THE WAY

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BECOMING HUMAN

Thinking Faith

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.

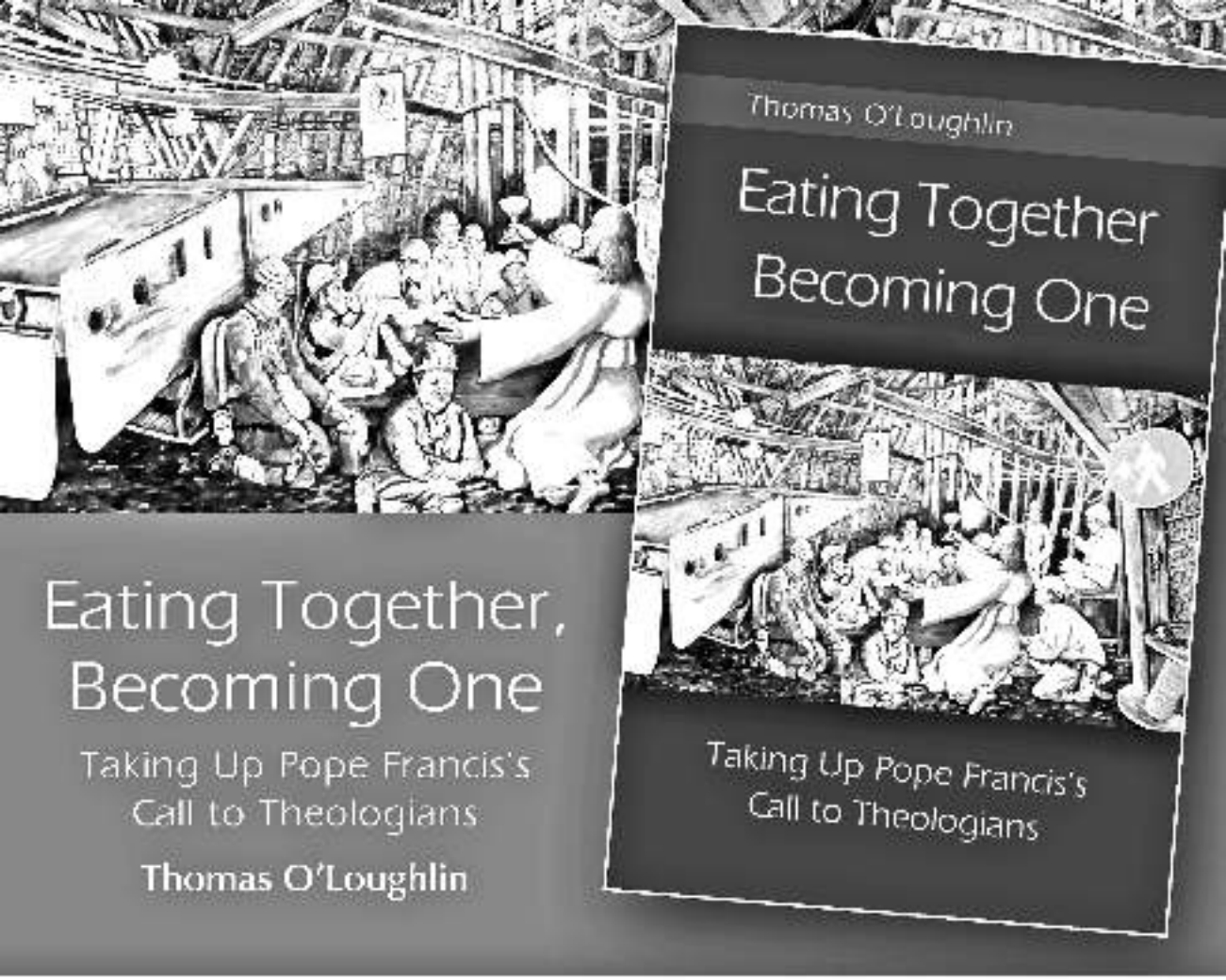
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to the editors of *Manresa* for permission to publish the translation of María Prieto Ursúa's article.

ABBREVIATIONS

Autobiography	'Reminiscences (Autobiography)', in *Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)
Constitutions	in *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
Diary	'The Spiritual Diary', in *Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)
Dir	*On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599*, translated and edited by Martin E. Palmer (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996)
Exx	*The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, translated by George E. Ganss (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992)
GC	General Congregation, in *Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 31st – 35th General Congregations of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2009) and *Jesuit Life and Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus* (Boston: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2017)
MHSJ	Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu, 157 volumes (Madrid and Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1898–)

Papal documents may be found at www.vatican.va



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FOREWORD

WHEN I WAS STUDYING zoology and psychology at university in the 1970s the 'nature versus nurture' debate was at its height. Were an adult's character and outlook on life attributable primarily to the genetic disposition he or she had inherited, or to the upbringing he or she had received? It was hoped that by studying, for example, identical twins separated at birth, the question might receive a definitive answer. Instead, what happened was that the debate largely died out of its own accord. Few today would deny that both nature and nurture have a crucial role to play, and that it is the interplay between them that is perhaps the most significant factor.

For people of faith, spiritual growth and development are important aspects of what it is to move closer towards reaching one's full human potential. The articles in this issue of *The Way* consider, from different perspectives, what such growth and development look like, and how best to achieve them. Brian O'Leary describes a journey with three stages. Beginning with a childlike wonder, a person is led through gratitude to a radical availability to others that, perhaps counter-intuitively, is the high point of individual fulfilment. This contrasts with many of the more self-indulgent attitudes described by Helen Orchard, which are evident in many popular contemporary descriptions of spirituality, and which she contrasts with the path marked out in Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*.

From a Christian perspective, sin is the great barrier to becoming fully human. John Zupez shows how an adequate understanding of sin involves recognising the failure to reach out to others, by contrast with an older approach that focused primarily on individual, often sexual, transgressions. One reason for the long prevalence of this more limited outlook may be that spirituality has frequently been viewed, for the most part, from a masculine perspective. María Prieto Ursúa sketches a feminine understanding that might balance the traditional approach. Another invitation to breadth of understanding is offered by Anneke Viljoen, who points to the transformative effects of actively believing in a God who intervenes directly in ordinary individual human lives.

The Christian Church has been intended from the outset as a principal forum in which the task of becoming human can be realised. In the twentieth century the image of Holy Saturday, a time of waiting

between the seeming catastrophe of the crucifixion and the dawning glory of the resurrection, proved highly fruitful theologically in coming to a deeper understanding of the Church. The article by Riyako Cecilia Hikota introduces this topic through the work of the Jesuit theologian Erich Przywara. A fuller understanding of the relationship between the Christian Church and other religions was also developing in the twentieth century, and ways in which this continuing process is currently bearing fruit are explored by Kathleen Taylor. Jakub Walczak's exposition of the image of a garden as illustrative of spiritual growth, it is worth noting, draws as much on Islamic and other sources as on Christian ones.

Becoming fully human is a lifelong task, and one which has many aspects. As John Moffatt points out, we need to employ a variety of methods in order adequately to understand the undertaking. An effective spirituality, which takes proper account of human psychology as well as theological concepts of God's action in the world, will be a great help to this process. The task is not, as is evident from the writing gathered here, one to be approached in isolation. Even hermits ultimately rely on others, and contribute to their well-being through their prayers. The Christian Church has a long tradition of reflection on promoting a genuinely fruitful commitment to human growth, and this issue of *The Way* offers a variety of contemporary perspectives on that theme.

Paul Nicholson SJ
Editor

A TRIBUTE TO DENISE CRITCHLEY-SALMONSON

Editorial Assistant to *The Way* for 22 years from 1961 to 1983

IT IS FIFTY YEARS since I first met Denny. She had a little house in the grounds of Heythrop College, then in rural Oxfordshire near Chipping Norton, and was working full-time on *The Way*, a publication on spirituality that had been started by James Walsh and his team in the early 1960s. What I remember was her lively conversation, which kept me on my toes as she thought about things and had a way of turning her statements into questions. Once I met her, and when we discovered that we were related, we had many chats. Although she knew a lot of people, few would haul themselves to the Cotswold wilds to visit her. She would tell me, among many other things, of her brother Peter and Ascension Island. I think she went there once.

Heythrop moved to London, *The Way* followed and so did she. She purchased a house in Datchet which was sufficiently close to Heathrow to hear planes passing over head every three minutes. It was the time of the Forty Martyrs (1970) and the Jesuits had a draw as to who would be the twenty (or thirty?) to go to the canonization. I was not on that list but Denny got me there anyway on some other mysterious list. Time passed and I was in Africa but I would call on her at her delightful house in Winchester. She had a gift for furnishing her homes beautifully. The living room was at the top of the house with views all round.

Then the day came when I phoned to wish her a happy ninetieth birthday and she wrote in reply, 'I am crumbling away peacefully and happily in this undeservedly lovely world of Winchester, and feeling so grateful for the enriching time I had working on *The Way*, and the Martyrs, with such great people'. I went to see her later with Teresa de Bertodano and saw the beginnings of indications that her 'crumbling' would not be entirely happy. Then I heard stories of her being a bit irritable: 'Why bring flowers? I have nowhere to put them!' The diminishments of old age for a person who was always so in command of her own life must have been hard.

There is one other mysterious connection which I think I can mention for fun! The Critchley-Salmonsons grew up near Taunton in the 1920s and 1930s, and the Dove family lived somewhere close by. They were obviously in and out of each other's homes. John Dove became a Jesuit and I worked closely with him for many years. Some of his friends—and John Bradburne, whose cause for beatification is now under way, in particular—used to call John Dove 'Critch'. I never discovered how this name came to be attached to him but there is no harm in a little speculating! Could it be that Denny and John were fond of each other in their youth and the nickname somehow got attached? In the event they went their separate ways and each had an action-packed and happy life.

David Harold Barry SJ

THE CREATURE AND THE SOVEREIGN SELF

The Anthropology of the Spiritual Exercises and Contemporary Spiritual Narcissism

Helen Orchard

> Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls. The other things on the face of the earth are created for the human beings, to help them in the pursuit of the end for which they are created. (Exx 23)
>
> To recognize oneself as a sovereign being is to acknowledge one's own total spiritual autonomy and unconditional entitlement to self-determination. It is a primary avowal of oneself as a free and natural human being—not a serf, a subject, a corporate entity, or even a citizen.[1]

PERHAPS IT IS A TRUISM to contend that a text written by a Spanish priest in the sixteenth century can speak to issues relevant to the twenty-first-century Western world, given that the text, the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola, remains a popular classic of Christian spirituality; but the juxtaposition of the two statements above suggests how very pertinent, indeed pointed, that conversation can be. Notwithstanding the demands of a historical context and political world-view very different from those of today, coupled with the challenges of a text which, by the nature of its structure and style, is difficult to read, the *Spiritual Exercises* nevertheless provides a framework for personal transformation which has endured for centuries.

While it is the framework and method—the exercises themselves—that form the focus of any practical application of the Spiritual Exercises, the theology that underpins the text is also of primary significance. I argue here that the theology of the human person which informs and

[1] Neil Kramer, *The Unfoldment: The Organic Path to Clarity, Power and Transformation* (Pompton Plains: Career, 2012), 129.

shapes the Spiritual Exercises is directly antithetical to the anthropology of much popular postmodern spirituality.

Both have an experiential focus, yet while the latter promises enlightenment and fulfilment through 'practices of authenticity' and the exercise of spiritual autonomy, the freedom it delivers can turn out to be a superficial veneer covering a self-indulgent narcissism. Conversely, the theology of the Spiritual Exercises might seem to limit the freedom of the individual, designated firmly as a creature serving the Creator, but it is through embracing this identity, as mediated by the practices and disciplines Ignatius prescribes, that genuine freedom can be found.

As the theologian Edouard Pousset contends:

> Man's relationship to the Creator does not entail a dependence which would alienate man from himself, as so many moderns imagine it. On the contrary, this relationship generates life and freedom for every person who abides in life and freedom.[2]

Pousset's comments about alienation prompt us to remember, at this early stage, that Ignatius' views of freedom are heavily influenced by Augustine. Augustine's theology of primal freedom asserts that the fulfilling of God's will results in true freedom because our *de facto* natural orientation is towards God. It is impossible for right relationship to result in alienation; rather this is the result of a falling away from right relationship. So, 'our fall is evil because it is a reversal of the natural order, since it proceeds from the highest level to the lower'.[3] The first evil will of man, which precedes all evil acts, is 'a falling away from the work of God to his own works', which results in bondage and the loss of freedom.[4]

The Spirituality Revolution

The 'spirituality revolution'—a shift within Western culture from the acceptance of traditional religious expressions to the embrace of diverse and manifold new explorations of spirituality—is well documented.[5] Stemming from the New Age movement of the 1970s, it has been characterized by

[2] Edouard Pousset, *Life in Faith and Freedom: An Essay Presenting Gaston Fessard's Analysis of the Dialectic of the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1980), 17.

[3] Augustine, *City of God*, 12.8, in *The Later Christian Fathers: A Selection from the Writings of the Fathers from St Cyril of Jerusalem to St Leo the Great*, edited and translated by Henry Bettenson (London: OUP, 1970), 195.

[4] Augustine, *City of God*, 14.2.

[5] See David Tacey, *The Spirituality Revolution: The Emergence of Contemporary Spirituality* (London: Routledge, 2004); Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion Is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005).

an explosion of holistic 'mind–body–spirit' beliefs and practices promising enlightenment and peace. These have often been denounced by the religious traditions, which point to the danger of 'spiritual consumerism' and the fickleness of a 'pick-and-mix spiritual marketplace'.[6]

That there is plurality in the spiritual arena is simply a fact of life in the twenty-first-century Western world. This is, as David Tacey points out, the era of diversity: a complex and fragmented world in which people find themselves needing to 'piece together the puzzle of their lives and sacred reality'.[7] Why should inquiring seekers not cast about for that which they find to be personally uplifting and affirming? After all, are we not all precious and unique individuals in the sight of God? But therein lies the problem.

The turn of contemporary spirituality has been inward, resulting in expressions which are often highly individualistic and egotistical. It is doubtless the case that the growth (and attraction) of these has been fed by the major cultural shift described by Charles Taylor as 'the subjective turn'.[8] The development of consumerism in the West has commodified Romantic expressive individualism:

> … the … belief that every person has his own individuality, and that life consists in discovering and realising this authentic and unique

[6] Gregg Lahood, 'Relational Spirituality, Part 1. Paradise Unbound: Cosmic Hybridity and Spiritual Narcissism in the "One Truth" of New Age Transpersonalism', *International Journal of Transpersonal Studies*, 29/1 (2010), 31–57, here 40.
[7] Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, 44.
[8] Charles Taylor, *The Ethics of Authenticity* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard UP, 2003 [1991]), 26.

> identity, rather than in conforming to normative models imposed from without by society, namely from political and religious authorities.[9]

At best this contemporary focus on the individual can result in self-indulgent, if unselfconscious, narcissism; and at worst it traps us in a 'cocoon' resulting in 'despair, depression and frustration'.[10]

The Spiritual Exercises

What, by contrast, does Ignatius have to say about the human person, and what are the implications of his insights for life today? Roger Haight notes that Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* begins by addressing the abiding questions of spiritual seekers in any age: 'Who am I? Why am I here? Does some larger purpose underlie being itself and human existence? Is it realistically possible in our age to imagine or formulate a comprehensive vision of reality?'[11] In this sense, Ignatius had what many reflective people today do not possess: a sure foundation on which to build.

It is in the Principle and Foundation, indeed, that Ignatius expounds his anthropology most clearly and succinctly, setting out the world-view against which everything else in the *Spiritual Exercises* should be understood. The official *Directory* to the Exercises of 1599 refers to it as 'the basis of the whole moral and spiritual edifice'.[12] The human being, explains Ignatius, is a created thing whose existence only makes sense in relationship with the Creator. It is this relationship that gives the individual meaning and purpose, and provides a way of navigating successfully the relationships that the creature will have with other created things.

It is notable that, in an age when the individual person was of little value and viewed primarily as a member of society or a community, Ignatius affirmed throughout the *Spiritual Exercises* the importance of the individual's relationship with God expressed through personal experience: memory, understanding and will; consolation and desolation. However, while the *Spiritual Exercises* begins with the human person, he or she does not exist in isolation as the centre of a universe around which all else revolves. It is God who is the centre and the one for whose praise and loving service human beings were created.

[9] François Gauthier, Tuomas Martikainen and Linda Woodhead, 'Acknowledging a Global Shift: A Primer for Thinking about Religion in Consumer Societies', *Implicit Religion*, 16/3 (2013), 261–276, here 271.
[10] Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, 148.
[11] Roger Haight, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers: Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola* (New York: Orbis, 2012), 102.
[12] Dir. 12. 1.

The Centre of the Universe

Understanding the end for which human beings and the universe exist is sufficiently fundamental to have been called 'the foundation of the Foundation'.[13] However, while understanding and defining one's identity in relation to the divine in this way is axiomatic to the Exercises, it is antithetical to much contemporary spirituality. Why not, rather, inhabit a universe of your own making in which you are sovereign and in which other created things praise, reverence and serve your ego?

The idea of spiritual autonomy stems from a notion of complete independence: the self in isolation is the source and end of all things, and sufficient for its own enlightenment and salvation. However, for Ignatius, the human person is always considered within the context of relationships. James Hanvey comments:

> We are never allowed to stand outside these relationships on our own; there is no sovereign self, exercising a contemplative grasp of the whole from some vantage point outside the material, historical and existential process of life.[14]

Understanding his or her status as a creature automatically places the individual in right relationship with God. It is the Creator who is sovereign and creatures are able to understand who they are and the 'end' for which they exist within this context.

Moreover, it is not simply that human beings have been created by God for a particular purpose in the past; creation is ongoing:

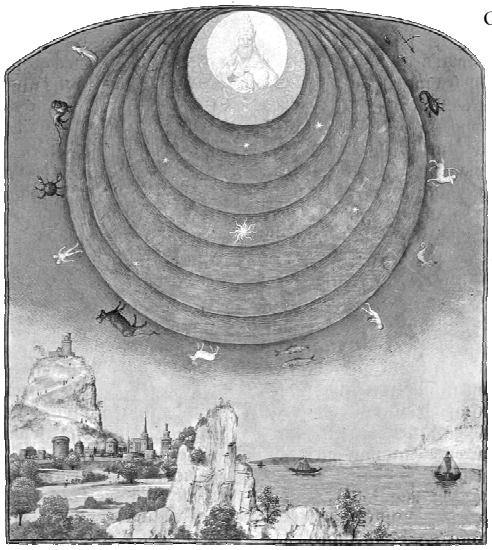
> We are being created momently by our God and Lord in all concrete particulars and that we are listening to God's summons into life when we let ourselves hear our most authentic desires, which rise out of God's passionate, creative love in us.[15]

This makes it clear that our very existence is completely contingent on God's love and mercy, from moment to moment. As such, our identity cannot be grounded in the self, but must be found in relationship with the Creator (or, as Paul has said, 'hidden with Christ in God'; Colossians 3:3).

[13] Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 26.
[14] James Hanvey, 'Ignatius of Loyola: Theology as a Way of Living', *Thinking Faith* (30 July 2010), at http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20100730_1.htm.
[15] Joseph A. Tetlow, 'The *Fundamentum*: Creation in the Principle and Foundation', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 21/4 (1989), 1–53, here 7.

Once this truth is grasped, the relationship with other created things can fall properly into place; that is, second place, next to the desire to choose what is 'conducive to the end for which we were created'. The indifference to any other created thing or state of life, so characteristic of Ignatian spirituality, is the natural result of the individual's profound understanding of who he or she is in relation to God and everything else that God has made. As Harvey Egan reflects, 'the emphatically theocentric thrust of this meditation renders all created things relative'.[16]

Nevertheless, maintaining a theocentric rather than anthropocentric approach to the Principle and Foundation can be difficult even for experienced interpreters of the Spiritual Exercises, when they find themselves in a society which is inevitably orientated towards the self. In the 'contemporary reading' of the first line of Exx 23 given by the well-known Ignatian commentator David Fleming: 'The goal of our life is to live with God forever. God who loves us gave us life. Our own response of love allows God's life to flow into us without limit.'[17] Here the centre and focus have shifted from God to the human person. Instead of human beings being created to love and serve God, the point of departure has become 'our life'. Certainly, it is a life given by God, but there is a sense that we are central, with God considerately flowing into us. Notice, too, that though we love God in this interpretation, the full breadth of that notion, through praise, reverence and (significantly) service has been lost. It is a subtle shift, but not unusual in texts which move too far in paraphrase from Ignatius' original language.



A theocentric universe, from a thirteenth-century French book of hours

[16] Harvey D. Egan, *The Spiritual Exercises and the Ignatian Mystical Horizon* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1976), 67.
[17] David L. Fleming, *Like the Lightning: The Dynamics of the Ignatian Exercises* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004), 27.

This point is made purely to emphasize the significance of grasping the relationship between creature and Creator in the Spiritual Exercises, and the extent to which it opposes the contemporary zeitgeist. To moderate or undermine it risks misunderstanding the theology of the human person in Ignatius, which is the first building block of the Spiritual Exercises, upon which all other assumptions, arguments and practices rest. If this is not grasped then his subsequent comments about indifference, humility, freedom and *kenosis* will not make sense.

Of course, internalising this principle is not the work of a moment, and a number of Ignatius' exercises assist in driving the point home, specifically the Two Standards (Exx 136), Three Classes of Men (Exx 149) and Three Kinds of Humility (Exx 165). It is not a coincidence that, directly following the meditation on the Principle and Foundation, the exercitant is plunged into the First Week of the Exercises, which focuses on sin. Again, this helps to set the individual in right relationship to God and to society.

Sin is not a subject beloved of contemporary spirituality; indeed in many of its expressions sin does not really exist, all actions are relative and there is no objective good or evil. While Ignatius' language of Lucifer, Satan and 'the enemy of human nature' may be alienating in its medieval tone, the recognition and naming of sin, as a problem to be owned and repented by the creature and dealt with by the Creator, once again emphasizes relationship rather than a narcissistic understanding of the human person, in 'an engagement with the "mysterium inquitatis" that cannot be reduced to a projection of our own subjective woundedness'.[18]

The Principle and Foundation concludes with the advice that 'we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created', drawing together the key elements of our creation and purpose with the *choices* made in this life. Ignatius takes for granted that an understanding of who we are before God brings the individual face to face with the question of how to live in the world. For him, life is to be lived after the pattern of Christ and as a companion of Christ, whose own life is explored through the meditations of the Second Week.

Desiring and Choosing

Introduced by the challenge presented in the Call of the King (Exx 91), the Second Week provides the material and moment for a life choice,

[18] Hanvey, 'Ignatius of Loyola'.

or *election*, to be made. Ignatius provides clear direction on when and how this is to be approached (Exx 163); it is a central part of making the Spiritual Exercises which, through the work undertaken on our desires, moves us towards union with God. It is interesting to note the contribution that Ignatius thus makes to a fully rounded understanding of freedom and choice, subjects beloved of postmodern spirituality.

For the freedom of self-determination and the ability to choose according to one's own desires are key to the self-understanding and *modus operandi* of the contemporary sovereign self. The same word, *freedom*, is used to describe completely opposite states of being in Ignatian and New Age spiritualities and, ironically, the means to achieve both is choice. The freedom of individuals to do as they choose (so long as no one else is being harmed) is an inviolable principle in new spiritualities, commodified in the rights of the consumer, but also closely allied to the notion of personal uniqueness: 'To live "out" one's unique life, to be "true to oneself", means finding the freedom, the autonomy, to be oneself, to become oneself, to "turn" into oneself, to live one's life to the full'.[19]

The Ignatian understanding of freedom is a reversal of this position. At the beginning of the Exercises personal freedom is to be surrendered: the exercitant is advised to offer up his or her 'entire will and liberty' (Exx 5) to enable God to work fully in accordance with God's will. The Principle and Foundation encourages an indifference to created things and states of life in order for the freedom to make a right choice to be cultivated. Now, at the moment of election, the exercitant is reminded again of the connection between choice, freedom and the end for which he or she was created. Any and all choices are governed by this end: the praise and service of God (Exx 169).

It is an outworking of a fundamental truth of the gospel that a life laid down is a life received back; a seed that dies is a seed which fruits to life. Freedom freely relinquished results in life in all its fullness because the freedom that serves the personal ego is subsumed by the freedom that serves the end for which the individual was created. The process of election, then, is a dialogue between our freedom as human beings and God's freedom. When our choice is for God, our freedom is affirmed and expanded rather than diminished. We receive the gift of a freedom from attachment to any created thing, which is the expansiveness of God's freedom.

[19] Paul Heelas, *Spiritualities of Life: New Age Romanticism and Consumptive Capitalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 38.

This results in a uniting of wills which is liberating rather than constricting precisely because the creature has chosen to embrace the end for which he or she was created. Experience shows that election cannot happen unless a retreatant has the courage to desire great things and to ask for them; when the election springs forth, it is like the birth of a new freedom. In this freedom, this use of the will, the individual has accepted God's transforming gift within his or her own will. The person's freedom has been liberated so as to choose in true freedom, in other words in covenant relationship. It is precisely in the will that he or she is united with God.[20]

A uniting of wills which is liberating rather than constricting

Self-Giving Love

In the final meditation, the *Contemplatio* (Exx 230–237), all these threads—identity, freedom and choice, desire and possession—are drawn together in the prayer of offering, the *Suscipe*. The very word 'take' poses a challenge to a spiritual materialism, which is acquisitive in character. In offering to God memory, liberty, understanding and will, all that is quintessentially 'me, myself, I' is let go; I am drawn into an act of *kenosis* which is, by its very nature, the opposite of narcissism. However, contrary to the fear that the individual will disappear completely, subsumed into God, this radical alignment of wills involves an exchange which subsequently shapes and characterizes the life of the one making the offer: God's love and grace are received in return. This is a prayer of self-giving that is entirely modelled on the perichoretic relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the continual pouring out and receiving of love, one to another. It is for this reason that the *Suscipe* can be seen to be both the means of Ignatian mystagogy and the basis for engagement with the world. It is a 'drawing in' that leads to 'sending out': from *circumincessio* to *missio*.

This suggests a further, serious critique of many forms of new age spirituality, which are not only self-aggrandising but also self-serving. The focus on the self is the perfect distraction, resulting in an inability to care for others, as all a person's energy is expended on nurturing his or her own being. Such spiritualities do not have the capacity to reach out to the other; they cannot self-empty because they work by 'self-filling' spiritual consumers. Closely allied to this is a reluctance, and a lack of resources, to deal with suffering. David Tacey writes:

[20] Sylvie Robert, 'Union with God in the Ignatian Election', *The Way Supplement*, 103 (2002), 100–112, at 107.

> True spirituality is not something that makes itself available to our egotistical designs, but rather something that draws us into a larger world and makes us subordinate to a greater will that transcends us on all sides. The credo of true spirituality could be the words of Jesus uttered in despair in the Garden of Gethsemane before the crucifixion, 'Nevertheless, not my will but thy will be done' (Matthew 26:39; Luke 22:42) …. Not 'follow your bliss', but 'thy will be done' is the credo for authentic spirituality.[21]

He argues that those who subscribe to the myth of individualism are often dismayed on discovering that the natural action of the Spirit found within is to lead the person outwards, beyond subjectivity, to engage with the world.

> The narcissistic idea of private spirituality becomes shattered by the spirit as soon as it is awakened. Private spirituality is revealed as an illusion or as a transitional stage between a former state of sleep and a future mission of social responsibility and commitment.[22]

This line of thought is entirely congruent with the Ignatian charism which, rather than eschewing suffering, seeks it out as a means of closer connection with Christ. The desire of Ignatius voiced in the prayer to Mary to 'put him with her Son' (*Autobiography*, n.60) is a thread woven through the whole of the Spiritual Exercises. It is a prayer to enter into and share Christ's life of poverty, insults and humility, set forth in the Two Standards (Exx 136), and to participate in his passion during the Third Week. The exercitant is prepared for this discomfort by the meditations of the First Week, which focus on sin and the individual's part in the suffering it causes, and the continual praying of the *Anima Christi* throughout the thirty days as a petition to the crucified Christ, in whose wounds we not only hide but also participate.[23]

Finally, the *Contemplatio* is rooted, from the outset, in the movement outwards through love of the other as it focuses on the divine outpouring of gifts, life and labour. This is the love that manifests itself 'more by deeds than by words', consisting in 'a mutual communication' (Exx 230–231); it therefore cannot exist within a cocoon, but must always look outwards, forming the foundation of service. It is, for Ignatius, self-evident that

[21] Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, 146.
[22] Tacey, *Spirituality Revolution*, 148.
[23] Not only expected as part of the triple colloquy, but one of the 'ordinary daily prayers' (Louis J. Puhl, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius* [Chicago: Loyola, 1951], 162).

we cannot enjoy the bliss of the *Contemplatio* without having first endured the pain of the passion, yet even in that bliss we are being poured out for others after the pattern of Christ. The *kenosis* of the *Suscipe* is the outworking of the prayer *place me with your Son*, for in that pouring out we are entirely united with Christ in his act of giving himself for the world. This is the union that Ignatius envisages which, though both mystical and joyful, is a far cry from the triumphant self-fulfilment of the sovereign self.

