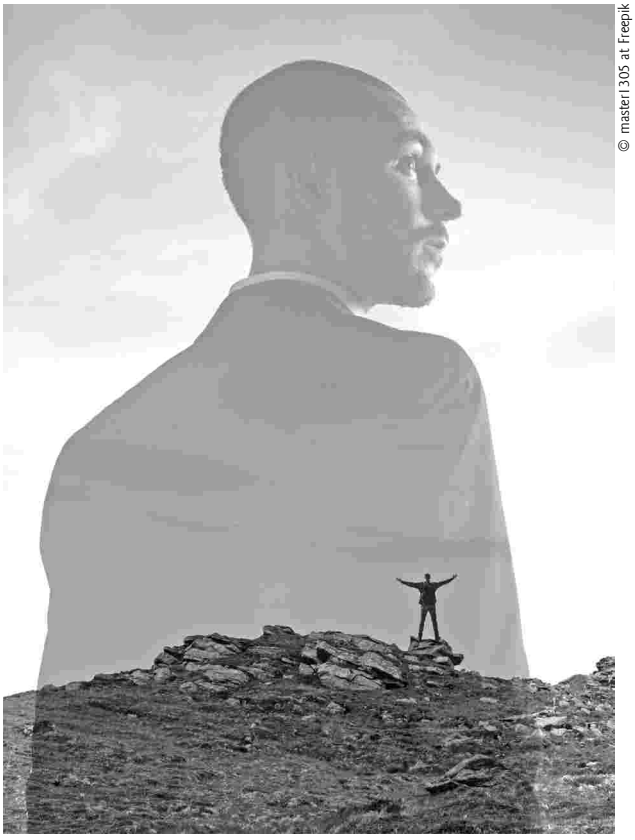
THE WAY

a review of Christian spirituality published by the British Jesuits

October 2023 *Volume 62, Number 4*

GROWING STRENGTH



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FOR AUTHORS

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foreign-language quotations are translated by the article author unless otherwise noted. The scripture quotations herein are generally from the New Revised Standard Version Bible © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, and are used by permission. All rights reserved.

ABBREVIATIONS

Autobiography	Ignatius of Loyola, 'Reminiscences (Autobiography)', in *Personal Writings*
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 *Personal Writings*
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–)
Personal Writings	*Ignatius of Loyola: Personal Writings*, translated by Philip Endean and Joseph A. Munitiz (London: Penguin, 1996)

Papal documents may be found at www.vatican.va

FOREWORD

LAST SUMMER'S FILM *Oppenheimer* tells the story of the designer of the first nuclear weapon. It reminded us of the fragility of human life before the means we still have at our disposal to destroy ourselves. Yet even in the darkest moments of human history, hope has sprung anew, strength has been received and we have been able to walk forward in confidence. The human spirit was made indefatigable, nourished by the hidden well-spring of God's life. Each of the articles in this issue touches upon the theme of resilience, a growing strength in the face of adversity. With God at our side we stand forever at the threshold of hope.

In the wake of the first nuclear attack in Hiroshima, Pedro Arrupe searched through the wreckage of the city and tended to the surviving victims. Based on his work with survivors of trauma, Robert McChesney invites us to notice and respond to these *hibakusha* who lived with the continuing impact of what they had experienced. He shows how, through the incarnation, God reveals the desire to walk with all those affected by violence. Later Pedro Arrupe's own suffering after his stroke gave him the opportunity to discover for himself that he was, more than ever, in the hands of God. Mary Cohen draws out spiritual inspiration from his self-surrender for sufferers of dementia and their carers today.

Bill Watson's empirical approach to the Examen Prayer is the fruit of many years of helping people to implement it in their lives. His work has been based on a profound insight into the connection between the prayer and Ignatius' own traumatic past. The prayer encouraged Ignatius to heal from the spiritual trauma of a ruptured relationship with God. A critical appraisal of the role of spiritual direction in recovery from trauma enables Berry Bishop and her co-authors to show what helps and hinders in spiritual ministry. They argue that the role of the director is to build a spiritual home where life can be received once more. In an article reprinted from our online sister journal *Thinking Faith*, Gavin Murphy found that the Jesuit novitiate was not, in the end, the home where he would flourish, but in his surprising journey to mental well-being he finally arrived in the same place.

The First Week of the Spiritual Exercises is one place where we can acknowledge our human fragility before the love of God. In an exposition of the role of vulnerability in virtue ethics, Woo-jung Kim argues that as we look upon the cross we recognise that God shares our vulnerable nature:

> The culmination of this revelation of God's vulnerability is Jesus dying for us on the cross. When we understand this vulnerability, we can recognise our own vulnerability, as our nature reflects God's attributes and participates in God's nature.

Although some theologies have claimed that God abandoned Jesus on the cross, Robert Green argues that God neither abandoned Jesus nor does he forget any one of us, with important implications for pastoral ministry.

Two of the articles here tackle the positive and negative impact of the global pandemic. Annemarie Paulin-Campbell's experience of the online ministry of spiritual direction helped deepen her understanding of how Ignatian spirituality can be adapted to time, place and person. The pandemic brought to light a human fragility that could easily make us feel uncertain about the future of humanity. However all the articles in this issue give us cause for hope. We walk with growing strength, reassured by God's continuing presence even in the midst of adversity. Gerard Garrigan makes the following invitation:

> Let each one of us live our own improvised lives in this extraordinary time with the delightful originality with which our loving God created us in his glory with joy, with verve, with zest, with hope and, most of all, with *swing*.

Philip Harrison SJ
Editor

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION AND TRAUMA RECOVERY

Berry Bishop, Theresa Tisdale and Katharine Putman[1]

SOUL CARE in the form of spiritual direction has been a sustainable source of shepherding and support for individuals for centuries. In their contemporary classic *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*—one of the most referenced sources in the literature of spiritual direction—William A. Barry and William J. Connolly assert that direction is primarily focused on an individual's relationship with God, the most significant relationship for his or her spirituality: the space of spiritual direction asks, 'Who is God for me and who am I for him?'[2]

John H. Coe and Todd W. Hall state that spiritual direction 'is guidance designed to assist the believer into the process of spiritual transformation by responding to God through attending to the Holy Spirit in the context of prayer'.[3] The authors also propose that, like clinical psychotherapy, spiritual direction involves a 'meaning-making process':

> In the broadest sense, the telos of both psychotherapy and spiritual direction is the promotion of maturity as a meaning-making process, which includes separateness and connectedness, interdependency, intimacy, and the ability to freely give and receive in love. This applies equally to both psychological and spiritual maturity, the only difference being that psychological maturity does not require spiritual maturity (i.e. relationship with God) in any explicit sense, whereas spiritual maturity does necessitate psychological maturity because our love for others and development of character and our

[1] The authors are grateful for the collaboration of Larry Warner and Robert K. Welsh in writing this article.

[2] William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction* (New York: HarperCollins, 1982), 5.

[3] John H. Coe and Todd W. Hall, *Psychology in the Spirit: Contours of a Transformational Psychology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010), 386.

> human capacities is part of our love for God. So, the respective goals of psychotherapy and spiritual direction, in the broadest sense, are very similar in that they both seek to increase the capacity for intimacy and love and the overall development of the person.[4]

Thomas M. Holden maintains that spiritual direction, by contrast with therapy, highlights God's concrete involvement in everyday life: 'The underlying assumption that God acts and is involved in the concreteness of our everyday living is made more explicit in spiritual direction than in psychotherapy'.[5] With these thoughts in mind, we would like to consider here the ways in which the development of an individual's relationship with God may have an impact on his or her processing of traumatic experiences, and we reflect on how this may contribute to post-traumatic growth in the context of the relationship between spiritual direction and psychotherapy.

Trauma and Resilience

According to the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, trauma 'occurs as a result of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war and other emotionally harmful experiences'.[6] The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* lists diagnostic criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder including direct exposure to a trauma, intrusive symptoms associated with the traumatic event, avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma, negative cognitions and mood, and 'marked alterations in arousal and reactivity'.[7]

Taken together, these sources reflect what is likely to be most readily considered when defining trauma. However, some people experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder who have not gone through these types of events. Accordingly we shall be adopting an enlarged perspective on trauma which includes emotional and spiritual trauma. Robert Stolorow articulates this more complex view, asserting that

[4] Coe and Hall, *Psychology in the Spirit*, 387.

[5] Thomas M. Holden, 'A Therapist's View of Spiritual Direction: A Case Study', *Chicago Theological Seminary Register*, 73/3 (Fall 1983), 1–13, here 12.

[6] Larke N. Huang and others, *SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach* (Rockville: SAMHSA, 2014), 2, available at https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/userfiles/files/SAMHSA Trauma.pdf, accessed 25 August 2023.

[7] American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, rev. 5th edn (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association), 301–303.

emotional trauma is 'an experience of unendurable emotional pain'.[8] Emotionally painful events become unbearable when a person does not find what Stolorow calls a *relational home*, where the pain is known, understood and held.

> Severe emotional pain that has to be experienced alone becomes lastingly traumatic and usually results in some form of emotional numbing. In contrast, painful feelings that are held in a context of human understanding can gradually become more bearable.[9]

Most individuals who experience trauma do not develop symptoms of post-traumatic stress or other trauma-related disorders; instead, they demonstrate resilience.[10] People affected by trauma are able to recover, and spirituality and religious belief may be an important factor in this, along with personal attitude, education and community, and various intrapersonal and interpersonal mechanisms such as a sense of inner control and self-esteem.[11]

Trauma and Spirituality

Trauma has been discovered to affect spirituality in multiple ways, including, but not limited to: compromising a person's sense of safety and security; raising existential doubts and questions; raising questions of identity; producing immense guilt or shame; undermining concepts of good and evil; and subverting the person's world-view.[12] The impact of one or more of these may result in a crisis of faith. At the same time, spirituality may also influence and inform how an individual makes sense of trauma and how he or she recovers and grows in the aftermath of processing traumatic experiences. Yvonne Farley named seven traits of individual resilience that are enhanced by spiritual or religious practices:

[8] Robert D. Stolorow, 'A Phenomenological-Contextual, Existential, and Ethical Perspective on Emotional Trauma', *Psychoanalytic Review*, 102/1 (2015), 124.
[9] Stolorow, 'Phenomenological-Contextual, Existential, and Ethical Perspective', 125.
[10] See George A. Bonanno, 'Loss, Trauma, and Human Resilience: Have We Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive after Extremely Aversive Events?', *American Psychologist*, 59/1 (January 2004), 20–28; LaNAE Valentine and Leslie L. Feinauer, 'Resilience Factors Associated with Female Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse', *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 21/3 (1993), 216–224.
[11] See Roberta R. Greene, Colleen Galambos and Youjung Lee, 'Resilience Theory: Theoretical and Professional Conceptualizations', *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 8/4 (2003), 75–91, at 78; Valentine and Feinauer, 'Resilience Factors Associated with Female Survivors', 221–222.
[12] Yvonne R. Farley, 'Making the Connection: Spirituality, Trauma and Resiliency', *Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Social Work*, 26/1 (2007), 5–6.

insight, independence, relationships, initiative, creativity and humour, and morality.[13]

Spirituality and trauma may have reciprocal influence in positive and/or negative ways. Recovery from trauma often includes a search for meaning, which spirituality may help or hinder. Spirituality has specific components that enhance individual resilience. However, it is also of note that religious and spiritual beliefs can increase an individual's traumatic experience, causing harm.[14] A particular set of spiritual beliefs can lead victims of trauma to blame themselves, perhaps believing that the trauma was a punishment for sin. Beliefs that promote self-blame in the aftermath of trauma can be detrimental to spiritual life. The potential for the interaction between spirituality and trauma to be either empowering or devastating is a foundational rationale for exploring the impact of spiritual direction on those who have experienced or will experience trauma.

Spiritual Direction, Trauma and Post-Traumatic Growth

Trauma brings to the surface existential realities about life, purpose and death.[15] These realities do not create traumatic suffering in themselves; rather, it is a response to them. The context in which a painful event is experienced dictates whether emotional trauma, or emotional recovery and post-traumatic growth, will prevail. One way of decreasing vulnerability to emotional trauma is by turning to a relationship with the transcendent through religious and positive spiritual coping.

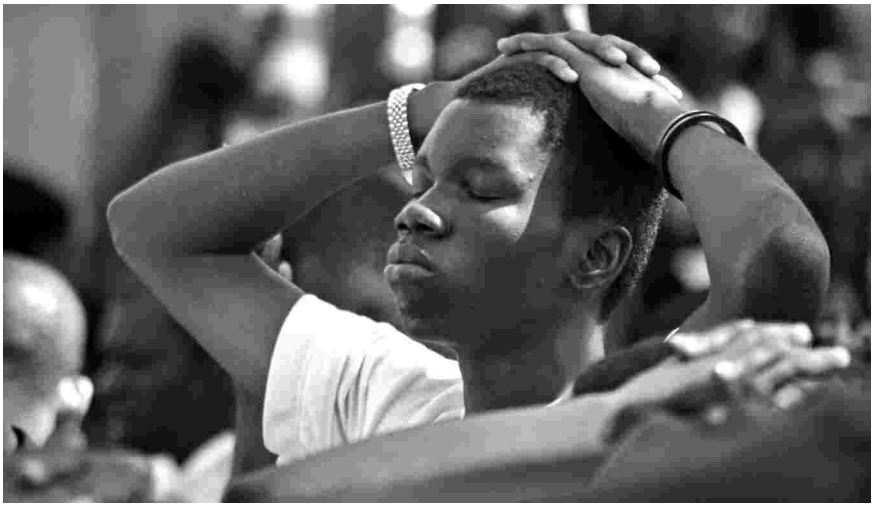
According to Bessel van der Kolk, who is one of the foremost thinkers and researchers on trauma, recovery from trauma occurs in the context of *relationships*.[16] This resonates with Stolorow's concept of a 'relational home' as the healing factor in emotional trauma. Not all relationships facilitate recovery; of particular importance are those that provide physical, emotional and, we add, spiritual safety—safety from being dismissed, from being shamed and from being judged.[17]

[13] Farley, 'Making the Connection', 8–13.
[14] See Stacy Smith, 'Exploring the Interaction of Trauma and Spirituality', *Traumatology*, 10/4 (December 2004), 207–266.
[15] Stolorow, 'Phenomenological-Contextual, Existential, and Ethical Perspective', 130–132; Mary Patricia Van Hook, 'Spirituality as a Potential Resource for Coping with Trauma', *Social Work and Christianity*, 43/1 (2016), 7–25, here 11.
[16] Bessel A. van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014), 212.
[17] Stolorow, 'Phenomenological-Contextual, Existential, and Ethical Perspective', 134.

Such hospitality and safety are fostered within spiritual direction, so that a directee may enter more fully into relationship with God and develop an increased awareness of God's movements and actions in his or her life relative to the experiences of trauma. A closer relationship with God may contribute to a directee being more able to process, integrate and adapt to trauma, recover from it and experience post-traumatic growth.

Major world religions, including Christianity, accept that suffering, significant stress and even trauma itself can enhance faith and personal development.[18] Spiritual direction has sought to address human suffering for centuries and, consistently with Christian theology, has worked to enhance positive adaptations to trauma and suffering.[19] 'And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope' (Romans 5:3–4): a first-century text reflects the connection between suffering and growth.

A study of the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti affirms, 'When individuals are able to create positive meaning out of tragedy, they are often able to activate critical recovery attributes such as a sense



A survivor prays after the Haitian earthquake

[18] See Annick Shaw, Stephen Joseph and P. Alex Linley, 'Religion, Spirituality, and Posttraumatic Growth: a Systematic Review', *Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, 8/1 (March 2005), 1–11, at 2.
[19] Coe and Hall, *Psychology in the Spirit*, 365 following.

of self-efficacy and a sense of purpose'.[20] Any meaning-making context that can provide what Stolorow calls a 'relational home' in which to process trauma—or offer some protection against its effects—is worth exploring. To determine whether spiritual direction is a worthwhile practice for recovery from trauma or in developing resilience, the role that religious protective factors have in post-traumatic growth should be examined. Surveying the research on spiritual direction and positive spirituality will reveal if there is any relationship between recovery from trauma, post-traumatic growth and participation in spiritual direction.

Positive and Negative Spirituality

A positive relationship with God, or *positive spirituality*, is correlated with post-traumatic growth. While there is no direct empirical research assessing spiritual direction's effect on an individual's relationship with God, a favourable connection may be inferred from existing empirical evidence—and confirmed through future research.

Religion and spirituality have been reported to have an overall positive impact on mental health.[21] People often turn to spirituality and religion when they are faced with distressing circumstances and suffering. Studies of trauma have referred to positive spiritual or religious coping as a means of navigating mental health problems, working through suffering, recovering from natural disasters and processing traumatic events. Positive spirituality has been found to decrease psychological distress, increase interpersonal connectedness with God, decrease anxiety and worry, increase the quality of interpersonal relationships and quality of life, and even help to prevent suicide.[22] Spirituality moves people towards something that is beyond themselves. It provides a resource in times of frustration, despair and painful encounters with finitude. Spirituality contextualises difficult life circumstances by providing meaning and empowerment through relationship with God. It also provides a sense of belonging, worth, direction, community support, altruism and hope for life after death.[23]

Spirituality moves people towards something that is beyond themselves

[20] Kari A. O'Grady and others, 'Earthquake in Haiti: Relationship with the Sacred in Times of Trauma', *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 40/4 (December 2012), 289–301, here 289.
[21] Samuel R. Weber and Kenneth I. Pargament, 'The Role of Religion and Spirituality in Mental Health', *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 27/5 (September 2014), 358–363, at 359.
[22] Weber and Pargament, 'The Role of Religion', 359.
[23] Van Hook, 'Spirituality as a Potential Resource for Coping with Trauma', 16–17.

However, it is important to note that, conversely, spiritual and religious difficulties may be a source of poorer psychological adjustment to stress.[24] Individuals who have significant spiritual struggles over an extended period of time are at an increased risk of developing mental health difficulties.[25] Samuel Weber and Kenneth Pargament have noted that those who respond to a distressing event in a negative religious or spiritual way have poorer mental health outcomes. They stated more explicitly that there are three types of spiritual struggle: 'divine, or difficulties and anger with God; interpersonal, or negative encounters with other believers; and intrapsychic, or internal religious guilt and doubt'.[26]

The quality of a person's spiritual beliefs and religious practices affects how a painful event is experienced. 'Spirituality can both contribute to resilience (the ability to bounce back after hardship) and can intensify the pain and distress.'[27] Religion and spirituality may be used to contextualise suffering as an opportunity for God to fix the painful event or take it away, or to blame God or the devil for the pain and suffering; these religious responses are less likely than more positive ones to lead to post-traumatic growth following pain and suffering.[28] Externalising trauma in this way through entreaty or blame diminishes the positive relational aspects of religion and spirituality that enhance constructive spiritual coping.

How a person engages his or her spiritual and religious coping in times of pain and suffering has been shown to have a significant impact on the development of trauma symptoms or, alternatively, post-traumatic growth.[29] Although the potential negative impacts of spirituality need to be considered, meta-analytic studies have demonstrated that religion and spirituality can be effective resources in developing resilience.[30]

[24] Carol Ann Faigin, Kenneth I. Pargament and Hisham Abu-Raiya, 'Spiritual Struggles as a Possible Risk Factor for Addictive Behaviors: An Initial Empirical Investigation', *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 24 (2014), 201–214, at 202.
[25] See Vincent R. Starnino, 'When Trauma, Spirituality, and Mental Illness Intersect: A Qualitative Study', *Psychology of Trauma*, 8/3 (May 2016).
[26] Weber and Pargament, 'The Role of Religion', 360.
[27] Van Hook, 'Spirituality as a Potential Resource', 13.
[28] Shaw, Joseph and Linley, 'Religion, Spirituality, and Posttraumatic Growth', 6.
[29] See Smith, 'Exploring the Interaction of Trauma and Spirituality', 239; Van Hook, 'Spirituality as a Potential Resource', 13.
[30] Ca Trice B. Glenn, 'A Bridge over Troubled Waters: Spirituality and Resilience with Emerging Adult Childhood Trauma Survivors', *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 16/1 (2014), 37–50, at 40; Kirby K. Reutter and Silvia M. Bigatti, 'Religiosity and Spirituality as Resiliency Resources: Moderation, Mediation, or Moderated Mediation?' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 53/1 (March 2014), 56–72, at 57.

Some people are predisposed to greater resilience by protective factors such as higher IQ or a stable family, but spirituality has been shown to enhance resilience irrespective of such factors.[31] Strengthening a person's positive religious practices and spiritual beliefs in the context of a safe relationship may have a significant impact on resilience in the wake of trauma.

Spiritual Direction and Psychotherapy

It is understandable to assume that someone who has experienced trauma should be referred to psychotherapy. As a spiritual director, the training I received encouraged me to do this if a directee revealed a history of trauma. Appropriate referral is part of being a good and ethical spiritual director. However, it is a concern that while spiritual directors refer directees to psychotherapy, psychologists less often refer patients to spiritual direction.[32] It is important for both psychologists and spiritual directors to acknowledge the impact that spiritual direction may have on processing trauma. Cross-referrals may result in spiritual directors having more confidence in their vocation as it relates to trauma recovery. Moreover psychotherapists are ethically obliged to recognise the limits of their competence, and should be open to consultation, further training and referral when they are beyond their knowledge in the area of spirituality.[33]

Over the past decades, there have been many explorations of how spiritual direction has been influenced by psychology, how the two disciplines are alike and

[31] Farley, 'Making the Connection', 14.
[32] Cassandra Vietan and David Lukoff, 'Spiritual and Religious Competencies for Psychologists', *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 5/3 (June 2013), 138–139.
[33] Vietan and Lukoff, 'Spiritual and Religious Competencies', 138.

how they are different. In her discussion of Ignatian spirituality in relation to Jungian psychoanalysis, Ruth Barnhouse suggested that whether people seek help from clergy (for example in spiritual direction) or mental health professionals (for example in psychoanalysis) is in many ways a cultural accident: 'what it perhaps comes down to is that the care of souls is the care of souls, and the more vocabularies and symbol systems one has at one's disposal, the more effective one is likely to be in exercising that care'.[34]

Barnhouse stated that counselling troubled people and providing guidance to those desiring personal growth,

> … really *is* the oldest profession, and every culture has had its shamans, confessors, gurus, spiritual directors, magicians, and many other varieties of wise men and women, dedicated, with varying degrees of expertise and effectiveness, to carrying out just these tasks.[35]

Only in the last century has there been a split between the spiritual and the psychological in theory, research and practice. We find it curious and interesting that psychotherapy, rather than spiritual direction, became the more popular way of caring for soul and psyche.

Spiritual direction and psychotherapy have several overlapping features: first, the client, patient or directee needs to desire change; secondly, the therapist or spiritual director offers an objective vantage point by his or her presence; thirdly, both handle unique events; fourthly, both involve the technique of choice.[36] In psychotherapy, the technique of choice may include helping to bring what is unconscious into conscious awareness. In the practice of spiritual direction, the technique of choice is the use of discernment.

Although spiritual direction and psychotherapy may overlap, their goals are different. The former is concerned with spiritual growth and the latter with psychological growth.[37] Spiritual direction does not focus on pathology, although this is acknowledged when it presents. Instead,

[34] Ruth R. Barnhouse, 'Spiritual Direction and Psychotherapy', *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, 33/3 (September 1979), 149.
[35] Barnhouse, 'Spiritual Direction and Psychotherapy', 149.
[36] Barnhouse, 'Spiritual Direction and Psychotherapy', 150–152.
[37] Marilyn A. Ganje-Fling and Patricia R. McCarthy, 'A Comparative Analysis of Spiritual Direction and Psychotherapy', *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 19/1 (March 1991), 104.

the focus is on that which unifies and separates all: the spirit. Spiritual direction is concerned with the spirit–Spirit relationship, whereas psychotherapy is concerned with the self–other and self–self relationships. Spiritual direction is unique in that it does not treat the person as the barometer of change. Instead, 'the reference point in spiritual direction is not on the human plane, but is the subject's relation to God, and the participation in the entire Christian community, the Invisible Body of Christ'.[38]

Psychotherapy's overarching aim is the relief of psychic disturbances; and the aim of spiritual direction is the cultivation of the relationship between a person and God. These aims can, however, be complementary: 'The relieving of psychic disturbances can aid spiritual growth, and the deepening of spiritual life can aid the relieving of psychic disturbances whether their manifestation is intrapersonal or interpersonal'.[39] The two helping disciplines probably have more in common than not, and practitioners have the opportunity and potential to collaborate in the care of those who seek them out.

Spiritual direction, like psychotherapy, also has limitations. Ruth Barnhouse warns,

> The first major trap is that either therapy or spiritual direction may become so standardized as to once more muffle the inner voice rather than to promote those conditions of personal freedom in which it can be truly heard.[40]

Spiritual direction is fallible and prone to human error in its practice and may indeed 'muffle the inner voice'. Additionally, there is a potential for it to emphasize the inner life of the individual at the expense of the group, missing out on the benefits of community. Spiritual direction in the last century has been significantly influenced by psychoanalytic and psychodynamic theory.[41] The limitations of these theories are relevant for the current practice of spiritual direction, especially Ignatian spiritual direction, because of the ways in which some authors have

[38] Barnhouse, 'Spiritual Direction and Psychotherapy', 149–150, 153.
[39] Susan L. DeHoff, 'In Search of a Paradigm for Psychological and Spiritual Growth: Implications for Psychotherapy and Spiritual Direction', *Pastoral Psychology*, 46/5 (May 1998), 345.
[40] Barnhouse, 'Spiritual Direction and Psychotherapy', 163.
[41] Duane R. Bidwell, 'The Embedded Psychology of Contemporary Spiritual Direction', *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 11/3 (2009), 148–171, at 151.

compared the Ignatian Exercises to psychoanalytic and family systems developmental models.[42]

People experiencing trauma have a need for interventions that specifically address spiritual struggles, and the potential of spiritual direction in trauma recovery is important because spirituality aids in meaning-making.[43] Spiritual direction has the potential to improve psychological adjustment to stress for those who have a religious belief system. It may lead to practices that offer a new way of looking at one's life, both past and present. Like psychoanalysis, it is a long and slow process, attending to the movement of the Holy Spirit and the inner voice. It is not for acute treatment, but rather for continual support. Those who engage in it are likely to experience post-traumatic growth.[44]

How Spiritual Direction Fosters Post-traumatic Growth

In the process of spiritual direction, the director encourages the directee to tell his or her spiritual narrative while placing the directee in a 'relational home' between God, spiritual director and self, which is attuned to the directee and to the Holy Spirit.[45] This process is meant to facilitate the directee's growth in his or her self-understanding, through God's work. The goal is to create greater intimacy between the directee and God, increasing positive spirituality.

