

# STUDIES

## in the Spirituality of Jesuits

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Toward a Theology of the Religious Life

A Sketch, with Particular Reference

to the Society of Jesus



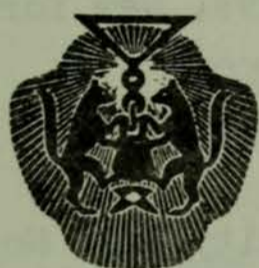
John R. Sheets, S.J.

Published by the American Assistancy Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality,  
especially for American Jesuits working out their aggiornamento  
in the spirit of Vatican Council II



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## THE AMERICAN ASSISTANCY SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

consists of a group of Jesuits from various provinces who are listed below. The members were appointed by the Fathers Provincial of the United States in their meeting of October 3-9, 1968. The purpose of the Seminar is to study topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and to communicate the results to the members of the Assistancy. The hope is that this will lead to further discussion among all American Jesuits -- in private, or in small groups, or in community meetings. All this is done in the spirit of Vatican Council II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original charismatic inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the changed circumstances of modern times. The members of the Seminar welcome reactions or comments in regard to the topics they publish.

To achieve these purposes, especially amid today's pluralistic cultures, the Seminar must focus its direct attention sharply, frankly, and specifically on the problems, interests, and opportunities of the Jesuits of the United States. However, many of these interests are common also to Jesuits of other regions, or to other priests, religious men or women, or lay men or women. Hence the studies of the Seminar, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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## C O N T E N T S

### TOWARD A THEOLOGY OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

A Sketch

with

Particular Reference to the Society of Jesus

by

John R. Sheets, S.J.

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#### A Summary

Introduction. There is a special need today for a theology of 155  
the religious life, one in which the religious life is  
traced to its roots, its "ground of being." The need  
arises because of the present collapse of plausibility  
structures, including that of the religious life, which  
has painfully brought the question of the meaning of re-  
ligious life to the forefront of our consciousness.

The "ground of being" of the religious life is  
graced existence. The theology of the religious life has  
to be traced back to the meaning of grace.

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with human love, seeing how one person graces another by  
a continual process of ordination, creating an alter ego.  
All love is seen as a process of inter-ordination, a proc-  
ess of bringing about what St. Augustine describes as "one  
soul in two bodies."

#### II. Scriptural Meaning of Grace 161

In the Old Testament many images are used to de-  
scribe this process of inter-ordination of God and man,  
for example, covenant, marriage, kinship. In the New  
Testament the fulness of grace is revealed in the inter-  
ordination of the incarnation and redemption. In the

Gospel of John and in the epistles of Paul this rich theme of our fellowship with Christ and, through him, with the Father, is constantly occurring.

Graced Existence brings about a new ordination on three levels: man becomes a new being, with a new way of being related, and a new manner of life. Christ is the fulness of this new ordination. Christians share in it through the gift of the Spirit.

The new realities of grace bring about certain polarities of: continuity-discontinuity, restoration-innovation, anthropocentricity-theocentricity, kenotic existence and integrating existence.

### III. The Religious Life as an Epiphany of Certain Aspects of Graced Life 170

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Aristotle remarked that philosophy begins with wonder. Theology, one might say, begins with anguish. The questions we ask concerning existential meaning ordinarily do not arise out of moments of serene contemplation. They are usually born in a moment of crisis that forces us to examine consciously and analytically a life situation which up to that moment had been lived in a more or less secure and accepted fashion.

The history of ideas manifests a pattern of interacting forces that give rise to doubt, challenge, ambiguity, and (sometimes) clarification. Augustine recognized this long ago when he observed how certain doctrines of the Church were clarified through controversy. "For was the Trinity perfectly treated of before the Arians carped thereat? Was penance perfectly treated of before the Novatians raised their opposition? So too Baptism was not perfectly treated of before the rebaptizers who were cast out of the fold contradicted the teaching. Nor were the doctrines of the very oneness of Christ, which have been stated, clearly set forth save after their separation began to weigh upon the weak...."<sup>1</sup>

This pattern will be present as long as history lasts. From new situations new challenges will be issued to each generation to spell out the here-and-now answer to the question of meaning. This holds true both for the fundamental questions, such as the meaning of God and the meaning of man, as well as for particular questions, such as those concerning morality and man's relationship to other men.

Among the questions in the forefront of the consciousness of many today is the meaning of religious life. It is not, of course, the first time that religious life has been challenged. In the past, however, it

was not so much the substance as some particular aspect that was challenged, as when St. Thomas, for example, had to defend the rights of the Friars Preachers to attend the universities.

The question concerning the meaning and nature of the religious life has a special urgency today for two reasons. First of all, the same thing has happened to the plausibility structure of the religious life that has taken place with many other plausibility structures in our contemporary society. They are at least threatened, if they have not collapsed entirely. The plausibility structure supplies the psychological support needed to sustain the confidence in any organization or movement. When that support is gone, the members become confused, lose heart, and begin to founder. This is the case with many religious. The number of those leaving, the problems of adaptation, and the challenges to give an account have weakened the plausibility structure of the religious life. In the second place, the challenges issued to religious life today are aimed directly at the heart, not simply at some particular aspect. They touch on the meaning of faith, the nature of the Church, the dogmas concerning Christ, and many others.

This challenge has given the incentive to many theologians to probe beneath the surface to provide a theological rationale for the religious life.<sup>2</sup> Besides the work of theologians many valuable contributions have come from scholars in other fields, for example, sociology, psychology, and history.<sup>3</sup> As valuable as such works from the social disciplines are, they do not really touch the essence of religious life. In order to ask and answer the question about the meaning we have to get to the "ground of being" of the religious life. Studies from the social sciences can be very illuminating, but they are no substitute for an adequate theology of the religious life.

Unless the religious life is seen in its ultimate components, there is the danger of seeing it simply as an epi-phenomenon in the life of the Church rather than as an intra-phenomenon, flowing from the very dynamics that constitute the new reality that has come into the world through the Paschal event. In other words, the theology of the religious



life has to be traced to the dynamics of grace. The new cosmos that has come about through the redemption is the cosmos of grace. The world has been made over. If one follows, then, the various aspects of the religious life down to their source, he will find the tap root in the new reality that is a graced reality. The religious life is simply an epiphany of certain aspects of the new cosmos of grace. If one understands the dynamism of grace, he sees that there is a certain exigency for it to manifest itself in what we call the religious life.

It is hoped that the following remarks will contribute to some extent to what others have already done in providing a theological foundation for the religious life.

Our exposition will have four parts. First of all, we shall attempt to form some idea of the meaning of grace from the analogy of human love, seeing it as a process of ordination; secondly, we shall consider the Scriptural idea of grace, and shall see how it effects a triple ordination, making man a new being, with a whole new way of being related, and giving him the dynamics of a new mode of life; thirdly, we shall see how the religious life forms a kind of epiphany of certain aspects of the manifold ordination of grace; and finally we shall comment briefly on the particular form religious life takes in the Society of Jesus, as shaped through the presence of the Ignatian charism.

## I. Grace as Ordained Existence

The word grace connotes beauty, gift, favor, gratitude. It suggests that glow in personal relationships coming from the highest form of human love, where there is not simply an exchange of things one possesses, but in some way an exchange of personal life itself.

