



# STUDIES

IN  
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

**Saint Ignatius Speaks about "Ignatian Prayer"**

**Joseph Veale, S.J.**

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## 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 that religious institutes recapture the original inspiration of their founders and adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material that 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, and laity, to both men and 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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SAINT IGNATIUS SPEAKS ABOUT  
"IGNATIAN PRAYER"

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*Joseph Veale, S.J.*

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STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

28/2: MARCH 1996

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## *For your information . . .*

Every year brings with it anniversaries in the Society to commemorate and to celebrate, and 1996 is no exception.

Perhaps the most important such anniversary this year is the four hundred and fiftieth of the entry into the Society of Jesus of the first Jesuit brother. The papal document *Exponi nobis*, issued on June 5, 1546, less than six years after the formal public approval of the Society, removed the original restriction to a membership of sixty and made possible the extraordinary history of the lives and works of Jesuit brothers during the last four and a half centuries. The whole Society owes an enormous debt of gratitude to those fellow Jesuits who, as the Thirty-fourth General Congregation expressed it, respond with all other members of the Society to "the one common call of the Lord to follow him in living out the evangelical radicality of religious life." This should surely be a year of celebration on their account.

The variety of men who entered the early Society is exemplified also in two other four hundred and fiftieth anniversaries. In 1546 Pierre Favre, the first permanent companion of Saint Ignatius, died in Rome. That same year Francis Borgia entered the Society. One need know only a little about the two of them to recognize the contrasts in their personalities. (Of course, also in 1546 Martin Luther died; and there, to be sure, was a contrasting personality, but also a person whom Favre in the graciousness of his character regularly included in his prayers.)

Four hundred years ago, in 1596, a group of Jesuits who were vehemently opposed to the policies of Father General Claudio Aquaviva tried to get him appointed archbishop of Naples in order to remove him from his post as superior general. The first and, at the time, only Jesuit cardinal, the great theologian Francisco de Toledo, was in on the maneuver. But when he was advised that such a "promotion" to Naples, a cardinalatial see, would probably put Aquaviva in line also to be a cardinal, Toledo successfully turned his energy and influence against the move!

Three hundred and fifty years ago, in 1646, Saints Isaac Jogues and John de la Lande underwent martyrdom for the faith in North America. And in that same year the Eighth General Congregation decided that the martyrology should be read every day at dinner, a practice from which some of us older members picked up much of the curious lore about the Church and the Society. That same congregation, by the way, also sternly declared that the task of teaching basic grammar classes was not beneath the dignity of the professed fathers.

Two hundred and fifty years ago, in 1746, after frequent requests on the part of successive general congregations and frequent refusals on the part of the

Holy See, Benedict XIV finally abrogated the decree of Innocent X that imposed a general congregation every nine years. One hundred years ago, in 1896, the Holy See declared Saint Peter Claver the patron of apostolic works among the blacks. And just as recently as 1946, only (only?) fifty years ago, John Baptist Janssens was elected superior general. The events of the fifty years since then in civil society, in the Church, and in the Society of Jesus we shall, for the moment, leave to a future chronicler.

To turn from the past to the future, future issues of STUDIES depend especially, of course, on the writings of the members of the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality. But the Seminar does welcome the submission of manuscripts by others too, as I have several times remarked in this section of STUDIES. Obviously they should be on a subject concerned with Jesuit spirituality and of interest primarily to United States Jesuits. The manuscript should usually be in the range of thirty-five to fifty pages in length, typed in double-spaced format, and accompanied by the text on a computer disk. We much prefer that the computer version be in MS-DOS and WordPerfect; but if that software is not available to you, send the manuscript any way you can and we shall attempt to reformat it.

A manuscript thus submitted first goes through a set of readers that includes both myself and a "first-reading committee" of several Seminar members. That committee recommends to the full membership whether or not it ought to read the manuscript. If so, after such a reading we engage in a first discussion of the manuscript and then decide whether or not to proceed further. Again if the decision is favorable, we invite the author to meet with the Seminar to discuss the essay, and then we vote on whether or not and under what conditions to accept the essay for an issue of STUDIES. The process may seem long and thorough, and it is. But it also provides the occasion for interesting, informative, insightful, and enjoyable conversations on subjects of serious importance to all of the participants. Often enough the process results in an issue of STUDIES, such as the very one you are now reading. So, please, do participate with us in the work of the Seminar.

And if writing an essay is beyond your interest and exceeds the time available to you, send us a letter about the essays you read in STUDIES. Letters to the editor are not only welcomed but actively encouraged.

*John W. Padberg, S.J.*  
*Editor*

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## A Note to Introduce What Comes After

I thought it might be diverting to have Saint Ignatius speak to us in a relaxed way, as if he were conversing with us. Conversation lets us move with a certain ease from one train of thought to another. We are not under constraint to present a structured argument. When we do, the company dozes. Conversation invites a kind of musing on things and does not lend itself to a lengthy table of contents or a text broken up into divisions and subdivisions. Instead, ideas flow, as it were, in and out of each other. They interweave and surprise us by what they remind us of or recall. They take off in unplanned directions. Conversation is allowed to meander or to retrace its steps. It invites us to go back on our tracks, to take up something we asserted before and to look on it in a new light. It allows us to say, "Now that I think of it, it may be I should have put it this way . . ." Conversation is comfortable with contradictions.

I was asked to supply some notes about names or terms that some readers might find unfamiliar. I tried to do that, as best I could, in a number of postscripts found on pages 24 to 31. References to these postscripts are made by superscript capital letters in the text; for example, "to God<sup>A</sup>" directs the reader to postscript A on page 25.

Joseph Veale, S.J.



## SAINT IGNATIUS SPEAKS ABOUT “IGNATIAN PRAYER”

*May we be allowed to suppose that Saint Ignatius is speaking to us in 1996.*

.....

I have to confess that I am puzzled by talk of “Ignatian prayer.” I do not know what it means.

All I did was to borrow ideas from the tradition that was available to me at the time, ideas that I found would work. For a long time before I began to learn anything about praying, there had been a widespread concern among the Christian people, people winning their daily bread in the world (as you sometimes strangely call it), to learn how to pray. There was a widespread concern to learn how to grow in a faith that was interior and alive. From the new devotion that came from the Low Countries through the Benedictines at Monserrat and from my reading of Ludoph the Carthusian’s *Vita Christi*, I simply picked up what I thought was more helpful to such people.

I suppose the use of the term “the Ignatian method” (which has, fortunately I think, for quite some time been dropped as false to the teaching of the Exercises) came to be fairly widespread because those Spiritual Exercises became so influential in Christian piety. People began to assume that I was responsible for it. Writers hostile to method and my uncritical admirers claimed far too much for me. I deserved none of the praise, and it was some of my well-meaning and less well informed disciples in later years who may be blamed for a rigid teaching on method in prayer.

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I thought I had made it clear that the only teacher of prayer is the Holy Spirit. Each person has to discover the particular way the Spirit desires to lead him or her to be present to the mystery of God, who is beyond all our words and ways and methods. You will be familiar with what I wrote to Francis Borgia in 1548:

[T]hat level [of prayer] is best for each particular individual where God our Lord communicates himself more. . . . He sees, he knows, what is best [for each one] and, as he knows all, he shows [each one] the road to take. What we can do to find that way with his divine grace is to seek and test [the way forward] in many different fashions, so that an individual goes ahead by that way which [for him or her] is the clearest and happiest and most blessed in this life.<sup>1</sup>

You must know that I held it to be harmful, to say the least, for directors to impose on someone else a way that has proved helpful to the directors themselves. That would be to interfere with the personal leading of the Holy Spirit. Father Pedro Ribadeneira called attention to my conviction on that point:

He blamed those masters in spiritual things who want to impose the same way that has proved useful for themselves. This was harmful and the work of people who neither knew nor understood *the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit and the variety of the graces* through which he distributes his mercies, giving each person his own special and particular graces, to some in one way and to others in another.<sup>2</sup>

Methods have their place. As I understood it, the Exercises were a way of helping those who desired to set out on the road to God. Or they helped those find God who had been serving him for some time. I hoped that the various ways of praying I recommended in the Exercises would help them to begin to be open to God at work in them. They needed to have a definite way of beginning to pray. It gave them confidence and avoided vagueness and daydreaming, letting them know where to begin and how to go ahead. It gave them a clear objective and a compass to steer by.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter 466, in *Epistolæ et Instructiones S. Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 2 of Monumenta Ignatiana (MI), vol. 26 of Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu (MHSI) (Madrid, 1904), 236. For an English version, see William J. Young, trans., *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1959), 181.

<sup>2</sup> Pedro de Ribadeneira, *Vita Ignatii Loyolæ*, vol. 4 of MI, vol. 93 of MHSI, p. 854, §135; this quotation is taken from the Spanish text, with emphasis added. See Luis Gonçalves da Câmara, *Mémorial*, Collection Christus (Paris, 1966), §256; see also the original text of his "Memoriale," in *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola*, vol. 1 of MI, vol. 66 of MHSI (Rome: Historical Institute of the Society of Jesus, 1943), 677.

I trusted that those who were gifted in the art of giving the Exercises would be so experienced in prayer and so informed about "the manifold gifts of the grace of God and the varied inspirations of the Holy Spirit" that they would be flexible in helping someone to discern the particular way that God at any particular time moved to help that person to find Him.