Janet Ruffing explains: 'The person seeking direction tells a religiously shaped life story, incorporating key episodes from the past and the present related to his or her understanding of spiritual direction'.[46] Her description illustrates how direction may invite directees to articulate their traumatic life events to an attentive other who bears witness to their suffering. However, it is not only the director who affects the narrative;

[42] See Bidwell, 'Embedded Psychology of Contemporary Spiritual Direction', 151; Mary Jo Meadow, 'Four Stages of Spiritual Experience: A Comparison of the Ignatian Exercises and Jungian Psychotherapy', *Pastoral Psychology*, 37/3 (March 1989), 172–191; Ekman P. C. Tam, 'Satir Model of Family Therapy and Spiritual Direction', *Pastoral Psychology*, 54/3 (January 2006), 275–287.

[43] Kavita M. Desai and Kenneth I. Pargament, 'Predictors of Growth and Decline Following Spiritual Struggles', *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 25/1 (2015), 54.

[44] See Kenneth I. Pargament, Kavita M. Desai and Kelly M. McConnell, 'Spirituality: A Pathway to Posttraumatic Growth or Decline?', in *Handbook of Posttraumatic Growth: Research and Practice*, edited by Lawrence G. Calhoun and Richard G. Tedeschi (New York: Psychology, 2014 [2006]), 121–137; Starnino, 'When Trauma, Spirituality, and Mental Illness Intersect'.

[45] Gene Barrette, 'Spiritual Direction in the Roman Catholic Tradition', *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 30/4 (2002), 290–302.

[46] Janet K. Ruffing, *To Tell the Sacred Tale* (New York: Paulist, 2011), 69.

it is also the process of direction itself, the invited presence of God and the safety of the relational space. The directee, sharing his or her trauma in the safe holding environment of the spiritual direction room, has an opportunity for healing and growth.[47]

It is both in the holding and in the telling that the directee's perspective on, or experience of, the meaning of his or her story is changed. 'By telling the story of how they have encountered the mysteries of faith, directees make their experiences increasingly specific, coherent, personal, and concrete', which in turn allows them to see where God can have or has had an effect on their life.[48] The opportunity for directees to tell their story and, eventually, to develop a coherent, ordered narrative, enables them to see how their religious beliefs and spiritual practices can reshape what they previously thought to be unresolvable trauma experiences.

Practices encouraged in spiritual direction, such as silence, various prayer postures and discerning the movements of the Holy Spirit, are agents of spiritual development. Joseph Driskill observes that silence can be used by a directee to discover personal agency: 'Finding God's love and mercy in the quiet places of spiritual disciplines allows a woman to find her voice'.[49] Additionally, the quiet space—which is often

[47] See Stolorow, 'Phenomenological-Contextual, Existential, and Ethical Perspective', 124–125; Ann Belford Ulanov, *Finding Space: Winnicott, God, and Psychic Reality* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).
[48] Ruffing, *To Tell the Sacred Tale*, 81.
[49] Joseph D. Driskill, 'Spiritual Direction with Traumatized Persons', in *Still Listening: New Horizons in Spiritual Direction*, edited by Norvene Vest (Harrisburg: Morehouse, 2000), 32.

overlooked in modern talk-therapy practices—enables the directee's perspective and needs to be identified rather than being overwhelmed by the voice of another. Most spiritual direction relationships are indefinite, without any agenda or treatment plan, giving space for the directee to move towards forgiveness and healing without being forced or pushed by another's timeline or agenda.

'Because direction focuses on spiritual growth', Ruffing writes, 'the spiritual-direction encounter presupposes that the person seeking direction consciously relates to God, however mysteriously or vaguely'.[50] Directees are able to have a spiritually informed perspective within the context of the spiritual direction relationship. The exploratory, intentional and narrative process of spiritual direction is a reflection of a directee's intrinsic motivation to grow. This intrinsic motivation is nurtured by spiritual direction and fosters spiritual development.

Jack Bauer, Dan McAdams and Jennifer Pals call post-traumatic growth 'a narrative identity process of exploration and self-transformation'. Given the exploratory nature of spiritual direction, it should be able to foster the emotional resilience that leads to post-traumatic growth.[51] As directees continue in spiritual direction, growing psychologically and relationally with God by actively looking for the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, experiences once perceived as traumatic may begin to be viewed as redemptive. In other words, the spiritual development encouraged by spiritual direction will shift their perspective on certain life events, moving towards an integrated view includes redemption of suffering. Also, given the directees' spiritual development and increased engagement in a positive relationship with God, when faced with a new trauma they 'are more likely to benefit from their faith, and more likely to emerge from the ordeal with beliefs essentially intact'.[52]

Spiritual direction is designed to provide a space where directees have the opportunity to experience change, including change in the way trauma has been internalised. As directees reflect on existential experiences that make them confront their limitations, fears and belief systems, those experiences that have a negative connotation owing to trauma are able to be reshaped.[53] Vulnerable moments while processing

[50] Ruffing, *To Tell the Sacred Tale*, 20.
[51] Jack J. Bauer, Dan P. McAdams and Jennifer L. Pals, 'Narrative Identity and Eudaimonic Well-Being', *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9/1 (February 2008), 95.
[52] Smith, 'Exploring the Interaction of Trauma and Spirituality', 236.
[53] Ruffing, *To Tell the Sacred Tale*.

trauma may push the directee towards belief, or they may lead to unbelief. They may bring the directee into a deeper relationship with God and transform the traumatic event into a redemptive story, or they may confirm him or her in unbelief, especially if spirituality and religion were previously negative forces in the individual's life.[54]

Sidney Furst stated, 'At various stages of life old conflicts and psychic organizations are revisited and reorganized and become reintegrated into new psychic organizations'.[55] This suggests that the developmental stage at which a trauma occurred, the attachment style of the individual at the time, and the opportunity for processing the traumatic event, all influence whether or not the trauma becomes pathogenic. At the same time there is always the opportunity to heal intrapsychic conflicts by revisiting them. The degree to which a spiritual director is able to understand the directee in his or her developmental and historical context and perceive the directee's specific stage of spiritual development as well as reflect God's redemptive role in the directee's life is the degree to which the directee will evolve in a more secure and healing relationship with God.

Post-traumatic growth through spiritual direction is mediated through positive spirituality in the context of the spiritual direction relationship. Spiritual direction is linked to positive spirituality by means of a relational practice that focuses on an individual's view and experience of God. Spiritual direction is unique because the process incorporates all three characteristics identified by Desai and Pargament that strengthen an individual's religious orientating system: it is a meaning-making practice, it takes place within a religious setting and it is a positive coping tool.[56]

Through a willingness to dwell in the pain of the directee and a stance attuned to the work of God in the midst of the pain, the spiritual director is occupying a meaningful role in building the relational home between directee and God. 'Painful feelings that are held in a context of human understanding can gradually become more bearable.' There is potential for powerful healing to occur in the context of spiritual direction through both human understanding and Holy understanding.

[54] Smith, 'Exploring the Interaction'.
[55] Furst, 'Psychic Trauma', 35.
[56] Desai and Pargament, 'Predictors of Growth', 52.

Trauma isolates people; therefore, healing from trauma involves both the individual and the other.[57] As a hospitable and relational process, spiritual direction has the potential to facilitate processing and recovering from trauma in ways that lead to post-traumatic growth and the articulation of a redemptive narrative of a life lived more securely with God, others and self.

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[57] Stolorow, 'A Phenomenological-Contextual, Existential, and Ethical Perspective', 129–135.

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VULNERABILITY AND VIRTUE IN THE FIRST WEEK OF THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Woo-jung Kim

A NUMBER OF MORAL THEOLOGIANS have argued that there is a foundational relationship between ethics and spirituality. According to Richard Gula, morality and spirituality work in 'a critical-dialogical relationship': 'without spirituality, morality gets cut off from its roots in the experience of God and so loses its character as a personal response to being loved by God, or being graced'.[1] Likewise, spirituality would be impractical without morality.

William Spohn affirms, 'moral perception, motivation, and identity can be enhanced by most of the forms of spirituality that I have examined'.[2] The Irish theologian Enda McDonagh emphasizes the relationship with God in the conscience of a community: 'It is clearly impossible to discuss the church as moral (and immoral) community without considering it in its relationship to Jesus Christ and his God, which at once establishes and undermines its authority'.[3]

The Jesuit James Keenan has studied virtue ethics through the particular insights of Ignatian spirituality. He argues, 'Spirituality, especially Ignatian spirituality, has always recognised the need for morality, perhaps not one of the principles governing external acts, but rather one of the virtues'.[4] He points to three Jesuit thinkers who have contributed to developing virtue ethics from the perspective of Ignatian spirituality: John Mahoney, who explores the obsession with sin in moral

[1] Richard M. Gula, 'Spirituality and Morality: What Are We Talking About?', in *Ethics and Spirituality*, edited by Charles E. Curran and Lisa Fullam (New York: Paulist, 2014), 56.
[2] William C. Spohn, 'Spirituality and Ethics: Exploring the Connections', in *Ethics and Spirituality*, 72.
[3] Enda McDonagh, *Vulnerable to the Holy: In Faith, Morality and Art* (Blackrock: Columba, 2004), 78.
[4] James F. Keenan, 'Catholic Moral Theology, Ignatian Spirituality, and Virtue Ethics: Strange Bedfellows', *The Way Supplement*, 88 (1997), 36–45, here 43.

theology; Thomas Slater, who argues for a separation between morality and spirituality; and Robert Persons, whose Ignatian devotional work was appropriated and developed by the Puritans into an ethical model. He also sets out some of the underlying similarities between virtue ethics and the Exercises.

The Australian-Vietnamese moral theologian Ai Van Pham has identified some of the critical characteristics of Ignatian spirituality that inform Christian morality.[5] Moreover, he pays attention to the relationship between virtue ethics and Ignatian spirituality, specifically in the *Spiritual Exercises*. In the *Exercises* there is a crucial dynamic between God's call and the exercitant's response. Pham notes that this response is 'accentuated in a language of character and virtue: knowing Christ more deeply, loving Christ more intensely, and following Christ more closely'. He argues, 'Virtue ethics considers the existential dimension and the relational context between exercitants and Jesus'.[6]

The Recognition of Vulnerability in the Spiritual Exercises

In the First Week of the Exercises, Ignatius invites exercitants to imagine Christ upon the cross (Exx 53).[7] This is our Creator on the cross; God is suffering and dying for us. The cross demonstrates just how vulnerable God is. The Creator became human to save us and died for us. Vulnerability is key to understanding the dynamics of the Exercises: God's love is revealed in God's vulnerability, and the culmination of the revelation of God's vulnerability is Jesus. As Hans Urs von Balthasar wrote:

> It is God's going forth into the danger and the nothingness of the creation that reveals his heart to be at its origin vulnerable; in the humility of this vulnerability lies God's condescension (*condescensio*) and thus his fundamental readiness to go to the very end of love on the cross.[8]

[5] See Ai Van Pham, 'A Jesuit Accent for Contemporary Christian Ethics: A Study on the Relationship between Spirituality and Morality' (PhD diss., Weston Jesuit School of Theology, 2002), 86–169.

[6] Pham, 'Jesuit Accent for Contemporary Christian Ethics', 116.

[7] The author has developed a fuller argument about vulnerability and virtues throughout all the Weeks of the Spiritual Exercises in Woo-jung Kim, 'Vulnerability and Virtues in the Spiritual Exercises: Exploring the Dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises through the Lens of Virtue Ethics' (STL thesis, Boston College School of Theology and Ministry, 2023).

[8] Hans Urs von Balthasar, 'Bonaventure', in *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, volume 2, translated by Andrew Louth, Francis McDonagh and Brian McNeil, edited by John Riches (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1984), 356.

Ignatius appeals to exercitants to ask themselves the triple question, 'What have I done for Christ? What am I doing for Christ? What ought I to do for Christ?' (Exx 53). These questions are not simply about particular actions. Rather, through them the exercitants see that they are called to be disciples of Christ. Jesus said to his disciples: 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me' (Matthew 16:24). Those who want to be his disciples should be vulnerable to bearing their own cross. Those who reject their cross cannot become his disciples. To follow Jesus is to become vulnerable to others, as he did.

To follow Jesus is to become vulnerable to others

Ontological Vulnerability

James Keenan underlines the relationship to others involved in vulnerability:

> We imitate God when we practice this vulnerability and its accompanying mercy—that is, the willingness to enter into the chaos of another. That merciful act often entails an elective suffering for the sake of others.[9]

Vulnerability makes us connect with one another even in devastation, in chaos. The philosopher Judith Butler reflects,

> I am already bound to you, and this is what it means to be the self I am, receptive to you in ways that I cannot fully predict or control. This is also, clearly, the condition of my injurability as well, and in this way my answerability and my injurability are bound up with one another. In other words, you may frighten me and threaten me, but my obligation to you must remain firm.[10]

For Butler, the human person is vulnerable because all human beings are intrinsically connected. Here, she echoes the words of St Paul: 'If one member suffers, all suffer together with it' (1 Corinthians 12:26a) Those answerable to others' needs and capable of being injured for others are vulnerable to others. According to Butler, all humans have a vulnerability that leads them to care for one another.

[9] James F. Keenan, *Moral Wisdom* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017), 62–63.
[10] Judith Butler, 'Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation', *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 26/2 (2012), 134–151, here 141–142.

Similarly, the theologian Linda Hogan describes an ontological vulnerability in humanity:

> Human beings share an ontology that is grounded in vulnerability. It is tied, of course to our embodiment, to our vulnerability as embodied agents; to our dependency as subjects, from infancy to old age; it is connected to the general reciprocity or interconnectedness of social life and also with the precariousness of social institutions.[11]

This vulnerability binds us together, no matter who we are or where we come from. It makes us embrace others before asking for responsibility for their sins. It is prior to all human senses. That is why the father of the Prodigal Son could find his son coming from afar and run to him: his vulnerability moved him to do so.

The notion of ontological vulnerability described by both Butler and Hogan is familiar to the Christian tradition. St Paul wrote, 'We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another' (Romans 12:5). Therefore, we are naturally vulnerable because we are all connected as one body in Christ, who is himself vulnerable. For Keenan the vulnerability in human nature originated with God: 'our vulnerability derives from the nature of God in whose image we are made; made in the image of the vulnerable God, vulnerability is our nature'.[12] Keenan warns us, however, not to confuse vulnerability with *precarity*, that is, 'being in an unstable situation'.[13] He claims that vulnerability is 'capacious', like the character of the Prodigal Son's father: 'the centrality of the story is the enduringly vigilant, attentive, and responsive Father who is so, because he is vulnerable'.[14]

Vulnerability and Sin

At the opening of the First Week, exercitants meditate on sin. But for what purpose? For Joseph Tetlow, 'we have to learn that God's creative love comes first, and not our sins'. He claims that our common error is to make 'the initiative rise out of our sin'.[15] In other words, we sin first

[11] Linda Hogan, 'Vulnerability: An Ethic for a Divided World', in *Building Bridges in Sarajevo: The Plenary Papers from CTEWC 2018*, edited by Kristin E. Heyer (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2019), 219.
[12] James F. Keenan, 'Vulnerability and the Father of the Prodigal Son', *Accademia Alfonsiana Blog*, 2019, at https://www.alfonsiana.org/blog/2019/09/27/vulnerability-and-the-father-of-the-prodigal-son/.
[13] James F. Keenan, 'The World at Risk: Vulnerability, Precarity, and Connectedness', *Theological Studies*, 81/1 (2020), 132–149, here 141.
[14] Keenan, 'Vulnerability and the Father of the Prodigal Son'.
[15] Joseph A. Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises* (New York: Crossroad, 1992), 57.

The Father of the Prodigal Son*, by Eugène Burnand, published 1908*

and then God redeems us. Gerald O'Collins also emphasizes the priority of God's love in the meditation on sin: 'the meditation ends by thanking God "for his constant loving kindness and mercy towards me right up to the present moment"' (Exx 72).[16] Through the meditation on sin, exercitants not only feel sorrow and shame for their sins but also experience God's steadfast love for them; their sins are contrasted with God's mercy.

In the meditation on sin, exercitants should not focus too much on their sins as such; rather they should look at God. Sin is contrary to the nature of God, so it is not the object of the Exercises. Tetlow warns us to distinguish moral shame and guilt from neurotic shame and guilt. Of course, exercitants might find themselves in precarity owing to their sins. However, as Tetlow emphasizes, 'these appreciations come in God's presence, who will not let you see into the horror of sin until He has taught you how He loves you, and then only in the measure in which you have accepted your Lord's love'.[17] The meditation on sin will ultimately lead exercitants to encounter God's vulnerability. The more they acknowledge their sins, the deeper they experience how God is vulnerable in loving them.

Vulnerability leads us to recognise our neighbours and love them. According to Keenan's definition, vulnerability is the ability to recognise

[16] Gerald O'Collins, 'Memory in the Spiritual Exercises and John 21', *The Way*, 59/3 (July 2020), 71.
[17] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola*, 59.

and embrace others in need, and to enter into others' precarity: 'being vulnerable, we have the capacity to encounter and respond to another whose vulnerability is precarious, and we can, in our own vulnerability, enter into the precarity of another'.[18] Enda McDonagh also argues that one becomes vulnerable in 'loving recognition' and in 'the acceptance of the different, of the other'. If we let ourselves be with others as Jesus came to us, we become 'vulnerable to the holy'.[19] In this way, vulnerability is the acceptance and reflection of God's redemptive-creative work.

Ignatius places the mediation on sin at the very beginning of the Exercises. This is the first moment when exercitants encounter God's vulnerability. As they do so, they recognise that they are also vulnerable. This opens them to become vulnerable to others, just as God is vulnerable to us. They come to desire to love others; from there, virtues can develop as they practise love. As Butler argues, vulnerability precedes the development of virtues, which is not something that we practise through our senses or abilities: 'This ethical relation is not a virtue that I have or exercise; it is prior to any individual sense of self'.[20] Vulnerability is not a habit that we can develop through exercises, as the virtues are in Aquinas's understanding. Rather, virtues develop in the condition of vulnerability. Therefore, we need first to recognise and understand vulnerability.

The Humility to be Vulnerable to Others

In order to be vulnerable to others, humility is critical. Meditating on sin leads exercitants to be humble, because sin teaches them that they need Christ. If they appreciate that, they will no longer be complacent; they will be transformed by humility.[21] People tend to make a safe zone for themselves, be it through riches, honour or pride. Ignatius describes Satan using such ploys to entice people to all sorts of vices (Exx 142), making people feel falsely secure without Jesus. Exercitants are drawn out to follow Jesus, rather than stay in their safe zone. They can only encounter Jesus as Saviour by meditating on sin.

[18] Keenan, 'World at Risk', 141.
[19] McDonagh, *Vulnerable to the Holy*, 12–13.
[20] Butler, 'Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation', 141.
[21] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, 49.

Jesus told the rich young man who wanted to gain eternal life: 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me' (Matthew 19:21). Jesus invited the man to come out of his safe zone. However, he went away from Jesus disappointed, without taking this vital step. Following the encounter, when the disciples asked Jesus whom then could be saved, he told them, 'for mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible' (Matthew 19:26). We cannot recognise our vulnerability on our own. McDonagh points out that this is hard for those in protected positions because they might have to surrender their power and privilege if they are to be vulnerable to others in need.[22] To become vulnerable, we must be humble and ask for grace.

This is the paradox of vulnerability. How can the vulnerable care for the vulnerable? The answer is: 'For God all things are possible'. In the meditation on sin, exercitants might think that they cannot escape from their own chaos. To be sure, no one can be freed from chaos on his or her own. However, we can be delivered because God has entered into our chaos. The initiative for God's redemptive work comes from God's love for us, prior to our love for God: 'we love because he first loved us' (1 John 4:19). Through the meditations, exercitants are invited to cultivate the virtue of humility. They come to know that they need the grace of our Lord.

Outside our safe zone, we may confront unexpected dangers such as poverty, violence and injustice, when we 'enter into the chaos of another'. God entered into our chaos to deliver us from it: 'the Word became flesh and lived among us' (John 1:14). If we enter the chaos of others, we could be hurt, just as Jesus was, even to death. However, Jesus said, 'no one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 15:13). In his humble vulnerability, he showed us the greatest love.

Jesus' vulnerability shows his humility and *vice versa*. As Anne Carpenter writes,

> Jesus's obedience extends beyond death into being-dead, in total solidarity with sinners, gathering them together as they cannot gather one another, as he endures *krisis* of divine judgment not only 'then' but also for all time.[23]

[22] McDonagh, *Vulnerable to the Holy,* 24–26.
[23] Anne M. Carpenter, 'Analogy and Kenosis', *Nova et Vetera,* 17/3 (2019), 831.

Jesus is so humble that he is vulnerable to becoming like a sinner—vulnerable to obeying God's will, even to death, in order to save us. Jesus is our perfect exemplar of humility. We can understand this humility from the notion of *kenosis*:

> Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied [ἐκένωσεν] himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5–8)

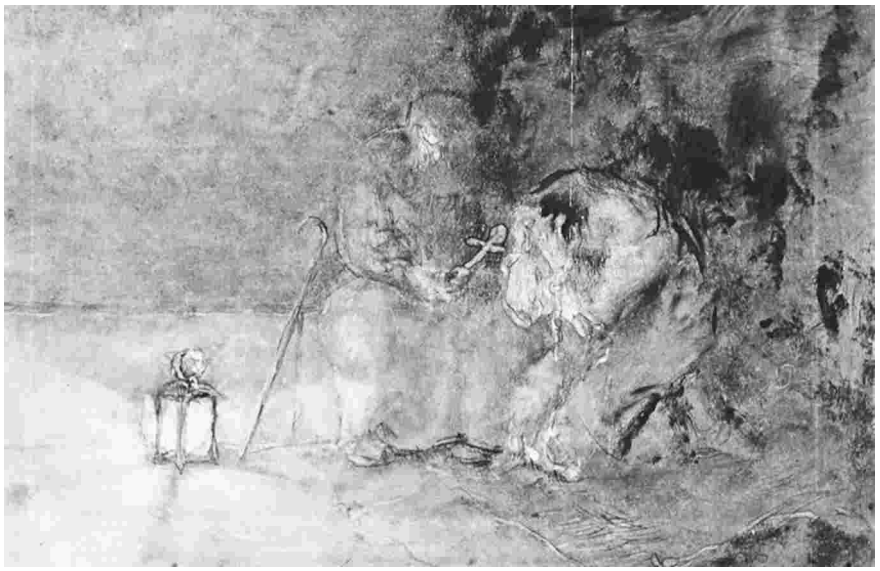
When exercitants imagine Jesus on the cross in the first exercise, they ask themselves the triple question: 'What have I done for Christ?', 'What am I doing for Christ?', 'What ought I to do for Christ?' (Exx 53). They thus contrast themselves with Jesus on the cross, leading to greater humility, as well as the recognition that they are inherently vulnerable; they will ask for the grace of vulnerability to others.

Freedom to Be Vulnerable to Others

James Keenan pointedly defines sin as the failure to bother to love.[24] In other words, sin is the failure to be vulnerable to others. To love others, we should first recognise our own vulnerability. However, we are blind because of our sins. We must, then, become free from sin, which obscures that vulnerability. Sin makes us afraid of being vulnerable to others even though we are already intrinsically vulnerable. The Exercises are an excellent means to help us recognise our vulnerability in freedom.

Freedom is rooted in one's unique relationship with God. This is why Ignatius cautions that directors ought not to interfere in the communication between exercitants and God (Exx 15). As such, directors should not intervene, but accompany exercitants. Their position is limited to helping exercitants make their exercises properly according to the prescribed process. Ai Van Pham rightly notes that God does not impose God's will upon us, but wants us to accept it in mutual interaction.[25]

[24] Keenan, *Moral Wisdom*, 45.
[25] Pham, 'Jesuit Accent for Contemporary Christian Ethics', 138.



Repentance, *by Nikolaos Gyzis, 1895*

For Ignatius, exercitants cannot discern God's will if they are 'disordered' or 'inordinately attached' to unimportant matters. He describes the purpose of the Exercises as 'to overcome oneself, and to order one's life, without reaching a decision through some disordered affection' (Exx 21). Disordered affections prevent us from being vulnerable to others. In the 'Principle and Foundation', Ignatius emphasizes being 'indifferent' (Exx 23). As Joseph Tetlow notes, this does not mean diffidence, laziness or disinterest; rather, this is a 'strong desire'.[26] It is a desire to draw us to the ultimate end. Ignatius writes, 'we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created' (Exx 23). He emphasizes freedom from disordered affections that are not appropriate to the ultimate end.

How can we build that desire? In the Exercises, exercitants find a calm place to pray for an hour. In prayer, they listen to Jesus speak and hear the voice of conscience, where God alone is with them and where, in the words of Vatican II, 'in the depths of his conscience, man detects a law which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience'.[27] Just as Jesus's *kenosis* is not a passive act, but rather

[26] Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola*, 54.
[27] *Gaudium et spes*, n. 16.

'willing obedience', in Walter Kasper's description, so too, in freedom, do the exercitants dispose themselves willingly to obey God.[28] Directors, then, ought not intervene in this communication with God.

John Paul II writes about the relationship between freedom and love:

> Freedom is for love. Freedom that is unused, not employed by love, becomes precisely something negative—it gives man a sense of emptiness and unfulfillment. Love engages freedom and fills it with what the will clings to by nature: it fills freedom with the good. The will tends to the good, and freedom belongs to the will, and therefore freedom is for love, for through love man most fully participates in the good.[29]

According to Augustine, we become free by God's grace. The human will does not acquire the grace of God by freedom, but rather acquires freedom by grace.[30] We can be free by God's grace, which is love. Our freedom must be for love and serve love itself. As such, Christian freedom is the ability to be aware of vulnerability and become vulnerable to others.

Vulnerability and Charity

In the colloquy with Christ on the cross, exercitants ask themselves: 'What ought I to do for Christ?' (Exx 53). Those who experience God's mercy deeply may know what to do. It is to act with mercy. A significant change takes place within them. At first, they may be afraid of God's judgment. However, they realise that God never condemned them. Ignatius asks exercitants to thank God for giving them life despite their sins (Exx 60). They will want to act with mercy after they experience God's own love and mercy, stirring in them the virtue of charity. If the end of the Exercises is relationship with God, exercitants can never achieve that goal without cultivating this virtue of charity, as charity alone leads people to love God.

