

STUDIES

in the Spirituality of Jesuits



**Compass and Catalyst:
An Essay on the Ministry of Administration**
by
Charles J. Beirne, S.J.

BOSTON COLLEGE

MAY 01 1986

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

Vol. XVIII

March, 1986

No. 2

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THE AMERICAN ASSISTANCY SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

consists of a group of Jesuits from various provinces who are listed below. The members were appointed by the Fathers Provincial of the United States.

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 to 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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COMPASS AND CATALYST:

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by

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Introduction

A legendary province prefect of colleges and universities, upon hearing that the provincial had appointed one of his deans a seminary rector, remarked: "Why did they go and do that? It's hard to find a good dean, but any damn fool can be a rector!" Sometimes, when the "patres graviores" gather around the coffee table, they can set up a gauntlet that scares off anyone foolish enough to consider any administration post, either as a religious superior or head of apostolate. Despite that risk, however, we have all seen some tattered hats willing to fly into any available ring. Is administration a haven for battered masochists, an ego trip, an onus to be endured with long-suffering, or an opportunity for ministry?

For well over a decade in high school and college posts, I have found administration creative and fulfilling, though sometimes a costly ministry. In this essay I have combined my own reflections and experiences with those of colleagues from many times and places. I hope that others might not shy away from this particular call to ministry if it should enter their lives, and that the members of their communities might help them minister effectively. The essay addresses Jesuit administrators and nonadministrators alike; we are all in this together. The administrators whom I have in mind primarily are those at senior levels in educational institutions, but pastors, department heads, and even religious superiors might detect resonances with their own ministries.

I would suggest as scriptural models for administrators John the Baptist, the prophet who prepares the way of the Lord, or Peter, the spontaneous ex-fisherman trying to help advance the Kingdom, but who rather consistently puts his foot in his mouth. These images and many

more do fit the role at times. Administrators, like the models in the scriptures, have to admit personal weaknesses and strengths, reflect on experience, and keep on discovering the nature of their calling by the Lord. Like other forms of ministry, administration implies service to the community, a way of responding to a call of the Lord. Through institutions like high schools and universities, one serves within the Church but for the world. The specific ministry of the administrator encompasses the apostolate as a whole. The community missions the administrator to help clarify its goals and objectives, remember its history and charism, stimulate new formulations of its mission, and serve as a catalyst who encourages all members to give the institution continuous life. The administrator chips away at the barnacles without digging into the hull. But first, what goes on inside the one who ministers?

I. A GLIMPSE AT THE INTERIOR JOURNEY

Ministering to God's people as leaders in the community, administrators of institutions require an ever deepening relationship between themselves and the Lord. Although slavish imitation of characteristics and style more appropriate to the historical era of Jesus would detract from authentic ministry in today's administrators, their everyday actions, their administrative style, and the atmosphere they create should mirror the patient, respectful, and loving God on whose behalf they administer.

A. A Glance at the Gospel

The cool reception Jesus got from the crowds led him to concentrate his efforts on the Twelve. Behind the scenes he patiently taught and retaught his message of love and generosity even though they still squabbled over who would rule in the Kingdom. He gently washed their feet and strongly denounced hypocrisy. He even resisted the temptation to summon angels and transform rocks into bread for self-aggrandizement rather than effective ministry. He removed obstacles so that others might live more abundantly: calming storms, seeing through hypocrisy, and curing paralysis. He shared meals with his disciples and multiplied loaves and fishes for others. The essential requirements for genuine ministry he

taught through the beatitudes and the Last Supper discourses. He valued deep personal relationships such as his friendships with Lazarus, Martha, Mary, and John. The faith of the centurion and the generosity of the widow earned his praise and gratitude. He knew how to listen and respond, to encourage and to challenge. After his rising from the dead, his disciples, inspired by the Spirit, abandoned their craving for the first places at table and shared that table with others.

B. In The Context of the Spiritual Exercises

Through his personal example of active ministry complemented by retreating to the garden to pray, he sketched out the essential of the ministry to lead his people. He even tried to push away the cup and then acquiesced in his father's will.

