

STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS



BOSTON COLLEGE

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**Where Do We Belong?
United States Jesuits
And Their Memberships**

George B. Wilson, S.J.

THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

The Seminar studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material which it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, laity, men and/or women. Hence the Studies, 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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**Studies
in the Spirituality of Jesuits
21/1
January 1989**

For Your Information . . .

The one-hundredth consecutive issue of *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* will be published in this present year, 1989.

The Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality has just completed twenty years of existence. During its start-up time, it took two years to produce the first five issues of *Studies*, but since then we have published five issues annually. The Seminar has plans to mark the occasion of the hundredth issue in a special way. At the heart of Jesuit life is prayer. So we hope to publish as part of the one-hundredth issue of *Studies* a selection of "classic Jesuit prayers" that come out of the four hundred and fifty years of the life and activities of the Society of Jesus.

Here is where we would like to have your help. Do you have an example or examples of such prayers which you think ought to be considered for inclusion in that special issue of *Studies*? (The prayer may be written by a Jesuit in English or in any other language. We shall see to a translation if necessary.) Please send it to me at the Institute of Jesuit Sources by June 1, 1989. Please also include as full a bibliographical reference as possible, for example, the full name of the author, the title, publisher and year and place of publication of the book or other source in which you found the prayer. If you do not have all the details, do not let that deter you. Send the prayer with as much information as you have. In advance, thank you for your help. With it we hope to make that one-hundredth issue of *Studies* appropriate to the occasion.

Of current interest to you, our readers, will be news of a recent and special book. The information came in a response to the May, 1988 issue of *Studies*, "Symbols, Devotions and Jesuits." Father John Vessels of the New Orleans Province, director in Rome of the international office of the Apostleship of Prayer, informed us that that office has just published a small book, *A Most Pleasant Mission*, commemorative of the three hundredth anniversary of entrusting to the Society of Jesus in 1688 the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The book (126 pages, paperback) is built around the celebration at Paray-le-Monial on July 2, 1988 when some

three hundred Jesuits from a dozen different countries gathered to recall the occasion. At that gathering, Father General, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, gave a homily and a conference. The book begins with them and then goes on to give a great wealth of selections from original texts to which Father General had referred. The latter include such items as retreat notes of Claude de la Colombiere, texts of the prayer experiences of early Jesuits (including that of Peter Canisius) in relation to the Heart of Christ, selections from *Haurietis Aquas*, the most important encyclical on the Sacred Heart, excerpts from the writings of Hugo and Karl Rahner on the subject and from documents of general congregations, letters from Father General, Lorenzo Ricci, on the Heart of Christ as the suppression grew imminent, the conclusion and "last message" of Fr. Arrupe to the Society from his letter, "Rooted and Grounded in Love," and the exchange of correspondence between Fr. Kolvenbach and Pope John Paul II at the time of the Pope's visit to Paray-le-Monial. Copies of the book in English, Spanish or French can be ordered at five dollars each (postage included) from the Apostleship of Prayer, Borgo S. Spirito 5, C.P. 6139, Rome 00195, Italy.

John W. Padberg, S.J.
Editor

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WHERE DO WE BELONG? UNITED STATES JESUITS AND THEIR MEMBERSHIPS

George B. Wilson, S.J.*

INTRODUCTION

Since Vatican II a huge amount of ink, paper, magnetic tape, and human energy has been expended toward the goal of building local Jesuit communities. In the face of all this, how explain the nagging sense of failure that characterizes so many assessments of the subject? Can the expenditure of yet more ink possibly be of help? I am brash enough to suggest that in our ongoing dialogue there is a reality not yet sufficiently named which might provide a new perspective on what has been happening. In the light of this reality we might discover new methods which could offer practical help in the task.

My observation after studying a good many efforts at community development is that they begin in lofty rhetoric and end in futile moralizing. What's missing? *The lived reality of the actual bodies in the room.* In an earlier issue of *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*,¹ Joseph Appleyard has observed that we find it hard to communicate

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1. J. A. Appleyard, S.J., "The Language We Use: Talking about Religious Experience," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 19/2 (March 1987).

because we are really using different languages arising from different worldviews. I would suggest that the issue lies deeper than that. The changes of the past twenty years have produced transformations in *the very way we image ourselves*.

These are not simply changes in our ideological approaches, the kind of thing alluded to when we refer to the tension in our houses between "conservatives" and "liberals"; they reside at a fundamentally different level of the psyche.

Nor can they be reduced to our era's heightened consciousness of the existence and significance of different personality types. We may choose to schematize our sense of those differences among people by using Jungian constructs or Sufi numbers or the medieval humors. Or we may simply use our untutored horse sense to help ourselves deal with the differences between the smooth and the spiny, the one whose snowblower never rests and the one whom outer snow will never reach because his castle wall is totally impervious. No, those differences have always existed, whatever the names we may give them. The situation we deal with today is genuinely new.

The transformations I am speaking of have created basic, stable patterns that have an impact on our approach to major segments of our lives; hence, they can legitimately be described as being situated at the level of personal identity. *We have simply become different kinds of persons*. But since we have not fully named that reality, it should not surprise us that we have yet to find the options that will help us deal with it constructively. We are trying to build consensus on what to do without an agreement on where we are.

It may be some small consolation to observe that the same issue confronts almost all religious communities to a greater or lesser degree. Some have named the phenomenon more explicitly for themselves. Some have even consciously renegotiated their expectations for relationships within religious community in order to capitalize more fully on the potential benefits implied in the new reality and to minimize its risks. Few, perhaps none, have worked out the model for living effectively in this new situation. Perhaps it is in the nature of

things that there can be no lasting "resolution" except in terms of accepted principles and agreed-upon methods for ongoing negotiation by those involved. Even after agreement on principles and methods for negotiation, the task of acting on the principles and applying the methods will still be unique for each local group.

Now, the members of the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality have a kind regard for you, their faithful readers. They have also patiently endured the adventure of reading my first draft and trying to follow the meanderings of what my friends generously call my mind. So, in a gracious effort to spare your energies, they have asked me to give you a kind of road map for the journey I am proposing for us in what follows in this paper.

First, I will name briefly the perspective I am proposing to help us understand where we are. Then we will leave religious life behind and strike off on a detour. We will take some time to observe and describe another species of the U.S. citizenry. My hope is that by means of this field trip we will uncover a cultural analogue and some key principles it suggests. Then we will return to our Jesuit reality. We will examine our Jesuit experience from the perspective of the analogue and propose some conclusions. Then, because all of this has evoked in me some larger issues in spirituality, issues which transcend the narrower focus on local community life, I will invite you to roam with me for a while in these fields (in an earlier Scholastic tradition the accepted rubric was, I believe, to label this an *excursus*). Finally, I will return to the narrower question of local community formation and propose a concrete method for actually using the perspective to arrive at realistic, specific commitments or covenants.

