



STUDIES

IN
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

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“City of the Living God”

The Urban Roots of the Spiritual Exercises

RICHARD A. BLAKE, S.J.

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James F. Keenan, S.J., teaches moral theology at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Cambridge, MA (2000).

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G. Ronald Murphy, S.J., teaches German language and literature at Georgetown University, Washington, DC (2001)

Thomas P. O'Malley, S.J., is associate dean of arts and sciences and teaches in the honors program at Boston College, Chestnut Hill, MA (2000).

John W. Padberg, S.J., is chairman of the Seminar, editor of *STUDIES*, and director and editor at the Institute of Jesuit Sources (1986).

William R. Rehg, S.J., teaches philosophy at St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO (2000).

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3601 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108
(Tel. 314-977-7257; Fax 314-977-7263)

“CITY OF THE LIVING GOD”

The Urban Roots of the Spiritual Exercises

Richard A. Blake, S.J.

STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

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Novitiates have a long history in the Church and in religious life. Anthony of the Desert could accept Paul the Simple as a new disciple by saying the few words, "In the name of Christ, behold you are now made a monk"; but it was St. Benedict and his Rule that fixed the terms "novice" and "novitiate" to designate a candidate for religious life and his period of probation. Most such periods were of one-year duration; the great innovation of the Jesuits was to add a second year to the novitiate. And then one might have gotten the impression, certainly until Vatican II, that the life of the novitiate just went on its way from then on, perhaps growing ever more complex and rigid.

A history of the Jesuit novitiate is yet to be written, if it ever can be; but there are cases showing that its life was not always as rigidly set as we might have imagined. To cite but a few examples: first, up to Vatican II, for the United States at least, it was effectively unheard of for a novitiate to be anywhere other than in the countryside, to preserve the novices from the world so recently abandoned. Yet for almost two centuries the most famous Jesuit novitiate in France, the home of a great number of Jesuit saints who were later canonized, was in the middle of Paris, less than two city blocks from one of the largest, most rowdy, raucous, enticing, disreputable amusements in the city, the St. Germain Fair. Yet another example: the novitiate prepares one for his future life as a Jesuit. That is true, unless you are Jan Casimir, brother of Wladislaus IV, king of Poland. Jan joined the Society in 1643, was made a cardinal three years later, and after two more years became king of Poland. He served in that capacity until 1668 through a series of disastrous wars that almost destroyed the country. It was in his reign that the monastery of Częstochowa was successfully defended and became a symbol of Polish nationhood. Another example: presumably only some years after the novitiate would a novice pronounce final vows. But then, matters were otherwise when that novice was a former bishop and former senator of Poland. In 1678 Thomas Ujeyski finished the novitiate and was immediately professed of the four vows.

And we all know how experienced in the life of the Society a novice director is meant to be. But the ten young men in the first novitiate in the United States, that of the Maryland mission, began their long retreat on October 10, 1806. Their director, Fr. Francis Neale, was himself a novice who had entered the Society on that very day. The reader of these four novitiate stories may draw any moral he wishes.

Jerónimo Nadal must have taken to heart the advice that Ignatius of Loyola gave in the *Spiritual Exercises*: "[S]ee in imagination the physical place where that which I want to contemplate is taking place. . . . for instance, a temple or a mountain where Jesus Christ or our Lady happens to be, in accordance with the topic I desire to contemplate" (47:3-4). In his latter years, while in retirement in Hall, near Innsbruck, Nadal was the author of an extraordinary book of engravings of scenes from the life of Christ. Not published until some thirteen years after Nadal's death in 1580, it was one of the last gifts to his Jesuit brethren and to the Church from a man to whom the Society owed so much.

The book originally appeared at Antwerp in 1593 from one of the greatest publishers of Europe, the Plantin Press. It is sometimes referred to today, and aptly so, as *The Illustrated Spiritual Exercises*. Its original long Latin title in English translation can be put as *Images from the Gospels Used in the Sacrifice of the Mass during the Year, Arranged according to the Chronology of Events in the Life of Christ*. From the birth of Jesus to the assumption of Mary, every event in Christ's life is pictured, those taken from the Gospels and even from legends, and even accretions to the Gospels. Details in each of the one hundred and fifty-three engravings are lettered and described in a text below the illustration, and the specific Gospel references are given above each illustration. Those texts are in Latin and would unfortunately be all too unknown to many people today, but not to those who used the book at the time it was published. The pictures not only then served as a stimulus to imaginative contemplation, as they could serve now, but even now they are a treasure-trove for historians of sixteenth-century Catholic spirituality, and for the influence of that spirituality through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They are equally a rich mine for art and architecture historians, because the buildings, the decorations, the furniture, and even the clothes of most of the participants in the stories are those of sixteenth-century Europe.

The original 1593 edition is, of course, a rare book today. But fortunately contemporary technology has made possible excellent reproductions of the illustrations. Fr. Richard Rousseau, S.J., at the University of Scranton Press, has provided them in a paperback edition of Nadal's original work. He merits our thanks for making available to us again one of the Society's treasures, and thus for making us once again aware of Nadal's gifts to the Society.

And finally, an interesting observation, not apropos of any of my previous comments, but intriguing in itself and, I hope, capable of stimulating thought and maybe even a letter or two in agreement or disagreement with it. In my experience, what is said below is certainly not true of life in the Society of Jesus. Is it true of life in the Church? The comment is by Clifford Longley, writing in *Priests and People*, an English Catholic Journal.

Catholic Infantilism: As citizens we are required to be critical of authority where necessary, to have regard to our rights and to stand up for them. A healthy scepticism is required of us. How come in our lives as Catholics—surely the most important part of what we are—we somehow have to contrive to become completely different people: docile, passive, uncritical, with no power or influence, no right to information, no right to be consulted? Is it even possible to switch over like that, from active citizen to passive church-goer; or do we just pretend we have done so, hiding what we really feel? Does this not lead to a kind of Catholic infantilism, where we have to cease to be adults because the only room for us in the Church is as children?

John W. Padberg, S.J.
Editor

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“CITY OF THE LIVING GOD”

The Urban Roots of the Spiritual Exercises

*Bernardus valles, montes Benedictus amabat;
oppida Franciscus, sed magnas Ignatius urbes.*

(Bernard loved the valleys, Benedict the mountains,
Francis the towns, but Ignatius the great cities.)

The Question

Overworked and overwhelmed by the demands of noisy, city-centered ministries, Jesuits, like many other priests and religious, cherish their annual retreat in the country. They delight in the greenery and savor those hours of productive, refreshing quiet away from the exhausting pace of their “real” world. For many, returning to that messy workaday world can involve at times a bit of a letdown, a sense of departure from a world of “spirituality,” as though the two spheres existed independently at opposite poles in a Jesuit’s life. Some may even harbor an unspoken assumption that associates holiness with the tranquility of the country and worldliness with the babel of the city.

The title of this essay is quoted from Heb. 12:22. Regarding the epigram, see Thomas M. Lucas, S.J., *Saint, Site and Sacred Strategy: Ignatius, Rome and Jesuit Urbanism* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1990), 16. In a note Lucas refers to the various forms this oft used traditional proverb took in its many incarnations in Jesuit literature (*ibid.*, 44).

Richard A. Blake, S.J., is professor of Fine Arts and codirector of the Film Studies Program at Boston College. Formerly he was executive editor of America, where he has also been doing film reviews since 1975. His recent books include Woody Allen: Profane and Sacred, and Afterimage: The Indelible Catholic Imagination in Six American Film Makers, awaiting publication.

The rural setting has become an ordinary part of the retreat experience for contemporary American Jesuits, and most of us most of the time, no doubt, find that in many ways it enriches the atmosphere for prayer. But do we lose something by making our annual retreat in the country when our apostolic work is rooted in the city? It is an intriguing question. Put another way, I wonder if geography adds to a sense of spiritual schizophrenia, as though we may be trying to lead two Jesuit lives at once: the life of prayer and the life of action, each pursued in a radically different environment. Teasing out the implications of this question may not lead me to surrender my annual week in the country, but it has led me to rethink my sense of Ignatian spirituality.

What follows should not be construed as a plea to shut down Gloucester, Wernersville, Sedalia, or Los Gatos. I would, however, like to examine the thesis that the Spiritual Exercises in both composition and early practice grew from urban roots. Yet for many of us, making a retreat means

moving to the country. This change of venue may lead us to miss some of the implications of individual exercises, and may even compromise that unity between action and contemplation that lies at the core of Ignatian spirituality.

One soon realizes that the process of Ignatian conversion and spiritual development took place to an extraordinary degree in busy, highly social, even urban situations rather than in places of quiet and solitude.

This thesis, intended here to be exploratory rather than argumentative, may have implications that can enrich our understanding of how we make the Spiritual Exercises today. First, going back to early historical records provides a context for this kind of reflection. What was the setting in which St. Ignatius composed the *Exercises*, and how did he and the early Jesuits begin leading others through their

retreats? Second, could the normal urban setting in which the Exercises were given in their early days have influenced the composition, understanding, and focus of the key meditations for Ignatius and the First Companions? Third, as a personal quirk, I'd like to explore some cultural factors that might explain why we American Jesuits as a group generally prefer to live in the city but pray in the country.

Historical Contexts

The Place of Composition

Location is everything. At least today's entrepreneurs seem to think it is. It seems fair to ask the question: Where, geographically and socially, were the Spiritual Exercises originally composed and given? Recognizing the importance of its original setting, especially if it is different from what most of us are used to today, holds some serious implications not only for the Exercises but for Ignatian spirituality as it is lived by Jesuits in their daily routine.