In the *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius reroutes Jesuit administrators back to Jesus' example. The First Principle and Foundation reminds them why they administer at all--as helpers of the Creator who invites persons to share his divine life inside time and beyond it. Conscious of their own sinfulness and unafraid to immerse themselves in that consciousness, they can empathize with the weakness of others and help themselves and others to realize their best selves.

As they enter the Second Week of the Exercises, they face decision making that can further the kingdom of God rather than their own. They contemplate Christ actively engaged in his ministry, and beg for the grace to accept misunderstandings and humiliations that may come because they provoked such reactions by some insensitive response to another person, or by their just being visible targets for someone's dissatisfaction.

In the Third Week they see the Lord along with the consequences of his decisions and tempted to sidestep the tough ones. When they recall that their own sins have been washed away by a merciful Lord who cares, they find themselves a bit more willing to suffer with the Lord as they attempt to exercise his ministry. Such sharing in the Lord's suffering does not make them "martyrs" deserving sympathy and admiration, but this aspect of ministry does cut to the bone at times, even when they do not provoke it.

In the Third Week, administrators try to integrate their very

weaknesses into their ministry. They admit their need to keep emptying out selfishness and pride, and then they struggle to persevere in this rooting out. They experience their personal failings as these whittle away at the good attempted. Disillusioned by the gap that yawns between their goals and their current state, they fall back on the Lord and let him work on them in and through the problem at hand. They strive to leave space for the Lord to suggest new ways to further his kingdom.

A provincial wisely cautioned a young administrator who had gotten off to a good start: "Wait until you make your first mistake. See how you react. Then you will know what progress you are making." Can administrators ask for forgiveness? Can they pick up the pieces after a vision clouds over? At moments like these, the administrator can relate to the Lord in the Third Week by grieving at the effects of sin in himself and by recommitting himself to the task which he accepted originally in the Kingdom meditation.

In the Fourth Week they share the Lord's sense of satisfaction and joy especially when their own serving as administrators has helped this sharing of life to flow more abundantly. This constant linking of the administrator with the Lord who has called them to minister to his people increases the odds that their service will redound to his greater glory more than their own. Whether these experiences of prayer have penetrated their very being will become clear when others examine their offhand comments and their subordinate clauses. Will prayerful reflection help them weigh a word before they say it so that it fosters ministry rather than undermines it?

Whether for good or not, the personality and style of a high school or college administrator affects the daily life of the institution: for example, the ups and downs of moods, the types of personnel appointments, how often one is seen around the school, and the wisdom of one's real priorities. The day-to-day mode of operation provides a barometer for the staff and even a target for the cartoonist in the school newspaper. This does not necessarily mean that the administrator encourages personality cult or sycophancy. The nature of the role as visible representative of the institution, and the influence exercised on the lives of colleagues and staff require, however, the administrator's sensitivity to his impact on others and a determination that this personal style and

approach will foster individual growth in colleagues and the implementation of the school's mission rather than hinder these goals.

C. A Habit of Reflection

The potential ambiguity in the administrator's role demands a habit of reflection that alerts one to both danger signals and creative opportunities for ministry. Prayerful reflection away from the office can bring greater sensitivity within the office: for example, during a conversation in which he experiences anguish at the problem of the speaker or boredom with a situation from which mind and spirit try to escape elsewhere. A ten-minute conversation with a teacher or student might occupy just one line in an administrator's appointment book. But these many single lines represent individuals. The other person may have centered the whole day on this conversation. How can one keep that perspective? When I have failed to do so, a cursory examination usually reveals that I have not found enough time for those moments of reflection that remind me that my administrative role is a ministry and not an autonomous function that responds only to immediate circumstances. One has been called by the Lord Jesus to remove obstacles that keep others from growing or to create circumstances within which their growing becomes more likely. Even when one recaptures this perspective right in the middle of day-to-day encounters, longer times away with the Lord are essential to keep self and role from melting together.

