese, late sixteenth century***

These do not seem like surprising responses to getting back a loved one who had been lost, but these encounters do tell us something about the way in which the risen Christ acts with people—by rekindling lost hope, bringing joy, easing fear and enabling a lived response of continued discipleship. Ignatius's firm conviction was that, to this day, encounters with the risen Christ will similarly be typified by experiences of hope, joy and life—in his language, spiritual consolation—even amidst struggles and the darkest times.

It might be helpful to give a sense of what spiritual consolation was for Ignatius. He does not offer a single concise definition, instead he gives various examples of what he means by it in regard to people 'of good will' (people who have a core orientation towards God). Loosely summarised, for Ignatius, spiritual consolation is any experience that leads to love of God, and love of all people and things in God; increases our faith, hope and love; leaves us feeling joyful, peaceful and tranquil in a deep and abiding way in our sense of God. There is something about spiritual consolation that orientates us towards God, helping us move closer to God, and it often involves a healthy moving outwards, from self towards others, in love. Importantly, spiritual consolation may not always feel pleasant. Hard spiritual consolation exists, for example in the grieving of a loved one: although it feels deeply painful and sad, and Christ doesn't change that, there is a sense of Christ feeling it with us and holding us through it. Consolation is not about pleasure but about a deep sense of Christ's presence, and an orientation towards Christ that enables the person to live with whatever struggle or pain is being experienced rather than being overwhelmed by hopelessness and despair.

Consolation is any experience that leads to love of God

In Ignatian spiritual direction, there is a strong focus that echoes this conviction about the way God works, about the way we meet the risen Christ. The Ignatian director will acknowledge and possibly name spiritual desolation in a person's experience—the thoughts, moods and feelings that come when we are under the influence of things that move us away from God; a being out of tune with God's Holy Spirit—but choose to focus on the spiritual consolation: the moments of movement towards God, moments of hope, life, light, energy.

This may sound like a hedonistic focus for spiritual direction, even anathema to the Christian life—seek only comfort, avoid suffering. And clearly, as can be seen from any human life, and indeed Jesus' own life, being fully myself in God is not a ticket to a pain-free path. And yet …!

Ignatius still had a deep sense that the way in which Christ works and is encountered is the way of consolation, and importantly consolation can exist and act in the midst of sorrow and death, as well as of joy and life. If anything, this is what the resurrection is about—that the consoling, life-giving, loving action of God is stronger than all that opposes it, even death.

Interestingly, as human beings, we seem to be hard-wired to prefer desolation. Spiritual desolation is endlessly fascinating—many problems to be fixed, something we can really get our teeth into. There is a parallel in psychological research: 'Bad emotions … and bad feedback have more impact than good ones. Bad impressions and bad stereotypes are quicker to form and more resistant to disconfirmation than good ones.'[5] Indeed, it apparently takes five times as many 'good' comments to overpower a 'bad' comment in someone's psyche.[6] Now this is all a little binary and, as I've said, Ignatian spiritual consolation isn't synonymous with good/pleasant experiences, but there is something important to note here: people receiving spiritual direction find it difficult to stay with, relish and savour consoling experiences in life and prayer.

Ignatius specifically encourages relishing, savouring, going back and dwelling with experiences of spiritual consolation. When I am able to help a person in spiritual direction stay and explore experiences of consolation, I can visibly see shifts, growth, new life emerging in them. Most noticeably, more often than not, whatever desolation was around is also transformed, has a new light cast on it, and becomes far less powerful and ensnaring. Staying with and focusing on the consolation tends to lead to freedom, because it is in moments of consolation that people are most in touch with the risen Christ, who is far better at untangling their lives than we are. Pope Francis puts this eloquently in *Laudato Si'*, quoting Pope St John Paul II: 'The Holy Spirit can be said to possess an infinite creativity, proper to the divine mind, which knows how to loosen the knots of human affairs, including the most complex and inscrutable'.[7]

By giving them this freedom, Christ consoles people into life and discipleship. The way in which Christ makes disciples, calls and sends

[5] Roy F. Baumeister, a professor of social psychology at Florida State University, summarises these findings in an article, 'Bad Is Stronger than Good', *Review of General Psychology*, 5/4 (2001), 323–370, here 323.

[6] Baumeister and others, 'Bad Is Stronger than Good', 329.

[7] Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, n. 80.

people to build the Kingdom of God, is by consoling them into these responses. So, if we are to collaborate with this action of Christ in the world, then we, too, must have an eye for the consolation of Christ and tarry there a while to let it blossom. This is why in Ignatian spiritual direction we have a preference for noticing and staying with the spiritual consolation in people's experience. It is Christ doing the healing and transforming: all that the director is doing is using listening skills to help them say more about the particularities of the consolation, to help them get more deeply in touch with what that experience was like, affectively—and what Christ might be like in that experience, too. And, time after time, as they say more, an experience of encounter with the risen Christ takes place.

It is not just Ignatian spiritual directors, but all people, who are being invited to collaborate in the consolation of the risen Christ, to opt for that spiritual consolation, in both our lives and the lives of those we listen to and encounter. It has been said of an early Jesuit, famed for being the best giver of the Spiritual Exercises, that:

> To each individual soul he was redemptively attentive. And through this attentive submission to the reality of other people, combined with a passion for their restoration, [Pierre] Favre obtained the charism of spiritual direction, a charism which enabled him to discern and uncover in all whom he met the point at which salvation was coming to them from God.[8]

The risen Christ is at work, but importantly we are relational beings, and we are called into this ministry of consolation, to collaborate with the work of the risen Christ in our relating to self, God and others. We are also asked to choose 'the path of consolation that fortifies our faith, hope and love', because this is where we encounter the risen Christ and collaborate in Christ's mission.[9]

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[8] Michel de Certeau, 'Pierre Favre and the Experience of Salvation', *The Way*, 45/4 (October 2006), 21–40, here 31.
[9] GC 36, decree 1, n. 12.

From the Ignatian Tradition

A PEDAGOGY OF CONSOLATION

Patrick Goujon

IN THE CASE OF SOMEONE wanting to make a decision, Ignatius seeks to strengthen that person's sense of freedom by releasing him or her from whatever might either be an obstacle or obscure relevant criteria. The ability to lead one's life well and to reach one's proper goal requires many factors to come into play: such as a proper appreciation of the surrounding circumstances; a channel to persons of experience; a clear-sighted capacity to anticipate events; and an ability to weigh up alternatives when preparing to make a choice. All three steps whereby a person deliberates, considers and consults require both rational and interpersonal skills, and also a certain tact and sensibility. Over time, one learns by experience and practice how to set about the process of coming to a decision. There are rules and these serve to remind how one has acted in the past and how to prepare for new contingencies. A person comes in this way to face up to the unexpected events that are constantly occurring in life. Ignatian advice is concerned less with saying what should be done than with giving help so that I can find that for which I am looking.

At times a problem may be considered in the light of prudence and moral principles. It may seem a matter of trying to find the right criteria in order to make a decision. I may wish to be able to operate freely in a situation where the circumstances seem far from clear. One might then ask whether the moral tradition is not sufficient without recourse to any spiritual considerations. Does the spiritual life have a role here? But, for Ignatius, the fact that I have the capacity to lead my own life is itself a gift of the Holy Spirit, an action of God in the life of a human being. It is thanks to God that I have this ability to use my own resources. As he explains in a 1552 letter to those sent on missions, there is the 'anointing of the Holy Spirit', and also, 'we contribute to it by reflection

and careful observation'.[1] Thus if one's conduct relies on such reflection and careful observation, it also requires what can only be described as a spiritual aura, thanks to which both the affective and the rational are supported by the work of the Holy Spirit. Ignatius is hinting here at a *pedagogy of consolation*, in which it is possible to pick out the key features of his vision of what it is to be human.

Entering the Situation of the Person Seeking Help

The letters of Ignatius do not provide immediate entry into the words of advice he offers his correspondents. Rather, they invite the recipients to an active reading, which presumes an effort to understand what is being said. Likewise, we have to adopt a similar attitude when we read these letters. And although some information about external details can be useful in order to grasp the context, what is needed above all is attentiveness to the way in which the letter constructs the situation, how it understands it, and the roles it assigns to the recipient. It will then be possible to analyze the reaction that these words are expected to arouse.

Briefly, then, to suggest a method: let us say that, having received certain contextual information concerning the correspondent and the historical circumstances (the sort of information usually to be found in critical editions of the letters or in modern anthologies), an attempt has to be made to reveal how the letter deals with a specific situation.

> To Alfonso Ramírez de Vergara[2]
>
> My dear Sir in our Lord,
>
> May the sovereign grace and eternal love of Christ our Lord always be our continual help and protection.
>
> Through your own letter of February 4 and another from Father Francisco Villanueva, I have learned about your personal situation and your decision. As for commending you to God our Lord and having others do the same, I most willingly accept

[1] Ignatius to those sent on mission, 8 October 1552, in *Ignatius of Loyola, Letters and Instructions*, edited and translated by Martin E. Palmer, John W. Padberg and John L. McCarthy (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), 394.

[2] Ignatius to Alfonso Ramírez de Vergara, 30 March 1556, in *Ignatius of Loyola, Letters and Instructions*, 647–648; the French translation used by Patrick Goujon is available in *Ignace de Loyola. Écrits*, translated and edited by Maurice Giuliani, Collection Christus 76 (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991), 983–984.

> the charge; for I wish for you—as I ought—not only every perfection but every consolation as well.
>
> The means for relishing with the affection and carrying out with sweetness a course which reason dictates to be for God's greater service and glory is something that will be taught you by the Holy Spirit better than by anyone else. Of course, it is true that in pursuing what is better and more perfect, it suffices to be moved by reason, and the other movement, that of the will, even if it did not precede the decision and execution, can easily follow it, as God our Lord repays our trust in his providence, our complete self-abandonment, and our giving up of our own consolation by giving us a deep contentment and relish, and a spiritual consolation that is all the richer the less we aim at it and the more purely we seek his glory and will. May his infinite and supreme goodness deign to guide all our affairs as he sees will best lead to this end.
>
> The business matters you have entrusted to me will be taken care of. Master Polanco will write more fully about this, and I refer you to him.
>
> As for the other matters you discussed with Father Francis [Borgia] in Alcalá and about which Master Nadal brought a memorandum, I commend them to him confident that he will not fail to do whatever he can for your service and consolation.
>
> May Christ our Lord give to all of us his grace always to know his most holy will and entirely to fulfil it.
>
> Ignacio,
>
> Rome, March 30, 1556

The historical situation is clear: Alfonso Ramírez de Vergara is a doctor in the University of Alcalá.[3] He has indicated goodwill towards the Society and the desire to join as a member, but has put off making any decision. The final paragraphs refer to topics that will be dealt with not by Ignatius himself but in letters to be written by others, and as they have no relation with the main topic of the letter they can be omitted here. Taking into account how the problem is presented, one can work out how Ignatius sets about giving his advice. The ability to profit from this

[3] This information is provided in the two translations mentioned.

advice depends on the relationship established between the two persons. In normal circumstances, the exchange of advice between two people assumes that this particular human activity is possible because there is an intelligence at work that it practical, reasonable and involves the affections.[4]

In order to appreciate this, one needs to look closely at the terms used. The best indication of the relationship between the correspondents comes from the use made of pronouns. A link is established between the first person ('I', the counsellor), the second ('you', the addressee), their eventual alliance ('we') or their remaining at a distance, and the possible intervention of a third person ('he') who, by definition, is absent from the present exchange but who indicates the possibility of the relationship widening. Although grammar allows a rough sketch of the persons involved, such people are embedded in their historical situation. They can take part in an epistolary relationship in accordance with factual historical links but also in accordance with the stipulations imposed by custom, where authority, respect, reverence may play a part. A letter to a brother is not written in the same way as one to a prince, and a letter to a brother in the twenty-first century will differ from one to a Basque brother of noble rank in the sixteenth.

Ignatius addresses himself to Vergara with the deference expected then towards a doctor of a university who comes from a noble family: *Mi Señor*.[5] However, by adding the ecclesial 'in our Lord', Ignatius makes clear from the start what will be at the heart of this epistolary exchange: everything will be in relation to God, the *Lord* who is recognised by both correspondents. This is reinforced by the first person plural (*our*) which is immediately introduced in what seems a customary formula, but which sounds a constant background note in the letter.

In fact, Ignatius' salutation—'May the sovereign grace and eternal love of Christ our Lord always be our continual help and protection'—is far from being inserted as a mere religious formula: with these words, Ignatius and his correspondent are both shown to be recipients of the grace of Christ. By using the subjunctive formula of desire (a prayer for them both) Ignatius raises his correspondent to a plane where he is hoping Vergara would wish to be placed: ready to receive the help of God.

[4] The affective range involved in the giving of advice has been studied by Alain Cugno, *La Blessure amoureuse. Essai sur la liberté affective* (Paris: Seuil, 2004).

[5] The English translation (*Dear Sir*) fails to convey this aspect; the French (*Mon seigneur*) comes closer.

Even though such a formula is in common use, and has a place in the liturgical salutations, themselves inspired by the Pauline epistles, it should not be considered merely as a formal mark of respect or a simple way of establishing contact. Its effect is to set up the dynamic situation of a spiritual relationship. The dynamic element is worth noting because it is not as if fixed positions were being created by an affirmation (we are all recipients of the love of God) but a wish is expressed: the letter points to a situation where an exchange is awaited. The eventual outcome will depend on the desire of the correspondent, on what circumstances will allow, and … on God.

Ignatius then points out why he is involved in a letter to this particular correspondent. He outlines briefly the preliminary circumstances: the topic raised, the previous letters, that of 4 February and one from someone else. The letters of Vergara have not survived, unfortunately; but two by Villanueva, to whom Vergara had explained his problem, have been found and published.[6]

Ignatius mentions that he is praying as requested (for the person and his decision) and has urged others to do likewise. He is thinking of Vergara not only in a first- and second-person relationship ('I' and 'you'), but also as someone (a 'he') who can be recommended to the prayers of others. He is doing the same as Villanueva had done when he wrote to Ignatius asking him to shed light on the wishes of Vergara. With his prayer, coming as it does as part of a fraternal exchange of goodwill and advice, Ignatius puts his correspondent in the position of someone destined to receive a gift from God. Thus the spirituality involved comes not simply from one side—the person giving the advice—but from the overall activity of the Spirit, working also through the recipient and acknowledged by the counsellor. It is the Spirit who is shared and circulates between them, and whose work is due to be revealed by means of a spiritual conversation.

The Spirit … is shared and circulates between them

The recipient's situation is made explicit by an affirmation ('[you] will be taught by the Holy Spirit better than by anyone else') to which a further clarification is added on the role of reason and the affections ('it is true that …'). The fourth and fifth paragraphs mention matters that will not be dealt with in this letter, and the sixth concludes by returning to the situation announced in the first paragraph in the form

[6] Francisco de Villanueva to Ignatius, 15 March 1554, MHSJ *Epistolae mixtae* 4, 98–101 (letter 777); Francisco de Villanueva to Ignatius, 31 December 1555, MHSJ *Epistolae mixtae* 5, 147–148 (letter 1078).

of a prayer: 'May Christ our Lord give to all of us his grace always to know his most holy will and entirely to fulfil it'.

The counsellor places his correspondent in the position of recipient of the grace of God, from whom he will receive any advice; but, in doing this, Ignatius not only refers to his individual life and his relation to God, but includes him in the common lot of all those baptized—who, in their spiritual life, pray for one another as they seek for grace. Thus, the means that the correspondent should use in order to make his decision are integral to the prayers and careful attention that we have for another.

The counsellor's role requires the establishment of a relationship which combines clarity and rigour with a gentleness that gives encouragement. One is reminded of the instructions about the use of these same virtues given to anyone who guides another in making the Spiritual Exercises:

> If the giver of the Exercises sees that the exercitant is desolate and tempted, it is important not to be hard or curt with such a person but gentle and kind, to give courage and strength for the future, to lay bare the tricks of the enemy of human nature, and to encourage the exercitant to prepare and make ready for the consolation which is to come (Exx 7).[7]

A climate is created between the correspondent, the counsellor and God in the dealings that are to follow. The counsellor has to adapt in accordance with what he or she knows about the correspondent, and bring into play the ability to form a relationship. In this particular case, Ignatius makes it easier for Ramírez de Vergara to come to a decision which is in accordance with the Holy Spirit by assuring him of prayerful support in such a way that Vergara will be encouraged—both by the gentleness of the reassurance and the firm insistence that it is up to him now to undertake the task.

In the process of 'giving advice', the way that this is done is as important as the advice given. Nothing will be gained by formulating a piece of advice unless attention is given to the manner in which it is offered. Nor is it just a question of skilful rhetoric in its most limited

[7] The translation used here is that of Michael Ivens, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola* (Leominster: Gracewing, 2004), 4. One should note that the gentleness and kindness mentioned here, along with the severity and harshness that may appear in the Letters, have always to rest upon a fundamental 'goodwill' which is presupposed in the Exercises (Exx 22). Early rhetorical teaching put a similar stress on such qualities and in this respect converged with Renaissance moral teaching, indebted to both Aristotle and St Thomas. It is interesting to see how the practice of counselling drew on these different traditions.

sense. It is necessary to address the recipient in such a way that his or her situation can be altered, not just by the substance of what is said but by the fact that it is said *in this way*. 'Words of advice are always accepted as true precisely because they never elucidate the reason why they are so: it is just because they are lived out that they become pertinent—not for themselves and in themselves.'[8] It is this that allows advice to be repeated (what Ignatius says to Vergara could be said to someone else) and to have a fecundity without limits. Ignatius relies on the fact that his advice does not allow for contradiction: what is at work here by means of reason and emotions is the Holy Spirit.

The Advice: How to Set about Making a Decision

The next step is to examine the advice Ignatius gives to his correspondent:

> The means for relishing with the affection and carrying out with sweetness a course which reason dictates to be for God's greater service and glory is something what will be taught you by the Holy Spirit better than by anyone else. Of course, it is true that in pursuing what is better and more perfect, it suffices to be moved by reason, and the other movement, that of the will, even if it did not precede the decision and execution, can easily follow it, as God our Lord repays our trust in his providence, our complete self-abandonment, and our giving up of our own consolation by giving us a deep contentment and relish, and a spiritual consolation that is all the richer the less we aim at it and the more purely we seek his glory and will. May his infinite and supreme goodness deign to guide all our affairs as he sees will best lead to this end.