Before we take up the Scriptural meaning of grace and the theological reflections on it, it will be helpful to approach it from the analogy of the way human persons grace one another through their mutual love. In using this approach we hope to do more than exploit a personalistic jargon that happens to be "in" at the moment.<sup>4</sup> Genuine love wherever it is found is at least in a remote way a manifestation of grace, however tenuous and imperceptible it might be. Human love is a duet in a much

larger chorus.<sup>5</sup> It contains at least an oblique reference to grace.

Our first step then will be to reflect briefly on the way that one person graces another in human love. From there we can go on to see how this effects a person on a divine-human level.

To begin, we have to see that all love is a process of ordination. Because man is not simply flesh but incarnated spirit, he has the power in some mysterious way to extend himself to another person and to ordain that person to himself, and himself to the other. It is an experience everyone has had who has loved and been loved. It is difficult, however, to conceptualize the process.

In the gradual development of a love relationship there is a continual process of ordination, that is, an ordering or being ordered to. It shows itself concerned first of all with what is merely external and terminates with an ordination approximating identification.

There is first the ordination of what is external, for example, one's time, because of the mutual desire to spend more time with one another. Then there is a sharing of what a person has in an exchange of gifts. All the while there is taking place an inner ordination affecting one's whole being. The memory becomes ordained to the other to such an extent that one is always recalling the other's presence. Everything becomes a memento. The imagination in turn takes on a particular ordination with the result that one's image world takes on the hue of the other's presence. It is not necessary to belabor the point to show the powerful way in which love ordains the imagination. The imagination becomes the fertile field of dreams, love letters, and poetry. The words we use to describe such a person show what a powerful "fix" love has when it takes over the imagination. We speak of such a person as captivated, charmed, enchanted, fascinated.

Further, one's thoughts take on a particular ordination to the point where someone is not simply in one's mind but on his mind. The thoughts become weighted as it were toward the other. The whole mysterious complex of a person's life which we call the heart takes on the pull of another. One's life begins to be centered on another. All of these

various ordinations reach their fruit in the deliberate choice of the other, which may not be one act, but a whole network of acts. The ordination comes to fruition in conscious choice, as we see, for example, in the choice of a life partner in marriage. The choice of a person is the choice of a presence, not simply a presence of juxtaposition, but a presence which is a world in which one lives and moves and has his being.

Growth in love, therefore, is a process of inner ordination to the point where one takes on the "spiritual shape" of another through this process of ordaining. A child born of the union is the physical shape of an inner ordination we cannot see. He is "grace" made visible. The inter-ordination of two, who in the Scriptural formulation are two in one flesh, which is primarily a spiritual reality, actualizes itself in the visible expression of one who is two-in-one-flesh, when a child is born. The child not only comes from the union. He is the union made visible.

The love relationship requires continual re-ordination. It cannot rest on an ordination as if it were made once and for all. It must give its shape to all that is offered in the succession of moments, days, weeks, years. A mind grows only through the ordination of the manifold series of experiences presented to it day after day. Love grows in the same way. It must give its shape to the experiences which confront it day by day, whether they reinforce the love or threaten it.

On the other hand a process of dis-ordination takes place when love begins to die. A death takes place on every level--memory, imagination, thoughts, heart, and choice--until there is a death of mutual presence. This again is a matter of experience. When love dies, the memory of a lovely life dies. What before was a treasured memento now becomes hateful. Similarly with the imagination. A death of imagination takes place. The imagination-in-love enhanced the love relationship. The imagination-out-of-love dies, though he still remains alive as a person-in-himself.

What is true of the love relationship, it can be said in passing, is true also of the faith relationship. Faith and love are aspects of one and the same ordination. Loss of faith is the death of a person-in-love. It is accompanied by death on every level of existence. It can

also he observed that unlike other forms of life, faith and love do not die by accident. They die because they are killed either directly or through neglect, usually through the presence of another incompatible relationship.

One of the most beautiful descriptions in the whole of literature on this subject is found in Augustine's Confessions, when he describes how he felt when a young man who was his closest friend died. In its simplicity and profundity it is unparalleled. He speaks of how his own heart, his whole life was totally darkened by the loss of his friend. He himself did not want to die, because this would mean not simply his own personal death, but the total death of his friend. He wondered how he himself could still be alive, while his friend was dead, since friendship was a union of one soul in two bodies. With his friend dead, Augustine felt that he himself was "halved." It was a source of painful awareness to be only half alive.

I wondered yet more that I myself, who was to him a second self, could live, he being dead. A certain one [Horace] said well of his friend, 'Thou half of my soul'; for I felt that my soul and his soul were 'one soul in two bodies.' Therefore my life was a horror to me, because I would not live halved. Therefore too perchance I feared to die, lest he whom I had much loved should die wholly.<sup>6</sup>

Here Augustine speaks of friendship as one soul in two bodies. This is another way of describing what we have been speaking of when we describe love as an inter-ordination, where the mysterious presence of one in other converts the other somehow into an alter ego.

This power of love to effect an ordination which creates an inseparable identity is also beautifully described in the Song of Songs, the only example of Hebrew love poetry found in the Scripture. "Set me like a seal on your heart, like a seal on your arm. For love is strong as Death, jealousy relentless as Sheol. The flash of it is a flash of fire, a flame of Yahweh himself. Love no flood can quench, no torrents drown."<sup>7</sup> The strength of love is compared with Death and Sheol, which nothing can resist.

Human love is, therefore, a power of self-ordination, of centering

oneself on another, and the other on oneself. This does not mean, however, that this relationship is self-enclosed and self-sufficient, though it does have a primacy over other relationships, which it nourished and in which it is in turn nourished.

We have begun with this brief analysis of human love in order to appreciate better the meaning of grace in the Scriptural sense. In human love one person graces another, or two are mutually graced. If we understand this we can get away from the idea of grace as "something" added to someone. When a person loves and is loved he has nothing he did not have before. He is not necessarily richer, wiser, wealthier, healthier. On the other hand, he is someone he was not before. Though he has nothing more, his whole life is changed. For many it is the first time their lives become meaningful.

With this preliminary exposition of the way persons are graced through human love, we can now turn to the Scriptural meaning of grace.

## II. The Scriptural Meaning of Grace

It would be presumptuous to attempt to give an adequate treatment of the Scriptural idea of grace in a few pages. The whole of Scripture is about grace. The words Bernanos uses to conclude his Diary of a Country Priest apply most appropriately to Scripture. "Grace is everywhere." After all what is Scripture but the progressive revelation and realization of the covenant relationship of God and man. The term covenant is another way of expressing the mutuality of ordination we have been speaking of. God "ordains" himself, freely, totally to the salvation of man. His whole work is to re-order all things to himself by re-establishing all things in Christ (Eph. 1:10). It is not a question of one soul in two bodies, as Augustine spoke of human friendship, but one Spirit in many, drawing all to a unity in Christ.

Nonetheless, though we cannot do justice to the full ambit of the Scriptural idea of grace, we want to recall some of the main ways this graced relationship is described there.<sup>8</sup>

In the Old Testament many images are used to describe this ordination, freely initiated by God, the extent of which the people of Israel only gradually realized. Any and every human analogy is used to convey the reality of God's love and his desire to draw his people into a special ordination of his own inner holiness: the love of the faithful spouse for one who is more often unfaithful than not,<sup>9</sup> of the vineyard and its keeper,<sup>10</sup> the servant whom God has chosen,<sup>11</sup> the redeemer with the same love as a kinsman,<sup>12</sup> the consoler,<sup>13</sup> loving them as a father does his children,<sup>14</sup> or a mother for her children,<sup>15</sup> the good shepherd,<sup>16</sup> the guardian of Israel,<sup>17</sup> their king,<sup>18</sup> the author of the covenant,<sup>19</sup> their lover.<sup>20</sup>

All of these images serve to bring out the idea of grace as a new, gratuitous mode of existence where God's inner ordination of personal holiness reaches out to form for himself a people according to his own heart.