This need for perspective points to another part of the administrator's interior journey: how free is he to respond to the needs of others rather than just to his own? The administrator struggles to distinguish between authentic exercise of authority and the need to control, to feel important, to have his own way. Efforts to root out these needs provoke useless frustration because participation in the human condition is permanent despite attempts to deny it. Ongoing reflection on his needs and weaknesses produces an alarm system to alert him when the balance has tilted dangerously. The struggle never ends, though, because alarm systems can be disconnected or wear away. Administrators surrounded by adulators can be tempted to join in the chorus of praise for their real or imaginary new clothes.

The administrator has to have experienced enough success to feel good

about himself, and secure enough to take risks, but humble enough to consult regularly and really listen to feedback. Can I still laugh at the cartoon in the school newspaper? Can I suppress the desire to cry, "Off with their heads!?" Do I keep fighting for the freedom to distinguish my self and my role or do I need its few emoluments to preserve my sense of self? How long does it take me to get back my inner peacefulness after an 'incident'? These questions never cease popping up and they should not stop. If one has major personal issues which bubble near the surface but stay unresolved, then they will break through the surface under pressure. When energy resources burn up in the maintenance of personal defense systems, they might not be there when one tries to exercise the ministry of administration.

Harry Truman saw his desk as a place where bucks stopped, and on one occasion he advised that if one could not stand the heat, one should get out of the kitchen. The 'aloneness' of the ministry of administration scares persons from taking it on. We have to live with our decisions, an especially hard burden when we cannot divulge all the reasons for making some of them. I have had persons urge me to expel students or fire faculty members when I felt that these firebrands would have backed off from those tough decisions if they had 'enjoyed' the authority to implement them. Even when great care characterizes the implementation of tough decisions, some will term them thoughtless because they do not know how much prayer, consultation, and exploration of alternatives preceded the decisions.

D. The Administrator in Community

Living with tough decisions over the years, however, has not bothered me as much as those times when people related to me just as a role. I greeted one community member shortly after I arrived at a particular house. He grumbled an annoyed response until he realized I was the new headmaster of the school. Then I thought I was going to have to lift him off his knees once my 'exalted' position dawned on him. I preferred the spontaneity of the initial greeting. On another occasion a teacher greeted the announcement of a new president of the school with: "I don't know him but I know I won't like him!" Fortunately these incidents do not repeat themselves very often, but they occur with enough frequency that one can feel like a nonperson: receiving exaggerated deference or serving for target practice, a daily roller coaster.

The religious community in which the administrator lives can alleviate the 'aloneness' or reinforce it. At times, when either the administrator or others bring up business matters, the institution and its roles can leak into the community and prevent it from serving as an oasis, a source of renewal and expansion of perspective. Discussion of one's ministry forms a normal part of community interchange, but no one should let it permeate the dialogue in an exaggerated way. Administrators overly conscious of their authority and community members hung up on authority force the role and the person to melt into each other. The word "role" need not imply something artificial, a pose required to maintain authority. It describes just one dimension of the life of a person whose ministry incorporates administration.

Friendships within the community deepen the personal and religious growth of the administrator. Poking fun at him keeps perspective as does a word of encouragement at the end of a trying day. Some community members feel uneasy with such friendships because others might see them as "insiders," potential powers to be reckoned with. In that perspective, the administrator might be seen as treating some community members as a "kitchen cabinet" that wields influence that should come from the faculty as a whole, both Jesuit and lay. The value of such friendships, however, far outweighs the risks.

An enlivening community lures the administrator away from "workaholism" because it reminds him that others share the ministry. Sometimes the press of responsibilities forces a return to the office after hours or trips out of town, but the administrator should be able to look forward to returning home to the community. Creating such an atmosphere requires sensitivity and caring on the part of all.

Staying alive in all senses of the word is essential to this ministry and constitutes part of the interior journey. Jogging and tennis relaxation and change perspective. For me, educational consultation in Central America and helping with Spanish-speaking liturgy in South Bronx parishes complemented the ministry of the office. I enjoy a good concert and I love to teach history. Effective ministry requires that the various threads of one's life weave together like a tapestry--friends and ideas, crises and oases, successes and failures.

