

STUDIES

IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS

ORAT PRO ECCL. ET SOC.: REFLECTIONS
ON AN ESSENTIAL MISSION

E. EDWARD KINERK, SJ
JOSEPH A. TETLOW, SJ

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY STEPHEN R. SCHLOESSER, SJ

56/2 SUMMER 2024

THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS is a publication of the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States.

The Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality is composed of Jesuits appointed from their provinces. The seminar identifies and studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially US and Canadian Jesuits, and gathers current scholarly studies pertaining to the history and ministries of Jesuits throughout the world. It then disseminates the results through this journal.

The opinions expressed in Studies are those of the individual authors. The subjects treated in STUDIES may be of interest also to Jesuits of other regions and to other religious, clergy, and laity. All who find this journal helpful are welcome to access previous issues at: ejournals@bc.edu/jesuits.

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ISSN 1084-0813

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a word from the editor. . .

This summer, I step down as general editor of *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS*. I am grateful to the Society for trusting me with this mission for the last nine years, grateful to past and present members of the Seminar for so many edifying conversations inspired by the submissions of our companions, and grateful to Fr. William O'Brien (UMI), who generously has volunteered his services as copy editor since 2016. I could not have done this work without him. The new general editor is Fr. Michael Knox (CAN), a former member of the Seminar, who has an exciting new vision for the future of *STUDIES*. The journal is in good hands.

I am proud that the final issue on my watch is by Frs. Joseph A. Tetlow (UCS) and E. Edward Kinerk (UCS). When the previous general editor, Fr. Richard Blake (UEA), first passed me the proverbial keys to the car, he said, "We don't have anything to print for the next issue." In a panic, I called Fr. Tetlow, who I knew to be a good writer, and asked him if he could produce something within thirty days. God bless him, he did. The result was "The Preached Weekend Retreat: A Relic or a Future?" (2016).

As for Fr. Kinerk, he was serving as provincial of the Missouri Province in 1992 when I made my first vow profession. After the ceremony, he approached my parents and said respectfully, "Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Geger, for giving us your son," to which my father replied, with a grin, "No: thank *you*, Father, for taking him." Judging from the number of downloads from readers around the world, I daresay that Fr. Kinerk has written some of the most popular issues of *STUDIES* in its long history, including "Eliciting Great Desires" (1984), "When Jesuits Pray" (1985), and "Personal Encounters with Jesus Christ" (2016).

And so, with Joe and Ed on the cover once again, I feel that my time as editor has come full circle. This makes me all the more grateful to Fr. Stephen Schloesser (UMI) for his extraordinary introduction to the

present issue. The research and thoughtfulness that he put into it speaks to his own respect for these two men. May the present issue then be a source of consolation and encouragement both for our brothers who have received the mission *orat pro Eccl. et Soc.* —“he prays for the Church and the Society” —and indeed for the rest of us who will be following them soon enough.

Barton T. Geger, SJ
General Editor

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E. Edward Kinerk (ucs) was born in Kansas City, Missouri and entered the Society of Jesus in 1966. After ordination (1972), he earned a doctorate in sacred theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He since has served as director of novices, provincial assistant for formation, provincial superior, university president, and director of a retreat house, all while contributing regularly to various journals on topics in religious life and Ignatian spirituality. He currently resides at St. Ignatius Hall, Florissant, Missouri.

Stephen R. Schloesser (umi) entered the Wisconsin Province in 1980. Following ordination (1992), he began a doctoral program in history and humanities at Stanford University specializing in twentieth-century French Catholic revivalism. After completing the degree (1999), Fr. Schloesser taught history at Boston College, Weston Jesuit School of Theology, and, since 2011, Loyola University Chicago. He has published widely in French Catholic cultural history and the history of the Society of Jesus.

Joseph A. Tetlow (ucs) was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, entered the Society of Jesus in 1947, and later earned degrees in philosophy and English (Loyola University Chicago) and theology (St. Mary's College, Kansas). After priestly ordination (1960), Fr. Tetlow completed a doctorate in American civilization at Brown University. He since has served as director of tertians and general secretary for Ignatian spirituality, in which field he has published widely. Fr. Tetlow currently currently resides at St. Ignatius Hall, Florissant, Missouri.

Introduction

Stephen R. Schloesser, SJ

In this issue of *STUDIES*, two Jesuits reflect on what it means to be missioned, after a long apostolic life, to “pray for the church and the Society.” They belong to different generations. Joseph A. Tetlow was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on October 28, 1930, one year after the Black Friday stock market crash and at the very beginning of the 1930s Great Depression. E. Edward Kinerk was born thirteen years later—in a radically changed world—in Kansas City, Missouri on August 30, 1943, two years after Pearl Harbor and in the midst of the US engagement in World War II.¹ They had very different life trajectories owing to different interests, skills, and circumstances. Ed spent many years in internal governance—novice director, formation director, and provincial—as well as a university presidency. By contrast, Joe counts his short stint as a theologate president a “failure”—although that experience, while closing one door, soon opened up broad new horizons for him as a teacher and writer.

Both men’s lives, however, share strong common currents. Curiously, they both wrote their doctoral dissertations on literary figures—a testimony to the importance of imagery, metaphors, symbols—*stories*—for each. And, they each then went on to invest deeply and immerse themselves in the study and practice of Jesuit spirituality over the decades, eventually spending many years and countless hours directing retreats. Even there, however, there are distinctions. From his earliest years in the Society, Ed was drawn to individual spiritual and retreat direction, shortly after that method was recovered in the 1950s. By contrast, although Joe too spent many years as a spiritual companion to clergy and others, he has long been a practitioner of and advocate for preached retreats, most recently passing this craft on to lay persons.

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, dates and other personnel data in this introduction and its notes are owed, with thanks, to Dr. David Miros, director of the Jesuit Archives and Research Center (JARC), St. Louis, Missouri.

As a result of years of accumulated experience, reflection, and wisdom, both men have much to say about a Jesuit's apostolic assignment to "pray for the church and the Society" following long careers. The following biographical sketches, embedded in the turbulent historical contexts of the last eighty years, trace the trajectories that have brought these two Jesuits to this moment.

1944–1952

June 6, 1944: D-Day • August 1944: Liberation of Paris • April 12, 1945: Death of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt • Succession by Vice-President Harry S. Truman • May 8: Victory in Europe Day • August 6 and 9: Hiroshima and Nagasaki • Pedro Arrupe, medical doctor and novice master, ministers to Hiroshima victims • August 15: Japan surrenders • September 2: World War II formally ends • September 15, 1946: General Congregation 29 elects Belgian Fr. Jean-Baptiste Janssens as superior general and wartime interregnum in place since the 1942 death of Superior General Włodimir Ledóchowski ends • Janssens's *Yad Vashem* title of "Righteous Among the Nations" sharply contrasts with his predecessor Ledóchowski and vicar general placeholder, Norbert de Boynes • July 2, 1948: Janssens, "On the Spiritual Exercises" • October 10, 1949: Janssens, "Instruction on the Social Apostolate."

On July 1, 1947, Joe Tetlow entered the novitiate at Grand Coteau, Louisiana. He recalls:

I entered as a boy of sixteen in 1947. I was with men who had captained bombers and one who had been a German prisoner for a long time. The novitiate was forty-seven bells a day and two showers a week even when we went to fields to work. It was an asceticism in the very old sense of the word. I took vows alone on 3 July 1949, in Latin, to my Uncle Malcolm P. Mullen, SJ.²

² Malcolm Patrick Mullen (1904–1970), the brother of Joe Tetlow's mother, Helen (née Mullen) Tetlow, entered the Society in 1922. Since 1938, he had been a professor of philosophy at Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama, including teaching in the scholasticate located there. Mullen's personnel record notes that he received his PhD in 1949 from the Gregorian University in Rome, "retroactive to 1929—Gonzaga University,"

I aced the Juniorate and more than once teachers had me read out what I had written (it was not a good idea).³

In 1951, after four years in Grand Coteau, comprising his novitiate and juniorate, Joe was sent to three years of earning a BA in Classics, a PhL in Philosophy, and an MA in English. Although the degrees were credentialed through Loyola University of Chicago, Joe spent those three years (1951–1954) far from the Second City, ensconced in West Baden College, West Baden, Indiana. He recalls:

I was sent alone up to the Chicago Province for Philosophy, during which I went through a period of darkness when I didn't think I believed in God. I like to think (and frigid scholasticism in Latin was not, for me, thinking). A streak of rebellion in me against the inequities in creation. I learned then that belief is not in the head but in head, heart, and hands—what you are doing. That made fidelity to Jesus feasible. I lost the Blessed Mother for a couple of decades but then she came to me (I was surprised to be saying the “beads,” i.e., the rosary).

1952–1963

August 28, 1952: Southern Jesuits meet at Grand Coteau, Louisiana to discuss interracial relations • March 5, 1953: Joseph Stalin dies • March 14: Nikita Khrushchev succeeds as first secretary of the communist party of the Soviet Union • May 17, 1954: *Brown v. Board of Education* • June 9: Joseph N. Welch to Senator Joseph P. McCarthy: “Have you no sense of decency, Sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?” • September 9: New Orleans Jesuit Provincial A. W. Crandell issues “an official declaration of policy” and “a thoroughly-tested statement of Catholic principles and practices regarding interracial relations.”⁴ • September 25, 1957: President Eisenhower

Spokane. Between 1949 and 1954, he delivered “talks and lectures on communism” at Kiwanis, Lions, and other such groups.

³ Unless otherwise attributed, this and the following quotations from Fr. Tetlow come from email correspondence between him and the author.

⁴ Letter of Very Reverend A. W. Crandell, SJ (September 30, 1954), distributed by “Christ’s Blueprint for the South: A Social Action Bulletin of the New Orleans Province

orders federal troops to Arkansas to escort the Little Rock Nine • October 4: USSR successfully launches Sputnik-1 • October 9, 1958: Pope Pius XII dies • October 28, 1958: Angelo Roncalli succeeds as Pope John XXIII • November 8, 1960: Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy elected as first Roman Catholic president of the United States.

Joe's return to the south in the late summer of 1954 followed *Brown v. Board* and was contemporaneous with the race relations policy directives of Provincial A. W. Crandell (1909–1973). Although Joe spent the next three years (1954–1957) assigned to teach English and Religion at Jesuit Dallas College Prep, the majority of his energy was spent in the theater: productions of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Macbeth*, William Wister Haines' *Command Decision* (1948), and Christopher Fry's *A Sleep of Prisoners* (1951). Finally, Gilbert and Sullivan's operetta *H.M.S. Pinafore*—for which Joe had to re-write much and eventually conduct the orchestra—“was the one that nearly killed” him.

In the fall of 1957, Joe returned to the Midwest for three years of theology studies at St. Mary's College, Kansas, accredited as the School of Divinity of Saint Louis University (SLU), that would be marked by the death of Pius XII and succession of John XXIII. In June 1960, as the country was in the full swing of a presidential election contest, Joe was ordained at Spring Hill College in Mobile, Alabama. That fall, shortly before the Kennedy election, he returned to Kansas for his fourth year STL.

In 1961, the first year of the Kennedy presidency, Joe's first post-ordination assignment returned him to St. Charles College in Grand Coteau as an instructor of Greek history, poetry, and New Testament Koine Greek in the old-time juniorate. In 1962–1963, Joe then made his tertianship in La Ñora, Murcia (Spain); contemporaneously, from October 11–December 8, 1962, the Second Vatican Council met its first session, and its opening coincided with the Cuban Missile Crisis.⁵

Institute of Social Order.” Thanks to R. Bentley Anderson, SJ for this reference; see also Anderson, “Black, White, and Catholic: Southern Jesuits Confront the Race Question, 1952,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 91, no. 3 (July 2005): 484–505.

