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REFLECTIONS ON THE LIVING TRADITION

The Cannonball and the River: Ignatian Lessons for Building Institutions that Last

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Introduction

This is not the book; it is the story of how the book was written. While the forthcoming work distills five centuries of Jesuit spiritual strategy and institutional design, this paper is about what came before: the wound, the fire, the cannonball of a reflection that followed the moment my own faith in institutions collapsed. As a Jesuit alumnus, I did not set out to write about the Society of Jesus; I set out to survive that crisis. The Jesuits were not a research subject. They became a mirror, a provocation, and ultimately, a spiritual rescue. This is the story of why I had to write this book, what broke me open, and what I learned in the rubble.

Part I: The Cannonball Moment: A Crisis of Coherence

A Rupture in Havana

My struggle to understand organizations began in 1999 in Cuba, the land my parents had fled decades earlier. Born into exile and raised on stories of what was lost, uprooting was my inheritance. So when my mother asked me to accompany her on her first—and ultimately last—trip back to Havana, I agreed out of resignation rather than readiness. I was in the midst of a devastating bankruptcy—my own cannonball moment—and returning to a place defined by rupture felt fitting, as I was already unraveling.

In Havana, I expected contradiction, but not the kind that settled deep into my bones. Slogans like *Patria o Muerte*—Homeland or Death—were

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everywhere, painted on peeling walls. Yet beneath the revolutionary banners lay a decay that was more than physical. Buildings crumbled, and faces looked weary; the passion had shifted into performance. I did not have the words for it then, but I sensed a core absence: the people were not the purpose of the revolution but its fuel, consumed in service of an abstract ideal. The institution had become an end in itself.

The insight from Cuba—that institutions built to serve people had instead begun consuming them—remained a latent feeling for nearly a decade. It was not until the 2008 financial crisis, as the system collapsed under its own contradictions, that the pattern came into sharp focus. The institutional hollowing I had witnessed in Havana reappeared on Wall Street. Different flags, different ideology, same pathology: organizations losing their soul, reducing people to instruments or raw materials, and forgetting their purpose. I finally connected the dots between political dogma and market logic, realizing these weren't isolated crises but symptoms of the same deep design failure. The institution had become an end in itself, and the human cost was staggering.

This realization became my mission. Convinced that our future will be shaped not by lone heroes but by collective action through these organizations—the true leverage points for humanity—I had to find answers. Why do institutions, born to serve, so often turn against their people? Why do they forget their purpose? And what, ultimately, makes an organization endure? I had to figure out how to make them not just efficient, but vital.

The Cruel Contradiction

The questions planted by Cuba and Wall Street remained dormant for years, until a moment in 2013 shattered my last illusions of easy coherence. I had just read "In Search of the Missing Link between Education and Development"[1] by Xabier Gorostiaga, S.J.—a respected economist, educator, and advocate for the poor. His words induced a sense of intellectual vertigo. With the surgical precision of an insider, Gorostiaga exposed what many of us had sensed but never dared articulate: a structural disconnect between the ideals we were taught and the world we were meant to apply them in. He argued that Jesuit education promotes solidarity but trains and inserts its graduates into economic structures that reward individualism, thereby "reproducing and applying a deformed development or 'mal-development.'"

1 Xabier Gorostiaga, "In Search of the Missing Link Between Education and Development," in *Private Prometheus: Private Higher Education and Development in the 21st Century,* ed. Philip G. Altbach (Bloomsbury Publishing, 1999). Also in Spanish: https://revista-estudios.revistas.deusto.es/article/view/644/806.

Gorostiaga's blunt diagnosis forced me to confront the contradiction I had always suspected, prompting me to reread Pedro Arrupe's famous 1973 speech, "Men and Women for Others."[2] I had kept the yellowed pages, marked with youthful, idealistic underlining, since my school days, but this time the reading felt entirely different. I experienced a strange mix of nostalgia and frustration; each paragraph echoed memories of my education at Liceo Javier and that adolescent certainty that we could change the world. I still agreed with Arrupe's core principles: justice as a fundamental part of the Gospel, effective love as evidence of religious authenticity, and the need to be agents of transformation.

But something bothered me deeply: it was as if Arrupe had designed a beautiful map for a territory that did not exist.

