

# STUDIES

## in the Spirituality of Jesuits

The Status of Obedience in the Society  
of Jesus

by

Robert F. Harvanek, S.J.



Reactions to the Connolly-Land Letters on  
Faith and Justice: A Digest

by

Philip S. Land, 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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# THE STATUS OF OBEDIENCE IN THE SOCIETY OF JESUS

by

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## Introduction

Obedience is intimately related to the identity of the Society of Jesus. This relation is expressed in the famous third paragraph of the Letter on the Virtue of Obedience from St. Ignatius to the Jesuits in Portugal:

We may well allow ourselves to be surpassed by other religious orders in fasts, watchings and other austerities, which each one following its own institute devoutly embraces. But in the purity and perfection of obedience, joined with a true resignation of our will and the abnegation of our judgment, I am very desirous, beloved brethren, that they who serve God in this Society should be conspicuous.

In this time of changes in life-styles, patterns of behavior, and community structures in the Church and in religious orders, it is indeed what seem to be changes in obedience which most disturb many inside and outside the Society, and which raise the question for them whether the Society of Jesus has itself changed radically. Occasionally Jesuits have been heard to say, perhaps less frequently now than several years ago, "This is not the Society of Jesus I entered." Friends and admirers of the Society, alumni, even bishops, have remarked, "The Society of Jesus is no longer what it was," or even, "The Society of Jesus is finished." The cause of these remarks is generally linked to the perception that the traditional strict discipline and obedience of the Society are no longer clearly in evidence.

Change in authority and obedience is of course not limited to the Society of Jesus. A good case could be made for the position that what most characterizes the change that has taken place in the Church in the period surrounding the Second Vatican Council is the change in authority

and obedience. The strong control and power of authority which obtained in the Church both in Rome and in the local churches together with the general acceptance of that authority by the faithful has been shaken, and many forces have been at work to develop an order less structured by authority-obedience. In the United States, if not in the rest of the world, similar dynamisms have been operative in human society, both in family patterns and in civic society. It would seem that these are more than the ordinary tensions between authority and freedom that obtain at all times, and that a major all-pervading shift is taking place in human society which affects all institutions.

But change in authority-obedience has special significance for the Society of Jesus because of the relationship between obedience and the identity of the Society mentioned above. It is for this reason that I propose in this issue of *Studies*, in reflection and discussion with the Assistancy Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality, to consider the status of obedience in the Society of Jesus today.

I intend to ask two questions. The first is: Is it indeed true that a change has taken or is taking place in Jesuit obedience? This question will have two parts: It will first ask whether a change has taken place in the practice of obedience, and then whether there has been a change in the theory of obedience. The second major question is: In the light of the present situation relative to authority and obedience, what meaning can be given to Jesuit obedience today? How can it be described? The study will conclude then with some remarks about the areas of apparent change in obedience.

Before proceeding to the questions, let me make two more clarifications. Someone is certain to remark that obedience is a relationship, that it cannot be treated separately and apart from authority, and that the more significant question might be whether authority has changed. There is no doubt that authority and obedience are interrelated and that they cannot be treated separately. However, the focus can be different. The concept of authority has received a fair amount of attention in recent years, usually under the aspect of leadership. In some ways it might be possible to maintain that the great shift in the Church from the pre-Vatican II



mentality to Vatican II and after is the shift in the understanding of authority and leadership (see, for example, *The Way*, January, 1975). Whether as much attention has been given to the concept of obedience is questionable. In any case, a large measure of concern and anxiety in the Society today is over the status of obedience; and so the focus of this discussion is obedience.

Another preliminary note is necessary. In this study the question about obedience is being asked from within the United States and within the scope of the United States. We have been accustomed to recognize that the patterns and structures of personal and social relationships are different in different cultures and societies, and there is no disguising the fact that the American ethos is largely formed by the values of individual freedom and democratic processes and that, correlatively, the ethos carries its own attitude of criticism of all public authority. Accordingly, what may be the case with American Jesuits is, in all likelihood, not the case somewhere else in the world. We cannot present an abstract account of obedience. We cannot escape our cultural atmosphere; at best what we can do is to be aware of it to some degree.

#### PART I. HAS JESUIT OBEDIENCE CHANGED?

So we now ask the question: Has obedience in the Society of Jesus changed? When people ask this question, I believe they are asking whether the theory or the theology of obedience has changed. And the reason they ask the question is because they observe that the practice of obedience seems obviously to have changed; then, when superiors apparently do nothing about this, they go on to ask: Has the theory of obedience changed?

There are different ways of forming a reply. One way is to suggest that obedience has not changed substantially but that its mode of exercise has changed and will always continue to be in a process of change. This solution approaches a process of human behavior with the categories of a substance and its modes. It shows a bias also towards finding a central core of stability or of immutability in the idea and practice of obedience.

Perhaps it encloses an essentialist (bad word) conception of history and behavior. When dealing with a behavioral and historical concept it may be better to avoid substantialist and essentialist language, which is more suitable to things and natures than to events. It is not clear that there is an essence of the Society of Jesus; the Society of Jesus is a set of relationships that was put together in history. The same is true of religious obedience, which is one of those relationships.

There may also be an implicit logic in the first paragraph above that needs to be examined: The question may rest on a rationalist logic. What is characteristic of this logic is the viewpoint that practice follows theory and that consequently, if there is a different practice, the reason is that someone changed the theory. It is true of course that a change in practice implies a change in theory, but the theory is not always recognized even by those who change the practice. The rationalist reasons from a different starting point, namely, that reason determines action. If then you wish to change the action, you begin by changing the reason, and if you wish to correct the action, you isolate and correct the theory. It is doubtful that this rationalist presupposition is correct. More likely is the interpretation that a change in action develops out of forces other than reason and frequently operates without a conscious theory. It is only in the stage of reflection that the theory is sometimes formulated and either acknowledged or repudiated. It can well be that action has changed without any conscious awareness of a change in theory.

In fact, the change may be even more profound. What may have taken place, or may be taking place, is what has come to be known as a paradigm shift. This is a term made popular by Thomas S. Kuhn, a philosopher who has studied the history of scientific theories. There are changes that have taken place in scientific theory but within the same world view. But then there is a change in the world view itself, when the whole context within which the theories were constructed has shifted and fundamental perceptions of the world which once provided a home for the theories are no longer the same. This is a paradigm shift. Examples in earlier times would be the situation which permitted the rise of philosophy among the Greeks, the entrance of Christianity into the western world, the

renaissance-and-reformation with all its social and political shifts together with the discovery of the roundness of the earth and the Copernican revolution. Examples in our time span would be the perception of evolutionary-time in nature and of the significance of the flow of history; also, the mathematization of nature, and the entrance into space.

The paradigm shift is deeper and more fundamental than theory and is the context, frequently unperceived, in which both theory and practice are embraced. It seems most frequently to manifest itself first in action--rather than in theory; and it is only when someone with reflective abilities has watched the change in action for a while that he can begin to formulate the implicit change in theory.

Probably this is the insight of those who ask, relative to our present topic, whether obedience has changed. They see the change in practice and sense that there is also a change in theory. Their error, if there is one, is to believe that the practitioners know what their theory is and have worked from theory to practice. In any case, let us begin by asking whether there has been and is a change in the practice of obedience in the Society of Jesus. Later we can turn to the question of theory.

#### A. Has the Practice of Obedience Changed?

There are four arenas of action in which evidence of change in the practice of Jesuit obedience has been perceived: obedience to the pope; obedience to liturgical prescriptions; obedience to the assignments of superiors; obedience to community life-style. An attempt is made here to sketch the apparent changes in these spheres so that they can be identified.

##### 1. Obedience to the Pope

In the public forum the most obvious and dramatic difference in the practice of Jesuit obedience has been the open and strong opposition to the Holy See on the part of individual Jesuits, and also of Jesuit faculties of theology on a number of major issues in the Church. The first and most public was the opposition to *Humanae vitae*. There have been other cases--conspicuously, active participation in political life by way of elective

public office, defence of the current United States legislation on abortion in a pluralistic society. The most recent case has been the action of a number of Jesuits, notably of one Jesuit theological faculty, on the issue of the ordination of women.

What makes these instances an issue of Jesuit obedience is the special relationship of the Society of Jesus to the pope. In the first stages of the formation of the Society it was the pope himself who had the function of giving Jesuits their missions. But as the Society grew and the missioning process became too complex, the authority to mission Jesuits was also given more clearly to the superior general of the Society. This relationship to the pope as the "missioner" of the Society "anywhere in the world" was expressed in the famous "fourth vow" of the professed, which was considered the "principle and foundation" of the Society. This history and vow was the principal cause for the Society's special devotion to the Holy See, but there were other perhaps less tangible causes: St. Ignatius' own personal devotion to St. Peter, his devotion to Christ, the communicating of that devotion with the religious imagery of the *Spiritual Exercises* to his first companions and fellow founders of the Society of Jesus, the ecclesial privileges given to the Society which strengthened the appreciation that they were "the pope's men," the history of support for the Holy See especially by the theologians and philosophers of the Society, and the like.

This spirit and tradition in the Society were most clearly expressed in a theology which made the issue of special Jesuit obedience to the pope into an issue of faith also. Confer the letter in the September, 1977, issue of the *National Jesuit News*: "I wonder if we realize that the pope is by divine institution *Vicar of Christ*, which means *in loco Christi*, and therefore, *in loco Dei*, and therefore, *loquitur tamquam ipse Deus*."

It is obvious that the issue is an emotional one within the Society. Actions of "loyal opposition" such as those listed above are disturbing to many Jesuits, seeming to strike not only at the heart of the Society as it has been conceived and known but even at the very faith of a Catholic as represented in the Society. A sample of this is an "open letter" sent by such a disturbed Jesuit to some of his brothers after a recent expression

of dissent by some Jesuits. In the course of his lengthy letter he made these remarks:

It is asserted that in recent years the corporate body of the Society of Jesus is actually keeping in good standing Jesuits who refuse to believe all that the Holy Catholic Church teaches; and that, as a consequence, it has become radically changed, and is no longer a supernatural organization, nor characterized by outstanding devotion to the Holy Father, Christ's Vicar.

Offered as proof is the fact that since 1968, as far as I know, each Jesuit is free to decide for himself, if and how he will accept *Humanae vitae*, and remain in good standing whatever his decision.

Though the General orders all to accept and defend *Humanae vitae* (Letter to Provincials 7/31/68), he does not enforce this command and leaves in good standing such as refuse, even teachers of theology, disregarding the vow of obedience each Jesuit has freely made to the Society; and the baptismal vow, made to God and the Church.

Clearly, this is not the Society of Jesus which St. Ignatius gave us; nor the Society of Jesus handed on by Father Janssens, our General's predecessor.

There is no doubt that for many these actions manifest a change in Jesuit obedience. Formerly when Jesuits spoke out in public, they spoke in support of papal positions, without making any distinction between the pope and the Vatican. Admittedly, there have been theological and philosophical positions developed by Jesuits in the past that were different from the approved positions, but these were either suppressed by superiors (as in the cases of Maréchal, Teilhard de Chardin, Cardinal Billot, John Courtney Murray) or not published openly (the target of *Humani generis* was the dissemination of modernizing positions through mimeographed notes and papers and through unpublished classroom teaching). But part of the task of superiors was considered to be the suppression of such teaching, and when they so acted they were thought to be exercising their office properly. When, in the new age, superiors either could not or would not suppress such critical and oppositional publication, they were considered to have failed in their office, that is, in the exercise of authority. Clearly, the public face of the Society, which has traditionally been one of strong support of the Holy See and in general of the hierarchy, has changed.

## 2. Obedience in the Liturgy

Another sign of change in the exercise of Jesuit obedience is in the sphere of liturgical rites. At the time of the liturgical renewal signaled by the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council, some Jesuits began celebrating the Eucharist without vestments, sometimes in informal situations, for instance around a dinner table, without sacred vessels, and with ordinary bread and wine. A particularly disturbing instance for many Jesuits at that time was the publication of a photo of the American provincials concelebrating the Eucharist around a conference table with only the principal celebrant in vestments. Other unacceptable actions included the distribution of the Eucharist under both species, that is, the giving of the cup; still more disturbing was the practice of giving communion in the hand. This last case is particularly revealing of the confusion in the present situation. Communion in the hand has now been made an option for the dioceses of the United States. What was so wrong before is now right! Moreover, when it was wrong here, it was permitted and practiced in other countries and dioceses, with the approval of the Holy See. Further disturbing usages were freedom in the adaptation of liturgical texts, in many instances encouraged by the new Sacramentary itself and in other instances--as in the use of unapproved Eucharistic Prayers--not sanctioned.

The particular focus of the issue of obedience here was of course the liturgical prescriptions from Rome regulating the ritual changes initiated by Vatican II. However, one of the policies that developed out of the council was to put the regulation of rites in large part in the hands of the local ordinary. At least the implementation and moderation of the changes were mediated through the ordinary under the supervision and management of the Roman commission. The effect of this was to put those Jesuits acting freely in their practice of the liturgy in a situation of not obeying the local ordinary in an area of his special responsibility and where the privileges granted to the Society did not clearly obtain.

This area of obediencial practice, as in the matter of obedience to the pope considered above, had deep emotional effects for many Jesuits,

as well as for bishops and laity. The liturgical rites which had long obtained in the Latin Church, and the mode of governing them, seem to have symbolized for many an entire vision of the Church and Christian life now put in jeopardy by the free adaptation of some in the points indicated above. The liturgy (especially the Eucharistic liturgy), its language and literary forms, its prayers, even as extending into paraliturgical and devotional worship, seems to have carried a sense of the sacred closely linked to the fact that the forms came "from above" (that is, from the Holy See) and were for the universal Church. To tamper on one's own initiative with any of this was to tamper with divine authority and with the whole structure of the Catholic Church and of Catholic life.