⁵ Stephen Schloesser, SJ, “Against Forgetting: Memory, History, Vatican II,” in

Joe's tertian director was Manuel Olleros, a former provincial of Toledo.⁶ Joe recalls that Olleros had "thirty-seven tertians from perhaps five nations." Furthermore, Joe writes:

what he did was superb. We met each evening for perhaps ten minutes and he talked. Then he saw a bunch of us daily. I saw him every three or four days. . . . He showed me how to talk to a group, instructing and guiding, and leave them free to do their own journey with Almighty God. In a real sense, God was in charge of my retreat.

1963–1965

June 3, 1963: Death of Pope John XXIII • June 21: Giovanni Battista Montini succeeds as Pope Paul VI • June 26: John F. Kennedy gives his "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech • August 28: Martin Luther King, Jr gives his "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington • September 29–December 4, 1963: Vatican II, second session • November 22: US President John F. Kennedy assassinated in Dallas, Texas • Succession by Vice-President Lyndon Baines Johnson • July 2, 1964: Civil Rights Act soon followed by "long hot summer" of race riots in various northern cities⁷ • August 7: Gulf of Tonkin Resolution authorizes President Johnson to "take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack

Vatican II: Did Anything Happen?, ed. David G. Schultenover (New York: Continuum, 2007), 92–152 at 99–100.

⁶ Manuel Olleros Gregorio, SJ (1911–1993) was fifty-two years old at the time. After having studied civil engineering at La Escuela de Ingenieros de Caminos in Madrid, Olleros entered the Society in 1930, the year before the deposition of King Alfonso XIII and the establishment of the Second Spanish Republic. Since the 1931 republican constitution banned the Jesuits and other religious institutes, Olleros was exiled (*desterrado*) to Belgium immediately upon pronouncing his vows in 1932. He spent his formation years exiled abroad during most of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), returning to Spain only in August 1938 after the formation of Francisco Franco's first government. Olleros was ordained in July 1941—Franco's Spain was officially neutral during World War II—and he professed final vows in May 1948. Following his term as provincial of Toledo (1951–1956), Olleros served as tertian instructor (1956–1963). Thanks to Fr. Alfredo Verdoy, SJ, director of the Archivo de Alcalá, for this information.

⁷ "'Hot Summer': Race Riots in North," *The New York Times*, Sunday, July 26, 1964, Section E, p. 1.

against the forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression" by the communists • March 1965: President Johnson launches Operation Rolling Thunder and first American ground combat troops arrive in Vietnam • May 7, 1965: General Congregation 31 opens • May 22: Fr. Pedro Arrupe elected superior general • July 15: General Congregation 31 suspended • September 14–December 8: fourth and final session of Vatican Council II • End of 1965: 184,300 US troops stationed in Vietnam.

In the fall of 1963, Joe returned to Grand Coteau for two more years of classroom teaching in the juniorate (1963–1965), shortly after which President Kennedy was assassinated on November 22. Then, on August 15, 1964, Joe pronounced his final vows at Grand Coteau.

One year later, in the fall of 1965, Joe entered the pioneering American Civilization interdisciplinary program at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.⁸ He went to study with the poetry critic Hyatt Howe Waggoner (1913–1988) and the historian of American religion William G. McLoughlin (1922–1992). Converging circumstances led to Joe's dissertation on "The Intellectual and Spiritual Odyssey of Edgar Lee Masters (1868–1950)." Joe sprinkled the introduction with irony:

Fifty years ago, Edgar Lee Masters was known by most Americans and by many in both Europe and the Orient. Today he is recognized as the man who tore open "the hypocrisy of the small town" with a book of poems, and by a very few among the literati as the author of fifty-five books written during the first half of the century. His impact on American life and letters is rarely overestimated.

A close study of Masters will be useful as literary history if it does nothing but offer some explanation of the immense

⁸ Established in 1945 as a doctoral program in "American Civilization," this program was the oldest interdisciplinary academic unit at Brown and the third oldest American Studies program in the country. For more information, see <https://american-studies.brown.edu/>.

critical and popular success of the *Spoon River Anthology* (1915) and of the relative failure of almost every other book he wrote.⁹

Although Joe wrote the dissertation at the insistence of his director, the odd subject fortuitously fell within the expertise of his already amassed fluency in classical languages. On this point, Masters had been “so devoted to the Greek and Roman classics that his idea of getting away from the frenetic pace of his public life . . . was to spend a summer reading the Greek dramatists.”¹⁰ As such, Joe’s training and teaching gave him a rare skill set in the turbulent 1960s.

1966–1972

1966: 385,300 US troops stationed in Vietnam • September 8–November 17: General Congregation 31 second session following closure of Vatican II • January 21, 1967: Paul C. Reinert announces that SLU will become first major Catholic university to turn over its ownership and control to a lay board • October 21: March on the Pentagon • End of 1967: 485,600 troops stationed in Vietnam • 1968: “The Year that Rocked the World”¹¹ • Tet Offensive • President Johnson decides not to seek re-election • April 4: Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated • June 6: Senator Robert F. Kennedy assassinated • July 25: Paul VI promulgates *Humanae Vitae* • August 20–21: Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia ends “Prague Spring” • August 26–29: Democratic National Convention in Chicago • November 5: Richard M. Nixon elected US president • November 22: The Beatles “White Album” • End of 1968: 536,100 US troops stationed in Vietnam • June 28, 1969: Stonewall Uprising • May 4, 1970: Kent State Shootings • End of 1970: 334,600 US troops stationed in Vietnam • June 1971: *New York Times* publishes the

⁹ Joseph Allen Tetlow, “The Intellectual and Spiritual Odyssey of Edgar Lee Masters, 1868–1950,” PhD Diss., Brown University, 1969, 1. Curiously, Pope Francis quoted Masters in 2015 (Ryan Teague Beckwith, “Here’s the American Poet Pope Francis Just Quoted,” *Time*, September 23, 2015, <https://time.com/4046240/pope-francis-us-visit-edgar-lee-masters/>).

¹⁰ Tetlow, “Intellectual and Spiritual Odyssey,” 4.

¹¹ Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* (New York: Ballantine, 2004).

Pentagon Papers • End of 1971: 156,800 US troops stationed in Vietnam • November 7, 1972: President Richard M. Nixon re-elected in a landslide • End of 1972: 24,200 US troops stationed in Vietnam.

In September 1966, two years after earning his BS degree in math and physics at Rockhurst College, Ed Kinerk, age twenty-three, entered the Society at the old novitiate in Florissant, Missouri. His long retreat in the novitiate changed his interests from math and physics to spirituality. In 1968, Ed moved on to Fusz Memorial at SLU where he would spend the next two years. (In the fall of 1967, the divinity school had been transferred to St. Louis from St. Mary's, Kansas.) Having in college largely fulfilled the canonical philosophy requirements, Ed took a few philosophy courses on the side of earning his MA degree in moral and pastoral theology.

Not surprisingly, given the broad cultural ferment during the two years that Ed spent at Fusz (1968–1970), SLU was home to several young Jesuit priests who were deeply interested in recent trends in spirituality.¹² Ed's interest and involvement with individually directed retreats was especially sparked by those who had made their tertianship at St. Beuno's in Wales. By 1968—already a decade into the sixteen-year tenure of Irish Jesuit Paul Kennedy (1903–1988) as instructor of tertians (1958–1974)¹³—the St. Beuno's tertianship had become internationally

¹² These included (ages indicated are for 1968): Eugene F. Merz (b. 1931, age thirty-seven), spiritual director for scholastics at Fusz Memorial, 1965–1974; John C. Futrell (b. 1927, age forty-one), professor of ascetical theology at SLU, 1967–1969, and Lewis Memorial theologate (SLU), 1969–1976; Thomas P. Swift (b. 1925, age forty-three), final vows 1966, rector of Lewis Memorial theologate, 1968–1972; and David L. Fleming (b. 1934, age thirty-four), tertianship at St. Beuno's, professor in SLU School of Divinity, 1970–1976, and later rector of theologian community at Lewis Memorial, 1972–1976. Also worth noting: George E. Ganss (b. 1905) was the founding director of the Institute of Jesuit Sources (IJS), which began in 1961 at SLU. The IJS published Jesuit primary sources in English translation for the revitalization of the Society's "charism" as mandated by both Vatican II and GC 31. For example, in 1970, Ganss published his groundbreaking English-language translation of the *Constitutions*, and in that same year, the IJS published John Futrell's dissertation, *Making an Apostolic Community of Love: The Role of the Superior According to St. Ignatius of Loyola*.

¹³ Following Fr. Kennedy's death, Detroit Provincial Howard J. Gray (1930–2018)—who had made his tertianship under Kennedy (1962–1963)—sent a tribute to the British Province that included the following: "Paul's gift to us was not that he pro-

known for its pioneering work in offering the Spiritual Exercises as individually directed retreats.¹⁴ As such, Ed's encounters at Fusz would eventually have a significant long-term influence on his life.¹⁵

In 1972, after a one-year regency assignment teaching religion at SLU High School (1970–1971) and having earlier completed his theology MA, Ed was ordained at SLU's St. Francis Xavier College Church.

Meanwhile—in 1969, having completed his doctorate in American Studies, Joe Tetlow received his first assignment, which was to Loyola University in New Orleans as an assistant professor of history. Three months into the position, the president and provincial made him the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Joe recalls that, although he was made dean against his wishes, “That position, it turned out, was the one I was born for.” Issues included Vietnam, faculty rights, and a common contempt, shared by both faculty and students, for the core curriculum. Guided by the principle that “the solution of any crisis is in the crisis,” Joe dove in and unilaterally changed the “core curriculum” to the “common curriculum.” When students occupied his office, he sent out for beer and talked with the occupiers—who later left peaceably to demonstrate outside.

grammed a following but that he liberated a generation of North American Jesuits to believe that God can deal directly with a person.” See the Gray tribute in “Father Paul Kennedy” obituary, *Letters and Notices* 89 (1988): 197–210 at 205–7. Thanks to Mary Allen, Deputy Archivist, British Jesuit Archives, for supplying this obituary as well as that of Kennedy's predecessor, Fr. Francis Mangan, SJ (1890–1964), published in *Letters and Notices* 69, 145–57.

¹⁴ On St. Bueno's, see John W. O'Malley, SJ and Timothy W. O'Brien, SJ, “The Twentieth-Century Construction of Ignatian Spirituality: A Sketch,” *STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS (STUDIES)* 52, no. 3 (2020): “In this same spirit, Paul Kennedy (1903–1988) of the British province became tertian instructor in Saint Beuno's in Wales in 1958, where for the next sixteen years he introduced the directed retreat principally, but certainly not exclusively, to English-language Jesuits from around the world. His impact on Jesuits from Canada and the United States was particularly important” (27). Note the reference to Tom Shufflebotham, “Ignatian Directed Retreats: The Dark Ages?,” *The Way* 49, no. 3 (July 2010): 109–20, cited in O'Malley and O'Brien, 27n42.

¹⁵ Note also George E. Ganss, SJ, “The Authentic Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Some Facts of History and Terminology Basic to Their Functional Efficacy Today,” *STUDIES* 1, no. 2 (November 1969).

However, in 1973, “just as the National Education Association (NEA) had blessed us with a big grant and I was to read a paper in London,” another provincial “removed me, whether I wished it or not (I’d told him I thought it was unjust to the faculty).”

1973–1975

January 22, 1973: former US President Lyndon B. Johnson dies on the same day as the *Roe v. Wade* abortion rights decision • January 27: Paris Peace Accords signing officially ends direct US military involvement in Vietnam • October 6–25: Yom Kippur War ends with Israel’s surprising victory • Consequent OPEC retaliatory oil embargo provokes global financial shock • August 9, 1974: US President Nixon resigns over Watergate scandal • April 30, 1975: Fall of Saigon.