What is the problem that the advice is trying to solve? The opening lines indicate this clearly: how can Vergara carry out a decision which by reason he has recognised to be for the greater service and glory of God? So what is being sought is not reasoned knowledge of what has to be done, but rather a decision to carry out what is known. It is a problem of the 'will', that is to say, what it is that will allow Vergara to put a decision into practice. Ignatius is replying to a question that may be formulated as follows: how is Vergara to set about carrying out what his reason tells him is for the service of God?

In his reply, Ignatius will appeal to measures outlined in the *Spiritual Exercises*, while trying to show Vergara that his understanding of the

[8] Cugno, *La Blessure amoureuse*, 26.

means for making a choice may cause problems. Thus, while having recourse to the spiritual principle that it is the Holy Spirit who will teach him how to carry out a decision recognised by reason, Ignatius points out a possible misunderstanding of the measures that his correspondent already knows. While Vergara is right to think that 'reason alone may suffice', he should be aware that 'the movement of the will' should not be disregarded. This distinction made by Ignatius between movements of reason and those of the will, and how they are articulated, calls for separate treatment before considering further the actual letter.

The Need for Such Movements

Thoughts that pass through the mind have an effect upon us: ideas, intentions, dreams, regrets and so on do not simply come into the mind as memories, realisations and proposals, which we accept in a narrative mode; but, at another level, they also touch us in different ways, for which Ignatius uses the term *mociones* ('motions/movements'). He groups these together in binary fashion as joyful or sad. The two levels mentioned, one discursive and the other affective, suppose a distinction of great importance. This is seen in the account given by Ignatius of his own experience at Loyola, and anyone who gives the Exercises has to be attentive to it.

Ignatius recounts how he came to recognise in narrative mode two quite different ways of life opening before him: on the one hand, as he read the romances of chivalry he called to mind a certain lady and he felt

Ignatius convalescing at Loyola, by Carlos Saenz de Tejada, mid-twentieth century

the wish to undertake works of gallantry in order to win her over. On the other hand, as he read the lives of saints he wanted to imitate their exploits and set off on the life of a pilgrim. But while he was aware of the two possibilities, knowing them did not help him resolve which to choose. A new stage came when he became aware of a different level: 'One time his eyes were opened a little, and he began to marvel at this difference in kind and to reflect on it, picking it up from experience that from some thoughts he would be left sad and from others happy'.[9]

In such cases, it is not the objective value or content of a project which is decisive in leading me to discover which should carry the day, but rather the feeling I get in each case. A reaction of joy will be interpreted as a sign coming from God, whereas one of sadness will point to the demon. As Ignatius notes, it is when he began 'to marvel' at this difference in kind, and to reflect on it, that he became aware and intelligence began to dawn; however, this was not enough. So far only the foundation had been laid, thanks to which he could be guided in choosing a form of life that sought to serve God alone. Annotation 6 in the *Spiritual Exercises* instructs the one who gives them that it is about these 'motions/movements' that a careful inquiry is needed:

> When the giver of the Exercises becomes aware that the exercitant is not being affected by any spiritual movements, such as consolations and desolations, and it is not agitated by various spirits, the exercitant should be questioned closely about the exercises, as to whether they are being made at their appointed times, and in what way, and similarly as to whether the additions are being carefully followed. The giver should inquire in detail about each of these points. (Exx 6)

The letter to Vergara clearly presumes that he will be someone who becomes aware of such movements and that he will reflect on them. And yet something more is needed.

A Direction to Life

The advice that Ignatius is giving relies on the work that God is doing 'by giving a deep contentment and relish, and a spiritual consolation that is all the richer the less we aim at it and the more purely we seek his glory and will'. Such advice gives great importance to 'consolation'. Why should this be so?

[9] *Autobiography*, n. 8.

The account given in the *Autobiography*, which lays such stress on the contrast between sadness and happiness, runs the danger of limiting attention to these psychological effects rather than to the direction in which they are pointing: a better understanding of the sort of life Ignatius should be leading. Here, the definitions given in the *Spiritual Exercises* of the two types of movement provide much light:

> Lastly, I give the name 'consolation' to every increase of hope, faith and charity, to all interior happiness which calls and attracts to heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, leaving the soul quiet and at peace in her Creator and Lord. (Exx 316)
>
> On spiritual desolation. 'Desolation' is the name I give to everything contrary to what is described in Rule Three; for example, darkness and disturbance in the soul, attraction to what is low and of the earth, disquiet arising from various agitations and temptations. All this leads to a lack of confidence in which one feels oneself to be without hope and without love. One finds oneself thoroughly lazy, lukewarm, sad, and as though cut off from one's Creator and Lord. (Exx 317)

The vocabulary used to describe these interior motions/movements is a dynamic one. An 'increase', on the one hand, 'calls and attracts'; and the effect is one of 'peace and quiet' (a doublet typical of Ignatius' literary style). On the other hand, some 'agitations' cause 'a lack of confidence'. More important than the feeling as such is the movement that is set in motion. It is the direction of that movement, rather than the feeling, that is crucial. In fact, as Ignatius makes quite explicit with regard to consolation, the feeling one receives may be pain and a desire to weep; nevertheless it is consolation that is present,

> … when a person sheds tears which lead to the love of our Lord, whether these arise from grief over sins, or over the passion of Christ our Lord, or because of other reasons immediately directed towards his service and praise. (Exx 316)

Thanks to the feeling, the retreatant finds his or her heart open, and does not linger on the feeling itself but looks at the inner polarisation and orientation towards God.

The characteristic of consolation is the love which one has for God and for all that exists simply because it comes from God:

> I use the word 'consolation' when any interior movement is produced in the soul which leads her to become inflamed with the love of her

> Creator and Lord, and when as a consequence, there is no creature on the face of the earth that the person can love in itself, but they love it in the Creator and Lord of all things. (Exx 316)

Desolation, on the contrary, separates one from God: as Ignatius describes it: 'One feels oneself to be without hope and without love. One finds oneself thoroughly lazy, lukewarm, sad, and as though cut off from one's Creator and Lord.' (Exx 317) Note how the soul is not really separated, but it is 'as though' that were true. Desolation thrives on a lack of confidence in God and in all that feeds God into our inner lives. The most radical of all temptations is to think that God does not want to have anything to do with us: this runs counter to what God says about Godself and to what God is accomplishing: making a covenant with us.

My life can be polarised in relation to only one direction and that direction is God: either towards or away from God. Once again, Ignatius requires an act of faith. In his writings, God is 'Creator and Lord': God alone creates and call to life. The Contemplation to Attain Love will be even more explicit in its invitation to consider all the good that comes from God. God governs and directs in so far as God is Lord. God alone is the one whose will is always done perfectly.

> It is characteristic of God and his angels in the movements prompted by them to give true gladness and spiritual joy, while banishing all the sadness and distress brought on by the enemy, whose characteristic it is to fight against this joy and spiritual consolation by bringing forward specious arguments, subtleties and one fallacy after another. (Exx 329)

Ignatius is well aware of the spiritual combat, but he does not see in it a symmetry between the opposing forces, as if they were equal: God on the one hand and the enemy of human nature on the other.

Ignatius holds that the human being is destined for joy. As first principle of the Exercises he writes that 'the human person is created to praise' (Exx 23). The joy of praise is not that of someone who takes pleasure at others' expense; it is rather the joy of one who rejoices in oneself. In my rejoicing there is a division between myself and the object that gives me joy. Joy in the case of consolation expands so that I become capable of finding joy in all things. It is not that I own whatever gives the joy: it is all a gift. Such joy is possible for the person who lives in freedom, quite independent of anything that alienates one. In virtue of that freedom, I have the capacity to make and to carry out a deliberate decision. This leads us back to the letter of Ignatius to Vergara.

Confirmation Given by the Spirit

So far we have pointed out the ideas with which Ignatius is working in his reply to Vergara. His advice has been only about the way to make a final decision. Vergara was aware, by weighing up the pros and cons, what decision he thought he ought to take. It is worth examining in detail what steps the *Spiritual Exercises* recommend. A retreatant is invited to consider in successive stages the advantages and disadvantages for and against a particular choice. Then, once they have been examined:

> The Fifth Point. Having in this way thought and reasoned from every point of view on the thing before me, I shall look to see in which direction reason inclines more. It is thus according to the stronger inclination of the reason, and not according to the inclinations of sensuality that the decision on the matter before me is reached. (Exx 182)

Ignatius thinks that his correspondent has found out in which direction his reason is pointing but, on the other hand, he feels uneasy that Vergara does not seem to have experienced any movement of the will, that complete assent whereby a decision can be put into practice. As the *Spiritual Exercises* specify:

> The First Time. When God our Lord so moves and attracts the will that without doubting or being able to doubt, the faithful soul follows what is shown, just as St Paul and St Matthew did when they followed Christ our Lord. (Exx 175)

If the deliberation with the use of reason should not be confused with the identification of what one chooses to do (Exx 182), the decision as such is still not the same as its being put into practice. Ignatius has a further clarification: he points out what he calls the stage of 'confirmation':

> After such an election or decision has been made, the person who made it should turn with great diligence to prayer, coming before God our Lord, and offering him this election, so that his Divine Majesty may be pleased to accept and confirm it, if it is to his greater service and praise. (Exx 183)

In his letter, Ignatius explains to Vergara about this confirmation: '[this] is something that will be taught you by the Holy Spirit better than by anyone else'. In other words, the joy that is felt on being confirmed in some decision where a person desires to give him- or herself entirely, and

Ignatius and his First Companions rejoice after making their vows, by Carlos Saenz de Tejada, mid-twentieth century

the peace that comes as one takes up such a project, are not gained by oneself. By pointing out that they are the work of the Holy Spirit, Ignatius is showing at the same time that they are not under the control of the person, nor of the adviser. The confirmation that allows the execution to take place is something that brings peace and comfort; it is a grace. It can be recognised by its aura of peace and joy. Such confirmation of a decision enters as consolation. Feeling, reflection, confirmation: these are the three beats in the spiritual rhythm that distinguishes life in the Spirit.[10]

Such joy will be all the more a clear and certain sign in so far, writes Ignatius, as we have given up looking for 'our own consolation':

> … as God our Lord repays our trust in his providence, our complete self-abandonment, and our giving up of our own consolation by giving us a deep contentment and relish, and spiritual consolation that is all the richer the less we aim at it and the more purely we seek his glory and will.

The search for consolation, and even the close attention given to it as a guide in the spiritual life, could make a person become self-enclosed. In that case, consolation may bolster my self-satisfaction and, through

[10] See Maurice Giuliani, *L'Accueil du temps qui vient. Études sur saint Ignace de Loyola* (Namur: Lessius, 2015).

the delight I find in it, cease to be true to itself. In place of it supporting and nourishing me in my spiritual life, I make of it an object of comfort, in which, as Ignatius says, we 'build our nest' (Exx 322).[11]

Even the longing for a sign of confirmation can become an obstacle if it takes precedence over the decision that I should be making. Ignatius was all too aware of this, as his *Spiritual Diary* bears witness. Any longed-for sign does not absolve me from facing the risk required and taking the first step, by making the decision that I see needed, even if I feel I am stepping into the dark. Only the unimpeded movement of my freedom can lead me towards joy. God guides me to it provided that the only thing I try to do is what I have identified as the service of God for his greater glory. In other words, I am not trying to serve any other purpose.

The pedagogy of consolation leads straight to the heart of the gospel faith: Jesus declared, 'strive for his kingdom and these things will be given to you as well' (Luke 12:31), to free his disciples from any anxiety about how they were to live. The peace for which all are looking comes with an act of confidence in the goodness of God. This requires that no good thing be wanted for itself; its existence is wanted only because it is seen to be good. Such is the one and only source of joy.[12] In this it has its place in the creative will of God: God 'saw that it was good' and rejoiced over the work thus granted to humanity.

The substance of the advice Ignatius is giving consists of a presentation of the rules by means of which the correspondent who seeks help is enabled to act. Ignatius takes him to be a responsible agent whose sense of freedom needs to be confirmed, and he outlines exactly what the correspondent's position should be thanks to the advice given. Thus the roles of each with regard to what should be done are clearly delineated. The counsellor's tone has to be such that the advice given does not become an impediment to what is needed. However, this way of offering words of advice and envisaging how they are to be received is by no means limited to formulating a method, no matter what precautions are taken to ensure that the one invited to accept the advice is in a proper state of mind.

[11] Ignatius points out in this Rule of Discernment that there are three causes of desolation. The third is to warn us that consolation does not depend on us, 'so we are not to build our nest where we do not belong, becoming elated in mind to the point of pride and vainglory, and putting down to our own account devotion or other forms of spiritual consolation'.

[12] See Michel de Certeau, 'L'Espace du désir ou le "fondement" des *Exercicices spirtuels*', in *Le Lieu de l'autre. Histoire religieuse et mystique* (Paris: Gallimard/Seuil/Hautes Études, 2005), 239 and 247.

The conviction that the correspondent is able to decide for himself and put that decision into effect is founded on the trust that it is God who will teach the person how to act, not by standing in for the person but in the interaction that is described in the letter. The certainty that God acts in this way is made clear with the first words of the letter; this is a greeting in the form of a prayer. God's help appears as consolation. This is not a final assent to what reason has come to recognise by its deliberation, but rather that internal echoing which Ignatius teaches how to interpret by paying attention to the interior movements. What happens in the process of deliberation and decision-making, and is hoped for as a confirmation, is actually going on all through the course of the work of clarification. The feeling one has—what makes up an interior movement and is not simply an agitation, but has a direction—is shown to be a means of interpreting God's aid. It is quite independent of the process of deliberation as such. It springs from the interplay of thoughts, reasons, wishes and their echoes. In these movements, whatever leads to joy allows a person to understand what Ignatius recognises as coming from God. The image one forms of how best to lead a prudent life is built on a vision of God as an interior help. The area of one's affections is where, not without the effort of prayer and penance, things happen in the lives of human beings.[13]

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translated by Joseph A. Munitiz SJ

[13] This article is chapter 3 of Patrick Goujon's book, *Les Conseils de l'Ésprit. Lire les lettres d'Ignace de Loyola* (Namur: Lessius, 2017), 43–60.

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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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WALKING

Teresa White

IN MODERN TIMES we have seen increasing pedestrianisation in city centres—a process that seems unlikely to be reversed any day soon. Although this may have been carried out mainly to boost the economy by facilitating access to shops and other businesses, indirectly we all benefit from it, because it forces us to do a bit more walking. There is something inherently 'civilised' about walking round town, as opposed to zooming about in motor vehicles, endangering pedestrians and cyclists and endlessly polluting the atmosphere!

Interestingly, notwithstanding the numerous gyms, mental and physical disciplines and diets designed to facilitate fitness and good health, many doctors say that, all other things being equal, walking, our most natural form of bodily exercise—regular, unstressful walking—is probably as good for us as anything. So, they suggest, if you are travelling by bus or metro, why not get off a stop or two before your destination and walk the rest of the way? As for the car, avoid using it whenever possible, and if you can sensibly go from A to B by shanks' pony, do so!

Sometimes it is no bad thing to remember that, for most of human history, relatively few people possessed a horse or chariot, so walking was the main means of locomotion—and still is for many inhabitants of our planet. In the ancient Middle Eastern countries, it seems people thought nothing of walking forty miles in a day, carrying only a gourd. This they would fill with water from a stream, picking and eating the fruits of bushes and trees as they went.

Walking—much easier to demonstrate than describe—is the process of moving forward by lifting one foot entirely, then allowing it to touch the ground while raising the other foot to repeat the action. Slightly bending the knee comes into it, and a rhythmical swing can make it a pleasurable experience. But this uninspiring explanation is very far from encompassing the profound significance of walking for us humans. Rhythm, the beating of the heart, is our lifeline, and the act of walking in some sense echoes and affirms this rhythm. Typically, we learn the skill at about the age of twelve months, and after taking our first hesitant steps

(to the applause of our delighted parents) it rapidly becomes second nature to us. Most of us then carry on walking with confidence and nonchalance until a sprained ankle, arthritis or some other physical ailment or disability makes us realise just how vital walking is to so many aspects of our lives and to our general sense of well-being. How we miss it when we are unable to do it easily, when each step exacts pain and effort on our part! Practical, down-to-earth (literally), walking is the indispensable prelude to more charismatic bodily activities such as dancing and sport—you have to learn to walk before you can run, or jump, or tango!

In religious rituals, spiritual realities are frequently represented by familiar things, taken from nature or from life as we know it: water, oil, bread and wine. These things are part of our lives—they precede the spiritual meanings we give to them. So, yes, in human experience, what comes first is not the spiritual but the material or physical. Yet we live in both realms, and walking in some sense seems to unite the two for, though manifestly a physical activity, it can be a spiritual experience also. The cosmos is our meeting place with God, in whom 'we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28), and when we walk in our world, God's world, the ground beneath our feet is sacred; God, as Paul Tillich famously said, is the 'ground of being'.[1]

St Paul adds another dimension to the act of walking: 'We walk by faith, not by sight', he says (2 Corinthians 5:7). Walking by faith, walking reflectively, a person may discover his or her true identity and vocation. Because of this, from the earliest times, walking—not running, jogging, dancing or leaping, but travelling on foot, with a kind of reverence and at a moderate pace—became a metaphor for a privileged time of 'encounter': with self, with others and, above all, with God. There is undoubted wisdom in the Latin tag *solvitur ambulando*—it (a difficulty, a misunderstanding) is solved by walking. From my own experience, I could not count the number of problematic situations that have been eased or solved by people agreeing to go for a walk together to talk things through.

Ambulatories and Labyrinths

Cathedrals and churches often contain what are technically called 'ambulatories', or aisled spaces on either side of the nave and round the apse to form a continuous processional walkway. In a mediaeval monastery,

[1] See, for example, Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, volume 1, *Reason and Revelation. Being and God* (Chicago: U. of Chicago P, 1966), 156.

the ambulatory or covered walkway surrounded an enclosed garden (cloister), and the monks or nuns, as they walked round it, would read and pray and reflect. It is thought that the labyrinths found in certain French cathedrals may have been created for a similar purpose: to aid spiritual growth by walking and prayer. Today, the only original labyrinth that remains intact is in the nave of Chartres cathedral, many others having been torn up during the political troubles of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century France—although some, like the one in Amiens cathedral, have been reconstructed.