In the later books of the Old Testament a development takes place which serves as a bridge to the New Testament idea of grace. This is found in the wisdom literature. The idea of wisdom, proceeding from God, transmitted to Israel, chiefly in the form of the Law, expresses in an eminent way how the inner ordination of God enters into a people to form them according to his ways.<sup>21</sup>

### In the New Testament

In the New Testament the full meaning of grace is revealed. Christ himself is its full expression. In him as the incarnate Son, the meaning of graced existence reaches a peak that could never have been anticipated. In Christ the inner ordination of a human heart becomes the very ordination of God's own heart.

The whole process of Christ's redemptive activity can be described as a process of identification in order to draw us into his own ordination to the Father. He does this first of all by entering into the disorder of our sinfulness, suffering, and death. His passion and death are the winepress of his identification.

Christ, therefore, is the one who is the "fulness of grace and

truth" (John 1:14). Yet his graced existence is not so much given to him to be possessed as to be transmitted, in order to draw others into his own sphere of existence.

Our grace, then is a participated grace, a share in the graced existence of the Son, who has become one with us through his compassion, his entering into our disorder, without of course any sin on his part.

This identification with the Son is brought out in all of the books of the New Testament, to a lesser degree in the synoptics, more extensively in the Gospel of St. John and the epistles of St. Paul.

In the synoptics the idea of grace is mostly interwoven with the idea of membership in the kingdom of God. Even there, though, the idea of identification is brought out explicitly, as for example, when Christ identifies himself with the little ones who were hungry, thirsty, strangers, naked, in prison (Matt. 25:40), or where he speaks of his presence wherever his disciples are gathered in his name (Matt. 18:20), or because he has deliberately shared with them the love and knowledge he has with the Father (Luke 10:22).

In the Johannine writings the idea of grace as mutuality of presence is a recurring theme. It effects a fundamentally new ordination in man, making him a child of God,<sup>22</sup> giving him a share in Christ's own life,<sup>23</sup> making him an abode of the divine presence,<sup>24</sup> creating a fellowship with Christ and one another,<sup>25</sup> creating a degree of identification which parallels that of Father and Son.<sup>26</sup> John's theme of grace can be summed up when he says: "Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us, by letting us be called God's children; and that is what we are" (1 John 3:1).

While the theme of grace is more or less explicit in the rest of the New Testament, it is the warp and woof of Paul's life and letters. The only way to account for this is an overwhelming mystical experience of the reality of Christ's identification with the Christian. The words he heard when he was confronted with Christ form a kind of inscription over the whole of his life. "I am Jesus, and you are persecuting me" (Acts 9:5). At the time he probably was not aware of the full meaning

of these words. Gradually, however, he began to assimilate their meaning, or rather he began to be assimilated by the reality signified by the words. He came to realize that Jesus was not simply a "self", an "ego", but that in some mysterious way, Jesus was also a "we." Jesus was identified with his brothers. What they suffered, he suffered.

Paul makes use of every possible expression to bring out the completeness of this identification of Christ and the Christian. Often he will combine words with the Greek preposition syn in order to convey the meaning. The Christian suffers with Christ, is crucified with him, dies with him, is buried with him, rises with him, lives with him, is vivified with him, takes on the same form with Christ, is glorified with him, seated with him, reigns with him, conformed with him, grows together with him, is an heir with him. He uses the formula "in Christ Jesus" over one hundred times to denote the identification.

One way in particular brings out the idea of inner ordination we have been using to describe graced existence. It is the idea of image. We have been called by the Father for one purpose, to become the image of the Son (Rom. 8:28-30). The whole work of the Spirit is to change men into this image (2 Cor. 3:17, 18).

This mode of existence is a completely new creation. A whole new cosmos has come into existence interpenetrating the old cosmos, giving it a new ordination. "If then any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old state of things has gone. Wonderful to tell, it has been made over absolutely new" (2 Cor. 5:17). What we have been calling an ordination is spoken of by Paul as a new principle of life. "Yes, we were buried in death with him by means of baptism, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, so we also may conduct ourselves by a new principle of life" (Rom. 6:4). The same idea is expressed when he speaks of the Christian as being clothed with the person of Christ (Gal. 3:27).

In a mysterious fashion, through the gift of the Spirit, the Christian shares in Christ's own ordination as Son, victim, and risen Savior, not in a way that touches his life tangentially, but in such a way that



there is a complete change of reality. The totality of the change is as great as bringing a dead body to life. "Consider yourselves dead men brought back to life" (Rom. 6:13). He speaks of it as complete change of one's being, a metamorphosis (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18).

In some way we cannot fathom, the inter-ordination of grace brings about a trans-personalization of our own existence. There are two "ego's" in us, two centers within us, that of the Son, and our own, not lying alongside one another, but in such a way that our personal, natural center is trans-personalized by the self of the Son. Our natural ordination with all of its sinfulness and frailty is taken up into Christ's. This is what Paul means when he says, "I live now, not I but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). If, to refer to Augustine's remarks about friendship, a person becomes whole only through love, then man becomes completely whole only when he becomes holy in the relationship where his own self is taken up into the self of Christ.

#### Grace as New Being, a New Way of Being Related, and a New Mode of Life

If we reflect further on the data of Scripture we have so briefly commented on above, we see that the life of grace has three aspects. It creates a new being, who has an entirely new way of being related, from which there flows a whole new manner of life. All of these aspects of newness are inter-related and cannot be separated. All of them are the incarnation in the Christian of Christ's own graced existence, or to use the expression we have been using, his own ordination.

#### Christ as the Fulness of Grace

Christ is the incomparable expression of the new mode of being, of being related, and of the new mode of existence. His new mode of being is that of the Son of God in the flesh. From the first moment of the incarnation on, to use Augustine's phrase, God's union with man in the flesh of Christ is such that he would be "halved" if such an ordination were dissolved, and God cannot exist "halved." All of the descriptions in which the Old Testament describes the way that God relates to man

take on a new meaning in the New. Wisdom, for example, which was a personification in the Old Testament is now revealed to be a person. His dwelling in us is shown to be a share in his own personhood.

Christ, therefore, is the new being, the New Adam (Rom. 5:15), in whom the Godhead dwells bodily (Col. 2:9), the one in whom all exists and for whom all was created (Col. 1:16, 17), who receives the same worship as the Father (Apoc. 5:13, 14).

In him we also see the meaning of grace as the new way of being related, one whose whole being is constituted in his relation to his Father and to mankind. His whole being is turned toward the Father, so that the overwhelming weight of that divine presence could turn him completely toward man. He is both Son of the Father and brother of those whom he has drawn into his own orbit of existence (Heb. 2:10). He is the divine Word, whose whole meaning is comprised in the fact that he is from the Father but for man.

His manner of living flows from his being, and his being related. His life is the "outside" of his relationship to the Father and mankind. It has a dual aspect, as a consecrated life, and a consecrating life. In his life of consecration he consciously seeks the will of the Father in all that he does (John 8:29; Matt. 26:39). He is the one the Father has consecrated and sent into the world (John 10:36).