At the same time, however, a curious anomaly in respect to obedience appeared in the liturgical arena, this affecting some of those most perturbed by the new free practices that seemed to disregard liturgical prescriptions. For many years a source of pain to many devoted Jesuits was the liturgical prescription forbidding the celebration of the Eucharist without a server or at least a congregation of one person. In large communities of priests, for many of whom there was no occasion to celebrate daily Mass with a congregation, it was difficult to obtain servers. Frequently priests served each other. Sometimes there was some talk that the Society had been given a privilege in this matter. Generally Jesuits, motivated by their deep devotion to the Mass, found ways of resolving their consciences peaceably.

However, with the renewal of the liturgy came not only the possibility but even the official Roman encouragement of concelebration, which would solve the problem of community at the liturgy. Moreover, prescriptions were issued against private celebration of Mass when the Eucharist was being publicly celebrated at the same time in the same room, with matching instructions against the practice of building altars for private Masses in a chapel or church other than the central altar. An opening was left for obedience since concelebration was only encouraged but not prescribed. Nevertheless, those most disturbed by the new freedom practiced by others frequently did not themselves follow the new directions of the liturgy. For instance, persons in this category only grudgingly, at least at first,

yielded to the direction of using the vernacular in the liturgy. Justifications were developed of course for this behavior, but comparable justifications were not recognized for those exercising a different kind of freedom.

Among the indicated group liturgical freedom was considered to be not only a failure of obedience but also a failure of authority in that superiors did not or could not enforce conformity to ecclesiastical prescriptions in the liturgy. In the past, Jesuit lack of expertise in liturgical performance where the ceremony went beyond the simple Mass had been a matter for humor, but this was never seen as deliberate; on the other hand, exactness in liturgical action for the simple Mass had been one of the emphases of Jesuit training (for example, in rites classes and in tertianships). This training embodied a conception of obedience which was now shaken by the new practices.

### 3. Obedience in Assignments

A third difference in the practice of obedience that showed up in the time of change was in the mode of assignment of Jesuits to houses, to studies, and especially to ministries. Formerly such assignments were made by the publication of a "status" for the entire province on which all changes were announced. Frequently the changes were preceded by discussion, but not always, and often there were a number of surprises both to the individuals involved and to the general public of the province. The status easily served as a symbol of Jesuit obedience, of men ready to go anywhere and serve in any way that superiors should decide. Perhaps it was in this practice that the Society approximated most closely the military image which it carried. But in the time of change the traditional published status either disappeared or was replaced by a province bulletin giving, along with the men's new addresses, their assignments that had already been worked out and implemented.

In some provinces this new situation was linked with the introduction of what became known as "the principle of attraction," though it had different names in different provinces (for example, the MAD principle, the



method of apostolic discernment, and so on). What this said to the general body of the Society, especially to those in Jesuit educational institutions which were simultaneously expanding and feeling the acute need for more Jesuits, was that the provincial was no longer assigning men to apostolates according to the needs of the apostolates but rather was allowing them to follow their own "attractions," to "do their own thing." This development was confused by the introduction in many other religious orders of methods of "self-destination" or "auto-destination" to missions and works and communities, with self-destination thus becoming a universal issue in religious life.

What gave credence to the notion that religious, including Jesuits, were being allowed to choose their own apostolates was the entrance of a notable number of Jesuits (often young) into the activist social apostolate as well as into educational apostolates outside Jesuit institutions. This seemed to be a flight both from our common educational commitments in our own institutions and from our traditional intellectual apostolates--a flight in favor of conspicuously controversial service in social and secular situations. To many the opening of new apostolates was unintelligible in view of the needs of existing apostolates and the shortage of Jesuits.

Especially did work in educational apostolates outside Jesuit institutions create the impression of a denial of Jesuit team or community work in favor of individual ministries, and this impression in turn further strengthened the idea that Jesuits were being allowed and were choosing to follow personal interests rather than "team" interests. In the past, Jesuit obedience was largely associated with assignment by superiors to works, communities, and offices, with primary emphasis on the needs of the works and of the communities rather than on the desires of those being assigned. There was indeed a certain amount of group and public pride in the image of the Jesuit as a person who could be sent anywhere and assigned to any job, and in the confidence that as a matter of fact he would go where he was sent and do whatever task he was put to. The image of course, given the human situation, was not altogether real. There were always Jesuits whom superiors could not move or whose service had restrictions placed by the individual. This, however, was provided for by the *Constitutions* of the

Society in the practice of the account of conscience, one purpose of which was to inform the superior of the limitations and needs of the individual.

#### 4. Obedience in Community Life

Community life demonstrated a fourth change in the mode of obedience. Most obvious in this sphere is the disappearance of many community structures entailing obedience to established customs, prescriptions, or rules. Established times for rising and retiring, for personal prayer, for community prayer (litanies), for meals and community recreation; times and places for Mass, with daily Mass expected of all; assignments for pastoral services (supply); exhortations; regulations about dress, about kinds and amounts of recreation: common vacations at designated places with a superior and a daily order--all these prescriptions structured the Jesuit's life. A main task of the rector and minister of the house was to see that the Roman prescriptions and assistancy customs were in effect as well as that established house customs and practices were defined and observed. Jesuit obedience and the governance of superiors entered, in this way, into all the details of a Jesuit's daily life. Moreover, obedience in these matters was subject to the supervision and vigilance of superiors, was in fact considered one of the main responsibilities of superiors. This obedience was, indeed, subject to sanction, even to the application sometimes (more frequently in the years of formation, but in principle at all times in a Jesuit's life) of public admonition and penance (culpae, chapters). Such penances, which served as sanctions, have largely disappeared--a disappearance challenging the old scholastic thesis that sanction is a *proprium* of law. If there is no sanction, the argument went, the law is not serious and carries no force. The concept of force itself is challenged in this new development. Can there be law without force, and if force is out of favor, is there then any true authority? It has been said that the major experiment in our time is the experiment of authority without sanction. Should it be added that joined with this experiment is that of community without authority? Is it possible to maintain community prayer, common participation in community exercises, meetings, and the like, without

authority that is accepted by all? Is it possible to have any community in life-style, dress, and so forth--if such is desired--without authority that has sanctions?

Related to this change in the role of obedience in the community is a change in the common acceptance of those areas to which obedience applies. Many areas of human life which in the past were considered the proper subject of obedience have been declared "trivial" and therefore outside the concern of authority or obedience.

Intrinsically linked with the traditional model of structures was the understanding that, since everything was covered by prescription and custom, a Jesuit did nothing without the approval of the appropriate superior, sometimes assumed, sometimes tacit, but always there. This mode of obedience and governance was total.

Today almost all the structures (as common structures for everyone in the community) have disappeared; and along with their disappearance have gone, inevitably, common customs and common prescriptions--and of course public sanctions. In theory, almost everything in a Jesuit's day has been personalized; that is, times and places and modes of rising or retiring, prayer, Mass, and the like are to be worked out by the individual with his superior. And since what is done individually with the superior is not visible to the public, and is known only to the individual and to his superior, neither the obedience nor the superior's governance is visible. Whether the individual actually did work out his daily order with his superior, or whether the superior has exercised his governance over the daily life of the individual, is not public knowledge. Consequently, it is not known whether there is obedience; what is evident is that communal, visible obedience hardly exists any more. The tendency is to assume that what is not public does not exist.

Related to this change in community obedience is the movement towards "small communities." Even in the older model of community life, small communities (such as parishes or retreat houses) had less natural need for the functions of a superior in establishing community life, and they accordingly tended to be a "problem" for the major superior whose responsibility it was to see that customs and rules were observed. But in the new movement towards small communities, the size of the community is not connected with the particular apostolate to which the community is assigned.

Rather, it is inspired by a new personalist view of community living or in some instances by a form of poverty (that is, without hired services, a *low per diem*, and the like). It involves concepts of "sharing," "openness," "support" for all the members, "intimacy" even, a concept alien to the older model of community. This makes collegiality and community central, and leaves little if any place for an individual superior. In the developments of religious life within other religious orders and communities, the movement towards communities without superiors seems to be a reaction against the bad experience one had of superiors in the past. In the Society this does not appear to be the case. The movement to a community without a superior seems to be more a reaction to highly structured and "impersonal" apostolic communities than to arbitrary and insensitive local superiors. The personalist small community simply does not have a place in its rationale for a superior conceived on the hierarchical model. The concept of obedience tends to be replaced by the concept of community responsibility.

An extreme change from community obedience has been, on the part of a few, the movement out of a Jesuit community altogether. Sometimes this action has been dictated by the assumption of an individual apostolate in which there are no other Jesuits with whom a community could be formed. Often, however, apartment living, or living in a non-Jesuit community, seems to be motivated by difficulties with community life, particularly the structured and obediencial style of community life. Possibly in some instances it is a reaction against community absolutely.

#### B. Has the Theory of Jesuit Obedience Changed?

If the foregoing is a correct account of recent developments in the practice of obedience in the Society of Jesus, then it would seem evident that the practice of Jesuit obedience and governance has changed significantly in the last dozen years. The question which comes to the fore, then, is whether this change in the practice of obedience signalizes a change in the theory of Jesuit obedience and governance. This question itself has two dimensions to it, or two forms in which it can be asked.

The first is whether the official teaching of the Society of Jesus, through its governing body, the general congregation, or through its ordinary government, Father General and the provincials, has changed. The second is whether the membership of the Society of Jesus has in notable numbers changed in its understanding and affirmation of its own obedience.

1. Change in the Church

a. The Spirit of Vatican II

Has the official teaching, then, changed? In answer to this first form of the question, it would seem that there are some significant changes in the mode and exercise of authority in the Church, and that these changes have had an impact on the Society. I note several developments in the Second Vatican Council which have influenced religious obedience in the Church. The first is the very nature of the council itself, namely, its purpose and character as an "updating" (aggiornamento) council. It came together not to maintain and strengthen tradition in the Church, but to bring about change, change of course that would be in continuity with the life of the Church from the beginning, but nevertheless change. This movement in the council towards change had a strong impact on the conception and experience of authority and obedience in the Church. Insofar as a large part of the responsibility of authority in the past was to maintain and support the traditions, the council undercut the Church's support for that conception of authority by itself introducing change and leaving its practicing superiors frequently in a state of confusion through its own advocacy of the precise changes which local authorities were resisting (think of the case of communion in the hand instanced above). Perhaps the area in which this movement had the greatest psychological impact was that of the liturgy. The institution of liturgical renewal and reform on the part of the council was, as already noted, symbolic for the meaning of authority and obedience. The liturgy, especially the Eucharistic liturgy, had become deeply ingrained in the Catholic soul as a symbol of the presence of the divine in the Church and therefore as something sacred that could not be modified by the ordinary Christian, indeed not even by

the ordinary priest. It had also become a symbol of the universality and unchangeableness of the Church across nations and across time. When the liturgical renewal was instituted in the direction of the vernacular and regionalism, and in the direction of greater presence and participation on the part of the laity, then the sense of the sacredness and of the "untouchableness" of religious authority was disturbed, and a process of demythologizing set in.

b. Collegiality

Another feature of Vatican Council II which affected the area of authority and obedience was the promotion of collegiality for the bishops with respect to the pope. This move introduced an element of communitarianism into the Church and of community participation in the governing function. It modified and balanced the isolated affirmation of the authority of the pope which had had its strongest moment in the unfinished First Vatican Council and in the definition of papal infallibility. This modification of the monarchical and, in a sense, of the hierarchical model of the Church was supported in the Second Vatican Council by the dogmatic constitution on the Church which, introducing multiple models of the Church, drew attention to the communitarian models, notably to the Church as the "people of God."

c. Authority as Service

A third factor in the council which relates to the question of authority and obedience was its emphasis on the "service" aspect of authority. It was an explicitly pastoral council, and it brought the image of shepherd strongly to the forefront of consciousness when dealing with those in governing positions, primarily with the bishops of the local churches. This move took some of the supporting strength away from the governing function of the bishops, their "kingly" role, and put more emphasis on the people they served. The resulting theme of bishop as servant and guide for the upbuilding of the people individually and collectively in Catholic life and worship was woven all the way through the works of the council,

and it undoubtedly had an impact on the popular mind of the Church. What the new emphasis said was that the function of the members was no longer to be simply the obeying Church, but rather to be the recipients of the service of the governing Church. It suggested that now and in the future the needs and concerns of the general membership were of primary importance rather than the maintenance of a certain structure and order.

d. Reduction of Censorship

Nor should we underestimate the effect of dropping the Index of Forbidden Books and of restructuring and renaming the Holy Office. These developments meant that the former tight control and censorship was considerably loosened over what was published and what was said by those who performed the functions of teaching and of scholarship on seminary and university levels and in the popular forum. And this in turn reduced to a great extent the impression of one voice and one mind in the Church, and helped the upsurge of "pluralism" in the Catholic community. Pluralism is not the context in which authority is strongly supported. When there are many voices, authority is mitigated and sometimes submerged. At the same time, obedience, a simple and following obedience, becomes confused and disconcerted because the single direction to follow is no longer clear.

e. Dialogue and Religious Freedom

Finally, some importance should be given to two other movements in the council, though they may be only indirectly connected with authority and obedience. The first is the change of stance relative to other Christian churches, to other religions, and even to nonbelievers. The vision of the integrity of the Church, its uniqueness and fullness, in relation to other religious groups and attitudes, which existed in the Tridentine period, created a context in which strict doctrinal and pastoral authority and obedience was possible. The movement towards dialogue, towards searching for the common basis of belief and values, and towards working together with groups of different beliefs or of no beliefs weakens that context, invisible as it was. Diversity of point of view becomes

much more acceptable, and respect for pluralism outside the Church opens the way to the acceptability of a measure of pluralism inside the Church. More respect is paid also to individual conceptions and values and practice.

The second movement, perhaps included above, is the pronouncement on religious liberty (*Dignitatis humanae*). The declaration strongly affirms the dignity of the human person and the natural right to freedom in central areas of human personhood such as religion. This movement tends to give much more weight to the personal understanding and will of the individual than had been the case before. Such assertion of freedom in the affirmation of faith certainly changes the role of authority in ways that have perhaps not yet been fully perceived.