I. THE PERSPECTIVE AND THE ANALOGUE

If we observe how Jesuits and most other religious actually live today, we discover that they are generally involved in a wide range of relationships. We can, it seems, examine what we are observing by employing the perspective of *multiple memberships*. To put it very directly, Jesuits are very different from what they were in 1950 because they now "belong" in more settings. To uncover all the rich reality behind the simple tag "multiple memberships," we need now to leave the Jesuit compound and go out to meet one of our neighbors.

A cultural analogue

We begin by looking at a quite typical man or woman in contemporary American life. Our female readers will pardon me if for simplicity's sake I happen to refer to this person as "he" although the reality is, I believe, largely gender blind.

To help our imaginations I would propose that we see our subject as standing within a series of circles, as if he were simultaneously working many hula hoops. They are larger or smaller; each embraces at least one other person; some may hold many, many people.

When we meet our friend we might first discover that he is married. He stands within a relationship, "sharing the hoop," if you will, with a particular woman. How they actually relate to each other is utterly unique, depending on an all but infinite number of variables: histories, cultures and sub-cultures, biology, geography, personality, economics, transient fads and permanent virtues, and quirks of all sorts. They may still be romantically in love; they may not have communicated beyond a grunt or a mumble for years. But no matter how you look at it, they are members of a marriage. There is a circle and he and she stand within it.

Our gentleman, it turns out, also has a few children. His wife has them too, of course, but that is not germane to my discussion

here. This man is a parent. And that is not the same circle as his marriage. It is a different circle, a membership with some other persons.

Let's say—since we are painting this fellow, although we have to stay within the bounds of verisimilitude—that he has a pretty strong allegiance to the parish he belong to. He has served on the parish council for two terms, currently volunteers to assist in the activities of the food pantry for poor families, and has run the baseball-toss booth at the annual festival for, lo, these many years. He plays golf with the pastor and a few macho cronies occasionally.

Did I mention that he is the secretary of his union local? And that he stays in touch with a college alumni crowd? And together with his wife has been bowling with the same eight couples every other week for several years?

A year and a half ago his mother, widowed and quite independent for the past thirteen years, had a hip replacement and has not been as able as before to get out for her groceries. It falls to him to shop for his mother and see to it that her medical bills are paid on time. But it does take time each week to review all that on the phone with his sister in a distant city.

I forgot to mention Shrug, his tired old basset hound. Just about there. But there. Contributing to his life, claiming some of it.

You get the picture. All in all, nothing extraordinary. A pretty normal specimen of late-twentieth-century Americana. Characteristic of our big culture, though the specific shades and contours stem from his set of particular subcultures.

The point is that all of these circles constitute *memberships he has to deal with in some way or other*. Let us walk around the terrain of “memberships” and see what principles we might uncover for application when we return to our Jesuit starting point.

Memberships

Memberships are created whenever a person enters into a relationship with another person or persons in such a way as to create a set of *ongoing, relatively regular expectations*. The expectations may focus around the doing of specific deeds, the sharing of a certain level of affective response, or perhaps simply personal presence, being there.

How expectations are created is a terribly complicated question. It is made most difficult by the fact that our conscious ego, that part of self which we can order and bring under some modicum of control, holds but a small part of the energies with which the self confronts life. We are all more than we can consciously hold up to the light and analyze. Let us not get into the varieties of theories about the human psyche here. We can stay within the realm of experience directly accessible to the nontechnician and still be confident in affirming that some expectations in each of us arise largely out of our effort to respond constructively to invitations or requests from others, whereas we create other expectations out of our own need, although we interpret their origin as coming from the other. We have all had the (usually painful) experience of trying to respond to another in a certain way because we thought that was what she or he expected of us, only to find out later that the relationship did not mean the same to the other person at all. Then in other situations we discover that we had read the situation accurately; the other party had expectations identical or close to what we had anticipated. We all build our world to some extent on the basis of projections, as well as on genuine free offers from others.

In this essay, however, the processes by which expectations and memberships are engendered are not our question. Our task at the outset is simply that of coming to terms with the fact that they are *there*. Our anonymous friend is a member of many circles; he is the subject of multiple memberships, regardless of how they came to be or what their foundations are.

Nor does it matter that these networks of expectation may not (indeed, usually are not) spelled out in formalized contracts or by-laws. It is a serious mistake to restrict our use of the notion of membership to those entities which are formally institutionalized and articulated through legal or quasi-legal instruments. I and my friend are members in our friendship—indeed, this particular membership is far more significant than almost any other membership—although there is not a single piece of paper which points to that fact.

Now the result of a membership is that *my subjectivity is altered*. Not that I have lost the freedom to decide how I will respond at any particular moment when the membership makes, or seems to make, a claim on my time, action, affect, or presence. No, I remain free. But as a result of the membership my freedom comes into play, not on a field which is a *tabula rasa*, but on a field upon which some lines have been drawn in virtue of the actions I took upon entering into the membership. I may subjectively experience the lines as wildly fulfilling and liberating, or as painfully constraining but still life-producing, or yet again as unbearably suffocating. In my response to them I may choose at the moment to go beyond the lines; I may consciously or unconsciously bend or distort them; I may, because of the claim of another membership, simply leave the field altogether—but none of those choices changes the fact that there are lines. My lived history has created them and they are real for me; they enter into the calculus of my existential choices, if we may be permitted that analogy.

Memberships can be multiple

Our ability as humans to enter into any membership, to cast ourselves out into our future—however short the term beyond the present—and to say yes *now* in a way that creates a new self when that future moment of *then* arrives—this capacity is itself part of our glory as persons created free. The issue becomes potentially more creative and rich, as well as possibly more tragic, when we confront our ability to constellate ourselves in a similar posture toward *several*

or even many such memberships. We are capable of making, and indeed do make, multiple commitments; we place multiple responsibilities upon a single self. We can "belong" in several places.

Because we are not gnostic ideas but historical beings, immersed in the limits of time and space, multiplicity of memberships obviously will lead to conflicting networks of expectations and necessitate our making choices in concrete situations. We have to choose a course of action which will disappoint one or other of the persons or groups with whom we are comembers.

To illustrate: In the case of our typical American, his mother feels that, since the coming Saturday is her birthday, there is an even more special reason than usual why he should come over and shop for her; son Billy's ninety-pound football team is playing for the championship on Saturday and dad has not been able to see him once all season; his wife needs special love and presence precisely on this day because yesterday she made the troubling discovery that quite unexpectedly and at a frighteningly late age she has become pregnant, something he cannot explain to either his mother or his son; and, to top it all off, his great friend, the pastor, just called to tell him that they needed a last-minute-substitute adult guide for the Boy Scout camping trip which had been scheduled for months and for which no one else was available.

How is one to deal with these conflicts of genuine commitments?

"Primary" memberships

One of the ways people attempt to deal with these conflicting expectations is to establish a hierarchy within the multiplicity of memberships. There is a "primary" commitment and all others are "secondary." In the case of the principal character of our analogy, it goes without saying that his marriage partner comes first.

