



# STUDIES

IN  
THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

## **Fear and Consolation**

*Peter Canisius and the  
Spirituality of Dying and Death*

**HILMAR M. PABEL**

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## *the first word . . . .*

The name Leo McCarey might not ring a bell. Here's a hint: *The Bells of St. Mary's*. He was one of the most prolific and successful motion picture directors of the 1930s and 1940s. Today the standard film histories scarcely mention him, or if they do, it may be only in connection with the Marx Brothers' outrageous comedy *Duck Soup* (1933), a film he tried to direct while each of the brothers orchestrated his own personalized brand of chaos. A little research project last summer led to several interesting discoveries about the man. He was raised in an aggressively Catholic family, and remained a Catholic until his death in 1969. He won several Academy Awards, for directing, writing, best picture, and even song writing. He teamed Laurel and Hardy and refined their act for the early sound era. Subsequently he directed Eddie Cantor, a popular vaudeville and radio comic of the day, Mae West, Harold Lloyd (we still see photos of him hanging from a clock high above the street), and Charles Laughton in a rare comedy role in *Ruggles of Red Gap* (1935). He is also credited with helping Cary Grant develop his brash but vulnerable comic style in *The Awful Truth* (1937). Grant, with his unique screen personality and unmistakable accent, went from reliable leading man in romantic comedies to Hitchcock thrillers in a career that lasted through the 1960s, while McCarey all but vanished from consideration as a director of any consequence.

Why one director rises in reputation—like Preston Sturges, for example—while another falls out of fashion is a mystery that's tough to crack. Several factors can be isolated as partial explanations. McCarey's two most successful films, critically and financially, were his parish melodramas, *Going My Way* (1944) and its sequel, *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945). As the cultural historian Anthony Burke Smith points out in his splendid study, *The Look of Catholics: Portrayals in Popular Culture from the Great Depression to the Cold War* (2010), these twin sagas of Catholic life in urban America hit close to home as the world prepared for a postwar era of peace, stability, and a return to the traditional values we'd fought so hard to preserve. The jovial Father Chuck O'Malley, one-time songwriter and baseball player, was portrayed by Bing Crosby, unquestionably the most popular entertainer in the country at the time. With his jaunty straw hat, cheery concern for everyone in the parish, and a tendency to break into song at the least provocation, Father O'Malley

embodied American optimism fused with traditional beliefs. A few years after the success of these films, the Cold War soured the cultural climate appreciably, and these films seemed naïve and hopelessly sentimental. The brilliant comedies of the 1930s were dated in the eyes of more sophisticated post-war audiences and critics, of course. Finally, McCarey was believed to have “named names” of Communist sympathizers before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He didn’t, as it turned out, but the allegation made him anathema to the critical and academic establishments for many years. This combination of factors was too much for his reputation to withstand.

As I worked through this mystery, one strange title kept reappearing in the literature: *Make Way for Tomorrow* (1937). In interviews, McCarey claimed it was the best film he ever made, and when he accepted the Oscar for *The Awful Truth*, he politely thanked the Academy, but commented that they had given him the award for the wrong film. Orson Welles, who knew a few things about movies himself, claimed that it would wring tears from a stone. One essay referred to it as the greatest American film ever made—that no one had ever heard of. True. I certainly hadn’t. With good reason. It proved disastrous at the box office and disappeared into the studio vaults to languish until a recent reincarnation on DVD. Welles and McCarey knew what the rest of us didn’t. It stands right up there with *Citizen Kane* and *Casablanca*.

Why was it such a dud? Frankly, because it is about old people, and about the inevitability of aging and death, topics that film audiences, studios intent on capturing the youth market, and just about everyone else would prefer to ignore. The film opens with a family meeting. The father (Victor Moore) and mother (Beulah Bondi) have summoned their three children to announce that a combination of poor planning and the Depression have left them without resources to pay off the mortgage on the family home. The bank will foreclose within two weeks. The siblings argue that they cannot possibly help their aging parents financially, but as a compromise they will let the homestead go, and two married children will each take one parent. Separated in different cities after fifty years of marriage, both parents try to adjust in alien worlds. They try, but fail. They disrupt the families and quickly become, if not an unwelcome, then certainly an awkward presence. No one acts from deliberate malice; but, with brutal honesty and occasional comic touches to keep the film from becoming lugubrious, McCarey simply points out the inevitable friction in the passing of generations. After a penultimate dream-like sequence, as the aging couple receive their due respect and affection from strangers, who don’t have to live with them, they say goodbye on a railroad platform. He departs for California and the home of another daughter, who can “take one of them for a while.” In his farewell, he addresses his wife by her maiden name, as though affirming his realization that their marriage has



ended and he will never see her again. For once, Hollywood failed to provide the happy ending. To cite Orson Welles again, in *Citizen Kane*, Bernstein, the Kane's longtime bookkeeper, tells the reporter working on Kane's obituary: "Old age is the one disease nobody wants to be cured of."

The topic clearly does not provoke enthusiasm, at the box office or any place else. This year's exception to the rule is *Amour*, a French-language film, written and directed by the Austrian Michael Haneke. It's gathered a bushel of awards in Europe and has been nominated for several Academy Awards in the U.S. It shows the struggle of a married couple in their eighties as they try to maintain their relationship after the woman (Emmanuelle Riva) suffers a series of strokes and passes from cane, to wheelchair, to bed. She loses the ability to speak, a doubly painful fate for a family of musicians. It's real. At some point they realize that no pill or procedure can end the humiliating cycle of bathing, feeding, dressing, and cleaning. All men (and women) are mortal eventually, and that's a fact that the movies, and the rest of us, would rather not face.

The success of *Amour* led Ty Burr, film critic of the *Boston Globe*, to do a Sunday article on aging and death in film (Jan. 20, 2013). Understandably, he didn't have too many examples to choose from. One of the most moving, in my estimation, was *Away from Her*, developed from "The Bear Came over the Mountain," a short story by Alice Munro, adapted and directed by Sarah Polley in 2006. In it the character played by the still-beautiful Julie Christie develops Alzheimer's disease, and her husband, played by Michael Murphy, watches powerlessly as her behavior becomes more erratic. He can do nothing to stop her deterioration. Once she enters a health-care facility, both grapple with the reality that she has already left him. He tries to pick up the remaining fragments of his life, while she drifts further away into her private world.

Also high on Burr's list was *Tokyo Monogatari* (*Tokyo Story*, 1953), which the great Japanese director Yasujiro Ozu openly adapted from the McCarey film. I'd add *Ikiru* (1956), by another great Japanese director, Akira Kurosawa. It involves the reflections of an aging bureaucrat, whose diagnosis of terminal cancer forces him to reevaluate his life. The narrative device is reminiscent of Ingmar Bergman's *Wild Strawberries* (1957), the story of an elderly professor emeritus (Victor Sjöström) who returns to his university to receive an honorary doctorate. During his journey, he reflects on his life and confronts his own loneliness. He knows it's too late to reconstruct the past. He can only savor a few recollections of his boyhood and family as indications of what might have been. I would also have added Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1956) to the list. Although the Knight (Max von Sydow) appears neither aged nor ill, he does journey through a world scarred by the plague. His faith in an afterlife has

eroded through the years, and he enters into a game of chess with Death as a tactic to delay the inevitable. Bergman ends the film with the ominous black-cloaked figure with the scythe leading all the principal characters in a Dance of Death. Checkmate. Death wins.

Let's also include *Wit* (2001), which provides a perfect example of audiences' discomfort with the topic. As a play on Broadway, it produced a Pulitzer Prize for its author, Margaret Edson. Emma Thompson collaborated with the author on an adaptation for the screen and took the principal role. Multi-Oscar winner Mike Nichols directed. With these credentials, it should have been a certain hit, but it never made it to theaters. Convinced that audiences would never invest ten dollars and two hours to watch a woman dying of cancer, backers released it directly to cable television and DVD. Like those other brutally honest films, *Wit* peels away the eyelids and forces viewers to stare at the ultimate human reality. The Thompson character is a brilliant professor of literature, dedicated to her work, and, if the truth be known, a bit of a control freak. Her intelligence, courage, and the most advanced medical treatment shrivel to insignificance as the disease works its way toward the predetermined end. Day by day she loses control not only of her body but of the hundred little defenses that have insulated her from the world of mortal beings.

In an early flashback scene, the Thompson character, as a student at university, receives a withering critique of her paper on John Donne. The professor, played by Eileen Atkins, challenges her interpretation of "Death Be Not Proud," which ends:

One short sleepe past, wee wake eternally,  
And death shall be no more; death, thou shalt die.

Donne, as a man of faith, included a last act, or more properly a triumphant coda to the human drama. Life does not end with death. It marks the start of a new life. We're left wondering if the professor learned the meaning of life only while she was in the process of relinquishing it.

Movies and poetry teach us a great deal about the rhythms of life and death, but perhaps the simple eloquence of a dying priest speaks to the matter most directly. Before his death in November 1996, Cardinal Joseph Bernardin shared his own faith-filled appreciation of life in his final days. He made no secret of his immanent death from pancreatic cancer, but, pastor that he was, used the occasion to speak about life and death to his flock, which includes all of us. His words deserve repeating: "Many people have asked me why I am at peace, or how I can be at peace, and first of all, you have to put yourself totally in the hands of the Lord. Secondly, you have to begin seeing death not so



much as an enemy but as a friend. And thirdly, you have to begin letting go. And if you can do those three things, then you experience peace.”

