



STUDIES

IN
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

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**Saint Ignatius Asks, "Are You Sure
You Know Who I Am?"**

JOSEPH VEALE, S.J.

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THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

The Seminar is composed of a number of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

It concerns itself with topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially United States Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces through its publication, *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*. 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.

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Of all things

SAINT IGNATIUS ASKS,
“ARE YOU SURE YOU KNOW
WHO I AM?”

Joseph Veale, S.J.

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Of all things . . .

You may be interested in this example of what could never happen in the Society of Jesus—but did. At one time in the past a Jesuit superior general appointed a novice to govern the Society of Jesus. Who was the general? Who was the novice? What were the circumstances? The answers to those questions you will find at the end of these remarks—but no skipping ahead to them, please!

As I thank the members of the Seminar who have completed their three-year term, Richard Blake, Philip Chmielewski, Richard Hauser, and Thomas Lucas, please join me in welcoming the new members. They are Robert Bireley, professor of history at Loyola University in Chicago; Lawrence Madden, former pastor of Holy Trinity Parish in Washington and presently director of the Georgetown Center for Liturgy, Spirituality, and the Arts; and G. Ronald Murphy, professor of German language and Liturgy at Georgetown.

And here, surely, is the place to recognize another person who five times a year for more than a dozen years now has done the copy-editing of every STUDIES manuscript. As you might imagine, those manuscripts come from writers each of whom has his own quirks, both positive and negative. He has also regularly prepared the camera-ready material that finally emerges as the copies of STUDIES that you hold in your hands and read. That man is John L. McCarthy, S.J., a member of the Wisconsin Province and an associate editor at the Institute of Jesuit Sources. Without him, STUDIES would not be what it is. Thank you, John!

Whatever one may presently think of the matter, Bishop Felix Davidek and Ludmila Javorova most surely thought that on December 29, 1970, at Brno, Czechoslovakia, he ordained her to the Roman Catholic priesthood. This remarkable story has been told in a recently published book, *Out of the Depths*, by Miriam Therese Winter (New York: Crossroad, 2001, 260 pp.). It is a deeply moving account of love and fidelity to the Church in the context of forty years of Communist persecution, of imagination and daring in the midst of danger and ambiguity, and, above all, of extraordinary personal commitment. Because it is not a scholarly historical treatise, the book leaves the historian with questions to be answered and corroborative material to be provided. A full-blown scholarly study ought to be undertaken before documents vanish, memories fade, and participants die. But on its own merits this book is very much worth reading and pondering.

Felix Davidek, ordained a priest in 1945 at the beginning of the Communist takeover of Czechoslovakia, later imprisoned, sometimes in solitary confinement, released, and routinely under surveillance, nonetheless managed to found Koinotes, a clandestine community of committed Catholics. In 1967 he was validly but secretly ordained a bishop. (As early as 1951 other bishops had been secretly ordained, among them two Jesuits. One of these, Jan Korec, is today Cardinal Bishop of Nitra in Slovakia.)

Javorova was among those most deeply involved in sustaining the Koinotes community and fostering the pastoral work of Davidek. In 1970 after a contentious meeting of Koinotes representatives who were divided on the question of women priests, Davidek carried out the rite of ordination on Javorova. For twenty years, up to the "Velvet Revolution" and the fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia, the Koinotes community carried on its work. Then news of unusual ordinations gradually came to the attention of Church leaders in the West. They have since, to use an anodyne phrase, sought to "regularize the situation." Ludmila Javorova only reluctantly made her story public in recent years. As told in this book, it is a story of both simplicity and complexity, of beauty and astonishing dignity.

From the Institute of Jesuit Sources comes a new book, *A Guide to Jesuit Archives* (x + 178 pp, \$19.95). It presents data on the official archives of the ninety provinces and independent regions of the Society of Jesus on every continent as well as data on the central or Roman archives of the Society. The book opens up and enhances research opportunities around the world for scholars and others in a great variety of fields. Another announcement of interest: Did you know that the IJS has its own Website now, <www.jesuitsources.com>? It will give you the opportunity to order our publications online. Visit us there; we'll be happy to welcome you.

Did you jump ahead to this last paragraph? Did you guess or deduce or already know the answers to the questions in the first paragraph? The general was St. Ignatius. The novice was Cristobal de Madrid. The circumstances were the increasingly frequent illness of Ignatius in 1556, the year of his death. Madrid, a priest before entering the Society in 1555, had been a friend of Ignatius and, indeed, a consultant or advisor to him for several years. After Madrid had been a novice for only a few days, Ignatius demonstrated his confidence in him by appointing him to work with André des Freux, the rector of the German College, to quell a sort of mutiny there among the students who had rebelled when Ignatius ordered them to speak Italian at the college rather than their native German. Apparently Madrid pleased Ignatius by the skill with which he carried out this delicate mission, because in June of the next year, 1556, when Ignatius was so ill that he could no longer occupy himself with the work of general of the Society, he temporarily turned over all his governance powers to Polanco and Madrid. That presented a problem, to say the least, because Ignatius had earlier named Nadal as vicar general, and Borgia in Spain also seems to have had full governing powers, at least for that country. The situation became even more complicated, of course, when, upon the death of Ignatius, Laínez was elected vicar general, in accordance with the Constitutions. But Laínez was at this time on the point of death and, until his recovery, he used Polanco and Madrid just as Ignatius had. When Laínez later was elected the second general of the Society, Madrid became one of the assistants. He was also (in 1556) the first Jesuit to write a book advocating frequent Communion, a controverted position then and for the next several centuries and one that brought considerable trouble to the Society from the more rigorist theologians and prelates.

John W. Padberg, S.J.
Editor

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**Marian Cowan, C.S.J., and
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SAINT IGNATIUS ASKS, "ARE YOU SURE YOU KNOW WHO I AM?"

A Note to Introduce What Comes After

A few years ago, in a fit of high spirits I wrote "Saint Ignatius Speaks about Ignatian Prayer."¹ I thought it might be illuminating to have him speak to us in a relaxed way, as it were, conversationally. This is a kind of sequel. It asks: How can we be sure we know the real Ignatius? How do we find the authentic original spirit?

When it eventually becomes possible to write the history of Jesuit spirituality, it will have to show how the fortunes of a spiritual teaching like St. Ignatius's are influenced by the different cultures it lives through, by the currents of secular mood and thinking, as well as by the religious culture of different times, by the spiritual traditions of different continents, by the Church's ever changing self-understanding, by a dominant theological style, by the aspirations and needs of the people of God, by passing religious fashions, by the fears that move authorities—and by the deeper movements of the Spirit of God as well.

It is sobering to glance at the variations of interpretation in the history of the Society that have arisen in the course of more than four and a half centuries—just as has happened in the Church and in any human institution. If a new generation prides itself on getting it right, it can be

¹ See STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS 28, no. 2 (March 1996).

Joseph Veale, S.J., a member of the Irish Province, has taught English literature at Gonzaga College in Dublin and has been the director of the tertianship program for the Irish Province as well as of the combined program for the Irish and British Provinces of the Society. He has written extensively and worked in the field of Ignatian spirituality, directing the Spiritual Exercises in Europe, North America, and Africa. His address is Milltown Park, Dublin 6, Ireland.

healthily chastened when it looks at history and observes how earlier dominant orthodoxies failed to question themselves or to listen to a different voice. It is good for us to stop from time to time and to ask each other, "Whom are we currently writing off?"

"There are no static answers to questions of historical authenticity." Those words of Fr. John W. O'Malley are the conclusion and the beginning of these reflections. To highlight that borrowing from him is to say how much these musings are indebted to all his writings and shared conversation. He is not guilty of the misuses of his wisdom.

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 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 recall or suggest. 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, maybe I should have put it this way." Conversation is comfortable with contradictions.

So, now, may we be allowed to suppose that St. Ignatius is in conversation with us in the first decade of the new century.

Ignatius Speaks

When I lean over the parapet and take a look at what Jesuits are up to, I am puzzled when I see myself. I mean when I see what Jesuits have made of me. In this last half century, I feel like someone who has been dismantled and reassembled. I've become a congenial and warmhearted member of a group of companions who were friends in the Lord.

Well, fair enough. But it was not like that fifty years ago. Then I was stern, more than a little inhuman, a soldier, militant, militaristic, an organizer of genius on soldierly lines, a martinet expecting prompt and unquestioning execution, a proposer of blind obedience, not greatly given to feeling or affection, rational, a man of steely willpower, hard in endurance, with his sensibility (if there was any of that there at all) under control. Heroic. That was it. I was a hero.

People need heroes. I suppose every generation re-creates its heroes in its own image. Religious orders are no exception. The stern and strong-willed man had a long run for his money. That image may have helped many a man alone in the jungle or in the boredom of the classroom. It was the picture by and large that was dominant since our Society was restored (1814) and reestablished under Fr. General Jan Roothaan (1829-53). It goes even further back to the time of Fr. Claudio Aquaviva (1581-1615) and even earlier. The first published biography—the one Fr. Pedro Ribadeneira, who had lived and worked closely with me, wrote with enthusiasm soon after I died—did not please and a new biography was commissioned.² It was around that time that Fr. General Francis Borgia required all the manuscript copies of the story of my pilgrimage to be returned to Rome.³ You were already painting an official portrait that was composed through the lens of what you saw yourself to be.

I cannot say I recognize myself. We don't know ourselves too well, do we? Certainly we do not know what people are going to make of us when we are gone. You have only to listen to any group relating what happened last week to hear the disparate versions of the same event. It makes you wonder, doesn't it? There are axes to grind. You wonder at the way history gets written.

The newer version of me, the Iñigo one, the one that has grown since you began to go back to reflect on the beginnings of it all—since, say, the 1960s—is softer than the older picture. That document that Fr. da Câmara put together from what he remembered of my telling him “how God had dealt with my soul” (what you often call my autobiography, when it wasn't, was it?) has been mulled over a lot these last forty years. I'm well aware that that has been done with affection.

What you have discovered by looking at so many more of my writings, my letters, and the fragment of my spiritual journal that has

² Ribadeneira appointed himself as Ignatius's Boswell: “Inside and outside the house, within the city and away from it, I was never away from his side on every occasion I could, noticing all his manners, sayings and actions” (quoted in José Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, *Ignatius of Loyola the Pilgrim Saint* [Chicago, 1994], 8). It is surprising, then, that Ignatius chose Luis Gonçalves da Câmara to record his story.