The cruel contradiction became personal. Arrupe's call for a "simplicity of life" clashed with my reality as a parent of six. How could I afford the same quality Jesuit education I received without engaging in the very "competitiveness" he criticized? Living "for others" paradoxically required competing in a system that rewarded individualism, leading to a painful conclusion: for all their spiritual beauty, Arrupe's ideals felt inapplicable. Gorostiaga's diagnosis—that personal conversion is insufficient if economic structures remain intact—only confirmed this, leaving me at an existential dead end. If the structures wouldn't change and personal conversion wasn't enough, then what?

The Search for a New Language

That question became a driving force. My personal struggle for coherence bled into my professional life as a business consultant, where I saw the same contradiction plaguing the organizations I advised: a deep desire for purpose trapped within a system that only rewarded profit. In search of a better model, I turned to hundreds of management books—Drucker, Porter, Kaplan, Collins. Their frameworks were sharp and their tools practical, but none provided the language for what I sensed was missing.

Then, in 2017, I came across Frederic Laloux's *Reinventing Organizations*.[3] His concept of future organizations, a 'Teal' organization, one that weaves together purpose, wholeness, and self-management, stopped me cold. Wait a minute, I thought. I've seen this before, not in

2 Pedro Arrupe, "Men for Others," address to the Tenth International Congress of Jesuit Alumni of Europe, Valencia, July 31, 1973, in *Justice with Faith Today: Selected Letters and Addresses—II*, ed. Jerome Aixalá (Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1980), 123–38.

3 Frédéric Laloux, *Reinventing Organizations: A Guide to Creating Organizations Inspired by the Next Stage of Human Consciousness* (Nelson Parker, 2014).

a startup playbook, but in the Society of Jesus. I had spent my life in and around Jesuit institutions. They were my educators and protectors during Guatemala's civil war, a time when teachers disappeared and priests received death threats. They were my mentors and, later, my colleagues. I had witnessed them at their most human: demanding, passionate, fallible, and fiercely compassionate. For over three decades, I had taught, worshiped, and worked alongside them. Yet, in all that time, I had never truly seen them as an organization. Laloux provided a modern vocabulary for a timeless reality I had always known but couldn't name. The Society of Jesus didn't just have a mission; it had a living soul ('purpose'). It did not just educate minds; it cared for the entire person ('wholeness'). It did not just rely on hierarchy; it used sophisticated instruments like discernment and consultation to enable freedom and effectiveness ('self-management'). The realization was startling: what Laloux described as the future of organizations, I had experienced in a 500-year-old institution. The Jesuits were Teal before Teal had a name. And they were still here. Still building. I had to ask, why?

Suddenly, my two worlds collapsed into one: the spiritual community of my youth and my professional obsession with organizational vitality. The crisis sparked by Gorostiaga and Arrupe was not the end of the story but the beginning of a quest to understand how the Jesuits bridged the gap between ideals and reality, purpose and practice. I realized I had been studying organizational excellence all along—not in case studies, but in classrooms, chapels, and conversations with Jesuit mentors who lived their values through action.

The challenge, I now understood, was one of translation: how to distill this 500-year-old masterpiece of human-centered design into a usable framework. The risk was not oversimplification but misrepresenting something vital. The task demanded a language capable of capturing the dynamic interplay between purpose, structure, and people. That language would become the framework I call *Organizational Biodynamics*—a way to describe not just how institutions function, but how they endure.

Part II: The Jesuit Blueprint: Engineering an Enduring Soul

From Disruption to Design

My curiosity about lasting institutions kept leading me to the Jesuits. Their scale is unsettling—thousands of schools, millions of alumni—but their endurance is stranger still. Suppressed and exiled intermittently throughout centuries, they adapt without dissolving in a world where most institutions become hollow or rigid. Beneath their history lies something scandalously modern: they know how to form people, not just educate them.

I did not understand the weight of this until a confrontation with Fr. Roque Carrizo, S.J., at Liceo Javier. I had cornered him one afternoon, full of teenage skepticism about whether Jesuit education actually mattered—whether all this talk of virtue and reflection had any relevance in the real world. "What do you think we do here?" he asked, turning my challenge back on me like a typical Jesuit would.

I rattled off subjects like math and philosophy, trying to sound worldly and practical. He cut me off mid-sentence. "No!" he said, with an intensity that stopped me cold—the same fierce conviction I would later recognize in Jesuit educators everywhere. "We teach you how to think. Something you probably don't understand today, but will discover when you leave school."

At seventeen, facing his unwavering certainty, I dismissed it as defensive philosophical posturing. Decades later, I realized it was the most practical thing anyone had ever told me. This is the thread to follow: the Jesuits endure because they remember what the modern world forgets—that formation takes time, purpose is sacred, and leadership starts in the soul.