As I read through the meticulous scholarship of Professor Pabel in this issue, the thought struck me that sixteenth-century Christians may have had an easier time embracing Cardinal Bernardin’s beliefs than many of us today. In our world of miracle drugs, wellness programs, and organ transplants, we may be tempted to succumb to a state of disbelief about death. For us, we believe that illness routinely leads to recovery and life will go on as before. But in an age of poultices, bleedings, and herbal teas, that outcome was surely perceived as more problematic. Plagues, epidemics, and infections held no respect for age or station, and as a result death visited families and towns indiscriminately and often. Their experience led them to accept death as a natural part of life, not an aberration or failure. Illness raised the inevitable question of passage into an afterlife. In our day, such thoughts would be considered morbid.

Preparation for death then becomes a crucial but normal pastoral activity, as Professor Pabel shows by his study of the literature on the topic that emerged during the early days of the Society of Jesus. A pastor had to help the sick person acknowledge the condition honestly and then balance trust in God’s mercy with fear of the final judgment. He had to encourage a final confession and profession of faith; and in regions torn by religious divisions, he had to be sure the person adhered to the doctrines of the Holy Catholic Church. Families, neighbors, and entire villages had to be part of the rituals of dying. These manuals served as guidelines to explain the responsibilities of priests and laypeople as they attended a dying person. Those of us who have experienced varying levels of discomfort while visiting hospitals, hospices, and funeral parlors know that the ministry is challenging and can appreciate the value of having a document to provide some directions on how to proceed.

Peter Canisius was indisputably a giant among the many giants of the early Society. He not only engaged in preaching and teaching and established a network of colleges as a response to the inroads of the reform movement, but also served as the ecclesiastical administrator of the entire region of Upper Germany. Still in the midst of all this activity, he made the work of ministering to the dying a priority of such importance that he studied existing texts and incorporated many of their standard themes into his own several writings on the subject. Readers of this issue can be grateful that Professor Pabel has given us some new insight into the achievements of one of our greatest saints.

*Richard A. Blake, S.J.*

Editor



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# Fear and Consolation

## *Peter Canisius and the Spirituality of Dying and Death*

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*Ministry to the sick, the dying, and their families was a key work of the Society from the time of Ignatius. Influenced by several diverse traditions, St. Peter Canisius addressed this topic in a way that infused the Ignatian view of God's saving love for each soul into a tradition that was often marked with fear of final damnation.*

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### I. Introduction

**A**lmost thirty years ago, Jean Delumeau, the eminent French historian of religious mentalities, published his ample argument for the endurance of a culture of guilt in the Christian West from the Middle Ages to the end of the early-modern period.<sup>1</sup> Central to a religious discourse that bred sin and fear was a pervasive “familiarity with death.”<sup>2</sup> Sustaining this familiarity was a literary genre, the *ars moriendi*—the craft of dying. Two anonymous early-fifteenth-cen-

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<sup>1</sup>A grant from the Social Sciences and Research Council of Canada funded the research for this article. I am grateful to the members of the Jesuit Seminar of *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* for their helpful recommendations to improve this article.

<sup>2</sup>Jean Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur: La culpabilisation en Occident, XIII<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Fayard, 1983), 44.

ture texts, one shorter, usually furnished with woodcuts of the dying person tempted by devils or consoled by Christ and the saints and known simply as *Ars moriendi*, and a longer *Speculum artis bene moriendi* (The mirror of the craft of dying well), helped to launch a tradition that flourished into the eighteenth century and has attracted considerable scholarly commentary.<sup>3</sup> A principal source of what Delumeau called *la pastorale de la peur*—a pastoral ministry that promoted fear—the *ars moriendi* genre contributed to the spread of “this religion of anxiety” that Delumeau aimed to expose and formed part of a “catechesis of anguish” in early-modern Catholicism.<sup>4</sup>

Jesuits embraced a ministry to the dying in the early years of the Society and remained faithful to it long after they established themselves as a religious institute. Consolation, not fear, was the hallmark of early Jesuit contributions to the craft of dying, and thus they challenge Delumeau’s argument.<sup>5</sup> Much like Erasmus’s *De præparatione ad mortem* (Preparation for death, 1534), Gaspar de Loarte, S.J., addressed in the two relevant chapters of his *Esercizio della vita cristiana* (The exercise of a Christian life), first published in 1557, the potentially sick or dying person, and not his friends, who generally played a central role in the spiritual ministry to the dying in the *ars moriendi* tradition.<sup>6</sup> Loarte was an early recruit of Jewish ancestry for the Society and “one of the most prolific, published, and translated spiritual writers of the first generation of the Jesuits.”<sup>7</sup> As he dealt with diabolical temptations, a common motif in the *ars moriendi* literature, Loarte

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<sup>3</sup>For a recent printing of a German edition of the *Ars moriendi* with illustrations, see Hiram Kümper, ed., *Tod und Sterben: Lateinische und deutsche Sterbeliteratur des Spätmittelalters* (Duisburg and Cologne: WiKu-Verlag Dr. Stein, 2007), 193–214. The literature on the medieval and early-modern craft of dying is vast. Please consult the appendix for a select bibliography.

<sup>4</sup>Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur*, 385, 369, 388.

<sup>5</sup>John W. O’Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 174–78.

<sup>6</sup>Peter Neher, *Ars moriendi — Sterbekunst durch Laien: Eine historisch-pastoraltheologische Analyse* (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1989), 342.

<sup>7</sup>Robert Aleksander Maryks, *The Jesuit Order as a Synagogue of Jews: Jesuits of Jewish Ancestry and Purity-of-Blood Laws in the Early Society of Jesus* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 84.



echoed Erasmus by trapping the devil in a vicious circle (*Teufelskreis!*) in the temptation to undermine faith. When the devil asks what the dying person believes, he should answer what the Church believes; the Church in turn believes as he believes.<sup>8</sup>

Francisco de Borja also addressed the individual preparing for death in an anonymous little work written around 1568, when he was superior general. His principal concern was to undermine the fear of death. One of his methods, the frequent contemplation of Christ's death, was consistent with the *ars moriendi* tradition.<sup>9</sup> Jerónimo Nadal, writing in the 1570s, believed that Jesuit priests should diligently devote themselves to the consolation of the dying, which he regarded as "a remarkable ministry of the Word." They should make sure that the dying receive the sacraments of penance, Eucharist, and extreme unction and draw their desires away from earthly things to the pleasures of eternal bliss.<sup>10</sup> Juan Polanco, who played a decisive role in the articulation of the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus and served for many years as secretary to the superior general of the Society, published a detailed *Methodus ad eos adjuvandos qui moriuntur* (*Method for helping the dying*) in Macerata in 1575, the year before his death.<sup>11</sup> Like Nadal, he hoped that Jesuit priests would distinguish themselves in serving

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*Long ago, Otto Braunsberger, the editor of his correspondence, maintained not only the centrality of prayer in Canisius's spiritual life but also his commitment to teach others to pray. More recent studies have supported his argument.*

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<sup>8</sup>Gaspar de Loarte, *Esercizio della vita cristiana* (Venice: Altobello Salicato, 1573), 115r; *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, vol. V-1 (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1977), 384–85.

<sup>9</sup>O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 176; Francisco de Borja, *Tratados espirituales*, ed. Candido de Dalmases (Barcelona: Juan Flors, 1964), 464–65.

<sup>10</sup>*Commentarii de Instituto S. I.*, vol. 5 of *Epistolæ et monumenta P. Hieronymi Nadal*, ed. Michael Nicolau (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1962), 838.

<sup>11</sup>O'Malley, *The First Jesuits*, 7, 10, 176–77.

the dying.<sup>12</sup> Two Jesuit pastoral principles inform Polanco's book: "the minister's need to accommodate to the situation and his role as bearer and facilitator of consolation."<sup>13</sup> Between 1575 and 1580, eight more editions of the *Methodus* appeared: in Rome, Venice, Zaragoza, Dillingen, Bruges, Liège, and Lyon. A German translation appeared in 1584, a French translation in 1599.<sup>14</sup>

A suggestion at the end of the fifth exercise—on hell—in the First Week of Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* to add meditations "on death and moreover the other penalties of sin, on

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*The danse macabre, or dance of death, taught that death was not a respecter of persons: men and women of every estate and condition had to join the dance. And yet not all macabre imagery was meant to terrify. The inescapability of death reinforced banality.*

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judgment, etc." motivated Polanco to elaborate three points of meditation on death in his *Directory to the Exercises*, probably written between 1573 and 1575.<sup>15</sup> Émile Mâle attributed the emergence around 1570 of morbid motifs in Catholic funerary monuments to the place that the meditation on death achieved

in Jesuit spirituality.<sup>16</sup> In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France, the Society of Jesus dominated the proliferation of the *ars moriendi*, supplying it with sixty authors. "Nothing," Daniel

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<sup>12</sup>Juan Polanco, *Methodus ad eos adiuvandos qui moriuntur* (Marcerata: Sebastiano Martellino, 1575), 2r.

<sup>13</sup>O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 176.