Although the labyrinth, with its strange patterns, is not a Christian symbol in itself—its amazing design has been found carved into rocks dating back to prehistoric times, thousands of years ago—the fact that it was incorporated into churches suggests that it must have had a Christian purpose. A common theory is that walking the labyrinth gave people who could not undertake the lengthy journey to Rome or Compostela or Jerusalem the opportunity to make a symbolic pilgrimage: all they had to do was simply walk through the entry space and then prayerfully follow the path to the centre.

'Labyrinth' here is not to be understood in its original sense, as a complicated cluster of pathways like those in the place of confinement of the mythical Cretan monster, the Minotaur; nor does its modern meaning apply either, for the mediaeval labyrinth is not just a brain-teaser, a baffling jumble of multiple paths lined, like the maze at Hampton

The labyrinth at Chartres cathedral

Court, with high hedges. The Chartres labyrinth, circular, flat and marked out in black and white marble, is set into the paving stones of the floor of the cathedral. There is only one route to follow, a clear, though intricate, one which leads from the circumference to the centre. Unlike Theseus, who needed Ariadne's thread to find his way out of the Cretan labyrinth, the walker following this path cannot get lost: there are no junctions, no dead ends, no choices to be made. Interestingly, walking the labyrinth, a practice which has experienced a revival in recent times, among Christians and New Age enthusiasts alike, is often used today as a meditative exercise representing the journey, both literal and metaphorical, to our own centre and out into the world again.

Scripture

Scripture readily mingles history and theology, and its wide-ranging narratives reflect both elements. 'Walk before me, and be blameless' (Genesis 17:1), said God to Abraham and, from very early on, the biblical notion of walking in God's presence, following God's ways, held a strong metaphorical significance for the people of Israel. So we see them on their journey to the Promised Land making the progressive discovery that God 'walks' with them, accompanying them, guiding them along the 'right' path. Sometimes they lose sight of that presence and come to grief. But overall, when the writers of the Hebrew Bible describe the long peregrinations of their nation, they see these as times when God is testing and forming them. The 'Torah' was not just a law, it was 'the way' that God's people were called to walk, following the divine commandments. As they walked that path, they deepened their relationship with God and with their community, and they learnt from experience that God's fidelity would not fail them. In the New Testament also, especially in the letters of Paul, there are frequent references to walking in this metaphorical sense, as he urges the first Christians to walk 'in the Spirit', to walk the path of life in love, in light, in truth and with integrity.

In the Bible it is possible to discern a kind of dialectic between the sedentary and the nomadic, and the notion of walking is sometimes presented as an antidote to a settled, stable existence in which a person or tribe puts down roots and stays in one place for a long time, accumulating wealth and possessions. Jesus' parable about the Rich Fool (Luke 12:16–21), who set about building more and more barns to store his abundant crops, echoes this tension: such people think they can get on alone—that they do not need God's help. Nomads and travellers, on

the other hand, always on the move, their only shelter a flimsy tent, are conscious of their weakness and fragility. Poor in spirit, they recognise their vulnerability and know their need of God.

Pilgrimage

There is an asceticism or spiritual discipline involved in moving away from home and familiar things in order to follow God's call, and the experience of pilgrimage calls for a similar attitude of detachment. Thus the inner disposition required of the pilgrim is a sort of spiritual poverty, trust in God, not in material things. In addition, the mediaeval pilgrim routes were notoriously hazardous. Because of this, wealthy people sometimes preferred not to make the journey themselves but to pay others to represent them at a shrine—indeed in 1352 a London merchant left a man £20 in his will (a huge sum of money at the time) to go on a pilgrimage to Mount Sinai on his behalf![2]

Going on pilgrimage—making one's way to a holy place, alone or with others, in order to seek forgiveness or pray for spiritual and temporal favours—was a very popular religious practice throughout mediaeval Europe. It declined in the sixteenth century, when the whole idea was scorned by the reformers, who considered pilgrimages to be a 'popish' custom, in their view akin to the selling of indulgences, since (even apart from the phenomenon of vicarious pilgrimage) money was demanded by the keepers of the shrines, which often contained somewhat dubious relics. Nevertheless, in spite of the reformers' zeal, the Black Death and political obstacles such as wars, the practice of Christian pilgrimage never completely died out, especially in continental Europe. Today many people continue to undertake pilgrimages, and of course the notion of a 'sacred journey', when the spiritual quest is expressed in a physical journey to a holy place, is found in all faith traditions.

Travelling to a common destination by any means of transport—car, train, plane, bus—can generate a sense of companionship, especially if there is an unexpected delay or a problem arises. However, the stated purposefulness of such modes of transport—to get the traveller to a given destination as quickly as possible and within certain time limits—means that the element of 'unhurriedness' that seems to be integral

[2] Diane Webb, *Pilgrims and Pilgrimage in the Medieval West* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 140. And see also Christopher Roman, 'Professional Pilgrims', in *The Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage*, edited by Larissa Taylor (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

Pilgrims, from the* Cantigas de Santa Maria*, late thirteenth century

to walking in the biblical sense, is often missing. Contemplative walking, on the other hand, is akin to pilgrimage, symbolizing humankind's search for meaning in life, and is a powerful reminder of the importance of spiritual realities.

Seeking God, seeking the holy, is at the heart of the idea of pilgrimage, and 'God', Pope Francis says, 'does not hide himself from those who seek him with a sincere heart, even though they do so tentatively, in a vague and haphazard manner'.[3] Pilgrims often say that there is something special about walking alongside another person or with a group of people to a shrine: walking together seems to generate dialogue, intimacy, mutual pleasure, mutual help and support, instinctive cooperation. And it has a 'levelling' effect, as people walking together are reduced to that fundamental human condition of moving forward with one another *on the ground*. We see this in *The Canterbury Tales*, in which Chaucer used the occasion of a pilgrimage to the most popular shrine in England to bring together people from various classes of society for the reader's edification and entertainment. Chaucer's pilgrimage remained an unambiguously 'religious' journey—however secular the preoccupations and subsequent actions of the characters may have been.

Recently, when I visited Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, inside, just near the main door, I saw a large plaque inscribed with the words: 'VIA VIATORES QUAERIT' (translation from the Latin was given in three languages: 'Je suis la voie qui cherche des voyageurs'; 'Yo soy el camino que busca viajeros'; and 'I am the way which seeks travellers'). I discovered that in 2013, during the celebrations marking 850 years since the construction of Notre Dame began in 1163 (it was completed some 200

[3] *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 71

years later), one of the commemorative events organized by the diocese of Paris was a pilgrimage. The organizers took the theme of 'VIA VIATORES QUAERIT', and it seems that hundreds of people, young and old, took part in that pilgrimage, coming to Notre Dame on foot and by various other forms of transport from all over France, and further afield.

Since then, each year, during the summer months, the cathedral has continued to display that plaque for the benefit of the Compostela pilgrims, many of whom pass through Paris on their way to Spain. Near the plaque, in the accompanying blurb, I noticed that the words were attributed to St Augustine of Hippo; but Augustine's actual words (which I looked up on my return home) were: 'Via ergo ista nostra *ambulantes* quaerit'—our way (that is, our Christian way, the way of Jesus Christ) seeks *walkers*.[4] This is a classic biblical notion, clearly expressed in Psalm 128: 'Happy is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways'. I was reminded of a South African Zulu chant, *Siahamba*, whose words have the same message, echoing 1 John 1:7: 'We are walking in the light of God …'

On the mainland of Europe, pilgrimages to the shrine of St James at Compostela began very soon after the tomb believed to contain the saint's relics had been rediscovered in 814 AD. A large number of the pilgrims came from France (joined by many, too, from England), and Notre Dame was the starting point for the pilgrimage. The kingdom of France provided protection and freedom along the pilgrimage routes to the shrine, known as the 'Camino de Santiago' (the 'Way of St James'). The names of a surprisingly large number of Paris streets and districts reflect the popularity of this pilgrimage, and the emblem worn by the pilgrims, their 'badge', the so-called *coquille Saint Jacques* (a scallop shell), is engraved on some of the buildings along the traditional route through the city.

In the Middle Ages, pilgrims often walked for months or even years through France and northern Spain to reach their destination, sleeping in huts and barns or in the open. It was a risky undertaking, and they often went in groups as a protection against thieves and brigands. On the way, pilgrims would present themselves at churches, castles, abbeys, farms and ordinary homes, rich and poor, where they could expect to be given as much sustenance as they could pick up with one scoop of the 'coquille'. In this way, even the poorest household could, without being overburdened, offer charity to the pilgrims, who would be given oats or barley or perhaps beer or wine. In spite of periods of decline,

[4] Augustine, *Sermo ad catechumenos*, 4.

this pilgrimage has always attracted people and in 2017 over 300,000 pilgrims from different parts of the world made their way to Santiago. Many of these would have used various forms of transport at different stages of the journey, but still, for the vast majority of the pilgrims, young and old, walking continues to play an important part in the whole experience of the Camino.

Wandering

Is wandering is a kind of poetic expansion or extension of the act of walking? I think it may be. Wandering involves walking in a leisurely, relaxed way, with no plan or definite purpose, and it seems to encourage a more contemplative gaze, so that we learn to look at commonplace things with a greater intensity and understanding. As we wander, we sometimes come upon new and exciting pathways in what had seemed to be shadowy landscapes. Sudden moments of insight and liberation are not rare, as Wordsworth well knew. It was as he wandered, in his famous poem, that he saw that 'host, of golden daffodils … fluttering and dancing in the breeze'. And he never forgot them. It seems that when such epiphanies 'flash upon the inward eye', a wave of hopefulness and unexplained joy washes over us.[5] Afterwards, we can tune in to that joy and be spiritually nourished by it whenever it comes to into our minds.

Wandering and wondering seem to be closely linked in our human experience. The words of John Jacob Niles' American folk hymn gracefully articulate this link: 'I wonder while I wander out under the sky'.[6] While wandering, at the same time we are often drawn to reflect on the deeper questions about who we are and why we are here. If, as R. S. Thomas said, the relationship with God is 'somewhere between faith and doubt',[7] reflective wandering can help us to be more open to intimations of the divine in both ordinary and challenging situations, to cling to hope in times of suffering, to seek meaning in the often chaotic human journey. Wandering and wondering in this way can lead us to disentangle ourselves from the fast-moving narrative of our lives and to relish moments of grace and transcendence in the midst of the hazards and risks, the perplexities and uncertainties that many people have to face each day.

[5] William Wordsworth, 'Daffodils', in *The Poems* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 619.
[6] See http://www.musicanet.org/robokopp/usa/iwondera.htm.
[7] R. S. Thomas, 'Waiting', in *Collected Poems: 1945–1990* (London: J. M. Dent, 1993), 376.

Creativity

Pilgrimage, journeying to a holy place, or the more poetic activity of wandering, are very far from being the only reasons why walking is so important to us. Many a writer or composer or painter has found walking to be an essential stimulus to creative ideas. Nietzsche would certainly not disagree: 'Only thoughts which come from *walking* have any value', he said.[8] I once read that Ian McEwan spends hours walking and ruminating before beginning to write one of his novels, and it would not surprise me to hear that other writers do the same, and composers too. Benjamin Britten is a case in point: it is a well-known fact that, walking on the beach at Aldeburgh, he would work out an entire musical score in his head before setting it down on paper.[9] It seems that J. S. Bach was also a walker, and an intrepid one—he once took a month off from his musical duties to walk the 250 miles from Arnstadt to Lübeck, in order to hear the famous Buxtehude giving an organ recital![10]

Marching

As for the Jarrow marchers in 1936, they walked all the way from Tyneside to London, carrying a petition to the British government requesting the establishment of a new industry in their town after the closure of their shipyard. They received food and hospitality on the way

[8] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Twilight of the Idols*, translated by Duncan Large (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 9.
[9] See Seán Street, *The Memory of Sound: Preserving the Sonic Past* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 106.
[10] This is narrated in J. S. Bach's 'obituary' by his son, Carl Philip Emmanuel Bach: *Nekrolog, or Obituary Notice of Johann Sebastian Bach*, translated by Walter Emery (London: Travis and Emery, 2009).

and a public welcome awaited them on their arrival in London. The government received their petition, but to the men's intense frustration and distress, did not debate it, so they returned home believing they had failed. But their long walk had made a deep impression on the nation, and is thought to have helped foster changes in attitudes to the poor and the unemployed which led to some of the major social reforms that followed the Second World War in Britain.

Treading Gently

And when we think of that terrible war, it is perhaps salutary also to remember how many maimed, wounded and dead human beings would never walk again as a result of it. Perhaps we can comfort ourselves with the hope that, if all that unprecedented misery and destruction had any ultimate saving grace, it may well have been to make us more sensitive to any kind of suffering, and to have helped to change our way of relating not only to other human beings, but to the earth we walk upon.

In recent years, many people, perhaps especially the young, have become more conscious of humanity's contribution to the present ecological crisis and they desire to make amends. 'Generations have trod, have trod, have trod', said Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil'. But, the poet continues, 'There lives the dearest freshness deep down things'.[11] Recognising the importance of that freshness, we are slowly learning that we need to walk more gently upon the earth. Our increased understanding of and respect for the workings of nature has led some to choose a simpler lifestyle, marked, in the words of Pope Francis, 'by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little'.[12]

We are learning, too, to expand our moral concern and to see our human needs as part of a spectrum that includes plants, animals, air, water and soil. After all, as Pope Francis says in another document,

> We human beings are not only the beneficiaries but also the stewards of other creatures. Thanks to our bodies, God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful

[11] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'God's Grandeur', in *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Norman H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 111.
[12] *Laudato Si'*, n. 222.

> disfigurement. Let us not leave in our wake a swathe of destruction and death which will affect our own lives and those of future generations.[13]

We still have far to go, but many of us are making more conscious and concerted efforts to walk on the earth—God's earth and our common home—with greater sensitivity, more intensely aware of our relationship with one another and with the natural world which nurtures and sustains us.

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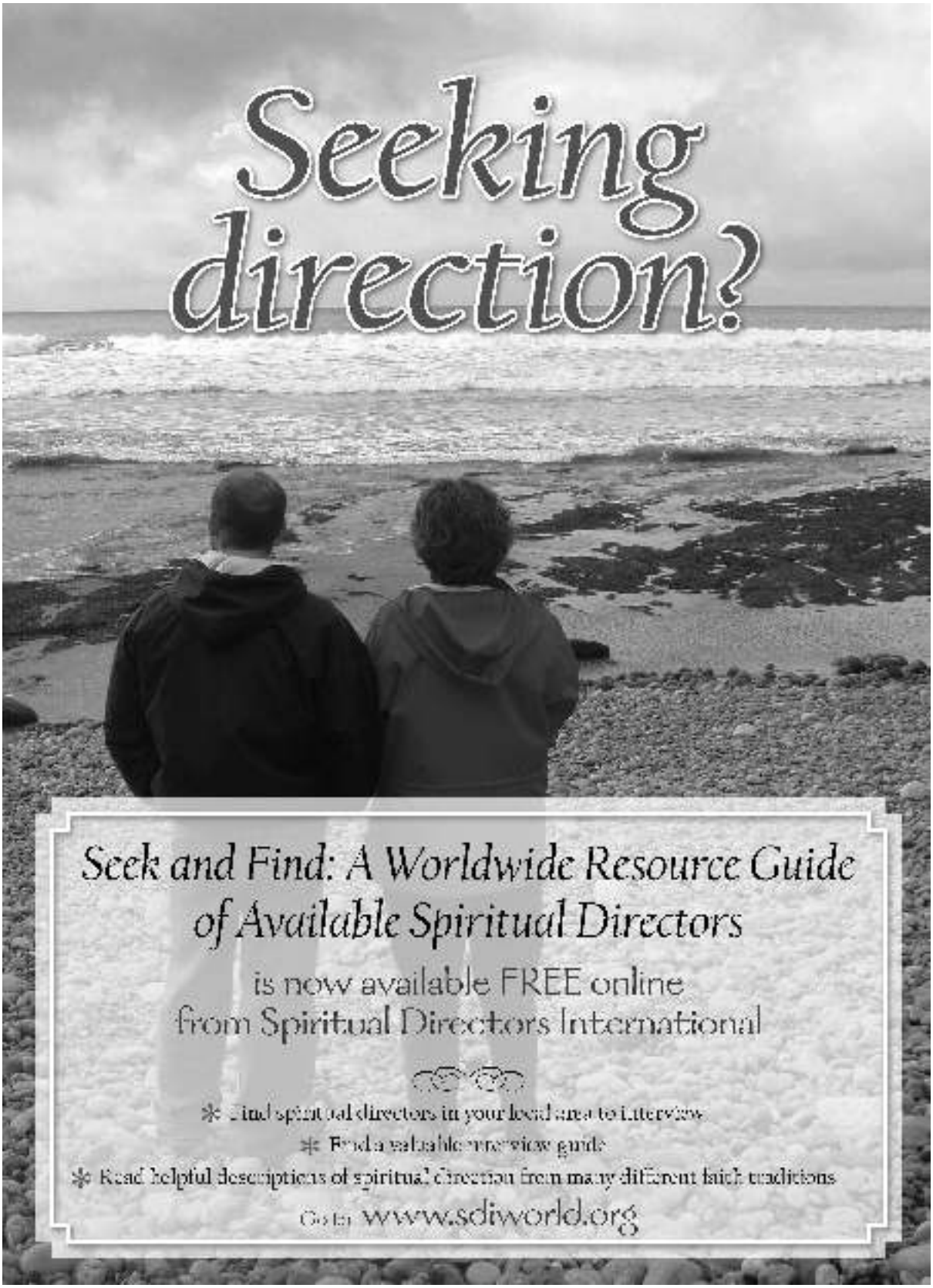
[13] *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 215.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Our Common Home

HOPKINS, NATURE AND *LAUDATO SI'*

Nancy Enright

WHEN GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS was writing his poetry in the nineteenth century, he might have been surprised and, perhaps, gratified to learn that, in the twenty-first century, a Jesuit Pope—a possibility that in itself would have seemed extremely unlikely at the time—would write an encyclical, a definitive papal statement, on the topic of the natural world. Hopkins saw himself first as a priest, then as a poet, and his poetry was always deeply linked to religious experience, including his appreciation of nature, as well as to his concern about the environmental destruction that he witnessed resulting from the industrial revolution.