To find God. That was the objective, the "end." The rest is "means." Particular "ways" of prayer are means. People are held back on the road to finding God when they (or those who are helping them) become so preoccupied with the means or so attached to a particular way that they lose clarity about the end.

I liked to say that we should have God always before our eyes. I was not given to defining "prayer" or to theorizing about it. That was not my way. But if you wanted to understand how I thought about prayer, that phrase would do. "To have God always before one's eyes" was to be given the grace to desire God in all things and in whatever situation. It was to desire God so much that there was no situation or circumstance or conversation or relationship in which he was not to be found; to have such a constant desire for him, for the end and purpose of the whole of created reality, that everything else fell under the heading of "means." It followed that if one was to be free to be led interiorly by the Spirit in a great variety of situations, to be able to be flexible in occasions that were unplanned and unforeseen, then one had to sit lightly to the means and to be ready to use them or leave them unused in the light of this God who was always before one's eyes. Prayer was among the means.

That is why it gave me a sense that my mind was truly understood when a few decades ago Father Paul Kennedy, who directed the Jesuit tertians in Wales, used to say to them: "We do not give ourselves to prayer. We give ourselves to God."<sup>A</sup>

About those many ways of prayer that I recommended in the Spiritual Exercises perhaps I should say a few things. When I spoke of "spiritual exercises," I included many different ways of disposing oneself to be actively open to God's action. Neither then nor now would they all easily fit under the term "prayer."

What I said of penance, for example, I took to be understood also of various ways of praying. I would not have dreamt of laying down any amount of penance—to say, for example that one should fast on so many days in the First or the Third Week of the Exercises. Persons differ greatly from one another: what is helpful to one is unhelpful to someone else. The Spirit leads each one in different ways according to the Spirit's own wisdom, the Spirit's own pace, and according to an individual's nature, temperament, and capacity. That is why I wrote:

When someone making the Exercises fails to find what he desires, such as tears, consolation, and the like, it is often useful to *make some change* . . . so that we do penance for two or three days and then omit it for two or three days. For some persons more penance is suitable, for others less. . . . Now, since God our Lord knows our nature infinitely better than we do, through changes of this sort he often enables each one of us to know what is right for ourselves.” (*SpEx*, §89, emphasis added)

I always preferred to be empirical. I was suspicious of generalized prescriptions that were more abstract, bookish, or a priori. I trusted those who gave the Exercises to use the same suppleness and discernment with regard to ways of praying. They were to help the exercitant to begin the long apprenticeship to gain the ability to discern when consolation would indicate the right way for that person. In that way they would find God. They would find him in no other way. “God sees, he knows, what is best for each one and he shows each one the road to take . . . so that an individual goes ahead by that way which for him or her is the clearest and happiest and most blessed in this life.”

You will know that I wrote very little about prayer and certainly nothing of mysticism. I preferred to be silent. It was not that I did not hope to see many receiving “God’s most holy gifts.” You will remember the letter I wrote to Father Francis Borgia in 1548:

[S]eek more directly the Lord of all things, I mean his most holy gifts. . . . All is directed and ordered towards that everlasting life while [already here in this life] being embraced and united by means of those most holy gifts. By these gifts I mean those that are not in our own power to obtain when we wish, but simply given by the one who gives and has command over all that is good. . . . We seek them from a conviction that without them all our thoughts, words and works are confused, cold and agitated. We seek them so that our thoughts, words, and works may become warm and clear and composed for the greater service of God.<sup>3</sup>

But I thought it wiser to speak and write little about these things. I had seen in Alcalá in 1527, when dealing with my friends among those groups who came together to pray, women and men eager to learn about prayer (so indiscriminately labeled *alumbrados* and included under a blanket condemnation), how an initially wholesome conviction about interior prayer can turn to a kind of feverish intensity that does not bear the mark of the good spirit.<sup>4</sup> There can be, as you can see yourselves in these days, a kind of talk about prayer that is not always helpful or healthful. It can sometimes

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<sup>3</sup> Ignatius, *Epistolæ*, 236; Young, *Letters of St. Ignatius*, 181.

<sup>4</sup> Alastair Hamilton, *Heresy and Mysticism in Sixteenth-Century Spain: The Alumbrados* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 91, 96, 97, 99, 101.

get so caught up within itself that it seems (verbally at least) to lose all sense of relationship with God and can disguise a subtle self-seeking. It is easier to read about prayer (or to write about it) than to do it. You will be well aware of a snobbishness, too, in spiritual things. So I judged it better to keep my counsel.

What I hoped to do in the Exercises—provided they were given by someone with experience in these things and with the ability to reflect on his own experience—was to leave the way open to the action of the Spirit in leading men and women of desire to discover “God’s most holy gifts.” I advised the giver of the Exercises to say rather little so that those who are praying may find something that arises from their own imagination and understanding or from “the action of God illuminating the mind” [“quier sea en cuanto el entendimiento es ilucidado por la virtud divina”]. This produces greater spiritual relish and fruit, for “it is not much knowing that fills and satisfies the spirit but more to sense and taste things interiorly” (*SpEx*, §2). I had more trust in the generous action of the Holy Spirit and in the help of someone wisely experienced than I had in books. Since God desires to give his “most holy gifts,” I wanted to reverence the freedom of the one making the Exercises as well as the sovereign freedom of God.

Since it all has to do with desire, with what this particular person truly desires in the light of the ongoing day-to-day experiences and graces of his or her prayer, I made it clear that “where I find what I desire, I will there remain quiet and reposed” (*SpEx*, §76). I judged that that was enough as a sober pedagogy to enable an eager person to learn when to fall silent, when the Spirit would lead prayer to become simpler. It is an open door to the discovery of contemplation. It is better discovered than talked about. It is better experienced than given a name.

As you know, in the Second Week of the Exercises I used the term “contemplation” in a different sense than I have just now been using it.<sup>B</sup> The kind of simple “contemplation” of the mysteries of Jesus’ life from the Gospel was widely current in my time among people who were prayerful. It was associated with the Franciscan tradition that I had been in touch with at the court in Arévalo, and I learned more about it from my absorption in Ludolph the Carthusian’s *Life of Christ*. That widely read book was itself simply a way of bringing the living Gospel home to people who were eager to learn how to pray the gospel events in order to come closer to the “mind of Christ,” to Saint Paul’s *sensus Christi* (Phil. 2). You know now, as we did not then, that Ludolph borrowed from the pseudo-Bonaventure and so from the Franciscan source.

It was clear to me, as it has been growing clearer to you in your last quarter century or so, that having God always before one’s eyes, having a

constant desire for the end, relativizes the means by which in great variety one may seek the end. But not all the means are equally important or unimportant. Certainly, in the making of the Exercises I should insist on the importance of the exercitants' becoming more absorbed day by day in the events and mysteries of Jesus' earthly life. I tended to keep my distance from modes of piety that seemed to me to lose touch with the Incarnate Word. In the Exercises especially I wanted the exercitant to have the opportunity to be drawn by the Spirit of Jesus into an intimate relationship with him. The heart needed to be engaged.

Besides, the concern of the Exercises is to open the spirit to God, so that God can make the person free with what Saint Paul called the freedom of the Spirit. All that entailed the kind of deep healing of our woundedness and the freeing of our imprisonments that Jesus alone can bring about. And it entailed as well that retreatants, having been made free, might be open to the revelation of God's particular and concrete will in their living. For me there is always that intimate and intrinsic link between the contemplation of Jesus in the Gospel and *discretio*, the gift of the Spirit that gives an interior sense or taste of what God may want. The Exercises are about godly decision.

You will have noticed that I wrote in the *Exercises* that the one who is contemplating the gospel events may listen to the persons "to hear what they are saying or *what they might say*." I think I took that hint from Ludolph. In the contemplation of the birth in the cave, "I will make myself a poor little unworthy slave and, as though present, look upon them, contemplate them, and serve them in their needs with all possible homage and reverence" (*SpEx*, §113).

I wanted the beginner who was perhaps discovering the Gospel for the first time to be able to enter into the reality of the event and, as it were, to take part in it. Not as an observer, however; as a participator. I did not at the time reflect theologically on that; I had not yet been to Paris. Perhaps Father Jerónimo Nadal, who was so much more learned in these things, saw the point more eruditely than I did. But in the ordinary course of living, if decisions are to be at all close to the *sensus Christi*, the primary norm of discernment is Jesus in the Gospel.

I suggested that those who prayed the Gospel in that way should be open to hearing what "the persons might say" or what they might do, so that the Gospel might come into intimate encounter with the experiences of each one. Their experiences would include their particular histories with their graces and hurts, with their temperaments and natures as God had given and shaped them, with the wide or small horizon of the world as those persons had been enabled to know it. In that way the Gospel would illuminate and give its meaning to all their experiences and their experiences

would illuminate the Gospel. Only in that way would their continuing experiences begin to become a concrete expression of the Gospel in their life. How otherwise is the Gospel to become embodied in your world?

Father Louis Cognet was right when he said about me, "Nothing is more foreign to him than the systematic 'leaving behind' (*dépassement*) of a Saint John of the Cross."<sup>5</sup> It was my mind that no matter to what degree the Spirit might eventually purify and simplify prayer, those praying should not lose touch with the deeds and words of the Incarnate Word or bypass the realities of their own lives.<sup>6</sup> God led me personally and led me to help others in such a way that the Gospel might be made real in the world and that the Word might continue to be made flesh in greatly different times and in a thousand different cultures.