<sup>14</sup>Carlos Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque del Compagnie de Jésus*, vol. 7 (Brussels: Oscar Schepens; Paris, Alphonse Picard, 1895), cols. 944–45.

<sup>15</sup>Monumenta Ignatiana, 2nd series, *Exercitia spiritualia Sancti Ignatii de Loyola* (Madrid: Typis successorum Rivadeneyræ, 1919), 298, 834, 757.

<sup>16</sup>Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux après le Concile de Trente: Étude sur l'iconographie de la fin du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle, du XVII<sup>e</sup>, du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Italie—France—Espagne—Flandres* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1932), 106–10.



Roche insisted, “can rival *la mort jésuite*” in this period of French history.<sup>17</sup>

One early Jesuit who still needs to take his place in the history of the *ars moriendi* tradition is Peter Canisius. Like Polanco, Canisius became one of the most dynamic of the early Jesuits, emerging as “the most important and influential pioneer” of the Society in the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>18</sup> Here, as in no other region in Europe, did the Society “owe its success and identity so manifestly to a single individual as it did to Canisius.”<sup>19</sup> After being appointed by Ignatius in 1556, he became the first head of the Upper German Province, a position he held until 1570. He established several Jesuit colleges and virtually preached and wrote incessantly. His catechisms established his reputation as a teacher of Catholic Christianity, for which he earned the title of Doctor of the Church when he was canonized in 1925.

The few studies that have investigated his spirituality have concentrated on his “spiritual portrait” or his “internal development.”<sup>20</sup> We know of his debt to late-German mysticism, of his synthesis of this with Ignatian spirituality, and of his own mystical experiences.<sup>21</sup> Long ago, Otto Braunsberger, the editor of his correspondence, maintained not only the centrality of prayer in Canisius’s spiritual life but also his commitment to teach others to pray.<sup>22</sup> More recent studies have sup-

<sup>17</sup>Daniel Roche, “La mémoire de la mort’: Recherche sur la place des arts de mourir dans la librairie et la lecture en France aux XVII<sup>e</sup> et XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles,” *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 31 (1976): 94.

<sup>18</sup>Thomas Kaufmann, *Geschichte der Reformation* (Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig: Verlag der Weltreligionen, 2009), 660.

<sup>19</sup>O’Malley, *First Jesuits*, 272.

<sup>20</sup>A. de Pelsemacker, “Saint Pierre Canisius: La spiritualité d’un apôtre,” *Revue d’ascétique et de mystique* 35 (1959): 168; Anna Coreth, “Die geistige Gestalt des hl. Petrus Canisius,” *Jahrbuch für mystische Theologie* 7 (1961): 114.

<sup>21</sup>Karl Richstätter, “Deutsche Mystik und Ignatianische Aszese im Innenleben des hl. Petrus Canisius,” *Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik* 1 (1925): 25–37; Pelsemacker, “Saint Pierre Canisius,” 177–87; Coreth, “Die geistige Gestalt,” 138, 142–44, 153–54.

<sup>22</sup>Otto Braunsberger, “Ein Meister des innern Gebetes. (Zum Teil nach ungedruckten Quellen),” *Stimmen der Zeit* 105 (1923): 87.

ported his argument.<sup>23</sup> Since he was the first Jesuit to engage in print with the spirituality of dying and death, his writings relevant to this theme deserve analysis.

To a limited extent, Canisius's thinking about death corresponds to *la pastorale de la peur*. He was unabashedly capable of marshaling biblical resources to enhance anxiety. Yet he obviously recognized and certainly reflected in his own writing the profoundly consolatory program of the *ars moriendi*. He promoted a traditional spirituality that sought to diminish fear by emphasizing God's goodness and solidarity with the suffering and death of a merciful Jesus.

An analysis of essential texts underpins my argument. Three foundational fifteenth-century texts—a section from a catechetical work by Jean Gerson, the *Ars moriendi*, and the *Speculum artis bene moriendi*—introduce the essential features of consolation in the craft of dying. These texts establish the tradition that provided the framework for Canisius's operation within an established spirituality of dying and death. A booklet produced in 1554 for ministry to the gravely ill begins our consideration of Canisius within the *ars moriendi* tradition. He introduced and perhaps he also wrote the *De consolandis ægrotis*, to which scholars have paid inadequate attention. Encouragement for the sick was the objective of the booklet's homiletic exhortations. Canisius dealt with death in a treatment of Christian eschatology in his Large Catechism, first published in 1555. Here anxiety is more evident than consolation perhaps because the dying were not Canisius's intended audience. By 1568 he inserted an *ars moriendi* in a German edition of his Small Catechism, which he combined with a prayer book.

This final text shows how closely Canisius assimilated and transmitted the *ars moriendi* tradition both in format and objective. He deployed standard structural elements, such as questions, exhortations, and prayers, and envisaged the friends of the dying person as

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<sup>23</sup>F. Saft, "Das 'Allgemeine Gebet' des h. Petrus Canisius im Wandel der Zeiten," *Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik* 13 (1938): 215–23; Paul Werner Scheele, "Petrus Canisius als Beter," in *Petrus Canisius: Zu seinem 400. Todestag am 21. December 1997* (Würzburg: Office of the General Vicar of the Diocese of Würzburg, 1998), 71–94; Paul Knopp, "Der heilige Petrus Canisius—ein Mann des Gebetes," *Analecta Coloniensia* 2 (2002): 135–86.



the principal ministers of pastoral care. Their ministry was completely consolatory. What specifically influenced Canisius to adopt and adapt the *ars moriendi* tradition is not clear, but his adherence to it reflects his astute awareness of currents within Christian spirituality.

## II. Three Foundational Texts

**W**e can locate the *ars moriendi* genre within several historical contexts. Although the Black Death, which had ravaged many parts of Europe in the middle of the fourteenth century, had come and gone, outbreaks of plague persisted in different regions into the seventeenth century. The European iconographical imagination commonly depicted death as a gruesomely omnipresent force. Images as well as the written and spoken word stressed death's inescapability. The *danse macabre*, or dance of death, taught that death was not a respecter of persons: men and women of every estate and condition had to join the dance.<sup>24</sup> And yet not all macabre imagery was meant to terrify. The inescapability of death reinforced banality. In the middle of the reverse of the title page of a book of hours printed in Paris in 1508 stands a skeleton surrounded by scrolls and captions imparting astrological information about the effects of the sun, moon, and planets on the human body. With its inclusion of the passion of Christ according to John's Gospel, the Office of the Dead, and the Hours of the Holy Cross, this prayer book is typical of other books of hours.<sup>25</sup> Devotion commonly embraced the death of fellow Christians and the death of Christ. Underlying the *ars moriendi* is a long Christian literary tradition that analyzed death from various moral and spiritual per-

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<sup>24</sup>Alberto Tenenti, *La vie et la mort à travers l'art du XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: A. Colin, 1952), 17–40; Rainer Rudolf, *Ars moriendi: Von der Kunst des heilsamen Lebens und Sterbens* (Cologne and Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1957), 49–55.

<sup>25</sup>*Hore due virginis Marie secundum verum usum Romanum* (Paris: Guillermus Anabat, 1508), b iv recto – b viii recto, a i verso, h vi verso – k vi recto, k vi verso – k vii verso. These three elements also figure in *Hortulus anime cum alijs quam plurimis orationibus* (Nürnberg: Johannes Koberger; Lyon: Johannes Clein, 1516), XLV verso – LI verso, CXCVI recto – CCVI verso, XXI recto – XXIII verso.

spectives. Rainer Rudolf has traced this tradition in detail, especially from the twelfth century onwards.<sup>26</sup>

### *Opusculum tripartitum*

Jean Gerson, chancellor of the University of Paris, conciliarist, and spiritual writer, provided the “main impetus” to the *ars moriendi* genre.<sup>27</sup> A catechetical work that sustained his reputation as a writer into the sixteenth century, his *Opusculum tripartitum* (ca. 1404), instructed readers in the Ten Commandments, sacramental confession, and the “knowledge of death.”<sup>28</sup> The French bishops approved it for the instruction of clergy and laity and required pastors to read it aloud to their congregations. Gerson’s “little work” spread quickly through southern Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary to the Spiš region in modern Slovakia.<sup>29</sup> The four parts of the *de scientia mortis*, the final component of the *Opusculum tripartitum*, found their way into some editions of the *Hortulus animæ*, a popular prayer book in Germany at the end of the fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries.<sup>30</sup> While the section *de scientia mortis* concerned a person at the point of death, all Catholics in good health ought to learn the art of dying well, Gerson emphasized. Ministry to the dying was a task for all, a duty of friendship; it was not exclusively clerical. Gerson simply envisaged “the true and

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<sup>26</sup>Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, 12–61.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 65. The religious thought and spirituality of Gerson have long been the subject of scholarly research. For some recent studies, see D. Catherine Brown, *Pastor and Laity in the Theology of Jean Gerson* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Mark S. Burrows, *Jean Gerson and De consolatione theologiae (1418): The Consolation of a Biblical and Reforming Theology for a Disordered Age* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1991); Cornelius Roth, *Discretio spirituum: Kriterien geistlicher Unterscheidung bei Johannes Gerson* (Würzburg: Echter, 2001); Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Reformation* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2005); Marc Vial, *Jean Gerson, théoricien de la théologie mystique* (Paris: Librairie philosophique J. Vrin, 2006).