³ In 1567 Borgia requested that all the manuscript copies of da Câmara's text be sent to Rome. Borgia wanted whatever was published to be edifying. It seems fairly certain that a first chapter, the story of the saint's sins, was shredded. Idigoras says that Ribadeneira's biography was selective. He omitted the confession of sins to a layman at Pamplona, which appears in the autobiography. Idigoras says that Ribadeneira omitted what would have shown Ignatius's independence from the social and political environment of his age (*Pilgrim Saint*, 23).

survived, along with comments made by my contemporaries, is a man of feeling, often given to tears, of daring imagination, something of a dreamer, a man of sensitive self-awareness, attending to the subtle movements of his sensibility, a man of strong emotions, with a gift for friendship and affection. You have even noticed that they used to hear shared laughter coming from my office.

I observe that you often like to bring into your homilies, or, God help us, your annual panegyrics, the time recorded by Fr. Diego Laínez:

The busy general was observed at prayer. . . . He used to go up to the terrace where he could see the open sky. He would stand there and take off his hat. Without stirring, he would fix his eyes on the heavens for a short while. Then, sinking to his knees, he would make a lowly gesture of reverence. After that he would sit on a bench, for his body's weakness did not permit him to do otherwise. There he was, head uncovered, tears running drop by drop, in such sweetness and silence, that not a sob, no sigh, no noise, no movement of body was noticed.⁴

Well, you'll have to admit that that is not like the older picture. It is not as though this is a touching-up of an older canvas, a shadowing here, a raising of a color there, but, as it seems to me, quite a different picture. A reversal of almost everything in the old.

The fact of the difference raises a few questions for you. At least I hope it does. How do you know you have a true picture of me?

Clearly the two pictures are incomplete. There is a good deal of truth in both. Most of us are a bundle of contradictions anyway, and I had more than my fair share of them. Your sense of history tells you that neither interpretation is the whole story.⁵

You have been learning how, quite soon after I died, even some of my closest fellow workers and friends were giving a helping hand to some of the myths.⁶ They could not resist the temptation to beat the soldierly drum. My brief brush with soldiering was useful for seeing me in later years as military, not to say militant. And they—some of them perhaps to enlarge me

⁴ Pedro de Ribadeneira, *Vita Ignatii Loyolæ*, ed. Candidus de Dalmases, vol. 4 of *Fontes Narrativi de s. Ignatio de Loyola (FN)*, vol. 93 of the *Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu* (MHSI; Rome, 1965), 747, 749. This work is cited by Charles E. O'Neill, S.J., in his "Acatamiento: Ignatian Reverence in History and in Contemporary Culture," *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS* 8, no 1 (January 1976): 7.

⁵ According to Idigoras, Ribadeneira characterized Ignatius as a close-tongued, guarded Basque who was mysterious and enigmatic, one who consciously hid himself behind masks, giving a certain equivocation to his words and actions (*Pilgrim Saint*, 23 and xi).

⁶ John W. O'Malley, S.J., *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, 1993).

or to make me more important than I really was—liked to see drama in the confrontation of two giants, Luther and Ignatius. Well, really. I can't say I see myself in that kind of light. That particular piece of theater has distorted people's perceptions of the scope and purpose of the Company, at least as I saw it. You still find the distortion repeated in the history books as though it were established fact. We aspired to be less than (and more than) simply agents of what you used to call the Counter-Reformation.

You were already, so soon, doing what all organizations and nations like to do, composing a picture that flatters them. They wanted to present an image of what they would like to be. Soon admiration and desire get to work. And now that you have made my Exercises, other influences insinuate themselves. Fr. Jerónimo Nadal said that my narration of God's working in me was “truly to form the order.”⁷ As he saw it, my experience would be a kind of paradigm for the growth in each of you, for all of you, through the centuries. But Fr. Nadal was not slow to paint a picture of me that supported his conviction of what he judged the Company ought to become.

I am not saying that these men were not genuine. Good men do not set out to doctor the facts. But you and I know enough of human nature to acknowledge that we cling to versions of ourselves and versions of the facts that express our feelings, that touch on our loyalties. We often paint an ideal in terms of what we want the facts to have been. It is not unusual, in loyalty or in love, to like to have a share in a person's reflected glory, to bask a little in his light, to present one's set-up, beloved as it may be, with a shade of self-congratulation. Over a period of almost five hundred years, you have sometimes set yourselves up to be the object of knowing smiles for seeking God's glory by means of the greater glory of the Society. Well, I don't mind that. You cannot be naive and Jesuitical at the same time.

It has been much the same, hasn't it, with “Jesuit Spirituality”? I wanted to help people to know Jesus in the Gospel and to find God. I wanted all of us, all of you, to help them, in freedom, to be open to whatever way God desired to give himself to them.

If we have to use the term “spirituality,” unsatisfactory and all as it is, it must be obvious that your current practice and your current vocabulary are not simple adjustments made in the teaching and practice of sixty years ago. There is a strong contrast between the Jesuit spirituality of those days and the style of spirituality now more commonly called Ignatian. The change cannot be captured in a sentence. But it might without too crude a

⁷ Luis Gonzalez de Câmara, S.J., “Acta patris Ignatii,” in *Fontes narrativi de s. Ignatio de Loyola (FN)*, vol. 1, ed. Dionysius Fernandez Zapico, Candidus de Dalmases, and Petrus Leturia, vol. 66 of the MHSI (Rome, 1951), 361.

simplification be described as a shift from the antimystical to the mystical, from a stern ascetical regime to something more contemplative.

I would expect you to ask: Is this change a response to fad or fashion, an accommodation to contemporary needs, a forcing of the evidence to make me say what suits a flabbier mood, to make me say what I did not mean to say and would not wish to have said? Is it no more than a replacing of a healthy asceticism with an undemanding mysticism?

The older version had its vigorous critics from outside your circles. It was commonly charged against the spirituality purveyed by Jesuits that it was rationalist, voluntarist, Pelagian, moralistic, individualistic, desiccating. It was a bully. It would force the free play of the spirit into a straitjacket of method. Besides, it was accused of forming many religious who were anxious, scrupulous, intense, introspective, self-preoccupied. And all the while (since all these musings point to the ironies in all of us), it was generally granted that your pastoral work with laypeople, in the confessional or in the pulpit, was hopeful, optimistic, an allayer of scrupulosity, a dissolver of fears.

After I died—indeed, I suppose, now that I think of it, before I died—there were differing accounts of what I intended, accounts by men with a desire to be true and fair. They cared that the body of the Company should be true to its beginnings.

Who could better claim to know my spirit than Fr. Luis Gonçalves da Câmara? It was he who recorded the story of my pilgrimage. And his *Memoriale* is a valuable compilation of reminiscences and of sayings attributed to me.⁸

Fr. da Câmara was at the center of a contention quite early on as to what my spirit was really like. What was the authentic “way of proceeding” of the Company? Fr. da Câmara and Fr. Leão Henriques, cousins, were confessors to the King in Portugal and to the Cardinal Infante. The cousins were powerful and they had no hesitation in wielding their power. They knew what the Company should be. It was their orthodoxy that was dominant in Portugal and that effectively supplanted the authority of their provincial. They ignored the instructions of the General, Francis Borgia, and Borgia’s visitor, Fr. Diego Miró.

You must have read Andrew Ross’s account of this. Fr. da Câmara insisted that

⁸ Luis Gonçalves da Câmara, S.J., “*Memoriale seu Diarium*,” in *FN* 1:508. The *Memoriale* was translated into French by Roger Tandonnet under the title *Memorial* (Paris, 1966).

he knew the true Ignatian way of proceeding. . . . [He] maintained that leaders should guide the members of the Society along a road to perfection by a rigorous exertion of autocratic leadership, punishing all defects and failures vigorously and subduing passions by severe mortifications. Borja [insisted] on a mutually close understanding between superiors and juniors, where direction was to be *per il modo soave*.

As soon as Miró had ended his period as visitor, da Câmara (who had no authority) “swept through the province restoring the previous severe style.”⁹

Who was in the right? The General, Fr. Francis Borgia, because he had authority and because Fr. da Câmara was required to be obedient?

It would seem so, wouldn't it? But you will recall that in my time I acted in ways that Fr. da Câmara could have used as ammunition. It was he who quoted me in his *Memoriale* as though to praise mortification over prayer, and it was well known that I could be stern in imposing penances when something annoyed me.¹⁰ And at times I was anything but gentle in my treatment of Frs. Láinez and Nadal.

My teaching about the way to God, on the means that may help others to the freedom that opens them to experience God, very soon became a point of differing interpretations. People could feel passionately about it. Soon after I died, there were two contending views, one of which could crudely be called the “ascetic” and the other the “mystical.”

They cared that the body of the Company should be true to its beginnings.

A tension existed here, one that remained for generations. The tension was a mirror, of course, of what was happening in the culture of the Church and of religion in Europe. The culture influenced you and you influenced it.

The disagreements among you in the 1500s and the 1600s were reflections of what was happening in the culture of the Catholic Church at that time. The story illuminates the way a dominant orthodoxy within the Church gains ground. Moreover, the ecclesiastical culture is blown upon by shifts in the world's prevailing winds, resulting in resistance to them or unthinking compliance with them. Or, indeed, by becoming what you hate.

⁹ Andrew C. Ross, “Alessandro Valignano: The Jesuits and Culture in the East,” in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley et al. (Toronto, 1999), 340.

¹⁰ Da Câmara, *Memoriale*, no. 195 (p. 644). See also nos. 196, 256 n. 7.



For the most part, the dominant assumptions were “ascetical.” Some would say “Pelagian,” another of those casual labels that beg too many questions and mislead as much as they give light. The dichotomy is far too simple, of course. No group of people—especially a group of men formed to think on their feet in unforeseen situations and to have strong convictions—no such group can be truthfully represented in some teacher’s simplifying distinction. Life is more complex than melodrama. The danger with a label is that it can be taken to exhaust the meaning, the reality, of a person or of a movement. And, besides, over a period of almost five hundred years, you have been dealing with a great variety of cultures. You have been present to all the diversities of human experience, from the sinfulness of holy people to the goodness of the sinner. You are familiar, even more than I am, with the contradictions of the concrete. No wonder then that some of you did not cleave to the dominant orthodoxy. But by and large, as I have been looking on, the writers who interpreted me in more contemplative terms seem for much of the time to have been marginal. Marginalized, perhaps. Certainly the orthodoxy in possession in the generations preceding Vatican Council II was the “ascetic” one.