Hopkins wrote about nature as a vehicle of God's grace and an expression of God's love: 'all things are … charged with love, are charged with God and if we know how to touch them give off sparks and take fire, yield drops and flow, ring and tell of Him'.[1] He saw humanity's assaults on nature as a kind of sin, but retained a deep hope that, despite the destruction unleashed by humans, God and the redemptive power of God's love at work in nature could and would change things. Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* echoes these four themes, and an exploration of some of Hopkins's most famous nature poems in connection with the Pope's text shows just how closely linked the concerns of the two Jesuits are regarding the natural world, and how important these different texts are as a call to awareness today.

One of Hopkins's most famous poems, 'The Windhover', celebrates a particular type of bird—the windhover or kestrel—and the beauty of its appearance in flight. The poem expresses the ability that nature has to stir

[1] *The Note-Books and Papers of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Humphrey House (Oxford: OUP, 1937), 342. This quotation was given to me by Dr Jude Nixon.

The Windhover

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, king-
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding
Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing
In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,
As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding
Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding
Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of; the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: shéer plód makes plough down sillion
Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,
Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

the heart: 'My heart in hiding / Stirred for a bird'. Nature as embodied in the windhover is something sacred, reflecting a transcendental beauty. Hopkins associates the windhover with kingship ('daylight's dauphin') and knighthood ('O my chevalier!'), in a vision of 'brute beauty and valour'. His intense evocation of this creature reflects, without explicit mention, the hand of the creator; though the poem's dedication, 'To Christ our Lord', makes clear that it is written in gratitude to Christ for the bird's existence.[2] Its flight, up and down, shaken by the wind, echoes the rhythms of the ploughed landscape beneath it, the ebb and flow of the natural world, dying and rising, reflecting also the death and resurrection of Christ.

Pope Francis likewise celebrates nature in *Laudato Si'*. Its title draws on the praise to God offered by his name patron, St Francis of Assisi, in his 'Canticle of the Creatures', which repeats the mediaeval Italian phrase *Laudato si'*—'Praised be you'.[3] Pope Francis explains the link

[2] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'The Windhover', in *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Norman H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 120.

[3] St Francis, 'Canticle of the Creatures', in *Francis of Assisi: Early Documents*, volume 1, *The Saint*, edited by Regis J. Armstrong, J. A. Wayne Hellmann and William J. Short, translated by Regis J. Armstrong and Paul Barrett (New York: New City, 1999), 113.

between his own encyclical and the attitude of St Francis, who, 'faithful to Scripture invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness'.[4] Quoting from the Book of Wisdom (13:5), Francis points out how, 'Through the greatness and the beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker'. He contrasts this reverential and celebratory view of nature as God's gift with the misguided one held by many people, who misinterpret the early chapters of Genesis as suggesting that human 'dominion' over nature is an excuse to use and to abuse other creatures as if they had no value in their own right. On the contrary, Francis argues, human beings have a responsibility to nurture and care for the earth (nn.48–49). Francis, like Hopkins, sees the beauty of creation as intimately linked to the love of God: 'Creation is the order of love. God's love is the moving force in all created things.' (n.55) Hopkins would affirm the validity of his fellow Jesuit's words.

Jesuits are taught to approach life and their own consciences through the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius, their founder. Ignatius encouraged his followers to use their imaginations to grow closer to God, and to make an honest examination of conscience, of which the *Examen* is a crucial part. The Examen involves reflecting and praying at the end of each day about what has taken place. Pope Francis encourages all readers of his encyclical, whatever their beliefs (he addresses all people of good will), to examine their own response to nature in light of social justice and faith. Hopkins's poetry also implicitly calls readers to use their imaginations to enhance their spiritual experience, as well as to examine what is right and wrong in their lives. Two more well-known poems exemplify these qualities of conversion through imagination and examination of conscience: 'Pied Beauty' for the former and 'God's Grandeur' the latter, though the second poem involves both.

Unlike 'The Windhover', 'Pied Beauty' celebrates not a single creature but a particular quality seen everywhere in the natural world—that of having more than one colour. Hopkins displays the incredible diversity of nature through examples ranging from cows to landscapes, all of them 'dappled' with variations of colour. The 'brinded' (streaked or striped) cow and the trout with 'rose moles' both testify to an almost playful enjoyment of beauty in the creator that is reflected in creation. The poem seems to dance, lavishly using alliteration to make the reader or hearer

[4] *Laudato Si'*, n.12 (subsequent references in the text).

Pied Beauty

Glory be to God for dappled things—
For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings;
Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough;
And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim.

All things counter, original, spare, strange;
Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)
With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim;
He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change:
Praise him.

play close attention to its language: 'Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings', 'Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow, and plough' and 'Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?) / With swift, slow; sweet, sour; adazzle, dim'.[5]

The uniqueness of each created thing, mysteriously coloured and patterned ('Who knows how?'), is clearly something to be appreciated, even reverenced. For, as Hopkins affirms near the end of the poem, the source of such loveliness is God: 'He fathers-forth whose beauty is past change'. The variety and changeableness of nature contrast with the eternal, unchanging character of its creator but, nonetheless, the colourful and varied qualities of natural creatures have their source in the unity of the creator God. The last words of the poem, 'Praise him', bring us back to the theme and title of the Pope's encyclical, *Laudato Si'*.

Like Hopkins, Pope Francis delves into the precious quality of each individual creature as a unique representation of the creator God's plan and purpose, to be appreciated and guarded, not selfishly exploited and damaged. Francis speaks of the richness of the natural world in terms that recall Hopkins's poem:

> The universe as a whole, in all its manifold relationships, shows forth the inexhaustible riches of God. Saint Thomas Aquinas wisely noted that multiplicity and variety 'come from the first agent' who willed 'that what was wanting to one in the representation of the divine goodness

[5] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'Pied Beauty', in *Poetical Works*, 121.

> might be supplied by another', inasmuch as God's goodness 'could not be represented fully by any one creature'. (n.86)[6]

Because of the importance of each creature, the extinction of any one of them is an irreparable loss, far more so than is commonly imagined. Francis warns, 'Because of us, thousands of species will no longer give glory to God by their very existence, nor convey their message to us. We have no such right.' (n.33)

Hopkins powerfully addresses the evil implicit in the destruction of nature through human sin in his poem 'God's Grandeur', which both celebrates the beauty of creation as the handiwork of God and laments its destruction. The first quatrain glorifies creation as a sign of 'the grandeur of God'. However, the very similes expressing this grandeur foreshadow the subject of the second quatrain—the damage done to the created world through industry—since they use images not of nature but of machinery and the work of the factory ('shook foil', 'ooze of oil'). The last line of the first quatrain—'Why do men now not reck his rod?'—leads easily into the subject of the second, which gives the answer to the question just asked.

The source of the sin is human greed, expressed through economic activity: 'And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil'.

God's Grandeur

The world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs —
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

[6] See Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q.47, a.2.

Humanity has developed, but has lost sight of the beauty of creation, upon which humans 'have trod, have trod, have trod'. 'Man's smudge' and 'man's smell' suggest not only physical dirt but also inner corruption, combined with alienation from nature: '… the soil / Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod'. The situation seems almost hopeless, but the octave provides a characteristic 'turning'—the *volta* that is part of the tradition of the sonnet.[7]

Hopkins shifts into a tone of hope. True, enormous damage has been done (even then!) but, despite that, 'Nature is never spent'. For Hopkins, faith in nature is founded upon faith in God. There exists 'the dearest freshness deep down things'; there is something deep within the created world, put there by its Creator, which continually regenerates it, even in the face of human destructiveness. Hopkins roots the poem in Genesis. Though evening and morning ('black west' and 'brown brink eastward') are tainted, still, echoing Genesis 1:3, 'the Holy Ghost over the bent / World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings'. The ultimate message is one of hope.

Laudato Si' also offers a message of hope, albeit mixed with a much sterner warning than that given by the poet—a natural result of the increased destruction that has occurred since the Pope's fellow Jesuit wrote of nature. If Hopkins, in the mid-nineteenth century, already lamented ecological destruction, what might he have said today? Pope Francis strongly encourages us to have a renewed appreciation of the natural world: 'An integral ecology includes taking time to recover a serene harmony with creation, reflecting on our lifestyle and our ideals, and contemplating the Creator who lives among us and surrounds us' (n. 226). Francis encourages believers to act in accordance with what they profess: 'Believers themselves must constantly feel challenged to live in a way consonant with their faith and not to contradict it by their actions' (n. 200). Quoting Pope John Paul II, he says, 'When we contemplate with wonder the universe in all its grandeur and beauty, we must praise the whole Trinity' (n. 238).[8] The 'grandeur of God', as Hopkins calls it, should today lead to an appreciation that results in action to prevent further damage to creation.

Pope Francis, again like Hopkins, links ecological sin with economic activity. Hopkins alludes to 'trade' and 'toil' leading to destruction and

[7] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'God's Grandeur', in *Poetical Works*, 111.
[8] John Paul II, general audience, 2 August 2000, n. 4.

Gerard Manley Hopkins in 1866

pollution. And Pope Francis spells out the ecological 'debt' that the richer countries owe to those in the developing world. Cautioning against an economics of exclusion, Francis argues that, while the richer countries have, by far, done the greatest environmental damage, it is the poor countries that bear the consequences of that damage. Francis notes 'the pollution produced by companies which operate in less developed countries in ways they could never do at home, in the countries in which they raise their capital' (n.51). He exposes the faulty ethics of business people, in particular, and the rich countries where they enjoy their profits, often through production done elsewhere with no thought for the harm caused: 'Their behaviour shows that for them maximizing profits is enough' (n.109).

The Pope quotes from a statement made by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference, asking what the commandment not to kill means in light of the fact that 'twenty percent of the world's population consumes resources at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive' (n.95).[9] Like Hopkins, Francis challenges

[9] See New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference, *Statement on Environmental Issues* (1 September 2006), available at https://www.catholic.org.nz/about-us/bishops-statements/statement-on-environmental-issues/.

humanity's economic and ecological failings in terms of overall moral corruption:

> We have had enough of immorality and the mockery of ethics, goodness, faith, and honesty …. When the foundations of social life are corroded, what ensues are battles over conflicting interests, new forms of violence and brutality, and obstacles to the growth of a genuine culture of care for the environment. (n.229)

In response, he calls for conversion: 'Many things have to change course, but it is we human beings above all who need to change' (n.202).

However, despite his strong words (and I have quoted only a few selections from them), Francis, like Hopkins, speaks from a place of hope. He is writing his encyclical to all persons of good will, on the assumption that it is not too late to turn things around. In words that echo the last section of 'God's Grandeur', Pope Francis says:

> God … offers us the light and strength to continue on our way. In the heart of this world, the Lord of life, who loves us so much, is always present. He does not abandon us … for he has united himself definitively to our earth, and his love constantly impels us to find new ways forward. *Praise be to him!* (n.245)

Gerard Manley Hopkins, Jesuit priest and poet of nature, would agree.

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WORDS AND SILENCE

On Reading *Revelations of Divine Love* and *The Cloud of Unknowing*

Kirsty Clarke

MAINSTREAM CHRISTIANITY, both ancient and modern, has consistently privileged the *word* over its binary opposite, *silence*.[1] Our constant 'God-talk' (*theo-logy*) has arguably suffocated silence under the weight of its own loquaciousness, thereby relegating it to a secondary status. One way in which this theological tussle has been played out is in the cataphatic and apophatic traditions of Christian spirituality.[2] These can be exemplified by two fourteenth-century mystical texts: Julian of Norwich's *Revelations of Divine Love* or *Showings* and the anonymous *The Cloud of Unknowing*.[3]

Cataphatic theology (the *via positiva*) sees God manifest throughout all creation, above all in the act of the incarnation. As such, it is unafraid to use a profusion of words, images, experiences and sensations to speak of the divine and the likeness between God and the 'stuff' of God's good creation.[4] Thus, for the theologian Denys Turner, cataphaticism can be defined as 'the verbose element in theology':

> It is its cataphatic tendencies which account for the sheer *heaviness* of theological language, its character of being linguistically overburdened .... For in its cataphatic mode, theology is, we might say, a kind of verbal riot, an anarchy of discourse in which anything goes.[5]

[1] To read about this privileging—and the 'minority report' of silence—see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Silence: A Christian History* (London: Penguin, 2013).

[2] For a detailed overview and definition of these two traditions see Andrew Louth, 'Apophatic and Cataphatic Theology', in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism*, edited by Amy Hollywood and Patricia Z. Beckman (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 137–147.

[3] See Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, edited and transated by Edmund Colledge and James Walsh (New York: Paulist, 1978); *The Cloud of Unknowing*, edited by James Walsh (New York: Paulist, 1981). For Julian I prefer the title *Showings* because this is what she herself most often called them, and I focus on the Long Text because I regard this as Julian's more final version.

[4] See Harvey D. Egan, 'Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticisms', *Theological Studies*, 39/3 (1978), 403.

[5] Denys Turner, *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995), 20.

Cataphatic theological language is celebrated for its affirmative statements about God and God's continual revelation in the world (*Deus revelatus*). It expresses a personal relationship with God, centred on sharing the life of Christ (*imitatio Christi*):

> When discussing how they felt or what they saw as they imitated the life of Christ and further contemplated God, mystics used metaphors of *via positiva*, metaphors that linked the divine with material things—nuts, winds, wombs, families.[6]

Directly opposing this mainstream theological mode is apophatic theology (the *via negativa*). Drawing on the foundational texts of the sixth-century figure known as Pseudo-Dionysius, this approach encounters God best in darkness, unknowing and silence. Pseudo-Dionysius wrote in *The Mystical Theology*: 'we shall find ourselves not simply running short of words but actually speechless and unknowing …. it will turn silent completely, since it will finally be at one with him who is indescribable'.[7] Apophatic theology therefore starts with the *ineffability topos*: the fundamental premise that God is wholly transcendent, *beyond* all words and representations.[8] Revelling in paradoxical discourse and ever more elaborate 'word-knots',[9] proponents of the apophatic way argue that the inadequacy of language means our discursive models of God have to be denied, negated and then cast aside and abandoned. By contrast with most of the theological enterprise, apophaticism says we cannot state what God *is*, only what God *is not*. God is unknown and unnameable, hidden (*Deus absconditus*), appearing oxymoronically as an absent presence; a presence so overwhelming that it blinds us with its 'brilliant darkness of a hidden silence'.[10]

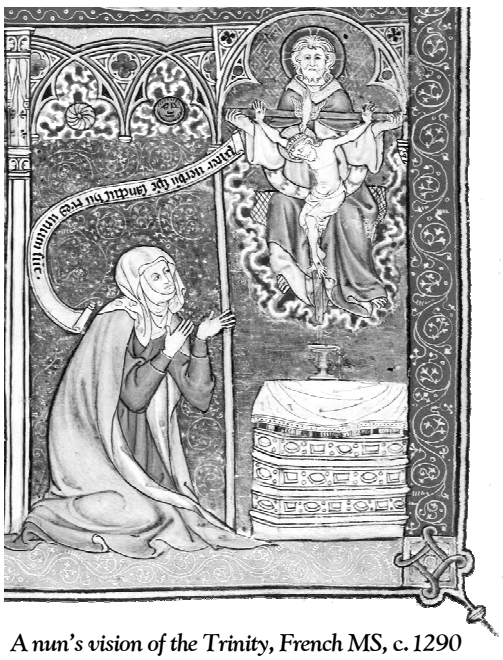
I should like to argue, however, through a reading of Julian's *Showings* and *The Cloud* as exemplary texts, that this cataphatic–apophatic division is far too simplistic. Although these texts epitomize their particular traditions, I shall suggest that such categories have always been porous and thereby open to the possibility of interpenetration. Like other apparent 'binaries', cataphatic and apophatic theologies are not totally distinct, but

[6] Christopher Roman, *Domestic Mysticism in Margery Kempe and Dame Julian of Norwich: The Transformation of Christian Spirituality in the Later Middle Ages* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 2005), 27, and see 26.
[7] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology*, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, translated by Colm Luibheid (New York: Paulist, 1987), 139.
[8] Dorothee Soelle, *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 56.
[9] A phrase taken from Vincent Gillespie and Maggie Ross, '"With Mekeness Aske Perseverantly": On Reading Julian of Norwich', *Mystics Quarterly*, 30/3 (2004), 135.
[10] Pseudo-Dionysius, *Mystical Theology*, 135.

dependent upon and intimately related to each other.[11] Thus, in *Showings* and *The Cloud* the two schools of thought are simultaneously nuanced and destabilised. In a suitably paradoxical vein, I conclude by tentatively proposing that such mystical texts are *neither* cataphatic nor apophatic, but *both*.

The Cataphatic Showings

Julian of Norwich (1342–*c.* 1416), an anchoress of the fourteenth century, has long been a favoured and treasured mystic of the Christian cataphatic tradition; her *Showings* is believed to be the first book written in the vernacular by a woman.[12] Here, she tells us that at a young age she asked for three 'graces' from God: a deeper and more personal understanding of Christ's passion; a severe illness, so she would think she might die; and to receive the 'wounds' of contrition, compassion and the longing to do God's will.[13] These were conventional expressions of the piety of the time, rooting Julian securely in the affective tradition of spirituality, with its emphasis on the 'wounds of love' and erotic and bridal mysticism.[14] In May 1373, at the age of thirty, and believing she was on her deathbed, Julian received the first of sixteen visions. For Julian, these were an affirmation of cataphatic spirituality, in the sense that 'God wishes to be known'.[15] The Short Text of the *Showings* was written soon after



A nun's vision of the Trinity, French MS, c. 1290

[11] See Egan, 'Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticisms', 405.
[12] For an overview of Julian's life and theology see Grace M. Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich: Mystic and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1987) and Janina Ramirez, *Julian of Norwich: A Very Brief History* (London: SPCK, 2016).
[13] See Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 125–127, and Jantzen, *Julian of Norwich*, 53.
[14] Joan Nuth writes, 'Julian's prayer may have been motivated by her knowledge of continental women visionaries, many of whom suffered chronic illness which they integrated into their spirituality as a way of sharing in the suffering of Christ'. See *God's Lovers in an Age of Anxiety* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2001), 101.
[15] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 184, see also 177; Ramirez, *Julian of Norwich*, 37.

her visions, while the Long Text is the result of an extended theological reflection as to their meaning (which she concluded to be 'love').[16]

Proclaiming that her work is for everyone and not just a privileged few (as the majority of apophatic texts such as *The Cloud* are intended to be), Julian's visions delight in sensual and bodily imagery.[17] Unlike the apophatic tradition, her mysticism is consistently Christ-focused (sometimes rather graphically), beginning with her gaze upon the crucifix held in front of her by an unnamed curate in chapter two, leading Janina Ramirez to write:

> The importance of medieval religious imagery in terms of Julian's own experience is stressed from the very opening of the book. Were it not for the bloody crucifix the priest held before her dying eyes, she may not have experienced her revelations. The image was the gateway to unlocking a lifetime of rumination on Christ and his Passion. The sixteen revelations all stem from this one image of the crucifixion.[18]

As the curate shows Julian the crucifix, he tells her to focus her eyes upon it rather than looking up towards heaven.[19] Significantly, it is from this key moment that her cataphatic encounter with the divine begins. Later, in chapter nineteen, Julian imagines being invited to stop looking at Christ on the cross and to look heavenwards—in an apparent apophatic gesture and movement—but she refuses, saying that Christ is all the heaven she needs, in the process confirming her choice and cataphatic intent.[20] As Veronica Rolf states:

> Julian does not want to desert Christ and leave him alone, as the disciples did, by looking away from the harshness of his sufferings, even for a single moment. She desires no heavenly vision that is without Jesus and, paradoxically, to be with Jesus, even in his terrible suffering on earth, becomes heaven for her.[21]

[16] In particular read her moving commentary on the understanding that 'love is our Lord's meaning' in the last chapter. See Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 342.