In 1973, Joe left his dean’s position at Loyola New Orleans and moved to Washington, DC to assist in setting up the US national Jesuit Conference. This initiative was a response to the mandate of General Congregation 31 to facilitate “interprovincial cooperation” by means of newly created regional “boards of provincials.”¹⁶ In this venture, Joe joined John W. Padberg, SJ (1926–2021), academic vice-president and acting executive vice-president of SLU; Vincent J. Duminuco, SJ (1934–2006), holder of a Stanford University doctorate in education and principal of Xavier High School in Manhattan; and two former provincials: James L. Connor, SJ (1929–2021, Maryland); and Robert A. Mitchell, SJ (1926–2006, New York), first president of the Conference. The team “produced the Jesuit Conference’s Project 1: its action-reflection project on Jesuits in education.”¹⁷

Also in 1973, Ed Kinerk moved to Rome to earn his doctor of sacred theology degree from the Pontifical Gregorian University.

¹⁶ GC 31, d. 48; d. 22, no. 385; *Jesuit Life and 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), 206, 146.

¹⁷ George E. Ganss, SJ, “Editor’s Foreword,” *STUDIES* 15, no. 5 (November 1983): iii.

His dissertation investigating the work of C. S. (Clive Staples) Lewis (1898–1963), the British fiction writer, literary scholar, and Anglican lay theologian, would initially seem to have been an unusual topic for a Roman theology degree.¹⁸ However, the dissertation’s title evokes Ed’s future scholarly path: “Death and Desire: A Study of the Experience of Joy and Practical Spiritual Wisdom in the Life and Works of C. S. Lewis.”¹⁹ In his introduction, Ed notes that, for Lewis, “death was both good and necessary because without it a man would not be likely to un-hitch himself from all the lesser goods of this world in order to choose that Greatest Good which is what he really wants.”²⁰ The “partial dyings of everyday life” are a necessary process of detachments that allow one to arrive at one’s deepest desire. Ed concluded:

Lewis’ advice in matters of “practical spiritual wisdom” generally turned on a partial dying; and these partial dyings were choices of “what I really want” through a rejection of what was suggested—during the desolation. Since particular desolations singled out lesser objects which had to be mortified if one’s ultimate desire was to be reached, desolations were described as negative insights into “what I really want.”

Completed in 1975, Ed’s dissertation exploring “what I really want” already suggested the line of thought that would be developed more fully a decade later in his article “Eliciting Great Desires” (1984).

1975–1980

December 2, 1974–March 7, 1975: General Congregation 32 • Decree 4: “Service of Faith” / “Promotion of Justice”
• November 2, 1976: James Earl “Jimmy” Carter narrowly defeats President Gerald Ford in US presidential election •

¹⁸ For information on Lewis, see: “C. S. Lewis Life and Works,” C. S. Lewis Institute, <https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/c-s-lewis-life-works/>.

¹⁹ Eugene Edward Kinerk, SJ, “Death and Desire: A Study of the Experience of Joy and Practical Spiritual Wisdom in the Life and Works of C. S. Lewis” (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana. Facultas theologiae, Institutum spiritualitatis, 1975). Thanks to Christopher Staab, SJ, for assistance in obtaining a copy of Ed’s dissertation from the Gregorian University.

²⁰ Kinerk, “Death and Desire,” 21.

1977: *STUDIES* symposium on “Changes in US Jesuit Membership, 1958–1975”²¹ • March 12: Rutilio Grande, SJ assassinated in El Salvador • January 7, 1978: Iranian Revolution begins • August 6: Pope Paul VI dies • September 28: Pope John Paul I dies after thirty-three day pontificate • October 16: Karol Józef Wojtyła, Cardinal Archbishop of Kraków, assumes papacy as John Paul II • 1979: Energy Crisis in wake of Iranian Revolution • May 4: Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister of the United Kingdom • July 15: Jimmy Carter “Crisis of Confidence (Malaise) Speech” televised • November 4: Iran Hostage Crisis begins • December 3: Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini becomes the first Supreme Leader of Iran • March 24, 1980: Archbishop Óscar Romero assassinated in El Salvador • September 17: Solidarity (Polish trade union) holds first Congress • November 4: Ronald Reagan defeats President Jimmy Carter for US presidency in a landslide victory • December 2: El Salvador martyrdoms of four women missionaries.

After spending two years (1973–1975) as the first executive secretary of the US Jesuit Conference, Joe moved to the opposite coast to serve the next two years (1975–1977) as president of the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley (JSTB), now the Jesuit School of Theology – Santa Clara University.²² Looking back, Joe evaluates those four years: “The Jesuit Conference was a wonderful experience of governance and the JSTB presidency was the worst failure I ever suffered (and one of the greatest graces). They ought never have invited me and I ought to have had better sense than to plot a career in higher ed administration. It only took two years, though.”

²¹ Joseph M. Becker, SJ et al., “Changes in U. S. Jesuit Membership, 1958–1975: A Symposium,” *STUDIES* 9, nos. 1 and 2 (January and March 1977).

²² When Joe arrived in 1975, JSTB was only six years old. Originally established in Los Gatos, California in 1934 as Alma College, the school, following directives of GC 31, moved to Berkeley to join the Graduate Theological Union and now exists as a college of Santa Clara University. Joe succeeded the canon lawyer Richard A. Hill, SJ (1928–2000), who had served as JSTB’s first president from 1969–1975. Hill served again, following Joe, from 1977–1982. For more information on the school’s history, see “History of JST,” Santa Clara University, <https://www.scu.edu/jst/about/history/>.

In the Fall of 1977, in the wake of the two-year presidency and as Joe turned forty-seven, his life's trajectory began taking a big turn. Moving to America House in New York, he returned to his youthful passion for literature and, more generally, words. He spent the next four years (1977–1981) as the associate editor of *America* magazine, where he wrote "The Word" weekly column and served as the literary editor during his final year.

"The Jesuit Conference was a wonderful experience of governance and the JSTB presidency was the worst failure I ever suffered (and one of the greatest graces)."

Meanwhile—in 1975, having completed his doctorate in Rome, Ed returned to province and became director and superior of the Sacred Heart Jesuit Retreat House in Sedalia, Colorado. There he was asked by Missouri Father Provincial (1973–1979) Leo Weber (ucs) to start offering individually directed retreats.²³ After four years at Sedalia, Ed moved to St. Beuno's in Wales and made his tertianship during the fall of 1979 through the spring of 1980. In the course of the program, he made his own individually directed retreat under the remarkable Michael Ivens, Paul Kennedy's successor, who had recently been assigned to St. Beuno's.²⁴ Ed professed his final vows in September 1980 and spent that academic year in private study at SLU.

During that year of study, Ed published, in the *Review for Religious*, a foundational article, entitled "Toward a Method for the Study of Spirituality," that would be widely referenced in the coming years.²⁵ There, he wrote:

²³ For more on Fr. Weber, see "Father Leo Weber, SJ: 80 Years a Jesuit," Jesuits Central and Southern, <https://www.jesuitscentralsouthern.org/jubilarian/leo-weber-sj/>.

²⁴ Ivens would eventually spend thirty years at St. Beuno's, nearly half of them while suffering a brain tumor. For more on this exceptional figure, see Michael Ivens, SJ, *Keeping in Touch: Posthumous Papers on Ignatian Topics, Including Tributes by Various Authors*, ed. Joseph A. Munitiz, SJ (Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, 2007); and Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises: Text and Commentary: A Handbook for Retreat Directors*, 2nd ed. (Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, [1998] 2016).

²⁵ Edward Kinerk, SJ, "Toward a Method for the Study of Spirituality," *Review for Religious* 40, no. 1 (1981): 3–19.

personal growth demands a certain degree of unity of purpose and technique, and a spirituality which seems to move in many different directions at the same time will only provoke confusion and frustration. . . . For example, a spirituality expressed entirely in a nineteenth-century idiom might exhibit good theology and good psychology, but unless it is able to translate itself coherently into the language and forms of the twentieth century *there will always be an unnecessary tension from trying to operate in a world view, a cosmology, which is no longer our own.* This was one of the reasons for Vatican II's call for adaptation in religious life.²⁶

This appreciation of the need for "adaptation in religious life" was about to be critically valuable for Ed's many years in internal governance.

1981–1991

January 20, 1981: Ronald Reagan is inaugurated US president
• June 5: the CDC reports the first cases of AIDS in the US • August 7: Pedro Arrupe suffers an incapacitating stroke • October 6: Pope John Paul II appoints Fr. Paolo Dezza, assisted by Fr. Giuseppe Pittau, as pontifical delegate for the Society • November 25: Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger named prefect of the CDF • June 9, 1982: Margaret Thatcher re-elected in landslide
• September 1–October 25, 1983: General Congregation 33 accepts resignation of Pedro Arrupe and elects Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach as successor • August 6: CDF publishes "Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'"
• November 6, 1984: Ronald Reagan re-elected president in landslide • March 11, 1985: Mikhail Gorbachev becomes general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union • April 26, 1986: Chernobyl • June 12, 1987: Reagan in Berlin: "Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" • November 8, 1988: Vice-President George H. W. Bush elected US president • June 1, 1989: Debut of CNN (Cable News Network) • June 3: Tiananmen Square • November 9: Fall of Berlin Wall • November 16: six Salvadoran Jesuits, their housekeeper, and her daughter are assassinated • April 25, 1990: Hubble Space Telescope

²⁶ Kinerk, "Toward a Method for the Study of Spirituality," 19. My italics.

launched • January 16, 1991: “Operation Desert Storm” in First Gulf War • February 5: Pedro Arrupe dies • December 26: Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union votes USSR out of existence and the Russian Federation begins.

In 1981, at age thirty-eight, Ed went on to seventeen years of service to the Society’s internal governance in the Missouri Province: as novice director (in Denver) from 1981 to 1985; formation director from 1985 to 1991; and provincial from 1991 to 1997. Put more boldly: Ed spent all of “The Eighties” and nearly all of “The Nineties” in internal service to and governance of the Society.

During his years as novice director, Ed published two influential essays coming out of his experiences: “Eliciting Great Desires” (1984) and “When Jesuits Pray” (1985).²⁷ During his years as formation director, Ed published essays in *The Way* (UK) integrating his experience with foundational documents: “A Model of Formation” (1988); and “Formation and the Vows” (1991).²⁸ In the latter, published in the year he became provincial, Ed reflected on men he had seen stay in the Society during a time marked by departures. “These men have successfully negotiated the important realization,” he wrote, “that the ideals of the Society of Jesus and of religious life exist in no utopian state but only in the limited persons, actions and structures of Jesuits who have great desires yet who have great weaknesses and sinfulness.”²⁹

Meanwhile—in 1981, having crossed the half-century mark, Joe left *America* magazine for his native New Orleans and began work as a full-time spiritual director (1981–1982). In 1982, he began a ten-year stint as tertian director, first in New Orleans and then in Austin, Texas. In 1983–1984, following his arrival in Austin, Joe published a

²⁷ E. Edward Kinerk, “Eliciting Great Desires: Their Place in the Spirituality of the Society of Jesus,” *STUDIES* 16, no. 5 (November 1984); “When Jesuits Pray: A Perspective on the Prayer of Apostolic Persons,” *STUDIES* 17, no. 5 (November 1985). Note the acknowledgment of Fr. Kinerk’s work in Michael Ivens, SJ, “Desire and Discernment,” *The Way Supplement*, 95 (1999): 31–43 at 43n1.

²⁸ Edward Kinerk, “A Model of Formation,” *The Way Supplement* 61 (1988): 89–99; and “Formation and Vows,” *The Way Supplement* 71 (1991): 64–72.

