



STUDIES

IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

HOLY WORDS: PRAYING THE LITURGY
OF THE HOURS WITH ST. PETER FABER

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They published your diary
And that's how I got to know you
The key to the room of your own and a mind without end¹

When the song “Virginia Woolf” by the Indigo Girls popped up on Spotify as I was driving through South Bend one afternoon, I thought to myself that Emily Saliers’s lyrics captured well my own relationship with St. Peter Faber (1506–1546), first priest of the Society of Jesus and the one whom St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) considered most skilled at giving the Spiritual Exercises.² The song, which appeared on the folk-rock duo’s epic 1992 album *Rites of Passage*, presents a young protagonist who finds herself “on a kind of a telephone line through time/And the voice at the other end comes like a long lost friend.”³

I first “got to know” Peter Faber during my novitiate (2012–2014) when I read his spiritual journal, the *Memoriale*.⁴ My novice director,

¹ Indigo Girls, “Virginia Woolf,” *LyricFind*, accessed December 28, 2025, <https://lyrics.lyricfind.com/lyrics/indigo-girls-virginia-woolf>.

² On Ignatius’s estimation of Faber’s aptitude for giving the Exercises, see *Gonçalves Mem.* 226; Luis Gonçalves da Câmara, *Remembering Iñigo: Glimpses of the Life of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: The Memoriale of Luís Gonçalves da Câmara*, trans. and ed. Alexander Eaglestone and Joseph A. Munitiz, SJ (St. Louis, MO: The Institute of Jesuit Sources [IJS], 2004), 130.

³ Indigo Girls, “Virginia Woolf.”

⁴ Peter Faber, *Memoriale*, trans. Edmond C. Murphy, SJ, in *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, ed. Edmond C. Murphy, SJ, John W. Padberg, SJ, and Martin E. Palmer, SJ (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 1996). Unless otherwise noted, I cite Murphy’s translation while also referencing the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu: B. Petri Fabri primi sacerdotis e Societate Jesu: Epistolae, memoriale et processus* (Madrid: 1914), hereafter abbreviated *Faber*. I also have consulted Pierre Favre, *Mémorial*, trans. Michel de Certeau, SJ (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960).

James P. Carr (UEA), who had and continues to have a deep devotion to Faber, shared with me and my brother novices his love for this “long lost friend,” one of what St. Ignatius called his “friends in the Lord.”⁵ Never imagining that Faber would be canonized, Jim promised that,

As I continued in formation and in my liturgical studies, I came to value what seemed an underappreciated element of Faber’s Memoriale—namely, his warm, loving, and sometimes fastidious commitment to the Divine Office or, in today’s parlance, Liturgy of the Hours.

if ever he were raised to the altar, we novices would feast. Imagine his surprise, then, when Pope Francis canonized him on Francis’s own birthday in December of 2013 and in so doing shared with the world Faber’s soulful, sensitive, supremely Christian style. In what to this day I consider one of my greatest honors, Jim asked me to preach, as novices often do in Jesuit novitiates, at our celebration of the first memorial of

St. Peter Faber the following summer. “His entire life and ministry,” I said, seemed to cry out, “If only you knew the abundant, flagrant, even sensuous ways in which God our Lord is continually gifting you, healing you, trying to open up the narrow gate of your heart!”⁶

As I continued in formation and in my liturgical studies, I came to value what seemed an underappreciated element of Faber’s *Memoriale*—namely, his warm, loving, and sometimes fastidious commitment to the Divine Office or, in today’s parlance, Liturgy of the Hours.⁷ As is fitting for the Society’s first priest, the Office featured prominently in his prayer. He loved its daily rhythm, cherished all the “holy words” it contained, and longed, as we shall see, to recite it with greater attention.⁸ While Faber reports praying all “seven canonical” hours, the *Memoriale*

⁵ Ignatius of Loyola, Letter 12, *Monumenta Ignatiana. Santi Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones (Epp. et instruct.)*, vol. 1 (Madrid, 1903), 119.

⁶ Matthew D. Cortese, SJ, “For the Memorial of St. Peter Faber,” homily, St. Andrew Hall, Syracuse, NY, Summer 2014.

⁷ I see the two terms as more or less interchangeable. Throughout the *Memoriale*, Faber refers exclusively to the “Office” (Spanish *oficio*, Latin *officium*), whereas the Roman Catholic Church, following the Second Vatican Council, uses *Liturgy of the Hours* (*Liturgia Horarum*).

⁸ See, for example, *Faber Mem.* 135; trans. Murphy, 147.

entries that mention the Office focus on those of the morning (Matins/Lauds), evening (Vespers), and night (Compline).⁹ Among these, he seems to give special attention to the morning hour and the dawn stirrings of his soul—perhaps because, as Michel de Certeau (1925–1986) surmises, Faber appears to have penned his thoughts most often after his morning prayer period.¹⁰

The Office organized not only Faber’s day but also his weeks and years. He expresses, for example, special affection for the Sunday Offices and those of solemnities.¹¹ As his foremost Spanish translator and interpreter, Ignacio Iparraguirre (1911–1973), puts it, “Faber lived the liturgical cycle with an almost insuperable intensity. It seems as if this cycle was the environment in which he moved. . . . It seems that the holy feasting through the liturgy was for him the sun around which his existence spun.”¹² Summing up Faber’s Office prayer succinctly, he writes, “In his *Memoriale*, one can follow his constant effort to soak himself in the effects of the *Breviary*, to live the *Divine Office*.”¹³

To explore Faber’s perspective on the Office is to find ourselves in the middle of an ongoing debate among liturgists over the very nature of liturgy. Formed consciously or not by twentieth-century liturgical re-

⁹ *Faber Mem.* 29; trans. Murphy, 81. Regarding Matins/Lauds, see *Faber Mem.* 88, 118, 146, 227, 277, 298, and 319. Regarding Vespers, see *Faber Mem.* 87; trans. Murphy, 118 (“first vespers of the Assumption” at the cathedral in Speyer) and *Faber Mem.* 204–8; trans. Murphy, 189–91 (“I listened to the chanting of vespers in the cathedral of Aschaffenburg” for the Circumcision); see also *Faber Mem.* 58 and 198. Regarding Compline, see *Faber Mem.* 58, 101, 282, and 407–8; in the latter two cases, Faber uses the prayers of Compline to bless his accommodations, which changed frequently.

¹⁰ Michel de Certeau, SJ, introduction to *Mémorial*, by Pierre Favre, trans. Michel de Certeau, 77. This morning prayer period would have included not only Matins/Lauds, but also his regular and beloved meditations on the mysteries of Christ’s life, familiar to us today as the mysteries of the Rosary, together with the celebration of Mass. For a historical and liturgical-theological reading of praying with the mysteries of Christ’s life, see Nathan Mitchell, *The Mystery of the Rosary: Marian Devotion and the Reinvention of Catholicism* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2009).

¹¹ Regarding Sunday, see *Faber Mem.* 82, 103; regarding solemnities, see *Faber Mem.* 87–88, in which he celebrates the Assumption.

¹² Ignacio Iparraguirre, “*Carácter teológico y litúrgico de la Espiritualidad del Beato Fabro*,” *Manresa* 19 (1947): 39. Translations of Iparraguirre are mine.

¹³ Iparraguirre, “*Carácter teológico y litúrgico*,” 44.

newal, we might find Faber's sixteenth-century approach to the Office in many ways deficient. We might consider his perspective to exemplify, in the words of liturgical historian Robert Taft (1932–2018), "the late medieval degeneration of the Liturgy of the Hours as *liturgy* in the West."¹⁴ According to Taft, this perspective evinces the twin "defects" of "clericalism" and "privatization" that he considers "endemic to much of the Western liturgical enterprise," both insufficiently communal and insufficiently attentive to the "duties" of the entire "People of God."¹⁵ For example, Faber clearly sees the Office as a text to recite privately rather than to say—let alone to sing—in common.

On the other hand, to discount Faber's approach to the Office would mean rejecting one of our first and finest as well as losing an opportunity to learn from him. I contend that, without accepting every jot and tittle of Faber's sixteenth-century liturgical worldview, we can find help today for praying the Liturgy of the Hours in his (1) love of the *Breviarium Romanum*, (2) desire to avoid distractions, and (3) pursuit of interiorization through the Breviary's holy words. In the first three parts of this essay, I develop each of these points respectively; then, in part 4, I consider what in Faber's approach we might best leave behind. Finally, in part 5, I conclude with a key insight from Faber's account—namely,

¹⁴ Robert F. Taft, SJ, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West: The Origins of the Divine Office and Its Meaning for Today*, 2nd rev. ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1993), 299.

¹⁵ Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 315, 309; see chapters 18 and 19 for Taft's full account. In a paper originally presented to the Jungmann Society, Taft describes Ignatius as heir to the "affective, subjective, and interior devotional" turn of the *Devotio Moderna* and claims that Ignatius "shows no awareness of the objective ecclesial and communitarian character of the Church's prayer, which is not a means to something else, not even to lead one to devotion or confession, but which has a value in itself; no awareness of the full significance of 'community' in the Church or the Society of Jesus, or of common prayer and worship as indispensable constitutive elements of any Christian community. . . . St. Ignatius had no proper appreciation of the liturgy, and there is no use trying to prove he did." In fairness, Taft thinks that "no one in the 16th c. Latin Church understood or appreciated liturgy as we understand it today," caught as they were in "a degenerate medieval view of liturgy." See Robert F. Taft, "Jesuit Liturgy—An Oxymoron?" *Worship* 84:1 (2010): 47–50.

that prayer is a dialogue between God and human beings that God initiates and articulates.¹⁶

1. The *Breviarium Romanum*, Cardinal Quiñonez, and the First Companions

In general, Jesuits tend not to think of the three first companions—Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier (1506–1552), and Peter Faber—as having had any significant differences of opinion among them. Instead, in late twentieth and early twenty-first century North America, we tend to imagine them—as depicted in an icon commissioned by the former Wisconsin Province for the 2006 Jesuit Jubilee—as a sort of apostolic similitude of the Holy Trinity.¹⁷ Indeed, these three college roommates shared a deep bond—“united in the same determination” to join in a common project, as Faber puts it—and they, together with the other first companions, exemplified friendship in the Lord, “the union of hearts and minds.”¹⁸ As we shall see, however, they did not agree completely on a matter as important as how to recite the Divine Office.

In section 400 of his *Memoriale*, we read Faber’s side of the story. While journeying in Portugal in 1545, about a year and a half before the end of his life, Faber writes:

¹⁶ A few additional, introductory notes: I see this essay as the beginning of a conversation rather a final word. Further attention to Faber’s correspondence as well as archival study would doubtless expand my perspective. On the Society of Jesus and the Divine Office more generally, see Joseph E. Weiss, SJ, “Jesuits and the Liturgy of the Hours: The Tradition, Its Roots, Classical Exponents, and Criticism in the Perspective of Today” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1993); and Jérôme Guingand, SJ, “Celebrating and the Prayer of the *Liturgy of the Hours*,” in *Jesuits and Liturgy: Community and Formation: Proceedings of the Tenth Congress of the Jungmann Society for Jesuits and Liturgy*, ed. Vlastimil Dufka, SJ (Trnava: Faculty of Theology, Trnava University, 2025), 70–87.