Tim Muldoon reflects that Ignatian spirituality should naturally speak to the postmodern generation because 'it is based on a personal imaginative exploration of the gospel, and it invites people to choose freely to deepen their intimacy with God through a deepened understanding of who they themselves are'.[24] Indeed, in many ways undertaking the Spiritual Exercises might be extremely attractive to contemporary spiritual seekers set on a spot of navel gazing: it really is thirty days of thinking 'all about me'. But here is the irony. In turning inwards to God one finds that one is turned back out again to the world that God created through love. Instead of operating as a solitary sovereign self seeking personal spiritual well-being, the individual joins the community of those who consider themselves companions of Jesus, engaged in his loving and healing work in the world; realising that, in and through this work, they will draw closer to God and find fulfilment in serving the end for which they have been created. Or, as Jesus put it rather more succinctly, 'those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it' (Matthew 16:25).

Helen Orchard is team vicar of St Matthew's Church in the Wimbledon team ministry.

[24] Tim Muldoon, 'Postmodern Spirituality and the Ignatian *Fundamentum*', *The Way*, 44/1 (January 2005), 88–100, here 96.

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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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THROUGH WONDER TO FRUITFULNESS

Brian O'Leary

TO MAKE SENSE OF ANY REALITY we need simultaneously to be engaged with it and disengaged, to be an active participant and at the same time a detached observer. Let us stay with that paradox for a while; let us see if we can 'float a little', in the words of Mary Oliver, 'above this difficult world', get some distance from its turmoil and angst, while yet remaining rooted in it. This difficult world can be the world of family, of community and of work, all of which impinge directly on each of us. But it can also be the wider geopolitical world of wars, injustice, poverty, famine, environmental catastrophe, sexual violence and so on. What will this reality reveal to us that is new or enlightening? Might we find ourselves looking 'into the white fire of a great mystery'?[1]

Wonder

Wonder and amazement come easily to young children. Everything is being seen, heard, touched, tasted, smelled for the first time. Theirs is a world of the senses and of feeling. It is a world of immediacy. A child does not have to be taught how to wonder. Every sensation, every experience is novel, fresh, exciting. It cannot be otherwise; this is the nature of childhood. Adults, on the other hand, are more likely to be conscious of the repetitiveness of life, the monotony of experience. This can be accompanied by a sense of heaviness, sometimes of dreariness or boredom. It can even reach the level of disenchantment or disillusionment. As Qoheleth noted:

> All things are wearisome; more than one can express;
> the eye is not satisfied with seeing, or the ear filled with
> hearing.
> What has been is what will be;
> and what has been done is what will be done.
> There is nothing new under the sun.[2]

[1] Mary Oliver, 'The Ponds', in *House of Light* (New York: Beacon, 1992), 59.
[2] Ecclesiastes 1:8–9.

Even when something apparently new happens, the adult response is frequently muted: mild surprise, perhaps, rather than exhilaration, a raised eyebrow rather than an exuberant dance.

This is not to say that wonder and awe are beyond the capacity of adults. However, they emerge differently within the adult psyche. The key now is depth. Remember the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins: 'There lives the dearest freshness deep down things'.[3] Freshness for a child is more on the surface and is marked, as I have suggested, by immediacy. Freshness for an adult is found by entering into life, even into what is familiar and mundane, and touching its core, its depth. 'The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth', as George Herbert wrote about prayer.[4]

Recall the words of Jesus to the Galilean fishermen: 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch' (Luke 5:4). The outcome is wonder and amazement in Peter and in those who are with him. What they have just seen in the unexpectedly large catch of fish is something new, something fresh that shakes them to the core. Instinctively they know that this event has to do with more than fish. They have been given a sign of the new creation and are being invited to be part of it. This story is, of course, about call and mission. But it is also a wisdom story that summons us to enter the deep water of our own souls.

Another familiar metaphor is that of life as a search for the Holy Grail—that symbol of all we long for in terms of wisdom, of beauty, of

Sir Perceval arrives at the Grail Castle, French manuscript illumination, 1330

[3] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'God's Grandeur', in *The Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Norman H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 111.
[4] George Herbert, 'Prayer (1)', in *The Complete English Poems*, edited by John Tobin (London: Penguin, 2004), 45.

love and of esoteric meaning. The medieval story of the Grail can assuredly appeal to the child (it is, after all, colourful and dramatic) but its essence can only be understood by the adult. Writers such as T. S. Eliot have seen this journey as a response to God's loving initiative beckoning us ever onward. In *Little Gidding* he writes:

> With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
>
> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.[5]

Freshness is part of knowing *anything* for the first time. But here it is found, paradoxically, not at the beginning but at the end of 'our exploring'. It is not the freshness of a new sensation but of a new understanding. This is the gift that opens up for us as we age and makes it nonsensical to indulge in melancholic nostalgia—in wanting to be young again.

While we cannot earn, deserve or force this adult sense of wonder, it may be possible to create conditions that make it more likely to happen. A sense of reverence is an enormous help. Indeed the difference between reverence and wonder is paper-thin. The early biographers of St Ignatius Loyola describe a particular habit of his.

> He would go up onto the terrace, where he liked to look up at the sky. He would stand there for a little while, stock-still, his eyes fixed on the heavens. Then he would worship God on bent knee. Next, uncovering his head, he would sit on a low bench, on account of his physical frailty. Right away streams of tears would gush forth. This happened gently and calmly, and without any sobbing or noise or bodily movement.[6]

Notice the body-language of Ignatius in this passage: sitting quietly, eyes gazing at the night sky, reverently removing his hat, sinking to his knees, then sitting again in total stillness as his tears of wonder flow without a sound. Does Ignatius pray because he experiences wonder, or does he experience wonder because he prays? In either case he is ready to 'taste and see that the Lord is good' (Psalm 34:8). And, as Hamlet said to Horatio, 'The readiness is all'.

[5] T. S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding', in *The Complete Poems and Plays* (London: Faber, 1969), 197.
[6] Pedro de Ribadeneira, *The Life of Ignatius of Loyola*, translated by Claude Pavur (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2014), 5. 1. 15 (MHSI FN 4, 746–749).

Another take on such readiness is found in Mary Oliver's poem, 'The Summer Day', in which she opens herself to freshness and to mystery. She surrounds herself with the beauty of nature and pays attention to what it evokes in her. She is not straining, as she might if engaged in arduous academic research or anxiously fulfilling some practical chore. She simply pays attention in a relaxed and unselfconscious manner, kneeling in the grass, strolling in the fields, enjoying the experience. Through doing this she learns 'how to be idle and blessed'. It is then that the world reveals its mystery, its inner meaning, and also its power to transform her. Out of this experience comes her challenge to us all: 'what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?'[7]

The Welsh poet R. S. Thomas shares a similar sensitivity. But he is also aware that such revelations of mystery do not impose themselves on us. He echoes Oliver's stress on the need to pay attention. He does this in the poem 'The Bright Field', where he recalls a moment when he himself was guilty of being inattentive, negligent, as the sun briefly picked out a single field in the landscape: 'the one field that had treasure in it'. He echoes the words of Moses in Exodus 3:3 when he comes upon the burning bush: 'I must turn aside and look ….' Moses recognises the need to interrupt his search, however urgent, to find new pastures for his flock. Instead he is being told to pause and pay attention to the here and now. Something strange is happening, something mysterious which must not be ignored. We can imagine Moses saying to himself: *Do not simply pass by, intent on your task. Take some time to look, gaze, contemplate. Open yourself to the mystery in the here and now. Otherwise you may miss the most profound experience you will ever have*. But this is exactly what happened to Thomas. He went on his way and missed the 'pearl of great price'. Ever afterwards he regrets not 'turning aside like Moses to the miracle'.[8]

Another modern poet who is aware of how we can reject a revelation, or close off an entry-point into the mystery, is Denise Levertov. Her poem 'Annunciation' falls into three parts. The first and third deal with Gabriel's annunciation to Mary, while the middle section is about the annunciations that occur in our day-to-day lives. While Thomas uses biblical imagery, and paints our negligence in broad strokes, Levertov enters into the psychology of this negligence. Rather than embrace the annunciations that occur in our lives we turn away from them 'in dread,

[7] Mary Oliver, 'The Summer Day', in *House of Light*, 60.
[8] R. S. Thomas, 'The Bright Field', in *Collected Poems: 1945–1990* (London: Phoenix, 2004), 302.

in a wave of weakness, in despair and with relief'.[9] How particularly perceptive is that last phrase, 'with relief'! An annunciation, or a revelation, somehow threatens us. This is not what we are accustomed to; it is drawing us outside our comfort zone.

In the time before an annunciation we may well be praying for one. But when it does happen our deep-seated ambivalence can surface, and so we block the annunciation out. Then what happens? In a way, nothing happens. And that is precisely the tragedy. As Levertov writes, 'Ordinary lives continue'. We are once more back in our familiar landscape where we feel secure. We are again settled into our comfort zone, 'with relief'. Best of all, we will not be punished. 'God does not smite them.' Yet, in spite of that, there *are* consequences: 'But the gates close, the pathway vanishes'.[10] An opportunity is lost, perhaps never to return.

Gratitude

Of course, some will say that they lack the finely tuned susceptibility of the poets and that such annunciations never come *their* way. Maybe such people protest too much! But even if this were true, there is another more down-to-earth way of opening ourselves to wonder. This is the way of gratitude, calling to mind all that we have to be grateful for in our lives. Surely that is not beyond any of us? Such gratitude, once awakened, leads us at some point to recognise that *all* is gift. How astonishing that is, and how wonderful!

Just before the turn of the millennium a best-selling book was published with the title *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom.[11] It records a series of conversations between Morrie Schwartz, a retired professor of sociology at Brandeis University, and Mitch, who had been one of his favourite pupils twenty years earlier. Now Morrie is dying, suffering from ALS, a devastating illness of the neurological system. His conversations with Mitch cover the main themes of human life, including death itself. As his weakness increases and his pain intensifies, Morrie speaks with profound gratitude for all that life has brought him. Thankfulness is the leitmotif running through all his conversations. Eventually, his generous and magnanimous spirit fades away without recriminations, without regrets.

[9] Denise Levertov, 'Annunciation', in *The Stream and the Sapphire: Selected Poems on Religious Themes* (New York: New Directions, 1997), 60.
[10] Levertov, 'Annunciation', 60.
[11] See Mitch Albom, *Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, a Young Man and Life's Greatest Lesson* (London: Time Warner, 2003).

Whenever we ourselves pause to reflect on God's gifts to us, we usually find that many are easy to recollect and name. Many will be related to the human sources of our happiness: our family and friends, our health, our talents, our successes, times when we were surprised by joy. Others may relate to our experience of God protecting us, healing us, forgiving us. Still more may be difficult to recognise as gifts at first, painful episodes that reveal their giftedness slowly and only with God's gracious light.

In God's plan our human life is divinised, and becomes a sharing in the life of God. As St Ignatius wrote in the final prayer of the Spiritual Exercises:

> I will ponder with deep affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much he has given me of what he possesses, and consequently how he, the same Lord, desires to give me even his very self, in accordance with his divine design. (Exx 234)

'Even his very self!' We are recipients not only of God's gifts but of God's self, of God's being, of God's life. Day by day, and moment by moment, God has been sharing, and will continue to share God's own life with us. We do not need to be poets or artists to be amazed at this overwhelming love.

Much of our prayer risks being self-centred. We often spend as much time in prayer looking at ourselves as we do in looking at God: in introspection rather than in contemplation. The prayer of thanksgiving, however, while it begins with the awareness of ourselves as gifted, gradually turns our attention towards the source, the fountainhead, the origin of these gifts. The gifts themselves may even fade into the background as we are drawn in wonder and gratitude to God, the Giver of gifts, the Giver of Godself. Can anything be more awe-inspiring, more capable of moving us to 'magnify the Lord'?

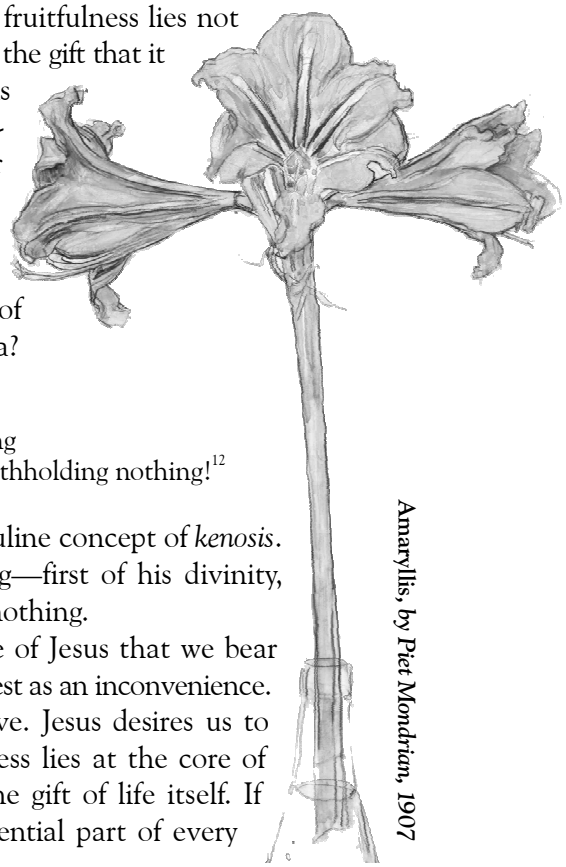
Fruitfulness

But wonder and gratitude are not the end of the journey. Life continues to unfold. In the Gospel of John, during the Last Supper discourse, Jesus offers us the powerful symbol of the vine and the branches: 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.' (John 15:1–2)

That Jesus wants us to bear fruit is clear. But what does fruitfulness mean? We speak of autumn as the season when crops come to maturity and are ripe for harvesting. We speak of the fruitfulness of a marriage

when a new human life comes into the world. Something that was always a possibility, that was embryonically present in an organism, has grown and reached its fullness. And all of this in due time, in God's time. Such is Christ's desire for us all. He wants us to reach the full potential of our humanity—indeed of our divinised humanity, in all its wonderful complexity.

In one of her last poems, called 'The Métier of Blossoming', Denise Levertov describes the growth and unfolding of a flower, the amaryllis. This is a beautiful meditation on fruitfulness, although Levertov writes about *blossoming.* Levertov's amaryllis grows in strength and beauty as it is meant to do. It comes to completion in itself. But, by so doing, it also makes itself available to all who have eyes to see. The viewer can take delight in its perfection. The amaryllis puts no restrictions on the pleasure that humans can enjoy in gazing at it. Its fruitfulness lies not only in its own self-actualisation but in the gift that it is for others. For Levertov the amaryllis actually surpasses humans in this self-giving. We may want to achieve our potential, to become all that we are capable of becoming—but are we willing to share this with others? And is not this sharing meant to be part of our perfection—not an optional extra?



Amaryllis, by Piet Mondrian, 1907

> If we could blossom
> out of ourselves, giving
> nothing imperfect, withholding nothing![12]

We can sense here an echo of the Pauline concept of *kenosis*. Christ emptied himself of everything—first of his divinity, then of his humanity—withholding nothing.

Sometimes we can see the desire of Jesus that we bear fruit as a demanding obligation, or at best as an inconvenience. However, there is another perspective. Jesus desires us to bear fruit precisely because fruitfulness lies at the core of each of God's gifts. This includes the gift of life itself. If that is so, then fruitfulness is an essential part of every

[12] Denise Levertov, 'The Métier of Blossoming', in *The Great Unknowing: Last Poems* (New York: New Directions, 1999), 12.

gift. The gift does not fully exist apart from its fruitfulness. It cries out to be allowed to blossom, to flower, to flourish and to give of itself—like Levertov's amaryllis. Remember also the parable of the talents: they are meant to produce tenfold, thirtyfold, a hundredfold, not to lie hidden in the earth of our self-hatred or our fears. Gifts that are buried only decay along with those who were their ungracious recipients.

A further confirmation of these ideas comes from the words of Isaiah:

> For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed for the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the things for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10–11)

There is fruitfulness *within* the rain and snow, at their core. They contribute to life; they make a difference, and so fulfil their purpose.

All our own personal gifts have a parallel potential, a parallel power and energy. They are fully realised only when their fruitfulness—their potential, power and energy—is released. As we have already said, our human fruitfulness is not merely something that brings *us* a sense of completion, but it is meant to influence and serve the world and its people.

Gerard Manley Hopkins too, in his more convoluted way, conveys a similar wisdom. In his sonnet 'As Kingfishers Catch Fire', we read:

> Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
> Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;
> Selves—goes itself; *myself* it speaks and spells,
> Crying *What I do is me; for that I came*.
> I say more: the just man justices;
> Keeps grace: that keeps all his goings graces.[13]

The key word here is the verb *selve*. Hopkins has converted a noun into a verb to stress the inner dynamic of each 'mortal thing', whether animate or inanimate. 'Each mortal thing … *selves*', becomes its true self by bringing out what is 'indoors' within each. This true self acts in accordance with what it really is in its essence. There is complete coherence between who I am and my actions. 'The just man justices', activates his inner justice. The growth that happens 'indoors' flows outward into the world. 'What I do is me'. Now I am being fruitful.

[13] Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'As Kingfishers Catch Fire', in *Poetical Works of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, 141.

The gospel passage on the vine and branches also teaches that our fruitfulness is linked to union with Christ.

> Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. (John 15:4–6)

The richest fruitfulness is that which lures and draws people more deeply into the Trinitarian life of God who is Father, Son and Spirit. This luring and drawing can only happen 'through Christ our Lord'—as we say in all our liturgical prayers. Jesus is our only way to the Father, and the Spirit we share is his Spirit. Our fruitfulness is a sharing in the fruitfulness of Christ.

A common temptation is to undervalue our gifts, and so underestimate our potential for fruitfulness. Then we risk falling into a false, though perhaps comfortable, humility. One reason for this can be forgetfulness—sometimes forgetfulness of the gifts we have received, but most of all forgetfulness of Christ and of his power available to us. 'Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit.' It is not for us to set limits to our fruitfulness. Of course there are limits, but it is up to God, not us, to set them.

For our own part we are encouraged to dream dreams, to nurture desires, to long for a better world, to imagine possibilities of self-transformation, social transformation and world transformation. 'Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth' (Revelation 21:1). Such a vision will itself energize us. The accompanying experience of human inadequacies and failure does not have to lead us into discouragement or disillusionment. It will lead us to rely all the more on God. Finally, we might take to heart the words of Paul:

> Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20)

Brian O'Leary SJ is an Irish Jesuit living in Dublin. He has worked in the ministry of Ignatian spirituality at both the academic and practical levels. His latest books are *Radical and Free: Musings on the Religious Life* (2016) and *God Ever Greater: Exploring Ignatian Spirituality* (2018).

THE METAPHOR OF THE GARDEN IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

Jakub Walczak

THERE ARE AT LEAST TWO WAYS in which our spiritual life may be imagined as a garden, using two different approaches to the idea of what a garden is. A garden is an enclosed, protected space; it is also a space that does not take care of itself spontaneously but needs continuous and systematic work in order to flourish. I shall relate the first idea, of enclosure and protection, to our *external garden*, the various physical spaces in which we actually live our lives; and the second idea, of the need for cultivation and work, to the *interior garden* of the mind and spirit. In conclusion I shall consider how these two approaches complement one another in thinking about the metaphor of the garden in spiritual life.

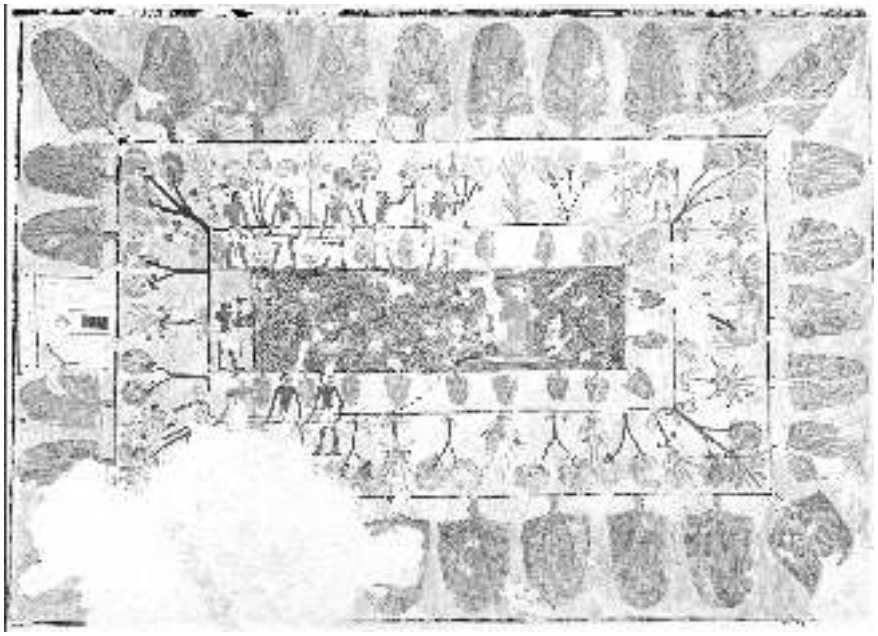
The External Garden

The image of the garden in the context of the relationship between God and the human person is embedded in the Bible. Already in its very first book, Genesis, we encounter the Garden of Eden. To understand Eden better it is worth examining the place of garden symbolism in other ancient Near Eastern cultures as well.

The Garden in Ancient Egypt

In Egypt during the period of the Old Kingdom 'gardens represented deity'.[1] In the New Kingdom there existed a custom of digging graves within gardens, seen in texts and artwork such as the tomb painting known as the Garden of Rekhmire. The owner of this garden expressed his hope of being able to walk through the garden after death, to rest under its sycamores and wonder at its beauty.[2]

[1] Alison Daines, 'Egyptian Gardens', *Studia Antiqua*, 6/1 (2008), 15–25, here 16.
[2] Mariusz Rosik, 'Discovering the Secrets of God's Gardens: Resurrection as New Creation', *Liber Annuus*, 58 (2008), 81–98, at 82.



The Garden of Rekhmire, c. *1450* BC

Gardens in ancient Egypt were considered places for relaxation, refreshment and repose.[3] 'They were enclosed either by a reed or thorn fence in the earliest times, or by mud brick walls, which served as protection from both animals and the wind.'[4] Water was essential to them; besides the natural irrigating function which allowed the trees and plants to grow, it also had a symbolic function: 'Temple gardens incorporated water, which represented the original water which covered the earth at the beginning of time'.[5] The orientation of the garden and the plants in it denoted particular deities and sacred ideas. Trees and plants represented gods such as Re, Min, Thoth, Osiris, Horus, Isis and Hathor.[6]

The Garden in Ancient Mesopotamia

The Sumerian myth called *Enki and Ninḫursaĝa* describes the island of Dilmun, where its narrative is set. The island is identified both as a 'land' and a 'city': 'a pure, clean, and bright place, without violence, suffering,

[3] Daines, 'Egyptian Gardens', 22.
[4] Jane M. H. Bigelow, 'Ancient Egyptian Gardens', *The Ostracon*, 2/1 (2000), 7–11, here 9.
[5] Alix Wilkinson, 'Symbolism and Design in Ancient Egyptian Gardens', *Garden History*, 22/1 (1994), 1–17, here 2, and see 8.
[6] Daines, 'Egyptian Gardens', 16, 18.

sickness or death. A place of peace, blessing, and fertility.'[7] Dilmun is a paradise without any stain of evil. It is described as a 'land of the living', 'the place where the sun rises', where,

> The sick-eyed says not 'I am sick-eyed',
> The sick-headed says not 'I am sick-headed',
> Its old woman says not 'I am an old woman',
> Its old man says not 'I am an old man'.[8]

Dilmun, however, lacks water; but Enki, the god of water, solves the problem by ordering Utu, the sun god, 'to fill it with fresh water brought up from the earth. Dilmun is thus turned into a divine garden, green with fruit-laden fields and meadows.' Dilmun is presented as 'a land of deathlessness and immortality'.[9]

The motif of garden also appears in the *Epic of Gilgameš*, which describes a journey made by the eponymous hero with his friend Enkidu to challenge Ḫumbasa, the guardian of the Cedar Forest, home of the gods.[10] When they approach the seat of gods, they find a garden: 'From the face of the mountain the cedars raise aloft their luxuriance. Good is their shade, full of delight.'[11]

The Garden in Ancient Persia

The Persian word for garden is *pardis*. It probably derives from the Median word *paridaeza—pari* (around) and *daeza* (wall)—referring to an enclosed park or garden: 'a luminous and perfumed place, populated by a number of angelical and beautiful creatures'.[12] The fence or wall around the perimeter of a Persian garden is indeed a distinctive feature. This enclosure provides,

> … the image of an internal paradise in the heart of deserts guarded against the eyes of strangers. Apart from creating a boundary it also acted as an interface between the dry hot outer area and the green, shady and semi-paradise inner area.[13]

[7] Ivan Hrůša, *Ancient Mesopotamian Religion: A Descriptive Introduction* (Münster: Ugarit, 2015), 45; Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), volume 4, 94.
[8] Quoted in Samuel Noah Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: U. of Chicago, 1963), 281–282.
[9] Kramer, *Sumerians*, 148, 282.
[10] Andrew R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts* (New York: Oxford UP, 2003), volume 1, 466; volume 2, 822.
[11] Rosik, 'Discovering the Secrets of God's Gardens', 83.
[12] Leila Mahmoudi Farahani, Bahareh Motamed and Elmira Jamei, 'Persian Gardens: Meanings, Symbolism, and Design', *Landscape Online*, 46 (2016), 1–19, here 2.
[13] Farahani, Motamed and Jamei, 'Persian Gardens', 8.

Persian gardens are also characterized by the use of straight lines and rectangular plans with perpendicular angles, the mixing of evergreen and deciduous trees, varied planting and the inclusion of a central pavilion.[14]

Water, however, in the form of pools and ponds, is the most significant element in a Persian garden, as it transforms the desert into a fertile place 'where trees and flowers could grow'. Persian gardens aim not merely to provide 'green spaces for the inhabitants', but also to create 'the opportunity for further interaction between the human and nature'. They constitute a space connecting what is real with what is metaphysical: the form and matter are concrete and real, but the content is symbolic and refers to immaterial concepts. Some scholars argue that the typical layout of Persian gardens, 'is a metaphor of the cosmos. In this sense, a Persian garden is considered as a universe whose architect is God and the human is a seedling planted and created by God.'[15]

A space connecting what is real with what is metaphysical

The Garden in the Book of Genesis

The garden depicted by the author of the Book of Genesis fits into the pattern of gardens in the ancient Near Eastern mentality and meets every expectation that that implies. In particular it displays motifs of: 'the unmediated presence of the deity … the source of the subterranean life-giving waters which supply the whole earth, abundant fertility and trees of supernatural qualities and great beauty'.[16] Jan M. Bremmer writes: 'The first chapters of Genesis mention a landscaped, enclosed park, full of fruit-trees, planted by God himself, with a river running through it'.[17]

To speak of this garden, the authors of the Septuagint used the Greek word *paradeisos*, which, like the Persian *pardis*, most likely derives from Median *paridaeza*.[18] The Hebrew word for garden, *gan*, also refers to a fenced enclosure protected by a wall or hedge, and comes from the verb *ganan*, which means to cover, protect, enclose.[19] The Old Testament

[14] Farahani, Motamed and Jamei, 'Persian Gardens', 2.
[15] Farahani, Motamed and Jamei, 'Persian Gardens', 2, 13, 17.
[16] Howard N. Wallace, *The Eden Narrative* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1985), 83; see also Terje Stordalen, *Echoes of Eden: Genesis 2–3 and Symbolism of the Eden Garden in Biblical Hebrew Literature* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 256.
[17] Jan M. Bremmer, 'Paradise: from Persia, via Greece, into the Septuagint', in *Paradise Interpreted: Representations of Biblical Paradise in Judaism and Christianity*, edited by Gerard P. Luttikhuizen (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1–20, here 1.
[18] Bremmer, 'Paradise', 1; Jean Delumeau, *History of Paradise: The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition* (New York: Continuum, 1995), 4.
[19] William J. Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel: A Theological Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 19.

distinguishes between *gan* and *Eden*, as the place where the garden was planted (Genesis 2:8, 10; 4:16). Some other expressions appear, such as the garden of Yahweh (Genesis 3:10; Isaiah 51:3), and the garden of God (Ezekiel 28:13, 31:9).[20] But when the Septuagint used *paradeisos* as a translation for all these terms, it 'shift[ed] to a more religious meaning' and 'took on the connotation of the garden of God'.[21] Though the garden was planted by God like a horticulturalist, God does not actually live in the garden.[22]

The garden of Eden is separated from the outside world, and it becomes a place where life is made possible. These are the two fundamental features of the garden. The first appears directly from the etymologies both of *gan* and *paradeisos*. And the second, the possibility of life, results from the presence of water. Gardens in the ancient Near East offered a space where trees and plants could grow and animals could live. When you went out of the garden, you found yourself in the desert, where everything was sun-scorched. As a result life was impossible outside the garden. In central Europe, by contrast, both inside and outside a garden everything is green. This is why it can be difficult for Europeans to comprehend the idea of the garden in the mentality of the ancient Near East, where only gardens offered conditions that made life possible—simply because they contained water and gave protection. This is why the garden creates a space appropriate for physical life. In the book of Genesis even God would walk in the garden, not in the desert outside it.