Ignatius himself does little to assist us in this investigation. The meager descriptive information found in primary documents regarding the various locations in which the Exercises were composed, made, and given strikes me as ironic, penned as they were by someone who gave such detailed descriptions of how he returned to Mt. Olivet, surrendered his penknife as a bribe to a guard, and asked to be allowed to revisit a holy site outside Jerusalem, just so that he could check the exact position of our Lord's feet at the moment of his Ascension (47).¹ Even though Ignatius appreciated the importance of location, either by oversight or design, he left his own biographers stranded in a strange land without a penknife.

All Jesuits have composed their own mental biography of Ignatius. Most of us have long ago concluded that the Spiritual Exercises are the product of a newly converted hermit living in a cave at Manresa. The text of Ignatius's "autobiography" furnishes some refinement of this conception. Keeping in mind this question of locale while skimming through its pages, one soon realizes that the process of conversion and spiritual development took place to an extraordinary degree in busy, highly social, even urban situations rather than in places of quiet and solitude.

The first stirrings of the saint lurking under the skin of a wounded soldier began at his ancestral castle, where, surrounded by physicians and attendants, he even had access to a library containing, if not the "worldly books of fiction" he requested, at least a life of Christ and a book of lives of saints (*PilgTest* 5). During this period of confinement, he also flirted with the idea of becoming a Carthusian in Seville; but even in the midst of his "first fervor," he decided that holiness for him would be found, not in a monas-

¹ *A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of St. Ignatius of Loyola As Transcribed by Luis Gonçalvez da Câmara*, trans. Parmananda R. Divarkar, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995). Hereafter this source will be abbreviated to *PilgTest*. Here and later, numbers enclosed in parentheses following references to texts written by Ignatius indicate the paragraph numbers of the document cited.

tery, but on the pilgrim's road to the city of Jerusalem (12). Nor did the Benedictine foundation at Monserrat hold much appeal for him. After his general confession and his all-night vigil, he took to the road again and stopped at the small city of Manresa, where, he notes, the townspeople regarded him as something of a celebrity for his "renunciation" at Monserrat (18). Much to his embarrassment and apparent annoyance, giving his cloak to a beggar during his pilgrimage there gave rise to a rumor that he had given away a vast fortune.

The perception that Ignatius lived the life of a hermit in a cave at Manresa while he composed the *Spiritual Exercises* calls for some refinement as well. According to his own recollections, his days included more social contact than one might expect of a "hermit." Every day he went out into the town to beg (19) and attended Mass, vespers, and compline in the cathedral (20). Eventually he moved from his hospice to a "small room" in a Dominican monastery, where he prayed seven hours a day (23). Even while keeping this extraordinary regimen of prayer, he still had time to offer spiritual direction to those who came to visit him (26). He notes that during these days he even began to change his personal hygiene in order to be better able to help souls (29). During his several bouts of illness, he was taken into a private home and cared for by "many prominent ladies" (34).

The famous revelation on the banks of the Cardoner occurred while he was on his way to attend Mass at a public church "situated little more than an mile from Manresa" (30). Significantly, his Cardoner experience of 1521 heightened his awareness of the Trinity and, as Father General Arrupe has perceptively observed, set the foundation for the outward-looking, apostolic mission of his life and of the Society that he would one day found.²

By the time he left Manresa in 1523, he had both "made" the Exercises himself under the direction of the Holy Spirit and had begun to assemble the notes that would enable him to lead others through the experience.³ During this period of extraordinary spiritual activity, both contempla-

² Pedro Arrupe, S.J. "The Trinitarian Inspiration of the Ignatian Charism," *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS* 33, no. 3 (May 2001): 22.

³ *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, ed. and trans. George E. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 3. Citations from any edition of the *Spiritual Exercises* will hereafter be indicated by *SpEx*. The *Spiritual Exercises*, as we know them today, were composed over a period of time. The oldest complete form, the *Versio Prima*, sections of which were written in the hand of Ignatius, is thought to date from 1541. Pope Paul III approved the *Vulgata versio* on July 31, 1548; this was the "classical" Latin version done for Ignatius by André de Freux (Joseph de Guibert, S.J., *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, ed. George E. Ganss, S.J., trans. William J. Young, S.J. [St. Louis:

tive and pastoral, he remained in some way in contact with a wide circle of people in the town. One might say that his spirituality took shape in the social environment of village life as much as in a solitary cave or monastic cell.

The Pilgrim's Progress

After Manresa, the autobiography of Ignatius reads like a travelog, an odyssey of the interior life marked by a series of journeys to major cities: Barcelona, Rome, Padua, Venice, and finally Jerusalem. There, despite his initial desire to stay in the Holy Land and grow close to Jesus through his devotion to the sacred shrines, he also formulated a desire to "help souls," which he chose not to reveal to the Franciscan superiors during his unsuccessful negotiations to stay with them (45). At the end of his return journey to Barcelona, through Venice and Genoa, he took the next step in his development by resolving to return to school (54).

After preliminary studies at Barcelona, Ignatius attended the university at Alcalá. Here he lived in a hospice in town and, despite his dedication to his studies, he "was engaged in giving the spiritual exercises and teaching catechism" (57). It is noteworthy that the director and his retreatants conducted their business in town rather than in a monastery. All the while, Ignatius remained involved with his own studies and catechizing. At Alcalá, Ignatius also did time in jail for his allegedly questionable doctrine and for his suspected role in encouraging two noblewomen to undertake a pilgrimage unescorted(!), an accusation he vigorously denied (61).

History repeats itself: The next university town, Salamanca, brought him another stay in prison for talking of God without suitable academic credentials (65). Realizing that his brush with the law would limit his ability to "help souls" in Salamanca, he resolved to continue his studies at Paris, La Grande Pomme of sixteenth-century Europe. While living in this metropolis, he resolved to gather additional companions to help him in his great, but as yet unspecified, work (71). In the rough-and-tumble of city life, he gained greater appreciation of the role of others in his vocation, not only as "souls" to help but as companions in the enterprise.

At Alcalá and again at Paris, Ignatius led his companions through the Exercises but, sadly, he left us few details about the physical circumstances of their "retreat." While in Paris he set his spiritual sights initially on two roommates, Francis Xavier and Pierre Favre, who he thought would make excellent companions for the long haul (81). Under his direction, they made the Spiritual Exercises there in the city. By the time Ignatius had

established himself in Venice in 1537, the number of companions had reached nine (not including Ignatius himself); but again he says little about the circumstances of their “formation” (93). As for himself, Ignatius notes, “In all that traveling he had great supernatural experiences like those he had at Manresa” (95). He did not have to withdraw to a mountaintop to find God; God found him wherever he happened to be.

While the evidence is meager, several conclusions seem plausible, at least as a starting point for further reflection. During these days Ignatius and his companions had ongoing commitments to study, to preaching, to spiritual conversations, and to works of charity. Despite his busyness, Ignatius himself continued to experience privileged moments of contact with God in the midst of his studies, travels, imprisonment, and ministry. So it would seem likely that, based on his own experience, when he led others through the Exercises, he saw little need for his exercitants to seek the kind of solitude and withdrawal from the affairs of life that one usually associates with gifted prayer. Ignatius would probably smile approvingly at the line of Charlie (Harvey Keitel) in *Mean Streets* (Martin Scorsese, 1973): “You don’t make up for your sins in church. You do it in the streets.” His smile might fade as Charlie concludes his speech: “The rest is bullshit and you know it.”

Alone in a Crowd

Ignatius’s brand of street-bred spirituality raises some questions. How did the early Jesuits find the privacy needed for prayer in the midst of city life? Ignatius clearly intended his retreatants to depart from the normal routine of their daily lives and seek some form of solitude. He makes this absolutely clear in the twentieth and last of his Introductory Explanations or Annotations, when he states confidently that the exercitant “will achieve more progress the more he or she withdraws from all friends and acquaintances and from all earthly concerns; for example, by moving out of one’s place of residence and taking a different house or room where one can live in the greatest possible solitude” (*SpEx* 20).⁴

Two observations follow immediately. First, as the enumeration indicates, this directive follows immediately after the nineteenth introduc-

⁴ The Spanish autograph of Ignatius, the two Latin versions (*Versio Prima* and *Vulgata Versio*), along with the version of Fr. Roothan of the twentieth annotation, are printed side by side in *Exercitia Spiritualia Sancti Ignatii de Loyola et eorum directoria*, from the Monumenta Ignatiana, ser. 2, vol. 52 of the series Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu (Madrid, 1919), 246–49. The Ganss translation follows the autograph, and may be presumed closest to the original intent of Ignatius. All four versions stress the importance of privacy, but none specifies where the private rooms are to be located.

tory explanation, which provides a blueprint for directing the Exercises for “a person who is involved in public affairs and pressing occupations” (19), one who presumably cannot interrupt the daily routine by withdrawing any great distance from ongoing responsibilities. In this note Ignatius spells out a regimen of prayer, but says nothing about the place. Such persons merely make a meditation for an hour each morning and then go about their daily routine. Second, although the twentieth annotation suggests a different room or house, where the familiar patterns can be displaced by full attention to prayer, it does not explicitly encourage the retreatant to move away from his or her neighborhood or city, nor does it prescribe a preference for a rural setting. The nineteenth annotation presumes that one will remain in one’s usual environment, and the twentieth leaves the matter open to the discretion of the director and the retreatant.