It is clear from the various early sketches of “directories” of the Exercises that there were many different understandings present among you.¹¹ The “ascetics” in the 1500s and early 1600s were fearful that the “contemplatives,” especially in Spain, might weaken the apostolic character of the Company. All that prayer might render zeal flabby. A rugged stoicism uncontaminated with that nonsense about affectivity was truer to the Jesuit way. A Jesuit in a jungle contending with humidity and mosquitoes was not a picture of a “contemplative” that the imagination of those days could cope with. There were some of you, as you know, who would have formed themselves into something like a congregation of cloistered men or hermits. The “ascetics” were zealous to protect the tradition. The “contemplatives” like Fr. Alvarez (at twenty-six the spiritual director of Teresa of Avila) on the whole understood me better.¹² They were clear that prayer must not supplant the apostolate. Their ascetical teaching was as demanding as mine,

¹¹ See, for example, Martin E. Palmer, S.J., trans. and ed., *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

¹² “Balthasar Alvarez was St. Teresa’s confessor from 1559 to 1564. He entered the novitiate in 1555, at the age of twenty-two; four years later, twenty-six years old and newly ordained, he became one of St. Teresa’s directors. St. Teresa wrote of him, “I believe he is the confessor who has done me the most good.” The references are given in E. Allison Peers, *Handbook of the Life and Times of St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross* (London, 1954), 111.

possibly more so. They held that God gives contemplative gifts especially to those called to apostolic labors.¹³

Fairly early on, the authorities among you wished to prescribe how Jesuits should pray, and they insisted on a narrow understanding of “meditation.” I think they had lost sight of my way of dealing with persons “according to the measure of God’s grace imparted to each.” If I had had the word “mystical” to hand, I am fairly certain I would not have used it. If someone even now were to challenge me: “Come now, do you mean mystical in the strict sense or in the broad sense? Are you talking here about acquired or infused, ordinary or extraordinary contemplation?” I’d keep my counsel. I’d say it was enough to know how to respond. That it is more important to have the freedom to rejoice in “more spiritual visitations or fewer.”¹⁴

I have to agree with what Fr. Balthasar Alvarez says in his *relatio* to Fr. Mercurian’s visitor, who was in Spain to sift through the confusions and to reconcile the contentions. There Fr. Alvarez patiently tried to convince him that in unitive grace there is a spectrum of degrees. I had that in mind when I wrote of those who “do not understand the way in which the gifts of grace are communicated in one and the same Spirit, . . . who do not know the manifold gifts of the grace of God.”¹⁵

The danger with a label is that it can be taken to exhaust the meaning, the reality, of a person or of a movement.

¹³ “God usually grants this gift of contemplation to those who have long labored at the purification of their hearts, at overcoming their passions and meditating on the truths of the Gospel, especially when they labor zealously to sanctify and save others” (Luis de La Puente, *The Life of Father Balthasar Alvarez*, chap. 14 [London, 1868], emphasis added).

¹⁴ For the text of the *Constitutions (Cons.)*, see, for example, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996). The reference here is to no. 260.

¹⁵ The whole text alluded to here runs as follows: “He blamed those masters in spiritual things who wanted to impose the same way that had proved useful for themselves in living or in prayer. This is dangerous, he used to say, and leads a man astray who does not know the manifold gifts of the grace of God and the varied inspirations of the Holy Spirit and who does not understand the way in which the gifts of grace are communicated in one and the same Spirit. ‘For every man has his own special gift from God, the one so but the other so’ ” (Ribadeneira, *Vita Ignatii*, 854/5; see also: da Câmara, *Memoriale*, no. 677 n. 7).



When the “ascetics” and the “mystics” differed with one another, both sides were aware that the charism of the order was new and that it needed to be defended against assimilation to older forms of consecrated life. But neither group were at all clear in what the newness consisted. Neither side had a language. They did not have the words in which to articulate the difference.

Already, before I died in 1556, the Exercises were under attack. It is a good example of the ways a dominant orthodoxy works. When you are defending a position that has not yet acquired a confident language, especially if you are forced to use the vocabulary of your debating opponent, you can insensibly grant too much and be quietly taken over by what you set out to oppose.

The fiercest opponents of the Exercises were two of the foremost Spanish theologians of the time, Melchor Cano and Tomas Pedroche. In the 1940s a fellow Dominican, Emilio Colunga, in a study of sixteenth-century Spain, calls them the “intellectualists” and distinguishes them from the “mystics.”¹⁶ As “intellectualists” they were fearful of anything that savored of subjectivism. Orthodoxy would be saved by rationality.

Fra Melchor Cano came to see me several times. In Spain he had come to know of the Company, and what he saw he did not like. He believed that only a good tree bears good fruit, so he had better check out the cause of it all. If a founder was not holy, the followers could not be harmless. Accordingly, when he was in Rome, he asked to see me, and we invited him to dinner.¹⁷

He discovered that I was a fraud. Fair enough. People had said I was holy. He found I was wanting in integrity. I was vain and conceited. He saw through to my narcissism.¹⁸ He reported that I complained that I had been persecuted in Spain. I talked about revelations I had received from God. When the two of us called on Cardinal Farnese, I announced my arrival at

¹⁶ E. Colunga, O.P., “Intellectualistas y místicos en la teología española en el siglo XVI,” *Ciencia Tomista* 9 and 10 (1914), cited in I. Iparraguire, *Practica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio de Loyola en Vida de su Autor* (Rome, 1946), 92.

¹⁷ Terence O’Reilly, “Melchor Cano and the Spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola,” in *Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo*, ed. Juan Plazaola (Bilbao, 1992). See also: “Melchor Cano’s *Censura y parecer contra el Instituto de los Padres Jesuitas*: A Transcription of the British Library Manuscript,” in Terence O’Reilly, *From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross: Spirituality and Literature in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (London: Variorum, 1995). All this reflection is indebted to Professor O’Reilly’s article.

¹⁸ William W. Meissner, S.J., *The Psychology of a Saint* (New Haven and London, 1992).

the door with a list of titles and grand connections, names that carried weight. "[D]e lo qual infirió el Autor habia mucho viento." I was full of wind.

It was the Exercises that really angered him and made him fearful. They turn soldiers into women and *caballeros* into hens. They were full of heresy. They would subvert church and state. Jesuits urged a contemplative way upon all and sundry. (You would say now, some of you, "cheap mysticism.") In doing that, you Jesuits were lacking in realism about human beings; you were imprudent and indiscriminating. If you teach people how to pray, they will neglect their work and responsibilities. It was an error to hold that you can combine an active and a contemplative life. Too much prayer would make zeal flabby.

It is instructive to note what Cano found particularly dangerous. The Exercises gave people beforehand an expectation that they would experience consolation and experience God. The Exercises promised experience. That was to force God's hand. People were to learn to speak about the sensible graces they received. That was of the devil. Jesuits gave an excessive importance to conformity with God's will. What I had said about "indifference" was dangerous. It was a false piety and against the example of Christ. Cano was particularly incensed by the dangerous teaching that God deals directly with the soul.¹⁹

For men like Melchor Cano and Pedroche, strong fighters for the purity of the faith, anything that looked mystical was too close to the *alumbrados* for safety. They were wary of whatever gave importance to the interior illumination of the Spirit.

Both of them went straight to the heart of the Exercises, and they found it corrupt. Pedroche's censure was accurate in pinpointing those places in the text that are contemplative (or, if you must, mystical).²⁰ He wrote perceptively:

These words manifest and clearly contain and affirm and teach a proposition that is temerarious and scandalous and heretical. . . . Preaching has no place, nor a preacher, to persuade [the exercitant] which particular choice among many goods he ought to make. . . . It is clear to me that this doctrine belongs to the *dejados* and *alumbrados*; the written word is left

¹⁹ *SpEx* 15. Cano also includes the familiar charge made against what you fear and hate, that your enemy is unchaste. "He mentions several cases, referring twice to the branch for women founded by Isabel Roser, an experiment which (he claims) ended in sexual licence" (O'Reilly, "Censura y paracer," 377).

²⁰ The term "mystical" is used in its larger sense to designate "the aspect of passivity that is found again and again in every interior life" (Joseph de Guibert, S.J., "Mystique," *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique (RAM)* 7 [1926]: 14).

aside, with all the teaching and doctrine which good and wise men have given. These men give themselves over to what the spirit and God tells them there in the recesses of the soul.²¹

In the first decade of the 2000s, you will not find that style unfamiliar. The Spirit induces nervousness in the watchdogs of theological accuracy. It is the natural fear of the inquisitor that when people attend to the leading of the Spirit, they escape control.²²

What is interesting is that within twenty years of my death it was the Pedrochean theology that was becoming the dominant orthodoxy among Jesuits. The Jesuit spirituality of seventy years ago, as Fr. Joseph de Guibert presented it in his historical essay on Jesuit spirituality, is in almost all respects the same as that of Cano and Pedroche.²³

You have access to the early documents (many of which I never laid my eyes on) and to the recorded witness of those who were close to me.

What I want to put to you is the question of authenticity. When you look at the shifts of tradition, at the variations found in your historical experience, how do you know you've got it right?

In those early times under Generals Francis Borgia (1565-72) and Everard Mercurian (1573-80) and for many decades thereafter, what was exercising men on different sides was **the question of authenticity**. The "ascetics" were zealous to protect the stripling Company from what was *alienum* to the true tradition and spirit.²⁴ There was a fear on the part of some that you might not be taken seriously as real "religious." The generals feared that the spiritualizing tendencies among some of your men from Spain might dilute or radically change the apostolic character of the charism. They may have been right. Though now looking back they seem to me to have overreacted. The overworked Jesuits in northern Europe were unlikely to be excessive in the time they gave to prayer. There were

²¹ See Ignacio Iparraguirre, S.J., *Practica de los Ejercicios* (Rome, 1946), 99.

²² There is a fallacy frequently repeated in books on mysticism that mysticism is necessarily at odds with the institution.

²³ Joseph de Guibert, *La Spiritualité de la Compagnie de Jesus: Esquisse historique* (Rome, 1953). The author died unexpectedly in 1942. Fr. General Ledóchowski was displeased with the manuscript. It was published eleven years later under his successor, Fr. John Baptist Janssens. An English translation was published in 1964, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (Chicago, 1964; St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964).