<sup>28</sup>McGuire, *Gerson*, 180, 344; *Joannis Gersonii doctoris theologi & cancellarii Parisiensis opera omnia*, 5 vols., ed. Louis Ellies Du Pin (Antwerp: Sumptibus Societatis, 1706), 1:447. A French translation of the *De scientia mortis* can be found in Jean Gerson, *Oeuvres complètes*, 10 vols., ed. P. Glorieux (Paris: Desclée, 1960–73), 7:40–7.

<sup>29</sup>Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, 67.

<sup>30</sup>See for example *Hortulus animæ noviter ac diligenter impressus* (Strassburg: Johannes Knoblouch, 1516), 81v–84r.



faithful friends of a given sick person” as the practitioners of the art. “There is no greater or more friendly (*commodosius*) work of mercy,” Gerson insisted, “that is esteemed of such great merit in God’s eyes and often more than that as a physical service rendered unto the person of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as if he were still living with us on earth.”<sup>31</sup> The art consisted of exhortations and questions addressed to a dying person, prayers that he ought to say, and observations for those assisting him. The friends emphasized the necessity of loyalty to faith of the Church, contrition for sins, their sacramental confession, and the forgiveness of others. Before praying for the help of the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints, the dying person should twice invoke Jesus’ passion in praying for the attainment of paradise. Gerson assigned several tasks to the friends in the observations. Among other things, they should read aloud “stories and devout prayers”; show the dying person the crucifix or an image of a saint; prevent him from thinking—at least not too much—about his wife, children, or possessions; dissuade him from putting too much hope in recovery; and confess his sins to a priest.<sup>32</sup>

### *Ars moriendi*

The anonymous author of the *Ars moriendi* included in his preface the warning of the “Chancellor of Paris” against convalescence. The preface begins with a quotation from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*: “Of all the most frightening things the death of the body is most frightening” (1115a26). But the loss or death of one’s soul, the preface insists with references to St. Augustine and St. Bernard of Clairvaux, is far worse than physical death.<sup>33</sup> The booklet promotes the soul’s salvation through an analysis of the trials of a dying person. He becomes an eschatological battleground between the devil and an angel. Through five temptations the former tries to undermine the dying person’s faith, overwhelm him with despair, and lure him into impatience, pride (*vana gloria*), and greed. With a corresponding “good inspira-

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<sup>31</sup>Gerson, *Opera omnia*, 1:447B.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:447C-449C.

<sup>33</sup>*Ars moriendi ex variis sententiis collecta cum figuris ad resistendum in mortis agone dyabolice suggestioni valens cuilibet Christifideli utilis ac multum necessaria* (Landshut: Johannes Weysenburger, 1514), A ii recto.

tion" the angel admonishes him to hold firm against every temptation, citing passages from the Church Fathers and the Bible. Woodcuts illustrate each temptation and inspiration. The devil's defeat is obvious from the beginning. Discussing the temptation against faith, the author insists: "The devil cannot compel a person in any temptation; nor can he also in any way prevail" unless the dying person chooses to yield to the devil.<sup>34</sup> The *Ars moriendi* ends with a call to prayer. The dying person should pray to God, Mary, the angels, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins. He must in prayer put the passion and cross of Christ, the purity of Mary, the blessing of the saints, the protection of the angels, and the prayers of the elect between himself and all his enemies, "visible and invisible." The booklet ends with a lament: only a few can "faithfully stand by their neighbours . . . especially because the dying themselves are not yet willing to die and the souls of the dying often deplorably court danger."<sup>35</sup>

### *Speculum*

If, as Mary Catherine O'Connor contended, the *Ars moriendi* was an abbreviation of the earlier *Speculum*,<sup>36</sup> we should consider what distinguished the latter text. It clearly borrows prayers and observations from Gerson. The questions for the dying person that it proposes in the third chapter are not Gerson's, but Gerson is the proximate source of the strategy of interrogation, even if the questions in the *Admonitio morienti* attributed to Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109) serve as an earlier precedent.<sup>37</sup> In the second chapter, the *Speculum* elaborates on the treatment of the temptations to faith and of despair, impatience, pride, and greed and their remedies and omits the agency of the angel in the remedies. The first chapter begins by quoting the passage from Ar-

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., A iii verso.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., C iii recto.

<sup>36</sup>In her *Art of Dying Well: The Development of the Ars moriendi* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), 11–17, Mary Catharine O'Connor challenged the traditional interpretation, still upheld by Rudolf, in his *Ars moriendi*, 75, that the *Speculum* came after the *Ars moriendi*. Neher, *Ars moriendi*, 49–51, supports O'Connor.

<sup>37</sup>Rudolf, *Ars moriendi*, 57–58. The text of the *Admonitio morientis* may be found in *Patrologiæ cursus completus . . . series latina* (hereafter PL), 221 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: 1844–55), 158:685–88, and in Kümper, *Tod und sterben*, 99–101.

istotle's *Ethics* without the corrective elaborations of Augustine and Bernard and adds the Vulgate translation of the Septuagint reading of Psalm 33:22: *mors peccatorum pessima*—"the death of sinners is the worst."<sup>38</sup> But the aim of the initial chapter is, if I may make a scriptural allusion, to neutralize death's sting: to make death appealing by portraying it as a portal to eternal life.

The *Speculum's* most important contribution to the spirituality of dying and death is to endow with greater prominence than Gerson and the *Ars moriendi* the theme of Jesus' suffering and death, which serve as the dying person's refuge, the source of his salvation, and a constant theme of his prayers.<sup>39</sup> As a remedy against despair, the *Ars moriendi* illustrates God's power to forgive sins: "Christ also was crucified for sinners, not for the righteous, as he himself testifies when he says: 'I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.'"<sup>40</sup> The *Speculum* cites Bernard of Clairvaux to offer the dying person an intimate relationship with the crucified Christ, who is ready to kiss and embrace the dying person and to love him from his open side.<sup>41</sup>

The sixteenth century with its diverse religious currents represents an era of considerable development in the *ars moriendi* genre. Often reprinted, Erasmus's *De præparatione ad mortem* (1534) refashioned the genre within "a humanist rhetoric of consolation."<sup>42</sup> In the early decades of the Protestant Reformation, German Lutherans produced several manuals on Christian death in conformity with their theological outlook. The application of the doctrine of justification by faith alone led to an emphasis on the assurance of salvation. Like the *Speculum*, the Lutheran *Sterbebüchlein* aimed to relieve anxiety about

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<sup>38</sup>Frances M. M. Comper, ed. *The Book of the Craft of Dying and other Early English Tracts concerning Death* (1917, reprint; New York: Arno Press, 1977), 5.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.*, 22–23, 26–27, 40–44.

<sup>40</sup>*Ars moriendi* (1514), A vi recto.

<sup>41</sup>Comper, *Craft of Dying*, 14.

<sup>42</sup>Hilmar M. Pabel, "Humanism and Early Modern Catholicism: Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Ars moriendi*," in *Early Modern Catholicism: Essays in Honour of John W. O'Malley*, S. J., ed. Kathleen M. Comerford and Hilmar M. Pabel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 30.



death, but their emphasis on the suffering and death of Jesus left no room for an appeal to the succor of the saints.<sup>43</sup>

### III. Peter Canisius and *De consolandis ægrotis*

**P**eter Canisius arrived in a far from exclusively Catholic Vienna at the beginning of March 1552, having completed a brief stint of teaching and administration at the Bavarian University of Ingolstadt (1549–52). His original mission, at the behest of Archduke Ferdinand, was to teach at the University of Vienna, but he soon became encumbered with Ferdinand's request of the Society to produce a catechism for use in his lands. Claude Lejay, S.J., had reluctantly taken up the catechetical project after he joined Vienna's Faculty of Theology in 1551. He hoped that Canisius or Nicolaus Goudanus, S.J., could relieve him of the burden.<sup>44</sup> On August 7, 1552, the day after Lejay's death, Canisius complained to Polanco that work on the catechism consumed so much time that it prevented him from ministering to convents of nuns, prisons, and hospitals—ministry that he would gladly perform.<sup>45</sup> Hospitals and prisons routinely attracted early Jesuits, who served the physical and spiritual needs of those whom these institutions housed.<sup>46</sup>

Canisius's complaint is inaccurate in that, before and after Lejay's death, Canisius gave himself to pastoral work. Already in the spring of 1552, he devoted a great deal of emotional energy to prepar-

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<sup>43</sup>Claudia Resch, *Trost im Angesicht des Todes: Frühe reformatorische Anleitungen zur Seelsorge an Kranken und Sterbenden* (Tübingen and Basel: A. Franke Verlag, 2006), 207–20; Austra Reinis, *Reforming the Art of Dying: The Ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519–1528)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 243–56.

<sup>44</sup>*Epistolæ PP. Pascahsii Broëti, Claudi Jaji [Lejay], Joannis Codurii, et Simonis Rodericii*, vol. 24 of the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (Madrid: Typis Gabrielis Lopez del Horno, 1903), 372–74.

<sup>45</sup>Otto Braunsberger, ed., *Beati Petri Canisii Societatis Iesu epistolæ et acta*, 8 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1896–1923), 1:411.