It will be clear, then, that there is nothing original in the ways of prayer I recommended in the Exercises. That is why I am so bemused by your use of the term "Ignatian contemplation." I suppose it may be said that whatever I taught about ways of praying was placed in a new context and with a new focus. The new context was important to me, since what chiefly concerned me was the contemplative mode of coming to decisions that were true to the mind of Christ and apt for building the Kingdom of God. I have to admit that I transposed the ordinary and fairly commonplace teaching on "contemplation" to my concern with apprenticing persons to *discretio*, to a habitual sensitivity to the day-to-day, mundane, workaday interior leading of the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Jesus and the Way to the Father.

It seems that it is only fairly recently that it has come home to those who reflect on these things that my overarching concern was to bring people into a direct encounter with God. There are two statements in the *Exercises* that my Jesuits seem often to have left in the shadows, perhaps out of fear. One is "to ponder how the same Lord desires to give himself to me" (*SpEx*, §234). The other is "When a person is seeking God's will, it is more appropriate and far better that the Creator and Lord himself should communicate himself to the devout soul, embracing it into his love and praise . . .

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<sup>5</sup> "Rien ne lui est plus étranger que la technique de *dépassement* systématique d'un saint Jean de la Croix" (Louis Cognet, *L'Essor: 1500-1650*, vol. 1 of *La Spiritualité moderne* [Paris, 1966], 20).

<sup>6</sup> Dermot Mansfield, "The Exercises and Contemplative Prayer," in *The Way of Ignatius Loyola*, ed. P. Sheldrake (London, 1991), 191-202. Also in *The Way* 25 (October 1985).

allowing the Creator to deal directly with the creature and the creature with its Creator and Lord" (*SpEx*, §15).<sup>7</sup>

You will remember that Father Karl Rahner had me say to the Jesuits of the 1970s, "This was the experience I longed to communicate with others."

You should understand all this [namely, all other pastoral, academic, social, and political activities which you have felt it necessary to attempt in the course of history] as a preparation for or a continuation of your ultimate task both now and in the future: to help others to experience God. . . . All you do should be tested to see if it serves this purpose. . . . This is the core of what you term my spirituality.<sup>8</sup>

I was pleased to see the same point made by Father John O'Malley in his *First Jesuits*. It pleased me that the historical evidence, what there is of it, bore out what Father Rahner saw from his theological reflection. Father O'Malley shows from his reading of the sources that the first generation of Jesuits had picked up what was at the heart of my concerns. They saw all their pastoral work as a ministry of consolation.

The Jesuits wanted to live according to such consolation themselves and to help others to do the same. . . . They expected the manifestation of God's presence within the soul to be accessible, in some degree, to all human beings. . . . There was . . . one "doctrine" that was fundamental for them, one that gave orientation to all their ministries and to the way they wanted to lead their own lives. It was the basic premise of the Exercises. . . . The creator deals directly with the creature and the creature deals directly with the creator. . . . They sought to be mediators of an immediate experience of God. . . . That purpose shines through all they wrote and said as the ultimate goal they had in mind when they spoke of helping souls.<sup>9</sup>

The Spiritual Exercises, then, were and are, if we must use the term, mystical. You will know that I do not care to use that word, because in my time (when, in addition to all else, it was dangerous) and even more in yours, the term is shrouded with vagueness and misused in a thousand bizarre ways. It can be a seedbed of illusion. Nevertheless, it can be truly applied to the Exercises when the term means that the human person at a

<sup>7</sup> Such understanding was never entirely muffled among Jesuits; but the dominant orthodoxy in the Church was of a different color. See J. Veale, "Dominant orthodoxies," *Milltown Studies*, No. 30 (Autumn 1992), 43.

<sup>8</sup> Karl Rahner, "Ignatius of Loyola Speaks to a Modern Jesuit," in Karl Rahner, *Ignatius of Loyola*, historical intro. by Paul Imhof, trans. Rosaleen Ockenden (London: Collins, 1979), 11, 16, 13. Bracketed material transferred from the preceding paragraph.

<sup>9</sup> John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1993), 83, 373, 19.



certain point has some experience of receiving, of passivity before the action of God—when the person is *divina patiens*.

You will wonder, then, how it came about, quite soon after I died, that Jesuits grew nervous of what was so central to my meaning. There were two influences at work, one within the order and the other from outside. The one within the order explains to some extent why the elementary method of prayer employing the memory, the understanding, and the will, the method I proposed only in the First Week of the Exercises, came to be identified as *the* Ignatian method.

In Spain there were, among others, two who had entered the order before I died. One, Father Balthasar Álvarez, a young man in his twenties just recently ordained a priest, found himself the confessor and spiritual director of Saint Teresa. He and Father Antonio Cordeses among others practiced and taught ways of prayer that were affective, simple, quiet, and silent.

By that time, the flowering of contemplative prayer that had grown strong in Spain in the early fifteen hundreds and had been so encouraged by the great Franciscan reformer Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros had begun to seek the shadows. That had already begun when I was in Alcalá in the late 1520s. Anyone who sought to take prayer seriously had good reason to fear the hostility of the inquisitors and their treatment of the *alumbrados*. The Church was, as it always is, afraid of illuminism. At all events, the General, Father Francis Borgia, ordered Father Cordeses to stop teaching a simple affective kind of prayer. He wrote:

I praise your zeal and your good desires, for it is quite true that that is the best and loftiest spiritual exercise. But I warn you, my father, that not all are developed enough for this exercise and that not all understand it or are capable of it. To teach them how to pray, the Lord has given us a good guide in the Spiritual Exercises of the Society. . . . Later, some will continue in this manner of praying, others in another. . . . For the movements of the Holy Spirit are different and different the characters and minds of men.<sup>10</sup>

Father Balthasar Álvarez was treated more peremptorily. Father Everard Mercurian from Luxembourg succeeded Father Borgia as general. Like all the generals, including myself, he had to be wary of a tendency among some Spanish Jesuits to prescribe that all Jesuits should pray for many hours each day; that could, at least in Spain, have changed the missionary nature of the order. But Father Mercurian had a liking for what was logically coherent and systematic. He did not see, apparently, that Father

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Dudon, "Les Idées du P. Antonio Cordeses sur l'oraison," *RAM* 12 (1931): 97ff.

Álvarez was speaking and teaching from the sources of his own experience. The only language commonly available to express something of the reality of a quieter and simpler prayer was the language that came to Spain from the writers of the northern school of mystics. Certainly Father Cordeses and Father Álvarez were helped, as Father Pierre Favre and Father Peter Canisius had been, by the extraordinarily popular and widely read exponent of some of the northern masters, the Franciscan Hendrik Herp.<sup>c</sup>

Father Mercurian forbade Jesuits to read Herp, Tauler, Ruysbroeck, Mombaer, Raymond Lull, Gertrude, Mechtilde of Magdeburg, "*et alia huiusmodi.*" He genuinely seems to have believed that the kind of prayer described by the northern school was incompatible with commitment to apostolic work; he considered that it would make for neglectful laborers in the vineyard.

At all events, Father Alvarez was ordered to stop praying contemplatively in the quiet and silent way he had been led to pray, a way that he had taught prudently and zealously; he was told to bring back those he was directing to what were taken to be safer ways.<sup>11</sup>

The whole event was summed up by a Spanish provincial of the time who worried about "those who employ a way of praying different from that which our Father Ignatius teaches in his Exercises."<sup>12</sup> I confess I find that strange. It does not allow for the kind of development in prayer that I expected to occur while making the Exercises and in the maturing experience that would follow them. It seems to ignore the variety of ways of praying I recommended in the *Exercises*. It is ignorant of the other things I tried to convey orally when dealing with prayer and in my letters and Constitutions. I thought I had made it clear in the Constitutions, when speaking of the spiritual formation of the scholastics, that flexibility was to be shown "especially with some who do not advance spiritually by one method, that with the grace of God they may be helped more by another" (*Const.*, §343).

It pleases me that both sides in this contention were equally concerned to protect the authentic spirit of the order. Both were clear that an indispensable element in that spirit is prayer. It is not a matter of indifference how the busy apostle gives himself to prayer. It is crucially important. In those early days it was not yet easy to see, as you can more easily see now at the distance of four hundred years, exactly how the Spirit had led the order from the beginning along a path radically different from what had

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Dudon, "Les Leçons d'oraison du P. Balthasar Álvarez, 1573-1578," *RAM* 2 (1921): 36ff.

<sup>12</sup> Cognet, *Spiritualité moderne*, 196 n. 5.

gone before.<sup>13</sup> Both the "ascetics" and the "mystics" knew that that was so; but they did not have the language to say how it was so.<sup>14</sup> This was especially true with regard to the place of prayer in a Jesuit's life and the kind of contemplation likely to be more helpful in an overworked life of apostolic dedication.

At any rate, the general who succeeded Father Mercurian, Father Claudio Aquaviva (1581-1615), wrote a letter to all Jesuits in 1590 that in principle settled the question. I say "in principle," because in practice the antimystical bias remained strong, especially after the Quietist crisis at the end of the seventeenth century (1687), through the nervous years of the nineteenth century, and after the condemnation of Modernism (1907).

Father Aquaviva based his teaching on the authority of the Fathers, his favorite leisure reading. According to them, true contemplation is more powerful than any other method of pious meditation for diminishing pride, promoting obedience, and enkindling zeal for souls. He wrote that it was an error to say that a Jesuit may never pause on simply knowing and loving God or that he must always direct his prayer to something practical.<sup>15</sup>

However, that was not the end of the matter. There was also a stronger influence brought to bear on the order from outside and especially on its teaching on prayer and the Jesuit interpretation of the *Spiritual Exercises*.