Charity is different from all other virtues. For Aquinas, 'charity is called the form of the other virtues not as being their exemplar or

[28] Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ* (London: Continuum, 2012), 239.
[29] Pope John Paul II, *Love and Responsibility* (Boston: Pauline, 2013), 117.
[30] See St Augustine, *Rebuke and Grace*, n. 17, in *Answer to the Pelagians*, volume 4, *To the Monks of Hadrumetum and Provence*, edited by Roland J. Teske and translated by John E. Rotelle (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1999).

their essential form, but rather by way of efficient cause, in so far as it sets the form on all, in the aforesaid manner'.[31] He follows St Paul (1 Corinthians 13:13), who contends that charity is the greatest among the theological virtues: 'Charity precedes faith and hope: because both faith and hope are quickened by charity, and receive from charity their full complement as virtues'.[32] As Bonnie Kent describes Thomas's view,

> Unless directed to God through charity, naturally acquired virtues are deficient in the truly essential character of virtue … the virtue of charity, which has God as its object and enables people to act from the love of God, exceeds every other virtue.[33]

Vulnerability cultivating charity is the beginning and the end of the Spiritual Exercises. The very first exercise is the meditation on sins, and the very last is the Contemplation to Attain Love (Exx 230–237). Both lead exercitants to experience God's love for them.

The Development of the Virtues

Without God, as the theologian Stanley Hauerwas affirms, it is uncertain how 'people can find the resources, socially and personally, to form and sustain the virtues necessary for the recognition and fulfilment of our historical nature'. 'We inherit too many histories and participate in too many communities, each with its own account of what constitutes being virtuous.'[34] How can Christians find God in a world encompassing so many different religions and cultures? What virtues do they need to live according to God's will in our diverse universe?

Ignatian spirituality can be an excellent way to address those questions. The Exercises begin and end with God's love. God's love is the ultimate source of all spiritual activities and Christian life. In the meditation on sin, we encounter God's vulnerability. The culmination of this revelation is Jesus dying for us on the cross. When we understand

[31] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 2.2, q.23, a.8, ad.1, translated by fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Washbourne, 1915).
[32] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1.2, q.62, a.4.
[33] Bonnie Kent, 'Habits and Virtues (Ia IIae, qq. 49–70)', in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, edited by Stephen J. Pope and James F. Keenan (Washington, DC: Georgetown U, 2002), 124.
[34] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* (Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame, 1981), 128, 126.

this vulnerability, we can recognise our own, as our nature reflects God's attributes and participates in God's nature. We are thus delivered from precarity and achieve freedom from disordered affections through God's mercy and forgiveness of our sins. As our desire for the ultimate end grows, we are similarly eager to act out of mercy in charity, loving our neighbours because God loves them. In this way, through the Exercises, we grow in the virtues of humility and charity. Each of these is foundationally related to vulnerability: God loves because God is vulnerable; Jesus is humble because he is vulnerable and willing to obey his Father's will in freedom. Through the Exercises, we can become aware of our identity as disciples of Jesus, our ultimate exemplar. In Jesus we can see the virtues we ought to develop. Jesus sent the disciples to 'go therefore and make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). This is our calling today and we need to develop the virtues continually in order to fulfil our mission. By God's grace, we can do this by recognising our vulnerability through the Exercises.

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WAS JESUS ABANDONED?

A Theological and Pastoral Reflection

Robert Green

IN BOTH THE MARKAN AND MATTHAEN accounts of the crucifixion of Jesus he utters words which, though their force may have been dulled by over-familiarity, are really quite shocking: 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Mark 15:34; Matthew 27:46) It is significant that Jesus chooses the opening words of Psalm 22 which is, according to Walter Brueggemann's classification, a psalm of *reorientation*, in that its opening expressions of desolation are transmuted into a vision of hope and vindication in later verses.[1]

The very human question this cry of dereliction raises is whether Jesus simply felt utterly alone *in extremis*, or whether he really and truly was abandoned by God. The second of these options is axiomatic to the doctrine of penal substitution which, although it was not the understanding of the atonement adopted by the primitive Church, is now widely believed by Christians in the conservative evangelical tradition (meaning many millions of Christians worldwide). It was first put forward by Anselm of Canterbury in the eleventh century and was the atonement model of choice for the sixteenth-century Reformers. The following words of John Calvin clearly express the heart of this belief:

> [The justified sinner] was estranged from God through sin, is an heir of wrath, subject to eternal death, excluded from all hope of salvation … at this point Christ interceded as his advocate, took upon himself and suffered the punishment that, from God's righteous judgment, threatened all sinners ….[2]

[1] See Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984), 19 following.

[2] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.16.2, translated by Ford Lewis Battles, edited by John T. McNeil (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960).

The problem is that actually he didn't. If eternal separation from God with no hope of reconciliation in time or eternity is the punishment for sin then that was not what happened to Jesus. As David Lewis puts it, 'the death is temporary and foreseen to be temporary'.[3] The resurrection of Jesus, understood as having been achieved by God the Father, is at the heart of the earliest Christian kerygma, as in Paul's affirmation that Christ 'was raised from the dead' (Romans 7:4). A few decades later Luke also made this explicit in his account of the first Christian sermon from the mouth of Peter when he says, 'God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power' (Acts 2:24). In addition, with regard to the period between Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, the early Petrine tradition describes Jesus not enduring a vicarious punishment but busy preaching 'to the spirits in prison' (1 Peter 3:19).

The idea that God abandoned Jesus because he was being vicariously punished as the object of God's wrath—and its corollary within the doctrine of penal substitution of the eternal abandonment of the lost to condemnation and separation from God—will be considered in two ways: its theological implications regarding the nature of the Trinity and the atonement and its pastoral implications especially in the context of Christian ministry to those who themselves feel lost or abandoned in one way or another. Theological thinking and pastoral praxis should not take place in separate rooms with no communicating door; there has to be a free-flowing conversation from one to the other, back and forth, if we are to reach a holistic understanding of why the Christian faith is good news for all. This means that our experience 'on the ground' of dealing with human beings in a pastoral context (or any context, actually) will inform our theological understandings and vice versa.

Models of the Trinity

The nature of the relationship between the essential ('God in God's self') and economic ('God in his relationship with creation') models of the Trinity has been the subject of vast numbers of books. Greatly simplifying

[3] David Lewis, 'Do We Believe in Penal Substitution?', in *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology*, volume 1, *Trinity, Incarnation, Atonement*, edited by Michael Rea (Oxford: Oxford U, 2009), 311.

a topic of immense complexity, two contrasting Trinitarian models are relevant to this discussion. A paradigm of the first understanding is David Bentley-Hart's unequivocal assertion that 'the eternal God … is the God he forever is, with or without creation, to whom creation adds absolutely nothing'.[4] Nothing, neither the act of creating and sustaining the universe nor the redemptive suffering and death of Christ, changes the fundamental integrity of the relationships of Father, Son and Spirit in any way. It is perhaps surprising that many of those who preach penal substitution also believe this model univocally to describe the Trinity. It certainly appears more problematic to understand how God could abandon Jesus if the inner life of the Trinity remains unaffected and undisturbed by God's activity in salvation history.

Trinity, *by Johann Ignaz Cimbal, c.1770*

The other understanding, conversely, is based on the proposition that, as Stanley Grenz puts it, 'God changes in and through his relations with history'.[5] One key proponent of this view, Jürgen Moltmann, argues: 'On the cross the Father and the Son are so widely separated that the direct relationship between them breaks off', creating a 'deep division in God himself, in so far as God abandoned himself and contradicted himself'.[6] Central to Moltmann's understanding is a Trinity consisting of 'three centers of conscious activity' who, in the acts of creation

[4] David Bentley-Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 157.

[5] Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the* Imago Dei (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 39.

[6] Jürgen Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, translated by Margaret Kohl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 166; Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, translated by R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 244.

and redemption, hand the ball to each other, as it were, until all is subsumed into an eschatological unity, as he puts it, 'at the same time a unity in God, in so far as God was at one with God and corresponded to himself'.[7]

This is a reminder that while there is a tendency to consider only the Father and the Son in this regard, the activity of the Holy Spirit is important if we are to see this in a Trinitarian context. This idea is present in the New Testament, in Hebrews 9:14 for instance, which makes a pneumatological element in the offering of Christ's life explicit. Graham Cole argues that the Spirit 'kept the triune Godhead from imploding—as it were—when the barrier of sin went up between the Father and the Son'.[8] We are hereby given a somewhat bizarre image of the Trinity almost at breaking point, as if the rubber band is about to snap, with the Holy Spirit working flat out to hold things together.

The question is whether a perichoretic vision of the Trinity in which 'each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to and rejoices in the others [creating] a dynamic, pulsating dance of joy and love' can survive God abandoning and contradicting God's self.[9] Can there be a place in the dance for violence done by one to another threatening the very integrity of the Trinity to the extent that 'God were *appeased* in the slaughter of a victim and his wrath were simply *averted* by way of prudential violence of which he approved'?[10]

The belief that God actually did abandon Jesus on the cross leads to a whole bundle full of difficult questions: can the Trinity survive such a serious tear in its eternal triune indivisibility? What was the Holy Spirit actually doing as Jesus hung abandoned? At what point did God turn round (as it were), decide that enough was enough and restore his relationship with Jesus? How can Jesus pray for the forgiveness of those who have crucified him (Luke 23:34) if he knows the Father is absent? Does God actually require the horrific violence that is handed out to Jesus before his anger is satisfied? Of course, if the Father did

[7] Grenz, *Social God and Relational Self*, 44; and see Jürgen Moltmann, *Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, translated by Margaret Kohl (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1981), 144–148, 174–176; Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 244.

[8] Graham Cole, *He Who Gives Life: The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 167.

[9] Timothy Keller, *The Reason for God: Belief in An Age of Scepticism* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 2009), 214–215.

[10] Bentley-Hart, *Beauty of the Infinite*, 348.

not abandon the Son many of these questions lose their urgency (or are even rendered irrelevant), and an assessment of Psalm 22 is a key factor in this consideration.

Psalm 22

It is worth pointing out that, out of context, Jesus' cry of dereliction would be bleak indeed. It would be expressive of the ineluctable sorrow of one whose hopes and dreams have been comprehensively dashed. But it is profoundly significant that Jesus chooses to quote from the Psalms, thus internalising the scriptures that informed and enriched the Jewish people and gave them an identity as the people of God. He is certainly gasping out words written on his heart that describe what he is feeling, but understanding the relevance of Psalm 22 illuminates something of what is actually happening as Jesus dies.

The fact that both Matthew and Mark quote Jesus' words in the original Aramaic (*Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?*) before translating them into Greek suggests that the evangelists felt they held a particular significance. If we look at Psalm 22 as a whole, as we are clearly intended to, we will find it profoundly descriptive not of a punitive experience but rather of the sad inevitability that such a profound life of trust in God ends with the encirclement of evil. As David Bentley-Hart puts it:

> There is a double motion in the crucifixion, of gift and immolation: Christ giving himself to God in the entirety of his life lived toward the father, unto death, and the violence of worldly power folding back upon this motion in an attempt to contain it … but the cross ultimately fails to put an end to the motion of Christ's life, to the infinity of his gift.[11]

These two motions are clearly present in Psalm 22, as a journey of trust beginning in the womb (v. 10) leads without specific explanation (so clearly just 'what happens' to such luminosity) to being prey to evil (v. 13). The conclusion of the Psalm (vv. 26–31), with its vision of the triumph of the righteous rule of God affirms, in the context of the cross, that the motion of trust in God exemplified by Jesus is ultimately irresistible (which has a profound soteriological significance).

[11] Bentley-Hart, *Beauty of the Infinite*, 543.

All this suggests that Jesus' cry is not that of one who suddenly finds that the wrath of God has been unleashed upon him but that, along with the writer of Psalm 22,

> … the Markan Jesus has not been abandoned by God in the sense that the presence of God has left him altogether. Instead these phenomena suggest that the 'abandonment' of Jesus refers to his helpless situation at the hands of his enemies.[12]

Psalm 22, then, was able to voice exactly what Jesus was feeling in his guts as well as the inexorable triumph of the Kingdom of God achieved paradoxically as he hangs there naked. It is also, importantly, a reminder of the intrinsic humanity of Jesus; as Theodore Ferris put it:

> It seems almost inevitable to me that Jesus should go through this kind of darkness …. If you think of God disguised as a man, then this will have no meaning for you. But if you think of him as a real man who in the very depths of his manhood disclosed the very nature of the Godhead then this [suffering] is inevitable …. this experience of being separated from God himself is inevitable, this is an intrinsic part of human existence.[13]

This insight has a profound bearing on pastoral ministry.

Why Did Jesus Die?

The doctrine of penal substitution which, certainly in its most conservative iteration, starts with the belief that, because of sin, every human being deserves to be eternally sundered from God's love and presence, and the fullness of God's Kingdom. There is no get-out clause because God will not ever change his mind—once you are in hell there is no hope whatsoever of any kind of restitution. It is salutary to heed the words of Tom Wright as he observes that the tendency of much talk about sin 'cheerfully sends most of the human race into everlasting fire'.[14]

There is in this doctrine, as Tom Greggs puts it, 'a binary dividing line', generally based on whether or not an appropriate personal faith commitment has been made, that dictates where an individual will spend

[12] Holly J. Carey, *Jesus' Cry from the Cross: Towards a First-Century Understanding of the Intertextual Relationship between Psalm 22 and the Narrative of Mark's Gospel* (New York: T. and. T Clark, 2009), 16.
[13] Theodore Parker Ferris, *What Jesus Did* (New York: Oxford U, 1961), 83.
[14] Tom Wright, *The Day the Revolution Began* (London: SPCK, 2016), 98.

eternity.[15] There are complicating factors, though, and therefore no firm consensus, in this essentially dualistic assessment of humanity, about where the dividing line actually comes down. What about those, for example, who follow other faiths and live and die never having been exposed to Christian preaching; or those who reject the Church as a result of having been abused by a Christian priest or minister; or those who die in infancy—can they be saved? I've been party to many such conversations over the years which have never reached any conclusions, suggesting that on this crucial issue, the scope of the salvific work of Christ, many of those who follow him are agnostic (an agnosticism often expressed in the standard get-out clause, *we should really leave that to God*).

So, according to this modality, the need for humans to be saved from the wrath of God—however many or few might actually benefit in the end—requires a vicarious, transactional sacrifice in which Jesus is both placed on the cross and abandoned there by God, who turns away from his cry of dereliction. So Paul Dafydd Jones proposes that, as Jesus hangs on the cross, 'the Father and Spirit withdraw entirely, thereby providing a temporal reiteration of God's eternal rejection of all that opposes God .... Christ is unequivocally forsaken'.[16]

Christ Crowned with Thorns, *by Antonello da Messina, c. 1470*

It needs to be made clear at this point that all Christians, including the present writer, understand the statement that Christ died for our sins to be

[15] Tom Greggs, 'Beyond the Binary: Forming Evangelical Eschatology', in *New Perspectives for Evangelical Theology: Engaging with God, Scripture and the World*, edited by Tom Greggs (London: Routledge, 2010), 152–167, here 153.

[16] Paul Dafydd Jones, 'The Atonement: God's Love in Action', in *New Perspectives for Evangelical Theology*, 44–62, here 57.

axiomatic. Something happened on the cross that needs to be remembered in bread and wine, and in lives and communities that tell the good news. But does the forgiveness of human beings require a blood sacrifice and a wounding tear in the integrity of the Trinity in which the Father abandons the Son to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual torture? While the covenantal history of Israel requires blood sacrifice for it to work, there are other diverse strands in which divine forgiveness seems to be offered in other ways, irrespective of the sacrificial system.

These differing strands jostle one another in Psalm 51 which, at one point, asseverates that broken hearts rather than burnt offerings are efficacious in winning God's favour (vv. 16–17) before a reaffirmation (possibly by a later editor) of the value of the sacrificial system when done in the right spirit (v. 19). The freer strand is evident in the story of Jesus healing the paralytic when, on the basis of the faith of the friends who brought him to Jesus (rather than the sufferer's own), his sins are forgiven (Mark 2: 5). The shock of the crowd at Jesus' apparent audacity stems in large part from their received tradition that only God does that sort of thing (v. 7) and that temple sacrifice is a non-negotiable prerequisite.

Pastoral Praxis

Following the pattern set by Jesus, Christians are called to offer pastoral care unconditionally. There is a model for this in the parabolic origin story of Adam and Eve at the beginning of Genesis. After they eat the forbidden fruit they are banished from the Garden of Eden—reminding us that sin does matter and has consequences. There are consequences in this story and life will continue on the wrong side of the garden gate, as it were. However, before the expulsion God is solicitous enough to make them some clothes and there is no sense at all that they have been abandoned. Indeed when Eve gives birth to Cain she acknowledges that she has done so with divine help (Genesis 4: 1).

All those, including this writer, who have worked in full-time parish ministry will have offered pastoral care to many people who have felt that God has abandoned them. It can be difficult for those who have experienced, for example, the death of a child, the loss of a job, a terminal diagnosis, the breakdown of a marriage, mental-health issues, moral failure or an encounter with 'the dark night of the soul', to understand that they have not been forgotten by God. We have all, to the best of

our ability and with (we hope) sensitive and appropriate words, tried to reassure those feeling lost that, though the divine presence may appear remote at best, God is actually around and cares for them very much. Understanding that Jesus himself, the divine Son of God, felt that way himself yet was not forsaken is a profoundly helpful pastoral insight. Knowing that God in Christ has felt what it is like to be at the sharp end of life is a perception that offers hope and reassurance.

This addresses one assumption that people very often make, that when something bad happens it is because God is punishing them; it is amazing how resilient this belief is! My pastoral practice was to assure people that God doesn't operate like that. However the theological and pastoral problem for those who believe in penal substitution is that it can appear that that is very much God's modus operandi.

A little time after the event, a friend of mine heard a Christian preacher declare at a large gathering that God meant the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, which killed approximately 230,000 people, to happen because the area affected was mainly Muslim and that it would now be opened up to Christian relief workers who would bring the good news with them. This reflected belief in a punitive God who kills on an industrial scale 'for the greater good'. I'm not suggesting for a moment that all who believe in penal substitution would have agreed with that assessment, but the fact that his talk was apparently very well received by his audience is profoundly troubling.

The complications of trying to marry up unconditional pastoral care with a theology of penal substitution come into sharp focus in denominations, such as the Church of England, that have communal vocation and therefore an unconditional duty of care to all those living in their parishes. This involves ministers regularly conducting the funerals of those who have had no connection with church and have never made any public profession of faith—which describes the vast majority of funerals I conducted in the course of parish ministry. It leads to the incongruous, if not disingenuous, position (which can be appreciated by even a cursory glance at websites of a significant number of parish churches) that, while they declare themselves happy to conduct the funeral of anyone in the parish and celebrate that person's life, their doctrinal statements state very clearly that many of those for whose lives they help bereaved families to give thanks will suffer eternal condemnation. Many Anglican churches, for instance, subscribe to the Evangelical Alliance's basis of faith which expresses faith in:

> The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfil the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.[17]

Some years ago, in connection with his funeral service, I visited the two daughters of a man who had recently died. They asked me outright, 'where do you think he's gone?' As I was operating with a penal substitution theology at that time I used the get out clause alluded to previously, suggesting that we should really leave that in God's hands. It was the best I could do with the theological framework I had to hand but fudging the issue was not really congruent with being the bearer of good news.

There is an understandable tendency among ministers who hold the doctrine of penal substitution to be rather coy in a pastoral context about belief in an eternity without God—although there may be a sensibility that vast numbers of people being trapped in a conscious hell with no way out, however much they regret the reasons that brought them there, is hugely difficult to square with the concept of a God of love. If that is so, is it the *imago dei* within rebelling against such a thought? Certainly it makes God less moral than human beings because our best selves would never ever give up on someone we truly loved.

Retributive Judgment or Restorative Love

This line of argument is not intended to lead to a moral free-for-all, to an understanding of God as our favourite uncle who hands out treats and overlooks all our mistakes. The idea of judgment is serious and deeply embedded in scripture, including the teachings of Jesus. It is the nature of that judgment that is of critical importance. If it is retributive then the focus is solely on punishment (hence the abandonment of Christ), but if it is restorative the focus moves to repairing hurt and pain and finding a path of healing.

How we understand Jesus's cry of dereliction on the cross is fundamental here. If Jesus is taking the full extent of the wrath of God in a propitiatory sacrifice that can only be appropriated by a conscious faith commitment (one that satisfies the examiner, as it were) then

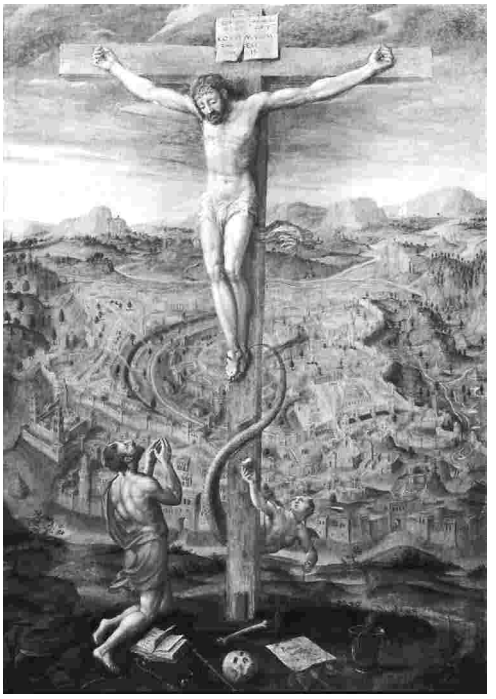
[17] https://www.eauk.org/about-us/how-we-work/basis-of-faith.

it must be retributive. David Bentley-Hart makes the point that a punishment that lasts for eternity is clearly disproportionate when set against the mistakes of the brief and complex lives humans lead,

> It takes an almost heroic suspension of moral intelligence … to believe that any soul could possibly, under the inevitable conditions of existence in this world, earn for itself a penalty that is at once both 'eternal' and 'just'.[18]

To put it somewhat more prosaically, the punishment clearly does not fit the crime.

Bentley-Hart goes on to ascribe this 'heroic suspension' to 'a failure to think through what the word "eternal" actually means'.[19] Eternal, almost by definition, implies retribution, because it necessarily entails that there is no chance of restoration. Richard Rohr argues, 'it's time for Christianity to rediscover the deeper biblical theme of restorative justice, which focuses on rehabilitation and reconciliation and not punishment'.[20] If Jesus is taking into himself on the cross the very worst of which humanity is capable, while articulating the unconditional nature of divine love and making real in his death and resurrection the eschatological hope in the consummation of light, love, life and goodness, then infinite possibilities open up. It is why Paul says there is nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:38–39), and why the earliest Christian message was one of universal restoration (Acts 3:21).



Allegory of Salvation, *by Vredeman de Vries, 1596*

[18] David Bentley-Hart, *That All Shall Be Saved* (New Haven: Yale U, 2019), 37.
[19] Bentley-Hart, *That All Shall Be Saved*, 37.
[20] Richard Rohr, *The Universal Christ* (London: SPCK, 2019), 142.

Never Abandoned

So the question as to whether God abandoned Jesus on the cross is actually a much wider question about whether he abandons anybody. The penal substitution model in effect argues that he does: that he will give up on huge swathes of humanity and consign them eternally to a place of condemnation. In its Calvinistic iteration it even goes so far as to declare that the destiny of those despatched to hell was predestined by the will of God.

Yet the New Testament offers us a number of models of the atonement such as ransom—taken from the slave market—in which Jesus 'buys us back' from bondage to sin and death (1 Timothy 2:5–6), or the 'Christus Victor' model, which understands the atonement primarily as a victory over the forces of sin and death. These do not require God to abandon Jesus and, given the multiplicity of models of atonement offered in the New Testament and Christian tradition, it would appear most logical to understand them as essentially apophatic: attempts to define what is essentially beyond definition. Above all we must not let them place God in any kind of straitjacket or constrict God's ability to forgive. C. J. Den Heyer warns against 'the disturbing thought that God is so tied to his own justice that his hands are no longer "free" to save unconditionally'.[21]

David Cunningham makes an important observation: 'the ultimate salvation of humanity will come about by means of a human act of violence—an act not propagated by God, but rather one propagated by human beings upon God'.[22] God in Christ becomes a God-incarnated victim of the very human evils of hatred, envy and judicial violence—or, to put it another way, 'sin'—and returns only love and forgiveness, thus drawing the sting of sin and death, reconciling the world to God's self and exposing the fatal flaw in the idea that God could abandon those made in his image, however selfishly, cruelly and despotically they act. This is why Jesus on the cross asked God to forgive his tormentors (could we imagine that God refused his request?) and why the following anonymous prayer was written, reputedly found by the body of a dead child in Ravensbrück concentration camp:

[21] C. J. Den Heyer, *Jesus and the Doctrine of Atonement* (New York: SCM, 1997), 133.
[22] David S. Cunningham, *These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 245.

O Lord, remember
not only the men and women of good will,
but also those of ill will.
but do not remember
all the suffering they have inflicted on us;
remember the fruits we have bought,
thanks to this suffering:
our comradeship, our loyalty,
our humility, our courage,
our generosity, the greatness of heart
which has grown out of all this,
and when they come to judgment
let all the fruits
which we have borne
be their forgiveness.

Does the big picture require God, a fraction of a second after the Big Bang, to create the conditions for human life eventually to emerge on earth, only subsequently and wrathfully to consign many or even most humans to eternal condemnation? This is not to turn a blind eye to the possibility of hell—which clearly exists on earth, meaning that Christians are called to minister to those enduring it. Yet, as the erstwhile hell-preaching evangelist Carlton Pearson understood viscerally while watching news coverage of the immensity of suffering in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the idea of God perpetuating dreadful and unendurable suffering into eternity is inconceivable.[23] Christian pastoral care must rather be grounded in the unconditional love of God for every human being. This call to love indiscriminately does not mean we ignore the tendency to sin that weighs so heavily and causes such painful departures from the vocation of humanity to live together in a mutuality of love.

In the context of climate change, the developed world's deep-seated sense of entitlement and subsequent blindness to the true purpose of humanity—to be stewards within the created order—needs to be identified as inherently sinful and challenged at every level. Yet this is not to be done retributively, but with the aim of healing the planet as well as restoring the three key relationships involving humanity: those with the Creator, all those also created in the *imago dei* and the whole

[23] See Carlton Pearson, *The Gospel of Inclusion: Reaching beyond Religious Fundamentalism to the True Love of God and Self* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009), 2–4.

created order in all its wondrous biodiversity that are all pictorially fractured in the second creation story (Genesis 3:9–19). The bottom line is that God hates sin because he loves the whole of creation, which embraces humanity even in its brokenness—something powerfully and definitively embodied in Jesus' *cri de coeur* from the cross. The pastoral love by which Christians present Christ to the world in each generation reflects the divine invitation to humanity to partake in the eternal perichoretic dance of the Trinity, which means that the possibilities are endless.