This language undoubtedly expresses an important truth. Some memberships are more serious than others, and that fact needs to be held in consciousness. Such principles assist us greatly by creating

the broad lines within which choices are to be made. But important as they are, we have to remind ourselves that of themselves they do not provide *proximate* norms for appropriate moral choice. Let us say that our subject faces serious conflicting expectations from both his mother and his wife on a given Saturday afternoon: his wife is stretched to the limit by her concerns about the pregnancy, while his mother's eighty-eighth birthday is particularly significant because she has been more than ordinarily in pain with arthritis the past few months. Who would be so arrogant as to presume to tell him where "of course" his responsibility lies?

Let us make the situation even more complicated—and perhaps more real. Suppose that any "objective" observer would with good reason say that the relationship between this particular son and this particular mother has for some time been one of *excessive* demands on her part and inordinate acquiescence on his. Does it seem even clearer now where his primary *concrete* responsibility lies? Not exactly. That past history does not change the fact that the reality of her need did change with this recent pain and depression, just as the reality of his wife's claim did change with the discovery of her pregnancy.

Beyond the limited effectiveness of the broad principle for resolving the conflict, there is another truth to be faced. We must confront the insight from the Gospels that it is possible for us to absolutize *any* "primary" membership to the point where it domesticates and negates the radical claim of the God of history. The "given" priority of every human institution, including the primordial institutions of marriage and the family, has never been more forcefully critiqued than by Jesus of Nazareth: "Unless you are ready to leave father, mother, wife [at least in Luke] . . ." It is possible for us to fulfill our legitimately accepted and socially prioritized roles and still fail our neighbor at the side of the road.

The truth is that in the existential order *every* membership, including those we rightly deem primary, can make inordinate claims upon the human subject. It is true that we will not become whole

except within a human community (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 9), but each of our concrete human communities can become totalitarian, presenting its claims as *automatically* and self-evidently prior to all others. The critique may yield the same specific *answer* as that produced by an uncritical application of some general principle of priority, but having some platonic "correct" answer is not the issue. The issue is genuine entry into our finite human condition. That involves the risk of weighing competing concrete attractions and claims and then creating our response in the face of data which will not yield a self-evident syllogistic conclusion. And it involves the risk of aloneness, the risk of "missing" what others are sure is the mark. We die alone, but so do we make genuine choices alone. The door of integrity and freedom is narrow.

If we are to move beyond the limited assistance provided by general principles, we need the moral virtue of prudence, which does not offer the same a priori security as the general principles. And prudence is ultimately genuine only if it is allied with love. The authenticity of our concrete choices within the networks of memberships into which we have inserted ourselves (and of others we did not initially choose but simply found ourselves in) will ultimately depend on the kind of love we have for all. Whether the man in our analogy decides on that particular Saturday to risk stretching his marriage by deciding to visit his mother or conversely to risk disappointing her by staying with his wife, he must ultimately place an act of trust in the genuineness of his love for and commitment to the other one who will experience his choice as a loss. Any outsider who would presume to judge *that* is an impious intruder unaware of the sacredness of the ground beneath his hobnailed boots.

Changing intensities

In speaking of memberships up to this point, we might seem to give the impression that a membership, once entered into, becomes a *thing*, a static reality to be placed on one pan of a scale in a test of weight with others in the opposite pan. Experience tells us that

memberships are not so easily reified—despite our eternal temptation to pin them like butterflies to the boards of our abstract hierarchies (John Fowles said it much better in *The Collector*.)

Memberships are constituted by persons: myself and the other(s). In real life there is an ebb and flow of human energies on both sides of the partnership. One of the invaluable insights I gained from nine years of ministry in the field of marriage spirituality concerned the constantly shifting intensity levels within memberships that were fundamentally quite constant. The marriage relationship or the parental one could occupy the center of a person's attention for some time; it could be preoccupying and all but consuming. And then for long periods it could be quite muted. The partners were involved in other pursuits and, yes, memberships. The focus of energies moved elsewhere; the marriage became at a certain level almost peripheral, on the margin rather than consciously central. Then again, by whatever evident or more mysterious impulse, it would move back front and center once again, perhaps for an extended length of time. Other matters would again assume lesser significance. Meanwhile the marriage membership remained quite solid even as the "togetherness quotient" shifted greatly.

The assistance of others

The framework for mining some usable principles is almost in place. All, that is, except for one major piece. Although each of us alone is responsible for his or her choices, we are not totally alone. We can help each other in the difficult task.

If the past one hundred years have heightened our awareness of anything about the human subject, they have underscored the incompleteness of our self-knowledge. The basic idea is as old as humanity, of course. No one is a good judge in his or her own case. Modernity has raised that primordial truth to new levels of articulation. We may employ Freud's idea of the unconscious; we may prefer Jung's image of the shadow we cannot see but which is always with us; it may be

sufficient simply to note that our ego is not coterminous with our genuine self.

When we relate this truth to the question of a person's memberships, we return to a fact noted earlier, that it is apparently quite human for all of us to misread the expectations others have of us. We can fail to perceive messages of real need and proceed to absolve ourselves of legitimate claims; and we can, out of our own need to be needed, create demands that others are not really placing upon us.

This brings us to the human need for help from others in weighing specific situations or even ingrained patterns of response. The "other" in question may wear the lofty guise of a spiritual director, or the more pedestrian one of counselor; or perhaps in most cases the other comes clothed in the comfortable old shoes of a friend or even the motley garb of a group of cronies who care enough to raise a question for us. The communication may take place within a formal setting or in an apparently casual encounter. Perhaps it takes the form of a glancing remark: "Are you making that trip *again*?" or maybe "How about taking time to visit Frank up at Holy Redeemer?"

In the final analysis the other cannot really determine the legitimacy of a particular claim or the appropriate weight to place on a particular option for response. That is the privilege and the burden of the free subject. Others cannot assume responsibility for the choices of a genuine subject. They can, however, assist the subject by reflecting back the validity they experience or the projection they detect in the weighing of options by the person. And any person with a modicum of wisdom, aware of the possibilities of self-deception and seeking to make wise decisions, will stay alert and sensitive to such signals from others.

A summary

We are now in a position to recapitulate some major assumptions that can assist us in a further analysis of the realities of contemporary religious community.

- 1) We are all members of more than one group.
- 2) The notion of membership is not exhausted by the formalized statements of our organizational memberships.
- 3) Each membership creates its own legitimate expectations; others have a claim on the subject's time, energies, and personal resources—as the subject does on the other member(s).
- 4) Every membership contains the risk of nonlegitimate expectations, whether they arise out of the other persons involved or out of the subject's personal projection of what they expect; this is true of our primary memberships as well as of others.
- 5) The weight and intensity of different claims will vary at different stages and moments of life.
- 6) It is a personal life issue for the free subject to weigh the strength and legitimacy of these various claims; no one can do that for the deciding subject, but others can serve the person's genuine freedom by reflecting back the consistency or inconsistency of the person's assessments and questioning possible projections or denials at work in the process.