That realization launched a seven-year journey to uncover the organizational design of the Society of Jesus. I assumed someone had already studied one of history's most enduring institutions from a management perspective, but as I scoured academic literature and historical archives, I discovered a striking void. Five centuries of global influence, yet no one had seriously analyzed how the Jesuits actually *operated*. The discovery was profound: if the map did not exist, I would have to draw it. To structure this task, I divided my research into three parts: the historical context that shaped Ignatius of Loyola, the design of his original organizational model, and the application of modern theory to decode his blueprint.

Ignatius was forged in an age that was tearing itself apart. He was born into a fixed universe where the earth was the center of creation and the church spoke with God's voice. Then, in a single lifetime, it all crumbled. Christopher Columbus (1451–1506) shattered ocean barriers, Martin Luther (1483–1546) fractured Christianity, printing presses bypassed gatekeepers, and Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) displaced the earth itself. This was not a gradual change; it was reality being rewritten in real time. These interwoven forces unraveled one world and birthed another, creating a speed and volatility that old institutions, built for stability, could not contain. Most resisted or collapsed.

Into this chaos stepped Ignatius, a young nobleman with a shattered leg and a redirected ambition. He looked at the wreckage and saw not just upheaval, but opportunity. He would create something entirely new: an organization designed not just to survive disruption, but to thrive in it.

The world that shaped Ignatius—one of expanding horizons, collapsing certainties, and explosive knowledge—should sound familiar. Change the "discovery of the Americas" to "the internet," swap the "Protestant Reformation" for "social media disruption," and replace the "Copernican revolution" with "artificial intelligence," and the 16th century feels eerily like our own. The same forces are reshaping our world, just with different tools and faster speeds.

This is precisely why his story matters, not as ancient history but as a blueprint for building amid upheaval. Ignatius and his companions did not just survive their century's disruptions; they learned to harness them, creating an organization that could adapt without losing its soul. So, who was this man who transformed crisis into clarity and turned disruption into design?

The Man Who Turned Crisis into Clarity

Before sainthood came the cannonball. Ignatius of Loyola was no saint in waiting; he was a brawler, a gambler, and a womanizer whose courtly career was cut short when a new king turned against his protector. With polite society's doors slammed shut, he turned to the military—the only remaining stage where his aggressive ambition could still win glory. This relentless drive brought him to the walls of Pamplona on May 20, 1521. Facing overwhelming French forces, any reasonable commander would have surrendered. But Ignatius was chasing a vision of himself as a hero, the man who held the line when others fled.

A French cannonball shattered his leg, and with it, the entire narrative he had written for his life. The French, impressed by his reckless courage, spared him, but for a man whose identity was built on physical prowess and martial glory, this mercy felt like mockery.

What happened next reveals the force that would later reshape the catholic church. Appalled by a disfiguring bump on his poorly healed leg, Ignatius demanded his physicians saw the bone—not for his health, but for his appearance. He consciously risked death for cosmetic reasons because, in his world, visible imperfection meant diminished status. This was not mere vanity; it was personal ambition so pure and concentrated that he was willing to risk his life again for it. This same fire, this relentless drive for significance, would become the engine that powered the Jesuits.

Confined to bed during a long recovery, Ignatius faced a new problem: boredom. The castle library offered only two books, *The Life of Christ* and *Lives of the Saints*—not the chivalric romances he craved, but they were all he had. What began as desperate entertainment slowly transformed. Reading about saints like Francis of Assisi, Ignatius saw them not as mys-

tics, but as men who had achieved what he'd always wanted: lasting greatness, eternal significance.

His ambition did not die; it found a new target. If knights could win temporal glory, why couldn't he win eternal glory in service of the King of Kings? The fire that had nearly consumed him was about to be redirected toward something infinitely larger.

After his recovery, Ignatius made a pilgrimage to the mountaintop monastery of Montserrat to renounce his former life. He spent three days in confession, left his fine clothes with a poor man, and laid his sword and dagger before an image of the Virgin Mary—a concrete vow marking his transition from soldier to pilgrim. His ambition remained, but its direction had changed. Yet old habits die hard. Stopping in Manresa for what became nearly a year, Ignatius threw himself into spiritual warfare against himself with the same extremism he would once bring to battle. He tried to conquer his inner life through sheer force of will: seven hours of daily prayer, harsh fasting, and radical isolation. He aimed to control his demons, his desires, and his vanity, but the struggle nearly broke him. He stopped eating, bathing, or cutting his hair and nails. Loyola was a total mess.