At the same time he is only consecrated in order to consecrate others. "For their sake I consecrate myself, so that they too may be consecrated in truth" (John 17:19). Concretely his mode of existence was a function of his mission, to re-unite men with the Father and with one another through his consecrating activity. His mode of life, therefore, was sacrificial, or to use the expression of St. Paul, kenotic, a constant emptying of self, reaching its climax in his passion and death (Phil. 2:7). This is his supreme act of consecration.

Christ's sacrificial life was not something added on from the outside, as it is for the rest of men, through whatever circumstances demand of them. Christ's consecrating activity in a sacrificial manner was built into his life with an ontological necessity. The very nature

of his mission was to enter into mankind in order to take on man's own dis-ordination, in all things except sin. His whole mission was to become the alter ego of man, not in some romantic way, but as man actually is, as destined to death. This whole process of identification is the way that he graces man, taking on man's ordination to death, in order that man might take on Christ's ordination to life. His sacrificial life was the eclipse demanded by the completeness of the identification. It was not sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice or a display of heroics or the need for personal asceticism. In order that we could enter into his life, he first had to enter into our death.

Every individual moment, therefore, in Christ's life has the same structure as the whole of his life, the structure of the Paschal event--an emptying of self in order to fill us. Every moment was a moment of consecration. "Remember how generous the Lord Jesus was: he was rich, but he became poor for your sake, to make you rich out of his poverty" (2 Cor. 8:9). From the very beginning of his public life he was designated as the sacrificial lamb (John 1:29). His passing over to the Father, the definitive overcoming of death by life, is the climatic form of a way of life lived every moment. Being the Servant of Yahweh was not a role he assumed only during "business hours." It was the very structure of his existence. In the Scriptural sense, it was his Name, where name expresses the essential character of a person.

The Christian as New Being, with a New Way of Being Related, and a New Manner of Life

We have seen how the threefold ordination of grace, as new being, being related, and new manner of life, is found fully in Christ. We want to see how the graced life of the Christian is a sharing in this triple relationship. Here we want to translate what we said above about the graced life of the Christian into the schema of the triple ordination of grace.

The Christian is a completely new being. "For anyone who is in Christ, there is a new creation; the old creation has gone, and now the new one is here" (2 Cor. 5:17). The commentary of a Scripture scholar

on this passage is instructive. "The old things, the Old Covenant, are no more... The word kaine (new) designates not just something that has recently appeared but rather a new manner of being, differing essentially from what was habitual before."<sup>27</sup>

As a new being he has been taken up into a whole new way of being related to God and man through Christ. "You belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God" (1 Cor. 3:23, 28). This point is so obvious and so thematic to the New Testament that there is no need to elaborate it.

A new manner of life flows from his new being and new relationship. All of Paul's teaching on morality illustrates this. He draws out the directives for Christian living as corollaries from the graced existence of the Christian. To take one example, he teaches the unacceptability of fornication not from an ethical argument or from the decalogue but from the fact that a Christian is one with Christ, making one person with him. "But the body--this is not meant for fornication; it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body... Anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him" (1 Cor. 6:14, 17).

We want to pursue further the implications of the new manner of life of the Christian. We saw Christ's manner of life had a twofold aspect, as one who is both consecrated and also consecrating through his kenotic activity. If a Christian is to express fully the ordination of Christ in his life, he must show it both in personal holiness and also in the activity of consecrating others through his redemptive activity. We would like to concentrate on this second point for a moment, the kenotic manner of life of the Christian.

As we have stressed above, there is only one central rhythm to Christ's life. On it everything else is based. He achieves communion through sacrifice. His mission is to effect union by being priest and victim. The kenotic aspect of graced existence is not, therefore, adventitious. It locates graced existence in the reality of man's life in time and history, with the interplay of light and darkness, holiness and sin, growth and death.

If one took only one aspect of graced existence, as sharing in the

ordination of his risen life, he might easily overlay it with Platonistic connotations, like a sharing in the good, true, beautiful, instead of seeing Christian existence as living out the rhythm of Christ's own ordination, a life overcoming death, a consecrating as well as a consecrated life. What Paul says of himself is true of every Christian in his own way. "All I want is to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and to share his sufferings by reproducing the pattern of his death" (Phil. 3:10).

Up to this point we have reflected on the meaning of grace as a new ordination, where a person through the Spirit of Christ takes on the three-fold ordination of Christ. We would now like to go one step further to see how the new ordination of grace is related to the old order, how the post-graced order is related to the pre-graced.

#### The New Ordination of Grace as Related to the Old Order

It is difficult to explore fully how the new ordination of the Christian as a son of God envelops his "old" ordination as man.<sup>29</sup> We see, however, on each of the three levels we mentioned above certain polarities in the way graced existence manifests itself in its relationship to the natural order. Though we will treat these polarities in a schematic fashion, we hope that no one will get the impression that they are found in reality in neatly packaged containers.

Beginning with the first level of ordination, man as the new being through grace, we see a double relationship of the new to the old. There is first of all the polarity of continuity-discontinuity; secondly that of restoration-innovation. We shall explain more fully below what we mean by these polarities.

On the second level, as bringing about a new way of being related, grace existence creates a polarity of theocentricity-anthropocentricity.

On the third level, as a new manner of living, graced existence creates the polarity of kenotic-use as compared with integrating use, or saying the same in another way, the consecrating use as compared with the consecrated use. One aspect emphasizes the priestly-victim

mode of graced existence; the other, the kingly aspect. One emphasizes Christian life as renunciation; the other, as ratification of nature by grace. The mystery of grace, so rich in its simplicity, when it is refracted through man, turns some faces upward to express the inner poise of the Church with its whole being turned toward Christ, with an absorption that is not of this world. It turns other faces downward into this world in order to build the kingdom of God by building the earth. Every graced person has both faces to some extent. But the Holy Spirit will draw out the polarities of grace, turning the face of some to one aspect of the ordination, with their eyes fixed on Christ, and others to another aspect, with their gaze on the world. In only one person is this twofold gaze found perfectly. The face of Christ is perfectly turned toward the Father, and at the same time toward man. In those who are graced by Christ, however, some are called to manifest one ordination, others to show forth another one.

We are in a position now to apply what has been said concerning grace more directly to the religious life.

### III. The Religious Life as an Epiphany of Certain Aspects of Graced Life

It might be helpful to give a brief résumé of what has been said so far to see how it relates to the religious life. To grace another is a process of loving that creates an inter-ordination, approaching an identification. In the Old Testament this inter-ordination is described in various ways, all of which express some aspect of loving ordination. In the New Testament the inter-ordination of God to man takes the form of an incarnation of love in the Son, who is himself the fulness of grace. This inter-ordination creates a graced being on three levels: a new being, with a new way of being related, and a new manner of living. The completely new inter-ordination by grace is related to the old ordination of nature in such a way that it creates certain polarities, each of which brings out a certain aspect of the ordination of grace.

How is this all related to the religious life? The religious life brings into a visible, tangible focus the life of grace in one series

of the polarities which the mystery of grace creates in the human heart. It shows forth the life of grace in its discontinuity with all that preceded it, in its power to innovate, its theocentricity, and its kenotic quality.