II. SOME SIGNS OF THE CALLING TO THIS MINISTRY

The ministry of administration emerges gradually from a Jesuit's own community when others notice his leadership qualities, especially if he makes no effort to attract their attention. Sometimes the solemn anointing as manuductor (head novice) sets a young Jesuit apart right from the beginning, but the community has a way of ferreting out candidates even when they have previously escaped notice. A timely insight at a meeting or a clear formulation of the group's consensus suggests a good listener, a person whose insights resonate with the goals of a community or an institution. Members of a community grow to trust the instinctive reactions of a leader especially when they notice that he neither follows these instincts blindly nor ignores them.

The qualities Ignatius sought in the superior general of the order suggest analogous ones in an administrator. He must be "closely united with God and intimate with Him in prayer and all his actions. . . ." (*Constitutions*, [723]). Administrative style should "mingle rectitude and necessary severity with kindness and gentleness. . ." ([727]). Perhaps "forthrightness and courage of convictions" could replace "severity". Ignatius wanted the general to show "magnanimity and fortitude of soul . . . to bear the weaknesses of many, to initiate great undertakings in the service of God our Lord, and to persevere in them with constancy. . ." ([728]). The leader should enjoy "reputation, high esteem, and whatever else aids toward prestige. . ." ([733]). He should show "good judgment accompanied by sound learning" ([735]).

All of these characteristics presuppose, however, that the individual leaders "neither desire nor . . . seek honor rather than dishonor" (*Spiritual Exercises*, [66]). He should at least have the desire "to imitate and be in reality more like Christ our Lord, . . . desire and choose poverty with Christ poor, rather than riches; insults with Christ loaded with them, rather than honors; . . . desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in the world" ([167]).

Although humiliations do not ordinarily enhance the leadership potential of an administrator, the heroic admission of mistakes has, on occasion, bolstered the credibility of the leader because it showed God's

grace and mercy transforming individual weakness. Personal esteem for the administrator can serve the institution or it can merely aggrandize the incumbent. Ignatius saw prestige and honor as creatures whose usefulness depended on their consistency with the objectives. Although the leader should not provoke insults, how he reacts to them can signal the authenticity of his calling.

After persons have been tapped for administration, do they wear their authority lightly while exercising their responsibilities conscientiously? Do they enjoy what they are doing much of the time? Does the role fit? The prestige attached to most administrative posts usually wears thin early on, but the role must keep invigorating incumbents or else the fit between the person and the job breaks apart. He has to experience the challenge more as an adventure than a burden even when responsibility weighs heavily. In this ministry one should not take oneself too seriously because there are always enough other people who feel they have to. When besieged by a flock of persons anxious to kiss his ring, Cardinal Cushing supposedly tossed the ring to the crowd and told them to pass it around and kiss it if they wished, just as long as they returned it before he left. I am not suggesting we treat our responsibilities lightly, but rather that we keep the dimension of service paramount and enjoy the chance to help others exercise their ministries.

The administrator experiences ministry even in the very doing of nitty-gritty tasks: laboring over a schedule that will bring student and teacher together at the same time and in the same room, or even "working the hall" during alumni gatherings to greet students of a previous era, to try to remind them of their debt of gratitude to the institution and inspire them to guarantee its continued existence. A chance conversation at one of these events might lead to more serious dialogue on a personal problem and a more commonly recognizable form of priestly ministry from the administrator. Fund raising is a major ministry even with the glad-handing it often entails. It is not the type usually featured on vocational posters but nonetheless authentic and significant. If the administrator sees schedules and handshakes as ministry, then he will thrive. At times he can scarcely muster another smile. But if he does, someone might see a glimpse of the Lord and the ministry will bear fruit. Hearing the confession of a penitent or visiting the sick appear more ministerial,

but creating an atmosphere or appealing for resources so that others might minister is itself ministry. Everyone likes to serve on the frontlines and see the fruits of one's labors, but the administrator ministers through roles of mediation more often than not. Personal kudos and newspaper recognition might shower down like confetti at gala events, but it is the teacher in the classroom who gets to interact with the beneficiary of a scholarship or earn a sabbatical to complete research.

