

STUDIES

in the Spirituality of Jesuits



**Affectivity and Sexuality: Their
Relationship to the Spiritual
and Apostolic Life of Jesuits
Comments on Three Experiences**

by

William A. Barry, S.J.

Madeline Birmingham, R.C.

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Robert J. Fahey

Virginia Sullivan Finn

James J. Gill, 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**

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.

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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AFFECTIVITY AND SEXUALITY: THEIR RELATIONSHIP
TO THE SPIRITUAL AND APOSTOLIC LIFE OF JESUITS

INTRODUCTION

by

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

To face and explore issues which are affecting the lives of Jesuits and those we love and serve has been a constant aim of the American Assistancy Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality. Members of the Seminar have steadily endeavored to choose topics for discussion and publication which seemed to be both important and timely. An unwritten objective of the group has always been to examine the issues, not to create them; and this is what the authors of this present offering have sought to do. Jesuits' spirituality, like that of all priests and religious men or women, is in fact being influenced strongly today by forces related to both human affectivity and sexuality. Problems as well as opportunities for spiritual and personal development are consequently arising in the lives of members of the Society engaged in all types of apostolates. But especially in the day-to-day experience of spiritual directors is it becoming increasingly apparent that affectivity and sexuality are interrelated and together either promote or impair the spiritual maturation and functioning of persons sincerely intent upon living as "friends in the Lord."

Religious formation personnel, superiors, spiritual directors, and individual Jesuits everywhere have during recent years shown unmistakable signs of increasing interest in the interrelationships among sexuality, celibacy, community, apostolate, friendships, and spiritual growth. Workshops, academic courses, articles in various publications, and countless hours of conversation and debate have focused on these interacting elements in Jesuit life. We have probably been no less and no more concerned about them than members of other religious orders and congregations all over the

world. But the relationship between affectivity and spirituality does not appear to have been as widely discussed or deeply explored, perhaps because it is not as obviously problematic or as central an element in other spiritualities as it is within the Ignatian model. Our founder was a man of strong and flexible feelings, and his prayer and method of discernment featured prominently the affective aspect of his personality. His gift of tears, ecstatic joy, scrupulous guilt, and warmth of friendship are only a few of the signs which, along with his instructions about prayer, disclose that Ignatius' affective life was intimately linked with his successful pursuit of Christian spiritual values.

Two major "revolutions" occurring in the past several decades have contributed to the urgency with which we feel inclined to deal with the topic at hand. The so-called "sexual revolution" so visible in this country is, I suspect, somewhat more universally recognized than the equally profound affective revolution we have been living through and influenced by. Evidence of the former is everywhere around us. In the past quarter of a century we have grown accustomed to seeing and hearing about string bikinis, topless bars, transvestites, pornography, abortion legislation, contraceptive pills, coeducational dormitories, suburban wife-swapping, skin flicks, sex therapy, unisex clothing and hairstyles, transsexual surgery, the gay liberation movement, women's lib, *Playboy* and *Penthouse*, statistics from Masters and Johnson and the Hite Report, a sex-and-violence-sustained entertainment industry, and a new "sexual morality." The life of any Jesuit, including his "spirituality," could hardly escape being influenced by the vapors from such an eruption. We live in the world; its climate provides the air we draw with each breath into the very depths of our being.

We have also been living through an explosion of concern about affectivity. Feelings and emotions have supplied the lifeblood of such recent inventions and discoveries as sensitivity sessions, encounters, T-groups, marathons, love-ins, cursillos, marriage encounters, est, faith healing, primal-scream therapy, tranquilizers, antidepressants, Esalen, group process, humanistic psychology, the human-potential movement, self-actualization, gestalt therapy, psychoanalysis, rock music, the hippie

movement, and the drug culture. "Getting in touch with" one's feelings, expressing one's emotions "openly," and "gut-level communication" have become virtues for our times. In spirituality, too, affectivity is attracting not new but renewed attention. Especially in the realm of prayer, the ability to communicate with God in terms of what one is experiencing at the level of feelings and emotions is becoming more and more commonly an issue of concern for Jesuits and their spiritual directors on a week-to-week basis, not just during the course of an Ignatian retreat.

Another transition has taken place and helped to provoke the Seminar's discussions which preceded the writing of this issue of *Studies*. It is closely related to the two "revolutions" we just briefly considered. Jesuit formation and apostolic emphasis have changed. For a Jesuit like myself, who was guided toward an apostolic life between two and three decades ago, the emphasis was naturally placed on becoming a man who would come to know and love God and manifest this love especially by zealously engaging in the service of one's fellow men and women. The typical modes of service were providing sacraments, preaching, teaching, and giving retreats. At the risk of oversimplifying, I would say that the education and formation we received was aimed particularly at providing us with knowledge which we could impart and skills in the ways of expressing the truths we were learning about God, man, and the world in which we live. Our "spiritual life" was very personal, a matter of privacy between ourselves and God, perhaps shared with a spiritual director or superior, but generally incompletely.

The continuing formation we are undergoing today, strongly shaped as it is by our two most recent General Congregations, gives a new emphasis to our pursuit of competency and our understanding of what a "spiritual life" is all about. Instead of serving people by supplying them with "the truth" or having "the answer" to the problems they face in their lives, we are exhorted to "communicate" with them personally and individually, by listening to their needs, sharing their struggles, allowing them to come to know our deepest attitudes, values, faith experiences, struggles and weakness, and, in brief, giving them a chance to recognize us as "wounded healers." We hear a new emphasis on the continuous pursuit of growth, the improvement of our ability to relate to others in Christian

friendship, and a deepening of our understanding of ourselves as well as the people we serve. We have become accustomed to think of our "spirituality" as being defined in terms of the quality of our relationship with God, with Christ, with others, and even with our selves. Whether or not we view this gradual but striking shift of apostolic emphasis (from giving what we know to sharing what we are) as evolution or revolution, the implications are profound. Many new and difficult life problems are also being experienced by Jesuits, and other religious, whose apostolic style, human relationships, modes of prayer, life styles, and rearranged value systems reflect the influence of our changing, post-Vatican II times.

The contemporary challenge we hear to relate to others inside and outside the Society deeply and personally, to share faith, sufferings, and struggles with them, to cherish them not so much volitionally as "from the heart" brings with it, obviously, an invitation to problems emerging inevitably from the sexualized and emotionalized nature that God has so imaginatively designed for us. But our purpose in presenting this issue of *Studies* is not one of examining some problems and suggesting some solutions. Neither is it simply to indicate the profitable ways that our feelings and our sexuality can be integrated into our spiritually oriented lives. Rather, we want to do something like "take the lid off" what we believe to be an important, profound, and timely topic. It is one that provided some of the most animated hours of discussion and some of the most diversified points of view that any of our Seminar topics has elicited from the members of the Seminar. The very thickness of the volume you have right now in hand gives a hint regarding the magnitude and far-reaching implications as well as the complexity of the subject matter we have selected to explore.

Some Important Terminology

But before we go any further by way of introduction, a few important terms should be defined. I cannot promise that each of the writers contributing to this issue will employ each of these terms in precisely the same sense, but the following clarifications should prove helpful.

We have a relationship with God, our Creator and Father, and with Jesus Christ, our Savior and Brother, and to his Spirit whom he has given to us, who is Love. Flowing from our relationship to these three Persons, there is an aspect of our life which is expressed in certain thoughts, phantasies, feelings, decisions, communications, and other actions. This aspect is our "spirituality," and we as Jesuits have shaped it to operate (in each of these elements mentioned) in an Ignatian way. The authors see, of course, relationships between affectivity and sexuality and *all* forms of spirituality, but we are interested here in exploring the topic especially in the light of the nature of Jesuit spirituality, which is apostolic and fraternal.

Another aspect of our life, of all that we think, imagine, and do, is our sexuality. Every cell of a Jesuit's body is identifiable anatomically as a male cell; every physical or mental faculty we have is a male's. Our sensations and perceptions, memories and imaginings, are accomplished by a male's senses, brain, and mind. The thoughts, feelings, attitudes, desires, choices, deeds, and experiences of every sort which emanate from within us are all in some way a male's activities. Every gesture, every conversation, every interaction with others, including God, is sexualized to some extent; in our case these all convey a flavor of maleness. Similarly, every woman's interior and exterior activities all have a sexual aspect to them and carry an intrinsic quality of femaleness.

Interaction of any sort between two persons of the same sex will, therefore, always have an aspect of sexuality about it, and can be called in a limited sense "homosexual." This is true of conversation, friendship, or even shared prayer. Similarly, if the interaction is between individuals who differ in sex, the sexual aspect of their activities will be "heterosexual." It is impossible for us to be non-sexual in anything we think or say or do--even in our communication with God! All of us in the Church owe it to ourselves and to him, as our Creator, to accept the maleness or femaleness he has given us, and to accept the reality of the presence of a sexual aspect in all that goes on within and among us, especially within the context of our interpersonal relationships.

Most people in our culture are inclined to equate the term "sexuality" with what is more properly called "genitality." But not all that is sexual

is genital. This latter term is better reserved to designate whatever pertains to the arousal or use of the anatomical parts of the body we call the genitals, whether we are referring to erotic feelings, physiologic changes (such as erections), or the actions related to sexual foreplay, intercourse, and reproduction. It is the deliberate use of the genital aspects of our nature that Jesuits and other religious have chosen to forgo "for the sake of the Kingdom" by the vow of chastity.

But, as we all know only too well, one of the complicating factors and sources of difficulty in living the celibate life is the fact that genital feelings and desires spontaneously and indeliberately arise. We religious all know, too, that our relationships with certain persons whom we find humanly appealing tend to produce at times more or less strong genital reactions within us. On such occasions, when we find ourselves aroused "sexually," (better to say "genitally") in body and in mind, we call ourselves tempted, and these we regard as occasions for reliance upon God's generous help and for renewal of our personal commitment, in faith, to a life of celibacy. Moments of such temptation are inescapable within the context of the apostolic, shared, deeply transparent lives we contemporary Jesuits are called upon to experience in intimate contact with men and women and God. We strive to gain, with the help of God's grace, such deep convictions about the value of our chastity and such strength of motivation to observe it, that we can withstand the attractiveness of whoever or whatever might strongly appeal to our genitality. Ignatius encouraged us to attempt to imitate the chaste condition of the angels who, with gaze fixed upon God, await the missions upon which he will send them. Yet they are a little more fortunate than we are. Not having bodies, they never know what it means to struggle to achieve impulse control. But neither do they know, for the same reason, the pleasure of experiencing *feelings* such as tenderness, excitement, or the warmth of a heart filled to bursting with gratitude, friendship, or love.

These "feelings," and also the genital ones I mentioned earlier, are partly psychological and partly physical. They are also closely related to the content of our thoughts and the accompanying images we produce (or "phantasize") within our imagination. They are elements of the so-called

"affective" realm or aspect of our human functioning. Psychologists distinguish this physical-mental mode of operating from the cognitive activity of sensing, perceiving, or knowing, but the two are closely related to each other. What we think about, and what we concomitantly picture in our imagination, brings with it an affective response. This includes our feelings, emotions, passions, and moods. Feelings are generally considered mild emotions, and passions are very intense ones. Moods are the emotional states in which we remain for a significant period of time. But "affectivity" is our tendency to react in any such ways as these just mentioned; and it is just as inescapable an aspect of our human functioning as is our sexuality.

Feelings and emotions are, by God's design, meant to play a daily and constructive part in our lives. They emerge spontaneously in our relationships and interactions with persons both human and divine. Consequently, they are intimately bound up with our spirituality, as we defined it descriptively above.

Recognizing the fact, then, that our relationships, spirituality, affectivity, and sexuality are all intimately interrelated, that the spirituality of Jesus and Ignatius existed in relation to their affectivity and sexuality, and that we as Jesuits find the same elements interacting in our own lives, the Seminar decided to publish an issue on this complex, challenging, but potentially very interesting topic. We realize fully that this is only a groundbreaking effort, not at all aimed at being definitive.

A New Approach: the Case Method

We decided to adopt an approach new for the Seminar. For the first time the "case method" will be used in an issue of *Studies*. Also, writers who are not themselves Jesuits have been invited to contribute. All these authors met several times in Cambridge. They discussed their proposed drafts before writing them; and then, after the Jesuit writers had discussed these tentative drafts with the members of the Seminar in their meetings elsewhere, the writers met again to discuss their own revisions

in the light of the Seminar's discussions. We hope that this case method will prove to be not just a novel departure for *Studies* but also an interesting and stimulating experience for our readers.

Rather than begin our treatment of affectivity, sexuality, and spirituality with a welter of generalizations, we thought it might prove to be more stimulating, helpful, and nearer to realism for us to discuss fictitious but plausible and concretely described individuals in case form. By doing so, we feel we are inviting the reader to picture for himself a person like himself striving to live a spiritual, religious life in a given physical body, with a developed mind, personal life history, definite past experiences, qualities of heart, talent, and motives which, in God's providence, call for recognition as one's own. By inviting, as we have done, six different writers (along with our readers) to react to the three cases we are outlining here, we have opted for a device which we hope will stimulate readers to view the contents of each case in strikingly different ways, thus automatically facilitating discussion and debate. Since this sort of dialogue is the principal outcome we hope ultimately to promote, we do not apologize for leaving the cases just vague enough in some ways, and stippled enough with uncertainties, to make it apparent that a number of points are disputable, and that no sure and final solution can be formulated or imposed.

The authors of the issue do not intend that the cases be approached in the manner which all of us "older Jesuits" encountered in our *casus morales et liturgici*, in which we tried to hammer out "the solution" to each problematic case we collectively considered. Rather, we are offering and inviting discussion, first on the part of our writers and then on the part of our readers. And in order to widen the dimensions of the discussion as far as possible, members of the Seminar's writing team extended an invitation to three non-Jesuits, all of them familiar with Jesuits and their spirituality, to complement the ideas of the three Jesuit contributors.

The Cases Are Plausible rather than Typical

It would seem important to state clearly from the outset that the

cases presented have not been designed to include the "facts" they embody because these are the most frequently encountered problems on a busy spiritual director's appointment list. Neither should they be construed as somehow "typical." They have been composed and offered simply as plausible graphic cases that reveal in concrete (although fictitious) ways the fact that--as any reflective spiritual director will surely agree--affectivity and sexuality repeatedly and inevitably appear as significant aspects in the spiritual life of every Jesuit, as well as in the spirituality of any other man or woman, whether priest or religious or lay person, who shares life with other human beings with intent to please and praise God.

There is another point which we hope the reader will keep clearly in mind: the precise nature of the question to which all six contributors are replying after their reading of the three case histories. Each writer was invited to react spontaneously to whatever aspect of the case might strike her or him as deserving of special comment, in view of her or his own experience and expertise. No effort was made to insure that the most important, or most crucial, or most-anything aspects of the cases were taken up. There was no attempt to be systematic or disjunctive in any way, and certainly no striving to say the final word on any point. Our readers will be receiving only the *comments* of the respective writers. These same cases, or any others which anyone might wish to devise, can be discussed in the way we are doing here, for example, at a religious community meeting or in any comparable forum. Men and women from outside our Jesuit ranks could be invited into our houses to participate in a continuation of the discussion which we are beginning here in these pages. As a matter of fact, many Jesuit communities, particularly in houses of formation all around the globe, have during the past fifteen years arranged programs lasting from a day to even a week or more so that sexuality could be discussed in relation to the Society's ideals and way of life, often with non-Jesuits of diversified backgrounds participating. We add to sexuality here the aspect of affectivity, hoping to continue and broaden these discussions already begun.

When we presented the tentative draft of this manuscript to the members of the Seminar during our recent meeting in New Orleans, strong

recommendations were made to us to make an unequivocal declaration to the effect that we are not trying to provide a set of guidelines for Jesuits or anyone else doing spiritual direction. We are certainly not trying to offer any statement of principles of effective counseling. Although some of the comments we make here will be related to the approaches spiritual directors take (or could try) in the given case, we by no means want to convey the impression that we think no other way of understanding the problem or mode of helping could be successfully devised. To underscore these assertions, it may be helpful for the reader to keep in mind the fact that in each case a substitution might well be made in such a way that instead of "spiritual director," you could read "superior," or "confessor," or "friend," since spiritual assistance can be provided by persons in any of these relationships. Our cases feature a spiritual director simply because all of us Jesuits have had experience of this model of facilitating spiritual growth, and at the same time most of us would probably agree that the role of the director implies a most consistently detached, objective, unbiased and non-threatening vantage-point from which to consider the types of difficult and sensitive cases we are projecting here.

The Three Cases and Their Respective Topics

Each of the three cases and the comments made about them will be introduced separately. The first case relates affectivity to Jesuit spirituality; the second focuses on the relationship between sexuality and our spirituality; and the third introduces the problem of homosexual behavior. Then in Part IV Virginia Finn points out some of the common themes that run through all three cases. And, finally, William Connolly presents his reflections on the relationship between celibacy and affectivity.

To bring these introductory remarks to a close and lead into the first of our cases, I remind our readers of something which Charles Darwin pointed out when he introduced his concept of evolution and described "the survival of the fittest." He taught us that the way human beings behave in changing and stressful environments either can be successfully adaptive, with survival resulting, or else it may lack adaptability, with the result that the individuals thus fail to survive.

I think his thoughts can be applied to religious men and women as individuals and also to the religious orders and congregations to which we belong. In regard to both sexuality and affectivity, as I stated much earlier, we are living in a time of dramatic transition and in circumstances demanding prompt adaptation. Those who achieve this successfully will survive; those who fail will not. A whole congregation might bring on its own demise simply through ostrich-like refusal to raise its head out of the sand to face the realities it would rather think are nonexistent. But we Jesuits are concerned about more than our own survival. We are men who desire above all else to be apostolically effective in the service of our Lord. To be such, in the difficult times in which we live, we must learn to be adaptive. The sexuality and affectivity aspects of our lives--and of the lives of those we serve--require new understanding, choices, grace-facilitated development, and loving care. We hope that the pages that follow and the thoughts which they contain may in some small way assist Jesuits and others to achieve these aims. This issue has been prepared with profoundest respect and admiration for the celibate lives of love and zeal and sacrifice so many are generously living in the hope that the Lord may come to reign in the hearts of all.

PART I. THE EXPERIENCE OF BENA. Preface

We can learn about the ways in which God deals with human beings and in which they respond to him from spiritual theology, from history, and from contemporary experience. Part I of this issue describes and discusses a contemporary experience of spiritual life familiar to many Jesuits and other religious: A dedicated person in good health finds that his life is losing momentum and wonders what he can do about it.

The Jesuit described here is in his late thirties. Experience like his is not confined to men of his age group. Men in their forties and fifties speak of similar experience. The late thirties, however, is a time when a striking number of Jesuits and other religious become aware of a need for greater depth in their lives. For instance, it is the time when many Jesuits freely decide they want to make tertianship. It is also the time when many religious set out to become seriously engaged in contemplative prayer and to integrate prayer more fully with their ministry.

Ben is a person, not a case. Most religious who have read our manuscript have recognized him. For, although he is fictional, he reminds them of men and women they know. Spiritual life is relational. Most fundamentally, spiritual life is the relationship with God. Ben wants that relationship and is trying to cooperate in its development. His attempts begin to lead him toward a more pronounced emotional openness to God. They also lead him toward developing his relationships with other persons and with life itself.

The writers who comment on Ben's experience discuss the relationships that are available to him. William Connolly reflects on Ben's relationship with God and other persons in the light of traditional Christian spiritual values. Madeline Birmingham comments on his relationship with his religious community. Virginia Finn writes about Ben as a man who is beginning to develop his ability to relate as a person to other persons. Robert Fahey emphasizes Ben's need for genuine relationships if he is to be a hoping, loving person, and points out the immediate opportunity he

has to develop one. James Gill discusses the psychic dynamics of Ben's experience and offers suggestions in response to the question: What can Ben do? William Barry discusses affective underdevelopment and the effects of experience like Ben's on Jesuit institutional life.

B. Ben's Experience

by William J. Connolly, S.J.

Ben, a Jesuit thirty-seven years old, makes an appointment with another Jesuit for spiritual direction. The man he approaches has met him only a few times, but knows him to be personable, friendly, and interested in the welfare of others, especially of his students. People enjoy him. He has an appealing boyish demeanor and a stock of amusing anecdotes that they find charming. He has a reputation for being generous, particularly to his students, but also to the younger unordained Jesuits teaching in his school and to older Jesuits in need of his kindness. He is the kind of man a principal is delighted to have in his school and most Jesuits are glad to have in their communities.

Some of those who know him best have said, however, that they do not know him very well. And although many people like and admire him, he has few, if any, close friends.

At his first meeting with the spiritual director Ben remarks that this is an unusual experience for him. He has not talked to a spiritual director since he was ordained, seven years earlier. Since then there has been no need to talk to one. The discussions he had with his local superior when he was making his decision to return to high-school teaching after ordination, and an occasional semi-directed retreat, have provided all the spiritual direction he has needed.

In the last two years, however, he has felt himself vaguely dissatisfied with his life and ministry. Up to that time he knew what he had to do in his spiritual life, worked hard at his teaching, struggled to achieve professional competence, took time for relaxation when he could, and was generally satisfied with his life. Energetic, enthusiastic, competent, he soon found himself appointed to a number of faculty committees. In

addition, he was often asked by the principal to accept tutorial and counseling tasks with problem students that required an unusual degree of patience and dedication. His life as a teacher was thus exceptionally full. He enjoyed working with students, and although he sometimes complained at the end of a taxing day, he liked being busy.

In the early years after ordination he gave several retreats to adults, and for a year or so considered making retreat work a secondary apostolate. He liked to explain the new movements in the Church to retreatants, and found his audiences appreciative. But after a year or two he realized that retreats were becoming boring. He was tired of saying the same things in every retreat. So, although he still felt he might like a secondary apostolate, for the time being he decided to give all his energy to his work in the school.

He was surprised then when he found in the last two years that teaching was losing some of its attraction for him. It was hard to understand. He still devoted a great deal of time to his work, and he continued to be successful at it. But he had lost some of his zest. He had begun to give more time to television. Some Sundays he spent most of the day reading the newspapers, something he had never done since ordination. "Front to back, including some of the classifieds," he said wryly. He had noticed too that, for the first time since ordination, he sometimes had nothing to do.

The director asked him whether he prayed. He prayed in snatches, he said. Sometimes while waiting for a bus or driving. Since he began teaching, he found little time for more extended prayer. He also found that lengthy prayer was hard to persist in. He did not have much energy for it, and was easily distracted.

He did enjoy celebrating the liturgy, particularly for students. But recently he had felt bored with community celebrations, and could not find much time for them.

Ben talked readily about himself and his work, the policies and politics of his school, his growing sense of boredom and dissatisfaction. He did not speak as fluently about his friendships and leisure activities. He spoke hardly at all about what happened when he prayed, and said nothing

about what he hoped for and looked forward to. What did he care about? the director asked. He cared about his work, he said, and about his widowed seventy-year-old father, whom he visited regularly.

He was clearly worried. Teaching had been all-engrossing a few years before, and he was disconcerted by the signs that he was losing interest in it. He seemed a little puzzled by the questions about what he liked and what he cared about, as though he could not see why they were asked. And he seemed somewhat nonplussed by the difficulty he had in answering them. He was a little afraid when he considered the possibility that his boredom might be a permanent condition. It made the future look dull, he said, and he did not know how long he could live a bored life with equanimity. As a matter of fact, he said, he had been drinking more heavily in recent months, and that gave him a qualm now and then. Nothing serious, he added quickly, but still, he wondered a little about it.

Ben asked about regular spiritual direction. Would it be helpful? he wondered. The director did not know. He thought that would depend on whether Ben wanted it to help him. If he wanted to make his relationship with God more explicit and develop it further, the director thought frequent spiritual direction might help. Whether Ben wanted this or not, though, he was always welcome to stop in to talk about what was happening to him and the way his life was going.

Ben thought a "deeper" relationship with God might help him, and chose to begin frequent direction. His interest in prayer, however, soon proved sporadic, particularly when prayer was difficult. And it was often difficult. He would analyze a psalm or a Gospel passage rather than let it speak to him and elicit a response. When he was determined to pray, he worked energetically at it, only to find that the word seemed to elude him. He would begin prayer with a passage that interested him but after a few minutes would slip into a dry, dispassionate thought process that quickly lost interest for him. The director encouraged him to step beyond the rational content of a scriptural passage and to express the feelings it aroused. In this way he hoped to encourage Ben to let the word speak to him on an affective as well as a rational level, and to speak back on the same level.