## 2. Change in the Society

### a. Reflection of the Council

In the Society also there has been some change relative to obedience, but it has been a change in orientation and emphasis more than in teaching or doctrine. The 31st General Congregation reflected the directions of the Second Vatican Council, and stressed, for instance, the service character of government rather than the regulatory. It made much more of the consultative process for government than perhaps had been done before, extending the process beyond the official consultants to all parties able to help and concerned in the action contemplated. It included group or community consultation. This was furthered by the 32nd General Congregation, by its recommendation of the community spiritual-discernment process for some issues. The move towards some measure of collegiality was also increased by the development of the collegium of the general assistants to Father General. That is, it is now mandatory that Father General consult the general assistants (not the regional assistants) as a body in a common meeting.

### b. Personal Government

Both general congregations have also placed great stress on personal and spiritual government in the Society. This is not a change in theory



except insofar as different aspects of theory are emphasized at different times. In fact, it may be more in the nature of a recovery of the original charism of the Society which links obedience with interior life. The present emphasis on personal and spiritual government both of individuals and of communities tends to change, perhaps without intending to, the primary concern of government from a promotion of apostolic works to concern for the personal and spiritual growth of individuals. It tends to make government much more concerned with interior desires and needs than with externals. And this tendency in turn moves towards individualizing government, that is, towards dealing with members of a community as individuals and towards making dispositions for them as individuals rather than prescribing common behavior for the whole community.

c. Reaffirmation of Obedience

At the same time the Society has continued to assert, and has strongly reasserted, the tradition of obedience as a primary characteristic of the Society. It has insisted that the ultimate decision and responsibility where issues of Jesuit religious and apostolic life and work are involved is with the superior. It has called for some structures of daily life for community, for some common daily prayer, for daily participation in the Eucharist. It requires that every community have a superior. It has not accepted the theory or practice of "auto-destination" of Jesuits, and insists that it is the prerogative of the appropriate superior to assign Jesuits to works and communities.

d. From Rules to Orientations

One symbol of change is the act of the 32nd General Congregation of abrogating the Common Rules of the Society and of commissioning Father General to publish a summary of the decrees of GCs 31 and 32 and of some of his own letters. This act reflects the character of the two congregations themselves. Both of them adopted an editorial or essay form of expression rather than a legislative or prescriptive one. The shift from "Common Rules" to "A Summary of Orientations and Norms" (subtitle of *Jesuit*

*Religious Life*) probably manifests a profound paradigm shift from a spirit of command and regulation to a spirit of guidance and encouragement. Perhaps the same shift is shown in the change from the use of the *miles Christi* (soldier of Christ) model to designate a Jesuit to that of Companions of Jesus, Friends in the Lord (*Amigos en el Señor*--the way in which the First Companions spoke of themselves).

### 3. Change in the Members of the Society

#### a. The Immanence Model

The next area of change is more subtle and more difficult to verify. It is that area referred to in the second form of the question proposed above on page 183: Has the membership of the Society in notable numbers changed in its understanding of its own obedience? Manifestly, this inquiry concerns the acceptance and confirmation of authority and obedience on the part of the governed or non-governing sector of the Society, that is, of those not directly engaged in formulating or executing the policies and principles of Jesuit life and work. Here would seem to be a spectrum of attitudes ranging, to use political language, from the far right to the far left. There are those whose minds and hearts are formed in the monarchical, hierarchical model of the Church and of the Society and who are distressed and scandalized at the evidence they see in the Society of other models. At the other extreme are those who do really have a new conception of government and obedience, even though they may not have articulated it as yet or even acknowledged it as different. The new model has sometimes been characterized as "personalist." It may be more correctly designated as an "immanence" model. The negative principle of the immanence model is: Nothing can be imposed from outside. The positive principle is: Everything must be worked out from within. In this model, policies, regulations, and prescriptions which are worked out by a remote governing body and in the process of which the individual has not been involved, unless perhaps only minimally, do not "touch" the individual and are not much attended to. The immanence model affects, among other things, the size of a viable religious community, since a community that is too large to allow for the engagement of the individual in its governing processes and

for effective participation in the development of policies and practices is a non-community. The immanence model has difficulty integrating obedience within its perspective.

b. Personal Growth

A second change of mentality on the part of a segment of the governed is the assertion that the goal of religious life and community is the growth and fulfillment of the governed. Apostolic directions and decisions have to be fitted into that norm. In a study made for the American bishops, *The Catholic Priest in the United States: Psychological Investigations* (Washington, 1972), Eugene C. Kennedy and Vincent J. Heckler concluded with some recommendations and presented the bishops with a primary decision for policy. On page 173 it was expressed in this form:

1. Do you put first priority on assisting American priests to achieve greater personal maturity and therefore greater effectiveness as priests?
2. Do you rather put priority on American priests' adjusting themselves to the expectations of the institutional priesthood even at the price of not developing themselves?

The new mentality sees no reason for debate here, but simply assumes the first position. A correlate of this is a rereading of the Jesuit principle that a Jesuit is called upon by his obedience to obey "in everything where there is no sin." "Sin" is broadly construed as "anything which hinders greater personal maturity." In this perspective hardly anything in the realm of command is excluded from the area of possible sin.

c. Epikeia

Another attitude on the part of the governed should be noted here. Among those who adhere to the monarchical and hierarchical model of the Church and the Society, there have always been those who developed a defensive and even adversary position towards authority. They have worked out ways, often personally necessary ways, of surviving within a structure of authority and of protecting themselves from the prescriptions and policies both of individual superiors and of governing bodies in the

Society. This approach is commonly located under the principle of epikeia. It adheres to the old order of authority and obedience, but it places limits on that order without calling for a change in the order. Epikeia does this by providing for the uniqueness of the individual situation in the face of the general prescription of the law. It says: The law does not, did not when it was promulgated, have my special situation in mind, and therefore it does not apply in this case. The order of law, of course, provides for the granting of an exemption from the law on the part of the relevant authority, and for granting of exceptions from the law in particular cases. But epikeia permits the individual to make this judgment of nonapplication for himself.

The recent mentality is disturbed by this method of making the law "human." It tends to see this interpretation as inauthentic and dishonest. If the law does not apply, if it calls for exceptions and exemptions, then it should be changed so that it expresses what does fit the situation of most people.

## PART II. JESUIT OBEDIENCE TODAY

### A. Introduction

So far in this study of Jesuit obedience we have reviewed four arenas to see whether there are any evidences of change in the practice of obedience. We have also looked at the Second Vatican Council and the 31st and 32nd General Congregations for evidence of any change in the theory of obedience. We have certainly found evidences of change in the practice of obedience. In the matter of theory, however, most of the changes seem to be in the spirit, attitudes, and processes of the Church and the Society which provide the context for the practice and theory of obedience rather than in the theory itself. In other words the changes relative to obedience in the Church and the Society are more in the order of a paradigm shift as explained above on pages 172-173 than in the order of theory.

## 1. Procedure: Phenomenological-Historical Method

Where do we go from here? I propose in the light of the changes, particularly in the light of the changes in context, or the paradigm shift, and at the same time in the light of the origins and tradition of religious obedience, to attempt a description of Jesuit obedience from the contemporary standpoint.

What I am attempting might be called a phenomenological-historical description, though not a very scientific one, in the mode of some contemporary philosophy. It may be useful to say something about this, so as to forestall some expectations and prevent undue puzzlement and frustrations. I will not try to give a definition of obedience in the Aristotelian mode of defining essences which are timeless and from which consequences can be deduced. I will not be using Aristotelian demonstration at all.

Nor will I try to give an historical account of obedience as presented by St. Ignatius, as it is found in the Formula of the Institute, the *Constitutions*, and his Letters, or as it is described by the early writers of the Society. Neither will I attempt to do a contemporary theology of obedience, either in the biblical mode, as a Raymond Brown might do, or in a systematic mode, as Karl Rahner might do. What then will I be trying to do? I will be trying to describe what the Scholastics would have called the intentionality of obedience, the internal word expressed in my mind when I contemplate obedience. This description might be said to be the fruits of meditation. It involves trying to absorb recent thinking on the religious life and the Gospels, reliving in spirit the beginnings of the Society, and consciously assimilating the spirit of our times. Then, in that reflective mood one focuses on lived obedience in the Society and tries to discern its various notes or parts and give expression to them in some sort of intelligible whole.

A recent article on "Philosophical Models in Ecclesiology" by Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P., in *Theological Studies* for March, 1978, which is concerned with a similar reflection on the Church, on page 17 describes the phenomenological-historical method very well:

I call this model "phenomenological" because, refusing to deduce a formal structure from a given essence of the

Church, it begins with a cluster of forms, seeing there an emerging if only partially disclosed nature. The phenomenological approach becomes "historical" as, no longer expecting perfect definition or eternal essence, it unveils to us a particular, enduring reality by means of the formal arrangement of old and new characteristics. This process of disclosure takes place in time. Time and form seem to be the necessary bridges for the beginning of something to reach our perception.

What does one have when one has finished such a description of Jesuit obedience? A demonstrated conclusion? No. One person's opinion? In a way, I suppose. It certainly is one person's vision. But opinion is the wrong word for it. "Opinion" applies in the order of demonstration and belief, and pertains when one is presenting a position to others as true or real. What I am presenting is what I see in my mind's eye when I contemplate Jesuit obedience. It is a preliminary stage to the order of demonstration and is presupposed in any demonstration. To be filled out, the vision needs other persons to reflect on the same data and history and see whether the description matches what they see, or whether it has to be corrected. When the description comes close to what a sufficient number of people experience in themselves, then it has fulfilled its purpose, it has described "what Jesuit obedience is today." For religious obedience, like religious poverty and chastity and community, or anything spiritual, is not something which is simply "out there," if anything is, but it is largely what it is *seen* to be by a group of persons. Jesuit obedience is the collective vision and behavior of Jesuits.

## 2. Religious Obedience: Counsel or Commandment?

It is important to note that we are not considering obedience in general but religious obedience, that is, the obedience which a person vows along with poverty and chastity when he enters a religious order or congregation, when he joins a religious community. This is not the obedience which is an ethical mode of behavior called forth by properly constituted authority founded on the natural law or divine law. Religious obedience is founded in freedom. It is a freely chosen obedience to a freely constituted authority within a freely founded community. After

the community has been founded and functioning for some time, it is possible for new members to miss this character of religious obedience, for new members who wish to join the community can tend to view the vows as conditions for membership rather than membership as a way of fulfilling the vows previously chosen. Ignatius understands that those who enter religious life have already chosen the life of the evangelical counsels.

Religious obedience falls within the category of the evangelical counsels, and in the language of St. Ignatius the way of the counsels is distinguished from the way of the commandments. This is a classic distinction in the history of Christian spirituality. It has been customary to found this distinction on the Scriptures, for example, on our Lord's invitation to the rich young man. It has also been customary to use this distinction to classify religious in the Church as a category distinct from clergy and laity alike: religious as a class were committed to the life of the counsels beyond the life of the commandments.

This distinction between the way of the counsels and the way of the commandments was disturbed by the Second Vatican Council and seriously called into question by the theology of the period. A case could be made, I believe, for the position that the most disturbing effect of the council on religious life in the Church has been the council's affirmation that Christ continues his prophetic office--the testimony of his life and the power of his words--not only through the hierarchy (which in the popular mind tended to include all priests and religious) "but also through the laity," to whom God has given "understanding of the faith and the grace of speech, so that the power of the gospel might shine forth in their daily social and family life" (Constitution on the Church, no. 35). Such renewed focus on the laity's call to holiness and apostolate, seemingly unprecedented, had an unintended practical effect; it made the traditional effort by religious "to follow Christ more freely and imitate Him more nearly by the practice of the evangelical counsels" (Decree on Religious Life, no. 1) appear less special than it had appeared formerly. If one can aspire to holiness, and in fact is called to it in the way of marriage, family, and secular work in the world, then it would require a highly special and very personal call indeed to follow Christ in the way of

celibacy, poverty, and obedience in religious communities.

This effective blurring of the degrees or grades of being a Christian was abetted by an exegesis which said that the distinction between the way of the commandments and the way of the counsels is not to be found in Scripture. Some biblical scholars, it is true, found what might be called different degrees of following Christ. For instance, Raymond Brown finds three categories of Christians in the New Testament: those who believed in Christ but did not leave their home and situation (for example, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary); those who became disciples and left home to follow Christ on his missionary travels; and finally those who were chosen to be apostles. Others have found the way of celibate chastity, to use one example, to be something not taught in any explicit way by Christ, but to be intimated by a collection of passages in the Gospels.

But, though some argument can be made for finding poverty and chastity in the Scriptures, religious obedience has encountered more difficulty. Commentators have more frequently judged that religious obedience is not to be found in the New Testament. When Jesus is subject to Mary and Joseph, he is still a minor. When Paul speaks in his letter to the Philippians of Jesus' obedience, the reference is to obedience not to another human person but to the will of his divine Father, and the passage is primarily concerned with humility.

I do not want to attempt to unravel this exegetical problem, or even to attempt a resolution of the problem of whether there are degrees of Christianity or of the following of Christ to be found in Scripture. What I would like to do, rather, is to suggest that the life of the counsels is the result of contemplation of the Christian community in history upon the mystery of Christ. Now, the form that this contemplation takes, its results, are undoubtedly affected by cultural factors. The dispute over the distinction between perfect and ordinary Christians began in Alexandria with Christian Gnosticism as early as the second century. The spirituality of degrees of holiness or following of Christ certainly was influenced by the Neoplatonism and Neoplatonism of both eastern and western Christianity throughout its history up to our present age--when we seem to be undergoing a shift from Greek to Hebrew perspectives.



I suggest that the thrust towards a higher and more perfect way of union with God and the following of Christ is founded in the human spirit and in its own thrust towards a constantly higher form of existence, towards "the more," whatever may be the case with Scripture and the recorded teaching of Christ. In other words, the way of the counsels, as I will try to explain later, has a foundation in spiritual anthropology as much as in revelation. God, and for the Christian, Jesus, is an attractive force which draws some followers and believers to do and be more than they find themselves doing and being at any given moment. This desire searches for ways and means of expressing itself and of attaining its objective always still beyond its reach.