II. CONTEMPORARY JESUITS

We left contemporary Jesuits some pages back. Perhaps we are now in a position to return to them and ask ourselves what we might learn from our reflections on the normal American pattern of memberships.

The changed reality

Let us look first at the garden-variety Jesuit of thirty years ago. What were the regularized patterns into which he had been socialized and which constituted the network of expectations within which he made his choices? What were his memberships?

To make the case in perhaps too dramatic a form, one might risk saying that he had but a single membership, membership in the Society of Jesus. Too strong? Think about it a bit.

Family

Let us take the biological family. For the Jesuit of 1950 membership in his family of origin was almost reduced to a memory. The psychological intensity of the relationship may have been great, perhaps even greater in virtue of the lack of physical presence. Behavioral expectations, on the other hand, were almost nonexistent. Attendance at a family wedding was quite problematical, and even at funerals only slightly less so. An aging parent was no different from the general category "parent," an alcoholic brother worth an intention on the bulletin board, and nephews and nieces about as real as trolls.

It would be possible to examine the origins of this reality, how it came to be elaborated from a set of beliefs into a whole framework of policy and normative expectations, to analyze the authority and legitimacy structures that maintained it, and so forth.

It might also be interesting to explore some of the unexamined assumptions and unconscious motivations that led religious communities to create such networks of (non)expectations. One might legiti-

mately ask whether they were authentic manifestations of discipleship or distortions that avoided more difficult demands.

Such avenues of research, interesting as the insights they could produce might be, would take us back into the past and might divert us from acknowledging the reality of the present. The fact is that most Jesuits (along with most other religious) today would situate their personal choices concerning responsibility to their families in a different frame of reference than they would have done in 1950. They might indeed arrive at the same concrete answer in a specific instance of conflicting expectations surrounding family and their Jesuit community; but their starting point, the context of their act of choice, would be quite different. They would experience the need to weigh the competing claims. The care of an aging parent, to use only one of many possible examples, would not today be *automatically* excluded from a Jesuit's consideration and left to brothers or sisters. It would be easy to think of a host of other arenas of choice: presence at family celebrations or times of struggle and trial, situations in which members of the family become persons to be ministered to, events which call for the Jesuit simply to accompany, to walk with, a brother or sister. The Jesuit's family membership is one he deals with today in ways not contemplated in 1950. In a given concrete situation it is not a priori clear that he is to give a higher priority to presence with his Jesuit brothers than to a blood brother.

Let us look at another human arena in which we have changed so much in the past thirty-five years as to be different people.

Friendships

It is not all that long ago that the topic of friendships would have evoked a raised eyebrow if not a "tsk! tsk!" One need only mention the term "particular friendships" and an array of feelings and associations are raised in any Jesuit who entered the Society prior to Vatican II. (This piece of lived history, incidentally, is something that younger Jesuits need to be taught in order to appreciate some responses of their older confreres.) Friendships were frowned

upon if the friend was a Jesuit, and the idea of a friendship with someone “not of the Society” was barely on the horizon. That the non-Jesuit might even be—let us try for linguistic historicity—a non-male was even less thinkable. (How did Hugo Rahner ever have the wisdom and daring to bring out of obscurity and publish those eight hundred letters of Ignatius to women?)

As a result of many threads once again far too complicated to unravel here, that reality has changed for many contemporary Jesuits. They cherish and nurture often profound friendships with other Jesuits, with lay colleagues, with women. The friendships are serious commitments; they involve the giving and receiving of care and attention, the expenditure and replenishing of personal energies. They may get out of hand, but so can any membership. The first step is to recognize that they are there. The yes which has been said constitutes a reality to be reckoned with in the individual’s decision making.

Professional and ministerial memberships

Now we move from the more intimate interpersonal contexts of family and friendship into the realm of apostolic service. (We could just as well have started here; there was no priority intended in the sequence.) Here we encounter a veritable smorgasbord of potential new memberships. The apostolic Jesuit of 1950 would tend to have exhausted his memberships *ad extra* with either his class (most were engaged in teaching) or his sacramental and counseling ministry (if he was serving in one of our parishes). We have to remind ourselves that institutions like schools and parishes were simpler in general in contrast to those existing today. One did one’s daily round of work, whether in the classroom or parish. *The community routine was closely tied to the ordinary demands of the regimen in the institution*—another experience younger Jesuits might need help to appreciate. In general, everyone could quite reasonably be expected to be under the same roof at the same periods of time for the better part of the week and even the weekend.

Today's picture of ministry and apostolate could hardly be more different. In the area of education at any level, of social ministry (scarcely named as such in 1950), or of pastoral ministry (then it would have probably been termed "parochial"), we have witnessed a proliferation of organizations and entities to which ministerial professionals are rightly expected to belong.

Institutions of higher and secondary education have layers of departments, committees, and task forces. Any academic worth his certification participates in a variety of lateral organizations and professional societies; if he intends to make any kind of difference instead of being simply a passive participant, he accepts and works at leadership roles, striving to affect the policies and directions of the organizations.

Let us tour another field of ministry. A pastoral Jesuit in today's world cannot simply retire to a rectory. The modern parish or pastoral setting involves participation in many structures for planning, coordinating, and carrying out multiple missions. There are staffs and councils and boards of all kinds to be dealt with. The pastoral Jesuit is expected to participate in structures and events involving all the pastors or ministers of the local church, such as presbyterial assemblies, deanery or vicariate meetings. To open his congregation to the movement for the unity of Christians prayed for by Jesus, he must enter into local ministerial alliances. In the same Jesuit parish one man may be up all night keeping peace in a shelter for homeless people in the church basement; another is out on the streets all day helping uneducated people learn how to get the assistance due them by law. Merely being present at the many evening activities of a contemporary parish is all but an impossibility. So too for any kind of social service or advocacy operation; there are multiple memberships involved, each claiming its own share of attention, time, and energy.

(I cannot help but note that the participants in the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality had to "absent themselves" from their own local

Jesuit communities in order to hold the discussions leading to the decision to publish these reflections.)

Another set of more recently developed memberships affects the identity of Jesuits as members of our provinces.

Intra-Society memberships

Many of us have become different people in relating to each other precisely as Jesuits. It should not be surprising that we are not yet in a position to foresee all the implications of this change, since the phenomenon itself is scarcely named. It involves the apostolic service of many Jesuits "outside the province." What was once a relatively exceptional phenomenon is now quite widespread. For some time it has been common practice for presidents and deans of our colleges and universities to be drawn from a national pool of Jesuits ready and willing to assume those positions. The pattern is working itself out in other areas of our apostolates, and it is not all that unusual to have a Jesuit from one province serving as director of the apostolate or even religious superior in a house of another province.

Jesuits have, of course, always gone "out of the province" for extended service on the missions. It would seem a mistake, however, to use that example for interpreting the contemporary experience. In the traditional concept of the missions, the man, however long he may have been on the mission, would still see himself predominantly as a member of the sending province. Something new is happening today. New memberships are emerging.