Some Jesuits have been asked to forgo a life of scholarship for which they earned a doctorate and take up instead a deanship, a presidency, or a post as religious superior or province official. To mediate between the educators and the beneficiaries may not bring as much personal satisfaction on a day-to-day basis, but it can fulfill the minister and the ministry. These comments in no way imply that teachers never experience the tedium of the classroom--especially when bluebooks pile up. Every ministry guarantees highs and lows, but the administrative role of its very nature focuses on the mediate, the setting up of conditions and resources for ministry more than its immediate fruits. The administrator should seek to enhance the gifts of others by helping to make their ministry possible. A willingness to mediate the individual gifts of others is a sign of this calling, just as a tooting of one's own horn calls it into question.

For Ignatius, too, each person and his or her gifts held great importance. He danced for the downhearted novice; he built into the *Constitutions* a system by which community members could make representation or suggest alternatives to the superior's decisions if they felt additional information might affect the situation. The letters between Ignatius and Francis Xavier reveal a warm friendship undiminished by distance. For Ignatius no one could be just a line in an appointment book, but even he must have grown weary trying to neutralize ecclesiastical dignitaries who wanted to change the name of the Society or trying to placate kings who insisted he establish Jesuit schools in their kingdom. Princes and porters found him gracious and respectful, but he knew where he wanted the Society to go and what he wanted it to accomplish for the Church.

A final sign of calling in the ministry of administration is the personal growth of the minister: the integration of all strands of one's life. Designing new ways for students to participate more actively in

their own education can stretch the imagination to rethink perennial problems. The administrative role can bring one many new friends and contact with different cultures, the discovery of new strengths and weaknesses, and confidence in the exercise of responsibility even when concrete results might be rated mediocre. These forms of ministry stimulate personal growth which, in turn, stimulates creative ministry.

III. SOME WAYS TO EXERCISE THE MINISTRY OF ADMINISTRATION

Two images that help me organize my reflections on this ministry are the compass and the catalyst because they both achieve their goals by reaching beyond themselves. The compass points in a constant direction but does not interfere as we explore new paths. The catalyst makes possible those transformations that reveal powers in other elements. Both images limp a bit because they imply some indifference to the outcome of the interaction. I use them to stress the notion of instrumentality without denying the individuality and unique contribution of the minister.

A. The Compass

Since administrators minister to the community or institution as a whole, they articulate its mission in a manner faithful to the historical charism of the community yet responsive to the directives of trustees, staff, students, and alumni. The administrator creates new ways to actualize the vision, by monitoring the quality of the institution's survival and, when necessary, by correcting inconsistencies. Pulling together so many strands demands a sense of history, a vision that understands the mission of the institution, not in an antiquarian sense of just preserving the past for its own sake but in a freeing, dynamic sense that helps the institution respond to new needs. This monitoring of real progress requires those respites for reflection mentioned earlier so that continuity with the past will endure as the institution evolves.

Jesuit universities stretch across our nation where Catholics number a fourth of the population and command influential positions. Although special governance plans vary from one institution to another, they all hark back to over four centuries of schools that have stressed active learning for the changing of attitudes and societies. New immigrations

have forced the schools to redefine their missions because the preparation of leaders for today requires new forms of excellence and creativity. While trying to balance budgets and fill classrooms, Jesuit universities try to find ways to accept these new challenges. While all members of the institution assume an obligation to translate this vision into reality through their individual tasks, the major administrators attempt a comprehensive task--the overall picture.

Does the institution allocate resources according to its espoused priorities? Does the administrative style of its leadership team give an image of the collegiality and shared ministry called for by Church and Jesuit documents or does it appear paternalistic or authoritarian? The ministry of administration requires constant reflection to insure that the charism and mission of the institution are understood and practiced. The community rightly holds the administrator accountable both for regular reminders of its history and for fresh ideas to face new challenges.

No educational institution exists solely for its own sake, valuable though this be. At least in the long run its mission reaches out to the larger communities for which it shares responsibility. This polarity between a university's reasonable autonomy and its stretching beyond itself requires leadership that exercises the gifts described earlier. The leaders have to help the institution seize opportunities and foresee pitfalls and storm clouds.