This desire and thrust is familiar to all students of Ignatius and is shown by their common use of the Latin *magis* as expressing the spirit of Ignatius in the *Exercises*. The expression is found in the Principle and Foundation, in the two responses to the Call of the King, and especially in the Three Modes of Humility.

It is of some use to compare the counsels not with the commandments, as is commonly done in the tradition, but with the virtues as analyzed in the philosophy of Aristotle. Aristotle sees the virtues as the forms and dispositions of behavior that are proper to man. They are founded in human nature, and in the Greek spirit they are governed by the principles of rationality and moderation. The counsels, however, go beyond what is expected, beyond rationality and moderation. They are a consequence of love, that is of charity, and they tend towards excess; they flow from a superabundance of charity. The counsel of obedience therefore can be said not to be the virtue of obedience. The counsel obtains where the virtue of obedience may no longer be required. After a young man has come to his majority, for example, and is no longer living under the roof of his father, he is no longer subject to his parents in the way that he was when he was a child. Nor is he subject to any other person in that way. But he may for special reasons choose to be subject to another person. A religious does this. For the love of Christ, he chooses to be obedient to another person in a religious community for the praise and service of God.

Within the evangelical counsels themselves obedience has an ambiguous

history. For instance, when Ignatius lists the counsels, he ordinarily does not list obedience, but rather poverty, humility, chastity, and concomitant attitudes. His degrees of humility, however, begin as degrees of obedience. Moreover, obedience as a Christian response and expression of the greater service of God developed early in religious life, perhaps especially in the cenobitic life and most forcefully under St. Benedict. In his Rule Benedict does not explicitly require the vows of poverty and chastity, but only obedience along with the promise of stability and the conversion of morals.

### B. The Form of Jesuit Obedience

It is then this development of religious obedience out of the desire to go beyond one's present state, or beyond the ordinary (what more can I do?), in the service and imitation of Christ, as it developed in the contemplation of Christians in history, that I would like to describe. My description cannot pretend to be an historical study. It is rather a reflection, and, after the mode of the phenomenologists, an effort to present the form of the religious obedience of a Jesuit.

I have tried to order my perceptions under four headings: (1) the following of Christ, (2) human fulfillment, (3) community, and (4) the Society of Jesus.

#### 1. The Following of Christ

In first place let me say, somewhat at variance with Karl Rahner, that religious obedience *is* a mode of following Christ and that in at least three ways.

a. The first way is the imitation of Christ. It is true that the relation of Jesus to the Father is encompassed in the special relationship of the Son to His Father, and there is no possibility of our relating directly and immediately to the Father as Jesus did. But this impossibility is precisely what founds religious obedience. As persons immersed in nature we need someone to represent the Father to us. We need ikons, images to represent the invisible God, living images to represent the living God.

This is one of the reasons for our need for Christ. "Philip, he who sees me sees the Father." This is one of the reasons for our need for the Church. Ikonology is part of our nature, as Christianity has always assumed, even while accepting Sinai's castigation of idolatry.

It is the deep desire of Christians to imitate the Son of Man in his obedience to the Father, coupled with the need for a living and human symbol, that joined with other forces in the Christian spirit to create Christian communities in which one person symbolizes the Father mediated by Christ. With this device it is possible for the Christian who wishes to "signalize himself" in the following of Christ to go beyond the command of obedience to a special way of obedience. It is now possible in some distant way to imitate Jesus in his obedience in all things to his Father.

b. The second way of following Christ in obedience is to be obedient to Christ, that is, to imitate the Apostles in their obedience to Christ. "You address me as 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and fittingly enough, for that is what I am." The special mode of the obedience of the Apostles is of course the mode of apostleship, not so much in the role that developed later for them as rulers in the Church, but in their role of missionaries and messengers of the Good News. "As the Father has sent me, I also send you." In this form Jesus is sender as well as one who is sent. The obedience of the apostle is to be sent.

It is well known that Ignatius conceived the Society of Jesus on the model of the apostles, not as rulers in the Church but as missionaries, and on the model of the seventy-two disciples sent out in pairs to be extensions of Jesus in fulfillment of his mission. The scriptural, or early Christian, base for the Society of Jesus is not, as it is with the Benedictines and other monastic communities, the model of the early Christian community given in Acts 2:42-47, but rather the missioning of the apostles in Mark 6 and Matthew 10, and of the disciples in Luke 10.

In the Society this desire to be sent by Jesus is transferred to Peter, to whom Christ had transferred the primacy in his Church. This transfer is pointed up by the fact that in the beginning the vow of obedience in the Society was first a vow to be sent by the successor of Peter and the Vicar of Christ "anywhere in the world." It is interesting too

that, in giving guidelines in the *Constitutions* to those sent to bring the Good News to different parts of the World, Ignatius speaks of them as going in pairs, so that one partner can complement the other. Later this obedience to the pope is extended to the superior general of the Society, to provincial and local superior, even to the cook.

c. The third way of following Christ in religious obedience is the way of reparation for sin. Sin is presented in Scripture as disobedience and as rising out of disobedience. Ignatius in the First Exercise of the First Week continues this teaching: "I will recall to mind the sin of the angels, remembering . . . that they refused to make use of their liberty to offer reverence and obedience to their Creator and Lord. . . ." But in the spirit of St. Ignatius, who centers his whole spiritual doctrine on liberty and its use, the response of obedience is not only a sharing in the response of Christ to the will of his Father as reparation for the sin of man; it is also an acknowledgment of the same roots of disobedience in us. This tendency to use our freedom for ourselves needs to be "gone against" and countered by devoted obedience. Anyone who wishes to signalize himself in the following of Christ will want to go beyond what is required in the matter of obedience. He will want to give himself to religious obedience in union with Christ our Redeemer, and to "make up for" his own disobedience.

This spirit of obedience is not a Christian version of a stoic asceticism, but a conscious participation in the cross of Jesus, who is "going to his passion on account of my sins." Christian participation in the cross stands somewhere between Rousseauvian innocence and Manichean evil. We are not innocent, neither are we evil. Neither can we share in the resurrection without sharing in the cross. At its deepest spiritual level religious obedience is participation in the passion and cross of Jesus, who is doing the will of his Father on account of our sins. This feature of religious obedience destroys all naturalism in attempting to understand it. Any effort to understand religious obedience from the pragmatics of an organized community living together for a common purpose, any analogy with a signal-caller on a football team or with the general of an army in war, falls short. At the heart of religious obedience is entrance

into the sacrifice of Christ, his "holocaust" or "offering" for us. Yet it needs to be emphasized that it is not because of the "suffering" involved that obedience shares in the cross but because the cross is the obedience of Christ in reparation for our disobedience.

## 2. Obedience and Human Fulfillment

I turn now to another facet of religious obedience, human fulfillment. Earlier I spoke of one characteristic of the spirit of our times, the principle of immanence which says that nothing must come in from outside, everything must be derived from within. This principle must be given some respect. It is the expression of a basic truth constantly analyzed and reaffirmed in the Christian tradition, namely, that nothing can pertain to the good of man unless it is a fulfillment of the potentiality and desire of man for beatitude. But that tradition, in Augustine and in Thomas, also teaches that the desire of man for fulfillment is identifiable with God's call to man to union with himself. Human fulfillment is the human vocation, and the call comes from the Creator. Moreover, the fulfillment is not to be found within man but only in the gift of God to man.

Religious obedience is to be seen as a response to the call of the Trinity, to God's invitation to man to go beyond himself. I propose to consider this under three headings, (a) the call to growth, (b) the call to transcendence, (c) the life of the Trinity.

a. The call to growth. It is a tendency of the older spirituality to place religious obedience directly in the supernatural order, as it is called. This language implies a distinction of orders and an ontology that has been undergoing revision in recent theology. It does however express a truth, that religious obedience, as religious life generally, cannot be explained by human and natural powers alone. But even though this is true, surely it is necessary to locate religious obedience within the psychology of growth and development of the person. Life is of itself an immanent dynamism, always in movement, and in its early stages at least a movement of growth to maturity. This is true of all the phases of life,

not merely the biological. But there is a tendency to stop the growth movement after one has arrived at adulthood, at the time when biological growth stops. This stage or level of human life tends to be a dividing line for obedience also. It is generally accepted that obedience belongs naturally to the period of growth and development, but once maturity is reached a stage of independence begins and generally also a stage of authority and command as one begins to raise his own family. It has been one of the conceptions of our time to appreciate that psychic, spiritual, and personal growth ideally should continue as long as there is life. Abraham Maslow was one psychologist who was surprised to find that not everyone wants to grow and develop continuously. He found that it was necessary to introduce into the patterns of life challenges to growth. Obedience, though I do not wish to attribute this to Maslow, is one of these challenges to growth.

Long before Maslow, St. Bonaventure in the thirteenth century had uncovered, among religious, this willingness to find and remain at a comfortable level of living. In a little work of his which was required reading for superiors in the Society in the early days of Ignatius and Nadal, *The Six Wings of the Seraph*, Bonaventure tells superiors that they will find in their communities religious who are satisfied with their level of virtue and not interested in growth. This is easy to understand, and I imagine that all of us at times can recognize that spirit in ourselves. Traditionally obedience has been one of the principal challenges to growth in the spirit in religious life, a check also against settling into a comfortable mediocrity, against slipping back into secularity. It would seem that without obedience there is no fulfillment.

b. The call to transcendence. But religious obedience is more than a call to growth. It is also a call to transcendence, to go beyond the merely human, to open oneself to the presence of God in one's life.

This really involves an understanding of the human; and although this is not the place for an interdisciplinary treatise on human personality, some sketch of perspectives is necessary. In recent years it has become customary to view human fulfillment (preferred language to the language of "perfection") horizontally rather than vertically.

Incarnationalism has generally been the chosen term, though some theologians have been talking of an "ascending" rather than a "descending" Christology. Incarnationalism has been opposed to "eschatologism," the tendency to think of man in terms of his final stage, in heaven rather than here on earth, in the future rather than here and now. Incarnationalism, a reflection on Emmanuel, God-with-us, in Jesus, turns our gaze to the here and now, to history and to society as they are being worked out in our lives. The theology of liberation is simply an extension of this theme. It is of course a legitimate and important theme, and one of the necessary poles of the Christian vision (earth *and* heaven).

What has rarely been discussed is the implicit anthropology encased in this theme. There is a repudiation of the Cartesian and Platonic dualism of mind (or soul) and body in favor of an identification of man with his body. Phenomenological analyses, as for instance in Gabriel Marcel, have tended to pay much more attention to the bodily, social, and interpersonal experiences of man. "Enfleshment" has become part of the language.

No doubt most Catholic philosophers would want to repudiate Cartesian and Platonic dualism and move in the Thomistic direction of the soul as the form of the body. I am not sure whether as many would prefer the Hebrew anthropology which is coming more and more into vogue rather than the Greek (or Aristotelian) anthropology, but certainly many would be sympathetic with it. Martin Buber's Hasidic philosophy of the total man in dialogue has been attractive to many.

But what is not attended to is that dualism and incarnationalism are not the only options. Much more traditional in Christian philosophy since the age of the Fathers is what might be called an anthropology of transcendence. This is the view of human nature which is, for instance, expressed in Bonaventure's *Itinerary of the Mind to God*. The human person is to be understood in terms of levels or stages which lead him from the physical to the mystical levels of being and experience. And in the dynamics of this anthropology man is constantly being invited to transcend the level at which he is, to ascend finally to the level which is above all creatures, to the most blessed Trinity.

Continental philosophy, Kierkegaard and Jaspers, has so analyzed man,

and I have been told that contemporary psychology is beginning to talk of the transpersonal as well as the interpersonal in man. It seems to me to include an important dimension that incarnationalism has left out.

Incarnationalism, that is, the spirit of incarnationalism rather than its doctrine, has profoundly affected the Christian consciousness of the religious vows. It has tended to see them in terms of enfleshment and social relationships, as fulfillment of the human in the horizontal direction. It has obviously affected the meaning of Christian consecrated chastity so that it can include interpersonal relationships in a very human way. Perhaps it is this move which has favored the change of the name from "chastity" to "celibacy." But it has also affected poverty, because it does not want to accept any ideal of poverty which prevents development of the human in any way, and actual economic poverty does place limits on human development.

But incarnationalism also affects religious obedience conceived as obedience to another human person. For obedience within the scope of that relationship tends to place the person obeyed on a higher level of existence, above oneself. Incarnationalism does not favor a hierarchical structure of reality, which is the natural home for obedience. That is why in the present non-hierarchical conceptions of the Church there have been attempts to rename the authority structures, such as Andrew Greeley's effort to promote the term "fraternal authority" instead of "paternal authority." Under the same influence there have been efforts to rethink obedience in terms of community, which is a relationship of equals on the same level of being with oneself, or to speak of obedience to the Holy Spirit, which is the spirit of community, rather than of obedience to Jesus, who is Teacher and Lord. Many religious communities have in our time moved towards live-in communities without superiors, and towards team or collegial government.

In the transcendence view of man obedience has the role of responding to the call to transcendence, to come from oneself to a higher level of life. Of course the call must come from outside oneself, from the Creator who is summoning His creature to union with Himself through Christ. This is the highest form of fulfillment; for man's greatest potential is to be



like God. This reveals the deepest nature of man, his profound ambiguity. It is not the dualism of soul (or mind) and body, but the transcendence of the human by the divine.

c. The life of the Trinity. The call to transcendence is really the invitation to participation in the life of the Trinity. But this is not an invitation to a higher-than-human form of life in some general ontological sense. The Trinity is revealed as community of persons, and the call to man is a personal call. Yahweh calls His people to service and praise. The Father sends his Son to reveal his will. Man must hear the word of God and keep it. There are various forms of understanding this call and response, but one enduring form from the beginning of Genesis to the death of Jesus is that of command and obedience. Christian meditation on this call has striven to give expression to it in ever stronger and deeper ways. One of these ways is religious obedience, the putting of another human person from the community of believers and followers in the place of Christ in order that he may summon the community to an ever deeper participation in the life of the Church, which is the life of Christ in the Spirit in obedience to the Father.