[17] The author of *The Cloud* writes in the Prologue that, 'as for the worldly chatterboxes, who brazenly flatter or censure themselves or others, the rumour-mongers, the gossips, the tittle-tattlers and the fault-finders of every sort, I would not want them ever to see this book. It was never my intention to write on these matters for them.' (*Cloud of Unknowing*, 102) In contrast, Julian says that her work is for 'all fellow Christians' (Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 191).

[18] Ramirez, *Julian of Norwich*, 44; Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 128.

[19] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 128.

[20] 'No other heaven was pleasing to me than Jesus, who will be my bliss when I am there. And this has always been a comfort to me, that I chose Jesus by his grace to be my heaven in all this time of suffering and of sorrow. And that has taught me that I should always do so, to choose only Jesus to be my heaven, in well-being and in woe.' (Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 212)

[21] Veronica M. Rolf, *Julian's Gospel: Illuminating the Life and Revelations of Julian of Norwich* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2013), 352.

The Apophatic Cloud

The speculative apophatic spiritual tradition arguably began with the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius.[22] Most likely a Syrian monk, his real identity remains unknown. But, 'whoever he was',[23] the *Corpus areopagiticum* (four treatises and ten letters), with its complicated amalgamation of Christianity and Neoplatonism, has been enormously important, casting Pseudo-Dionysius in the role of the 'apostolic father' of apophatic theology.[24] With the translation and transmission of *The Mystical Theology* to the West from the ninth century onwards, an apophatic privileging of the transcendence and ineffability of God began, encapsulated in a 'cloud of unknowing'.[25]

Deriving its title from the closing passages of *The Mystical Theology*, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* wrote in direct descent from the Pseudo-Dionysian heritage, or at least as filtered through Victorine interpretation.[26] The author of *The Cloud* also translated *The Mystical Theology* into Middle English (*Deonise Hid Diuinite*), thus demonstrating how this text was something of a handbook for the medieval mystic and a template for the construction of further apophatic discourses.[27] Like Pseudo-Dionysius, the author's real identity is not known, with pseudonymity and self-effacement seemingly important components of the apophatic spirit.[28] Belden Lane accordingly writes:

> The hiddenness of the self in the apophatic tradition is … nurtured by its impulse to anonymous authorship. The incognito of the spiritual

[22] Believed to have been written by Dionysius the Areopagite, who heard Paul's Athenian speech (Acts 17: 16–34), these were venerated in the East as near-scriptural, at least until the author's 'brilliant choice' of pseudonym began to unravel from the Renaissance onwards. See Paul Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to Their Influence* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), 7.

[23] Martin Luther famously referred to Pseudo-Dionysius as 'Dionysius, whoever he was': *Luther's Primary Works: Together with His Shorter and Larger Catechisms*, edited by Henry Wace, translated by Charles Adolphus Buchheim (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1896), 393.

[24] Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 214.

[25] See Robert Boenig, 'Pseudo-Dionysius and the *via* towards England', in *Mysticism and Spirituality in Medieval England*, edited by William F. Pollard and Robert Boenig (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 1997), 36.

[26] The school of mysticism originating at the abbey of St Victor in Paris in the twelfth century 'set the stage for a full-scale Western appropriation of *The Mystical Theology* and of the entire Dionysian corpus into the mainstream of medieval mysticism': Rorem, *Pseudo-Dionysius*, 218–219, and see 221–222.

[27] Louth, 'Apophatic and Cataphatic Theology', 143–144.

[28] On pseudonymity, see Charles M. Stang, 'Dionysius, Paul and the Significance of the Pseudonym', *Modern Theology*, 24/4 (2008), 541–555, and Charles M. Stang, '"Being Neither Oneself Nor Someone Else": The Apophatic Anthropology of Dionysius the Areopagite', in *Apophatic Bodies: Negative Theology, Incarnation, and Relationality*, edited by Chris Boesel and Catherine Keller (New York: Fordham UP, 2010), 69–72. The current consensus is that the author was a Carthusian recluse from the East Midlands. See *The Pursuit of Wisdom and Other Works, by the Author of* The Cloud of Unknowing, translated by James Walsh (New York: Paulist, 1988), 9.

> teacher is viewed as an appropriate dimension of the nature of the truth that he communicates …. The author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* enters so fully into the process of self-forgetting that his name no longer matters.[29]

The Cloud's premise is that God is known through 'darkness', silence, negation and a 'privation of knowing'.[30] Written as a work of spiritual direction from an elder religious to a novice in the spiritual life, it concerns the soul's apophatic journey to God. The text is framed around the central literary motif of a 'cloud', although there are actually two clouds: one of 'forgetting' and the other of 'unknowing'. The soul is invited to hide with the former all that stands between it and God—'put beneath you a cloud of forgetting, between you and all the creatures that have ever been made'—while the latter is the dark and unfathomable residence of God.[31] As Denise Baker suggests:

> The cloud of forgetting is a metaphor for the apophatic or negative method of contemplation itself. In order to concentrate his attention on the utterly unknown deity, the disciple must obliterate all thoughts from his mind …. The second cloud is a metaphor for the absolute transcendence and incomprehensibility of God.[32]

As the soul moves higher towards God, *The Cloud* stresses the necessity of leaving worldly, active life behind to enter the realm of contemplation. Consciousness, language, intellectual capacity and discursive prayer are increasingly removed so all that remains is an intense longing, a 'naked intent',[33] and an 'impulse of love' for God which is wrapped in darkness and unknowing.[34] As Oliver Davies explains, the 'divine darkness' of the cloud of unknowing paradoxically deepens the soul's longing for God through a 'blind beholding' of the divine in contemplative prayer.[35] To move closer to God in this way, we are encouraged to place the 'cloud of forgetfulness' between ourselves and all creation, even to the point

[29] Belden C. Lane, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality* (Oxford: OUP, 1998), 73.
[30] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 128.
[31] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 128.
[32] Denise N. Baker, 'Julian of Norwich and the Varieties of Middle English Mystical Discourse', in *A Companion to Julian of Norwich*, edited by Liz H. McAvoy (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2008), 58.
[33] This is often lost in translation, but first introduced in chapter 3: *Cloud of Unknowing*, 120.
[34] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 126.
[35] Oliver Davies, *God Within: The Mystical Tradition of Northern Europe* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1988), 169. Davies is using Evelyn Underhill's translation; Walsh gives 'dark gazing' (*Cloud of Unknowing*, 137).

of 'forgetting' ourselves.[36] The soul is then unencumbered and able to embrace an unmediated mysticism by briefly piercing God's 'cloud of unknowing' with one-word prayers,[37] which act as 'a sharp dart of longing love'. The greater the economy of words the better, as 'it bursts upon the ears of almighty God much more than any long psalm mumbled away in an inarticulate fashion'.[38] Eventual union with God is beyond the bounds of the text, but a temporary, apophatically infused foretaste of the permanent 'oneing' is provided with the piercing of the cloud.[39]

The Creation of Light, *by Gustav Doré, 1866*

The final chapters are, for James Walsh, where the author 'takes up the Dionysian torch openly'.[40] Speaking directly of Pseudo-Dionysius, he writes that we must silence the self and the senses if we are to achieve divine union: 'Work hard in this nothing and this nowhere, and desert your outward bodily senses and the objects of their activity … leave your outward senses and do not work with them, neither exteriorly nor interiorly'.[41] *The Cloud* consistently warns against those 'false mystics' who look for physical and sensual experiences of the divine.[42] The author thereby confirms the standard understanding of apophaticism as being opposed to an affective, bodily based and experiential mysticism, writing that mystics of this kind have strange behaviour, 'staring like madmen do' with their eyes 'set in their heads as though they were sheep suffering

[36] 'Try to destroy all understanding and awareness of anything under God and tread everything down under the cloud of forgetting …. So you must destroy all knowledge and feeling of every kind of creature, but most especially of yourself': *Cloud of Unknowing*, 201–202.
[37] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 134. For a detailed examination of the use of one-word prayers in *The Cloud* see J. Kirk, 'The Hideous Noise of Prayer: *The Cloud of Unknowing* on the Syllable-Word', *Exemplaria*, 28/2 (2016), 97–117.
[38] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 131 and 145, 193.
[39] William Johnston, *The Mysticism of* The Cloud of Unknowing (New York: Fordham UP, 1967), 189.
[40] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 94.
[41] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 255.
[42] Nuth, *God's Lovers in an Age of Anxiety*, 71.

from the brain disease', or holding their heads to one side 'as though a worm were in their ears'.[43] Strongly opposed to such 'somatic language', he also condemns excessive speech and the 'blabbing fleshy tongue'.[44] He writes:

> … speech is a bodily activity performed with the tongue, which is an instrument of the body, it is necessary that bodily metaphors be used. But should it on that account be interpreted and understood bodily? No, spiritually.[45]

A Binary under Pressure

Showings and *The Cloud* can both be interpreted in ways that enable them to exemplify the cataphatic and apophatic traditions of spirituality respectively. But to conclude here would do an injustice to the depth and complexity of their respective mysticisms. In reality, both transcend the bounds of the cataphatic–apophatic divide; with *Showings* displaying remarkable apophatic inclinations and *The Cloud* letting slip a certain cataphatic consciousness. Indeed, these texts help to deconstruct the fallacy of a cataphatic–apophatic dialectic, which has hitherto dominated how these traditions are understood. Instead, these two mystical approaches should be placed in a non-polarised, complementary and interdependent relationship with the characteristics of a dynamism rather than a dualism.

A dynamism rather than a dualism

The Showings *as Apophatic*

Although not nearly as often acknowledged, it is important to note that Julian's *Showings* is as apophatic as it is cataphatic, albeit in a less obvious way than *The Cloud*. For example, Julian, like the author of *The Cloud*, is, in fact, anonymous. She discloses precious little about her personal history and circumstances, instead choosing, apophatically, to hide behind the 'persona' of 'Dame Julian'. As an anchoress, she adopted the name of the church to which she was attached, and her personal identity is therefore likely to remain elusive to historian and theologian alike.

Julian is an example of a mystic who speaks 'in a cataphatic way about apophatic truths …. Her visions are unashamedly cataphatic, but they

[43] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 222.
[44] Baker, 'Julian of Norwich and the Varieties of Middle English Mystical Discourse', 58; 'For I dare not take it upon me to speak with my blabbing, fleshy tongue of the work that belongs to God alone…': *Cloud of Unknowing*, 175.
[45] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 241.

are intimately conjoined with apophatic meaning'.[46] It seems as if Julian perpetually exists on the porous threshold between the two, even at her most explicitly cataphatic.[47] Denys Turner therefore rightly warns against being misled into a 'lazy characterisation of her theology as cataphatic' because of the 'riot of dense coloration and shadings' in her language.[48] Such an excess of words does not necessarily mean Julian is being entirely cataphatic in her discourse. Despite having a very different writing style from the author of *The Cloud*, Julian is equally apophatic:

> For all the affirmative richness of her theological vocabulary, hers is a linguistic strategy every bit as apophatic as that of the *Cloud* author …. Julian gets to the same apophatic place as does the *Cloud* author by the opposite literary strategy, precisely by an excess of affirmation that, as it were, collapses under the weight of that very excessiveness.[49]

Precisely because she used so many words in the first place, Julian feels able legitimately to make the apophatic statement that she cannot find the best—or right—words to express something of a God who is wholly ineffable.[50]

Using paradoxes and operating at the threshold are given elements of apophatic texts, and Julian seems comfortable, and even confident, inhabiting this linguistic landscape. She would have been starkly reminded of this in her own life, because as an anchoress she lived on the border between life and death; dead to the world and sealed into her anchorhold after a funeral liturgy, and yet still very much alive. Such a threshold existence is repeatedly demonstrated in her *Showings*, beginning with the view from her apparent deathbed. From here, she became paralysed and all activity (even her speech) temporarily came to an end, leaving her enveloped in the darkness of the room and light of the cross.[51] Roland Maisonneuve writes:

[46] Roger J. Corless, 'Comparing Cataphatic Mystics: Julian of Norwich and T'an-luan', *Mystics Quarterly*, 21/1 (1995), 19.
[47] See Cynthia Masson, 'The Point of Coincidence: Rhetoric and the Apophatic in Julian of Norwich's *Showings*, in *Julian of Norwich: A Book of Essays*, edited by Sandra J. McEntire and Joyce E. Salisbury (New York and London: Garland, 1998), 154.
[48] Denys Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2011), 24.
[49] Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian*, 24–25.
[50] Rolf, *Julian's Gospel*, 350.
[51] Julian writes: 'After this my sight began to fail. It grew as dark around me in the room as if it had been night, except that there was ordinary light trained upon the image of the cross, I did not know how.' (Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 180) And see Ena Jenkins, 'Julian's Revelation of Love: A Web of Metaphor', in *Companion to Julian of Norwich*, 184.

> The proximity of death can burst the limits of perception …. In Julian's case it pulverises her first universe, which was more limited spiritually; she is confronted, as a starting point, with the emptiness of the divine darkness which is light: it is this paradox which the darkness of the room and the light of the crucifix symbolise.[52]

Although not explicitly using the language of a 'cloud of forgetting', Julian tells the reader that two of her requests—for a meditation on the passion and a serious illness—subsequently 'passed from my mind'.[53] Julian's vision of Christ's passion came from her gaze on the crucifix and then formed the basis of all her subsequent revelations. Vincent Gillespie and Maggie Ross show how Julian's tendency to enfold the cataphatic into the apophatic is demonstrated in her passion imagery. Like the threshold between darkness and light at her 'deathbed', Julian's description of Christ's crown of thorns is both cataphatic and apophatic, 'its apophatic centre surrounded by the signs of human suffering'.[54] The unknown, ineffable and indescribable God forms the greater part of her description—the apophatic centre—but framed by her cataphatic calling to God. Gillespie and Ross describe such imagery as 'liminal', existing at the same time on both sides of the cataphatic–apophatic threshold.[55]

Likewise, Julian takes 'homely' images found in creation (a consistently cataphatic trait) but transforms them into 'gateways into the apophatic'.[56] This is most famously seen in her reflection on holding a mysterious object 'no bigger than a hazelnut' in the palm of her hand.[57] Thus, for Gillespie and Ross,

> Our visual perspective is … looking at all that is made, as if from the perspective of the creator. Simultaneously we are being offered an image which does not exist. What Julian sees is not a hazelnut, but an unspecified thing, about the size of a hazelnut if it were in the palm of her hand (which it is not), and as round as a ball …. Julian again balances her description on the brink of the apophatic.[58]

[52] Cited in Ritamary Bradley, 'Julian on Prayer', in *Julian: Woman of our Day*, edited by Robert Llewelyn (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985), 62.
[53] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 179 and Masson, 'Point of Coincidence', 240.
[54] Vincent Gillespie and Maggie Ross, 'The Apophatic Image: The Poetics of Effacement in Julian of Norwich', in *The Medieval Mystical Tradition in England: Exeter Symposium. Papers Read at the Devon Centre Dartington Hall, July 1992*, edited by Marion Glasscoe (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1992), 59.
[55] Gillespie and Ross, 'Apophatic Image', 62.
[56] Gillespie and Ross, 'Apophatic Image', 65.
[57] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 183–184.
[58] Gillespie and Ross, 'Apophatic Image', 67.

Foundational to the apophatic project is the act of self-emptying (*kenosis*) or self-annihilation in order to achieve union with God. This vocabulary is everywhere in *The Cloud*, but it is also markedly present in Julian's *Showings*.[59] For example, Julian frequently writes about a mutual enclosing, enfolding and indwelling between herself and the Trinity, commenting in apophatic language reminiscent of Meister Eckhart that God is 'the ground of [her] beseeching'.[60] The divine is already within her as much as she is straining towards the apophatic God. Julian has therefore reached the stage where she can leave images behind and enter into contemplative prayer; a prayer without words, striving in yearning and desire for God in much the same way described by *The Cloud*. She writes:

> I saw and felt that his wonderful and total goodness fulfils all our powers … that his continual working in every kind of thing is done so divinely, so wisely and so powerfully that it surpasses all our imagining and everything that we can understand or think. And then we can do no more than contemplate him and rejoice ….[61]

The Cloud *as Cataphatic*

Although the scholarly consensus is that *The Cloud* is the direct heir of Dionysian apophaticism, it also bears significant cataphatic traces. Harvey Egan argues that its author uses 'sweet meditations' on the passion of Christ and the divine attributes as a means towards his apophatic ascent, albeit confined to the earlier stages:

> Despite the apophatic emphasis of the *Cloud*, its kataphatic basis and moments stand out in bold relief. Although the contemplative must forget everything, especially during the time of individual prayer, he remains solidly anchored in the devotional and liturgical life of his monastery.[62]

The author is largely apophatic in intent, yet his emphasis on love has undertones absent from more 'orthodox' readings of apophaticism such as the speculative mysticism of Pseudo-Dionysius.[63]

[59] This shows that Julian is willing to die to the world—to undertake an act of self-annihilation—just as Christ did. See Gillespie and Ross, 'Apophatic Image', 63.
[60] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 248–250.
[61] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 253–255.
[62] Egan, 'Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticisms', 409; see also 405.
[63] This is discussed in many places, but see for example Cheryl Taylor, 'The *Cloud*-Author's Remaking of the Pseudo-Dionysius' *Mystical Theology*', *Medium Aevum*, 75/2 (2006), 202–218.