The creation of the Garden of Eden is presented by the author of Genesis as taking place after the creation of human beings. The first parents were placed in the garden to till and keep it.[23] God wants to enter into relationship with them, and the creation account at Genesis 2:8–25 indicates the nature of that relationship. The fact that Adam and Eve live in the garden testifies to their harmony with God.[24] They are also in harmony with nature and one another. Though the man and his wife are naked, they feel no shame (Genesis 2:25). There is no affective disorder within the human person on the moral plane, which appeared later, with the Fall.

For this state of full harmony is not something inevitable or unconditional. In the centre of the garden grows the tree of the knowledge

[20] Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 161.
[21] Ed Noort, 'Gan-Eden in the Context of the Mythology of the Hebrew Bible', in *Paradise Interpreted*, 21.
[22] Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 161.
[23] Hamilton, *Book of Genesis*, 162.
[24] Rosik, 'Discovering the Secrets of God's Gardens', 84.

of good and evil (Genesis 2:9). The first parents can eat from any of the trees except this one (Genesis 2:17). Obedience to God's command is necessary for immortality. Adam and Eve are like guests; they are called to live in relationship with God, but they do so under a certain rule that was put in place by God.[25] The garden, thus, 'is a special place, separated from a world that needs to be brought under the dominion of the divine rule, for which Eden is a model'.[26] The presence of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and subordination to divine rules, distinguish the Garden of Eden from other gardens in ancient Near Eastern cultures.

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, ***by the Master of the Mazarine Hours, 1414***

The External Garden and Spiritual Life

The Bible gives us an idea of the garden as a separated, enclosed space that offers an opportunity for life in harmony, in the divine presence and in relationship with God. It is a space that demonstrates the beauty of nature, which in turn has an impact on the human person. Is it possible to find a space like this in our daily life?

A family home, for example, might be this kind of garden. It is a space separated from the world in which family relationships can grow and mature. It is also an enclosed space in which each member of the household can and should find an internal peace, quiet and security, and an openness to divine presence. In this way a home, like a garden, becomes a space for the encounter with God and for life in God's presence.

For the family of a religious community, a monastery or a convent can play the role of a garden in which life according to a religious rule and constitutions is cultivated. For Carmelites, in particular, this metaphor

[25] See Dumbrell, *Faith of Israel*, 18–19; Rosik, 'Discovering the Secrets of God's Gardens', 84–85.
[26] Dumbrell, *Faith of Israel*, 19.

relates in a beautiful and symbolic way to the very origins of their order, named after Mount Carmel, which means *divine garden* or *divine vineyard*. The first Carmelite hermits, who decided no longer to live as a group of separate individuals, but as a community, led their life on this mountain in accordance with the Rule given them by St Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, some time between 1206 and 1214. When they were forced to leave Mount Carmel and flee from the Holy Land to Europe, the houses they founded there reminded them of their first community.

Each church is also an enclosed space where the believer can meet God and stand in God's presence. Such spaces can be found even in the noisiest, busiest places, such as the chapel of the Tyburn Convent in London, a house of cloistered, contemplative nuns that sits at the top of Hyde Park, by the Marble Arch, steps away from the bustle of Oxford Street. Here (thanks to double- or triple-glazed windows) it is possible to adore God in the Blessed Sacrament in complete silence for a whole day.

Literal parks and gardens also remain spaces in which to contemplate nature and relax, where people of any faith can raise their thoughts and hearts to God who created this world in such a beautiful way. Finally, we can look at our planet Earth as the garden in which we live, protected and separated from the rest of the universe, where we as humanity can develop and grow. Sadly, we have shown ourselves unable to appreciate or make good use of this garden. In 2015 Pope Francis dedicated his encyclical *Laudato si'* to the problem of how we behave towards the planet on which we live. He asked us to protect our home and to open up a dialogue about the way in which we are shaping its future.

Alongside our lack of harmony with the world there is also lack of harmony between people. Family homes are not always protected spaces in which we can find security and harmonious life. The practice of our life of faith is often far from ideal, and church is not always a place where we can experience encounter with God: sometimes because it is empty, sometimes because people do not have the time or will to come, sometimes because of other reasons. Are the problems we have in our external garden related to the problems of our interior garden, that is, our human interior? I will explore this now.

The Interior Garden

So far I have placed emphasis on the garden as an enclosed space which makes life possible because of the existence of water. This way of thinking about the garden, however, is not the only one. We can also highlight

the beauty of the garden—its vegetation, greenery, fertility and internal harmony, or the selection of species of plants for the garden. This beauty, however, is not achieved spontaneously, but requires a lot of effort, and systematic and persistent work. Gardens do not take care of themselves, but require weeding, ordering and organizing, including the eradication of what is harmful.

The Interior Garden in the Bible

In Genesis the human person was placed in the garden to take care of it. The garden provided our first parents with food. Harmonious life in the garden depended on obedience to the divine law. We know from the narrative of Genesis that our first parents broke that law and ate the fruit of the forbidden tree. As a result they were expelled from the space of life into the space of death and lost the harmonious life they had before original sin. But this is not the end of the story. Of course, the former harmony cannot be fully restored and death cannot be eliminated from the space outside the garden. Evil and death are present in the world and even the resurrection of Christ did not change that.

However it is possible, as divine revelation unfolds, to discover a way out of this situation. It was God who sought the first parents when they hid themselves. And it was God who made garments of skin for them and clothed them (Genesis 3:21). In this way God took care of them, demonstrating God's faithfulness despite human unfaithfulness.[27] In the New Testament, the motif of the garden appears once again as both a place of sin and a place of divine

***Noli me tangere*, by Lavinia Fontana, 1581**

[27] Rosik, 'Discovering the Secrets of God's Gardens', 94.

resurrection.[28] The burial of Jesus took place in a garden and the discovery by Mary Magdalene of the open tomb of Jesus at sunrise is a symbol of his new life. Through Jesus' resurrection the garden is once again the place of divine presence.

The same garden motif is used by John in the Book of Revelation where, together with the tree of life, it is a sign of the eternal joy of the saved who live together with God. As the divine revelation proceeds, 'we are … in terms of biblical eschatology, moving from a localized Eden in Genesis 2 to the new creation as a universal Eden in Revelation 22: 1–5'.[29] Our way to this universal eschatological Eden exists thanks to work of redemption; it may be seen as a consequence of divine grace but, like the harmony in the Garden of Eden, it is not something automatic. Jesus tells us what we as human beings have to do: to deny ourselves, take up our cross, follow him and lose our own life for his sake in order to find life, repent and believe in the gospel (Matthew 16: 24–25; Mark 1: 15). This involves systematic and continuous work on our human part.

The Consequences of Original Sin

Expulsion from the Garden was just one of the consequences of our first parents' fall. They became aware that they were naked and made loincloths for themselves (Genesis 3: 7), so we can see some change in the affective sphere. They did not become like God, but they did experience the reality of evil. They had not known this reality before, because evil was hidden in the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Since it was prohibited to eat the fruit from this tree, it did not harm the human person.[30]

What the first parents did cannot be reduced to merely an act of disobedience, a rebellion against the rules made by God that resulted in expulsion from the Garden and the release of evil. By eating the prohibited fruit Adam and Eve experienced the reality of evil and infected their human nature with it. This is why their action brings bad consequences. We all experience this change, which touches the whole of the moral plane. St Paul writes:

[28] Federico Giuntoli, *L'anima dei luoghi. Un itinerario biblico dal 'deserto' al 'giardino'* (Milan: San Paolo, 2009), 42.
[29] Dumbrell, *Faith of Israel*, 20; see also Rosik, 'Discovering the Secrets of God's Gardens', 85; Delumeau, *History of Paradise*, 5.
[30] Dariusz Dziadosz, 'Drzewo poznania dobra i zła a koncepcja Stwórcy w Rdz 2,4b–3,24', *Biblica et Patristica Thoruniensia*, 7 (2014), 81–105, at 103–104.

> I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. (Romans 7:15)
>
> For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want. (Galatians 5:17)

St Thomas Aquinas teaches us that the fall of the first parents left us with four wounds in our human psyche: weakness, ignorance, malice and concupiscence.[31] Though original sin had its own consequences, however, it did not destroy our ontological unity. We still remain unique and integral human beings; we simply have difficulties in the moral sphere.

St John of the Cross has a similar insight into this condition of human nature. Using different language he describes something like what St Paul experienced. John recognises two elements in human nature: the lower, sensual part and the higher, spiritual part. To the lower part he assigns the flesh and external (sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch) and internal senses (phantasy, imagination, sensual memory). In the higher part he distinguishes intellect, memory and will. This is not the complete structure, but it is enough for our purposes.[32]

What John of the Cross notices is that these two parts do not have the same aspirations. They do not operate in an ordered and integrated way. They do not work as a unity from a functional point of view. Each has its own goals, strives for them, wants to impose them on the other and seeks to arrange its activity according to them. This means that there cannot be agreement between them because each part wants to reign over the other and over the whole person. This internal conflict is actually the battle of each human being with him- or herself. We all experience this.[33]

For example: someone wakes up in the morning, tired and not having slept enough. The first idea this person has is: *I want to sleep longer, I do not want to get up, just another few minutes*. This is what the flesh says

[31] Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.2, q. 85, a. 3

[32] There are three models of human psychological structure in the *Spiritual Canticle* and they are associated with three symbols: the hill (*la montiña*) (redaction A, 25.6; redaction B, 16.10), the city and its outskirts (*la ciudad y sus arrabales*) (A, 31.7; B, 18.7) and 'strength' (*el caudal*) (A, 19.4; B, 28.4). Taking into account all the elements specified by St John of the Cross in these models, it is possible to reconstruct a detailed image of the psychological–ontological human mechanism. See St John of the Cross, *The Spiritual Canticle*, in *The Collected Works of St John of the Cross*, translated by Kieran Kavanagh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, DC: ICS, 1991), 459–630.

[33] Federico Ruiz, *Introducción a San Juan de la Cruz. El escritor, los escritos, el sistema* (Madrid: Editorial Católica,1968), 306.

and wants from this person. After second thoughts another idea appears: *I do not have time, I have to get up and go to work, to school*, or whatever the reason might be. And this is what the intellect says. In the end the decision must be made: to get up or to stay longer in bed. Each day we have a lot of situations like this and we have to make decisions about them. Some of these situations are definitely much more complex, and making the decision is not so easy. If we multiply the number of situations by days, by weeks or by months, we will see that this conflict, this battle of the person with him- or herself is everywhere. John distinguishes between those who organize their lives according to their sensual part and those who follow their spiritual part. He is not afraid to call the former sensual, earthly or animal.[34]

It is worth noticing at this point how important our human will is, because it is the will that makes decisions. And the will tends to do what appears to be more attractive for the human person. When we go back to the words of St Paul and to the consequences of original sin, we can see that we are not always attracted to what is good or, to say it better, what is good in God's eyes. Moreover, in itself, sin is not the only reason for the internal conflicts we experience. Our internal human tension is much more complex and also contains a positive element. The conflicts that we experience are rooted in the fact that, despite our sin, our relationship with God still remains a reality in us and can be felt through strong impulses and claims. This spiritual battle is part of our human life. We cannot conceal the fact that, as human persons, we are created in God's image and likeness, and this relationship also affects our daily life. Since our ontological continuity is preserved, we retain a deep sense of being a single person and, from a theological perspective, a faith in being a creature and a child of God despite our sins.[35] The insatiable desire for immediate gratification can be treated as a misinterpretation of the call coming from the depths of the human being in which the human person experiences and meets God.

A creature and a child of God despite our sins

The Interior Garden and Spiritual Life

It is our human will that makes decisions about what to choose and what to refuse, and that will tends to favour what appears more attractive.

[34] See St John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, 26.3, in *Collected Works*.
[35] See Federico Ruiz, *San Giovanni della Croce. Mistico e maestro* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 1989), 147–148.

Since we might be attracted by something that is opposed to God and consequently damaging to us, we need to look at our human interior as a garden that does not take care of itself. This garden needs effort: persistence and systematic work on our part. We can find this point of view in the writings of St Teresa of Ávila, who writes in the *Book of Her Life*:

> Beginners must realise that in order to give delight to the Lord they are starting to cultivate a garden on very barren soil, full of abominable weeds. His Majesty pulls up the weeds and plants good seed. Now let us keep in mind that all of this is already done by the time a soul is determined to practice prayer and has begun to make use of it. And with the help of God we must strive like good gardeners to get these plants to grow and take pains to water them so that they do not wither but come to bud and flower and give forth a most pleasant fragrance to provide refreshment for this Lord of ours. Then He will often come to take delight in this garden and find His joy among these virtues.[36]

This aspect of the garden is common to us all, because each person has to strive to be a more decent human being every single day. The doctrine of St John of the Cross introduces the notion of the purification and interiorisation of the whole person that is necessary to overcome our functional disharmony.[37] The One who purifies is God. So the process of purification is not only about human involvement, but first of all about divine grace. To have access to this grace, the centre of each person must be moved from the senses to the spirit, which must become the foundation of the whole activity of the person so that everything becomes concentrated on God.[38] This does not mean that John excludes the senses. He wants, rather, to subordinate the senses to the spirit and for us to grow in this way in our spiritual life. The form of life to which St John of the Cross leads his readers is called divinisation.[39]

We need time for this transformation to happen; it is not something we can achieve during the break between the first and second halves of the football match. We cannot expect that we will become holy immediately. Denying ourselves and taking up our own cross to follow Jesus Christ is a process that lasts for a whole lifetime. It is not something that we can

[36] St Teresa of Ávila, *The Book of Her Life*, 11.6, in *The Collected Works of St Teresa of Ávila*, translated by Kieran Kavanagh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, DC: ICS, 1976–1985).
[37] St John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, 1.1.
[38] See Henri Sanson, *L'Esprit humain selon Saint Jean de la Croix* (Paris: U. de France, 1953), 221.
[39] St John of the Cross, *Spiritual Canticle*, redaction B, 39.4; see Ruiz, *San Giovanni della Croce*, 154–155.

learn once and for all like walking, riding a bicycle or driving a car. Simply because we are attracted by different things and not necessarily by what is good in God's eyes, this spiritual battle will remain with us. We have continuously to grow in detachment from what is opposed to God and in this way purify our interior garden. Our human strength is not enough to do this. St Teresa of Ávila writes about 'the help of God', but to ask for that help or make use of it, we need to be in a relationship with God and this relationship has to grow.

How can we develop such a relationship? In our relationship with God, to my mind, we have the same situation as in our human ones: we have to meet; there has to be an encounter between us. Of course, a lot of people today use social media or dating websites to get to know new people, but sooner or later they have to meet each other in order to speak and to be together in the real world and in real situations. Our parents had to meet each other, well before we appeared in the world. Nothing can substitute for a real meeting, face to face, and a real talk with another person. We experience it in our daily life; it creates a space for relationship. In our daily religious practice we have at least three possibilities for meeting God: Holy Mass, prayer and reflection on scripture.

The Gardens of God

The Garden of Eden was a space where the human person could live in harmony with God, nature and her- or himself. Despite the expulsion from Eden there is still a way to regain something of what our first parents lost, but it requires work on our own interior garden. The two concepts of the external and interior garden complement one another. Each of them corresponds to a different aspect of our spiritual life. On the one hand, we can have a space that gives us protection and the possibilities of life in harmony, of living in God's presence, of growing in relationship with God and with other human persons, and of development in all our human dimensions. On the other hand, this does not happen automatically, but requires the acceptance of divine law and constant interior work. In this way our human will may be strengthened with divine help and Christian values, rules and commandments may be something with which we identify ourselves and not merely the law we have to obey.

Our internal garden is our centre for decision-making. This is why we should pay attention so as to take care of it well and train our will to

make wise and mature decisions. The external garden, if it too is treated well, can strengthen and improve our internal garden. In this way those two gardens complement each other. The emphasis, however, should be placed on the internal garden: on our relationship with God, which shapes all our human relationships, in particular with the world and with other people. Ultimately both gardens belong to the Lord. God is the one who is in charge and it is through God's grace that both are transformed. Without God we can do nothing, so we have patiently to collaborate with that grace.

Jakub Walczak O.Carm. is a Polish Carmelite. He did his philosophical and theological studies at the Catholic University of John Paul II in Krakow. He continued his studies at the Institute of Spirituality of the Gregorian Pontifical University, from which he obtained a licenciate and doctorate in spiritual theology.

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TALKING WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Kathleen Taylor

IT IS ACKNOWLEDGED that the declaration *Nostra aetate* of the Second Vatican Council marked a turning point in the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and non-Christian religions. The declaration specifically mentioned Hinduism and Buddhism as well as Islam and Judaism. In Hinduism, for example, it says,

> … men contemplate the divine mystery and express it through … searching philosophical inquiry. They seek freedom from the anguish of our human condition either through ascetical practices or profound meditation or a flight to God with love and trust. (n. 2)

This wording suggests the influence of scholars of Hinduism on the Council. Although by some later evaluations *Nostra aetate* may have appeared cautious, it opened the way to interfaith dialogue and eventually to the modern theology of religions, which deals in a more positive way than hitherto with Christianity's position relative to other faiths in a diverse world. Catholic theologians have felt permitted, while remaining true to the faith of the Church, to take non-Christian religions seriously as paths to reach God, and even to learn from them.

As Michael Barnes points out, the issue here is not whether people from other faith traditions, as individuals, can be saved—even before Vatican II that was viewed as being under the dispensation of God—but what part in their salvation is played by the religions themselves. 'Are they saved *despite* their traditional beliefs and practice or more exactly *through* them?'[1] The Vatican declaration seems to veer towards the latter view, albeit in the context that the Church 'ever must proclaim Christ "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), in whom men may find the fullness of religious life' (n. 2). In a later decade, Pope Saint John Paul II spoke of the Holy Spirit sowing 'seeds of the Word' in the various cultures

[1] Michael Barnes, *Interreligious Learning: Dialogue, Spirituality and the Christian Imagination* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 15.

of the world, preparing them 'for full maturity in Christ'.[2] As Barnes puts it: 'This is classic Catholic fulfilment (or … "inclusivist") theology; the grace that makes salvation possible is given in virtue of Christ'.[3]

Paradigms

Michael Barnes refers to a 'threefold paradigm' or typology—exclusivism, inclusivism and pluralism—defining three theoretical frameworks for approaching religions other than one's own. (For present purposes we will assume this means from the Christian point of view.) First defined by Alan Race in the 1980s, it has been widely used in theology of religions, but is increasingly found to be unsatisfactory.[4] Each of the terms can be used in a number of ways and the concept of pluralism, especially, raises many issues.[5]

The seminal work of Jacques Dupuis comprehensively outlines the variant forms and critiques of these typologies.[6] Briefly summarised, exclusivism holds firmly to the truth of one's own tradition and the falsity, or at least inadequacy, of all other religious beliefs. It consequently rejects accommodation or dialogue, or at least has no interest in them, although it need not necessarily be inconsistent with accepting the salvation of non-believers.[7] In Christianity this view is often associated with conservative Protestant evangelicals or Calvinists.

Inclusivism is the dominant position of the Roman Catholic Church since Vatican II, of which one version is the 'fulfilment theory' mentioned above: it accepts that there is truth in other religions, but their 'fullness' is to be found in Christ. Another version perhaps goes further: while the 'Christ-event'—the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth—is necessarily salvific for all humanity, the Word and the Spirit, as Persons of the Trinity, can be believed to be at work independently of the historical event of incarnation and of the Christian Church.

The idea of 'seeds of the Word', which the early Church Fathers declared to be present in the Jewish religion and in the pagan philosophies of their day, becomes for Dupuis the basis of a Christian universalism or pluralism. John Paul II's encyclical *Redemptor hominis* of 1979 stated:

[2] John Paul II, *Redemptoris missio*, n. 28.
[3] Barnes, *Interreligious Learning*, 14.
[4] See Alan Race, *Christians and Religious Pluralism: Patterns in the Christian Theology of Religions* (London: SCM, 1983).
[5] See Gavin D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).
[6] Jacques Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997).
[7] D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions*, 29.

> The Fathers of the Church rightly saw in the various religions as it were so many reflections of the one truth, 'seeds of the Word', attesting that, though the routes taken may be different, there is but a single goal to which is directed the deepest aspiration of the human spirit as expressed in its quest for God and also in its quest, through its tending towards God, for the full dimension of its humanity, or in other words for the full meaning of human life.[8]

Dupuis writes that a 'teaching is gradually emerging' from this and other texts that 'true dialogue and authentic encounter' are among the 'fruits of the activity of the Spirit'.[9] The wording of the encyclical affirms a common humanity across religious boundaries.

When John Paul invited representatives of different religions to the World Day of Prayer for Peace at Assisi in 1986, it was a wholly new departure, inspired by *Nostra aetate* but going further. In an address to the Roman curia, he spoke of a 'mystery of unity' beside which differences were 'a less important element'.[10] Although—as Dupuis acknowledges, and as we shall see—the Vatican has not always spoken with one voice, he believes its statements nevertheless display 'an unprecedented openness'. We are a long way from the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (no salvation outside the Church)—the classic expression of what Dupuis calls 'ecclesiocentric exclusivism'.[11]

Paradigm Shifts

Rather than a 'threefold typology', Dupuis writes of 'paradigm shifts'. The first is from an 'ecclesiocentric' to a 'Christocentric' view—this is the move from exclusivism to inclusivism, which rests on Christ rather than the Church. While the 'Christ-event' remains central to human history, its saving grace extends to those of other religious traditions through the implicit, though unrecognised, presence of Christ among them.[12]

Raimondo Panikkar's *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism* could be viewed as the classic expression of Christ-centred inclusivism in relation to that religion, as its title implies; although, in his second edition and later

[8] John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, n.11. Also cited in Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 174.
[9] Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 175.
[10] John Paul II, Christmas greeting to the Roman curia, 22 December 1986, quoted in Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 175.
[11] Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 179, 188.
[12] Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 185–6.

writings, Panikkar moved away from this view towards an emphasis on the *Logos* rather than Christ.[13] The work of Karl Rahner, with its thesis of 'anonymous Christianity', is another statement of Catholic inclusivism. While this is controversial, one significant point among others is that Rahner accepts the 'lawfulness' of other religions and the presence of supernatural grace in them. Here individuals are saved through them and not despite them. Only in Christianity, however, is this grace brought to its fullest expression and effectiveness. Christian faith knows *explicitly* the Christ who in other religions is known 'implicitly'.[14]

There are many problems with inclusivism, not least the implication that Christians understand other religions better than their adherents do. As Charles Mathewes puts it in a critique of the typology: 'Inclusivists claim that other religions should be understood as saying in different (and less adequate) ways what Christians truly say and so are only superficially different'.[15] It must be noted that there are 'inclusivist' versions of other religions which apply similar analyses to Christianity.

Panikkar's later position is a form of what Dupuis calls 'Logocentrism', placing the *Logos* or Word at the centre of all religions. He separates the figure of the Christ from the historical Jesus of Nazareth, whose incarnation, death and resurrection (the essential 'Christ-event') constitute one particular cultural and historical expression of what he eventually calls 'the Mystery', which 'cannot be totally identified with Christ', though he claims that Christ is its most powerful symbol.[16] Panikkar also makes a

[13] Raimondo Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism: Towards an Ecumenical Christophany* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1981 [1964]).
[14] See Michael Barnes, *Religions in Conversation: Christian Identity and Religious Pluralism* (London: SPCK, 1989), 53 following.
[15] Charles Mathewes, 'Pluralism, Otherness and the Augustinian Tradition', *Modern Theology*, 14/1 (January 1998), 85–112, here 86.
[16] Panikkar, *Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, 24–25, quoted in Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 152.

distinction between faith and beliefs, the former being 'a lived relationship to transcendence', while the latter are the varied sociocultural expressions of faith.[17] With the later Panikkar one moves on from inclusivism towards pluralism, although Christ remains of central importance.

Another 'paradigm shift' identified by Dupuis moves further in the pluralist direction: from 'Christocentrism' to 'Theocentrism', the latter supplanting the former as outmoded. The most representative exponent of this is John Hick, who used the analogy of the Copernican revolution: the sun instead of the earth is placed at the centre of the solar system, and in the same way the pluralist places God, rather than Christ or Christianity, at the centre. 'The various religions, Christianity included, represent as many ways leading to God, all of which, differences notwithstanding, have the same validity and equal value.'[18]

In a secular society this view is superficially attractive, and is probably the one most people intuitively hold. But there are problems here too. For one thing, it can be argued that 'God', as much as 'Christ', is a tradition-specific concept, belonging to the monotheistic religions. It may be replaced by 'reality' or some other abstract principle such as 'ultimate concern' or 'Ground of Being', which can end up becoming a rather empty category.[19] What this kind of pluralism does, in effect, is to say not that all religions are equally true but that they are all equally wrong. The goal of all religions is defined in a way that does not apply to any of them. It is 'a view from nowhere'.[20]

Another paradigm-shift, which Dupuis sees as more useful, is from God- or Reality- or Logos-centred views towards the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is God's 'point of entry' wherever God is revealed. But 'pneumato-centred' perspectives also divide according to how much emphasis is placed on the Spirit's relation to Christ. Dupuis insists:

> To be complete a pneumatic Christology must stress, on the one hand, the active presence of the Spirit throughout the human story of the man Jesus and, on the other, the sending of the Spirit to the world by the risen Christ.[21]

[17] Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 151.
[18] Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 186; and see John Hick, *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion* (London: Macmillan, 1973).
[19] Gavin D'Costa, 'The Impossibility of a Pluralist View of Religions', *Religious Studies*, 32 (1996), 223–232, at 227.
[20] Barnes, *Interreligious Learning*, 12.
[21] Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 195–198.

The Holy Spirit remains the Spirit of Jesus, but as the Third Person of the Trinity the Spirit is universal and works in the world in ways we do not necessarily understand.

Eventually we arrive at a view of religious pluralism that moves us away from conflicting claims about uniqueness and from the 'threefold typology'. Dupuis quotes with approval what he calls 'an important statement' from the thirteenth annual meeting of the Indian Theological Association in 1991. This introduces a new dimension:

> The religions of the world are expressions of the human openness to God. They are signs of God's presence in the world. Every religion is unique and through this uniqueness, religions enrich one another. In their specificity, they manifest different faces of the supreme Mystery which is never exhausted. In their diversity, they enable us to experience the richness of the One more profoundly. When religions encounter one another in dialogue, they build up a community in which differences become complementarities and divergences are changed into pointers to communion.[22]

This statement also clearly expresses Dupuis's position on Christian pluralism as a basis for dialogue. While the historical Christ-event is the culminating point of God's plan for the salvation of humanity, all humanity's religious traditions contain memories of God's dealing with peoples and cultures. Religious diversity should not merely be accepted as a 'fact of life' but should be *valued* as 'a divine grace to be thankful for and an opportunity to be seized—a gift and a task'.[23] The task is not that of seeking a conceptual unity of religions, it is about religions learning from each other.