### 3. Community and Obedience

Reflection on obedience as the call to human fulfillment in the life of the Blessed Trinity leads into the third important dimension of religious obedience: community. For the Blessed Trinity is of course the community of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the call of obedience to participate in the life of the Trinity is the call to community. An essential characteristic of religious vows is that they are promises to the Trinity in community. It is amazing how many religious and Jesuits seem to see their vows as between themselves and God without the communitarian dimension.

#### a. Community

It is probably the vow of obedience that links together the community most of all. Obedience has in itself a communitarian mode that the other

two vows, except perhaps poverty, do not have. It is true that the presiding authority deals individually with each member of the community and calls each to the praise and service of God and His Church, but the same person is the officer for all of the members of the community, and by that fact he is already a bond of union. He is moreover the officer for the whole community together and he calls the whole community to service and praise.

From almost any point of view, then, religious obedience is a mode of religious community. As soon as one introduces the notion of community, he introduces all the relationships of individual and community. Individuality is heightened in consciousness by community; one sees oneself as distinct and different from the others, but at the same time called together with the others to a common service. To come to agreement with everyone else in the community is no small task. It is a task more possible in some ways in a small community, because in a small group it is possible for everyone to hear everyone else. But it is at the same time sometimes more difficult in a small community, because it is more difficult to hide individualizing differences.

How to get everyone to do some things together in a community? The only common action that seems to succeed is the meal, and perhaps that is why the meal is the most basic community symbol. It is for this reason that the Eucharist has a high importance in a religious community. But the solution of a common meal breaks down when the community is too large for everyone to sit down together. It is, I think, possible for a community to be one without a presiding authority--though in that case I suspect that some dimension of community is lost. But without a presiding officer to serve as a symbol and bond of unity, it is also very likely that a community will divide, or simply become a more or less loose relationship of individuals. If community is an essential note in one's consciousness of religious life (as officially in the Church it is), then the question of superior or president will inevitably arise. To view obedience simply in terms of personal fulfillment and not in function of the unity of a community and its fulfillment would be to miss one of its most significant characteristics.

b. The Superior

Assuredly one of the deep and difficult problems of religious obedience, the handing over of one's individual right and responsibility of personal decision in certain matters to another human person, is that this act implies a kind of divinization of the superior. The superior is traditionally said to be in the place of Christ. He is expected to have personal and spiritual qualities of leadership which would by its caliber command the following of his community. In some descriptions indeed the looked-for superior is expected to resemble what someone has wittily called "Jesus Christ on a good day." Inherent in this attitude are two difficulties. The first revolves around the theological problem as to how the religious superior can actually be "in the place of Christ." There is of course the hierarchical solution: The pope stands in the place of Christ; the pope approves the constitutions of the religious order; therefore, the pope communicates authority to the superiors of the order according to its approved constitutions. (Undoubtedly some descendent authority does come to a religious community from the Church through a bishop or pope.) But religious orders are not part of the hierarchical structure of the Church, as dioceses and parishes are. In addition, the problem is complicated by the fact that religious obedience has generally entered more completely into all aspects of personal life--life-style, order of the day, occupation, associates, habitat, and the like--than hierarchical authority even claims to do.

The second difficulty inherent in the "place-of-Christ" attitude is the obvious limitation of individual human persons as directors with authority over the lives of others--and this particularly in times of confusion and crisis. Perhaps outstanding leaders arise in those times, but perhaps they don't. Even in ordinary times, if there are such, it is hardly to be expected that one person will have the virtue and the wisdom needed to be a superior "in whom Christ can be seen." In our own times the most frequent justification of the move to religious life without superiors has been the history of arbitrary and sometimes personally harmful actions of superiors even while acting in good faith. The strategy

accordingly has been to modify the office, indicating the change with an appropriate change of title (community representative, community co-ordinator, or something similar), or to institute team government, and in all instances to insist on broad consultation.

How then can the office of religious superior be understood? From what has been said above, it can be argued that the superior receives his office and role not from any qualities that he has in himself, not even from the churchly approval of the constitutions of his order, but rather from the membership of the order itself. The office arises out of the members' desire to go beyond the ordinary in the imitation and service of Christ. Out of that desire to imitate and serve Christ, to imitate the apostles in their obedience, the membership gives to one of their number the office of missioning and of communitizing. In the hiddenness of Christ from our visible world of human relationships, the only action possible to a community that wants to imitate the apostles is to ask one of their number to center for them their common and individual desire to teach the whole world and to baptize those who listen in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. This superiorship then, the receiving of the mantle of Christ, arises from desire of the companionship to be sent by Christ and to be one, in the Spirit, and it is imposed on the superior with all his humanness. There is no prescription that in his person he resemble Christ any more than any other human person. The superior is not imposed on the community from outside. He is put in the place of Christ by the membership.

### c. Mutuality

It follows from this that the form of the relationship between superior and members is mutuality. That is, the relationship is founded in the mutual desire of superior and members for the same goals and purposes, for the service of the Church through the imitation of Christ and his apostles, and for constant growth in holiness on the part of all-- which is to say, in personal fulfillment through charity. When this mutuality is not perceived, or is sensed to be absent in a significant

degree, then the foundation of obedience disintegrates. Superior and member must want the same thing in the same community in the same way.

As the study of history makes clear, different aspects and elements of human structures and behaviors differ in different cultures, and within the same culture in different times. This is naturally true of obedience. It surely depends on or reflects the structure of culture and society in which it lives. So it is inevitable that American culture should affect religious obedience in this country. Also inevitably, historical dialectic will affect religious obedience within the Church, and this will be reflected in the Society.

My suggestion is that what characterizes obedience today, rather than its hierarchical character, is the form of mutuality. The superior does not come in from outside. He receives a mission from the community: to serve within the community its special goals and purposes of personal holiness and of service of the Church, to stand in the place of Christ, to be the ikon. Hence all the processes of his superiorship must involve the community in some satisfying way. Hence the emphasis given to personal concern, to engagement of the individual in decisions that involve his service, to broad consultation, to the processes of spiritual discernment, including communal discernment.

Perhaps it is true to say then that it is not obedience which has changed, but rather the mode of making and commanding the decisions to be obeyed. Yet, to say only this would be simplistic. Along with the emphasis on mutuality in the processes of decision-making and commanding, there is the heightening of personal responsibility and of concern for the whole community on the part of individual members. Members can no longer put all the weight of decision-making on the superior. They have to be concerned in a new way about decisions that apply to them, have to judge whether in their case the decisions really do lead to holiness and service. If they do, or if at least it is not clear that they do not, then there would seem to be an added, a new responsibility on the part of the members to live out the decisions; because it is not only the superior's decision, it is also their own.

What makes mutuality difficult of attainment is of course fulfilling

the condition, that is, achieving a true commonality of goals and purposes, so that decisions and commands are recognized as coming out of the common desire to serve Christ in his Church.

I suspect that this swing of the pendulum from hierarchy to mutuality, though reflecting the spirit of the first Jesuit "friends in our Lord," who rotated the superiorship among themselves, will have effects not yet worked out or even foreseen, in the life and image of the Society, at least as that life and image have been known in the recent past.

#### d. The Church

Reflection on religious community and obedience suggests another aspect of obedience, and that is its role as a symbol of the Church. A religious community in the Church has a double role to play within the Church. Its first function is to serve the Church. This was already suggested when we were reflecting on obedience as the following of Christ. For the Church is Christ in the contemporary world and to serve Christ is to serve the Church. If any group of disciples of our Lord wish to go beyond the everyday in his service, then the way to do that is by serving his Church.

But the second function of the religious community is to serve also as a symbol of the Church. The Church is the community of Christ. It exists and is manifest in several spheres of human and religious society. It accepts a very broad membership, perhaps even a membership that cannot be publicly discerned, as in the theory of the anonymous Christian. But it also invites each and every one to a very intimate and intense membership. A religious community is that kind of membership, and in its dimension of obedience it expresses an intense devotion to the Church. It is a sign of the Church.

It is perhaps for this reason that, in a time when the relationships and structures of the Church are going through a period of adjustment, the place and role of obedience is likewise suffering some disruption. The image of the Church and the image of obedience go hand in hand, and in all likelihood the situation of the one will not be solved without the other.

#### 4. Obedience in the Society of Jesus

This entire essay has been written from the Jesuit point of view. Though not a historical study, I hope that it is something in the order of a retrieval of the original meaning and spirit of obedience in the Society of Jesus. If it is not successful in that hope, perhaps it will stimulate others to do the job more surely. It seems therefore appropriate to conclude this section with some remarks about the form of obedience in the Society.

It is perhaps unnecessary to remark that religious obedience is not a univocal term applied equally and in the same way to all religious orders and congregations. Each religious family has its own way of understanding and experiencing the imitation of the Trinity and the service of the Church. As was remarked in the beginning, religious obedience is closely related to the identity of the Society. It characterizes the Society in the conception of St. Ignatius more than other religious traits and virtues. It is probably more important to the Society than it is to other religious groups. Jesuit obedience has its own distinctive features. What is it that specifies Jesuit obedience?

From what has already been said, it is clear that obedience is intimately related to the apostolic, that is, to the missionary character of the Society. It came into the Formula and the *Constitutions* of the Society out of the desire to serve the Church, like the Apostles, anywhere in the world, and out of the maneuver of vowing obedience to go wherever the head of the Church would send its members.

It was out of that missionary obedience too that the Society's internal obedience grew. When it became evident that the members of the original band of companions of Jesus would be scattered to different places, the question of their community was raised. The solution to that question was to form a religious order and to give obedience to one of their own members. Moreover, because the members were so scattered in their "missions," it was not feasible to follow the patterns of capitular government of other religious orders; therefore ordinary government was centered on one man, while general congregations of the Society, which called for bringing the members together, were made irregular and infrequent--only for the election

of a superior general or for extraordinary cause. For the same reason, community in the Society is conceived first in terms of men scattered throughout the world on missions, the *corpus Societatis*, and only after that in terms of regional and local divisions. Thus, in the Society, community rests much more in the superior (in first place in the superior general, then in the provincial, and finally in the local superior) than in the local live-in community.

It is only in the Vatican II era that the personal live-in community has begun to get attention in the Society, and that collegiality, which was a strong force in the council, has begun to have an effect on the Society. This has been seen by some as a "Benedictinizing" of the Society, the replacement of mission by community. This view can be understood if one recalls Aristotle's dictum that from one extreme the middle seems to be at the other extreme. What really seems to be the case, however, is that the Society of Jesus today is trying to recover in modern terms the original form of a missionary or apostolic community.

But there is, I believe, a more profound link of obedience to the Society of Jesus. It arises, as all things Jesuit, out of the *Spiritual Exercises* and the conception of the relation of creature and Creator found there. The intention of the *Exercises* is to bring about a situation in which the Creator can communicate with his creature and manifest his will to the creature. The spirituality of divine call or command is pervasive throughout the process of the Exercises. It assumes a God who is Lord of his universe and who is actively engaged in the governance of his world, and in particular of his Church or people. The dynamic and loving will of God moving and calling his people to the end for which they were created is the spiritual context for obedience. The exercitant or Jesuit seeks to know and to fulfill that divine will. The Jesuit sees history and human endeavors in society as moved by the will of God not in the mode of some abstract impersonal power but by way of invitation to follow and serve the Son of Man in his struggle with the forces of evil. The praise and service of "our Creator and Lord," and the religious imagery of the Call of the King and of the Two Standards, are what makes the mode of obedience congenial to the Society of Jesus so that it is the most natural thing in



the world for it to be characterized by this virtue rather than "fasts, watchings and other austerities. . . ."

### C. Applications to the Four Areas

The phenomenology of Jesuit obedience which was presented in Part II did not directly address itself to the four specific arenas of concern considered in Part I. What it tried to do was uncover the inner motivations and the form of Jesuit religious obedience. As such it perhaps applies most explicitly to the obedience of missioning and the obedience of community life. But it would be a mistake to think of a universal essence of obedience that can be applied to all particular cases. The four arenas of concern all differ from one another, and to treat them together would be like putting potatoes and peanuts in the same baskets. Let me make some remarks about each of them.

#### 1. Obedience to the Pope

Jesuit Obedience to the pope has its special Jesuit sense, as I hope would be clear from the analysis in Part II. It really derives from the obedience of missioning and the desire to imitate the Apostles in being sent by Christ. But it is complicated by the fact that every Catholic by the profession of his faith owes a form of obedience to the pope. So obedience to the pope is not simply a matter of religious obedience in the special sense of religious obedience explained earlier. It is also a matter of Catholic faith; and if it is possible to think of a real distinction between these two obediences, then a Jesuit obedience to the pope in the sense of faith is not special to him but is common to all Catholics. As such it is subject to the theological and spiritual understanding of that obedience and of the authority to which it responds. This is a complex question, in our times as ever in papal history, and it is from the pluralisms and the transitions in the structure and process of authority and obedience that the whole Church is suffering today.

At the same time the spirit of Jesuit religious obedience to the pope moves the Jesuit and the Society of Jesus in the direction of special

devotion to the pope and to the pope's cause. It would seem that here more than anywhere else St. Ignatius's admonition in the *Exercises* is applicable, that our first inclination ought to be to save the neighbor's proposition rather than to condemn it. It is true that responsible and respectful criticism has its place within the virtue and spirit of obedience, but criticism does not characterize the instinctive response of the obedient follower of Christ.

## 2. Obedience in the Liturgy

Liturgical obedience is also its own kind of problem. True, the prescriptions of the liturgical books issued by the appropriate commissions with the approval of the pope, and the determinations and vigilance of the local bishop, carry an element of authority and obedience. But what is being regulated is a ritual, a liturgical action performed by the community with its priests and other ministers. Liturgical actions have their own inner laws and their own dynamics; they precede in a sense the regulations of the officers of the community. Ritual, generally, is deeply ingrained in the spirit and feeling of a people. It tends also to embody a sense of the eternal. That is why it is not easily changed and why simple decree will not achieve change. Ritual has to work out of the habits and experience of the people.