Then, sitting by the Cardoner River, everything changed. Ignatius experienced what he called an opening of "the eyes of his understanding"—not a mystical rapture, but a profound shift in perspective. At Manresa, he had tried to destroy his ambition through self-punishment, but it did not work; the ego doesn't die through violence, it only hides. By the river, he understood he could not destroy his desires, he had to redeem them. Not by indulgence or denial, but by redirecting them toward love, service, and mission. This insight became the foundation of the Spiritual Exercises, a tool designed not to erase the self, but to aim it.

This redirection was also strategic. Ignatius realized that unexamined ambition will always destroy the mission. If you want institutions that endure, you do not suppress the ego—you form it, channeling it toward something more lasting than the self. The world was not something to flee from, but to engage with. Ambition was not evil; it just needed the right purpose. From this experience, two revolutionary principles crystallized: contemplation in action, ending the false choice between the spiritual and the practical; and finding God in all things, recognizing the sacred in every aspect of life.

From Insight to Infrastructure: The Constitutions

This spiritual vision was translated directly into an organizational design. At its heart lies a radical insight most institutions still miss: do not destroy personal ambition—harness it, shape it, aim it. This understanding was

codified in the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*,[4] creating an organization where personal drive and collective purpose were not in tension, but in synthesis. It all began with a cannonball, a broken leg, and a quiet moment by a river. But it became something that would outlast empires.

Ignatius had found his method, but he knew insight must become infrastructure to endure. My own journey mirrored this. The convergence of the chaos I saw in Cuba and the clarity of Jesuit design became existential. I had grown up straddling the spiritual intensity of my education and the disillusionment of institutional failure, but now I saw the connection. The Jesuit *Principle and Foundation* was not just a sentiment; it was a system, a structure for coherence. Their brilliance was not charisma; it was their design for endurance.

Over a decade, Ignatius drafted the *Constitutions* as a blueprint for dynamic unity, balancing paradoxes like discipline with freedom and hierarchy with autonomy. In this, I saw the pattern of all effective organizations: a spine of unshakable clarity with limbs loose enough to adapt. The institution in Cuba had calcified; the Jesuits had learned to breathe.

Deep in the *Constitutions*, I stopped seeing a historical artifact and started seeing living code—organizational software that had been running for five centuries. This was not scripture; it was source code. Ignatius's brilliance was not charisma; it was translation. He converted spiritual clarity into structural precision, understanding that inspiration fades while systems endure. He knew you don't scale by holding tighter, but by letting go intelligently. Principles like *contemplation in action* and *cura personalis* were not just abstract values; they were operationally embedded through ritual and rhythm, designed to form people who could form others. That is the difference between a movement and a moment.

But even this elegant structure didn't explain the Society's vitality. The key insight came from Part X of the *Constitutions*, where Ignatius described the Society not metaphorically, but literally, as "a good being."[5] He made the radical claim that when purpose, structure, and people align,

4 Barton T. Geger, S.J., ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: A Critical Edition with the Complementary Norms* (Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2024).

5 Barton T. Geger, S.J., recognized today as one of the leading experts on the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, has made these texts more accessible and relevant for modern Jesuits and lay collaborators alike. In a recent discussion, he concurred that "good being" might more faithfully capture the ontological depth of *buen ser* than the more common "well-being" found in previous translations to English of the *Constitutions*. Highlighting this nuanced translation reveals how Part X addresses the Society's integral organizational, spiritual, and personal needs by treating it as a genuine living whole rather than just a community with abstract "well-being."

they create something alive—an entity with its own dignity and capacity to endure. Reading those words changed everything. If an organization can be a living thing, literally, our job is not to manage it like an instrument, but to nurture it as a living entity. This understanding, which the Jesuits have practiced for 500 years, changes everything we know about leadership.

I first encountered this design philosophy without knowing its name. In seventh grade, facing expulsion for failing grades, the school didn't see a problem to be managed, but a person in pain. They looked beyond the rules and let me stay. This was *cura personalis*—not just kindness, but a human-centered system in action. It is one of many mechanisms the Jesuits built to focus their care. They turned *discernment* from vague spirituality into a decision-making technology and embedded the *daily examen* as a daily act of recalibration—a feedback loop for the soul, engineered centuries before the term existed.