We would like to develop these points a little to see how the religious life is an epiphany of a whole set of ordinations implicit in graced existence, recalling our warning at the same time about seeing these in neat compartments.

First of all, the religious life bears witness to the discontinuity of the mystery of grace. It is a life that does not come from below, but completely from above. No matter how nature could strive to set the mountain of Pelion upon Ossa it could never reach the inter-ordination of grace. The sheer magnitude of the ordination creates a complete discontinuity with any ordination that preceded it. To understand this better we can compare grace in its discontinuity with grace as it creates continuity. The sacrament of matrimony, for example, while being a new reality as a sacrament, is continuous with the pre-graced reality of marriage, which was instituted from the beginning.

Religious life, therefore, bears witness to the reality of grace not just as a higher ordination of what was there before, but to the magnitude of the gift. Like the incarnation itself, a gift so great and unexpected, it explodes the bridges that link it with the previous reality and creates a whole new cosmos of meaning.

In the second place the religious life bears witness to the innovating aspect of the mystery of grace, as it brings about a totally new creature. "Behold I make all things new" (Apoc. 21:5). In this way it brings out the ordination of freshness, newness that we find, for example, in the Resurrection, which is not repolishing an old reality. It is an entirely new personal existence with the newness of a fresh gift from the hand of the Creator. Matrimony, on the other hand, while it shows forth the newness of a graced existence, as Paul beautifully describes (Eph. 5:21-33), highlights grace as the restoration of a reality that was already there, giving it, however, a newness and freshness

it never had before.

In the third place, the religious life shows forth the theocentricity of the orientation effected by grace. It shows forth the immediacy of the union of God and the human person. There is nothing or no one between God and the graced person except God himself, that is, his Spirit. One's whole being is drawn into immediate union with him, in a partial way now, but eventually to a degree of intimacy which words cannot describe (1 John 3:2).

The immediacy of the union and its theocentricity is brought out when Paul speaks of Christ as the spouse of the Church. They make two in one flesh. Grace ordains the whole of the Church turning its face completely toward Christ and the Father. The religious life, particularly as a life of consecrated virginity, brings out the theocentricity and the immediacy of the union with the Father in and through Christ. The sacrament of matrimony, on the other hand, brings out the anthropocentricity of grace. In matrimony two persons mediate grace to one another. Through their mutual love they draw one another into the ordination of grace.

In the fourth place, the religious life shows forth the kenotic aspect of graced existence. The ordination of Christ's life, as we saw, was to fill us through the emptying of himself. In a mysterious way a victim way of life becomes the vehicle of gracing others. What seems on the face of it to be a privation of ordination becomes the medium of ordaining others. "The language of the cross may be illogical to those who are not on the way to salvation, but those of us who are on the way see it as God's power to save" (1 Cor. 1:18). His emptying of his self-will in complete obedience to the will of the Father becomes the medium of our ordination as sons of God.

What in Christ seems to be an absence of that personal union which is found in the union of marriage is really the visible ordination of a hidden relationship to all men with whom he forms a union through his Spirit. He is in the bosom of the Father (John 1:1), and in the bosom of those who are his spouse (Apoc. 21:2). He is in the bosom of no one individual because he is in the bosom of all who are united to him through grace.



Again, Christ's life of poverty (a word whose meaning has to be explained each time, since it has so many connotations depending on circumstances) was not a life of simplicity similar to that which even a Stoic might recommend for the peace that it gives. His life was simple, it is true. But even more it was characterized by a redemptive use of things. Giving his life as a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28) was not just one final act, but an attitude which stamped his life and his use of things.

The religious life bears witness to the dynamism of grace not only in the fact that we are consecrated as Christians, but also in the way we are consecrated. Through the victim life of Christ, we are consecrated not only to the term of grace, but also to the means to the term.

There is an inner nexus between the giving-up aspect of Christ's life and the giving-to aspect. What seems to be a giving-up becomes the way he in fact gives himself to us. What looks like separation is indeed communion.

Wherever graced existence is found, this kenotic quality is present. The religious life of chastity, poverty, and obedience, however, makes a special profession of this ordination. Such a way of life arises by a certain exigency from within the mystery of grace itself.

We spoke above of the polarity of the kenotic aspect of grace and the integrating aspect. It is hard to find words to express the exact nature of this polarity. It corresponds to the two ways in which the Holy Spirit acts to bring about the re-establishment of all things in Christ, through the "unreasonable" or kenotic use of things, and through the reasonable use. By unreasonable, we do not mean what goes against reason, but a use of things which, as St. Paul says, is illogical unless it is seen as a living out of the "unreasonable" nature of Christ's own life. There is, on the other hand, a reasonable or prudent use of things which is also a manifestation of grace in its continuity with the old order. The power of the Holy Spirit reinforces the integrating power of the natural order with a new power to build and unite. It is the duty of the Christian to build the earth using all of the means possible. In one way the Christian builds the earth with material he has quarried

from heaven; in another with the material he has quarried from the earth.

The polarities we have described might seem to some to cancel one another out. They might seem to contradict one another but actually are polarities of one and the same mystery of grace. How can we reconcile, for example, the continuity and discontinuity within the mystery of grace? the kenotic ordination, which seems to be unreasonable as if it were an absence of power, with the wise ordering that seems so reasonable? Conceptually they seem to be mutually exclusive. In life, however, they are reconciled, especially at the very center of the life of grace, Christ himself.

In Christ there is both a "yes" to the order of logos, or structure, or reason, of which he is himself the author, and also a "no" to it, in so far as it is caught up in a new kind of logos, or logic, redemptive, victim-logic, which has its own inner law. On the one hand, he acted reasonably as any founder would by gathering disciples, instructing them, forming them through personal contact. On the other, he acted "unreasonably" in the type of men he chose, certainly not the type to start a kingdom. He acted "reasonably" in eluding his enemies before his time, "unreasonably" in setting his face toward Jerusalem realizing he was putting himself in the hands of those who wanted to kill him. He taught obedience to those who sat on the chair of Moses, but declared himself Lord of the Sabbath. Examples of this sort could be multiplied. They have a reconciliation in the heart even though the head finds it hard to keep them together.

Each order of reality has its own logic, whether it is the order of reason, beauty, love, holiness. The logic of one order can seem at first sight to contradict another, but in reality it is a logic of a higher order. Following a certain line of logic, for example, no mother should love her child, since according to the logic of reason it is unreasonable to love one who is a source of pain and sacrifice. Yet we all know that there is a logic in love which is its own explanation, though it seems to contradict the logic of reason.

Christ as the redemptive Word both reinforces the word he spoke in

creating the world, and also melts it down in the smelter of his redemptive logic, a logic of victim love, out of which it emerges in what appears to be an entirely different form. The logic of redemptive love, which Paul calls the logic of the cross, contains a wisdom which not even the hidden powers penetrated. "It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory" (1 Cor. 2:8).

The religious life professes to manifest this higher, redemptive logic, which seems to be a lack of logic when looked at from below. It is not, however, a denial of reason but a manifestation of a higher form of reason.

Is the religious life, therefore, a better or a higher form of life? Christian tradition has always looked on it as a higher form of life. For various reasons, however, we feel uneasy with such statements today and also question the reasons given for the traditional position. Yet there is a legitimacy in the traditional statement if we understand the point of reference for the comparison.