Similarly, when the feeling and experience of the people is undergoing a change, support is sometimes removed from the customary rites and symbols. How to adjust the two, so that the eternal and the temporal blend into some kind of harmony? Such adjustment normally does not occur by sudden insight or by instant decree. Complaint was heard when the new Sacramentary was being prepared that the changes were brought in piecemeal rather than all at once. That is the only way they could have been brought in; even then they needed to be tested, and perhaps modified, again and again.

Moreover, a characteristic of the current liturgical renewal is that it moved from a format of strict prescription (of varying degrees of authority) for each word and gesture, to differing basic structures and

formulas adjustable to different circumstances (such as the formulas for the Children's Mass). The minister of rite stands between regulation and the people.

### 3. Obedience in Assignments

The obedience of missioning likewise stands in the middle between two purposes sometimes in conflict: the good of the mission and the good of the person. Ideally these two come together in the traditional interpretation of Ignatius' formula for the end and purpose of the Society. But there is a reason in nature for the dialectical expression of that end and purpose: not only the salvation and perfection of one's own soul but also the salvation and perfection of one's neighbor. This is not merely the result of Ignatius' habit of saying everything in couplets. Given the limitations of human understanding and wisdom as well as the anxieties that pursue us, it is easy to see how in successive cultural periods the pendulum would swing from emphasis on the mission to emphasis on the person and back again. The cardinal sin is not to take both purposes into account at the same time, and sometimes the person has to cry out in pain and even anger or rebellion to call attention to his suffering. The danger is, in these circumstances, that the person will absorb all the attention and the mission will suffer. The Jesuit task, the cooperative task of superior and member, is to work diligently and prayerfully to bring the two purposes into harmony.

Self-destination is not the answer, because self-destination leaves out the central element of mission. Neither is the answer found in simple assignment of persons according to the needs of the mission. Man is not made for the sabbath; the sabbath is made for man. Missioning must take place according to the nature and grace of the apostle.

### 4. Obedience in Community Life

Community obedience is an entirely different area of human existence. It deals with life-style and community, and is closely connected with asceticism and prayer in the tradition of western religious life. Perhaps

more than the other three arenas it expresses in the popular mind what religious life is all about; and yet for the Jesuit it may be the least significant. The original Jesuit was expected to be, much of the time, out on the road--not in community. It may be this feature of Jesuitism which accounts for our traditional individualism.

And yet life-style and community are not insignificant factors of religious and Jesuit life. Indeed the two factors have deep meaning not only as outward expression to the people who observe us but as an inner manifestation to one another.

Nevertheless it is possibly in this arena more than any other that there has been refusal to obey. This reaction seems to have two motivations. One is a strong sense that not all of human life should be regulated, that there need to be spheres of freedom and individualism. The other is that communication or community is a gradual accomplishment, to be achieved through stages. Persons do not, it seems, arrive at community by fiat.

In the end it looks as though community is the determining value. Is it desired? How is it achieved? Where is it found--in the interior spirit or in externals? It does not seem that we have found it. Two spirits seem to be in struggle: on the one hand the need for community and intimacy, on the other Berchmans' experience that common life was his greatest mortification.

#### CONCLUSION

With the diversity of these arenas of concern granted, it may still be worth the attempt to suggest some "rules," in imitation of Ignatius, which flow out of the Jesuit spirit of obedience.

High in priority, clearly, are the consequences of the principle of mutuality. The member is part of the decision; his "motions" are integral to the discernment process. If a decision or command is to be right, the member must be heard, that is, seriously listened to. There are many degrees and ways of participation, according to the circumstances and the importance of the decision.

At the same time, the member himself has an obligation to participate in the decision not only for himself individually but for the community and mission on all levels. He cannot abdicate this responsibility.

However, given the integrity of the communication process, certain other attitudes are appropriate:

Because every Jesuit has chosen the way of obedience, his inclination ought to be to obey rather than not obey. Some have advocated a contrary procedure: that the first reaction to a decision or command should be to challenge. There may be some exercise of one's critical faculty in this response, but hardly a consistency with chosen obedience.

A second attitude should be to refuse to use force against the decision of the superior, not only the force of external media, but also internal force. Force, as the Letter on Obedience observes, bends the superior's will to the member's and inverts the order of Divine Providence.

Thirdly, it is still in accord with the spirit of obedience to look for reasons that justify the superior's decision, even when it is contrary to one's own conclusions or wishes. It may even be necessary to turn one's thinking around and take an unfamiliar approach. The effort may not succeed, but it should be made.

In the final analysis I suppose it is necessary to be personally persuaded that the way of obedience in our Lord is a call to go beyond oneself and enter into the way of the Lord. If one has this spirit there is no fear, there is only freedom. One is no longer bound to earth but can walk above it. Most importantly one walks with him of whom the Letter to the Hebrews says: I have come to do your will, O God.



# REACTIONS TO THE CONNOLLY-LAND LETTERS ON FAITH AND JUSTICE

## A DIGEST

by

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### PREFATORY REMARKS

A year ago these *Studies* (Volume IX, number 4 [September, 1977]), treating "Jesuit Spiritualities and the Struggle for Social Justice," presented an exchange of letters between Fathers Bill Connolly and Phil Land about "the problematic": What can be done to further the understanding, acceptance, and implementation of the 32nd General Congregation's Decree 4 on our mission to serve faith and promote justice?

An invitation was also extended to the readers (on page vi) to send in their reactions or reflections on the topic, in such a way that each would formulate the problematic as he sees it in his own life; in other words, what *he thinks* the problem is. The plan of the Seminar was to handle the incoming letters by digesting them to strain out the inevitable overlap, and by picking out the chief ideas for one or several main positions. This, it was hoped, would result in one organized presentation, reasonably brief. Happily, many letters came in, and the present writer is now attempting the digest.

After much reflection on the letters received, he now thinks it better to allow each single letter which addresses the problematic substantively to stand alone, though necessarily in abridged and synthesized form. The reason for this procedure is that several writers made an effort to make integral statements. These would be lost if all the communications were lumped together.

Excluded here are several letters which simply give information about projects, or ask advice, or merely congratulate the original authors.

In addition to the more integral treatments, some respondents develop

one or other theme that sparked their attention in the Connolly-Land exchange. These will be treated more briefly at the end.

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David J. Leigh, S.J., Rector, St. Michael's Institute, Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington 99258.

Leigh offers reflections which strike him "as central to the problem of stirring us up to a new lifestyle and new dedication to faith-with-justice."

1. *Narrowness of Horizon*: "As old Fr. Louis Twomey told us in 1957 at Sheridan, American Catholics are brought up with a strong sense of Christian responsibilities within their personal, familial, and sometimes neighborhood horizons. However, the larger issues of state, nation, and world are not within this perspective either intellectually or emotionally. . . . Very little energy has gone into stretching the gospel to touch on these wider issues."

2. *Vagueness of the Imaginative Model*. "The Call to Faith and Justice lacks a positive socio-political model for a just society. Both capitalist and socialist models have been so tainted by corruption and failures in Europe, the United States, Russia, and China that it is hard to stir up interest in either capitalism or socialism as a model for a just society." Thus, "whenever we discuss the building of a just world, we are mostly envisioning what we do not want: no more war, no poverty, no class hatred, no racism, or the like. But we lack an imaginative model for economic and social justice that has not been tainted by failures of recent history."

3. *Comfortable Isolation of Jesuit Lifestyle*. "This has been touched on often, but needs continual reminder. Unless we simplify our lifestyle and spend some of our time in poverty situations, we will not be able to take seriously the urgent cry for justice that the very living conditions of most people embody."

4. *American Clerical Tradition of Non-involvement in Politics*. "This has still not been broken down, even among younger Jesuits. Most of us are very negligent of anything but minimal voting duties, and even these are often neglected. Regular participation in political caucuses, committees,



petitions, and so on, is not (with exceptions) a part of Jesuit lifestyle. We assume that this is not right for American clerics. Politics is either too corrupt or too much the 'lay apostolate or violation of Church/State separation.' This seems to be the feeling of many middle and older Jesuits and of some younger ones."

5. *Worship of Expertise*. "This problem, addressed by Ivan Illich and others, is still deeply engrained. We tend to let the economists or political scientists deal with the larger world issues, failing to become involved."

6. *Personal-communal Spirituality*. "As Bill Connolly points out, most of us are struggling to keep our personal spirituality alive, and in some places to relate this to that of our local community and local Eucharistic groups. But there is still a great gap in retreats, prayer, discussion, and writing in spirituality--a great gap between the emotional concerns of our prayer life and the needs of the larger social issues."

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J. Robert Hilbert, S.J., Superior, St. Francis Mission,  
St. Francis, South Dakota 57572.

Hilbert addressed letters separately to Fathers Land, Connolly, and George Ganss, editor of *Studies*. In part these treat the same theme with somewhat different reflections; in part, too, they treat cognate themes such as the sense of sin--something closely related to Father Robert Harvanek's "The Reluctance to Admit Sin" in *Studies* for May, 1977. We take his three letters as a whole.

H. finds that Decree 4 of the 32nd General Congregation makes eminent sense, articulates what he has always understood. He also believes it does not call us to very radical change.

Seeking to learn why Jesuits respond differently to the decree, he believes that they part company on knowledge, conversion, and response. Accordingly H. states his spirituality of these three.

1. *Knowledge*: Conceding that there is need of some technical understanding, H. nevertheless argues in principle that "I can know from a simple awareness of the lot of the poor that injustice exists and is

systemic." This practical knowledge will lead to various kinds of operative knowledge.

First is the operative knowledge that "the values, ideas, and world view which we treat as absolutes are in fact cultural relativities. The danger in our treating them as absolutes, as the way things are, is that we may be blind to injustice which they may entail."

Second is the knowledge, implied in the first, that "our belief in the goodness, justness, and generosity of our middle-class society is mythology. We are not the peak of civilization and culture. A process of inoculation from earliest education has rendered us incapable of seeing that it is our society that is the source of the oppression that surrounds us."

Third is the knowledge about the nature of structures. "They are erroneously viewed as being something other than people interacting or interrelating. However complex a structure may be, decisions of humans, countless millions, are involved. And they are human decisions, qualifiable always and everywhere in structures as morally good or bad. Yet, school administrators and business managers think that they can speak of 'our policy' as if it were founded on the nature of things. If therefore structures oppress, it is people making up the structures who oppress. Accordingly, it is incorrect to say, 'People commit sins, not structures.' This gives a false objectivity to structures. Say rather that people sin in and through structures." H. believes that this separation of personal responsibility from structures derives from privatization of morality.

The fourth operative knowledge, says H., is that we must come to understand social justice in a biblical meaning which surveys injustice from outside our social understanding "rather than from within the scholastic philosophy of our American culture--definitions which conceal the injustice of our society."

2. Here the author's ideas are drawn from all three of his letters. His experience of sin started with involvement in racial conflict. He saw blacks suffering under structures of discrimination in housing, education, and employment, and he discovered that all too often these were not understood as structures of injustice. Still worse were the destruction

of black people's self-respect, the climate of fear, the bewilderment, and their inability to be sure even who their antagonists were at a particular moment. Physical poverty, he says, does not compare with that destruction of the person.

Thus, continues H., "I came to see American society from the underside as radically destructive, as enormously powerful, as oriented clearly toward oppression, and this in order to serve the interests of those on top." But up to this point this perception of the evil of structures was purely intellectual. How to make the transition to the sinfulness of these structures in the light of their effects?

"I now saw in these structures," H. goes on, "a malevolent spirit, a spirit that caught up all the evils of all the people into a seemingly intelligently organized coalescence that not only causes hunger and other physical hardships but also destroys human persons." Our author believes that his own small greed and desires for personal comfort and for all the equipment, transportation, and other apostolic necessities contributed to the totality of destructive greed. "The root evil that motivates our society--greed and self interest--are in me by the culture that has formed me."

Was the author guilty? The insight thus gained, he goes on, "seemed experientially at least analogous to original sin, and only the radical language of Scripture describes the personal revolution needed to escape, language such as 'to be born again' or 'to die to self.' This was an experience, not of sins, but that *I* am sin--an experience compatible, however, with peace in the experience of God's love." He found himself unable to argue that, after all, his share in the societal effects of sinful structures was small. On the contrary, he felt that he "could not segregate any small part and say that it is my part, and not all the rest." He adds that he felt it, not as non-deliberative limitation or deprivation, but as my pattern of choices dictated, of course, "not by a desire to hurt, but by my self-interests."

Conversion to Christ, H. says, must move to fundamental reorientation; it cannot be a blandly detached viewing of suffering but must be experiential and empathetic. If we are to develop Christ's Kingdom, we must first be evangelized; and we must be aware of the concrete existential exigencies in which the Kingdom will be unfolded.

3. The final point of H.'s spirituality is Response. Some Jesuits say the problem is too big and too complex, and so they turn to personal ministries. Some make their commitment to social change through teaching, social research, ministries to the poor, or the like. For H. the key is "not what I can do to effect social change," although he concedes that there are things which he or the Jesuit order can do. But reliance on success here can lead to the frustration and disillusionment of past activists. Above all, for H., reliance on success "risks failing to see that I am the enemy by my participation in the value system and structures of oppression. I must therefore through analysis and reflection become aware of my sinful participation in injustices and then I must change my attitudes (operative values and myths) and my lifestyle in mode and goal fitting my ministry."

4. Finally, according to H., to return to social engagement, while we must be involved in effecting change and being with the oppressed, the measure of the usefulness of this will be whether in so doing we are better Christians. The measure of that will be placing our hope for this world in the death and resurrection of Christ and in his presence in this world (and Jesus' time-span for ending evil may not be as rapid as ours).

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L. Patrick Carroll, S.J., a member of the Oregon Province, wrote from St. Paul House, LeSotho, South Africa, where he has spent the year.