Quite possibly unconsciously, the author of *The Cloud* both moved beyond and 'softened' Dionysian theology with his commentary on the soul's love and desire for God.[64] This drew on the affective tradition (*affectus*) of Bernard of Clairvaux, with which he would have been familiar, combined with the intellectual language (*intellectus*) of his apophatic heritage. The result is to carry the reader 'a fair distance from the "image-less" ideal of Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism'.[65] William Johnston is therefore able famously to describe the author of *The Cloud* as engaging in a *via amoris* (way of love) as well as a *via negativa*, thus transforming 'the structures of the apophatic journey': 'the author of *The Cloud* depicts the *via amoris* as a higher negation that exceeds the intellective negation itself.'[66] God 'can certainly be loved, but not thought'.[67] Indeed, as Turner has suggested, desire is central to *The Cloud*: 'The *Cloud* Author's is a spirituality in which desire figures not merely as an important emphasis but pretty much as the whole thing—at least as the *unum necessarium*'.[68]

The soul as the bride of Christ, from the* Rothschild Canticles*, early fourteenth century

Throughout *The Cloud*, its author denigrates physical, 'fleshy' imagery and an affective, Christ-centred model of mysticism, but he is also drawn, for whatever reason and almost against himself, into these more openly cataphatic and sensual forms of expression. This is most notable in the 'sharp dart of longing love' used to pierce the 'cloud of unknowing'. This imagery

[64] Taylor, 'Cloud-Author's Remaking', 205.
[65] Wolfgang Riehle, *The Secret Within: Hermits, Recluses, and Spiritual Outsiders in Medieval England*, translated by Charity Scott-Stokes (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2014), 161–162.
[66] Johnston, *Mysticism of* The Cloud of Unknowing, 50; Beverley J. Lanzetta, *The Other Side of Nothingness: Toward a Theology of Radical Openness* (Albany: State U. of New York P, 2001), 68.
[67] *Cloud of Unknowing*, 130.
[68] Turner, *Darkness of God*, 195.

has erotic undertones and, for Baker, the repeated use of a single word such as 'Love' or 'God' 'indicate[s] the pulsation of desire'.[69] Likewise, its cataphaticism 'climaxes' in its strongly Christocentric dimension, itself an unusual addition for an explicitly apophatic text.[70]

The Cataphatic 'Chatter' of the Mystics

It is profoundly ironic to write about the ineffable, and to do so strikes at the heart of the *ineffability topos* itself: for if we declare something to be ineffable then it cannot be perfectly so precisely *because* we have declared it.[71] And an obvious paradox of apophaticism is that it can only be expressed using the very apparatus it seeks to transcend: language. Mystics of the *via negativa*, such as the author of *The Cloud*, seem to talk relentlessly: something of a cataphatic trait. The task of the apophatic mystic is to expound silence, ineffability and unknowing. In communicating about the divine, the more they speak the more they feel compelled to undo their words, in a process that potentially continues *ad infinitum*.[72]

Despite this threat of linguistic breakdown, apophaticism always relies on a 'first word' in order to begin the process of negation; for, as Mark Burrows states, we can only unsay what has already been declared.[73] Consequently, it is vital to understand that apophatic theology is not about being reduced to permanent muteness. Rather, the closer we come to the divine, the more we realise the faltering nature of our words, and yet that we *must still speak*.[74] This is the unresolvable dilemma of all theology.

Frustrated by the 'dust of words' and the limitations of language, mystics of the negative way constantly searched for better translations of the indescribable.[75] And so even apophatic mysticism is a literary discourse, a genre of writing about God. As Beverly Lanzetta affirms:

> Although mystical experiences are consistently reported to be ineffable, indescribable, and the like, the mystical texts that have survived are the products of an unbounded generosity of speech and form a

[69] Baker, 'Julian of Norwich and the Varieties of Middle English Mystical Discourse', 59.
[70] Egan, 'Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticisms', 411 and 413.
[71] Cited in T. A. Carlson, 'The Poverty and Poetry of Indiscretion: Negative Theology and Negative Anthropology in Contemporary and Historical Perspective', *Christianity and Literature*, 47/2 (1998), 170.
[72] See Soelle, *Silent Cry*, 57, and Chris Boesel and Catherine Keller, 'Introduction', in *Apophatic Bodies*, 1.
[73] Mark S. Burrows, 'Words that Reach into the Silence: Mystical Languages of Unsaying', in *Minding the Spirit: The Study of Christian Spirituality*, edited by Elizabeth A. Dreyer and Mark S. Burrows (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2005), 211.
[74] Mark A. McIntosh, *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 124.
[75] Soelle, *Silent Cry*, 55.

> distinguished literary genre marked by linguistic sophistication and poetic brilliance.[76]

However unequivocally apophatic it may seem, mystical writing is actually always grounded in—and expressed through—the cataphatic mode simply by virtue of being written. As Charles Stang has observed, 'mystics write precisely to be defined as "mystics" in the first place'.[77] On the basis of this, Don Cupitt argues that mysticism is a 'kind of writing':

> If we look at any canonical list of mystics, what one notices straightaway is that these people are *writers*, wordsmiths … people highly conscious of language, people who convey their message, not by pointing to something outside language, but by the way they play games *with* language.[78]

Furthermore, mystical texts contain within them the potential to recreate mystical experience in their readers. Such literature is parallel to scripture in the way that it continually unfurls meaning,[79]

> The mystics' words not only point beyond themselves into the silent, imageless love, but they help others to participate in this experience. Someone must incarnate, express, talk about, explain, and evoke what this way is all about.[80]

This notion of *participation* in mystical texts is especially crucial to understanding *Showings*. Here, the ineffable 'comes alive' for both the writer and the reader. Neither writing nor reading is a passive activity, but should instead be treated as being 'performative' to the extent that it is always open-ended and receptive to new interpretations. Julian knew this, announcing at the opening of her final chapter that her 'book is begun by God's gift and his grace, but *it is not yet performed*'.[81] So, as Gillespie and Ross rightly acknowledge, we, her readers, are left with the task of 'performing' her words anew.[82]

[76] Lanzetta, *Other Side of Nothingness*, 16.
[77] Stang, 'Writing', 253.
[78] Don Cupitt, *Mysticism after Modernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 57–67, here 61.
[79] McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*, 130.
[80] Egan, 'Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticisms', 411.
[81] Julian of Norwich, *Showings*, 342 (my italics). This supports Joanna Ziegler's view of the medieval Christian mystics 'as artists who *performed* their mysticism': Joanna E. Ziegler, 'Introduction', in *Performance and Translation: New Approaches to Late Medieval Spirituality*, edited by Mary A. Suydam and Joanna E. Ziegler (New York: St Martin's, 1999), xiii.
[82] Gillespie and Ross, '"With Mekeness aske Perseverantly"', 139. See also Anna Lewis, 'Directing Reader Response: Julian's Revelation as Guided Meditation', *Mystics Quarterly*, 35/1 (2009), 1–27, and Burrows, 'Words that Reach into the Silence', 213.

Never fully separate from cataphaticism, some forms of apophatic discourse consciously choose to engage with its principal characteristics, ceaselessly describing the indescribable. So, before the collapse into silence and unknowing, the inadequacy of language is first enacted by a superfluity of words, each jostling for meaning and position, as vividly described by Mark McIntosh:

> Apophatic speech might take the form of a quieting down, a stilling into hushed silence. But it might also take the form of an explosion of speech, a carnival of self-subverting discourse, language tripping over itself in paradox or fantastical repetition as it comes undone in the whirlwind of divine superabundance.[83]

The distinction between the apophatic and cataphatic is therefore not a simple dialectic; in reality there are significant areas of overlap. Indeed, mysticism is concurrently apophatic *and* cataphatic, with each containing 'moments' of the other.[84] As Ross states:

> The two modes, kataphatic and apophatic, are dependent one on the other, as human eyes are dependent one on the other, and are mutually enriching. Refusal to engage apophaticism is comparable to gouging out an eye.[85]

A Qualified Apophaticism

Showings and *The Cloud* are simultaneously apophatic *and* cataphatic in their textual expression. Espousing a performative reading of mysticism, Michael Sells proposes an understanding of apophatic language as that which is deliberately destabilised, meaning that mysticism is, by necessity, a discourse which is 'performed' and enacted, rather than merely stated:

> In those writings, the effort to affirm transcendence leads to a continuing series of retractions, a propositionally unstable and dynamic discourse in which no single statement can rest on its own as true or false, or even as meaningful.[86]

[83] McIntosh, *Mystical Theology*, 124.
[84] Egan, 'Christian Apophatic and Kataphatic Mysticisms', 405 and 425. This interdependence can even be seen in arguably the most 'apophatic' of all mystics, Pseudo-Dionysius himself. See Andrew Louth, *Denys the Areopagite* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), and Paul Rorem, 'The Uplifting Spirituality of Pseudo-Dionysius' in *Christian Spirituality*, volume 1, *Origins to the Twelfth Century* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 132–152.
[85] Maggie Ross, *Silence: A User's Guide*, volume 1, *Process* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2014), 70.
[86] Michael A. Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying* (Chicago: U. of Chicago P, 2016), 3.

Unlike theologians such as Paul Rorem and Denys Turner, both of whom regard the apophatic silence at the end of mystical texts as permanent, Sells instead contends that it can only ever be *temporary*: a momentary stage in our ongoing God-talk. So, language is ultimately unable to come to rest in an enduring silence, where the hubbub of affirmation and negation gives way to wordlessness.[87]

This non-permanent silence means that apophaticism can only ever be a *form of speech*, which Sells terms a 'language of unsaying'.[88] Silence is no more than a pause, an intake of breath and a taking stock rather than a last gasp. We are therefore presented with a continual movement between silence and speech, affirmation and negation, and a language incapable of ever concluding,

> Any saying (even a negative saying) demands a correcting proposition, an unsaying. But that correcting position which unsays the previous proposition is in itself a 'saying' that must be 'unsaid' in turn. It is in the tension between the two propositions that the discourse becomes meaningful..[89]

This has profound implications for the theological enterprise, because it becomes ever more imperative that theology is kept alive and open in this gap, the pregnant pause between knowing and not knowing. In having the courage to resist false conclusions and the comfortable tying up of loose ends, the theologian provides a space for the emergence of revelatory truths and a deeper vision and understanding of the nature of God. Julian of Norwich was instinctively aware of this dynamic, as is shown by her concluding remark that her book 'is not yet performed'. Turner writes:

> Julian systematically refuses to finish, because she intends theological incompleteness …. There is no more intelligibility to the notion of a fixed boundary at the end of the theological than there is to there being one at the edge of space …. Indeed, its character as theology consists in its precious positioning on the cusp formed by theological knowing and mystical unknowing, and so it is in its entirety mystical theology.[90]

[87] See Rorem, 'Uplifting Spirituality of Pseudo-Dionysius', 142–143, and Turner, *Darkness of God*, 22. For an overview of Michael Sells's position vis-à-vis other scholarship see Louise Nelstrop, Kevin Magill and Bradley Onishi, *Christian Mysticism: An Introduction to Contemporary Theoretical Approaches* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 15.
[88] Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 1–14.
[89] Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 3.
[90] Turner, *Julian of Norwich, Theologian*, xii.

A reading of *Showings* and *The Cloud* has demonstrated that mystical texts are, by their very nature, appropriately paradoxical: *both* apophatic and cataphatic, and also *neither*, as they move us on to recognise and engage with the suspended and fleeting moments between the two categorisations. Louise Nelstrop writes that we need to transcend and move *beyond* apophatic and cataphatic. In going beyond this dialectic we can richly enter into the 'brief pockets of silence', for this is where authentic theology is done.[91] It is in this Sabbath-pause that new and transformative ways of speaking become possible.

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[91] Nelstrop, 'Julian of Norwich's Logophatic Discourse', 211.

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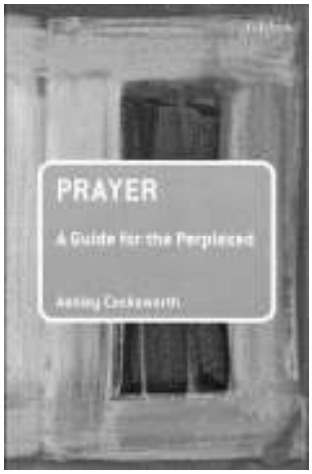
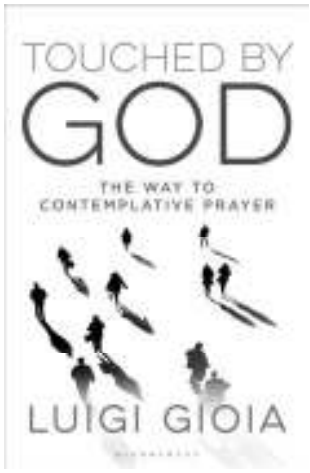
Ashley Cocksworth, *Prayer: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: T. and T. Clark, 2018). 978 0 5671 9872 3, pp. 226, £19.99.

Luigi Gioia, *Touched by God: The Way to Contemplative Prayer* (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018). 978 1 4729 5100 7, pp. 224, £10.99.





Ashley Cocksworth hopes that his *Prayer: A Guide for the Perplexed* will help us pray. It will. But the provision of advice about how to pray is not his first concern. Cockworth's intention is not to add to the multitude of prayer manuals already available to us but, digging far more deeply, to explore what, at root, prayer is. That task is theological. Prayer and theology, Cocksworth argues, are not two separate pursuits, even though religious booksellers will invariably display publications in the two fields on separate shelves. They are essentially one. Cocksworth does not pepper his text with texts. Had he done so, he might have summarised the thesis of this fine study with familiar words—'What God has joined together let no one put asunder' (Matthew 19: 6).

We begin in chapter 1 with the fourth-century desert father Evagrius Ponticus and his well-known saying—'If you are a theologian, you will pray truly, and if you pray truly, you will be a theologian' (*On Prayer*, 61; quoted p. 15). Here Evagrius is voicing what was once axiomatic: the principle that prayer and theology are realms as 'kneeling work' (p. 31). Only those who have talked *with* God can talk *about* God.

In chapter 2 Cocksworth charts the process by which prayer and theology went their separate ways. He then highlights the attempts being made in our own time to restore their original union. For much of Christianity's earlier history, theology was done in monasteries, by monks whose studies were steeped in prayer. With the Middle Ages and the rise of the universities came the uncoupling of prayer and theology, a divorce which today is almost total. But there are those who are

seeking to return theology to its original anchorage in the practice of prayer. Among them are Sarah Coakley, Rowan Williams and Nicholas Nash.

Cocksworth's third chapter is a study of the relation of the doctrine of the Trinity and the practice of prayer. We are invited to examine two scenarios. The first is the fourth-century debate between Athanasius and Arius. The second, leaping across a millennium and a half, is the role of prayer in the contemporary remaking of Christian doctrine, for—rest assured!—we live at a time when 'the Holy Spirit is alive and kicking' (p. 94). The conclusion of this closely argued chapter is that 'prayer is about nothing less than participation, by the grace of God, in the prayer of the Trinity' (p. 110).

In the fourth chapter we explore the Christology of prayer. We survey the prayer life of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. We are invited to see the prayer of Jesus in John 17 as an 'improvising' on the Lord's Prayer and on Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. More boldly, Cocksworth proposes that Jesus, who prays for us and who prays on our behalf, is 'prayer itself' (p. 137).

Does God answer prayer? In his fifth chapter Cocksworth comes at last to the agonizing question that will prompt many to reach for his book. Here we must grasp the nettle of divine providence. For light on this most intractable of theological conundrums Cocksworth consults Thomas Aquinas, Karl Barth and the contemporary US theologian Kathryn Tanner. Aquinas's theory of causation and desire will leave some of us, bears of lesser brain, wondering whether we have been made victims of 'a doctrinal sleight of hand' (p. 154). We are rather more encouraged by Cocksworth's conclusion that the God of Karl Barth—'unchangeable, utterly immutable' (p. 169)—is yet moved by our prayers. Heartening, too, is Tanner's claim that divine providence and human freedom are not in competition. If so, a door opens to admit the possibility of petitionary prayer. So *does* God answer prayer? Ashley Cocksworth believes so, but that is not, fundamentally, what I need to know. My need is not for 'answers', however harrowing the cry of the child from beneath the rubble, say, may be. My need is to take to heart that I am 'known and loved by God' (p. 172).

Cocksworth's sixth and final chapter is an investigation into the relationship of prayer and ethics. Much is touched on in these closing pages. We are introduced to 'ecclesial ethics', an approach to the moral life which grounds the ethical in the liturgical and, specifically, in the Lord's Prayer. To say this prayer is to turn towards others, a necessarily *political* orientation. The fundamental integrity of the prayerful and the political has been well understood by the Latin American liberation theologians. Cocksworth calls attention in particular to the prophetic witness of Jon Sobrino, Gustavo Gutiérrez and Leonardo Boff.

Finally, what should we do about our bodies? Cocksworth began by suggesting that theology should be done kneeling, but he ends by urging that prayer should be done *standing*. If you are standing you are poised 'to walk—and

dance!—in solidarity with others' (p. 200). This is a thrilling note on which to close a remarkable book. But it must be emphasized that this is not an elementary primer on prayer. A measure of theological literacy is demanded of the reader. Cocksworth expects you to know what words such as 'pneumatologically' and 'hypostatization' mean. And this, surely, is not 'a little book', even though a commendation on the back cover says it is. Little books do not have the forests of footnotes and colossal annotated bibliography that this book does. We salute this publication, not because it boasts such accoutrements but because it fully exemplifies what a theologian should be doing.

The scholar and spiritual writer Luigi Gioia tells us that since he was a teenager he has been puzzled by the saying of St Paul, 'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thessalonians 5:17). His *Touched by God* is a study, both deeply felt and challenging, of how the Pauline command might be obeyed, so that prayer ceases to be merely an intermittent interruption of a life doing other things and comes to permeate our very being.