The *Exercises* had hardly been printed when they came under strong attack. They were seen to be too contemplative, too mystical, as you would say. The attack came from some Spanish theologians, particularly Melchior Cano and Thomas Pedroche. They saw the prayer of the *Exercises* as too mystical and affective, as insufficiently ascetical and rational, as seeming to bypass the objective teaching of sound doctrine, as granting too much to a person's subjective experience, and as giving a dangerous prominence to the interior light of the Holy Spirit.

Thomas Pedroche, the Spanish inquisitor, was accurate in pinpointing those places in the *Exercises* that were mystical and therefore identified with Illuminism: annotation 15, where I spoke of the Creator dealing directly with the devout soul, as well as the parts of the *Exercises* on indiffer-

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<sup>13</sup> We have access in the Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu to early documents that were not available then. We have the advantage of over four hundred years of experience and a language adapted somewhat better to the nuances of the reality.

<sup>14</sup> See J. Veale, "Ignatian Prayer or Jesuit Spirituality," *The Way*, Supplement 27 (1976), 5-7.

<sup>15</sup> Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 240f.

ence, everything to do with decision, and the description of spiritual consolation.<sup>16</sup> Those parts, if you add the remaining guidelines on discernment, are the heart of the *Exercises* and are at the basis of my later thinking in the Constitutions on apostolic life. Father Pedroche was quite right. Those features of the *Exercises* are indeed markedly what you would call mystical.

There always remained among Jesuits a strong tradition of contemplative prayer.<sup>17</sup> But by and large it went underground. Its quietness, if we may call it that, reflected the Church's fear of mysticism during those centuries, a fear expressed and reinforced by the condemnations of Quietism and Modernism. What happened was that the sternly rational theology of Melchior Cano, who had tried to have the *Exercises* placed on the Index for their mysticism, became the dominant orthodoxy within the Church; it was that climate of theological culture that largely determined the way in which Jesuits interpreted the *Exercises* and taught about prayer.<sup>E</sup> The election of Father Francis Borgia in 1565 dates the start of the process by which Jesuits subscribed to that style of theology, for the most part, until Vatican Council II. It turned my teaching on its head. It disallowed my conviction that is at the heart of the *Exercises* (that the Creator and Lord desires to deal directly with the soul earnestly seeking God and that he discloses his desire by granting "consolation"). It is at the heart of what I subsequently said about prayer and about what I would now feel free to call the purely contemplative nature of the Jesuit charism.

But all that is about Jesuits. I am more concerned here with those who are not Jesuits: indeed, with those whose life is to be led in the midst of the responsibilities and fret of family life, of public life, of getting and spending and providing and caring for others. My excuse for the lengthy account of Jesuit history is that I judged it necessary if what you like to call "Ignatian spirituality" is to be understood in your time.

God as he revealed himself to me was the one who cares for and enters into every detail of our human lives and every facet of our experience. There is nothing in our experience, even our sinfulness, in which he is not to be found. He is at work laboring for us in the world, calling us to labor with him to accomplish his work on earth (*SpEx*, §91-98, 236).

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<sup>16</sup> Ignacio Iparraguirre, *Práctica de los Ejercicios de san Ignacio de Loyola en Vida de su Autor, 1522-1556* (Rome, 1946), 99.

<sup>17</sup> Besides the numberless nameless ones, some of those known by their writings were Francisco Suárez [d. 1617], Alonso Rodríguez (d. 1618). Diego Álvarez de Paz (d. 1620), Luis de la Puente (d. 1624), Louis Lallemant (d. 1635), Jean Pierre de Caussade (d. 1751), and Jean Nicolas Grou (d. 1803).

In Christ, God fills the whole of creation and is redeeming and sanctifying us through each other. Both my meditation on the King in the *Exercises* (§§91-98) and the vision I was given at La Storta in 1537 express the same reality.<sup>18</sup> The reality is that Christ who calls us to be with him in his labor is the Christ who is now in the world carrying his cross.

All my experience of God, from the understanding I was given by the river Cardoner in 1523 and through all the years that followed, showed me how God is everywhere to be found in his world. The important thing is that our faith should so come alive that we grow in our desire to find God. There is nothing in which he cannot be found, if we can allow the Holy Spirit to teach us how. We are united with God, not in spite of things but through them, not in spite of our humanity but through it, with all its frailty and sinfulness, with its nobility, with its limitedness and variability, its inconstancy, its bitterness, its ups and downs, its pains and impoverishment, its heartbreak and its joys, its fragility and splendor.

I notice that it has been said recently that I not only radically decloistered consecrated life but that I also decloistered God.<sup>19</sup> Well, there is something in that, though it claims too much if it seems to suggest that for many generations a good number of the people of God in their workaday lives had not been seeking and learning a deeper and more living faith from monastic teachers and from, for example, the Brothers of the Common Life. It could also be taken to ignore what Martin Luther and John Calvin were zealous about at the same time. Besides, devout Jews had through the generations been worshipping God on Friday evenings, at the beginning of the Sabbath, in the liturgy of their homes, aware that their work in the world is a participation in God's active creation. Or, for that matter, you are better informed than we were how the daily familiar prayers of the Irish brought God and Christ contemplatively into the hearth and the byre, into every homely day-to-day task and activity.

However, let it stand. Perhaps it is true that my concern to help all to seek and find God in everything did bring God out of the cloister and into the streets. God unites himself with his people not only in holy places or spaces or in particular times or particular kinds of activity but also in all situations, in all activities, in all relationships, in silence as in conversation, in failure as in success, in responsibilities, and in the enjoyments of leisure. I

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<sup>18</sup> The pilgrim's account of his spiritual journey (sometimes misleadingly called his autobiography), §96. See *A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of St. Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. Parmananda R. Divarkar (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995), 89.

<sup>19</sup> J. Veale, "The Unique Elements in Ignatian Spirituality," *Milltown Studies* 30 (1992): 100.

wrote to Francis Borgia, "For certainly there is more virtue in being able to rejoice in the Lord in a variety of duties and places rather than in only one."<sup>20</sup> It is not God's creation that is profane.

What is at the root of this grace of finding God anywhere and everywhere is the contemplative gift I seemed so casually to refer to in the Exercises' Principle and Foundation (*SpEx*, §23). All things are good because God made them to help us. Wisdom would suggest that we use them insofar as they help us to find God and leave them be insofar as they hinder. Therefore, I wrote casually, as it were, "We must make ourselves indifferent." I was speaking of freedom, of the gift of the Spirit that is the freedom of the children of God.

You will remember what Father Karl Rahner says of this and of what follows from it in all that I tried to teach. He teases out what is implied in my "Therefore we need to make ourselves indifferent" (*SpEx*, §23). He describes a grace of freedom:

[t]he calm readiness for every command of God, the equanimity which, out of the realization that God is always greater than anything we can experience of him or wherein we can find him, continually detaches itself from every determinate thing which man is tempted to regard as *the* point in which alone God meets him.<sup>21</sup>

As you can see from a little observation and experience, it is easy to be tempted to regard this or that way of service, this or that way of prayer, especially what some books call the more advanced ways, as "*the* point in which alone" God meets one. The same is true of prayer itself.

It is there that Father Rahner says that the characteristic of Ignatian piety is not so much situated in a material element, in this or that practice or in this or that method or way, in one kind of spirituality or another, as "in something formal, an ultimate attitude towards all thoughts, practices, and ways: an ultimate reserve and coolness towards all particular ways."

Such a degree of freedom, then, obviously gives "the courage to regard no way to him as being *the* way, but rather to seek him in all ways." The reason is that "all possession of God must leave God as greater beyond all possession of him." It gives rise to a "perpetual readiness to hear a new call from God to tasks"—and obviously to ways of prayer—"other than those previously engaged in, continually to decamp from those fields where one wanted to find God and to serve him . . . the will to be at hand like a

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<sup>20</sup> Ignatius, *Epistolæ*, Letter 466, p. 234.

<sup>21</sup> Karl Rahner, "The Ignatian Mysticism of Joy in the World," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 3 (London, 1974), 290f.

servant always ready to accept the duty of changing oneself and of having nowhere a permanent resting-place as in a restless wandering towards the restful God."<sup>22</sup> You will understand, then, my bemusement when you speak and write of "Ignatian prayer."

You will have noticed when you made the Exercises and read the Constitutions that I seldom used the word "prayer." I used a great variety of terms that gave a wide latitude: "cosas spirituales," "spiritual exercises of devotion," "piety," "exercises of piety," "devotion," "familiarity with God." You will be aware from what you know of my own daily practice how crucial I judged it to have time set apart for prayer.

There was nothing especially original in what I wrote about desire and intention turning everything in some sense into prayer. Saint Thomas was expressing something strongly rooted in the tradition when he said that "as long as a man is acting in his heart, speech, or work in such a manner that he is tending towards God, he is praying. One who is directing his whole life towards God is praying always."<sup>23</sup>

In fact, in the Constitutions I kept recurring to the need for "a thoroughly right and pure intention," a condition of purified desire that is the same as "being indifferent," being made so free by the Spirit that

the love that moves and causes one to choose . . . descends from above, that is, from the love of God, so that before one chooses he senses that the greater or less attachment for the object of his choice is solely because of his Creator and Lord. (*SpEx*, §184)

These are high graces. They are given. In that light I was able to write, "In the midst of actions and studies, the mind can be lifted to God; and by means of this directing everything to the divine service, everything is prayer."<sup>24</sup>

But my use of the word "prayer" in that place is unsatisfactory. The trouble is that when a word is made to mean everything, it soon begins to mean nothing. It is often better to allow words to mean only what they intend to say. I suppose it can be said that my teaching on everything becoming prayer was simply something that had always been present somewhere in the Christian tradition. In a way, though, more radically than

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *Commentary on Romans*, chap. 1, lect. 5, quoted in George Ganss, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), §340 n. 4.