Although moving to a somewhat remote ambience has become standard retreat practice, at least in the United States, for many practical reasons Ignatius does not insist on it. In fact, even as superior general of the Society, he conducted the Exercises in Rome himself, and the earliest novices made their long retreat at the novitiate, which was also located in Rome according to Ignatius’s own preference.

Despite Ignatius’s apparent neutrality on the issue, the impulse toward the monastery and the country would seem to have asserted itself rather shortly after his death. But even the appearances can be a bit deceptive in this case. At least the evidence that remains in the documents holds enough ambiguity to call for a closer examination of the text.

By the time the official *Directory to the Spiritual Exercises* appeared in Latin in 1599, the early Jesuits seem to have moved substantially beyond Ignatius by declaring, “It is certain that the place chosen for performing the Exercises ought to be at a distance from the haunts of men and out of sight of friends, even the most intimate.”⁵ The phrase “at a distance from the haunts of men” would seem to offer a clear indication of preference for moving out of the city. This anonymous British translation of 1925 reflects and affirms what was then the current practice of Jesuits’ making the annual retreat in the country. The 1996 American translation of the Latin text (“remotus ab hominum concursu”), however, provides more leeway in the matter. In this version the directive reads: “There is no doubt that the place where the Exercises are made ought to be secluded from all social contact

⁵ *Directory to the Spiritual Exercises of Our Holy Father Ignatius*, trans. anon. (London: Manresa, 1925), 1, p. 17.

and even the sight of others, especially family and friends.”⁶ Seclusion (perhaps “privacy” might have a more contemporary sound to it) need not imply physical distance from “the haunts of men.” This version, with its ambiguity about setting, echoes the sentiment of Ignatius himself in his own autograph directory: “The place where he makes the Exercises should be where he will be least able to be seen or talk with anyone, if the Exercises are being given in full.”⁷

Many of the earlier documents from a variety of private directories that were collated under the direction of Father General Claudio Aquaviva and became the *Official Directory* of 1599, echo this call for privacy, without

Did the location actually color the experience of the Exercises for the early followers of Ignatius?

the sense of remoteness from populated areas that the 1925 British translation implies. For example, Father Diego Miró, in a directory written before 1582, wanted to correct some of the excessive “flexibility” that he perceived in contemporary practice by returning to the spirit of St. Ignatius. He writes: “As for the place, unless the person who is going to make the Exercises is a member of the Society or has decided

to enter the Society, he can be given the Exercises in some house or dwelling outside our own, where he can be away from every kind of occupation, as is indicated in Annotation 20.”⁸ Even for one inclined toward strict observance, the issue is privacy, not rustification.

Similarly, Fr. Girolamo Benci compiled notes for a directory during the retreat he made sometime between 1580 and 1590. He echoes the sentiment of Miró: “Unless the exercitant belongs to our Society, the place for him to stay could be a secluded room in a separate house; this would be more suitable than in our college.”⁹ One final example: Fr. Antonio Cordeses notes in his undated directory, “Once a person had decided to make the Exercises, provision should be made for him to withdraw to a secluded cell,

⁶ *Exercitia Spiritualia*, 1125, no. 1; *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories of 1599*, ed. and trans. Martin E. Palmer, S.J. (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), chap 4, no. 36 (p. 298).

⁷ Palmer, *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises*, p. 7, no. 2.

⁸ “Second Directory of Father Diego Miró,” no. 9 (*ibid.*, 164).

⁹ “How to Give the Exercises, by Fabio de Fabi,” no. 21 (*ibid.*, 201). Fr. Benci was careful to credit these observations to his director, Fr. de Fabi.

remaining secluded throughout the Exercises from any conversation or dealing with others that might distract him from them."¹⁰

Silence and privacy are not in question for one making the Exercises in full. The early directories leave no doubt about the need for some form of seclusion where one can be spared the distractions of the workaday world. In the available literature, however, it is the nature of the seclusion that remains in doubt.

Let's stop at this point in our survey of texts to address the obvious question: Who cares? What difference does it make whether one creates a world of silence in a private room in a house in the city or whether one retreats from the city altogether and tries to listen to God's voice in the natural silence of a pastoral setting? Did the location actually color the experience of the Exercises for the early followers of Ignatius? Whether or not one chooses to replicate that urban experience today, does this historical background hold implications for one's apostolic spirituality today? It might, as I hope to suggest once the rest of this historical groundwork has been set in place.

A Very, Very Quiet Place

If the early documents leave the nature of seclusion unsettled, the practice of the time yields some sense of the settings for the Exercises among the early Jesuits. Being directors ever ready to adapt to the needs of the retreatants, Ignatius and his companions allowed those making the Exercises to choose from a great variety of accommodations. What is known today as the Nineteenth Annotation Retreat, an ordinary practice rather than an innovation in the early days, proved no problem.¹¹ Persons making the Exercises in this manner merely lived at home and periodically consulted the director at the Jesuit rectory. Women, if they were members of a religious community, simply remained in their convent. Laywomen might find temporary lodging in the guest quarters of a convent; or, more commonly, they simply stayed at home and met with the director in a church, frequently in the place where confessions were normally heard.

Some men, however, posed housing problems. These included men discerning a vocation to the priesthood, the Society of Jesus, or some other

¹⁰ "Directory of Father Antonio Cordeses," no. 13 (*ibid.*, 267).

¹¹ John W. O'Malley describes the evolution from individual direction to "group" retreats, which required space, which in turn took on the form of reserved rooms and eventually entire buildings set aside for those making the Exercises (*The First Jesuits* [Cambridge: Harvard, 1993], 129).

religious institute, as well as other laymen who for a variety of reasons were ready to commit an extended period of time to making the Exercises beyond the First Week. For these the Jesuits wanted to provide some special accommodations. Routinely they took up residence in an isolated section of the Jesuit community; or if a place could be found for them, they could stay in a private house or monastery, where they could attend Mass and vespers and meet with the director from a nearby Jesuit residence.

It became common practice to reserve a few guest rooms in the residence for this purpose. If an exercitant was to stay with the Jesuit community, the superior of the house, rather than the director, was instructed to discuss financial arrangements with the guest and provide “someone to wait on him and bring him his meals.”¹² Once the Exercises began, this “manservant”—as much as the term rubs us wrong today, no more appropriate word can be used—handled practical details only, and spoke with the retreatant only on these matters “in the fewest possible words.” No one else in the house had any dealings with him whatever. Meals were taken alone in the private room, not in the community refectory.

This extreme form of “solitude” within a single room in the community residence might strike us today as bordering on solitary confinement, but this initial impression may be misleading. The isolation was eased to some extent by daily trips to the neighborhood church and by scheduled visits from the “servant” and the director. If the house was large enough, the retreatant might spend some time in the garden, but during the First Week, the Additional Directions reinforce an extraordinary degree of isolation: “I will deprive myself of all light, by closing the shutters and doors while I am in my room, except for times when I want to read the office or other matters, or eat” (*SpEx* 79). Long walks in the woods were not factored into the routine, but trips through the streets to a public church for Mass and vespers were.

When matched against today’s experience of making the Exercises, where the solitude derives from a more or less spacious rural setting provided by many retreat houses, the early practice bristles with paradox. Today the houses themselves are “isolated,” while the retreatants enjoy lounges, music, a library, a house chapel, a pleasant dining room, and at least the moral support of seeing other people as they go through a similar routine. In the early days, however, the houses were located in the towns, within which the individual retreatants followed their own individual regimen of solitude, which included walks back and forth to church. These

¹² “The Official Directory of 1599,” chap. 4, no. 38, in Palmer, *On Giving the Exercises*, 298.

lodgings for exercitants, within ready walking distance of a church, or of the director’s residence in the case of those who had quarters outside the Jesuit house, would have been located primarily in populated areas, where the Jesuits of the community, including the director, would be working at their various ministries.¹³

Jesuits Making the Exercises

What about lodgings for Jesuits making retreats during the lifetime of Ignatius and shortly after his death? In the earliest days, they had no problem about finding a time and place for their annual retreat, simply because the obligation did not exist until 1608 (fifty-two years after the death of Ignatius), when General Congregation 6 decreed that every Jesuit should devote eight to ten days each year to making the Spiritual Exercises.¹⁴ De Guibert underlines the dramatic shift from ordinary practice that Father General Aquaviva and this congregation initiated in their efforts to foster continuing spiritual development among Jesuits who had already completed their formation: “Hitherto, the practice had been to make the Exercises only on extraordinary and rare occasions.”¹⁵

Before they became part of the annual routine, these “extraordinary and rare” occasions might well lead a Jesuit to adopt the same form of total isolation as a layman trying to decide on a new direction in his life or as a novice or tertian searching for confirmation in his vocation. Once the Jesuits were required by law to make a retreat every year, the problem of lodging took care of itself. They were able simply to stay at home and the whole community together made the “house retreat.” If the community was located

¹³ Thomas M. Lucas, S.J., points out the apostolic need that prompted the early Jesuits to deliberately select a location at the center of the city of Rome. Throughout this study, he demonstrates how this “urban strategy” developed in other cities as well (*Landmarking: City, Church and Jesuit Urban Strategy* [Chicago: Loyola, 1997], 87).