Like Hilbert, Carroll writes a highly personal reflection and speaks for many of us.

1. *His Reflections*. "Forty years of age, well educated, well read, middle-class American by birth, training, and inclination, I still manage 'to live fairly simply by Jesuit standards (though the world would judge me affluent). I am aware of suffering.' In every work I face the problem of dealing with the injustices of our society and my choice is always the same--Band-Aid rather than dealing with the causes. Also I work with and minister to people as individuals. I am more concerned with the immediate, the individual, the here and now, rather than with meeting world hunger or race discrimination, or longer-term effects of injustice, and, above all,

structural causes." He also is prepared to say that his life gives little witness to the values he holds (and deplores the fact that, whereas he went to LeSotho precisely to live with the poor and to sensitize himself, he was caught up in the ministry for which he had been prepared (retreats and personal counseling) and so "skirted any real witness."

This leads him to state his and our problem and then to call for one line of solution. The problem: "All the above is to indicate the tension I have lived for years. To use my gifts. . . , I have immediately at hand many good things I can do. Rarely do these directly or immediately confront the larger issues of justice. I deal with one-on-one relationships or small groups. I feel the tension to witness better to what the Church and the General Congregation call us to. . . . But to do that latter I would need retraining, to be made over."

2. *A Road Out of the Dilemma.* Carroll says that he could be more comfortable in responding to the 32nd General Congregation if he lived in a group that together witnessed by lifestyle and community to justice issues. He adds that (even if he did not change his theological and sacramental pursuits) if the community he lived in was clearly poor, simple, open, nonsexist, nonracist, energy- and food-conscious, and so on, some of his guilt would be relieved. But this is not generally the case in our communities. He here relates the experience of six years back in forming such a community. He found that, as the members of it changed, gradually the community reverted to the very style of life the original group had abandoned. This leads him to conclude, "We have an immediate and gigantic need to overhaul the ways in which we live together if the efforts of individuals are not to go up in smoke."

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Charles Law, S.J., St. Xavier's G., P.O. Box 50, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Law draws from the Connolly-Land exchange the centrality of poverty and addresses this from personal experience. He makes a distinction between helping the poor and living their poverty. He sees foreign experts come to Nepal to help the poor, but notes that they live in a style in which only rich Nepalese can live. Against this he proposes a spirituality

of poverty for Jesuits. But he first recognizes that Jesuits cannot be expected to live the poverty of the "marginal peoples throughout the world. Nor should Jesuits glorify such poverty. The adults among those poor live in economic slavery, devoid of any real way to lift themselves from their substandard condition."

L., like the previous two letter writers, conveys a highly personal experience of what poverty means for him. To begin with, he is not satisfied with Land's statement that every Jesuit's lifestyle witnesses or fails to witness to justice, identifies him with the poor or distances him from them. Good enough, says L. But the essential of poverty is that it unite me to God. "For true and deep poverty creates the necessary atmosphere and personal disposition for real union with God." He adds that "actual poverty gives the necessary personal freedom to preach the gospel fearlessly wherever we are called."

And such poverty must be lived by all Jesuits, whether they are working in a remote and poor village of the Third World or drawing down a fine salary as a professor in a secular university. Variously they will resolve what the poverty of Jesus calls to. His own experience living in Asia has taught him that "men of prayer in all religions live a life of poverty." Poverty aids contemplation.

This leads Law to state his view on prayer. He believes that recent discussion of the "contemplative in action" has centered too uniquely on finding God totally in one's apostolate. At the same time he rejects a focus on prayer that considers the apostolate a distraction or so distinguishes contemplation and action that prayer becomes the filling of a reservoir to be emptied later into the apostolate.

No, for Jesuits there is "intimate and strengthening connection between deep prayer and true apostolic action. Each mutually enriches the other. Between our relation to the Transcendental and our relation to God's creatures there is priority for the former, but not priority in time. It is not: First I pray and then I serve. Rather it is: First in my personal life is my life of love with God my Father and Jesus Christ my Brother; and having experienced this, I then communicate this good news." He adds finally that this life in and with Christ is essential to sustain

us whenever our apostolate is not immediately rewarding or enriching. For L. the root of the excesses of the activists of the 60s was that they sought personal fulfillment that could not be had in their work, failing to rely for fulfillment on life in Christ and his cross.

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William G. Downing, S.J., of the Wisconsin Province, but working in Chicago.

Writing out of a lifetime of dedication to the social apostolate, Downing finds very much to commend in the Connolly-Land exchange as well as in the article that followed, Kammer's "Burn-Out." Like the preceding letters, D.'s is a highly personal account--once again forcing us to regret that space does not permit publishing the letters in full. We can take the points he offers in order because they follow the order of the articles in *Studies*.

1. *The facts of burn-out.* D. agrees totally with Kammer. "So true for us activists and even for many educators for social justice. . . . We understand what he means by anger, questionable authenticity, different lifestyles, lack of support, alienations, and failure."

2. *Causes: Lack of Faith.* "I think that the most important single contribution of the articles was the emphasis on the real link between faith and justice. . . . The writers point out the widespread lack of true understanding of incarnational theology. 'How is what you do priestly?' is the question I am most asked. So it's encouraging that *Studies* devotes two issues to the so-called 'secular-worldly-profane-pragmatists.'"

3. *Causes: Psychological Resistance and Lack of Implementation.* On this D. accepts Land's analysis of causes and answers.

4. *Causes: Overemphasis on Poverty but Underemphasis on Structures and Other Problems.* While the authors of the *Studies* articles legitimately stress the question of poverty, D. believes that many readers will be lured into believing that poverty is the only question of justice. Moreover, Connolly and Land gave inadequate attention to the structural aspect of the problem. "Our cities will become even poorer if we continue to neglect our ethnics and the middle class and the many other problems of powerlessness caused by our social structures." D. adds, "GC 32 speaks not only of

the poor but of the powerless and of unjust structures."

Turning from causes to solutions, D. gives two:

5. *Social Education.* Downing believes that the *Studies* articles underemphasize social education in the training of priests and lay people. "I believe that this one basic solution would alleviate many of the problems pointed out in these articles." He recounts his experience in the early 30s of working creatively with such education for justice. And today? "It is a well-known fact that most educational institutions and parishes are not interested in neighborhood problems around their institutions until the neighborhood decays. . . ." This leads D. to inquire, "How can our leaders--bishops, provincials, superiors, school administrators, and writers--implement social action if they have never been taught the meaning of social justice?"

D. then adds that "the Wisconsin Province has sponsored a province-wide program on justice: Education for Social Concern. We hope it will help. But even if it is successful, more social education will still be needed."

6. *Solutions: Implementation.* "All of us must be taught more about incarnational or liberation theology, social justice, the beatitudes, the horizontal love of Christ, and especially the unjust social structures which must be changed. And this education is for all Jesuits, for the social apostolate is for all of us." On implementation Downing adds that he knows of "several postulata for GC 32 which dealt with these problems but were rejected."

*Conclusion.* Drawing upon experience of "burn-out," D. comes to a troubling conclusion. "I believe that the 'burn-out' problems which confront many Jesuits . . . call for heroic sanctity. Since most of us do not have that, we will suffer many degrees of serious burns." To that he adds, "I also believe that, until there is adequate social education of all Jesuits and especially our leaders and a resulting implementation, Jesuits should not be encouraged to engage in the social apostolate. Some of these burns cannot be healed. Some burns cause death."



Edward Bobinchak, S.J., of Rockhurst College, working in the Kansas City Organization Project, 1915 E. 55th, Kansas City, Missouri 64130, and B. Harold Dessel, S.J., St. Francis Mission, St. Francis, South Dakota 57572.

These presented both a joint letter and separate letters. We take first their joint letter, adding in, as needed, subsequently from their separate letters.

Though the majority of Jesuits are successfully employed in ongoing apostolates and experience these as fulfilling the *magis*, a "growing number discover themselves as 'unemployables' in their present apostolates and seek the *magis* in another ministry." (In his separate letter Bobinchak maintains that the Connolly-Land exchange takes no account of the 'unemployables,' and that therefore their discussion of spirituality is irrelevant for a group who will discover a cause of passion only in ministries other than those in which they are presently employed.)

Speaking jointly the authors say that the 'unemployables' are drifting but searching for new ministries which respond to the 32nd General Congregation's linking of faith and justice as inseparables. They test the existence of such in our various existing apostolates.

1. *In Parishes.* Some Jesuits here encounter restrictions from parish structures and expectations in their effort to preach the gospel of liberation. The fundamental problem is a merger of gospel language with unconverted cultural values and traditional superstitions which result in preserving the status quo rather than in liberation from oppressive values and structures. Delving deeper one discovers at work our cult of individualism which privatizes spirituality and results in a pastoral activity in service of individualism, consumerism, and the American way of life.

2. *In Educational Institutions.* Operative here are societal forces such as accrediting agencies, government regulations, the state of the American economy, job opportunities, ideas of benefactors. The result is the coercion of our schools to support the American mythology of individual superiority, competition, and private gain together with the bias of white-male-middle class. Many Jesuits resist filling slots in such institutions. Where Jesuits do work in such schools, many of them insist that their efforts should be devoted toward creating a critical sensitivity in students,

aimed ultimately at creating a more just society.

Is such insistence enough? "We feel that such insistence by itself is not enough." Their reason is twofold: (1) "While it is possible that our high schools and universities *can* be vehicles for justice within the U. S. society . . . , we believe that the *way* . . . is not yet evident"; and (2) "it is unlikely to become evident so long as we seek to answer from within our institutions."

3. *Traditional Ministries for the Poor and Powerless.* Even here, work for the sick, the imprisoned, the aged, the alcoholic is a very traditional type of chaplaincy. The 'restless' think that this one-on-one ministry does nothing to eliminate causes, scarcely impacts values and structures which often determine who suffers what.

4. *Newer Ministries of Spirituality.* Here too the 'restless' are engaged. They feel that individual conversions in succession do not meet the need of societal conversion. They do not find in this spirituality the spirituality of the 32nd General Congregation's Decree 4, which in faith sees human beings as sons and daughters of God and as brothers and sisters called to justice among themselves. "These new ministries . . . concentrate on an interior 'me and Jesus' without practical consequences in the Body of Christ, especially for the poor and powerless." The authors lay down one further challenge: "Societal conversion is *not* just the accumulation of many individual conversions, but that change of societal values, presuppositions, and structures which is essential to the *possibility* of individual conversion in an authentic and enduring sense."

5. *Signs of Hope.* The authors discover several signs of hope. First, the growing acceptance of the 32nd General Congregation's vision of the inseparability of faith and justice. Next, the Jesuits in the Third World who give practical example of how to preach the word as conscientization and call to the awareness described above. These Third World Jesuits also "demonstrate the harsh reality of the distance of the Church from the poor and the fact that the Church must *learn* the demands of justice, not from the powerful and educated, but from the poor and powerless." The authors add that our Third World brothers teach us to judge all ministries from this norm of liberation (rather than to require of liberation ministries

that they conform to norms developed in apostolates serving the affluent and comfortable). This liberation and liberating norm frees one from serving the needs of institutions so that one can serve the needs of people. It creates new options instead of keeping us fixed in socially acceptable functions. It makes more of conscientization than reconciliation.

Finally, there are hopeful signs among U. S. Jesuits. The fact of restlessness is a challenge to one's identification with any particular existing institution or apostolate and even to its own continuation. There is also growing concern that communities not be centers of uncritical activism and of complete autonomy based on quantitative norms of success, but that communities rather be measured qualitatively and on the basis of shared faith, shared experience, and shared dreams.

And returning to apostolates within our schools, parishes, and the like, they observe that "there are creative and courageous new projects for justice." They only hope that more will be done within these apostolates to put us more on the side of the poor and the oppressed. But in final analysis the authors see these measures as "intermediary steps."

Intermediary to what? To "new forms of ministry for justice." First because, without the learning about justice that comes only from direct contact with the poor and the oppressed (and not from the rich, the powerful, the educated), the intermediary steps themselves may be in jeopardy. Second, quite in themselves and apart from their educative value, these new ministries are ones without which we will not fully address the problem of injustice.

6. *Call to Organize.* After these observations on the requirement for meeting fully Decree 4 on Our Mission Today, the authors call on those engaged in such new ministries to communicate better among themselves in order to break down present isolation and the sense of being on the fringe of our communities, "overshadowed by larger, staff-consuming, energy-consuming, and money-consuming apostolates." They append a statement of norms for such new ministries.

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Harold Dessel's Separate Letter. This has been published in *Studies* for November, 1977, pages 277-279.

However, for the sake of integrating it into the preceding joint letter, we reproduce it here in barest bones. Dessel writes that failure to respond to the Decree 4 on Our Mission Today stems from lack of conversion at one or all of four levels: feelings, ideas, action, witness springing from belief.

1. *Feeling*. We lack passion for justice--or for anything. The reason is we were taught to cut off emotions of anger, compassion, sorrow, and despair which may lead to hope. Emotions are integral to spirituality.

2. *Ideas*. We operate out of unbiblical dualism about matter-spirit, individual-social, values-structures, church-world, religion-politics. This dualism militates against a ministry of faith and justice which accords with the gospel unity of love of God and of neighbor.

3. *Action*. We overanalyze and theorize and fail to move into action or living with and listening to the least among us--the needy, the sufferers. From such action, living, and listening would come passion to change things.

4. *Witness Springing from Belief*. We need "to be converted back to the God of Israel and to Jesus, the ultimate meaning of existence, who showed the Holy Mystery to be One who heard the cries of people and who had table-fellowship with the poor and the outcast and held our lifetimes to be evaluated in terms of how we respond to those least and most in need. . . ."

This conversion does not proceed "from the inside out" nor from "the outside in," but in interrelationship of myself with others. These others--the poor, the violated, the sufferers of injustice--in D.'s experience have been the sources of the above fourfold conversion.