Ben soon encountered trouble with this procedure. After a few times of prayer in which he reacted to Scripture with pronounced feeling, he found himself again harried by distractions and unable to concentrate on the prayer. Then, during one meeting with the director while he was talking about the feelings a passage had aroused, his voice showed traces of anger. The director pointed this out, and suggested that he try to express the anger to God. He found at first that he could not do so. It seemed too artificial; he felt too self-conscious. The inhibition soon became more complex. "How can I be angry at God?" he thought. "He always acts for good. And he holds my life in his hands." He persisted, however. Finally, one day, walking along a deserted road near the school, he was able to say to God how angry and dispirited he felt at the boredom and futility he was experiencing. As he spoke, the anger mounted. Then, to his enormous surprise, he found himself shouting and swearing at God. Before he stopped praying that day, God seemed closer than he had for years. Ben told the director later that he did not recall ever having sworn at anyone as recklessly as he had at God, and he did not remember ever feeling anyone so close to him. He continued to pray during the following days, and one day experienced a keen sense of God's presence with him.

Ben's prayer and his life continued to open out in the following months. On one occasion he became angry at a colleague and faced him with it, something he had never done before. He began to grow begonias in his room, and found himself spending absorbed moments enjoying their leaf formation and closely observing their nascent buds. One day too he realized that he vehemently disliked one of the Jesuits in his department. He had avoided the man for months, but had not realized that he disliked him. In fact, he told the director, he had never realized that he disliked anyone.

Ben's most persistent difficulty in prayer remains his lack of facility in expressing deep feelings, his basic attitudes, his moods to God. His affective life, despite its development, still shows a tendency to remain separate from his explicit dialogue with God. Repeatedly when he has been able to see that he has been angry, afraid, or pleased, the director

has asked whether he has expressed these attitudes in prayer, and Ben has answered "No." His experience, however, has been making it clear to him that, when he leaves these attitudes unexpressed, he becomes torpid or distracted during prayer, or he avoids prayer. His experience is also showing him that when he does express such attitudes and "sits with" them, the prayer becomes more attentive, more persistent, more satisfying, sometimes more buoyant. In particular, Jesus has become more human for him, with feelings of His own. Ben has come to see Him with some frequency as caring for him, encouraging him, hearing him out with attention and concern when he expresses his feelings and moods.

Both the difficulty and the increasing attentiveness he experiences in prayer he also experiences outside prayer. He is more often aware of his attitudes toward himself, the people he associates with, and the events that affect him. But he is also frequently unaware. He expresses his attitudes more often and more freely now, but much of the time he keeps them to himself even when he is aware of them. He is sometimes quite pleased now with himself and his life, and he realizes that he is more responsive to other people.

C. Ben's Experience and the Christian Spiritual Tradition

by William J. Connolly, S.J.

Ben is not a highly unusual American Jesuit. The novitiate and seminary system that educated and trained him did not pay much attention to his affective development. His course of formation trained Ben's reason, shaped his religious outlook, and sharpened his sensitivity to feelings and actions that might threaten his vocation. But it left uncultivated his capacity for affective awareness and response. Ben has available to him at thirty-seven a significantly limited number of ways of reacting to life.

Lack of spontaneous feeling and inattention to a wide range of affective reactions probably posed no major problem for many American Jesuits and other religious twenty years ago. They could live dedicated, admired, hard-working lives without their affective poverty causing them major

difficulties. This is probably still true for some. For a number of reasons, however, it seems less often true now than it was a few decades ago. At least it seems that many more active religious now find that if they are to live lives that include vibrant contemplative prayer, trenchant decision-making that stems from that prayer, openness in community, and flexibility in ministry, they must let themselves develop affectively. At the most basic level, then, Ben's difficulty is one of spiritual life, not of psychic dynamics. He cannot pray. And he cannot discern.

When the question of affective development arises among Jesuits, it inevitably raises the contingent question: "Does emphasis on affective development mean a change in our ascetical values?" It may also raise such particular questions as: "What about self-conquest, *agere contra*? Are we being encouraged to give up the struggle with ourselves, our egocentricity and our sensuality?" Attention to affective development, I submit, does not mean a change in ascetical values. It does mean that a person may question the spiritual effectiveness of means he employs to achieve those values. That kind of questioning seems to have occurred in religious as their lives went on even in the nineteenth century. The formidable Paul Ginhac "became as large-hearted and indulgent in his direction as he was formerly inclined to be rigid. . . . Towards the end of his life--he lived to over seventy--gentleness became his chief characteristic."¹

Insisting with oneself on being aware that one is angry when anger is present, or afraid when one's actions are motivated by fear, does not change an ascetical value. (It may, however, alter a pseudo-ascetical attitude.) It gives a person opportunities he would not otherwise have to do something about the anger or fear, and so expands the scope of his spiritual freedom. The living-out of the ideal becomes more clear-minded and less dominated by blind drives he is not attending to.

The external image presented by the person living creative ascetical values rather than unexamined pseudo-ascetical attitudes will change too. He or she may not, for example, act any longer as though reverence for his fellows in community requires that he allow hidden angers and frustrations with them, or affection for them, to go unexpressed.

As religious become more aware of their own deeper attitudes and motivations, they may also become aware of contradictions in some of the images by which they have tried to live the ascetical ideal. The ideal itself urges us toward a development of spiritual freedom. Yet the unawareness of one's own motivations and the exaltation of "regularity" sometimes promoted by religious communities have often combined to leave religious unable to "promptly obey" in enterprises that required largeness of heart.

One of the reasons for the new emphasis on affective growth that has appeared in the last decade is the deep, pervasive change in the model of "the good person" that has taken place in our culture over the last fifty years. For many centuries the culture in which religious lived supported the ideal of religious equanimity by rewarding secular equanimity and extolling it as an ideal. The saint who was "always the same," whose "changeless visage" witnessed to his serenity of soul,² for example, was admired for these qualities in patristic times by his Stoic contemporaries, because the Stoic sage tried to live the same ideal. The philosopher who admired Marcus Aurelius for speaking of the wars by which he preserved the Empire as "puppies squabbling over a bone" could appreciate a monk's harsh depreciation of his own accomplishments. They subscribed to the same ideal of constant serenity. Secular ideals thus supported and encouraged the ideal of perfection that religious strove to attain.

This image of "the good religious," which derived much of its strength from the parallel secular image of "the good man," has had a long life. "Every one of his movements is studied," a Jesuit who had Paul Ginhac as novice director said of him. "If he speaks affectionately, if he smiles or is amiable, one can see that it is all regulated by the will and he acts thus because God wishes it so."³

The Jesuit who tries in our culture, however, to live the classical ideal of imperturbability will be challenged by social pressures, working both externally and within himself, to show that he is not simply unfeeling and that his imperturbability is not a result of extensive repression, that is, of extensive unawareness. He will find that the people he serves and the Jesuits he lives with, far from admiring this trait in him, will be

irritated and often repelled by it. They will feel that they do not know him, and the more astute among them may begin to wonder whether he knows himself.

Ben would not be unfeeling in any obvious way. He can offer signs of sympathy and friendship, even lavish them. But on a deeper level he too is impassive. When people need someone with whom to communicate on that deeper level, they do not choose him. If they do, they are disappointed because they do not find him able to accept the confusion they experience on that level. As a result, he never hears about their deepest uncertainties, their disappointment with life, their more tentative hopes.

He himself will not understand his own deep affective reactions or let them become creative. He becomes persistently lonely as a result, and remains interiorly uninvolved in the deeper, most significant currents of community and pastoral life.

At this point we ask: What sustains him? What gives him life, vigor, and creativity as a Jesuit committed to the people he serves in his apostolate and to other Jesuits? Once the structures of religious life were of immense, even overweening help in sustaining us. Now, when the sustenance and sense of direction in the life of a religious are often expected to come, not from structures, but from the person's own convictions and free decisions, his affective resources tend to determine his ability to live a happy, productive religious life. When these resources are excessively limited, the person's ability to form and maintain deep relationships is impaired. The difficulty with prayer that we see in many persons who have not developed their affectivity suggests that, despite the existence of their implicit relationship with God, their explicitly realized relationship with him suffers at least as much from their limited affectivity as do their relationships with friends, colleagues, and the people to whom they minister.

The importance of affective resources in the life of a religious probably becomes most succinctly evident in the effect they have on his making of the Spiritual Exercises. A personal response to the *Exercises*, as opposed to one predominantly intellectual, can come only from a man or woman who can feel anger, fear, joy, satisfaction, and love, and have

these feelings and affective attitudes integrated with their lives. The cardinal petitions of the *Exercises*--to experience shame and confusion, to know Jesus and love him, to share his grief and the joy of his victory--indicate this. The content of the meditations and contemplations of the *Exercises* indicates it just as clearly. A person who has never felt loved will experience the colloquy of the first meditation of the First Week in a different way from one who has felt himself loved, forgiven, and sacrificed for. A person who has never felt much hope himself, or been drawn to share the hopes of anyone else, finds it impossible to comprehend, let alone respond to, the Call of the King. It is not that the person with limited affective resources feels nothing while making the Exercises. He may feel, but he does not feel deeply. And the feelings and attitudes we are called to by the *Exercises* are deep, surging, and powerful. They can motivate us profoundly and forever, they can move us to a new and selfless integration of life, and they can keep moving us to develop that integration and the sense of companionship and mission that flows from it. The experience of those who give the Exercises is that this actually happens. But it is also their experience that the Exercises leave many who would like to make them incapable and inert.

Prayer that brings only the mind or the visual imagination to bear soon ceases to be vital. This lack of vitality may, if the person has considerable intellectual or imaginative resources, take some time to become evident. But people who have tried to pray by making use of their rational or visual imaginative resources alone have often indicated that the prayer has eventually become desiccated and listless.

Because it is in prayer that a person most explicitly and directly tries to relate to God, it is in prayer that any dissociation between what he believes in and what he actually cares about becomes most obvious. The dissociation may not be easy to identify, because it will occur on the level of feelings, emotion, and mood rather than on the rational level. It is likely to be most clearly evident in not finding time to pray, falling asleep while praying, and experiencing blankness, dullness, or an explosion of distractions.

Ben's ability to relate affectively to the Lord is increasing. If he

persists in his attempts to expose his deep attitudes to God and on the level of those attitudes to hear and receive Him, he can come to care about the mission of Jesus with a force that will provide an invigorating and sustaining center for his life.

D. Formation and Community

by Madeline Birmingham, R.C.

Key words in this case study give us clues to where Ben has been living on the level of feeling. He is puzzled and distressed. He does all he can but feels he ought to do more. Try as he will he cannot be enthusiastic about this world. He never felt a need to talk about his life except when he was making occupational decisions. He seldom spoke to spiritual directors because he knew what he had to do about his spiritual life. He was expert at problem-solving. With his background he was lucky to find a spiritual director who supported him instead of threatening him. He was fortunate to find a man who understood his need to grow in affectivity.

I know Ben and his brother Tom and his cousin Patricia. We wanted to love God but we were caught in a sterile atmosphere. We were dodging the B-B shots of anxiety that filled the air around us. Love, but don't be too loving. Be concerned, but not too concerned. Be aware, but not too aware. This anxiety blurred the edges of the desire that brought us into religious life. We had wanted to live closely with others who also loved the Lord. We had wanted to learn with them to love God even more and to serve him out of this love. Later on we realized that much of our energy was given over to discussion and problem-solving. We avoided deep reflection and sharing. Many became lonely and disenchanting over the years. We asked ourselves why God couldn't fill our pockets of emptiness. Something life-giving was missing but we didn't know what.

So Ben takes on special meaning for us. He is the symbol of our own long slow search for life--real life. He also hesitates and makes mistakes. We can see too that he is finding joy in step with his pain. If we listen carefully, we hear his new heart beating in tune to begonias, Jesuits, and other people.

Ben is becoming a new man but he is experiencing a lot of tension. His past experience has often been dull and enervating. He may often prefer it, however, because at least it was safe. God's love is a vast ocean and we can drown in it. We can really be overwhelmed by God's power. Our greatest instinct is to fight. We don't especially want to fight God, but we want to fight to keep control of ourselves. We have courage but we need to be standing on solid ground. Swimming in the ocean is pleasant enough but no one wants to be tossed around by breakers and undertow. Ben will feel this struggle and tension often. He is growing; he is swimming. He is venturing beyond his own depth. He is letting God take hold of him bit by bit. It won't be easy.

And Ben may not get much help from his brothers. After all, he's already respected and admired. Everyone counts on Ben to do his part. What does it matter if occasionally people have a vague sense that something is missing, that part of Ben is shut off, that no one really knows him? For them it is a fleeting conjecture. For Ben it is tragedy beyond all measure. It is tragedy in that he is cut off from the richness of life. His relationship with Christ is dried up at the roots instead of being full and flourishing. Some religious live out their entire lives like this. They are "good" religious. They do their jobs well. Does it matter if they sometimes get a sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach, a sense of disappointment in life and in themselves? They may sometimes wonder whether God too is disappointed. In a real sense, he is. He gives us life that is rich in potential for growth. We dedicate ourselves to teaching this to others. Why can't we learn the lesson ourselves? The seeds, planted deeply within us by the Lord, are never nourished by our laughter, our tears, the warmth of our human emotions. In the end we deprive ourselves. We cut off the people who would love us if we only gave them a chance.

Is this just Ben's problem? He has a faulty relationship with his community. Is the community's relationship with Ben faulty too? We are liable to answer: Why, we have no responsibility for him. We're here for the people of God. Let Ben get busy again, forget himself, and he'll soon be content. That may be partially true, but it's also partially false.

We have a commitment that extends to our community. None of us can learn to be full human persons if those we live with don't care for us. I'm not talking here about Nebulous Ned who thinks that community doesn't exist unless every man in the house sits with him four hours a night in front of the TV. I'm not talking about Panicky Pat either. Pat needs someone with him for endless hours while he expresses his fears and anxieties. He can bat fears from home plate faster than his entire community can field them. I'm talking about the normally neurotic person who needs to live in an open and accepting atmosphere. Many Jesuits are admired by their brothers. They are admired for their writing, teaching, professional skill. Yet more than a few of these same Jesuits will say that they have few close relationships with their brothers. They feel unloved because they are seen as Jesuits, as do-ers, not as persons. This may come as a shock to some, but Jesuits don't differ all that much from other human beings! They too need to live and grow in an attitude of care and concern. When they walk into their own houses, their own community rooms, they need to be welcomed. They need to know that others are happy to see them and to have them around.

Ben has made progress because the director is urging him to sit with his feelings. He's learning to recognize and name them. Eventually he can make friends with them. Ben has faced his anger and vented it. And the Lord has come. He hasn't come simply because Ben has felt anger. Ben's anger is not more important than his other emotions. He just had more of it! The Lord has come because He sees Ben standing "naked and unashamed." Ben reaches out to wholeness and integrity. In return, the Lord reaches out to touch Ben in love.

How much easier it would be for everyone if Ben could find the support he needs in his community. Ben would grow; his community would grow; and those they serve in Christ would be enriched.

E. Identity: Role or Person?

by Virginia Sullivan Finn

Ben is changing and I'm not sure I want to know him anymore. It was

so much easier in the old days. As he came down the street, I'd slap a smile on my face and slip out of myself and into my role, saying, "Hello, Father Ben. How are you today?"

Nowadays he might say, "Lousy. To tell you the truth my knee hurts."

Do I really want to deal with his telling me his truth? In the old days, when Father always said, "Fine," and looked as if he meant it, it was so much easier. His response allowed me as a laywoman not only to respond in kind, but simultaneously to put the finishing touches on my shopping list and organize the coming evening.

I may have to listen to Ben now. I may discover myself as a laywoman being challenged by Ben or cared about by Ben. Do I really welcome this kind of invasion? I do. But it will take more than a moment to explain why.

Two facets of Ben's development deserve special notice, I believe. First, Ben had an exceptionally full life as a teacher, indicating that he, at one time, felt a sense of passion and commitment. My critique: Was passion and commitment, by being limited to school, too narrowly envisioned and applied?

Secondly, Ben, as a priest, had a rather active ministerial life characterized by retreat work and the celebration of liturgies for students. My critique: Is it coincidental that ministerial fulfillment came only when Ben was "looked up to" as the leader and the knower instead of through modes that built solidarity with a people?

Because Ben appears to have posited his identity in *role* rather than *person*, it seems inevitable that role finally conquered passion, commitment, ministry, and prayer.

Boredom is a theme Ben reiterates. Is it his obituary? Dead at forty is an expression younger Jesuits sometimes use. "I don't want to be dead at forty like some guys I know." In other words, I don't want to be a Ben. Someone who "sometimes has nothing to do" but has not time enough to pray, yet is finding more time to drink a little more year by year. Boredom may be Ben's cover-word for the fact that he seems to be outgrowing some of his roles.

The key to understanding the significance, in a negative way, of role

in my assessment is his reply to the two inquiries made by the spiritual director: "What do you care about?" "Who do you care about?"

Ben cares about his father and Ben enjoyed being a father, that is, teacher, leader, celebrant. Rather than developing himself as a person Ben may have chosen, too frequently, to imitate the role of those above him, and in imitation, enjoyed those modes of being a father that placed him above others.

My negative evaluation of role stems from my sensing that Ben may have grown up by "learning the lines" for the part he felt called to play in the drama that would be "on stage" after his ordination in the Society. Certain cues called forth lines that expressed congeniality, others lines that expressed responsibility, still others lines that instructed the students or the "faithful." For a while the drama received rave reviews from Ben. But Ben was "not himself." Ben was not Ben. And now he's bored.

Is the charge too severe? That Ben was "somewhat nonplussed by the difficulty he had in answering" simple questions about the self Ben is-- what he liked and what he cared about--reveals, I maintain, that Ben has been more engaged in playing a part, a role, being Jesuit, teacher, and priest, than in being Ben.

Boredom may be Ben's cover-word for saying that *role* is dead in his life. He is "losing his appetite" for teaching. He "did not have much energy" for prayer. "Retreats were becoming boring."

Still on stage, Ben is starting to mumble. He's tired of reciting the priest's lines in the first act, the teacher's lines in the second act, and the Jesuit's lines in the third act. Once he may have needed the applause he received for playing these three parts. He no longer needs it. But reciting instances of boredom defers saying he no longer wants to play roles.

On the other hand, how can Ben step offstage? He seems to have no lines of his own. Recently I listened to a nun defend her need to be addressed as Sister. "Unless I am called Sister," she pleaded, "I have no identity. There is no me apart from Sister. It's who I am."

Ben probably likes to be called Ben. On the other hand, he has

difficulty telling his director about a Ben apart from Ben the teacher, the priest, the Jesuit, roles that identify yet are beginning to bore.

As teacher and priest, Ben, through role, has been protected; with peers, assuming role is far more difficult. And the void in Ben's life is relationship with peers--a void that may be the contributing factor in his affective poverty. We hear little about Ben's Jesuit brothers and nothing about friends outside the Society or women in any of the descriptive material.

How has Ben held himself aloof from intimacy with friends and brothers? He seems to have distanced himself by focusing on objective issues in conversation and by substituting congeniality for caring.

Like it or not, we humans mature by responding to the emotive challenges *peers* bring into our lives. Neither lording it over from above nor steadfastly staying below as an obedient robot paves the path from youth to adulthood. The jealousies, joys, resentments, rejections, compassions that happen in close personal relationships--the "stuff of life" for millions of people--are the catalysts from which zest and vitality for living and for vocation must emerge. A distancing that protects us from solidarity with others impedes the process of maturing.

Ben had the zest of *youth*. Reliance on role and on patterned existence, without girding these with prayer of depth and with personal relationships, prevented that zest from developing into a life-giving vitality, self-transcending and sustaining through the middle years of his life. By avoiding what was human within himself and by avoiding the unique humanness of the beings in his life, he found himself stuck on a dead-end road, empty and alienated from himself and God.

If Ben brought to prayer what he brought to others in his relating to them, it is no wonder his prayer life died. In prayer, if we as persons remain hidden, the Lord can only stay in hiding.

Recently something crucial has been happening to Ben in prayer. He has started shedding his roles and moving offstage. He's letting the Lord hear the words imprinted on his heart instead of the lines he's learned. He's allowing the Lord to get a glimpse of the Ben he created. He's inviting the risk of rejection or affection.

Prior to his recent experiences, Ben, through reason, may have convinced himself that God was pleased that he was a Jesuit, a teacher, and a priest. Ben is now on the road to discovering that God loves *Ben*, the ultimate uniqueness he is as person. This discovery he is making through feelings *in* prayer--and beyond.

Until now Ben may have thought that a real man, a real Jesuit, conquers feelings. Values achievement over affectivity. Doesn't need personal relationships. Isn't called to be honest and open with others in his life and ministry.

Hiding feelings and refusing to be open, however, can cause complexities on even the simplest levels of life. Recently I listened to three religious in dialogue for an hour. They were trying to decide how to tell another religious not to be the center of attention by monopolizing all the conversation. Finally, one turned to me and asked me how the situation would be handled in my family.

I said, "Someone in the family would blurt out, 'For God's sake, will you shut up!'" "How simple!" was one reply. "How direct!" was another. "How honest! We could never be that honest in our house!" was the third response.

Simplicity, directness, honesty--these are the gifts of feelings when they are given welcome as they surge up within us. This is not to deny that within a work, home, or community context one or two emotive persons can misuse others through the expression of feelings. Being abusive or domineering through negative affectivity, a tyrant can inhibit all affectivity within others. It is easy then for persons like Ben to minimize the need for affectivity in personal relationships and with God. Tyrants must be challenged and defeated.

Others may ask: In the face of the anguish that exists on our earth, why should expressing simple, direct, honest feelings be given *any* primacy in our lives, or in Ben's life? I would reply that a primacy must be given to feelings because feelings tell you that you *are* you, just as they tell Ben that he *is* Ben.

Without the particularity of that rootedness, how can Ben *be* a Jesuit, a truly communal, compassionate companion? How can he *be* a priest, sincerely

caring, consoling, and challenging? Without feelings and the freedom to express them, Ben is not a person.

Dead at forty is being discarded by Ben in favor of born at forty. Born as Ben. Identified--named--therefore *able* to be called.

Ben was bored. The demon of passivity through being role instead of man was defeating his vocation and his prayer. This happens to many of us in our sojourn on earth. Uncomfortable with himself, Ben sought help. He is to be admired for this step, a step many of his brothers among the laity might not so readily take.

But Ben's individual salvific event is not all that is at stake here. The end is beyond Ben, for the vitality of the priestly ministry within the Church is linked to the quality of affectivity men like Ben experience in their prayer lives and personal relationships. And our corporate past complicates this quest.

This fall a friend of mine was rushed to the intensive-care unit of a local hospital. Medication she takes for asthma had masked all the symptoms of pneumonia her body should have been experiencing. In a similar way, we Christians, including priests, can develop a manufactured charity that masks the fact that we do not love from a depth that is organic, that emerges from ourselves as persons. For a man like Ben a priesthood founded on a manufactured, synthetic base is sham.

Love involves feelings and the action motivated by these feelings. But if we experience feeling in only a sporadic way, or only in negative or limited ways, we *are* in hiding and cannot be open to the Lord who motivates our ministry or to others who need that ministry.

Ben is allowing himself to experience an inner chaos. He is facing the surprise and turmoil feelings evoke. He is becoming religious in a deeper, more vibrant biblical sense. Though he's probably drinking less, his heart on occasion is experiencing a natural inebriation. Yet that heart is right side up now because Ben is discovering that the progression cannot be from *order to religious*, from role to being. It must be the reverse. Communally also, affective and religious sensibilities must strive over and over to break through the conditioning of role and of order to enable the orders to be *religious*. Process must be the victor over programming.

My hope is that Ben can perceive this process as conversion and continue to move with it, becoming a Jesuit whose life is rooted in depth, courage, and closeness to others and to God. A life grounded in substance, not in role or conformity, enabling him to love as simply and directly and honestly as the Healing Man he follows.