²⁹ Kinerk, “Formation and Vows,” 65.

lengthy reflection for a double-issue of *STUDIES*: “The Jesuits’ Mission in Higher Education: Perspectives and Contexts.”³⁰ While in Austin, he also served as “spiritual companion to the clergy of the diocese—a

“The ideals of the Society of Jesus and of religious life exist in no utopian state but only in the limited persons, actions and structures of Jesuits.”

position I thought God had invented for me. This work, and the three years of regency in the poverty-stricken old high school in Dallas, were the ones I enjoyed most.” In 1985, drawing on his experience with both tertians and diocesan clergy, Joe published a

STUDIES article entitled “A Dialogue on the Sexual Maturing of Celibates.”³¹ The following year he published another article in *STUDIES*: “The Transformation of Jesuit Poverty.”³²

In 1987–1988, half-way through those ten years, Joe had taken a year-long sabbatical at Jesuit Hall, SLU, where he “loved the community.” One result of that sabbatical was a *STUDIES* article appearing in 1989: “The Fundamentum: Creation in the Principle and Foundation.”³³ That same year, Joe published *Choosing Christ in the World*, later translated into several languages, including Mandarin Chinese and Polish.³⁴ Joe reflects on the book’s origins:

All of this time, I’d been writing. A lot of it was high-flown stuff in higher education. More of it had to do with American Catholicism in American life and religious life in it. Then I got to emphasizing two things: Jesuit life and helping the prayer

³⁰ Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ, “The Jesuits’ Mission in Higher Education: Perspectives and Contexts,” *STUDIES* 15, no. 5 (November 1983) and 16, no. 1 (January 1984).

³¹ Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ, “A Dialogue on the Sexual Maturing of Celibates,” *STUDIES* 17, no. 3 (1985).

³² Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ, “The Transformation of Jesuit Poverty,” *STUDIES* 18, no. 5 (November 1986).

³³ Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ, “The Fundamentum: Creation in the Principle and Foundation,” *STUDIES* 21, no. 4 (September 1989).

³⁴ Joseph A. Tetlow, *Choosing Christ in the World: Directing the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola According to Annotations Eighteen and Nineteen: A Handbook* (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 1989).

of the adult Catholic—whom I had begun calling “mature disciples of Christ” (which more than one said no one had ever called them). During the 1980s tertianship, I had been directing groups of prayers, writing material for them.

Choosing Christ in the World was a whole new thing. Somehow, I had hit on what helps mature Catholics pray and think and be with Jesus in daily life. I had had to study the *Spiritual Exercises* all along, written on them, and had a definite notion of what the “dynamic of the *Exercises*” is, how the Presupposition (*Sp. Ex.* 22) is radical, and how “God wishes to give us Himself” (*Sp. Ex.* 234). I had learned a lot directing tertians in the long retreat—they taught me a lot, even the dozen who were getting ready to leave the Company.

1992–2011

April 6, 1992: Bosnian War begins • October 11: *Catechism of the Catholic Church* promulgated • November 3: William Jefferson (“Bill”) Clinton elected US president • April 8–July 15, 1994: Rwandan Genocide • January 5–March 22, 1995: General Congregation 34 • July 11–13: Bosnian Genocide • November 5, 1996: Bill Clinton re-elected • December 19, 1998: Bill Clinton impeached • August 6, 2000: CDF, *Dominus Iesus* promulgated • January 20, 2001: George W. Bush inaugurated • January 24: CDF censures Jacques Dupuis • September 11: World Trade Center terrorist attacks • October 7–December 17: US invasion of Afghanistan • Jan 6, 2002: *Boston Globe* sex abuse scandal coverage begins • December 13: John Paul II accepts resignation of Cardinal Bernard Law • March 20, 2003: US invasion of Iraq • November 18: *Goodridge v. Dept. of Public Health* decision on same-sex marriage • November 2, 2004: George W. Bush re-elected • December 13: CDF censures Roger Haight • April 2, 2005: Pope John Paul II dies • April 19: Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger succeeds as Benedict XVI • November 26, 2006: CDF censures Jon Sobrino • June 29, 2007: Apple releases iPhone • July 2007: 2007–2008 Financial Crisis begins • January 7, 2008: General Congregation 35 opens • GC 35 accepts Kolvenbach resignation and elects Adolfo Nicolás Pachón as successor • November 4: Barack Obama elected US president • December: CDF bars Roger Haight from teaching • April 23, 2010: Adolfo

Nicolás in Mexico City: "Globalization of Superficiality" • December 15, 2011: Iraq War ends.

Following another three years (1988–1991) in Austin as tertian director and spiritual director for local clergy, Joe recharged his batteries with another sabbatical (1991–1992) at his beloved Jesuit Hall. That sabbatical resulted in the publication of *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises*.³⁵ He then happily settled in at SLU for another four years (1992–1996)—celebrating his sixty-fifth birthday in the Fall of 1995—as a visiting distinguished professor of spiritual theology.

Joe's life, however, was about to take another major turn when the Missouri Province elected him in 1994 as a delegate to General Congregation 34 (January 5–March 22, 1995). There he "made history by running a commission that refused to write a document (we parsed everyone else's for 'inculturation')." Following the general congregation, Superior General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach called Joe to serve as the director of the Secretariat for Ignatian Spirituality. In 1996, at age sixty-six, Joe moved to the General Curia and used his new position to bring lay colleagues and Jesuits to Rome for meetings to which the general gave major addresses. His appointment as editor of the *Review of Ignatian Spirituality* also allowed him to return to the editor's desk.

Meanwhile—in 1998, Ed, at age fifty-five, took a significantly different turn outward as he became the thirteenth president of Rockhurst College, its title changed in 1999 to "university."³⁶ During his eight years of service, he oversaw significant expansion of both the campus and student enrollment along with the successful completion of the \$50 million "Excellence in the City" campaign.³⁷ In 2006, at the closure of his tenure, friends, families, and colleagues honored him with the establishment

³⁵ Joseph A. Tetlow, *Ignatius Loyola: Spiritual Exercises* (New York: Crossroad, 1992).

³⁶ Ed succeeded Fr. Thomas J. Savage (1947–1999), who had served as president of Rockhurst College from 1988–1996.

³⁷ Regarding the history of Rockhurst University, see "Rockhurst Traditions: Historical Highlights," Rockhurst University, <https://catalog.rockhurst.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=535>.

of a scholarship for an entering undergraduate student who shows significant financial need. At Ed's request, the scholarship was named the "St. Peter Claver Scholarship" for the seventeenth-century Jesuit who devoted his life to the poor and oppressed.

In 2007, following a one-year sabbatical, at age sixty-four, Ed returned to Sedalia, where he spent another sixteen years at Sacred Heart Retreat House as a retreat and spiritual director—first as administrator, then as director of the work. During that time, he again published in *STUDIES*: "Personal Encounters with Jesus Christ" (2006).³⁸

Meanwhile—in 2004, after eight years in Rome, Joe, at age seventy-four, returned to the US and spent the next seven years (2004–2011) as a program and retreat director, and then superior, at Montserrat Jesuit Retreat House in Lake Dallas. Mid-way through those seven years, he published *Making Choices in Christ* (2008).³⁹

2011–2022

November 6, 2012: Barack Obama re-elected • February 11, 2013: Pope Benedict XVI announces his resignation • February 28: Papacy of Benedict XVI ends • March 13: Argentinian Jesuit Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio assumes papacy as Francis • February 20, 2014: Russo-Ukrainian War begins • December 8: Adolfo Nicolás announces intention to resign as superior general of the Society • May 24, 2015: Promulgation of Francis's encyclical, *Laudato Sí* • June 26: *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision legalizes same-sex marriage in US • October 3, 2016: General Congregation 36 opens • GC 36 accepts the resignation of Adolfo Nicolás and elects Arturo Sosa superior general • November 8: Donald J. Trump elected US president • January 20, 2017: Donald J. Trump inauguration • March 11, 2020: US begins Covid-19 pandemic shutdowns • May 20: Adolfo Nicolás Pachón dies • October 11: Promulgation

³⁸ E. Edward Kinerk, SJ, "Personal Encounters with Jesus Christ," *STUDIES* 48, no. 3 (Autumn 2016).

³⁹ Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ, *Making Choices in Christ: The Foundations of Ignatian Spirituality* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008).

of Francis's encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* • November 3: Joseph R. "Joe" Biden elected US president • January 6, 2021: US Capitol Insurgency • August 15: Afghanistan War ends after twenty years • October 9: Opening of synodal process • December 31: Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI dies • February 22, 2022: Russia invades Ukraine.

In 2011, at age eighty-one, Joe moved back to his beloved Jesuit Hall Community at SLU where he spent the next four years as a writer, lecturer, and retreat director. In 2015, after a half-century absence, Joe returned to Grand Coteau—not now as a novice or juniorate instructor but as retreat director at Our Lady of the Oaks Retreat House. The year after arriving—and three years into Francis's pontificate—Joe published *Always Discerning: An Ignatian Spirituality for the New Millennium*.⁴⁰

That same year, reflecting on his current and past experience, Joe published yet another article in *STUDIES*: "The Preached Weekend Retreat: A Relic or a Future?"⁴¹ It had been nearly sixty years since the development of individually directed retreats, most notably for Anglophones in the late 1950s at St. Beuno's in Wales. As the general editor of *STUDIES*, Barton Geger (UCS), noted in his preface to that issue, the previous decades had seen "a sense of ambivalence, even opposition" arise "among many Jesuits, regarding the very idea of preached retreats, to say nothing of those that last only a weekend. At best, they were 'not really Ignatian.'"⁴² Joe addressed this tension by beginning with a trademark anecdote in his "Prefatory Confession":

I began giving preached weekend retreats in 1962. I didn't know what I was doing. When I gave the first one at the Cenacle Retreat House in New Orleans, the Cenacle director asked me what I wanted to do. I told her I didn't know what to do. She knew what to do.

⁴⁰ Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ, *Always Discerning: An Ignatian Spirituality for the New Millennium* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2016).

⁴¹ Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ, "The Preached Weekend Retreat: A Relic or a Future?," *STUDIES* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2016).

⁴² Barton T. Geger, SJ, "a word from the editor ...," in Tetlow, "The Preached Weekend Retreat," iii–vi at iv.

I have been giving preached weekend retreats ever since.⁴³

Joe's response came directly out of his ongoing experience: "So in my last years, I spent three years at Our Lady of the Oaks in Grand Coteau forming sixteen lay men and women to preach the weekend retreat, which a number of them do very successfully." Joe's *Handing on the Fire: Making Spiritual Direction Ignatian*, was written for and dedicated to this cohort.⁴⁴

After nearly five years at Grand Coteau (2015–2019), Joe moved back to the Montserrat retreat house in Lake Dallas, Texas. There, in October 2020, he celebrated his ninetieth birthday and spent the next three years (2019–2023) as a writer and lecturer. Joe reflects on the eight years:

At Our Lady of the Oaks and at Montserrat, I was able to get several books out, leaving one or two still in my computer, completed, not footnote checked or spell-checked, but there. I guess I've always been mainly a teacher and a writer, and I thank God for that because with that He has kept me faithful.

2023–2024

May 11, 2023: US Covid-19 "Public Health Emergency" designation expires • October 4–29: Synod Session 1 • October 7: Hamas-led attack on Israel • October 27: Israeli invasion of Gaza Strip • June 2024: US presidential election year underway with President Joe Biden and former President Donald J. Trump as presumptive nominees for their respective parties.

In July 2023, at age seventy-eight, Ed moved to the newly opened St. Ignatius Hall in Florissant, Missouri—just miles from where he had entered the novitiate nearly sixty years earlier—to pray for the church and the Society. As Ed notes in the essay in this volume, he has "given the full Spiritual Exercises as a directed

⁴³ Tetlow, "The Preached Weekend Retreat," 1.

⁴⁴ Joseph A. Tetlow, *Handing on the Fire: Making Spiritual Direction Ignatian* (Chestnut Hill, MA: IJS at the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies at Boston College, 2021).

retreat over 300 times, most of these in my last sixteen years at Sacred Heart Retreat House in Sedalia. Every year of giving those Exercises I was able to listen better and to craft suggestions more in line with both the Exercises and the particular needs of the retreatant.”⁴⁵ Ed’s takeaway point? “You never know.”⁴⁶

Meanwhile—in July 2023, at age ninety-three, Joe also moved to St. Ignatius Hall in Florissant, Missouri. There he prays for the church and Society and continues his ministry of the word as a “writer in residence.” Reflecting on this time, he concludes:

Now I’m here [in Florissant], trying to persuade myself and my companions that enjoying these days and celebrations is a gift from God. Any guilt I might feel about being so well treated is clearly a temptation from the evil one, promoting narcissism, discouragement, and pessimism—and I’ll have nothing to do with it. Amen.