Behaviorally there are now many Jesuits who, besides belonging to their province of origin, "belong" to (are psychically members of) an as-yet-unnamed national Jesuit province of higher education—or secondary education or pastoral or social or artistic ministry, to lesser but real degrees. The open job market and the desire of institutions (schools, retreat or renewal centers, agencies of all sorts) to attract those Jesuit talents most suitable to their particular mission invite these men into a new membership. When they come up against missioning situations, the needs of the Church or Society at the

national (or even international) level are liable to weigh as seriously in their discernment as the claims of institutions maintained by their "home" province.

The point is that these new memberships can create in the individual Jesuit a tension between the identification he has embraced by entering his "own" particular province and living with its other members, and the membership he feels with others at the institution where he actually invests himself in apostolic ministry; or between responsibilities to his own province and the solidarity he enjoys with Jesuits around the country or perhaps even around the world, who share the transprovincial ministry he is engaged in. Even within the Society itself it is quite possible to experience the reality of multiple memberships and, therefore, the possibility of competing claims.

This change raises issues of a different order. For beyond the existential tension in the life of the individual Jesuit, this shift inevitably raises *organizational* questions as well. If "the province" remains in some sense a primary membership, what does that mean? Are provinces to continue in their function as personnel-supplying agencies for institutions still within their care? Or will that function gradually fall to the national pool of Jesuits? Or international? What happens to a province's identity when ever-larger numbers of those serving within its geographic territory did not originally become Jesuits under its tutelage and the influence of its ethos? As these patterns evolve we will probably have to redefine just what the nature of a "province community" can be.

The Society and the Church

If I may be permitted to venture out even further, this tension of memberships can occur with respect to institutions not conducted by the Society. I recently visited with a bishop who had to lose the services of a religious on his diocesan staff, an invaluable asset to the mission of the diocese, because the religious community discerned the need for the person's service in internal ministry to the religious community itself. The bishop's quite sincere comment: "I really value

religious men and women, and I am delighted to see them taking discernment so seriously; but I sure would like to have seen my local church included in the discernment process. Our mission has been set back a whole year because the replacement will have to start all over." Howard Gray has recently urged that the issue for the future is not really collaboration with the laity but *codetermination*: sharing as peers in policy decisions. Would we be prepared to let the leaders of a local church be codeterminers with us of the placement of a valued human resource, a member of our least Society?

A complex new reality

I believe it should now be clear in what sense I asserted that we have become different kinds of persons, imaging ourselves as subjects in very different ways from that of most Jesuits of the '50s.

The perceptive reader will also have guessed by now that it is not my purpose to assess the *appropriateness* of the realities I have been describing here.

In response to a question of this nature, some would claim that many of the new involvements of contemporary Jesuits have been undertaken precisely in response to the vision and calls of both Vatican II and our recent general congregations, urging us to be more relational, more collegial, more pastoral, more ecumenical, more professional, more involved with the poor and marginal, more dialogic, more sharing of our brokenness, less provincial and more national or international in our worldview, more collaborative with our lay colleagues or other religious engaged in the apostolate. Indeed it would be difficult to take all those challenges seriously and not gradually find oneself involved in new memberships. To share in a pilgrimage with others is not the same as being a tourist passing through without committing oneself.

Others might be inclined to stress the risks of overextension and loss of primary commitment in this multiplicity of mutual claims, to point out how easy it is for our sinful selves to cloak their disorders in the mantles of pious rhetoric. Those are possibilities deserving

serious reflection. But the risk in such considerations is that we could commit the fatal error of rushing to analysis (or even to "solutions" for something too quickly labeled a "problem") before we have allowed ourselves the full appropriation of the reality itself on its own complex terms. We will return to this point later.

The picture would be rich enough if we stopped our description here. But there is another factor to be considered.

Not the same for all

When we apply this lens of multiple memberships to the contemporary Society of Jesus in the United States, it becomes clear that our analogue limps. The analogue dealt necessarily with a single individual; but, when speaking of a religious community, we are, of course, dealing with several, perhaps still quite a few, individual Jesuits working out their destiny and mission together.

That fact makes us confront another reality; these changes have not taken place in the same way, much less with the same level of intensity or bonding, for every individual Jesuit. There are Jesuits in almost every larger house who still image themselves in the model of the Jesuit of the '50s, in contrast to others who have inserted themselves in the ways I have described into multiple commitments of an ongoing, highly involving nature.

Some men still live their lives totally within the world of the daily round of experience under the one roof of "the house." They still carry expectations of physical presence in common activities: meals, some communal prayer, TV watching, haustus, birthdays and feast days. Their conversation is largely local, or perhaps focused on the world of the Society. They do not know the worlds in which other men in the community find their personal, religious, and apostolic identity, much less the mutual expectations generated by these commitments. They live cheek by jowl with others whose calendars seem to be filled up well beyond the parousia.

It is understandably difficult for the former not to interpret the behavior of the latter as "doing their own thing." (This is an interest-

ing expression, if you let yourself think about it a bit. Is one expected to do “somebody else’s” thing? It is somewhat like that other old unexamined term “particular friendship”: did friendship-in-general ever exist?) Conversely it may be difficult for those who have moved into multiple memberships not to categorize the others as “stuck” or as Lazy-Boy potatoes (couches are not our style).

Once again, it is not my purpose to place a value judgment on the lives of Jesuits with a single membership or on those broadly involved. Each way of living will have its unique moments of joy, of fulfillment, as well as of difficulty, cost, and painful discernment. The point is that we need to acknowledge that the *starting situation* for discernment has changed radically and that Jesuits living under the same roof can be at quite different places in the multiplicity of their memberships and, therefore, in their expectations of local community living.

Some conclusions

What does all this mean? In the concrete, of course, that question will only be answered by the Jesuits themselves as a group. My own conclusions from this set of reflections take the form, not of prescription for what we should do about the reality of multiple memberships, but rather of some implications or consequences that seem to flow from it.

The first implication is that there is a reality right in front of us calling for recognition; it will not go away. We are irrevocably different. We may try to understand how it all happened, to uncover the strands woven into the tapestry. But first we must let the real be real.

The second is that moralizing or projecting blame on each other for the world that exists is an inappropriate response. We have to begin one more time (will there ever come a time when we will not have to do so?) with Ignatius’s *praesuppositum* to the Exercises: to believe that those who may be at very different places than we are on the spectrum of memberships are there as a result of a serious

personal effort to respond to the call of the Lord in their lives at this point.

Third, the reality means that the schedules of community members are and will continue to be very diverse, and legitimately so. This makes most unrealistic any expectation of presence of every member of a community at very regular, much less daily, activities.

Fourth, it means that the concrete expectations of local community life will be a function of the actual mix of memberships of that particular body of men. Within a framework of broad values and policy guidelines holding a province or the whole Society together, each community will be different at the level of specific expectations. And even that plateau of specificity will shift as each new member arrives, each existing member moves on, or people grow and change. What is possible one year may no longer be feasible or even appropriate the next. (Remember all those different couples up and down the same street, each living out with shifting levels of togetherness from year to year the reality we call "marriage"?)