F. Development Demands a Relationship

by Robert J. Fahey

Ben is legion among the general population, I think. A good man, but until recently, with hopes diminishing, faith quiescent, losing both purpose and headway. Not asking anything of God, asking less and less of himself, surely with diminishing self-regard, and not loving anyone else much, although still in touch with his father.

Yet now the signs of life are there. To fan those embers into fire is the possibility. His one loving relationship with another--his seventy-year-old father--is surely a place to begin. The patient, thoughtful development of that relationship with a lifelong friend is a way of beginning to express himself more fully, and to take up again the thread of his own affective development from where he let it drop.

To the extent that his father's health permits, here is a close friend with whom the young man can share his own entire life and much of the old man's. They have shared experiences, can share recollections; they have shared friends, loved the same woman. Whatever he has never put into words of his feelings for his father he can now try to express, a huge possibility. He and his father can embark upon the breaking up of whatever conventions and reticences have kept them apart, kept them from intimacy. He can say things to his father going over their years together that he has never said, and encourage his father to do the same. They can forgive each other and come together more completely than they ever have.

This young man is very fortunate to have in his life another person with whom to share all his hopes and failures, regrets and joys. For him, for them, it is not too late. And although there is no guarantee whatever of success, there really never is.

G. Affective Development

by James J. Gill, S.J.

Ben's experience recalls to my mind the fact that what many persons regard as a "bad sign" in relation to their spiritual life is not necessarily that at all. Even though they find their state of boredom, irritating lack of apparent progress, or apathetic mood a painful condition to bear, I consider them fortunate. Their discomfort is signaling a need for some sort of change. When a person like Ben has been living on the same spiritual plateau for a considerable length of time, it is inevitable that he will eventually become dissatisfied. His frustration may be the sign that he needs a new way to pray, a new type of work, or perhaps a new group of people with whom to share his everyday life. His pain is a cry for growth.

Human life was never meant to be static. It is essentially a growth process, with each progressive step leading toward a further one. Steady progress provides not just an increasingly rewarding experience of life, but also an expanding competence in dealing with the substance of life itself--its conflicts, its problems, its complications, and its opportunities. Intellectual growth, spiritual growth, moral growth, social growth, sexual growth, and physical growth all move us toward an ever greater (yet always imperfect) maturity. These may proceed at different rates, and not simultaneously, in any given person. Ben, for example, demonstrates an intellectual competence which appears to have been developed far beyond the level at which his emotional maturation became arrested. He is fortunate now in having someone in his life who wants to help him recognize his need for further affective development, someone ready to challenge him to strive toward both experiencing and expressing deep feelings, especially towards God.

Helpers Are Needed

Abraham Maslow, the renowned psychologist and researcher into the process of human development, concluded from his studies that what prevents most people from achieving the actualization of their innate possibilities

is (1) the absence of an effective challenge, (2) the absence of model whose growth-efforts they could imitate, and (3) the absence of a growth-conscious and growth-facilitating human "climate" around them. Maslow pointed out that whenever we reach a plateau and tend to remain there too long (preferring to avoid the anxiety that temporarily attends any significant change in our ways), we need someone to be *with us*, someone who will encourage our efforts and, in effect, supportively say "you can do it, if you try." We need persons (including spiritual directors) around us who are realistic enough to know that even if we do make the effort to try new ways of praying, new ways of using our talents, or new ways of relating to other persons, we will probably not succeed right away. We are likely to make mistakes, perhaps even fail, and then have to select a different path to try, until at length we climb a little and stabilize on a new plateau--until boredom once again returns and whispers to us: "Isn't it time you began thinking about taking a further step for yourself?" The best helper of all, of course, is the friend, spiritual director, or religious superior who not only provides consistently encouraging support for our growth-efforts but also transparently presents on a day-to-day basis unmistakable evidence of his own serious efforts to keep growing all life long. What a blessing such a person is in our lives.

Repressed Feelings Obstruct

Ben's experience also demonstrates a fact about human nature that is all too familiar to most psychologists, psychiatrists, other counselors, and spiritual directors. It pertains to positive or pleasurable feelings, such as tenderness, joy, and love. These are often prevented from being experienced and expressed by persons who are harboring, deep in the unconscious part of their being, an accumulated mass of negative or painful feelings (hostility and resentment, for example) which they have for self-protective reasons needed to conceal there (or "repress"). Unfortunately, such a situation results in the person's finding it impossible to react to life experiences with an appropriate emotional flexibility, (joy for example, when things go well, and anger when frustration occurs). It is

as if the unexpressed negative feelings from the past are still alive and blocking the one channel through which all one's emotions were designed to flow and find their way into some form of external expression. New cognitive experiences occur, but the inhibited individual cannot successfully generate the appropriate affective response which should spontaneously accompany his knowing. Thoughts and feelings are meant to go together like words and music. For the affectively impoverished, like Ben, life is simply not a song.

People raised by parents who tend to discourage or forbid the expression of their children's emotions often turn out like Ben. In their adolescent or adult years they need to find someone whom they can endow with authority to permit them to experience and express such feelings as anger, hostility, or fear, even though they are anxious about the outcome. His spiritual director has done this for Ben. Just as many husbands and wives have found that their most joyful and tender moments of intercourse come only after they have engaged in a good fight, Ben discovered that he could only experience God most intimately and soul-warmingly after he had given vent to his accumulated negative feelings toward the One who, he felt, had drawn him into the life of boredom and futility he was suffering through.

Ben's problem, as the case describes, remains one of expressing his attitudes, feelings, and reactions spontaneously to God while they are still affecting him. I have known so many religious persons who have had enormous difficulty in learning to do this. They had developed a habit of talking to God *after* events, *after* they had reacted spontaneously to what was happening to them, and *after* their emotions had faded and were gone. I call this (for lack of a more apt term) "pack rat spirituality." These men and women bring the past moments of their lives to prayer in the form of dried recollections which they carry back to their rooms or chapels to intellectualize and verbalize for God long after the affective music has stopped, instead of sharing their experiences prayerfully with Him during the time when their minds and hearts were most enlivened (whether by joy or sorrow, hopelessness or fear) and while they were reacting spontaneously and with full vitality.

How Release Affectivity?

As in Ben's case, religious are often encouraged to develop the affective aspect of their lives, but at times, even on their own, they gradually come to realize that they are impaired with regard to experiencing and expressing feelings. What can be done to help them?

First of all, I would want any religious interested in pursuing the development of his affective life to reflect back, if he can, upon his early-life experiences, in order to discover how his parents, siblings, teachers, or other influential persons in his life reacted to the emotions he displayed. What happened when he showed them he was angry? When he shed tears? When he gave evidence of jealousy or resentment? And what occurred when he tried to communicate to them his feelings of joy, or enthusiasm, or signs of the love or tenderness that filled his heart?

Just parenthetically, I would want to remark that countless children are raised in such a way by authority figures in their lives that they become afraid to express their emotions openly, especially the negative ones which they suspect will draw the displeasure of their parents, or God, or both. Some experience a need to do more than just refrain from expressing overtly the emotions which they feel. Their anxiety is so strong that they need also to avoid recognizing their own affective reactions. In other words, they learn to conceal their feelings even from themselves, not just from those they think would not tolerate them. This self-deception is accomplished unconsciously by means of a mental mechanism called "denial." When this sort of defensive device has been operative for many years, a man like Ben can be, in the depths of his person, charged with intense anger, but denial can unconsciously enable him to consider himself as simply a very benign and loving individual.

I would want, therefore, a religious of the type I was describing, in addition to reflecting upon the way his feelings were received in childhood, to begin also to look at the events of his current days to see whether he is in fact experiencing situation-appropriate emotions, and whether he is giving adequate expression to them. If he is not, it could happen that by learning to reassure himself repeatedly that it is good to experience

emotions spontaneously and it is generally healthy and humanly constructive to let others know what one is feeling, he could gradually grow to allow himself greater freedom and spontaneity in the affective realm of his life. There is no guarantee that he will be able to accomplish this alone. But I have seen some people become "more affective" in their daily lives by deliberately choosing to participate in activities which naturally tend to elicit emotional responses, such as competitive sports, certain types of literature and films, and association with types of persons who are likely to provoke affective responses (for example, crippled children, grief-struck persons, or groups which are celebrating with great joy). The presence of others who are uninhibited in the way they are expressing their feelings tends to free some persons to give expression to their own previously "forbidden" ones. Moreover, a religious can choose to contemplate scenes or events which are highly conducive to an emotional and not just cognitive or volitional response (our Lord's crucifixion, for example). In prayer such as this, a person can profitably beg God to grant the grace of an appropriate affective response; and indeed, such was Ignatius' frequent recommendation in his *Spiritual Exercises*.

A spiritual director can often be the one who helps his directee accomplish a release of his affectivity by using the authority of his helping role to encourage and support the exploration, recognition, and expression of previously constricted emotions in the ways I have just outlined. But particularly by examining in detail with the directee the nature and quality of his prayer, the spiritual guide can encourage him again and again to look deeply into himself to discover what he is actually feeling, to accept his affective states as real and as reflecting profound aspects of himself, and then to present his emotions before God with a conviction that it is this sort of true expression of the "heart" that God will consider acceptable (along with the thoughts, choices, and actions which accompany and flow from it), and vastly more preferable than the "praying with many words" which Jesus deplored in the misguided spirituality of many of his contemporaries.

Therapeutic Experiences Help Many

At times the person's problem with affectivity is so deep-seated and resistant to these ordinary efforts that some outside assistance becomes warranted. The help of a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist in the form of psychotherapy is valuable in many cases. In this one-to-one forum the client learns to stop repressing his feelings and to give appropriate expression to them, first toward his therapist and then toward those he contacts in his everyday life, including God. In therapy of this type, emphasis is placed on affective development, and excessive recourse to intellectualizing on the part of the client is discouraged. As a result, the man achieves a better human balance in his responses. Affectivity begins to match cognition, and the whole of the person becomes more truly alive.

Still, one-to-one therapy, particularly the way many traditionalist practitioners conduct it, is generally not as helpful as group therapy in providing a climate encouraging freedom to express feelings directly. When individual therapy does achieve this, it is usually in circumstances where the therapist has incorporated some of the so-called "encounter" methods into his or her treatment repertoire. But, as a rule, groups provide far more opportunities for emotional experiences. Members inevitably stimulate affective reactions in one another; they give moral support to each participant's efforts to express himself frankly and completely; and they provide spontaneous and constructively critical response to the verbal and non-verbal communications of others within the group forum. Here one finds answered Robert Burns' poetic prayer; he receives the gift of seeing himself as others see him. But best of all, he finds that others sincerely prefer to find him expressing his feelings, the negative as well as the positive ones, in reactions that are more fully human, and no longer inhibited as they were when he first entered the group.

When a spiritual director refers his directee, for the purpose of affective development, to a "therapy group," it will be important for the directee to talk with the group leader before he joins it and make sure that a principal aim of that specific group is to facilitate precisely the

kind of personal development he is seeking. In most American cities today there are groups readily available which are "personal growth" oriented. They present themselves under many different names; for example, sensitivity training, human potential, encounter, marathon, T-groups, humanistic confrontations, and truth labs. But one should not expect the name to tell very much about what goes on within the process so labeled. These all have much in common, but different leaders guide their groups according to different aims and with varying degrees of success. An experienced, competent, and thoroughly trained leader is the only kind to whom we should be entrusting the psychological care of our spiritual directees. Moreover, a proficient group leader should be carefully screening out any candidate for his group who is liable to suffer a serious trauma to his personality. Group experiences of this type are not for everyone. Some persons are just a little too vulnerable psychologically to be justifiably exposed to the strong interactions of group therapy.

A number of Jesuit provinces have made available an array of group experiences for their own members during the past ten years. Tertians, for example, in Taiwan, Australia, the Philippines, and California have participated in week-long, growth-oriented encounter groups during this past year. The Irish Province has annually offered similar "courses," as they call them, to all its members since 1969, and nearly a third of the members of the province have voluntarily participated. The English Province and the Vice-Province of Rhodesia have presented similar opportunities to their men during recent years. But it was Father Pedro Arrupe who first authorized experiences of this sort for the superiors he called in groups to Rome in the late '60s. These "colloquia," as they have been called, were what Carl Rogers would call "encounters." Leadership for all these short-term groups has been provided by experienced Jesuit psychologists and psychiatrists from the four corners of the earth.

I believe that Ben deserves and needs such a group experience. To be able to perceive one's feelings and relate to God or Christ through them is not by any means a spiritual luxury. Competence in this regard is certainly related essentially to a priest's effectiveness in pastorally guiding souls, and without it a discernment of spirits is impossible.

Effective use of the *Spiritual Exercises*, our traditional Jesuit spirituality, and perhaps even perseverance in our vocation will depend upon our ability to relate to the Lord through our feelings. A pertinent finding on the part of sociologist Father Andrew Greeley and the staff of the National Opinion Research Center (reported in their 1971 study on *Priestly Life and Ministry in the United States*) was the fact that resigned priests were distinguishable from those who remained active in terms of the frequency with which they underwent a recognizable "religious experience" during a three-year period of their priestly lives. Those who had resigned revealed themselves in the study as having significantly fewer experiences of "an overwhelming *feeling* of being at one with God or Christ," or a "deep *feeling* of being personally loved by Christ here and now." It seems evident from this study that any man who is unable to respond affectively is functioning spiritually in an extremely disadvantaged condition. Perhaps every center where spiritual direction is provided for priests, religious, and laity should promote the development of a treatment center or growth-facilitation group where persons like Ben can get the competent professional help they so critically need.

H. Affective Underdevelopment and Jesuit Institutions

by William A. Barry, S.J.

If we accept as reasonably valid the conclusions of the psychological study of the priesthood produced for the American bishops,¹ considerably more than half of the priests of the United States are underdeveloped as persons. When we read Kennedy and Heckler's description of the underdeveloped, we can experience a variety of reactions ranging from anger to pity to smugness, but we are liable not to feel much compassion for these men. The concrete human being Ben evokes compassion. Ben is clearly a good man. Moreover, we see the human costs of underdeveloped affectivity and the immense courage it takes to try to do something about the problem. Because Ben comes through as a real person, we can, perhaps, reflect on the reality of affective underdevelopment with compassion as well as objectivity. Our purpose is to be helpful to the Ben in each of us and to the Society as a community of brothers.

The term "underdevelopment" presumes some normative pattern of development. The Kennedy-Heckler study based its normative pattern on the work of Erik Erikson. Erikson's developmental model covers the whole life cycle and sees the possibility of arrest of development occurring at any of the eight stages. Earlier developmental models concentrated on arrests of development occurring in the first five to seven years of life and diagnosed mental illness according to the stage at which the arrest occurred. Erikson's model avoids diagnostic categories and focuses on critical issues faced by the maturing person. The nature of the theory encourages one to see the possibilities of renewing forward progress even if an arrest of development has occurred. For instance, a person who has stopped developing emotionally at the age of eighteen may begin developing again because of some new experience that occurs at, say, age thirty. Ben's case provides another example. The point is that "underdevelopment" points to a norm, but also indicates that the norm is still approachable.

"Underdevelopment" is also a blanket term. One has to specify what aspects of the person are underdeveloped. Ben's intellectual life is probably well developed. Certainly his sense of responsibility is not underdeveloped. His taste in music, books, and films may be highly developed. His ability to analyze and speak articulately about politics, foreign affairs, sports, and the like may also be well developed. One might find him a charming dinner companion because he knows so much and is articulate. The area of underdevelopment is his affectivity, and most pointedly his affective relationships with other people.

Kennedy and Heckler put it this way:

The chief area in which the underdeveloped priests manifest their lack of psychological growth is in their relationships with other persons. These relationships are ordinarily distant, highly stylized, and frequently unrewarding for the priest and for the other person. Underdeveloped priests report their interpersonal relationships as difficult, even though they like people and, at a deep level of their personality, would like to be closer to them. There is a certain pain involved for them in this conflict between wanting the psychological experiences of being close to people and yet finding it awkward and difficult to get themselves into close relationships with others.²

Ben and men like him often have responsible positions. They have, indeed, often been considered exemplary Jesuits. They have many highly developed talents. But in the area of affective development they are still adolescent. They have not developed a secure enough personal identity to be able to entrust themselves to others in deep friendship and caring. They care about their parishioners, their students, but they do not have any intimate friends.

Both in the case presented and in the Kennedy-Heckler interviews of underdeveloped priests one notes the "inability to articulate a deep level of personal religious faith."³ And no wonder. A vibrant faith life has to be interpersonal; it is not so much a matter of orthodoxy, but of passionate commitment to the mystery we call God and Jesus Christ. Ben has not developed the ability to be intimate with anyone and so cannot be intimate with God.

Such men do not often have problems with celibacy. Since they do not have close friends of either sex, they do not experience the affective and sexual attraction of another person, except, perhaps, in phantasy. If asked, Ben might say that celibacy is not a great problem although he does have persistent problems with masturbation. After indicating that the way underdeveloped priests live out their celibacy is understandable, given their training and life experience, Kennedy and Heckler state: "Any group of men would find it difficult to make celibacy a vital and integrating force in their lives if they had this educational experience. So it is with the underdeveloped priests, few of whom violate their vow of celibacy, but who adjust to it rather than live it with much vitality. Celibacy for underdeveloped priests means that they are not married; it does not reflect a higher development of religiously motivated dedication."⁴

Men like Ben may have rough edges but they have also been the mainstays of our institutional apostolates. They groused about assignments and students and superiors, but they could be counted on to carry their load year after year. As a result, superiors rarely were concerned about them or thought they needed any help--unless, of course, the drinking got out of hand. Others in the community also had little to be concerned about. Ben would fit in rather nicely in communities where the only deep personal

involvement occurred in pairs or very small groups and community recreation and meetings revolved around issues rather than persons.

But what will happen now that Ben no longer finds satisfaction in his work or life and begins to do something about his malaise? If he were to tell some of his brethren how he was feeling, what would they say or even unconsciously communicate? Would Ben hear a confirmation of what part of himself is saying? "Life isn't meant to be easy and satisfying. Play the man. You've committed yourself for better or worse, so hang in there." If he hears such words, he might never approach a spiritual director as he does in the case. Community can be a prison for men like Ben because no one may be up to encouraging him to do something about his malaise and some may actively discourage his efforts at change.

Let's face it: taking men like Ben seriously can threaten Jesuit works. If he begins to do something about his malaise, he may find himself thinking of leaving the high-school apostolate or of taking a sabbatical or of entering an encounter group or of enrolling in a quarter of Clinical Pastoral Education. Superiors, administrators, and Jesuit confrères may begin to bristle because another good teacher may leave a school that already feels beleaguered. Since Ben himself feels a bit odd about his malaise, small wonder that in this climate it takes a long time, often enough, for the reality of the malaise to sink in. Not only do all Ben's prior training and ways of dealing with life's problems militate against his taking seriously what he is experiencing, but the people around him and the institutions he belongs to can tend to reinforce this tendency to look the other way.

But Ben may be facing a salvific opportunity for himself and for the Society of which he is a part. The discontent and malaise seem to be a sign that growth and a renewed commitment to the Lord are on the horizon. The case as described indicates this possibility. It also shows that life is not a soap opera. Ben is not transformed in a day. Struggle and painful and halting steps will be a hallmark of Ben's efforts to choose life. But I feel hopeful as I read the case. Ben is on the way. Now he needs the encouragement of his superiors and brothers, as well as of his director, as he courageously tries to choose life.

PART II. THE EXPERIENCE OF JOHN AND MARYA. Preface

In the discussion of the experience of Ben we have seen the relation of affectivity to Jesuit spirituality and apostolate. The development of a deeply affective life means close relationships with other persons. Such close relationships include relationships with women, and thus the issue of sexual attraction and celibacy cannot be avoided. William Barry has written a case entitled "The experience of John and Mary" as a springboard for this part of our issue.

John and Mary are religious in their late twenties who fall in love. We all know that many religious in their forties and fifties are having similar experiences. Thus, the experience is not limited by age. A relatively mature religious may experience this kind of turmoil just as may a relatively mature married person.

In the reflections following the case, William Barry discusses the dynamics of spiritual growth that can occur once such an experience begins. He also tries to describe what a close friendship between a committed Jesuit and a committed woman might be like. In the first version of the case it had been said that the director helps the young man toward transparency before God. Bob Fahey focuses his discussion on what such transparency means and on the necessity and the difficulty of the choice before John. Madeline Birmingham presses home the need for John and his spiritual director and for Jesuits generally to realize that there is another person involved in this relationship. Jim Gill discusses the human needs that relationships can meet. Different needs require different treatment. Virginia Finn clarifies the differences between being a couple and being friends. The various viewpoints obviously do not cover all that can be said about sexuality and celibacy, but they do provide much material for reflection and will, we hope, stimulate further discussion and response.

B. The Experience of John and Mary

by William A. Barry, S.J.

John, a young man in the second year of theology, has been moving normally toward ordination. He prays regularly and has a relatively deep affective prayer life. God as Father and Jesus as Brother mean a great deal to him. He has been an effective high-school teacher in regency, and in various ministerial positions has been successful in helping teenagers and young adults. He has a profound attraction to ministry; he wants to help other people to meet the God who has been so good to him. His life in the Society has had its ups and downs. Close friends have left the Society, but other close friends remain. He has met Jesuit priests who inspired him and others who scandalized him. On the whole his affection for the Society and its men and ideals and spirituality runs very deep. Before he entered the Jesuits, he had dated and had gone steady with one young woman for two years. In regency he had been close to a couple of women and had been mildly in love with one of them, but these friendships had not raised questions about his decision to be a Jesuit. He is well liked by fellow Jesuits and respected by them and by his superiors. Everything seems to be going smoothly; he himself, his friends, and his superiors all expect that he will apply for ordination this year and be ordained a deacon in November of his third year of theology and a priest in June after earning his degree of Master of Divinity.

He has had a regular spiritual director whom he sees every two to three weeks. For the most part they talk about his prayer and the development of his relationship with God and Jesus, but they also talk about the other aspects of his life as these affect his prayer and his progress toward ordination.

Over the past few months there has been more and more talk about a friend of his, a young woman who is in a number of his classes and whom he likes a great deal. When the friendship first began to come up in his conversations with the director, it was more like an incidental detail as part of a story; for example, "I was talking to this friend of mine and she said that the Jesuits in the school as a group seemed the most open

to women in ministry." Over the months the director noticed that the friend was being mentioned more often, but neither he nor John showed concern about the relationship. It seemed a good friendship. John spoke about the friendship as being very beneficial to both of them. Mary was a religious about his own age and also studying for the Master of Divinity degree.

On occasion John would ask himself whether she would be hurt when he was ordained and left the area, but whenever he brought this up with her, both of them seemed to agree that that kind of pain was the price of friendship and was O.K. He was filled with gratitude for her friendship and thanked God often that she was a part of his life.

But life rarely runs so smoothly. With time the friendship grew in intimacy, and they began to see more and more of each other. The director noticed that Mary had not been mentioned in the spiritual-direction sessions for a few weeks. When he asked how things were going with her, he got an answer like: "Fine. We're in good space," and the talk veered off to another topic. The man's descriptions of his prayer seemed more perfunctory. The director found himself somewhat bored during the meetings, a feeling that had not characterized their meetings earlier. The young man postponed meetings on occasion as well.

One day he appears very nervous and upset and the director comments on this appearance. He then says: "Everything's up in the air; Mary and I are in love and both of us are experiencing strong sexual attraction to one another as well as a desire to be with one another frequently."

For the last month or so they have been meeting frequently; phone calls are a daily occurrence. He can't get her out of his mind. He hasn't been able to study, and his prayer has just been a cry for help when he has prayed at all. They have become more and more intimate sexually, but have not had intercourse. They don't know what to do. He still wants to be a Jesuit, he thinks, but he thinks more and more of marriage. She has strong ties to her religious order and its ministry, but she too thinks of marriage to John. What can they do?

C. Sexuality, Discernment, and Friendship

by William A. Barry, S.J.

Introduction

A number of new and surprising and often enough disturbing things have been happening to us Jesuits over the past fifteen or so years, and especially in the last five. One of the most surprising and, perhaps, disturbing has been the growing presence of women in our lives. A Jesuit calls to talk to his rector, and he hears the secretary's voice. Jesuits are having a drink before dinner and another Jesuit introduces a woman friend of his into the group. In more and more of their ministries Jesuits find themselves working side by side with women. If a Jesuit goes to a Jesuit retreat house for a directed retreat, he might find that half of the directors and retreatants are women. Moreover, if he asks the superior to recommend a good retreat director, the latter might say that Sister Marie Jones is one of the best directors on his team. We could go on. The point is that women impinge on Jesuits' lives more and more.