⁴⁵ E. Edward Kinerk, SJ, and Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ, “*Orat pro Eccl. et Soc.: Reflections on an Essential Mission*,” *STUDIES* 56, no. 2 (Summer 2024): 31.

⁴⁶ Kinerk and Tetlow, “*Orat pro Eccl. et Soc.*,” 32.

I. St. Ignatius Hall: A Vibrant Apostolate

E. Edward Kinerk, SJ

There are about 425 men in the Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States (JCCU) who are listed in the conference catalog as “praying for the church and the Society.” Like any assignment listed in the catalog, this tells us where we should be carrying out the mission of the Society but not how to carry it out, nor does it explain the importance of the mission for ourselves or for anyone else. For example, most of us do not focus on the apostolic nature of this assignment to St Ignatius Hall—the retirement community in the United States Central Southern (UCS) province—but rather we think of ourselves as being retired because of age and/or physical and mental infirmities. In other words, rather than thinking of this as an apostolic assignment, most of us think of it as being put on a shelf, being too old and infirm to continue apostolic service. In this short article, I want to describe the importance of this assignment and how these could well be the most important years of our Jesuit lives.

These days, elders are not valued in Western cultures as much as they were in earlier times and are still today in East Asian cultures. This does not mean, however, that our elder Jesuits have not acquired gifts to bring to the table, and that they have acquired them precisely in function of the many years of life that they already have lived. As I present in what follows, four considerations might help our elders bring some extremely valuable pieces to our joint apostolic endeavor: the nearness of death, the constant presence of fellow Jesuits, time on our hands, and wisdom.

1. The Nearness of Death

First of all, we are very aware of the nearness of death. Not only do we realize how old we are but also we have a significant number of our community members passing away each year. Now this can be

seen as a pessimistic point of view but, in fact, it can be—and often is—a magnificent expectation of the coming of the most wonderful part of our existence, which is total and infinite love. In a few years,

The spreading of love is very important and gives power to our prayer for the Society and the church.

or even months or days, we will be a part of the fullness of the Kingdom of God. We will see God as God is (1 Jn 3:2). We will experience God's infinite love directly and we will experience the perfected love of everyone else who is there. And, this will include ev-

eryone who ultimately will be there as there is no time after death. What we call death is certainly not the end of life; rather, it is the beginning of real life and the purpose of our creation. We carry out what Jesus said in the final seconds of his human life: "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46). And moments after those words, His earthly life ended and He was then, as a human being, in the fullness of His divinity. In our earthly deaths, we are indeed going to a place prepared for us (Jn 14:2-3), and we shall see God as God is (1 Jn 3:2). We have known all of this through most of our lives but, coming to Ignatius Hall, for our last days, sharpens our awareness of the life to come and deepens our wisdom.

Now here are several important aspects to love. The first is obvious, but we need to take it very seriously—that is, that God is love. Yes, of course, God loves; but GOD IS LOVE. In other words, the source and essence of all reality is love, and the ultimate conclusion of all reality is love. There is nothing after the end of time except love. It is easy to say this, but it is almost impossible for us to grasp fully until we will experience the fullness of the Kingdom, and we need to trust this as our time for transition comes closer. Within our temporary existence on earth there are alternatives to love, but only so that we, who are not God and thus imperfect, can learn to love. After we die, we will be transformed into giving and receiving love perfectly.

Now, it is important, especially in this final stage of our earthly existence, to realize that there are two dimensions to love. The first is obvious: putting the good of the other ahead of my own good. This is obvious in family life and especially for us in ministries of every kind. And we give enormous energies throughout most of our Jesuit lives to

bring love to others. But there is a second dimension to love, and that is receiving love graciously and gratefully. While this may seem easy, for many Jesuits it is not as easy as giving love. Yet as we grow older, our need to receive love grows every day. “Can I help you? No, no, I can do it.” This has gone on for much of our lives and probably rightly so. But, as we age, we need to receive more and more as our capacity to care for ourselves declines in this last stage of our earthly life. This is hard to accept at first, but it is good because it expands our ability to receive and therefore prepares us to receive God’s infinite love. And saying *yes* to the offer to help is itself an act of love for the helper.

For example, a classmate of mine, Dick Perl, was in our infirmary.⁴⁷ He was totally handicapped physically, could not feed himself, and could only whisper a few words at a time. Yet his mind was quite intact. When I saw him or helped him, he would look at me with a sparkle in his eyes. It was one of the most powerful experiences of love I have ever had. And love always spreads. Dick passed away several months ago.

As such, the spreading of love is very important and gives power to our prayer for the Society and the church. Every act of human love spreads out, even though we are rarely aware of it. It not only spreads out beyond us through immediate words or actions but also it spreads forward in time. After all, love is from God and God *is* love, so it cannot die.

Let me give another example. I’ll begin by admitting that I can be an aggressive driver. Before joining the Jesuits, I was in graduate school and drove a taxi cab to help pay my expenses. People who know me now say I still drive like a taxi cab driver—careful, but aggressive. In any case, several years ago I was driving into Denver for a late afternoon board meeting and the traffic on the interstate was jammed, moving along at about ten miles an hour. Since I needed to get off a couple of exits ahead, I was driving in the far-right lane. At the time, though, there was a line of cars in an access lane trying to get onto the freeway. My instinct ordinarily would be to stay close

⁴⁷ Fr. Richard D. Perl (1948–1923), a native of St. Louis, Missouri, spent most of his Jesuit life serving in Belize and Honduras.

to the car in front of me and not give up my space, which would cost me about two seconds in trying to get where I was going. Instead, something—God’s Spirit—made me slow down even more and wave to the man next to me in the access lane. He pulled in front of me and then turned his head to smile and wave at me. I suddenly felt like God was in our cars! I felt very good and I remember thinking that I would feel better when I got to the meeting—that I would treat people just a little bit nicer, then they themselves would feel better and go home and treat their families a bit better, and so on. And, the same for the man who waved back to me.

In this way, love spreads and quickly spreads beyond our awareness. And because of this act of kindness, we might have prevented World War Three—who knows? But God knows, because all love comes from God and God is love. Love is never lost and never ultimately dies. Though we may never see the results of it in this life, we will do so in the fullness of the Kingdom. At St. Ignatius Hall, such simple acts of love—which occur all the time—spread out far beyond our residence and impact the whole world.

2. The Constant Presence of Our Fellow Jesuits and Caretakers

For those of us in the Central Southern Province, St. Ignatius Hall is the last bus stop on the way to our final destination. And we are all getting off at the next stop. Once there, we will love each other infinitely and we will be aware of our pasts as well. So, we need to start now. Of course, none of us has yet undergone the transformation that will make us infinitely loving and loveable, but it is going to happen. Knowing this and absorbing evidence of its near immediacy can make it much easier to love our neighbor with his numerous faults, especially if we tell ourselves that we will both remember this momentary encounter with total love and understanding for all eternity.

From this perspective, the everyday presence of our brothers in retirement provides a constant choice to love or not to love. And one of the ways in which we can make this more present to ourselves is to edit constantly our self-talk. For instance, we have all had the experience

of having an internal conversation with those whom we believe have offended us or with whom we disagree. Even though we never acted out these conversations, they do affect our attitude and make us aware of the “un-love” that is still within us. As we become more aware of these kinds of conversations, we can reverse our images and imagine God’s loving presence wanting us to love that person more. Imagine, for example, having a much different conversation with this person in the fullness of the Kingdom where each of us will love perfectly.

It is important here to realize that the fullness of the Kingdom is God’s goal for creation. God obviously knew at the beginning of creation that we would not love perfectly. In fact, because we are not God, we cannot love perfectly; but we can love, and this is precisely because we are not perfect. If we were made perfect from the beginning, we could not fail to love; but neither would we be free to not love, such that love would not be our choice. In other words, human love requires the freedom either to love or not to love, and so love needs to be our choice. And while grace can help us, we alone ultimately can choose to put the good of the other ahead of our own. After death, we will see God as God is, and we will always love perfectly. But in this time of our existence, we need to show that we want to love.

It is important to realize too that each of us is unique just as our loving contribution to the Kingdom is unique. For example, our neighbor may not be outgoing by temperament but spends a lot of time in his room thinking and perhaps even praying for each of us and for the Society. And so, while he might not bring much to the conversations at our meals or social events, he is contributing in his own way to the fulfillment of the Kingdom, and this love will touch each of us.

Now, how can we contribute to the work of the Society? Obviously, we can; and the most direct way of doing this is by dedicating ourselves to our common mission to pray for the church and the Society, as indicated in the conference catalog. Of course, there are probably as many ways of praying for the church and the Society as there are Jesuits; but the most important thing to remember is that true prayer is an act of love because this act entails putting the needs of others ahead of our own. And so, when we say that we are praying for someone, we mean

that we are putting aside our own needs and are showing love for that other person or persons, and this love never dies. Even our willingness to pray for the works of the Society constitute acts of love, although we may not know our brothers for whom we are praying or the particulars of some work. Here, it is always important to remember that love never dies and always spreads. And so, while we probably never will see the wonderful and ongoing effects of our love and prayer, we will experience the joy that is almost always present among us.

3. Time on Our Hands

Another characteristic of retirement is that we have a lot of free time. Many days, even if we have some active ministry, we still have loads of free time. One thing we can do frequently during these days is connect with the Lord. Now, what might this look like? Suppose two friends, Jim and Tom, decide to meet for lunch at the Outback Diner. They pull up in their cars at about the same time and walk toward each other. As they get close, the first words out of Jim's mouth are, "I am so concerned about the Cardinals—they still don't have good pitching." Of course, Tom might be a Cardinals fan too; but at this time he says, with some emphasis, "Jim, hi! Its great to see you." The greeting in the parking lot is important because they are telling each other, "I am aware of you." Then they can talk about the Cardinals, their jobs, their families, and whatever else. In the example of Jim and Tom, Tom is telling Jim that he is aware of him, but Jim is not telling Tom that he is aware of him.

In a similar sense, we can connect with the Lord periodically during the day by thinking or saying something like, "Oh God, thank you for your love." Words like that or simply an awareness on our part connect us with God. But we don't even need words as long as we take a second or two to make ourselves aware that God is lovingly present to us and aware of us. If we do this on a regular basis, we will build up a background sense of God's constant presence. It would be like a couple watching television every night together. While they are focused on the program they are watching, every now and then one might say something briefly to the other. This is like a reminder that they are not alone and that they care about each other. And of course, in the case of God, we are never, ever alone.

Now, as I mentioned, we have lots of free time in our retirement, and so we can connect with the Lord many times during our day. Often, this might last only for a second or two, but it also can be used in longer ways with other routine actions. For example, one way to connect would be to make up a mantra, such as, “Oh God, help me love you more,” “Oh God, help me love my brother(s) more,” or “Oh God, help me love my brothers and the work they are doing at the border.” We can use such a mantra periodically throughout our day and in this way connect with the Lord. We also can connect the mantra to some regularized physical activity which has the value of connecting two good things at the same time. For instance, walking, whether inside or outside, allows us to match our steps to the words of the mantra. While the two matched routines become automatic, the matching of the physical and the mental helps me to keep my mind on course and my awareness on God’s presence. Walking works best for me, but there are many who cannot walk. And so, other physical routines can replace the walk—for example, moving a wheel chair, blinking my eyes, or even regular breathing can give a framework for the mantras.

A simple act of love can help to change the world.