<sup>24</sup> "Entre las acciones y studios se puede elevar á Dios la mente; y enderezándolo todo al divino servicio, todo es oración" (letter 4012, *Epistolæ et Instructiones S. Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 6 of MI, vol. 33 of MHSI [Madrid, 1907], 91).

anyone before me, I think, I changed the meaning of "prayer." I held strongly that God needs to be sought and found in private prayer. But God is in no way less to be found in washing one another's feet.

Even in your own day, the word "prayer" obstinately continues to mean in common usage something we do when we put affairs aside and enter into that secret place. I think we should be content with that usage. No amount of erudite explanation changes the way people commonly use their words. That is their sovereign privilege.

What is needed is a new word, one you have not discovered yet. It would encompass not only the prayer that opens the spirit to God and leads towards union with him but, over and above that, all those other things that equally open one to God and to his action within one and lead towards union with God.

What is indisputable is that under certain conditions of desire and disposition, in a certain climate of faith, if you like, the workaday tasks and delights and responsibilities and frets that draw us out of ourselves towards the needs of others have been especially blessed and, as it were, given the likeness of a sacrament when Jesus spoke of washing one another's feet. Whatever brings faith to life, whatever brings faith to bear on everything else we experience, whatever draws the focus away from ourselves, whatever beauty or goodness so absorbs us that we entirely forget ourselves, whatever strengthens hope and makes us more loving—all these equally with prayer can be purgative and illuminative and unitive.

A sign of authenticity in prayer as in service is that a person grows more godly. To be godlike is entirely to forget oneself. Whether that comes about by a call to become absorbed simply in God or by the circumstances of life that engage a person wholly in others' needs is not for us to say. You badly need a new word that would include both prayer and everything else that opens the believing community to the work of God within us and between us and for others.

I wrote to Father Manuel Godhino, whose labors as procurator (or, as you might say, accountant or manager) of the college at Coimbra made him despondent. Recognizing that he found "the charge of temporal things . . . distracting," I gave him this advice: "By your good and upright intention you turn everything you do into something spiritual for God's glory. . . . [Your] distractions . . . can not only be the equivalent of the union . . . of uninterrupted contemplation but even more acceptable to him, proceeding as



they do from a more active and vigorous charity.”<sup>25</sup> I am aware that that was no small claim. Of course, I knew my man.

You will realize that I keep my distance from a kind of spiritual language that is overly spiritual. I am sure the writers do not intend it, but somehow the impression is taken that the way they describe growth in prayer is the only way that prayer develops. I did not think then, nor do I now, that that is so. It is true that when people have been praying for some time, their prayer often tends to become simpler, to become more quiet. In fact, I expected that to happen in the course of each day's prayer in the Exercises.<sup>26</sup> It is the case with many that prayer becomes more wordlessly attentive. With them images and ideas seem to get in the way. For longer or shorter stretches of time, prayer becomes darker. It grows blank. It can seem that one can no longer pray. But the grace of God is manifold in its gifts and varied are the inspirations of the Holy Spirit.

A common-sense agnosticism would make you cautious in assuming large generalizations. Is that kind of prayer “better”? Is it universal? Is it common? Is it the only way to union with God? If we were honest we would say that, from our experience of listening and helping, at most we can surmise. We do not have the evidence.

You have often wondered at my silence and my lack of enthusiasm for the writers of the northern school, whose teaching became so widely influential, especially in Spain, through the writing of Hendrik Herp (d. 1477). My friends, the Cologne Carthusians, dedicated an edition of his work to me, but I was unable to reply warmly.<sup>27</sup> I know how Father Pierre Favre and Father Peter Canisius found his teaching congenial and helpful. I did not find myself at home with the neoplatonizing language that has so dominated writing on prayer in the Christian tradition. That was one of my limitations. But my own experience and my listening to others convinced me that there are other idioms in which the deeper working of the Holy Spirit can be described. Whatever language you may use or discover will in any case be inadequate to the reality. Even the most refined human language, even an idiom that is hallowed by hundreds of years of repetition and variation, is only a stuttering attempt to say something about the incomprehensible mystery of God's intimate dealing with the individual soul. We do well to

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<sup>25</sup> Letter 2383, *Epistolæ et Instructiones S. Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 4 of MI, vol. 29 of MHSI (Madrid, 1906), 127.

<sup>26</sup> J. Veale, “The Dynamic of the Exercises,” *The Way*, Supplement 52 (Spring 1985), 10.

<sup>27</sup> Letter 6023, *Epistolæ et Instructiones S. Ignatii de Loyola*, vol. 10 of MI, vol. 39 of MHSI (Madrid, 1910), 349. See Veale, “Ignatian Prayer,” 13.

remember “the . . . manifold gifts of the grace of God and the varied inspiration of the Holy Spirit.” It is good to be agnostic about what we cannot know.

I have in mind that there are profoundly holy people whose prayer remains simple in a different sense: they are led by a way that is luminous and childlike; it delights in expressing itself in words or wordless conversation and in a homely familiarity with what Jesus did and said in the Gospel.

I have another reason for hesitating before certain styles of writing about prayer, and for that reason I tried as best I could to say very little. I could never quite understand accounts of prayer that suggested that one form of prayer was “higher” or “more advanced” than another. That is not for us to say. It seems (but who are we to say?) that many unlettered people of God (and for all we know many of the lettered) know no other prayer than the rosary or the stations of the cross and “devotions” and the Mass. And they are (but who are we to say?) holy, united with God. Are they more holy? We cannot say. I like what Father Karl Rahner said about his own piety and about such matters, that he enjoyed “a certain ‘educated ignorance.’”<sup>G</sup>

There are other disorders that arise from too much talk about prayer. They were current in my own day and they are current in yours. I included many of them under the blanket term “illusion.” An obvious one is that it is easier to read about prayer than to do it. There are ways of writing about prayer that can lull readers into a pleasing sense that they are enjoying a state of prayer when in fact the words on the page are making them merely feel good. The spirit remains enclosed. Prayer can become a hobby. A certain kind of preoccupation with it can become closed within itself. Because prayer is so obviously a good, a cultivation of prayer can be a subtle form of self-cultivation. Many good persons have through the centuries grown a little cynical to observe how prayerful people can be self-absorbed, centered on the self, closed off from the obvious need of the persons next to them, unaware of the need or pain of the rest of the world, so that the world’s needs and tasks and tragedies pass them by on the other side.

I used to say things to this effect (and Father da Câmara reported it of me more than once), “No, he is a greatly mortified man,” when a man was praised for being a great man of prayer.<sup>28</sup> And he quoted me, too, as saying more than once that many who were given to much praying tended to be opinionated and obstinate, rigid in judgment and behavior. I may have been exaggerating—who knows what exasperation I was feeling at that

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<sup>28</sup> Da Câmara, *Mémorial*, §195. See also §196, §256 and *Const.*, §182.

time?—when I said that, of a hundred people much given to prayer and long penances, ninety were subject to illusion.<sup>29</sup>

It is another matter entirely with prayer that is authentic. It is not for us to measure authenticity. But we do sometimes encounter persons so transparent and real that we are led to say that true prayer leads people out of themselves, outward towards God and towards others. It makes for a humility that is wholly unconscious of itself. It is gentle and supple. It makes the spirit more open to God, more selfless in service, more unpretentious. It is the enemy of falseness and unreality. It brings a person to live the Gospel more truly. It does not at all necessarily remove the deep woundedness of a personality or work miracles of psychological healing. Just as holiness often has a tenuous link with sinlessness, so holiness does not of itself exclude neurosis. Though, of course, it may. What authentic prayer does is to make operative in life and in relationships the free gifts of hope and charity within the believing community and towards all.

In a way, all I am trying to say in my remarks quoted by Father da Câmara in the passage cited above is implied in those guidelines in the *Exercises* by which we may make some attempt to discern the effects of the action of the spirits—of the enemy, who is the father of lies and the begetter of blindness and illusion, and of the good spirit, who is the creator of all that is real and true, gentle, unassuming, who creates persons so absorbed in others that their love is unaware of itself (*SpEx*, §§313–36). Those are the signs by which tentatively we might hazard a judgment as to what is unauthentic and authentic in prayer and in anything else.

As for discernment, you will have noticed, as I have observed increasingly in recent years, how quickly religious language loses its freshness. What was exact (like the word "discernment") becomes nebulous through overuse: it can be made to mean almost anything you want it to mean. It has happened in your own time and quite quickly with the word "discernment," and it did so as well with Father Jerónimo Nadal's *in actione contemplativus*, and even with the phrase I preferred to express the same thing, "to seek and to find God in all things." My formulation has become so overused and through use has come to mean so many things I had not meant, that I think it should be given a rest for a while.