²⁴ See Michel de Certeau, "La Reforme de l'interieur au temps d'Aquaviva, 1581-1615," *Les Jesuites* 55 (Paris, 1974).

those among you who argued that contemplative forms of prayer were alien to the authentic charism. And, having a right sense that the charism is inseparable from, is intrinsic to, the Exercises, they insisted that it was improper for Jesuits to pray in any way that was not recommended there. What they seem to have meant by that was the method of prayer I suggested in the First Week of the Exercises.²⁵

The second and third generations of the Company were concerned with protecting your authentic spirit, but they had no adequate grasp of it. How could they? You have access to the early documents (many of which I never laid my eyes on) and to the recorded witness of those who were close to me. The men who came after me, after I died, did not have that resource. They had a dwindling oral tradition and a handful of manuscripts. Your recent renewed grasp of the Exercises and, to some extent, of the other documents and stories that you call my "sources" would have been impossible without the scholarship of the men who edited and published since 1894 the more than one hundred volumes of the *Monumenta historica*. For the first half of this last century, the *Monumenta* were being quietly plumbed, scholars secretly burrowing away, discrediting the dominant orthodoxy of the generations. Since the 1960s this mining of the sources has grown enormously. Besides, the scholars have made a beginning in the labor of alerting you to the presuppositions inherent in sixteenth-century language and its culture.

All this puts questions to venerable tradition. There were historians who saw what happened as providential. Certain directions that were taken, especially those determined by generals like Aquaviva and Roothaan, must have been the faithful evolution of my spirit. After all, those were prayerful and holy men and besides had the authority of office. It was not to be imagined that the directions they chose not to take might have been more authentic. A historian's imagination did not encompass a conjecture of discontinuity. They simply took it, as you all did in those days, that what was done was inevitable and irreversible.²⁶

A dominant orthodoxy works by assumptions. What is simply taken for granted is not looked at. A weak dissident voice piping up somewhere is not heard, or is ignored, or is swept aside in the rush. You don't have time. Sometimes the view in possession works because to imagine otherwise would threaten a fragile interior structure of security and of the

²⁵ This is what La Puente understands throughout his biography of Balthasar Alvarez.

²⁶ John W. O'Malley, "De Guibert and Jesuit Authenticity," *Woodstock Letters*, 1966, 103-10.



person. These are all devices of the spirit of deception that (if I had been able to) I might have added as an observation to the material in the Exercises dealing with the Two Standards. Those of you who have some experience of directing the Exercises will be familiar with the writhings of the spirit when it wants to avoid looking at the truth. You will of course long since have seen it at work in yourselves.

It has become a commonplace to observe that when we question history, the historical evidence answers us within the limitations of the words we use and the assumptions latent in our terminology. When a scholar like Fr. de Guibert was writing in the 1940s, it was not easy—indeed it was morally impossible—to put certain questions to the evidence or to the tradition. The culture did not favor a freedom to imagine things becoming otherwise. Consequently it did not encourage you to explore the paths of development that were not followed, to imagine how things might have been otherwise. It is not that questions were disallowed or officially forbidden. That was not necessary. An orthodoxy in possession usually works in more subtle and undetected ways. It simply does not hear awkward questions and they die by silence.

So, things change. You have been through great changes these last fifty years. There has been a shifting of the geologic plates. The mutations of attitudes and understanding since the 1960s have caused pain and bewilderment to many of you. What was assumed to be immovable, what was felt by many to be unchangeable, set in stone, as it were, by a bright structure of essential concepts and eternal principles, has been shifting. Certainly among many of you a new orthodoxy is in place. It pays respects to experience and history.

One of the most subversive observations of Vatican Council II may have been the following: “Since the ultimate norm of religious life is the following of Christ as given us in the Gospel, this is to be held by all institutes as their supreme rule.”²⁷ The law is there to help us draw closer to Christ and live up to his Gospel. When it grows to be in the way, you drop it. I know there were a good many among you through the centuries who cheerfully acted on that truth anyway. It must be difficult for a younger generation to imagine how some of you used to view the Gospel through the lenses of the scholastic categories and the theology manuals, and not the other way around.

A “Pelagian” asceticism cannot stand long in the presence of the Gospel. It is seen for what it is and it crumbles in the light. Besides, its

²⁷ “Perfectæ caritatis,” in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York, 1966), 468, no. 2.

depressing climate, its mean apprehension of God, its meager hopes and small expectations, its inhumanity and pessimism about what is in humanity, its capacity to induce a permanent aridity of the spirit, its opening to desolation, its anxieties and stresses, could not long survive the largeness of mind and the generosity of heart perceived in *Lumen gentium* and in its treatment of holiness.²⁸

Looking on this last half century, I think it probable that the change with the most revolutionary consequences was the discovery that one could respectably use the word "experience." Those of you born in recent decades probably cannot conceive how it was before your time. No one imagined that experience might have anything to say to the dreadful theological aridities of those days. The academic orthodoxy then prevalent frowned on the word, if it ever entered their ken.

But you take it for granted that making the Exercises depends on one's being able to articulate what God is working in a person's spirit. It seems incredible now that experience should have been a bad word in any Jesuit theologate. The dynamic of the Exercises is connected with the ability to be aware of what is happening in the spirit and to reflect on those subjective realities with the help of the one giving the Exercises. One of you, now a cardinal, has pointed out how both Fr. Karl Rahner and Fr. Bernard Lonergan found the root of their theology in the experience of the Exercises.²⁹

By the time of Vatican II, some of you had begun to take seriously my directives about giving the Exercises. There had always been an awareness that it was an adaptation of the Exercises to give them to groups with a number of lectures each day. There was a kind of floating assumption that to give them to one person at a time was not practicable.

You have discovered that it is remarkable what you learn about the ways of God when you spend time each day with one exercitant listening to his or her experience in seeking God and trying to discern together where it may seem the Spirit is leading. When God discloses the variety of his ways with human lives, the trim garden paths of the spiritual treatises begin to look unreliable. You are brought to wonder at the largeness and generosity

²⁸ "Lumen gentium," chap. 5, in *Documents of Vatican II* (pp. 65-72).

²⁹ "Rahner characterized his own theology as an attempt to spell out the implications of the experience of the Holy Spirit that St. Ignatius wished to deepen and clarify through the Spiritual Exercises. . . . The experience of 'being in love with God,' according to Lonergan, corresponds to St. Ignatius Loyola's consolation that has no cause" (Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J. "Jesuits and Theology, Yesterday and Today," *Theological Studies*, 52 [1991]: 524).

of God's ways. He discloses himself as the sovereign master of what he does. He is not confined by your categories. He is no respecter of your refined distinctions or labels. He makes your cautions look shabby. For each he has his own pace. He ignores your maps and schedules. You begin to see methods of prayer as what they are, useful devices that may or may not be suitable to open this or that person to God's action. Some of the venerable generalizations of the tradition are seen to be useful, some false, some pointless.

All that discovery and experience began to spell the end of rationalism in spirituality, the poor relation of a rationalist theology, if, that is, rationalism can be taken to mean a mistrust of subjectivity and a simple faith in rationality. In those pre-Vatican II days, it was as though objectivity and reason could save us from the illusions that attend upon feelings, that

The change with the most revolutionary consequences was the discovery that one could respectably use the word "experience."

hover around the *ignis fatuus* of the imagination. Reason would defend us against the subterfuges of self-deception. I do not recall now that it was ever observed (something you directors of the Exercises observe so often that you perhaps hardly reflect on it) that rationality is the stoutest ally in the cause of evading painful decisions and is a chief tool of the self-serving spirit. Rationality needs, even more than do the heart and the imagination, to be

purified. Yes, I know, I taught you to reverence the intelligence. I hope you will never lose hold of that. But I wrote in one of my letters, "For it may often be that those things which do not seem to fit in at all with human prudence are perfectly compatible with the divine prudence. For the divine prudence cannot be bounded by the laws of our reasonings."³⁰

Your experience has shown you, surely, that if abstractions are to be your servants and not your masters, you need constantly to bring them into friendly encounter with experience. You have to check them out continually and adjust them in the light of the real. Otherwise, they take on too easily a life of their own and too much determine how you see reality.

Attention to experience, too, and reflection on it, especially as you give the Exercises, began to dissolve the inherited burden of Pelagianism. (Very well, go ahead and put that word in quotation marks. Take it as a

³⁰ See Hugo Rahner, S.J., *Ignatius the Theologian* (London, 1968), 225: "no se ata á las leyes de nuestras razones." Rahner here cites a letter of Ignatius to the Duke of Alba, in *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola epistolæ et instructiones*, vol. 11, vol. 40 of MHSI (Rome, 1968), 8.

useful enough label to cover as well a prevailing wind of neo-Augustinian pessimism.) Even a small presence to the power and generosity of God's action in a person begins to dissipate the clouds of pessimism about human nature that long had been looming over spirituality in the religious climate of those last four hundred years. The kind of fear and mistrust masquerading as a wise prudence is seen to beget pusillanimity, a small-minded placing of human limitations on the power of God, a timid hedging-around of a person's expectations of how God desires to act and how generous is his bounty. I had hoped that when you had all finished making the Exercises, you would have found a permanent joy in "pondering with deep affection . . . how the Lord desires to give himself to me" (*SpEx* 234).

Before the mid-1960s the dominant orthodoxy did not encourage you to use the word "contemplation." Once when Fr. James Walsh, the only begetter of *The Way*, was working toward his doctorate in Rome in the early 1950s, at the end of a seminar on late-medieval writers, he asked the presiding professor, "Isn't it clear that their use of the term contemplation is what Ignatius meant by . . . ?" The professor replied, not quite looking over his shoulder, "Yes, of course. But you can't say so."

Now at any rate you can speak more freely. Some of you, indeed, may say, too freely, given the rapid deterioration of the currency of good words in the field of spirituality these days. We may feel that words like "mystical" are too cheaply used.³¹ Be that as it may, it can happen that while making the Exercises, a person becomes aware that something has intervened, aware of having received something given. In the vocabulary I was able to use in the 1500s, that would coincide with what I meant by consolation (*SpEx* 316).³²

All that is no more than to say that when you begin to attend to what actually happens in persons under the working of grace, you discover the importance of not interfering (*SpEx* 15). I said, didn't I, that I wanted you as far as possible to be free in all your activities, at ease in yourselves,

³¹ De Guibert, almost, one might think, echoing Melchor Cano's words, wrote, "No doubt, just like so many spiritual writers of other schools, more than one Jesuit also has written about facile paths to union and the shortened roads to the love of God" (de Guibert, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 572).