We can have a variety of reactions to the new situation. And these various reactions can occur within one person as well as in different persons. We may find that we enjoy the presence of women in our communities. Women may seem to add brightness to our common rooms and zest and new viewpoints to our conversations. But we may also experience some diffidence and fear if we have not had much peer contact with women. We may not know what to say. "Women's lib" may make us nervous about our "his's" and "man's." We may feel anger that our privacy is disturbed or that we are being forced to change our ways. We may wonder where it will all end since most of the traditional supports for our vows of celibacy seem to have disappeared or to be rather weak. We may wonder about our brothers who seem freer than we are in dealing with women, sometimes thinking that we, perhaps, are too inhibited, sometimes suspicious of what they are up to.

We have to expect all these and more reactions to this new situation. Some of us welcome it, some of us fear it. The one thing that seems certain is that the new situation will not suddenly go away. Our world has changed and will not unchange. We may have difficulties because of the

changes, but our charism has always been to test the winds of change, to discern the spirits. We have not always lived up to the charism. We have at times in our history adamantly refused to see the possible good in a new situation--and we may be tempted that way now. But when we look back at our history, we are proudest of those men who, as individuals or as a group, looked openly and courageously at the new situation and tried to discern the spirits that were moving in themselves and in their surroundings. The changing roles of men and women, the struggle of women for equality, the experiences of new ways for men and women to relate to one another in ministry, the changing sexual ethos--and our own varied reactions to these events--all of these impinge on us. Where is the Spirit of God in all these movements? That should be our paramount question.

The case presents us with one instance of the new situation. John and Mary are in a seminary together. Fifteen years ago even the thought of women being in seminaries would have been quickly dismissed as a bit daft. The case is deliberately drawn so that we can focus the discussion on the central issue that confronts many of us Jesuits as well as other religious and lay persons: How can we be wholeheartedly chaste in the cultural and social ambience in which we live? The case aims at precluding an easy recourse to psychopathology as an explanation of John's and Mary's predicament. Although I have written more about John, I intend us to consider both of them as not obviously maladjusted. A case could have been written about a Jesuit priest and a nun, both of whom were successful and effective apostles, both of whom were thought of as future superiors in their orders. The issue I want to focus on is spiritual, not psychological. How do John and Mary discover the will of God for them?

Some may say that the will of God has already been made clear. Both of these people have made permanent commitments as young adults after much prayer, living, and reflection. The case presumes that they are not psychologically maladjusted. Thus, it would seem that they discerned the will of God. What remains is that they live out that commitment trusting in the grace of God to see them through. Indeed, most of the Johns and Marys I have met have themselves felt and reasoned this way, at least in part. That original commitment could not be easily cast aside. Just as there

are few people who do not struggle with the "until death do us part" of the marriage vow when the prospect of divorce looms, so too there are few religious who do not struggle with the reality of their perpetual vows when the question of leaving their order arises.

We are, however, in a new situation both with regard to marriage and with regard to perpetual vows. The Church has changed its practice radically in both areas. Annulments are now relatively easy to attain. The Church is saying repeatedly that certain people for one reason or another did not make a valid permanent commitment even though their marriages were "ratum et consummatum." And the Church has been dispensing religious from permanent, even solemn, vows at a very high rate. Whether we like it or not, John or Mary religious or John and Mary married couple may develop serious doubts about the validity of their commitment to religious or marriage vows. They may be sorely troubled by the turmoil and mixed emotions they experience as a result, but they may well find it difficult to resolve their turmoil by recourse to the principle that a permanent commitment once made is certainly the will of God. This is not to say that valid permanent commitments cannot be made or should be easily voided. I believe that valid permanent commitments have been and can be made and adhered to through good times and bad. In my experience most Christians who face the question of changing a permanent commitment fight against even asking the question, at least at first, because they regard the commitment as permanent. But the changed circumstances to which we have alluded may make that recourse difficult to maintain for many. It is precisely because of this predicament that the case presents a real problem for spiritual direction and discernment.

In these reflections I want to focus first on some of the principal movements that occur when religious like John and Mary try to discern in prayer God's will for them. Then I will say something about the mature friendship that is possible between a Jesuit and a woman. Finally I will speak of what a spiritual director might learn from an experience with a case like this.

The Process of Contemplative Prayer

It is obvious that John and Mary do not yet have hearts so deeply committed to their calling as religious that they can weather the storms of attraction and desire that can accompany close relationships with the opposite sex. Both may have believed that they were maturely committed to their religious communities, but the events of this year have belied that belief. In his essay at the end of this volume William Connolly describes the deepest desires that motivate a vibrant celibate life. John and Mary do not yet have that motivation. The process I will describe is one way of helping them to discover what their deepest desires really are and to align their lives with these.

The case ended with the question: What can these two people do? My hope is that both of them have spiritual directors whom they trust and to whom they can speak openly and honestly.¹ The task of spiritual directors does not change when issues of sexuality arise. They see their purpose as offering help to another person to let God relate to him, to respond openly to God, and to live the truth of that relationship. Spiritual directors do help directees avoid blind spots and self-delusion by raising questions for reflection and prayer, but they are not surrogate consciences. For example, a Jesuit may refuse out of fear to tell a superior what he really thinks about the direction of the high-school apostolate. If he speaks of this with his director, the latter might help him to reflect on how such a refusal squares with what he has just been saying about his vision of Jesus, but he does not tell the man what to do. When the issue of sexual attraction arises, directors can and do raise questions for reflection and prayer, but they ought not, if they want to stick to their lasts, become judgmental and directive. Madeline Birmingham and Virginia Finn make some wise and trenchant comments on this case which directors and their directees need to keep in mind; but neither of them, I believe, would advocate that the directors become instructors of John and Mary now that sex is in question.

What John and Mary most need from their directors is help to present themselves honestly before the Lord in all their confusion, doubt, and

turmoil. Neither of them may have ever spoken openly to the Lord² about their sexual desires and fantasies, except to confess them as sinful. They may be reluctant to do so. There is the reluctance to speak about such intimate aspects of oneself to anyone, including God. Moreover, most of us have feelings of shame connected with sexuality. Finally, reluctance can arise because we are afraid of God's reaction to our sexuality. We fear that he may be angry at us for having sexual desires or that he will make demands of us that we do not want to face. Mary and John, for example, may fear that he will demand that they give one another up. In our Christian training God has not been presented as friendly toward sexuality, except within very strict limits. Thus, Mary and John need help to present themselves honestly before God.

If a person does begin, however tentatively, to tell the Lord what is happening to him and how he is reacting, what occurs? He is often surprised to discover that the Lord does not seem to be angry at him, that, in fact, he is understanding and consoling. Indeed, he seems to bless his love for the other. There is a sense of companionship with God; the words of Isaiah 43:1-2 may seem to be personally directed to him: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you." Perhaps for the first time he learns that he can speak the truth about his sexuality to God, and that God is not scandalized, as it were. He is encouraged by such experiences to be more and more open in prayer. He tells the Lord about his fantasies, his strong desires, the imperiousness of his arousal states. He may well find that, with the telling, the pressure abates somewhat; he is less a hapless victim of his passion, more in control of himself.

Within him a transformation takes place. He gradually is being freed of negative attitudes toward his body and his sexuality and toward sexuality in general. Some of this change can be attributed to the fact that he loves and is loved by another. But the change in attitude also occurs because he finds that the Lord is not only tolerant of him as a sexual being, but is with him in the struggle with his sexuality as He is in all his struggles.

Jesus understands because he himself was a sexual human being.

This kind of transformation can happen to John and Mary. But the question of their calling is not yet decided. Each tells the Lord of the desire to serve him and his people and to do his will. Both have positive experiences of living in their respective communities. As prayer and talk with their directors and one another progress, both may begin to see that their motives for living the religious life have been very mixed. John, for example, recognizes that he desires to minister to others, but he also sees that the Jesuit life offers security and an honorable place in his world. Mary realizes that service to the poor is a strong motive with her, but also that she is afraid that God would have nothing to do with her if she left her community. Both are struck by their fears of life outside religious life. Throughout this process each experiences God as one who kindly invites to honest self-evaluation.

They gradually become freer of compulsive motivations for being religious. They realize that, whether they remain in religious life or not, God will not abandon them. They recognize that they do not have to be religious in order to be persons of worth. Thus, they are freed of some of the myths that have kept them insecure and self-doubting. They need their religious communities much less as guarantors of their worth.

There is a headiness about these new freedoms, but there is also fear. Freedom not only "beckons" but it also seems to "lurk"; it is attractive and frightening. They sense that they stand before the Holy, the *mysterium fascinans et tremendum*. They gradually realize that for much of their lives they have been and are partially attempting to escape from freedom and thus from God. They have, perhaps, maintained a distance from others out of fear of what might happen. They have often conformed to what their communities and superiors and others expected of them because of their need to win approval. They have not been honest with one another about their ambivalence toward one another because each was afraid the other would be angry. They desire to be wholehearted and honest and are attracted by that vision, but they shudder when they realize what such wholeheartedness might mean. The depth of their ambivalence before God and before life puzzles and disturbs them.

These two people now stand on the brink of adulthood and lifelong commitment. They have been freed of some of the shackles that hindered them. They know in a far deeper sense that they are loved sinners. The next step is to try to discover what the Lord wants of them. If either or both of them are to remain in religious life, they need to have hearts relatively unambivalent in their commitment to follow Jesus as celibates for the sake of the kingdom. They need to have a profound conviction that the Lord wants them to serve him in this way. Most religious in the position of John and Mary also want to know that the Lord is not calling them to religious life if, in fact, that is the case. Thus, at issue now is the discernment associated with the Second Week of the Exercises.

There are three possible outcomes of this process. Both John and Mary may discover that they are not called to religious life. Their hearts do not center on Jesus' call to work for the Kingdom as celibates. Since both of them have had relatively positive experiences in their congregations, such a discovery will be accompanied by pain and grieving, sometimes severe. I have advised people like John and Mary to take time for courtship after leaving religious life, and this for two reasons. There is an element of unreality to courtship while one or both are religious, and they need to see how it goes when that element is removed. The other reason has to do with the grieving that leaving religious life often entails. The danger is that marriage will seem like a way to assuage the pain and loneliness and be entered too quickly. Marriage is not a cure for such pain; it takes time and a certain amount of solitude.

Another result may be that one decides to leave religious life, the other to remain. In other words, their hearts take on a different cast. Mary, for instance, discovers that her strongest desire is to cast her lot with Jesus in celibate dedication to the work of the Kingdom; ministry is the core of her calling. John, on the other hand, discovers that his heart focuses on wife and children, that there is no lasting peace or *élan* in him when he envisions life as a Jesuit. In this scenario great pain is involved because John will *feel* that Mary's decision is a personal rejection of him and Mary will *feel* the loss of him.³ The chances of them remaining friends are slim, but it has happened.

Finally, both may decide that their hearts are focused most fruitfully and passionately by the call to serve others in their respective orders. Indeed, they may discover that their love for one another at its deepest level rested on the intuitive recognition in each that the other's heart could not become centered on their relationship. In this scenario there will also be pain because they are giving up one strong desire of their hearts, namely, to be together forever. Moreover, they are aware that this decision probably means that they will be separated in the very near future because of assignments after the completion of their Master of Divinity degrees. But they have each concluded that more important than their relationship and proximity to one another was their relationship to a Lord who was calling them to celibate service of His people. They realized that their greatest happiness and best future lay in letting their hearts become centered on this call.

In these last few paragraphs I have spoken about the heart a great deal. It is my conviction that much of the malaise and lack of direction we experience as Jesuits and as Christians generally comes from an unwillingness or inability to let our heart, that central core of our motivation and passion, become focused. We seem to prefer a divided heart, a heart that remains ambivalent. As a result we cannot choose cleanly, especially when we cannot rationally decide which option to take. The Jesuit who remains deeply ambivalent about his calling finds it very difficult to decide on a career within the Society, on the kind of community he wants to be part of, on what he wants out of prayer, and the like. He also has a hard time knowing how to relate to women. And given the varied opinions on sexual expression now prevalent, he may find it hard to decide how to behave sexually. In former times when many decisions like these were made for us by superiors or accepted customs, the ambivalence of a man's heart might not have become so evident, even to himself. But in these days the man with the very ambivalent heart can be a disaster for himself and for others.

The vitality of the Society depends on its having an abundance of men with relatively unambivalent hearts. The process of prayer and spiritual direction I have described can lead to this result. The process is not unfamiliar; it is, after all, the process of the First and Second Weeks of

of the Spiritual Exercises. I believe that we have not sufficiently allowed this process to touch our hearts and to focus our energies, especially our sexual energies. We are beginning to do so, and like all beginnings it is a halting and painful process. But the results are worth it.

Heterosexual Friendship in Religious Life

When John and Mary met and fell in love, they were relatively young. They were also not yet interiorly settled in their vocations and in how they would live out their celibate lives. They also may not have had any role models or concrete descriptions of heterosexual friendships among religious that would be helpful to them. In this section I want to reflect on what a mature friendship between a Jesuit and a woman might be like.

The most important thing is that both people know what they want, namely friendship, not a marital or quasi-marital relationship. Thus, something else besides their relationship occupies the center of their hearts.⁴ For the Jesuit it is his commitment to Jesus Christ and His mission. For the woman it could be a similar commitment as a religious or a commitment to her marriage and family, or a commitment to a career.

I presume that these friends (let's call them Joe and Joanne) do not intend to live a private life at variance with their public life. In other words, at least the Jesuit has taken a public vow of chastity; his friend may also have public vows as a religious or married woman. An intentional sexual relationship would be at variance with the public life. I also would hope that their friendship would not have to be clandestine. Thus, they are seen in public and people know about their friendship. I presume too that their friendship means that each finds in the other a confidante so that they share their joys, sorrows, hopes, dreams, and the like. They support and challenge each other as friends do.

Because they are confidantes, Joe and Joanne will want to spend time alone. Not that their friendship is exclusive; with them three or more is a crowd only when they want to talk intimately as friends do. When they are alone, they do not spend a lot of psychic or spiritual energy worrying about chastity. In some cases one or the other or both may experience

a desire for sexual expression, but they know that every desire does not need to be acted on. Each knows the difference between those affectionate gestures and words that more clearly focus or begin to focus on genital expressions of affection and those that do not. They are able, generally, to avoid the former. The more clearly they have decided what they want, the more easily they can do this. Jesuits are no different from married men and women in this regard since the latter also form intimate friendships with non-spouses and need to learn how to be friends and yet remain faithful to their marriage vows. Celibates and married people could help one another by more open dialogue on this subject.

There can be feelings of regret at bypassed opportunities for the sexual expression of love. At times of disappointment with one's own community or with one's work these feelings of regret are exacerbated. People need to remember that such times of desolation are poor times for making decisions, especially decisions that change a course decided on in times of consolation.

We are assuming that both parties to the friendship know who they are and what they want to be and do. The goals of their lives can be a lodestar that helps them to make concrete decisions about how they should relate. For instance, those goals, and not their desire to remain in proximity to one another, will be the determining factors in their choice of apostolate and in their openness to mission. Physical separation would be painful and would require time for grieving. The fact that they are publicly known as friends would make the grieving more possible. But mission and service and commitment to their primary goals come first for both of them. I know instances where the relationship itself enabled openness to mission that brought about a painful separation. That is, the two people precisely because of their love for one another and their knowledge that only total openness to the call of the Lord would ultimately satisfy each of them kept one another from a narrowness of vision that would have precluded what each eventually saw was the greater good. And that greater good involved wide geographic separation.

Joe and Joanne will also have other close friends, both men and women. Thus, their emotional life does not center on their one relationship.

Moreover, their friendship will be enhanced if both have a work they enjoy and can get absorbed in, especially if they can share that work or its fruits with one another. Good friendships do not focus totally on the relationship itself. Anne Morrow Lindbergh uses a beautiful image after describing a day at the beach with her sister:

A good relationship has a pattern like a dance and is built on some of the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly, because they move confidently in the same pattern. . . . There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy hand; only the barest touch in passing. Now arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back--it does not matter which. Because they know they are partners moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together, and being invisibly nourished by it.⁵

These comments may seem idyllic. Life has a lot more swamps and mine fields than I have depicted. I think it necessary, however, that we glimpse possibilities where before, perhaps, we saw none. Too many of us see a very close relationship between a man and woman as restricted to marriage or to those who are contemplating marriage. For the sake of the kingdom we need to see the new possibilities that are opening up around us. I believe that the salvific opportunity for men and women to discover new ways of relating and of working together is upon us. Whether married or celibate, we Christians are being urged to discern the spirits. A *kairos* is a time of opportunity and of judgment, and we shall be judged on how we have met the challenge.

A Note on Spiritual Direction

The spiritual director can learn a great deal from working with people like John and Mary and also from the various comments made on the case. James Gill's insight (below) that the prospect of ordination can be the catalyst for bringing to the surface unresolved issues, along with the director's own experience of not paying much attention early on to John's growing friendship with Mary, may help him (or her) to listen more attentively to future directees who are facing a decisive point in their lives. Not that the director becomes a detective; rather he listens better and reflects back earlier what he is hearing. He may now sooner note

the edge of anxiety or concern in the directee's voice when he speaks of ordination or of a friend and help the directee to pay attention to what is occurring within him.

The director may also have his vision broadened by Madeline Birmingham's caveats that the woman may be in danger of being used. Virginia Finn's reference to the wider public of the Church and her comments on the difference between friendship and coupling may also broaden his vision. Here again he is not expected to become the judge and conscience of his directee; rather the broader vision will enable him to raise issues that the directee with his vision tunneled by concentration on the turmoil of the relationship may not see without such help.

Let me be clear. A person may use Mark's Gospel for contemplative prayer, asking to know Jesus better in order to love and follow him. If he sees only the kindness and love of Jesus in the first three chapters and in repeated prayer periods never notices the anger of Jesus, a wise director will note this fact and will, when the time seems ripe, help the directee to look at what is happening. The director does not accuse the directee of anything; he helps him to notice what is happening and to go back to prayer with what he has noticed. In the area of sexuality the wise director does likewise. He is not afraid to raise issues that the directee seems to be avoiding nor does he accuse and condemn. Some directors need help not to be afraid of raising issues in this delicate area; others need help not to become accusatory.

A final point. Perhaps we spiritual directors need to ask ourselves about the advantages and disadvantages of at least some joint spiritual direction. The disadvantages come readily to mind. The director may be in a bind on confidentiality if he or she does not know how open the two want to be. Moreover, many spiritual directors have no experience of joint work and may feel inadequate to it. But the advantages need to be weighed. Often enough John and Mary may be working from different assumptions about one another and about their deepest spiritual desires. In the presence of a third party they might be helped to talk about these differences. The director can also help them to share more openly their experiences in prayer, especially if these experiences tend to run counter to their desires

to be together. The capacity for self-deception and for hearing only what we want to hear is rather large in all of us. A director can help John and Mary to be more open with one another and to hear one another better. We pay lip service to the idea that persons grow spiritually as well as psychologically through relating with other persons; joint spiritual direction, at least on occasions, may be the best way to show that we believe it. The spiritual development of the two people may be enhanced by their talking together with a spiritual director.

D. The Choice John and Mary Must Make

by Robert J. Fahey

The director helps the young man toward transparency before God. Surely this is an apt expression of what both the young man and the director are and should be pursuing: to move toward openness, truthfulness (very close to the same thing), and willingness to consider the possibilities in the situation and to offer them to the sight of God. These are the forces to be brought into play in the life of the young man in this situation.

The confusion and turmoil experienced by this young man seem rather clearly to be the confusion and turmoil one can experience in the early awareness of an attraction shared between two persons, its mutual acknowledgment, the deepening intimacy that can follow the acknowledgment, and now, in this case, the developing physical and specifically sexual expression of intimacy. The onrush of these tides can be engulfing, offering a warm blanket of mutual absorption and self-absorption, along with something of a withdrawal from others, all a part of a true courting or mating process.

Nor is the confusion experienced always exclusively painful. Indeed, more typically it is also all that the poets try to put into words: it is intoxicating, stimulating, seductive, lulling. The word "confusion" is probably inadequate to describe the intrusion upon orderly thought processes effected by the emotional forces at work in the young man's situation.

It seems to me that the director, as he patiently works to assist self-transparency, and transparency before God, must also help the young man to become aware of the personal choices implicit in this situation. Transparency is a gift not always easy to accept, precisely because ultimately it evokes a call to choose. To accept this transparency is precisely to admit a will other than one's own, and to risk the pain of a choice between loves. Only the young man here can know what Christ says to him, what choice is acceptance of Christ's will and what is not.

But it is that choice, the choice of how to respond to Christ, that the transparency will serve and that the young man will need when he is ready to move to and make choices. Obviously he cannot make it in transparency before God without knowing a lot about its consequences for himself and others.

A young man who has prayed regularly over time, for whom God as Father and Jesus as Brother mean a great deal, should be capable of such a life choice as is involved here, difficult and painful though it will be. And inevitably, given the love that he has for those he is with as a Jesuit, for those whom he serves as a Jesuit, and also for the woman whom he has come to love and whom he might now marry, it will be difficult. The choice will inevitably mean one departure or another, a leave-taking from one or the other love, for both cannot be expressed together in the ways he is presently attempting. Until the choice is made of how he will love these people (and he should not choose hurriedly, or other than in freedom), the young man will not have fully responded to Christ.

E. Concern for the Other

by Madeline Birmingham, R.C.

At first reading of this case about the young Jesuit who has fallen in love we might conclude that there is little to be said. The spiritual director's approach is sound and well-balanced. Experienced directors, at least a number of them, know that all is not lost when love comes in the window. What is vital is that both director and directee recognize what is positive about the relationship. If it reflects God's deeply

personal love for us, then there is reason to celebrate. The end result will be emotional, psychological, and spiritual growth.

Too exclusive an emphasis has often been put on problem-solving in friendship. Much attention, some of it necessary, has been directed toward limits. How far can you go sexually and still remain physically and spiritually celibate? This may be helpful but it does not strike at the core issue. The spiritual director can begin at this core. He can help John to look at his relationship with God, around which all discernment and decision-making revolve.

John needs to pray. He needs to experience that his problem will remain fundamentally unresolved until he sees it in light of his basic relationship to the Lord. It's a hard truth, but still truth, that his decision to remain a Jesuit or marry is important but is not the supreme issue. He must first decide with the Lord how to love and serve him. And God is always best served not by what we do so much as why we do it.

It troubles me, however, that too few directors may recognize that this is not John's problem alone. There is another *real* person involved. Why is it that an alarming number of Jesuits don't see people as persons in their own right? They seem to see them in two categories: those they serve and those who serve them. This is rock-bottom chauvinism! There is just too much male-centeredness in this matter of friendship. Some Jesuits speak as if the women (or woman) in their lives exist mainly for their benefit--to help them grow in affectivity. Where is their sense of personal responsibility and personal concern for the other person? We have to be aware of this element of responsibility and concern. Our awareness or lack of awareness will color radically our view of sexuality, celibacy, and basic affectivity.

In the past, people tended to talk about the rights that married people had over each other. Today we see those rights as freely chosen and freely given. Married people recognize that their happiness depends on mutual concern, not on some legalistic concept. Now, depending on the depth of their friendship, any two people also assume concern for each other. In all the talk about celibate relationships, how much thought and reflection has been given to what this means?

Let's look at a close friendship between any Jesuit and any young unattached woman. The Jesuit has a definite center to his life. He wants to dedicate himself to the Lord through service. He agrees to do this with a single mind and a whole heart. Just as clearly, the woman has a goal that far from parallels the Jesuit's. She probably loves the Lord too, but she isn't ordinarily committed to celibacy. This raises questions which cry out to be asked and demand to be answered. By what right does the celibate offer her second place in his life in exchange for first place in hers? What happens when his apostolate takes him far afield? He kisses his friend goodby after taking up her time for several years and goes off. He is still celibate, still dedicated to the Lord, still committed to the Church and the Jesuits. She stands at the airport holding a large empty sack in her hands. No husband, no children, no home, no future. Yet love is a pledge and a promise that speaks not just for today but also for tomorrow. Does the celibate understand this? Did she really understand what he could honestly promise in light of his prior commitment to God? Who does the giving and who does the taking?