¹⁴ De Guibert, 237. Clearly a man of his own perspectives and preferences, de Guibert notes with apparent approval that the insistence on an annual retreat was part of a movement toward greater regimentation imposed by General Congregation 6 and Aquaviva. The spirit of this period of renewal also included enshrining into law the practice of the full hour of mental prayer that had been the recommended custom since Borgia and GC 2 in 1565. This decree was a clear and deliberate revision of the *Constitutions* of Ignatius. See *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms: A Complete English Translation of the Official Latin Texts*, ed. John W. Padberg, S.J., et al (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), *Cons.*, Part IV, no. 342 (p. 142).

¹⁵ De Guibert, *Jesuits*, 237.

in the cities, as most active communities were, then the retreat became an “urban” experience.

Housing for Laymen

While the Jesuits could stay at home for their annual retreat, lay retreatants desiring some temporary separation from business and family needed some special accommodation. This proved a problem. Initially, the ministry was limited by the lack of available space, and the enthusiasm to provide rooms in existing residences became tempered by an internal debate about the types of persons and numbers that should be encouraged to make the Exercises in this fashion.¹⁶ Some believed that only extraordinary lay-people should be allowed to make even a truncated version of the Exercises. Others, notably Nadal, felt that all lay students of Jesuit schools should have a retreat experience of some kind, but in this instance the residential nature of the institution solved the housing problem. They could simply stay at school.

Resolving this problem of housing non-student laymen was accomplished indirectly and in stages. As early as 1547 Ignatius wanted to establish special houses in which to train Jesuit novices. These would also house several formed Jesuits, men carefully chosen for their skill in directing the Spiritual Exercises. Precursors to today’s novice masters and spiritual directors, they would both train novices and conduct the Exercises for laymen who requested them. To facilitate this work, additional rooms were to be included in the building for the explicit purpose of housing lay retreatants.¹⁷ Ignatius’s revolutionary notion that novices should engage in social work in addition to study, prayer, and the full course of the Spiritual Exercises during their early training entailed locating the novitiates in the cities. If his first companions could make their retreat of election in their own rooms in Paris, then Ignatius could see no reason why the next generation of Jesuits couldn’t do the same in Rome and in other cities.

In 1553 the Jesuits added an entire building to the college at Alcalá for laymen making the Exercises, but this generosity in providing housing seems to have been the exception to the rule. John O’Malley notes that when the Collegio Germanico moved to new quarters in 1563, several rooms (not a building) were set aside for lay retreatants; he considered this allotment of space enough to qualify the college for the honor of being “the first

¹⁶ O’Malley, *First Jesuits*, 130.

¹⁷ De Guibert, *Jesuits*, 302.

'retreat house' in Rome."¹⁸ In 1599 Aquaviva was still urging superiors to be generous in setting aside rooms for retreatants. Oddly, even after space became available, the numbers of laymen making the retreats in the colleges remained disappointingly low, despite the innovative practice of giving the Exercises to several exercitants at one time.¹⁹ Naturally, local superiors were reluctant to add extra rooms for laymen if there was a possibility that they might go unused. It was a proverbial vicious circle: without space, large numbers could not be invited to make the Exercises; without exercitants, no one would add space in Jesuit residences.

After some decades this impasse reached a resolution by moving retreat facilities away from the Jesuit communities. The concept of what we would now call Jesuit retreat houses did not really take shape until 1660, when Vincent Huby and Jean Rigoleuc converted a seminary building into a center for giving the Exercises. Located in Vannes, in Brittany, the house followed the model established by St. Vincent de Paul in Paris in 1628. The idea of offering abbreviated retreats in a separate house caught on and spread throughout France. Within the next century there were seven such retreat houses in France, some serving on occasion a hundred or more men at one time.²⁰ In these large-group retreats, individual direction would be impossible. Because of the numbers, the Exercises for laymen, like those for Jesuits, fell into the pattern of the preached retreat.

Summing Up

At this point it may be helpful to draw these several strands together to try to gain some sense of the perceivable shift in the practice and experience of the Spiritual Exercises. This historical survey of these early developments, we hope, can provide a useful context in which to reflect on the Exercises and indeed on Ignatian spirituality itself as they shape Jesuit lives to this day.

For present purposes, six observations can be drawn from all the disparate information provided by the early documents and from what is known about the practice of the Exercises by Ignatius and the First Companions:

1. During the period of his great illuminations at Loyola and then at Manresa, when Ignatius can be said to be making his own version of the

¹⁸ O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 130.

¹⁹ De Guibert, *Jesuits*, 302 f.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 304.

Spiritual Exercises under the direction of the Holy Spirit, he remained in contact with the larger ambient society, exercising various ministries and accepting spiritual and temporal support from local residents. In the years after Manresa, as he continued to record his insights and refine his ideas and as he gathered companions, Ignatius remained in populated areas where he could engage in other apostolates while directing others in the many forms of the Exercises.

2. Ignatius and his companions adapted the Exercises to the varied needs and capabilities of the retreatant, according to introductory explanation 18, and thus frequently confined themselves to reflections on the First Week, which might last from a few days to a week or more (*SpEx* 18). Furthermore, they made frequent use of the nineteenth-annotation approach, which permitted both the exercitant and the director to go about their normal duties during the retreat (19). Both factors suggest strongly that both retreatant and director remained in a city, within easy distance of one another and their respective outside obligations.

3. Those wishing to make the Exercises over a longer period of time—what we would call today a “closed” retreat—took up residence in a private house, monastery, or Jesuit community close enough to the director’s regular round of activity to allow them to meet on a daily basis. Again, since Jesuits carried on their ministries in or around cities and colleges, this was where the retreat was conducted. Even within this urban or suburban setting, arrangements could be made to ensure an extraordinary degree of solitude within the house.

4. When novitiates once separated from the houses of more-advanced study, they became the preferred location for laymen making the Exercises.

These were initially located in the cities, where novices could have access to the ministries of their ongoing experiments. Certain Jesuits were assigned to direct both the novices and the lay retreatants there in the city.

Does a week or month of quiet in idyllic surroundings pose the risk of widening the gap between prayer and apostolate in a Jesuit’s life?

5. When the annual retreat became obligatory for all Jesuits, the ideal of having a personal director for each exercitant was no longer practical in large communities. As a result, the “house retreat” became the norm, especially for Jesuit students.

The one retreat master could travel to a house of studies anywhere. While these scholasticates were located in a city, near a university, the experience remained somewhat urban in nature. As the scholasticates moved

to the country, as was certainly the case with the acre-a-man policy that ruled in the United States for over a century, the house retreat became more rural in flavor.

6. From their inception, retreat "houses" for the laity were free-standing ministries. The Jesuits assigned to them led visitors through the Exercises in part or in whole and also did spiritual direction; many wrote pamphlets and books to supply fellow directors with ideas for this important work of the Society. They frequently had no other obligations, like teaching or social ministry, that would tie them to an urban center, and as a result they and their ministry could be located anywhere, even in the country.

While a retreat in the country offers much by way of refreshment, physical as well as spiritual, the change in ambience that took place after the death of Ignatius may have compromised something of the original genius of Ignatian spirituality. It certainly has led to an experience that differs a great deal from what Ignatius and the First Companions knew, as this historical survey has suggested.

In Search of Integration

Some Key Questions

The nub of the argument is simply this: Does a week or month of quiet in idyllic surroundings pose the risk of widening the gap between prayer and apostolate in a Jesuit's life? Put positively, is the urban setting, familiar to the early Jesuits and their lay retreatants, more conducive to the objective of finding God in all things? Finally, if the answer to both questions is "yes," or even "maybe," then one might ask whether an awareness of the urban context in which the Spiritual Exercises were composed and originally used might help provide Jesuits today with a richer reading of the texts, and help them integrate their prayer and work. The question that will not be addressed, at least not directly, is an intensely personal one: Could there be some advantage in making a retreat, at least on occasion, on a busy campus during the school year or in a school or parish in the middle of a city, as in fact many Jesuits do at present? Again, my purpose is exploratory, not argumentative. Some may find the notion intriguing; others, ludicrous.

Analogy to the Examen

An analogy helps us judge the merits of the suggestion. Thinking of the examen, a brief interlude of prayer set in a busy workday, provides a useful point of reference for thinking about a retreat set in a busy urban

environment. The value of both derives precisely from their insertion into the real world of a Jesuit's preoccupations, fears, hopes, angers, frustrations, and exhaustion. In each case prayer becomes part of that world, not something separated from it.

A few reflections on the examen will help clarify this point. Sublime realist that he was, Ignatius realized that a spirituality of works rather than regular monastic discipline could easily lead his most generous and zealous followers into an all-consuming and counterproductive commitment to "the work," as though it were a job rather than a ministry. Today we use the term "workaholic." Because of this danger, he did not insist on forcing long prayers and formal liturgies into an already busy schedule, but relied instead on a brief fifteen-minute examination of conscience twice each day. No one was to be exempt, not the scholastics (*Cons.*, 342) nor the brothers (344).

Although De Guibert frequently interprets the examen in the traditional sense of a prayer of contrition and reform of life, he does foreshadow later understandings of the practice that involve perceiving God's role in the activities of one's day. He writes thus:

They [examens and meditations] are always seen as a means to dispose the soul, to free it from disordered passions, to place it fully under the influence of the supernatural light, and by means of this light to make it capable of finding, embracing, and carrying out as far as possible God's will concerning the soul. This too was to become the most important function assigned to prayer in the spiritual tradition of the Jesuits.²¹

Of its very nature, the examen, as the centerpiece of Ignatian spirituality, according to De Guibert, demands, not a withdrawal from the affairs of the day, but an appreciation of the workings of God in the very midst of the many exhausting activities undertaken to help souls. The examen ties prayer and ministry inextricably together in a Jesuit's life.