³² Asked what he meant by consolation, St. Ignatius said of himself that it was "something that he sensed in himself that was not his own, nor could be his own, but was purely from God" (reported by Pedro de Ribadeneira, "De actis P. N. Ignatii," in *Fontes narrativi de s. Ignatio de Loyola (FN)*, ed. Candidus de Dalmases, vol. 2 of *Monumenta Ignatiana*, vol. 73 of the MHSI (Rome, 1951), 338).

and obedient to the light given particularly to each one of you.³³ It was in a letter to Francis Borgia that I wrote,

God sees what is best for each one. And knowing all things he shows each one the road to take and helps him with grace to follow it. But a man may need time before he discovers, perhaps by trial and error, his own special way to God, the surest and the happiest for him in this life.³⁴

Notice that I wrote, "before he discovers perhaps by trial and error." That was my idiom. I had a liking for the empirical, a trust in the interplay of the intelligence with experience. That was something central to my way of proceeding and my temperament. I was less at home with generalizations and abstractions. My mind preferred synthesis to analysis, preferred reconciling to defining and excluding. I was wary of categories and absolutes. I believed in obedience to the real: to what is there, is given, is objective. I never underestimated the usefulness of law or the need for the clarity of the schools. But I wanted the contribution of positive theology, of the Fathers, and of monastic theology. And I had to confess to being irritated by the kind of conversationalists I dubbed *decretistæ*, those who laid down the law.³⁵

History is disturbing, isn't it? As soon as it is allowed on stage (with experience, its partner), the ground begins to move. And when the Holy Spirit is acknowledged to be the primary agent at work in the world, fear enters. It will be well known to you from your experience in giving the Exercises that fear is what most often affords an opening to the bad spirit. It is then that you get reality distorted. Your psychologists know all about denial. People will do anything rather than see the reality that is staring them in the face.

But how do you judge what is healthy tradition and what has become unhealthy?

Those of you who are older were formed in a world that was set in stone. The Church asked you in *Perfectæ caritatis* to return to the sources. All very fine. You were to grasp the spirit of the founder, to identify it, and

³³ FN 1:357.

³⁴ Letter 466, in *S. Ignatii de Loyola epistolæ et instructiones*, vol. 2, vol. 26 of MHSI (Rome, 1964), 236. For an English translation of this letter, see William J. Young, S.J., trans., *Letters of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (Chicago, 1959), 181.

³⁵ Da Câmara, *Memoriale*, no. 204.

preserve it with a view to a new engagement of the same spirit with a different world and one with wholly new needs.

The words the fathers of the council used were "sanæ traditiones."³⁶ You were to engage with the world employing the Company's sound traditions. Sound: or sane or healthy or wholesome or reliable. In an earlier draft of that sentence, the text had said you should cleave to the *venerabiles traditiones*. But the fathers of the council rejected that wording. It was an acknowledgment that not all the venerable traditions were healthy.

It may be that the Church has rarely said anything so upsetting. In the event, it upset the assumptions of a dominant orthodoxy then in possession. It was a recognition that institutions within the Church (and by implication the Church itself) can become encrusted with layers of misinterpretation. Many of you at that time had already become aware that every institution can come to carry an increasingly heavy baggage of custom, custom that was once healthy, necessary, and life giving, but is later found to be a dead hand, a chill on the spirit, a constriction upon God's work.

But how do you judge what is healthy tradition and what has become unhealthy?

To decide which traditions are a natural development of the original charism and what are eventually found to be foreign to it would seem to suppose that you are already in possession of a clear grasp of the original charism.

But are you?

I expect you would say that before the 1960s you knew. You had the words of the *Formula of the Institute*. There was no talk then, of course, of "charism." That good word had not yet been recovered, at least in general talk, from St. Paul. You went about your work without for the most part asking disturbing questions. The Society was there. The system was in place. You trusted the system. The spirituality of the order and the institutional structures that shaped the regime of living and formed your internal experience as Jesuits were in place from, roughly, 1600 to 1965. That was largely the work of Fr. General Aquaviva (+1615). The Aquavivan settlement crumbled in the 1960s. "Overnight" is only a shade too strong to describe the swiftness of the dismantling.

You assumed that those three hundred years and more of the Society were the work of Providence. You would be right if you thought that, in my view, all the development that has occurred was guided or

³⁶ *Perfectæ caritatis*, no. 2. See *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Herbert Vorgrimler, vol. 2 (New York and London, 1968), 322.

allowed by “the supreme Wisdom and Goodness” (*Cons.*, 134). The supreme Wisdom has reasons for allowing the imperfect on the road to later growth. You expect mistakes. That was a principle, as you know, behind my method of forming young Jesuits. You wait for growth. You learn the ways that help it. You help those not long on the road to learn how to learn from mistakes.

What do you think? Before the 1960s it was not common among you to imagine that things might have been otherwise. You were not given to pondering how later decisions are at best approximations to a founder’s spirit, sometimes the best you can manage, if you are cornered, in the circumstances. What was in fact done may be more in tune or may be less in tune with a founder’s intentions.

What was certainly an influence was the prevailing Church culture and what it simply took for granted. When you reflect on the opposing views of the ascetics and the mystics in the Company’s first hundred years, it becomes obvious that both sides were in want of a language. They did not have the words with which to articulate their convictions.³⁷

In fact, the *Exercises*, had they known them better, would have provided a language in which to begin to understand the questions at issue: the vocabulary of consolation and desolation, of the movements of the spirits, of activity and passivity, of the process of *discretio* in the making of a choice under the guidance of the Spirit, of the variety of ways in which God relates with persons, of the manifold reality of his gifts. Neither side refers to Nadal’s “contemplation even in action.” Neither uses my preferred way of saying much the same thing: “seeking and finding God in everything.”³⁸ Neither draws on the spirituality that inhabits every line of the *Constitutions*, especially what I tried to make clear in the proemium and in my returning often to *discreta caritas*.³⁹

³⁷ Fr. General Claudio Aquaviva settled the issue in principle by referring to Jerónimo Nadal’s “ducentem Spiritum sequebatur, non præibat.” Experienced Jesuits were to be led by the Holy Spirit. Aquaviva made it clear that contemplative ways of prayer were not foreign to our way of proceeding. See, for example, the letter of May 8, 1590, “Quis sit orationis et pænitentiae usus in Societate, juxta nostrum institutum,” in *Epistolæ præpositorum generalium*, vol. 1 (Brussels, 1909), 248. See also Joseph de Guibert, “Le Généralat d’Aquaviva,” *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 10 (1941): 68f.

³⁸ Sources for this Ignatian aphorism included, among others, Jerónimo Nadal, S.J., “In examen annotationes,” in *Epistolæ p. Hieronymi Nadal*, vol. 4 (Madrid, 1905), 651; Young, *Letters of St. Ignatius*, 235 f., 240; and FN 2:419, no. 22.

³⁹ “More than any exterior constitution, the interior law of love which the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts” (*Cons.*, 134).

But neither side used that language.⁴⁰ The charism was known in the living of it. They did not have a theology, a theological culture, a vocabulary, or a language that would have enabled them to grasp the new nature of what they were faithfully living. There had not been time to reflect in depth on that experience or to grasp clearly what constituted its newness.

You must be familiar with this reflection on the difficulty of capturing a spirit in words.

The official documents of religious orders, including the documents of the founders themselves, express even the ideal only imperfectly. In particular, those documents find it easier to articulate how they are in continuity with the tradition than how they are innovating within it, for by the nature of the case the latter reality lacks as yet a precise vocabulary.⁴¹

The conceptual tools were not at hand to express the newness of a way of contemplative life in which the one end is "to aid souls."⁴²

Trent, insofar as it had considered the nature of the priesthood, had been unable to look at or to encompass the long experience of priests whose consecrated life, for example, the Franciscan or Dominican orders, was given

⁴⁰ However, Balthasar Alvarez, in an account of his teaching on prayer written for the General, refers to *SpEx* 76: "Where I find what I desire, there I will be quiet, without being anxious to go on until I have been satisfied." That is a main point of St. Ignatius's delicate pedagogy of contemplation. Alvarez in the same place says, "To the ideas of my opponents I will oppose [St. Ignatius's] example" (see La Puente, *Life of Balthasar Alvarez*, chap. 41).

⁴¹ 37 John W. O'Malley, "Priesthood, Ministry, and Religious Life: Some Historical and Historiographical Considerations," *Theological Studies*, 49 (1988): 223-57. Also in *Tradition and Transition* (Wilmington, Del., 1989), 134.

⁴² The one end is to be so united with God that he can use the body of the Company as a flexible instrument in his hands to complete his work on earth.

"That is why Joseph de Guibert's division between union and service ultimately breaks down in Ignatian spirituality. It is not that 'the orientation of this mystic [is] towards service rather than union.' It is rather that God is at work; and that to be united with Him the way that He is, is to be with him in this labor. In this understanding of the providential God, the dichotomy between union and service is collapsed into a single *comigo*. One is with God in His work" (Michael J. Buckley, "Siempre crescendo in devotione . . .," *CIS*, no. 60 = vol. 20, no. 1 [1989], 70f.).

The language of two ends traps one into asking a question that ends in barren words. Francisco Suárez escaped this way: "Ita vero sumendus est hic finis ut ab alto, scilicet perfectionis propriæ acquirendæ, non separetur, sed sit quasi determinatio ejus; vel potius sese determinant, et ita ex eis conflatur unus adæquatus et perfectissimus finis talis religionis" (Or rather one should say that they [two ends] determine each other mutually, and so from both is composed the one adequate and most perfect end of this religious order) (*Tractatus de Religione Societatis Iesu* (1626) [Brussels, 1857]).

to ministry.⁴³ Insofar as Trent reflected on religious life, it saw it in monastic terms and regarded it as the pursuit of personal perfection. The dominant theology in no way came to terms with the reality of religious priests whose whole life was dedicated to the apostolate. Indeed, for that matter, you will have noticed that in *Perfectæ caritatis* the Church has not yet articulated officially that part of its experience.⁴⁴ Nor have the official statements of the Church been able even yet to find words for that reality of Christian life in which activity and contemplation compenetrates and in which the apostolic task itself is unitive.⁴⁵

So, there is need for words. Words, words, words. You have been good with words, haven't you? Great waves and inundations of them over those hundreds of years. Eloquent words, dry scholarly words, soporific and exciting words.⁴⁶

When I began to see the Gospel value of schools and got after you to open them everywhere, you eagerly embraced that tradition of rhetoric that the Italian humanists passed on to you.⁴⁷ You grasped it and you ran with it. It fitted. But all that articulacy and scholarship, your ease with words and the great mountains of them you have left behind you, should have made you skeptical about words. Words are friable, they are slippery, they slide and wriggle, they are protean, they refuse to stay still, they shift and dissemble. You think you have pinned a reality with a definition, boxed it in, when already reality is mocking the illusory permanence. Your mastery of words has often seduced you into a rage to define. You bruise with definitions. You do not sufficiently acknowledge that there are some layers of experience that are happier left indefinite, more at home among the poets. When I listen in to your lengthy and learned discussions, I feel I'd like to

⁴³ O'Malley, "Priesthood, Ministry," 154.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 161. "Of the sections of *Perfectæ caritatis*, only two (nos. 8 and 20) are devoted to ministry."