Here I would speak cautiously. We are all so fearful and frail that we need to be encouraged. God so desires to give himself to each of us and the inner action of the Holy Spirit is so powerful that it is an error to speak or write as though finding God were extraordinarily difficult. God is all the

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<sup>29</sup> Da Câmara went on to say, "[I]n fact, I am not sure he did not say ninety-nine" (da Câmara, "Memoriale," MHSI, pp. 644f., §196).

time finding us. God desires that we find him and, like the rain and snow, his word does not return to him empty. But God is not served and people of God are not well served by a flabby use of language that disguises the real and would seem to sell the things of God cheap.

This touches on what has seemed to many to be my stern and daunting observations on abnegation; such as Father da Câmara's comment (in the context of my alleged remark that 90 percent of those who gave long hours to prayer were stiff-necked and wedded to their opinion) that "the Father meant everything to be built on mortification and abnegation of the will."<sup>30</sup> It is a window on what I thought about prayer and its place in the contemplative apostolic life. Therefore it follows that it has its application for all who lead a busy life in the world and combine it with a living faith that seeks to find God in it all.

How, in a life of stress, is a person genuinely to find God? It is obvious that in many a busy life given to zeal, God is not found, nor for that matter sought. How is one to grow through those experiences (not in spite of them but through them) into union with God?

It is evident that there are lives of activity and zeal as well as lives given to prayer in which God is absent. There are ways of being busy as there are ways of praying in which persons do not seek God or seek to build his kingdom. In a life of activity, what began genuinely as service of others slides into a subtle cultivation of oneself or one's life project or one's "spirituality" or, more crudely, into a seeking of power or importance or prestige or the simple satisfaction of excelling or of competing or of seeking a secure sense of being ahead of others.

In a life given to prayer, the self-serving is more subtle. The nobler the human aspiration, the more it needs to be scrutinized, to be submitted nakedly to the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit. The holiest people can be beguiled by the attraction of power or influence or learning, all of which are good things. The noblest aspirations disguise the protean forms of self-seeking, of misappropriation or aggrandizement or pride. It is easy to build one's own kingdom, not God's. Very prayerful people can do ungodly things.

Those remarks recorded by Father da Câmara find their purport and meaning in such considerations. If God is truly to be found, whether in prayer or in the washing of feet, what concerned me, especially in the Constitutions, was the preconditions and dispositions in which God could disclose himself in the disclosure of his will.

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., §256.

For those of you who are familiar with the Exercises, you will recognize that I am speaking of the prayer of the Two Standards. It seems to me more and more, especially as I regard those who call themselves my sons, always with love and often with exasperation, that the daily bread of their prayer needs in one form or another to be the triple colloquy of the Two Standards (*SpEx*, §147).

For those of you who may not be so familiar with the Exercises, the meditation on Two Standards invites retreatants to pray that their spirit be clarified and enlightened to recognize the lying ways in which the "enemy of our human nature" deceives good people under the appearance of good when they are seeking the good. You have only to reflect on your own experience, to recall how you have been so often blinded by the enemy's stratagems. He disguises the crudeness of "riches" and "honors" in ways that make what we want attractive and necessary, rationally persuasive, inevitable, realistic, or nobly self-sacrificing and godlike. In those guidelines for recognizing the devices of the bad spirit, I quoted Saint Paul on the way in which he disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11:14).

If there may perhaps be some reality that corresponds with the term "Ignatian prayer," perhaps it is here. And yet there is nothing here that is not in the four Gospels or in the Pauline Gospel and in the tradition. One prays to be drawn by the Father, "to be placed with Christ" in his experience of being poor and unhonored, and, perhaps, if God should grant it, dishonored (*SpEx*, §167).

The personal dispositions for finding God and finding God's will in authentic prayer or in authentically selfless service are costly. Love is costly. My teaching here is in no way different from Saint John of the Cross's or Saint Teresa's or Saint Thérèse's or of any of the teachers of the ways of God. When God makes himself known, the demands of "greater abnegation . . . in all things possible" (*Const.*, §103) are experienced as an intrinsic requirement of love. You will not need me to tell you that that dying to self is a requirement equally of human love. For those setting out on a life of serious faith and wishing to give themselves to prayer or to service or to a life in which service and prayer compenetrates, the precondition of authenticity and growth is self-abnegation. But if that is not experienced as the other side of love, it were better forgotten.

A life of faith so lived is not possible without prayer. Let us be agreed that "prayer" should be allowed to mean simply what it means in common usage. It was my conviction—and it continues to be—that when God gives the contemplative graces of the Second Week of the Exercises, especially if through love he creates a climate of the heart in which a person is drawn to prefer to share Jesus' experience of being poor and outcast (what

in the Exercises I called the third degree of humility), then whatever one does through that grace, whether it be prayer or the washing of feet, is unitive with God.

Just as the same devices of self-seeking contaminate both prayer and service, so the same graced dispositions of self-stripping open up either prayer or service to the action of God.

In our Constitutions I was concerned to make clear those habitual ways and attitudes that would dispose the whole body of the Society in its individual members to be a flexible instrument in God's hands to complete his work on earth. God cannot use an instrument that is not flexible and sensitive and molded to his hand by long use. The instrument and the master need to be in harmony, in union, or, as I said, "joined." In §813 of the *Constitutions*, I listed some of the things that would unite the human instrument with God and so dispose it that it may be used well by his divine hand. Perhaps now, looking back, it has come home to me that I named prayer only in the fourth place: "familiarity with God in spiritual exercises of devotion."

Such means [of ensuring that a person busy in God's service may be united with God] are, for example, goodness and virtue, and especially love, and a pure intention of the divine service, and familiarity with God our Lord in spiritual exercises of devotion, and sincere zeal for souls for the sake of glory to him who created and redeemed them and not for any other benefit.

People pray in a thousand different ways. Some are led by a way that is dark and dry and unrewarding, like Father Karl Rahner's "winter faith." Some are called by a way of prayer that seems full of light. There is good reason to believe, as Father Jerónimo Nadal seems to have done, that for the apostolic contemplative the purifying darkness is there, not in prayer, but in the labor of service itself and in the frequent obscurities and irrationality of obedience.<sup>31</sup>

If prayer is authentic at all, it will be marked, even in situations of distress and pain, by a constant accompaniment of consolation. It is an error to write or speak in a way that convinces people that there is only one way in which the Holy Spirit draws us towards union with God. There are more languages than one, more images than those of one school of thinking, that can be used in the attempt to describe the incomprehensible mystery of

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<sup>31</sup> Maurice Giuliani, "Nuit et lumière de l'obéissance," *Christus* (1955), 349ff. English version in William J. Young, trans., *Finding God in All Things* (Chicago, 1958), 205.

God's way of giving himself to this person or to that. Beyond that it is good to fall silent before the mystery.<sup>H</sup>

If we take the Contemplation for Attaining Love to be in some sense a culmination of the Exercises, or if we may accept that there I was pointing to the way in which a hard-working person might "keep God always before his eyes," then you will have noticed that when I described the things in which God labors and the gifts that come from above from God, the final words I used were "etc."<sup>32</sup> That opens up for one who has been given the Exercises an entry upon unmapped territory, uncharted regions of entering into the mystery of God in ways only God knows. What happens later in such a person's prayer? Who knows? That is not our business.

It is enough that the human instruments in God's service, making available to God all their God-given gifts of ingenuity and initiative, of imagination and intelligence, desire to be used so that God may be God in his world. The instrument is united with God in being used.

Or God may build his kingdom by leaving his gifts unused. The freedom that I called "being indifferent" entails the possibility that one may not be used at all. It can be bitter and puzzling to discover that God builds his kingdom also through the impotence of illness, the diminishment of aging, or by the dark ways of obedience. By one path or the other, by achievement or by the frustration of achievement, and always in either by the way of the cross, the instrument is sanctified.

That is God's business, not ours. All such concerns we hand over to him. Let us think little of it. Meanwhile there are tasks to hand that are our business. Our goal is not to become holy but to be spent.

May it please the sovereign Goodness that everything be ordered to his holy service and continual praise.

I close by asking through his infinite Goodness that he give us the perfect grace to know his most holy will and to fulfill it completely.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> *Sancti Ignatii . . . Exercitia Spiritualia*, ed. José Calveras, S.J., and Cándido de Dalmasas, S.J., vol. 1 of MI, vol. 100 of MHSI (Rome, 169), p. 310, §237 (autograph version).

<sup>33</sup> Ignatius thus concludes nine hundred and ninety-three of his letters.

## Postscripts

Often in conversation there is no time to pause to explain names or references that crop up. These postscripts attempt to clarify what may need some explanation.

Conversation is comfortable with contradictions. Saint Ignatius was at home with them. The synthesizing cast of his mind was happy to wait upon the process that would bring into harmony the realities in our experience that we rush to oppose to each other: contemplation and action; the ascetical and the mystical; charism and institution; and all those others that we are so familiar with.

This imagined conversation moves in a way that seems to show us the dialectical manner which was congenial to his understanding of the world. We recognize his accent at once in some of the central statements of his Constitutions. The syntax itself discloses how he perceived the interplay of the human and the divine: "*Although . . . nevertheless.*" For example, speaking of the apprenticeship of scholastics to the apostolate and of the flexibility and imagination they must use in dealing with a great diversity of persons throughout such varied regions, he wrote thus:

Although all this can be taught only by the unction of the Holy Spirit and by the prudence which God our Lord communicates to those who trust in His Divine Majesty, nevertheless the way can at least be opened by some suggestions which aid and dispose one for the effect which must be produced by divine grace. (*Const.* §414)

In this present piece we may overhear him say, among many other things, "Although there was nothing new in what I taught about ways or methods of praying, nevertheless it seems that God used me to cast a new light on prayer in its place in a life of apostolic ministry, on the dispositions that open a person to be united with God in a contemplative life that is led wholly in service, in decision, and action."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It may be that the prayer Ignatius calls "drawing the five senses over" (often referred to as applying the senses) is original with him. It is certainly contemplative in its intention.