<sup>46</sup>O'Malley, *First Jesuits*, 171–74.

ing prisoners for Communion by getting them to confess their sins.<sup>47</sup> At the beginning of January 1553, Martin Gewarts, S.J., informed Ignatius of Canisius's "unstinting ministry" (*cura sedula*) to prison inmates, his consoling accompaniment of a man to his public execution, his preaching to nuns, and his hearing of their confessions. At Christmas, after celebrating Mass in a rural, priestless parish, he went out to "visit and comfort the sick" by hearing their confessions and administering the Eucharist to them. Calling on the "afflicted and hopeless" in Vienna had earned him the reputation of coming to the help of some of the city's most unfortunate inhabitants.<sup>48</sup>

Canisius's stature in the local church grew rapidly. In 1553 he became court preacher to Ferdinand. The Archduke was as determined to have Canisius fill Vienna's vacant see as Canisius was, in obedience to the Society's *Constitutions*, to resist wearing a mitre. The Jesuit succumbed to a compromise when Pope Julius III appointed him administrator of the diocese in November 1554.<sup>49</sup>

That year a preface by Canisius appeared in a booklet entitled *De consolandis ægrotis . . . salutaris formula* (A wholesome formula on consoling the sick). Consisting primarily of three sermons addressed to the dying person, to which were appended meditative prayers for the liturgical hours and passages from Psalm 78 (Vulgate), the booklet was meant for priests and others ministering to the dying in Vienna's

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*The rhetorical strategy of the declamations is to mediate consolation, not to instill fear. "You should not fear death at all," the minister insists to the dying person, as he borrows a theme from the Speculum. Death is the means by which "we pass over to and arrive at eternal life and glory."*

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<sup>47</sup>*Litteræ quadrimestres ex universis præter Indiam et Brasiliam locis . . . Romam missæ*, vol. 1: 1546–52 (Madrid: Augustinus Avrial, 1894), 574

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 2 (1552–54), 114–15.

<sup>49</sup>James Brodrick, *Saint Peter Canisius* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935), 187, 190–194.



royal hospital. The sermons came in three languages: Latin, Italian, and German. The Italian version represented a more attentive translation of the original Latin than the truncated German version. At the beginning of the German text, Michael Khüfringer, superintendent of the hospital, added a brief letter of dedication to the hospital's patron, Martin Guzman, chief chamberlain to Emperor Charles V, Ferdinand's older brother. Neither Canisius nor Khüfringer explicitly took credit for this manual. The bibliographer Michael Denis was convinced that Canisius was its author, and James Brodrick, Canisius's biographer, inclined to this view when he wrote that Canisius "planned and printed" the manual.<sup>50</sup>

Canisius's pastoral ministry and churchly reputation in Vienna certainly made him an obvious choice to write the preface, if not also to inspire him to write the booklet. As is evident from Nicolas Delano's report written to Ignatius on April 24, 1552, the Jesuits in Vienna were certainly aware of an Italian-speaking community in the city that required sermons in Italian and of the many Italian youths in urgent need of catechesis.<sup>51</sup> That might explain the inclusion of an Italian version of consolation for the dying and point to Canisius's involvement with the production of the manual.

Some internal evidence might point to Canisius's authorship. His loyalty to Catholicism is consonant with the manual's insistence that a dying person "understand the explanation (*ratio*) of the Catholic faith and your salvation" and acknowledge "in agreement with the holy Catholic and apostolic Church . . . the communion of saints in heaven and on earth, the forgiveness of sins . . . and eternal life."<sup>52</sup> The reference to Hebrews 9:27 that "it has been determined for all human beings to die once" corresponds to Canisius's quotation of this passage at the beginning of his treatment of the four last things in his

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<sup>50</sup>Michael Denis, *Wiens Buchdruckergeschicht bis M.D.L.X* (Vienna: Christian Friedrich Wappler, 1782), 517; Brodrick, *Peter Canisius*, 195.

<sup>51</sup>*Litteræ quadrimestres*, 2:575.

<sup>52</sup>*De consolandis ægrotis, praesertim ubi de vitæ periculo agitur, in usum sacerdotum et ministrorum, qui circa ægros versantur in hospitali regio Viennæ Austriæ salutaris formula* (Vienna: Michael Zimmermann, 1554), A iv verso, C ii verso.

Large Catechism, the *Summa doctrinæ christianæ* (1555), published one year after the *De consolandis ægrotis*.<sup>53</sup>

If Canisius did not write the *De consolandis ægrotis*, he certainly endorsed it. In his preface, he describes visiting the sick as one of the “ministries of charity” that distinguish Christians, a “Christian duty” that Christ valued so much that he will both recall and reward it at the last judgment. If showing mercy to the sick is an important value, caring for a Christian soul before its imminent departure from the body is all the more “distinguished, pleasing to Christ, worthy of humankind, and even necessary.” Canisius prefers a priest to undertake this ministry, but allows a “faithful friend” to do so provided that he take

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*If God allows the devil to tempt human beings, the dying person should realize that “the loving, gentle, and kind heavenly Father permits human beings to fall, but not to be beaten down.”*

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his brother’s salvation seriously “from a sincere love of Christ and neighbour.” Assuming that his readers will want to be treated in the same solicitous way as their brother, Canisius commends “this short and easy formula” as “most accessible for anyone to use either to admonish or console a sick person.” He identifies its movement from the human fall from grace to reconciliation to faith.<sup>54</sup>

A separate authorial preface to the reader lays out the threefold agenda differently. The first task is to “explain briefly the entire Christian religion”; the second, to “console and also strengthen souls thus instructed”; and the third, to gird the sick person with spiritual weaponry against the devil. Three declamations in fine humanist rhetorical style fulfill these tasks. Thus the first chapter, “The Benefit of Creation and the Fall of Man,” summarizes the Christian religion by going beyond its title to end with God’s liberation of humankind from eternal punishment justly deserved as a result of sin. The second chapter is

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<sup>53</sup>Ibid., C i verso; Friedrich Streicher, ed., *S. Petri Canisii doctoris ecclesiæ catechismi latini et germanici*, 2 vols. (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana; Munich: Officina Salesiana, 1933–36), 1:73.

<sup>54</sup>*De consolandis ægrotis*, A ii recto – verso.



misleadingly entitled "The Benefit of Redemption and the Justification of Man." It is a summons to perseverance in the face of affliction, not a catechetical instruction on salvation. By means of the third chapter, "The Agony and Penance of Man," the minister helps the dying person overcome temptations, which are limited to despair and pride.

The rhetorical strategy of the declamations is to mediate consolation, not to instill fear. "You should not fear death at all," the minister insists to the dying person, as he borrows a theme from the *Speculum*. Death is the means by which "we pass over to and arrive at eternal life and glory." If in prayer the dying person prepares for and awaits death, then "death itself, although it is the most frightful of all things, nevertheless by this precept of life, will not harm you; nor will it be able to threaten eternal damnation."<sup>55</sup> In a peroration, the minister reminds the dying person, "Do not be terrified and even tremble or waver from your good intention."<sup>56</sup>

God's goodness informs the spirituality of dying and death throughout the *De consolandis ægrotis*. From beginning to end, both in the economy of salvation and in the consolatory discourse of the minister, the dying person encounters a good God. The emphasis on divine goodness is consistent with Erasmus's humanist spirituality.<sup>57</sup> The sick in Vienna's hospital hear that almighty God is "that supreme and eternal good" and that "above all things the Lord is kind."<sup>58</sup> Creation, redemption, and God's particular provision for the sick are all products of his goodness. God created human beings "out of inexpressible and pure goodness." "A gracious and merciful creator toward his creature, namely man," God, as is evident in Psalm 91, protects human beings, hides them in the shadow of his wings, shields them, and holds them in his hands so that their feet do not strike against a stone (A iv verso, B ii verso). Although by God's "most just judgment" an "ever-

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., C i verso.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., C iv recto.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.; Hilmar M. Pabel, *Conversing with God: Prayer in Erasmus' Pastoral Writings* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

<sup>58</sup>*De consolandis ægrotis*, A iv verso, B iii verso. Hereafter, when a notable series of ibid.s occurs after quotations, the changeable part of the citation will be printed in parentheses right after the quotation rather than in a footnote.



lasting curse” was the lot of human beings because of their original disobedience (B i recto). God saved them. In response to Adam’s fall and human sins, “having embraced us out of pure grace, from a paternal and unique charity, love, and divine favor,” God “gently turned away and abrogated the eternal penalty justly and duly deserved and kindly turned it into a temporary and light physical punishment.” If God allows the devil to tempt human beings, the dying person should realize that “the loving, gentle, and kind heavenly Father permits human beings to fall, but not to be beaten down” (B i recto). He humbles only to raise up human beings. “Indeed,” the minister assures the dying person, “God is so merciful that he does not allow us to be tempted beyond our ability, but he even affords success with temptation so that we might endure” (B ii verso).

In his affliction, a person who is gravely ill puts all his trust in “such a gracious, gentle, and kind God, and, moreover, a God of much mercy” (B iii verso). With the apocryphal prayer of Manasseh, he acknowledges his many sins but professes to God, “You will forgive all of my sins.” He should see an example of Christian patience in the cross of “Christ Jesus, the most innocent Lord of all, and your redeemer for your salvation” (B iv verso). When the devil tempts him to despair because of his many sins, he should “hurry immediately to the merit of the suffering of Christ” (C ii recto). His saving death has freed the dying person from “the power of the devil” (C ii verso). To combat temptation from the devil, he should acknowledge “the forgiveness of sins, accomplished by the saving passion and death of Christ and the resurrection of the flesh.” He should put his faith and hope “entirely in the one crucified for the human race” and forgive those who have offended him just as God forgives his sins “from his inexpressible and pure grace” (C iii recto).