Robert Green spent over thirty-five years in parish ministry in the Church of England. For nine years this was combined with overseeing a diocesan training programme for Readers (lay preachers).

NOTICING *HIBAKUSHA*

A Trauma-Informed Reading of the Incarnation Contemplation

Robert W. McChesney

ON THE MORNING of 6 August 1945, a 37-year-old Spaniard was gazing serenely out of the window of his Jesuit residence in the Nagatsuka neighbourhood on the outskirts of Hiroshima. He was composed, having spent almost two hours in prayer seated on his heels in a traditional Japanese meditation posture, silent and immobile on a tatami bamboo mat. But life as he knew it was about to erupt like a volcano. Almost 10,000 metres overhead, a United States B-29 bomber had just changed history by releasing the first atomic bomb deployed in war. For the Basque Jesuit Pedro Arrupe, henceforth there would be *before* Hiroshima and *after* Hiroshima.

On the far side of a nearby hilltop an incandescent flash lit the sky, followed immediately by an earthquake-like roar. Despite severe damage to the compound's buildings, Arrupe and his Japanese and German Jesuit companions were unhurt. Ascending the rise, they were aghast at the sight of the city below.

> A desolate panorama opened before their eyes. A huge, dark, smoking cloud hovered menacingly over a desert of ashes, the devastating remains of what had been Hiroshima …. Smoke, fire, ruins, screams—this was truly hell.[1]

There was no time to waste. The resourceful Arrupe had trained as a medical doctor before his spiritual call, and immediately began to organize daily forays into the city to visit local hospitals and sweep the

[1] Pedro Miguel Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe: Witness of the Twentieth Century, Prophet of the Twenty-First* (Chestnut Hill: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2021), 22–23.

Survivors in the ruins of Hiroshima

streets for survivors. He recalls seeing a child with glass embedded in one eye; 'another victim was caught between two beams with his legs calcified up to his knees'.[2] His small Christian community immediately converted their chapel into a field hospital, where Arrupe treated hundreds of the wounded, many of whom survived. Proximity to Ground Zero was crucial, a lesson he would never forget. Some 150,000 persons died before the end of the year—about 90 per cent in the first two weeks after the explosion.[3]

Pedro Arrupe, famously, would go on to serve from 1965 to 1983 as the 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus. According to Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the Dutch Jesuit who succeeded him, Arrupe was 'a spiritual master in the line of St Ignatius Loyola'. His temperament evinced a visceral attraction to God encountered in the 'plight of the suffering, especially refugees and the victims of war and violence'.[4] Arrupe felt an instinctive, practical solidarity with bloodied casualties. Hiroshima had left an indelible mark on his soul, transforming him into a *hibakusha*—an 'explosion-affected person'—as the Japanese called atomic-bomb survivors. This term aptly extends to those scarred by other traumatic events.

[2] *Recollections and Reflections of Pedro Arrupe*, translated by Yolanda T. DeMola (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1986), 29.
[3] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 183 note 16.
[4] Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, foreword, in *Pedro Arrupe: Essential Writings*, edited by Kevin Burke (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 12.

After Arrupe passed away in 1991, his dramatic reform programme for the Society of Jesus, overlapping with the broader ecclesial *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council, left him both revered and reviled. Only in the past generation has Arrupe's momentous legacy been fully appreciated and his continuity with Iñigo himself celebrated and admired.[5] However, the significance of proximity to physical violence in the personal and leadership narratives of both Basque Jesuits has gone unremarked.

I would like to suggest that this proximity, pointing prophetically towards the twenty-first century, anticipates and inspires fresh Christian spiritual insights and practices suitable for an age of trauma. In service of the battered and broken, Ignatian spirituality has an opportunity—indeed a duty—to be of service to its epoch. According to Michael Kirwan, there are now 'so many indicators of cultural sickness and danger that to ignore them would be irresponsible'.[6] Surely trauma is among them.

It would be impossible, here, to engage in a technical mental-health discussion of such a vast field. But etymologically, 'the ancient Greek word for trauma means a "wound" or "an injury inflicted upon the body by an act of violence"'.[7] In modern times, those wounds are understood to include emotional, moral, neurobiological, even spiritual injuries. Traumatic symptoms can affect the whole person.

Spirituality for an Age of Trauma

It is time—past time—for Ignatian-informed spirituality and pastoral care to notice that 'we're living through an age of trauma, and it's taking its toll'.[8] Theology and, more slowly, spirituality are beginning to respond to this 'special needs' population. To cite a significant example, Christian practice today features any number of spiritual retreats that begin in the 'bad news' of traumatic violence personally suffered by the retreatant—which may leave the faculties of human volition paralyzed, the affect

[5] The cause for Arrupe's beatification and canonization was opened in Rome on 5 February 2019.

[6] Michael Kirwan, '"Swearing, Blaspheming, Wounding, Killing, Going to Hell …": The World, as Seen and Heard by Ignatius', *The Way*, 57/4 (October 2018), 77–89, here 81.

[7] Serene Jones, *Trauma + Grace: Theology in a Ruptured World* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2019), 12.

[8] S. I. Rosenbaum, 'The Age of Trauma', *Harvard Public Health Magazine* (Fall 2021), at https://harvardpublichealth.org/mental-health/the-age-of-trauma/.

numb, memory blank, understanding meaningless and imagination stunted. Certain retreats are expressly designed for adult men who have been abused, perhaps as minors, by clergy or other authority figures in the Church.[9] Others are offered for female survivors of violence by an intimate partner; male staff may or may not be welcome. Retreats open to men and women of any denomination who have served in the United States armed forces are available, with focus on the psychological trauma that can accompany military experience.

Such practice respects those who, for whatever reason, do not experience God's creation as good—'*In the beginning was the subhuman howl*'.[10] Though this can be accommodated within a 'standard' Ignatian retreat, the distinctive symptoms and dynamics of trauma do present fresh challenges to encountering God in a personal relationship.

The Incarnation Contemplation

The centrality of violence, typically at the roots of traumatic wounds of any sort, is at the heart of the Incarnation Contemplation at the start of the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises. This imaginative prayer finds striking currency in an epoch of trauma.[11]

Here Ignatius invites the retreatant to notice the Three Divine Persons of the Trinity, who are depicted gazing intently down from the heavens at the world. What the Divinity observes is horrific—a world swearing, blaspheming, wounding, killing, going to hell, and so on. Michael Ivens, an authoritative commentator on the Exercises, directs our own gaze to that same existential world:

> The exercitant contemplates the world in its totality, with particular emphasis on diversity of race and culture and on the tragic, fragile and violent aspects of human life. It is essential that the world thus contemplated be, or at any rate include, the exercitant's own world.[12]

[9] In 2023 the Jesuit Conference of the United States and Canada commissioned such a weekend Ignatian retreat. See https://endersisland.secure.retreat.guru/program/ignatian-retreat/?lang=en.

[10] Kirwan, '"Swearing, Blaspheming, Wounding, Killing, Going to Hell …"', 84, alluding to the work of the British philosopher Gillian Rose (1947–1995): italics original.

[11] Note the clear link to the closing exercise of the preceding, memorable Meditation on Hell. The segue from First to Second Weeks seems obvious.

[12] Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary. A Handbook for Retreat Directors* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 92.

Today's *hibakusha* thereby find assurance from the classical spiritual tradition that their Higher Power notices them and acts on their behalf. 'The emphasis is on the way Creation has turned out disastrously and on the need for someone (the Second Person) to come down and fix things.'[13]

In mental-health and trauma-counselling literature, 'trauma-informed care' has become a quasi-technical term:

> Trauma-informed care represents a means to address trauma throughout a system of care …. As we learn more about traumatic events across the lifespan, along with the lifelong effects of some trauma, it is increasingly evident that all care systems share the need and responsibility for identifying and responding to trauma.[14]

Consideration of a 'trauma-informed' Incarnation Contemplation can serve, in this regard, as a path to personalised encounter with God fashioned for a world of hurt. It well captures more toxic aspects of the present zeitgeist, and will be familiar to many casualties of violence and their local churches.

Perhaps, as well, this revered exercise provides a fresh perspective, worthy of further attention, on the personal narratives of the two Basque Jesuit leaders. Such a perspective is grounded in scripture and the Ignatian tradition. 'Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight, and the earth was filled with violence.' (Genesis 6:11) It both honours the Jesus story about a battered traveller (Luke 10:25–37) and channels elements of Arrupe's experiences at Hiroshima and Iñigo's experiences at Pamplona and Manresa, where the Exercises were born in violence and moral injury endured, inflicted—and transformed by God. One wonders, with Michael Kirwan: 'Is Ignatius remembering here his own swaggering past life?'[15]

Trauma-Informed Spiritual Noticing

It was early in Iñigo's third-person narrative of his spiritual awakening, while still convalescing at the Loyola family castle, that 'his eyes were

[13] Kirwan, '"Swearing, Blaspheming, Wounding, Killing, Going to Hell …"', 78.
[14] Lisa López Levers and others, 'Trauma, Crisis, and Disaster Interventions: Integrative Approaches to Therapy', in *Trauma Counseling: Theories and Interventions for Managing Trauma, Stress, Crisis, and Disaster*, edited by Lisa López Levers, 2nd edn (New York: Springer, 2022), 432.
[15] Kirwan, '"Swearing, Blaspheming, Wounding, Killing, Going to Hell …"', 79.

opened a little'.[16] What he had begun to notice interiorly he subsequently described, unsurprisingly, in language familiar to him: God must always be in conflict, since an evil power whom Iñigo designates 'the enemy of our human nature' invades the world and must be overcome. The inevitable result is warfare within the human soul between the Kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan, archetypal representatives of good versus evil spiritual forces.[17]

'So began a practice that underpinned Ignatius' conversion and his journey with God: noticing.'[18] Obstacles to noticing the dynamics and symptoms of trauma—including loss of faith in a God who is good—are legion for *hibakusha* and those who accompany them. Most obvious, perhaps, is that traumatic events can be shameful, triggering, frightening, disgusting, nightmarish, or paralyzing to name, much less recall to memory. In his thirteenth Rule for Discernment, Ignatius cautions that 'the enemy acts like a false lover in so far as he tries to remain secret and undetected' (Exx 326).

For 71 years, this seems to have been the evil spirit's strategy for Hiroshima survivor Tomiko Shoji. She was a nineteen-year-old secretary at the time of the blast. Until she was almost ninety, she had never talked about her experience of the atomic bomb. A paralyzing terror had left her no option but to isolate herself in the shadows for the entirety of her adult life. 'I'm scared to meet people', she finally acknowledged publicly, speaking in the present-tense Japanese of her teenage self: 'Something could just blow up'.[19]

Casualties of violence such as Shoji must be interiorly ready and able to notice their symptoms. For some it takes a lifetime; others, tragically, never develop the freedom to seek access to healing resources, especially following childhood trauma. (In much of the world outside the West, those psychospiritual resources simply do not exist anyway, except in major capital cities.) Might a trauma-informed spiritual conversation with a trained guide, at the right moment, assist some *hibakusha* to

[16] *Autobiography*, n. 8.

[17] The imagery and theology are most famously captured in two exercises—the Contemplation of the Kingdom of Christ (Exx 91–99) and the Meditation on Two Standards (Exx 136–147).

[18] Gail Paxman, '"When His Eyes Were Opened a Little": The Role of Noticing in the Spiritual Exercises', *The Way*, 61/2 (April 2022), 27–41, here 27. This essay is indebted to Paxman's insightful presentation.

[19] Quoted in Sarah Stillman, 'Hiroshima and the Inheritance of Trauma', *New Yorker* (12 August 2014).

begin their recovery, by naming the event(s) at stake? Might it even assist them to discover God's presence and mercy at work, as unlikely as it sounds, in and through those events?

Epochal violence—the violence that characterizes our very age—demands a more trauma-sensitive approach to the Exercises which thoughtfully accounts for 'unconscious resistance to conflicts and pain'.[20] That is rarely a facile or speedy process. The tendency to 'fight, flight, or freeze' is well documented in the psychological literature. But, with informed guidance, there is a healthier option. The noted Jesuit spiritual directors William A. Barry and William J. Connolly suggest that the 'willingness to notice' can over time become 'a process of progressively greater openness to reality'.[21]

A more trauma-sensitive approach to the Exercises

For *hibakusha* such as Shoji, this was indeed a lifelong process. Horrendous events cannot be undone, and it would be cruel to propose otherwise. God does not come to take away EverySurvivor's human pain and toxic bitterness so much as to accompany and sustain that person through the heavy lifting of post-traumatic growth. 'I can see no way out but through—leastways for me …'.[22] Though the road is long and winding, one slowly learns to trust that resources for the journey are ample. 'It is not the amount of darkness in the world that matters. It is not even the amount of darkness in ourselves that matters. In the end, it is how we stand in that darkness that is of essence.'[23]

The Incarnation Contemplation exercise is available to guide, safely—discerningly—certain retreatants or seekers in how to stand resiliently in their dark place. Four times it makes use of *etc.*, a technical Ignatian usage (sometimes translated 'and so forth' or 'and so on'; Exx 106, 107 twice, 108*)* For example: 'Here I will consider what the people on the face of the earth are doing: How they wound, kill, go to hell, and so on' (Exx 108). Regarding the Ignatian *et cetera,* Ivens comments*:* 'In Ignatius' usage this is an invitation to the exercitant to develop a

[20] Paxman, '"When His Eyes Were Opened a Little"', 34.
[21] William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*, 2nd edn (New York: Harper One, 1982), 83.
[22] Robert Frost, 'A Servant to Servants', in *The Poetry of Robert Frost: The Collected Poems, Complete and Unabridged*, edited by Edward Connery Lathem (New York: Henry Holt, 1969), 64.
[23] Robert Wicks, *The Simple Care of a Hopeful Heart: Mentoring Yourself in Difficult Times* (New York: Oxford U, 2010), 164.

general idea in one's own way'.[24] For *hibakusha* and those who accompany them, the invitation is a cue to stamp the exercise with a personal, perhaps rough, narrative authenticity. One prays from existential experience, with particular reference to the memory of any traumatic or spiritually injurious events.

Having observed their Higher Power looking down upon, and even coming lovingly and mercifully to save, a befouled, fallen creation, retreatants then gaze through God's merciful eyes upon events in their own troubled personal and family history. Evident to anyone ready and willing to notice are people abusing and being abused, shooting up schools and being shot, bombing and being bombed … *and so on*. Ignatian spirituality and many of its practitioners are surely capable, by God's grace, of learning to be more attentive to a world in which violence, and the trauma it engenders in many, are unfathomably, sickeningly pervasive.[25] A population and world of hurt await the Good News.

Interdisciplinary Dialogue and Collaboration

The modern field of trauma studies complements the practice of Ignatian noticing—and Christian spirituality and pastoral care more broadly—in significant ways. 'Trauma has become a key interpretative category of our time.'[26] The following are suggestions for further

[24] Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, 93.

[25] The Costs of War Project at Brown University concludes in a September 2020 report that refugee flows have never been higher. 'The US post-9/11 wars have forcibly displaced at least 37 million people'. The authors consider that number a 'very conservative estimate', and one which *excludes* those killed or injured. See https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/2020/ Displacement_Vine%20et%20al_Costs%20of%20War%202020%2009%2008.pdf.

[26] Nicole A. Sutterlin, 'History of Trauma Theory', in *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Trauma*, edited by Colin Davis and Hanna Meretoja (London: Routledge, 2020), 11.

interdisciplinary exploration, in no particular order, subject to review and correction by additional research, collaboration and field experience.

Bodily Sensations

Noticing is 'an indispensable ingredient of the Spiritual Exercises'.[27] Bessel van der Kolk, the globally acclaimed psychiatrist of trauma, claims that one of the two most important phrases in trauma therapy is: 'Notice that'.[28] Van der Kolk complements Ignatius' spiritual wisdom with psychological tools of a similar nature.

> In my practice I begin the process by helping my patients to first notice and then describe the feelings in their bodies—not emotions such as anger or anxiety or fear but the physical sensations beneath the emotions: pressure, heat, muscular tension, tingling, caving in, feeling hollow, and so on.[29]

One must notice, and befriend, bodily sensations. As the Jesuit Anthony de Mello advises:

> There is a very close connection between the body and the psyche and any harm done to one seems to affect the other …. rest in the awareness of your body …. This will bring you the spiritual benefits of opening your Heart to the divine, plus the benefits to psyche and body that go with this exercise.[30]

For Ignatian caregivers de Mello's work is well worth revisiting in this regard.

Diagnostic Insights

Because of enormous recent mental health and clinical advances, certain social-psychological characteristics of casualties, such as the battered traveller in the parable of the Good Samaritan, can be sketched based on the nature of the presenting wound and related

[27] Paxman, '"When His Eyes Were Opened a Little"', 27.
[28] Bessel van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Viking, 2014), 208.
[29] Van der Kolk, *Body Keeps the Score*, 101.
[30] Anthony de Mello, *Sadhana: A Way to God. Christian Exercises in Eastern Form* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978), 56.

symptomatology. For example, according to the clinical and forensic psychologist Laurence Miller, particular traits are distinctive to victims of crime.

> Society often regards victimization as contagious …. Most of us want to believe that crime victimization is something that happens to somebody else. The victim must have done something to bring it on him or herself, otherwise, I'm just as vulnerable too, and who wants to believe that? We may thus be reluctant to associate with the victims for fear that their bad luck will 'rub off'. All of these beliefs and reactions further contribute to the feelings of blame and shame that many crime victims experience.[31]

Such evidence-based indicators provide invaluable social and psychological data to spiritual and pastoral guides—and not only regarding crime victimisation. Diagnostic insight about distinctive traits is available for other groups as well, for example war refugees, or survivors of incest, molestation or intimate-partner violence. Caregivers working with such individuals should be able to enhance their professional approach by making use of such data.

Perspective-Taking

The American Psychological Association *Dictionary of Psychology* defines *perspective-taking* as 'looking at a situation from a viewpoint that is different from one's usual viewpoint'.[32] It is a trait associated in the psychological literature with empathy. Psychologists suggest that it may be required to notice potentially traumatic events, perhaps many years later. For example, Ignatian devotees are understandably attracted to the heroic figure of Iñigo and his so-called 'cannonball moment' during the bloody Pamplona siege. But perspective-taking suggests that authentic gospel neighbourliness requires a capacity to notice *all* those wounded and killed alongside Iñigo, as well as to consider their loved ones back home.[33] Surely the God of the Contemplation on the Incarnation did.

[31] Laurence Miller, *Practical Police Psychology: Stress Management and Crisis Intervention for Law Enforcement* (Springfield: Charles C. Thomas, 2006), 38.
[32] American Psychological Association, *Dictionary of Psychology* (Washington, DC: APA, 2015).
[33] These included Alonso de San Pedro (Pedro de Malpaso), the inspector of the fortress works, who was badly wounded during the siege and remained with Iñigo in the castle some days after the cessation of hostilities. He died the following month. See José Ignacio Tellechea Idígoras, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Pilgrim Saint*, translated by Cornelius Michael Buckley (Chicago: Loyola, 1994), 106.

Imagination

Imagination is an important psycho-spiritual noticing skill. The Ignatian heritage is well aware that an ability to deploy one's imagination effectively is required in order to pray the Exercises as Iñigo intended. But trauma is so insidious, as van der Kolk notes, precisely because it 'affects the imagination'. It deprives the individual of the mental flexibility for perspective taking, 'the hallmark of imagination'. Those suffering from the memory of past horrific events 'simply keep replaying an old reel'. Stunted imagination can result in 'no hope, no chance to envision a better future, no place to go, no goal to reach'.[34] Indeed, imagination is of such critical significance in the healing and reconciliation process that interdisciplinary collaboration between mental health and clinical professionals, on the one hand, and spiritual and pastoral guides, on the other, may be decisive for certain individuals.

Expert Companionship

Finally, for a population with special, trauma-informed needs, it may be prudent to assume experienced companionship and guidance on the journey from properly trained caregivers. *Hibakusha* often find it hard to practise noticing, perhaps for fear of shame or triggering painful memories or symptoms. They will never begin without a secure sense of safety and trust. Once again interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration may be needed on a case-by-case basis.

Spiritual and pastoral caregivers should realise that specialised resources are available from mental health practitioners. 'Expert companions' are trained to accompany those journeying through post-traumatic growth:

> We call the stance we take as professionals in helping people who are coming to us for assistance in coping with trauma and its aftermath *expert companionship*. The term emphasizes the view that both professional expertise and human companionship are crucial for the people seeking our help …. We see ourselves as *facilitators* rather than creators of growth ….[35]

[34] Van der Kolk, *Body Keeps the Score*, 17.
[35] Lawrence G. Calhoun and Richard G. Tedeschi, *Posttraumatic Growth in Clinical Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 23.

At the same time, most experienced spiritual and pastoral caregivers will find they are more qualified than they think to be helpful to a trauma-informed population of survivors. 'Companionship first' is the basic principle in the literature of post-traumatic growth.

> We use the term *companion* to emphasize that simply *being with* a survivor of trauma who is experiencing misery and confusion can bring significant comfort to this person …. Especially in the early phases of helping trauma survivors the expertise that trauma clinicians offer should be expertise in relating and listening.[36]

Ignatian guides, of course, are trained to listen with a third, discerning ear, and to establish trust from the start in effective spiritual and pastoral care. They may be surprised to discover, in this regard, how suitable their skills are to accompany *hibakusha*. Scholars today are beginning to recall that the Spiritual Exercises 'are a special form of spiritual conversation'.[37] And such conversation may prove to be the most effective model for delivering care to trauma-informed survivors in the twenty-first century.[38]

Proximity to Ground Zero

Hibakusha and those who accompany them in seeking divine encounter can take heart, and learn, from the compassionate perspective of yet a *third* Jesuit. Like Pedro Arrupe and Ignatius Loyola before him, Jorge Maria Bergoglio—Pope Francis—proclaims good news for battlefield casualties, forsaken crime victims and other survivors of violence in a world of hurt. This is a man profoundly gifted with trauma-informed listening, relational and noticing skills. For Francis, as was the case for Arrupe at Hiroshima, *proximity to Ground Zero* is crucial.

> I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity. I see the church as a field hospital after battle. It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if he has high

[36] Calhoun and Tedeschi, *Posttraumatic Growth in Clinical Practice*, 24.
[37] Nicholas Austin, 'The Ignatian Art of Spiritual Conversation', *The Way*, 62/3 (July 2023), 9–23, here 13.
[38] 'Endeavor to be profitable to individuals by spiritual conversations, by counseling and exhorting to good works, and by conducting Spiritual Exercises' (*Constitutions*, VII. 4. 8 [648]).

> cholesterol and about the level of his blood sugars! You have to heal his wounds. Then we can talk about everything else. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds …. And you have to start from the ground up.[39]

Robert W. McChesney SJ has been a Jesuit of the East Coast Province in the USA for fifty years. He has master's degrees in educational psychology, divinity and international relations. His great love has been refugee ministry; he has accompanied refugees and migrants for much of his adult life, most recently in the Middle East, and has served as director of the Jesuit Refugee Service in the USA. His private practice includes the accompaniment of military veterans, as well as survivors of incest and sexual assault. He is rooted in wide experience of directed retreats, spiritual direction and crisis intervention within the Ignatian tradition.

[39] Antonio Spadaro, *A Big Heart Open to God: A Conversation with Pope Francis* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013), 30–31.

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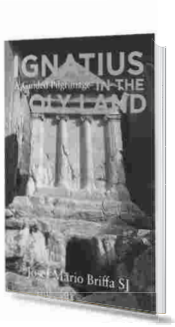

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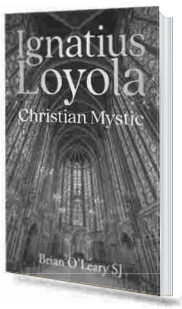

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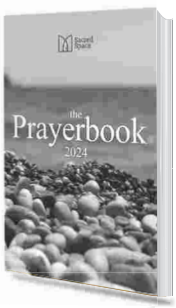

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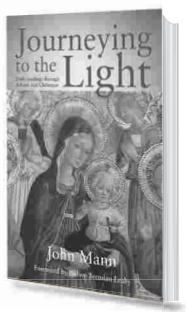

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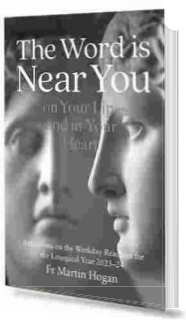

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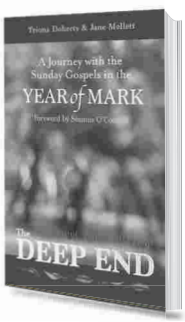

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SPIRITUALITY AND THE ARTS

The Healing Nature of Poetry and Jazz

Gerard Garrigan

WHEN ASKED WHAT POETRY IS, the great American poet Emily Dickinson replied: 'If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry'.[1] Great poetry does 'take the top of one's head off' and opens us to a reality that was present but unnoticed until the poet skilfully made it known by presenting it in a compelling, novel way. Dickinson also wrote in one of her poems: 'Tell the truth but tell it slant'.[2] This communication of a previously unknown truth in the poet's fresh and singular way, 'telling it slant', has an effect of healing on the reader of the poem, for truth is always healing. Through poetry we come to know a truth more clearly and fully, that truth which ultimately comes—as does all truth—from God, who is *the* Truth and the source of all truth.

Poetry's healing effect of freshly communicating a truth to us is the same effect that Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, who is the Truth, achieves through his parables in the Gospels. In them he opens the minds and hearts of his hearers to a present but unnoticed truth, 'taking the tops of their heads off' to enable that truth to be discovered by them for the first time. Like Jesus' parables, poetry changes our hearts and minds with its fresh and inspired, slanted truth. Our coming to see the truth always brings us closer to the Truth who is God, who is love—as St John teaches us—and love is always healing.

The healing power of music can be thought of along the same lines as the healing power of poetry. Music is 'the food of love', as

[1] Emily Dickinson, quoted in T. W. Higginson to Mary Elizabeth Channing Higginson, 16 August 1870, in *Emily Dickinson: Selected Letters*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (London: Oxford U, 1971), 208.
[2] *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, edited by Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown, 1960), 506.