Where two celibates are concerned, the picture may be different. We hope that both have the same goals and a firm idea of who they are. Their affection for each other is important. If it is grounded in God it strengthens them for the hard tasks. They follow the Lord with greater fidelity wherever he calls. They follow even when he calls them in different directions. They are open to the pain this may cause them, just as they are open to the joy of being together and working together.

Neither of them is hung up on sex. I mean by this that they can't be going around all the time so preoccupied with their mutual attraction that they have no time to open the morning mail! Neither are they blindly unaware of their sexuality. He knows that he is a man and she knows that she is a woman.

Their friendship isn't something they looked for the way a child looks for a puppy in the pet store. It comes quietly and slowly, a pure gift from God. As with all gifts from the Lord, they know it is not for themselves alone. It has to nourish both their lives and their apostolate. They do not accept their friendship lightly because they know it is not

given lightly. In some way, God is asking for more dedication and more commitment to him and his people. The two people treat each other with respect. They support each other. They help each other to become more honest, more open, more transparent before God.

Let's go back to John and his director. It is good and necessary for the director to emphasize John's spiritual growth. I hope that he can also sharpen his awareness of Mary. I hope he sees how much Mary has to do with John's spiritual growth. If he realizes this, then he will be able to help John to see the whole picture, not just isolated parts of it. John is going to have to be very open with the director, with Mary, with himself, with the Lord. He has several alternatives. He can cut off the friendship. He can leave the Jesuits and marry. He may also remain a Jesuit and continue his friendship with Mary. Whatever he decides, he has to be careful and concerned in his prayer. He will finally make his decision alone, as we all must. But he is holding somebody's hand while he is praying. If his prayer does not reflect that kind of close concern for Mary, then I do not see how it can be valid prayer in God's sight.

John's prayer is going to be painful and confused because he has a lot to consider. He will want to run away from it. He will be tempted to try for a quick solution just to get it over with. It is the director's job to help John to stay with it. If John does stay with it, his final decision will give him clarity and peace because he will have become transparent before God.

F. Responding to Human Needs

by James J. Gill, S.J.

It does not surprise me that John finds himself falling in love, sharing his life intimately, and seriously considering marriage during the year before his scheduled ordination. It is not by chance that a crisis has developed at this point in his life. The career decision he is facing with regard to priesthood and celibacy as a lifelong commitment would naturally raise questions about what other options he might pursue

as alternatives. Such a monumental decision, if he views it as gravely as the official Church does, is normally going to produce some anxiety, and John's experiences in the Society to date are understandably resulting in some ambivalence on his part. The young woman he is considering marrying may well have perceived these mixed feelings and his lack of complete certainty. He is spending more and more time with her, and this fact alone could be telling her, even without his being aware of his doing so, that he has an increasing need for her and may not be able to go on living as a Jesuit without her. The question in my mind is: What need is she helping him meet right now?

I find it useful to draw a distinction between two different types of need that prompt religious men who have already pronounced permanent vows, as John has, to reach out toward women with intense feelings and yearning. The first kind of need is related to the normal, healthy personality development process. For example, a young adult who has successfully established his sense of personal identity (the principal psychological task of adolescence), and who therefore has developed a sense of competence, of self-esteem, and sees a place in the world awaiting him, will generally soon turn spontaneously toward a young woman whom he will come to know deeply and cherish. He will learn to disclose to her, and later to others, his deeper self (for example, his previously concealed fears and limitations, along with his true feelings and unspoken dreams), and by doing so he will gradually achieve a "capacity for intimacy." This is simply one of the ordinary steps that lead toward the attainment of psychological and social maturity.

The other type of need is related to emotionally traumatic events which I frequently see providing the occasion for a religious man's seeking the intimate companionship and affection of a woman. This need sometimes becomes apparent, for example, just after one has engaged in intense and humiliating conflict with an authority figure; after the death of a beloved parent or close friend; or during a season of emotional depression resulting from the loss of one's position or failure to reach an intensely desired personal goal. The relationship with the woman can fulfill a variety of requirements ranging from a mother-substitute to a proof of

one's virility. To appreciate this reaching out to a woman in time of pain, it is useful to recall that down deep in every man there is a hidden conviction that his fears, loneliness, hurts, and every form of physical and emotional distress can in some almost magical way be allayed by a woman. How does this assumption arise? Through the personal experiences every one of us had as an infant and small child, when a woman converted our tears into laughter and our fears into confidence through the alchemy of maternal love. No wonder that in every man's unconscious there is generated a wish for the problem-solving, healing mother to return in the person of whatever good woman appears available when we find ourselves in distress and yearn for instant relief.

With these two types of need in mind--the one "developmental" and the other "post-traumatic"--a spiritual director would have to decide which of them is applicable in John's case. Is he simply growing through a normal and inevitable stage of psychosexual and social development? Or is he revealing a significant shift in his psychological equilibrium as a result of something that has traumatized his life?

There is no evidence that I can find in the case which would prompt me to conclude that John is reaching out to this young woman because he is in a state of marked emotional distress resulting from something that has profoundly affected the stability of his life. But I *can* see how this relationship and the course it is taking can be viewed as fulfilling in John's life the developmental need for achieving the "capacity for intimacy" which I mentioned above. The term *intimacy* is used in the sense Erik Erikson employs it when discussing the eight stages in the life cycle he has presented so clearly in his *Childhood and Society* and *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. The term has no sexual connotation here. John is consciously looking ahead toward a lifetime of serving others and having heavy, constant demands placed upon him by the multitude who will need his apostolic care. He will have to be "generative" (in Erikson's sense of the term)--ready to use his time, his talents, his energies, and all that he *is* and *has* for the benefit of others. Their growth, their achievements, their happiness, and their salvation will have to be his chief concern as a Jesuit priest. This is equivalent to saying that he will need to

have solidly achieved a state of psychological adulthood to play this role successfully for the well-being of others as well as his own. But first John must--as we all at some point in our lives need to do--pass through the prerequisite (pre-adult) stage of "intimacy," so that later he will have the ability to disclose himself *profoundly* (with faith and hope and love that are transparent) while sharing his life with those whom God will give him providentially to benefit from his care.

But will the care John gives in future years be pastoral? Or will it be literally paternal and familial? The answer will obviously depend on the discernment process and the tough decision lying ahead. But in the meantime, I appreciate the way his spiritual director has refrained from taking a moralizing stand with regard to John's behavior. It is true that the young man has bound himself by a permanent vow of chastity and is running a risky course in pursuing such an intense relationship with Mary. But he knows that as well as his director does. He knows, too, his obligation in God's sight to strive with the help of grace to live up to his vowed commitment. The only comment I would want to make is that, if John's spiritual guide were to appear to condemn his behavior or if he were to adopt an attitude which would prove threatening, I would expect the effect to be a provoking of "defensiveness" on John's part. This reaction would inevitably impair the openness of his communication with his spiritual director just at the time this is most important. He needs to receive a genuine acceptance of his responsibility for his own life, his own decision, his own future, his own relationships, his own feelings, and his own responses to the graces God chooses to give him. He needs a director who is able to be understanding as well as patient, and one not already biased with regard to the ultimate resolution of John's dilemma.

If John grows toward adulthood through this current relationship, will God call him further to be a priest? Or is his love for Mary destined to draw him into marriage and parenthood? I have seen both outcomes occur in various similar cases. Many Jesuits know from personal experience that falling in love need not destroy one's religious vocation. The decision to remain celibate often proves painful. But what realistic person ever expected a life of love to be pain-free?

One final remark about John's case. It signals the need for an effective spiritual director to know some psychology. But I am not sure how much is essential. I would think that a basic knowledge of the way leading proponents of personality theories view human nature, its basic needs, and its stages of development would be minimal. The list might include at least the names of Freud, Jung, Sullivan, Erikson, Fromm, Rogers, Maslow, Valiant, and Skinner. I would think, too, that familiarity with the signs and symptoms of emotional illness could be beneficially achieved through a fundamental academic course in abnormal psychology or psychopathology. Not that I would want to see a spiritual director transformed into a psychologist or a therapist. Rather, I would hope that at least the signs and special needs associated with specific stages or phases of normal human development could be recognized as directees present them. And when referral to a professional therapist is needed, I would hope that the signs of pathology would be detected early and the additional help sought promptly. For this reason I recommend, every chance I find to do so, that each spiritual director should have a back-up psychologist or psychiatrist (preferably as a friend) whom he can consult easily, comfortably, and quickly about any serious emotional problem one of his directees may be developing. In general, the earlier a psychological illness is detected and treated, the more rapidly will recovery be achieved.

G. Two Ways of Loving

by Virginia Sullivan Finn

When I was a very little girl, I thought storytelling was the ordinary, everyday way of communication for many people because my father always talked by telling stories. His favorite Church story was about his own pastor, the one who tried to baptize him Bartholomew Cornelius, the pastor's name, instead of Thomas Edward, the name my grandparents had chosen.

It seems that the pastor stopped suddenly, mid-sentence, early in his sermon, one summer Sunday, to stalk down the aisle and out of the Church. Grabbing a whip from a carriage, the pastor proceeded to beat a horse gone wild in the street. When the task was accomplished, he resumed

his place in the pulpit to finish his sermon with only a single reference to the incident. "Any unruly horse, woman, or passion, you must whip into submission!"

It's good at times to remember our past. And to remind ourselves that the Church has changed, somewhat, since that day. John and Mary are caught up in those changes and in the uncertain currents of our time. Rather than center on the specificities of their present situation, however, I will try to unfold dynamics pertaining to relationships between men and women, particularly priests and women.

In discussing this, my hope is that what follows will be a dialogue with you, that you will test what is said in relation to your own experience, hopes, aims, and spirituality.

Evaluating distinctions between coupling and intentional friendship will be the focus of this paper. Coupling will refer to a relationship between two persons who share both emotional affectivity and, partially or completely, a sexually active relationship. Intentional friendship will refer to a relationship between two persons who feel emotional affectivity for one another without sharing partial or complete sexual activity. Both forms of relationship imply that the two persons, in addition to knowing one another in other encounters, spend time alone together, regularly or sporadically. In both forms of relationship the two may be seen together alone in public, having lunch or attending a lecture together, for example. In other words, the distinctions considered significant between the two forms of relationship are not external.

Because of its length in years and its demand for total mutual sharing and responsibility, only the marriage relationship can fruitfully encompass both coupling and friendship. Marriage is also often more than marriage. When it is family, children force both growth and stability in the couple and provide an opportunity for spouses to combine coupling and friendship. Marriage, of course, can have its terrors and times when neither coupling nor friendship characterizes it.

A few notes pertaining only to intentional friendship are in order before we make comparisons. In this type of relationship the man may yearn sexually for the woman; she may desire him the same way. But both

man and woman already have other primary commitments (such as marriage, religious life, or priesthood). Because of this, it is necessary to keep in mind that these persons are part of a socialization pattern that includes many other relationships besides the one described.

Our dialogue will center on two questions. Like many of us, John and Mary must face these questions. The first pertains to unity: What does "the two of us together" mean in our relationship? The second relates to affectivity: How do we deal with the strong emotional feelings that may emerge between the two of us?

The Unity of Coupling

Let us speak first, then, of unity. Our images of unity are formed by our pasts, and the dynamic of bonding in creatures has hidden roots. Scientists are helping us unearth some of these roots and their effects:

We have all seen ducklings following their mother in a line. Experimenters have discovered that it is necessary for the duckling to hear its mother make the quacking sound when the duckling is between thirteen and sixteen hours old. [This] makes a unique and permanent impression on the brain. . . . If the duckling hears the quack at the critical hour, but the mother is not in sight, the duckling will imprint on whatever is in sight. It might be a farmer or even a dog. And it will follow that person or animal thereafter.¹

In our formative years these kinds of bondings become intertwined with images of power, possession, and responsibility. Children, in a sense, own their parents through their demand that the feelings, spirit, intellect, and bodies of parents be used in care for them. Parents, because of the power of their position, have command over their children, their intellect, spirit, bodies, and in the creation of their feelings.

This may account for why the bonding sense reverberates with such strength in cultures and cannot be avoided. Images of a father lifting his daughter high on his shoulders and of a mother nursing her baby son, as much as overt sexual images, tell us that flesh touching flesh is intimate, endearing, and one.

We bring this "sense" with us to adulthood and experience it as adults in the cultural mores around us. That may be why oneness is implied in

sexual sharing. There is, in flesh, a giving over and a taking, an entry into another and a leaving of self. In the coupling, because of the depth of the physicality and the affectivity, each person may experience a new freedom through this unity, but each also, in a sense, abandons freedom to the elusive spirit of owning that emerges in sexual oneness. Owned by you I realize I owe to you.

By free choice, I have, through coupling, become part of a dynamic that now limits my choice unless hedonism is my style. This judgment is not an invention of the Magisterium or theologians. It emerges from the monogram of passion, the mutual intertwining into one of two emotions, two spirits, and two bodies. This is a phenomenological truth in all persons who cherish wholeness in human beings. This is a truth John and Mary must face.

Within, yet also beyond, the affection that we have for one another, I discover that your flesh calls me back to you; you discover my flesh calls you back to me. Through the particularities and certainties of touch we remember one another. You may remember me in my specificity, but if we are coupled we also share a unified memory of oneness, a "two-of-us-together-touching-through-flesh-in-space-and-time" memory. This memory enables and encourages us to fantasize from known experience, not guessed hope. We are urged by it to anticipate with a sureness that heightens the desire.

My desire for you lures me into surrendering to the small coercions you demand of me for our unity. You also willingly compromise because you, too, cherish our oneness. Because who each of us is is tied to who we are together and we have symbolized this with our bodies, our unity is our oneness. This glory we cherish and protect.

The two of us together, in the coupling form of relationship, inevitably means exclusivity. There is at least one dimension between us, our shared sexual pleasure, that others cannot opt into without specific invitation which we will not give. Unless one is part of a milieu with an immature or coarse set of values, flesh is inevitably a closed bonding, one that has an owning and owing sense.

The Unity of Friendship

In the face of all this what can be said for simple friendship? Although this is a question a man and woman with other primary commitments, like John and Mary, may ask themselves, it is a question our general culture seems to leave unanswered. Only in the experience itself will we discover what the unity of intentional friendship is.

The two of us in intentional friendship means inclusivity--open bonding, relinquishing possession. There is no one dimension we share together that you may not share with another. That is my gift to you in our friendship. Although confidences we share will not be shared with others, any dimension of myself that I share with you, I may also share with others. That is your gift to me in our friendship.

In our intentional friendship, complementarity is the dynamic of our unity. Because we have forsaken the freedom to establish our oneness in flesh, we are free to look deeply into each other as the separate persons we are. I discover realities about you I did not know, and you may not have known yourself. I am, in turn, being explored and discovered in the same way. When exploring you, I surrender myself in attending to you, and you do the same with me. A fresh experience of self emerges along with a fresh experience of you. Because of this, true friends such as we never tire of one another.

Though the man and woman may crave at times for physical bonding, they need no physical bond or outward revelation of affectivity for unity. In intentional friendship each tests the other in truth. This renews trust which is the bond.

I am myself with you. You are yourself with me. We have no memories held by the sharing of the particularities and certainties of sensual touching. Our unity dwells in the more elusive realm of sensing. And this is risk. I cannot be sure that what I sense is what you feel. Without the flesh to call each of us back to the other, our fidelity to one another rests entirely on trust. There is no ownership. There is, however, the owing that my faith in you, and your faith in me, invites.

Because sexual activity is uninvited, no place can be set for it at

table. We must talk about the specificity you are, or about the specificity I am, or about cabbages and kings, but never affectionately about us in oneness.

If trust wears thin or if intentionality goes slack, our friendship can easily die, not by burning up but by the atrophy of talk that has forgotten who the two of us can be together. "Didn't we know each other better two years ago a little past eight in the evening . . . in September I think it was?"

You cannot take me in your arms to heal the hurt you've sent my way. I cannot tell you "I didn't mean what I said" by soothing your body with my hands. Between us lies a trust that will never be celebrated by en-fleshed symbol, yet this trust is the glory our unity gifts us with. Because it is our only bond, this fragile trust must be protected as we would protect our physical oneness were we coupled.

In intentional friendship the two-of-us-together does not mean oneness. Each of us, more completely "himself" and "herself," does not make the "changes for his sake" and "conversions for her sake," without which oneness would never come into being. The harmony of the relationship is determined by man and woman appreciating the uniqueness of each other while navigating the shoals created by "her impossible side" and "his stubbornness." Though he may steady her when life for her is an earthquake, he'll do it his way, and not in a way that has emerged from their oneness. Being herself, she may switch from gentle sympathy to playful teasing in the twinkling of an eye.

Having looked at the dynamic of unity in each relationship, it is time to study the differences in emotional dynamics between coupling and intentional friendship.

Emotional Dynamics in Coupling

In coupling, merger through sexual pleasure and openly expressed affectivity makes you part of me. I love you, but I especially love the you in "us." Each of us shares a physical and affective center, openly experienced and remembered by both of us. We are caught up in its aura.

This enchantment and pleasure binds us, at least temporarily, and together we plan for the next time when we can share the same feelings and activity. We yearn for that sameness and suffer disappointment if it is thwarted.

At the same time, our sexual sharing in coupling and the affectivity that accompanies it builds a "sheltering us" that becomes a home to absorb all the problems each of us has. Because we have opened the door to taking responsibility for fulfilling each other's sexual needs, expectations in relation to other responsibilities increase through our deepened sense of oneness. This may be why persons who could without difficulty share sexually while living apart drift toward living together. Sexual sharing easily becomes a magnet for "telling all"--and giving all even though the man or woman may sense that this is not the one with whom "I want to tell all" or give all.

Holding back can become a grave issue in coupling. If in the coupling relationship between two persons with other primary commitments partial sexual activity takes place, there may be a physical holding back to insure that passion does not lead to completion. If completion is the style of the relationship, there may likewise be subtle gestures, looks, remarks, or outright arguments that caution the other to remember that "I am not owned by you." This lie, if converted into truth, might tip the tower of jackstraws toward desertion of one's primary commitment. The degree of control and the drain on energy sexual coupling demands of persons with other primary commitments subverts the freedom the couple felt initially. Without an affective focus on "us," the sexual activity loses emotional valuation and may become only recreational (mutual masturbation). With an affective focus on "us," emotions make it difficult to keep the relationship in a fixed, cautionary position; it insists on moving, growing, changing, deepening, exploding in a frenzy of love or hate.

When they happen, and later when we remember, we savor those moments of tenderness, of gentle humor and magnificent passion, and of hurts healed. Yet we know that affectivity and sexual activity, united, are by themselves unaware of the rest of the world. They make unseasonable demands because the heart and the body never reason. "But I need you tonight! I don't want to be alone!" "What do you mean something came up? We planned to be together today!"

Emotional Dynamics of Friendship

On first reading, intentional friendship between two persons with other primary commitments appears to be no better a state. Because the emotional focus that might provide the entrance for sexual activity must by effort not be allowed to emerge, friendship appears, at first glance, less free. Unity based on complementarity means that we invite one another not to center on "us in oneness." This does not mean that "us" is not talked about. In intentional friendship it is crucial to share occasionally how each of us feels about the "us" that we are. That "us," however, is not the "us of oneness." We would be deceptive if we did not talk frankly without the affectionate endearments that would lend a romantic aura to our language, mood, and need. The style and words of our dialogue acknowledge that the depth of our feeling for one another is a problem as well as a joy. We do not push the world away in order to speak of love as couples do.

Your focus is on me, not us, and mine is on you, not us. My feelings are free to plummet to the deepest levels of compassion for you, of appreciation and gratitude for you, of anger when you do not realize your gifts or you cut short honesty about yourself to me. From you I receive the same depth. We know how to argue. We know how to give. Most of all, while together, we know how to resist affectivity that would pull us into what we may both desire but have committed ourselves not to have. We have posited "oneness" elsewhere, in our primary commitments, and are free, with the above exception, to be an unencumbered "me and you" together.

In our relationship of friendship, moreover, because it is not coupling, we do not "plan" that we will share the same emotions at the same time, a pattern necessary in sexual affairs. I want you to come to me just as you are. You want the same from me. We are open to this other risk and to coincidence. The joy that comes is always spontaneous, and thus an epiphany.

Complementarity rather than oneness means that, by holding back an active physicality and the affectivity that lead to physicality, I am free to feel more deeply for you as you are, and you for me as I am, because we perceive phenomenologically our separateness. As noted earlier, merger through sexual pleasure and openly expressed affectivity makes you part of me, drawing love from me for the you in "us." In intentional friendship,

on the other hand, I love the you in you, and let you love the me in me without insisting that that me unite with that you. This is a loss that can, in time, become a found.

Say I am celibate, you are married. My oneness is commitment to God through community and Church. Your oneness is commitment to God through marriage and Church. My celibacy is part of who I am; my community is part of who I am. That wholeness of me you have come to love. You respect my celibate dimension as much as my other dimensions. I would not be me without it. If, for a time, I become estranged from oneness with my community or the Church, what is your role as friend? If you were a counselor, you might isolate the estrangement in order to help me express and resolve all the negative and positive feelings I have in regard to it. If you assumed the role of a superior or a pastor, you might remind me of the ethical dimension of myself and challenge my loyalty to promises I had made.

But you are my friend. You love me in my wholeness. Instead of isolating a part of me, you help me remember who I have been in the past and who I had hoped to be in the future in that wholeness. You help me struggle with who I am in the present, suffering with me as I reflect on the source of that estrangement, affirming me as I try to resolve that estrangement. As I lose my sense of my wholeness, you, as friend, do not.

If you take this estrangement and suffering as opportunity to offer me oneness elsewhere--that is, with you--you are, suddenly and most regrettably, no longer my friend. The love you offer is a love that has forgotten who I am.

When a person's primary commitment becomes vulnerable because of the situation in which it is, for the moment, being lived, the fascination of coupling can become intense. Surrendering to this fascination may overwhelm fidelity to primary commitment; then the person is thrust into comparing a "honeymoon" type of oneness with a "honeymoon-is-over" type of oneness. For the long-term relationship that one has within religious community or marriage is inevitably a "honeymoon-is-over" kind of oneness. There may be greater depth and deeper joys, but these are seldom isolated from the strife and challenge and frustration that is realistic everyday life.

Coupling, that phenomenon many men and women as well as the media

cling to in enthusiasm for romantic escape, serves as a cushion against the "upheaval reality" we encounter in a free society day after day. The popularity of coupling should not surprise us, for coupling, at first, promises and delivers release from "upheaval reality" because coupling, with its honeymoon spirit, is always isolation. In coupling you and I find a cocoon. Because it diverts us from dealing with reality it may disengage us from deeper emotions. Eventually, ennui may pervade our relationship. "What went wrong?" we ask ourselves.

Coupling, as a life style, is linked with the demise of the spirit of qualitative generativity--caring beyond self for others in the civic-communal, more universal, sense. The malaise concerning motivation in regard to celibacy should not be seen apart from this.

Young celibates and candidates for celibacy were raised in today's culture. To isolate issues concerning them from attitudes of their counterparts in the secular culture is unwise. On the other hand, commentators who shout "Halleluia!" in celebration of coupling, and critics who shout "Sin!" in a burst of condemnation and dismissal, are on the same side, for both the acclaimers and the detractors turn their backs on the imperative task, the serious search for roots and resolutions.

Couplings, homosexual unions, living together, single parenting, and some divorces share a similarity with the race to suburbia of recent years. They provide an escape from the mobility and upheaval reality of our culture. At times, segregation of priests from people or rigid sex segregation in relationships between men and women in the Church or even community itself can be used as an escape from contemporary reality. That all these escape phenomena are now contributing to the alienation that creates upheaval reality would be ironic if it were not tragic. Strict codes of behavior, old rhetoric, new rhetoric are hollow solutions. Instead, men and women committed to facing upheaval reality and to relating with affective fidelity to one another and to their vows may help the Church become the generative witness of Christ it is called to be.

In this paper I have attempted a "seeing more deeply into what is before our eyes." Because the commentary on friendship has been limited to one set of two persons in relationship does not mean that only one

intentional friendship in a person's life is being suggested. Pseudo-marriage is not recommended. A vowed person is more likely to remain a vowed person if he or she has several intentional friendships with persons of the opposite sex.