In these practices, I saw a blueprint for the future: adaptability without losing identity, autonomy without chaos. Here, in this living structure, I finally found the words I lacked in Cuba. The revolution there collapsed because it consumed its people; the Jesuit order endured because it respected them. One treated humans as fuel, the other as fire. This is the core lesson: lasting institutions must be designed for both soul and system, not just in theory but in practice.

Ignatius feared only one thing: himself. He resisted becoming the first father general because he knew the same ambition that once led him to disaster could, disguised as virtue, sabotage the very Society he had built. He feared becoming the executioner of his own creation. So, when he finally accepted the role, he did not rely on his own will but on a protective framework. He spent over fifteen years meticulously designing the *Constitutions* not as rules, but as a living system capable of guiding its leaders and its members. He built in processes for consultation, correction, and even the removal of the Father General, ensuring no single will—not even the founder's—could override the Society's mission.

This is the key to the Society's endurance: Ignatius translated inner transformation (the *Spiritual Exercises*) into institutional design (the *Constitutions*) that keep its members grounded and balancing the spiritual and material world in perpetuity. In these dual architectures—the synthesis of spirit and system, person and collective body—I found the seed of what I now call 'Organizational Biodynamics.'

How do living organizations prevent decay and failure? I found the answer in Hannah Arendt's observation that "evil comes from the failure to

think."[6] Her words instantly illuminated two conversations from my past. The first was with Father Carrizo, who insisted the Jesuits did not just teach subjects; they taught us *how to think*. The second was with a stranger at a party who, upon learning where I was educated, laughed and said, "Do you know what Jesuits do to you? . . . They just don't let you sin in peace."

At the time, I laughed too. But Arendt revealed the profound truth linking these moments. The stranger's joke and the priest's mission were two sides of the same coin. The Jesuit's brilliance isn't just in forming minds but in shaping consciences. They were inoculating us against the thoughtless obedience that Arendt identified as the root of evil. Practices like *cura personalis* and the *daily examen* are not merely about kindness or reflection; they are institutional antibodies against the moral decay that starts with a failure to think. This is the pinnacle of their design: building institutions that resist decay because they have embedded conscience into their system, making betrayal harder.

Success, ambition, or desire by itself is neither virtuous nor sinful; the distinction lies in both *motivation* and *method*. When pursued solely for selfish gain, success becomes corrosive, leading to self-destruction rather than fulfillment. However, when success serves a purpose—providing for one's family, empowering stakeholders, and contributing to the greater good—it becomes virtuous. The key difference is simple: ambition that consumes, or ambition that creates.

While the Jesuit blueprint was magnificent and actionable, my research into organizational theory was infuriating. I found myself drowning in a sea of academic abstraction that felt more like a Jackson Pollock painting—evocative, but impractical. I wrestled with Taylor's machine-like efficiency, Max Weber's iron cage of bureaucracy, and the human relations school's sophisticated controls. Each offered a piece of the puzzle, but none could assemble them into a whole being with a conscience. They described the body parts but had no theory of a soul.

Part III: A New Framework: Organizational Biodynamics

From Law to Life: The Search for a Theory of Vitality

Exhausted, I asked a different question: Where does an organization become a real 'thing'? The answer was not in business school but in law school, with the idea of corporate personhood. Here was a concrete identity: a corporation could own property, sign contracts, and be held accountable. Yet, this clarity, while powerful, was also hollow. The law gave the organization

6 Amos Elon, "Introduction: The Excommunication of Hannah Arendt," in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, by Hannah Arendt (Penguin Books, 2006), xiv.

a body, but it could not explain its soul. It defined legal status but not vitality, health, or character. This was the turning point. My question evolved: If an organization is a 'person,' what determines that person's health and character? I realized I needed a theory not of legal status, but of cultural vitality. This led me outside the world of management and into the grand-scale work of sociologists who studied the very rise and fall of civilizations.

The answer came from an unexpected source: *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, the 1930s masterwork by Pitirim Sorokin, a Russian-American sociologist and founder of Harvard's Sociology Department.[7] In his study of civilizations, Sorokin argued that cultures are meaning-making systems that cycle between three mentalities: the Sensate (obsessed with material results), the Ideational (anchored in spiritual ideals), and the rare Integral (a synthesis of both). His research revealed that Integral societies, like Classical Athens and Renaissance Italy, achieved the greatest human flourishing.