An Argument from Congruence

The life of Ignatius, the early practice of Jesuits, and written directives—all taken together present a united front, or at least a remarkable consistency. Initially all forms of Jesuit prayer, from the fifteen-minute examen to the thirty-day retreat took place in proximity to the pastoral ministries, not apart from them. The director in particular had to remain close to his base of operations. There seems something wonderfully Ignatian for a Jesuit to interrupt his duties in a local school, hospital, or prison to

²¹ De Guibert, 537.

stop off to discuss the workings of the Spirit in the life of one making the Exercises at some house in the neighborhood. Many today continue this practice by carrying on fruitful ministries of spiritual direction in the midst of their other "primary" ministries. Such an arrangement underlines continuity, not rupture.

In contrast, today's experience of the Exercises often stresses discontinuity. At the risk of generalization and possible exaggeration, let me try to describe this separation. Frequently enough, retreatants value a complete change of atmosphere, generally at some distance from their normal activities. Going to a retreat house means going to the country, and most Jesuits welcome this change of scenery. Once surrounded by grass and trees, the regimen suggests a temporary vocation to the monastic life. Silence reigns throughout the house and grounds; meals and liturgy follow a set schedule. This well-ordered routine could not stand in sharper contrast to the chaos of the usual apostolic setting. The change is welcome (at least for a short time), but alien to Jesuit apostolic life.

Social patterns change as well. In unaccustomed physical surroundings, the retreatant deals with types of persons somewhat different from his usual circle of colleagues, students, patients, or parishioners. Directors assume a role of overwhelming importance, but in this setting they are not busy ministers who have dropped in for a few minutes between other apostolic commitments in the neighborhood. They are the resident experts. Even if their regular ministry is something other than retreat work, in this particular environment they are the directors.

This leadership role is inevitable. As a general practice today, full-time directors have received some specialized training for this ministry, and appropriately so. They have studied the Spiritual Exercises at some depth, know at least some rudimentary techniques in psychology and counseling, have made workshops and served apprenticeships. They read the books and periodicals written by their colleagues. Even part-time directors presumably share this background with full-time directors to some extent, or they would not be engaged in the work. In short, they have devoted themselves to this apostolate as professionals and, much like dedicated professionals in any field, they pride themselves on their expertise. For the most part, this professionalism has served the Society well.

But professionalism comes with a cost. As professionals, directors can unwittingly form a distinct guild, with its own language, goals, issues, literature, folk heroes, and social patterns. During a retreat, the relationship between director and retreatant is not such as exists between peers. During the week or month away, the exercitant communicates by using their specialized vocabulary and adapts to their lifestyle in their setting.

Entering into a director's physical and social space has some advantages, of course. It moves the retreatants away from their own small world and daily preoccupations, and provides, at least for the time away, a different perspective on life. On the other hand, and this is my point, it reinforces the sense of "difference," the separation between the spiritual life away in the country with spiritual people and the real world at home in the city with colleagues. After a good experience with regular order and congenial guides in a lovely setting, retreatants going back to the harsh realities of the real world would have to "shift their gears" violently. Sometimes the gears don't mesh all that smoothly. Resolutions to pray more often, made with great ardor during the stay in the country, frequently have a relatively short half-life back in the brick-and-asphalt bowers of the big cities. Looking back, retreatants may find their resolutions simply unrealistic; and since they were made in an alien environment, perhaps they were. The world of spirituality and resolutions was there and then; the world of reality—our world—is here and now.

In Search of Continuity

A reading of several of the key exercises with an awareness of their urban roots could provide a starting point as we struggle to maintain contact between those privileged moments of quiet prayer that we all cherish and the noise of our apostolic works. In a healthy Ignatian spirituality, prayer and work exist in a reciprocal relationship. Discovering that continuity, fostering it, and living by it provide an ongoing challenge for contemporary Jesuits.

Even for one making a retreat in the most pastoral of settings, the Exercises continually invite one to recall a world of busy human enterprise. As we have seen, Ignatius composed the *Exercises* and continued his spiritual growth surrounded by people, and he and other early directors met with their retreatants in genuinely urban settings. The *Exercises* and *Directories* in written form emerge from that background. As a result, many of the prescribed meditations bustle with activity. They are crowded and noisy. They propose a sweaty spirituality with dirt under its fingernails. These few instances illustrate this premise:

The Principle and Foundation (23) may be the perfect example. With very few exceptions (it's hard to imagine any!), everyone making the Exercises has to grapple with these ideas at some point and in some form in the retreat. Normally, it comes up early, often as the first set of recommended reflections, while the person is just settling into the retreat. All these individuals have one of their hands in the retreat and one of their feet out there in

the world they normally inhabit. Memories, problems, tensions, and the like are still vivid and extremely important, and these become the starting place for the retreat. In the exercise, one does not suppress awareness of people and events, but one makes it the foundation of prayer.

In this introductory phase, the retreatant is reminded that “other things [other than human persons] on the face of the earth are created for human beings, to help them in the pursuit of the end for which they were created” (23:3).²² The temptation always is to leave “other things” in the abstract. In fact, as one concretizes the “things” that help and thus are to be embraced with gratitude, one naturally turns to places, objects, and events that are vivid in the memory. Conversely, one prays to use things that help, and to free oneself from those that hinder (23:4). How does one know the difference? One begins the Principle and Foundation by examining life in all its messy complexity, not by trying to rise above it.

In the Exercises many of the prescribed meditations bustle with activity.

The Meditations on Sin (45–73) also profit nicely from recalling the urban setting of the early Jesuits. After theoretical considerations of the sin of the angels (50) and of Adam (51), the text invites the exercitant to continue the movement toward the more concrete and experiential. At this point, the meditation directs attention to one’s personal sins, and the retreatant enters this reflection on sin no longer as an observer, but as a participant, again in most concrete terms:

I will call to mind all the sins of my life, looking at them year by year or period by period. For this three things will be helpful: first the locality or house where I lived; second, the associations which I had with others; third, the occupation I was pursuing. (56)

These directives most explicitly lead one’s thoughts and imaginations back into the arena of one’s normal activities. Praying in a similar environment may help jar the memory and make these recollections more powerful; physical proximity to the day-to-day world reduces psychological distance.

But the world of this meditation reveals itself in magnificent ambiguity. It is a world tainted by personal sin, but at the same time brimming with opportunities. Ignatius clearly directs these exercises toward a sense of

²² Thus are the paragraph and “verse” numbers indicated in recent editions of the *Spiritual Exercises*, such as the Ganss edition described in n. 3 above.

gratitude for a second chance to seize the future: "I will conclude with a colloquy of mercy—conversing with God our Lord and thanking him for granting me life until now, and proposing, with his grace, amendment for the future" (61). Implicit in this sequence of meditations lies the resolution to return to the site of past failings and missed opportunities, determined to seize the day when it next presents itself. The meditation ends with an uplifting sense of hope that the arena of human activities will in the future be touched by grace that overwhelms sin.

The *Kingdom* presents its own particular difficulties for retreatants today because of its underlying military metaphor (91–103). Sensitized to issues of war and peace, imperialism and colonialism, we might overreact to one imaginative framework and miss another. A close reading of the text suggests that an urban metaphor stakes an equal claim to our attention, and this may be more useful. In the composition of place, Ignatius invites the retreatant "to see with the eyes of the imagination, the synagogues, villages, and castles through which Christ our Lord passed as he preached" (91:3). Only after that imaginative structure is in place does Ignatius shift abruptly from the sights and smells of Jerusalem and the villages of Galilee to the consideration of "a human king, chosen by God our Lord himself" (92).

This jarring shift in imagery, from towns and cities to a mythical leader, offers a challenge, but it has its own inner logic. The imagination of place provides a continuous backdrop against which this leader appears. He is a single human person amid hordes of diverse people in a city who yearn for someone to provide a direction in their lives. For his part, he tries to inspire generous souls to undertake a noble enterprise with him. The audience then is as important as the leader, whether the leader is imagined as a military figure, as Ignatius suggests, or as Dorothy Day, or as Mother Teresa. This charismatic figure reaches out to all sorts of people, the retreatant among them, inspires generosity, and promises companionship. The pattern is thus set for the second part of the meditation, where Christ himself stands in the sites familiar from the Gospels and extends his call to a diverse, busy population and to this retreatant in particular (95). He looks upon them in their need and through his call fulfills all their longings. The text itself, and not a fanciful extrapolation, invites us to look with Christ's eyes at the world in explicit, concrete terms; and for most of us, that involves looking at the city where we exercise our various ministries.

The *Meditation on the Incarnation* (101–9), immediately following the *Kingdom*, moves the retreatant even more deeply into a consideration of the human environment of ministry. This exercise could have been composed at a contemporary inner-city parish. If the *Kingdom* left any doubt about the call of Christ as located in a universe of diverse human activ-

ity—and it doesn't—then the Incarnation seals off any possible escape into abstraction.

In the first prelude the retreatant explicitly adopts the point of view of the Trinity prior to the Incarnation, and notes "how the three Divine Persons gazed on the whole . . . surface of the world, full of people; and how, seeing that they were going down into hell, they decide in their eternity that the Second Person should become a human being" (102:1-2). Again good and evil are mixed, as they are in any human concourse.