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Edward Bobinchak's Separate Letter (and Lengthy Appendix)

Bobinchak here develops his ideas of a spirituality for social apostolates. He returns to the idea expressed in his joint letter with Dessel that passion for the poor and victims of injustice is born only of "the perception of new and exciting ministries." People engaged in

them experience a spirituality which, unfortunately, they mistrust because it is dismissed by theoreticians as "lacking academic precision or as falling into reductionism."

B. next delineates the "spirit-filled" spirituality of social apostles. It is founded on the fact that Christianity is not a theological statement but a way of life. It is the experience of loving Jesus of Nazareth and living according to his charism. This position does not negate the validity of theological interpretation. But it does require that orthodoxy prove itself by orthopraxis, that is, by judgment of the fruits of such ideas in action. Yes or no, do insights lead to action consistent with the actions of Jesus?

B. next offers his statement of the core gospel message as a basis for a spirituality for justice. To live by the charism of Jesus means accepting his Good News. This Good News is that God is a loving and forgiving Father and we are his daughters and sons (faith dimension) and destined to live as brothers and sisters (justice dimension). Where all accept this status the Kingdom exists, a kingdom of brotherhood and sisterhood, a kingdom of justice. It is a kingdom in present reality because we are already such, and a kingdom of the future because we are that only inchoately. Refusal to act justly is a sign that the status of brotherhood and sisterhood has not been accepted.

Jesus' charism does not impel him to elaborate a doctrine of the Kingdom. He simply repeats it in simple formula and lives it. He is brother to and travels with many different types. He removes their sufferings, rejects the elements in religion and politics which impede him from acting as brother to them. And he rejects these, not on the basis of divine illumination, but on the simple fact of suffering seen and responded to. (The Spirit is thus revealed as source of his charism.)

Accordingly a Spirit-filled orthopraxis requires that we confront suffering, seeking to remove it--and this because human dignity requires it. "It is Jesus' action for others that we identify as 'salvation.'" Christians must empty themselves of self as Christ did, going to his cross not to satisfy a vengeful God but because the kenosis of the cross belonged to his mission. "Ultimately Jesus was crucified because he

refused to compromise with the forces which rejected . . . his Kingdom." He died because of fidelity to his message-in-action. We are called to the same "self-emptying statement of concern for others." We are called to brotherhood and sisterhood which, because it repeats Jesus' charism, requires the same message-in-action, accompanied by the same preparedness to accept suffering and oppression in order to end the suffering and oppression of our sisters and brothers.

And, as with Jesus, there must be unambiguous resistance to unjust structures, resistance based on "the hope in ultimate victory of the Kingdom even if it presently leads to ostracization, to suffering and death in one's individual or in our institutional identity."

This brings us to the need of conversion, to live humanly even when surrounded by death. Conversion will mean accepting failure--"in the knowledge that this accepted for the Kingdom is the only way to live humanly." B. adds: "Conversion then is living the faith that the Kingdom of Jesus is pure gift already given. It is knowing that no one action will bring the Kingdom to fulfillment. Nor is there any guarantee of reward or result other than the Kingdom itself."

The author concludes: (1) "This requires building community among people working together for greater justice in place of building communities of clear and precise conceptual statement." (2) The inseparability of God's sons and daughters (faith) from their status as brothers and sisters (justice) is not politically neutral. (3) The primary moral norm is the existence of suffering which requires that our actions impact this. If our actions increase suffering and oppression they reduce the Kingdom. If they reduce suffering and oppression they increase the Kingdom. (4) There can be no compromise with unjust structures, nor facile reconciliation which ignores injustice and inequalities. (5) There is no blueprint of the Kingdom, no social program, only response to suffering to which we respond despite the complexities of the situation and despite "theoretical ambiguities." Despite lack of total clarity or of ultimate solution, we act. (6) Success and efficacy are not primary concerns. The cross was not a politically expedient response to injustice.

Finally "ultimate victory, resurrection, and salvation are not

individual accomplishments, but gifts guaranteed to all of humanity as it enters into the Kingdom of justice, . . . into the communal victory when all live the gospel proclamation of sonship and daughterhood. . . ."

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#### A Group of Shorter Letters

The previous four letters sought to give comprehensive statements about spirituality. The next three treat only one or other theme and can therefore be treated more briefly.

A. J. Adams, S.J., Holy Trinity Rectory, 235 North Convent Street, Trinidad, Colorado 81082.

A. says that the Connolly-Land exchange gave a good account of reasons why Jesuits are slow to respond to the decree on Our Mission Today. But they miss one point. This is that "the germination and growth of an idea is a very slow process. . . ." Christ's own effort to change the mind of his disciples required, not surveys or theological arguments, but the infusion of the Holy Spirit. Jesuits need education to justice. This must move us against "past training which emphasized the intellectual versus the emotional, with some Jansenism. This withered the hearts of some to the point of fearing love itself. Even our group retreats as well as individual self-directed (inbreeding) retreats . . . fostered an individualistic bent. . . ."

Reeducation must move us with Vatican II "away from rugged individualism with its 'me and God' vertical religion to a sense of community, of the People of God, of the Body of Christ working in the world, with the world, for the salvation of the world." This is also the heart of our Decree 4. To plant this new idea in our individualistic soil will require still more time. To encourage us, A. draws upon his association with the social movement from the early 1930s to show "that we've come a long way." There has been movement away from the skepticism--what's social involvement got to do with salvation? There has also been movement away from exclusive reliance on direct action to recognition that attack must also be on unjust structures--and this not just by letters to congressmen.

Despite his call for reeducation, A. ends by recognizing that many will understandably be slow to change. "Let us thank God we have men who hang tenaciously to the principles they learned and by which they have accomplished so much for the Kingdom of Christ." He sees in these a yardstick by which to measure the "true effectiveness of new ideas." Finally, "while I welcome GC 32, I can understand and appreciate the fears of some regarding Decree 4."

Charles A. Robinson, S.J., also from Holy Trinity Rectory, Trinidad.

Robinson offers a few "random comments." First, Ignatius, like Teresa, remains a valid model of mysticism in action. Next, Decree 4 does not demand the closing of our schools except "where they cease to be Catholic." Nor is it proper that our men run for public office. We should, like the Methodists, encourage and train the laity to enter into political life.

Reflecting back over his sixty-five years in the Society and the movements and men he has known, he adds that while the apostolate of the Christian Life Communities is good, "the sodality when conducted correctly was better." He cites Father William Markoe's sodality for professors at Marquette University. While living with the poor stands as an approved objective, the implicit objective of living in small communities where the poor live has had mixed results. "So many left from them that Father General insisted that each small house must have a superior!"

R. lists with comment several possible social works and ministries. He notes that Vatican II calls one to giving, not just from superfluities, but even from one's stock of capital or land. Finally he states his belief in the infallibility of the Magisterium.

Clifford Carroll, S.J., Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington 99258.

Carroll, too, provides running comments on the Connolly-Land exchange. First he disagrees with Land that Decree 4 is clear. He finds it vague. He adds that if it seems to imply the closing of our schools, "this is not the understanding of the people in the schools." Similarly if the decree is interpreted to mean that Jesuits and the Church ought to be in the



political arena "making prudential decisions," then "count me out." Churchmen have "neither that expertise . . . nor mission." This leads him to the "pope's call to political action." On this he asks for clarification, for C. feels that "people are putting ideas there that I don't think he would espouse." His reference here is to politicking by priests, churchmen descending to concrete political proposals, drives in support of individuals like Chavez--in all of which, A. feels, there is a too easy espousal of one side, often an ignoring even of simple justice for the other.

But Carroll adds that "there is so much good will on both sides--the avant-gardists and the more traditional--to be taken advantage of . . . that a landslide would take place if this good will could be enlightened and moved."

The problem of our poverty is C.'s next concern. Our poverty "must be a realistic poverty we can live with." Nevertheless, he finds hard to reconcile with "poverty as the firm wall of religion" the permission of a peculium and present practice of private budgeting. Speaking more generally as "a man who firmly believes in the inseparability of faith and justice, in the call to justice and to a simpler lifestyle," C. questions our practices, again especially on lifestyle, and would like to see more firmness on the part of superiors. "The ranks are listening to different drums. Corporately we are not getting clear sounds."

Going on specifically to Church leaders, C. maintains that "the Church should stay with principles, for example, the right to join a union. But when the Church says you must choose Chavez, I go berserk. When the Church undertakes to destroy me because I don't take her prudential judgment on 'sinful' lettuce, she is alienating me and exercising a power she does not and should not possess. It is the inquisition reincarnate. . . ."

William A. Allen, S.J., St. Stanislaus Church, 633 5th Avenue, Lewiston, Idaho 83501.

Allen believes that the reason why many Jesuits are not responding to the decree on Faith and Justice is that they do not know how to implement it. They have no clear norms for judging what the poor can rightly claim from the wealthy in the absence of positive law. Moreover, what the poor

can get through charity is too much subject to the vagaries of benefactors.

A. argues that, if we admit that all law is a measure of order and that man by his natural powers can discern order and formulate the laws that measure it, then one can question why it is necessary to try to resolve mass poverty by appeal to charity. Can we not discern a hierarchical order of creatures in the world and formulate laws to preserve it? All rational people are aware that man is the most perfect of corporeal beings and that his preservation in existence requires that his basic needs be satisfied. By applying this empirical approach to discovery of natural law, we take man as we see him, man as contributing more to the essential perfection of this world than all beings of a lesser species. And since his continued existence depends upon these lesser creatures they should be made available when need for them arises.

The importance of this approach for discovering law is that it avoids evaluating people by how others feel about them and using arbitrary criteria to determine which people need help desperately. Both theologian and moralist start with postulates accepted as true either from divine revelation or from how they believe man is inclined to act by a law embedded in his nature. From these postulates they try to deduce what people should do or avoid doing to accomplish a desired objective. Whether anyone will accept the behavioral patterns these teachers propose will depend upon a prior acceptance of their major premises. A. maintains that he is "not saying that concerned theologians like Fathers Land and Connolly are wrong in appealing to conscience and the social encyclicals to obtain a positive response from Jesuits and sympathetic Christians." What he does say is that secular society will pay little attention to their cry for social justice unless they can provide hard scientific evidence that what they claim is a matter of justice. Secular society identifies justice with law, and the only way to convince society of strict obligation to assist the poor is to indicate a clearly discernible natural law binding in social justice.

The ethician, A. continues, does not start with presuppositions or generally accepted postulates. He is merely a rational person who recognizes that all law is radically founded in order whether it measures

harmony existing in nature or relationships compatible with basic justice. He is aware that a man is not essentially changed by what he believes or by what he has done. Characteristics such as race, color, nationality, political, religious, and moral beliefs, or how a person acts, are all accidental differences. The ethicist recognizes that keeping body and soul together is infinitely more important than preserving or eliminating these accidentals. Consequently, his major concern is to preserve human life and even increase it so long as it is not detrimental to others.

Every person is a human being, and by virtue of humanity should be preserved in existence as long as is reasonably possible. The preservation of the more perfect beings through the sacrifice of less perfect ones is a law all earthly creatures conform to, and clearly dictates to rational persons that they must be provident for others as well as for themselves. If some selfish people are indifferent to needs, it is not because they are ignorant of this order, but because they choose not to apply its measure. Since this law can be substantiated by the overall order seen in nature as extended by humans to their own species, it can appropriately be called the natural law. Preservation of life for the millions of poor cannot be accomplished unless material or financial assistance is forthcoming from possessors of surplus wealth. A. thereupon argues that "since such wealth contributes only to the possessors' accidental perfection, yet can be converted into need-commodities to sustain life or essential perfection for the poor, natural law demands that adequate goods and services be made available to the indigent poor before anyone may accumulate luxuries."

In the light of this natural law, one can easily specify what a person has a *human right* to by discovering what is wanting to physical, intellectual, or psychological well-being. To the extent that food, for example, is wanting to the full physical perfection of a poor person and he lacks the means for purchasing it, "we can consider him unlawfully disordered and blame society as a whole for his privation."

Rights to goods and services other than those satisfying basic needs ought to be classified as *acquired* (through their own efforts or those of a benefactor). These must be subordinated to human rights simply because

the preservation of the species is the foremost objective of the natural law and its positive precepts cannot be set aside for any lesser good.

Charity, A. says, cannot substitute for social justice. Charity is based on the belief that the donor lawfully claims all his after-tax surplus, and therefore gives as he chooses of what is his to needy people; that, after it is offered, the recipients acquire a right to the donation by humbly accepting it. In the light of the natural law, a needy person's right to assistance from a potential benefactor arises automatically by the privation from which he suffers; and the obligation correlative to his human right falls on all the affluent to correct it as a strict obligation in social justice. Even if a rich man donated all his surplus wealth to his favorite mission, his obligation in social justice would not be satisfied, simply because this obligation extends to all deprived people and not only to a select few.

Social obligations demanded by the positive precepts of the natural law cannot be fulfilled adequately or equitably without a world government. All men can become aware of social disorder when any person, through no fault of his own, is suffering from want in a world of plenty. This awareness attests to the fact that the natural law is promulgated through an order rational man can see and experience. But general awareness is not enough. The law must be applied universally to ensure that no one suffers unnecessarily and that the debt of supplying for human needs is equitably shared by all the affluent. Only a world government can accomplish this task. The sole purpose of this government would be to implement the natural law, or to protect human life from the selfish who would not give assistance to the helpless poor and sick, or from criminals, including the heads of national governments, who do not respect all human life.

Allen says that he sees "the implementation of the decree of the 32nd General Congregation almost exclusively in terms of social justice as spelled out by the natural law, rather than in terms of faith in a theological or moral context." Yet he holds "that such faith is a powerful motivating force to get people to respect the human dignity of all men, and for persuading them to establish a world government, the necessary instrument for ensuring that every person's human dignity will be respected."

A. proposes, first, that all Jesuits should discover the natural law empirically as source of human rights and as imposing correlative social obligations; second, that all Jesuits should work for the creation of a world government that will enforce the positive precepts of the natural law by ensuring that the basic needs of all are satisfied, and will also enforce the negative precepts of the law by controlling the weapons of mass human destruction.

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