⁴⁵ Yet in *Lumen gentium* bishops "will make their ministry the principal means of their own sanctification," and a priest should "not be undone by his apostolic cares, dangers and toils, but rather led by them to higher sanctity" (no. 41, emphasis added).

⁴⁶ Karl Rahner has St. Ignatius say, "If you fill up the barns of men's consciousness only with your very learned and up-to-date theology, which ultimately engenders nothing but a fearful torrent of words" ("Ignatius of Loyola Speaks to a Modern Jesuit," in *Ignatius of Loyola*, with a historical introduction by Paul Imhof, S.J. [London, 1979]; the German original was published the previous year). This is the only occasion in which Rahner appeared on stage as a ventriloquist. That was in 1978.

⁴⁷ O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 200 ff.

shout: "Please. Be quiet. Just for a minute. Just fall silent before the mystery."

And you know, of course, when you are searching the sources for the original spirit, you have to be wary. "Documents do not speak to any of us, most certainly when they are from an age other than our own. With a professional finesse reminiscent of the worst legends of the Spanish Inquisition, we must torture their meaning out of them."⁴⁸

For most purposes words are all you have. You must do what you can with them. You have to approach them with reverence. That is the least you can do when your order is named for the incarnate Word. You have to use them with respect, even when you succeed in shrugging off a seriousness that may make you too ponderous. If you are to use words in the service of the Gospel and not in the service of some other kingdom, you have to love them. And you have to want, yourself, to be true.

I had no great vanity about my own command of words. I did try to weigh them and use them carefully. There are some of you who say now that there was something of the poet in me. I certainly had nothing of the poet's art with words. I was not one to forge a new language. I had to do with what was at hand. If you encounter God at whatever lowly level, you can only communicate the ineffable in the categories of your time.

The same limits constrained me when I sat day by day trying to find words to express the new charism in the *Constitutions*. I see now that I was trying to capture a vision. And the words were not up to it. "We must, in any case, reckon that even religious geniuses like Dominic, Francis, and Ignatius may not have been fully capable of expressing what they were doing or hoped to do."⁴⁹ Well, Dominic and Francis, anyway.

So words are unreliable. And the evidence of history is fragmentary. It must be bred in your bones that human life is unfinished, ragged. From your first encounter in the Exercises with the Principle and Foundation, from the contemplation on the Incarnation, from your experience of living and speaking the Gospel, that must be second nature to you. The Jesus you desire to be identified with is hedged about with limitation. It follows that in your search for the original spirit, you have to live contentedly with some realities that attend the limitations of your creaturehood.

The first is that authenticity cannot depend on the historical evidence. Such evidence as you have is fragmentary. Your view of it is colored by your time. It is a fundamentalist fallacy to suppose that more

⁴⁸ O'Malley, "de Guibert and Jesuit Authenticity," 108.

⁴⁹ O'Malley, *Tradition and Transition*, 168.

knowledge of the sources or the discovery of new documents would ensure a more authentic grasp of the original spirit. All your education tends to make you look first to the text. If you have truly interiorized the culture of the academy, you will be impatient with people who speak from a different level of experience. Your instinct is to use the tools of reason. You search for the available evidence and you want to make it disclose its secrets.

The other truth is that those early documents “are incapable of rising above the historical realities in which they are immersed. Only with the hindsight of generations or centuries does the *sensus plenior*, the full implications, emerge” (168).

The *sensus plenior*. The fuller understanding. Fine. But how, by what means, does that fuller understanding come?

I had that in mind when I wrote the tenth part of the *Constitutions*, “How the Whole Body Can Be Preserved and Developed in Its Well-Being.”

I was no historian. Certainly not in the sense you would have in mind. But I had a sense of history. All my thinking was immersed in process. Already in my lifetime the companions were encountering “so many different people inhabiting the great extent of the surface of the earth, some white, some black . . . coming into the world” (*SpEx* 103, 106)—from Brazil to Japan and India and Malacca and Africa and Europe north and south, and Europe east and west, even to Ireland.

I did not see then, naturally, in any specific way, the imaginative daring of Fr. Alessandro Valignano and his encouragement of Fr. Matteo

The Constitutions are not for speculative contemplation or academic discourse but for contemplative decision and action.

Ricci, their capacity to enter into the interior worlds of people with so different a way of seeking God, their conviction about what you now term “inculturation.” But I well knew the interior dispositions that men of that sort would need. Freedom from fear and a capacity for risks: the grace of “being indifferent” mentioned in the *Exercises*, the freedom of the spirit, is what liberates the imagination and ingenuity to conceive what had never been con-

ceived. And the fearlessness that embraces risk. Freedom. Freedom from shame and fear. That was it.

I knew the mission of the Kingdom would require mobility and flexibility, an exterior mobility that would be simply the spontaneous expression of your interior mobility. I built all that into the *Constitutions*. Vastly different cultures throughout the world demanded an inbuilt principle

of adaptation. Unyielding rules and definitions would not serve. The mission was to be accomplished always "according to the circumstances of persons, places, and times."

The determining principle that was to govern the ongoing mission was to be no written document. The Institute, our "way of proceeding," was already there, being lived, before we came together to deliberate in 1539 and to try to find words for what we were already living. It was our experience that we prayed and reflected upon together, before it was written down. Between the experience and the text came the "election," *discretio*, a process.

A reverse process is needed if the text as you have it is to be understood and interpreted. It is the same with the various other documents you have that survived from those early days. To interpret the text, to bring it to life again, to continue to found the order, to animate and deploy the body, in what I now see to be a post-Enlightenment, post-Darwin, post-Freud, post-Marx, postmodern, world, demands a sensitivity to "the interior law of love." The law of love in your hearts is the Holy Spirit. Between the text and the living of it comes the "election," a process I kept coming back to in the text itself, *discreta caritas*.⁵⁰

It is in deeds more than in words that the authentic spirit and the *sanae traditiones* come to be understood. In that way the fuller understanding, the *sensus plenior*, is disclosed. It is in the cost of decision, in the demands that it makes on your senses and spirit, in the pain of seeking the dispositions that make you open to finding the missions that truly build Christ's kingdom, that unaware you continue to refound and to be faithful and creative. Those early documents do not yield their fuller meaning to scholarship. The *Constitutions* are not for speculative contemplation or academic discourse but for contemplative decision and action. It is decisions that embody them, give flesh again to the word. You learn their meaning by living them. Their meaning comes alive in an experience together of proceeding "in conformity with the spirit" (*Cons.*, 671), of the whole body in union deciding about the mission of the Kingdom. It is *discreta caritas* in action that is the authentic interpreter of the documents, that opens the *Constitutions* to you, that calls you to be authentic, that reincarnates the original charism. It is in that contemplative procedure that you are to find God in what you are brought to decide and to do, in fluctuating situations that you cannot foresee, in a world and a Church you cannot know beforehand.

The principal means used by the divine Wisdom is "the interior law of love which the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts." I longed to make it clear that that interior law is effective "more than any written

⁵⁰ *Cons.*, 134, 414, 671, all from Part X.

constitutions.” I wanted that law of love to govern your interpretation of those early documents and govern your reading of the world you are immersed in. The law of the Spirit is primary. The exterior law is useful and necessary.

If you feel I have overdone it in my observations on the fluidity of words and the teasing mysteries of historical research, it may be because I feel you fall too easily into a notion that your meetings and your lengthy wordy encounters ought to solve things. And then, when they don't, when ten years later you find the eloquent documents still largely unimplemented and you find a demand for more and still more documents, and you wearily say that you have too many documents already, then you become frustrated and sad. You look in the wrong place. Your focus is misplaced.

But, believe me, I would have you bear in mind that the written word is indispensable. The same is true of the historical evidence. I have always revered learning and the labors of the intellect. The knowledge that your scholars mine for you is invaluable, but at best it is imperfect. All those are the human means and I wanted you to respect them. The human means are to be used with diligence, used always in a clear awareness that they are secondary (*Cons.*, 414, 814).

The primary instrument of authentic interpretation is the living body of the Company composed of its members.

I expect it is a commonplace among you that where there is question of authentic interpretation of any document (never mind this holy world of charisma and institutes), authenticity is a function of the authenticity of the interpreter. If the interpreter is true, the interpretation will have some chance of coming closer to the truth. Integrity in teaching and writing come only from moral integrity.

But what I had in mind in the *Constitutions* goes deeper than moral integrity. It is not enough that the will and the conscience cleave to truth. The spirit, too, needs to be purified. The well-being of the whole body, the truth and integrity of your living, depends on the extent to which you are *instrumenta conjuncta cum Deo* (*Cons.*, 813).

It follows that you will be off course, chasing shades, getting it wrong, to the extent that the members are not united with the source. The spirit that is incarnated will be unauthentic. The body may show an energetic semblance of life. I so desired to make it plain that a true grasp of your charism and any effective good you may do need particular dispositions. That is what the *Constitutions* are, not primarily laws, but guidelines toward the formation of a particular kind of man and an outline of the dispositions that make for freedom.

The spirit needs to be clarified. It needs unceasingly to be purified. It cannot purify itself. I often repeated the need you have to seek "a thoroughly right and pure intention" (*Cons.*, 618, 288). If you have not experienced the bitterness of discovering that you have sidestepped from the road into a bog, you may never see words like those as anything more than harmless pieties. It is frivolous to talk of discernment (as you have been doing now for almost forty years) if you do not all the time bring home to yourselves the cost of the dispositions that allow freedom. That is what I meant when I said you would desire your "greater abnegation and continual mortification in all things possible" (*Cons.*, 103).

Freedom from self-serving motivation is given only in the setting of a continuing and affective contemplative relationship with him who is "the way that leads men to life" (*Cons.*, 101). That makes no sense if it is not seen as an intrinsic requirement of love.