¹⁷ George Drance, SJ, *Three Companions of Jesus*, reproduced in John J. O’Callaghan, SJ, “Jesuit Jubilee 2006: A Vision, A Mission, A Prayer,” *Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education* 29 (2006): 3, https://www.marquette.edu/library/conversations/No29_2006/29_jesuit_jubilee.pdf.

¹⁸ *Faber Mem.* 15; trans. Murphy, 68; see General Congregation 32, Decree 11, “The Union of Hearts and Minds,” in *Jesuit Life & Mission Today: The Decrees and Accompanying Documents of the 31st–35th General Congregations of the Society of Jesus*, ed. John W. Padberg, SJ (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 2009), 339–52.

On the Friday after Ash Wednesday, I experienced a great desire that our Society should not lose anything by using the new Roman Breviary. I feared the usual consequences: that Ours might make ill use of the privilege by which they are not bound to recite numerous long offices aloud. So I celebrated Mass for this intention, namely, that through the offices of working and of prayer of the heart, we may fully compensate the living and the dead for our making less of the vocal office. This will be easy for those who love God and their neighbors; for, by preaching, hearing confessions, and personal exhortation together with mental prayer, they can help both the living and the dead, making known to many of the faithful the needs of the dead and keeping their memory alive among themselves. But if we do not see this, it will be preferable for us to be bound to a longer office and have less time available for other pious activities and prayers. In short, no one should waste time. Let us help the living in all their needs, spiritual first, then corporal. Let us help the dead by engraving their needs deeply on our memories and by inducing others, penitents, congregations, those we meet and converse with, to do the same. And let us form many to take our place and recite the offices we are unable to say ourselves.¹⁹

The “new Roman Breviary” that Faber laments refers to the reformed Office prayer book known as the *Breviarium Sanctae Crucis*—the Holy Cross Breviary that Spanish cardinal and reformer Francisco de Quiñonez organized. To understand the context for this early instance of disharmony in the Society, we will consider briefly the history of this novel prayer book and that of its author.

Quiñonez’s resumé must have seemed as remarkable in the sixteenth century as it does in the twenty-first: born around 1480, a minor Spanish nobleman who became general of the Order of Friars Minor (1523–1528), confessor to Charles V, patient diplomat between emperor and pope at a supremely tumultuous time in the history of the church and, for his labors, cardinal of Rome’s Santa Croce in Gerusalemme—

¹⁹ *Faber Mem.* 400; trans. Murphy, 292–93.

whence the name *Holy Cross Breviary*.²⁰ While Pope Clement VII had missioned Quiñonez to his liturgical task, Pope Paul III, who in 1540 would approve the institute of the Society of Jesus, first published his text in 1535. For his own part, Quiñonez intended the Holy Cross Breviary for apostolic clerks whose pastoral work required a shorter office that they could recite individually. As such, it represented one of the first of its kind: a breviary designed with only private recitation in mind.²¹

In the preface to his text, Quiñonez makes clear his hermeneutic:

So to arrange the canonical hours as to bring them back as far as possible to their ancient form, to remove from the office proximities and difficult details: it was to be faithful to the institutions of the ancient Fathers, and the clergy were to have no longer any reason for revolting against the duty of reciting the canonical prayers.²²

Note here how modern Quiñonez sounds, especially in his humanistic historical consciousness. Certainly, Trent, the Protestant Reformers, and Vatican II would all take as their liturgical goal the faithful return “to the institutions of the ancient Fathers.”²³ But in attempting to return *ad*

²⁰ See Pierre Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary*, trans. Atwell M. Y. Baylay (New York, NY: Longmans, Green and Co., 1912), 182.

²¹ In other words, Quiñonez did not intend the Holy Cross Breviary to replace the *Breviarium Romanum* sung in choir but rather as a concession to secular clergy who Quiñonez feared were not praying the Office as devotedly as they ought. See Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary*, 184–88.

²² Quoted in Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary*, 182.

²³ The fathers of the Council of Trent preface their “Canons on the Sacrifice of the Mass” as follows: “Since many errors are at this time disseminated and many things taught and discussed by many persons that are in opposition to this ancient faith, which is founded on the holy Gospel, the traditions of the Apostles, and the teaching of the holy Fathers . . .” See ch. IX, “Twenty-Second Session: The Mass,” in *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, trans. H. J. Schroeder (Charlotte, NC: Tan Books, 2011), 151. Yet Martin Luther roots his rejection of transubstantiation in the Church Fathers: “Moreover, the church kept the true faith for more than twelve hundred years, during which time the holy fathers never, at any time or place, mentioned this transubstantiation (a monstrous word and a monstrous idea), until the pseudo philosophy of Aristotle began to make its inroads into the church in these last three hundred years.” Martin Luther, *Babylonian Captivity of the Catholic Church*, trans. A.T.W. Steinhäuser, ed. Frederick C. Ahrens and Abdel Ross Wentz, in *Three Treatises*, 2nd rev. ed. (Philadelphia, PA:

fontes, Quiñonez cut much of what made the Roman Office the Roman Office in the minds of some of its early modern practitioners. Historian Pierre Batiffol puts it a bit dramatically but doubtless captures something of the minor trauma those of Faber's persuasion would have experienced: "There is nothing left in the breviary but (1) psalms, (2) antiphons, and (3) lessons," and some hymns . . . the Divine Office becomes principally a reading of the Bible."²⁴

Taft, however, presents a somewhat more balanced assessment:

Designed for private recitation, [Quiñonez's Breviary] distributed the whole psalter weekly, without repetitions, three psalms per hour; increased the length of the Scripture readings "in course"; suppressed legends, votive offices, as well as such choral elements as antiphons, responses, chapters, intercessions, and many hymns; and reduced matins to one nocturn with three lessons. The result was a short, homogenous, simple, easy-to-use breviary, with a large amount of Sacred Scripture. Its disadvantage was the opposition it provoked among those who thought it too radical a departure from tradition.²⁵

For his part, Josef Jungmann (1889–1975), the most renowned Jesuit liturgical scholar of the twentieth century, points out that the monks of Cluny, that great center of medieval liturgical culture, had "attached" to the office much of what Quiñonez removed, most notably the "daily obligatory observance . . . of the Office of the Dead, the Little Office of our Lady, the Penitential Psalms and the Psalms of Degrees [the Gradual Psalms]."²⁶ With this in mind, the prospect of not having to recite the

Fortress Press, 1970), 147. On Vatican II's approach, see, for example, the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*: "Other elements [of the rites, here speaking of the Mass] which have suffered injury through accidents of history are now to be restored to the vigor which they had in the days of the holy Fathers, as may seem useful or necessary"; *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963), https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html, §50 (hereafter abbreviated as *SC*). See also Vatican II's call to return to "the venerable tradition of the universal Church" with respect to the Divine Office (*SC*, §89).

²⁴ Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary*, 185–86.

²⁵ Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West*, 311.

²⁶ Joseph A. Jungmann, SJ, *Pastoral Liturgy* (New York, NY: Herder and Herder, 1962), 201.

Office of the Dead and the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary every day as part of one's daily Office prayer must have seemed strange to those who found it both customary and meaningful.

In any case, as we have seen in the *Memoriale*, Peter Faber certainly was counted among those who found Quiñonez's experiment too extreme. Here, Faber seems to have two principal and interrelated concerns. First, he fears that Jesuits "might make ill use" of the "privilege" of reciting the Holy Cross Breviary—that it would lead them to "waste" any extra time gained from its brevity, especially given that their Office obligation already involved so much less than that of their monastic and mendicant counterparts.²⁷ In short, he worried that Jesuits would become lax in prayer. On this point, John de Arze, Quiñonez's greatest detractor at the Council of Trent, would echo Faber's concern in claiming that wider use of the Holy Cross Breviary would "encourage laziness."²⁸

Second, Faber connects his fear about wasted Jesuit time with the "consequence" of lessened intercessory efficacy: that with less Office prayer, Jesuits could not "fully . . . compensate the living and the dead"—that their prayerful help offered to "the dead" and "the living in all their needs" would notably diminish.²⁹

Note, however, that the pastoral practice of Ignatius and Xavier suggests that they did not share Faber's view. Although himself exempt from reciting the daily Office, Ignatius "received from Paul III the general privilege for the members of his order to use" the Holy Cross Breviary.³⁰ For his part, Francis Xavier, "who used the old [Roman] breviary

²⁷ *Faber Mem.* 400; trans. Murphy, 292.

²⁸ Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, 206.

²⁹ *Faber Mem.* 400; trans. Murphy, 292–93.

³⁰ Ignatius's own prayer elicited rapturous and physically overwhelming consolation and thus, out of concern for his health, "his companions requested from Paul III permission for Ignatius to replace the canonical hours by a certain number of Our Fathers and Hail Marys." Joseph de Guibert, SJ, *The Jesuits, Their Spiritual Doctrine: A Historical Study*, trans. William Young, SJ (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 1964), 45–46. On the Society's reception of the privilege to use the Holy Cross Breviary, see Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, 204. In his June 6, 1546 letter to Leonard Kessel, Ignatius notes—among other pontifical permissions—that Jesuits have "the faculty to recite the canonical hours according to the use of the new breviary"; see Ignatius of Loyola, Letter 125, *Monumenta Ignatiana. Santi*

himself,” would ask that he might grant permission to his “fellow-travelers to India” to use Quiñonez’s text.³¹ Of course, this does not mean that Ignatius and Xavier were strongly in favor of the Holy Cross Breviary; it does suggest, however, that Faber’s former roommates expressed a greater openness to Quiñonez’s experiment and its potential pastoral benefits for priests on the move—that is, its missionary utility—than did their companion from Savoy.

In the end, the perspective of Ignatius and Xavier won the day. At least during the period in which the Holy Cross Breviary was permitted, as Jungmann summarizes, “it is mentioned amongst the Jesuits as the Breviary commonly (*ordinarie*) used.”³² Even Peter Canisius (1521–1597), whose vocation Faber so kindly cultivated, would request permission to grant its use.³³ In another irony of history, Pope Paul IV—the former Cardinal Giovanni Pietro Carafa of Theatine infamy—would, in 1558, purposefully let lapse the permission to print the Holy Cross Breviary, effectively ending its usage and preparing the way for the Office reforms of Trent.³⁴

Ignatii de Loyola Societatis Jesu fundatoris epistolae et instructiones (Epp. et instruct.), vol. 1 (Madrid, 1903), 395; the same letter indicates that Jesuits have permission “to anticipate or postpone the canonical hours” for a legitimate reason (396); my translations. A note from the editors states that Paul III granted the Society these permissions in his June 3, 1545 apostolic letter, *Cum Inter Cunctas*; see Ignatius, Letter 125, *Epp. et instruct.* I: 395n3. See also Murphy, notes to *Memoriale*, in *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 292n6.

³¹ Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, 205. On October 22, 1540, Francis Xavier writes the following to Ignatius from Lisbon: “Send also to us permissions for six priests to recite the new office so that we can give them to six of those who are going with us to the Indies,” emphasizing that “time is pressing” and that they have no time to waste in receiving official communiques; see Francis Xavier, *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe, SJ (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 1992), 30. We know that Xavier received the permissions in time because he grants one in Goa on September 21, 1542; see Xavier, *Letters and Instructions*, trans. Costelloe, 30n8, 60.

³² Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, 204.

³³ Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, 204–5.

³⁴ Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary*, 191.

At this point, we might reflect a bit more deeply on what Faber would have found so objectionable about the Holy Cross Breviary, as these objections will help identify what he most valued about his own Office prayer. In addition to his stated concerns noted above—its overall shortness, which would in Faber’s mind have meant both less time devoted to prayer and less intercessory fruit—Quiñonez’s prayer book, as we have seen, “suppressed legends, votive offices,” as well as the daily required Cluniac “attachments,” namely, the Office of the Dead, Little Office, Penitential Psalms, and Gradual Psalms.³⁵ And all three suppressions strike at the roots of two of Faber’s interrelated spiritual passions: prayers to the saints and prayers for the dead. I will touch briefly on each.

One of the first things one notices about Faber’s Office prayer—in indeed, about his spiritual life in general as the Memoriale records it—is his devotion to the saints.

One of the first things one notices about Faber’s Office prayer—in indeed, about his spiritual life in general as the *Memoriale* records it—is his devotion to the saints. Faber’s sanctoral calendar brimmed over with heavenly intercessors, and he wanted neither their quantity nor his busyness to impede his reception of the graces resulting from the recitation of their Offices.³⁶ He states explicitly, for example, that he prayed the Offices of Saints Hippolytus, Sabina, Michael, Mark, Stephen, Caesarius, Martina, Hyginus, Gilbert, Bruno, Roch, and Processus and Martinianus.³⁷ Note too that, in the *Breviarium Romanum*, these Offices—specifically the hour of Matins—would have contained extensive lives of saints, “legends” about their heroic sanctity.³⁸ And while Faber may not cite these narratives directly, he clearly references their *vitae*, declaring

³⁵ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 311; Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, 201.

³⁶ For an early list of saints to whom Faber had a special devotion, see *Faber Mem.* 28. See also *Faber Mem.* 74, in which Faber expresses the desire to comb through the various diocesan calendars to honor local saints appropriately.

³⁷ See *Faber Mem.* 85, 106, 116, 138, 141, 182, 250, 255, 257, 261, 266, 361.

³⁸ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 311. Many of the saints to whom Faber seems to have felt drawn died as martyrs; thus, many of these “legends” would have contained accounts of martyrdom.

his affection for those saints “who are mentioned more at length in my Roman breviary.”³⁹ Thus, Quiñonez’s jettisoning of these stories of sanctity that Faber held dear, many of which we might consider fanciful, would have felt like an assault on a cornerstone of Faber’s devotional life.⁴⁰

Furthermore, while his *Memoriale* entries often coordinate with official feast days in the *Breviarium Romanum*, we find notable exceptions.⁴¹ Some of these instances, Faber tells us, specify recitation “postponed,” “put off,” or “deferred,” most likely because his apostolic life required a certain flexibility.⁴² In other cases where his recitation does not correspond with the liturgical calendar, however, another principle seems operative. For example, consider Faber’s prayer to and with St. Roch, an early modern plague saint from fifteenth-century France whose cult spread widely both in his homeland and in Italy, specifically in Venice, where the first companions famously convened, and Piacenza, where early Jesuits worked, as well as in Germany.⁴³ Faber himself tells us that he “had resolved” to commemorate St. Roch “on the day after the As-

³⁹ *Faber Mem.* 28; trans. Murphy, 80.

⁴⁰ Many before Quiñonez regarded elements of saints’ Breviary *vitae* as “incredible tales.” On this point, see Batiffol, *History of the Roman Breviary*, 168.

⁴¹ A good bit of local variation of course preceded the calendrical uniformity that Trent imposed. However, a comparison of the *Memoriale* with the calendars in the *Breviarium Romanum* from Faber’s time shows that Faber stayed remarkably faithful to the sanctoral cycle that Franciscan influences had established for the Roman Curia. See, for example, two editions of the *Breviarium Romanum* published by Thielman Kerver in Paris in the first half of the sixteenth century, which resemble the Breviary that Faber would have used. See, for example, a facsimile of the Bavarian State Library volume (1513) at https://www.google.com/books/edition/Breviarium_Romanum/n2NUAAAAcAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1; or a facsimile of the Austrian National Library volume (1531) at https://www.google.com/books/edition/Breviarium_Romanum_altero_jamdudum_exara/ntZWAAAACAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0. Thanks to Peter Jeffery for these indications.

⁴² He notes the Offices of St. Caesarius (*Faber Mem.* 182; trans. Murphy, 174), St. Martina (*Faber Mem.* 250; trans. Murphy, 213), St. Hyginus (*Faber Mem.* 255; trans. Murphy, 216), and St. Gilbert (*Faber Mem.* 257; trans. Murphy, 217).

⁴³ See Heinrich Dormeier, “Un santo nuovo contro la peste: cause del successo del culto di san Rocco e promotori della sua diffusione al Nord delle Alpi,” in *San Rocco: Genesi e prima espansione di un culto* (Brussels: Société des Bolandistes, 2006), 225–44. See also Gregory DiPippo, “The Feast of St. Roch,” *New Liturgical Movement*, August 16, 2020, <https://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2020/08/the-feast-of-st-roch.html>.

sumption," August 16, "the same date as the Carmelites in their house in Paris."⁴⁴ And yet in the next calendar year, we find him reciting St. Roch's Office on an unspecified day in February or March 1543.⁴⁵

Regarding this discrepancy, it seems that Faber prayed St. Roch's festal psalms and prayers as a votive office—that is, for a particular intercessory desire (*votum*) or intention.⁴⁶ Not surprising either that Faber would turn to St. Roch in that time especially vulnerable to plague, when Faber prayed frequently for protection, not only for himself and his various dwellings but also for those to whom he ministered.⁴⁷ Perhaps most interesting for us, this latter entry contains Faber's most complete reflection on the liturgy, in which he articulates the Catholic position on the importance of "external worship rendered to Christ and to his saints," in apparent contrast to the perceived Lutheran emphasis on "interior worship" alone.⁴⁸ Thus, in addition to warding off pestilence, the votive Office of St. Roch afforded Faber an opportunity for fruitful liturgical-theological reflection.

Lastly, Faber's Office prayer to the saints, either on their feast days, postponed, or as votive exercises, relates to his larger commitment to pray for the living and the dead. This, we have seen, appeared as one of his stated worries about the Holy Cross Breviary—namely, that the living and the dead would receive less compensation. On this point, he writes, "Let us help the living in all their needs, spiritual first, then corporal. Let us help the dead by engraving their needs deeply on our memories and by inducing others . . . to do the same."⁴⁹ Faber's intercessory prayer for the living and the dead goes beyond his Office prayer,

⁴⁴ *Faber Mem.* 90; trans. Murphy, 121.

⁴⁵ See *Faber Mem.* 266.

⁴⁶ While twenty-first century Catholics will more likely know about votive masses, since these appear in the current *Roman Missal*, than votive offices, the basic idea behind both remains the same: a liturgical act celebrated with a particular intention in mind.

⁴⁷ Perhaps the most famous passage from the *Memoriale* in which Faber invokes "Christ the Consoler" mentions "plagues" among humanity's "manifold afflictions"; see *Faber Mem.* 151; trans. Murphy, 157.

⁴⁸ *Faber Mem.* 266; trans. Murphy, 220–21.

⁴⁹ *Faber Mem.* 400; trans. Murphy, 292–93.

as throughout the *Memoriale* he prays constantly on behalf of all.⁵⁰ Of course, the daily Offices of the Dead in the *Breviarium Romanum*, together with his votive Offices for particular intentions, would have provided him with opportunities to help the living and the dead. Thus, Quiñonez's suppression of daily required Offices of the Dead would have, in Faber's mind, meant less help overall.

To compensate for this, Faber, while suspicious of Quiñonez's wider use, suggests that Jesuits might supplement this loss "through the offices of working and of prayer of the heart . . . by preaching, hearing confessions, and personal exhortation together with mental prayer."⁵¹ He seems to think that Jesuit apostolic labor at its best might in a sense make up for the Society's decreased Office prayer, not least because such work involves continually reminding "the faithful" of "the needs of the dead."⁵² Yet realizing that not all Jesuit ministry attains the ideal, he maintains that, in such circumstances, he thought it best to have men "bound to a longer office."⁵³ Indeed, he felt that even in the best-case spiritual scenario, Jesuits ought to "form many to take our place"—cloistered communities and/or those religious bound by choir—who will "recite the offices we are unable to say ourselves."⁵⁴ Such a position seems to suggest that something about Office prayer does not transfer in the economy of grace.

Thus, for Faber, while circumstances might demand shortening or mitigating the breviary, nothing can replace its recitation. Nevertheless,

Faber's intercessory prayer for the living and the dead goes beyond his Office prayer, as throughout the Memoriale he prays constantly on behalf of all.

⁵⁰ Examples appear on literally every page. For Faber's experience of devotion while saying Masses for the Dead, see *Faber Mem.* 164, 257. For his prayers for the holy souls in Purgatory, see *Faber Mem.* 232, 243, and 257. Faber's most striking prayers for the living might appear in his repeated prayers for Luther, Henry VIII, and other ideological opponents; see *Faber Mem.* 25, 33, 151, and 390–91.

⁵¹ *Faber Mem.* 400; trans. Murphy, 292.

⁵² *Faber Mem.* 400; trans. Murphy, 292.

⁵³ *Faber Mem.* 400; trans. Murphy, 292.

⁵⁴ *Faber Mem.* 400; trans. Murphy, 293.

the Faber who emerges from the pages of the *Memoriale* seems less interested in what he prays than in how he prays. And so we turn now to this “how” — this paramount question of method and disposition — from which, I contend, we twenty-first century Jesuits and Ignatian-inspired persons might learn the most.

2. Distraction and Attention

Peter Faber had an overarching and sometimes overwhelming desire, in prayer generally and in his Office recitation specifically, to avoid and overcome distractions (*distractiones*) in order to maintain attention (*attentio*) and foster devotion (*devotio*).⁵⁵ For Faber, distraction involves anything that draws one out—*dis-traho*—of one’s interiority in prayer.⁵⁶ On this point, Robert Vernay notes that the patristic desire to avoid distractions “was discovered anew” toward the end of the Middle Ages and at the beginning of the early modern period as the “great apostolic orders,” immersed “in the worries, problems, and troubles of the age,” adapted “monastic” spiritualities to “the active life.”⁵⁷ This “evolution,” he tells us, “manifested” itself radically among Ignatius and his company.⁵⁸

One finds this desire in the *Imitation of Christ*—Ignatius’s beloved *Gerçoncito*, which Faber surely knew.⁵⁹ There, Thomas à Kempis exhorts

⁵⁵ We could write much more about Faber’s account of devotion—*devoción, devotio*—which lies beyond the scope of the present essay. For an analysis of *devotio* in the early Society of Jesus, see Christopher M. Staab, SJ, “Always Growing in Devotion: The Grace of Devotion in the Life of Ignatius of Loyola and the Society of Jesus,” *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 56, no. 1 (Spring 2024).

⁵⁶ See the *Oxford Latin Dictionary* entry for *distraho*: “To pull apart . . . to disperse . . . to part forcibly . . . to separate . . . to disrupt . . . to draw (a person, his mind, feelings, etc.) in several directions, arouse conflicting impulses in, drive distracted”; *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1982), 560.