The points of the meditation itself urge ever more concrete explicitation of this busy "world" constantly besieged by sin. The point of view switches from the "Three Divine Persons" to "I," but the object of the vision is the same. If anything, it is made even more precise because it is reconstructed through personal experience, not what one thinks God sees in the world, but what the retreatant has actually seen with the eyes of experience.

In the first point, one sees persons of different races, at war and at peace, weeping or laughing, healthy or sick, being born or dying (106:2). This complex image touches reality only as it reflects the actual persons one has encountered in life. In a daring shift of his point of view, Ignatius then instructs the retreatant to give attention to the Three Persons looking at the same sights. At this point the vision of the retreatant is fused with that of the Trinity. By gazing at the Three Persons, one not only sees what they see—that was the first prelude—but now feels what they feel and reacts as they react. Throughout this meditation the retreatant tries to imagine the world of his or her personal experience through the eyes of God.

Meditations on the Kingdom and the Incarnation, rooted as they are in city life, prepare the way for the subsequent contemplations of the Second Week, many of which explicitly deal with the ministry of Jesus amid crowds of people seeking his help in an urban setting. With the exception of the few exercises that stress the solitude of Jesus, such as the Temptations in the Desert (274) or the Agony in the Garden (290), each prayer begins with the same preparatory composition of place, that is, a mental reconstruction of the sites of the public and highly social ministry of Jesus that one is about to contemplate (91:2).

The *Two Standards* (136-48) reiterates the social character of the Kingdom, the Incarnation, and the subsequent contemplations of the Second Week. It even constructs a polarity of two symbolic cities, Babylon and Jerusalem. Satan at first appears "in that great plain of Babylon" (140); but his attention is directed toward the "uncountable devils" whom he "disperses, some to one city and others to another, not missing any provinces, places, states, or individual persons (141). In perfect symmetry, Christ is

imagined in “the great plain near Jerusalem” (144); but his attention, like Satan’s, turns outward, where he sends his “apostles, disciples and the like . . . throughout the whole world, to spread his doctrine among people of every state and condition” (145). Inexorably, the retreatant enters this imagined combat between the forces of good and evil, where the battle threatens the greatest number of souls. The exercise gains immediacy as it is related to the persons and places of one’s own ministry.

The *Contemplation to Attain Love* (230–237) traditionally provides a summary and climax of all the preceding exercises.²³ In keeping with the sense of tranquility that should follow the completion of the retreat, Ignatius relies on a most uncharacteristic pattern of agrarian imagery. In the second point, Ignatius proposes for consideration God’s activity in “the plants, giving them life; in the animals, giving them sensation” (235:1). In the third point, he returns to the same contemplation of nature: God “is working in the heavens, elements, plants, fruits, cattle, and all the rest” (236:2).

The imagery of the *Contemplation* takes us by surprise, but through a careful reading we can discern a logical compatibility with an urbanized reading of Ignatian spirituality. In the totality of the exercise, these pastoral images function as introductory reflections. They recall poetic commonplaces to set the theme of wonder and gratitude, but then Ignatius urges retreatants to go beyond them and into personal, specific experience of their own life and ministry.

The text amply supports this reading. It introduces the Exercise by proposing a reflection on action: “Love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words” (230:2). Rendering this concept in concrete terms inevitably brings to mind acts of love one has received from others, acts witnessed, and even acts performed in the service of others in the ministry. Pushing forward in this drive toward specificity, Ignatius urges the retreatant to pray “for interior knowledge of all the great good I have received” (233). In each part of the meditation, despite the nature imagery, Ignatius invites the retreatant to look with gratitude and hope at the concrete details of his own life and ministry: “the gifts I have received—my creation, redemption, and other gifts particular to myself” (234:1); “how he dwells also in myself, giving me existence, life, sensation, and intelligence” (235:2); “how God labors and works for me” (236:1); “how all good things and gifts descend from above; for example, my limited power” (237:1). Each section of this

²³ Ganss notes that early commentators questioned placing the *Contemplation* invariably in the Fourth Week, and observes that this minority position was rejected rather quickly (*Spiritual Exercises*, endnote 117 [p. 183]).

meditation turns resolutely to the life of the retreatant as it functions in a busy world of human activities.

The *Suscipe* also lends itself to a consideration of the specifics of one's ministry. The retreatant offers everything back to God, including memory, understanding and will. The prayer continues: "All is yours. Dispose of it according to your will" (234:5). Disposing of these gifts implies, surely, a disposition of the whole person for the service of others. In this context, the *Suscipe* implies not so much being lifted up and away from the concerns of humankind, but rather being lifted up and away from self-love, so that one can plunge without reservation into the ministry of Christ.

The Contemplation ends abruptly with the fourth point, where Ignatius writes: "I will consider how all good things descend from above" (237:1). After someone has made the Exercises for a week or a month, ending on a positive note provides a fitting summary of all the previous considerations of the work of God amid the wonders of creation. As I hope the previous pages have suggested, the "positive note" includes more than good feelings. The Exercises grew out of the busy life of the city and energize one to return to the busy life of ministry. Even in the country, Ignatian spirituality reveals itself as rooted in the world of God's struggling, hoping people.

Doesn't it seem a bit paradoxical that we Americans, tamers of the wilderness and builders of cities, still feel the need to "retreat" from the metropolis in order to pray?

An American Perspective

American Ruralism

Even if the previous two sections of this essay have been persuasive in characterizing the *Spiritual Exercises* as an urban document and Ignatian spirituality as rooted in the busyness of city life, I doubt that many people will be persuaded to change a lifelong habit of going off to the country to pray. Despite the evidence from foundational documents, we continue to associate spirituality with the country, distraction and even temptation with the city. "Getting away" for retreat has become routine, even for older Jesuits who decades after the fact profess disdain for their years of formation in scholasticates built on the brink of the wilderness.

No doubt, the reasons for this preference are personal, varied, and not particularly mysterious. Still, the pattern seems so pervasive and touches so many very different types of people that it raises the suspicion that some more generalized factor may be lurking beneath the surface. Why do so many of us feel this way?

What follows is the proverbial “shot in the dark,” but as one whose academic work often involves teasing out the reciprocal influence of American film and American social mores, I find the cultural factor an intriguing possibility. Doesn't it seem a bit paradoxical that we Americans, who characterize ourselves as modern and progressive, tamers of the wilderness and builders of cities, still feel the need to “retreat” from the metropolis in order to pray?

American history, as it comes down in popular myth, can be instructive. From the early decades of the seventeenth century, Puritan settlers came to North America for a new beginning amid the vast forests and rivers of a new world. Their mission included a religious dimension as they resolved to create a garden in the howling wilderness. The open spaces offered limitless possibilities for those with strength, courage, and self-reliance, then and now considered rural virtues. This freedom also implied rejecting the established cities of Europe, with their constricting religious and social structures.

It's reasonably accurate to say that in rejecting the commercial centers of Europe and entering an unspoiled continent, the early settlers founded the United States on an agrarian ideal, and that over the past four centuries this initial ideal has been elevated to the status of foundational myth. Intellectuals and academics may question the impact of the myth and of the agrarian nature of Jeffersonian democracy, but these notions continue to shape the American imagination, as successful popular artists from Norman Rockwell to Steven Spielberg have demonstrated over the last century. For them and for us, wooden churches, white picket fences, and homemade apple pie provide the durable images of American innocence and integrity, even though the reality behind the symbols has long since vanished. Some may wonder if it ever existed at all.

The sense of separation from Europe was dramatically reaffirmed with our popular understanding of the Revolutionary War. A nation without a past, the new United States had a boundless future, and that future was to be found, not in the commercial centers of the East Coast, which began to be perceived as little better than Europe, but in the vast unmapped areas of the interior of the continent.

Suspicion of the cities found expression from some surprising sources. Writing of Benjamin Franklin, literary historian Henry Nash Smith

notes a growing sourness in the Founding Father. A leading citizen of Philadelphia and one who served as American ambassador to Paris, Franklin was no country bumpkin, but Smith offers these comments:

When [Franklin] surveyed the society of the new nation, the aging statesman consoled himself for the idleness and extravagance of the seaboard cities[, thankful] that the bulk of the population was composed of laborious and frugal inland farmers. Since the hundreds of millions of acres of land still covered by the great forest of the interior would every year attract more and more settlers, the luxury of a few merchants on the coast would not be the ruin of America. . . . Such ideas were widely current in late eighteenth-century America.²⁴

Two of Franklin's sentiments are worth highlighting: first, the contrast between "idleness and extravagance of the seaboard cities" and the "laborious and frugal inland farmers," and second, the sense of nearly infinite possibilities in the "hundreds of millions of acres" of the interior. The first haunts us still whenever Congress tries to appropriate funds for social services, the second when it discusses environmental regulation.

The agrarian face of the United States changed dramatically in the nineteenth century. "In 1810, 90 percent of Americans lived on farms; by 1880, it dropped to 40 percent, and by 1980, 3 percent."²⁵ In the middle decades of the century, town life provided a temporary stopping place on the rush to the cities. Even though small towns had a relatively small economic impact on American life, their symbolic import as repositories of old-fashioned virtue remains enormous in the American imagination.²⁶

Franklin's high expectation for the future of pristine, quintessentially moral values became, a century later, nostalgia for a lost opportunity. American historian Frederick Jackson Turner, interpreting data from the census of 1890, declared that the continental United States had closed its frontier areas. In his famous essay of 1893, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," Turner cites the superintendent of the census of 1890:

²⁴ Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press, 1978), 125.

²⁵ Colin MacArthur, "Chinese Boxes and Russian Dolls: Tracking the Elusive Cinematic City," in *The Cinematic City*, ed. David B. Clarke (London: Routledge, 1997), 23.