**A. Jesuit tertians:** Jesuits spend a year after their studies and before final vows in making the Exercises again, in refreshing their spirit, in renewing the contemplative nature of their calling. This has come to be called "the tertianship." Saint Ignatius called it *schola affectus*, sometimes translated as "the school of the heart." But in the late-medieval tradition, while *affectus* included the affective side of the personality, it was a term associated with contemplation and with levels of the spirit that are deeper than emotion.

**B. Contemplation:** The use of this word here may be confusing. When the word is given quotation marks here, it refers to a way of praying the events of the Gospel that Saint Ignatius found current in late-medieval practice. From the beginning of the Second Week of the Exercises, he wants the person making the Exercises to become steeped in the acts and words of Jesus. He proposes a way of being present affectively to the reality of the event by looking and listening, by gazing and attending, by absorbing and being absorbed into, by assimilating and being assimilated to, the "mystery."

In the course of a day during the Exercises, the process of repetition can introduce a deepening quietness and simple presence to Jesus in the Gospel. It can tend towards what the monastic writers would recognize as contemplative.

The components of *lectio divina* are simple and illuminating: *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (ruminating), *oratio* (expression of desire for the good beheld in meditation). *Contemplatio* was something one waited upon to be given.

The ways of prayer that Saint Ignatius introduces to those who are making the Exercises are a natural development from the monastic *lectio divina* (which is not to say they were an improvement). *Lectio* corresponds roughly with what Saint Ignatius styles "calling to mind the narrative." *Meditatio* included what Saint Ignatius calls "contemplation." *Oratio* is the same as the Ignatian "colloquy." In the tradition, *oratio* was held to be as far as we can go, aided by grace, in seeking God.

*Contemplatio* goes beyond those preparatory rungs of prayer. It is understood to be simply given and is not the fruit of our striving. The term in Saint Ignatius's idiom that corresponds with that grace is "consolation."

"Consolation" does not mean being made to feel good. Saint Ignatius characteristically avoids definition. He describes different ways and levels of consolation and expects us to enlarge on his descriptions on the basis of our observation and experience. Often one of the signs of consola-

tion is a quieting and composure of the person. It is experienced to be *de arriba*, from above.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the end of his life, Saint Ignatius one day mentioned in conversation that he did not know how he could live without consolation. Seemingly in response to someone who questioned what he meant by that, he said consolation was “something that he sensed in himself that was not his own, nor could be his own, but was purely from God.”<sup>3</sup>

He expected someone seriously making the Exercises to experience consolation. The grace of the First Week of the Exercises is a grace of profound consolation; it does not await on any completion of a *via purgativa*. The older writers in the monastic tradition would characterize that as contemplative.

In a letter Ignatius urged Francis Borgia to seek “God’s most holy gifts,” adding, “By these gifts I mean those that are not in our power to command . . . but which are simply given by the powerful giver of every good.”

Dom Columba Cary-Elwes describing contemplation distinguishes it from meditation and writes:

Among the Fathers of the Church, notably Augustine, Gregory, and Bernard, and for medieval writers, contemplation meant a form of prayer which does not require discursive reasoning (ratiocination), but in which the soul is aware that God is close and so stays with him in an attitude of humble praise, thanks, sorrow, adoration and longing.

This meaning is now once again the standard one.

Catholic writers prefer “contemplation” to “mysticism.” It has acquired more precise meanings.<sup>4</sup>

We may hope that that standard meaning and use of the term “contemplation” may supplant the term “mysticism.” The use of the term “mysticism” became fashionable from the seventeenth century on; it has become almost unusable, given the confusions of understanding it has been subjected to. Now the popular media, and the intellectuals’ media too,

<sup>2</sup> *De arriba* is part of St. Ignatius’s personal idiom. If he would avoid the term “mystical,” he was clear on those graces that were experienced to be from God. See the “De Arriba” section in Hugo Rahner’s *Ignatius the Theologian* (London, 1968), 3–10.

<sup>3</sup> “Dixit me præsente et multis audientibus, se non posse suo quidem iudicio vivere absque consolatione, id est, nisi aliquid in se deprehenderet quod neque suum esset, neque suum esse posset, sed penitus a Deo penderet” (Pedro Ribadeneira, “De actis P. N. Ignatii,” in *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola*, vol. 2 of MI, vol. 73 of MHSI [Rome: Historical Institute of the Society of Jesus, 1951], 338).

<sup>4</sup> Columba Cary-Elwes, *Experiences with God: A Dictionary of Spirituality and Prayer* (London, 1986), s.v. Contemplation.

commonly make the word refer to the weird and the bizarre, to the wilder shores of the irrational.

The terms "contemplation" and "contemplative" (consolation in Saint Ignatius's language) suggest quietness and silence, presence to the realities of faith and a sense of being a receiver of the action of God.

**C. Hendrik Herp** (Henricus Harphius) (d. 1477): Hendrik Herp was a writer who had immense influence and popularity for more than two centuries, but now is known only to those interested in delving into the history of Christian piety. He was widely read, his work was printed in many vernaculars, his teaching was extraordinarily influential, especially during the flowering of sixteenth-century Spanish contemplation.

A Dutch Franciscan with roots in the Franciscan tradition, he was a disciple of Jan van Ruysbroeck (d. 1381). Franciscan as he was, he attempted "to translate Ruysbroeck's speculative mysticism into an affective mysticism."<sup>5</sup> And being Franciscan, he assigned the Incarnation a central position in his contemplative teaching, just as Saint Ignatius had placed it at the heart of his trinitarian contemplation.

We have to be content to wonder at the coolness of Saint Ignatius toward Herp. Not only was Herp congenial to Pierre Favre and Peter Canisius, he strongly influenced Antonio Cordeses's practice and understanding of prayer and, through Cordeses, the published writings of Álvarez de Paz.

The notorious *Index of Forbidden Books* published by the Spanish inquisitor general in 1559, which so saddened Saint Teresa, since it proscribed some of the books she enjoyed and found helpful, named Herp in the company of Saint John of Avila, Saint Francis Borgia, Francisco de Osuna, and Luis de Granada.

It is a mistake to suppose that the northern school was simply indifferent to the reality of the Incarnation or unheeding of the needs of souls. In Ruysbroeck, for example, "The spirit of God blows us outside so that we may practice love and virtuous deeds."

**D.** "God usually grants this gift of contemplation to those who have long labored in the purification of their hearts . . . *especially* when they labor zealously to sanctify and save others" (emphasis added).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Alois Maria Haas, "Schools of Late Medieval Mysticism," in *High Middle Ages and Reformation*, vol. 2 of *Christian Spirituality*, ed. Jill Raitt (New York and London, 1989), 162f. The quotation here about Jan van Ruysbroeck is taken from p. 165 of this source.

<sup>6</sup> Luis de la Puente, *The Life of Father Balthasar Álvarez* (London, 1868), chap. 14.

E. That the baleful influence on contemplation was not confined to Jesuits and was the effect of an extraordinarily strong dominant culture in the Counter-Reformation Church is interestingly illustrated by the similar story of the Carmelites.

Auguste Saudreau records the lament of a Carmelite who entered the order four years after the death of Saint John of the Cross, Father Joseph of Jesus-Mary Quiroga (d. 1629). He wrote *Don que tuvo San Juan de la Cruz para guiar las almas*, appended to volume 3 of the works of Saint John of the Cross.

As among Jesuits, there were Carmelites who kept the contemplative tradition alive. But

[w]hen the influence and teaching of our saintly Father, Brother John of the Cross, ceased, other Masters arose who extolled the discursive method and the bustling and hasty operations of the soul more than the very simple spiritual acts which allow the divine operation, and the effects of supernatural influence by which perfection is attained.

These Masters brought about a very different work in their disciples [than did Saint John of the Cross], for these disciples came from prayer with aching heads and rarely showed that their minds had been greatly enlightened. And as, in the novitiate, they did not learn how they could enter into contemplation when they were ripe for that kind of prayer, they left the preparatory school without knowing the principal object of their vocation and remained their whole life without knowing it, laboring in prayer with their natural powers without giving place to the divine operation which introduces perfection to the soul.<sup>7</sup>

F. “In giving your reasons for not making use of the help sent you, you do not seem to us to have reasoned very well, taking as you do so spiritual a view of the matter as to lose all touch with reality. . . . Thus by being so very spiritual you cease to be spiritual at all.”

This is from a well-known letter written by Juan Polanco on the instructions of Saint Ignatius to Father John Álvarez (July 18, 1549), who had been critical of Saint Ignatius’s use of resources and influence and called it “bending the knee to Baal.”<sup>8</sup>

G. A year before he died, Karl Rahner in a radio interview spoke about his own piety. “I hope it is the case that spirituality intends to be a relationship to God. One does not know about a relationship to God, whether one

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted by Auguste Saudreau, *The Life of Union with God* (New York, 1927), 252.

<sup>8</sup> Letter 776, *Epistolæ*, vol. 2; Young, *Letters*, 190.

has it, what is decisive in it. I have a certain 'educated ignorance' about myself."

The interviewer replied, "Translate that, please."

"It is a wise, educated ignorance about oneself, which must be entrusted to God, without knowing how it is."