⁵⁷ Robert Vernay, “Distractions,” in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité: Ascétique and Mystique, Doctrine et Histoire*, vol. III (Paris: Beauchesne, 1957), 1352–53; hereafter abbreviated DSAM.

⁵⁸ DSAM, 1353.

⁵⁹ On the misattribution of the *Imitation of Christ* to Jean Gerson, see Guibert, *The Jesuits and Their Spiritual Doctrine*, 155.

that, during an examination of conscience, one should “lament and grieve because you are . . . so wandering in your attention, so careless in saying the office, so lukewarm in celebrating, so heartless in receiving, so quickly distracted, so seldom fully recollected.”⁶⁰ Indeed, this phrase could serve as a summary of sorts of Faber’s central desire that he not be “careless” when it comes to the Office.

In one of his earliest entries, Faber himself provides his most complete instructions for reciting the Office. “On the day of Ss. John and Paul,” June 26, 1542, he writes, “I was given knowledge and an indication of a means to improve my recitation of the office.”⁶¹ He then lists “four things” that serve as “limits and bounds beyond which I should determine not to pass during the time of the office” — four key elements for fruitful Office praying:

1. “place” (*lugar/locus*) of recitation,
2. “persons or saints mentioned in the prayer,”
3. the “words” (*palabras/verba*) themselves, and
4. “gestures” that accompany these words and pertain to the Office (*obras que entran/opera intervenientia*).⁶²

Focusing on these “four things,” Faber notes, will prove especially “useful” to “beginners for driving away” any and all distractions—specifically, “any memories, thoughts, impressions, or desires, connected with

⁶⁰ *Imitation of Christ*, bk. 4, ch. 7; Thomas à Kempis, *Imitation of Christ*, trans. Aloysius Croft and Harold Bolton (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003), 125.

⁶¹ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87.

⁶² *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87; *Faber* 868, 509. Regarding (4), Murphy translates *opera* and *obras* as “gestures,” which seems to follow Certeau, who uses *les gestes*, as in *Faber Mem.* 37, trans. Certeau, 140. One thinks of the sign of the cross and the genuflections indicated toward the end of certain offices; see “Genuflexion between Psalm and Oration,” in Jungmann, *Pastoral Liturgy*, 172–80. One thinks too of the “act of reverence or humility” indicated to begin an Ignatian contemplation, as at *Spiritual Exercises* 75–76, hereafter abbreviated *SpEx*; *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. and ed. George E. Ganss, SJ (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 1992). All quotations from the *SpEx* are from this edition. See also *Faber Mem.* 116.

other places, persons, conversations, or activities” that might intrude on praying the Office.⁶³

Faber further suggests that the one praying “look ahead, long before saying the office to each of its principal parts,” meaning to each hour and the psalms and readings it contains, “with great desire to concentrate” on the task at hand.⁶⁴ To illustrate, he presents an example of the inner monologue the one praying might adopt in preparation: “You have to say this psalm first, then this one, then the other, and so forth,” such self-talk helping one to enter into (*entrar*) or begin (*incipere*) the Hour.⁶⁵ Note here how much of Faber’s Office advice applies not only to the time of recitation, but also to the time before and after prayer—specifically, the one praying the Office is to “withdraw” frequently in the midst of one’s daily life to think about the “subject matter” of a future or previous office.⁶⁶ One thus seeks to “prolong” one’s “reflection as much as possible” after the recitation so as to extend and preserve the “spirit” of the prayer and continue the affective experience of the hour.⁶⁷

While one cultivates a constant, continual “desire . . . to pray well,” one also must establish for oneself “definite times for prayer, to call them to mind often and with longing and with an ever present fear of not praying well.”⁶⁸ One should, Faber tells us elsewhere, “strive to discover outside the time of prayer the causes of” one’s distractions, “so that at the time of prayer,” one “might deserve to find joy in the reading of the

⁶³ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87.

⁶⁴ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87.

⁶⁵ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87; *Faber* 868 and 509. This advice echoes Ignatius, who indicates in the *Exercises* that, before bed, the retreatant should “think for the length of a Hail Mary about the hour I should arise, and for what purpose; and I will briefly sum up the exercise I am to make,” and “upon awakening,” keep out “any other thoughts” and “immediately turn my attention to” the impending exercise (*SpEx* 73–74, ed. Ganss, 48). Elsewhere, Faber suggests aids for preparing and entering each Office prayer: “to say ‘Jesus, Mary’ ten times at the beginning of each hour,” each invocation paired with an intention; *Faber Mem.* 29; trans. Murphy, 81–82.

⁶⁶ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87–88.

⁶⁷ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87. Faber frequently desires to maintain the “spirit” of prayer after its formal end; see *Faber Mem.* 52.

⁶⁸ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 88.

word of God.”⁶⁹ To offer an analogy, we might think of Faber’s ideal Office devotees as competitive swimmers whose exercises on land— for example, stretching and lifting weights—matter as much if not more than their time in the water. Thus, preparation outside the time of Office prayer will help those who pray, in contemporary parlance, to stay completely in the moment. In Faber’s words, they will have arranged “the hours and the time available during the day so as to not allow” their “attention to stray” or their “thoughts to dwell” on what comes next, assuring that their spirit not be “divided” or “wander.”⁷⁰

Here we begin to see taking shape the fundamental elements of Faber’s view of the Office: attention to place, saints, words, and gestures; the importance of preparation for prayer and the organization of one’s time; and the deep desire to avoid distractions. These themes appear repeatedly in the *Memoriale*, undoubtedly as a result in part of his repeated exposure to the spirituality of the Carthusians. Henry Shea (UEA) has reviewed the early Society’s relationship with the Carthusians as well as Faber’s own “close...connections,” including his early acquaintance with their spirituality at the charterhouse of Reposoir, where his relatives served as successive priors, his visits to the charterhouse of Vauvert outside Paris with the other first companions and, perhaps most importantly, the friendship he fostered with the Cologne Carthusians at the charterhouse of St. Barbara and especially with their prior, Gerald Kalckbrenner.⁷¹

Certeau, in a rather romantic turn of phrase, also posits Carthusian liturgical influence on Faber, who in his view had a “continual desire to reconstruct in the world the cloister and the monastic liturgy” that he had experienced from youth in Carthusian contexts.⁷² Faber’s relationship with Kalckbrenner perhaps proved most influential, not only

⁶⁹ *Faber Mem.* 61; trans. Murphy, 103.

⁷⁰ *Faber Mem.* 38; trans. Murphy, 89. See also *SpEx* 13, 20.

⁷¹ Henry J. Shea, SJ, “Contemplatives and Apostles: The Paradoxical Harmony of the Carthusian and Jesuit Charisms,” *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 55, no. 1 (Spring 2023): 3–4. See also Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 28–40.

⁷² Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 29, cited also in Shea, “Contemplatives and Apostles,” 7n21. Translations from Certeau are mine.

because of their warm rapport and extensive correspondence, but also because St. Barbara's functioned as a center of Catholic publishing—a sort of sixteenth-century version of Ignatius Press or Orbis Books, printing and purveying an orthodox, mystical message in the spirit of the Catholic Reformation.⁷³ Even before Kalckbrenner's tenure as prior—and before Faber's arrival in Germany—St. Barbara's was publishing Latin translations of the Rhineland and Flemish mystics.⁷⁴ Historian Dennis Martin writes that, “under Kalkbrenner,” the Cologne charterhouse's publishing activities moved “into high gear.”⁷⁵ From this perspective, we can imagine Kalckbrenner lending his dear, bookish friend Faber, for his spiritual edification, a few of “the ‘pocket-size’ half-octavo format” texts “frequently employed by the Cologne Carthusians.”⁷⁶ And so, along with the later influence of Ignatius, the Carthusians—especially Reposoir with its large library and St. Barbara's with its impressive publishing apparatus—would have exposed Faber to the rich wells of the *Devotio Moderna*.⁷⁷

Here we begin to see taking shape the fundamental elements of Faber's view of the Office: attention to place, saints, words, and gestures; the importance of preparation for prayer and the organization of one's time; and the deep desire to avoid distractions

⁷³ On Faber's friendship with Kalckbrenner, see, for example, Faber's letter 68, “To Gerhard Kalckbrenner, Prior of the Cologne Carthusians, a Letter of Spiritual Friendship,” trans. Martin E. Palmer, SJ, in *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, ed. Edmond C. Murphy, SJ, John W. Padberg, SJ, and Martin E. Palmer, SJ (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 1996), 350.

⁷⁴ See Dennis D. Martin, “Carthusians during the Reformation Era: ‘*Cartusia nunquam deformata, reformari resistens*,’” *The Catholic Historical Review* 81, no. 1 (January 1995): 56–59.

⁷⁵ Martin, “Carthusians during the Reformation Era,” 59.

⁷⁶ Martin, “Carthusians during the Reformation Era, 57–58. See also Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 31–32.

⁷⁷ Bangert summarizes well: “The monks of Reposoir brought Peter within the spiritual influence of the school of Gerhard Groote, Ludolph of Saxony, Henry Herp, and Jean Ruysbroeck, since it was the Carthusian monasteries at Treves, Mainz, Cologne, Louvain, along with the Brothers of the Common Life, that were the important pegs which held the web of the *Devotio Moderna* spread out over the Low Countries and the Rhineland”; William V. Bangert, SJ, *To the Other Towns: A Life of Blessed Peter Favre, First Companion of St. Ignatius* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2002), 26.

We know that Faber knew the thought of the fifteenth-century “eclectic, scholastic contemplative” Denis the Carthusian whose works St. Barbara’s published.⁷⁸ In fact, Denis perhaps best anticipates Faber’s approach to the Office, writing that

To pray the Office “distinctly, devoutly, and with his mind on what he is doing” remained one of Faber’s principal challenges

“the contemplative must say his office or his prayer distinctly, devoutly, and with his mind on what he is doing. He must think of God as being

always present, aware of, and judging all that he does, thinks, feels, and says.”⁷⁹ Thus, both Denis and Faber affirm that successful Office prayer has less to do with a physical monastic enclosure than with one’s psycho-spiritual focus, one’s devotion and attention. It is, as Certeau says, a “cloister” that is “in the world.”⁸⁰

To pray the Office “distinctly, devoutly, and with his mind on what he is doing” remained one of Faber’s principal challenges.⁸¹ For example, in his entry for the first Sunday of Lent in 1542, Faber records one of the most human moments noted in the *Memoriale*. As he relates it, Faber finds himself during his Office recitation tempted to adjust

⁷⁸ Martin, “Carthusians during the Reformation Era,” 59. According to Martin, St. Barbara’s published a “massive edition” of Denis’s works, which Terence O’Reilly notes spanned fifty-seven volumes; see Terence O’Reilly, introduction to Denis the Carthusian, *Spiritual Writings*, trans. Íde M. Ní Riain (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), xi–xii. At Faber’s urging, Cornelius Wischaven preached on Denis’s writings, which offers further evidence that Faber knew and drew on Denis; see Ignacio Iparraguirre, “Influjos en la Espiritualidad del Beato Pedro Fabro,” *Revista de Espiritualidad* 5 (1946): 449.