Shakespeare tells us, and love on this earth is but a finite, partial expression of God who is Truth in its fullness and who is love.[3] And, again, God, who is love, always heals. Great music brings about that healing in such a mysterious, powerful and singular way. I think, but I cannot adequately describe how or why, music, of all the arts, most closely approaches the divine. Music mysteriously somehow communicates the sublime, the transcendent, the ineffable to me as no other art form does. Perhaps it is just this ineffability of music that touches me, that heals me as no other art form does.

Music has a healing effect because it is 'the food of love' and God is love and God, by nature, always heals. Jazz achieves this healing effect in me more than any other genre of music does. I love the remark often attributed to Louis Armstrong: 'If you have to ask what jazz is, you'll never know'. When one speaks of jazz, one must speak of improvisation, which plays such an important part in it. This joyful, delightful, enlivening quality that comes from improvisation in jazz is described in my poem 'I Heard Jazz on Christmas Night':

I Heard Jazz on Christmas Night

I heard jazz on Christmas night
Sung by angels improvising
Syncopating, swinging, jiving
Riffing on that 'Gloria'
Lord have mercy
They were hot
While others heard them
Straight and white
I heard them scat
And they were *tight*

The originality that is so essential to the healing power of jazz is spoken of most eloquently by the great jazz saxophonist Lester Young: 'Well, the way I play, I try not to be a "repeater pencil", you dig?'[4] 'Originality's the thing. You can have tone and technique and a lot of other things but without originality you ain't really nowhere. Gotta be original.'[5]

[3] Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, I. i. 1.
[4] Lester Young, interview with François Postif (1959), in *A Lester Young Reader*, edited by Lewis Porter (Washington: Smithsonian, 1991), 186.
[5] Lester Young, interview with Allan Morrison (1946), in *Lester Young Reader*, 131.

I find improvisation, the originality that great jazz musicians are able to produce so wondrously, to be exceedingly healing. Each of us is unique, uniquely made in the image and likeness of our God who is love. And each jazz musician brings the originality that the Spirit of God works through him or her in the most delightfully singular way in his or her improvisation. This brings real healing to my soul. And, in these days of the plague of the pandemic, we especially need to be reminded that God's beauty, delight and love are still all around us, because God is still present everywhere, ever-present even in these days of suffering.

In These Trying Days of Plague

In these trying days of plague
These days of fright and of despair
We become so blind, quick to forget
God's mercy, great mercy, beauty -
His everlasting beauty everywhere
Oh, yes, His great, great mercy,
His everlasting beauty still everywhere

The musical form that is jazz came out of the suffering of the African-American people, a suffering born from the great evil of slavery and the racial hatred and injustice it engendered. The African-American jazz musicians, through the improvisation of a new genre of music, were able to express joy and beauty and truth. It brought them, and still brings us today, the healing of love born and triumphant in the midst of great suffering. These great musicians took the conditions of

their lives and their times, full of the suffering caused by racism, and transcended them by their original, healing music, which is jazz. We need to do the same. We must also find the true, the good, the beautiful, the joyful amidst the sufferings of our day, in this time of pandemic suffering.

Jazz proves to us that the human spirit cannot be defeated, because we are children of God, made in his own image and likeness. Our God has overcome the world and all of its suffering, even death itself. Our spirits are of God and God has redeemed us by his own suffering, death and resurrection. He has won for us a fullness of joy that never ends. And so, let all of us improvise with our own lives, each of them delightfully original, in these days of suffering, to find the beauty, the joy, the truth and the healing that jazz expresses so delightfully. By doing so, we will transcend and enjoy a foretaste of the limitless, unending joy that awaits us in heaven, in that place alone, where suffering and death are no more, but only the fullness of life and love.

As the jazz genius Duke Ellington reminded us: 'It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing'. And so, let each one of us live our own improvised lives in this extraordinary time with the delightful originality with which our loving God created us to his glory with joy, with verve, with zest, with hope, and most of all, with *swing*.

Gerard Garrigan OSB, a St Louis native, is a Benedictine monk of Saint Louis Abbey, Missouri, USA. He shares the sentiment of the distinguished St Louis native who eloquently wrote: 'Home is where one starts from'.

NEW NARRATIVES

Dementia, Arrupe and Living the *Suscipe* Prayer

Mary M. Cohen

> More than ever, I now find myself in the hands of God. This is what I have wanted all my life, from my youth. And this is the one thing I still want. But now there is a difference: the initiative is entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in his hands.[1]

TWO YEARS AFTER SUFFERING a debilitating stroke, Pedro Arrupe offered these powerful lines at the beginning of his 'Final Address as General of the Society of Jesus'. Arrupe's impaired cognitive and physical condition left him unable to write or deliver the speech on his own, instead relying on companions who 'grasped what [he] wanted to say to everyone'. Arrupe conveyed praise, gratitude and hope throughout the address. He offered to the Lord the remainder of his life, along with his prayers and the sufferings caused by his ailments. He concluded with the Ignatian *Suscipe* prayer 'from the depths of [his] heart'.[2]

> Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my whole will. All I have and all I possess are yours, Lord. You gave them to me and I return them to you. Dispose of them as you will. Give me your love and your grace, and I shall want for nothing more.[3]

Arrupe now lived the very extreme conditions described in the prayer, once offered as a prayer of drastic possibility, ushering in a new phase of his spiritual life and prophetic witness.

[1] Pedro Arrupe, 'Final Address as General of the Society of Jesus', in *Essential Writings* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2004), 201.
[2] Arrupe, 'Final Address as General of the Society of Jesus', 201, 203.
[3] Exx 234, quoted in Arrupe, 'Final Address as General of the Society of Jesus', 203.

This new journey began as Arrupe left the plane after a strenuous trip to the Philippines in August 1981. The charismatic and sometimes controversial Superior General of the Society of Jesus was suddenly unable to grip his suitcase and began uttering disconnected words. Alarmed aides rushed him to the hospital, where the 73-year-old Arrupe was diagnosed as having suffered a massive embolism. The stroke caused symptoms of dementia as well as partial paralysis, affecting his movement and speech.

In an instant a man who had communicated fluently in multiple languages could only express himself with halting Spanish phrases. A man known for his interpersonal and leadership skills lost recollection of proper names. A man who travelled extensively was now confined to an austere Jesuit infirmary. This moment was the just the beginning of a decade-long period of decreased cognitive ability, progressive frailty and near-complete dependence. Yet Arrupe's limited words and actions, and the observations of those caring for him during these so-called 'silent years', speak volumes about living with and accompanying people with dementia—much of which runs counter to our current despairing and dehumanising narratives.

Examining Arrupe's lived experience of the Ignatian *Suscipe* prayer can improve our understanding of and response to the growing number of people living with dementia.

Growing Concern and Pressing Questions

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 55 million people currently live with dementia, with over 60 per cent residing in low- and middle-income countries. As the worldwide proportion of older people increases, the WHO projects this number will rise to 78 million by 2030 and 139 million by 2050. Dementia is presently the seventh leading cause of death and one of the major causes of disability and dependence among older people.[4]

Dementia is not a disease, but an umbrella term based on cognitive losses. WHO defines dementia as follows:

> Dementia results from a variety of diseases and injuries that affect the brain. Alzheimer disease is the most common form of dementia and may contribute to 60–70% of cases ….

[4] World Health Organization, 'Dementia', at https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/dementia, accessed 8 November 2022.

> Dementia is a syndrome—usually of a chronic or progressive nature—that leads to deterioration in cognitive function (i.e. the ability to process thought) beyond what might be expected from the usual consequences of biological ageing. It affects memory, thinking, orientation, comprehension, calculation, learning capacity, language, and judgement. Consciousness is not affected. The impairment in cognitive function is commonly accompanied, and occasionally preceded, by changes in mood, emotional control, behaviour, or motivation.[5]

The timing of brain changes leading to lost memories and abilities is unique to each person. Some memories and abilities fade away while others mysteriously remain or return intermittently.

Lack of awareness and understanding about dementia often leads to stigmatization and barriers to diagnosis and appropriate care. As result, people living with dementia and their care partners are frequently denied their human rights both in their communities and in nursing facilities, resulting in further affliction. This denial of human rights can take the form of poor living conditions without access to basic assistance for shelter, food, hygiene and medical care. As forgetfulness intensifies, the

[5] WHO, 'Dementia'.

individual may grow separated from family, friends and faith communities, as neighbours fail to remember the forgetful. In the most extreme cases, there may be calls for euthanasia or assisted suicide when people are no longer seen as worthy of our collective care and resource allocation. Given the great impact of dementia on global health, WHO has identified it as a public health priority.[6]

Contemporary Western society, in particular, has largely viewed dementia as a health condition meriting a medical response. Significant investments have been made in biomarker and pharmacology research, for example, which have shown only slight effectiveness at best.[7] People who are no longer able to care for themselves or be cared for by loved ones are often placed in sterile institutional settings for symptom management until their deaths. Devoid of such humanising elements as a sense of home (for example the presence of plants, pets, photographs, and cultural and religious artefacts), meaningful activities, companionship, community integration and spiritual care, these settings speak the language of generalised medicine and economics, not loving, person-centred care.

Beyond questions for medicine, economics and government, dementia raises profound and pressing questions for Christians, deserving of our deepest consideration and highest prioritisation. The pastoral theologian John Swinton identifies the most essential questions a diagnosis of dementia raises: who am I without my memory and my understanding? Will I forget God? Will God forget me? Can I still know, praise, and serve God without my ability to remember and verbally communicate? Who will care for me? Who will tell my story when I can no longer tell it?[8] How we answer these questions has significant consequences, not only for how we care for those living with dementia, but also for how we *all* know our loving Creator and view ourselves as participants in God's ongoing Creation story. As a basis for exploring these questions—which will ultimately require us to redescribe dementia in the language of a loving God—I will now turn to the *Suscipe* prayer and Arrupe's lived experience as a prophetic example of a counter-narrative.

[6] WHO, 'Dementia'.

[7] National Institutes of Health, 'Advancing Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias Research for All Populations', *NIH Scientific Progress Report* (2022), available at https://www.nia.nih.gov/sites/default/files/2022–11/2022_nih_progress_report_ad-adrd_research_0.pdf, accessed 8 November 2022.

[8] See John Swinton, *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012).

The Suscipe *Prayer and Dementia*

Ignatian spirituality has been called,

> … a 'way of proceeding' that offers a vision of life, an understanding of God, a reflective approach to living, a contemplative form of praying, a reverential attitude to our world, and an expectation of finding God daily.[9]

Included in the *Spiritual Exercises'* Contemplation to Attain Love is the offertory prayer known in Latin as the *Suscipe* (translated 'Take, Lord, Receive'), with which Pedro Arrupe ended his 'Final Address'. This surrenders to God not only one's possessions, but one's entire self, with deep affection. The theologian and spiritual director Joan Mueller observes that some retreatants admit they feel the prayer is a 'radical, even reckless risk', and then decide to 'what degree they will pray it'. Those who are able to pray the *Suscipe* 'with gusto, as if it were their greatest joy to make the words their own' experience the true freedom of giving everything over to God.[10] In doing so, they invite the reign of God into the world.[11]

The *Suscipe* is situated in the *Spiritual Exercises* after the retreatant is assured of two truths about love. First, love is shown in deeds more than words. Second, love consists of mutual sharing. Recalling all gifts that he or she has received—creation, redemption and one's own particular gifts—the retreatant then, in an act of complete surrender and detachment in love, offers everything back to the Lord, the giver of the gifts. The Jesuit writer Dean Brackley describes the traditional interpretation of the *Suscipe* prayer as a 'freedom … *for* giving ourselves and our lives to God. This is not about renouncing memory, intellect, will, and freedom, however, but enlisting these, with all our creativity, in service.'[12] David Fleming explains that praying the *Suscipe* is a response 'to God's limitless blessings', resulting in 'intimacy with Jesus [as] the central grace of the *Spiritual Exercises*'. This sharing of the heart represents a total commitment to God, which is the core theme of Ignatian spirituality.[13]

[9] David L. Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?* (Chicago: Loyola, 2008), vii.
[10] Joan Mueller, 'The *Suscipe* Revisited', *Review for Religious*, 53/4 (1994), 534.
[11] Mueller, '*Suscipe* Revisited', 542.
[12] Dean Brackley, *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times: New Perspectives on the Transformative Wisdom of Ignatius of Loyola* (New York: Crossroad, 2004), 215.
[13] Fleming, *What Is Ignatian Spirituality?* 105.

Considering the *Suscipe* prayer in context of persons living with dementia, however, invites other possible interpretations of this radical love offering. Those living with dementia are *being placed* in a situation of surrendering all their liberty, memory, understanding and will. In this most vulnerable and dependent state of involuntary surrender, those living with dementia still have the opportunity to offer their suffering to God, and place their trust in a God who will love them and lavish them with abundant grace. Seen in this way, could it be that those who have offered their lives with dementia to the Lord are perhaps among those living in the closest unity with God?

The experience of those living with dementia also invites other perspectives on Ignatius' two foundational truths about love. As the ability to communicate via words drifts away, love is necessarily expressed more in deeds. These expressions come in such forms as non-verbal communication (smiles, hugs, laughter) and humble acceptance of one's involuntary dependence. As the vestiges of autonomy are stripped away, love is necessarily experienced in mutual sharing.

On this latter point, the ethicist Stephen Post pointedly shatters the damaging illusion of independence and autonomy prevalent in many societies, reminding us that we were all born into the world dependent and continue to benefit from the multitudes of others who care for and sustain us. Post argues, with emphasis, '*Dependence constitutes the deepest core of human experience, even when we pretend that we are self-made*'.[14] Said another way, the truth is that we are interdependent and relational beings who rely on one another and on God. The most dependent among us, such as those living with advanced dementia, experience the very essence of humanness.

The most dependent among us … experience the very essence of humanness

To be clear, although God never wants suffering, in Ignatian terminology, God can 'make use' of it to bring people nearer through spiritual dependence. A closer examination of Arrupe's involuntary surrender to dementia can teach us all something about the value of voluntary dependence upon God, not only in the involuntary surrender to dementia or other conditions of suffering, but always.

[14] Stephen G. Post, *Dignity for Deeply Forgetful People: How Caregivers Can Meet the Challenges of Alzheimer's Disease* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U, 2022), 4.

Arrupe's Twilight Story

On the Feast of Saint Ignatius in 2013, Pope Francis caressed Arrupe's tomb and spoke of his friend's 'long and exemplary twilight', which he wanted us 'to observe carefully and remember'.[15] Recalling this image and message, Superior General Adolfo Nicolás wrote of the Ignatian *magis* of his predecessor, saying,

> Those of us who visited him there in the infirmary witnessed his passion in silence, in prayer, in thanksgiving. It was the end of a life of complete coherence, of surrender to God and humanity, without condition or reserve.[16]

Taking a closer look at a few examples of Arrupe's ways of *being with* during these last years of surrender helps illumine new perspectives on dementia care. The examples also help us answer some of the most pressing questions dementia raises for Christians.

Recognising the significance of Arrupe's later years, his biographer Pedro Miguel Lamet expanded his twenty-fifth anniversary edition of Arrupe's life history to include more about this period of his subject's 'prostration and silence'.[17] Many of the intimate details come from the personal diary of Arrupe's infirmarian and near-constant confidant, Brother Rafael Bandera. Bandera tells of Arrupe's physical challenges and prayer practices as well as his unconditional acceptance of his current circumstances.

Despite periods of loneliness, mourning of losses, discouragement, frustration and ongoing concern for the injustices of the world, Arrupe radiated 'joy and serenity which flowed out of him effortlessly'.[18] Much of Arrupe's communication was non-verbal, which Bandera closely observed and recorded. Bandera described radiant transformations that would come across Arrupe's face—weeping, smiles, blinking, rapid heartbeats, strong breathing, looks of affection and laughter. Many of these expressions would come during and after prayer.

> He couldn't speak clearly, just uncoordinated words, but he said the Ave Marias and the Our Fathers well, and his face used to change.

[15] Pedro Miguel Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe: Witness of the Twentieth Century. Prophet of the Twenty-First*, translated by Joseph V. Owens (Chestnut Hill: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2020), 1.
[16] Adolfo Nicolás, prologue, in Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 2.
[17] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 12.
[18] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 423.

> You could see that he had a great devotion to Mary. We always prayed the rosary together, every day ….[19]

For as much as Arrupe depended upon Bandera for physical assistance, there was clearly a mutual sharing of Christian devotion between them.

This mutual sharing was also experienced during the many visits Arrupe received from friends, his fellow Jesuits, Pope John Paul II and community members from other faith traditions. Bandera writes poignantly of two special visitors who travelled from afar to be with Arrupe:

> One day, Mother Teresa of Calcutta visited, her lined visage shining with tenderness for the outcasts she loved; as she sat by Arrupe's bedside, the faces of both of them harmonized in a soundless chord. Something similar happened when Arrupe received a visit from Brother Roger Schutz of Taizé …. Roger 'sang for him with the other brothers who were with them and they prayed. Don Pedro seemed transported.'[20]

We see here again mutual love not shared in verbal exchanges of ideas and opinions, but in different modes of communication from the heart. This type of tender care and *being with* requires an offering of presence, time and attentiveness.

Mother Teresa visiting Pedro Arrupe after his stroke

[19] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 424.
[20] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 449.

How Arrupe participated in the preparation of his biography—the telling of his story—is also instructive. In periods of lucidity, Arrupe directed Lamet to friends and other persons who helped collect memories, letters and testimonies. Arrupe sat for interviews, recalling anecdotes from his childhood, his experience at Hiroshima, his missionary work with refugees, his time as Superior General, his revelations in prayer and his weakness for chocolate. Lamet and others who participated in this endeavour carry his memory, his understanding and his will forward to new generations so we, too, may intimately know the man who sought to evangelize not so much by what he said but by what he was living.

Returning to the questions dementia raises for Christians, we can learn much from Arrupe's lived experience. He had a community of caring people who supported him during his dependence, not just physically but also spiritually. They respected his dignity and sought methods of engaging with his remaining capacities in compassionate ways. His identity was affirmed as a beloved by God, not for what titles he held or what he accomplished, but by his humanity, his faithful trust and perseverance in prayer. There was a dynamic listening to one another with the ears of the heart and compassionate presence. Indeed, this is precisely the type of necessary spiritual conversation that Arrupe's lived experience of the *Suscipe* prayer most demonstrates.

Arrupe reflected in one of the early interviews of his twilight years,

> Reviewing the stages of my life, with their concrete details and external manifestations, I have reached the same conclusion: what is most important and decisive in a life, what is most fully characteristic of it, is incommunicable. This is so either because it is a matter of intimate experiences that cannot be translated into words, or because these experiences have a very personal, interior value and therefore remain in the dark, which is precisely where they have their value.[21]

Although in time Arrupe's memory, intellect, cognition and words faded further away, perhaps even taking with them his capacity to know *about* God, we have the assurance that he still *knew* God. He was not only held in God's hands, but written in the palms of God's hands, not to be forgotten or forsaken.

[21] Pedro Arrupe, *Itinéraire d'un jésuite. Entretiens avec Jean-Claude Dietsch*, translated in Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 457.

Towards a New Narrative

Arrupe prophetically said, 'We cannot respond to the problems of today with the solutions of yesterday'.[22] Applying this wisdom to the growing worldwide epidemic of dementia, we cannot continue to pursue a strictly medical model with its narratives of loss and despair that worsen exclusion and dehumanisation. Rather, Arrupe's lived example inspires a hopeful, communal model of care. This paradigm first requires seeing dementia through the eyes of God, then adopting different forms of communication and ways of *being with* that seek inclusion and foster remembering. These ways place people living with dementia at the centre, recognising their essential need for loving relationships, and affirmation of their identity, dignity and worth as beloved people of God.

I offer some key elements of a Christian response: *participation*, *pace*, *lament* and *music*. To help conceptualise how these elements can be incorporated into a community of care model, I follow with a profile of an innovative faith-based respite care programme located in Atlanta, Georgia, in the USA.

Participation

One of dementia's greatest harms is its ability to separate people from their loved ones, homes, communities, work, faith practices and more. Isolation not only worsens the symptoms of dementia but also affects caregivers who place themselves at risk from isolation's harmful effects. Efforts to create hospitable, dementia-friendly environments are critical in forming communities that love and support people and their caregivers through this experience. These environments seek to reduce stigmatization by educating, including and encouraging.

Faith communities can play a critical role in how members of the Body of Christ reach out to and embrace people living with dementia. This outreach can be done in the form of pastoral visits, adapted spiritual direction, education sessions, care referral assistance, sacramental access, intercessory prayers, meals, social activities, inclusion in volunteer projects and respite care. Offering opportunities for people with dementia to tell their stories, to make connections and pass on their spiritual legacies is also vitally important. This sharing of stories can take the form of simple conversations, or memory-keeping activities (such as creating

[22] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 2.

scrapbooks or writing a spiritual biography), or artistic creation (plays, poetry, painting).

Pace

To be truly present with a person living with dementia we must use time differently, and more faithfully. Our practices of care, especially in the medical milieu, are culturally orientated towards doing and producing, otherwise they are considered wasted. Being with a person who is experiencing dementia in meaningful, purposeful and intentional ways requires a slower, gentler and more patient pace. It requires favouring non-verbal communication through emotions, bodily expressions and sensory experiences. John Swinton refers to this as 'God's created time', when we listen with our ears, eyes and souls to show our care and affection. In God's time we sanctify and redeem the present moment and are drawn into the service of God.[23] In God's time we offer our presence to one another, acknowledging the inherent goodness and giftedness of a life in relationship.

Lament

While I make a case here for new narratives of living with dementia rooted in hope and affirmation, it would be wrong to deny the pain and hardships dementia brings with it. The theologian Warren Kinghorn writes,

> Although persons with dementia are part of God's good creation, dementia is not: there will be no dementia in the new creation when God makes all things right. As such, one faithful and necessary response to dementia is lament.[24]

Biblical expressions of lament acknowledge the passionate cries of the afflicted placed before God, even when God seems absent at the time. Almost all the psalms of lament, however, end with expressions of steadfast hope in deliverance from present circumstances.[25] Following this biblical tradition, we can encourage and join in practices of lament with those living with dementia and their care partners.

[23] Swinton, *Dementia*, 253.
[24] Warren Kinghorn, '"I Am Still With You": Dementia and the Christian Wayfarer', *Journal of Religion, Spirituality and Aging*, 28 (2016), 98–117, here 98.
[25] Kinghorn, '"I Am Still With You"', 99.

Music

Even in the advanced stages of dementia, elements of music memory remain. These musical memories serve as autobiographical narrative often filled with emotion and reminders of the people, places and events of one's life. Before most children can speak, they respond to and even participate in song. Enduring musical memories continue to form throughout one's lifetime as music accompanies significant occasions such as weddings and funerals as well as more ordinary events—family meals, birthdays and holidays. The lyrics of familiar hymns are often joyfully accessed by people who cannot recall basic facts about their own lives. People with limited or no words can participate in musical experiences through gestures, movement and sounds such as clapping, foot tapping and humming.[26] Music is a powerful form of prayer and worship, serving as a conduit to the Creator and one another.

Respite Care Atlanta: A Model of Community Care

Three days a week, people living with mild to moderate dementia are greeted with literal open arms by trained volunteer companions at Respite Care Atlanta (RCA). RCA is a non-profit interfaith collaboration of several congregations in the urban Georgia area who saw a need to

[26] See Prabhjot Parmar and Nirmal Puwar, 'Striking a Chord: Dementia and Song', *Performance Research*, 24/1 (2019), 25–34.

provide both enriching social opportunities for people living with dementia and a much-needed break for caregivers. Located in the teenage gathering space of one of the founding congregations, RCA offers a variety of cognitive activities, education, meals, movement, nature area and plenty of time for member-led conversation and *being with*.[27]

The focus is on joyfully engaging members in their abilities and celebrating their presence. Community volunteers, from musicians to gardeners to exercise instructors, offer their time and talents, which keeps the programme interesting and the costs down. Prayer and worship are integrated into the activities, offering spiritual nourishment. Members, caregivers, volunteers and the community at large all share in the benefits of being together in an inclusive, caring and Spirit-filled environment. The Respite for All Foundation, the pioneer of this community-based model, offers resources for how other communities can provide this life-affirming alternative to complete isolation at home or institionalised care.[28]

The Mission

In his period of greatest restriction, humility and dependence, Pedro Arrupe seemed to convey the greatest lessons about living a life of meaning and purpose in Christ. His biographer Lamet wrote that Arrupe gave him personally,

> … something that cannot be paid for with all the gold in the world, or even with this homage of this biography, namely that it is possible to maintain one's dignity and hope in the midst of the greatest difficulty and, with an incredible interior drive, to live one's humanity to the fullest.[29]

Decades after completing the first edition of Arrupe's biography, Lamet marvelled at the enduring 'Arrupe effect' by which people continued to draw inspiration from Arrupe's remarkable story. The 'Arrupe effect' now rightly extends to how we can understand and care for people living with dementia.

[27] The teen room was going unused during the day while the young people are in school. RCA members pay a small daily fee for five hours of supervised programming, which covers space rental, director's salary and supply costs. Benefactors have also generously donated additional funds to support start-up and ongoing operations.
[28] See www.respiteforall.org.
[29] Lamet, *Pedro Arrupe*, 9.

This care recognises the need for ways of *being with* that favour heart-centred communication and an acceptance that we are interdependent people reliant on one another and God. For those of us who are not yet able to offer the *Suscipe* prayer with deepest affection, perhaps this look at Arrupe and the needs of the growing numbers of people living with dementia can inspire in us a desire to pray it. Perhaps Arrupe's witness can also inspire people living with dementia to inhabit a new narrative about their condition in which their involuntary surrender of liberty, memory, understanding and will brings them to the same closeness to God expressed by the voluntary surrender of the *Suscipe*. Finally, perhaps Arrupe's witness will move us all to create communities that welcome and care for people living with dementia in ways that nourish spirituality and affirm inherent dignity.

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THE PERENNIAL VITALITY OF THE IGNATIAN EXAMEN

The Work of the Sacred Story Institute

William M. Watson

OUR FAMILY VACATION on the Oregon coast in the summer of 1973 ended on 21 August, the feast of the Blessed Mother's Assumption. On the way home, we stopped at the Jesuit novitiate near the town of Sheridan, Oregon. My family left and I stayed to begin my new life as a Jesuit. In the evening of that same day, while walking the hilltop trails of the novitiate property and watching the sun set, I made my first Ignatian Examination of Conscience. My recollection of that Examen was a sense of gratitude because I felt I had come home.

Moving ahead two decades, I made the final stage of my Jesuit formation in Northern Ireland, in the town of Larne in County Antrim. Years before this spiritual sabbatical, I had let the habit of the Examen slip, till it was hardly present. Now I discovered in the illuminating, mystical fires of the Spiritual Exercises the price I had paid for abandoning this most elemental of all daily Ignatian practices.[1] So, for the next ten years, I reincorporated the twice-daily Ignatian Examen back into my spiritual regimen.