Freedom was what I was concerned about throughout the Exercises. When I was writing our *Constitutions*, I was assuming that when you had made the Exercises, you had come up against the blocks and the bents of your freedom. You would taste its limits. That experience would have brought you to a companionable familiarity with your particular biases and prejudices, with your favored devices of evasion: that you would have begun a life-long process of living with your proper crippledness and would know the need to continue to learn the wise ways of handling it. The Principle and Foundation, if it has been experienced and not just assented to as a pleasing formula, gives you a glimpse of God and his absolute freedom, of your shackled freedom, of the sacredness of others' freedom, of the risk of God in giving it and the splendor of the gift. You would desire to continue to take the means to grow always into greater freedom. And you would know that freedom and desire and love are the same thing.

When you first make the Exercises, you can only glimpse, even in the searching fire of the First Week, the convolutions of your clinging to what prevents you from being free. I was always aware, especially in the *Constitutions*, of process. I trusted the process of growth. If you could enter affectively into what I presented there and could continue to be helped to learn from your mistakes,

The primary instrument of authentic interpretation is the living body of the Company composed of its members.

you would be strong in helping others at a deep level to find God. That was to be your consolation.

So, from the threshold of the Exercises you had begun to “keep God always before your eyes” (*Formula of the Institute*, 3)—provided you did not silently leave all that baggage by the roadside and get on with the important things like career and office and the excitement of achieving, becoming captivated by your cleverness or adroitness or competence in managing affairs or occupied with the alleyways of power.

Your calling is such that you cannot safely travel that road if the prayer of the Two Standards is not the daily bread of your spirit. That is what I had in mind when I warned that you would have “to associate with so great a diversity of persons throughout such varied regions” (*Cons.*, 414). You would have to learn to use a great variety of methods and means, heedless of risk, in the thickets of your own mind, acting with cunning, in situations that are complex and ambiguous, finding a way through mazes of danger and delusion, face to face with the sinuous darkness of human reality, face to face with your own darkness. There is no way you could wrestle with that (if you were not to become fascinated by it, not sucked into it) without making the triple colloquy of the Two Standards your constant clamor and a familiar and loved way of beholding your life in the world as it is.

It is a continuing and lifelong learning. If some of you have come to feel that the Company needs “refounding” (but that expression did not get much of a run and was semantically analyzed until it lost all flesh and blood) or that you feel in some parts of the body like an unwieldy aircraft that has reached a comfortable altitude and is cruising on hold, it may be that many of you have lost touch with that prayer of the Exercises in which you see how your deeper and subtler attachments induce you to cling to what is familiar and safe: always looking on, quieting your imagination, being sensible, marking time, being sage before the risks of deciding, fearful of the kind of creativity that their freedom gave to so many of you in the first hundred years or so. But you are called to have the courage to fail, to go beyond frontiers of rationality into “those things which do not seem to fit in at all with human prudence,” but “turning your hearts, as I said, to things of real beauty.”⁵¹

⁵¹ “In the things of God, those who are over-prudent will hardly ever achieve anything really great. For those who are always thinking about the difficulties, and who are constantly brooding and vacillating because they fear the possible outcomes which they foresee, will never turn their hearts toward things of real beauty” (attributed to St. Ignatius by Ribadeneira). Hugo Rahner, in *Ignatius the Theologian*, 225, gives this reference: *Vita Ignatii*, V, 11 (ed. Cologne, 1602), 662.

All that process is a personal learning of the stratagems of the enemy. It is not comfortable. Since I urged you to use all the human means (*Cons.*, 814) with as much efficiency and effectiveness as you can, that prayer of the Two Standards is crucial. It is there that you learn the particular ways in which you can be led insensibly, when you are using the human means, to making the means your end (*SpEx* 169). Too often across the centuries some of you have made the means a substitute for God. It is easy to supplant him. I remember being made to address you more than twenty years ago, as "you repressed secret atheists of today, . . . your skepticism [about my knowing God] sharpened by an underlying atheism . . . not just in cleverly expressed theory but in the bitter practice of life too"⁵² That was in the context of my saying that you can be skeptical about my confidence in the capacity of men and women to experience God. Some of you still find your task so absorbing—either the relish of it or as a deadener of deeper pain or stirrings of desire or intimations of your earlier dreams—that God is shelved. The experience of the Exercises teaches you the infinitely subtle variations, in each one of you, of the terms "riches" and "honors": how anything that is not God can become riches, how the more the enterprise is selfless, idealistic, and noble, inescapably what justice or truth demands, the more it needs scrutiny, needs the scrutiny of the Spirit. You know well that the more spiritual the objectives of your desire, the more easily, in clinging to them, can you be betrayed. We are betrayed by what is false within.

Your recent exchanges about refounding and creative fidelity—am I right in surmising that they suggest uneasiness? A feeling that something is missing? Will anyone name it? That you have lost your way? Or that you have lost life? have sunk into a torpor? and in some parts of the body, into stagnation? That you have lost your edge? I am amazed when I see the well-being of the Company where you are at the edge, on the margin: where you are on the margins with the poor and living with them and living like them. Your work with refugees, not on center stage, far from the center of power, is one of the places you are alive. The body can be alive in one part and decomposing in another.

Refounding, creative fidelity: are those bland formulas for something you are too polite to voice? Is it too offensive to say that what you need is conversion? Is that too crude?

Yet, look at all the life-giving rediscovery of the Exercises these last thirty years and more, the vitality of discovery in *Christus*, in *The Way*, in *Manresa*, in *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, and look at the great invest-

⁵² Karl Rahner, "Ignatius Speaks," 14, 12.

ment of talent and manpower and real estate in the giving of the Exercises. You still fill your retreat houses.

Are you secretly disappointed? Did you hope for something like the deep and radical conversion of many in the early days of the Exercises? I can hear some of you already getting ready to murmur that any such expectations were unrealistic. What would it have been reasonable to expect? Reasonable, yes. Always reasonable. Do you sometimes sit down together and ask these questions? You may not come up with any answer. But asking the question may disclose something you have not been seeing.

You cannot be more free than to choose what is more according to the mind of Christ.

If all that ministry of the Exercises seems to fall short of the exploded dynamite of the Exercises in the beginnings, it may be because directors are not themselves committed in their living to the radical graces of the colloquy of the Two Standards and the experience of the Third and Fourth Weeks. The Exercises are dynamite, to be handled with care. We can insensibly wrap them in tissue paper and

seal them inoffensively in a cardboard box.

It is only women and men so surrendered and free, so aware of their own vulnerability to the illusions of the enemy, who can imagine creatively where God is leading his Church and who can suffer the consequences of the risks entailed: the risk of being traduced, the risk of refusing any longer to be inoffensive, of falling on one's face, of getting up again and giving it another try.

In the absence of that real desire to be with Jesus in all his experience, giving the Exercises can slip into a comforting therapy with a religious cosmetic. Is it sometimes like that? The Gospel is full of consolation and painful challenge. When giving the Exercises, do you muffle the radical demands of the Gospel? Do you sometimes let yourselves be peddlers of an unvarying diet of the love of God, of a kind that effectively conveys a harmless God? Are you reluctant to mention the fear of God, instead domesticating the purifying fire or the dread before the transcendent Holy?

Is that what parts of the body need? A bracing exposure to the real?

That colloquy of the Two Standards is an asking to be drawn closer into the experience of Jesus. That is when you, when we, take fright. It is the Jesus who is humble and poor. I said (did I?) in 1978, that from among the many ways of being a disciple of Jesus, I chose the discipleship of the poor and humble Jesus. "I wanted to follow the poor and humble Jesus and

no other. . . . I wanted something that my foolish love of Jesus Christ inspired in me as the law of my life." I was forced to say then that if "one becomes a Jesuit today, one becomes, perhaps, quite quickly and automatically, a good man and a good priest—but not a poor and humble one, not by a long way."⁵³

Your desire leads you to want to be free. You want to be unburdened of the wayward and illusory desires that impede and mislead you. I had hoped that as you make the Exercises you would grasp more clearly that the freedom you glimpsed as a possibility in the Principle and Foundation is in fact the freedom to desire to be identified with Christ, a desire that is ready to enter into the consequences of doing his work in his way. It is crucial that it be his work and that you do it in the way he did. Then, if that desire is genuine, it cannot be without sharing his experience and embracing it "since he is the way that leads men to life" (*Cons.*, 101).

In the presence of that grace, given that disposition, God can, if he wishes to do so, make his will known. And the human instrument is less likely to be lured by the father of lies. You cannot be more free than to choose what is more according to the mind of Christ.

That culminating point of the Exercises I placed in the *Constitutions* at the gateway to the Company.⁵⁴ I knew what I was doing. If someone was wholly innocent of some deeper sense of seeing the beauty of that, if he had no affinity with it, I did not want him to risk the dangers of going further. The danger is that he might be lost entirely.

The words I chose, the verbs, point to a climate of the heart. "The candidate should be asked whether he finds himself in a state of **desires** like these." It is a state of desire that is emphasized here.

They desire to clothe themselves with the same clothing and uniform of their Lord because of the love and reverence which he deserves, to such an extent that . . . they would want to suffer injuries, false accusations, and affronts, and to be held and esteemed as fools . . . because of their desire to resemble and imitate in some manner our Creator and Lord Jesus Christ. . . . For he gave us an example that in all things possible to us we might seek . . . to imitate him, since he is the way which leads men to life (*Cons.*, 101).

For many that is a dragon in the gate. For some, it can later become a foolishness that is better relegated to oblivion. It offends reason. But in the

⁵³ Ibid., 21, 22.

⁵⁴ See the Three Kinds of Humility, *SpEx*, nos. 165–68. The "gateway" is found at the end of the interview with someone who wants to join the order, at the close of the fourth chapter of the *General Examen*, nos. 101–3.

absence of some affinity with those words, the *Constitutions*, and our way of living, remains a closed book, a dead letter. And so do those other early documents. Their authentic interpretation depends on the degree to which their interpreters are desiring to live them. The doing of it, the living of it, not the studying of it, opens their meaning. The final hermeneutic is the cross.

Far from being abashed or dismayed by the lessons history teaches you about the fragility of evidence or the human capacity for getting things wrong, this consideration should help you to live contentedly with the fact that your present interpretations too are partial and myopic and that God would have it so.

“There are no static answers to questions of historical authenticity.”

There was a deeper wisdom in the request of Vatican II that our approach to the sources should be a *reditus continuus*. The authentic source is a daily rediscovery and an unending search.