The development of the possibilities of dialogue with other religions, to which the door had been opened by Vatican II, received a setback when the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published the declaration *Dominus Jesus* in 2000, criticizing 'relativistic theories'. It was largely aimed at Dupuis's book. It stated (n. 6): 'The theory of the limited, incomplete, or imperfect character of the revelation of Jesus Christ, which would be complementary to that found in other religions, is contrary to the church's

[22] 'Towards an Indian Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism: Our Ongoing Search', in *Religious Pluralism: An Indian Christian Perspective*, edited by Kuncheria Pathil (Delhi: ISPCK, 1991), 349, quoted in Dupuis, *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, 199–200.

[23] Jacques Dupuis 'Christianity and Religions: Complementarity and Convergence', in *Many Mansions? Multiple Religious Belonging and Christian Identity,* edited by Catherine Cornille (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002), 61–73, here 62.

faith'.[24] Despite such opposition, Dupuis and others working in theology of religions have managed to retain the centrality of the Christ-event without defining it in a rigid form that obstructs the openness necessary for really learning about another religion. Dupuis says that the Kingdom of God is more than the Church, and Christians do not know all there is to know about Christ.

Treating all religions on the basis of equality does not have to end in relativism. The irony is that in the end *all* religions are in fact exclusivist, though they might express this as inclusivism or pluralism.[25] (*All religions are really saying the same as we do.*) They all make universal truth claims and the way through these differences is not to insist on one's own 'truth', nor to seek to eliminate difference as in the 'old' kind of pluralism associated with John Hick. Michael Barnes, who writes about and engages in interfaith dialogue, expresses the new approach succinctly and boldly: 'Religions make sense only as comprehensive wholes or totalities. In one sense they are irreducible; remove one part and you change the whole edifice.' He also writes that they are 'not competing ideologies'. They represent different ways of being human, 'each quite unique'. He agrees with Panikkar in seeing the uniting element in faith itself, which he too distinguishes from 'belief'. While this might sound like another abstraction, it goes along with a recognition that the transcendent object of faith *can* only be expressed in the sociocultural particularities of 'beliefs'. There is a dialectical relation between them. We cannot strip a religion of its 'outer layers' of beliefs to define a 'common core'.[26]

Religions ... represent different ways of being human

A useful metaphor could be language—not in the superficial sense of religions *saying the same thing in different words*, but with the recognition that there are things that can be said in one language more clearly or more subtly than in another. There is always the need for sensitive translation, which takes account of meaning within a context, rather than simple verbal equivalents. Above all, language is intended to *communicate*; it promotes social relationships. Michael Barnes insists that interfaith dialogue is between persons, not ideas or items of thought. He calls this theology *of* dialogue, rather than theology *for* dialogue. The meaning emerges out of the dialogue itself if it is sincere and has no hidden agenda

[24] Quoted in Joseph O'Leary, 'Toward a Buddhist Interpretation of Christian Truth', in *Many Mansions?*, 29–38, here 36.
[25] See D'Costa, 'The Impossibility of a Pluralist View of Religions'.
[26] Barnes, *Religions in Conversation*, 126, 131, 127, 80.

(such as being a covert form of mission), rather than from a predefined normative position. Dialogism means learning to *listen* and not imposing one's projections on to the other. As Barnes puts it: 'the conference model gives way to the conversation model'.[27]

Comparative Theology

Whereas theology of religions seeks a theoretical framework within which to place other religions from the perspective of one's own, comparative theology is to do with the actual practice of comparison; although it can be argued that the two are not separable. The positions outlined above about dialogue, equality, open-endedness and acceptance of difference can be seen to belong to a new, updated theology of religions which in turn forms the context for a new work of comparison.[28] In other words, the new comparative theology can only be practised on the basis of new forms of theology of religions. That is not to say that comparisons do not continue to be made from the point of view of the old typologies. Kristin Beise-Kiblinger shows how Buddhist appropriations of Christ and the Gospels can be classified as 'Buddhist inclusivism'.[29] In practice, most people's instinctive attitude, to a religion other than their own would come under one or another heading of the old threefold typology.

Silk Painting of the Buddha Jesus, *Chinese, twelfth century*

[27] Barnes, *Religions in Conversation*, 118–119, 117, 89, 112.
[28] See Kristin Beise-Kiblinger 'Relating Theology of Religions and Comparative Theology', in *The New Comparative Theology: Interreligious Insights from the Next Generation*, edited by Francis X. Clooney (London and New York: T. and T. Clark, 2010), 21–42.
[29] Beise-Kiblinger 'Relating Theology of Religions and Comparative Theology', 41.

The 'new comparative theology' arose in Boston in the 1980s and is associated with the work of two Catholic priests, James Fredericks and Francis X. Clooney, and their circle. Clooney writes that when theology becomes comparative it,

> … marks acts of faith seeking understanding which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but which, from that foundation, venture into learning from one or more other faith traditions. This learning is sought for the sake of fresh theological insights that are indebted to the newly encountered tradition/s as well as the home tradition.[30]

This is distinct from the academic study of religions in that it starts from a position of personal faith. Although it takes the fruits of academic study into account it is based on theological concerns, on theological engagement. 'Comparative' does not mean evaluation, or 'deciding which is better'; nor is it a scientific exercise. It is contemplative, in essence, a spiritual practice,

> … by which we see the other in light of our own, and our own in light of the other. It ordinarily starts with the intuition of an intriguing resemblance that prompts us to place two realities—texts, images, practices, doctrines, persons—near one another, so that they may be seen over and again, side by side …. Finally we see ourselves differently, intuitively uncovering dimensions of ourselves that would not otherwise, by a non-comparative logic, come to the fore.[31]

The other religion acts like a mirror. Clooney rejects the term 'interreligious theology', which might be used instead, precisely because he wants to preserve this notion of the power of comparison itself. It is not about deciding which religion is true, or about making general theories of religion; the point is that the real work, the conversation or dialogue, is ultimately brought back to the 'home tradition' and transforms it. This, he declares, is the only way in which theology can be adequate to its task in the modern world, where 'other religions' are not just closer geographically, but present in our own society, as our neighbours. Diversity is not only around us but within:[32] 'thinking interreligiously' is an essential aspect of theology itself today.[33]

[30] Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning across Religious Borders* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 10.
[31] Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 11.
[32] Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 6–8.
[33] James L. Fredericks, 'Introduction', in *New Comparative Theology*, i–xx, here xi.

Comparative theology belongs to the process of dialogue, but it is not only a dialogue between people. There is also dialogue between texts and 'classic' religious literatures. Clooney has developed a method of highly focused textual study in his comparative work on Hinduism which, as both an academic Indologist and a Catholic theologian, he is well qualified to do. He has written on the wider Hindu tradition as well, but has probed in depth two areas in particular: the Sanskrit commentarial tradition called *mimāmsa* and the Sanskrit and Tamil tradition of the South Indian Śrī Vaisnava sect.

While he is clearly captivated by the passionately devotional poetry of the latter, it is apparent that what attracts Clooney just as much is theology itself—in his words, 'doing theology' in an interreligious context, as the subtitle of one of his books suggests.[34] He claims the *āchāryas*—the medieval commentators on the Vaisnava poems—as fellow theologians.[35] Thus he avoids appropriating or universalising—that is, separating the texts from their social and religious context and their traditional 'owners'. By way of comparison Clooney reads selected Christian texts or literature alongside his Hindu ones, not intellectually analysing but allowing the resonances between them to operate. Such practice of 'reading back and forth' is a meditative discipline which he claims works to change and enrich one's experience of both.[36]

This is only a more conscious and theological version of what happens inevitably when people read the texts of another religion. In today's diverse world where 'we now have available to us an abundance of great theological texts from many traditions, in accessible translations', it is even more important to learn to read 'across' religious borders in depth.[37] The work of Paul Griffiths on 'religious reading' is relevant here: being open and vulnerable to the text, allowing it to penetrate and to change the self. This contrasts with what Griffiths calls 'consumerist reading'—reading for pleasure or for information, or to dominate the text. For Griffiths the latter category would include academic reading.[38]

[34] Francis X. Clooney, *Seeing through Texts: Doing Theology among the Śri Vaisnavas of South India* (Albany: State U. of New York, 1996); see also *The Truth, the Way, the Life: Christian Commentary on the Three Holy Mantras of the Srivaisnavas* (Leuven: Peeters, 2008); *Beyond Compare: St Francis de Sales and Sri Vedanta Desika on Loving Surrender to God* (Washington, DC: Georgetown UP, 2008). For Clooney's other major books see *Comparative Theology*, 20.
[35] Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 29.
[36] See, for example, Clooney, *Truth, Way, Life*, 189–191.
[37] Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 5.
[38] Paul Griffiths, *Religious Reading: The Place of Reading in the Practice of Religion* (New York: OUP, 1999), 41.

Clooney has his critics, particularly for his refusal to come to conclusions, either normative or ethical. He sidesteps truth claims and ethical issues—for example, conservative gender and caste values among the Śrī Vaisnava, who are a Brahmanical sect.[39] This makes his comparative theology point in very different directions from those of some other scholars who would claim to be in the same field.[40] Gavin D'Costa criticizes Clooney and other comparativists for 'not being concerned enough … with the issue of truth' and for focusing instead on inculturation. D'Costa remarks that none of the comparativists seems to reach a point where they are prepared to make these judgments. He asks, 'if comparative theology is allied to real engagement with living religious people … then are the texts not susceptible to critical question in respectful and reverential study?'[41]

The new comparative theology, in other words, seems to be thoroughly postmodern, with no 'privileged' point of view, no absolute values or conclusions, no 'grand narrative'. As a result it can paradoxically turn the wheel full circle, to exclusivism or 'radical orthodoxy'. As recognised above, all religions make universal truth claims, and need to be viewed as 'comprehensive wholes'. Says D'Costa: 'All the comparativists want to … represent Christianity in its orthodox form'.[42] Certainly, all the Christian texts that Clooney selects for comparison with his Hindu ones are entirely traditional and orthodox.[43] Superficially his work could look like 'comparison for comparison's sake', and not everyone may hear the 'resonances' he finds in the interreligious passages he has chosen to read together. But I believe his method to be relevant and interesting when, as is often the case today, we seek wisdom in the texts of a tradition other than our own.

Kathleen Taylor is author of *Sir John Woodroffe, Tantra and Bengal: 'An Indian Soul in a European Body?'* (2001). She has studied Indian religion and history at SOAS, London University, and has an MA in theology from Heythrop College, London. She lives in London and is an independent researcher and writer.

[39] Clooney, *Truth, Way, Life*, 186–188.
[40] For example, Tracy Tiemeir, 'Comparative Theology as a Theology of Liberation' and Michelle Vos Roberts, 'Gendering Comparativc Theology' on liberation theology and gender respectively, in *New Comparative Theology*, 129–150 and 109–128.
[41] D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions*, 40, 42.
[42] D'Costa, *Christianity and World Religions*, 39.
[43] Clooney, *Seeing through Texts*, 255 following.

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BEYOND REASON?

The Problem of Solving the Meaning of Life

John Moffatt

WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER, I rolled around on the living-room floor, helpless with laughter, listening to Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* on the radio. Perhaps the best-known gag from the series is when a team of super-computers around the galaxy finally works out that the ultimate answer to the meaning of life is 42—leaving the population of the universe asking: what is the ultimate question?

This actually captures quite nicely the puzzle for all of us who, in different ways, are concerned with integrating the gift of faith with a rich understanding of the world around us. We human beings use our reason to try to understand the way things are and why they are the way they are. We all want to reason rigorously and well—none of us would like to feel that our life is founded on a logical mistake—but sometimes the more mathematical and rigorous our reasoning becomes, the clearer, but the more disappointing, are the answers. If the question about the meaning of life is just an equation, its solution does not really seem to touch us as human beings.

This prompts interesting reflections about the nature of reason that take us back deep into the Christian and Jewish traditions, and the ancient philosophical ideas that they absorbed and transformed. If you look at the beginning of John's Gospel, you read, 'In the beginning was the Word'. When I was growing up, I was slightly puzzled by that expression, but let it wash over me. Then when I got to university I read it for the first time in Greek, and began to see what lay behind it. You see, that verse could as easily be translated as, 'in the beginning was the Reason'. The Greek word '*logos*', used by John to refer to the only-born Son of the Father, gathers in one term a whole range of meanings: word, speech, explanation, account, ratio, definition and human understanding, among others. Across a range of Greek philosophers we find *logos* associated both with

rigorous analysis and with the mystical quest for truth. In the Christian tradition, this divine *logos* is the one who both enables us to interpret our reality and is also the personal object of our love. Here we catch our first glimpse of something that I want to call 'deep' reason.

I want to emphasize that 'deep' reason is a part of our Christian and Jewish heritage. It is a reason that is both more than logic and good science while still *including* logic and good science. I want to use this idea as a way of thinking about some of the recent debates on faith and reason, religion and science.

Human Explanations and the Universe

We might agree that everything that happens in the universe happens in accord with the laws of physics and chemistry. These laws provide us with the most basic explanation of physical events. However, the most basic explanation of events is not always a *complete* explanation. This is most obvious in the primary world of our experience, which is not the world of particles, atoms and molecules, but the world of human beings. In most of our human interactions, if we reduced our explanations to a description of physical events, we wouldn't be able to survive a day at work, let alone our life at home.

Why is your significant other cross? Well it might be something to do with disruption to the molecules—or it might be because you have left your breakfast things for him or her to clear up five days in a row. Yes,

there certainly is disruption to the molecules, but unless you notice the problem with the washing-up as well, you could find your own molecules disrupted in very unpleasant ways. One of the tests of a good explanation is how it affects reality in predictable ways. In human affairs, explanations that take into consideration human desires, motivations and activities do indeed affect reality in predictable ways. You apologise, do the washing-up—and you leave the kitchen in one piece.

There is, of course, a difference between the social behaviour of human beings and the physical behaviour of matter. There is generally more room for surprise and creativity in the case of the former (although quantum physicists may disagree). And this is why the human sciences *look* so much less scientific than the Newtonian behaviour of particles. It is also why Shakespeare is often a better guide for understanding human behaviour than a sociology textbook. But all that depends on defining 'science' and 'reason' as being about *just* exploring the mechanical behaviours of matter—and we do not have to define science and reason so narrowly. That definition is a choice. The choice either excludes human behaviour from the realm of science, or includes it by reducing it to the mechanical behaviours of matter.

Those who choose the latter option would say that if we only knew enough about the physical states of human beings, we would be able to predict each person's next move perfectly. This often leads to a reductive take on human selfhood: human freedom and consciousness are an illusion; the *real* explanation is to do with the laws of physics. This is a perfectly legitimate way of looking at the world—and a very popular one. But all the physics in the world will not solve the problem of that awkward kitchen conversation. Nor will it explain what we are doing when we do physics. Because that is not the sort of explanation physics can provide.

What we find then, is that what we count as ultimate explanations depends not just on logic and observation, but on a *choice*—a choice about how we already prefer to think of ourselves, our universe and our place in it—and about what explanations we are prepared to consider 'real'. So, by one account, human activities and explanations are a second-order reality in a universe of physical elements. By another, our human experience of the world, and our capacity to talk about it and explain things in it, is a primary, irreducible reality; *logos* is an integral part of this universe. But notice: we cannot 'prove' scientifically which world is better; rather, we make a choice based on reasons that are not strictly scientific. What shapes that choice?

Religious Experience and Reasonable Belief

It is interesting how much effort we devote to showing that it is not stupid to believe in God, when actually few of those arguments really touch the main reasons why we believe. It is something about our experience of the world and our inner life that gives us the deepest reason to believe in God. It is on that mysterious edge of things where 'reason' borders on 'awareness'. It is on the same edge where what we see is the same as before, but now there is a change in the quality of the light.

There are, of course, many ways of 'deconstructing' such experience. One of these comes from the Scottish philosopher David Hume and his famous argument about miracles—which I think can be naturally extended to interior religious experience as well. Hume starts from the definition that a miracle is a violation of the laws of nature by a supernatural agency. The core of his argument is that our understanding of the laws of nature is based on our consistent experience. Now, clearly, it will always be reasonable to suppose that events follow the laws of nature, because that is what the weight of our experience tells us happens. And it is always reasonable to rely on the weight of our experience because that is, in the end, all we have to go on.

The question is: can it ever be reasonable to suppose that a law of nature has been violated and that a miracle has occurred? Hume's answer is that it can *never* be reasonable to suppose this. It will always be more probable either that there was some mistake in the evidence or that we had not fully understood or discovered nature's laws. The weight of probability, based on past experience, will always be against the miracle. The miraculous is excluded from reasonable explanations by the definitions of 'miraculous' and 'reasonable'. It is interesting that this argument clearly shifts the weight from the question of *truth* to the question of *reasonable belief*. This is important, because all of us (including David Hume) can have reasonable beliefs, based on the probabilities of experience, which are false.

But let us take a sidestep and ask: do we need to accept Hume's account of a miracle as a violation of a law of nature? I suggest that we do not. What is important is not *how* a remarkable event happened—the mechanics—but what it *means* to us. For Christians, a miracle is above all a sign, a 'meaning event' that speaks to us as we are. There is nothing supernatural about the processes of speaking and hearing words. But when those words are 'I love you', they are life-changing. Catching a large number of fish on Lake Galilee is hardly unnatural; for Simon Peter,

though, that was a moment which spoke to him, the fisherman, directly, clearly and deeply.

This line of thought invites us again to deepen our understanding of things, to move beyond the world of the purely mechanical to the world of the human, from abstract causal understanding to personal, communicative understanding. When we do so we can begin to recognise the final and central puzzle in all that we have looked at so far. The things that mean most to us and that transform our lives cannot be directly communicated to anyone else. Others can have experiences that echo our own, but they cannot have *our* experiences.

The meaning-events in our lives that lead us to a sense of God are central to our self-understanding, but can never be a sufficient reason for David Hume or anyone else to believe that God has touched our lives. He can always find a 'better', 'more probable' explanation for our claims than that our lives have been touched by God, because God is already excluded from his repertoire of reasonable explanations. Our own 'deep reasons' for believing are inescapably personal and communicative, just as God is personal and communicative. This is about deep *logos*: a word, a reason, a logic, which includes but goes beyond physical explanations. This leads me to a way of thinking about this puzzle, and the relationship between a 'narrow', analytic reasoning and a 'deep', human reasoning, that I have found helpful.

A 'narrow', analytic reasoning and a 'deep', human reasoning

The psychiatrist Iain McGilchrist has devoted the last twenty years or so to exploring two different modes of attention, located in the right and left lobes of the brain. The two halves of the brain can communicate, but each more often 'shuts off' the other, so most times we are either in left-brain, focused mode, or in right-brain, open mode. Apparently the left, analytic lobe is where most of our words are—it is the chatty lobe—and so for a long time people assumed that it was the cleverer, more advanced part of the brain. The poor old right lobe was a lobe of few words and was assumed to be primitive, less intelligent and less important.

What McGilchrist wanted to do was show that this assumption was incorrect. The right lobe actually has the more profound, insightful and value-laden appreciation of the world. Through his research he tries to show how the left lobe is unaware of the right lobe and therefore thinks it has the only worthwhile take on reality. He suggests that, perhaps because of this, our culture is over-impressed by 'left-lobe' approaches, and that as a result we are losing something important from our view of the world.

According to McGilchrist, in the ideal relationship, the left lobe is the 'emissary' of the right lobe, which is the 'master'. The left lobe's analysis, rightly taken up, leads to a richer appreciation of the world. The problem is that the left lobe *can* go it alone, and believe that its flat, analysed version of the world is the only true candidate for reality. I found this a helpful way of thinking about our puzzle about reason and reasonableness. The narrow version of reason that only accepts mechanistic explanations as authentic seems very close to what McGilchrist is talking about when he describes the left brain going it alone. His picture of the right relationship between the two lobes seems close to the idea of deep reason. Deep reason includes analysis and investigates mechanisms, but is open to a reality beyond them. It includes silent contemplation. It is open to the unexpected, to the human and to value. It is in this space, open to 'more', that it becomes reasonable to believe in God, though it is a space we share with many who do not believe in God.

Richard Dawkins begins his book *The God Delusion* with a moving quotation from his friend Douglas Adams, who died of cancer at the age of 49: 'Isn't it enough to see that a garden is beautiful without having to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of it too?'[1] Theists and non-theists alike can share a sense of awe and wonder at the beauty of the world. In so doing, though, we move closer together as human beings, away from any sense that the problem of the meaning of life can be 'solved' like an equation. 42 can never be the answer to the human vision of the world.

John Moffatt SJ is a Jesuit priest. He has studied at Oxford, London and Innsbruck. He has worked as a school chaplain at St Ignatius College, Enfield, and Wimbledon College, Merton, and as a university chaplain. After spending some time with the Jesuit Institute South Africa, he is currently working in London on a doctorate in medieval Islamic philosophy.

[1] Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Black Swan, 2007), 7.

GOD OF SEEING

Rehearsing the Presence of God in the Spiritual Direction Relationship

Anneke Viljoen

What God Sees and Hears Makes All the Difference

IN CHURCH ONE SUNDAY MORNING, at a time when I was working through a painful experience, the preacher shared an insight that made all the difference. The sermon recounted some of the things the Bible teaches us that *God sees*. It was quite an *aha!* moment for me. As I think back on it now, it seems so obvious; yet, somehow, until that morning it was not. In that moment the two worlds that shape my own spirituality—spiritual direction in the Ignatian tradition and Reformed theology—came together in a way that they had never done before. Suddenly the dots connected and an image of God—the *God of seeing*—took shape in my heart through the eyes of Hagar, an Egyptian slave woman from the book of Genesis.

Spiritual Pathology

As I reflected on this obvious, yet new, insight, the realisation dawned on me: despite all my years in church, theological training and pastoral ministry, I had a deistic God-image: I did not really think of God as intervening in our human lives. It seems I was not alone in this discovery.[1] Robert R. Marsh describes the source of this 'spiritual … pathology of our times': 'We do not allow God to be a living presence—a real subject—in our lives, because we have been trained by our culture to believe that God cannot, or at least does not, behave in that way'.[2] The

[1] Robert R. Marsh describes a similar realisation in 'Teaching Spiritual Direction as if God Were Real', *The Way*, 53/4 (October 2014), 57–67.

[2] Robert R. Marsh, 'Looking at God Looking at You: Ignatius' Third Addition', *The Way*, 43/4 (October 2004), 19–28.

French-born Protestant philosopher Paul Ricoeur uses the metaphor of a desert place to describe his experience of this spiritual pathology, which came in the wake of modernity, 'forgetfulness of hierophanies, forgetfulness of the signs of the sacred, loss of man himself insofar as he belongs to the sacred …. Beyond the desert of criticism, we wish to be called again.'[3] I think it no coincidence that Hagar met the God of seeing in just such a desert place.

Hagar and Deism

Hagar, the Egyptian slave of Sarai (later known as Sarah), is the biblical character who exposed to me the full depths of my own deistic beliefs. Her story is recounted in Genesis 16:1–16 and 21:8–21. When Hagar thought that she was completely abandoned, in an utterly desolate place, she met the *God of seeing* near a spring in the desert on the way to Shur. There she made the discovery that God not only sees, but hears as well: 'the Lord has given heed to your affliction' (Genesis 16:11). This was reaffirmed for her when she encountered God for the second time, once again in a place of abandonment and utter desolation. Hagar came to know that God was thoroughly aware of her, even intimately acquainted with her circumstances. Consequently she called her son *Ishmael*, which means 'God hears'. Hagar's and Ishmael's story is a powerful witness to us today that God is indeed profoundly involved in human affairs, even, perhaps especially, when those affairs are riddled with conflict, abuse and affliction.

Hagar Weeping, *by Gerbrand van den Eeckhout, early 1640s*

[3] Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, translated by Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon, 1972), 349.

A Biblically Informed Theological Imagination

These ancient biblical truths found their way into my own spirituality via a biblically informed theological imagination. Or should I rather say that I gained access to these truths? Maybe it is both; the process goes both ways. As Leland Ryken explains:

> The gap between ourselves and the stories of the Bible requires us to take a two-way journey. First we need to travel from our own time and place to the world of the story. Paradoxically, the more thoroughly we immerse ourselves in the world of the ancient text, the more likely we are to see recognizable human experience in it.
>
> After we have traveled to the world of the story and lived in it, we need to make a return trip. When we do so, we bridge the gap. The full range of familiar experience is the menu of possible links between the story and our own experience. What is particularly required is the ability to name the experiences of the biblical story in the terms with which we are familiar.[4]

Ricoeurian Hermeneutics

It was Paul Ricoeur who first drew my attention to the much neglected subject of biblically informed imagination.[5] His serious philosophical consideration of the imagination as a mental faculty in the process of revelation opened a new door for me in the hermeneutical pursuit of God. Imagination has been under grave suspicion for the greater part of Christian history, and rightly so if it be not a biblically informed and sanctified imagination.[6] (This is true, indeed, not just of imagination, but also of all the other human faculties, not least the other five mental faculties as well: reason, will, intuition, perception and memory.) J. R. R. Tolkien makes a point concerning fantasy that is also valid for an imaginal engagement with any text: 'Fantasy can, of course, be carried to excess. It can be ill done. It can be put to evil uses. It may even delude the minds out of which it came. But of what human thing in this fallen world is that not true?'[7]

[4] Leland Ryken, *How Bible Stories Work: A Guided Study of Biblical Narrative* (Bellingham: Lexham, 2015), 18–19.
[5] See Paul Ricoeur, 'Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation', *Harvard Theological Review*, 70 (1977), 1–37.
[6] See Michael Paul Gallagher, 'Theology and Imagination: From Theory to Practice', *Christian Higher Education*, 5/1 (2006), 83–96, at 83.
[7] J. R. R. Tolkien, *On Fairy-stories*, in *Tree and Leaf* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), 50.

Despite the reservations, there has been a recent philosophical and literary retrieval of imagination as 'the key to a knowledge deeper than the dominant logic'.[8] The Old Testament scholar Walter Brueggemann notes how such developments 'have made a difference to the way in which the Old Testament may be accessed as a source and norm for faith'.[9]

The Ignatian Tradition

At the same time that Ricoeur's work on imagination opened a new door for me in the hermeneutical pursuit of God, I found myself unexpectedly exposed to the Ignatian tradition. In this I shared the experience recounted by Joyce Huggett, who comes 'from an evangelical background' but found herself helping out with a retreat in a Trappist monastery. 'If anyone had warned me that stepping across the threshold of this particular place of prayer would change the direction of my spiritual pilgrimage, I would not have believed them', she wrote. But in fact the experience led her to explore silent prayer, contemplative prayer and eventually Ignatian spirituality.[10]

Like Huggett and many other Protestants, I came away from my own encounter with Ignatian spirituality enriched. I think she is right on the mark when she ascribes the reason for its positive effect on Protestants to, among other things, the strong biblical foundation of the Spiritual Exercises. She describes Ignatian spirituality as a 'new entree' into the biblical world.[11] One of the vital attributes of Ignatian spirituality is its inherent appreciation of the imagination: 'the imagination becomes a tool to help us know and love God'.[12] It is here that the Ignatian tradition's transformational contribution to my own spirituality intersected with the Ricoeurian movement that was already taking place in my faith journey. One result has been a series of insights into the spiritual direction relationship which, once again, has made all the difference to me.

Inherent appreciation of the imagination

[8] Gallagher, 'Theology and Imagination', 84.

[9] Walter Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003), xi. I have explored the hermeneutical contribution of an imaginal engagement with Old Testament texts in several articles; see, for example, Anneke Viljoen, 'The Structuring Considerations of a Ricoeurian Hermeneutic Employed in a Reading of Proverbs 14: 2', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 71/3 (2015).

[10] Joyce Huggett, 'Why Ignatian Spirituality Hooks Protestants', *The Way Supplement*, 68 (1990), 22–34, here 22.

[11] Huggett, 'Why Ignatian Spirituality Hooks Protestants', 25.

[12] David L. Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?* (Chicago: Loyola, 2008), 55.

Rehearsing the Presence of God in Spiritual Direction

William A. Barry and William J. Connolly famously define Christian spiritual direction as:

> Help given by one believer to another that enables the latter to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship.[13]

The spiritual direction relationship is a space where we not only affirm but also rehearse (or enact) the reality of God's presence. This rehearsal is grounded in three things that are closely related to each other: the nature of the Bible as literature, the nature of the faith community and the nature of faith itself.