²⁶ Canadian historian David J. Russo observes: "In the twentieth century most Americans came to live in these relatively few urban centers, which became the standard location for a population that had been dispersed in rural settings for the past three centuries. Neither before nor after did most Americans reside in towns: at first they moved out to the countryside, then they swarmed into the cities. Most of them have never been town dwellers" (*American Towns: An Interpretive History* [Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001], 4).

“Up to and including 1880 the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled area has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line.”²⁷ Turner comments dramatically, “This brief official statement marks the closing of a great historic moment.”

The frontier was closed, but its marks remained. While the earliest inhabitants streamed west, they carried the Puritan standards of the East Coast with them, and they settled into a homogeneous agrarian society of English, Scotch-Irish, and Palatine Germans.²⁸ By today’s standards, Turner seems terribly naive in his understanding of this development of an American people. He thought these three groups “were fused into a mixed race, English in neither nationality nor characteristics.” As it turned out, glaringly in the twentieth century, these three closely related northern-European groups blended easily into what those of Nativist leanings consider the true Anglo-Saxon American Protestant culture.

As the inland settlements of these groups became firmly established and prosperous, the coastal cities experienced a constant influx of Irish, Mediterranean, Latin-American, and Asian immigrants, along with Africans recently freed from slavery or segregation in the post-Reconstruction period. Ironically, out on the frontier settlements and farming communities of the interior, the homogeneous religious and ethnic characteristics of colonial America, most notably of the Puritans, were preserved, while in the eastern cities they were under siege by new, different, and presumably threatening influences of the recent immigrants. The reality is far more complex than the clean distinctions of the American myth. In fact, pockets of ethnic minorities existed all across the frontier, but the self-image of a homogeneous culture struck deep roots in the American psyche. John Ford, for example, set over thirty films in the American Southwest, with never a mention of Franciscan missionary churches, prosperous Mexican communities, or settlements of Chinese railroad workers.

Raised in a prosperous agricultural community in Wisconsin, Turner initially absorbed the frontier mythology of his home region, which was only a generation or two from the reality of settlement as he was growing up. In his private writings, as the American historian Richard Slotkin notes, Turner “expressed doubts about the capacity of Negroes and certain of the European ‘races’ (Jews, ‘Mediterraneans,’ Slavs) to properly adapt to Ameri-

²⁷ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Dover, 1996), 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 22.

can life."²⁹ Slotkin continues describing Turner's opinion: "The older immigrants had brought to the country as a whole, and to the West in particular, a moral and political idealism that reinforced and enriched native democratic tendencies."

To keep a proper balance, Slotkin points out that as Turner's thought matured during his years at Harvard, he insisted that the "new immigrants . . . were just as idealistic." In other words, the old stock out there on the farms embodied the ideal, and newcomers piling into the cities could be considered comparable to them in idealism.

As the frontier moved westward, the American imagination began to regard the cities, especially on the East Coast, simply as another version of Europe, where soft entrepreneurs in the offices of banks and railroads profited from the toil of a righteous, agrarian nation, and where new immigrants from a bewildering variety of regions and nations exploited the wealth of their adopted homeland. In the American mythology, these cities represented everything that was not truly American. With their babel of tongues and heterodoxies of belief, the cities threatened to undermine the foundations of the new Jerusalem founded by the first settlers. Without adverting to the fact, Americans thought of "God's country" and "the devil's cities."

The Frontier Reborn

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, just as the actuality of the frontier was passing into history, the movies appeared and burned the myth of the frontier forever into the American imagination. Clever showmen began selling tickets for demonstrations of the new apparatus as early as 1895, but the first genuine blockbuster was "The Great Train Robbery" (Edwin S. Porter, 1903). In this fourteen-minute epic, helpless Easterners, so identified by their costumes, riding on a train, a turn-of-the-century symbol of modernity, are robbed at gunpoint. Modern technology fails when the robbers take over the telegraph office. The townspeople interrupt their Virginia reel, a folk expression of community solidarity, and form a posse. After a chase through the woods, the townsmen trap the outlaws and shoot them to death. The message is clear: Good, simple, God-fearing citizens triumph over evil without the intervention of new-fangled Eastern-spawned technology.

²⁹ Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America* (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma, 1998), 55.

For the next sixty years, westerns rose to a position of prominence in the popular culture. Games of Cowboys and Indians reached into the most urban of playgrounds, and Western-style jeans became the obligatory uniform of Americans, men and women alike.

Vast indeed is the literature explaining the dominance of the western in the popular imagination and its sudden collapse during the period of the Vietnam War.³⁰ A few observations about this American fascination with the frontier myth are pertinent to our reflection on the rural bias of our spirituality.

Simplistic Morality: In the classic westerns, audiences had little doubt about good and evil. The cliché about white hats and black hats holds a great deal of truth in the movies. The heroes seldom had to face moral conflicts, and the code of conduct was governed by the simple adage "A man's gotta do what a man's gotta do." The discernment was brief and the conclusions definite. No one stopped to question the values supporting his efforts to drive the Indians back to the reservation, break up rangeland for development, or open the territory for the railroads. On the frontier we knew what was good, just, and the manifest destiny of a nation specially ordained by God. The western provides a very comfortable, sure-footed morality.

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The Lone Hero: Westerns routinely begin with the image of the solitary figure riding across the vast wilderness toward a settlement and end with his riding off into the sunset, westward to a new frontier. In the desert, a pristine region untouched by the intervention of human wiles and institutions, he is free, literally. The town forces him to confront corruption and, like it or not, become part of it. Out in the wilderness, he has the serenity of solitude, just like a retreatant.

The Community: The hero serves the community, but he is not part of it. He drives off the Indians, the outlaws, or the claim jumpers because it is the right thing to do; but in the end, after he solves the community's problems, he leaves it to its own devices. The settlers build their commu-

³⁰ Among the more comprehensive surveys of the popularity and decline of western films is Jon Tuska, *The American West in Film: Critical Approaches to the Western* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1985).

nity, which may in time become a town or city, but the hero hovers safely above their struggles. He helps, but he knows that he can always move on to another assignment, to another community.

The myth of rugged individualism, the image of man against the open sky, compassionate but free from the complexities and ambiguities of his environment, presents an attractive if imaginary life situation, if only for the few days of a retreat. Appropriating these frontier myths, so familiar through the movies, provides a sense of comfortable and holy space. Unfortunately, the perceived desirability of solitary heroism, out there in the frontier apart from the concourse of men and women, cuts against the apostolic grain for one making the Exercises. In the end, it proves counter-productive once one returns to the real world.

Meanwhile, Back in the East . . .

While western heroes wandered through mountains and plains establishing justice and building a nation—despite inconveniencing a few Native Americans—the cities gave rise to the gangster, who prowled through dark alleys and murky waterfronts undoing the law and order that the pioneers had so carefully established. Generally, gangsters have some alien roots; they are Irish, Italian, or Jewish; and their sinister presence is underlined by shadowy, black settings, punctuated by oblique shafts of light slashing across wet asphalt streets. The dark images of the movies left little doubt that the city spawned a foggy morality, where lines between good and evil are scarcely discernible. These gloomy, shadowy images gave rise to the term "film noir," or dark film.

In most of these movies, the criminal, played by Jimmy Cagney, George Raft, John Garfield, Humphrey Bogart, or Edward G. Robinson, was the most interesting and often the most sympathetic figure in the film. In this city, audiences lost their moral bearings and wavered between wanting to see justice prevail and wanting the antihero to succeed in his audacious criminal schemes. In this kind of movie-city, clear standards of morality do not exist; danger lurks everywhere. The city and crime are inextricably associated. In his seminal essay, "The Gangster as Tragic Hero," cultural historian Robert Warsaw noted, "The gangster is a man of the city, with the city's language and knowledge, with its queer and dishonest skills and its

terrible daring.”³¹ A good gangster coerces our admiration, even if we reject his morality.

Women characters also reflected the moral polarities of country and city. The country woman is blonde, dresses in calico, bakes pies, and identifies herself in terms of the traditional values of marriage and family. By contrast, the city woman is dark, possibly foreign-looking, wears silk, smokes, drinks, and uses her charms to pursue and often destroy men. Critics have coined the term “femme noire” to describe such dangerous women. No fragile victims are the likes of Theda Bara, Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Susan Hayward, or Barbara Stanwyck. The country girl who comes to the city risks not only her virtue but her safety.

The Middle Ground

American popular culture, as seen through its films, rushes toward extremes: the country as utopia and the city as dystopia. This tendency puts us in conflict with the dynamics of the *Contemplation to Attain Love*, through which the individual strives to discover God’s action in *all* things, starting with nature and ending with the concrete circumstances, events, and people of one’s own life.

Film theorists and historians have been at work trying to undermine the simplistic bipolar conception of environments as rural or urban, pristine or corrupt, utopian or dystopian. They find more congenial the notion of “heterotopia,” as proposed by Michel Foucault and others.³² They challenge the common understanding of the city in films as an unqualified moral wasteland. Nor do they accept the notion of the country as a pre-industrialized environment, a restored Eden. Rereading many classic films with a consciousness of ambiguity of place opens the way to a more complex and realistic appreciation of settings. Often enough, small-town and rural settings are hothouses of bigotry and pettiness that suffocate their inhabitants. The cities likewise provide the freedom and vitality that allow their citizens to become more, not less, human. Of themselves, locations are neither totally good nor bad, but a combination of both.