An analogy might help in summing up this "seeing what is before our eyes." Suppose you are in a museum. You enter a room with a large, many-sided stone, exhibited on a stand. Each side of the stone represents a different life style within a life span of a contemporary person in our culture. Six sides represent variations in the style of marriage. Marriage: without children; with children; with divorce followed by marriage; preceded by living together; preceded and followed by couplings or combined with couplings; combined with family and intentional friendships. Three sides represent the single state: with sexual couplings; as live-together relationships; as limited to intentional friendships. Religious life and priesthood are represented by three sides: without couplings or intentional friendships; with couplings; with intentional friendships.

The variety available surprises you. You look more closely and run your hand over each side. Your hand is scratched by the roughness and scraped as it slips into the clefts and crevices within the stone.

"One smooth and perfect side cannot be found," you murmur. If I were with you I would agree. There is no escape from upheaval reality. It is inherent in each life style, each life span. There is no side without night and cross. We are naive at this time to succumb to the new coupling rhetoric of our age or the old segregation rhetoric of another age.

Solidarity is the dynamic some men and women are already beginning to live. Relationships of friendship, they are discovering, can enhance one's identity as person, increase one's compassion, give one a renewed sense of being and strength, and enrich the Catholic community, helping it be generative toward the wholeness that family, community, Church, and culture can be.

We have reflected on coupling and intentional friendship. They are an either . . . or. There are two distinctly different dynamics to the two forms of knowing. Each has its own specific, fulfilling dynamic that cannot be avoided.

John, in our case study, might not feel ready to embark on the kind of friendship described here were his relationship with Mary to end, and in that decision he would be wise. His openness with his spiritual director may help him avoid, however, merely drifting into a life style by isolating this or that dimension of himself without regard to the wholeness of himself as a human being, a temptation some of his brothers and his counterparts in the culture might give way to.

How John has been educated within the Society in regard to sexuality and relationships is beyond the spiritual director's domain but not beyond relevancy to the case. If he has received a multiplicity of conflicting directives--be affective here, don't be affective there--be affective this way but not that--without rhyme, reason, or clarity, paralysis can easily set in.

Perhaps John has not seen, in the generation that models the priesthood for him, examples of fruitful relationships with the opposite sex; if so, it is no wonder that marriage comes to mind as the one and only alternative available if one does not wish to be isolated from affectivity in relation to women for one's entire life.

Developing self-awareness in regard to particular kinds of denial and deception is part of the educative process of every Jesuit, one hopes. For example, denial would be operative within John were he later to become acquainted with other women in a superficial way and pretend to himself and others that these relationships were friendships of any depth. Denial is also seen in celibates, single persons, and spouses who become enchanted with a person of the opposite sex, spend time with the person and think about her or him, while congratulating themselves that sexuality is not involved. In hibernation, awareness and arousal are apt to forget that spring is an inevitable season. If spring suddenly erupts, with no prior thought to its eventuality, fear may compel the one taken by surprise to lash out and reject the one seen as the harbinger or to slam the door without explaining the exit. This is sinful destruction.

Denial and deception work hand in hand when friendship is hidden by masking a friendship relationship in a "safer" designation--"we're colleagues," "it's purely pastoral," "he's tutoring me," "we work on the same projects"--because one is ashamed of one's own feelings or fears scandal.

These dangers, these denials and deceptions, these clefts and crevices in the stone, are part of the darkness and cross of friendship. In some friendships, of course, sexual attraction is minimal though affectivity has strength. In other friendships, sensual dimensions lessen as affection, through complementarity, deepens, especially if the two persons are determined to keep their primary commitments and live their lives by the intentionality of these commitments and by prayer and the presence of God, prayer and presence they willingly invite into every facet of their beings.

That suffering is inevitable in intentional friendship will not deter those who see the value and need for a witness of friendship within our Catholic community and our culture. Forbidding the emergence of sexual and openly affective oneness does not mean, however, that desire and affective love vanish within the individual man and woman. Opportunities for heartbreak abound. Great maturity combined with depth in spirituality is mandatory. For desire does not disappear overnight; fantasy does not fade in a season. No one should interpret coupling and intentional friendship as sinful over against sinless. The dynamic of friendship is not order and perfectionism. Repentance and forgiveness are the qualities that must accompany struggle with fidelity to vow and caring about others in personal love.

Affirming the separateness each is as person and navigating the shoals created by individuality can facilitate the retreats necessitated by the emergence of the erotic. It is trust, which means openness and honesty between the two persons, that allows one to call relationships friendship. Though awkward, the designation "intentional" has been deliberate. According to Rollo May intentionality implies two meanings: (1) simple future, "something will happen"; and (2) personal resolve, "I will make it happen." In other words, "we put ourselves on the line."² Connecting intentionality to psychological vitality, May feels that intentionality defines the aliveness of the man or woman, the potential degree of commitment, and the capacity to deal with intensity. Or as Paul Tillich says, "Man's vitality is as great as his intentionality; they are interdependent."³

Persons of Christian faith are committed to the vitality of Jesus, a vitality that has the courage to struggle with upheaval reality, a vitality

that fuses struggle with love. When struggle denies love and love denies struggle, vitality and wholeheartedness disappear.

I believe that, whatever the cost to ourselves, some of us who are men and women in the Church must not be so afraid of each other that we, by distancing, or dissension, or demonic use of power, destroy each other and mutilate the Church.

I believe that, whatever the costs to ourselves, some of us who are men and women in the Church must come close enough to love one another deeply yet in that closeness sever no public or private vow. When we do this we are doing God's work in the world, especially in North America where the meaning of promise and vow needs revitalization so intensely.

If this be a salvific moment, some of us must remember that Gethsemane as well as Easter, Calvary as well as Epiphany, come with salvific moments. Those who wear the fine raiment of easy peace, be it easy sanctity or easy values, live in the emperor's palace, not the Lord's.

PART III. THE EXPERIENCE OF PHIL

A. Preface

Our final case continues to highlight the relationship between spirituality and sexuality, but this time the interpersonal behavior that stands out is homosexual. A single, unprecedented incident erupts in this young priest's life history, against a background of affective deprivation. As a result, Phil's sexual identity is called into question. His spiritual director's reaction, as well as the man's own subsequent state, challenges the reader to reflect upon both the implications of this type of overt behavior and the ingredients of a helpful response.

Commenting on the case, William Barry directs his remarks principally to the issue of sexual identity, and then to the problem of accepting a homosexually oriented person into a same-sex religious community and helping him to develop toward greater maturity there. Madeline Birmingham focuses her reflections on Phil's need to grow as a whole person before God and suggests ways the spiritual director might help. William Connolly

follows with a look at Phil's sexual episode in the light of his entire salvation history. He goes on to show how a spiritual director can help a homosexual directee make personal and spiritual progress by bringing his sexual and other feelings into his regular contemplative prayer. Next, Robert Fahey points out a connection between Phil's sexual behavior and the difficulty he is experiencing in finding needed friendship within his local community. He views the erotic episode as an occasion for growth, but is also certain that a successful outcome will require the assistance of a competent counselor. Finally, Jim Gill presents several definitions of homosexuality, then comments on some pastoral attitudes and spiritual aids which could prove helpful to a Jesuit in Phil's situation. He also indicates some of the ways in which improved control over one's sexual impulses can be attained.

B. The Experience of Phil

by James J. Gill, S.J.

Phil is a thirty-two-year-old Jesuit priest in his second year after ordination. He has spent the past year doing pastoral work, is very distressed right now, and tells his spiritual director how he is feeling. He also tells him about a friendship with another Jesuit which developed rapidly during recent weeks and included some homosexual interaction this past weekend. Both men had consumed some alcohol and both shared the initiative; that is to say, there was no seduction involved. The other man is twelve years older than Phil.

Phil entered the Jesuit order as a novice after one year at a Catholic college. He had lived an intense intellectual life throughout his high-school years and that one year of college, and he continued to do the same all through his seminary training. His few close male friends prior to entrance into the order were among his high-school debating partners, his fellow actors in the casts of school plays, and his competitors in oratorical contents. He never had a girl friend. In the Society he lived among an emotionally close group of novices and scholastics all the way to ordination. He felt he knew them well and that they knew him--almost

as well as his twin brother did, until the two chose separate paths at the end of their first year of college.

During the past year Phil has been stationed a great distance from his former classmates and friends. He has been living in a much larger community than he experienced during any of his earlier years of formation. All the other members of this new community are between ten and fifty years older than he is. The friendship mentioned above has sprung up during the past few months and developed around their common interest in art and music. He feels depressed, guilty, and confused, now that he has become involved in a homosexual act. He is shocked at his own behavior and wonders what it means. He is asking himself: "Am I homosexual?" "Must I leave the Society?" He feels a deep sense of shame when he tells his spiritual director about this behavior. He has never been sexually involved in the past. He is also ashamed to face the other Jesuit with whom he became involved, and is angry toward him too. He is avoiding any sort of encounter with this man.

The spiritual director does not react by making a "big deal" out of the sexual event he hears Phil describe to him. He suspects it might be significant that the man has a twin brother and that the brother is married and has two children. He thinks, too, that it might be important to recall that his father died when the twins were twelve years old. He remembers that the mother was extremely pleased to see her son become a Jesuit, more so than over his brother's choice of the married state. The director is sorry to see Phil expecting God to reveal some degree of divine displeasure by responding in a punitive way. At the same time, Phil discloses that he thinks the spiritual director may be reacting too tolerantly. The director is now wondering what he can do to be helpful.

C. Sexual Identity and Jesuit Vocation

by William A. Barry, S.J.

Once again the case method helps us to look at a delicate issue with compassion for the person involved. And Phil badly needs compassion even if in his guilt he looks for condemnation from the spiritual director.

Men who have experiences like his are often plagued by self-doubts and self-hatred. Homosexuality as an issue does not often elicit compassionate reflections, and men who have homosexual incidents often expect the worst from those in whom they confide. The desire for punishment to assuage their guilt may actually anger spiritual directors or friends and thus achieve what it intends. But the anger is unfortunate because Phil would take it as proof that he is no good. Reflecting on the concrete case helps us to see the dynamics involved and to maintain a compassionate attitude.

Phil seems to be facing issues of sexuality for the first time. Prior to this incident he might have said that he was heterosexual if the question occurred to him. The fact that his twin brother is married and has a family might have been proof enough for him, if he needed it, that he was heterosexual. With this incident, however, grave doubts arise. Phil seems to be sexually underdeveloped in the sense that he has not yet established a clear identity as a hetero- or homosexual man.

Recall what I said about underdevelopment in my comments on the case of Ben. As the case is presented, Phil seems to be intellectually and affectively well developed. The area that seems underdeveloped is the sexual. His affective neediness at the present time leads to the attachment to the older Jesuit and to the sexual incident. Phil will need the help of the director to open himself to the saving love of God. It will take much patient effort because Phil's self-esteem has been deeply wounded by the incident. Whether he is homo- or heterosexual matters little in God's eyes; but men like Phil find it hard to believe. Thus, the director needs patience and compassion. Hopefully, Phil will allow God to love him and heal him. But the question of his sexual identity is not so easily settled.

As a Jesuit with a vow of chastity Phil cannot do what late adolescents do to establish their identity as heterosexuals, namely, date and spend enough time in the company of the opposite sex, and especially one person, to discover that they are men and women who can physically and emotionally attract and be attracted. If a Jesuit Phil's age were to try something like this, he could be accused of using another person for his own development. Thus, if he remains a Jesuit--and I see no reason why he should not--Phil may have to live with uncertainty about his sexual identity. This may

be asking a lot of him, but I know men who have come to terms with the uncertainty, not without great pain. Phil might get great help from counseling or therapy in a group which included men and women from varied walks of life. But the group leader would have to be a person who does not overvalue the sexual, making sexual identity almost a supreme value.

These reflections point up the difficulty we face in accepting young men into the Society of Jesus. Religious orders are not the best place to establish one's sexual identity precisely because of the limitations imposed by the vow of chastity. I would prefer that sexual identity--whether hetero- or homosexual--be established prior to entrance. What do I mean by sexual identity? I mean a relatively firm conviction that one is a sexual being with a relatively positive self-evaluation. One can be homo- or heterosexual and have such a conviction. The person does not need to prove continually that he is sexually attractive or heterosexual or homosexual. His sexuality is a given and he can entrust himself to others as a friend without too great a fear of losing control of himself sexually. If he is homosexual, he needs to have relative self-assurance that he can live a chaste life in an all-male environment without becoming a rigidly defensive, distancing person. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* for the heterosexual. And all of this must be understood in relative, not absolute terms. Sexuality and sexual identity are not absolute values, as I have said; nor does anyone ever achieve a guaranteed sexual identity and self-assurance. At the same time Jesuit life in the modern world seems to be made more difficult than it need be by an underdeveloped sexual identity, and the Society of Jesus is ill-equipped to help its members to come to a sense of sexual identity if they have not faced the question sufficiently prior to entrance.

This case also presents us with some of the complexities involved in the issue of homosexuality. Because there is a stereotype of the homosexual, it needs to be said that men whose basic sexual attraction is to men come in all sizes and shapes and in a variety of personality types. I have, for example, met Jesuits with such sexual attractions who do not exhibit any more hostility or fear of women than do most heterosexual men.

I suspect that neither men nor women would consider them anything but heterosexual. Such men have, however, labored under a poor self-image for years because *they* knew that their attractions, even though never acted on, were homosexual. Many of these men may well have entered the Society as Phil did without having established a clear sexual identity and have had little opportunity to experience heterosexual attraction during their formative years. Some of them entered the Jesuits with a relatively clear sense of and a relatively mature acceptance of their homosexual identity. Some have come to this maturity while in the Society. From my observation such men exhibit few of the negative dynamics that are considered stereotypic of the homosexual. They have learned to live with their attractions and remain celibate; they do not show inordinate ambivalent feelings towards strong males nor hostility toward women. Their ministry is not negatively affected by their homosexual orientation, only by their lack of self-confidence. Stereotypical remarks about homosexuals do not help such men to a sense of self-worth.

At the same time it must be acknowledged that there are men of homosexual orientation (and also of heterosexual orientation) who are destructive in community because they tend to set men against one another and who, for all their good intentions toward women, are basically hostile to them. They are very unhappy with themselves. Such men need therapy, not because of their sexual orientation, but because of their destructive dynamics. The Society of Jesus is not a healthy environment for them. They will continually try to win the favor of strong men within the Society, especially of superiors, but will ultimately find these men wanting, first because they are often looking for the perfect father who does not exist, second because they often betray the trust other men put in them and so are rejected, third because they are so ambivalent toward the very men they admire. Moreover, it must be said that celibate males as a group too often exhibit a fear of and hostility toward women which plays into the dynamics of the person I am describing. The Society is not a helpful place for these men.

A word about the acceptance of homosexuals into the novitiate. It should be clear that I do not favor the acceptance of those who have not

yet come to grips with the issue of their sexual identity or of those who are plagued by the destructive dynamics I have just mentioned. Neither of these restrictions is limited to the question of homosexuality. But there are young men who have come to terms with the fact that their sexual attractions are homosexual and who have arrived at a basic self-acceptance and who believe that they have a vocation to the Society of Jesus. I see no a priori reason to doubt the authenticity of the call. The all-male environment of a community may pose a difficulty, but fewer and fewer of our communities are like the cloistered hothouses of the past. These young men would, hopefully, not be afraid of developing close friendships with Jesuits for fear of homosexual implications. They may have to learn how to handle their feelings when offhand and cruel remarks about homosexuals are made. I would hope that their homosexual orientation is not a dark secret they continually fear will be discovered, just as I hope that they need not feel it necessary to tell one and all. Whether a person is homo- or heterosexual in orientation is not matter for public knowledge. For a Jesuit the main issue is that one can live with relative wholeheartedness a life of consecrated virginity in service of the Lord and his kingdom. Men with a homosexual orientation as well as men with a heterosexual orientation have been able to do so.

D. Phil Can Become a Whole Person Before God

by Madeline Birmingham, R.C.

This case brings us face to face with a reality situation. We are accustomed now to reading about and discussing homosexuality, lesbianism, gay rights. We have become superficially sophisticated in our stance. We consider ourselves objective and accepting. At the least we want to be open and balanced about this movement in society toward new norms in sexuality. The fact is, however, that the majority of society is heterosexual and that underlying the objective discussion is a certain subliminal smugness "because, of course, this would never happen to me."

We forget that the real crises in this emotionally laden area lie not in discussion and often not in a chosen way of life that differs from the

standard. So it comes as a decided shock if a real crunch arises in the isolated incident, the chance encounter. For this reason the case study touches more people than have cared to admit it. As an example, what about the times when two men or two women living and working closely together have discovered that they were mutually attracted? Often, even when there was no expression or minimal expression of this drawing force, the two people might have felt that awareness alone was sinful. Too often they repressed or denied this affinity, preferring to live with hidden guilt and anxiety rather than to face the issue and come to peace with themselves and with their God.

This particular lonely Jesuit, cast adrift from his emotional moorings, finds himself floundering among the coral reefs of another's need and his own. It may be that there is little desire for sex as such in these situations. Under other circumstances it could well have been a fleeting affair with an available and empathetic woman. The basic problem can be loneliness and inability to encounter that loneliness in a positive way before the Lord.

Phil has a lot going for him. He tries to be open before his director; he presents the facts much as they are. He acknowledges the encounter and shares in the responsibility for it. But he has a few mountains to climb before he can begin to come to resolution. Is his openness occasioned by a desire for help or a need to be punished? Both elements undoubtedly exist, but one is stronger than the other. He is discomforted by the director's acceptance of the situation and of him. Since his God is obviously a punishing God, Phil will not easily come to grips with the director's refusal to be living symbol of that punishment. On an emotional level he is looking for someone who will answer his need for castigation. "Don't be easy on me. Throw me into the snowbank and don't let me up again until I promise to be a good boy."

Phil's God has great expectations regarding all the details of his life. He needs to see God's great expectations in an entirely different light. God demands a turning to Him in love and trust in Him as a Father who stands by us no matter what.

Another difficulty is evidenced by his anger. He feels depressed,

guilty, confused, shocked, and ashamed. He mentions anger only in connection with the other Jesuit and he avoids all contact with him! He must learn to recognize his inward-directed anger and the variety of substitute emotions he employs to disown that anger. He is angry because he has disappointed his own image of what he should be.

Anger is not the only emotion Phil needs to make friends with. For years he may have been using his oratorical skills, debating talent, and acting ability to play out his emotions vicariously and with safety. This may have protected him from growing in self-awareness.

He has been separated often from people who had special meaning for him: a father who rejected him by dying; a mother who was pleased to see him become a priest; a twin who chose another path in life. Now the burden becomes too great when God separates him even from his peers and places him in an institution manned by older Jesuits with whom he has little in common. He is cut off from all the props which kept him from looking deeply within himself. This man never even had a girl friend to help him experience not just sexual attraction but that particularly close relationship between man and woman which helps both to grow in knowledge of self and loving concern for another.

The spiritual director wonders what he can do to be helpful. First I hope he will continue to respond positively to Phil despite Phil's unconscious desire for rejection and punishment. He must lead Phil to experience acceptance of himself. He needs to discover God, and himself in relationship with God. Can he help Phil to talk without leaning on ideas and abstractions? Can he assist him in uncovering his anger, his fear, his loneliness? If he is to do this, then he will need a lot of patience and concern himself. Before Phil can become centered on God the loving Father, he must experience personally that God loves and God frees. Then perhaps he can be helped to face the other Jesuit and experience concern for him rather than anger.

Most of all, he needs to be assured that out of this incident, good can evolve. This may have been just what he needed to awaken him to the fullness of life and the delicate balancing of all the powers he has been given. He needs to be reassured that the Lord may not be calling him to

leave the Jesuits. At any rate, he should not make a decision like this in a time of genuine desolation.

Phil may very well need counseling. Is he a homosexual? Perhaps he is. Regardless of that, his director must help him first of all to become a person.

E. Phil and the Spiritual Director

by William J. Connolly, S.J.

In the account of Phil's experience the sexual episode stands out vividly. The fact that the incident is homosexual contributes significantly to that vividness. Phil himself, however, is more important than any incident in his life. If the spiritual director is to help him he must welcome him as a person with his own history, the particular lines of force of his life, and the shape given to his character and personality by his life history.

It will not do to leave his life history completely to the psychologists. For his life history is his salvation history. God has acted in his life and is saving him through it. To take his relationship with God seriously, then, means to take his life history seriously. His attitude toward the sexual episode that upsets him now can be shaped by his relationship with God only if he sees his relationship as having shaped and developed him in the past.

One fact in this history will stand out for an experienced director, and he will want to point it out to the directee. Phil's living situation, a large community affording no opportunity for emotional ties with men his own age, is a new experience for him, one which is bound to cause him difficulty. Anyone would find it unsettling to live for the first time far away from the only people with whom he has been emotionally close. But Phil would find himself unusually deprived. His association with his twin brother has accustomed him from first consciousness to a close peer relationship. Up to this time his ties with Jesuit friends his own age have given him something like an extension of this relationship. He now finds himself without the support of these relationships at a critical time in

his life, the time of fledgling experience in ministry.

As a man who has devoted himself strenuously to intellectual pursuits in his college and seminary years, he has to expect that his entrance into full-time pastoral ministry will call for adjustments in his expectations and his ways of relating to people. He has to expect too that some of these adjustments will bring about temporary uncertainty, even spells of emotional turmoil. He is entering upon a new way of seeing himself, his life as a priest, and his ways of relating to other people. He is again, for the first time in many years, a novice in a new and major enterprise, and will have to undergo the uncertainties of a novice.

An experienced director will see the sexual incident against this background. This does not mean that he will judge it of no importance. Judgment is not his responsibility. And he cannot know how important this incident will prove to be in the development of Phil's life. He can be of most help as a director by pointing out the developmental situation in which Phil has found himself this year, and by helping him to introduce his attitude and feelings about the sexual incident into his explicit on-going dialogue with God.

If the man has been engaged in a contemplation-oriented prayer, this second task will be easier. If he has not, this will be an apt, though a difficult, time to begin such prayer. The director will probably find that Phil will not easily bring his feelings about his sexuality into the dialogue with God. In our culture, so much self-contempt surrounds the recognition of homosexual impulses in oneself that even a person accustomed to contemplative dialogue with God will often find himself distracted, confused, or blank when he tries to express these feelings to him. The director can help by encouraging Phil to describe these experiences of frustration and discussing them with him. He can also suggest that he speak to the Lord about whether he wants to express his sexual feelings to him.

If Phil can express to the Lord his sexual feelings and his self-depreciation in all their strength and uncertainty, and then listen, he is likely to find that he will be more transparent before Him and that the intimacy of the relationship will increase. This increase of intimacy is the most appropriate result of prayer and will be of great help to him whether or not other results follow.

He is likely to find too, however, that this increase in intimacy will bring about a clearer and broader perspective that will help him to decide what he wants to do about his present lack of close relationships, his community situation, and his doubts about his sexual identity. He will then be much better able to set about resolving these questions. His contemplation will be of immense help to him in doing so.

One of the more surprising things a director learns is the extreme difficulty a person with strong homosexual inclinations often has in letting God accept him as he is. His culture, his religious tradition, and his relationships with heterosexual people all tell him that these inclinations are contemptible and may lead him to judge himself contemptible. As a spiritual director I do not yet know whether Phil has dominant homosexual inclinations. Whether he does or not, he will have difficulty bringing his homosexual feelings into the contemplative dialogue. If he does, I can expect that he will take a long time and exercise much persistence before he will allow God fully to accept him as he is, and so come most fundamentally to accept himself.

Whether a person is homosexually or heterosexually inclined, however, is a secondary matter to the director. His concern is with Phil's desire to develop spiritual maturity. The clearer this priority is to him, the more helpful he is likely to be to the uncertain man who has come to him for help.

F. This Crisis Calls for Counseling

by Robert J. Fahey

It seems clear in hindsight that this thirty-two-year-old priest has lived within a rather narrow set of personal friendships, both in his early life and through the extraordinarily long academic preparation hitherto required of Jesuits. He has been part of a strong peer group, all the way to his thirty-first year, not unlike a set of blood brothers close in age, experience, and emotional ties to each other. Now he has found himself working among people in a wider world than the seminary, far from his family and long-time friends, living in a larger community than he is used

to, and one made up of older men. Now, in his second year after ordination he finds he has engaged in a homosexual episode.