Reading this, I had a moment of profound recognition. The Jesuits had built a perfectly Integral organization, uniting the spiritual ("God") with the material ("in all things"). But they had done something even rarer than Athens or Florence: they had engineered it to be sustainable for five centuries. This was the missing piece. Sorokin saw at the civilizational scale what modern theory had missed at the organizational one: institutions are not just structures; they are meaning-making systems. They endure not by choosing between purpose and practice, but by integrating them—and then building a framework to make that integration last.

The Integral Organization

Sorokin's framework sheds light on the crisis of our era. In 1970, Milton Friedman stated that the only social responsibility of business is to increase profits.[8] That single idea, the triumph of the pure Sensate mentality, became doctrine. It reduced people to resources to be used and created the opposite of a living organization. The outcome was not resilience but collapse. The evidence is a graveyard of giants like Credit Suisse, Purdue Pharma, and Enron, which failed not because of competition but due to internal decay.

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7 Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (Transaction Publishers, 2004 [1937–41]).

8 Milton Friedman, "The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase Its Profits," *New York Times*, September 13, 1970, SM-17, https://www.nytimes.com/1970/09/13/archives/a-friedman-doctrine-the-social-responsibility-of-business-is-to.html.

This is not a debate about capitalism; it is about a design failure. The problem is not an immutable economic structure, but how organizations choose to operate within it. The Jesuits showed a different path. For five centuries, they have held the Integral balance, proving that institutions exist to serve human flourishing, not the other way around. The real question is not whether it is for purpose or profit. It is about integrating them as one. Purpose without profit is unsustainable, but profit without purpose is hollow and, ultimately, just as fragile. The only profits that endure are those earned by serving people well.

My search, which began in Havana and found clarity by the Cardoner River, had led to a profound conclusion. But insight is fragile. To build something new, a story is not enough; you need a blueprint. My task shifted from discovery to translation: to distill the living reality of the Jesuits—a 500-year-old masterpiece of human-centered design—into a practical framework.

The Elements of the Living Organization

This work of translation became 'Organizational Biodynamics' (OB). The name is a synthesis of my journey: 'Bio' honors the living "good being" Ignatius described, and 'Dynamics' is from Sorokin's work on how institutions change. The core idea is simple: stop treating your organization like a machine and start nurturing it for what they are, a living being. For an organization to be healthy and endure, it must balance three core dimensions:

- Spiritual Dimension: The "Why." This is the purpose, vision, and culture that give the work meaning.
- Material Dimension: The "How." The intellectual and material property, structure, strategy, and systems—governed by a foundational constitution—are used to accomplish tasks.
- Human Dimension: The "Who." These are the people, the lifeblood who use the Instruments to express the Soul.

Most theories focus on the material dimension and treat the spiritual dimension as a slogan. Worse, they view the 'Human Dimension' (people) as a resource to be managed. OB argues that lasting success comes only from integrating all three. When these dimensions are in harmony, an organization becomes resilient, adaptable, and capable of thriving for generations.

This harmony is precisely what the Jesuit blueprint achieves. It avoids the modern trap of prioritizing one dimension over the others by creating a system where the health of the people and the integrity of the mission are understood to be one and the same.

Conclusion: The Final, Paradoxical Cannonball

Twenty-five years after my visit to Cuba, I find myself by another river, the Potomac. The crisis that began with Gorostiaga's diagnosis is resolved. The contradiction he identified between Jesuit ideals and economic reality is real, but the solution was not to abandon the ideals. It was to discover the hidden architecture that allowed the Jesuits to hold that tension creatively, transforming it from a source of paralysis into a source of power.

And so, this journey that began with a cannonball ends by firing one. The Society of Jesus oversees a global network of 90 business schools that shape future leaders. Yet they often teach the very 'Sensate,' profit-first models their own five-hundred-year-old 'Integral' design refutes. The grand illusion is that we are powerless against economic structures. The truth is that these structures are the collective result of the organizations within them. We cannot change the system without first changing its living cells.

Therefore, the most urgent application of this work is not for others to imitate the Jesuits, but for the Jesuits to reclaim their own genius. Their enduring model is a radical and proven alternative to the extractive theories that have caused so much damage. To offer this to the world is not just an opportunity—it is the great, untapped mission of their educational apostolate in the twenty-first century. The cannonball that shattered Ignatius's leg became his breakthrough. Perhaps our current institutional crises are our own invitations to conscious design.

The river keeps flowing. The choice remains ours. Are we going to help build institutions that exhaust their people, or ones that redeem them? Are we going to continue to teach models we have already outgrown—or offer the blueprint we've quietly practiced for centuries? What will we build? What will endure?

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