The interview is given the title "Spirituality Requires a Certain Educated Ignorance."<sup>9</sup>

Saint Augustine spoke about *docta ignorantia*. "There is in us, so to speak, a kind of taught ignorance, but taught by the Spirit of God" (*Est ergo in nobis quaedam, ut ita dicam, docta ignorantia, sed docta Spiritu Dei*).<sup>10</sup>

H. The hope of this attempt to imagine oneself into the mind of Saint Ignatius is to make some contribution to the liberation of spirit that has come about with the rediscovery of his flexibility and freedom, his expansiveness and optimism with regard to the abundance of God's goodness. "I will ponder with deep affection . . . how this same Lord desires to give himself to me" (*SpEx*, §234).

"Our Father wanted us in all we did as far as possible to be free, at ease with ourselves, and to be led by the particular light given to each one."<sup>11</sup>

For those who are still, strangely enough, called spiritual directors, Saint Ignatius's idiom and his silences are healthy and liberating. The encounter between his language and one's own experience is a sound basis for helping others to grow authentically in the ways of God.

The more one is also familiar with the great classical authors, especially with the articulate contemplative saints, the better one will come to know in some measure the manifold ways of the Spirit and the great variety of God's action in his people.

It is not so evident that much of the speculative writing on mysticism between, say, 1620 and 1960 is helpful. Bernard McGinn has noted how "[t]he neo-scholastic authors took on important issues, but in an overly conceptual and ahistorical way that has relegated most of their tomes to dusty shelves of libraries."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Karl Rahner in *Dialogue, Conversations and Interviews, 1965-1982*, trans. and ed. Harvey D. Egan (New York, 1986), 297.

<sup>10</sup> St. Augustine, Letter to Proba, *Ep.* 130. 15. 28.

<sup>11</sup> Da Câmara, *Mémorial*, §357.

<sup>12</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (New York, 1991), vol. 1 of *The Presence of God: A History of Western Mysticism*.

But their influence is still with us. A recent rightly admired translation and commentary on the Spiritual Exercises refers to the distinction between acquired contemplation and infused contemplation as “classic.” The author gives no indication that the distinction is as recent as 1620, that an author like August Saudreau went back to the Fathers to confirm his suspicion that the distinction is based on a wrong question and that there is good reason to doubt either the validity or the usefulness of the terminology.

A time will come when another generation will return to this body of literature and find what was valuable in it. But in the meantime we tend to find its categories and abstractions out of touch with experience. I should like to meet someone who has come across Auguste Poulain’s four degrees of ordinary prayer and his four degrees of extraordinary prayer. “There are many writers in these last centuries who seem by no means anxious to find out if their theories are verified by facts.”<sup>13</sup>

Besides showing an absence of history and experience, that kind of writing lacks a scriptural foundation. For example, Saint Paul’s teaching on the diversity of charisms in the body would have raised some wholesome hesitations and moderated some academic dogmatism. The variety of charisms is there in Saint Ignatius’s “manifold gifts of the Spirit.”

A living sense of the manifold gifts of the Spirit, of the variety of God’s ways of communicating himself, and the Ignatian injunction to avoid imposing one’s own way on another person’s seeking for God make one persist in pointing out that there are more ways than one leading toward union with God and more languages than one in which to describe it.

There has been a tendency, still evident in recent publications, to base theory primarily on the greater Spanish mystics. There is still a strong assumption that the mystery of God’s ways with souls is definitively expressed in the language of that tradition. Bernard McGinn makes the interesting observation regarding the French Jesuit writer Michel de Certeau:

One further difficulty in de Certeau’s approach is evident. While agreeing on the importance of the shift that took place in the seventeenth century, one may well think that de Certeau has made too much of it. Much of what he identifies as mysticism is what the Spanish and French mystics before and after this shift said it was.

Has de Certeau done nothing more than cast the traditional French neo-scholastic obsession with Spanish and French mysticism into a different language? . . . When [other forms of Christian mysticism] would tend to

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<sup>13</sup> Saudreau, *Life of Union*, 15.

contradict or qualify his view (as in the case of his claim for the essential anti-institutional and disruptive nature of mysticism), he is strangely silent.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly the unthinking identification of Saint Ignatius with "method" and the continuing ignorance of his contemplative teaching and experience die hard. Kieran Kavanaugh includes Saint Ignatius and García de Cisneros under the heading "Methodic Mental Prayer," and that is it. The ancient assertion is simply repeated that "methodic meditation" was appropriate for those "who had to travel to the Indies or throughout Europe" and who lacked "the inner discipline of the monastery." The contemplative teaching on *discretio* as intrinsic to missionary decision is reduced to "The meditation ought not to end in some merely vague desire for action. The image and ideas should lead to a decision for personal action."<sup>15</sup> That is simply the reiteration of the literature of a hundred years ago.

What is published and widely read marks how people pray and work and try to live their Christian lives. The rediscovery of Saint Ignatius has been a freeing experience for many. But the older mode of treating about mysticism (I naturally am not referring to the writings of the great contemplative saints) induced a chill on the spirit, anxiety and self-preoccupation, an oppressive fear of such supposedly high matters, a pessimism and timidity that left the spirit arid and sometimes with a resigned, mild, pervading desolation. All that had nothing to do with the vitality and freedom of the Gospel.

I hope we may soon come to a point where we can confidently presume a shared understanding of Saint Ignatius and a conviction that our active and often overworked life is also purely contemplative.



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<sup>14</sup> McGinn, *Foundations of Mysticism*, 312.

<sup>15</sup> Kieran Kavanaugh, "Spanish Sixteenth Century: Carmel and Surrounding Movements," in *Post-Reformation and Modern*, ed. Louis Dupré and Don E. Saliers, vol. 3 of *Christian Spirituality* (London, 1989), 70. This three-volume work is one of the most useful and indispensable publications of recent years.





## SOURCES

### Jerónimo Nadal on the Prayer of Ignatius

*In his "In examen annotationes" (Commentarii de Instituto Societatis Iesu, vol. 5 of Epistolæ et monumenta P. Hieronymi Nadal, vol. 90 of Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu [Rome, 1962], pp. 161-63, §§79-80, 31, and 82f.), Jerónimo Nadal speaks thus of the prayer of Saint Ignatius and of his Jesuit followers. The translation is by Joseph F. Conwell, S.J., and is found in his Contemplation in Action (Spokane, 1957), 24-26.*

Certain it is that prayer is an important and an especially necessary part of a religious institute. I mean that prayer of which St. Paul said, "I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the understanding" (1 Cor. 14:15), which embraces all divisions of spiritual effort, purgative, illuminative, and unitive. These, therefore, the Society embraces with great diligence and eagerness, in devotion of spirit in Christ Jesus. For there are none of hers whom she does not exercise first of all in those meditations which have to do with penance and the stripping off of the old man, and then in the contemplation of all Christ's mysteries, in which we seek to aspire to an understanding of the way, the truth, and the life; and finally we rest in love, so that we place our end in what ought to be the source of prayer, namely, in charity, the most divine virtue, so that by reason of this virtue and its fervor and zeal we go forth to our ministries in cheerfulness of spirit and humility of heart, with devotion and courage in Christ Jesus. This we gather from the book of our Exercises.

But there is one thing I shall not omit (even though this is not the proper place to speak of prayer but elsewhere): we know that Father Ignatius received from God the singular grace to enjoy freely the contemplation of the Trinity

and to rest in it. One day the grace would lead him to contemplate the whole Trinity, to be drawn to it and be completely united to it in great devotion and consolation. At another time he contemplated the Father, at another the Son or the Holy Spirit. He enjoyed this contemplation frequently at other times, but especially (almost as his only prayer) during the last days of his life.

Father Ignatius enjoyed this kind of prayer by reason of a great privilege and in a most singular manner, and this besides, that in all things, actions, and conversations he contemplated the presence of God and experienced the reality of spiritual things, so that he was a contemplative likewise in action (something that he used to express by saying, "God must be found in everything").

We have seen that grace and interior light break forth on his shining countenance and in the splendor and certainty of his actions in Christ, much to the wonderment and consolation of all of us; and we have felt something of that grace diverted, as it were, to the rest of us. The same privilege, therefore, that we understand was granted to Father Ignatius we believe has been imparted to the whole Society, and we are confident that the grace of that prayer and contemplation has been prepared in

the Society for all of us, and we maintain that it is linked with our vocation.

Therefore, let us also place the perfection of our prayer in the contemplation of the Trinity, and in the love and

union of charity, extended, indeed, to our neighbor through the ministries of our vocation, which, to be sure, we easily prefer to the taste and sweetness of prayer.

*Elsewhere ("Patrum dicta aliquot," in Selecta Natalis monumenta, vol. 4 of Epistolæ P. Hieronymi Nadal, vol. 47 of Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu [Madrid, 1905], 645), Nadal quotes comments made by Diego Laínez regarding the prayer of Ignatius. Again, the translation is the work of Joseph F. Conwell (Contemplation in Action, 27).*

Master Laínez said to me concerning him: "He is on very close terms with God in a very rare fashion, for he has already passed beyond all sensible visions, like seeing Christ present or the Virgin, and those that are seen through species and representations; now he enjoys purely intellectual ones in the unity

of God." Afterwards I [Nadal] learned from the same Father Ignatius that he held intercourse with the divine persons and found a variety of distinct gifts from the different persons, but in this contemplation he found greater gifts in the person of the Holy Spirit.

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