The Bible as Literature

Leland Ryken explains how biblical literature rehearses spiritual truth:

> The task of literature is to show rather than tell. To show means to embody in concrete images (including the settings, characters, and actions in a story); to tell means to explain and generalize (as in an essay or news report). The same distinction is sometimes expressed by the formulas that literature enacts rather than summarizes.[14]

This enactment or rehearsal does not consist of a one-way flow from text to reader. Instead it forms a two-way movement in which the reader participates.[15] For Paul Ricoeur 'what shows itself' in biblical literature 'is in each instance a proposed world, a world I may inhabit and wherein I can project my ownmost possibilities'.[16] A commentator on Ricoeur, David Hall, describes the two way participative working of biblical texts:

> To read the biblical texts is to participate in the redescription of reality initiated by the text and completed in the reader. What the texts offer to the imagination is, among other things, a moral redescription of reality.[17]

[13] William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (New York: HarperCollins, 1982), 8.
[14] Ryken, *How Bible Stories Work*, 26.
[15] For more on the referential intention of biblical texts see Anneke Viljoen and Pieter M. Venter, 'An Exploration of the Symbolic World of Proverbs 10: 1 – 15: 33 with Specific Reference to "the Fear of the Lord"', in *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies*, 69/1 (2013).
[16] Ricoeur, 'Toward a Hermeneutic of the Idea of Revelation', 25.
[17] W. David Hall, 'The Economy of the Gift: Paul Ricoeur's Poetic Redescription of Reality', *Literature and Theology*, 20/2 (2006), 189–204, here 198.

This 'redescription of reality' is not something arbitrary, modelled on the preferences of the reader—or of the spiritual director or directee. As Brueggemann notes 'faithful imagination is characteristically not autonomous fantasy, but good-faith extrapolation'.[18]

The Faith Community

The faith community is where the guiding principle of doctrine enters into the spiritual direction relationship. The primary rehearsal of the presence of God through the Spirit of Christ is situated in the life of the faith community, and the spiritual direction relationship is one instance or expression of that community.

The systematic theologian Kevin Vanhoozer states: 'Christian faith is not a private affair for individuals but a community-building project'. He uses a theatrical model to describe the purposes and workings of doctrine within the life of the faith community: 'The role of doctrine in the church is to assist pastors and other church leaders to mount local productions that serve as living parables of the kingdom of God'.[19] I am convinced that this model can be productively applied to the spiritual direction relationship. I would suggest that a biblically informed theological imagination operates within this relationship in the same way as doctrine does within the life of the Church. In the spiritual direction relationship biblical texts, read through the lens of doctrine, serve as the script for a rehearsal of the presence of God through the Spirit of Jesus.[20] This is not 'playacting or hypocrisy' but the rehearsal of a spiritual reality.[21] Which brings us to the nature of faith.

The Nature of Faith

Walter Brueggemann explains that biblical literature,

> … is not merely descriptive of a commonsense world; it dares, by artistic sensibility and risk-taking rhetoric, to posit, characterize and

[18] Walter Brueggemann, 'Biblical Authority: A Personal Reflection', in *Struggling with Scripture*, edited by Walter Brueggemann, William C. Placher and Brian K. Blount (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 5–31, here 16.

[19] Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Faith Speaking Understanding: Performing the Drama of Doctrine* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014), 10.

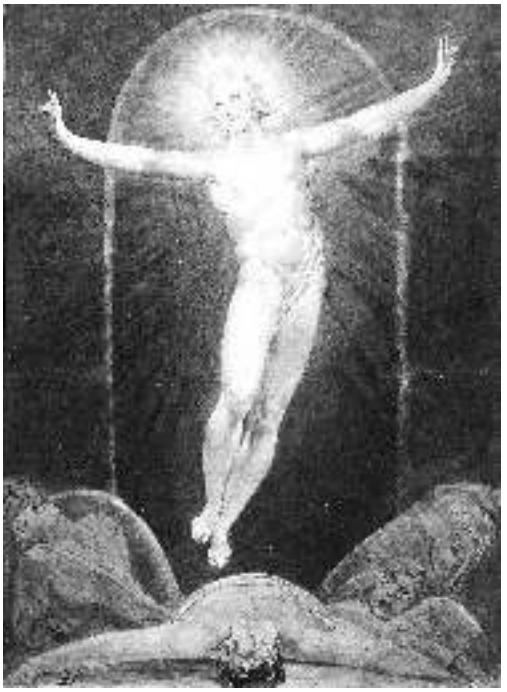
[20] This is especially true for those texts that speak directly about God's presence, of which the Hagar and Ishmael narratives are an excellent example, but it is also true of texts where God is present in an indirect way.

[21] Vanhoozer, *Faith Speaking Understanding*, 10. And see C. S. Lewis on giving 'full value to the word *play*' in 'play[ing] a part or role' as opposed to '"playing a part" in the sense of being a hypocrite': C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960), 145–146.

> vouch for a world beyond the 'common sense'. The theological aspect of this imagination is that the world is articulated with YHWH as the defining character.[22]

According to Brueggemann, biblical texts facilitate a counter-cultural *counter-imagination* of the world: 'a world in and through a different perspective'.[23] In this way a biblically informed theological imagination is the key to awareness of a reality beyond our physical perceptions: 'I understand imagination to be the capacity to entertain images of meaning and reality that are out beyond the evident givens of observable experience. That is, imagination is the hosting of "otherwise" ….'[24]

In spiritual direction, such an imagination enables directors and directees to rehearse together not just the possibility but the reality of God's presence through the Spirit of Jesus within a spiritual direction session. As the spiritual writer Brennan Manning affirms: 'The miracle of the gospel is Christ, risen and glorified, who this very moment tracks us, pursues us, abides in us, and offers Himself to us as companion for the journey!'; 'our hope is inextricably connected with the conscious awareness of present risenness'.[25] There is an intimate linkage between our Christian hope and our



The Resurrection, *by William Blake, c.1805*

[22] Brueggemann, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 9.
[23] Walter Brueggemann, *Texts under Negotiation: The Bible and Postmodern Imagination* (London: SCM, 1993), 20.
[24] Brueggemann, 'Biblical Authority', 17. Two classic biblical texts on the nature of faith testify to this reality. The author of the book of Hebrews describes the nature of faith (11:1): 'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen'; and in 2 Corinthians 4: 18–5: 10 our attention is drawn beyond the physically observable reality toward the unseen eternal reality.
[25] Brennan Manning, *Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2015), 91, 86.

awareness that Jesus is risen. Christian spiritual direction rehearses this hope in the affirmation of God's presence through the Spirit of Christ. It aims to heighten both directors' and directees' conscious awareness of the present risenness of Jesus—not least within the session itself, but also throughout the whole of their lives. By rehearsing their awareness of the presence of God, the spiritual direction session prepares them to rehearse this spiritual reality in the whole of their lives outside the session as well.

Hagar, the God of Seeing and the Work of Spiritual Direction

The space of accompaniment is a powerful reminder—not just to the directee, but to the director as well—of the presence of the God who was fully revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. I think this is precisely why I am so drawn to the ministry of spiritual direction. However Hagar's meeting with the God of seeing, which was my starting point, already has theological implications for that ministry which are worth exploring.

God's Awareness of Us

When Hagar was in a place of utter desolation, not only physically, because she had fled into the desert, but also emotionally, owing to her mistreatment by Sarai, she made a staggering discovery: the Lord sees her; God really sees her! As the narrative of Hagar's first encounter with the Lord draws to a close, Genesis 16:13 (NIV) relates the conclusion of her discovery. 'She gave this name to the Lord who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me", for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me".'

There is a convergence between Hagar's discovery and Ignatius' Third Addition in the *Spiritual Exercises*.

> A step or two away from the place where I will make my contemplation or meditation, I will stand for the length of an Our Father. I will raise my mind and think how God our Lord is looking at me, and other such thoughts. Then I will make an act of reverence or humility. (Exx 75)

Robert R. Marsh explains how, in this Addition, 'Ignatius is putting his finger here on a neuralgic issue which pains every aspect of our prayer, of our lives, and of the way we speak to one another about God. Ignatius both identifies the issue, and offers an antidote.'[26] Marsh describes several ways

[26] Marsh, 'Looking at God Looking at You', 19.

in which Ignatius' antidote counteracts the deistic 'spiritual pathology' that came about in the wake of modernity. This is his conclusion:

> Thus the third Addition offers more than an introductory gambit in the game of prayer. Ignatius' God is an active God, a God not content to be a distant observer, a God intimately engaged with every person who prays. This God is miles away from the cultural caricature I presented earlier. This God can be encountered, known. This God feels, acts, interacts. This God has personality.[27]

There is a striking similarity between the Lord whom Hagar encounters in the Genesis narratives and the Lord Ignatius expects us to encounter in our prayers and contemplations.[28] Hagar names this God as 'the God who sees me', the God of seeing. This is also the Lord of Ignatius' Third Addition, who is looking at us when we are looking at God—the One whose presence directors and directees rehearse together, both within the spiritual direction session and outside it.

Our Awareness of God's Presence

Brennan Manning describes the courage and hope that may be drawn from the risenness of Jesus:

> … our willingness to stand fast, our refusal to run away and escape into self-destructive behaviour. Resurrection power enables us to engage in the savage confrontation with untamed emotions, to accept the pain, receive it, take it onboard, however acute it may be. And in the process we discover that we are not alone, that we can stand fast in the awareness of present risenness and so become fuller, deeper, richer disciples. We … not only endure but are also forced to expand the boundaries of who we think we really are.[29]

Hagar's and Ishmael's story testifies to God's presence as a source of courage and hope. This is despite the complexity of the question of theodicy that is raised for those of us who are suffering or have suffered and are working through such painful experiences. The affirmation that God sees and hears becomes the grounding of Hagar's and our own further actions. If God is more than a projection of our own inner life, then (at least theoretically, if not yet in our experience) God may communicate

[27] Marsh, 'Looking at God Looking at You', 28.
[28] Why am I so surprised by this?
[29] Manning, *Abba's Child*, 87.

God's self, God's own emotions and desires to us. And these may be quite different from our own.[30] I can just imagine what Hagar's initial thinking might have been in Genesis 16:9 when God told her to return to her mistress and submit to her.[31] She did, however, return. In her encounter with the God of seeing she found the courage to act in accordance with what had been revealed about God's desires for her.

Hagar drew courage and hope from God's awareness of her and her own awareness of God's presence. The interaction between these two awarenesses is what enabled Hagar—and us—to integrate painful experiences and avoid what Brené Brown calls 'numbing' behaviours.[32] The spiritual direction relationship is the space where we rehearse the presence of the God of seeing—the awareness of the present risenness of Jesus—so that we may draw courage and hope from an encounter with this God.

God's Redemptive Actions

There is one more aspect of the Hagar and Ishmael narratives for the discipline of spiritual direction that I want to invite you to explore with me. These narratives testify powerfully to God's redemptive actions. Not only is God the God of seeing who also hears, and is therefore thoroughly aware of all the affliction in the story. In both encounters between Hagar and God, the Lord promises to redeem the pain (Genesis 16:10–12 and Genesis 21:17–18). This promise is also repeated to Abraham in his distress when Sarah demands that Hagar and her son be sent away (Genesis 21:12–13).

The pain comes about as a result of Sarah and Abraham acting on their own wisdom because they disregarded the promise of God (in other words, God's desire for them) in incredulity or unbelief. They themselves, as well as Hagar and Ishmael, suffer greatly because of this. Amidst all the affliction God is portrayed as the One who is redemptively involved. There are consequences to be borne,[33] but throughout Hagar's

[30] See Marsh, 'Looking at God Looking at You', 27–28.

[31] As above with the question of theodicy, I am very aware of the complexity of the question of the biblical understanding of slavery, but want to invite you, for the moment, to join me in reading the narrative on its own terms without encompassing concerns that the text does not explicitly aim to address.

[32] Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead* (London: Penguin, 2012), 137 following.

[33] This is evident from the description of Ishmael as 'a wild ass of a man', hostile and feral, in Genesis 16:12 and from God's affirmation in Genesis 21:12 that it will not be through Ishmael but through Isaac that Abraham's offspring will be reckoned.

The Banishment of Hagar, *by Jan Mostaert, c.1520*

God of seeing is not a deistic God, but One redemptively involved in human affairs.[34]

God's redemptive action is recounted throughout the Bible, reaching its crescendo at Easter with Jesus' cross and resurrection. The present risenness of Christ is the result of Jesus' triumph over the forces of sin and death. In his Easter gift the risen Lord makes himself available to spiritual directors and directees, and the space of spiritual accompaniment is a special one where we rehearse and celebrate the redemptive actions of the God of seeing.

Encountering the God of Seeing

One Sunday morning in church I encountered the Lord whom Hagar called the God of seeing. Such an encounter leaves no room for a deistic image of God, but enables our awareness of God's presence to become a source of courage and hope as we accompany each other, as it was for Hagar in her affliction. God's redemptive actions, seen in Hagar and Ishmael's story and throughout the Bible, culminate in God's Easter gift:

[34] This seems to me to be the strength of the Calvinist tradition's affirmation of the sovereignty of God.

the present risenness of Jesus who makes himself available to us. The spiritual direction relationship is the space where we can rehearse these spiritual realities in order to continue doing so in the rest of our lives, outside the spiritual direction session itself.

Anneke Viljoen is currently taking a sabbatical to wait on the Lord. She was trained as a pastor in the Netherdutch Reformed Church of Africa and is a research associate with the department of Old Testament studies of the faculty of theology of the University of Pretoria. The reflections presented here combines two disciplines that give her great joy: Old Testament studies and spiritual direction.

SINS OF WEAKNESS AND SINS OF STRENGTH

A More Biblical Moral Theology

John Zupez

AFTER FOUR YEARS OF REFLECTION at the Second Vatican Council, in their final document, *Gaudium et spes* (1965), the Roman Catholic bishops wrote that the Church must share 'the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted' (n. 1). They saw in Jesus' law of love reason for solidarity with the entire human family (n. 3). It was 'as if Christ Himself were crying out in these poor' (n. 88). They listed the many categories of the poor who cry for help in our time (n. 27). They called for careful study of 'the world in which we live, its explanations, its longings, and its often dramatic characteristics'. The Church must speak to this world in the light of the gospel and 'in language intelligible to each generation' (n. 4).

Some theologians active at the Council proposed a renewal of moral theology to make it more intelligible in our time and to focus more on the positive side: not just what one must avoid but also what one must do to be faithful to Christ's teaching. The bishops had declared that not only Christians but all persons of good will were 'capable of discharging the new law of love' through Christ's Spirit within them.[1] The Redemptorist priest Bernhard Häring's three-volume work on moral theology, *The Law of Christ*, was among the progressive works that became very popular after the Council.

But there were also those, such as Archbishop Wojtyla, later John Paul II, who continued to advocate a manualist approach to moral theology that predated Vatican II. Wojtyla had a strong influence on Paul VI in the drafting of the encyclical *Humanae vitae*, which ruled out 'unnatural' methods of contraception and allowed only the rhythm

[1] *Gaudium et spes*, n. 22.

method to control births. The scholastic philosophy of natural law that had prevailed in the previous centuries was reinstated by *Humanae vitae*, alienating those who saw room for renewal in the light of scripture and through a rereading of Thomas Aquinas. Attempts to renew moral theology remained suspect during the 26-year papacy of John Paul II. Neither did Pope Benedict XVI, who had been John Paul's doctrinal 'watchdog', see his way to expanding the dialogue between the Church and world through a renewed moral theology during his own 8-year papacy.

Pope Francis' Return to Vatican II

Pope Francis is widely perceived as following a more scripture-based attitude to moral questions than had the previous two popes. This approach, which is noted throughout the documents of the Council and in particular in its final document, *Gaudium et spes*, caused what I would describe as a shift in emphasis from sins of weakness to sins of strength.

Sins of weakness concern things we should not do, the negative side of the Christian life, and usually involve sins against the sixth commandment, or of sexual behaviour more generally. These sins may be very serious, but usually have little to do with larger questions of society and social justice. Social justice pertains more to the positive side of the Christian life, to the manifestation of charity towards all. Failures in this area we might call sins of strength. These include the ways we speak and act that fail to show sufficient love for all of our neighbours. Such sins keep us from reaching the full potential of charity or blessedness to which we are called by doing 'good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life' (Ephesians 2:10). Neglecting these good works deprives us, and the community of saints in heaven, of the full measure of goodness that God intended for us. Our good works do follow us, and are all that follow us, after this life.

Pope Francis does not theorize about moral theology but, from the start of his papacy, he has called for dialogue with the world in the spirit of Vatican II. During his first several months he wrote the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, which he described as having 'a programmatic significance and consequences' (n. 25) for his pontificate. In it he bemoans that 'the process of secularization tends to reduce the faith and the Church to the sphere of the private and personal' (n. 64). He goes on to identify the sins that most hamper Christian growth as being not contraception or sexual sins—sins of weakness—but the sins of strength.

After just three sentences of introduction, Francis launches into a call for a more expansive Christian spirit:

> The great danger in today's world, pervaded as it is by consumerism, is the desolation and anguish born of a complacent yet covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience. Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard, the quiet joy of his love is no longer felt, and the desire to do good fades. This is a very real danger for believers too. Many fall prey to it, and end up resentful, angry and listless. That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God's will for us, nor is it the life in the Spirit which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ. (n. 2)

Francis goes on to speak of the 'globalization of indifference' which has made us 'incapable of feeling compassion at the outcry of the poor' since 'the culture of prosperity deadens us; we are thrilled if the market offers us something new to purchase. In the meantime all those lives stunted for lack of opportunity seem a mere spectacle; they fail to move us.' (n. 54) And 'inequality provokes a violent reaction from those excluded from the system' (n. 59), a reaction which cannot be suppressed by force of arms (n. 60).

He further decries seeking comfort in 'a small circle of close friends' or in religious exercises that 'do not encourage encounter with others' (nn. 88, 78). He calls these 'alienating solutions':

> Our challenge is not so much atheism as the need to respond adequately to many people's thirst for God, lest they try to satisfy it with alienating solutions or with a disembodied Jesus who demands nothing of us with regard to others. Unless these people find in the Church a spirituality … summoning them to fraternal communion and missionary fruitfulness, they will end up by being taken in by solutions which neither make life truly human nor give glory to God …. The old question always returns: 'How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods, and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?' (nn. 89, 187)

In his critique of the economic system, Francis says: 'The private ownership of goods is justified by the need to protect and increase them, so that they can better serve the common good' (n. 189). He repeats much of what was said in previous papacies, but he has brought the seamless garment of social issues to centre stage during his own. He sees a 'drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk' in any religious community that does not show 'creative concern and effective cooperation in helping the poor' (n. 207). He continues:

> I am interested only in helping those who are in thrall to an individualistic, indifferent and self-centred mentality … to attain a way of living and thinking which … will bring dignity to their presence on this earth (n. 208).

Sins of Strength

Pope Francis makes little reference to the scholastic philosophy of natural law in his teaching. In this he differs from the pre-Vatican II moralists.[2] It is not in natural law that he finds Jesus' passion for what affects Christian life as a whole, and for what opens us up to God's grace in our lives.

Jesus was especially passionate when he spoke of the lassitude or indifference which those who were well-off showed towards the poor.

[2] In *Evangelii gaudium*, giving a footnote reference to Thomas Aquinas, he has this to say: 'Differing currents of thought in philosophy, theology and pastoral practice, if open to being reconciled by the Spirit in respect and love, can enable the Church to grow, since all of them help to express more clearly the immense riches of God's word. For those who long for a monolithic body of doctrine guarded by all and leaving no room for nuance, this might appear as undesirable and leading to confusion. But in fact such variety serves to bring out and develop different facets of the inexhaustible riches of the Gospel.' (n. 40)

For Jesus this became a question of how the rich use their wealth. In his preaching he often used hyperbole or exaggeration, a Jewish form of humour. But this should not distract us from the seriousness of the point he was making when he said: 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God' (Matthew 19:24). Jesus also tells the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31). Then there was Jesus' encounter with the young man who found himself unable to give his stored wealth to the poor and respond to Jesus' invitation 'Come, follow me' (Mark 10:17–22). We might say that one basic option that the young man had made was to become wealthy. He did not see his way to changing that option. He could become like the farmer who, in his prosperity, failed to show gratitude to God for his good harvest, but was rather caught in the trap of accumulating wealth. He built bigger barns in which to hoard his grain. Jesus' response to him was: 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you.' Jesus addressed this response to all who 'store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God' (Luke 12:18–21).

In trying to motivate people in modern society to live Jesus' good news to the full, we are often dealing with those who, by biblical standards, are rich: they have a sufficiency of food, clothing, shelter, health care and funds for their old age. The spectrum stretches up to those who have immense wealth and recognise no Christian obligation to use this wealth to help others. There is no obligation in justice to share one's wealth with any particular person. But in order to hear Jesus' call one *must* acknowledge that wealth is a 'talent' which God gives to be shared with the needy (Matthew 25:14–30). The need of some becomes, for those who have more than a sufficiency, a challenge to grow in divine grace by sharing, seeing in the poor and needy Christ himself. Such sharing is by God's merciful plan, according to the poet, 'twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes'.[3] Jesus promises a heavenly reward for those who work with their talent to do good in this life, and he threatens with damnation those who bury their talent.

A challenge to grow in divine grace by sharing

To realise the sin in all selfishness, note that the biblical word for sin is *amartia*, 'falling short of the mark'. We all fall short in many ways, but some ways in which we fall short are more pervasive and enduring

[3] Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, IV.i.175–176.

in diverting us from Jesus' new commandment to love one another 'just as I have loved you' (John 13:34). Jesus' command is a lifelong challenge for all persons, to keep growing in charity towards all. Pope Francis sees this confirmed in the preaching of the early Church: 'To his communities Paul presents the Christian life as a journey of growth in love: "May the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all" (1 Thessalonians 3:12)'.[4]

Sins of Weakness

Things are different when we look at Jesus' response to sins of weakness—against the sixth commandment, sins of the flesh. We see Jesus' attitude towards these sins in his dealing with the adulteress. He comes down harder on those who would stone the adulteress than he does on her. He tells the Jewish leaders that the one who is without sin should cast the first stone. He then shows divine mercy and compassion towards the adulteress, saying, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way and from now on do not sin again.' (John 8:11) Pope Francis comments on this passage: 'Jesus looked that woman in the eye and read in her heart a desire to be understood, forgiven and set free. The misery of sin was clothed with the mercy of love.'[5] But for those who wished to judge and condemn her to death, Jesus offers no hope. Their sin is one of pride, a sin of strength, not of weakness. Living a life of smugness and self-righteousness, they are more difficult to reach, more difficult to turn from the fundamental direction that their life has taken.

This hardness of heart of the Jewish leaders, and the difficulty of converting them, is a constant theme in the New Testament. Another such incident was when Jesus was criticized by a Pharisee for allowing an adulteress to anoint his feet at a meal. Jesus praised the woman, saying, 'her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.' (Luke 7:47) Jesus is simply stating the truth that pride places an obstacle in the working of God's grace. He makes reference to this also at the beginning of his Sermon on the Mount: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven …. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.' (Matthew 5:3, 5)

[4] *Evangelii gaudium*, n. 161.
[5] Pope Francis, *Misericordia et misera*, n. 1.

Peter, in his triple denial of Jesus, committed a sin of weakness. He was afraid to share in the sufferings that he saw inflicted upon Jesus. Peter was not beyond the reach of God's grace; he repented and was forgiven. Judas, on the other hand, committed a sin of strength in betraying Jesus for a price. It may have been a sin of greed, or a sin of pride, trying to force Jesus to overthrow the Romans and bring in the new kingdom. The message we get from the Gospel is that Judas' sin was further removed from the grace of repentance, and he went and hanged himself.

The Old Testament prophets also saw the difference between sins of strength and sins of weakness. King Saul, who pursued David to kill him, committed a sin of strength and was stripped of his kingship by God. King David, who was tempted in the flesh and committed adultery with Bathsheba, repented and was forgiven by God.

The Church and the World

In our increasingly interconnected world, the question 'Who is my neighbour' (Luke 10:29) has taken on global proportions. And yet for most of us, compassion diminishes rapidly beyond family and close friends. This is in spite of Jesus' haunting statement:

> If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same …. Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High …. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. (Luke 6:33–36)

True charity—goodness of life and the unselfish deeds that follow us to heaven—is best known by its universality.

The true disciple of Christ sees life as growth in charity, which is a source of deep peace and joy in this life and of reward in the next. Besides the vision of God in heaven, we will show the face of Christ to others. It will be an added joy for us to bring this joy to others, even as God rejoices in sharing the divine goodness and truth and beauty through creation and in the beatific vision. In the only Last Judgment scene in the Gospels, Jesus makes it clear that we will be rewarded to the extent that we reach out to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick, and the prisoner, saying: 'Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me' (Matthew 25:35–40). He goes on to describe as accursed those who do not respond to the needs of others.

The social dimension of Jesus' teaching is very strong in the New Testament, and has received repeated mention by the Church's magisterium since the groundbreaking encyclical *Rerum novarum* in 1891. But from my 65 years of experience as a Jesuit—teacher, pastor and confessor—I find that most Catholics show 'indifference' (as Pope Francis calls it) to the sufferings of others beyond their immediate circle of friends and those fellow citizens, with whom they identify. A significant majority of US Catholics voted for Donald Trump, who exhibits the instincts of his conservative Republican party. While the Democratic party succeeded in getting through a national health care plan, and gives greater hope of movement on other social issues, the Republicans have for decades used their opposition to abortion to secure a majority of the Catholic vote despite their record on other issues.

The US Conference of Catholic Bishops promulgated the document 'Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship' in November 2015. It reviews the whole array of social issues that marks Pope Francis's papacy. Its overall position seems very reasonable, warning against indifference on any important issue and focusing, in the political arena, on the voter's intent:

> A Catholic cannot vote for a candidate who favors a policy promoting an intrinsically evil act, such as abortion, euthanasia, assisted suicide, deliberately subjecting workers or the poor to subhuman living conditions, redefining marriage in ways that violate its essential meaning, or racist behavior, if the voter's intent is to support that position. In such cases, a Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in grave evil. At the same time, a voter should not use a candidate's opposition to an intrinsic evil to justify indifference or inattentiveness to other important moral issues involving human life and dignity. (n.34)

Notable here is the focus on the 'voter's intent', which matters on a wide range of issues. And yet, in some dioceses bishops ended their letter on the election with a mention of abortion as if it were the only intrinsic evil to be considered. This presents us with the spectre of one-issue Catholics, for whom abortion, a sin of weakness, trumps all others, though it may make no demand on them in their personal life.

This is not the route that Pope Francis has chosen to follow. The indifference of Catholics to people's suffering in the world today is a constant motif of his papacy. Another emphasis of Francis is on the difficulty that Catholics find today in becoming true disciples, committed to the Lord. At his Easter Vigil Mass in 2019, Francis said:

> Sin seduces; it promises things easy and quick, prosperity and success, but leaves behind only solitude and death …. Sin is looking for life among the dead, for the meaning of life in things that pass away …. Why not prefer Jesus, the true light, to the glitter of wealth, career, pride and pleasure? Why not tell the empty things of this world that you no longer live for them, but for the Lord of life?[6]

Moral Theologians Spurred to Action

The First Vatican Council in 1869 met at a time when the papacy and clergy were seen as protecting their often illiterate flock in the Western world from new questions raised by modern science, such as the literal truth of every line in the Bible. A century later the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) would rethink biblical fundamentalism, as well as the role of the Church in the modern world. Moral theologians have incorporated the insights of modern philosophers that make moral theology more compelling for educated Catholics today. An 'Oath against Modernism' required of all Catholic theology professors had insulated Catholic theology from advances in biblical and historical studies until the time of Vatican II. In calling for a Second Vatican Council, John XXIII wanted to 'throw open the windows of the Church and let the fresh air of the Spirit blow through'.[7] The bishops were confronted by issues that cried out for answers.

Some leaders in the Church had been slow to criticize the Jewish holocaust under the Nazis. Also, the Church was slow to respond to the issue of slavery and continuing racism in the USA. Even in the 1940s the Church did not have a forceful argument for admitting African Americans to Catholic universities.[8] The term 'economic imperialism' was popular in the 1960s, but the Church was tongue-tied and had little to say about the aggression of rich nations against poor nations. While US troops were napalm-bombing villages in Vietnam, even the US secretary of defence, Robert McNamara, privately admitted:

> The picture of the world's greatest superpower killing or seriously injuring 1,000 non-combatants a week, while trying to pound a tiny,

[6] Pope Francis, homily at the Easter vigil, 20 April 2019, n. 1, available at https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2019-04/pope-francis-easter-vigil-mass-homily-text.html.