Whatever else the episode means, it surely means he is lonely, and that in his loneliness he has sought, albeit awkwardly, intimacy with another human being. Further, it raises at least two questions: What does he know of his own needs for friendship, and what those needs require of him when his living or working situations don't naturally provide friends? Does the Jesuit community he has joined provide him with opportunities for friendship, and can he seek and find Christ in that house among those older men?

The homosexual incident is surely shaking him, but it may also wake him up. Whatever his sexual orientation, he is likely to pursue his search for human intimacy. How he does so is more of a question than whether he will do so. He needs now to reflect upon himself, his own development and needs, his relationships, his loneliness. The case is one that shrieks for a counselor to assist this man to a greater awareness of himself, a counselor with more perspective on his present situation than he himself is likely to have, given his apparently limited experience, limited self-awareness, and limited personal skills.

Institutional life can be something like a hothouse, growing weakness as well as strength. Here is a man who has at last, late, left home, left the controlled warmth of the seminary. Suddenly, he finds that he is a lonely man, divorced from the sustaining relationships he has enjoyed. Either he will now begin to build a life, new friend by new friend, approaching each day in some congruence with a life design he has been working on for over a decade of preparation for ordination, or in desperation he will reach out, probably again and again, for what sustenance he can secure through hopeless little sexual episodes or other substitutes for loving. Or he may go passive, I suppose, and become another specimen of humanity frozen in an institution.

G. Homosexuality and Impulse Control

by James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

Phil has developed a friendship with another priest, has become sexually active with him on one occasion, but has never been sexually involved with anyone in the past. He asks himself seriously: "Am I a homosexual?"

What would it be helpful for the spiritual director to know in order to assist this man in finding an answer to the question that is troubling him? First of all, I would hope that he would realize that there are many ways in which behavioral scientists and clinicians have defined homosexuality. Too simplistically, it is sometimes operationally defined as sex relations with a member of the same sex. One authority has classified as a homosexual any individual "who has engaged repeatedly as an adult in sexual relations with members of the same sex."¹ Some definitions, however, instead of stressing the overt (or *external*) behavior, place emphasis upon the person's sexual arousal pattern. A homosexual is, therefore, one who has the capacity to be sexually aroused by members of his or her own sex, just as a heterosexual person is one who becomes psychologically (and also physiologically) aroused by members of the other sex. It would be possible for an individual to be described as homosexual for this reason, even if no overt action had taken place (for example, because of prohibitions or fears), as long as the person experiences recognizable sexual feelings in response to someone of the same sex.

A careful distinction made by other authorities would seem relevant to this case. Some state that homosexual behavior does not constitute homosexuality any more than heterosexual behavior necessarily identifies heterosexuality. Why not? Because an external action can be a transient experience determined by personal or social factors. Homosexuality or heterosexuality is a basic property, a result of developmental and/or genetic influences which in turn determine not only overt behavior but also the nature of the person's predominant psychological responses. In other words, they consider both overt behavior and preponderant responses to be essential to the classification of an individual as homosexual or heterosexual.

Some authorities insist that the definition of homosexuality should emphasize the "preferential" nature of the sexual behavior between members of the same sex. They point out the fact that in sexually segregated situations the lack of a partner of the preferred (opposite) sex can contribute to the sharing of sexual behavior with someone of the same sex. Prisons, certain military bases, non-coeducational boarding schools, and even some forms of religious community life have been found to foster such choices. Certainly, in the case we are considering, this could be an important element to keep in mind.

I myself would want to emphasize again the distinction between homosexual actions and a predominant sexual orientation toward members of the same sex, this being manifested principally by the nature of the phantasy, erotic desires, and sexual arousal pattern of the person in question. Also deserving of attention is the fact that the label "homosexual" connotes to many people a condition that is permanent, rather than a transitional one or an arrested stage of psychosexual development (characteristic of early adolescence) which the majority of American psychiatrists, I believe, consider it to be. Personally, I would be very reluctant to describe anyone as definitely "a homosexual" until I had become certain that he has been at least throughout the third decade of his life consistent in manifesting in response to members of the same sex the signs of predominant orientation just mentioned above. I have seen a number of young men and women in their twenties, who suspected that they were homosexuals, go on to develop a predominant and lasting heterosexual orientation, sometimes with and sometimes without the help of psychiatric treatment.

Consequently, to help Phil answer his question about whether he is homosexual, I would think it advisable for him to examine the nature of his psychological arousal pattern in order to decide whether he has been for many years predominantly more responsive sexually to men than to women. Looking to his future, it might also prove helpful to remind him of the fact that drinking alcohol generally tends to dissolve a person's psychological inhibitions or "defenses." Sexual impulses of either a homosexual or a heterosexual type may be released, and the person may act in a manner he or she would have been psychologically unlikely to initiate without

drinking first. Although there is no scientific evidence that homosexuals have a greater problem with alcoholism than heterosexuals, it is a widely known fact that many initial experiences with homosexual behavior have been facilitated by the ingestion of alcohol.² Phil's case may be a good example of this fact.

Response to Sexual Behavior

But whether Phil is in fact homosexual, what can we say about his thinking that his spiritual director may be reacting too tolerantly? For one thing, it sounds as if Phil is inclined to evaluate his own behavior in terms of the traditional Catholic moral theology which has been endorsed as recently as 1975 by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in its *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*. This document, in treating homosexuality, urged that "homosexuals must be treated with understanding," but it insisted that no pastoral method might be employed which "would give moral justification to those acts." The Sacred Congregation continues to maintain that "the judgment of Scripture attested to the fact that homosexual acts are intrinsically disordered and can in no case be approved of."

An unknown number of religious persons today are less influenced in their thinking by such declarations than by contemporary presentations of moral theology which would "not necessarily condemn every form of homosexual expression or union as absolutely immoral," would allow that this is "the only way in which some persons can find a satisfying degree of humanity in their lives," and would affirm that "homosexual expressions are in themselves neutral" and become moral to the extent that they are "expressive of self-giving love" or "generating friendship that enables the partners to grow and become more fully human."³ Such theological views have inspired pastoral guidelines that are respectful of the problems of homosexual Catholics and attuned to their spiritual needs and sensibilities. However, the homosexual who binds himself by a vow of chastity or celibacy places himself in a difficult position. A Jesuit, for example, according to our traditional view regarding the content of our vow, is expected to refrain from all deliberate behavior of a genital nature (that is, "including

the sexual quality of arousal and achieving its highest expression in orgasm").⁴ There has been no official statement within the Society of Jesus which could suggest that anything less than the "total continence" which "intimately involves the deeper inclinations of human nature" (of which the 31st General Congregation speaks in its Decree 16 on Chastity, no. 9, marginal 260) is acceptable as an ideal for its vowed members, despite whatever new interpretations may be offered regarding sexual behavior by contemporary moral theologians.

I would consider it very important for Phil's spiritual director to make it clear that he is more concerned about what sort of psychological or social need underlies and motivates the young priest's sexual activity in preference to concentrating on the moral aspect of his homosexual action. What I said about not provoking defensiveness and a shutting-off of communication by moralizing in the case of John and Mary I would want to repeat here.⁵ I am certainly not denying that there is a moral aspect to Phil's behavior. What I am trying to emphasize is the fact that studies of effective helping in relationships (such as the director-directee type) reveal that the persons most successful as *helpers* are those who (1) are able to keep the channel of communication open and (2) are obviously more concerned about the growth of persons than about single actions or tasks being done. This single act on Phil's part may be evidence of loneliness, frustration, resentment, love, depression, or even a deep yearning within his nature to take a step toward adulthood and a more mature relationship with God. These are some of the possibilities I have in mind when I say there is more at issue here than just morality for the spiritual director to bring to Phil's attention.

Spiritual Help and Impulse Control

What means can the spiritual director offer to Phil in order to help him regain control of his behavior so that he can live a chaste, celibate life successfully? I think the 31st General Congregation answered this question in a remarkably comprehensive way.

To attain the perfect liberty of chaste love, besides the familiarity with God mentioned above, all the supernatural and

natural helps available should be used. Among these, however, those contribute more to the faithful fulfillment of one's obligation of chastity which are positive, such as probity of life, generous dedication to one's assigned task, great desire for the glory of God, zeal for solid virtues and spiritual concerns, openness and simplicity in activity and in consulting with superiors, rich cultural attainments, spiritual joy, and above all true charity. For all these things will of their nature more easily bring a man to the really full and pure love for God and men which we earnestly desire.⁶

But Phil's impulsive sexual behavior in this case raises the precise issue of self-control. We are living at a time when many religious people are striving to learn ways of giving adequate physical expression to their feelings of affection for those who are friends or those they love. Phil's spiritual director could be helpful by assisting him to give careful consideration to the forms of behavior he wants to develop and direct toward such persons in his life, the modes of acting which he would consider compatible with his understanding of his vow of chastity. As a Jesuit, there are certainly a variety of ways either verbal or non-verbal which are available to him (the latter being physical and involving either contact or no contact, for example, gestures) which will convey the affection he feels for cherished persons in his life.

In addition to learning religiously acceptable ways of showing his feelings, a priest like Phil will need to learn to control his sexual impulses, thoughts, desires, and phantasies, if he is to refrain in the future from getting involved repeatedly in genital activity as he has done on this single occasion. But where will he derive the requisite strength to achieve this? It is too simple to say "from God's grace" or "from his love for Christ." These are, to be sure, major and essential elements in a formed Jesuit's life. But I would want to remind Phil and his spiritual director that social-learning theorists⁷ have shown that there is greater likelihood of a person's discontinuing unacceptable behavior if his peers as well as authority figures disapprove of it, and a greater likelihood of his continuing the behavior if there is peer approval and authority approval. If peers approve and authorities disapprove, or if the reverse situation prevails, the effect would depend upon the individual's degree of responsiveness to influence from these separate sources. It would seem

important, in view of these research conclusions, that a widely (if not universally) agreed-upon and clearly articulated interpretation of the meaning of the vow of chastity and what it implies behaviorally would serve as a useful aid to a Jesuit's achieving and maintaining adequate control over his sexual (be they *homo* or *hetero*) impulses.

"Ego psychologists" would want Phil to recall that what will deter him from repeating his overt homosexual behavior depends upon the level of psychological and moral development at which he is functioning.⁸ Very immature individuals operate out of (a) fear of prompt punishment as retaliation for a forbidden deed, (b) fear of being caught, or (c) a need to gain approval by observing group-accepted norms. More mature persons will be guided by (a) long-term, self-evaluated goals and ideals, (b) rules they have made their own ("internalized"), and (c) broad, abstract ethical principles (such as social justice).

Psychoanalysts would want Phil's director to keep in mind the fact that some people reveal in their sexual behavior, resulting from irresistible impulses, a neurotic type of emotional pathology which stems from early-life affective deprivation. Thus, a homosexual act could well give evidence of a man's abiding craving for a father's tender affection which was for some reason denied him in the early years of his life. If such be the case, a repetition of external homosexual actions will in all probability take place; the ordinary spiritual and social remedies are likely to prove unavailing; and professional clinical assistance will ordinarily be required to help him modify his behavior.

Just a final comment on the feelings of guilt, depression, and shame which Phil is experiencing. These emotions are not surprising, and they provide evidence that the man is functioning in what appears to be a healthy manner affectively. His (for him *unprecedented*) action has provoked a lowering of his self-esteem, and a reaction of self-contempt, hence the depressed mood. His guilt feelings result from Phil's deviating in his behavior from his own internalized moral standards. His sense of shame is flowing from his knowledge that others are aware of his behavior, for which he suspects they have disdain. His spiritual director can help Phil gradually eliminate all three of these painful emotions (1) by showing

toward him a consistently high level of personal respect, (2) by genuinely accepting his human weakness (and his own) with obvious gratitude to God for His infinite love and mercy, and (3) by encouraging Phil to count his past and his future *successful* efforts at behavior regulation as evidence of God's grace and solid grounds for appropriate self-esteem.

Phil might benefit greatly from being reminded that the Lord said he had come among us "to heal the infirm," not to marvel at those who appear in every way adequate and strong.

PART IV. CONCLUDING COMMENT

A. Living Out Affectivity

by Virginia Sullivan Finn

"No man is an island," claimed John Donne, and in these papers we have affirmed his statement. It would be striking if we did otherwise, for implied in the term affectivity is "other" in relationship with me. Our three case studies revealed three different life experiences of Jesuits. These three journeys toward "others" may symbolize challenges in the human journey of affectivity.

Ben revealed the journey he is making in relationship to self, previously an unknown other--the challenge of moving from imitation of role model to person. John revealed the journey he is making in relationship to women--the challenge of sexuality and love. Phil revealed the journey he is making in relationship to men--the challenge of community.

Through spiritual direction the three Jesuits are being encouraged to make affectivity in relationship to God the center and challenge of each of these journeys. But the discovery of affectivity in relation to God leads inevitably to the question of the living out of that affectivity in the world. We cannot leave the issue on the level of the individual's prayer.

In our papers we have considered three men on the journey toward maturity. Ben and John and Phil are only now discovering what fidelity and commitment are. Before this, no matter how frequently the words may have

been on their lips, they were abstractions. For it is when a person questions the worth of fidelity or craves to break the commitment that he or she looks into its eyes for the first time and sees its truth. When Christians, like our three Jesuits, ache to choose an alternate path, they discover the reality behind the words fidelity and commitment and why this reality is called the Way.

Ministry as a Context for Living Out Affectivity

In our three cases we have seen representatives of the career Jesuits, the community Jesuits, and the culture Jesuits. Career absorbed Ben in his early years after ordination because it signified role and meant security. Phil blurred the distinctions between his own identity and community. John fell into the coupling pattern that characterizes the life styles of his peers in the culture. An opportunity to substitute something else for what the Jesuit may have originally committed himself to in relation to God and humanity seemed available and was accepted. While it is true that one cannot develop into holistic maturity apart from career, community, and culture, maturity requires balanced integration, not identification with one or the other.

What can enable that integration? What interior unifier can be found for Ben, or John, or Phil, a unifier so internalized that it will call each man back when the temptation to substitute career or community or culture for self emerges? I know that if I were to live my life over and were to chose to live out my affectivity as a celibate fruitfully and fully, my spirit and emotions and my body would demand reasons emerging from my sense of being loved and loving God and from my call to enflesh that affectivity in ministry.

Strangely enough, we hear only passing mentions of ministry from Ben, John, and Phil. I have been surprised at the number of Jesuits I meet who do not seem to have an intense ministerial drive, surprised because the first Jesuits I knew had such an intense drive. I want to suggest that ministerial intentionality, the envisioning of a ministerial trajectory that through the years unfolds in ways that deepen the Jesuit's creative

powers, his understanding, his commitment, and his faith, can link past, present, and future and thus provide the unifier we seek. This ministry may be adult education, pastoral counseling, liturgy, retreat work, Church-related social activism, or newer modes of proclaiming the word. The essential point is that the ministry put the priest in affective relationship with a group of people. Affective relationship gives ministry life; without it ministry can become a professional duty that does not absorb the heart.

What I found blurred and diffused in the experiences of Ben, John, and Phil was each man's understanding of this context for living out his affective life. Their primary commitment did not seem clearly understood and visible.

What is the primary commitment of the Jesuit? To say "the Church" or "the Society" is like saying "the world"; it is too large and general to provide a concrete image. To say "the school" as Ben did, or "my community" as Phil seems to have done, is to envision primary commitment too narrowly. Let us consider the following as a possible answer to the question. The alpha and omega of the Jesuit's life is his relationship to God. A ministerial trajectory chosen by intention and including an affective relationship to the people gives an outward witness to this basic affectivity. In other words, ministry incarnates the Jesuit's fundamental affective life. I speak of trajectory because the intentionality I mean has the thrust of deliberate forward movement, one that will not stop despite the attractions and impediments it meets. It also pulls forward what it is designed to carry. When this ministerial trajectory is internalized as the center of vocation, it provides a unifier that draws into itself membership in the Society, career as a teacher or other professional, relationship to local Jesuit community and intentional friendships, and commitment to culture and the social apostolate of the Society of Jesus.

What I am suggesting does not necessarily imply that more time will be spent on ministry by most Jesuits. Let me give you an example. The Jesuit-affiliated Vineyard Community in the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts is a lay community dedicated, in part, to increasing faith through expression in the creative arts. A Jesuit who participated in

the community went on for further study in another field, then into administrative work in the Society. Although he left the community, he maintained that his ministerial commitment originated there. He returned frequently to design liturgy with persons in the community and to celebrate liturgy with them. In his new location he participated in drama with a group, he continued his own self-study, and he taught an adult education course in the arts and faith; and he returns to the Vineyard each summer to design and lead, with lay persons, a workshop in the creative arts and faith.

This Jesuit priest is grounding his priesthood in ministerial intentionality which sustains the vitality of his priesthood because it encourages its development and growth and includes an affective dimension.

If a ministerial trajectory is to become the means for living out the Jesuit's most fundamental affective relationship, namely his relationship with God, formation needs to be designed with this purpose in mind. The formation process would have these characteristics among others:

- ... development of a clear understanding of Church today;
- ... continual dialogue about ministry with the Jesuit in formation;
- ... the provision of opportunities to participate in the broad variety of ministries the Church contains and in seminars and conferences devoted to particular ministerial interests;
- ... reflections in formal ways on the Jesuit's ministerial trajectory with rectors and formation directors.

In this process the Jesuit needs to be encouraged to deepen himself as a person through affective relationships with individuals and groups, because affective relating is fundamental to his ministry.

In the process of formation the Jesuit should not become alienated from the people. Our people are in need of particular kinds of affective healing because they have experienced the upheavals of the Church and culture in ways particular to themselves. Moreover, the family is in crisis and crisis is always a call for help. The Carnegie Council on Children notes, as quoted in *Origins*, VII, no. 34 (February 16, 1978):

If parents are to function . . . with confidence, we must address ourselves less to the criticism and reform of parents themselves than to the criticism and reform of the institutions that sap their self-esteem and power. Recognizing that family self-sufficiency is a false myth, we also need to acknowledge that all of today's families need help in raising children.

Voiceless, with little representation and relevant ministry encouraged within the Church, young as well as older Catholic parents watch with apprehension as their children enter a world that places minimal value on where they are laying down their lives, namely, family.

Thousands of lay persons and families have drifted away from the Church in the last decade, and their loss seems to have caused hardly a ripple in the functioning and commitments of religious orders and the leadership of the Church. The Jesuits, through dedication to education, have revealed affective, committed caring for many teenagers and young adults. The changes in the Church, however, and in the world since Vatican II have escalated the turmoil of family constellations, including younger families. Some lay persons feel that Jesuit priests like Ben and Phil have not responded enthusiastically to the needs of ordinary people in the Church for affective caring and spiritual leadership.

How can Jesuits be encouraged to relate more affectively with the people? Participation in lay studies, exposure to the variety of persons in our Church, reflection on these experiences, training in particular ways of affective relating, and most especially, ministerial studies in a context that includes mature lay students can help the Jesuit to internalize the affective attitudes needed by him to relate with the laity in healing ways. Without such preparation he may fail to reach the people in any significant ways, with affective damage to himself and others the price.

Provinces might want to consider developing more options for the participation of Jesuits in vibrant faith opportunities with people of the Church, ones that would deepen motivation in regard to ministry. If all opportunities offered from novitiate to golden jubilee are drab and limited, if they dampen or extinguish the vocation for ministry, men will continue to leave or develop problems like Ben, John, and Phil. Creating placements for ministerial growth, I would think, would be a priority of every province.

Affectivity for and with the people and intentionality in regard to ministry may influence the integration of sexual and affective dimensions within a priest. Every Jesuit I have known who was caught up in meaningful ministry and experiencing affective support from a people seemed to find true meaning in his celibacy and to express in his life a vitality, a sense of purpose and mutuality with the people and the Church, which I don't see in Jesuits like Ben, John, and Phil. When tied to ministry and to affective relationships with those with whom one ministers, celibacy becomes a process lived more than a state safeguarded by artificial barriers.

My premise has been that the most meaningful way for the Jesuit celibate to live out his basic commitment to the Lord is through an intentional ministerial trajectory united affectively to the people in small groups or large. The Jesuit does not have to give up his career, his community, or his interest in the general culture. Ministry with its affective relationship to people as the enfleshment of the Jesuit's love of God provides the internalized unifier for his other commitments.

Conclusion

My lay journey during the last decade and a half has been a journey with male religious celibates. But I am not a professional ministering person, social scientist, or spiritual director. Education in secular fields has been my profession. What I know about the Church I know from living in it as an active lay person. My deepest knowing of life, however, comes to me through being a wife and mother. Because it is on the deepest levels of myself as a person, the affectivity I experience as a wife and mother is the channel for insights pertaining to my affective relationship with God, with the Church and its celibates and lay people. In other words, my fundamental relationships are "tutors," in a sense, for my other relationships. In closing I would like to share with the reader insights on affectivity, Church, and celibates that came to me through a recent experience with my daughter Katherine.

Late one Friday afternoon last December a friend and I bought each other a cup of Christmas cheer. High above the city of Cambridge we gazed

through window walls at the city of Boston. It struck me that afternoon that the secular world of that metropolitan city is my world and the world of the many lay Catholics rooted there. I knew that if, in the reality that is my world, God is not present, now, today, then God for me cannot be.

That same Friday afternoon in even higher skies my daughter Katherine was looking down on the rim of the earth from a plane carrying her to a small remote village in the Far East.

My daughter Katherine is prophetic for me. Though only twenty-one she speaks four European languages in addition to English. Her consciousness is global in a concreteness not often seen. Because of her intensity she burns out often.

She is the young one. I am the older one. I remind her when she burns out of the roots that tell her who she is; she reminds me when I am moribund of the horizons that tell her what we on earth *can* be. In that sense we are like the old and the young in all societies, including the Society of Jesus.

Our mother-daughter relationship symbolizes Church and world. At times, I am Church and she is world. I call her back to what she has been and must not lose. At times, she is Church and I am world. She calls me ahead to what we can be and must move toward. We minister to one another just as laity and celibates are called to do.

We experience life differently, Katherine and I, just as lay persons and celibates do. Because of this, at times, we forget the words of Jesus; and when one asks the other for bread, a stone is given in return. Tracing the history of affectivity in the Church of the last century reveals a similar relational struggle.

In the Church we are beginning to learn to live the peace of Christ in solidarity together instead of giving it away individually each Sunday. We are beginning to nourish one another with the bread of affectivity, that which takes time and effort and care to prepare, that which takes hold inside and nourishes, that which is honest and plain and real.

Affectivity is not an option. If there is no affectivity between Katherine and me, there is a destructive relationship, not "no relationship," because fundamentally we *are* related. In the same way if celibates,

including Jesuits, stand apart from the people or the people stand apart from the celibates, destructive relationships occur within the family of the Church.

The spiritual directors cited in these pages affirm the importance of affectivity by encouraging Ben, John, and Phil to open their hearts affectively to Jesus. The healing that comes, however, may not be sustained unless eventually these men open their hearts affectively as Jesus did and bid the people enter.

Affectivity is not an option. Unless it is the foundation of family, Church, and the Society of Jesus, each of these "houses" is built on sand. Somehow we all sense this, yet knowing why it is so may be difficult to explain.

Insights from our real-life experiences more than books shock us into understanding.

On the Thursday before New Year's my husband and I received a call from the Far East. It was Katherine, in tears, saying she was on her way to the town clinic to have an appendectomy. We didn't speak to her again until four days later. She told us that the weather was like a New England winter with snow on the ground, yet the hospital had no heat, no flush toilets, and no running water. Her bed since the operation had been a long low table with a mat on it. Her only food, in limited supply, was rice and raw fish.

No one in the village including the doctor spoke English, except for one friend. She told us, "The people here are very, very poor. They don't speak English but they keep visiting me. I've never met people so warm and friendly and caring. I don't have much food but they feed me in a different way. If you could see 'em you'd love 'em! I do!"

During January I pondered deeply while praying for my daughter. How, I asked myself, was she able to sound so whole and healed in spite of being sick in such primitive conditions and unable extensively to share her feelings in her own language. People who had been strangers in her life had spoken, not in words, but in affectivity, and that language had healed. We can be deprived of almost everything, even the ability to understand and be understood, it seems, if we feel affectivity from others. Affectivity

can be saving; it is, therefore, the language of God.