Working with faculty and other staff members even more than with students directly provides perhaps the most difficult challenge for a dean or headmaster. Personal contact with the students and interaction with them in the office, the classroom, or the soccer field stimulate the administrators' sense of personal satisfaction and constantly remind them why the school exists in the first place. But when administrators encourage teachers to grow, and when they help them improve professionally, and when they reinforce the fine things teachers do so often in unsung ways, the multiplier effect can benefit the entire student body as a whole. Evaluation of the wise use of resources should begin with the administrator. A tour of the school for a potential benefactor does not bring the sense of satisfaction one gets from teaching a good class or spending some time with those students whose success every educator likes to share. But which action better illustrates effective ministry? Only the individual situation

can determine the appropriate response in each case, but it is an understandable temptation to consider direct contact with students the real ministry and sitting in on a class to help a teacher improve as less apostolic. By helping all to keep perspective, and by acting as compass, one ministers.

B. The Catalyst

Experienced administrators have to fight off the misconception that only if they do it themselves will it be done well. To minister to the institution requires administrators to minimize their own importance by preparing others to take responsibility for significant dimensions of the apostolate. For example, they should appoint administrative personnel who will take initiatives and even say "no" to the chief administrator or intervening dignitaries. Bringing additional creative energy into policy making and implementation enriches the institution even when it shifts some spotlight away from the chief administrators. Filling in the valleys and trimming down the hills to produce straight roads might not boost one's ego but may serve to strengthen the institution and bring its mission closer to fruition. So, one serves by cutting red tape, by spotting talented people to share the ministry, and by backing them when they take risks.

Stirring up stagnant waters, however, also requires various modes of ministry that can cost the administrator more anguish. When a teacher relies too heavily on yellowing notes and succumbs to "winging it," an administrator becomes a different kind of catalyst. At first one has to know the teacher and the teacher's history, needs, and strengths. Listening carefully to the teacher, the administrator will find occasions to suggest additional training or a sabbatical, or in the case of a brother Jesuit, will even start a process to help ease him toward a new form of ministry. This might require years of preparation, and the subject of one's ministry can react with anything but gratitude!

Some teachers say that they seldom received compliments from a supervisor sitting in on their classes. They rejoice when a visitor notices little techniques that they take for granted. Others complain that a supervisor has "some nerve" even hinting that they might need to consider refreshing their approach to the material. On those rare occasions when an administrator has to tell a colleague that he or she seems to be doing positive damage to the institution, he may be tempted to postpone such

confrontation even when he knows that many other approaches had been tried and found wanting. One administrator passes the problem on to the next one. As a result, later administrators feel reluctant to act because a teacher has tenure, or because someone has been in a particular position for a good number of years and considers criticism at this point impertinent. Hasty action at the first signs of trouble might solve the immediate problem but could cause many new ones and do an injustice to the person open to suggestions for improvement. To strike the balance requires prayer and reflection as described earlier in this essay. Nevertheless, the administrator needs the courage and freedom to be decisive when such action is appropriate.

Many administrators are tempted to say: "I have a school to run, let the religious superior or the therapist pick up the pieces." But they cannot just pass on the problem or ignore it if they wish to exercise the ministry of administration. The patient development of a renewal process that inspires trust and respect usually produces desired results, but its ministering exacts a toll of soul searching and motive weighing. In the long run it becomes ministry when one experiences the freedom to leave the process to the Lord after one has done as much as one can. The administrator never grows indifferent to personal success, but the more diminished its importance the more the ministry thrives.

In the post-Vatican II Church, lay persons have assumed more responsibility for the exercise of ministry. At first they filled the breach left by the vanishing religious, but in time they were recognized as enriching the vision itself through their own unique charisms. Seminaries hidden in the countryside have emptied out and passed to new owners; it is unlikely they will ever be repossessed, but our Church still struggles to come to grips with the implications of this shift. Through structures like the Colloquium on the Ministry of Teaching, Jesuit and other high schools have started to integrate the many dimensions of this ministry, but the Jesuit colleges and universities have not yet developed comparable vehicles. The administrator's ministry urges such development so that the institution as a whole and all the individuals who constitute it might exercise more effective ministries. They will thus use their many gifts to expand and implement the mission and the goals of the apostolate.