Furthermore, this combination of using a mantra along with physical actions can become our regular prayer. For example, I work out in our weight lifting room every day for thirty minutes using a machine that exercises my legs, and as I do so, I attach a mantra to the regular motions. I usually start with the mantra, “Oh God, help me love you more,” but the mantra will change often several times during my prayer and work out. This has become my daily prayer and it is easier to go to because I am doing two good things for myself at the same time—namely, exercise and prayer. I also have found that these mantras will almost always creep into other routine actions during my day, especially walks outside but sometimes even short walks inside, like walking down a corridor to the dining room.

Finally, one of the many ways of giving and receiving love that the staff at St. Ignatius Hall provides are the visits outside the house that they arrange. Roughly twice a month, a sign will go up on the bulletin board and arrive in our rooms announcing an event such as a trip to a museum or a park or something else that has interest and

beauty. Several staff go along to assist those who have wheel chairs or other disabilities. Certainly, these events are also expressions of love through the staff's service. At the same time, almost all these outings are occasions to visit a museum, a garden, or some other place that involves objects of beauty. Anyone can sign up to go and, of course, rides are provided. As such, these events offer wonderful opportunities to experience beauty, which almost always points to God and to love. Of course, we could have visited these places when we were younger and more active, but often we did not have or take the time or opportunity to do so. But in fact, many of these trips involve sites that were unknown to many of us including those who had lived and worked in St. Louis for most of their Jesuit lives.

As always, it is important to remind ourselves that love is ultimately from God who is love, which never dies and always makes a difference even though we may never see its results. This is extremely important since we can never assess the results of our loving prayer. As mentioned earlier, a simple act of love can help to change the world.

4. Wisdom

In his *Life of Anthony*, St. Athanasius presents the life of the most famous desert father in terms of four journeys. Anthony's first journey was to leave the village where he grew up and go into the near desert where he struggled with the demon of lust. Here, lust involves more than sexuality, including possessions, achievement, and the like. After a good bit of time and struggle, Anthony conquers the demon of lust and takes his second journey, which is into the middle desert, where he deals with the demon of boredom, asking the question, "Is this all there is to this life?" — in other words, what we would call today a *mid-life crisis*. But he conquers the demon of boredom and takes his third journey, which is into the deep desert, where he communes with God. But by now he is becoming an old man and cannot take care of himself alone, so he takes his fourth journey, which is back to the towns and villages where he grew up. There, he shares his wisdom — and this, as the story goes, is what made him famous, to the extent that even the Roman Empire called on him for advice.

Now, wisdom is a very positive term that implies not only knowledge but also experience. From this perspective, a wise person is one who knows what is really important in a given matter. And the matter with which we all deal is that of life. As such, wisdom is an understanding of what in my life is really important, and the most important aspect of my life at all stages is love. As I get older, I am better at both giving and receiving love and also in recognizing it.

The most important wisdom that we all have at this time in our life is that this life is but a temporary speck of our existence and that the magnificent best is yet to come.

As such, while we acquire this wisdom in many ways, we do so always through the experience of life. And at St. Ignatius Hall, we Jesuits have all lived long lives and have amassed wisdom in many different areas. However, the most important wisdom that we all have at this time in our life is that this life is but a temporary speck of our existence and that the magnificent best is yet to come. This of course does not diminish the importance of the years preceding retirement, which are both necessary and important because this is the period when we learn to love and show whether we want to love. The deepening of this knowledge then comes as we near the end of our time, and this deepening is precisely what generates our wisdom. From this perspective, the ways in which we prepare for death and the ways in which we die are themselves gifts to others and especially to our fellow Jesuits.

Let me give a somewhat humorous personal example. I have given the full Spiritual Exercises as a directed retreat over 300 times, most of these in my last sixteen years at Sacred Heart Retreat House in Sedalia, Colorado. And every year of giving those Exercises, I was able to listen better and to craft suggestions more in line with both the Exercises and the needs of the retreatant. It was not that I did not follow Ignatius's suggestions. In fact, Ignatius said that a spiritual exercise is whatever the retreatant does to acquire greater spiritual freedom.

In my last years at the retreat house, I was accompanying a layman who was making the full thirty-day Exercises. He noted to me one day that he had the habit of getting on his computer and looking up things about his favorite pro football team. Then, about five days

later, he came in and complained about spending too much time looking for information about his team, and that he had just gotten off his computer. So, at the end of the conference, on an impulse, I suggested

At St. Ignatius Hall, the nearness of death and the declining of health are therefore gifts that bring us the wisdom of understanding what is important in this life and the excitement of the coming of the next life.

that he go and get on his computer and look up stuff about his team until he got fed up with it. The next day he came in, twenty-three hours later, with dark circles under his eyes and said, "I just got off!" Well, I thought to myself, that was a terrible idea on my part. In fact, it scared the heck out of him, and he said, "I have an addiction

and I need help." It turned out to be the best exercise of the retreat because it led him to seek freedom. In my earlier years I would never have thought that looking up stuff on a favorite professional team would be a good part of the Spiritual Exercises, but you never know.

Indeed, St. Ignatius Hall is a treasure box of wisdom, and one sees this expressed in all kinds of ways. I mentioned earlier the example of a fellow Jesuit, Dick, who could hardly do anything for himself—not even speak more than a couple of words—but a loving look in his eyes meant everything. This is wisdom personified. At St. Ignatius Hall, the nearness of death and the declining of health are therefore gifts that bring us the wisdom of understanding what is important in this life and the excitement of the coming of the next life.

To be clear, the Society has done a good job in caring for our elders. St. Ignatius Hall is a beautiful place, and the staff here is outstanding. We receive wonderful care and much is provided for us. However, we might consider that the men themselves still have much to give. What matters on this point is to notice the love that the men have and how they express it. I already have mentioned several times my Jesuit classmate, Dick, who at the end of his life could hardly talk. Another of our classmates, Mike Barber (ucs), a professor at Saint Louis University, would come out nearly every Saturday evening having prepared an appropriate meal, which for Dick meant food that did not require much chewing. Mike would then come to our retirement center and, using a hospitality room, share the meal with

Dick and, once I arrived, with me as well. Those meals were incredibly moving and a grace for all three of us. Certainly, my classmate who prepared the meal was bringing grace and love; but Dick, who received it with only a very subtle means of communication, was the real source of grace for both Mike and myself. Dick died only about ten days after our last meal together, but the love he spread while he was with us still moves among us here and, of course, beyond.

Finally, the result of this wisdom is joy. Specifically, there exists an undercurrent of joy at St. Ignatius Hall. Now, joy is not the same as happiness, though there is a good deal of happiness here as well. As I see it, joy is a more foundational experience that can coexist with suffering and sorrow. For example, I remember when my father died at the age of ninety while doing the laundry in the basement of the house he built. Because he gave his body to medical science, there was no need for an immediate funeral. Instead, we had a memorial Mass about nine days later. In the interim, my mother and my brothers and sisters gathered every night for dinner. And, of course, we ended up telling stories about Dad. At one point, one of my sisters was both laughing and crying. "I can't help it," she said, "I am both happy and sad." Of course, we missed him, since he was a wonderful man and a wonderful father; but we took joy in him and in the quickness of his death.

Again, there is a good deal of joy at St. Ignatius Hall. We are old and unable to do the work we did for many years, and we are all near death. But there is joy in knowing the unimaginable beauty of our future, and there is every reason to believe that each one of us will share in that joy and will know God and each other with total love for all eternity.

Let me end with an image of our situation now and of the life to come. Imagine that you have a group of men who are interested in becoming military officers. They go to boot camp, and all of them survive and do relatively well. The general in charge calls them to a meeting and announces that soon they all will be commissioned officers but that there will be a delay of several months before the commissions become official. In the meantime, the general will station the men in various places and, based on their performances there, he will elevate some of them to captains and even majors when they receive

their commissions. But no matter what happens, they will all at the very least become second lieutenants. Now, we at St. Ignatius Hall, just as for Jesuits in similar places throughout our conference, are in a position similar to these officers-to-be. We have survived the most critical times (“boot camp”) in our active apostolic lives, and we will be with God in the fullness of infinite love when we die. But many of us will enjoy even fuller love than that, and this is what we will uncover by the ways in which we love in these last years of our lives.

II. Praying for the Church and Society: Jesuit Beliefs and Practices

Joseph A. Tetlow, SJ

1. Starting with Our History

The first prayers offered for the Society of Jesus were offered before it existed. On September 3, 1539, Pope Paul III approved the *Formula Instituti* but only *viva voce*—nothing signed—and he appointed a group of cardinals to study it. Bartolomeo Cardinal Giudiccioni (1470–1549), who headed the commission, was vocally opposed to establishing another religious order. Ribadeneira tells us that Ignatius Loyola decided that he and his companions would offer some thousands of masses to get approval.⁴⁸ After a while, quite unexpectedly, the cardinal changed his mind, and the Society was approved.

*Reliance on prayer is
in our Jesuit DNA.*

This reliance on prayer is in our Jesuit DNA. The First Companions begged Christ our Lord to establish the Company and they believed that he did it. Their confidence becomes our officially declared belief in the first paragraph of part 10 of the *Constitutions*:

The Society was not instituted by human means; and it is not through them that it can be preserved and increased, but through the grace of the omnipotent hand of Christ our God and Lord. Therefore, in him alone must be placed the hope that he will preserve and carry forward what he deigned to begin for his service and praise and for the aid of souls. In conformity with this hope, the first and most appropriate means will be the prayers and Masses which ought to be offered for this holy

⁴⁸ William Bangert, *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 1970), 21.

intention, and which should be ordered for this purpose every week, month, and year in all places where the Society resides.⁴⁹

We are engaged here with “the first and most appropriate means” that gives integrity and meaning to our entire Jesuit lives. Jesuits today will know that we believe this when we pray regularly and offer masses for our Company.

2. Mission: Pray for Church and Society

The marrow of our service of the Lord has always been prayer. Much the way the marrow in our bones puts blood and platelets into our bloodstream, our prayer puts love and zeal into the days’ activities. This does not change because Jesuits are living longer than we used to. So, when the 34th General Congregation met at the end of the last millennium, it recognized that Jesuits typically worked “well beyond ‘retirement age.’”⁵⁰ But men eventually needed to retire.

The congregation remarks that when any of us retires, “he can be tempted to think that his life has lost its primary purpose.”⁵¹ Of course, it has not. The reality is that each Jesuit is “offered a new way of carrying out his Jesuit apostolic mission.”⁵² And it is important to note that we are “offered” this new way. As with any call from God in Christ, this one requires that each of us freely accept and enact it.

The 34th General Congregation described this new way when it approved, on March 18, 1995, the *Complementary Norms*, which would bring the *Constitutions* into the twenty-first century. It added a norm at the end of part 6 on Jesuits’ personal life. Drawing on

⁴⁹ *Constitutions* 812, hereafter *Const.*; *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: The Institute of Jesuit Sources [IJS], 1996), 400.

⁵⁰ GC 34, d. 6, no. 29; *Jesuit Life and 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), 568.

⁵¹ GC 34, d. 6, no. 29; *Jesuit Life and Mission Today*, ed. Padberg, 568.

⁵² GC 34, d. 6, no. 29; *Jesuit Life and Mission Today*, ed. Padberg, 568.

both the *Constitutions* and its own work, it assigned this “special mission” to Jesuits in retirement:

Major superiors should give to our elderly and infirm members a special mission to pray for the Church and the Society and to unite their personal suffering and limitations to the world-wide salvific ministry of the Church and the Society.⁵³

Here, it would be more accurate for the text to read “to continue to pray,” since we have been praying for this all our Jesuit lives. Which is to say that this is hardly a mission into a *terra incognita*. Furthermore, with this norm now in the decrees that describe the shape of our Jesuit life and obedience, our way of proceeding as older men is defined.

Perhaps we should point out that the norm gives a mandate to major superiors, who “should give” this special mission to the elders. We elders are offered this “new way” of carrying out our Jesuit mission. Our interpretation of this is that the Lord is offering us a clear indication of the divine will for us as the privilege and burden of our vow of obedience.