It is necessary to keep three things in mind if one is to appreciate the traditional evaluation of the religious life as a higher state. First of all, since the term "better" is a comparative, it can only be understood if the point of reference is understood. What might be better in one way is less good in another. For example, when St. Thomas asks which is the most valuable of all the sacraments, he answers, the Eucharist. But he goes on to say, that from a certain point of view other sacraments could be considered most valuable: baptism from the viewpoint of its necessity; orders and confirmation from the viewpoint of ministry; matrimony by reason of what it signifies.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, it has to be kept in mind that the statement concerns what is better, not who is better. In our experience, though, the distinction is honored more in theory than in practice. Our self-love tends to convert what is an objective situation into a personal attribute. Our Lord, for example, chides the apostles for their discussion about who was better (Mark 9:34), though he invites them to what was better (Mark 10:21).

He states, for example, that Mary had chosen the better part, though he does not say Mary is better than Martha. Paul says that prophecy is better than the gift of tongues, though he does not say the prophet is a better man than the one with tongues. At the same time he tells them to be ambitious for the higher gifts (1 Cor. 12:31). Too easily, however, does our self-love blur the distinction between the gift given and the personal worth of the one who receives the gift. A better gift does not mean necessarily a better person.

Thirdly, when we understand the point of reference for the traditional evaluation of the religious life as a higher state, we see that it is not a matter of personal dignity or worth, as the mother of Zebedee's sons thought, but a profession of drinking the cup that Christ himself drank (Matt. 20:22). It is not a concern to be either at the right hand or left of Christ in the kingdom but to be with him on the way of the cross. Here the logic of language breaks down. The term "better" breaks in our hands like a rusty tool. All one can say is that it is a profession of a state of life in which one, through a life of chastity, poverty, obedience, and complete disposal to the community, drinks the same cup that Christ himself drank. It is grace in its kenotic, consecrating power, where life comes through the emptying of self.

With all of this in mind, it is probably better to avoid the terms "higher" and "better", as the Second Vatican Council did in describing the religious life, using the term "special" which avoids comparative overtones. It is a life which has its own specialization of grace, what we termed the kenotic aspect.

### The Religious Vows

The religious life has taken many different forms throughout history. Yet what is common to all is crystallized in the profession of the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, lived in community.

The traditional expression of religious dedication in terms of these three vows is not something arbitrary. They are three natural foci around which the logic of a certain manifestation of grace crystallizes.

This is the inner logic of grace, as we have mentioned, in its aspect as discontinuous, innovating, theocentric, and kenotic.

It is not possible to develop in detail the way that each of the vows manifests this logic. The Second Vatican Council in its Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life does this in some detail. For further development the commentaries on the decree can be consulted.<sup>32</sup>

The vows of the religious life are an affirmation of a particular ordination of grace. One cannot understand or appreciate the ordination of the vows except through their relationship to Christ's own redemptive ordination. The idea of a vowed existence of ordination, first of all, brings out the totality of the ordination--the whole of what one is, has, will be, for the whole of one's life. It is in a member a manifestation of the totality of Christ's own "yes" to the Father in embracing his mission. It encompassed all that he was--forever. A religious vow is not just a human act expressing someone's resolve to do something hard. It is the lived expression in history of Christ's own vowed dedication to his mission. The religious vow becomes the epiphany of Christ's own commitment, though we are aware that like all of the grace we have received it is held in a fragile earthenware jar (2 Cor. 4:7).

Each of the vows touches the whole of our life. It is not as if obedience, for example, touched only one's disposition of himself, chastity, one's relationship with others, and poverty, the use of things. They are as difficult to separate as the notes that blend to make up a single chord. They are branches coming from a common trunk and root.

Each of them, however, brings out a special aspect of the kenotic ordination of grace. The vow of obedience manifests the kenotic ordination as a form of sub-ordination, incorporating into one's life the complete sub-ordination of Christ to the will of the Father, as this is mediated through the religious rule and the will of the superior. The vow of chastity manifests Christ's inter-ordination, his relationship as spouse to his bride, the Church, not simply in terms of union, but a union brought about by his sacrifice. He had to wash the Church first before he made her his bride (Ep. 5. 25, 26). Through poverty there is

a super-ordination of things, where the redemptive use of things has a logic of its own, embracing and even surpassing the logic of the reasonable use.

### Lived in Community

The religious life brings out the community aspect of grace. What is true of the dynamics of every form of life is also true of the dynamics of grace. Every type of life forms clusters which in some way embody, sustain, and serve as a way of manifesting aspects of life which otherwise remain hidden. In this way all life tends to form faces. In the human face, for example, there is a special concentration of personality, not that the biological life of the cells in the face is any greater than other cells, but in some way the totality of the person surfaces in his face. For that reason if we direct our attention to a person, we look at his face, not at his hand or foot. Flowers again are faces, a concentrated, social expression of a beauty diffused but hidden.

Similarly the dynamics of grace tend to form faces, either in individual person, the saints, who become faces or windows through which we get a glimpse of the hidden reservoirs of grace; or in communities: religious communities, which form the kenotic face of grace, with a special dedication to the mission of the Church; married life, forming the face of the union of Christ and the Church.

Before we go on to consider in the next section the Jesuit form of religious life, it might be helpful to summarize what we have said thus far.

We have been trying to locate the religious life within the total life of the Church. It is not something which arises from the pressures of historical circumstances, though obviously history kneads the dough containing the leaven, and influences the contingencies of religious life. Religious life is the emergence in visible shape of a certain aspect of the reality of grace. In a special way the religious life brings out the mystery of grace in its discontinuity, newness, theocentricity, and kenotic quality. When to the ordination of grace there is the ordination

to give this community expression, the religious life in the technical sense appears.

#### IV. The Jesuit Form of Religious Life<sup>33</sup>

We would like to locate the Jesuit life within the larger context of the religious life as we have described it above. The perennial elements of the grace ordination, which are constitutive of the religious life, are there. At the same time something new and distinctive emerges. We shall assume the presence of the perennial elements without going into an examination of them. This assumption can easily be justified by a perusal of the Constitutions written by St. Ignatius. We shall concentrate rather on what is distinctive of the Society of Jesus.

But what is distinctive? Anything? How can it be found? Is it something which passed away with St. Ignatius or something enduring and continually shaping the life of the Society? In other words, what is the particular charism of St. Ignatius?

Since the word charism is used so loosely today, it is necessary to preface our remarks with some observations on the meaning of charism. A charism is a particularization of a general law in the economy of grace. It illustrates one of the characteristics of God's providence. He draws men and things to himself through the mediacy of other men and other things. A charism is a special gift from the Holy Spirit in which he shares with an individual or a community the drawing power of Christ himself. A charism, therefore, is a unifying power, given to an individual, or community, with an orientation that goes beyond the one to whom it is given. It always has a social orientation.

There are two kinds of charism: one given to the individual for the community; another given to the community for the individual. The first kind is what we see given, for example, to founders of religious orders. The second is the unifying power given to the Church, to teach, sanctify, and govern, with the particular gift of infallibility without which the unifying power of the other gifts would be merely nominal. These latter gifts are institutionalized charisms. Though they have a nucleus in

certain members of the community, the pope, namely, and the college of bishops, they are given to the body for the members. At present we are concerned with the first kind of charism, given to the individual for the community.

Within the Church some individuals are given a gift through which they fan out in their unifying power to create a family, or to use the terminology of Teilhard de Chardin, a phylum. The gift acts like a generative power, handed on, creating a family with its own characteristics. Though it might be hard to conceptualize the differences between different religious orders, for example, between the Dominican form of religious life and that of the Jesuits, the differences are there and are part of our experience.