Appendix 1

A Perspective

Germany, 1547: Bobadilla increased his trips, his interference, his outbursts, and his criticisms. His activity was effective because he had a very clear perception of situations, a single-minded zeal and dauntless courage; he refused to despair and shared his hope with others.

Rome 1552: The *Constitutions* began to be known in certain regions. A certain picking and choosing was at work among the companions. But the majority entered fully into their spirit. In other places Ignatius was obliged to intervene to recall some to obedience, to poverty, and to community life. He did so with lucidity and tenacity.

1552: Overly lenient recruitment in certain regions concerned Ignatius: the need for men caused haste and a lack of rigor that were contrary to the *bonum commune* of the Society.

Italy, 1552: When Ignatius recalled de Freux, Laínez protested and Ignatius reacted, which resulted in admirable letters from both of them. In the name of Ignatius, Polanco wrote to Laínez: "The chaff is mixed with good grain, even in the Society. The Lord knows those who belong to him and those alone constitute the Society."

Italy, 1553: For the colleges it was a difficult year as a result of poverty that bordered on abject misery. Laínez, sick, overburdened with work and worry—and, it must be said, tired of the spiritual mediocrity of certain subjects whom Rome sent him (who soon would leave or be discharged)—was driven to the point of asking Ignatius to relieve him of his duties as provincial.

Northern Europe, 1553: As the distances that separated the companions grew larger, the human aspect of their behavior showed through in their letters. Ignatius himself was caught in the middle and he reacted characteristically. He maintained what Polanco called "the simplicity which the First Fathers used among themselves": their simplicity, that is to say, their single-minded passion for God and for souls, their zeal. Nothing, it seemed, could disconcert him, neither success nor failure, neither friendship nor opposition nor calumny. He remained incapable of being flustered. This steadfast man in his little house near the church of Our Lady of La Strada seized events on the wing as signs of God, urged his companions forward, sustained them in battles, even in hopeless ones.

Cologne, 1552: Kessel, called to profession, went to his own country on family business. When he returned, he found his fold in revolt. He dismissed nine of his fourteen companions.



Italy, 1554: Rodriguez, forbidden to reenter Portugal and deprived of the authorization he had obtained from the Grand Penitentiary to live in a hermitage exempt from all obedience to Ignatius and the Society, began a painfully errant and erratic life.

India, 1554: Conditions were hard. The companions were overworked. The new viceroy reduced the allocation of money to the missionaries, an action that put certain charitable works and houses in difficulty. Fr. Balthasar Diaz was a man of great faith and he boosted the morale of his companions: it is in weakness, he reminded them, that God shows his strength.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Taken directly from André Ravier, *Ignace de Loyola fonde la Compagnie de Jésus*. This book is available in an English translation: *Ignatius of Loyola and the Founding of the Society of Jesus* (San Francisco, 1987).

Appendix 2

La Spiritualité de la Compagnie de Jésus: Esquisse Historique by Joseph de Guibert is a good example of the way a dominant orthodoxy blunts truth.

The *esquisse historique* itself has a history. The work was commissioned by Fr. General Ledóchowski for the fourth centenary in 1940 of the founding of the order. The author died unexpectedly in 1942. Fr. Ledóchowski was not pleased with the manuscript. Under his successor, Fr. John Baptist Janssens, the work was published eleven years later. An English translation was published in 1964: *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (Chicago, 1964; St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1963). Henceforth this work will be referred to as *History*.

The book reads like a work composed by two different men. The same contention between the “ascetics” and the “mystics” that was in the Society from the 1570s is at work in the present author. The two “authors” are not reconciled or integrated; they exist side by side, often in the same paragraph.

The portrait de Guibert draws of St. Ignatius and of his spirit was bold enough for its time. After all, de Guibert had been the first, in 1938, to publish a monograph on the fragment of St. Ignatius’s diary of 1544-45. There he had not only shown Ignatius to be a mystic “led by God in ways of infused contemplation to the same degree, though not in the same manner, as a St. Francis of Assisi or a St. John of the Cross,” but he had given us a language in which to begin to understand the significant difference between the nature of Ignatius’s mystical graces and those of St. John of the Cross or of St. Francis. It was no longer possible to assume that the contemplative journey is all of one kind.

It has been pointed out that de Guibert gives us a domesticated saint, finicky about “observance,” meticulous about rules and common life. There is no sense of the magnanimity of vision, of the daring and enterprise, of the urgency of mission. There is a curious hiatus between the saint’s interior life and the work he did, the first naturally looming larger. Questions that de Guibert could well have asked about the intrinsic relationship of the saint’s mysticism and mission remain simply unasked.

Double authorship

The third part of the *History*, written when the author was presumably a sick man and left unrevised upon his death in 1942, consists of an extended essay on the specific characteristics of Jesuit spirituality. It is here that the double authorship stands out and distorts the reality. There is, for example, a good section on the ways in which Jesuit authors have treated

questions of contemplative prayer and infused graces. De Guibert knew well the strong current of personal mystical experience and teaching on contemplation found among the Spanish Jesuits from the 1570s on: Antonio Cordeses (+1601), Balthasar Alvarez (+1580), Diego Alvarez de Paz (+1620), Luis de La Puente (+1624). De Guibert had been one of the founders of *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* in 1920, and of the *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, and had been among the French scholars who were quietly producing monographs on these matters for half a century before Vatican Council II. Nevertheless, while traversing this terrain in the *History* the writer strikes a marked note of caution, of not wanting to raise his voice too loud.

The second author, the “ascetic” de Guibert, speaks in a different tenor. He sets out to defend Jesuit spirituality against the charges of being a moralism, overly rationalist, voluntarist, Pelagian. The terms in which he conducts the defense confirm the case made by the prosecution.

The Language of Rationality

Since the *History* was published in 1953, we have learned a different language with which to explore our experience and to understand the Spiritual Exercises. We speak a different idiom. Here it is possible only to give a sketchy idea of the ways in which we should now find de Guibert’s vocabulary dismaying.

He sees the combination of enthusiasm with reason a chief characteristic note of Jesuit spirituality (595). From meditation on the Principle and Foundation, “Jesuits would henceforth ceaselessly recall that strong-willed indifference in the face of everything which is not the end” (534). In his exposition here of what Jesuit spirituality owes to the Exercises, he gives one sentence to the Election; “To the **principles and counsels** regarding the Election is related the very clear relish for **well-considered action** which is the fruit of mature **thought**” (536, emphasis added).

From Center to Margin

Now we should see the whole process of election, the apprenticeship to discernment in making the Exercises (*SpEx* 125–89), as not only giving its peculiar nature to the Exercises, but also stamping its contemplative missionary character upon Jesuit spirituality. It is linked intrinsically with the Contemplation to Obtain Love, an exercise that in its bald language expressed something of the culminating mystical grace by the Cardoner in 1523. But in the *History* the finding of God in all things, familiarity

with God in the daily experience of living, are given as "among the . . . traits of Jesuit spirituality."

Among the most constant traits in Jesuit spirituality—traits that also were numbered among those that St. Ignatius most earnestly desired to find in his sons—are several which have sprung from the suggestions in the Contemplation for Obtaining Love, the finding of God in everything, familiarity with the Master." (536, emphasis added)

And then the finding of God in all things is dropped. The rhetoric sees as marginal and accidental what we now see to be central and constitutive.

The Struggle Is Direct

In the chapter "Reformation of Life and Ascetical Effort," the two authors are at work side by side. The "mystic" one, the man who had drawn out the deep things of St Ignatius's diary, writes, "Prayer is a means by which the soul can be penetrated with the supernatural spirit, united with its Creator and Lord, and placed completely under the influence of his grace" (571). The other author, the "ascetic," who labors to make a case and at much greater length, writes:

What appears first . . . is the pitiless struggle against love of self, attachment to comfort and one's own judgment and will. Ignatius carries on this struggle without truce, by giving trials and reprimands not only to beginners but also to his most faithful companions. (565)

The Society has in truth never deviated from the line thus drawn. The acquisition of solid virtues and the struggle against self have been the themes that the generals have ceaselessly reverted to in their letters . . . this courageous and incessant struggle against themselves. . . . Another characteristic to be noticed in these programs to overcome defects and acquire virtues is that there is question above all of **direct** struggle and a **direct** effort." (569, emphasis added)

De Guibert argues at length that it is an essential Jesuit characteristic stemming from the Exercises to refuse to rest content with the maxim "Ama et fac quod vis." They have preferred to insist on the necessary practice of particular virtues and urged others to a direct effort to acquire them. The other de Guibert (the real one, I think) writes, as we should tend to say now,

If we are dominated by the love of Christ, we shall spontaneously take on his thoughts and tastes, we shall judge and act according to the example he has given. St. Francis de Sales's affectionate comparison is well known. On entering into the soul, charity, like the "queen bee" brings her whole people with her, that is, the whole troop of other virtues whose queen she is.

But then in the next paragraph the author wrestles with himself and returns to the claim that “nowhere in his spiritual direction and counsels is [St. Ignatius] satisfied with the indirect struggle against faults” (570). It is a prescription for self-absorption. That alone is enough to explain why many religious may have taken refuge in a healthier way of living, in activism.

No Easy Way

Two rhetorics are at work. There are two languages, each issuing from a different kind of experience and from different presuppositions. It is as though the “ascetic” is afraid to concede that God might have his own gentler ways of drawing people into union with him. De Guibert concedes that there have indeed been Jesuits who have advocated a less grim way of Christian living: “No doubt, just like so many spiritual writers of other schools, more than one Jesuit also has written about facile paths of union and the shortened roads to the love of God” (572). It would be dreadful to leave the reader with the impression that the way to God might be enjoyable.

At one point the “ascetic,” who is concerned at all costs to defend the grim version of Jesuit spirituality, sets out to refute the imputation of Pelagianism by the astounding argument that the spirituality could not have been semi-Pelagian because Jesuit theologians taught a sound theology of grace, as though the one had necessarily anything to do with the other (570). Fr. Paul Dudon in commenting on the instructive affair of Fr. Balthasar Alvarez, whose practice of direction was delated to the General in Rome by the watchdogs of authenticity and who was forbidden to pray contemplatively or to recommend affective prayer to others, observes that in these matters it is easy to be wrong when the only ground for one’s judgment is *une science livresque*.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ P. Dudon, “Les Leçons d’oraison du P. Balthasar Alvarez (1573-1578),” *RAM*, 2 (1921): 56.



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