3. Final Obedience: Retirement of Contemplatives-in-Action

Our provincial superiors pass that mandate on to us, as mature religious would expect. So now, our obedience has sent us to a specific place to do a specific work. This is how we habitually have worked—our way of proceeding. On this point, a norm summarizes how we Jesuits expect ourselves to respond to a command in obedience:

They should make their own the superior’s command in a personal, responsible way and with all diligence ‘bring to the execution of commands and the discharge

⁵³ *Complementary Norm 244, 3, hereafter CN; The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms, ed. Padberg, 267.*

of assignments entrusted to them the resources of their minds and wills, and their gifts of nature and grace.’⁵⁴

Here, the “gifts of nature and grace” include those of prayer.

Certainly, our Jesuit history of prayer has included some men renowned for their gifts, including Frs. Baltasar Álvarez (1533–1580) and Louis Lallement (1588–1635). Some generals, including Francisco de Borgia (1510–1572) and Jan Roothaan (1785–1853), have urged Jesuits to greater efforts in prayer and even legislated to make it happen. While these efforts have produced some movements, it seems that a Jesuit known as a man of prayer was notably an individual Jesuit and rarely the head of a movement. Our fame has seemed to come rather in the field of education, in breaking into new mission territories, and now in faith doing justice.

This focus on Jesuits as educators and missionaries rather than leaders into deep prayer was not, in our own time, merely public opinion, as we ourselves have felt. From the novitiate on, most of us have the vague feeling that we do not pray as we might be expected to. Of course, this is a matter of personal experience and so requires a great deal of cautions. But as a general rule, we Jesuits do not seem to esteem ourselves as “good” in prayer, and for most of us, tertianship rarely has seemed to cure that anxiety. Finally, then, the peace of our hearts and the contentment of our spirits in retirement depends largely on how we handle our anxieties around this special mission of prayer.

4. Retirement Is Being Spiritually Stripped

We who are retired face an added source of anxiety in that we Jesuits tend to throw ourselves into what we are asked to do, but now we are asked to “retire”—a condition newly common in our culture. As such, retirement now interests economists, psychologists, and sociologists,

⁵⁴ CN 152; ed. Padberg, 223.

and their surveys and reflections can help us. Even though our interest is religious and spiritual, however, we cannot expect that this will free us from the concerns that social scientists note among retired people, including loneliness, weakness of male friendships, sexual issues, and the American problems with creating and sustaining community.

On this note, we might find that, in leaving behind our active lives and most of what we have accumulated of files and books and the rest, what we experience is less a gradual letting go and more a swift divestment or stripping. As such, we find ourselves in a situation a bit like St. Paul's Colossians, whom he was helping to move from the context of pagan life into life in Christ. Along with a lot else, he gave them this advice: "you have taken off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed, for knowledge, in the image of its creator" (Col 3:9b–10).⁵⁵

This applies thoroughly to Jesuits who retire or are retired, in that what we are stripped of is precisely old behaviors, and what we have now to develop is this new self-understanding as my current interpretation of my life story within the Company and in Christ's church. In short, we will need a conversion of heart because we, as American males, have thought of our self in terms of our jobs and careers when "self" is much more than the work we are doing. Instead, it is our present appreciation of our life-story, our lifelong commitment to the Company of friends in the Lord, and how glad and sad we now are for all of it.

Of course, we will not make easily the transition from understanding ourselves as missioned to jobs to seeing ourselves as missioned to pray. Consider our write-ups for jubilee celebrations, which always describe us in terms of the skills we have developed and the works we have done. And now we are deprived of our old behavior and our old self along with all our jobs and our careers. The reality is that now, in retirement, we are taken down to our truest identity. As such, I find that I am and have been all my life one of the men who belong to the Company of Jesus. I am Jesus Christ's man. And so, we

⁵⁵ All Scripture quotations are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition.

have to pray in retirement that the Holy Spirit will grant us an interior knowledge of what it is to be Christ's men. And we need the grace to see this: "although our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day" (2 Co 4:16b).

On this note, the 34th General Congregation urged that we let the Spirit give us the beginnings of that interior knowledge—of our obedience, our celibacy, and our priesthood—and of the apostolic value of our payer rooted in the Eucharist. From this perspective, in this retirement community more urgently than in an active community, we have to beg for the consolation of knowing that before pronouncing any vows, this was already true of every one of us, that we are "'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises' of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Pt 2:9). While we all have preached that, we will find out when we retire how deeply we have believed it.

To this point, we were so driven early on to make ourselves good Jesuits that we only too easily could take for granted God's call. We never noted the irony that when we say that we take a gift "for granted," we mean that the gift already belongs to me, such that we start with the conviction that the vocation too is mine rather than God's call. However, saying that the gift was "granted" really means that God gave us the call. From this perspective, it was God who started our being, who remains our creator at every moment, and who has redeemed us "and called us to a holy life" (2 Ti1:9). In other words, it was God our Lord, maybe through one of his men, who summoned us into the Company named for his Son.

Back to the stripping, Fr. Pedro Arrupe (1907–1991) gave us testimony of how great a grace it is to let the Spirit purify us of our egoistic yearnings to keep preaching or teaching or writing. In a paragraph we all know well, he described the consolation that God our Lord gave to him after his stroke:

More than ever, I now find myself in the hands of God. This is what I wanted all my life from my youth. And this is still the one thing I want. But now there is a difference: the initiative is

entirely with God. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in his hands.⁵⁶

During the “action” years, we may not have been all that fervent about being “in the hands of God.” Of course, it surely came to mind during the annual retreat or when something hurt and when we failed seriously. But few of the men in active lives made a great point of it, though the prayerful knew how true it is. But now, the Spirit is clearly summoning every retired Jesuit to a conversion of heart. The interior knowledge of being in God’s hands somehow includes a more profound self-appreciation—as if the Spirit is saying in us, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?” (1 Co 3:16). This grasp came to Fr. Arrupe with his stroke, but he had had to “want it” all his life. Maybe when we retire, or are retired, we need to want this grace or to want the gift of wanting it. This is the shape of our *magis* now.

Another grace and *magis* that we now want is the grace of calmly facing death. In our retirement houses, we celebrate masses of Resurrection often. And even those of us who do not suffer physically or mentally find ourselves being purified by the Holy Spirit as we ponder death. Likely, however, as good Americans, we probably have not thought much about our death. And so, we may even need to be stripped of the American mindset of the denial of death, where death is something you never think about and do not need to think about; where you do everything you can to prolong this life and collaborate in turning the graveyard “cities of the dead” into what look like golf courses. But while most Jesuits probably will not be tempted to have our bodies deep frozen, we may well be tempted to use every therapy to put off our deaths.

With this in mind, we in our retirement might then take up again the established Jesuit practice of pondering from time to time our own death. This goes back to our beginnings, in which the marble paving of a side-chapel at the very front of the Church of the Gesù in Rome commemorates the Bona Mors Confraternity, which

⁵⁶ Pedro Arrupe, Message to the Society, 3 September 1983, AR 18 (1983): 987; cited in GC 34, d. 6, no. 29; *Jesuit Life and Mission Today*, ed. Padberg, 568.

was one of many such societies that Jesuits founded.⁵⁷ Many of us too pray at the end of night prayer for “a restful night and a peaceful death,” as monks have done for centuries. Now, we might even want to pray as one elder Jesuit suggested: “O son, pray that you wake up dead.” Regardless, this much is sure: that as the Lord Jesus went through death into his glory, we want to follow him in that as well.

5. About Being Further Along in Prayer

Men who follow Christ as contemplatives—Benedictines, for instance, and Carthusians in monasteries or hermitages—are brought to experiencing God in their intimate lives in and through their contemplative prayer and the austerities that shape their self-denial. And some of them have entered the marketplace to write about their experiences, which has brought them to a wider audience. Their writings reveal that God draws many mature contemplatives into a deeper interior union through some manner of *via negativa*. These people profess to live only to and for God and have had “dark night”-type experiences that strain the power of words. While we should not push this too far, the experiences they describe of an intimate friendship with the Almighty Eternal God offer a paradigm that may help us interpret our own experiences.

We who have lived as contemplatives-in-action have little reason to expect a “dark night” even though we want to make progress in the Lord. As Jesuits, we find God in all things and when we do, we find a busy God who is creating, redeeming, justicing, having mercy, teaching, and forming. We have begged to join him, doing his will and building his kingdom wherever we went—truly co-creators though in an infinitely unequal collaboration.

And so, now that we are retired, many of us expect to continue finding God, who is still active even if we are not. Indeed, we can hardly expect the Spirit to spare us purifying experiences as we face final judgment. In us, this purification—the vine being trimmed—is precisely the stripping that begins when obedience sends us to retire. From this

⁵⁷ *The Jesuits and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley, SJ, and Gauvin Alexander Bailey (Philadelphia: St. Joseph’s University Press, 2003), 240.

perspective, we make the superior's will our own by interpreting our mission here as a stripping of our selfishness and sin. All along, our progress was on the side of "in-action." Now we are divested of all that belongs to action and assigned what belongs to "contemplative."

With this in mind, we can think of our ascetical practice now as the consent that we give to this stripping. We are stripped of jobs or positions and even of pastoral ministry. Many of us do not have a car key in our pockets. We have been relieved of all scheduled lectures, masses, and meetings. We are on no committees or boards, anywhere. We are accountable to no director or manager, and only to one another along with our provincial and local superiors. We are responsible only to go to Mass, to pray, to keep our teeth clean, and sit to eat. We easily can go for months without leaving the building except for medical visits, as though we were prisoners. All we "have to do" in this new context is to pray and perhaps to endure physical suffering.

However, we really ought to be spiritually mature enough by now to recognize that either we persevere in making progress in our familiarity with God in Christ or we will spend our last days steadily *dissed*: discontented, disillusioned, discouraged, disgruntled, and dissatisfied. As did Master Ignatius, we will need our practice of the Examen until the day when we have no more needs. Most of us will be helped by a daily order in the community that gathers us not only for Mass but also for some shared prayer.

To round out this theme, consider that, in the tenth of his volumes on mysticism in the West, historian of spirituality Bernard McGinn points out that the mystics' heightened awareness of God "is only a tearing away of the veils of custom, selfishness, and obtuseness" that block our appreciative awareness of the God's infinite love permeating everything all the time.⁵⁸ We are in a time of stripping and as such perhaps do well to take this as an invitation to maturing in prayer, if the Spirit of God leads us there.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Daniel Burke, "Demystifying Mysticism: Bernard McGinn on Saints, Seekers and Psychedelics," *America*, December 8, 2023, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/12/08/interview-bernard-mcginns-psychedelics-246571>.

Finally, although a man's prayer is as private as is his suffering, our men give signs of their union with God. This emerges in our retirement homes in conversations, homilies, and in the way that some sit for long periods in the chapel, attentive only to the gracious God who, we believe, founded our Society.

6. Experience Is First of All in a Context

The *De Statu* of 2023 pointed out that the whole of our Society exists in the real, global world opening a new millennium and as such is the basic context of our lives. And as Pope Francis keeps reminding this world, we are not living an age of change but rather in a change of age.⁵⁹ And so, in this tsunami of changes, chances are high that each of us older than seventy-five has already experienced some stripping in the past decades of thunder, earthquakes, and huge winds. We come to retirement as men who, with God our Creator and Lord, have grappled with the many new things that have added up to a truly new period in human development. Pondering on what we have lived through will sharpen our appreciation of our Jesuit selves.

Some of us here began by earning PhL and ThL degrees in seven years of Latin and began celebrating Mass in Latin with our backs to the people. Some of us began closer to "An Aquarian Experience" with "Three Days of Peace and Music" at Woodstock in 1969. This launched the country and the Company into a couple of decades that left us frazzled and notably diminished by men—including my own brother—leaving and marrying with and without proper dismissals. Those of us who are still here have gone from 35,000 to fewer than half of that number.