Fifth, the reality raises to new urgency the need for adult collaborative and even negotiating skills. No one except the men themselves will work out the details of daily living for a particular body of Jesuits living together. Whether they bring it off with union of minds and hearts will depend, not simply on personal virtue, but on group skills. Would it be temerarious to whisper very gingerly that these have not traditionally been a strong suit of members of this least Society?

III. EXCURSUS: THE STARTING POINT FOR A SPIRITUALITY

Now let us take that side excursion indicated on our road map. We leave the immediate field of community formation and explore some more foundational questions. Below ground. Spiritual spelunking? It may help the reader to appreciate the approach I have taken in organizing these reflections.

I have not spoken until now about God or Jesus or the theological virtues; nor have I referred to things like the decrees of general congregations, much less our constitutions or Scripture. There are no footnotes to provide scholarly legitimation for what has been asserted here. These absences may call for some explanation, particularly in a publication devoted to reflection on the spirituality of Jesuits. So, with some hesitation (and surely a reliance on the Ignatian *praesuppositum* mentioned earlier), here are some personal observations on the subject of spirituality and its relationship to the ideas put forward above.

What do people mean by spirituality?

In my work as a church consultant and facilitator, I am frequently confronted with comments or evaluations to the effect that “the assembly was really great; it is the first time we ever spoke with one another so honestly; we really dealt with tough questions and found common ground; but I wish there had been more spirituality in the process . . .”

What do such comments mean? As far as I can tell from trying to tease out the intent of the speakers or writers, there is a prevailing sense that *you do not have “spirituality” until you take “ordinary” reality and clothe it in the garb of either Scripture or the foundational documents of the community or theological concepts.* Is that what makes a spirituality?

For completeness’ sake I should observe that the same comment might just as easily be coming from someone who would assert vigorously that he or she rejects a two-tiered theology of the supernatural, as from someone consciously espousing it. What we have learned is that we can change language rather easily; our ways of thinking are more intractable. But turning conceptual change into transformation of attitudes is backbreaking work.

The attitude symbolized by comments like those in quotation marks above raises serious questions about how we view spirituality. To tip my hand, I have consciously *avoided* clothing my observations

and reflections in spiritual language and references. I did so because, in my experience, there are two occupational hazards to which religious people are peculiarly subject and against which they must continuously struggle.

The risk of religious ideology

The first is the tendency to use arcane language or traditional documentation to refer to realities that might be more tellingly and effectively described in simpler, everyday language. Every human group seems to develop its own "in" language; religious are not unique in that. In and of themselves such languages are good. They can represent the best residue of a tradition, tools given to us by our historical family to assist us in making sense within the mystery of life. But it is also a part of human experience that the development of such languages can be symbolic of an *avoidance or denial* of reality. (Witness missiles named "peacemakers"; death tolls called "body counts"; or all the other manipulations of symbols by governments that do not want their people really meddling in policy questions).

I am, of course, referring to the possibility/probability of ideology, which can cause religious language to alienate people from their own experience. When "spiritual" language begins, as it so frequently does, to conceal what is actually going on, the risks are particularly great. Its destructive possibilities show up, for example, when lay people are in the company of "religious" (which is an interesting co-optive use of language itself) and begin to experience themselves as ill-equipped or even unequipped to explore the meaning of issues of faith merely because they do not "talk right." (It can take a lot of courage to risk remarking that there are no clothes on the emperor or empress). Thus there are many instances where we use words like "charism" when "gift" or "genius" or "corporate culture" would do quite well. Or, to use another example, a lot of "discernment" is really good old-fashioned decision making; or, to name more accurately, perhaps, what actually happens in all too many instances, it is

a mystification which results either in the avoidance of genuinely difficult decisions or the imposition of some power bloc's will. If we might venture into a really deep "cave," would it not be better sometimes for a superior to say, "Jack, we are really strapped for personnel and we need you," instead of, "Discernment has shown us the call of the Spirit"?

It is a demanding discipline continually to hold ourselves to authentic appropriation and acceptance of what is really going on. The God of history is forever being manifested in changing forms of finite reality, and we remain finite sinners seeking security in the conceptual edifices we construct to contain the impact of that mystery. Being genuinely contemplative involves, in the first instance, the risk of standing mute before reality and allowing it to name us before we do what as humans we eventually must, attempt to name it.

My assumption is that presence to reality is the first and continually primary task in any Christian spirituality. This is true even when we have no words for what we are experiencing. All reality holds before us the claim of the creator, the potter who is forever free to smash the pots of existing reality and forms with which we have become comfortable—and perhaps sacralized as a substitute for confronting the potter. We continually want to turn away from the theophany of the ordinary because it discloses both the creator's infinity and our sinful rejection of the coresponsibility offered to us in creation and baptism; and "spiritual language" is one of the ways we do so. The evening news and the morning newspaper do not talk "spiritually." They may be frightfully inadequate, slanted, controlled by commercial or political or social elites. Still, they remain vehicles by which we just might be put in touch with what God is about in the process of creation—or what God wants us to be about. To risk my own public confession: "Sunday Morning" with Charles Kuralt prepares me for corporate worship better than most pieces of spiritual reading.

At this point the astute reader may find me hoist with my own petard. Isn't "multiple memberships" itself a piece of jargon?

I am only too aware that I may be introducing my own esoteric language by taking all the varied forms of relationship mentioned above and putting them within the class of "memberships." To that criticism I can only reply that I am trying to respond to and hold up for our common acknowledgement a *pattern of reality* that I believe I am perceiving. The name is a tag, insignificant in itself; if the reader finds a better one, fine. Alfred Korzybski, the semanticist, reminds us that the map is not the territory, and it is the territory I am trying to grasp—on its own terms.

The rush to judgment

Some time ago I mentioned two risks in approaching the subject of new spirituality. The first had to do with the names we place on what we experience, and the possibility that spiritual language can be an avoidance mechanism. The second is our rush to *assign judgment*, to praise or castigate pieces of our existential reality before we have allowed ourselves to accept them and give them the space to be real for us.

One of the cultural strengths we enjoy as Americans is our drive and capacity for making things happen. Like any cultural strength, however, this is also the locus of our greatest potential for imbalance. Our drive to act can make us sally forth before getting grounded in a firm starting point. "Don't just do something; stand there!" is perhaps the most difficult piece of wisdom for us to absorb.

We are bred by our culture to be problem solvers; and so we are inclined to define any present reality as a problem, to judge it in terms of its inadequacies (usually by comparison to a fictitious Eden, namely, the era that immediately preceded it), because that will give us the chance to use our strength.

I believe that the case can be made that bad decisions are generally not the result of ill will, or even of poor analysis, but rather of premature abandonment of the presenting data, caused by prejudg-

ment. Often enough we come up with excellent answers to the wrong questions, in other words.