It is difficult to isolate the nature of a particular charism. It is not some inert force that yields itself to patient research. It is like a sunbeam refracted in the water. It is hard to see its boundaries. A charismatic gift is refracted in the temperament of a man and the mood of his particular period in history. It is not easy to distinguish the beam of light from the color it takes as it enters into a particular person and his historical circumstances.

The process of discerning the charism is, therefore, never completed. New circumstances can bring about a shift in our perception, moving something we thought was central out to the periphery, or even to the non-charismatic sphere. There is always a process of demythologization, not obviously in the sense that everything is converted into a myth. The exigencies of history, however, act like a refining process, separating the genuine from the inauthentic, sometimes indeed compounding the problem by insinuating its own inauthenticity.

It is not easy, therefore, to fix the boundaries of a charismatic gift. It is first of all a lived and experienced reality that only reluctantly yields to conceptualization. Prayer, experience, discernment, and research can help. The best means to discern the nature and presence of the charism is a life that is formed by the charism itself.

A charism is in some ways like the sacrament of the Eucharist,



though the comparison breaks down in many ways. In the Eucharist a material reality is transformed and serves as a drawing center of unity. Its reality does not pass unless the material elements cease. Though the sanctifying words which brought the Eucharist into existence have passed, the sanctifying reality perdures. The same is true when a person or community is sacramentalized. The gift given by the Holy Spirit is embodied in persons who become centers of drawing all things to Christ.

This is not some kind of a magical phenomenon. It is a manifestation of the power of the Spirit to share his own power to unite. He is not only the Spirit of union, but gives others this power to unite.

We want to pass on now to a discussion of the charism of St. Ignatius. Can we sort out the elements that belong to his particular gift? As we said above, the boundaries will never be sharp, and all of our searching deepens the channel, rather than narrows it. It is possible, however, to locate what lies in the center, what might be called the central axis. We find this through a study of his whole life, particularly his life after his conversion. It is embodied in a special way in the Spiritual Exercises and the Constitutions.

With due respect to those who have done this on a much more comprehensive level, we would like to describe what seems to us as the main aspects of the Ignatian charism.<sup>34</sup>

We would hazard the opinion that the particular charism of St. Ignatius is his vision of the way all things come from God and return to him. He sees all things, as it were, coming from God vertically, but returning horizontally through service. The work of the Jesuit is in a special way returning all things to God through collaborative service with Christ. There are, therefore, two fundamental aspects to his charismatic gift: the theocentricity of his vision, and the fact that vision leads to service.

The theocentric nature of Ignatius' vision is evident to all who are familiar with his life and writings. We shall limit our remarks to a few comments. It is brought out clearly, for example, in his Autobiography where he speaks of his remarkable vision of the Trinity. He

saw how all things in creation proceeded from the triune God. He also saw how Christ is the eternal Lord of all things.<sup>35</sup> The theocentric vision is also evident in the Contemplation to Attain the Love of God in the Spiritual Exercises. The same is true in the Constitutions with his stress on the ever greater glory of God and the importance of God's providence which brought the Society into existence and mercifully will preserve it.

But for Ignatius the vision of God as Creator and Lord led to a translation of what he saw into a life of apostolic service. It is impossible to describe briefly all that is involved in his notion of service. It is more of a constellation of various elements than one single idea. It takes in his attitude to Christ, the Church, man, the world, history, and the powers of evil. While he realizes that Christ calls every Christian to follow him in some capacity or other, he sees that Christ calls some to a special role of service.

Those who want to join themselves to Christ in this special role of service have to collaborate with him in his poverty, suffering, humiliation, and complete obedience to the will of the Father. In the Constitutions he stresses how this service takes place in the visible Church through obedience to legitimate authority, in a particular way, to the Holy Father, the Vicar of Christ on earth.

As Ignatius understands service it is always reaching out to the "more," the greater glory of God. It demands constant abnegation in order to attain the freedom and mobility necessary for complete and unconditioned service. The life of service, Ignatius saw, should respect what we spoke of above as the "logic of reason," that is, the inner order within the hierarchy of things, realizing always that the spiritual gifts have the primacy over the purely natural gifts. At the same time he saw that the "logic of the cross," which we spoke of above as the kenotic aspect of grace, was the way of service par excellence, since it was the way Christ himself chose in obedience to the Father's will.

Further, he realized that the life of service was not only a

straightforward movement of advancing the kingdom of Christ, but also a conflict with the powers of darkness. He had a keen sense of the power of the evil spirits in their antagonism to the kingdom of Christ. Because of this awareness, and also because of his instinct for the magis in Christ's service, he laid great stress on the need for discernment of spirits.

Ignatius is known, among other things, for his stress on the obedience of the Jesuit. This flows as a corollary from his vision of service. The Society needs unity and mobility if it is to serve Christ in the Church. One of the most effective ways of assuring the kind of service he envisioned as characteristic of a companion of Jesus was perfect obedience of judgment and execution. Obedience, however, was not conceived in functional terms alone, but as a way of closer identification with the character of Christ's own service.

One of the most striking aspects of the Ignatian charism is found in the quality of flexibility in the kind of service undertaken by the Society. On the surface it is hard to see how the wide variety of apostolates undertaken by Jesuits come under one banner. Jesuits are astronomers, mathematicians, theologians, philosophers, linguists, exegetes, playwrights, poets, artists, missionaries, teachers, directors of retreats, pastors, carpenters, cooks, and the like. How is it possible for all these to have any kind of unity which is not just nominal?

This serves to bring out a very special aspect of the Ignatian charism. The Jesuit response of service is a dialogue response reaching in two directions: first of all, to Christ, from the person as an individual but as a member of the Society; secondly, as a response to the circumstances where he finds himself.

The Jesuit notion of the apostolate is not, therefore, to have a prefabricated scheme fit for every occasion. It is situational or contextual. This does not mean that it is arbitrary or without continuity. It means, however, that it is carried on in prayerful dialogue with Christ, under the direction of superiors, in response to the needs of the situation.

It seems, then, that a very special aspect of the Ignatian charism is to support and promote unity in diversity, where the unity comes from a common center, and the diversity from the exigencies of the situation.

The Jesuit apostolate, however, was to be governed by certain objective priorities. It was not to be a "pop apostolate," taking on any and every need. St. Ignatius used the expression that a work was more divine the more universal it was. Putting the same idea in different words, it meant that the Jesuit apostolate put highest priority on those works which had the greatest potential for socio-spiritual change. For this reason he gave a high priority to the education of youth.

We have tried to bring out some of the main notes of the Ignatian charism. If someone expected a neat formula that would clear up all difficulties, he will be disappointed. The Ignatian charism gives the Jesuit who is open to it not a series of answers but a spiritual set to his mind and heart very often manifesting itself in a spiritual methodology conditioning his approach to his whole life.

It is remarkable how the decrees of the Thirty-First General Congregation are permeated with the same spirit we have attempted to describe. A comparison of these decrees with the Constitutions shows the presence of the same spirit. This is not the result of conscious imitation, the way that a contemporary artist might imitate an ancient master. Rather, it is the work of the Holy Spirit who in giving the kind of grace we call a charism to a particular person creates a network of grace, reaching out and leaving its spiritual imprint on all of those who are receptive.