Gioia's book has three parts. (It is also two-toned—more of which in a moment.) In the first part, entitled 'Feelings', Gioia challenges the usual assumption that feelings are never to be trusted. On the contrary, he tells us, 'contemplative prayer begins when we start feeling something in our reading of scripture and in prayer' (p. 17). We need what Gioia calls 'intelligent emotion' fully to savour the sense of scripture. Gioia draws repeatedly on the Psalms to flesh out this understanding of contemplative prayer, a way of praying born of the harmony of heart and mind.

The second section of Gioia's study, simply entitled 'John', consists of extended reflections on the biblical writings attributed to 'the beloved disciple'. For Gioia, John is 'the New Testament's main model for contemplation' (p. 67). We are invited to pursue the intriguing, if whimsical, line of thought that the narratives embedded in John's Gospel are akin to bedtime stories. Gioia has noticed something about the biblical accounts of the way God engages with people that has escaped more furrow-browed scholars, the *playfulness* of the divine encounter with humankind. That game of hide-and-seek, begun in the Garden of Eden, continues across the playing fields of scripture, nowhere more notably than in the fourth Gospel.

So far our path has been one of peaceful reflection. Now, with Gioia's third section ('Quietism'), we are—if not quite run down by a train—at least rocked on our heels., 'Quietism', for Gioia, is the pursuit of inner calmness by self-centred withdrawal from the world. Gioia's horror at such a grotesque parody of contemplative prayer accounts for the abrupt change of tone at this point. The overture to his discussion of quietism is a chapter entitled 'Sue the bastard!' (Note that 'Sue' here is not the name of a Susan yet to be introduced to us, but the imperative of the verb 'to sue'.) 'Sue the bastard!' This startling

rubric is lifted from the American playwright Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*. Gioia's turns to this extraordinarily powerful play to support his plea that 'we do not let God get away with his unbearable absence' (p. 153). Gioia takes his stand with the brave company of those who, from Job to Dostoevsky, have dared to arraign the Almighty. Paradoxically this absent God is present in Jesus. Authentic contemplation requires our immersing ourselves in the history he made his own—beginning with the next thing to be done.

Ashley Cocksworth and Luigi Gioia, writing from their quite different perspectives, come to the same conclusion—that prayer is a call to arms.

John Pridmore

Carlos Domínguez-Morano, *Belief after Freud: Religious Faith through the Crucible of Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 2018). 978 1 7822 0643 9, pp. 278, £28.99.

Published in Spanish in 1998, this controversial study by a Jesuit psychologist made a great impact, both in Spain and in South America. Now, after twenty years, it appears in a competent English translation, and is likely to be a great help to many *Way* readers.

The title's mention of Freud may arouse some suspicion: is he not *dépassé* in the twenty-first century? But Domínguez makes it clear from the start that he regards his master with a critical eye: 'what Freud has written about psychoanalysis regarding religion does not matter as much as what he has written on psychoanalysis, full stop' (p. 71). He is convinced that Freud's intuitions with regard to the unconscious and its influence have opened new paths to self-knowledge: 'Psychoanalysis … does not possess our inner truths. It offers the opportunity for us to open ourselves to a dimension of that truth.' (p. 76)

The first part of the book deals with the Freudian interpretation of religion: Domínguez points out how, for example, so many of us, mature in certain areas of competence, are woefully lacking in religious knowledge:

> Qualified professionals, social leaders, and intellectually cultivated persons can surprise us at any moment with very infantile, dependent, magical, or illusory approaches [to religion] in contrast to what mature, engaged, critical, and open-minded capacities they show in other areas of their lives …. (p. 107)
>
> Only from the death of illusion can religious hope, not just childish escapism, be born (p. 17).

> Freudian analysis of religion has shown that it is precisely within the feelings of infantile omnipotence where we can identify, at a psychological level, the ultimate and most decisive engine of religious motivation (p. 113).

In his second part, Domínguez outlines the response of faith, and the positive lessons to be learnt with the help of Freudian teaching. Such a response will require initially the abandonment of many illusions and dreams; the believer must 'leave home and father and mother' and start a dialogue in faith with the God of the gospel. In a real sense, the believer leaves the God of the child and turns instead to the God of Jesus: 'If the maternal is the prime mover in the desire for God, the paternal is what gives it an image and a configuration' (p. 102). A purely mystical faith can have its dangers:

> … the nostalgia for a heavenly Jerusalem on earth can bring oblivion or denial of life's troublesome dimension. Polarisation to appease a desire can make us forget a fundamental fact of faith: the prophetic inspiration of a God who calls us to build a different world. In that case, mysticism has lost its Christian link. (p. 105)

This last remark is based on the work of the great Flemish psychologist Antoine Vergote, who taught in Leuven. He was one of several Roman Catholic priests who were the first in the last century to see the importance of Freud's work; the Dominican Jacques Pohier and the Jesuit Louis Beirnaert figure largely in Dominguez's work, as do the later interpreters of Freud, such as Lacan and Anna Freud. They enable him to tackle the themes of guilt and salvation (chapter 7) and to affirm: 'what primarily matters in Christian faith is not to be a saint, but to follow Jesus' (p. 141). Again: 'Freed from the labyrinths of guilt, it becomes possible to adhere to the Kingdom beyond the desperate attempt for personal salvation. For salvation, being true to one's own conscience is enough (Matthew 25: 31–46).' (p. 143)

The final part deals with 'sex, power, and money' and, as the author points out:

> Psychoanalysis has certainly caused a revolution in the understanding of sexuality. Against a 'biologistic' definition that narrowly equates sexuality to genitality and procreation, psychoanalysis has looked into a whole ensemble of pleasure-producing phantasies and activities present since childhood that are not limited to the fulfilment of a physiological need. (p. 148)

Much of this part of the book is devoted to the three religious vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. Thus, from his discussion of *poverty* Domínguez can conclude, 'Poverty today is inseparable from an essential engagement in the fight against injustice and in the creation of a relevant symbol against the consumerism of our Western societies' (p. 223). But perhaps most illuminating is what he has to say about *obedience*:

> It is evident that the religious vow of obedience cannot be an exception to that fundamental call of the Christian message to encourage maturity, adult freedom,

> and what we could call, with psychoanalytical references, the necessary overcoming of the father (p. 203).

Hence, St Ignatius 'always had an extremely clear view of the need for discernment as expression of the subject's own autonomy and responsibility' (p. 204).

The aim of this review has been to give readers a glimpse of the treasures offered by Domínguez: in his closing remarks he insists, 'The unconscious, in spite of the fascination it is able to conjure, cannot be elevated to the altars' (p. 223). But knowledge of its workings, as described so eloquently in this book, does, it seems to me, help to open up the spirit to 'the way of the Lord'.

Joseph A. Munitiz SJ

Gerhard Lohfink, *Is This All There Is? On Resurrection and Eternal Life*, translated by Linda M. Maloney (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2018). 978 0 8146 8451 1, pp. 314, $34.95.

Here is another outstanding book from Gerhard Lohfink, who can always be relied upon to come up with something fresh and up to date, and written in the language of the women and men of our time. The question he presents is this one, at the heart of all human longing: 'In the end, is there just nothing? … In the end there remains only a genuine either-or: either resurrection or inexorable nothingness.' (p. ix) The structure is a simple one, with five parts entitled respectively 'What People Think', 'What Israel Learned', 'What Entered the World in Jesus', 'What Will Happen to Us' (this is the longest part of them all) and 'What We Can Do', each divided into several short and manageable chapters; although here it must be said that the reader should not be deceived into supposing that their brevity might be an excuse for rapid reading, for each of them offers much to reflect upon.

From prehistoric and classical times, from Hindu and Buddhist thinking, from the seductiveness of Schopenhauerian nature-mysticism, we can learn of human attempts to deal with the certainty of death, and recognise that 'If there is no God, if there is no encounter with the one towards whom we have always been moving, if there is no "face-to-face", then we die into an icy faceless nothingness' (p. 47). Nor is our longing for extinction (here presented with some chilling accounts of deliberate suicide) a sufficient answer; for what, then, of the history of the world?

In the second part, there is the beginning of the sketch of an answer; for this is something that we can only know 'through God's own self and out of a listening faith' (p. 61). As is well enough known, Israel does not until quite late in its history come to any sort of faith in a life beyond the grave (that sort of thing was for 'other nations'); Israel had to find the God who was the God of this life, one who was not compatible with the Egyptian fascination with death or the Canaanite cult of the ancestors. Slowly, however, the conviction about God's ability to deal with death began to emerge, through Daniel, Ezekiel and the Psalms (not to mention the later works of the Greek Old Testament, such as 2 Maccabees and Wisdom). So then we encounter the growing certainty that God's fidelity must go beyond the grave and deliver the people even from death. At the same time, however, Israel is called to believe in this present world, and therefore to take death seriously.

In the next part, Lohfink explores the radical difference that Jesus makes, with his powerful acts which transform the world, and yet coexist with a radical powerlessness, which 'was rooted in freedom' (p. 111) and in absolute non-violence, so that he even allowed himself to suffer death to the full, with the result that at first sight he appeared to be yet another Messianic failure. His followers took his death seriously and clearly did not expect the resurrection, but found themselves driven by their experience to affirm the basic Easter proclamation that 'God has raised Jesus from the dead' (rather than snatching him up to heaven), so that they learnt quite naturally to speak of a 'new creation', which takes place in the midst of history.

What then (this is now part 4) will happen to us? Helpfully Lohfink reminds us, with unshaken theological logic, that '… every statement about the Resurrection of the dead, just like any statement about God, is "speaking in parables" … in whatever we may say about God and ultimate life with God, what we say is more different from the reality than similar to it' (p. 131). Death, says Lohfink, is the overwhelming and undeniable experience of the presence of God, as judgment, where not only evil but good will be revealed, in the mercy of God, whose radical holiness will gently purify our unholiness, painfully burning away our egoism. Then, of course, you have to ask about Hell, on which we can summarise his pastoral approach, as, 'It is not God who punishes. People punish themselves.' (p. 166)

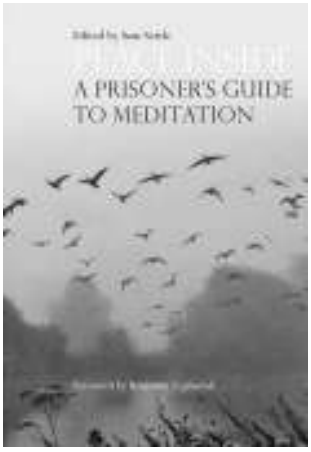
This is a particularly helpful chapter, as is that on 'The Whole History of the World', which explains that resurrection is not an exclusively individual matter, but happens along with all our relationships throughout history, and through the whole of creation. All the chapters in part 4 will repay close attention, especially that on the 'Relativity of Time', showing how modern physics has destroyed our idea of the absolute nature of time (which in any case only came about, he argues, with the invention of clocks, and

especially pocket watches). The alert reader will be aware that we are on the very edge of language here.

The final two chapters in this part, 'On the Endurance of the Soul' and 'On Participation', continue the journey into mystery, and explain how 'we can only use images to speak of what happens in death' (p. 220). Then there are three final chapters in part 5, on 'Genuine Care for Our Death'; on 'Christian Dying'; and, particularly, on 'When Does Eternity Begin' and the importance of present eschatology, with an admirably careful reading of John 5: 24–25, 'What is not lived here will not exist there' (p. 254), and a delightful section on the importance of the unself-regarding miracle of adoration. So this is a book not to be missed, greatly helped by the quality of the translation, done by Dr Linda Maloney, a former doctoral student of Lohfink's, which virtually never feels like a translation.

Nicholas King SJ

***Peace Inside: A Prisoner's Guide to Meditation*, edited by Sam Settle (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2017). 978 1 7859 2235 0, pp. 272, £12.99.**



I could immediately engage with the theme of this book. Having entered an enclosed Poor Clare convent in 1987 in my twenties, I became more reliant on my twice-daily meditation period than I had been before, seeking therein much of the strength and self-discipline I needed to navigate my strange new world. Meditation became for me an art that helped me to live meaningfully in a confined world and accept the loss of free access to family and social pleasures. Through many difficult struggles, it led to a more peaceful awareness of the self.

I had, of course, chosen this way of life, and my novitiate years were showered with friendship and encouragement. My correspondence with a death-row prisoner in Ohio, beginning in the mid-1990s, deepened my understanding of the experience of those who are confined forcibly. Prisoners live with a constant sense of loss and must deal with the resultant emotions of anger, frustration and regret. To live meaningfully we must grow; we must move forward; we must invest our lives in the present and know that other people want us to live well.

The charity of which Sam Settle is director, the Prison Phoenix Trust, encourages the practice of meditation and offers skilled direction as a way of helping prisoners come to grips with reality. The confrontation with and

acceptance of what is, explored by this book, is seen as essential to living well. It sounds so much easier than it is. The appreciation of reality may involve confronting terrible pain. From whence then does peace come? The book focuses on the need for attention to reality as a life-giving medium, notwithstanding the bitter truths and memories that it may contain. Facing the truth leads to serenity and maturity. One of the many drawings in the book is a cartoon illustrating the craving for results and stimulation that afflicts all those seeking to master the inner life. Acceptance of the loss of immediate stimulation is, of course, part of the exercise. A bored and bewildered prisoner has missed the point of meditating. He moans: 'noffings happen'd 'cept *Coronation Street*'s finished and me fag's gone out!'

As I read this book, I enjoyed watching prisoners who were receiving help from the Trust learning to rejoice in what life brings them. A prisoner takes delight in a small Christmas cake and coffee morning. Another says he is looking forward to Christmas. A man who has been struggling with depression realises that he is starting once again to enjoy music. Learning how to take real joy in the real gifts that life offers is part of the message of the book. A prisoner realises, 'I welcome the day so much better now' (p. 120). And 'My nightmares are gone' (p. 122).

I found the book balanced and lucid. It is full of practical wisdom helping one to focus on the here and now. The letters between prisoners and the Prison Phoenix Trust volunteers offer practical advice on major issues such as anger management, trauma, forgiveness, dealing with feelings of hatred and self-hatred, not experiencing the love of a father, fear of ageing, depression and low self-esteem. While these are very serious issues in any context, they can overwhelm the person living in a confined place. Prisoners live crushingly with their own thoughts and anxieties. Lack of confidence is particularly acute. Many of them have not had the chance to share their inner lives before or to realise they are not alone.

In one correspondence, a prisoner admits that the intense feelings which come up in meditation scare him. His pen-friend reassures him that confronting past hurt 'takes courage'. Again he questions: 'Will all the pain be worth it?' Again she gently reassures him: 'gradually, gradually you will come to discover the benefits' (p. 137). Poignantly, he asks her 'What does [happiness] feel like, Caroline?' With a practical wisdom that characterizes this book, she encourages him to see that already there may be some happiness. 'At the end of each day, think of three things that have happened during the day to say thank you for.' (p.143)

One cannot praise the sensitivity and care of these companions enough. They affirm the acts of self-conquest which are so hard in a prison context. They notice the good things that are happening in their friend's life

and encourage the imprisoned person to recognise and value their growth. They try to facilitate a faith that we should go on living because life is worth living. They offer advice on the nitty-gritty, the hard details. For example, John suggests that Dave make use of his repetitive prison work as a form of meditation. This helps Dave to accept it meaningfully. Through meditation the prisoners become more aware of their creative and spiritual impulses: the longing to understand Jesus, the longing for real freedom through self-discovery. They gain needed insights into themselves.

One of the participants, a woman called Donna, understands how important it is to become self-aware: 'Meditation helps me make sense of my emotions' (p. 208). Some of her questions, raised through this process of meditation and intimate correspondence, acquire great depth. She knows she must find inspiration and compassion to live well. But how, she wants to know, do you cultivate compassion in such a dark world? As she develops, she even wants to learn to have compassion for the people who terrify her: 'the angry, violent types' (p. 216).

I like the way the book expresses such hope in the imprisoned people included in its pages. Here are two inspirational quotations that I love:

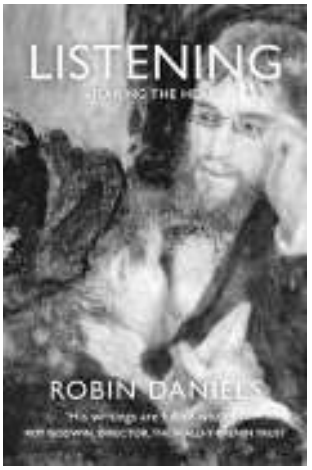
> Change occurs when one becomes what he is. (p.51)

And:

> Be patient towards all that is unsolved in your heart. (p.127)

Ruth Agnes Evans

Robin Daniels, *Listening: Hearing the Heart* (Watford: Instant Apostle, 2017). 978 1 9097 2874 5, pp. 192, £8.99.



In the New Living Translation of Deuteronomy in the Hebrew scriptures, we are told that the first commandment is: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.' (Deuteronomy 6: 4–5) In the past, if asked what the first commandment was, I would have reeled off, 'Love the Lord your God', and probably gone on to the gospel addition 'and love your neighbour as yourself'. However, something precedes the injunction to love in Deuteronomy: the command, 'Listen, O Israel!'. Before we are ever commanded by

God to do any *loving*, of God or indeed anyone or anything else, we are commanded to a *listening*. This intrigued me, and gave my poetic imagination much food for playful musings. What might life be like, what attitudes and assumptions might be at play, if this was the first step, before anything else. What does this say about the value of listening? I think this captures something of a conviction at the core of Robin Daniels's book *Listening: Hearing the Heart*.

Daniels was both a Christian and a psychotherapist and his book walks the line between a manual for psychotherapy and one-to-one pastoral work, and a poetic and personal exploration of the core dispositions and attitudes of heart-listening which, at least for Daniels, seem fundamental not only to the listening professions but also to the spiritual life and society at large. For Daniels, listening is a powerful tool. I might even go so far as to suggest that he sees it as a divine gift with a moral responsibility.

He begins the book with a challenging anecdote from the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Buber was approached by an unknown young man one day. They had a friendly conversation, but Buber failed to hear 'the question not spoken'. He later discovered that this young man had died at the front in the First World War, 'out of that kind of despair that may be partially defined as "no longer opposing one's own death"' (p. 26). It turned out that the question unasked had been about the very meaning of this young man's existence, and for Buber this became a moment of conversion where he realised the import just such an unexpected encounter could have, and how listening for what is unsaid, hearing the heart, might be powerful enough to save a life.