⁷⁹ Denis the Carthusian, *Contemplation*, in *Spiritual Writings*, trans. Íde M. Ní Riain, 35. Denis’s perspective is representative of several voices associated with the *Devotio Moderna*, including Jean Mombaer, another possible influence on Faber, who echoes similar themes (Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 35). On this point, historian Sara Ritchey writes that “[Mombaer’s] goal for the canons for whom he wrote was to increase attentiveness, to quicken the liturgy by internalizing the intentions (literally, *ad sensum vero* [the sense] and *ad finem* [the end] of the words uttered). . . . His *Rosetum* is dedicated to *simul attentus devotus in horis* (devoted and complete attention to the Hours) as a means to internalize and fulfill the text of the office”; Sara Ritchey, “Manual Thinking: John Mombaer’s Meditations, the Neuroscience of the Imagination and the Future of the Humanities,” *Postmedieval: A Journal of Medieval Cultural Studies* 3, no. 3 (2012): 343.

⁸⁰ Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 29.

⁸¹ Denis, *Contemplation*, in *Spiritual Writings*, 35.

and fidget with—“regulate,” wind, perhaps tinker with—his “clock” or watch (*horologium*; Certeau *montre*), confessing that “while saying my office I began to regulate my clock without need.”⁸² The experience in turn provides Faber with an image of what he seeks—namely, “to ask God for the grace to be ‘regulated’ by him and set in order so as to pray well.”⁸³ By this metaphor, then, God, the omnipotent Lord of time, can “more easily” and effectively “regulate” Faber than Faber “can regulate or put right some material object.”⁸⁴ How fitting that Peter Faber, the early modern priest, would ask God the clock-winder to regulate his praying of the canonical hours!

But then, a sadness enters and an awareness of “fault” arises, as Faber notes that he is, in general, all too fidgety—“too frequently” given “to engage in needlessly handling, gazing at, or fixing this or that object.”⁸⁵ Instead, he insists that “all my efforts should have been directed to preparing and disposing myself for the proper accomplishment of the work I have to do [viz., his “prayers and meditations”], whether with my hands, my mouth, or my mind.”⁸⁶ Here, Faber’s description of prayer—and especially Office prayer—as “work” seems profoundly traditional as it calls to mind the *opus Dei* of Benedict as well as Benedict’s instruction to coordinate “mind” and “voice” in praying the psalms.⁸⁷ Faber thus desires to “give . . . himself up completely” to the “exercises” at hand, “working in union with all the required faculties,” fully engaged with the help of the Holy Spirit.⁸⁸

Here, we might ask about the nature and origin of these horological distractions. Most often, as just suggested, the interruptions that Faber experiences while praying the Office seem pedestrian—in addition to the temptation to fidget, he thinks of apostolic concerns and

⁸² *Faber Mem.* 249; *Faber* 616; trans. Murphy, 212; trans. Certeau, 304.

⁸³ *Faber Mem.* 249; trans. Murphy, 212.

⁸⁴ *Faber Mem.* 249; trans. Murphy, 212.

⁸⁵ *Faber Mem.* 249; trans. Murphy, 212.

⁸⁶ *Faber Mem.* 249; trans. Murphy, 212.

⁸⁷ See Rule of St. Benedict, ch. 22 and 19; *The Rule of St. Benedict in English*, ed. Timothy Fry, OSB (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1982), 49, 47.

⁸⁸ *Faber Mem.* 249; trans. Murphy, 212.

“matters however pious” that, *prima facie*, would have seemed worthy of consideration but still compromise his focus.⁸⁹ In addition, distractions come from his own inner “turmoil,” stemming from “bitterness” at his own “infirmities,” “weaknesses,” or “imperfections.”⁹⁰ Faber frequently describes himself—his own lack of preparation, attention, or faulty disposition—rather than any evil spirit as the source of distractions and his own “memories, thoughts, impressions, or desires” as most often the source.⁹¹

Nevertheless, the good spirit—“God . . . with his holy angel”—is present to “observe” the fruit of his good efforts at recitation.⁹² “The good angel” or “the Holy Spirit, who is God,” will offer support and bring the prayer to “completion.”⁹³ Yet the evil spirit does appear in that, for the sake of accusation, he “observes all the faults you commit” in recitation.⁹⁴ Faber’s account of the roles of the good and bad spirits echoes Ignatius’s “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits,” where the good spirit—the Holy Spirit, God—“stir[s] up courage and strength, consolation, tears, inspirations, and tranquility” during the Office in the properly disposed person, whereas the evil spirit “cause[s] gnawing anxiety” and sadness and erects “obstacles,” perhaps especially after the completion of an hour.⁹⁵ Therefore, as we noted above, one should extend reflection in order to maintain the “spirit” of the prayer “so as to avoid becoming completely distracted by external matters [*no saliendo todo el hombre fuera/ita ut non exeat foras totus homo*].”⁹⁶ While he recognizes the role the various spirits play in the recitation of the Office, Faber seems more interested overall in the responsibility of the one praying, especially in one’s own preparation and disposition in light of one’s vulnerability to

⁸⁹ *Faber Mem.* 180; trans. Murphy, 174. See also *Faber Mem.* 249, 146.

⁹⁰ *Faber Mem.* 101; trans. Murphy, 126: “Wishing to say compline.”

⁹¹ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87.

⁹² *Faber Mem.* 181; trans. Murphy, 174.

⁹³ *Faber Mem.* 249; trans. Murphy 212.

⁹⁴ *Faber Mem.* 181; trans. Murphy, 174.

⁹⁵ *SpEx* 315; ed. Ganss, 121; see *Faber Mem.* 181.

⁹⁶ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87; *Faber* 868, 509. Murphy offers a dynamic translation of the final clause; a more literal translation might read, “So that the whole person might not leave/depart for that which is outside/external.”

distractions, many of which he considers self-originating. Again, while external and internal realities constantly prowl and threaten to distract from the task at hand, the one praying has a responsibility, with divine help, to avoid pitfalls.

This theme of distractions while praying the Office arises once again in the *Memoriale* on the feast of Saints John and Paul in 1543, exactly one year after Faber posited the “four things” quoted above.⁹⁷ He writes:

On the day of the holy martyrs John and Paul, after rising in the morning I experienced a notable enough grace which prepared my heart for the saying of the office and for the rejection of all impressions, either disheartening or encouraging, from exterior sources. While dressing and finishing what I have to do before saying my office, I was concentrated on the single desire [*hoc unum desiderandum*] of praying well, attentively and with devotion.⁹⁸

Here, we hear a continuation of his reflections from the previous year on the nature of distractions—those “memories, thoughts, impressions, or desires” that would impede the Office’s recitation.⁹⁹

Finally, we also may hear in this entry an echo of the thought of Denis. Whereas in *Memoriale* 37 Faber says that his “four things” might most help “beginners,” to guide their wandering minds and hearts, here

⁹⁷ We can only speculate as to why the feast of Saints John and Paul provoked Faber’s reflections on the Office. For example, according to tradition, these eunuch brothers served the daughter of Constantine, had a reputation for almsgiving, and resisted the avarice and idolatry of Julian the Apostate. As such, Faber might have seen these two chaste and generous brothers who served Christ rather than the wicked emperor as exemplars of Christian and especially Jesuit life. He also would have invoked them every day in the Roman Canon. For a translation of the saints’ passions that Faber would have read in his Office, see Gregory DiPippo, “The Feast of Ss John and Paul Martyrs,” *New Liturgical Movement*, June 26, 2018, <https://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2018/06/the-feast-of-ss-john-and-paul-martyrs.html>. See also “Ss. Gallicanus, John, and Paul,” in Michael Lapidge, *The Roman Martyrs: Introduction, Translations, and Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780198811367.003.0002>.

⁹⁸ *Faber Mem.* 336; trans. Murphy, 259; *Faber* 654.

⁹⁹ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 87.

he focuses less on forming others and more on articulating the terrain of his own heart. As he explains, “I felt in my heart that a kind of salutary disquiet was possessing me, the fear of being unable to maintain myself in that disposition”—that is, a disposition of attentiveness and devotion. Whereas Faber elsewhere (e.g., on the first Sunday of Lent, 1542, *Memoriale* 249) seems almost frustrated with himself, fed up with his fidgetiness during the Office, here he experiences the “disquiet” as “salutary”—a “certain sadness” at the lack of affective experience in prayer that leads to a greater desire for God’s presence and indeed for the beatific vision.¹⁰⁰ We find this theme repeating in the *Memoriale*: ideally, one should bear sadness or sorrow not of frustration over the distractions themselves, but rather out of love and desire for God, and especially out of “love and affection for the words of God and the matter of your prayer.”¹⁰¹

3. Interiorization and the Holy Words

To avoid distractions in his Office praying, Faber aims not for dis-traction but *intractio* or *intractus*, which Murphy translates most often as “interiorization.”¹⁰² While Faber uses a number of

¹⁰⁰ *Faber Mem.* 336–37; trans. Murphy 259–60. This section gestures toward Faber’s more general goal of “the plenitude of glory.” While “all the sacred words [*omnia verba sacra*]” are essential for prayer “on earth,” they remain in a sense provisional insofar as they function as a means to the greatest end of finding God *in se*. *Faber Mem.* 108–9; trans. Murphy, 130–31; *Faber* 547. Regarding Faber’s sometimes apophatic view of the spiritual life here below, see *Faber Mem.* 209–12, 278.

¹⁰¹ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 88.

¹⁰² See the entry for *intractio*, “The action of drawing back,” in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 953. Certeau defines *intractio* as “concentration toward the interior” and notes that Faber uses *intractio* and *intractus* interchangeably; *Mémorial*, trans. Certeau, 258n5. With respect to “interiorization,” Murphy seems to follow Certeau’s *intériorisation*; see *Faber Mem.* 188, trans. Certeau, 258. To avoid interpreting this as self-absorption, note that the emphasis falls on God’s initiative, on spiritual movements. This turning inward does not represent an end in itself but rather a means to spiritual ascent. As Maurice Nédoncelle puts it, “In simple terms, we could say that [Christian interiority] opens itself to the Being of God and to the being of the world. . . . It no longer designates only that which is in me, but it discovers—if one could put it thus—the interior of God and the interior of the world.” See Maurice Nédoncelle, “*Intériorité*,” in *DSAM*, vol. III (Paris: Beauchesne, 1970), 1898.

etymologically-related terms to capture this same movement—for example, “*retractio*” and “*tractu[s]*”—the central dynamic appears the same.¹⁰³ First comes the distractive movement, in which one moves away from one’s own prayerful recollection and thus from God; then follows the intractive/retractive/attractive movement that leads one more deeply to prayerful attention and devotion—indeed, as we shall see, into one’s own, truest heart (*cor*). In this progression, external factors—for example, temptations, “remorse of conscience,” fear, and the subsequent longing for devotion—can goad one heartward, but Faber makes it clear that the movement toward one’s interior at its most mature comes from one’s own “innermost soul” or recollected spiritual center.¹⁰⁴ At his best, then, Faber’s “soul” is “recalled to herself by what is inmost [*ex intimis*] in her.”¹⁰⁵ Interiorization thus entails a “drawing back [*retractio*]” that begins “from the deepest depths and from the heart [*ex visceribus et ex corde*].”¹⁰⁶

Faber defines this process of interiorization most clearly in an entry on an unspecified “Sunday morning” in October 1542.¹⁰⁷ Finding himself “distracted,” he notes that he “received not a few moments of pure devotion with various interior intimations [*responsa*],” which led him “to desire that the presence of the good spirit might be prolonged, above all in order to bring about a greater interiorization of my spirit” throughout the entirety of that particular Office prayer.¹⁰⁸ He continues:

This interiorization is a kind of attraction towards the interior which is brought about by God if we ask for it and if we strive for it with all our might [*intractum dico, quasi tractum intro, qui a Deo fit, nobis petentibus, ac omnibus modis nitentibus*]. By its means we gain a deep understanding of the holy words [*ut melius capiamus verba sancta*]; it causes them to strike root in us and penetrate us with their life-giving power. For every

¹⁰³ *Faber Mem.* 188; *Faber* 588; *Faber Mem.* 229; *Faber* 607.