The reality of the pattern of multiple memberships, of the new identity that has been shaped by the events of the past twenty years, is just that, a reality. It may be a different condition than we faced in religious life then; it may make some feel anxious and others feel energized. But it is not a "problem" to be "solved." It is a facet of unfolding mystery to be lived with. Like any other cultural shift it is driven ultimately by the human, God-given impulse to search for more value. And also, like any other cultural shift, it will be contaminated by sinfulness and self-interest. Like all its predecessors it will undoubtedly produce both wheat and weeds. And we know what Jesus had to say about those who were quite sure which was which and how to clean up the field . . .

IV. A METHOD FOR DEVELOPING LOCAL-COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

We return now to "the surface" and look back over our journey. We began by examining an American cultural analogue from the perspective of multiple memberships, drawing out some key assumptions which might guide us in formulating a strategy with regard to conflicting expectations. Then we examined some of the significant shifts which have taken place in the way United States Jesuits image themselves and the resulting tensions which they create both for local and province community-formation. We explored two basic approaches that risk distorting the raw stuff on which an incarnation-al spirituality might be built. At this point the reader who has persevered on the journey thus far might ask, quite appropriately, "But what can we *do* with these ideas?"

What follows is a method that many communities have found helpful. Whether it "works" for any particular local living group will depend on many factors which would take us far beyond what any

paper can accomplish by itself, factors such as the basic trust level of the participants, their willingness to be vulnerable with one another, their communications and listening skills, their willingness to invest time in an effort which might in the first instance seem not to produce a tangible effect, and the facilitating skills of the leader.

Individual work

The process begins, as all community development appropriately does, with personal reflection by all the individual members of the group. The purpose of the reflection is to name the various memberships which are actually engaging the energies of the individual members, as well as the network of operational expectations they engender. I have appended a personal work sheet the members might want to use to guide their reflection (Appendix I), but the questions are straightforward enough.

The first stage is descriptive. What are my memberships at this point? In each instance what do I perceive as the claims or expectations the particular membership appropriately makes on me or others within it? What have I come to expect of myself in terms of my energies, presence, or actual deeds vis-à-vis these others?

After the individual has listed all his memberships and his commitments to them in this way, the process invites him to name the cumulative effect of this situation on himself. Does it leave him at peace? Overburdened? Feeling overresponsible? Frustrated at not being able to respond to expectations however they have been engendered? Sensing that the claims of the apostolate and his own personal development are in balance? Did it surface areas where he would like to renegotiate mutual expectations with the other members in any of these memberships, including his living group?

Group sharing

At a mutually agreeable time all the members assemble to share the results of their personal reflection. It is not a time for intellectualizing the material shared, or for praising or criticizing. The initial

effort is genuinely to hear and appreciate the human disclosing himself.

In the process of sharing the results of the individual reflections, it is best to begin by naming any broad insights the exploration may have engendered concerning the reasons for the present affective state of the person doing the sharing, rather than starting from particular memberships and their resulting concrete network of expectations. It is, after all, whole persons that are involved in the process of creating the community; what my fellow community members need in the first instance is an appreciation of me as a person. In the contemporary idiom, they need to know and understand "where I'm coming from." Thus, for example, a man may report something like this: "This exercise has pulled together a lot of pieces for me and made me understand why I'm always feeling pressured." Or, "I find I'm pretty widely committed but it feels 'right'; on the whole I can handle it and I feel energized for my ministry."

When all the members have offered their personal contribution, it becomes appropriate for one or other to attempt a summary statement of what the whole picture seems to reveal. "We are a pretty invested group, but we seem generally to feel reasonably responsible both to others and to ourselves." Or, "We are showing signs of potential burnout." Or, "There seem to be evidences of stress about our lack of presence to each other." And so forth. The other members are invited to concur or revise that summary statement until the group has reached a basic agreement that they are viewing the general picture in the same way.

Specific issues

Once the general evaluation is in place, individuals are invited to explore with the group particular areas or commitments. They can be brought up by an individual out of his own personal reflection: "I have begun to wonder about the real value of my serving on the neighborhood council; what do you guys think about that?" Or one individual may ask for deeper understanding of another's involvement

in something: "Joe, I have to admit that I cannot understand your annual pilgrimage trips. They are obviously important to you; I wonder if you could help me by telling me what meaning they have for you?" "Frank, you amaze me with your energy for all those parish bingo evenings. How do you do it?"

This would be the place for someone to name his discomfort at another man's seeming indifference to communal events: "Charley, I have to admit that I was upset when you let us know at the last minute that you will not be participating in something we put on the community schedule months ago."

The skill needed at this stage is to invite response without suggesting some sort of attack on the other man's assessment of general priorities or his judgment in a particular instance.

Group needs named

After exploring the meaning of any individual membership that is brought up, the group returns to the operating implications of what they have shared. This is done in terms of felt needs of the members as a group. Once again, the interpretation can begin with any individual. "I get a sense that we are feeling a bit fragmented; maybe we need to plan to spend a bit more time together for the next few months." Or, "We seem generally to feel supported by one another in our commitments, but we may need to ritualize that a bit better in common prayer." Or, "We need to be on the alert for the days when Bill's dissertation is really getting to him and he may need us to pull him out of a slump." It is quite possible that the review will indicate no need to change any present directions; but reaching that conclusion together in a conscious process which was free and open to another outcome can be a valuable experience worthy of celebration by the members.

Negotiating expectations

The articulation of needs leads naturally into options for addressing them. This is the point at which the group needs to adopt a playful, brainstorming approach. As the television advertisement puts it: "What if . . . ?" Or, "Maybe we could try . . ." If the prior moments of sharing have been a supportive experience, the group may sense that a new plateau has been reached but that now is not the time to change anything. They may choose to stop at this point, continuing in their present pattern but still committed to exploring later in greater depth the ways they might try to address the needs they have named. Some needs are such that the very naming of them exerts a subtle influence on the interaction of the group, so that a few months later they find themselves in a different place without ever having taken any "formal" steps to change direction.

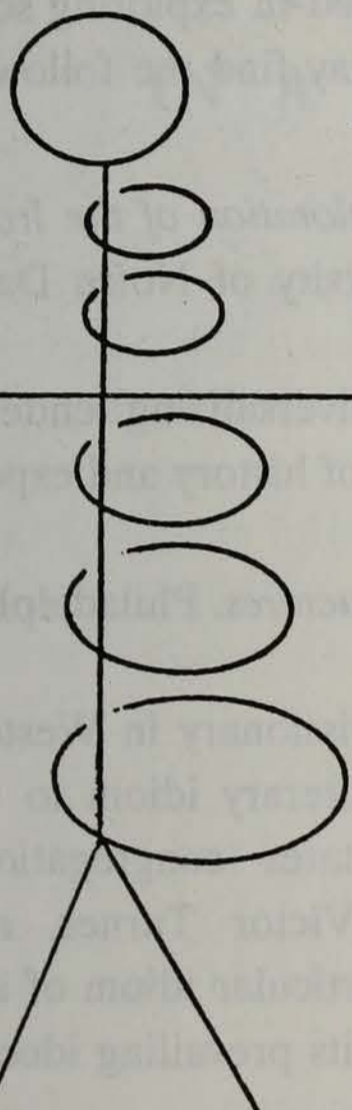
Still it may happen that the need is clear, yet the members are in some disagreement on the options they would be willing to try in order to improve the situation. They may need the assistance of an outsider with facilitating or reflecting skills to enable them to reach commitment on attempting some steps that are not fully satisfying to any of the members. But clearly at that point we are well beyond any help to be looked for from this article; we are moving into the realm of basic trust, of willingness to invest oneself in any effort to find common ground. And these are matters about which many things might be said, but which will remain difficult to understand . . .