³¹ Robert Warshow, *The Immediate Experience: Movies, Comics, Theatre, and Other Aspects of Popular Culture* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor, 1964), 84. This essay was originally published in the *Partisan Review* in 1948, and it remains pertinent to any discussion of the gangster film today.

³² David B. Clarke, “Introduction: Previewing the Cinematic City,” in id., *Cinematic City*, 6.

In her 1961 classic critique of urban planning, Jane Jacobs provides her own perspective on the question of the usual bipolar thinking about cities vs. the country. Cities and nature, she maintains, are one. The city is the natural habitat of the human species.³³ With all its mixture of appealing and maddening experiences, it is the place where the human person can develop and grow. And even more, she argues, it is the environment that forces one to look outward toward a wider world.

It may be romantic to search for the salves of society's ills in slow-moving rustic surroundings or among innocent, unspoiled provincials, if such exist, but it is a waste of time. Does anyone suppose that, in real life, answers to any of the great questions that worry us today are going to come out of homogeneous settlements? . . . But lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves.³⁴

Jacobs's appreciation of the cities' role in generating energy to grapple with the world's problems strikes me as quite similar to Ignatius's own preference for busy, diverse settings for his meditations and for urban environments in which to give them. Such locales, created in the imagination during prayer or savored by walking down a busy street, help one to imagine a wider, more creative context for one's apostolic life. If one can make the climactic Contemplation to Attain Love by looking at a tree or listening to the surf, then perhaps one could also find God in all things by walking attentively amid crowds of God's human creation. If this is distraction, then ministry is distraction. If it is prayer, then ministry is prayer.

³³ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1992), 443.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 448.

SOURCES

A Letter from Very Reverend Gabriel Gruber, Then Resident in Russia, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, to Most Reverend John Carroll, Jesuit before the Suppression and now Bishop of Baltimore, First Diocese in the United States

*When Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus in 1773, Catherine the Great refused to allow the letter of suppression to be promulgated in her domains, a canonical requirement for it to take effect. With the tacit and then verbal approval of Pope Pius VI, the Jesuits there would very gradually open a novitiate and elect five superiors through the years up to 1814. One year before Gabriel Gruber was elected in 1802, Pius VII on March 7, 1801, issued the letter *Catholicæ Fidei*, publicly sanctioning the existence of the Society of Jesus in Russia. He then allowed former Jesuits and new aspirants anywhere in the world to affiliate with the Society in Russia even if they were not living there. Such was the background of the following letter. Because of the revolutionary upheavals in Europe and Napoleon's imprisonment of Pope Pius, it was not until 1814 that the Pope could bring about the worldwide restoration.*

On the Restoration of the Society

Most Illustrious and Reverend Sir,

Your Lordship's two letters, one in full bearing date of March the 10th and May 25th of last year, and a shorter one of September the 21st reached me together. Prior to these I received nothing from you. Word cannot express my joy, on reading these two letters. I thank God, the Author and Distributor of all heavenly gifts, from the bottom of my heart, for having fostered and preserved in so many of our Society—notwithstanding the great distance that separates them one from another—that holy spirit which in our young days we caught from the Institute of our Holy Father Ignatius. Blessed be God, for His Mercy endureth forever! After God, my thanks are due to your Lordship, who has taken so exceedingly kind an interest in Ours as to inform me of their holy

desire. To satisfy you and them to the utmost, I shall first with all due sincerity unfold the state of our affairs here.

Our Society of Jesus, the same that was founded by St. Ignatius, approved first by Paul III, and then in turn by the Holy Pontiffs, his successors, has been most marvelously preserved in the Russian Empire. Three years since, it also received Canonical Confirmation in the Empire of Russia from our Holy Father, Pius VII. Doubtless your Lordship is aware that we are, in consequence, living here under the same primitive Laws and Constitutions of St. Ignatius, without the slightest change or innovation.

We have held four General Congregations, in the last of which, on the 10th of October, 1802, the task of governing the Society was laid on my weak shoulders.

You ask me, Illustrious Sir, if we have an Apostolic Brief extending the Confirmation of the Society outside of the borders of Russia. I answer that owing to the troubles in Europe and the uneasiness of the Catholic Courts, or rather the excitement of the enemies of the Church, which has not yet subsided, the Holy Father hesitates to make public his good-will towards us through a Brief, lest our enemies should be further aroused against us. Yet he has given, even for those outside of Russia, a *viva voce* permission of which both His Eminence, Cardinal Consalvi, Secretary of State, and Vincent Georgi, *Theologus pœnitentiarius*, formerly one of Ours, have written me; as also has the Procurator General of the Society of Jesus, Father Cajetano Angiolini, whom I sent last year to Rome, and who has frequent access to the Holy Father.

This *viva voce* concession empowers us to affiliate members to the Society in any place whatsoever, provided it be done quietly and without ostentation. In proof of this, witness an incident occasioned through the instrumentality of our Father Aloysius Poirot, Missionary Apostolic to Peking. Last year he sent to the Holy Father, in the shape of a pamphlet, a petition asking of him the necessary faculty for his reunion with the Society in Russia. The officials of the Roman Court (*Romani Curiales*) averred that it could not be well done. Our Father Procurator laid the matter before the Holy Father, who answered that there was no obstacle whatsoever in the way; nay more, he added that there was no need of the petition or of insisting thereon; that any one at all, no matter how far from Russia he dwelt, was free to become affiliated to the Society,

through the General of the same; that this all belonged to each one's conscience and so could give offense to no one. This alone, he continued, was forbidden, to wit, for Ours outside of Russia to unite together in a body, as it is said, and establish a community with a special kind of dress peculiar to themselves.

It is clear from these very words of the Holy Father, as well as from the letters to the same effect sent me by His Eminence, the Cardinal Secretary of State, that to avoid giving offense to the royal courts we must not build Colleges or Residences, and we must not wear a peculiar habit; for all this, being exterior, would attract attention. Nothing, however, is forbidden us that belongs to the interior, and which we do cautiously and with prudence A. M. D. G. To this latter category belongs the reception of new members. That this also is to the mind and intent of the Holy Father, is clear from another circumstance. On hearing that in England we had received not only those who were formerly of Ours, but outside students also, for which in the case of the latter we had earnestly sought permission, he raised his eyes to heaven and in most tender accents returned thanks to God.

In view of all this I accept and receive into the Society all that solicit to be united with us, whether or not, they were of the old Society. This is the plan I follow. The old Profession of the Four Vows according to the following brief formula: I, N.N., before Almighty God and His most Blessed Virgin Mother, ratify the Profession made by me in the year . . . the month of . . . v.g. at Liège. Done v.g. at Baltimore, the . . . day of

the month of . . . in the year. . . . Those who have not yet made their Profession, after having in a like manner spent eight days in retreat, renew their Simple Vows for the time being, as they are to take their grade at the end of the year. Before this, however, they must spend a month in Spiritual Exercises.

As for those who were not in the old Society, they must pass through something of a noviceship, spending four weeks in the Spiritual Exercises, and occupying themselves in reading the Institute and Rules, copies of which I shall take care to have forwarded thither in due time, and in the practice of humility and other solid virtues.

Wherefore I most humbly beg your Lordship, out of love for our best of mothers, to appoint in those parts one of the old Fathers, a man filled with the Holy Ghost and the spirit of St. Ignatius, to examine these new postulants, to instruct them, to watch over them and form them. He shall, if expedient, communicate with the Father Provincial of England, Father Stone, or with Father Strickland, now residing in London. In this new start we must, as far as possible, treat our novices as was done in the early days of the old Society, where the highest perfection was not exacted of them in everything, but only that they should make up in fervor of spirit for whatever should be wanting in them. I pray your Lordship also to have a catalogue made of all those who shall be re-admitted, or newly received; in which special note shall be made of the time of admission of the newcomers, of the time of ratification of their vows by the old Professed, and of the learning, the Theology, the prudence and virtue of those

who have merely renewed the Simple Vows of Scholastics; that I may know to what grade in the Society these should be promoted after a year's time.

My trust in God is firm that we shall not have long to await the public redemption of Israel. When that time comes, and things are quieted in Europe, some one shall be sent to America, if not hence, assuredly from England, to look into matters and put them in due order and arrangement. For the present I entrust everything to the good-will, zeal, and protection of your Lordship and your Coadjutor, His Lordship of Gortyna [Leonard Neale, after whom Neale House in Washington is presently named; he was coadjutor to John Carroll, bishop of Baltimore]. If Ours judge that they can with ease have recourse to Father Stone, the Provincial of England, for all necessary government, let them do so. If Fr. Stone is too far off, let them notify me and propose to me some one of Ours in America whom I may appoint Provincial. Meantime I desire your Lordship of Baltimore to appoint some one to act in those parts as Superior over the entire Society, that is again coming into existence, with all the necessary faculties which I by such appointment concede to him for the present. For the rest, as I began this letter by giving thanks to God, so I close it in adoration of Him, the Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and I beseech Him that, as He has deigned to further with His heavenly favor this beginning and recall to life there in secret, the Society of His Son, the fruitful mother of so many Apostolic men, so He will henceforth propagate it openly with the support and assistance of your Lordship, to whom, as well as to His Lordship of

Gortyna, with the deepest gratitude and profound submission, I recommend myself and all of Ours.

Your very illustrious and Most Reverend Lordship's most humble and obedient servant in Christ,

Gabriel Gruber
General of the Society of Jesus

St. Petersburg, March 12, 1804



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