## IV. A Catechesis of Fear and Consolation

### The Four Last Things

In 1555, the year after the publication of the anonymous *De consolandis ægrotis*, Canisius published anonymously in Vienna the *Summa doctrinæ christianæ* (Compendium of Christian doctrine). This, his so-called Large Catechism, along with his so called Small and Smallest Catechisms, appeared in Latin, German, and other languages. The

various catechisms were printed hundreds of times before his death in 1597 and beyond.<sup>59</sup>

Death found its place among the four last things in all three formats of Canisius's catechetical teaching. Latin editions of the Small and Smallest Catechisms as well as German editions of the Smallest Catechism merely listed the four last things (*quattuor novissima*): death, judgment, hell, and heaven.<sup>60</sup> A German edition of the Small Catechism printed in Dillingen in 1564 and two German Small Catechisms printed in Ingolstadt in 1563 and 1584 added a brief explanation. The four last things are inescapable. All must die and be

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*Delumeau would recognize a catechesis of fear and despair in Canisius's teaching. Death precedes "that dreadful judgment" (horrendum illud iudicium) of God.*

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judged by God. The elect pass on to heaven, the wicked to hell.<sup>61</sup> The Small and Smallest Catechisms commonly included the statement from Sirach 7:40 (Vulgate): "In all your works, remember your last things and you will never sin."<sup>62</sup> Canisius incorporated the passage in the *Summa* of 1555, which provided a more elaborate discussion of the four last things. After the Council of Trent, Canisius revised the *Summa*, providing a longer presentation of the four last things than in the pre-Tridentine *Summa*. In the revised *Summa*, which first

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<sup>59</sup>Paul Begheyn, "The Catechism (1555) of Peter Canisius, the Most Published Book by a Dutch Author in History," *Quaerendo* 36 (2006):51–84. On Canisius's catechisms see also, Otto Braunsberger, *Entstehung und erste Entwicklung der Katechismen des seligen Petrus Canisius aus der Gesellschaft Jesu* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1893); Begheyn, *Petrus Canisius en zijn catechismus: De deschiedenis van een bestseller / Peter Canisius and His Catechism: The History of a Bestseller* (Nijmegen: Museum Het Valkhof, 2005).

<sup>60</sup>Streicher, *Catechismi*, 1:258, 271; 2:243, 261, 285.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:6, 164.

<sup>62</sup>Streicher, *Catechismi* 1:258; *ibid.*, 2:76, 164, 222: "In omnibus operibus tuis memorare novissima tua et in aeternum non peccabis." For a current English translation of the passage, see Sir. 7:36: "In all you do, remember the end of your life, and then you will never sin" (NRSV).



appeared in 1566, Canisius called the passage from Sirach a “golden sentence.”<sup>63</sup>

The recognition of the four last things has its roots in ancient Christianity and became a staple of Christian spirituality, passed on by Cistercian monks, among others.<sup>64</sup> The *Cordiale quattuor novissimorum* (The tonic of the four last things) by Gerardus von Vliederhoven (d. ca. 1402) went through more than seventy editions between 1470 and 1500 and was translated into several European languages.<sup>65</sup> A fellow Netherlander, Dionysius the Carthusian (d. 1471), wrote a book on the same topic, *De quattuor hominis novissimis* (*Man’s four last things*). It remained in print throughout the sixteenth century and contained an *ars moriendi*.<sup>66</sup> Thomas More wrote a treatise and Erasmus an epigram on the four last things.<sup>67</sup>

Johann Gropper, a theologian at the University of Cologne who had won Canisius’s admiration in the 1540s when he was a student in Cologne, produced precedents for including the four last things in a catechism. His *Capita institutionis ad pietatem* (Chief points in the instruction of piety, 1546) offered a little section on “the four things always to be remembered” that ended with the quotation of Sirach 7:40. He entitled the section in his German catechism (1547) “The four last things that one should always keep in mind.” It too ended with the quotation from Sirach.<sup>68</sup> In June 1546, Canisius observed that Gropper had invested a great deal of effort in books meant for “the pious

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<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 1:74, 195.

<sup>64</sup>Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur*, 64–66.

<sup>65</sup>Alberto Tenenti, *Il senso della morte e l’amore della vita nel Rinascimento* (Turin: Guilio Einaudi, 1957), 84.

<sup>66</sup>Sven Grosse, *Heilungewißheit und Scrupolositas im späten Mittelalter* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1994), 224–25.

<sup>67</sup>*The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, ed. Anthony S. G. Edwards, Katherine Gardiner Rodgers, and Clarence H. Miller, vol. 1 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 128–82; *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami*, vol. I-7, ed. Harry Vredeveld (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1995), 350–351.

<sup>68</sup>Johann Gropper, *Capita institutionis ad pietatem, ex sacris scripturis et orthodoxa Catholicæ Ecclesiæ doctrina et traditione excerpta, in usum pueritiæ apud diuum Gereonem* (Cologne: Jaspas Gennep, 1546), E viii verso; Johann Gropper, *Hauptartikell Christlicher Underrichtung zur Gottseligkeit*, in *Katholische Katechismen des sechzehnten*

instruction of youth" that he had written "with the greatest devotion and skill."<sup>69</sup> He must have been thinking of the *Capita* and Gropper's prayer book, the *Libellum piarum precum ad usum puericiæ* (A booklet of pious prayer for the youth), also published in 1546.

Canisius's section *de quattuor hominis novissimis* (on the four last things for man) in the *Summa* does not serve as pastoral advice for the dying, but we can associate it with those texts, such as Erasmus's *De præparatione ad mortem*, that insisted that the art of dying was a lifelong process, not just a deathbed ritual. After quoting Jesus' command "to be ready because you do not know when the Son of man is coming" (Matt. 25:13), Canisius writes in the *Summa* of 1555:

We shall indeed be prepared to accept death, if earnestly and throughout all of life each person meditates for himself on this scripture: "Before death do works of justice since no food is to be found among the dead" [Sir. 14:17, Vulgate], and just as Christ said, "Night comes when nobody is able to work." (John 9:4)

The post-Tridentine edition enhances this passage by describing us as vigilant as well as prepared and adds one more biblical quotation after the quotation from John 9:4: "Walk when you have light so that the darkness does not overtake you" (John 12:35).<sup>70</sup>

With one exception Canisius's analysis of the four last things in the three questions of the pre-Tridentine or in six questions of the post-Tridentine *Summa* is immersed in the Bible. In 1566 he expanded the question "How does Scripture teach about the last things one by one?" into four separate questions that presented what Scripture had to say about death, judgment, hell, and heaven. Canisius also presses the Bible into service in the opening and closing questions: about the identification of the four last things and the application of the teaching about them. The exception is a previously unnoticed reference to a proverb of classical provenance: "For death, as they say, is the final

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*Jahrhunderts in deutscher Sprache*, ed. Christoph Moufang (Mainz: Verlag von Franz Kirchheim, 1881), 292–93.

<sup>69</sup>Braunsberger, *Canisii epistulæ et acta*, 1:204–5.

<sup>70</sup>Streicher, *Catechismi*, 1:73, 191.



limit of things.”<sup>71</sup> “*Mors linea ultima rerum*” is a passage from Horace (*Epistulae*, 1.16.79). Evidence for the proverbial reception of this statement in sixteenth-century European culture may be found in its inscription in Hans Sebald Beham’s curious copperplate engraving of 1529 known as “Death and the Indecent Pair.”<sup>72</sup>

Delumeau would recognize a catechesis of fear and despair in Canisius’s teaching. Death precedes “that dreadful judgment” (*horrendum illud iudicium*) of God. Even though Canisius omits the adjective *horrendum* in the connection between death and judgment in the post-Tridentine *Summa*, he introduces the notion of dread into his discussion of judgment in the revised text by quoting Hebrews 10:31: “It is dreadful [*horrendum*] to fall into the hands of the living God.”<sup>73</sup> Although death is beyond doubt, each person’s hour of death is beyond prediction. From Sirach 10:12–13 (Vulgate) we learn: “Today the king lives, and tomorrow he will die. When a person dies, he will inherit serpents, and beasts, and worms.” God, moreover, is a “judge to be feared,” as Canisius illustrates in the pre-Tridentine *Summa* by quoting Psalm 2:11: “Serve the Lord in fear and acclaim him with trembling. Learn discipline so that when the Lord grows angry you should not also perish from the right path since his anger ignites in no time” (1:73, 74, 191). Nothing can be imagined that is “more terrible, intolerable, and more unhappy” than hell (1:74). Or, as Canisius maintains in the post-Tridentine *Summa*:

As nothing indeed is more miserable than death, as nothing is also more terrible than judgment, especially to the children of this age who persist in sin, so nothing can be imagined that is more intolerable and more unhappy besides than hell and its punishment. (1:193)

Did Ignatius’s famous advice, given in the fifth exercise of the First Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*, to blend imagination and percep-

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 1:73, 190.