If we who have been strangers to one another within the Church--men and women, laity and celibates--are, in truth, images of God, we should speak God's language. Affectivity, it seems, is the one language that is redemptive.

B. The Experience of Religious Celibacy

by William J. Connolly, S.J.

When a person who has hardly noticed his affective responses begins to pay attention to them, his inner world undergoes pronounced and varied changes. He becomes aware of both his happier and his darker moods, of both his genial and his more baleful emotions and feelings. Anger, fear, affection, liking, dislike, sexual feelings, disappointment, and love make more distinct and perceptible impressions on him.

As he becomes more conscious and tolerant of his affectivity he experiences the energy and creativity affective response can bring. But he also experiences its unruliness. His moods, emotions, and feelings cannot be initiated or eliminated at will. He experiences less boredom, indecisiveness, and restlessness. He may also, however, be more liable to experience seething anger toward associates and strong affections for some of his friends. As a result, he will not always be happy with the exchange of his former dullness and rigidity for a growing freedom and aliveness, and may even at times long for the fleshpots of his earlier enervation.

For a religious, one of the consequences of an increasing experience of his or her affectivity will be a more pronounced attitude toward the celibate life. Before they become tangibly aware of their affective responses some religious seem to have no questions at all about celibacy--"God has called me and that's it"--and no realization that dedicated celibacy requires genuine choice. Others engage in a dry, persistent, rather abstracted questioning, often in intellectual rather than personal terms: "Is a permanent commitment to celibacy possible?" "Does God really ask a permanent commitment to celibacy of a person?" or a musing "Should I be celibate? Maybe what I need is to be married." The

questions never seem to get finally settled and never seem to move toward being settled. They have the banal quality of a dull but persistent itch--never alarming, never painful, but always there.

After awareness of one's affectivity develops, the dry, restless questioning may disappear. The questioning now becomes more specific: "Shall I continue to give up physical love?" or "Shall I give myself totally to this woman and ask her to give herself totally to me?" A person may say: "I never knew what it meant to feel. I took vows without having any idea what feelings were. I didn't even know what it felt like to be angry. Now I know what it feels like to love someone, and I'm more alive than I've ever been. I'm a different person from the one who took vows."

The spiritual director may well be startled by the urgency of this new drive toward choice, but he may at the same time, particularly if he knew the person when he was unaware of his affectivity, be convinced that the spontaneity of the new questions more nearly reflects authentic Christian life than did the earlier unawareness or persistent, unresolved itch. Indeed, those directors who are familiar with both attitudes often find this hard to doubt.

To those of us who have seen many Jesuits and other religious leave their communities and marry shortly afterward, the serious raising of the question of marriage or continued celibacy can bring a chill of dismay. The concrete raising of the question, we may feel, can have only one result: departure from religious life. Yet this is not so. Religious have seriously and concretely raised the question of marriage, decided for positive reasons to continue to live as religious, and have been happy and vibrant religious after doing so. Their developed affectivity has also enabled them to contribute more fully and effectively than they had before to their communities and their ministry. Others seem to have lived in community only as long as their affectivity had not developed, and promptly left when it did. There is tragedy for all of us in the possibility that they lived as religious only as long as they did not feel very much and care about anyone or anything very strongly. For the possibility runs counter to what we know of the passionate love of God and the neighbor that has been characteristic of the traditional models for

religious life--for instance, Anthony, Bernard, Dominic, Francis, Angela Merici, Ignatius, Jane Frances, Catherine McAuley--who lived that life because they felt and cared, not because they did not.

We could discuss in an abstract way the validity and desirability of the choice of celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom. Such a discussion, however, would have little practical value. I don't recall having met in recent years a religious who was considering final commitment or who was considering leaving religious life for whom scientific theological arguments had much weight. The only finally conclusive argument for celibacy seems to be the individual decision firmly made and lived out in mature awareness and love. Such decisions and such living-out we can often observe in ourselves and, empathetically, in others. No argument derived from the mores of the culture can refute such experience, and no argument drawn exclusively from Scripture or tradition can substitute for it. It is itself the key *locus theologicus* that we draw on to indicate the validity of people's desire for religious life.

To understand such experience, however, we have to reflect on the Gospel, on Jesus' call to some to "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their dead."¹ To understand it we also have to explore the tradition of the Church that accepts and approves the lives of those Christians who set out to pursue the knowledge and love of God and his people as the comprehensive project of their lives. Yet that understanding remains too general to motivate us unless it is accompanied by personal knowledge acquired either through empathetic insight into a particular person's life or through lived experience of one's own. Only through such personal knowledge can one come to answer the question "Is a celibate life for the sake of the Kingdom worth the trouble, deprivation, and risk it entails?"

There are indications around us that the question is often answered affirmatively by affectively mature persons. How would one describe their experience?

Let me make three prefatory comments before offering my description of their experience. Since my acquaintance with religious has been largely with men and women thirty to sixty years old, belonging to active communities, I can speak with knowledge only of that group. It is my impression

of their experience that I will try to describe.

There are so many facets to the question that I wonder whether it can be addressed adequately by anything less than a new Library of Congress dedicated to the study of human life and personality in all their social and contemplative dimensions. What we are talking about is the whole core of the lived religious life: What keeps religious interested in their work after it has ceased to be novel? What keeps them loyal to friends and deepens their relationships? How do they become consciously receptive to and responsive to God? How do they come to keep seeing and enjoying new events, continue to be open to new perceptions of reality? How do they come to be willing to introduce new, more effective measures into their ministry, even at significant cost to themselves? How do they develop an ability to let their intellectual and emotional horizons broaden? It seems to me that these questions are inextricably involved with the question of celibacy for the Kingdom. For religious are not, at the bedrock of their lives, more or less human than anyone else. These issues dog all of us, and any treatment of celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom will prove truncated if it omits them.

Neither can the question of celibacy be adequately addressed in isolation from one's personal contemplation. Celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom can remain basically an idea for many of us. It is analyzed, debated, and refined like other ideas, and as a result we may spend years in religious life before we confront the experience of celibacy on the deep life-level where our most forceful desires are generated. Only the life-to-life relationship with God, realized at this level in contemplation, can enable us to encounter it adequately.

With these comments in mind, let me attempt to describe people who find religious life worthwhile for religious reasons.

They are people who find religious life an ardent enterprise. By ardor I do not mean constant or unremitting energy. There may well be months in the slough, and extended periods of indecision. But the person's characteristic attitude becomes one of interest and spontaneous attraction to anything that promises to advance his or her mission. You can count on him to become alert when you bring up a question, an issue,

or an event related to it. There is a core to his life from which interest, decisions, new associations, and friendships develop. They do not issue basically from the norms for deportment of his social class, the rules for advancement of his profession, or the code of his community, but from the creative core of affective commitment which gives life as these cannot give it. He does not say: "I do my job and I'm obedient. What more do you want?" because although he probably does both, he does not think of his life in this way. He thinks of himself in terms of whom and what he cares about, and what he does and does not do about his caring. Any other way of defining his life seems to him to miss the mark.

This affective core motivates a person on the level on which his fundamental desires and the attitudes that spring from them affect him. These fundamental desires and attitudes remain below the level of ideas. However, they have ways of claiming our attention. The near-despair that comes about when a person feels that his life is worthless, or the mixture of buoyancy and confusion that marks the experience of being in love, persists despite the efforts of rational thought to domesticate them. Their force and persistence impel the person who experiences them to recognize that there is a level of life in him that has its own demands, and that these demands can be met only by life-responses that have cogency on the level on which the demands are made.

The experience of near-despair or the experience of being in love, while very different from one another, have this element in common: They cannot be countered by ideas. They can be met and matched only by life-responses that act on the same level at which these experiences affect us. This is the level on which fear of an uncertain future can make me vomit, or my passion for security can bring stomach cramps when I face risk. It is also the level on which ardor for the fulfillment of my mission for the Kingdom can motivate me.

Let us look at the major areas of the lives of such persons. Their work is not always exciting, but it does not become boring when it ceases to be novel. Experience permits them to examine the principles of ministry more thoroughly, to work from them more directly and more originally, and to enlarge the scope of their ministerial interests. It also enables

them to articulate their positions more basically and to develop them further. They tend to become more original, more unusual, sometimes even eccentric, when they talk about their ministry. Lack of variety is no great threat to them. They create their own variety. Every class is different; everyone who comes to their office is an individual.

There is a genuine communal dimension to their lives. This communal dimension may well not have the exclusivity that loyalty to one's religious community often connoted before the mid-Sixties. Some of their closest peer relationships may be with people outside their order or congregation. Fewer happy and creative religious seem to maintain close peer relationships only with members of their congregations. It seems also to be rare for such a person to find all his close peer relationships with people outside his congregation. Whoever their close peer friends are, however, there are some who share with them on the level of their religious motivation--on the level, in other words, of whom and what they care about.

Thus there is friendship in his or her life. The word may not be specific enough. Friendship involves intimacy. Intimacy here does not intend to imply a constant, twins-in-the-womb association, or physical, much less genital, contact. It does mean, however, more than living next door to a person, or feeling able to ask a person for small favors without fear of unsettling him, or not having had a fight with him for a year. It means emotional closeness and openness to one another, so that the two people can tend to edit less and less of what they say to one another and call on one another for help when they need it without considering themselves deeply indebted for the help they get. It does not mean that conflict never arises. It usually means that conflict has arisen, been owned up to, and been resolved. It means some degree of life-to-life, not just head-to-head or role-to-role, contact.

What makes religious life an ardent enterprise for these people? It is hard to understand how religious life can be ardent unless it has contemplative roots. By contemplative roots I mean that the question "What and whom do I care about?" comes to be answered from the person's affective resources with "I care about Jesus and his mission." A person might say the same thing on purely intellectual grounds. He could have come to the

conclusion after examining the gospel message to his satisfaction and matching it against the needs of the world as he sees them. By contemplative roots I mean that the experience of looking at Jesus--exemplified, for instance, in the Spiritual Exercises--brings about a response of the heart as well as of the head or the visual imagination. This affective response can progressively deepen and intensify so that caring about Jesus and his mission becomes a passionate concern that can unseat other deep concerns and become, in practice, not simply in theory, the primary motivation of the person's life.

At the core of a person's affectivity are his deepest desires and his will to have them fulfilled. As he or she lets those desires move from subconsciousness to greater clarity through contemplative prayer and other means, he will recognize conflict among them. Our desire "to be loved alone"² will conflict with our desire to share with Jesus the mission of redemption. Any of our sexual or aggressive desires--for power, say, or a better-stocked barn, or sexual excitement--can conflict with this desire to share the mission. They can neutralize it. However, that does not have to happen.

Some religious seem to feel that it does. When they experience violent anger for the first time, or acute discouragement, or the tumultuous feelings of being in love, they seem to conclude at once that this may mean they do not have a vocation. One wonders rather whether a person who has never experienced any of these emotions can know himself well enough to be deeply sure of his religious commitment. If our desire to share the mission of Jesus is strong and affective, we can learn to withstand the drives that challenge it, and with time, lessen the violence of the conflict. In other words, the person, because he *wants* to share concretely in the mission of Jesus, adopts the means he needs to limit contrary desires so that they will not hamper him in the accomplishment of his primary desire.

The dedicated religious has desires that conflict with his primary desire. But he also has desires that corroborate, support, and strengthen it. His desire to communicate with others who will understand him can do this. His desire to achieve something in his work can do it too. His

desire to be known and loved can make him transparent to the Lord, but also to friends and collaborators. The corroborative desires help him to avoid living in an affective vacuum. He confronts and limits desires that conflict with his primary desire, but he also shapes his corroborative desires in accordance with his primary desire, so that he gradually becomes an affectively mature person whose affectivity enables him to live out his primary desire with suppleness, richness, and persistence.

This primary desire is developed, strengthened, made supple and pervasive by contemplation. How is this done? Basically, contemplation as it is understood here is attention to one's relationship with God. It involves, like attention to any living relationship, a gazing on the other person, so that we come to know him. This gazing requires that God not be seen primarily as a problem, but as One who is trying to reveal himself through his words and actions. Contemplation sets out to see, hear, and react to him. For our relationship with God is not a fixed posture, but a movement-filled dialectic between living beings. Both persons in the relationship take responsibility for the health and growth of the relationship. God reveals himself; the man or woman tries to see him; God shows himself more fully, reveals further dimensions of himself; the human person manages to let himself see Him more fully, more realistically; God calls on him to reveal himself more fully; he or she flinches from this call or accedes to it. The mutual self-revelation seeks to continue, to include more of our attitudes and actions, and to permeate them.

This dialectic is seldom peaceful for very long. It frequently does yield the peace of a sense of God's presence, the peace of "Shalom"; but it also leads through war. For we resist the All-Good. We resist by not hearing his invitations to increasing intimacy in prayer, even when these are plainly proffered. We defend ourselves against him by taking refuge in our categories, so that when he speaks of his love for all his people we hear only his zeal for the good of our friends, of our own social class, our own nation, or our own ministry. God shows himself gentle, but never genteel. He acts on our lives while earthquakes shatter cities, blizzards overwhelm technology, children die of cancer, napalm makes deserts of farmlands. He seems to work to enable the person who has undertaken the

mission of Jesus to share the experience of Jesus, which was not one of clean hands and a scrubbed face in an idyllic world.

The contemplative roots involve some sense of genuine interior companionship with Jesus. This sense of companionship is not a feeling, although feelings at times accompany it. It is not an idea, although it gives birth to thought. It is stable, but not static. It is not a form of prayer, although it is often most fully recognized in private contemplative prayer. Indeed, its development, when I have heard people speak of it, seems to have taken place most palpably in this kind of prayer. It is a recognition of the relationship itself of growing intimacy with the Lord and of the Lord shaping the person as a celibate man or woman. It is a sense of relationship that must grow if the person is to be able to withstand the pressure of other life-forces that work at this deep life-level and will themselves dictate the shape of his life if he lets them.

We will have our lives shaped by our deepest desires whether we want them to be or not. The desire for security may impel us to seize and fortify a desirable life-situation; the desire for power may drive us to make professional advancement the linchpin of our lives; the desire to be loved concretely, tangibly, and *now* may make a friendship the most basic non-negotiable of our lives. One or other of them probably will become the primary shaper of our lives if the desire to share the mission of Jesus does not have sufficient affective force to take the dominant part in our shaping and decision-making. The contemplative roots favored by the spiritual tradition of active communities are not, then, the practice of contemplation, but what the communities hope will be produced by that practice: a life-motivation that can take a dominant place among the other deep and driving life-motivations that are at work in us.

There is always a danger when we speak of a contemplative basis for religious life that this will be thought of as referring only to prayer practices. It does not. Prayer cannot maintain itself in isolation from our ministry, our community associations, our friendships. If it involves our life-roots it will influence them, and be influenced by them. The contemplative basis will be established, maintained, and strengthened by innumerable facets and activities of our lives: friendships and other peer

relationships that develop from a sharing of like religious desires, work-decisions that spring from the desire to share in the mission of Jesus, a fidelity to ministry that is based on this desire, the growing freedom to share our lives with the people of God rather than simply do jobs for them, the growing freedom to hear what happens in the hearts of others, especially in the hearts of "strangers," people different from ourselves. All of these developments will often be initiated first in prayer. But if they genuinely stem from our affective depths, they will not occur only in prayer.

Besides ardor for sharing the mission of Jesus and the contemplative roots that fuel that ardor, is there anything else that seems to characterize the religious who is aware of his or her affectivity and is also convinced that celibacy for the sake of the Kingdom is worth the trouble and risk it entails?

They experience a continuing growth in inner freedom. An increasing number of inner choices become available to them. They cease to be inwardly constrained always to appear polite, self-effacing, and "charitable." They become better able to decide whether or not to express annoyance, opposition, and affection. The power that anxiety exercises over their ability to choose gradually diminishes. Their inner ability to choose among forms of ministry, situations for ministry, and degrees of personal engagement with the people to whom they minister increases. Their inner ability to choose is more pronounced this year than it was last year, and it will be still more pronounced next year.

One of the dimensions of their lives that this inner freedom becomes able to confront is the reality of the deprivation that celibacy itself represents. They become better able to recognize that they are deprived, rather than constrained to pretend that they are not. They also become better able to realize that every human person is, in ways that matter, also deprived. They come too to see that every serious Christian, whether married or celibate, chooses to live a significantly deprived life in order to fulfill his Christian commitment.

But as their inner freedom increases, these religious can also recognize more fully what they have, what their celibacy makes possible for them.

A religious man once described an incident in his life that he often recalls when he reflects on his own decision to adopt religious celibacy. He was afraid of flying, he said, until one day as he was boarding a flight with other passengers, he reflected that if the plane crashed he would be with those people as they were deprived of life. He decided that if they went down he would be willing to be with them. It was not the prospect of having company if the plane went down, he said, but the willingness to share their deprivation that was significant to him, so significant that he promptly lost his fear. He later realized that celibacy allows him to share the situation of all the human beings who go through life in some way deprived, that his decision to be with them gives him an association with them he would not otherwise have had, and that his willingness to share their deprivation has something to do with the Lord's decision to live deprived among us, though He had a right to riches. These realizations, though this may not have occurred to him, would not have meant so much to him if he did not have significant inner freedom. For he recognized that in choosing celibacy he was choosing to be deprived, *and* that he was choosing celibacy for the sake of the ministerial association with people and the companionate association with the Lord that celibacy offered him.

The experience of growing inner freedom enables the religious to make creative use of his freedom from some of the external pressures that are inseparable from marriage.

In the fourth century the apologetic for religious life stressed the freedom of the religious from the immersion in socio-economic systems that marriage requires.³ The argument can easily be overdrawn. No one who benefits from a socio-economic system can be entirely free of it, and religious communities are not exceptions to this cultural fact. However, despite the dependence of his or her community on the socio-economic structures of our society, the religious still has more freedom to change his ministry than a married man has to change his work, particularly if the married man is trying to put two children through college. The active religious who is aware of his affectivity and is happy with celibacy tends to recognize this freedom, and to use it for service. Religious can pay

a heavy price for this relative freedom: The lack of responsibility for providing others with food, shelter, and education can make it more difficult for them to achieve affective maturity. The use of this freedom for service, if the service is linked with the person's contemplative roots, will, however, contribute to his affective maturity. An irony is evident here: Both the affectively mature and the affectively immature, the freely responsible, the compulsive, and the irresponsible, all will describe the purpose of their freedom as service. The freedom, the contemplative quality, and the degree of personal engagement with which they serve will, however, differ.

Celibacy does involve deprivation, and cannot be understood unless that fact is taken into account. Nothing in the life of a religious can substitute for the marital and paternal or maternal relationships of which he deprives himself or she deprives herself. But affective maturity seems available to them if they accept responsibility for the affective growth that their communal, ministerial, social, and individual contemplative relationships call for. They will not have the affective maturity of married persons. They can, however, have the affective maturity of dedicated celibate persons.

What, then, makes celibacy for the Kingdom worth the trouble for a person who is on his or her way toward affective maturity? Precisely, it seems, the attractiveness of the Kingdom, most fully and distinctly embodied in Jesus but reflected too in those experiences of individual contemplative, communal, and ministerial life where he is most obviously present. This attractiveness engages the heart as well as the mind, and takes on force and depth in the relationship that the Lord has initiated with the person. The Lord and his people are no longer seen, then, simply as objective realities, like Napoleon or the Taj Mahal. They are seen and responded to in relationship. They are, in other words, involved in my life just as a close friend on whom my well-being significantly depends is involved in my life.

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FOOTNOTES

On PART I, B, Ben's Experience, by W. J. Connolly

- 1 Quoted in Alfred O'Rahilly, *Father William Doyle, S.J.: A Spiritual Study* (New York: Longmans, Green, 1928), p. 336.
- 2 Hilaire d'Arles, *Vie de saint Honorat, introduction, texte critique, traduction et notes* par Marie-Denise Valentin, O.P., Sources Chrétiennes (Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1977), no. 235, pp. 142-145.
- 3 Quoted in O'Rahilly, *William Doyle, S.J.*, p. 337.

On I, H, Affective Underdevelopment . . . , by W. A. Barry

- 1 Eugene C. Kennedy and Vincent J. Heckler, *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Psychological Investigations* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1972).
- 2 Ibid., p. 9.
- 3 Ibid., p. 11.
- 4 Ibid., pp. 12-13.

On II, C, Sexuality, Discernment, and Friendship, by W. A. Barry

- 1 In what follows I speak of individual spiritual direction and presume that each sees a different director. Once I directed separately two people who were in a very conflicted and ambivalent friendship. After a time one of them quit the spiritual direction, ostensibly because of the distance involved in travel, but in reality, I believe, because he felt I was biased toward the other person since I had known the other longer. My mistake, I now think, was in seeing both of them separately without bringing them together at least once, if not occasionally. It is probably a better thing to have separate directors. My experience has been with individual direction, but lately I have developed reservations about this individual approach in cases such as that of John and Mary. Individual spiritual direction has helped such people, but it may miss or underutilize a great resource for the development of their relationship with God, namely their relationship to one another.
- 2 I use "Lord" to refer to the Father or to Jesus when the person praying could be addressing either one or both.
- 3 In her comments on this case Madeline Birmingham paints a striking portrait of what might happen if the Jesuit decided to remain a Jesuit and left Mary at the airport.

- 4 Virginia Finn discusses the difference between friendship and coupling very trenchantly in her comments on this case.
- 5 Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *Gift from the Sea* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), p. 104.

On II, G, Two Ways of Loving, by Virginia S. Finn

- 1 Duane Windemiller, *Sexuality, Pairing, and Family Forms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishing Co., 1976).
- 2 Rollo May, *Love and Will* (New York: Norton, 1969), p. 243.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 244.

On III, G, Homosexuality and Impulse Control, by J. J. Gill

- 1 Irving Bieber et al., *Homosexuality* (New York: Random House, 1962).
- 2 The same would, of course, be true of initial heterosexual actions.
- 3 A. Kosnik et al., *Human Sexuality: New Directions in American Catholic Thought*. A Study Commissioned by the Catholic Theological Society of America. (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), pp. 203-204.
- 4 Donald Goergen, *Sexual Celibate* (New York: Seabury, 1974), p. 229.
- 5 See page 108 of this issue of *Studies*.
- 6 General Congregation 31, #257.
- 7 See, for example, A. Bandura and R. Walters on "Development of Self Control," chapter IV in their *Social Learning and Personality Development*.
- 8 See, for example, Jane Loevinger's "Stages of Ego Development," chapter II in *Ego Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976).

On IV, B, The Experience of Celibacy, by W. J. Connolly

- 1 Matt. 8:22, in the *New English Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1970). For a treatment of this text as a biblical description of the gospel attitude that later gave rise to religious life, see Martin Hengel, *Nachfolge und Charisma: Eine exegetisch-religionsgeschichtliche Studie zu Mt. 8:21 f. und Jesu Ruf in die Nachfolge* (Berlin: Verlag Topelmann, 1968).
- 2 W. H. Auden, "September 1, 1939," in F. T. Palgrave, *The Golden Treasury of the Best Songs and Lyrical Poems*, revised by Oscar Williams (New American Library, 1961), p. 550.
- 3 For example, Grégoire de Nysse, *Traité de la Virginité, introduction, texte critique, traduction, commentaire et index* de Michel Aubineau, Sources Chrétiennes (Paris: Editions du Cerf, 1966), no. 119.

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[352] TO HAVE THE TRUE SENTIMENT
WHICH WE OUGHT TO HAVE IN THE CHURCH
MILITANT

[353] Let the following Rules be observed.
First Rule. The first: All judgment laid
aside, we ought to have our mind ready and
prompt to obey, in all, the true Spouse of
Christ our Lord, which is our holy Mother
the Church Hierarchical.

[354] Second Rule. The second: To praise con-
fession to a Priest, and the reception of the
most Holy Sacrament of the Altar once in the
year, and much more each month, and much
better from week to week, with the conditions
required and due.

[355] Third Rule. The third: To praise the hear-
ing of Mass often, likewise¹ hymns, psalms,
and long prayers, in the church and out of it;
likewise the hours set at the time fixed for each
Divine Office and for all prayers and all Con-
ciliar¹ Prayers.

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