¹⁰⁴ *Faber Mem.* 188; trans. Murphy, 178–79.

¹⁰⁵ *Faber Mem.* 188; trans. Murphy, 179; *Faber* 588.

¹⁰⁶ *Faber Mem.* 188; trans. Murphy, 179; *Faber* 588.

¹⁰⁷ *Faber Mem.* 135; trans. Murphy, 147.

¹⁰⁸ *Faber Mem.* 135; trans. Murphy, 147; *Faber* 561.

word that comes from the mouth of God is God's true seed; it produces and engenders within us in some way God himself [*Deum ipsum quodammodo*], according to its power.¹⁰⁹

Faber thus understands "interiorization" as "a kind of attraction towards the interior which is brought about by God" if the one praying but "ask[s]" and "strive[s]."¹¹⁰ As he summarizes concisely in a related passage, Faber continually desires "to strive at all times"—and especially during the Office and at Mass—"for a closer interior attention to the words" he "was pronouncing and to penetrate more deeply into them [*ut, scilicet, circa sensus verborum quae a me dicebantur, semper niteretur . . . ad ulteriorem attentionem, ulteriorem sensum*]" for the sake of spiritual progress.¹¹¹

For Faber, an intimate relationship exists between the movement inward for which one strives and "a deeper understanding of the holy words."

Note that these passages suggest a further feature of interiorization: for Faber, an intimate relationship exists between the movement inward for which one strives and "a deeper understanding of the holy words."¹¹² While, as noted above, interiorization comes from one's own "deepest depths," one engages the process—one might say the experience—in tandem with proper recitation of, reflection upon, and understanding of the "*verba sancta*."¹¹³ Interiorization relates directly to attention to the holy words, in that proper attention to them constitutes

¹⁰⁹ *Faber Mem.* 135; trans. Murphy, 147–48; *Faber* 561.

¹¹⁰ *Faber Mem.* 135; trans. Murphy, 147.

¹¹¹ *Faber Mem.* 172; trans. Murphy, 169; *Faber* 580. The emphasis on human striving recalls the thought of Gabriel Biel, a Franciscan philosopher whose work deeply influenced all the early Jesuits at the University of Paris; see Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 22. In Biel's view, Christians dispose themselves for the reception of grace by doing what they have in their power to do—"facere quod in se est." See Heiko Augustinus Oberman, *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 129, 133. We thus see in Faber an emphasis on the psycho-spiritual striving to do his best—a striving within his own power that is always met by the initiative of God, the one who sows all graces. See also Murphy, notes to *Memoriale*, in *The Spiritual Writings of Pierre Favre*, 147n274.

¹¹² *Faber Mem.* 135; trans. Murphy, 147.

¹¹³ *Faber Mem.* 188; trans. Murphy, 179; *Faber Mem.* 135; trans. Murphy, 147; *Faber* 561.

means, gift, and goal—an aid for moving inward. Attention to the holy words, Faber tells us quite simply, represents the antithesis of distraction:

On the day of St. Catherine of Alexandria [November 25, 1542], I had a spiritual light on how to improve my saying of the divine office: that it would help me greatly, as long as I gave close attention to the divine words [*attentio bona ad verba divina*], to have confidence that the Lord would take upon himself the care of my duties and labors. For that reason you should not allow yourself to be distracted by any other matters however pious, lest you prevent God from giving careful attention to them himself.¹¹⁴

From this perspective, one thing is necessary. Faber must attend to the “*verba divina*,” while God attends to all “other matters,” including Faber’s apostolic “duties and labors.”¹¹⁵

To what, then, do the phrases “*bona verba*,” “*verba divina*,” “*verb[a] Dei*,” “*verba sacra*” refer—these “holy words” of which Faber speaks so lovingly and to which he so intensely desires to attend?¹¹⁶ Given that these terms arise so often in an Office context, Faber surely includes in this category the words of the psalms.¹¹⁷ Indeed, the *Memoriale* references directly and indirectly various psalms that Faber finds meaningful—119 (118); 148–50 (for Lauds); 20 (19); 18 (17); 21 (20); 6; and 73 (72)—while

¹¹⁴ *Faber Mem.* 180; trans. Murphy, 174; *Faber* 583–84.

¹¹⁵ *Faber Mem.* 180; trans. Murphy, 174; *Faber* 583.

¹¹⁶ *Faber Mem.* 116; *Faber* 550; *Faber Mem.* 180; *Faber* 583; *Faber Mem.* 37; *Faber* 509; *Faber Mem.* 109; *Faber* 547.

¹¹⁷ Faber might have used lines of psalms, perhaps from the Office, as ejaculatory prayers. To support this theory, note that Ignatius writes that Jesuits “should employ the holy practice of making short prayers or elevations of the mind to God, mingling these prayers with their actions at home and abroad, and in all manners of occupations, now uttering some chosen words according to the pleasure of each one, now speaking only with desires and pious aspirations”; quoted in Weiss, “Jesuits and the Liturgy of the Hours,” 163; *Monumenta Ignatiana Series 3. Constitutiones Societatis Jesu*, vol. 4 (Rome: *Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu*, 1934), 222. Note too that both Denis and Herp promoted ejaculatory prayers; see Joseph de Guibert, *The Theology of the Spiritual Life*, trans. Paul Barrett (New York, NY: Sheed and Ward, 1953), 247.

also expressing insights connected to the *Benedicite*.¹¹⁸ In his own spiritual journal, Jerónimo Nadal (1507–1580) encourages similar attention to the psalms of the Office: “In reading the canonical hours, especially the psalms, put on the person of Christ, that is, Christ himself, so that you may ask [or, petition] in him, suffer [in him], be powerful [in him], as if he himself were speaking in you, and also you in him in the Holy Spirit.”¹¹⁹ Nadal’s theologically rich exhortation to “put on . . . Christ” in reciting the Office, clearly drawn from Paul (e.g., Romans 13:14), illuminates Faber’s experiences by inextricably connecting the words of the Office and of the psalms to the words of Christ.

Murphy explains, however, that the holy words include more than the psalms and texts of the Office, defining them as “those [words] found in the Bible and the liturgy” and “the words of the liturgy, the Fathers, and conciliar canons.”¹²⁰ We might therefore understand Faber’s holy words more generally as the words of Scripture together with the purest stream of Catholic tradition—its liturgical as well as its patristic and conciliar sources.¹²¹ Faber thus envisions the “*verba sacra*” and all synonymous variants in a capacious sense while pointing to Scripture and liturgical texts as especially worthy of rumination and reflection.¹²² In this way, the words of the church’s liturgy, and perhaps especially the words of the Mass, including collects, Marian verses added to the

¹¹⁸ *Faber Mem.* 74, 86, 100, 103, 138, 407, 438; see Murphy, notes to *Memoriale*, in *Spiritual Writings*, 112n146, 117n163, 126n198, 127n204, 149n280, 296n21, 311n13; and the Canticle of the Three Young Men in Daniel 3, cited in *Faber Mem.* 86; see also Murphy, notes to *Memoriale*, in *Spiritual Writings*, 117n163. The *Benedicite* still appears among the texts for Sunday Morning Prayer in the current Roman Rite.

¹¹⁹ No. 244 in Jerónimo Nadal, *Orationis Observationes*, ed. Michael Nicolau (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Jesu, 1964), 103; my translations.

¹²⁰ Murphy, notes to *Memoriale*, in *Spiritual Writings*, 131n222 and 196n26.

¹²¹ See, for example, a slightly polemical anti-Protestant reflection in which Faber finds a continuity between “the arguments drawn from Scripture” and “the sacred words which support them”; “*quorum omnium singulorum rationes, et Scripturas aut verba sacra quibus innitantur*”; *Faber Mem.* 219; trans. Murphy, 196; *Faber* 601.

¹²² *Faber Mem.* 109, 131; *Faber* 547.

Gloria, the words of the Creed, offertory antiphons, and the Reproaches of Good Friday, touch him affectively.¹²³

Among the holy words, however, the words of Christ himself as Faber prayed and experienced them seem to take pride of place. For example, he cites the words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, encourages the recitation of Luke 11:13 between Office psalms “to improve . . . recitation of the canonical hours,” and prioritizes reflection on the last words of Christ.¹²⁴ In short, he understands the “duty” of the “court servant . . . to pay close attention to every word of his master.”¹²⁵ From this perspective, the words of Christ abide synaesthetically in the one praying, for Faber desires that “every word that comes from” Christ’s “mouth,” “the words of Jesus Christ my Lord,” might abide “in me and that I should perceive them with all my senses.”¹²⁶ Note however that these words of Christ include not only those recorded in the Scriptures and contained in the liturgy, but also the words that Faber imagines in prayer: “I seemed then to hear within me certain words of Christ, the Virgin, and some saints dear to me; but I perceived them as possible rather than actual, as

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¹²³ See *Faber Mem.* 186, 90, 272, 94, 424; see also Murphy, notes to *Memoriale*, in *Spiritual Writings*, 121n180, 123n186, 304n30.

¹²⁴ See, for instance, *Faber Mem.* 240, which cites Matthew 19:29; Murphy, notes to *Memoriale*, in *Spiritual Writings*, 208n18, 81n56; *Faber Mem.* 29; trans. Murphy, 81. In *Memoriale* 95, reflection on Christ’s Passion and his last words leads to Faber “finding devotion in my Office” (*Faber Mem.* 95, trans. Murphy, 123–24), and in *Memoriale* 229, he writes that, “while I was turning over these words in my mind and considering Christ hanging on the cross, I experienced a quieting of my heart that preceded from a certain interior attraction [*sentiebam, inquam, cor meum sensibili quodam attractu tranquillari*] which led it into a state of more profound repose and even to raise itself to become attentive to the words of my office [*elevari ad attentionem verborum officii mei*]” (*Faber Mem.* 229, trans. Murphy, 203, *Faber* 607).

¹²⁵ *Faber Mem.* 225; trans. Murphy, 199, which recalls psalm 123: “Yes, like the eyes of a servant on the hands of his master . . . so our eyes are on the Lord our God.” All Bible quotations come from the New American Bible (Revised Edition).