<sup>72</sup>Gustav Pauli, *Hans Sebald Beham: Ein kritisches Verzeichnis seiner Kupferstiche, Radierungen und Holzschnitte mit Nachträgen, sowie Ergänzungen und Berichtungen von Heinrich Röttinger* (1901, 1911, 1927; reprint Baden-Baden: Verlag Valentin Koerner, 1974), pt. 1, 161–62.

<sup>73</sup>Streicher, *Catechismi*, 1:73, 190, 192.

tion in beholding the miseries of hell inspire Canisius to select scriptural passages that vividly represented the weeping and gnashing of teeth, the darkness, the lake of burning fire and sulphur, where the inmates of that “‘everlasting horror’ [Job 10:22] . . . will be tortured day and night for endless ages”<sup>74</sup>

Some moments of hope do emerge. In the post-Tridentine *Summa*, we can look upon Christ as a “merciful judge” if “before judgment” we question ourselves and find “favour in God’s sight” (Sir. 18:20). Indeed, “if we judged ourselves, we should certainly not be judged” (1 Cor. 11:31).<sup>75</sup> A meditation on heaven interrupts the doom and gloom. In the pre-Tridentine *Summa*, it is the counterpoint of hell. No person could wish for anything more desirable, joyful, or happy. In the post-Tridentine *Summa*, Canisius evokes the heavenly Jerusalem of Revelations 21, where death and weeping will be no more. A holy city requires holy citizens, and thus “into her will not enter anything defiled” (Rev. 21:27).<sup>76</sup>

Canisius finds other ways of counterbalancing the fear and despair that the first three of the last things can inspire. In the post-Tridentine *Summa*, he appeals to the Psalms to distinguish “between the death of the righteous and of the wicked.” The phrase *mors peccatorum pessima* refers to those who “like the obstinate Jews die in sin without repentance (*pœnitentia*) and consequently they perish in such a way that they are always tortured among the dead with the rich wastrel” (cf. Luke 16:19–31). Yet “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his holy ones” (Ps. 115:15, Vulgate). This is only a physical death, “a restful sleep and safe slumbering” that marks “the passage to blessed immortality” (1:191–92). The fear of God, moreover, does not terrify. It leads “to salvation,” and functions as “the guardian of all virtue and moreover the necessary teacher in every stage of human life” (1:74, 195).

Achieving the correct understanding of the fear of God is one application of Canisius’s catechesis of the four last things. Another in the

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<sup>74</sup>*Exercitia spiritualia*, 294, 296; Streicher, *Catechismi*, 1:193.

<sup>75</sup>Streicher, *Catechismi*, 1:193.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid.*, 1:74, 194.



pre-Tridentine *Summa* is the reminder that the last things should serve as an antidote to sin and an impetus for doing what is just and good (1:74). A meditation on the last things, Canisius adds in the post-Tridentine *Summa*, deters us from vanity, sin, and rash behavior (1:194–95).

The move from fear to moral amendment corresponds to the collaboration, in Delumeau's terms, of a *pastorale de la peur* and a *pastorale de séduction*.<sup>77</sup> The pastoral practice of instilling the fear of death could also offer a "pastoral practice of enticement," a way out of fear, a solution—or, in Canisius's case—lessons by which to live. But Canisius is not convinced that everyone will profit from a knowledge of the last things. He ends his analysis on a dour note. The "children of this age" have no regard for the fear of God. Scripture assails them: "The people is without judgment and without prudence; if only they would know and understand and also look ahead to the last things" (Deut. 32:28). Job noticed them celebrating with music: "They spend their days in pleasant things and in a flash they go down to hell" (Job 21:12). "Thus," Canisius adds in the post-Tridentine *Summa*, "'Laughter blends with sorrow and lament overpowers the excesses of joy'" (Prov. 14:13).<sup>78</sup>

## The Consolation of Friends

Canisius included a recognizable *ars moriendi* in a German version of his Small Catechism, *Betbuch und Catechismus: Nach rechter Catholischer Form und Weyß* (Prayer book and catechism in accordance with correct Catholic form and manner). The *ars moriendi* constitutes the section entitled "Gebett, Underweisung und Fragstück für sehr krancke und sterbende Menschen" (Prayer, instruction, and interrogatory, for very sick and dying people).<sup>79</sup> I have consulted the edition of *Betbuch und Catchismus* printed in 1568. In a preface, Canisius calls this the fourth edition and reveals that he has rearranged, amplified, and corrected the book.<sup>80</sup> The bibliographic record is not sufficiently com-

<sup>77</sup>Delumeau, *Le péché et la peur*, 384.

<sup>78</sup>Streicher, *Catechismi*, 1:74, 195.

<sup>79</sup>Peter Canisius, *Betbuch und Catechismus* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1568), 368v. I am grateful to Kerstin Schalk, librarian at the Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule St. Georgen (Frankfurt am Main), which has a copy of this book, for making arrangements to allow me to consult it.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, A ii recto.

plete to trace this particular publication to its first edition. The second edition, which has a different title, appeared in 1563 and did not contain the *ars moriendi*.<sup>81</sup> I was not able to locate a copy of the third edition, published in 1564. Canisius's catechetical *ars moriendi* thus predates Polanco's *Methodus* by at least seven years, although it is still at most eleven years later than the two chapters of advice to the sick and dying person in Loarte's *Esercizio della vita christiana*. If Canisius did not write the *De consolandis ægrotis*, he was the second Jesuit to produce an *ars moriendi*.

The title of the *ars moriendi* provides some of the elements that constitute its structure. It begins with prayers that prepare the friends of the dying person. Canisius then issues instructions essential for pastoral care, which precede a series of nineteen questions for the dying person to answer. The *Fragstuck* follows the tradition of the ques-

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*"May the weakness of the crucified Jesus Christ be his strength, may Jesus' wounds be his medicine, may Jesus' agony be his joy, may Jesus' death be his life, may the shedding of Jesus' blood be the washing away of his sins and the obtaining of his eternal bliss."*

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tions initiated by Gerson and amplified by the *Speculum*. They aim, among other things, to instill contrition in the dying person, as well as a commitment to ask pardon of those whom he has offended, make restitution for offences, and forgive others. The dying person must also acknowledge that Christ suffered and died for him, and

that Christ's passion and death bring about the forgiveness of his sins and lead to everlasting life. The confessionalized tone of the early questions is unmistakable. The dying person must die in obedience to the Catholic Church, believe in the Church's teaching, and express joy in this belief.<sup>82</sup> Canisius continues with a substantial "Christian

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<sup>81</sup>Peter Canisius, *Catechismus; Kurtze Erklärung der furnemsten Stuck des wahren Catholischen Glaubens: Auch rechte und Catholische Form zu betten* (Dillingen: Sebald Mayer, 1563). I express my thanks to the manuscripts section of the Staats- und Seminarbibliothek at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt for allowing me to consult their copy of this book.

<sup>82</sup>Canisius, *Betbuch und Catechismus*, 377v.



exhortation directed to a dying person," not mentioned in the title. A series of short prayers to be said by the dying person follows. He should also frequently repeat or have read to him "Three Powerful Sayings," aimed at "all the power of the wicked enemies" (384r). In the moments before death, the friends should say the Lord's Prayer three times. Canisius supplies three accompanying prayers and ends with a prayer to be said after the soul's departure.

Canisius emphatically values the ministry of laypeople at the deathbed. The "faithful friends" manage the pastoral care for the dying. Their first duty is to insist that the dying desire "the spiritual medicine for their souls" in the form of the sacraments of penance, Eucharist (Viaticum), and the anointing of the sick (376r-v). Canisius ends his instruction by commending the "especially great work of mercy, pleasing to God and at the same time necessary for the dying person when one or many fellow Christians faithfully accompany (*beystehn*) the sick person until the end." That support consists of urging and consoling the sick, strengthening them against temptations, and reminding them "of the abiding faith and of the holy suffering and death of Christ" with readings, prayers, and exhortations, among other methods. They should encourage the dying often to rue their sins, "to call upon the sweet name of Jesus from the heart, and to recall his bitter suffering" (376v-377r).

Canisius spiritually prepares the friends for their ministry with three prayers to Jesus, one to God, and one to "all the saints." The fundamental petition of all the prayers is for forgiveness for the dying person. The friends also ask Jesus to strengthen the dying person against temptations. This leads to a prayer for perseverance mingled with other spiritual gifts. Jesus should arm the dying person "with sweet patience, with true contrition, with sufficient penance, with full absolution, with correct faith, with firm hope, and with perfect love" (373r).