The Examen's reintroduction into my life had salutary benefits in body and spirit. God's discrete presences were more transparent. Understanding that the movements of consolation and desolation were constant even outside a retreat—24/7—was a revelation. Also, my general health improved, both benefits I attribute to a more carefully

[1] The teaching of Christian doctrine for the early Jesuits was coupled with instructions for examination of conscience and the confession of sins. The instruction was less about theory and more about practical formation in 'how life was to be led as a Christian'. Jesuit pastoral practice with the laity did not shy away from the Examen's focus on sins. However, the early Jesuits sought generally to highlight the more positive aspects of spiritual growth and God's mercy. This positive focus matched Ignatius' own graced experience of God's love and mercy as he awakened to his sinfulness. See John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard U, 1993), 53–54.

examined and modulated life. It was early on during this period that I decided to develop an institute devoted to making the Ignatian Examen an accessible spiritual tool for people of all ages.

I wanted to resurrect teaching the dual benefit of a daily Examen practice with regular confession. Also, over many years in Ignatian retreat development, I knew that, practically, making a thirty-day retreat was an unachievable goal for nearly all the lay women and men I knew. It was an imperative to create a self-guided method that anyone could do. So, for this, and after thirty years of active ministry, I began a doctorate in ministry to form the basis for the Sacred Story Institute, founded in 2012.

The Origins of the Ignatian Examen

My doctoral programme provided the intellectual space to research the origins and structure of St Ignatius' unique Examen discipline. My first goal was to understand how Ignatius developed his method so that I update it faithfully for the third millennium.

I intuited I would find the building blocks of the Examen in the *Autobiography*, as I discovered no extant record or writings on its creation other than that his method was unique to himself.[2] For this, I did a close reading of the *Autobiography*—reading and rereading it. A Jesuit usually reads it once in the novitiate and that is it. But believing that the most unique spiritualities in Catholic history emerge from the way God works with human instruments during their ongoing conversion, I concluded that the *Autobiography* might hold the key. Understanding the how and why of its structure would provide the foundation for the remaining research.

A third of Ignatius' *Autobiography* is dedicated to the first two years of his conversion. A close scrutiny of these early years of Ignatius' faith journey reveals important insights. In this early part of his conversion narrative one can discern four paradigmatic events that appear significant not only for Ignatius' life, but for the spirituality that marks his

[2] George Ganss states that Ignatius formulated two methods of examination that 'were original' to him. George E. Ganss, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary* (Chicago: Loyola U, 1992), 153 note 23. On the particular examination of conscience, 'St Ignatius is generally considered as the author or at least as the first who reduced it to a system and promoted its practice among the faithful': Maurice Meschler, *The Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius Explained* (Woodstock, Ma: privately printed, 1899), 32.

legacy, including the Examen. These are Ignatius' injury at the siege of Pamplona and initial conversion experience (*Autobiography* nn. 1–10); his temptation at Manresa by his former sinful life (n. 20); his crisis with scruples (nn. 21–27); and a sequence of near-death experiences (nn. 32–34). They give rise to what I have called the Ignatian, Truth, Powerlessness and Patience paradigms.

Saint Ignatius Wounded in the Battle of Pamplona, *by Miguel Cabrera, 1756*

In May 1521, Ignatius was wounded at Pamplona, when a cannon ball shattered his leg. While recuperating from surgery, 'he requested books of knightly exploits and chivalrous romances popular with men of his social class'.[3] But the only reading matter available to him was Ludolph of Saxony's *The Life of Jesus Christ* along and the *Flos Sanctorum*, brief tales of the most popular saints' lives. Reading the books, his vain fantasies were interspersed with holy thoughts of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. But Ignatius started to see something in his daydreaming ruminations:

> … one time … his eyes were opened a little, and he began to marvel at this difference in kind and to reflect on it, picking it up from experience that from some thoughts he would be left sad and from others happy, and little by little coming to know the difference in kind of spirits that were stirring: the one from the devil, and the other from God (*Autobiography*, n. 8).

This led to 'an archetypal structure of conversion and vocation' which corresponds to the 'spiritual arc' of both the Examen and the Spiritual Exercises themselves.[4]

[3] Willam M. Watson, *Sacred Story: An Ignatian Examen for the Third Millennium* (Seattle: Sacred Story, 2012), 6.
[4] Watson, *Sacred Story*, 10.

Autobiography	Examen
A graced experience of God's love opening Ignatius' heart to →	GIVE THANKS FOR FAVORS RECEIVED
↓	↓
his dissatisfaction with vain fantasies and surrendering to holy daydreams characterized by consolation which in turn: →	GRACE TO SEE CLEARLY
↓	↓
cause him to review his life and actions leading to: →	DETAILED ACCOUNT OF CONSCIENCE: GENERAL AND PARTICULAR
↓	↓
his grief and the yearning for penance and the repentance for his past sins, culminating in: →	ASKING PARDON FOR FAULTS
↓	↓
Ignatius' passion to amend his life and a desire to love God wholeheartedly.	RESOLVE AND AMEND

Ignatius Is Schooled in Discernment

As one reads the *Autobiography*, it is clear that Ignatius' conversion process was guided by two foundational discernment insights at critical junctures or crises. The first of these came after he left the Loyola manor on pilgrimage to Montserrat. He was overcome with anxiety and fear that he would have to live the remainder of his life—seventy years—without the pleasures of his first thirty. He was graced with the insight that this was a temptation and named it as such— 'you wretch! Can you even promise me one hour of life?' (*Autobiography*, n. 20) In consciously confronting the fear of a lifelong commitment to battling his habitual sins, plus the constant self-examination it entails, Ignatius is 'rewarded with both peace and profound insights into the discernment of spirits that fill him with "awe"'.[5] This provides the basis for the Truth paradigm.

[5] Watson, *Sacred Story*, 14.

The second crisis, which gives rise to the Powerlessness Paradigm, is linked to his ferocious scrupulosity over confessing past sins, which drove him to contemplate taking his own life. And yet, just at the point of seeming failure, he was graced with what might be the most important insight of his life, at arguably the most vital juncture in his conversion process. What no effort of his own could achieve came to him from the Lord, 'as if awakening him from sleep' or from a dream.[6]

Testing the Modern Examen

Understanding the origins of Ignatius' unique Examen structure and realising that discernment is essential to navigate ongoing conversion, I had the necessary elements to construct an updated reading authentic to Ignatius' intent. But I would also need to produce a self-guided set of discernment strategies comprehensible to the average reader as the inevitable crises of conversion arose. I created a format for describing discernment principles that incorporates both narrative and descriptive elements. Also, I distilled the wisdom of the Rules for Discernment into short 'affirmative' statements that recur throughout the journey at the beginning of each new week.[7]

My doctoral research gave me the opportunity to assess the effectiveness of an updated method of making the Examen on human subjects. The basis for the analysis was provided by commentators who, for various reasons, had determined that Ignatius' method was deficient in helping individuals achieve integral and holistic spiritual and human growth. From the multiple commentators reviewed, five major themes surfaced: narcissism and individualism; narrow moralism; the interplay between sin and psychological compulsions; the social dimensions of sin; and modern secularizing trends and their impact on God-mindedness or God-consciousness.[8]

I had the help of two scholars to shape a survey for the research. One was a specialist with an Oxford doctorate in psychometrics, and the other a specialist in market testing with a doctorate in business. The survey tool I call the Whole Life Survey. It asks individuals for

[6] Watson, *Sacred Story*, 21.

[7] See William M. Watson, *Forty Weeks: An Ignatian Path to Christ with Sacred Story Prayer* (Seattle: Sacred Story, 2018).

[8] Eight *Examen* commentators were used in my research: George Aschenbrenner, David Townsend, Joseph Tetlow, John English, Joan L. Roccasalvo, Peter G. van Breemen, Mary Hugh Campbell and Brendan Kneale.

information on multiple aspects of their 'story', including family history, education, medical history, and religious beliefs and practices. It was designed to help assess reactions to the new Examen method being tested so I could correlate response to the method and a subject's background—his or her *story*.

The hundred participants in the survey were divided equally between Roman Catholics and Protestants. The Protestant subjects came from seven different denominations. It has been my intent, from the start, to create a version of the materials for Protestants, who, for reasons that appear linked to the pragmatic style of Ignatius' methods focused on Jesus and the gospel, gravitate in large numbers to his spirituality.[9]

Results

At the end of ten weeks, where participants did the daily exercises that would become refined in the book *Forty Weeks*, I had 2,000 pages of data. Participants had also completed the survey twice, once at commencement and once at the conclusion. The two surveys were essential to gauge the participants' growth or lack thereof over the course of the study, in the five areas where commentators had criticized the Examen.

The subjects who completed *most* of the required exercises made statistically significant progress in minimising narcissism, individualism and scrupulosity or narrow moralism. Diligent subjects also achieved statistically significant growth in understanding the connection between their sins and psychological compulsions. It has been suggested that the Examen can be a privatised, 'me and Jesus' spiritual discipline, but they also showed increased awareness of the social manifestations of sin. And finally, the goal of the Examen to become more conscious and aware of God in a secularised world was amply realised.

There were also two other important results of the research. First, those who experienced the least spiritual growth tended to be much more self-satisfied than those who grew the most, who had a humbler opinion of themselves. This humility was probably due to the Examen's ascesis helping individuals achieve genuine self-awareness before God. And second, of those who left the study early, the surveys indicated that all, *to a person*, had sustained some form of early-life trauma.

[9] In 2021, and with the editing help of multiple Protestant pastors, we published *Discovery: A Disciple's Journey*. All Sacred Story publications are available from our website: sacredstory.net.

Humility and Pride

In the course of many years of Ignatian programme development, I have been committed to ensuring the First Week of the Exercises is dutifully represented. Beginning in gratitude for the gifts that God showers on us, the First Week continues with a stark set of exercises that follow, forming the majority of the Week, that draw an exercitant into a full awareness of personal sinfulness. This is not just an awareness, but a conviction that one cannot save oneself from the magnitude of the damage sin has wrought in one's life. Of the multitude of purported modern versions of the Ignatian Examens I have researched, very few spend any time on these meditations on sin. Gratitude is aptly covered, but not sin.[10] But the Ignatian paradigm I detail above must be present for an Examen to be called 'Ignatian'. Unless and until someone realises his or her sin, and lack of capacity for self-salvation, Jesus, as Saviour, will not be necessary.

So, my research revealed that those participants who engaged in more exercises, including the daily fifteen-minute discipline, simple daily recording of consolations and desolations, and preparing and making the Whole Life Confession, had a more sober view of themselves.[11] They had come closest to what Ignatius intended in the First Week, realising more fully the scope of their sinfulness and discovering not themselves, but Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Conversely, those who did fewest fifteen-minute Examens, did not keep their journals diligently, and did not take part in sacramental reconciliation or a Protestant form thereof, had a more self-satisfied sense of their spiritual maturity. This aspect of the research would prove to be absolutely essential to the *sense and depth of community* that formed in the subsequent testing of the Forty Weeks method.

Trauma and the Examen

In three important articles written between 1972 and 1988 George Aschenbrenner observed the neglect of the Examen among religious men and women. He wrote: 'Examen is usually the first practice to disappear from the daily life of the religious … all the reasons amount

[10] One wonders if this focus on positive elements such as gratitude alone has been influenced by their authors' own difficulty in understanding Ignatius' true intent with his unique method of Examen and in opening to its full ascesis *and* its graces.

[11] I created for the research participants a method for making a confession of one's life, modelled on Ignatius' confession at Montserrat, that now comprises the first third of the Forty Weeks method.

to the admission (rarely explicit) that it is not of immediate practical value in a busy day'.[12] He later added, 'they start to practice it because it seems important, but it just does not last'.[13] Most commentators on the Examen are aware of the difficulties that secular culture presents to persons seeking to cultivate self-awareness. Aschenbrenner hints that undefined pressures make it difficult for them to achieve the day-long attentiveness the Examen invites. He writes:

> The examen invites its practitioner into the 'sorrow place' of the heart. Not an easy fun place, it is like a haunted house in the neighborhood of all our hearts. Guilt, failure, shame, sorrow, and inadequacy bordering on helplessness inhabit this place and easily frighten us into avoidance tactics for detouring around this haunted, fearful section of our hearts.[14]

In my own experience I have found that some people feel actual fear, even terror, of being silent on retreat lest those undefined pressures (ghosts, sorrows, self-doubts, shame) are brought to light. They instinctively know that there is a lot beneath the surface and they simply do not want to look too deeply at their lives.

[12] George Aschenbrenner, 'Consciousness Examen', *Review for Religious*, 31/1 (January 1972), 14–21, here 14.
[13] George Aschenbrenner, foreword, in Timothy M. Gallagher, *The Examen Prayer: Ignatian Wisdom for Our Lives Today* (New York: Crossroad, 2006), 10.
[14] Aschenbrenner, foreword, in Gallagher, *Examen Prayer*, 12.

Equal numbers of Catholic and Protestant, male and female participants (about a third of the total) left the research project before it concluded. Reasons varied: *took too much time, too complicated, not what I thought* and so on. The fact that all of them had self-reported some form of early-life trauma in the Whole Life Survey was significant. And yet, not a single individual alluded to any discomfort from remembered trauma as a reason for leaving the study early. I judged that the process of engaging the Examination of Consciousness in its General and Particular forms was bringing to the surface life events that had been forgotten, suppressed or repressed.

The very thing Ignatius sought to achieve in the particular Examen—bringing to light the core area of sin and dysfunction in one's life—was making the Examen difficult for individuals to access and, consciously or unconsciously, causing enough fear and anxiety for them to stop practising it. Moreover the challenge of applying the Particular Examen is not unique to those who have sustained early-life trauma. It is not pleasing for any individual to discover the source of his or her core sin or wound, which also reveals the temptation to seek self-salvation.

Is it any wonder, then, that an Examen practice designed specifically to access core sin and any trauma associated with it, consciously and unconsciously, causes distress, fear and anxiety? It is not uncommon to hear that the wounds and pain of childhood, beyond which individuals believed they had successfully moved, were reopened by engagement with spiritual methods such as the Particular Examen. The initial research for my doctorate gave clear evidence of this, as did the research we conducted for the study that shaped the final Forty Weeks method. While God has infinite patience with our wounded selves, the path to healing eventually must lead through the mire of sin and trauma if we hope to find integral and holistic growth.

At the time when I was preparing my doctoral thesis for publication and starting work on the larger study that would form the basis for *Forty Weeks*, I became acquainted with the work of the internationally recognised trauma expert Dr Gabor Maté. After reading his study of addiction, I reached out to him and we have kept in contact over the past decade.[15] Maté says in his book *The Myth of Normal*:

[15] See Gabor Maté, *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction* (Berkeley: North Atlantic, 2010).

> People bearing trauma's scars almost uniformly develop a shame-based view of themselves at the core …. Among the most poisonous consequences of shame is the loss of compassion for oneself. The more severe the trauma, the more total that loss.
>
> Trying to keep awareness of trauma at bay hobbles our capacity to know ourselves …. Facing it directly without denial or overidentification becomes a doorway to health and balance.[16]

The creative spiritual challenge I faced in developing exercises that guide people to reflect on uncomfortable experiences is to encourage reflection on how present events that trigger grief, anger or fear might be unconsciously linked to past events. This method is used in all of our adult and youth programmes and helps individuals neither to deny nor overidentify with their shame, sin and trauma. We constantly reinforce the message that individuals should not to be afraid. Fear is one of the chief tools of human nature's enemy to keep us from honestly exploring our lives and the elements in our story that God, in Jesus, is seeking to heal.

I have learned that it is important to help individuals with tools to prevent the conscious remembering of past experiences and/or traumas from being short-circuited. To do this, I urge persons to approach their life stories with *curiosity* and not self-blame. People need to affirm that Jesus knows us for who we are and does not reduce us to our shame, sins and failures.

> With Christ by your side, watch with curiosity and detachment, without self-blame. God sees beyond any patterns of sin and failure you have, or think you have. God knows you for whom you are. God loves you. God is the Divine Physician who desires to help you honestly see your life as it is so He can bring forgiveness, healing, freedom and peace.[17]

The evidence that we have achieved a good degree of success is the hundreds of people annually who express their gratitude for the gift of healing and hope they have received through Sacred Story Institute programmes.

[16] Gabor Maté, *The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness and Healing in a Toxic Culture* (London: Penguin, 2022), 30, 35.
[17] Watson, *Forty Weeks*, 63–64.

The Sacred Story Institute

Methods and Community Formation

Early in my pastoral work at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, where I was founding director of the retreat programmes office, I developed a five-day Ignatian silent retreat. A percentage of the directors in the first two years vigorously questioned spending two-and-a-half days on exercises leading to the sacrament of reconciliation. *Why are you focusing so much time on the* negative exercises *when there are so many positive ones to use?* Resisting the pressure, I found the fruit of that *negative* focus in the twelve years I directed this Georgetown retreat. Of all the programmes I developed and directed in those years, this one, where people reflected in silence on their lives before Christ, fostered the most intense and long-term friendships post-retreat, much more so than the group-sharing 'talking programmes'. It seemed evident to me that when people open their lives and hearts to Christ, encountering both their sinfulness and the healing power of Jesus, it is Christ himself who forms the community of the faithful.

All the programmes developed by the Sacred Story Institute, following Ignatius' authentic method as revealed in the Ignatian paradigm, are done by people on their own. However, we strongly encourage a weekly sharing of what people are experiencing. The solo work with Christ in the day-to-day personal spiritual work fosters an intense sense of community when people gather to share 'what Christ has done for me'.

I saw this again at the conclusion of the year-long project in the Seattle Archdiocese that gave rise to *Forty Weeks*. On my last monthly visit to each community, at the end of the trial period, I heard the same lament: *You mean you will not come again?* This revealed that a strong community had been shaped by the experience, but they mistakenly associated my visits with the community they had formed for themselves by engaging in the exercises and sharing weekly with each other.

So, I encouraged the six parish groups involved in the project to continue to build that community by leading others through the journey. Many of them are now in years eight and nine of guiding other faithful through the Forty Weeks. I see it also very clearly in the priests who use our programme of Forty Weeks for Priests. Many diocesan priests have monthly sharing groups. Those who have used our method as the basis for their fraternal gatherings remark in amazement how the spiritual method substantially increases the depth, vulnerability, transparency and their mutual bonding in friendship.

The Second Decade

In January 2023, the Sacred Story Institute began its second decade. In the first ten years we have translated *Forty Weeks* into Spanish and Italian, and versions in Mandarin and Slovenian are forthcoming.[18] Two special versions, one for priests and another for incarcerated persons, were researched and developed. We have separate programmes for the Whole Life Confession and spiritual discernment. Two years of research went into our children's version of the Examen, called Sacred Story Youth. Three years of research, in Latin America and North America, were needed to develop our young adult programme called True Heart. A version of True Heart has been created for men considering a diocesan priestly vocation. We are now working on a version for Christian couples dating and thinking of marriage. The pandemic forced our creative imagination to develop online courses, and seven of our book-based programmes will soon be available online. And we have laid the groundwork to develop an online MA programme in transformational evangelization.

God used the dysfunctional, traumatized and sinful Ignatius to create one of the most pragmatic and dynamic spiritualities in the Church, and one of its greatest saints. We fully intend to exploit this most precious treasure in our second decade to minister to those in the great 'field hospital' Pope Francis described early in his pontificate.[19]

William M. Watson SJ is founder and president of the Sacred Story Institute. The institute's mission is building Ignatian-based programmes for people of all ages, incorporating the Ignatian Examen and urging the practice of frequent confession. He received his D.Min. at the Catholic University of America. He was formerly director of retreat programmes at Georgetown University; the first vice-president for Mission at Gonzaga University; and provincial assistant for international ministries.

[18] We are working with the Jesuit Michael Agliardo, president of the US Catholic China Association, on networking with communities in South East Asia and China. The Slovenian Jesuit Tomaž Mikuš asked permission to translate the book into his native language because he found it so beneficial in his work in Twelve Step and healing retreats. Many know that 'Bill', author of the *Big Book of* AA, had a Jesuit spiritual director. This appears to be why there is so much complementarity between the movements of the Exercises and Examen, and the Twelve Step method.

[19] Pope Francis first used this image in an interview with Antonio Spadaro of *La Civiltà Catolica* in September 2013. See *A Big Heart Open to God: An Interview with Pope Francis* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 30–33.

HAS THE PANDEMIC CHANGED SPIRITUAL ACCOMPANIMENT FOREVER?

Annemarie Paulin-Campbell

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has had a significant impact on the way that people experience faith and their relationship with God. It also created a revolution in the way we do spiritual accompaniment and in how we train spiritual directors. The sudden and clear necessity of mastering technological means to continue these ministries at its height meant that we were forced to adapt. These adaptations have proved to be immense gifts for spiritual accompaniment and have opened new and exciting ways of engaging in these ministries.

While the COVID-19 virus still exists, we no longer live under the constraints of hard lockdowns and restrictions. At this point we can begin to reflect on our experience and the lessons and changes brought about by the pandemic, which include shifts to online and hybrid ways of working in spiritual accompaniment, retreat-giving and the training of people at different stages of learning how to do this work.

I reflect from the perspective of my own experience as a spiritual director, retreat-giver and trainer of spiritual directors based in South Africa, but my conversations with spiritual directors in other parts of the world suggest that many of the trends I have noticed locally also apply in the global context of Ignatian spirituality.

A Changed Context

During the long lockdowns when churches were closed, many people experienced what it was like not to attend church for the first time in their lives. For some there was a profound sense of grief in losing a way

of living and a community that had always anchored them. For others there was a sense of liberation in no longer feeling obliged to attend church on a Sunday.

As the weeks went by, many who had attended out of a sense of habit or duty, or under the threat of committing sin, began rethinking their practice of faith and church attendance. In many parts of the world church communities across denominations were already experiencing a decrease in numbers. This decrease was accelerated by the pandemic. According to research conducted by the Pew Research Center in the USA about 20 per cent of people attend religious services less often than they did before the pandemic.[1]

Many people who come for spiritual direction no longer belong to parish communities. They may not have a church community to which they feel committed and which they attend regularly. The freedom to look on the internet for church services around the world being streamed online alerted people to a greater sense of freedom to choose those offerings and communities that they found most nourishing. Some took responsibility for hosting online prayer groups or services,

[1] Justin Nortey and Michael Rotolo, 'How the Pandemic Has Affected Attendance at US Religious Services' (20 March 2023), *Pew Research Center*, at https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2023/03/28/how-the-pandemic-has-affected-attendance-at-u-s-religious-services/.

or having a prayer space at home as a small community. Women who felt disempowered in traditional church environments began to lead liturgies of the word, to preach or to facilitate the sharing of experiences of God. Many of those online communities are still flourishing. As people participated in online liturgies with their families during the lockdowns there was a growth in the domestic church and the family as a unit who worship together.

For many people COVID-19 brought great suffering and hardship: the experience of being seriously ill or of having family members who were; and for some the agony of not being able to visit loved ones in hospital as they died. The lack of closure in being unable to have in-person funeral services and gatherings, especially in Africa, where this is particularly significant culturally, took a huge toll. The grief of missing significant events and celebrations, of being separated from loved ones, and the sense of living in uncertainty dominated life.

In the African context, which is still quite religious, there is a strong inclination to turn to God and to the community in times of suffering and crisis. While a commitment to church attendance and sacramental practice seems to have diminished, the desire to make sense of life and to find meaningful ways of connecting with God seems to have deepened.

How Do All These Shifts Affect the Spiritual Direction Landscape?

The gift of many of the shifts that happened for people in relation to faith and church is that there seems to be more of a sense of taking personal responsibility for faith, rather than relying on Church and magisterium. More people coming into spiritual direction seem to be doing so with greater desire and intentionality. Many are in a process of faith deconstruction. For people who were already in a place of rethinking and re-examining their belief systems, the pandemic seems to have accelerated that process. They are now refusing to abdicate their responsibility for their relationship with God and making their own decisions about how to engage with their faith and taking responsibility for themselves.

The directees with whom we work often encountered the pandemic as a crisis which shifted them from a conformist phase of moral and spiritual development to what Elizabeth Liebert describes as a self-aware

or conscientious phase in which life is interpreted with a greater sense of nuance and complexity.[2] For them, spiritual direction could become a space in which doubts are explored and old beliefs re-examined before either being adopted with greater conviction than before or discarded.

It may also be that at the other end of the spectrum people reacted by becoming more reliant on external authority as a way of feeling safe amid the unpredictability of life. Few of those people seek out spiritual direction through our institute, but there does seem to be a more marked polarity with people tending more strongly to one position or the other.

The Use of Technology in Spiritual Accompaniment

Most people in the world of spiritual accompaniment have not traditionally been comfortable with technology. The received wisdom has always been that spiritual accompaniment over the phone or online was an option of last resort, and there was almost nothing in the way of online training for spiritual directors. The pandemic completely changed that landscape.

The first lockdowns in South Africa happened just before Easter in 2020. At the Jesuit Institute, we were acutely aware of people needing spiritual nourishment and support at the most important season of the church year while they were confined to their homes, anxious and struggling. Within days of the announcement of the lockdown, along with spirituality centres around the world, we had to find ways to offer online individually guided retreats.

This meant using technologies that at that time were unfamiliar to most people. While Skype was relatively well known, few people in our context had Zoom downloaded or were familiar with using it. We had no idea whether offering retreats in this way would work. All around the world spiritual directors were forced into learning to use ways of accompanying people that we would previously have said were impossible or at least undesirable. We were all in the same boat, and those taking

[2] See Elizabeth Liebert, *Changing Life Patterns: Adult Development in Spiritual Direction* (Mahwah: Paulist, 1991), drawing on the framework of Jane Loevinger in *Ego Development: Conceptions and Theories* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976).

part were patient as people grappled with the new technology: learning how to mute and unmute themselves; how to send and receive zoom invitations and how to place their computers or phones so that the light fell in front of them.

As we started offering training, we had to become comfortable with screen- and sound-sharing, and managing break-out rooms. Initially there were all kinds of difficult moments, such as when we lost about seventy people gathered for a zoom call as we didn't know the trick of making someone else a co-host, or when we accidentally prematurely opened the zoom rooms in the middle of a talk on Ignatian spirituality. In South Africa load-shedding, or planned power outages for several hours a day, added another layer of challenge.