¹²⁶ *Faber Mem.* 187; trans. Murphy, 178.

if I heard someone saying, 'If you could only hear the words of such a saint, your friend!' and so on."¹²⁷

These words—whether officially recorded, prayerfully encountered, or creatively imagined—all provide precious fodder for Faber's spiritual reflection and growth. Faber feels strongly that the "unheard" words of Christ should not be "wasted"—that is, that "whatever is of Christ" be "applied" for some "salvific" purpose.¹²⁸ Thus, he eagerly wants to cherish and "express in act or in word . . . all that the Lord has done and all the words he has spoken in this world."¹²⁹ In short, he hopes to waste no word, for each holds potential pastoral, ministerial, and missionary benefit.

This point leads us to consider more deeply what prayerful engagement with the holy words—particularly the holy words of the Office—brings about. To do so, we return briefly to Faber's first Office instructions, in which he notes that one's desire to pray well should "proceed from love and affection for the words of God" rather than, for example, from fear or anxiety over praying poorly.¹³⁰ Such prayer will involve an "attention not merely mental but even heartfelt [*non solum attentionem mentis, sed etiam attentionem affectus*]"—on account of God himself and his words and the works of his that are dealt with in the office."¹³¹ Faber thus takes love of God and of God's words as the starting point of prayer and sees the prayerful encounter as eliciting and deepening love. In other words, love constitutes both means and goal. Faber extensively employs affective language to describe prayer with the holy words. While reading, engaging, and praying with these words doubt-

¹²⁷ *Faber Mem.* 231; trans. Murphy, 204–5. Here, Faber puts into practice Ignatius's counsel from the beginning of the *SpEx* to speak to Christ, Mary, or the Father "in the way one friend speaks to another, or a servant to one in authority—now begging a favor, now accusing oneself of some misdeed, now telling one's concerns and asking counsel about them" (*SpEx* 54; ed. Ganss, 42–43); see too the triple colloquy (*SpEx* 147).

¹²⁸ *Faber Mem.* 342–43; trans. Murphy, 261–62.

¹²⁹ *Faber Mem.* 119; trans. Murphy, 137.

¹³⁰ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 88.

¹³¹ *Faber Mem.* 37; trans. Murphy, 88; *Faber* 510.

less involves one's intellectual faculties, such prayer principally touches and moves the affect—ultimately the heart, one's "deepest depths."¹³²

Certeau articulates this dynamic well, explaining that "prayer . . . becomes the perception of the spiritual sense of Scripture and of liturgical words, that is to say of the interior reality where the heart discovers its own truth . . . It is this that Faber calls the *intelligentia verborum*."¹³³ He continues:

The *intelligentia verborum* . . . is "interiorization": it no longer skims reality [*le réel*], but discovers there the truth through the words that express it. Here, the deepening of meaning (*spiritus*) operates through the repetition of the word (*littera*). . . . In this regard, the texts that come up incessantly in Faber's prayer are revealers [*révélateurs*] of the *spirit* in him. . . . These words are a seed that the living Spirit causes to grow and by which it [the Spirit] "begets" the soul. . . . More and more, the meditated word thus becomes presence to the one who comes.¹³⁴

According to Certeau, then, the holy words *reveal* the inner affective movements—the "spirit" or "spirits"—through which God speaks.¹³⁵ "Priority" thus goes, in the judgment of Brian O'Leary (HIB), "to the affective element over the intellectual element," for "the spirits make their presence felt through affective movements."¹³⁶ While O'Leary perhaps overstates the distinction, it certainly seems that attention to affectivity stands as "one of the corner-stones" of Faber's perspective.¹³⁷

¹³² *Faber Mem.* 188; trans. Murphy, 179.

¹³³ Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 92–93.

¹³⁴ Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 93n1. Thanks to Timothy W. O'Brien (UEA) for help with this quotation.

¹³⁵ Regarding Faber's use of the term *spiritus*, see Brian O'Leary, *Pierre Favre and Discernment: The Discernment of Spirits in the Memoriale of Blessed Pierre Favre* (Oxford: Way Books, 2006), 76–81. "What is of perennial value in the writings of Faber is his description of the *effects of spirits* on man, rather than his presuppositions about the ontological status of these spirits themselves" (79).

¹³⁶ O'Leary, *Pierre Favre and Discernment*, 112.

¹³⁷ O'Leary, *Pierre Favre and Discernment*, 112; cf. Iparragirre, who notes the importance of the intellectual aspect, defining *intractio* or *intractus* as "a reflexive attraction of the entire *intellectual* part [of the person] toward the deepest depth of oneself to

Note here that Faber himself repeatedly stresses this distinction, each time emphasizing the affective dimension of the spirits' movements. For example, after a day of accompanying Canisius on the Spiritual Exercises, he notes the importance

The holy words, like the Eucharist, thus provide an intimate encounter with Christ that leads, through interiorization, into one's cor, where Christ enters the "inmost center of our being."

of directing "our attention . . . to the spirit itself" in prayer rather than "to thoughts and interior locutions," for the former seem more trustworthy than the latter for passing "judgment" on a person's spiritual life.¹³⁸ Prayer often brings about a new "awareness

[*sensus*]" rather than an intellectual understanding, in that novelty appears in the affective appreciation of the same words or ideas.¹³⁹ Similarly, in short instructions on the task of "mental or vocal prayer," Faber distinguishes between "the meaning of the words used in prayer [*significatio verborum quae sumuntur ad orandum*]" and "the spirit in which all is felt in the heart [*spiritus in quo omnia sentiantur ex affectu*]."¹⁴⁰ And as he notes elsewhere, "God's touch [*tact(us) . . . divinis*]" allows words to penetrate "to the depths of our souls," leading to the "intentions of the heart [*intentionum cordis*]."¹⁴¹

Furthermore, insofar as the holy words as *révélateurs* reveal the Creator "working in" the creature through the conversation between God and the soul, they serve as signs or small sacraments that point to or reveal one's interiority—that is, God's action and presence in one's heart, at one's core (*cor*).¹⁴² The words thus function as symbols that facilitate the whole process of interiorization and lead those praying into

absorb it in God," a concept he notes comes from the Rhineland and Flemish mystics, particularly Herp (Iparraguirre, "*Influjos*," 448–49; my italics).

¹³⁸ *Faber Mem.* 300; trans. Murphy, 240; see Murphy, notes to *Memoriale*, in *Spiritual Writings*, 240n156.

¹³⁹ *Faber Mem.* 257; trans. Murphy, 217; *Faber* 620.

¹⁴⁰ *Faber Mem.* 320; trans. Murphy, 252; *Faber* 648.

¹⁴¹ *Faber Mem.* 253; trans. Murphy, 214; *Faber* 617–18.

¹⁴² On the Creator "working in" the creature, see *SpEx* 16; ed. Ganss, 26.

their affect (*affectus*) and heart.¹⁴³ Indeed, a careful reading of the *Memoriale* suggests a clear parallel in Faber's prayer between the role or function of the holy words and that of the Blessed Sacrament, the sacred species on the altar.¹⁴⁴ In an analogous sense, what O'Leary says of Faber's view of the Eucharist could equally apply to his account of the holy words: their recitation, like the reception of Holy Communion, "is our pledge that Christ has entered our *cor*, bringing with him the power (the grace) to draw us after him. Paradoxically, then, it is easier for him to enter this inmost center of our being than it is for ourselves; we can only do so by following him, or rather, by allowing ourselves to be drawn by his attraction."¹⁴⁵

The holy words, like the Eucharist, thus provide an intimate encounter with Christ that leads, through interiorization, into one's *cor*, where Christ enters the "inmost center of our being."¹⁴⁶ In this way, the holy words establish a real communion between Christ and creature. The desires that Faber names at Mass—to be, for example, "enclosed" with Christ within himself for the sake of his own healing and "restoration," and for his heart to "yield" to Christ—could similarly describe his ultimate desire in praying the Office: to encounter the person of Christ at and in and through his heart.¹⁴⁷ In Faber's view, as Certeau puts it, "the sacramental life"—and we might add the liturgical life of the church as a whole—provides the foundation for "the spiritual life."¹⁴⁸ Finally, then, "Little by little . . . our whole sensible and rational life must be guided back to our hearts [*ad cor nostrum*] so that, gathered together there and

¹⁴³ On the roles that *verbum* and *spiritus* play in the process of discernment that Faber envisions and practices, see O'Leary, *Pierre Favre and Discernment*, 111–23. A complete understanding of Faber's discernment praxis should take into account the many original, extemporaneous prayers that Faber expresses in his own words throughout the *Memoriale* and that reflect and articulate his affective experience and understanding.

¹⁴⁴ With all due qualification, for as Faber himself notes the substantial presence of Christ on the altar has incomparable value; see *Faber Mem.* 352.

¹⁴⁵ O'Leary, *Pierre Favre and Discernment*, 70.

¹⁴⁶ O'Leary, *Pierre Favre and Discernment*, 70.

¹⁴⁷ *Faber Mem.* 124; trans. Murphy, 140; *Faber Mem.* 68; trans. Murphy, 108.

¹⁴⁸ Certeau, notes to *Mémorial*, 195n1.

united at last, we may pass on thence to that indivisible and spiritual life which is hidden with Christ in God.”¹⁴⁹

4. Concerns: Privatization, Scrupulosity, and the Significance of Words

Following our discussion of the helpful features of Faber’s Office prayer, I would like to highlight two elements that we Jesuits and Ignatian-inspired persons might not want to appropriate or recommend. First, we return to Taft’s worry that early Jesuit “liturgical” prayer represented “the late medieval degeneration of the Liturgy of the Hours as *liturgy*.”¹⁵⁰ Without a doubt, the common daily prayer of the entire People of God transformed over time into the private prayer of clerics, such that the corporate and publicly ecclesial gave way to the individual and privately devotional. Perhaps the best example in the *Memoriale* of this infelicitous development occurs when Faber recalls “reciting matins without attending to the office being said in the church,” a rather absurd situation!¹⁵¹ Without denying the fruit of personal Breviary prayer—and Vatican II affirms that we must not do so—we readily admit with Taft the problematic aspects of a clericalized privatization of the Office.¹⁵² Thus, a sound liturgical theology and ecclesiology must affirm that “the divine office is the voice of the Church, that is *of the whole mystical body publicly praising God*,” which in its fullest sense requires a gathered assembly.¹⁵³ In our religious communities, schools, and parishes, then, we should promote truly communal common prayer.

Second, we might not wish to inculcate in those who seek our pastoral care the same sort of scrupulous anxiety with which Faber ap-

¹⁴⁹ *Faber Mem.* 355; trans. Murphy, 267; *Faber* 661.

¹⁵⁰ Taft, *Liturgy of the Hours*, 299.

¹⁵¹ *Faber Mem.* 88; trans. Murphy, 119.

¹⁵² On the matter of personal Office prayer, Vatican II states that “the divine office, because it is the public prayer of the Church, is a source of piety, and nourishment for personal prayer” (*SC*, §90).

¹⁵³ *SC*, §99; my italics.

proached the avoidance of distractions during Office prayer.¹⁵⁴ For example, on some pages of the *Memoriale*, we see evidence of the young pre-exercitant ravaged by “temptations and scruples.”¹⁵⁵ At the same time, however, many Jesuit clerics today, at least in North America, might find ourselves at the other end of the spectrum, less attentive to our praying the Office than the promise we made at our diaconal ordination might imply.¹⁵⁶ As our *Complementary Norms* exhort, “Our priests and deacons should *try to pray attentively* and at the appropriate time that wonderful song of praise which is truly the prayer of Christ to the Father, in union with his Body.”¹⁵⁷ Here, in our age of distraction, we can take Faber’s wisdom and experience as a resource and an inspiration.¹⁵⁸ We might, for example, do well to revisit Faber’s “four things” and engage in a sort of particular examen on our praying of the Liturgy of the Hours:

1. Where do I pray them?
2. To, for, and with whom do I pray them?
3. How attentively do I pray the given words and texts?
4. What posture and gestures do I adopt when I pray them?¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁴ See *Faber Mem.* 37.