## V. Conclusion

We have attempted to understand the religious life from the viewpoint of the intrinsic ordination of grace. For this reason we began with the kind of ordination that takes place in human love, and showed how this is raised to an entirely new dimension through the divine-human ordination of grace. We saw that the one, rich mystery of grace, when it is refracted in human nature, manifests itself in different polarities: discontinuity-continuity, innovating-renovating, theocentric-anthro-

po-centric, kenotic-logical. We saw that the religious life manifests one set of these polarities, though as we warned we should never think either polarity is found in its purity in any one state of life. The religious life, therefore, flows from the very nature of graced existence. It is not something added or arising only from historical circumstances, though its forms vary throughout history.

The Society of Jesus, along with other religious orders, emerges from the graced existence of the Church and bears witness to the ordination of grace at the heart of our existence. But this ordination is mediated to the Jesuit in a special quasi-sacramental form which we call the charism of St. Ignatius, which translates a vision of God into a vision of special service to Christ and the Church.

While much has been left unsaid, and perhaps what is said could have been said better, it is hoped that the preceding remarks might contribute to a better understanding of the religious life and in particular to the understanding of the Ignatian charism which leaves its sure but gentle touch on every Jesuit.

In conclusion we feel that the words of Gerard Manley Hopkins convey all we have been describing when we spoke of grace as ordination, and charism as a way of mediating grace.

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:  
Deals out that being indoors each one dwells;  
Selves--goes itself; myself it speaks and spells,  
Crying What I dó is me: for that I came.

Í say móre: the just man justices;  
Keeps gráce: that keeps all his goings graces;  
Acts in God's eye what in God's eye he is--  
Chríst--for Christ plays in ten thousand places,  
Lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his  
To the Father through the features of men's faces.<sup>36</sup>



## FOOTNOTES

- 1 On Psalm 54, 22.
- 2 Within the past few years scores of works have appeared dealing with the theology of religious life. See, for example, the "Donum Dei" and the "Vita Evangelica" series, published by the Canadian Religious Conference, Ottawa, Ontario. An excellent bibliography of authors, titles, and subjects has been assembled by Father Richard F. Smith, S.J. in the Review for Religious, volumes 28 (1969) and 29 (1970).
- 3 The bibliographies in the Review for Religious just mentioned contain a comprehensive listing of pertinent works.
- 4 For a survey of the contemporary trends in the theology of grace see Francis Colburn, "The Theology of Grace: Present Trends and Future Directions," Theological Studies, XXXI (1970), 692-711.
- 5 In one of his prayers Kierkegaard expresses in a compelling way the fact that human love has its source in the love of God. "How could anything rightly be said about love if Thou wert forgotten, Thou God of love, from whom all love comes in heaven and on earth; Thou who didst hold nothing back but didst give everything in love; Thou who are love, so the lover is only what he is through being in Thee! How could anything rightly be said about love if Thou wert forgotten, Thou who didst make manifest what love is, Thou, our Savior and Redeemer, who gave Himself to save us all! How could anything rightly be said about love if Thou wert forgotten, Thou spirit of love, Thou who dost abate nothing of Thine own, but dost call to mind that sacrifice of love, dost remind the believer to love as he is loved, and his neighbor as himself! O eternal love! Thou who art everywhere present, and never without testimony in what may here be said about love or about works of love...." See Perry D. LeFevre, The Prayers of Kierkegaard (Chicago, 1956), p. 11.
- 6 Confessions, IV, 6.
- 7 Cant. 8:6, 7.
- 8 A few of the standard references may be helpful. Peter Fransen, S.J., Divine Grace and Man (New York, 1962; first published in Antwerp in 1959). Henri Rondet, S.J., The Grace of Christ (Westminster, 1966). Joseph Bonsirven, S.J., Theology of the New Testament (Westminster, 1963). All of the various theological encyclopedias in their articles on grace treat the Scriptural meaning of grace, for example, Sacramentum Mundi. The New Catholic Encyclopedia.
- 9 Osee 1:2, 2:6, 4:12, 5:4; Isa. 1:21-26; Jer. 2:2, 3:1, 6-12; Ezech. 16:23; Isa. 50:1, 54:6,7, 62:4,5; Ps. 45.
- 10 Isa. 5:1-7, 27:2-5; Jer. 2:21, 5:10, 6:9, 12:10; Ezech. 15:1-8, 17:3-10, 19:10-14; Osee 10:1; Ps. 80:8-18.
- 11 Isa. 41:8,9, 42:19, 43:10, 44:1,2, 45:8, 48:20.

- 12 Ps. 19:14, Isa. 43:14, 44:6,24, 47:4, 59:20.
- 13 Isa. 51:12.
- 14 Osee 1:6, 2:3,25, 11; Jer. 31:20; Isa. 49:14-16.
- 15 Osee 11:1,2; Isa. 49:15.
- 16 Ps. 23; Ezech. 34.
- 17 Ps. 121.
- 18 Isa. 6:1,5; Jer. 23:2; Ezech. 34:11-16; Ps. 24:7, 47:8, 48:2, 68:24, etc.
- 19 Exod. 19:24.
- 20 Isa. 49:16.
- 21 Two of the key passages are found in Prov. 8:22-31; Wisd. 7:22.
- 22 John 1:12; 1 John 5:1,2.
- 23 John 15:5.
- 24 John 14:20, 15:4, 17:21,23,26.
- 25 1 John 17:22,23.
- 26 John 17:22,23.
- 27 John J. O'Rourke, Jerome Commentary (Englewood Cliffs, 1968), p. 281. See also Rom. 6:4, 8:10; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10.
- 28 See also 1 Cor. 6:19, 11:3; 2 Cor. 10:7; Rom. 6:11,15; 8:9; Mark 9:41.
- 29 We are aware of the working of grace in all spheres of existence at every point of history; that, for example, even the Old Testament is the New Testament in a real, yet preliminary way. The same can be said with the proper qualification of God's action among people at any point of history. What we are speaking of in this section is the fullness of grace through the redemptive action of Christ, and the drawing of all things into this event through the gift of the Spirit. While all time is in a sense Paschal time, the time of the Church is such in the fullest sense. Our remarks in this section are, therefore, limited to the non-anonymous Christian, to the Christian who is the sacramental expression of the ordination that comes from being taken up into Christ's own ordination. We hope that our passing over the treatment of such important questions as the relationship between nature and grace will be understood in the light of the limited scope of our treatment. This latter question is treated, for example, in Karl Rahner, S.J., Nature and Grace (New York, 1963).
- 30 Summa Theologiae, III, Q. 65, a. 3, ad 4.
- 31 Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 44; Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life, nos. 1,2.
- 32 Perhaps the best and most complete commentary is L'adaptation et la renovation de la vie religieuse, ed. J. M. R. Tillard, O.P., Unam



- Sanctam, LXII (1967) (Paris: Éditions du Cerf). Also helpful is Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966).
- 33 Points which are commented on only briefly here are taken up at greater length in a paper on the Jesuit vocation in this series, John Wright, S.J., "The Grace of Our Founder and the Grace of Our Vocation," Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits, Vol. III, No. 1 (February, 1971).
- 34 See, e.g., Hugo Rahner, S.J., The Spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola (Westminster, 1953), where there is also a brief bibliography.
- 35 Autobiography, nos. 28-30.
- 36 A Hopkins Reader, ed. John Pick (Garden City, 1966), p. 67.

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