[7] These words are widely attributed to Pope John. See *Wit and Wisdom of Good Pope John*, edited by Henri Fesquet (New York: Signet, 1965), 102.

[8] See https://nextstl.com/2013/02/even-the-pews-stood-up-the-forgotten-history-of-the-racial-integration-of-st-louis-university/, accessed 25 November 2019..

> backward nation into submission on an issue whose merits are hotly disputed, is not a pretty one.[9]

Pope Francis was in priestly studies in the 1960s, when the Vietnam war faced popular protests but the Catholic magisterium was preoccupied with the contraception issue.

These same 1960s saw the 'death of God' movement. Aware of the signs of the times, the bishops wrote in *Gaudium et spes*: 'Many benefits once looked for, especially from heavenly powers, man has now enterprisingly procured for himself' (n.33). They called for 'a new humanism, one in which man is defined first of all by this responsibility to his brothers and to history' (n.55). Theologians,

> … are invited to seek continually for more suitable ways of communicating doctrine to the men of their times; for the deposit of Faith or the truths are one thing and the manner in which they are enunciated, in the same meaning and understanding, is another (n.62).

Alarmed by the diminished influence of the Church, those at the World Synod of Catholic Bishops in 1971 wrote in their final document, *Justice in the World*,

> Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.[10]

This seems to be a conviction shared by Pope Francis as he tries to get the Church back on track to implementing Vatican II.

The Situation Today

With regard to issues of sexuality and marriage, Pope Francis has reformulated some rigid principles, taking into account a variety of forgiving circumstances and Christ's merciful judgment. He calls for recognition of the difficulty that the well-formed Christian conscience presents to

[9] *The Pentagon Papers: The Defense Department History of United States Decisionmaking on Vietnam* (Boston: Beacon, 1971), volume 4, 484.

[10] World Synod of Catholic Bishops, *Justice in the World*, n.6, available at https://www.cctwincities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Justicia-in-Mundo.pdf, accessed 25 November 2019.

oversimplifications of moral theology as regards sins of weakness. He has advocated a more holistic approach to situations such as that of divorced and remarried Catholics with families, for the good of the family. He would sooner welcome them to communion, as strength for sinners.

But as regards sins of strength, Francis emphasizes the strong sense of commitment required of true disciples of Christ, to work towards the relief of degrading poverty, to welcome refugees, to oppose oppressive economic systems, and to preserve the earth's environment and resources for future generations. Francis sees the need for development in the Church's teaching on matters such as capital punishment, even as Vatican II came to new conclusions that shocked those who insisted on the definitive authority of the ordinary magisterium with regard to issues from the past. He calls the Church to a process of synodality and collegiality so that, through prayerful discernment and dialogue, it may better respond to real-life situations. This approach to change would institutionalise what the bishops began at Vatican II and make the voice of the Church's magisterium more respected among educated Catholics, as new situations arise.

Moral theology seems to be in a period of transition, and Francis has not opted to endorse in its entirety any new approach to moral problems. But the historical precedents he uses to justify his conclusions go back, as do the modern moral theologians, to roots in the New Testament and in Thomas Aquinas. He challenges Christians to listen to the Spirit in

their life and to pursue a path of continuous growth in Christlike service to others.

The sex abuse crisis and divisions among the hierarchy have weakened the forcefulness of what the Church's magisterium has to say to Catholics at the moment. But if we are convinced that our eternal happiness is vitally connected to growth in charity, then there is help available for forming our conscience as close disciples of Christ. There are, of course, Catholic periodicals of all stripes and there are sources on the internet, though the traditionalists seem to have more financial support to flood the media. I conclude by offering some encouragement and resources for those who would try to live their Christian calling to the full.

Richard A. McCormick was a much-published columnist on social ethics in the United States for several decades. One senses his hopes and his frustration in an article he wrote on 'The Social Responsibility of the Christian'. He asks how it is possible to 'penetrate … the consciousness of … the rank and file of the believing community' with the need for 'the lively awareness of personal responsibility and … effective action'.[11] He then goes on to speak of the 'socially dormant conscience' and 'the split between articulated Christianity and lived Christianity' whereby 'Church leaders at all levels continue to call for social action in the face of injustices and their summonses are met with thundering silence and unconcern'.[12] He would agree with those who call for a more holistic approach to Christian discipleship, in light of,

> … the rather complete discontinuity between this life and the after life, between piety and practice. Christianity is associated with prayer, preaching, Church attendance and domestic virtues. Politics on the other hand, and business, education, the professions—these are seen as earthly concerns, with no relation to the Christian thing and guided by their own autonomous dynamics.[13]

McCormick goes on to point out that Christ is the liberator who has chosen to make us a part of his task, and 'there is continuity between personal conversion-and-liberation, and concrete social action'.[14]

[11] Richard A. McCormick, 'The Social Responsibility of the Christian', *Blueprint for Social Justice*, 52/3 (1998), 1, quoting Paul VI, *Octogesima adveniens*.
[12] McCormick, 'Social Responsibility of the Christian', 1.
[13] McCormick, 'Social Responsibility of the Christian', 2.
[14] McCormick, 'Social Responsibility of the Christian', 4.

One may also find a clarification of many issues in moral theology, and a lead to sources for further study, in the class notes of the Jesuit James Bretzke, which are available on the internet.[15] In Bretzke one finds cautious statements that encourage personal conscience formation without incurring censure from the magisterium: 'This tendency involves taking into account all the demonstrable elements and circumstances in the act and in the subject who carries it out'. Bretzke also directs our attention to texts such as this one from Vatican II's decree *Optatam totius* on the training of priests:

> Special care must be given to the perfecting of moral theology. Its scientific exposition, nourished more on the teaching of the Bible, should shed light on the loftiness of the calling of the faithful in Christ and the obligation that is theirs of bearing fruit in charity for the life of the world (n.16).

There was no effective means employed by the bishops at Vatican II to bring about the renewal of seminary education. Where that is lacking, the increasing number of college-educated laity in the Church may offer the best hope for recognition of Christ's positive commandment of love in the life of Christians, as expressed in Vatican II and emphasized in Pope Francis' papacy.

John Zupez SJ has authored more than 50 journal articles and 390 Wikipedia articles. He has taught in major seminaries, served as pastor, and at 83 is involved in both parish work and prison ministry.

[15] See https://www2.bc.edu/james-bretzke/MoralComplexWorldCourseNotes.pdf, accessed 25 November 2019.

FEMININE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL CLUES TO THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES*

María Prieto Ursúa

THE WORD 'FEMININE' figures prominently in the title of this article rather than a reference to 'women'; this is quite deliberate. My purpose here is not to speak of women as such, nor to contribute to feminism. My topic has to do with gender, but not with sex. This distinction between sex and gender is of great importance in what is to follow. Admittedly, I am introducing an excessive dualism in this way, and I am leaving to one side the close relationship that connects them. But my subject is exclusively *gender*, by which I understand 'the complex area which covers all those aspects relating to differences and similarities between the sexes which are not strictly sexological'.[1] Thus I omit *sex*, which can be defined as 'the complex combination of components (genes, hormones, distinctive cerebral reactions) which are all to some extent biological'.[2] However, when one looks at those aspects which are not strictly biological—and which are always, as we shall see, impregnated by cultural variables—a study of feminine or masculine characteristics becomes possible, even if the terms 'feminine' and 'masculine' are not to be identified with 'women' and 'men'.

Now that basic concepts have been clarified, our first step will be to try to understand what may be called 'feminine' as a category in general, first in psychology, and secondly specifically in spirituality (again from the psychological point of view).

Characteristics of 'Feminine' Psychology

Studies of the differences between men and women have found that many of these exist in the areas of human development and functioning.[3]

[1] Juan Fernández, 'El sexo y el género: dos dominios científicos diferentes que debieran ser clarificados', *Psicothema*, 22/2 (2010), 256–262, here 259.
[2] Fernández, 'El sexo y el género', 258.
[3] Here we give a simple summary of the findings in this area. For our present purpose we can prescind from any in-depth analysis of questions that have appeared, such as the stability or fluidity of features

First, in the cognitive area, there are differences relating to such basic functions as verbal facility (stronger in women), visuo-spatial capacity (stronger in men) and numerical capacity (also stronger in men, although differences in calculus may be better understood as related to spatial awareness). Analytic rationalisation, which is deductive, abstract and 'scientific', would be more characteristic of men, whereas women tend to have greater facility for inductive, integrating or intuitive modes of thought.

In another area, women are better than men at expressing emotions: they talk more frequently about their feelings, using a richer vocabulary, and referring to emotional experiences (both positive and negative) that are more intense than those experienced by men. They seek out such emotions more frequently and can cope with them better. Throughout the various stages of life, there is a radical difference in how women feel, recognise and express emotions. In short, anything to do with the emotions is acknowledged to be most firmly associated with the 'feminine'.

The most recent theories about feminine psychological development tend to concentrate especially on the importance of relationships in the lives of women, and they suggest that healthy relationships with others are both the means and the end of such development. Social support has, in fact, a stronger protective effect on women than it has on men, and this is especially so when the help given comes from other women. The 'with-others' dimension is more important and beneficial in the case of the feminine than is the 'above-others' dimension. The role of the feminine has been understood to be that of support and well-being in relation to others. Thus, another typically 'feminine' characteristic is that which has to do with relationships. The feminine contribution tends to maintain and support relationships by means of intimacy, trust, altruism and empathy.

And in the case of women, empathy consists not simply in understanding and registering what is happening and what others are seeing, but in feeling a mutual connection at a different level from the purely rational. Given the classical distinction between *cognitive* and *affective* empathy, the first adopts the cognitive perspective of the other person, and enables an understanding of a situation from that person's point of

in the vital cycle or their dependence on variable sociocultural factors. Also, given the aim of this article, we pass over the extraordinary diversity of aspects connected with gender; we are well aware that any talk of 'masculine' and 'feminine' is an over-simplification, by which much is lost but clarity gained.

view; whereas the second shares the affective state of the other, and through an emotional reaction is able to feel the emotion of the other. The 'feminine' would have a special facility for the second, even though, as has been pointed out, social and cultural factors may come into play here (women appearing to veer towards affective empathy because, having internalised the stereotype of established gender, they think this is what is expected of them).[4]

The 'masculine' would be associated more with results, achievement, success and power (less in the sense of dominion over others than as an awareness of hierarchical relationships); also with the practical and with work which, in many cases, would have a fundamental value superior to friendships, leisure and health. The values traditionally associated with what is masculine are those associated with people who are strong, independent and in control when situations of intimacy, vulnerability or dependence arise. Some authors would claim that the 'masculine' has difficulty in combining the rational and the emotional, and in recognising and expressing needs properly.[5]

Differences have also been found in the way that problems are dealt with. Both men and women may react positively, but the strategies adopted differ: women tend to be less aggressive and less rational, but

[4] Irene Fernández-Pinto, Belén López-Pérez and María Márquez, 'Empatía. Medidas, teorías y aplicaciones en revisión', *Anales de Psicología*, 24/2 (2008), 284–298.

[5] Paul Giblin, 'Men Reconnecting Spirituality and Sexuality', *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 16 (2014), 74–88.

more sociable and more assertive. In a specific situation, women are seen to deal with the emotions produced by the problem and to be more preoccupied with whoever else is involved, whereas men concentrate more on direct attack and the search for a solution. There seems to be no difference with regard to moral issues (once the effects of education and profession have been taken into account),[6] though perhaps there is a slightly greater tendency for 'care' in the case of women, and 'justice' in the case of men, but the establishment of such differences would depend on the methodology employed in the investigation.

Characteristics of 'Feminine' Spirituality

Psychology now gives increased importance to the term 'spirituality'; it has begun, in fact, to be thought of as the fifth force in psychotherapy and some suggest that it be considered the sixth major factor in personality. However, the definition of spirituality in psychology has proved to be complicated. There are dozens of different definitions and each author proposes that different dimensions be included. A survey of these definitions in the search for common characteristics leads one to conclude that the following dimensions of spirituality are to be found in the various psychological studies of the theme:

1. the search for the answer to questions about the meaning of life and its purpose;
2. transcendence, or the capacity an individual has to insert a distance between his or her immediate sense of time and space in order to look at life from another, wider perspective;
3. the search for a relationship with the sacred or transcendent; the term 'sacred' being taken to refer to 'a divine being, a divine object, the Final Reality or the Final Truth';
4. 'connectivity' or connection, the feeling that one is part of a wider human community or that one is part of a wider whole (such as the universe);
5. positive feelings of well-being or healing: for example, experiences of new-found strength or interior peace; the feeling of fulfilment and happiness, growth as a person and arrival at a higher spiritual level.

[6] Michael R. Levenson, 'Gender and Wisdom: The Roles of Compassion and Moral Development', *Research in Human Development*, 6/1 (2009), 45–59.

These elements are brought together well in the following definition of spirituality:

> By spirituality is meant the human propensity to seek for the meaning of life by means of a transcendence of oneself; it is the feeling of being related to something greater than oneself; it may or may not include formal religious participation.[7]

According to this writer, a strong sense of spirituality is associated with a meaningful relationship with the divine, a deep feeling of belonging to a greater 'whole' or of participating in the universe and the lived experience of well-being or improvement. In psychology, the third and fourth factors mentioned above have been put forward as the central dimensions of spirituality, so much so that people begin to speak of a 'Relational Spirituality'; in the study of this, what is known of the relationships between individuals is brought into play.

The effects of spirituality on personal well-being depend not so much on the level of spirituality or religiosity as on the type of relationship that is established in such a spirituality. Among possible forms of relationship, one may find: a firm contact with God (a feeling of security in the connection with God); spiritual instability (shown in intense emotional reactions, such as fear of punishment or of abandonment); a sense of spiritual grandeur (such persons having a narcissistic sense of being in relationship with the sacred, and so feeling themselves more spiritual or more favoured than others or more worthy of reward); or a feeling of being at variance with God (feeling anger, depression or frustration, which can at times lead to a more realistic acceptance of one's spiritual experience, or can result at other times in chronic spiritual conflict).[8]

The individual differences in the security or insecurity of the contact with God allow for an understanding of some of the experiences that occur in spirituality. For example, an insecure attachment links up with a marked instability in spiritual experience, which may include a propensity for sudden conversions, for acceptance of new spiritualities (such as New Age spiritualities) or for seeking and experiencing altered

[7] Diane Ruth Lauver, 'Commonalities in Women's Spirituality and Women's Health', *Advances in Nursing Science*, 22/3 (2000), 76–88, here 79.

[8] David Paine and Stephen J. Sandage, 'Religious Involvement and Depression: The Mediating Effect of Relational Spirituality', *Journal of Religion and Health*, 56 (2017), 269–283.

states of consciousness (absorption, or dissociation). In all such cases, the spirituality may serve to inhibit other more practical steps that would be useful in facing up to problems or reducing stress. On the other hand, a secure attachment, the feeling that one is closely connected with God, carries with it reduced signs of depression and loneliness, and increased signs of self-esteem, maturity in one's relationships and psycho-social competence. In such circumstances, a spirituality comes to be an important source of strength, good sense and courage.

In the light of this summary of the psychological notion of spirituality, the following question arises: are there distinctive aspects of a feminine spirituality? Can it be distinguished from masculine spirituality, or from spirituality in general?

At the sheer 'quantitative' level, women tend to be more spiritual and religious than men. They think of their faith as more important in their daily lives, they invest themselves more personally in their beliefs and in the divine and feel closer to God; they pray more, and they more frequently seek spiritual companions and religious consolation when they have problems. There are also differences in the role that spirituality plays in their lives: for example, spiritual experiences would appear to predict health, well-being and self-esteem only in women, but not in men.[9]

However, the (few) authors who have written about feminine spirituality point out that, quite apart from these quantitative or functional differences, the general dimensions of spirituality listed above are also

[9] Joanna Maselko and Laura D. Kubzansky, 'Gender Differences in Religious Practices, Spiritual Experiences and Health: Results from the US General Social Survey', *Social Science and Medicine*, 62 (2006), 2848–2860.

to be found in feminine spirituality, although with distinctive ways of understanding and putting them into practice. Thus the feminine spiritual experience tends to have the following characteristics:

1. It has an *interrelational* quality. We have seen that relationship or connection is one of the general dimensions of any spirituality, but in the case of women it has a central role in psychological development, well-being and the process of decision-making. *Being in relationship* is quite central to feminine spirituality. When women are asked how they define and experience spirituality they reply that they do so in terms of relationship with a superior being outside themselves, rather than in terms of individuation, personal development or summaries of belief (the reply more frequently given by men).[10] While men also enter into relationships, there is a difference in how they live them, their motives for establishing them, which they consider more important, their style and purpose, and what they achieve by them. Whereas women concentrate on the personal connection with a loving God and with members of their communities, men focus more on the power and judgment of God and on the practice of spiritual discipline. Such differences carry important implications for spirituality. To grow in spirituality, women need to feel that they are accompanied and connected along the way. For them, it is by means of relationships with others that they build up a meaning and purpose to life, rather than by concepts such as discipline, individualism, the setting-up of aims and achievements, all of which are of little help in the development of a feminine spirituality.
2. There is an *affective* or emotional dimension: spirituality among women supposes a deep feeling of *love*. Women involve themselves much more emotionally in their faith and they want to explore the meaning of spiritual expressions; the divine, in the case of feminine spirituality, is understood to be something that heals, a spiritual power of love and integration, one that empowers, rather than a hierarchical power that seeks submission and obedience.

[10] David B. Simpson and others, 'Sex and Gender Differences in Religiousness and Spirituality', *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 36/1 (2008), 42–52.

3. It is in the experience of *care*, whether for themselves or for others, that women most especially experience the divine presence. Although this may appear to be of minor importance, it is quite fundamental. The importance that all caring relationships have for women (given a context in which the female role is still more associated with care than is that of men) has as a consequence that it is day-to-day situations, family relationships and social occasions that are fundamental as the sources of their spirituality. The presence of 'the sacred' is sought and found by them in the humdrum, in the daily round of tasks involving care for others.
4. Feminine spirituality adopts a process that is *circular* rather than linear. For women, spirituality is not so much 'the hero's journey' aiming at a goal, but rather is centred on a God who is present in the quotidian, and is a journey back and forth in the sharing of experiences, leadership and responsibilities with others. Its aim is not so much to try and find concrete answers to spiritual questions, but rather to find comfort, while long-term problems about the meaning of life and the spirit may remain pending.
5. Feminine spirituality relies on *intuition*, which is all-important for women in the process of finding meaning and making decisions. In Western society, formal logical reasoning (which is more masculine) has been given greater value, but the feminine form of reasoning, which integrates rather than analyses and which has a more intuitive holistic way of understanding the world, is a central component in any growth in feminine spirituality.
6. Finally, there is a vital difference in coping with moments of difficulty or *spiritual darkness*: women find it easier to navigate in the dark during long periods of obscurity; they can live through such times in a positive way, knowing how to profit from a heightened self-knowledge instead of struggling against such periods and trying to make them end quickly.

The 'Feminine' in the Spiritual Exercises

In this final section our aim is to review Ignatian texts in order to discover the elements of feminine spirituality (emotion, relationship, intuition, care, circularity, the daily and the image of the sacred) that are present and can be used when accompanying those persons whose spiritual

orientation is more feminine. It is quite surprising to find, as one rereads the Ignatian texts in the light of the dimensions mentioned, how omnipresent the feminine elements are, especially the emotional component. The explanation for this may lie in the knowledge Ignatius had of women and his special sensitivity in accompanying different persons in the area of spirituality.[11] In the first place, some general questions about the methodology of the Exercises need to be considered; then we will examine the concrete structure of the different Weeks, while we search for the presence of those aspects identified as 'feminine'.

Even though the Exercises have at times been interpreted as being basically rational or intellectual, for some time now the value of *emotion* for the Ignatian spiritual task has been rediscovered. In the prelude to each of the exercises, Ignatius requires the exercitant to be in contact with his or her emotions: 'to ask God our Lord for what I want and desire' (Exx 48). He supposes that the feeling itself is already a cause for transformation. Moreover, the absence of affectivity is seen by Ignatius as a problem that needs to be closely examined (Exx 6). In the Exercises the emotional is a distinct path which complements the rational. Forces are to be found there, by means of the discernment of spirits, which, if redirected, tamed and properly used, can serve as a central criterion in the making of an election—where the emotional resonance is central to the decision taken—and, finally, put me in line with the purpose of my life.

The emotional is a distinct path which complements the rational

More feminine elements are to be seen in the repetition exercises: 'notice and dwell on those points where I felt greater consolation or desolation, or had a greater spiritual experience' (Exx 62). Here we can appreciate not only the importance of the emotional experience, but also the feminine *circularity* that was mentioned earlier. In the repetitions, there is no conclusion to be reached, no reasoning to be made and no linear process to be followed. One is simply present, permitting former experiences to return, finding relish in the movement back and forth, as was said above. In this way, Ignatius gives priority to 'savouring … interiorly' rather than to 'knowing much' (Exx 2).

Also present in the Exercises is the *relational* aspect; this appears not so much in the relationship between the exercitant and the person who accompanies (though it is there) as in the final purpose and aim,

[11] Santiago Thió, 'Ignacio, padre spiritual de mujeres', *Manresa*, 66 (1994), 417–436.

which is to facilitate a knowledge of, and a relationship with, the divine: to establish an interpersonal relationship with Jesus.[12] 'It is more appropriate and far better that the Creator and Lord himself should communicate himself to the devout soul, embracing it in love and praise.' (Exx 15) The one giving the Exercises is a mere instrument, his or her role being to facilitate the embrace, the contact, the relationship between the exercitant and God. In the words of Margaret Scott, 'one tries to be a witness on tip-toe, delicately, as if allowing God to blow a kiss'.[13]

From the feminine point of view what is sought and esteemed is not so much the image of the powerful King, the making of great decisions and the launching of an enterprise or adventure, but the experience of a new relationship, the sensation of an embrace, the ability to rest and gather strength while held in the bosom of God; then to pass on that emotion and that relationship to others in our daily lives. The image of the divine that Ignatius presents is lovable and generous, that of Someone who trusts me and cares for me, an eternal King who continues to invite me to follow him despite my defects, who loves me so much that he sacrifices himself for me, a God who embraces me. In other words, here is an image of the sacred with which one may easily fall in love; it is very much in tune with feminine spirituality.

Finally, the aspect of *care* is central to the Exercises: the whole methodology (most explicitly in the Additions) implies how Ignatius takes care of the exercitant as he or she advances through the process (advice given to the person who gives the exercises how best to assist the exercitant at different moments and stages). Ignatius also mentions how we are cared for by *the whole range of created beings* (Exx 60), how Jesus dedicates his life to caring for and healing us, indeed how God continually takes care of us (Exx 107, 234–237). The experience of feeling cared for and not only of caring for others is one of great significance for the feminine.

When one turns to the basic structure of the Exercises, in the First Week the *emotional* component has a special importance. The experience

[12] Simon Decloux, 'La transformación del yo y la experiencia de la relación interpersonal con Jesús', in *Psicología y Ejercicios Ignacianos*, edited by Carlos Alemany and José A. García-Monge (Bilbao and Santander: Mensajero and Sal Terrae, 1989), 397–411.

[13] Margaret Scott, 'Los Ejercicios Espirituales dados y vividos por una mujer', *Manresa*, 66 (1994), 355–364, here 357.

evoked is deeply affective: one asks for personal shame and confusion, for 'growing and intense sorrow and tears' (Exx 55), to feel abhorrence for one's sins, with 'an exclamation of wonder and surging emotion' (Exx 60) as one seeks for a 'purgative' experience (Exx 10). Given the facility of the feminine for the emotional, the task in the First Week with persons who clearly have a feminine orientation will be not simply to facilitate the emotional experience, but to control any excess (especially with regard to feelings of guilt and shame), and to help those persons to identify and come to terms with the elements that are at the root of their disquiet (especially the daily causes). One has to bear in mind that such emotional experience is not an end in itself. Rather, to continue the Exercises the exercitant has to direct this emotion to its final purpose, 'finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul' (Exx 1).

The Second Week would seem to have more masculine elements, such as the bellicose language, the decision to serve beneath a banner, the transformation of conversion into mission, reflection on what is to be done, 'work[ing] against their human sensitivities' (Exx 97). But the feminine/relational/non-linear/quotidian/non-rational reappears when the First Contemplation begs for 'an interior knowledge of Our Lord' (Exx 104): a knowledge that is emotional, visceral, *intuitive* rather than logical. As we contemplate, we enter into the mysteries of Christ's life, we take them into our hearts by simply being present and relishing, *as if I were present*, rejoicing in the person of Jesus, looking for no competition, no results, no achievements, simply looking, tasting … but looking and tasting what is *quotidian*, the day-to-day of the Divine … contemplating how Jesus *cares* for others, cures and heals, especially those most in need. Thus, for the feminine, the mission comes down to earth in what is inspired, intuited, felt, involving care and daily service.

In the Third Week, we continue to contemplate and to feel, but now it is with the contemplation of a passion, the passion of someone who is known, close to us, loved …. Once again, the petition is for 'sorrow, regret, and confusion, because the Lord is going to his Passion for my sins' (Exx 193), but now it is to shed tears with those who weep, to feel 'sorrow with Christ in sorrow' (Exx 203), to seek *empathy* (both rational and emotional), to be able to accompany by being there, looking on, not doing anything, allowing the feeling, putting up with the sorrow, enduring the dark moments …. A capacity for emotional empathy will make it easier to find this experience, but if this is linked to a facility for navigating

in the midst of *spiritual darkness* there may be some difficulty in making the transition to the Fourth Week. Once again, it may be necessary to control excess or becoming bogged down emotionally, especially if a person is someone of great feminine sensibility.

In the Fourth Week, once again one asks for an *emotion*: 'to be glad and to rejoice intensely' (Exx 221) with the risen One as we contemplate his resurrection appearances. From the feminine angle, the fifth point is especially appealing: 'consider the office of consoler' and 'compare it with the way friends console one another' (Exx 224). Equally the Contemplation to Attain Love (described by Margaret Scott as 'what is most feminine in the whole Ignatian text') talks not only of a feeling, but of a feeling that is transformed into life, one of service and care—'love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words' (Exx 230); a feeling that is communicated, a *relationship*—'love consists in a mutual communication' (Exx 231); and a feeling that is received—'Give me love of yourself along with your grace, for that is enough for me' (Exx 234). In the words of Scott: 'to reread the Principle and Foundation from the feminine point of view is to replace it in the context of Love'.[14]

Conclusion

It is surprising that in the epoch of Ignatius there should be such a strong presence of the 'feminine' in the work of spirituality. The experience of the Exercises obviously contains many masculine elements—their detailed structure both in general and in each particular Week; the search for self-control; the emphasis on action, election, on the dominance of reason. Nevertheless, Ignatius makes us realise that the feminine has a central role in our decision-making and in our interior life, giving great importance to 'savouring … interiorly'; to the 'movements of the spirits' (with self-knowledge, awareness and application); to service and care as a means and an end; to the element of relationship (the creature embraced and cared for by the Lord); to the formation of an image of God as loveable and loving; and to requesting in place of achieving: 'so that we may perceive interiorly that we cannot by ourselves bring on or retain great devotion, intense love, tears, or any other spiritual consolation, but that all these are a gift and grace from God our Lord' (Exx 322). As Scott explains:

[14] Scott, 'Los Ejercicios Espirituales dados y vividos por una mujer', 363.

> Far from forging men and women who rely on their own capacity to do more by sheer willpower, Ignatius opens us up to God, making us more disposable and receptive, more 'feminine' so as to be able to work with, for and in God.[15]

The view that Ignatius has of the 'feminine', not as inimical but as complementary to the 'masculine', is very much in line with recent psychological studies of spirituality; their aim is not to establish differences, but to defend the thesis that the best type of spiritual development is that in which masculine and feminine aspects are balanced.[16] If we move beyond the purely biological, if we leave to one side the biological distinction between men and women, if we cease to speak of 'women' and search rather for the *feminine elements* to be found in the Ignatian way, we encounter an entirely new and complete overview of spiritual maturity.

María Prieto Ursúa is a professor of psychology at the Comillas Pontifical University in Madrid. Her research focuses both on clinical psychology and health psychology.

translated by Joseph A. Munitiz SJ

[15] Scott, 'Los Ejercicios Espirituales dados y vividos por una mujer', 358.
[16] See Simpson and others, 'Sex and Gender Differences in Religiousness and Spirituality' .