The book explores various facets of what this complex art of heart-listening entails, drawing from Daniels's own wealth of experience as a psychotherapist. Some of what it explores is to be expected: the value of silence (which 'has an almost infinite variety of shades of tone and feeling', p. 106) and the qualities and attitudes of a good listener; and it also goes into more psychotherapeutic detail in regard to the attributes of a good therapist, and the metaphor of journey within the therapeutic relationship. Throughout all of this runs the thread of Daniels's love for music (the chapters are full of musical analogies), and his Christian faith. Yet this book seems to have greater aspirations for heart-listening than simply within one-to-one formal settings, and Daniels occasionally makes forays into society's deep need for such listening, especially when there is so little space and time for inner reflection and depth work.

A running theme throughout the book is that listening is an adventure which empowers the person to whom we are listening for self-discovery: 'it was said of Socrates that he helped his interlocutors each give birth to their own thought' (p. 53). Daniels seems deeply convinced that, 'much of what people need and seek, they already have in them' (p. 56), and 'the role and aim of creative listening is to empower the speaker to unfold, to believe in

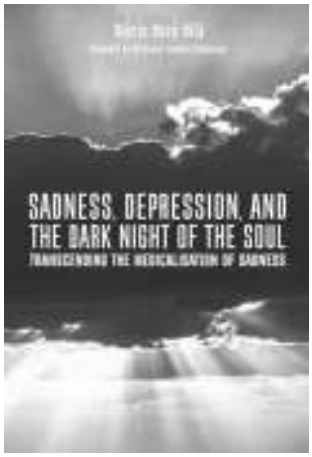
and to make full use of his own wisdom' (p. 50). This hearing of the heart is something of a rarity in today's increasingly busy, fast-paced world. Quoting Emerson, he describes the rare gift of having your heart heard: we 'mark with light in the memory' the few conversations that 'gave us leave to be what we inly were' (p. 72).

Daniels also offers some unexpected facets of his theme. For example, one of the sections explores the archetype of the 'secret' in terms of the therapeutic relationship. Here, Daniels explores the need to maintain a balance between openness and respecting that which is not yet ready to emerge: the secret. This is particularly important, he says, in a culture where privacy is under attack and openness is seen as an undisputed virtue. Using the image of the seed which needs time in the ground before it is ready to emerge, he calls for listeners to be wise to the need for secrecy and privacy as well as disclosure.

For the finale, Daniels describes some of the life experience from which Beethoven's music emerged, and then invites readers themselves to listen, fully and wholeheartedly, to Beethoven's violin concerto, a favourite of Daniels. This unusual culmination reveals once again that for Daniels listening is an art, not just a skill set to be learnt, but a relationship to be entered into and experienced, one which involves and emerges from the whole of a person's life. It is more a way of being than a thing we do, and the only way to learn is to sit down and begin. So, Daniels seems to say, I began with music, why not give it a go!

Iona Reid-Dalglish

Glòria Durà-Vilà, *Sadness, Depression, and the Dark Night of the Soul* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2017). 978 1 7859 2056 1, pp. 360, £24.99.



In his spiritual writings John of the Cross goes to immense trouble to distinguish the Dark Night of the Soul from forms of psychological distress, most notably what we would now call clinical depression. John is writing at the threshold of modernity and addressing the issue from the perspective of Christian spirituality. Glòria Durà-Vilà's book gives a detailed account of her attempt to address it from the perspective of a twenty-first-century psychiatrist using the methods of the medical and human sciences.

As a clinical psychologist who now teaches Christian formation and spirituality in an

Anglican theological college, I naturally found the book fascinating. It is presented very much like a doctoral thesis, though clearly and accessibly written, with most of the technical terms explained. It describes an empirical study of 57 Spanish Roman Catholics, using an ethnographic approach that involved participant observation and lengthy interviewing. The sample was made up of four subgroups: Cistercian monks, Augustinian nuns, parish clergy and lay Christians who were taking a course in theology.

Durà-Vilà's starting position is that over the last century psychological distress has become medicalised in response to socio-economic developments such as secularisation and the rise of large pharmaceutical companies. Her aim is to explore a counter-narrative using what she terms the 'idiom' of the Dark Night as an alternative framework to that of depression or mental illness. Rather than offering a critique of the current psychiatric approach to depression based on philosophical analysis or review of empirical literature (several of which already exist), she takes the qualitative and labour-intensive approach of listening to and recording the narratives of individuals who might reasonably be expected to speak with the wisdom of first-hand experience and deep reflection on the issue. In doing this she is able to draw out rich 'thick descriptions' of the phenomenology of deep sadness and the ways in which her religious participants draw on their faith to make sense of it.

Three key areas are addressed: the way in which participants conceptualise deep sadness; their description of their methods of coping and seeking help when experiencing sadness; and their understanding of their role in caring for those undergoing deep sadness, including experience of collaboration with mental health professionals in this task.

The study was conducted meticulously and is reported very fully. This gives a reassuring sense of rigour but it does mean that there is quite a lot of repetition; it would probably have been possible to present the material rather more succinctly and in a form that would be more digestible to readers lacking a background in qualitative research. There are many fascinating observations along the way. The analysis of the differences in the way the male and female religious participants coped with adversity is particularly intriguing from a psychological perspective. However, as the author readily acknowledges, it is difficult to know what to make of these as the two groups differed significantly in level of education, nationality and the form of monasticism they espoused.

The sections on the clergy's understanding of their role in assisting people undergoing deep sadness are very rich and offer salutary insights relevant to all Christian ministers who engage with people with mental health issues. There is careful analysis of the different strategic components of pastoral

care; helpful reflection on the differences between pastoral care, spiritual direction and psychotherapy; and consideration of the training and supervision that are necessary to support the development of practitioners who can integrate both spiritual and psychological expertise.

Perhaps the most important findings are those concerning the framework that the participants used to differentiate 'normal' sadness in response to life challenges from clinical depression, on the one hand, and from the Dark Night, on the other. Despite the diversity of the sample there seemed to be a good deal of unanimity on this. Durà-Vilà and her participants are agreed that normal sadness is too readily pathologized in a society that increasingly sees happiness as an entitlement, and by a psychiatric diagnostic system (DSM-5)[1] that does not accommodate the notion of seasons in life's journey or the importance of the human search for meaning. Even where such sadness becomes very intense and of long duration it may not signify clinical depression, and—it is asserted—diagnosing depression may actually shut down the opportunities that such an experience might otherwise offer.

The founding father of cognitive therapy, Aaron T. Beck, describes a depressive cognitive triad in which the self is seen as worthless, the future as hopeless and life as meaningless. In contrast, the participants in this study, while acknowledging significant overlap between depression and the Dark Night, characterize the latter as a state in which the self is disorientated (especially with regard to vocation) and life is an intensely painful search for meaning, but the future does hold hope.

These research findings are used to inform a framework that distinguishes clinical depression from the Dark Night in terms of three criteria: the life context in which the psychological distress occurs; the impact on the individual's functioning, especially in relationships; and the degree of risk to self and others. The framework is offered to mental health practitioners to assist them in taking seriously the existential dimension of human psychological distress, '… "protecting" normal sadness from receiving a diagnosis of depression the framework may allow people to attribute meaning to their experiences of sadness, loss, demoralisation, emptiness and disenchantment with life choices ….' (p.316).

Thus, while set in a highly specific religious context, the research aims to provide a more generally applicable and generic understanding of the complex nature of the human response to adversity. This perhaps explains why there is almost minimal engagement with John of the Cross himself or, indeed, any theological analysis. More puzzling is the lack of reference to

[1] *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fifth edn (Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

the very large literatures on religious coping[2] and post-traumatic growth,[3] both of which would have been highly relevant to the interpretation of the research findings, in particular to the important question of whether depression and the 'Dark Night' are distinct phenomena or two aspects of the same phenomenon. Despite this caveat, I highly recommend the book. It is full of rich insights and thought-provoking findings presented in the context of deeply moving and inspiring human narratives.

Joanna Collicutt

John-Francis Friendship, *Enfolded in Christ: The Inner Life of a Priest* (London: Canterbury, 2018). 978 1 7862 2046 2, pp. 218, £12.99.

The book's subtitle indicates its substance: the inner life of a priest. Friendship writes from within the Catholic Anglican tradition, but he wants to be open to all traditions; he has often drawn on Ignatian and Benedictine spirituality. He is concerned with the dangers of being so busy in active ministry that the inner life of prayer, reflection and relationship with God is neglected. This comes from his own experience of spiritual direction down the years. He structures his book on a sacramental pattern, at the same time drawing on that personal experience.

He recalls an 'epiphany' moment in his early twenties, coming out of Piccadilly underground station and being touched by the sight of a young rough sleeper: 'Why him? Why not me?', a voice said within him. That experience led him to work as a volunteer with homeless young people at Centre Point in Soho, to share regularly in the rhythm of prayer of a group of Anglican Franciscan brothers, and eventually to join them and train for ordination. The 'diaconal dialectic', as he calls it, between contemplation and action has remained fundamental and marks his approach throughout.

In the shifts and tensions of everyday life Friendship speaks of the need for 'white space' (p. 34), the space around words that enables us to read the text, uncluttered space that will guard our compassion from simple emotional activism so that we may reach out to others from the heart of God. This

[2] See Kenneth Pargament, *The Psychology of Religion and Coping* (New York: Guilford, 2001).
[3] See Richard Tedeschi, and Lawrence Calhoun, *Trauma and Transformation: Growing in the Aftermath of Suffering* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995).

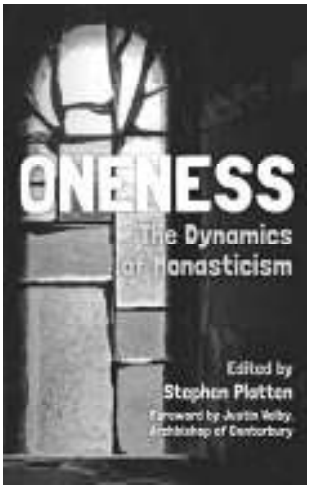
will involve waiting, having the humility to listen to the word of God, to those we are trying to help and to how others perceive us. The accompaniment of a spiritual director is a valuable part of this process.

Friendship writes clearly and with conviction, repeating his points to nail them home. Do not hide your wounds, he says, to anyone involved in ministry. Be in touch with the heart of who you are. 'So, in God's compassionate gaze, we can own the truth of our own being—warts and all. That's the starting point of this book' (p.16), he says. He stresses the importance of relationship with God, but also with those alongside whom one works. He emphasizes the necessity of supervision, not only in the daily nuts and bolts of ministry, but also in our inner processes, accompaniment. He advocates the Ignatian Examen, practised regularly—not only for one's own growth and development but 'to be men and women whose primary call is to enable others to encounter holiness, to encounter God' (p.58). He then explores in detail the sorts of prayer that enable this to happen, to form our image of God who loves us in Christ and through us can spread that love to others. Much of this is based on Ignatian spirituality with a Franciscan heart.

This book could be helpful, not only to clergy, but to anyone involved in ministry; helpful for its clear presentation of familiar teaching with Friendship's strong sense of conviction, borne out by years of pastoral experience.

Anthony Nye SJ

***Oneness: The Dynamics of Monasticism*, edited by Stephen Platten (London: SCM, 2017). 978 0 3340 5532 7, pp.226, £19.99.**



Oneness: The Dynamic of Monasticism presents, in a variety of ways, a 'sense of Church' which goes beyond the external structures and functions of Christianity, and which always leads back to the central mysteries. Some contributions address more, others less directly the expression of monasticism to be found at Shepherd's Law, the hermitage where Harold Palmer lives out his monastic life. This focus on Shepherd's Law and Brother Harold's spirituality is what holds together the chapters, which are otherwise only loosely related to one another.

In the first of these, Sarah Foot details the early Christian mission to the Anglo-Saxons,

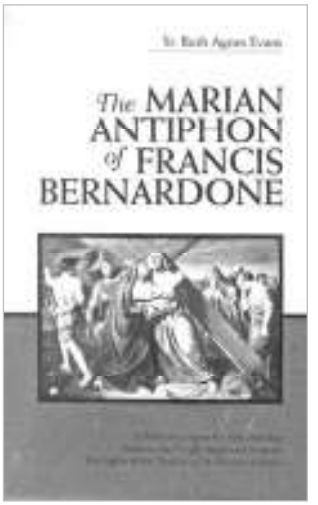
emphasizing the attempt to balance contemplative prayer with pastoral responsibility through a monasticism inspired by Gregory the Great and brought to England by Augustine of Canterbury. In the chapter that follows, Andrew Louth shows how this balance was first lived by monastic practitioners in 'the Skete' in Egypt—by monks who were known more for their solitary than their community life. Nicholas Alan Worssam then explores how even mendicant Franciscans—so well known for their presence in cities—have, at heart, a contemplative basis and, with this, a balance on which St Francis insisted from the very start of his religious life. Peta Dunstan ties these thoughts together by exploring the particular monastic and Franciscan movements that directly influence Brother Harold's spiritual formation. Stephen Platten then considers Brother Harold's concrete expressions of this spirituality at Shepherd's Law.

With this in place, a shift occurs in the text so that more universal aspects of unity and oneness in the Church can be considered. George Guiver looks at the sacraments and sacramentals, asking the reader to consider the term 'sacrament' in a broader way than is normally done: one that is based on the ideas found in the Rule of St Benedict. There the whole monastery is shown to be the house of God and everything in the monastery is expected to be treated with the respect shown to the items used at the altar. This general consideration of the sacred is followed by two more in-depth chapters, exploring how Gregorian chant (Xavier Perrin) and architecture (Christopher Irvine and Ralph Pattisson) shape monastic life and the life of the Church. The authors of these chapters are people who not only understand the theoretical and technical intricacies of their themes but are practitioners. They have the experience of attempting to shape the material and the aesthetic to be in the service of the prayer they house and inseparable from that prayer.

From all their different starting points, the authors attempt to flesh out the diversity of Christian, and particularly monastic, life. Each makes plain that operating within the Christian paradigm is not like choosing one option among others and that it is a life which turns norms on their heads or, as Stephen Platten puts it in the introduction, is like a tree with its roots stretched out towards heaven (p. 13). This study calls into question the way things 'have' to be and insists on the connections between the past and the present, the sacred and the seemingly secular, the practical and the spiritual. It also insists on the underlying unity within Christianity in spite of the divisions that shape our practical experience. As such, it can serve as encouragement for readers with a heart for unity and oneness.

Makrina Finlay OSB

Ruth Agnes Evans, *The Marian Antiphon of Francis Bernadone* (Phoenix: Tau, 2017). 978 1 6195 6566 1, pp. 150, £14.00.



This is a fascinating and most unusual book, the sort that would make an ideal retreat companion. Not only is it full of finely woven thoughts and reflections on Jesus, his mother and Francis of Assisi, but also, and very importantly for Sr Ruth, it is a contemplation on the death penalty in the USA. This is something about which she has felt passionately for a good number of years. For a lengthy period she gave wholehearted support to a young man on death row whom she always believed to be innocent and who was, indeed, finally released. During that time she entered very deeply into his experience and, through it, into that of all those unfortunate enough to find themselves condemned in this heartless way: the way of capital punishment.

Many, many books have been written about death row, but this is the first I have come across that makes a direct link between the passion of Jesus and the passion of a condemned man. It needed to be done, and Sr Ruth has achieved this connection in a most exquisite way. How often do we hear the passion narrative read: Jesus, a fully human person as he was, and the most beautiful human person who ever walked the earth, subjected to torture of the most appalling nature. It makes for uncomfortable reading; personally, I know that I shy away from it and could not bring myself to watch the film *The Passion of the Christ*. Sr Ruth, through St Francis's Gethsemane psalm, makes us see the distress and anxiety of Jesus. Once arrested, he faces his final loneliness. He realises the powers he is up against and, like today's condemned prisoners, has the terrifying knowledge that there is no going back, only forward into the depths of suffering. In the book we are reminded how Francis of Assisi also faced huge suffering when he became a figure of fun for his former friends and, worst of all, lost the protection of his father. Like Jesus, he too embraced his particular passion.

Sr Ruth has several goals in this book. She wishes to lead us deeply into the passion of Jesus and that of St Francis, which she very skilfully does against the backdrop of the psalms of St Francis's Office of the Passion. Sr Ruth also leads us to contemplate Mary and her role in the passion of Jesus. Finally, as far as this is possible, and with her finely honed gift of empathy, she helps us enter into the passion of a condemned man in the USA.

Like Sr Ruth, I have been closely involved with death row prisoners, in Texas, for many years—mostly by correspondence, but I have also made several trips to visit them. I have come to understand that passion in some depth by being with my friends who were sitting, day after day, often year after year, in a tiny cell awaiting the final call to be strapped to a gurney and injected with three lethal poisons. My first friend, Lesley Gosch, was widely known to be innocent of the crime for which he was condemned. Having received his date of execution he wrote asking me to be with him and then to 'witness to the world' about what was happening in Texas. This is not the place to write of my own experiences; I only say here that all that happened during those visits was truly an experience of entering into the passion of others.

What mother would want to watch her son's torture and death? Mary, of course, had no choice; she was there. Like Mary, as seen in this book, the mothers of the condemned experience truly indescribable pain, anguish and distress. Sr Ruth speaks about the execution of a fine young man, Edward Earl Johnson. Like Lesley Gosch, he was known by many to be innocent of the crime for which he was killed. He continued helping others up to the day he died. He willed no harm to his killers. This deep and moving book could leave us feeling very sad. But no, there is a 'new song' to be sung; there is resurrection: Jesus' and everyone's. We are reminded that we are called to follow Christ to the end; to imitate the totality of Christ's love for one another, as Mary did. Mary, who lived through her passion in silence, is now living the resurrection life.

Pope Francis has thanked Sr Ruth for her book. Let us recall with gratitude and relief that the Pope has declared the death penalty to be 'inadmissible' in all circumstances, and join with him in thankfulness for this deeply thought-provoking book.[4]

Joy Elder

[4] Copies are available in. the UK from Arundel Poor Clare Convent, Crossbush, Arundel, BN18 9PJ, srclaremargaret@googlemail.com. Copies are available in the USA from Tau Publishing.