In this period of transition, Jesuit presence will rely much less on numbers and more on quality service that faithfully reflects the Ignatian

vision. Ignatius saw Jesuit life as one important way to live out the fruits of the *Spiritual Exercises*, but he also encouraged lay persons to perfect their lives in other ways. The Jesuit administrator exercises an important ministry by stimulating the creation of ways by which the gifts of others might infuse new life into this vision, and by encouraging the development of a lay spirituality that brings out hitherto hidden richness in the vision. Lay persons themselves will take the lead in developing new forms of Ignatian vision in the educational apostolate, but administrators can serve them as catalysts, sometimes by helping Jesuits to accept this vital collaboration and, at other times, by pointing out to lay persons some positive and negative characteristics engrained in Jesuits by long years of training. The dialogue itself will produce new opportunities for ministry and clarify the mission of the institution.

C. How Long Should the Administrator Stay?

An involuntary removal from office or a thrombosis could settle the question of tenure, but a more orderly course of action benefits both the ministry and the minister. Well into the second year of a post, when one feels increasingly comfortable in the role and grasps the overall picture, a realistic appraisal of one's own talents and the needs of the ministry should suggest an administrative agenda and a timetable for implementing it. Ongoing consultation with colleagues will fine tune or more drastically revise the agenda and the timetable. When the agenda shortens, one should determine whether new items should be added or whether another type of challenge would benefit both the administrator and the institution. Neither the settled-in fixture nor the bird ready for flight helps a ministry achieve its potential. St. Ignatius urged Jesuits to do what they were doing but also to look up and away at times. Somehow institutions survive and even thrive after the departure of the irreplaceable!

The challenge of administration has to be fun at least much of the time or else the tenure will be shortened, or fade in quality. Periodic feedback from colleagues, if administrators listen to it, will help determine whether to stay or move on. If dialogue breaks down, the role will deteriorate into just a job, not a ministry. The inevitable cycle of the school year will begin to bore one and familiarity and identification with the role will make disagreement appear as personal opposition. As

an escape from such boredom or "opposition," one might find himself doing more and more for fewer and fewer persons; but a price to be paid is that the intervals between the administrator's mini-burnouts will diminish.

Administrators who stay too long in one post begin to defend their earlier accomplishments, perhaps in fear that they will end with their own incumbency. The administrator's ministry as catalyst should produce more and more occasions when other team members take initiatives and run with the ball in new ways. John the Baptist rejoiced that the Lord increased even as he himself decreased. So too, the Lord's ministry, rather than the administrator's profile, must increase over time. If one's initiatives and ideas truly benefit the institution and guarantee the realization of its mission, they will last and even grow in forms not always foreseen when implemented originally. One must be content to advance the cause rather than become it.

After almost a decade in an administrative ministry, the incumbent might fear a change. Years away from one's scholarly profession might require a long sabbatical for catch-up. What about the personal relationships that have deepened during those years? Will they continue? Will they just switch over to the successor with little more for the former incumbent than a firm applause at alumni gatherings? Will the inevitable uprooting cause much anguish? These and similar thoughts can tempt the administrator to find reasons to stay put and look for a few more mountains to climb.

Quality relationships with close friends and the Lord, however, will help the administrator decide when he should accept a different challenge. The more distance between the self and the role, the more he will notice the signs of the Spirit. Keeping free for new ministry brings the administrator back to the First Week of the *Exercises* and the discernment of spirits. Since the community might call again for the exercise of this ministry of administration, the Jesuit should continue to remove any obstacles to effective ministry. The community should encourage this process.

A Final Note

Attempting the ministry of administration can appear to provoke the same fate endured by the scriptural ancestors, John the catalyst or Peter the compass. But more often than not it brings the joy of seeing one's talents used for purposes in which one believes. Impatience with the role of compass or catalyst can wear one down, but the conscious acceptance of these roles also seasons the incumbent. The ministry of administration should not beckon the ambitious nor scare off the fearful. It invites one to serve.

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Father David M. Stanley, S.J., is professor of New Testament Studies at Regis College, Toronto School of Theology. He has published seven books and numerous articles on Scriptural topics, including A Modern Scriptural Approach to the Spiritual Exercises, published in 1967 and still in demand in 1986.

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