THE CHURCH AS A MISSIONARY SERVANT IN THE GODLESS WORLD

Erich Przywara on the 'Holy Saturday' Form of the Church

Riyako Cecilia Hikota

HOLY SATURDAY, the liturgical term for the day on which the body of the Lord was in the tomb while his soul 'descended into hell', has often been neglected in the life of the Church, as it seems to be an empty, silent day between the cross and the resurrection. However, the empty silence of Holy Saturday is vital to connecting the grief of the cross with the joy of the resurrection, exactly because of its in-between place.

St Ignatius of Loyola was one of those who are aware of the significance of this Holy Saturday silence, even though the Gospels themselves do not mention it. On the Sixth and Seventh Days of the Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises, the exercitant is instructed to contemplate the burial of the Lord, that is, his body remaining in the tomb separated from the soul, as well as the desolation of Our Lady and of the disciples.[1] Since these contemplations fall at the end of the Third Week, we can say that they are, in a sense, the culmination of the meditations on the whole passion week, as well as a preparation for the Fourth Week, which is about the resurrection of the Lord.

As the Gospels are silent about Holy Saturday, it is also the day that requires our pious imagination the most: how desolate and sorrowful

[1] See Exx 208, 'At midnight, from the taking down from the cross to the burial in the sepulchre, exclusively; and in the morning, from the placing in the tomb [298] to the house where Our Lady went after the burial of her Son'; 'A contemplation of all the passion taken as a whole, during the exercise at midnight and in the morning. In place of the repetitions and the application of the senses, the exercitant should consider, throughout that whole day and as frequently as possible, how the most holy body of Christ our Lord was separated from his soul and remained apart from it, and where and how it was buried. Consider, too, Our Lady's loneliness along with her deep grief and fatigue; then, on the other hand, the fatigue of the disciples.'

was Our Lady as she went home after the burial of her beloved Son? And how did the disciples and the women feel? How did they spend the day between the crucifixion and the resurrection? St Ignatius invites us to imagine ourselves in the midst of the deep sorrow of the followers of the Lord. To put it differently, he invites us to imagine what the world would be like without Jesus, that is, how empty it would be. This exercise is necessary for us to appreciate truly the wonder and the joy of the resurrection.

In the twentieth century there were two major Roman Catholic theologians who wrote on the significance of the empty silence of Holy Saturday: Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988), who developed a highly sophisticated theology of Holy Saturday by exploring its Trinitarian, Christological and soteriological aspects; and Karl Rahner (1904–1984), who reflected philosophically on its meaning. It is probably no coincidence that both of them were Jesuits (even though Balthasar left the Society of Jesus later in his life). A much less well-known fact is that their mentor, the Polish-German Jesuit Erich Przywara (1889–1972) also paid special attention to Holy Saturday, especially in his commentary on the Spiritual Exercises, and regarded it as the pre-eminent ecclesiological symbol.[2] For example, in an unpublished manuscript of meditations on the Spiritual Exercises, we find him saying:

> The sign of the resurrection will be: the empty grave! And therefore the real resurrection form of the Church also remains in the invisibility of God; and therefore it will be necessary for all the Church's worldly forms of the resurrection always to be humbled into the Third Week [of the Spiritual Exercises], for these forms are, fundamentally, a rebellion against the mystery of the cross …. Only there is the triumphal form of the Church at home. Throughout the history of the Church, there has been an impulse to embed invisibility in visibility within the Christian empire, and then the hand of God comes and restores *the true form of the Church*, *the form of Holy Saturday* …. This mystery keeps recurring. This holds good for the Church: humanity never learns from history and Christendom never learns from history either![3]

[2] Martha Zechmeister examines the significance of the Holy Saturday motif in Przywara's theology, which can be located in the tradition of negative theology. See 'Karsamstag: Zu einer Theologie des Gott-vermissens', in *Vom Wagnis der Nichtidentität: Johann Baptist Metz zu Ehren*, edited by Johann Reikerstorfer (Münster: LIT, 1998), 50–78; *Gottes-Nacht: Erich Przywaras Weg negativer Theologie* (Münster: LIT, 1997).

[3] Erich Przywara, *Exerzitien in Altenhohenau,* volume 2, 50. The manuscript was typed by Leo Zimny in 1936.

Here we can see that Przywara finds deeply ecclesiological significance in the image of Holy Saturday. In another place, he calls the Church on Holy Saturday 'a widow in all her parts, desolate in this world! That means: in DEO! God between the mystery of the ascension into heaven and the Second Coming—not only the invisible but the departed God.'[4] Przywara also repeats that Holy Saturday is 'the feast of the Church', that is, 'the Day of the Church exactly in the form of the divested, plundered, exposed, impoverished and abandoned Church'.[5]

It is intriguing that Przywara uses these powerful words to describe the state of the Church on Holy Saturday, even though they are fragmentary images rather than systematic thoughts. In what sense can this 'desolate', 'impoverished' form of the Church as a 'widow' be the 'true form of the Church'? And, more importantly, what implications does such a Holy Saturday motif have for our understanding of the role of the Church in the world today?

Holy Saturday as Ecclesiological Symbol

For Przywara, Holy Saturday is first of all about the mystery of Christ, who even descended to hell for us sinners, so that we might be led out of the damnation that should have been our fate and into heaven. Przywara writes:

> It is precisely this resurrection glory, taking place hidden in the womb of darkness itself, that is the light in which the extremity of this darkness first appears and shows itself: the inexorable consequence, happening to the God–man himself, of the 'curse' that he became for us (Galatians 3:13): sin, death, hell (Romans 5:12–21). This most extreme of extremities, hell, becomes manifest in the explicitly blessed soul: the blessed soul descended to hell. Since the darkness of God's own godforsakenness (Matthew 27:45–46) seems to be sealed in the darkness of death and hell, it is the blessed soul, that is, the soul living in the blessed vision of the unveiled God, that descended into hell, that is, to the place where the Godhead is hidden in the discontinuity of the loss of God.[6]

Here we can see some similarity with Balthasar's interpretation of Christ's descent into Hell. In the Holy Saturday mystery, what is called

[4] Przywara, *Exerzitien in Altenhohenau,* volume 2, 34.
[5] Przywara, *Exerzitien in Altenhohenau,* volume 2, 36.
[6] Erich Przywara, *Deus semper maior: Theologie der Exerzitien* (Vienna: Herold, 1964), volume 2, 148.

The Descent of Christ into Limbo, *by Giovanni Bellini, c.1475–1480*

the *admirabile commercium*, the 'redeeming exchange' between God and humanity, is clearly revealed.[7] However, Przywara's use of the Holy Saturday motif also has a deeply ecclesiological meaning in a more explicit sense than it does for Balthasar. We should also note the significant difference between them that Przywara is working with the Christ-Adam motif, which is an important part of the traditional interpretation of Christ's descent into hell as the 'Harrowing of Hell', while Balthasar has clearly rejected this motif. Przywara writes:

> Since in Christ's descent into hell there appears most extremely 'Adam *in* Christ', all the curse of humanity concentrated into one curse, which 'became Christ' (Galatians 3:13) … all humanity from Adam onwards is redeemed into one body of Christ: 'Christ in Adam … and Adam in Christ' (Augustine, *Ennarationes in Psalmos*, 101.1.4). Precisely because the 'Body of Christ' in redeemed pre-Christian humanity from Adam onwards … ascends in the 'ascending Christ' from the 'lower parts … so that he might fill all things' (Ephesians 4:9–10), and precisely because the 'Logos who became flesh' (John 1:14) is revealed as 'Head and Body of the one Christ' (Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 9.12) in the one 'body' of 'many members' (1 Corinthians 12:12), then also the perfecting 'beginning' (Colossians 1:18) of the new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) takes place in Christ, as the 'firstborn from the dead' ….[8]

For Przywara, in his descent into Hell, Christ as the New Adam unites humankind with himself in the body of the Church. This is why, as one commentator points out, 'Przywara gives such a peculiar rationale for

[7] Compare Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, translated by Edward T. Oakes (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1992), 360.
[8] Przywara, *Deus semper maior*, volume 2, 178.

the universal significance of the Church: it emerges from the event that affects and enfolds all of the humanity involved in sin'.[9]

As to the image of the Holy Saturday Church—the 'desolate' Church as 'a widow'—Przywara finds it relevant for us today, as he sees a certain similarity between the absence and silence of the 'dead God' on Holy Saturday and the seeming absence and silence of God in our 'in-between' time, that is, the time between the ascension and the second coming of Christ. For Przywara, '"the Godlessness of the world before the conception of the Lord" increases in "the Godlessness of the same world after his death and burial"'.[10] He also speaks of,

> … the God who seems to have come to this world once in order to leave it again, who seems to have handed over this world to a lost silence, as the silence before God's arrival was: for this world has experienced what God is, and now has to wait anew, having lost what had been found. And yet it is the silence belonging to a greater arrival.[11]

These words seem particularly profound when we consider the time in which Przywara wrote them: looking back on the catastrophe of the two world wars. Przywara was confronted with the harsh reality of suffering in a world in which God seemed to be silent.[12] Nevertheless he had a hope that this silence implies 'a greater arrival'. In a sense, the silence seems ever greater than before, exactly because we have already experienced what God is through Jesus Christ.

For Przywara, both the Church on Holy Saturday and the Church in the 'in-between' time are characterized by the motif of 'remaining' (*übrigbleiben*) or 'being left behind' (*Übriggelassensein*). The Church is, so to speak, the 'remnant', which stays after the Lord's departure, guarding the tomb as a 'desolate widow'. Just as the consecrated bread left over from the communion is kept and guarded (something that is also associated with the image of the body of Christ left in the tomb on Holy Saturday), 'the blessed, the most intimate and the warmest has the form of being left behind!'[13] Thus, for Przywara, being left behind in the

[9] Eva-Maria Faber, *Kirche zwischen Identität und Differenz: die ekklesiologischen Entwürfe von Romano Guardini und Erich Przywara* (Würzburg: Echter, 1993), 150.
[10] Przywara, *Deus semper maior*, volume 2, 118.
[11] Erich Przywara, *Was ist Gott? Summula* (Nuremberg: Glock und Lutz, 1953 [1947]), 26.
[12] In particular, Przywara explored this issue in his exchange with his contemporary, the author Reinhold Schneider. See Erich Przywara and Reinhold Schneider, *Briefwechsel: mit Gedenkworten von Theodor Heuss, Werner Bergengruen, Erich Przywara und einem Vortrag von Reinhold Schneider* (Zürich: Die Arche, 1963).
[13] Przywara, *Exerzitien in Altenhohenau*, volume 2, 36.

seeming absence of Christ is a blessing, which enables us to be the closest to and most intimate with him.

Here we see a distinctive characteristic of Przywara's spirituality, which paradoxically sees the utmost form of unity with God exactly in God's absence and silence.[14] Here we can also see that Przywara provides a unique interpretation of the seventh day of the Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises, when the exercitant is to contemplate both the body of Christ in the tomb and the desolation of Our Lady and the disciples: the body of Christ left in the tomb and the body of Christ (the Church) left by the grave are thus placed in parallel.

Further, the motif of 'being left behind' is connected to the notion of 'homelessness': Christ was without home on earth, and Christians and the Church are supposed to follow in his footsteps.[15] Christians and the Church are *in* this world but not *of* this world. For Przywara, this other 'in-betweenness' of the Church or the Christian directly leads to the Christian mission. Therefore, we can see a connection between the Holy Saturday form and the missionary form of the Church. The Holy Saturday form of the Church is ultimately its missionary form as a 'slave of the world' as well as a 'slave of God'.[16]

The Missionary Form of the Church in a Godless World

Przywara's out-of-print booklet *Idee Europa* ('Idea of Europe') has recently attracted attention, after Pope Francis called it a 'splendid work'.[17] Some scholars have already used it to illustrate the similarity between Przywara's vision of Europe and the Church, and that of Pope Francis.[18] *Idee Europa* is also relevant for the Holy Saturday form of the Church.

In it Przywara emphasizes the importance of the old and new covenants, and of *admirabile commercium*. He explains how a covenant, in the original biblical language, entails participation in the spousal mystery between God and God's people. In the New Testament, the covenant is grounded in the death and resurrection of Christ. He has revealed himself to us as a servant, who, 'though he was in the form of God … emptied himself, taking the form of a slave' (Philippians 2:6). Interestingly,

[14] Przywara's spirituality is influenced by the Carmelite tradition of the dark night as well by as St Ignatius.
[15] The significance of this notion is discussed by Faber, *Kirche zwischen Identität und Differenz*, 240–246.
[16] Erich Przywara, *Katholische Krise* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1967), 82.
[17] Pope Francis, address at the conferral of the Charlemagne Prize, 6 May 2016,
[18] See John Betz, 'Pope Francis, Erich Przywara, and the Idea of Europe', *First Things* (5 December 2016), at https://www.firstthings.com/web-exclusives/2016/05/pope-francis-erich-przywara-and-the-idea-of-europe.

in *Idee Europa*, the *admirabile commercium* is represented by the Maundy Thursday motif of washing feet; by washing the 'filthy feet' of the 'filthy world', Christ has shown the ultimate form of love and the basic intention of the covenant.[19]

Christ Washing the Disciples' Feet, *by Giovanni Agostino da Lodi, 1500*

According to Przywara, in the history of Europe as in the history of the Church, this new covenant has often been misunderstood as if it were just a new version of the old one: Christians have seen themselves as another type of 'chosen people'. The ruling dynasties of Europe made this grave mistake:

> They saw themselves exclusively as the glorious presence of the Divine Majesty on earth … to the point that they could see in those 'without Christ and without God' nothing but an 'enemy' to be vanquished by 'crusades' or compelled to baptism.[20]

Przywara also criticizes both the medieval Catholic Church and the Reformation, each of which has also created another form of exclusivity in a different way. Finally, Przywara criticizes 'Christian humanism' as well, which, in his view, also grew into a new version of the old covenant, that is, 'the new Old Covenant of "human perfection"', which is just another form of elite.[21]

In fact, Przywara is critical of any form of 'Christian elite' who just 'escape into the region of some "sacred separateness"', whether it be '"God's State", or "Holy Empire", or "community of the Chosen" … or "Christian society" or "Christian party"'. Instead, following the example of Christ, Christians must wash the 'filthy feet' of a 'filthy world'.[22] For

[19] Erich Pryzwara, *Idee Europa* (Nuremberg: Glock und Lutz, 1956), 36.
[20] Przywara, *Idee Europa*, 34, translated in Betz, 'Pope Francis, Erich Przywara, and the Idea of Europe'.
[21] Pryzwara, *Idee Europa*, 35.
[22] Pryzwara, *Idee Europa*, 36.

Przywara, only Christianity like this is 'the one true Christianity', the 'Christianity of the "redeeming exchange"'. Przywara concludes *Idee Europa* with the following passage:

> Therefore, a true and new 'Christian Europe' as 'Christian Occident' can only exist so long as, with Christ as the 'friend and table companion of sinners' (Matthew 11: 19), we Christians truly 'befriend sinners' and 'sit at the table of sinners'—this being the only way for us to be like Christ, who did not 'quench' his enemies (Isaiah 42: 3; Matthew 12: 20), but 'takes away the sin of the world' (John 1: 29).[23]

Eventually, as Eva-Maria Faber points out, we can see 'how little Przywara regrets the collapse of "Christian Europe"'.[24] This is understandable for, if we follow his logic, the Church becomes closer to its true form precisely when it is exposed to a godless world. This point is also connected to his idea of the Holy Saturday form of the Church. It is clearer now that for Przywara the Church has often fallen into the error of 'the new Old Covenant', of creating just another form of exclusivity. This is 'the triumphal form of the Church' or the Church 'at home'—the Church that does not go out into the profane world. Then the hand of God, which restores the true form of the Church, the 'divested, plundered, exposed, impoverished and abandoned', 'desolate' form of Holy Saturday as a 'widow', which is ultimately the form of the Church as a missionary servant. This form of the Church is Christologically grounded in the *admirabile commercium*, which is characterized by the radical service that Christ even descended into hell for us so that we might be saved from damnation.

The Holy Saturday Church

What implications does such a Holy Saturday motif provide for our understanding of the role of the Church in our world today? One important consequence might be to change our view of the so-called 'crisis' faced by the Church in the more and more secularised profane world. Such a Holy Saturday form of the Church, considered as a missionary servant to the godless world, shows us that crisis could actually be an opportunity for the Church to be closer to its 'true form'. Recently more and more devout Catholics have tended to take a somewhat defensive, inward-looking

[23] Pryzwara, *Idee Europa*, 36.
[24] Faber, *Kirche zwischen Identität und Differenz*, 246 note 414.

stance against the outside world, looking desperately for ways to uphold the fading authority of the Church in this world, and so falling into the error of 'the new Old Covenant'. Przywara suggests that what we need is rather the courage to go out into the godless world and remain there as a 'divested, plundered, exposed, impoverished and abandoned Church'.

His radicalism recalls that of Pope Francis, who has emphasized that the Church must go out to the margins of the world in order to serve the poor and the suffering. In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, the Pope writes:

> I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures … More than by fear of going astray, my hope is that we will be moved by the fear of remaining shut up within structures which give us a false sense of security, within rules which make us harsh judges, within habits which make us feel safe, while at our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: 'Give them something to eat' (Mark 6:37). (n.49)

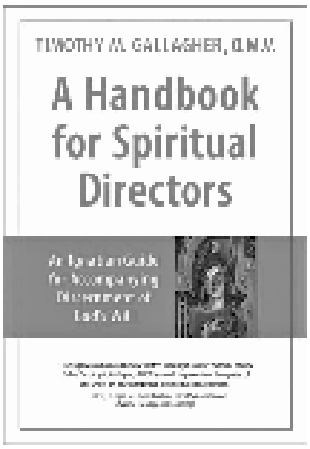
Despite the Pope's vision, the Church and the people of God still seem to be going in the opposite direction and, according to Przywara, we have often done so in the past. Przywara's image of the Holy Saturday form of the Church, along with its form of a servant to the ungodly world, may help us to remember what the true Church should be.

The Christian mission is a result of the encounter with the resurrected Christ, so an unbalanced emphasis on Holy Saturday which could simply undermine the joy of the good news should be carefully avoided. However, Przywara's radical reflection on the 'impoverished' form of the Church at the 'zero-point' of Holy Saturday may help us Christians to become and remain a humble, Christ-like Church that really serves the poor and the suffering in this more and more secularised world.

Riyako Cecilia Hikota is currently conducting research on Erich Przywara at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt. She received a PhD in systematic theology from the University of Edinburgh. Her thesis was published in 2018 as *And Still We Wait: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theology of Holy Saturday and Christian Discipleship*. Her main research interests are in the *ressourcement* theologians in twentieth-century Catholic theology.

RECENT BOOKS

Timothy Gallagher, *A Handbook for Spiritual Directors: An Ignatian Guide for Accompanying Discernment of God's Will* (London: Crossroad, 2017). 978 0 8245 2171 4, pp.144, £19.50.



Timothy Gallagher is a well-known and popular writer on discernment and Ignatian spirituality, and holds the St Ignatius Chair of Spiritual Formation at St John Vianney Theological Seminary in Denver, USA. He has written a lucid account of how to accompany someone making a discernment of the will of God according to the rules and principles in the *Spiritual Exercises*. The book guides the spiritual director through a process that may otherwise not seem obvious without the aid of a more experienced supervisor.

The book is particularly strong on the essential preparatory stages before the election or decision: laying the foundations, removing obstacles and forming the 'disposition'. It uses the Principle and Foundation as the basis for a secure sense of God's love as a prerequisite and being available to God in the discernment by being genuinely open and as free as possible It then dedicates a chapter to each of the modes or 'times' of discernment according to St Ignatius.

Throughout Gallagher uses examples or case studies that bring the otherwise somewhat abstract principles to life. He includes from the Exercises the Principle and Foundation, the texts on making an election and the Rules for Discernment. His suggestions of scripture texts are especially welcome. His explanations of Ignatius' rather laconic text and observations will make this a very useful reference book. Gallagher has an excellent knowledge of the Ignatian texts, and other sources and commentaries, and he presents this in an easily accessible style. He is also to be commended for his focus on the director's role and the required disposition.

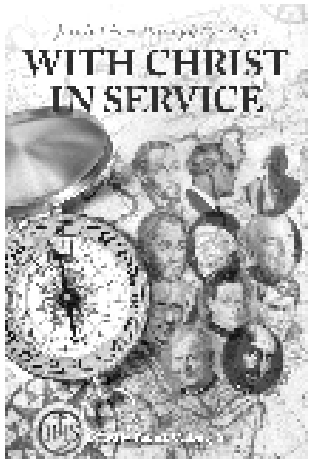
This is not an academic text, but one aimed at practitioners—spiritual directors who want to know 'how to do it': it is a handbook for directors who have made the Exercises themselves and are already familiar with Ignatian discernment. I read this book just before giving a retreat to someone who was making a major decision and who wanted it to be a God-centred choice.

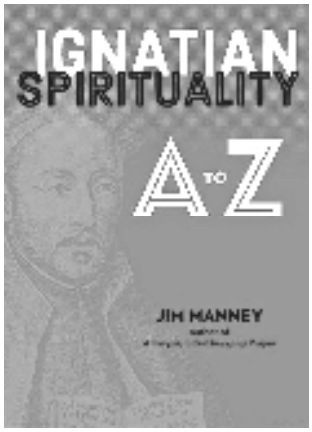
The handbook was just that: a guide for those accompanying that navigates through what can seem a somewhat complicated or even arcane process normally reserved for the initiated in the world of spiritual direction. Gallagher demystifies the process without reducing itself to a Mary Berry cookbook of spiritual discernment, and has made a significant contribution that will be invaluable to many spiritual directors.

Roger Dawson SJ

***With Christ in Service: Jesuit Lives through the Ages*, edited by Patrick Carberry (Dublin: Messenger, 2017). 978 1 9102 4870 6, pp.120, £8.95.**

Jim Manney, *Ignatian Spirituality: A to Z* (Dublin: Messenger, 2018). 978 1 9102 4894 2, pp.300, €14.95.





With Christ in Service is a book on the lives of sixteen inspirational Jesuits. Divided into three parts, it begins with Ignatius Loyola and ends with those from contemporary times. The short biographies are written by Jesuits from around the world, many of whom are deeply inspired by their subjects. Each chapter is introduced by a quotation attributed to the inspirational Jesuit or a comment on him, for example, from Pope Francis on Pierre Favre. This is helpful in setting the tone for each biography.

A central theme running through the lives of the featured Jesuits is the complete letting go of stubbornness in order to open up to God's plan. And the development of their spiritual lives unfolds as we read their stories, be it that of Francis Xavier, who came to warm to his roommate Ignatius' divine desires, or of Walter Ciszek, who tuned into God at every moment. We come to see that the hearts of these Jesuits were receptive to the heart of Jesus, radically following his example in the Gospels.

What also becomes apparent to the reader is the common Ignatian vision that animates not only the featured Jesuits but also the contributors

to the book. For instance, Kevin O'Higgins, who writes about the US social activist Daniel Berrigan, has shown a consistent promotion of a 'faith that does justice' through his missionary work in Paraguay and his current work with the Jesuit University Support and Training project in Ballymun, Dublin (as the notes on contributors at the end of the book show). Moreover, the book emphasizes the Jesuit sensitivity to a diversity of cultures, as exemplified by Pedro Arrupe in Japan and Vincente Cañas, who lived with tribespeople in the Amazon.

While the compilation is necessarily short, the reader is left with a desire to find out more about the Jesuits—a good thing! The book can appear somewhat repetitive when read sequentially, with similar references to early Jesuit history in the various biographies. But the repetition is helpful in providing context for the reader who just wants to dip in and out. *With Christ in Service* provides an insight into a variety of Jesuit lives, and we see the many unique skills and talents these men had, fired up as they were with zeal to serve the one, loving and unifying Christ. Regarding the title: while it is a good description of the content, a snappier, even slightly more secular title might have appealed to a wider audience, which it certainly deserves.

The author of *Ignatian Spirituality: A to Z*, Jim Manney, has no problem appealing to a wide audience with his conversational and engaging style. He explains well-known Ignatian terms, from the motto *Ad majorem Dei gloriam* ('for the greater glory of God') to *magis* and what it means in Jesuit works, to the *zeal* inherent in the lives of Jesuits and their partners in mission. It is a handbook for those who know nothing of Ignatian spirituality as well as a shorthand resource for people already steeped in the tradition. The author quickly gets to the crux of what it is to be a contemplative presence in the modern world (*contemplative in action*, p.46). Or he explains that the Latin *agere contra* (p.5) is not only about 'acting against' unhealthy inclinations, for example pride or greed, but also presupposes a need to desire the opposite, in alignment with the model of Christ.

The book is, in fact, deceptively simple and clear. For it is obvious that the author has done his research, drawing on a wide variety of sources. He combines this work with an intuitive grasp and understanding of the terminology he is excavating. For instance, he refers to a specific letter, written by Ignatius to the superior of a group of young Jesuits, that summarises particularly well the meaning of *finding God in all things* (p.86): Ignatius says that the Jesuits in training can find God 'in their conversations, their walks, in all that they see, taste, hear, understand'. The reader is left to ponder God at work in all of creation.

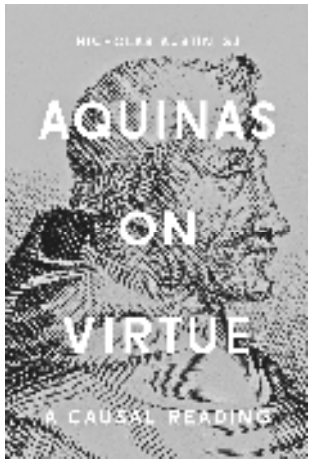
The author's personality emerges from the pages with a 'can-do' attitude to religious and spiritual life which he also senses in Ignatius. Hence his

understanding of *boldness*, which he describes as 'a certain apostolic aggressivity' (p. 27). The book is an accessible and humorous contribution to the field, but without being superficial. The author questions the eccentricity of Jesuits he has known, joking that Jesuits are 'a little slow' in reference to their lengthy training and education!

One drawback worth pointing out is that there is no 'Ignatian Reading List', as promised by the author in the preface. This is a pity as it would have enabled the reader to delve more deeply into the terms that have been touched upon. All in all, *Ignatian Spirituality: A to Z* adds colour and vitality to the Ignatian tradition. It is a resource that is not burdened by pious religiosity, but one that is alive with a heart 'set on fire'. It invites the reader to apply the terms explored to their own lives and to respond in turn to the great needs of humanity. It complements *With Christ in Service* in that, in the language of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, it draws the reader ever closer to the Omega Point, the point of convergence where all things begin and end.

Gavin Murphy

Nicholas Austin, *Aquinas on Virtue: A Causal Reading* (Washington, DC: Georgetown UP, 2017). 978 1 6261 6473 4, pp. 258, £26.50.



In the context of a renewed interest in virtue within theological and philosophical ethics, there is no lack of references to Thomas Aquinas or of studies of one or other aspect of his thinking related to virtue in general or to specific virtues. Nicholas Austin's contribution, nonetheless, is of a different kind, and worth singling out. The aim is not to offer a 'virtue ethics'—an ethics in which virtue serves as the basic idea or the central focus—but a 'virtue theory' based on Aquinas's thinking in terms of 'causes', and dealing with the nature, genesis and role of virtue (and the virtues). The outcome is impressive in offering the reader both a much-needed clarification about the notion of virtue in the context of ethical thinking and an inspiring guided journey through the reasoning of this great philosopher and theologian of the thirteenth century.

An extended analysis of the cardinal virtue of temperance opens the book. Illustrating the potential of a causal approach by reflecting with Aquinas on

notions such as *matter*, *subject*, *target* and *exemplar*, it convincingly suggests that temperance is far from being only a matter of the negative restraint of one's desires in areas such as the consumption of material goods, food, drink, sex and so on, and can be positively approached in terms of the integration, channelling, or redirection of one's sensible appetites. Already in this first chapter, the argument is made that reading Aquinas with the necessary technical competence does not preclude making him relevant to contemporary issues, even for the non-specialist.

The analysis then moves on to the general definition of virtue as a good habit. This is an opportunity to enter into dialogue with modern psychological accounts of 'habit' and to show the richness of Aquinas' concept, in which habits, far from undermining voluntariness, actually perfect it. Another engaging debate is exposed concerning the very existence of virtues, since the situationist critique based on empirical social psychology finds that social situation, not character traits, plays a greater role in explaining human behaviour. For Austin, 'situationist evidence may point to the notion not that there are no virtuous people, only that virtue, for most of us, is of the germinal and imperfect kind that still needs to grow into complete virtue' (p.64).