¹⁵⁵ *Faber Mem.* 9; trans. Murphy, 65.

¹⁵⁶ During the rite of ordination, the ordaining bishop asks the candidate, “Do you resolve to guard and increase the spirit of prayer proper to your way of life and, in keeping with this spirit and the circumstances of your life, to celebrate faithfully the Liturgy of the Hours, with and for the People of God and indeed for the whole world?” See section 200 of *Ordination of a Bishop, of Priests, and of Deacons*, trans. ICEL (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2021), 126.

¹⁵⁷ *Complementary Norms* 228; *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms: A Complete English Translation of the Official Latin Texts*, ed. John W. Padberg, SJ (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 1996), 261; my italics.

¹⁵⁸ Readers of this essay have pointed out the timely and timeless nature of Faber’s emphasis on distraction and attention. For attempts to date such concerns to the nineteenth century, see *Scenes of Attention: Essays on Mind, Time, and the Senses*, ed. D. Graham Burnett and Justin E. H. Smith (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2023).

¹⁵⁹ See *Faber Mem.* 37.

In light of these concerns and the focus of this essay, we might reflect further on point (3), which engages Faber's desired attentiveness to the

Here, in our age of distraction, we can take Faber's wisdom and experience as a resource and an inspiration.

holy words. As we have seen, Faber treats words, especially the words of the Divine Office, with the utmost seriousness. Despite having lived in what scholars today call the early modern period, he had a supremely premodern appreciation for the

power of words, believing wholeheartedly in their power both to signify and to accomplish, to do something—namely, to lead to the heart. On the other hand, we modern/postmodern folk can find it challenging to cultivate such an appreciation. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach articulates the situation eloquently:

To sum up our linguistic situation today, words are slowly but surely losing their symbolic dimension, whereas in fact they ought to reveal a meaning by hiding it, or protect a meaning while revealing it. In view of this refusal of the symbolic dimension of language, hasn't the way to God through words been interrupted?¹⁶⁰

As an antidote, Kolvenbach encourages us, with Ignatius in describing the second method of prayer in the *Spiritual Exercises*, to think differently about language:

By discovering God's heart in God's words our outlook on the world, on ourselves and on our life will be marked by an increase in faith and hope. . . . What matters is a growing familiarity with God's words. . . . When God bends down towards humans speech is his favorite means. And so it is fitting that when we try to meet God we seek him in the words of his Word.¹⁶¹

Kolvenbach's implicit exhortation here "to meet God . . . in the words of his Word" summarizes well Faber's entire perspective on the Office.

¹⁶⁰ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, SJ, "The Word: A Way to God According to Master Ignatius," in *The Road from La Storta*, ed. Carl F. Starkloff, SJ (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 2000), 156.

¹⁶¹ Kolvenbach, "The Word," 167.

Regrettably, however, we today still experience the long hangover of modernity that has resulted in the disenchantment of words.¹⁶² Post-modern deconstructions of language, some helpful and others not, have further influenced us.¹⁶³ Given these considerations, we might well benefit from the linguistic optimism of Faber and Ignatius that “the ‘signifier’” is “immediately the ‘signified’” as well as from their unshakable conviction that words and speech are “capable of being inhabited by the presence of God.”¹⁶⁴ To put this succinctly, words are remarkably—and literally—significant.

Recall, however, that Faber commends not words generally but the *holy* words—namely, the words of the Bible and of the liturgy. On this note, we might once again point out the pride of place that Faber gives to the words of the psalms, the “main course” of the Divine Office and thus a significant portion of his daily “spiritual diet.” Furthermore, in his account of the holy words, Faber finds a continuity between the psalms and the language of the Gospels, given that all holy words—biblical, liturgical, traditional, and even those discerned in one’s own prayer—come from the Lord. In contrast, we Jesuits and Ignatian-inspired persons today, having rediscovered Ignatian contemplation under the triumphal influence of historical biblical criticism, can at times

¹⁶² On this point, sacramental theologian Bernard Cooke writes that “modern times have dispelled some of the ancient belief in the magical power of certain words or formulae” (Bernard Cooke, *Power and the Spirit of God* [New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004], 125). For a more poetic perspective, consider the character Louis Ironson, who summarizes the modern American predicament as follows: Having “killed . . . off” the indigenous “spirits. . . There are no gods here, no ghosts and spirits in America, there are no angels in America . . . there’s only the political, and the decoys and the ploys to maneuver around the inescapable battle of politics” (Tony Kushner, *Angels in America, Part One: Millennium Approaches* [New York, NY: Theatre Communications Group, 1993], 92).

¹⁶³ On deconstruction, Daniel Boyarin notes that, “among other contributions, Derrida has demonstrated that the conception of univocity and transparency of meaning is none other than a philosophical possibility—indeed, a quite problematic possibility, not a logical necessity” (Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* [Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990], x).

¹⁶⁴ Kolvenbach, “The Word,” 159, 166. He writes that “if, as children of our scientific century, we ask ourselves what happened when Master Ignatius pronounced words, we have to say that for him, in terms of linguistic theory, the ‘signifier’ was immediately the ‘signified.’ That is, the very name became the reality” (159).

pay more attention to the words of the Gospels than to those of the psalms and the Old Testament in general. Instead, Faber consistently resists the false dichotomy that we often seem to presume between, on the one hand, the words of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels and, on the other, the holy words recorded in the rest of Scripture. Thus, to pray the Liturgy of the Hours with Peter Faber means, in part, to rediscover the psalms and make them a greater part of our lives.

5. Dialogue with God: Tuning Mind to Voice

In closing, I would like to address a tension that emerges from Faber's account. As we have seen, Faber thinks that our individual, prayerful attentiveness to the holy words has the potential for tremendous effect. He thus has a remarkably high regard for the importance of each person's prayer. For example, rather than imagining himself in prayer joining the general angelic praise of God, Faber desires that the angels and saints in heaven take up and make use of *his* recitation of the Office's holy words!¹⁶⁵ In this way, the individual's praying of the holy words takes on a cosmic importance, wherein even the angels and saints "can avail" themselves of "the opportunity afforded" by human articulation.¹⁶⁶ At the same time, the power of the holy words stems from the fact that they do not originate with us, for we recite and appropriate, but we do not possess them. Rather, the holy words belong to the patrimony of the church, deriving their power from their ecclesial nature. In this sense, as Nadal puts it, the Office invites us to "put on the person of the Church."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ On this point, Faber writes that, "while saying my office, I had a great desire that the angels might praise the Lord each time these words are recited . . . I desired also that the saints might do the same" (*Faber Mem.* 116; trans. Murphy, 135); likewise, "As I was saying my office before daybreak, I felt great devotion at the thought that the angels and saints can avail of the opportunity afforded by those words of mine in order to praise God" (*Faber Mem.* 118; trans. Murphy 136). These references echo the Confiteor ("all the angels and saints"), which the priest recited at the start of Mass as well as during Compline.

¹⁶⁶ *Faber Mem.* 118; trans. Murphy 136.

¹⁶⁷ No. 244 in Nadal, *Orationis Observationes*, 103.

Michel de Certeau articulates this point well in his description of the dialogical language between God and Faber's soul that structures the *Memoriale*. He writes that Faber's use of the holy words, "psalm verses, liturgical invocations, etc.," represents an inhabiting or embodiment of "the language that the people of the Son address to the Father," of the ecclesial spouse speaking to and with her heavenly Spouse.¹⁶⁸ As such, Faber's "personal conversation participates in the unique and 'liturgical' conversation" of the church, where "the voice of the heart [*la voix du cœur*] takes up this word that understands it; it only addresses itself to God in the language by which the Church speaks to its Eternal interlocutor."¹⁶⁹ In this sense, *la voix du cœur* employs the holy words, for the liturgical language of the church expresses the heart's affective (self-)knowledge better than one's own words ever could.¹⁷⁰

Finally, as *Sacrosanctum Concilium* would express four hundred years after Faber, echoing the great monastic rules of Augustine and Benedict, the ones praying the Liturgy of the Hours "attune their minds to their voices when praying it."¹⁷¹ Praying the Liturgy of the Hours thus does not involve primarily tuning one's voice to one's own mind, as we moderns/postmoderns might imagine the linguistic process to unfold. In other words, it does not function principally as a conduit for articulating one's own "interior locutions" or determining what one really wants to say — as if attempting to articulate something startlingly authentic or original.¹⁷² Rather, by praying and so voicing the holy words

¹⁶⁸ Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 80–81.

¹⁶⁹ Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 81.

¹⁷⁰ "The language of the Church is therefore the authentic language of communication with God" (Certeau, introduction to *Mémorial*, 81n1).

¹⁷¹ SC, §90; see also 11. The Council Fathers take this formulation from the West's most influential monastic rules. For example, the second chapter of the Rule of St. Augustine exhorts its adherents as follows: "When you pray to God in psalms and hymns, ponder in your hearts what your lips are saying" (Augustine, *The Rule of Augustine*, trans. T. J. van Bavel, in Frank Kazenbroot, *It Is Like A Mirror: Reflections on the Rule of St. Augustine*, trans. Patrick Corthouts (De Pere, WI: Alt Publishing, 2008), 179. Chapter nineteen of the Rule of St. Benedict expresses the same sentiment: "Let us consider, then, how we ought to behave in the presence of God and his angels, and let us stand to sing the psalms in such a way that our minds are in harmony with our voices (*The Rule of St. Benedict in English*, ed. Fry, 47).

¹⁷² *Faber Mem.* 300; trans Murphy, 240.

of the Office, we attune our minds and hearts to the words themselves. In this way, with prayer and practice, we produce fruit greater than anything we could have articulated on our own, since God alone articulates minds and hearts in and through the holy words. The goal, in Ignatian terms, thus consists simply in relying on God's words rather than on our own resources.¹⁷³ In so doing, we find that the initiative rests not with us but with God to whom we make ourselves present.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷³ See *Constitutions 67; The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and their Complementary Norms*, ed. Padberg, 37–38. As during the novitiate pilgrimage, one places one's "reliance entirely in" one's "Creator and Lord" out of "genuine faith" and with "intense love" when one allows the holy words to articulate one's inner life.

¹⁷⁴ Special thanks to Gill K. Goulding, CJ, who guided me in writing an earlier draft of this essay as a chapter in my STL thesis at Regis College, Toronto; and again to Jim Carr, who first introduced me to Peter Faber. Thanks also to the members of the International Jungmann Society for Jesuits and Liturgy, who inspired me, at our 2024 Congress in Cebu, to revisit and revise the present text; to the members of the Modern History of Worship Seminar at the North American Academy of Liturgy, who provided feedback; and Jonathan P. Pennacchia (UEA), who offered comments. I dedicate this essay to the memory of Graham R. Golden, O. Praem., who originally inspired it.