In the most economically disadvantaged areas of South Africa, people do not have access to Wi-Fi, and mobile data costs are prohibitively expensive. The use of WhatsApp and voice notes became the best 'data-lite' ways to connect with and support those people, many of whom were in dire straits as they were not able to continue to earn. Directors would send materials to retreatants individually via WhatsApp voice notes and receive feedback from them in the same way. This worked surprisingly well.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Online Accompaniment

Advantages

The advantages of working with technology soon became apparent. One of the most significant was greater accessibility. Suddenly we realised how possible it was to have directees from any part of the world where we could make the time zones work. Directees now have access to a far wider pool of directors, no matter where they live. On the first online retreat we offered I found myself guiding a retreatant from Orkney in Scotland and another from Cape Breton in Nova Scotia. Working online also means that those with mobility or health issues can more easily access spiritual direction.

Some directees experience a greater level of safety and comfort in receiving spiritual direction in their own home and even in the place they usually use for prayer. Spiritual accompaniment online also saves time and money commuting. More people in high-pressure jobs have been able to make time to connect online for an hour rather than the two or more hours it would take to travel to see a director. Some

directors find they can focus more easily online and it is possible to make a note or two during the session without it being a distraction to the directee.

Disadvantages

There is still something powerful about being in the same physical space as another person. It is easier to read his or her body language. It is also easier to create a suitable sacred, welcoming space for the other person when you can control the physical environment.

Having a commute to get to one's spiritual direction session can be a valuable part of the process. It provides a natural time of preparation beforehand and time to absorb what has been talked about immediately afterwards. A friend of mine used to travel once a month from London to Oxford for spiritual direction—a journey of about two hours each way door to door. I often used to receive text messages from him when he was on the return trip about some of the important insights and connections made during his spiritual direction session. Since the sessions moved online, I have not had any such messages which makes me wonder whether the 'buffer' time naturally created by the journey has been lost and what the impact of that may have been on the spiritual direction experience.

My own experience, both on the giving and the receiving end of spiritual direction, is that silences are harder to hold. Silence can feel more intense and more uncomfortable because there is nowhere else to look—unless one deliberately turns away or looks down. This is eased in the in-person context, where one is usually not sitting facing the other person head-on.

As psychologists soon discovered, 'zoom fatigue' is very real. We must focus more intently on what is being said and, if the connection is poor, it may be difficult to hear well. The aspect of constant gaze can make us feel uncomfortable and tired. There isn't the kind of exchange of energy that there is in the room with someone. When training people we are taking in a lot of stimuli as the multiple video backgrounds provide different visual information for the brain to process. Seeing ourselves online constantly is exhausting because our own judgments about ourselves are running in the background. Hiding the self-view can help. Some personality types find Zoom especially draining, though others find it less exhausting than seeing people one-to-one.

We have had to learn to adapt the ways we work when we work online. There are sometimes glitches with technology or times when connectivity is not as good. This can have a negative impact on the flow of the session. Another important disadvantage is that using Zoom and similar platforms favours those with access to resources. In some places people do not have access to a computer they can use privately, and they cannot afford Wi-Fi or data costs.

What We Have Learnt

The one accompanying must create a contemplative and hospitable environment virtually. He or she needs to be ready and waiting to let the directee into the meeting at the appropriate time. Attention needs to be paid to the zoom background, perhaps placing an icon or candle where it can be seen. It is often helpful to invite the one being accompanied to set up his or her space with a candle and Bible, and perhaps to clear the desk of work clutter.

Technically there are also things to attend to. The director needs to set up the zoom (or other media) call so that he or she can be well seen and heard, and should encourage the directee to do the same. There needs to be a previously agreed plan as to what to do if the call is lost. Who will reinitiate it? Is there the option of using the phone as a backup?

There is a greater risk for both director and directee of going immediately from another, perhaps very different kind of meeting, into

the spiritual direction session. It is all too easy to stop one zoom call and immediately start the next. Having a lead-in time of prayer in the session can be a helpful way to make the transition, but there may also need to be greater intentionality about taking time to prepare for the session immediately before it.

Retreats

During the COVID-19 lockdowns many Ignatian (and other) retreat and spirituality centres around the world experimented with different kinds of at-home online retreats ranging from mornings of recollection to weeks of accompanied prayer; and individually guided six-, eight- and thirty-day retreats. Retreats in daily life, in which people stay rooted in the ordinary lives but take time out to pray each day and to meet with a spiritual guide, were already widely on offer before the pandemic and these were easy to shift online. Especially during the hard lockdowns this way of being on retreat provided a lifeline to many people and a powerful sense of community.

A lifeline to many people and a powerful sense of community

A new challenge was trying to do residential retreats online. People stayed in their own homes but lived as though their home were a retreat centre. This worked well when people lived alone, but was vastly more challenging for those living with others. Some people did an adapted version, negotiating with spouse or family to be left alone and in silence during the day but breaking the silence to have supper with the family in the evening.

Another challenge was trying to help those retreatants who were in significant emotional distress and who were without support owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those accompanying found the online context more challenging in such situations as they were also not intersecting with the retreatant in any other spaces, for example over meals or at the liturgy, so it was difficult to have any sense of how the person was managing until the next online direction session. Creating shared spaces to celebrate liturgies online was also a challenge. These were mostly liturgies of the word but as the feedback noise is problematic when more than one person speaks at a time online, verbal responses from the gathered community or shared singing were not possible. Instead, it became important to assign parts to different retreatants to read, and to play pieces of music.

Though it was helpful (and less expensive) to be able to be on a full-time' retreat at home, many people expressed grief at not being able to go away for a time and to have the opportunities that the beauty and rhythm of a retreat centre provide. An at-home retreat lacked the gift of being in a different place, physically removed from reminders of the demands of ordinary life.

Training in Spiritual Accompaniment

The other area of the spiritual accompaniment world significantly affected by the pandemic has been the area of training people as spiritual directors.

When it became evident that the pandemic was not something that would be over in a matter of weeks or months, training also needed to move online. There had been a general assumption that teaching spiritual accompaniment was not something that could be effectively done in this way. While it was easy to see how lectures could be given online in relation to content, it was less easy to imagine how to transfer some of the practical, familiar methods of learning such as 'goldfish bowls' and 'triads'.[3] How would we teach listening skills when it was impossible to observe body language?

Our first adventure into the world of training was eased by the fact that it was a course in giving the Spiritual Exercises being offered to people already trained by us as spiritual directors. They already had good listening skills and basic accompaniment skills. The biggest learning curve was in helping participants and trainers who were predominantly older and less tech-savvy to learn to overcome their reluctance to use online platforms. I phoned a colleague who had already done significantly more online work for a crash course in how to manage break-out rooms, and sound- and screen-sharing, and then offered lessons to familiarise anxious participants before the next course module.

Our process involved inviting trainees to watch pre-recorded 20- to 25-minute talks. This was followed by time for them to reflect individually.

[3] Goldfish bowls are a method of learning in which one student takes the role of spiritual director or guide and another is the person being accompanied. The rest of the training group observes those in the 'goldfish bowl' and gives feedback as to what seemed to be helpful about how the one accompanying held the spiritual accompaniment session. Triads are a method in which learners are in a group of three. One takes the role of the spiritual director, one the role of the directee and the third person acts as an observer and offers feedback.

Discussion and sharing in break-out groups broadened and deepened their experience, and then we invited them back to the plenary to ask questions and make comments that the trainers could respond to. This had some unforeseen advantages. People often came to the conversation having had time to think about and process what they had heard on the video and the conversations were richer and the questions more interesting. By the time we finished with that group we were ready to take on two new challenges: the first was the training of prayer guides—which included basic listening skills—and the second an international course to train givers of the Spiritual Exercises.

The training of prayer guides was perhaps the most complex process to adapt to the online space.[4] Not being able to see body language easily made teaching listening skills more challenging. We learnt to divide people into twos for the various online exercises and to have a trained spiritual director observing them. Observers would switch off their cameras during the accompaniment session, which allowed the directors to focus on the person they were accompanying and whose video

[4] Prayer guides are people trained at a basic level in spiritual accompaniment to offer retreats in daily life, usually in a parish context.

they could see. Once the session was over the one being accompanied would leave the (virtual) room, and the observer would put on his or her video to give the accompanier some feedback on how he or she had listened and responded.

The international online training in giving the Exercises was a little easier. The participants were all fully trained spiritual directors who were doing a one-year specialisation course in giving the Exercises. The practicum component of the training involved accompanying a person through the Exercises while regularly meeting online with a supervisor. We met for two-and-a-half hours every week online (at a time that catered for most time zones) for 36 sessions over the course of the year. The training schedule included time for prayer; a 45-minute input; personal reflection; time for discussion and sharing in a mentor group; and time in the big group for questions and comments. The richness of the experience was that we had students from Africa, Australia, Canada, the United States, Mexico, Europe and Asia.

Today and Tomorrow

Our two-year spiritual accompaniment training has now become a hybrid. Two of the eight four-day modules in the course take place in person while the rest are online. This allows us some of the advantages of both in-person and online training.

It is still possible for many people from other parts of the country and even internationally to travel to the venue once a year. The online modules mean we can draw on a wider pool of trainees, and people living in remote parts of the country or who could not afford the expense of travel and accommodation costs for eight modules are now able to take part. Now that it has been shown that training can be done successfully online, there is a great deal of pressure to continue to offer it. However recently, when we had the in-person module for the year, many of the students asked for more of the modules to be in person. The sense of community which develops in person is often deeper because students can spend time together over lunches and teas, and develop friendships and connections more easily.

In the in-person training modules we spend a good deal of time on practical skills, which are more challenging to teach online. In the online modules we have shorter days—ending at 2.00 p.m. rather than 4.00 p.m.—because people tire more quickly online. To make up for

the shorter days, students have reading material and videos to watch in preparation for the teaching days and to consolidate the learning.

Power outages continue to be a challenge for both online spiritual accompaniment and spiritual accompaniment training, both in South Africa and in some other places including Zimbabwe and India. At times students must catch up interrupted sessions via recordings. This works for content and theory teaching. It is more difficult when doing practical work in dyads or triads.

COVID-19 restrictions made it impossible for us to meet the need for spiritual accompaniment without adapting our ways of working. It was a case of abandoning the work or finding a completely new way of engaging in it. Given the emphasis in Ignatian spirituality on creative adaptation and finding God in all things, we had a good basis to experiment and discover what helped and what did not. It was a context in which all of us were learning from scratch.

Today people are still recovering from the trauma of the pandemic. They also have other stresses such as increases in the price of fuel and other necessities, concerns about climate change and the threat of war. It is an uncertain time, and for many the Church no longer feels like a bastion of security. When people seek spiritual accompaniment, they are looking for someone who is willing to stand beside them in their uncertainty and to help them to connect with and deepen their relationship with God.

It is incredible that three short years after we started, spiritual accompaniment via Zoom or its equivalents no longer raises an eyebrow. Most spiritual directors now recognise that it can be as effective as meeting in person, and it is a matter of the personal preference of directors and directees whether to meet in person or online. Not enough time has passed to establish whether directors trained solely or primarily online are as effective as those trained in person. However, our experience thus far suggests that in-person and online training can work equally well, provided online training is approached creatively. What *is* clear is that directors currently being trained need to have the skills to accompany in both ways.

Those of us training the next generation of spiritual directors must be willing to trust that God may call us to work in very new ways. The pandemic opened new vistas in the work of spiritual accompaniment. We cannot and should not attempt to return to how things were before.

Our world has changed forever, and we are part of that reality. The challenge is to continue to learn to use the expanded options we now have to journey alongside others in their longing to deepen their life with Christ.

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BURSTING OUT IN PRAISE

Faith and Mental Health

Gavin T. Murphy

MY FORMER NOVICE-MASTER once said to me, 'It's better to be ridiculously early as opposed to being ridiculously late'. For me, this meant not always running out of the door at the last minute with my heart pumping and my mind racing. It meant not being the one that others had to make excuses for, such as 'Gavin's on his way' or 'he will catch up'. There was a moment during my Jesuit novitiate in 2011 when I started to be on time. Something clicked: when it did, I almost felt as if I was standing at attention with the other novices. It is in this context that I ponder what I want to say for Mental Health Awareness Week because I am more likely to be calm, confident and compassionate when I am engaged in meditation; I am more likely to be productive at work when I make it to the office at the same time as everyone else; and I am more likely to write articles like this one when I dedicate the time to do so.[1]

Timing was also important when I started my mental health blog, *ilovebipolar*, in 2016.[2] I found my 'voice' through this platform as I wrote on the upsides and downsides of bipolar disorder—a mental illness known for its severe changes and challenges in mood, such as depression, low mood, dysphoria (intense unease and agitation), hypomania (elation and overactivity) and mania. Relationship difficulties are particularly common and challenging, due to a lack of clarity in processing emotions. I find myself writing often about balance, with regard to thinking, energy,

Scripture quotations in this article come from the New Jerusalem Bible.

[1] Mental Health Awareness Week is organized in May each year by the UK charity the Mental Health Foundation.

[2] This blog concluded in 2020. See https://gratitudeinallthings.com/2020/03/26/journey-of-healing/.

lifestyle and so on. What you see now in my blog posts is a person who is quite healthy mentally, but this was certainly not always the case.

An important development in my mental health journey came when I made contact on social media with a Jesuit spiritual accompanier a few years ago, after I had left the novitiate. I bounced personal concerns off him from time to time. He always had a kind word to say and his gentle support prompted me to continue my journey with bipolar. Eventually, a lady from the Jesuit young adult ministry helped to organize for us to meet, and so began the process of spiritual accompaniment. I was a little nervous as I opened up to him but I soon began to relax in his quiet, unassuming presence, and my confusing mood experiences were quickly understood and even cherished.

We met at mutually convenient spaces until we finally decided to meet at my accompanier's community house. I continued to open up, and at one point I disclosed a particular weakness that I had found prolonged my unstable moods. This was an important step in my recovery as he could then better guide me in his Ignatian tradition. He was able to suggest psychospiritual concepts that suited my situation and that led me towards a more fulfilling and meaningful way of living. Han F. de Wit, author of *Contemplative Psychology*, notes, 'the strength of a contemplative tradition lies in its capacity for individual guidance', and I find Ignatian spirituality to be very strong in this regard.[3]

For example, the Latin term *agere contra*, meaning to 'act against' or 'go against self' was a concept that perfectly applied to me. It is a form of training that helped me go against my natural inclinations, as I was often pulled in unhelpful directions. So when I was in a 'high' state with a want for more buzz and excitement, I practised slowing down by going for a walk, turning off the internet and focusing on deep breathing. On the other hand, I pushed onwards during a 'low' state when I felt like collapsing, by keeping to my appointments, spending time with my family and friends, and continuing to pray. I also became more aware of the Ignatian concepts of consolation (being orientated towards God) and desolation (away from God), and in the words of psychoanalyst Dan Merkur I came 'to know and to want what God wants'.[4] I began to

[3] Han de Wit, *Contemplative Psychology*, translated by Marie Louise Baird (Pittsburgh: Duquesne U, 1991), 74.

[4] Dan Merkur, *Crucified with Christ: Meditations on the Passion, Mystical Death, and the Medieval Invention of Psychotherapy* (New York: State U. of New York, 2007), 54.

nip unhealthy distractions in the bud by recognising, for instance, when 'the devil comes cloaked as an angel of light' (Exx 332).

I continue to attend spiritual accompaniment on a monthly basis and I see it as an essential part of the recovery process. My accompanier gives me individualised scripture to pray with and I also 'empty my mind' through the practice of centring prayer. I find the training of Ignatian spirituality challenging at times, but I feel the Spirit nudging me onwards. I trust that often my accompanier sees my life more clearly than I see it myself, and this leaves me with a willingness to open my hands to God.

The metaphor of a traveller on a long-distance flight comes to the surface as I further ponder what Mental Health Awareness Week is about. Travellers experience many events, bumps and people from the start of their journey until their final destination. Similarly, those tuned into this week's initiative come with their own experiences, challenges and relationships, and they hope to arrive at a place where they can settle. We also learn to accept uncertainty on this journey and it takes courage to go through every step of the way.

'Bow Down, Then, before the Power of God Now' (1 Peter 5:6)

All that being said, a person's mental-health journey still has a somewhat mysterious dimension. I have tried to cooperate with the health services since a troublesome bipolar episode in 2012. I had moved on from the Jesuit novitiate in England to find my place as a lay person in Ireland. And this finding of place required a radical openness to God. I wasn't a fan of medication back then; in fact I rarely turned even to paracetamol. Even when I broke my leg as a nineteen-year-old and I was given painkillers after the operation, I wasn't interested in taking them.

When, at 29 years old, I showed up at the door of a psychiatrist, flanked by two of my brothers, I was initially resistant to treatment. The doctor ordered a battery of blood tests that displayed hormone and vitamin deficiencies. It was thought that these negative results were possibly related to my symptoms of mania and depression, and so I was treated accordingly. However, there was no significant improvement in my mood so the doctor suggested mental health medication.

Because of the doctor's concern and knowledge, I took the medication, which very gradually improved my symptoms. I regularly repeated a mantra: 'Every day in every way I am getting a little bit better and better', and I found consolation in Teilhard de Chardin's prayer 'Patient

Trust', which I often read. Today, I have found a medication prescription that more or less works for me, whereby two types of medication help tackle racing thoughts and mood instability. What's more, I have found that 35 sessions of psychotherapy over 15 months have really helped me to be more assertive. They have also enabled me to experience emotional intimacy in my relationships.

Another reality that dawns upon me is that the pain I experienced in my mental health has become a source of grace and fruitfulness. If I look back again to my novitiate experience, I see many moments of great struggle and anguish. Finding myself withdrawing from my colleagues was not easy, and believing in thoughts as if they were real voices was almost unbearable. My fellow novices tried to reach out to me, but I was unaware of what was happening inside. However, I learnt something from these experiences. In my struggle, it felt like God wasn't listening, but now I think God was reaching out to me in a manner that led me into a different way of being.

... So That God May Raise You Up in Due Time (1 Peter 5:6)

As mentioned, it was upon my return to Ireland that I finally sought out the mental health services. But what was God trying to say through my pain? Was there any meaning to it? Well, one way to look at it is to imagine what my life would be like if I didn't experience pain, high and low moods, racing thoughts, psychosis. Just like my old self. And, one word that presents itself is 'humility'. When speaking of humility I mean having a true appreciation of myself. I would probably not be as humble as I am right now (if I can be humble enough to say it!) without my experience of great pain, and without my willingness to let God transform it.

Today, I see that my humility enables me to accept the bad days and to look beyond myself when I begin to get stuck in the 'poor me' victim state. When I encounter pain, I now call out for the grace that wants to touch my heart. If I embrace the grace, I glorify God and become more fully alive. Sometimes I kick and scream out of anger and frustration, but ultimately I accept the reality of the situation, as Walter Ciszek recommended in the midst of being imprisoned for his faith in the Soviet Union.[5] Grace also brings a clarity to my words and deeds.

[5] See Walter J. Ciszek, *He Leadeth Me* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 84–89.

The Dead Christ Mourned by Nicodemus and Two Angels, *by Filippino Lippi, c.1500*

Recently I meditated on the absence of Christ during Holy Saturday as part of my Lenten journey. I imagined that I was Nicodemus, who helped cover the body of Jesus in linen cloths and spices. I prayed by his body and noticed a sense of loss and nothingness. I left the tomb and in my imagination I prayed with my family. My Saviour's felt absence during that day reminded me of times of depression where God's presence seemed ever so distant. There was pain in those times, but the grace I received urged me to rejoice when my mood lifted like the rising sun, a reminder of God's glorious presence.

... Unload All Your Burden on to God, since God Is Concerned about You (1 Peter 5:7)

Saying what I have said about accepting my mental-health condition does not for the slightest moment mean that I need to do it on my own. I believe that God is lovingly present and yearns to shower love on me. I have sensed God's concern for me over the years through the care of fellow novices, mental-health professionals and my spiritual accompanier. I have felt God's compassion through the care of my family and friends who have journeyed with me for better and for worse. To contemplate God's love enables me to dig deep and to do the most loving and truthful thing in the midst of the many challenging symptoms of bipolar. As Yahweh listened to Samuel, God listens to me: 'Samuel grew up. Yahweh was with him and did not let a single word fall to the ground of all that he had told him' (1 Samuel 3:19).

To sum up, I believe God is deeply concerned with everyone's mental health. God wants us to live a healthy life of eustress ('good stress'), rest, nourishment and all that promotes a real integrated person. Although God does not want us to get caught up with unnecessary anxiety and desolation, I believe God desires us to bring our struggles to the table so that we will be brought to a deeper spiritual reality.

Saint Francis of Assisi, the great lover of the natural world, was almost blind and in a lot of pain when he burst out in praise for all that had been given to him. 'All praise is Yours', he acclaimed. In gratitude, he created the song 'Canticle of Brother Sun' (or 'Canticle of Creatures'), which refers to the sun, wind, air and fire as his brothers, and the moon, stars, water, earth and death as his sisters. I further look to the Magnificat in the Gospel of Luke, in which Mary proclaimed the ultimate 'Yes' to being the mother of God. She inspires me to say 'Yes' to God, just as I say 'Yes' to mental illness. I call this personal prayer of mine 'The Magnificent Magnificat':

Yes to your promptings, your movement within,
Yes to your inner light, your sunny sensualities.
Yes to her hands filled with openness,
Sing Hallelujah to her magnificent lowliness.

Yes to your gaze, your soft sensitivities,
Yes to your blissfulness, your heavenly mindfulness.
Yes to her eyes filled with pureness,
Sing Hallelujah to her magnificent blessedness.

Yes to your open road, your warm invitations,
Yes to your genuineness, your grounded worldliness.
Yes to her embrace filled with wholeness,
Sing Hallelujah to her magnificent fruitfulness.

Yes to your lion-heart, your brave inspirations,
Yes to your expansiveness, your meditative spaciousness.
Oh Yes, Forever Yes, My Goodness!

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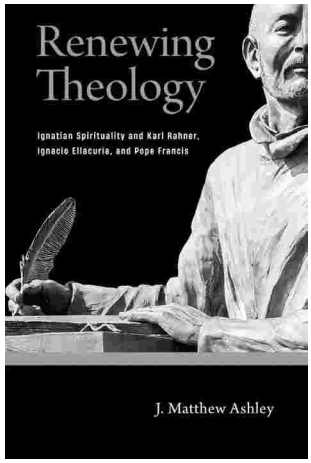
RECENT BOOKS

J. Matthew Ashley, *Renewing Theology: Ignatian Spirituality and Karl Rahner, Ignacio Ellacuría, and Pope Francis* (Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame, 2022). 978 0 2682 0317 7, pp. 460, £72.00.



William Portier memorably suggested that Roman Catholic theology after the Second Vatican Council could be described as a discussion among Jesuits on the way to read Ignatius on 'how God dwells in creatures'. However much such a claim may need qualification, the influence of Jesuits on the course of twentieth-century theology was unquestionably immense, and many of them, from Karl Rahner to Hans Urs von Balthasar, pointed to Ignatian spirituality as a decisive influence on their thought. In *Renewing Theology*, J. Matthew Ashley aptly considers the reasons for this trend, proposing that a deep reciprocity pertains between sound theology and spirituality, which should have 'a mutually fructifying relationship' (109). Ashley further contends that the rise of spirituality is a modern phenomenon to which an Ignatian way of proceeding distinctly corresponds, and he elucidates each of these theses together through a close reading of three modern 'Ignatian theologians' (299): Rahner, Ignacio Ellacuría and Pope Francis.

Ashley sets the stage for his argument by a sustained analysis of the contemporary religious and spiritual context. He traces the history of the relatively modern word 'spirituality', the meaning of which remains notoriously difficult to define. Ashley identifies it as a 'constellation of practices' associated with images and narratives that portray the 'world, our place in it, and our relationship to God'. The portrayal 'makes sense of—and is made sense of by—these practices' (301). Engaging several other voices, from Charles Taylor to Bernard McGinn, Ashley maintains that the turn towards spirituality directly corresponds with three central features of modern life: an individualism that requires ongoing 'self-surveillance' of identity; 'the affirmation of everyday life with its displacement of traditional hierarchies of lifestyle choices'; and an 'accelerating sense of transience

and rootlessness' driven by technological, cultural and socio-economic developments (95).

The Ignatian way, and especially its Spiritual Exercises, responded directly to these movements even as it endeavoured to transform them from within. Its signature 'mobility and adaptability' enabled it to bridge 'geographical distance and transcend cultural differences', and its focus on mission inspired a 'single-minded search for the most effective means to bring about desired ends'. This combination gave rise to a new 'ability and determination' to enter the door of others 'to bring them out one's own' (80), which, Ashley contends, is precisely what Jesuits have done for many denizens of the modern era.

What is the door to which Ignatian spirituality leads? 'The love of God', affirms Ashley, 'marked by the experience of consolation' (107). 'Consolation' is a broad and even somewhat contested term in Ignatian tradition. Ignatius employs it in the *Spiritual Exercises* to describe interior movements by which one is 'inflamed with love' of God. He elaborates that consolation likewise means 'every increase in hope, faith, and charity, and every interior joy which calls and attracts one toward heavenly things and to the salvation of one's soul, by bringing it tranquillity and peace in its Creator and Lord' (Exx 316). While the discernment of spirits often involves sifting through movements and counter-movements of consolation and desolation, Ignatius privileges 'consolation without a preceding cause', which has 'without any previous perception or understanding of some object' and is distinctly induced by God (Exx 330).

Ashley astutely shows how this same spiritual tradition became a theological point of departure in the work of Karl Rahner. In the same way that Rahner made the immediacy of the beatific vision of God his paradigm of a theology of grace, so does he consider the epitome of consolation to be immediate vis-à-vis God and not bound to any 'particular object' (151), or *Gegenstand*. These moves enable Rahner not only to render consolation an existential 'countermood' to Heideggerian 'angst' (141) but to present its paradigmatic form as always already available in everyday life, irrespective of its particular circumstances. While Rahner's theology is based in salient meditations of the Exercises, from the Principle and Foundation to the Contemplation to Attain Love, his work also employs the kind of 'creative retrieval' featured in his seminars with Heidegger. In the same way that Rahner read Aquinas in *Spirit in the World*, Ashley explains, Rahner did this theology by endeavouring to join Ignatius in creatively thinking through the experience of consolation more than simply to construe what Ignatius said (133).

Yet Rahner's creative relation to Ignatius was also selective and thereby tends to compromise the 'tensive balance' that Ashley envisions as innate to the open, 'eclectic' synthesis of the Exercises (169). Rahner downplays and even neglects what Ashley describes, via Ewert Cousins, as a 'mysticism of the historical event' (84–85). In his later writings, Rahner also struggled to render the immediate, subjective experience of consolation, which would seem to be 'nontransferable', into a basis for 'communal discernment' and 'the self-actualization of community' (163–164).