A second part of the book deals directly with various aspects of a causal approach, starting from the four classical Aristotelian causes: *formal*, *material*, *final* and *efficient*. Contemporary theories of causation are influenced by advances in physical science and are inheritors of the simplification, secularisation and metaphysical scepticism of modern natural philosophy. They are almost exclusively concerned with efficient cause. For Austin, it is still very useful for the ethicist today to consider seriously the kind of multidimensional account of causation offered by Aquinas. Indeed, reflecting on *object*, *exemplar*, *end* and *agent* provides inspiring categories and vocabulary for ethics today. For example, finality or teleology—so widely rejected by modern thinkers—can regain attractiveness in today's context of environmental challenges.

> Nature, lacking any intrinsic finality, becomes devoid of its own intrinsic moral status and is therefore open to human domination. Immanent finality, in contrast, opens up the possibility of reconciling human autonomy with divine heteronomy, as the moral life fulfils God's wise plan precisely by fulfilling human desires instilled into human nature. (p.95)

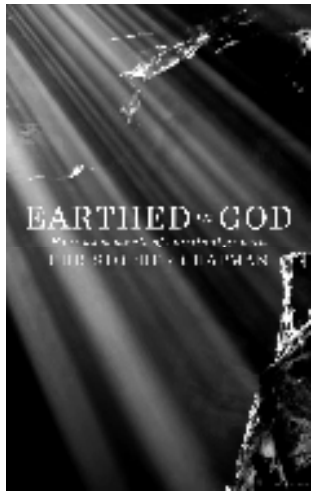
The last part expands on the causal interpretation of the definition of virtue that Aquinas inherits from Augustine. A virtue is 'a good quality of the mind by which we live rightly and no one can use badly which God works in us without us'. Once again, explanations about the different categories introduced by Aquinas, the subtleties of his arguments, the differences between his various writings and the debates in later interpretations, lead to substantial

and inspiring insights. Aquinas' virtue theory suggests an ethics of reason and will, but also of passion. According to Austin, 'Moral virtue, for Aquinas, is passionate virtue' (p.146). The book ends with a suggestive and in-depth rethinking of the notion of *infusion* so as to make sense of Aquinas' assertion that virtue is infused by God without denying the role of human agency.

In developing his argument, Austin navigates with ease the various works of Aquinas but he also uses some classical commentaries such as those of Cajetan, Poinsot and the Salamancans, as well as contemporary discussions. The notion of virtue thereby takes a refined and new dimension while the reader discovers or rediscovers Aquinas' approach. Along the way a brilliant and inspiring understanding of the dynamism of Aquinas' thinking is offered, making it fully relevant for today. As Austin himself recognises, he is 'asking of the reader a significant investment of energy' (p.xxi), but the reward is worth the effort and his stylistic and pedagogical skills make the journey much easier.

Grégoire Catta SJ

Christopher Chapman, *Earthed in God: Four Movements of Spiritual Growth* (Norwich: Canterbury, 2018). 978 1 7862 2055 4, pp.186, £18.99.



As its title suggests, this book identifies and explores 'four movements' of growth in the spiritual life, using organic metaphors derived from the day-to-day world of gardening. The author, an experienced spiritual director and late convert to horticulture, draws wisdom from biblical parables of growth and from 'the book of creation' (p.1) itself, whose seasonal rhythms, he argues, have much to tell us about how we might cooperate with God, others and creation in our own spiritual growth.

Humble collaboration is the fundamental theme of this work, which puts it squarely in line with the message of Pope Francis in his ecological encyclical *Laudato si'*. If the temptation of the technocratic paradigm (that shorthand for the dominant ideology behind the present world crisis) is to imagine ourselves as independent individuals, aloof from other creatures and with our own agenda and programmes for development (whether personal, social or economic), returning to images from the natural world soon reminds

us of our interconnectedness and interdependence. 'We tend to take the natural world for granted, as the backdrop of our activity', explains the author, 'but, given full attention, creation can be our teacher and mentor' (p. 3).

In the spiritual life as in the garden, growth and fruitfulness are organic and relational, never linear or autonomous. This is despite the stubborn persistence in the religious imagination of 'the ladder of perfection' and performance-driven models of personal growth. Chapman crucially distinguishes four *movements* of growth in the spiritual life ('rooted and grounded'; 'emergence'; 'the struggle towards abundance'; 'fruitfulness and fall'), not successive stages that one passes through in simple progression. Rather than the pursuit of individual gains, spiritual growth and maturity mean 'taking our full place in a community of mutually dependent life' (p. 128), he writes, echoing Pope Francis's call to the Church for a communal ecological conversion.

Returning to the soil is necessary to bust our myths of self-sufficiency, Chapman argues: we need to be continually 'earthed in God'. In this sense this is a humble book (in the original sense of the word) with a message of gospel simplicity. It will not be earth-shattering for those familiar with the topic but, nonetheless, this reviewer found it a refreshing reminder to remain grounded in creation and to revisit the many natural images to be found in scripture, particularly the kingdom parables in Mark.

This is a book that repays slow and close reading—what seems on the surface to be obvious and familiar turns out to have surprisingly deep and complex roots. It is also very Ignatian in its vision and understanding of reality—stressing our collective co-labouring with God in our ongoing creation: the author has previously explored in *The Way* these 'four movements' in dialogue with the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises.[1] Ultimately there is something universal at play here: the paschal mystery as revealed in the fabric of creation itself.

Chapman encourages personal reflection on the part of the reader as he shares his own thoughts and discoveries about growth in the spiritual life, interwoven with aptly chosen bible passages and reminiscences from the allotment. Chapman's remarks on prayer in chapter two, for example, are clearly the result of a lot of experience of accompanying others and may be of use to those involved in retreat-giving or spiritual direction.

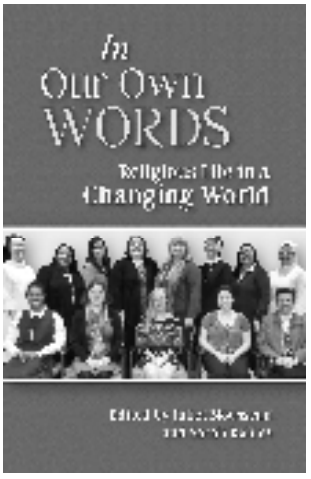
This is quite a charming little book with passages that approach the poetic in places, and it draws inspiration from a surprisingly wide variety of sources,

[1] Christopher Chapman, 'Striving for Perfection or Growing into Fruitfulness?', *The Way*, 57/3 (July 2018), 7–17.

from the thirteenth-century Beguine Hadewijch to Duns Scotus and the more familiar Teresa of Ávila. Chapman writes authentically, movingly at times, and manages to avoid the triteness that his theme might encourage to make a convincing case for the cultivation of the virtue of humility. In addition to being a helpful companion for those exploring or accompanying processes of spiritual growth, what emerges is a useful and unexpected contribution to the current debate on the spiritual origins of the present climate crisis and our response to it. In the end, the choice before us both as individuals and as a species is stark, he says: 'we will come to fruitfulness together, or not at all' (p. 131).

Tim McEvoy

***In Our Own Words: Religious Life in a Changing World*, edited by Juliet Mousseau and Sarah Kohles (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2018). 978 0 8146 4520 8, pp. 258, £18.99.**



In Our Own Words is an apt title for this book, in which thirteen religious women living in North America share their experience of religious life and their hopes for its future. All the contributors are members of active congregations and all are under fifty, with approximately half still in initial formation. Together they represent a variety of congregations, ethnic backgrounds and ways of approaching religious life. This diversity of participants was carefully sought by the group of young religious who planned the book, and it is the range of voices that ensures its integrity, enabling it to achieve its aim of helping younger religious to be heard.

The shared discernment process about the content of the book (with monthly video conferences and a week-long writing retreat) enabled any themes the writers thought important to emerge. What was not chosen is almost as notable as what was. Reflections from an older generation of sisters would have been likely to include discussions of the relationship between the hierarchy and religious life. Here the focus is on the essentials of religious life itself; community, encounter, compassion, and the growing exchange and collaboration between religious congregations have a central place.

Some of the most memorable passages in this book are reflections on the challenges of international and intercultural communities. In a thought-provoking chapter, Thuy Tran CSJ, a US-born child of Vietnamese refugees, describes struggling to reconcile the approach to conflict and silence with which she had grown up to that in the convent: 'My greatest struggle in religious life is blending the values of silence with using my voice .... From the Asian perspective, difficult conversations are communal, respectful, and harmonious, and here, I was experiencing just the opposite.' (p.106)

Christa Parra IBVM, a Mexican American within a predominately Irish and white community, chooses to write in Spanglish, since 'our fusion of dos idiomas as it is spoken in daily life is indicative of our being at home in our bicultural realidad' (p.133). Her striking account includes the challenges of her time of formation in Chicago, where she had to adjust to privileges previously unknown to her, with employed staff doing the cooking, cleaning and gardening. She relates how 'the only place I saw the color of my skin was on the Mexican mujeres working in the kitchen and cleaning the convent' (p.137). However, with an evident love of and pride in her culture, she balances this critique with an affirmation of the gift that Latinas offer religious life, including a familiarity with multigenerational living.

The primary intended audience for this book is those who are new to religious life and in formation, stemming as it does from a desire to address the lack of writing about living the vows today. However, it would also be particularly helpful for those responsible for accompanying women discerners and sisters in formation. And it makes for an interesting and at times inspiring read for all who are interested in why women choose to follow a call to religious life today and what makes them so passionate about their choice. As Mary Therese Perez OP points out in her chapter on the local and global dimensions of religious life, 'if you are looking for hope for the future of religious life, you need only go so far as a newer member to find it in abundance' (p.77). Passion, hope and sheer energy mark these chapters, combined with a realism which is not afraid to raise challenging questions.

The choice to focus on active religious means that the voice of contemplative nuns is missing; a similar work sharing the voice of enclosed sisters would be a fitting complement to this text, as would be a work gathering the voices of male religious. The editors of this work are aware of the limitations of their chosen parameters and hope that it will be the start of a conversation among women in religious life and beyond. The final half-page of possible discussion questions 'as a means to begin conversations' is a useful tool to this end.

Cathy Jones ra

***Amy Laura Hall, Laughing at the Devil: Seeing the World with Julian of Norwich* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2018). 978 1 4780 0025 9, pp.144, £58.00.**

Looking first at the index and finding there *Game of Thrones*, *Portrait of a Young Woman Wearing a Coif* (van der Weyden), Prince … 'Let's Go Crazy', and *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* all rubbing shoulders with each other, it must be admitted, set me wondering about what I was going to read. True, hazelnut, Fiend, Arundel Constitutions (1409), Gascoigne, Margaret, Black Death, Cressy, Serenus and Norwich are all there, too, but taken together they do seem to be strange bedfellows and they suggest a wacky, if not totally off the wall, type of book. In fact, *Laughing at the Devil* offers much sound research in a bold and fresh style for a general readership.

Amy Laura Hall, associate professor of Christian ethics at Duke University divinity school, achieves that fine balance between imparting well-contextualised knowledge and a personal, impassioned, and joyful presentation. After her Introduction, aptly subtitled 'Love in Everything'—the heart of Julian's theology and spirituality—we have four chapters. Each of these begins with a quotation from Elizabeth Spearing's fine modern English translation (Penguin, 1998), which Hall continues to use throughout her book. The first is headed 'Time: On Poynte'. At the end of her Introduction, Hall writes, 'Julian's visions are not timeless. They are timely.' And so she starts 'with Julian's perspective on time' (p.18) which is both 'in a poynte' and out of any earthly sense of time. This to some extent explains why, as Janina Ramirez has put it, it seems that Julian has been waiting in the wings and has only now come fully on stage.[2] We need her as much at the commencement of the twenty-first century as in the fourteenth and fifteenth.

Chapter 2, 'Truth: Divine Delight', explores the absence of 'divine anger' and 'threat of retribution' in God while still acknowledging the presence of 'domination and oppression' (p.49). Hall does not avoid the tough questions: how shall 'all be well'? She reminds us that when Julian has heard from God that 'All shall be well' she wants to be sure that God really means it. Giving his answer at the *kairos*, Julian—and we—are assured that we *can* stop being oppressed and obsessed by daily struggles. 'By the same power, wisdom and love with which he made all things, our good Lord is continually

[2] Janina Ramirez, *Julian of Norwich: A Very Brief History* (London: SPCK, 2016).

leading all things to the same end and he himself shall bring this about' (*Shewings*, Long Text, 35).

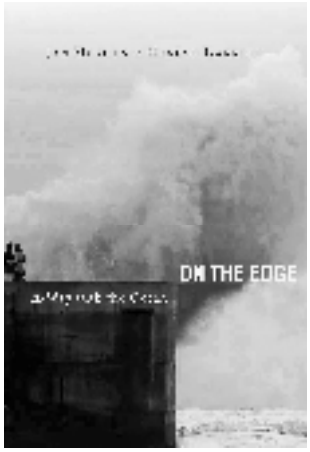
'Blood: Spiritual Safety' examines, with the pertinent and helpful anecdotes from Hall's own life that are a delightful feature of the whole book, how 'we are all known and pulled together toward the one who wants to save each one of us' (p.63). Unwrapping something of Jesus as Mother, Hall argues that each of us is held, 'unforgotten, tended to as if by a mother with no other work than to love us' (p.79): beautifully expressed. In the fourth chapter, 'Bodies: Nakedly and Truly', the book's title comes into its own.

> Jesus 'rejoices' that 'he has indeed done it' and will 'suffer no more'. Because the Fiend has been overcome, we may cheer ourselves by laughing at the Fiend himself. Julian also says that in her vision Jesus did not laugh at the Devil. Yet Jesus wants us to laugh. He wants us to be free and brave and not part of the public humiliation he endured alone … What Jesus suffered is not to be suffered by anyone else as part of God's work of salvation. (p.81)

I think Julian would have welcomed this book, but you will need to read it for yourselves to discover what a young woman wearing a coif and Charlie Brown are doing there.

Luke Penkett CJN

Jan Morgan and Graeme Garrett, *On the Edge: A-Way with the Ocean* (Reservoir: Morning Star, 2018). 978 0 6482 3245 2, pp.232, £17.99.



A holistic text for our time, *On the Edge* is a book to live with, a book that gently challenges our relationship with planet Earth. Jan Morgan and Graeme Garrett, a spiritual director and an academic, now both retired, introduce the concept of 'sea see/hearing'—'to attend in silence to the "visible voice" of the sea' (p.23)—as a language and as a spiritual practice, in dialogue with reflections on Australian indigenous experience, ecology, theology, philosophy, poetry and conversation. A Yuin elder, Uncle Max Dulumunmun Harrison, introduced Graeme and Ann to a deeper comprehension of ancient earth relationality: an engagement with 'Country'—for Indigenous Australians, their deep and true spiritual home. For each Mob (indigenous community), 'Country' is their inviolable place of Spirit. Every child is taught about 60,000 years of transmitted responsibility to be safe and to care in relationship with earth's forms and all living creatures where they live.

Jan and Graeme were led by Uncle Max to re-see, re-hear the sea, sand, wind, bird cries and human activity, to enter into relationship with the ocean's water, of which our human bodies are mostly made. Gradually, they discovered an initially alien practice: to ask the Ocean, 'What do you wish to teach me today?' Questions emerged. What is my sense of self as human in relation to the natural elements that support my body's life: earth, air, water, fire—the basics from which my food and shelter are derived? Who am I as an earth creature; and how should I be in relation to the natural world? Most of all, what is my responsibility as a relational being, not only to the humans closest to me, but to the entirety of humankind and to the Earth? How do we become conscious and responsible, living fully as only one part of the creation on our diverse planet?

Another guide was the French phenomenologist philosopher Jean-Louis Chrétien, who taught them about the call of creation and the vital necessity of a dialogic response of integrity—prayer. Encountering the response of adoration, they turned to a guide from the Christian tradition, St Augustine, and a recent secular French philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy. Augustine led beyond the adoration of creation to the Creator; Nancy led to the adoration called forth by creation.

These ways of being they were learning revealed not only the beauty and light of the sea's moods in all their glory, but also the dangerous and disgusting. For, what was being unveiled was painful as well as beautiful. They learnt directly from 'sea see/hearing', as well as from reading and seminars, of the ocean's sickness. They became aware of the dire consequences for sea life, air life and land life. What they learnt is overwhelmingly corroborated: in 2019, the United Nations documented 6,900 research studies of changing water cycles. The cryosphere, earth's frozen water, is melting, rapidly altering the blue, sparkling, warming oceans. Rainfall patterns are changing; fierce storms and drought are increasing. Science tells us that Earth and its lands, air and waters are going through the biggest mass extinction in 60 million years. Seas and rivers are loaded with raw human sewage. Coral bleaching and death are accelerating. Vast islands of human debris, washed out to sea from rivers or dumped overboard from ships, oil residues and coal effluent pumped into the sea, all reduce sea creatures' capacity to survive and reproduce. Yet, almost always, on its surface the ocean remains breathtakingly beautiful. A child star-jumps, calling out with delight in the shallows (p. 171).

For Graeme and Jan, embarked on reclaiming a human birthright, this child's star-jump became the perfect image for ancient memory. Here is a path to responsibility—reclaiming adoration. With guidance at each chapter-end for meditative practice, they invite us to see-hear the water, trees, sky—to find adoration anew. Their honesty motivates us to reflect, to consider our response, not just to read. Uncomfortable, beautiful, theirs is a demanding,

pioneering offering, inspiring us to receive, to practise, truly to uncover adoration in order to respond anew to how we live. Wherever we are on Earth, as we breathe, we are held in life *On the Edge: A-Way with the Sea*.

Carol McDonough

Benedicta Ward, *Give Love and Receive the Kingdom: The Essential People and Themes of English Spirituality* (Brewster: Paraclete, 2018). 978 1 6406 0097 3, pp.208, £18.99.

Sister Benedicta Ward's latest book offers evidence of the breadth and depth of her historical and theological scholarship over the years—especially in the area of Christian spirituality. Sister Benedicta is both a distinguished Oxford academic and a member of the Sisters of the Love of God, an Anglican monastic community. Her latest book brings together a selection of material previously published as articles, essays or pamphlets. The overall focus is on important people and themes in the history of English spirituality. The collection reflects the way in which Sister Benedicta blends together scholarship and spiritual reflection.

The first four chapters focus particularly on the key figures of Cuthbert and Bede, and emphasize the vital role of Irish-Celtic monastic missionaries and their spirituality in the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons, particularly in the north of England. This sat alongside the Roman mission in the south associated with the Italian Benedictine Augustine of Canterbury.

Chapter 1 explores the spirituality of St Cuthbert. While Cuthbert was originally a missionary monk in the Irish-Celtic tradition, he later accepted the Roman tradition after the Synod of Whitby (664). He was associated particularly with the monastic community on the island of Lindisfarne where he was at different times prior and also bishop. Cuthbert was strongly drawn to the eremitical life and spent time on the island of Inner Farne, where he finally retired and then died in 687. Cuthbert's tomb in Durham Cathedral remains a place of contemporary pilgrimage. Sister Benedicta bases her study of Cuthbert on two lives, one anonymous and the other by the Venerable Bede. Bede, in particular, emphasizes the link between Cuthbert's spirituality and scripture. The three passages from Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert* used in this chapter expound their meaning through scripture. In Sister Benedicta's words, they show that the basis of Cuthbert's spirituality was the association

of faith with 'works of love' as he sought to be a new Adam in whom 'the right ordering of creation was restored' (p. 18).

The second and third chapters turn their attention explicitly to the spirituality of the Benedictine monk Bede, who remains the only English person to be designated a Doctor of the Church. His tomb is also in Durham Cathedral. First of all, Benedicta Ward considers Bede's description of the conversion of the Anglo-Saxons in his famous *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. For Bede, a key symbol of this conversion was the substitution of monastic austerity for older conventions of warrior life. In other words, inner spiritual struggle replaced a long history of external warfare. However, a tension remained between spiritual ideals and traditional Anglo-Saxon warrior values. Bede's *Ecclesiastical History,* written around 731, towards the end of his life, contrasts the peace of heart that reflects the coming Kingdom of God with the tumult of Anglo-Saxon society. In chapter 3 Ward then outlines Bede's close relationship with the psalms. His spirituality was strongly based on the monastic Offices, in which the psalms have a prominent place. Interestingly, Bede created an abbreviated psalter which popularised their use: selected verses could be used as direct prayer, as the basis for meditation or as expressions of contrition, adoration and praise. The nature of Bede's text, quoted by Sister Benedicta, suggests that the psalms should be accessible to laypeople engaged with everyday life.

Chapter 4 examines the famous Synod of Whitby. Sister Benedicta critiques the notion that this was simply an Irish versus Roman battle centred on the dating of Easter. This view originated partly in nineteenth-century concerns to differentiate the Anglican Church from Roman Catholicism. For her, Whitby moved beyond abstract discussions to embrace a shared depth of prayer and love. The unity forged at the synod was a turning point for English Christianity. The key was the virtue of mutual respect which led to true spiritual unity rather than mere uniformity.

Chapters 5 and 7 then turn their attention to the important eleventh-century figure of Anselm of Canterbury; chapter 7 compares him with the fourteenth-century mystic Julian of Norwich. While Anselm's *Prayers and Meditations* are his most overtly spiritual work, Ward argues that even his philosophical-theological writings are intimately connected to a monastic vision. Intellectual thought and prayer are essentially combined. The title of chapter 7, 'Faith Seeking Understanding', is one of Anselm's phrases. In her comparison between Anselm and Julian, Sister Benedicta suggests that both are true theologians precisely because their search for understanding was a spiritual process intimately connected to their inner journey.

Between these two discussion of Anselm, chapter 6 focuses briefly on the long Christian tradition of the hermit life, and particularly on the emergence

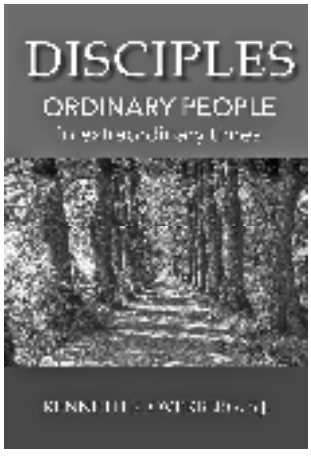
of new forms in twelfth-century England. Importantly, a monastic background ceased to be the normal prerequisite for eremitical spirituality. Famous solitaries, such as Christine of Markyate had a range of backgrounds, but their motivation, whether as individual solitaries or as part of a group, was a sense of God's love calling them from everyday society into the wilderness.

Benedicta Ward's final two chapters explore seventeenth-century English spirituality, both within the mainstream Church of England and in the Puritan John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Chapter 8 examines the sermons of Lancelot Andrewes, Jeremy Taylor and Mark Frank. Here, preaching was a medium of spiritual teaching linked in various ways to the liturgy. The title of chapter 9, 'Pilgrimage of the Heart', underlines a renewed understanding of the long-standing Christian tradition of pilgrimage as essentially an inner journey of conversion. Lancelot Andrewes and John Bunyan expounded new approaches to pilgrimage in their more interiorised and egalitarian register.

To conclude, the chapters of Benedicta Ward's new book inevitably remain somewhat free-standing, despite the unifying theme of English spirituality, reflecting their origins as separate writings. In that sense, the book is a collection of independent essays rather than a unified study of English spirituality. Some parts are fairly technical while others express spiritual insights which will still be inspiring for today's readers.

Philip Sheldrake

Kenneth R. Overberg, *Disciples: Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times* (Hobe Sound: Lectio, 2018). 978 1 9439 0108 1, pp. 112, $12.95.



The Jesuit Ken Overberg, longtime theology professor at Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, made the decision decades ago that it was more important for him to write for a popular audience than for the handful of academics who would read scholarly articles. This book of previously published articles is a sampling of the fruits of that commitment. It can profitably be read by any Christian, though its focus is Roman Catholic, to update an understanding of discipleship. Its diverse contents, however, will be especially useful to educational programmes—from the RCIA to parish discussion groups.

The individual chapters are gems of clarity—and challenge. 'From this mosaic of articles', the author says in the Introduction, 'emerges a portrait

of the faithful disciple in the twenty-first century' (p. 2). Chapter 1 begins by presenting some of the important, though often unexamined, convictions that form us. Overberg gives as an example of this cultural shaping in the response of US Catholics to the outbreak of the war in Iraq. Even though the Pope spoke out in opposition to it as an unjust war, most followed their president. Overberg does an excellent job of showing how Jesus preached the Kingdom, the reign of God, in a time with the same tensions between culture and gospel that we experience. He makes clear that Jesus summoned his followers to a new and different vision of reality, one that challenged their basic assumptions about everyday life. And that vision still challenges us! In the style so familiar to members of Bellarmine Parish at Xavier University, where Overberg frequently preaches, he ends this chapter, like all his homilies, with a question: 'Where in your life is your class or gender or political party more influential than the Gospel?'

In chapter 2, subtitled 'The Meaning of Christmas', the author offers an alternative but tradition-rooted answer to the questions, 'Why Jesus? Why Incarnation?' Jesus did not suffer and die to *atone* for our sins, he asserts. Nor was the Incarnation God's way of righting the alienation caused by original sin. He insists, in the tradition of the Cappadocian Fathers, Duns Scotus and Teilhard de Chardin, that Jesus, the Word-Made-Flesh, is not God's Plan B: for him the whole purpose of creation was incarnation, Plan A! 'What is at the heart of reality', he says, pointing to the Gospel of John, 'is a God who wants to share divine life' (p. 9). And Jesus is critical to that sharing.

Chapter 3, 'Finding the Heart of Jesus' Life and Mission', invites the reader to take a closer look at Jesus' earthly life and preaching. It leads us through an explanation of the infancy narratives, the unfolding of Jesus' mission, the growing awareness of his followers that Jesus is God's reign breaking into the world, and Jesus' loving relationship with God, whom he addresses as *Abba* (Daddy!). What may surprise some is the way Overberg explains the teaching of Jesus, emphasizing that he did not preach about himself or the Church. 'Jesus' whole life was directed to the reign of God' (p. 18), the author insists. He goes on to explain the meaning of God's reign. He addresses what this reviewer judges to be an underdeveloped part of most Catholics' understanding of Jesus' message: that 'the reign is present whenever and wherever God's loving presence is manifested' (p. 18). 'At the heart of Jesus' living and dying', Overberg concludes, 'are his intimate, loving relationship with God and his bold, creative proclamation of God's reign' (p. 20). Today's disciples are called to live and share this good news!

Chapter 4, 'Glad Tidings of Healing and Hope', looks at the central message of Jesus from another angle—by focusing on what the author calls

Jesus' keynote address (Luke 4:14–21). (Unfortunately this passage is not included in the text, so have a Bible, or the internet, handy.) After reading a passage from Isaiah about his being anointed and sent 'to proclaim good news to the oppressed … to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour' (Isaiah 61:1–2), Luke's Jesus says: 'Today this scripture is being fulfilled in your hearing'. In other words, the year of the Lord's favour, the reign of God, can be experienced *now*. And this is key to understanding what being a disciple means. 'With Jesus', Overberg says, 'we are called and anointed. With Jesus, we are sent to teach, to heal, to free ….With Jesus, we proclaim with passion glad tidings of healing and hope.' (pp.23–24)

Following these chapters focusing on Jesus and his message are chapters devoted to hot topics in Catholic life today and how followers of Jesus are challenged to respond: 'Vatican II', 'Catholic Morality', 'A Consistent Ethic of Life', '125 Years of Catholic Social Teaching', 'Wisdom from the Sunday Reading', 'Poverty, Economics and Justice', 'The Death Penalty', 'HIV/AIDS' and 'End-of-Life Ethics'. In each, the author examines varying perspectives and outlines what a path of discipleship looks like in our times.

In chapter 13 ('The Mystery of God and Suffering') and chapter 15 ('Loving God, Holy Mystery'), Overberg returns to the more theological and scriptural tone of the early articles to enlarge and enrich our understanding of God. The key to the problem of suffering? 'God does not desire Jesus suffering or ours.' (p.91) Chapter 15 exhorts readers to multiply their images of God, and offers suggestions. The most moving of these is his memory of sitting beside a dying Jesuit friend: 'I knew he was falling into the abyss of death, yet I also "knew" he would be OK because ultimately he was falling into the loving abyss of God' (p.99). Overberg is a master of compressing great meaning into few words. This book will not disappoint those in search of how to live as a disciple today, guided by the best of what our Catholic tradition offers.

Karen Hurley