Postscript

A final word on an unexplored trail. In this last section we have examined an approach that might be used in applying our principles to the continuing renewal of expectations at the level of local community life. At an earlier stage of our journey we had briefly touched upon the subject of the changing nature of province community. That is a cave with stalagmites of a different color. Let us save it for another outing.

APPENDIX I. MULTIPLE MEMBERSHIPS, INVOLVEMENTS, RESPONSIBILITIES

A Personal Worksheet



- Family
- Friendships
- Local Jesuit community
- Ministry groups
- Professional colleagues
- Province
- Cross-province relationships
- Universal Society of Jesus
- etc.
- etc.

The rings represent all the memberships to which this person is accountable.

Ask yourself what is *legitimate* for the various persons in each ring to expect of this person, in terms of time, energies, money, etc.

List your memberships below:

Describe what people in each of them may legitimately ask of you.

APPENDIX II. RELATED READINGS

Although I know of no other readings that focus directly on the issues treated in this article, the reader interested in exploring some facets of the mind-set from which it emerged may find the following titles of some value:

Lynch, William F., S.J. *Images of Faith: An Exploration of the Ironic Imagination*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1973.

Lynch offers a healthy critique of the universalizing tendency of the mind cut off from the concrete stuff of history and experience.

Hopewell, James F. *Congregation: Stories and Structures*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.

Hopewell, originally an Islamicist and missionary in Western Africa, brought his interest in myth and literary idiom to the examination of contemporary United States congregations. Drawing on work of Clifford Geertz, Victor Turner, and Northrop Frye, he makes us look at the particular idiom of any local community in a way which challenges its prevailing ideology.

Duncan, Hugh Dalziel. *Symbols in Society*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.

Coming out of an English sociology focused not on statistical variables but rather on observation and critical reflection on the actual behavior of social groups, Duncan opens up the whole symbolic and dramatic nature of human social life. Each human community is the enactment of a drama, so that the key questions for understanding it are: What actors are making what speeches, on what stages, with what audiences in view, in the interest of bringing what conflict to resolution?

Carlos G. Valles, S.J.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor,

The September, 1988 issue of *Studies*, "Jesuit Education and Jesuit Spirituality," gives me the most pleasure of your many issues. Apart from the pleasant nostalgia in remembering Father Joe Wulftange "the most influential teacher," close friend at Milford and West Baden, and the "Christ-like" Bernie Wernert, as well as my high school companion Bob Harvanek, I found comfort in Arthur McGovern's emphasis in restoring the study of philosophy to our Jesuit colleges.

Some years ago an American and close friend was president of a company in India when the Nehru government indicated that Indian personnel must gradually replace foreigners in major industries. My friend asked me for a list of our Jesuit colleges in India from which his company could recruit trainees.

"We don't want graduates in a particular field," he said. "We'll train them for that work. We want graduates who have been trained to think!"

Father McGovern gives us the survey of our 27 American Jesuit Colleges of forty years ago; the median requirements for the A.B. degree was 15-20 hours in philosophy, and slightly less for Latin, English, history, modern language.

When I returned from India I taught at one of our colleges in the New York Province, about the time computers became a fad. Jesuits and lay faculty were consulted about providing a place in the curriculum for this new "science." Departments were naturally reluctant to surrender schedules.

I learned then that 28 hours of philosophy were required when the college was opened; now it had been reduced to 12 hours only and might be lowered further for computers. It is ironical that in a Jesuit institution of learning a mechanical gadget could take precedence over the training of the mind.

Father McGovern correctly summarized this issue: "The importance of discernment, I believe, is reflected in the amount of emphasis placed on 'critical thinking' in Jesuit education." That is a paramount Ignatian principle.

John J. Barrett, S.J.
Brooklyn, NY

Editor,

Your recent issue of *Studies* (May, 1988), *Symbols, Devotions, and Jesuits*, deserves much attention and applause. It serves as a serious summons reminding us of a devotion which has indeed fallen into desuetude in recent years. We should be grateful and even more mindful of the merits of our particular devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as a result of the research of the authors.

Within recent years the legacy and literature of such devotions has aroused the attention of others besides Jesuits in the field. Interested readers should consult A. Taves' *The Household of Faith: Roman Catholic Devotions in Mid-19th Century America* for the role and rise of devotionism in the American context. It was published by Notre Dame Press in 1986. Therein one can glimpse the not always and altogether harmonious situation that prevailed in chancery and parish circles in this country, while the patronage of the Sacred Heart was used symbolically to serve both institutional and personal ends.

As one who often reflects on the significance of our devotion to the Heart of the Saviour, I was struck by your epilogue/editorial noting Fr. General's appeal to all Jesuits in Europe to celebrate-yes, to travel-to Paray-le-Monial to commemorate the tercentenary. At times I have wondered why provincials do not more strenuously promote this cause which, when we entered a generation ago, was intimately linked with prayer for vocations. Is it simply academic or rhetorical to be reminded anew that "the thoughts of His heart are from generation to generation"?

The rest is prayer.

Philip S. Kiley, S.J.
St. Bartholomew Parish
Needham, MA

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The first life of Ignatius was a classic, published in 1572 by his intimate companion Ribadeneira. But later lives for two centuries added embellishments or exaggerations according to literary or hagiographical customs of their times. They made Ignatius into a colossal figure not very human or winning. Some enemies, too, wildly distorted or defamed him. In the 1800s efforts began at more scientific lives; but most of the primary sources, still only in handwritten manuscript, were practically unavailable.

From 1894 onward the enormous work of winnowing the wheat from the chaff was greatly furthered through the publication of critical editions of these primary sources by the Jesuit Historical Institute, first in Madrid and since 1929 in Rome. Dalmases has taken a prime part in this editing.

In the present volume he has synthesized his vast knowledge into a brief, well-rounded whole. Scholarly reviews of the Spanish original of this book have pointed out its value to experts and general readers alike.

This book is available in Spanish, English, French, German, and Italian.

THE AUTHOR

As a young Jesuit priest, Cándido de Dalmases became a member of the Jesuit Historical Institute in Rome in 1938, where he is still active. His chief work soon became the editing of critical editions of primary sources about St. Ignatius—notably the four volumes of *Fontes narrativi de Sancto Ignatio* (1943-1965), *Exercitia Spiritualia: Textus* (1969), and *Fontes Documentales* (1977). He has also published many other books and articles.

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