Ashley therefore turns to Ellacuría to provide the historical and social elements of Ignatian spirituality that Rahner never effectively integrated. Ellacuría transposed Rahner's inner experience of God on to the horizon of history on which one finds Jesus, crucified and risen, who serves for Ellacuría as the 'heart of the Exercises, and hence the focal point for its interpretation' (201). But truly to know the poor, scorned, crucified and risen Jesus requires engaging and acting on behalf of 'crucified peoples' today, especially those that modern systems create 'in dialectical opposition' to their own professed ends of freedom and equality (179). It is above all in the Kingdom proclaimed and realised in Jesus that we are given the basis to 'scrutinize prophetically and animate utopically' the social imagination of our time (220), and only by 'shouldering' and 'taking charge of the weight' of what our realities demand of us may we participate in the paschal dynamics by which divine life may take shape in our history anew (216).

Pope Francis, by focusing on the role of discernment and encounter in journeying through 'tension' and even 'conflict', serves as a fitting conclusion to Ashley's survey (255). Francis's placement of mercy as a pastoral practice at the centre of ecclesial mission also brings the dynamics of the Exercises full circle, to conjoin the mercy of the First Week with the ministry of consolation of the Fourth. In like measure both the practice of Ignatian spirituality and the theological reflection of those who live it are to be instruments of 'consolation in today's world', drawing all into a deeper 'experience of mercy', as by what Francis is wont to call *misericordiando* (236).

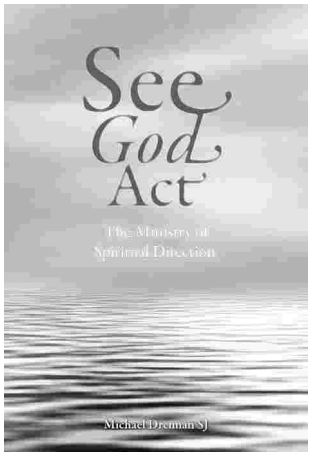
This is both a delightful and edifying book, especially for those of us who share in Ashley's deep affinity for the grace and charism given the world through Ignatius of Loyola. It is suitably intended as suggestive more than comprehensive (300), and Ashley acknowledges that many distinctive voices, even from within an Ignatian way, have been left out. There is, for instance, little consideration given to the *ressourcement* or *communio* movement, with its deep bases in Ignatian figures such as Henri de Lubac and Balthasar, and only passing references are made to the many other charisms that have both inspired theology and shaped that of the Society of Jesus. Every book,

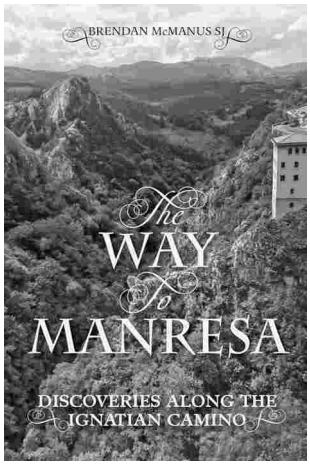
like every spirituality, has its limits. This work nonetheless serves as a splendid exhibition of the profound harmonies to be found between the needs of the modern world, the mission of theology and the spirituality of Ignatius.

Henry Shea SJ

Michael Drennan, *See God Act: The Ministry of Spiritual Direction* (Dublin: Messenger, 2021). 978 1 7881 2498 0, pp.192, £18.95.

Brendan McManus, *The Way to Manresa: Discoveries along the Ignatian Camino* (Dublin: Messenger, 2021). 978 1 7881 2326 6, pp.96, £18.95.





In recent years Messenger Publications in Dublin, although perhaps still best known for its magazine, the *Sacred Heart Messenger*, has become one of the chief producers of popular, yet academically respectable, books on Ignatian spirituality in the English-speaking world. Two works written recently by Jesuits of the Irish province illustrate something of the breadth of the publishing house's catalogue.

See God Act, by Michael Drennan (who died in April 2023), grew out of the author's long experience of training spiritual directors in the Ignatian tradition. Rather than starting from a description of the ministry of direction itself, he first considers what it is to be a human person, in a way that takes into account what he regards as the inescapable faith dimension of humanity. Rooting this in the call to be in relationship with God leads him naturally to an analysis of prayer and discipleship. These in turn allow him to present an understanding of what spiritual direction should be, how it can work in practice, and the various movements (which he labels 'dynamics') underlying it. As is common in books of this kind, the chapters are supplemented with material prompting readers to engage in their own reflection on the points raised. The book draws on both scripture and psychology, so that, for instance, a chapter on dynamic

patterns in life includes material both on human motivation and on bible passages in which characters' prayer springs directly from the challenges that they are facing.

At a time when many would deny that faith has any relevance at all to their lives, one of Drennan's chief strengths is in showing how it is in fact a key element in what it is to be human, and then drawing out the implications of that for anyone who wants to come to a deeper understanding of themselves or of others around them. Presented principally as a guide to spiritual direction, it is certainly that, but also has a wider relevance to those hoping to come to a clearer appreciation of human nature.

Unsurprisingly, with its central conviction that human life can only be understood in terms of its dynamism, the image of a journey recurs in *See God Act*. The book starts with the journey of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, develops by looking at the progress of the people of Israel towards the Promised Land, and ends with the two journeys, away from and back towards his father, made by the Prodigal Son. This same journey imagery is central to the second work under consideration here, *The Way to Manresa*, by Brendan McManus.

Subtitled *Discoveries along the Ignatian Camino*, this is a relatively straightforward account of a pilgrimage the author undertook along the road travelled by Ignatius of Loyola when, after his conversion, he left his home in Loyola in the Basque Country and headed for the Holy Land via Manresa, a town near Barcelona. It is the first work that this reviewer has read illustrated with a photo captioned 'The author performing a Bono impersonation', and having as an appendix a 'Playlist of Songs to Accompany this Book'. Without giving too much away, however, McManus is rapidly forced by circumstances to change the plans he had made before starting his walk, and it is the ways in which he reacts to these changes that shed most light on what he learns about himself and about God in the course of his journey.

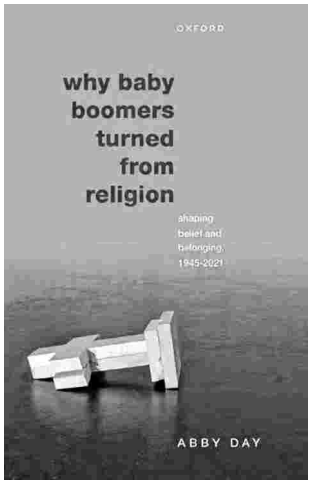
Ignatius himself felt that he gained so much from his own experience of long-distance walks across Europe that he prescribed this as one of the formative experiences that all Jesuits should go through as part of their training. *The Way to Manresa* offers good evidence of why this should be the case even today. Indeed, it was when making just such a pilgrimage as a novice that McManus's love of taking to the open road first emerged.

For Drennan the journey is a metaphor, illustrating and clarifying the nature of the relationship between the human and the divine. For McManus, it is a physical reality, demanding repeated decisions about what to wear, where to stay and which road to take. Both authors, though, have been

shaped by the spirituality of Ignatius, who in his *Autobiography* called himself 'the pilgrim'. Both thus allow themselves to be shaped by the journeys that they recognise they are on, and in their writing distil something of the fruit that they have gathered along the way. Drennan's book shows how this can be used to accompany others as they seek to know God better. McManus offers more direct advice based on his own experience. Both show clearly how the insights of a sixteenth-century Basque nobleman can even now illuminate the concerns of twenty-first-century seekers for God.

Paul Nicholson SJ

Abby Day, *Why Baby Boomers Turned from Religion: Shaping Belief and Belonging, 1945–2021* (Oxford: OUP, 2022). 978 0 1928 6668 4, 256, £76.00.



Abby Day is professor of race, faith and culture at Goldsmith's, University of London. Her thorough sociological study of the rapid decline in religious belief in the years since the Second World War makes thoughtful reading. The research participants were former Anglicans from Britain and Canada born between 1944 and 1960, although they were selected for their connection with the social sciences so the sample is not entirely unbiased. The mystery of why they rejected religion, and what might have replaced it, is the topic of this book. In a nutshell she discovers that church-attending parents successfully transmitted their religious values to their children—who forsook them and never passed them on (3). Ultimately she does not predict any form of imminent religious revival, concluding rather that 'modes of practice, belief, habit and the turn to legitimate authority all suggest less religious, but profoundly connected and ethical futures' (200).

According to Day's research, the former Anglican boomers were the first generation who 'did not go to Church as children, other than for a brief moment before or after Sunday school' (22). Though the Church was the locus for kindness and respectability it did not cultivate either genuine religious experience or belief. Their home life was similarly lacking in religious practice. Day quotes one boomer saying that he 'began to doubt that the

stories and mythologies were true, on the one hand God was a vengeful God, then it was a forgiving God, but like Trump, he was telling you one thing one day and something different another' (46). Against this backdrop parents began to moderate their values under the influence of the ensuing cultural revolution of the 1960s.

The sacrament of confirmation was perceived as a 'pivotal event' for this generation's rejection of Church. They soon discovered that the memorisation of articles of faith meant nothing to them, despite powerful social expectations. Later they became aware of a moral chasm opening up between Church and society. Day comments that they 'found it easy to leave because they never belonged' (58). Absconding from Sunday school or refusing to take part in activities became a way of creating a subversive counter-culture that went unchallenged by parents. One participant calls religion 'a vaccination that never took effect' (78).

The possibilities of education, work and leisure afforded by an increasingly affluent society became the locus for belonging and belief. Higher education was often a turning point when the implausibility of what they had learned in Sunday school turned into incredulity. For some the Church became an institution that represented nothing more than 'inequality, class and hypocrisy' (98). As time wore on it became evident that the religious sensibility of a previous generation had been lost. But a quotation from Philip Larkin's poem 'Aubade' reminds us that he had already understood that religion as a 'vast moth-eaten musical brocade' (113). The 1960s were not the cause of religion's decline, but rather the consequence of a sensibility already being lost, one that become emblematic for the boomers' identity as a generation.

The talismans of religiosity still lingered in some households of these former Anglican boomers as nostalgic mementoes of a vanishing social world. Only the vast cathedrals, with their choral traditions, still resonated for these boomers although merely as 'a secular experience' (134). And Christmas services, of course, which clung on as 'a "sacred", social and non-religious time' for which the motivation was mainly music, tradition or friendship (136).

Unnervingly, in the vacuum created by the loss of religious sensibility, Day found belief in the paranormal still strong among the participants. She notes that contact with deceased relatives was often reported 'even among the most atheistic' participants (147). She discovered a curious reflection of religion in the wake of its absence: 'Not only do Boomers share values and morals of what is "good" but … many also share a belief in something "beyond"' (149). The contours of this supernatural landscape are typified by a belief in the authenticity of experience; a belief in the ultimate truth

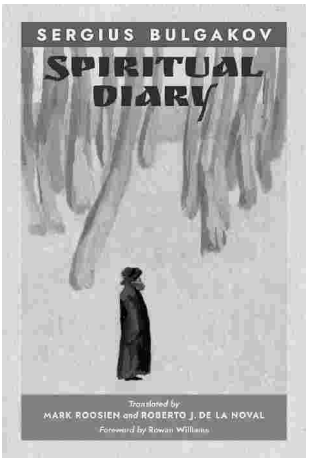
of science and human agency; and a belief in the continuity of the soul (150). As Day delicately unpicks these folk beliefs, she discovers that they are expanding in the next generation along with complex notions of relationality that are yet to be fully understood.

As this generation searches for meaning and purpose, they are discovering ways of understanding themselves. Day points out, 'the boundaries between meaning, purpose, and belonging seem remarkably blurred and porous for this generation' (147). She quotes another study whose research encapsulates the values that have been passed on to their children: 'Be real, know who you are, be responsible for your own well-being, support your friends, open up institutions to the talents of the many not the few, embrace diversity, make the world kinder, live by your values' (199).[1]

If we are to bring the gospel to the culture in which we live, these are the values that merit our respect and understanding. The experience of reading Day's research is rather like reading about all the people you did not make friends with at school. Her research sheds light on a generation that broke the chain of religious transmission. Perhaps we should have made friends.

Philip Harrison SJ

Sergius Bulgakov, *Spiritual Diary*, translated by Mark Roosien and Roberto J. De La Noval (New York: Angelico, 2022). 978 1 6213 8850 0, pp. 238, $19.95.



Sergei Bulgakov (1871–1944) was a prominent Russian thinker and Orthodox theologian whose life and work, as with others of his generation, was interrupted by the Russian Revolution and subsequent upheavals in the country of his birth. His *Spiritual Diary* was written in 1924–1925, when he was living abroad in exile from Soviet Russia. This volume is the first English translation of this work, presented with a double introduction by the translators providing biographical and theological context, as well as a short foreword by Rowan Williams, who is known for his work on Russian theology and Dostoevsky.

[1] Roberta R. Katz and others, *Gen Z, Explained: The Art of Living in a Digital Age* (Chicago: U. of Chicago, 2021), 5.

It is worth noting that the *Spiritual Diary* can be read by a 'layperson' with little knowledge of Bulgakov's work as a theologian. In most respects, it is a personal spiritual diary, as the title suggests, covering many spiritual topics: it resembles a prayer journal more than a theological treatise. However, as the translators point out, those with knowledge of the context of Bulgakov's theological writings (or his work in the area of Russian thought more broadly) would also see parallels therein, and it would certainly be interesting to contrast the *Diary* with his other thought.

Bulgakov went through some significant shifts in his thinking over his lifetime, which Mark Roosien discusses at some length in his biographical introduction. The *Diary* relates to a later period of his life when he had become an Orthodox priest and was living outside Russia (he initially entered the seminary as a much younger man, abandoned his vocation for a period, and then returned to the priesthood much later). It could perhaps have been helpful to provide a little more context about his influences and relationship with contemporaries within the tradition of Russian thought (aside from Florensky and Soloviev, not many are mentioned).

Aside from this slight weakness, the biographical introduction frames the *Spiritual Diary* well; together with the theological introduction it helps the reader pick out and reflect on the themes which emerge in what follows. This is perhaps necessary, because the diary was not written with other readers primarily in mind, and therefore does not follow a logical structure. In fact, Bulgakov returns to some themes several times, so there are some repetitions within the *Diary*.

Bulgakov reflects on the joys of priestly ministry. He refers often to attending at the bedside of those who are dying, seeing this as an enormous privilege which deeply touches him. He is clearly immersed in the Church's year, and therefore often writes about various feasts and seasons. There is a beautiful passage, for example, on Christmas, and he writes about Lent, Holy Week and Easter too. There are other sections on saints such as St Seraphim, St John the Baptist and St Sergius (his namesake). He has a profound devotion to the Virgin Mary, referring to her in the Orthodox way as 'Mary the Mother of God'. Other topics covered include miracles and the eucharist. Much of the diary is occupied with the theme of prayer in some way or another. He writes beautifully of how our daily reading of the Gospels should change our faith: 'Train your eyes to see it [the gospel scene] not as a story about something that happened once upon a time to others, but instead as what is taking place this very day with you' (157). This seems to hint at the idea of placing oneself in gospel scenes so loved by St Ignatius of Loyola.

In the *Diary*, Bulgakov writes often of sin and temptation, and also about despondency (which might be contrasted in his conceptualisation to the Ignatian concept of desolation). He places a particular importance on Gethsemane because it reveals how even the disciples were at times weak. This is clearly of significance for him personally. An aspect of the diary which might slightly jar with the modern reader is the way he occasionally refers to himself as a 'worm'. However, there is also a sense of intense gratitude for his current life which comes across very strongly. He writes 'the very ordinariness of each day: this is what makes up the content of our lives, and it should be transparent, serious, worthy and majestic' (84). He is in touch with the divine and transcendent in his life experience and even describes certain visions he has experienced.

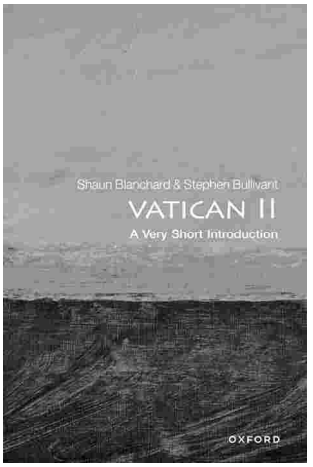
Another interesting aspect of the *Diary*, as Rowan Williams mentions, is Bulgakov's thoughts around guardian angels (and perhaps more alarmingly, demons). He links the Orthodox Church's teaching on guardian angels with real-life friendships. It is clear that despite the difficulties that Bulgakov has personally experienced he also values his marriage and friendships very deeply. Towards the end of the *Diary* he also meditates—perhaps unsurprisingly—on old age.

Bulgakov is preoccupied with a deep sorrow about what was happening in Russia at the time of writing, and what was happening to the Russian people—a theme which may seem salient for readers today for different reasons. He writes several times of what might be called the 'spiritual state' of Russia—and his own 'spiritual state' as an exile unable to return home, which clearly is a cause of some pain, and he often prays for Russia.

Most of the *Diary* is intensely personal but, at the same time, there is a relative lack of the autobiographical detail that one would expect to find in a memoir, for example. The style is both readable and aphoristic, and can be favourably compared, in this excellent translation, to spiritual classics of the Church Fathers or other saints (particularly in the Catholic mystic tradition). In this sense it could be recommended as daily spiritual reading, perhaps best read slowly and savoured. As Bulgakov himself says, 'the mystery of the spiritual life lies in its inexhaustibility and ever new creativeness' (148), so let us hope this volume can provide inspiration for the spiritual life of others, almost a century after it was written.

Elizabeth Harrison

Shaun Blanchard and Stephen Bullivant, *Vatican II: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 2023). 978 0 1988 6481 3, pp. 176, £11.95.



This volume enters a highly successful Oxford series of 'very short introductions', prepared by one expert (and sometimes two) for anyone wanting a stimulating and accessible way into a new subject. An introduction to the Second Vatican Council now joins previous volumes on Catholicism and the Reformation. The series still lacks volumes on the papacy and bishops.

Blanchard and Bullivant aim at watching their language. They recognise that talk of 'liberals' and 'conservatives' being locked in debate at Vatican II can sometimes be inaccurate. One cardinal (read Alfredo Ottaviani) could be 'conservative' in a particular area of teaching but 'liberal' in another. Blanchard and Bullivant prefer to follow the lead of other scholars in speaking rather of a 'Conciliar Majority' and a 'Conciliar Minority'. They attend carefully to the meanings of such terms as '*aggiornamento*', 'reformation' and '*ressourcement*', as well as 'reception', that highly significant concept and reality for the post-conciliar period.

Blanchard and Bullivant illuminate the move of the Western Church to the liturgical use of the vernacular by recalling how this was perfectly normal in Eastern Catholic Churches long before the Council. Where many commentators ignore the 1963 Decree on the Media of Social Communications (*Inter mirifica*), our two authors invoke Marshall McLuhan to argue that in the decree we have 'hints at a more nuanced, socio-cultural approach to understanding the media' which were 'genuinely cutting edge' (89).

Our authors rightly understand Vatican II as having championed baptismal ecclesiology, but remain silent on what baptism entails as sharing in the triple function of Christ, priest, prophet and king. *Lumen gentium* (the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church) elaborates that threefold vision of the Lord's redemptive work which also helps to fashion other documents issuing from the Council concerned with the baptized faithful and their ecclesial leaders.

I must confess to feeling that the reading of Vatican II proposed by Blanchard and Bullivant comes more through a sociological than a theological lens. I join them in being saddened by the decline of Christian life in

Europe. But why not show more joy over the massive growth of Roman Catholicism in the Congo, the high rate of Mass attendance in Nigeria and many further signs of Christian life flourishing elsewhere? They label a standing-room only, vernacular Mass in a Manila shopping mall as 'local customization' (50).

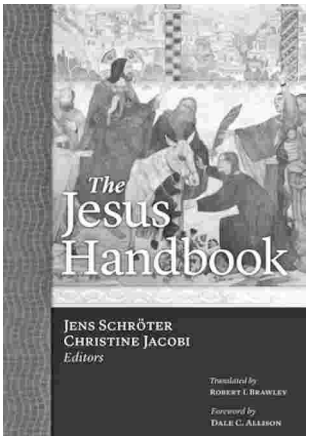
Blanchard and Bullivant associate themselves with John O'Malley's endorsement of Benedict XVI's words in an address delivered at Christmas 2005. The Pope interpreted Vatican II in terms of a reform, which involved continuity and discontinuity (112–113). The book ends with some pages on Pope Francis and Vatican II. I must protest against the claim that Francis 'wishes to direct and control' doctrinal development (116). As a theologian who tries to contribute to developing, interpreting and practising the central doctrines of the Church, I have not been directed and controlled, but rather inspired, by the Pope to do my best in the vocation I have embraced.

The bibliography includes publications by O'Malley and Jared Wicks, as well as one book by myself, *Tradition* (2018). Yes, that volume may help towards appreciating the achievement of the Council in being inspired by the living tradition championed by the Tübingen School. Perhaps I contributed something more relevant in *Living Vatican II* (2006), *The Second Vatican Council and Other Religions* (2013) and *The Second Vatican Council: Message and Meaning* (2014). The authors appropriately include two key books by Ormond Rush, the most informative writer on the reception of the Council. A work in collaboration currently being prepared by Catherine Clifford for Orbis Books will shortly provide a lively and informed access into examples of Vatican II being received and practised liturgically, spiritually and in further ways.

Apropos of the Second Vatican Council, in nearly sixty years of teaching and writing theology I have continued to draw much light and life from the sixteen conciliar documents. They continue to nourish my theology in a way that is second only to the inspired scriptures.

Gerald O'Collins SJ

***The Jesus Handbook*, edited by Jens Schröter and Christine Jacobi (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2022). 978 0 8028 7692 8, pp. 688, $74.99.**



This is a translation of *Jesus Handbuch* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017). Its international group of contributors covers with conciseness and precision most of the main topics regarding the historical Jesus, with a passing and implicit nod to the bearing of the historical Jesus on contemporary Christianity spirituality. What then does the historical Jesus have to do with such spirituality?

The Jesus of history can display his personality traits in a way that challenges us to avoid redefining him in our own inferior images. The same Jesus can thereby challenge us not to recast 'the Spirit of Jesus' in a way that misrepresents the divine mission of Jesus. The handbook suggests some considerations that bear on those challenges for us. Two are noteworthy here.

First, Jesus thought of God as 'Abba' (Father) in a way that concerns how we humans are to portray God. Treating 'Jesus's Concept of God', Christine Gerber remarks:

> The image of God perceptible in the Jesus tradition does not put threats of judgment in the forefront, but rather God's compassionate turning to human beings. As in Jesus's practice, what counts in God's turning to those in need such as the marginalized and sinners (female and male) is the individual person …. At the center of the theology implicit in this practice and teaching of Jesus stands God's relationship to individual persons and individual persons' relationship to God. Jesus stresses that God turns to the poor, the hungry, and those who mourn (Luke 6:20–23; cf. Matthew 5:3–12). (361)

This much seems undeniable if we attend to the historical Jesus. It does not negate a similar emphasis of the historical Jesus on interpersonal, social relationships among humans (Matthew 5:23–24). We learn more about the historical Jesus' understanding of God from how he *talks* about God as 'Abba', Father. Gerber comments:

> It is striking that in the Gospels talk of God as father is encountered only on the lips of Jesus. Just this can reflect that Jesus himself used this metaphor frequently. The unusual transmission of the Aramaic *abba* as a loanword transcribed in Greek in Jesus's address of prayer in Mark 14:36 speaks in favor

> of the fact that this pertains especially to *abba* as the address of prayer ('Father' as an address, and 'my father') …. Indisputably 'authentic' among the prayers is the Lord's Prayer in the version of Luke 11:2–4 (cf. Matthew 6:9). But also, even though the appeal to God as father in Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane (Mark 14:36 par.) and Jesus's prayers according to Luke 10:22 par and 23:34 are post-Easter formulations, they can carry on the memory of Jesus's praxis of prayer. (362–63)

The judgments about 'post-Easter formulations' here are controversial, but the key point is maintained: Jesus thought of and prayed to God as a caring father. This lesson is central to the kind of God involved in Christian spirituality.

Second, the historical Jesus manifests how, regarding our behaviour, we are to relate to God in a Christian spirituality. The kind of prayerful obedience shown by Jesus in Gethsemane is at the heart not only of the historical Jesus in relating to God, but also of a contemporary Christian spirituality. Writing on 'Jesus's Prayer, the Lord's Prayer', Karl-Heinrich Ostmeyer remarks: 'The high significance of Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane is expressed not only in the Gospels but also by the reference to it in Hebrews (Hebrews 5:7)' (394). He adds regarding Gethsemane:

> [Jesus] admonishes his companions repeatedly to watch and pray with him, so that they do not fall into temptation (Mark 14:37–38, 40–41; cf. Luke 8:13). According to Mark 14:17–42 par, Jesus knows about his impending death. He calls upon God as *abba* and pleads that the cup may pass him by (Mark 14:36), but he submits everything to the will of his Father. (397)

This summary captures what we know of the historical Jesus in Gethsemane.

Ostmeyer draws an important lesson for Christian spirituality:

> In the invocation of God as *abba*, (dear) Father, Jesus's understanding of himself, of prayer, and of God is combined (Mark 14:36). Accordingly, Jesus understands himself exclusively as *the* Son of God and presupposes that no one else stands in a comparable relationship with God. Believers who recite this name (*Father*) in prayer commit themselves to Jesus as *the* Son of God, through whom they know themselves to be redeemed. (400).

This emphasis on the importance of Gethsemane for the historical Jesus is correct and historically defensible as well as theologically important. It therefore is surprising that the handbook makes no mention at all of Gethsemane in its index.

A pressing issue is whether the historical Jesus is a contemporary spiritual reality, at least in the lives of some people. Historians of Jesus typically

hesitate to wade into theology, but it is an open question whether we can adequately understand the historical Jesus without robust theology that goes beyond mere history. Consider, for instance, the main purpose of Jesus in his life's mission: that purpose has to do, at least, with God (or his understanding of God), and it thus leaves us with some theology beyond mere history. Perhaps this will be historical theology, but it will be theology nonetheless.

The handbook serves a purpose of contemporary Christian spirituality by showcasing the main contours of the historical Jesus. Those contours guide us to retain the real Jesus in such spirituality. In doing so, they lead us to take seriously the challenge of Jesus from God. Contemporary Christian spirituality will only benefit as a result.

Paul Moser

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