Beyond providing the content of preparatory prayer, Canisius grounds those who pray in spiritual dispositions essential for assisting their dying friend. Reciting the prayers teaches them above all that Jesus and God are good, kind, and merciful. They invoke Jesus' "fathomless mercy," his "great mercy" and his "fervent, ardent, and perfect love" (369r, 371r, 372v). They ask the "kind Lord" to reveal to the dying person "the overflowing abundance of your mercy." God's "prodi-



gal love and kindness (*überschwencklich Liebe und Güte*) alone can accomplish the best in time of the most urgent need" (372v, 374r). The friends have a pronounced devotion to Jesus' suffering, in which they recognize the principal source of consolation for the dying person. Jesus' love compelled him "for us lost sinners to become human, to die the most bitter of deaths, and to present and to offer on the altar of the cross your innocent flesh and blood as a fragrant sacrifice." Through this sacrifice, the friends implore Jesus "thus to look upon and console this sick person, as you on the cross looked upon and consoled the poor thief" (372r-v). The ministers of consolation acknowledge the consoling solidarity between the suffering Jesus and their friend most poignantly when they pray to God:

May the weakness of the crucified Jesus Christ be his strength, may Jesus' wounds be his medicine, may Jesus' agony be his joy, may Jesus' death be his life, may the shedding of Jesus' blood be the washing away of his sins and the obtaining of his eternal bliss. (374r-v)

The commitment to consolation is a confessionalized one. The friends ask God that the dying person remain "until the end a true and living member of your holy Christian Catholic Church" (374r). Faithfulness to Catholicism leads to intimacy between the dying person and Jesus. The soul of the dying person should depart this life "in the unity of the Catholic Church and in a state of grace (*in einem gottseligen Stand*), in which she experiences your loving embrace and your sweet kisses." In this way, the soul remains "united as a spouse with you her bridegroom in eternal love and joy" (373r-v).

The spiritual values that Canisius integrated into the prayers to be said by the friends inform their exhortation to the dying person. The accent remains on consolation. What is death for someone who dies "in God's grace and in unity with the Catholic Church" but a falling asleep and "an entrance and passage to another and better life"? (380r). The dying person will find consolation in "God's prodigal forgiveness," in "Christ, your powerful Lord and Savior," and in "his holy life, suffering, and dying" (380v). The friends admonish the dying person to remain steadfast in the Catholic faith, within which forgiveness, God's grace, and eternal life are certainly found. "In this faith," he must ask God to forgive all his sins and commend himself "with contrite heart



to the most holy wounds of Christ" (380v-381r). After pondering the examples of Simeon, Paul the apostle, the good thief, and the martyrs, he must turn to Christ in his passion and speak his words: "My soul is sorrowful unto death. Dear Father, if it is possible, take this cup from me, but may your will, not mine, be done. Father into your hands I commit my spirit" (Matt. 26:39, Luke 23:46). The friends exhort the dying person to consider Christ's "consoling words and promise" and assure him that through Christ his mortal body will rise again on the last day for "eternal life" (381v).

The final prayers and sayings of Canisius's *ars moriendi* cohere with the consolatory strategy already evident at the outset. God's goodness and the salvific suffering and death of Christ remain paramount. The dying person invokes God as "Father of mercy" and Jesus as "his sweet and kind Lord," "savior and redeemer," the "dear child of my heavenly Father," his "dear Lord Jesus Christ," and his "only consolation" (382v-383v). He asks for forgiveness and salvation. He also needs Christ's company: "Sweet Lord Jesus, through your holy suffering and dying and through your rose-colored blood, never forsake me in all temptations, suffering, and dying" (383r-v). The "three powerful sayings" take "the needy person" (*der arm Mensch*) from creation, thanks to God's "fatherly kindness," through redemption, accomplished by Christ's "most shameful and most innocent death," to the consolation and bliss available through God's "fathomless mercy" (384r). The friends recall Jesus' death for all sinners as they call upon him as "the only and sure consolation of sinners." The "merciful Savior of the entire human race" should "through your prodigal love," save the dying person (385v, 386r).

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*In the first half, he teaches priests how to console themselves and others when faced with "the death of friends." He uses Scripture not only to emphasize the inevitability of death but to point to God's love for human beings, dead or alive.*

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## V. Conclusion

**N**agging uncertainty accompanies thinking about death. When Canisius observed in the *Summa* that although nothing is more certain than death, nothing too is more uncertain than the hour of death, he echoed proverbial wisdom quoted in the writings of medieval theologians, such as Anselm of Canterbury and Peter Comester, as well as in testamentary language of the early-sixteenth century.<sup>83</sup> A more profound uncertainty was eschatological in nature. What was the outcome of death: hell, purgatory, or heaven? As Sven Grosse argued, the late-medieval *artes moriendi* aimed at overcoming the uncertainty about whether one would be saved.<sup>84</sup> Gerson held that if a dying person endured his final suffering “with a contrite heart” and God forgave his “punishment and guilt,” he would be sure to enter paradise.<sup>85</sup> Canisius wrote, “Whoever abides in faith, patience and the love of God will without a doubt in Christ be saved” (*der wirdt ohn allen Zweyfel in Christo selig*).<sup>86</sup> The consolation of the *ars moriendi* in the *Betbuch und Catechismus* exceeds that of the *De consolandis ægrotis* because it not only helps the dying person accept death in the sight of a loving God but also holds out the promise of salvation.

The spirituality of the *ars moriendi* in the German catechism is consistent with that of the *De consolandis ægrotis*, but these texts are not natural companions for Canisius’s elaboration on the four last things in the *Summa*. Christ’s death does not enter into the discussion of death in the Large Catechism. God’s kindness is also absent. Canisius’s aim is not to comfort the dying but to deter the living from sin. The element of consolation is limited to a reevaluation of the meaning of the fear of God after a trenchant analysis of death, judgment, and hell and a reevaluation of death as it affects the righteous in the post-Tridentine *Summa*. Fear and consolation compete for attention.

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<sup>83</sup>Streicher, *Catechismi*, 1:73, 191; PL 158:741A, 198:1748C. See the wills from 1511 and 1512 printed in Tom Henry, “Raphael’s Altar-Piece Patrons in Città di Castello,” *Burlington Magazine* 144 (2002): 278.

<sup>84</sup>Grosse, *Heilsungewißheit*, 217–37.

<sup>85</sup>Gerson, *Opera omnia*, 1:448A.

<sup>86</sup>Canisius, *Betbuch und Catechismus*, 381r.



Late in life, Canisius demonstrated that fear and consolation still could jostle in a meditation on death. We find such a meditation in his “Notes for meditations and prayers” that he offers priests for All Souls’ Day in his meditations on the gospel passages appointed for Sundays and feast days of the liturgical year. The *Notæ evangelicæ* first appeared in two stout volumes from 1591 to 1593 in Swiss Fribourg, where Canisius had settled in 1580 and where he died in 1597 after founding his last Jesuit college. In keeping with his penchant for rooting spirituality in Catholic orthodoxy, he devoted the second half of his long treatment of the Feast of All Souls to a defence of the doctrine of purgatory and prayers for the dead.<sup>87</sup> In the first half, he teaches priests how to console themselves and others when faced with “the death of friends.” He uses Scripture not only to emphasize the inevitability of death but to point to God’s love for human beings, dead or alive. Thus his readers acknowledge that “precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his loved ones,”<sup>88</sup> but nowhere does he have them say that “the death of sinners is the worst.” An analysis of death as physical, spiritual, and eternal challenges the early effort at consolation. Some of the more macabre scriptural passages deployed in the *Summa* return. The dead fall prey to “serpents, beasts, and worms.” As in the post-Tridentine *Summa*, Canisius quotes from Job to portray eternal death, or “damnation,” as a place of darkness and “everlasting dread” (10:21–22). The priest

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*Canisius turns from the horror of eternal death to death as something that should be desired, not feared, to a passage to better things, to a sleeping “in the true and holy peace of faith, and in Christ himself.” Canisius leads priests from consolation through fear to consolation.*

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<sup>87</sup>Friedrich Streicher, ed., *S. Petri Canisii doctoris ecclesiae meditationes seu notæ in evangelicas lectiones*, 3 vols., 2nd. ed. (Munich: Officina Salesiana, 1957–61), 3:403–15. On the *Notæ*, see Hilmar M. Pabel, “Meditation in the Service of Catholic Orthodoxy: Peter Canisius’s *Notæ Evangelicæ*,” in *Meditatio: Refashioning the Self in Late Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual Culture*, ed. Karl Enekel and Walter Melion (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 257–89.

<sup>88</sup>Streicher, *Notæ*, 3:397.

meditating on eternal death resolves to recall “increasingly and more exactly the fear and even the terror of this death.”<sup>89</sup> But Christ can save us from the death of spiritual sin. His death brings about the forgiveness of sins; his resurrection bestows life and grace on the baptized. Canisius turns from the horror of eternal death to death as something that should be desired, not feared, to a passage to better things, to a sleeping “in the true and holy peace of faith, and in Christ himself.”<sup>90</sup> Canisius leads priests from consolation through fear to consolation.

Canisius’s writings indicate how difficult it is to conceptualize the spiritual temper of a period of history. A pastoral strategy of instilling fear does manifest itself in his *Summa* and in the long meditation that he prescribed for All Souls’ Day. Yet fear did not exclude consolation. While fear in the *Summa* might, in Delumeau’s terminology, exercise the seductive effect of a deterrent from sin, this seems not to be the case from our brief analysis of the *Notæ*. The *De consolandis ægrotis*, a pastoral aid at least sponsored by Canisius if he did not write it, and Canisius’s own *ars moriendi*, one of the earliest Jesuit contributions to the genre, belong firmly to the consolatory impetus of an established tradition in the Christian spirituality of dying and death. The *ars moriendi* in the *Betbuch* shows how well one of the most prolific Jesuit writers of his day could adapt himself to and transmit a spiritual tradition.

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 3:399, 401.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 3:400, 403.



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