And certainly, any of us may have stumbled, sometimes seriously and sometimes gravely. In any case, those of us who are truly blessed have been through some kind of failure. We perhaps failed in a ministry or position; we proved maladroit as teacher or a graduate

⁵⁹ See, for example, Francis, Address: Meeting with the Bishops of Brazil (July 28, 2013), 2, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130727_gmg-episcopato-brasile.html.

student. We were publicly pulled from a fraught position. One or other has been indiscrete in close relationships and has received a public rebuke. But all of us here are correct to feel deeply grateful that the Holy Spirit has guided us to fidelity and loyalty. In that same Spirit, if we have understood it well, we know that Jesus failed, too. Such was the Father's will; then, the Father graced him as the one Redeemer of all humankind. And as we have come to know, love, and follow Jesus Christ, our own failures were similarly graced to contribute to the redemption. For which reason we remain in retirement just as we were—Jesus Christ's men—and we know that as his doing in and with us.

Surely, we were well able to thread this troubled age of change because of our Ignatian asceticism of love of God, neighbor, and self. Still, we are likely unable to congratulate ourselves on how well we lived it. But we know that it was Jesus Christ who held us faithful, and we can be content that we have persevered when many around us—some, very dear—have not. In short, we are here—not in triumph, but here nonetheless—and they are not. We pray for them.

Furthermore, we are not vain or proud when we claim that we have found him—or more accurately, that he has walked with us all the years, in our apparent success and failure, in our suffering, and even in our sinning. As such, each of us comes bringing the human character and the Ignatian spirituality into which we have managed to grow. And now the Spirit invites us to face the challenge of forming a new community. The good community life we had when we wore cassocks and birettas, kept sacred silence at times, and moved together to the sound of bells—that neat community is gone entirely. We tended to think little of it for a while, but we can see now that we were nourished by the loyalty and good service we offered within its structure. But that orderly life has dissolved long ago, and now—it is especially important to recognize in retirement—we are finding our way.

7. A Forty-Year Search for Community

The effort is not new. Forty years ago, Missouri provincial David Fleming (1934–2011) urged the search for real community in the retirement facility. He articulated the aim in “Living and Dying as Jesuits: A

Missouri Province Statement” (1984). The statement required that “the development of a true community spirit/atmosphere take precedence over the medical resources which support the needs of the individuals within that community.” A lot of us worked to create that community atmosphere at St. Louis University’s Jesuit Hall, and we had some success. When a move out of J-Hall became necessary, it felt like a crisis. And plenty of us living there a year ago agreed: the move was a crisis.

Note here that being assigned to any retirement community faces a normal Jesuit with something of a crisis. And too, the resolution of any crisis is in the crisis. In other words, at St. Ignatius Hall, as in every Jesuit retirement community, the solution to the crisis lies in the community with its mission to pray for the church and Society and to be generous in filling up Christ’s sufferings for his people. The Society has given the community this mission, and our community somehow must grow within it. For this reason, the responsibility rests with us men, and that precisely presents a hurdle for us as American Jesuits. Philosopher Josiah Royce suggested why in *The Problem of Christianity*.⁶⁰ There, he showed that Christians could not build the blessed community envisioned and mandated by Jesus Christ because they were too individualistic and not mature enough. Only mature persons who were sensitive, docile, and creative in initiating things could build a community of believers: when there are not enough such mature people, community will not thrive.

Now, it goes without saying that any mature disciple of Jesus Christ ought to display those characteristics as the Lord Jesus himself surely did. However, we come to Jesuit retirement houses as what we are—American men. And as such, we have plenty of evidence that often enough American men do not enjoy good male friendships. This failure is a much-observed characteristic of our culture, and it is not a new one. Now all the media—books, articles, films, podcasts, TV—relate it, and this characteristic of current masculine culture in the US is in us as well.

⁶⁰ Josiah Royce, *The Problem of Christianity* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001). This book derives from a series of lectures that Royce gave at Manchester College, Oxford University, in 1913.

The issue here seems to be that we feel challenged to accompany one another in our retirement even as we ourselves seem more accompanied now than we have been since we were scholastics. For example, we are together now at meals in a way reminiscent of the large novitiate and juniorate communities. Once again, our friendships are, as it were, assigned. And the main work we are asked to do is to pray, just as the main work earlier on was to study—each of us alone, yes; but all of us together. And as a community, we need to feel and express our gratitude. For our life in retirement—good housing, nourishment, service, and medical care—is the gracious gift of Jesus Christ to those of us who have “given up houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name” (Mt 19:29a). And beyond this “hundred times more” that we are experiencing in our infirmaries, we are to “inherit eternal life” (Mt 19:29b).

We surely owe the thanks that we express daily in our community Mass. The danger is that our gratitude will become a formality. It is not enough just to say *thanks*. Gratitude is complete only when we are enjoying the gift. Hence, any of us who are not candidly enjoying our life in retirement cannot believe that we are sufficiently grateful to God. This is the joy that Jesus gave us—“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete”—and any day that we do not enjoy is a day marred by ingratitude (Jn 15:11).

8. A Crucial Discipline in Forming Community: Listening

One thing that mars our gratitude is a serious lack of spiritual conversation in our communities. On this point, talk about community regularly regrets our unresponsiveness to that directive from our norms that the local superior should also provide at times, in a way that is appropriate for each apostolic community, a longer period for prayerful interchange as an opportunity for reflecting before God on the mission of the community and, at the same time, for expressing the apostolic character of our prayer.⁶¹

⁶¹ CN 226.2; ed. Padberg, 259.

We might wonder whether we will ever relate to another graces in prayer and desires that the Spirit is stirring in us. Can we reasonably hope to be able to join long conversations like those of the First Companions?

It is a matter of experience that this kind of serious discourse means a moderation of our strong viewpoints, convictions, preferences, and prejudices. Harder to handle than that, we Jesuits must work through not the boundaries but the walls around our private lives. In past decades, the perception of personal sexual sinfulness may have made those walls seem more necessary. Yet that threat is precisely what makes it crucial to take down those same walls:

Chastity is more safely preserved “when in common life true fraternal love thrives among its members,” by fostering charity and the ready union of souls, which disposes us to bear one another’s burdens; and when we feel a generous love for one and all and at the same time engage in a helpful and fruitful dialogue with all and are true brothers and friends in Christ, leading the community life proper to the Society, as described in Part VIII, numbers 311–30.⁶²

Those sentences grew out of experience; they are not theory. They are describing what is “proper to the Society” and what we must expect of ourselves if we are to remain loyal to our Company.

Germaine to this point, the title of chapter 1 of part 7 of the *Constitutions* is “Aids toward the Union of Hearts.”⁶³ In the *Complementary Norms*, the title of the corresponding chapter is “Union of Minds and Hearts.”⁶⁴ Note here that nearly 500 years of human development separate the first approval of the *Constitutions* and their official updating by GC 34. In the *Constitutions*, the union here described is hierarchical and functions through the holy abnegation of the members and their obedience to the superiors. As such, the *Constitutions* required little interpretation but a lot of generosity in obeying. Furthermore, in earlier

⁶² CN 146.3; ed. Padberg, 217.

⁶³ *Const.* 655; ed. Padberg, 316.

⁶⁴ CN 311; ed. Padberg, 317.

centuries, the cultures in which Jesuits lived made them willing and able to experience community.

In our *Norms*, however, the union calls not only for willing obedience but also for ongoing interpretation of the church and secular culture in an attitude of constant communal discernment, which demands the engagement of our minds as well as our free wills. For this reason, we must interpret not only our own documents but also the processes of secular and ecclesiastical history, and thinking that spins on even as we are interpreting them.

To further complicate matters, this interpretation, during our earlier history, had been done by superiors and was finally reduced to Father General Ledóchowski's *Epitome*—a collection of laws and norms that emerged from preconiliar attitudes and brooked no discussion.⁶⁵ In fact, most of us received the little green book of the *Epitome* as a dead letter upon printing and regarded it like last year's train schedule since the cultural context already had evolved from the time of its production. In short, we did not need a handbook: we needed calm, heartfelt discourse among ourselves, which we have received, according to our way of proceeding, through various province gatherings and general congregations in each decade since Vatican II. But those communal events bring life only to the extent that we the membership of the Society participate in and receive their fruits, which in turn requires that we listen to one another.

9. "Jesuit Listening" Began before the *Exercises*

Listening is a stern discipline. For we Jesuits differ insolubly. Bernard J. F. Lonergan (1904–1984) threw some good light on this by distinguishing the experiences of a "classical worldview" and a "historical mindedness."⁶⁶ They differ but complement each other.

⁶⁵ *Epitome instituti Societatis Iesu: additis praecipuis praescriptis ex iure communi regularium* (Rome: Apud curiam Praep. Generalis, 1924).

⁶⁶ Bernard Lonergan, "The Transition from a Classicist Worldview to Historical Mindedness," in *A Second Collection*, vol. 13, ed. Robert Dorn, SJ, and John Dadosky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 1–10.

Understanding and feeling one another's different perspectives and perceptions can be a deep pleasure and leads to peace and contentment in communities. It certainly did so in our better experiences in sharing, dialoging, and discerning.

The reality is that our Jesuit experiences since Vatican II and GC 31 have shown the deep fruitfulness of serious listening and sharing. And the brotherly communion that the *Complementary Norms* encourage has been a treasure in many of our lives. In this same vein, we cannot easily ignore the way of proceeding of Pope Francis' *Synod on Synodality*, a papal initiative that has surprised Jesuit journalists. Here again, recalling a point from the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* might motivate us to remember who we are and help us listen better. While we do not hear it introduced often, if at all, in workshops on directing Exercises (to be transparent: *mea culpa*), Master Ignatius emphasized it as indispensable in helping souls and explained it in what he called a "Presupposition," inserted just under the subtitle at the beginning of the First Week:

That both the giver and the maker of the Spiritual Exercises may be of greater help and benefit to each other, it should be presupposed that every good Christian ought to be more eager to put a good interpretation on a neighbor's statement than to condemn it. Further, if one cannot interpret it favorably, one should ask how the other means it. If that meaning is wrong, one should correct the person with love; and if this is not enough, one should search out every appropriate means through which, by understanding the statement in a good way, it may be saved.⁶⁷

Ignatius was describing almost 500 years ago what is now a new meme: "deep listening." For us, though, it is not a meme but a matter of the virtues of love: respect, reverence, creativity, and humility.

Listening attentively to one another is also a matter of practicing Ignatian indifference. Ordinarily, we hold our deepest convictions and hard-earned opinions passionately. Here, *passion* is the

⁶⁷ *Spiritual Exercises* 22, hereafter abbreviated *SpEx*; *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary*, trans. and ed., George E. Ganss, SJ (St. Louis, MO: IJS, 1992), 31. All quotations from the *SpEx* are from this edition.

experience of perceiving and desiring when they are so tangled as to be impossible to disentangle. Think of salivating on smelling bacon frying, or feeling awe upon seeing the ocean for the first time. Well, some of our ideas and convictions are held with passion, stirring both mind and heart, and when we share with others, we are going to be challenged to loosen some of those attachments.

For this reason, learning to listen well is a core progress in our disciplined asceticism of self, done largely for love of our God-given companions. And if we are to learn to pray together as companions in ways that will endure, we are going to have to learn to listen to one another. As a new priest, in 1960, I heard older men discuss the new birth control pill. One told me that he had learned from the philosopher and theologian Romano Guardini to counter-propose, not contra-dict. That's discussing: it occasions "deep listening."

To bring this home, when we join a retirement community, we are joining men who have had an experience of life and death that has real depth. Because of this, we have to examine ourselves about how free we are to listen to the men present to us, which requires that we recall and practice seriously the Examen. And so, however we practiced this spiritual exercise before and for whatever reasons, we now need to understand that we do it in function of loving one another as we love ourselves. In other words, we have to do it in this fenced-in community for one another.

10. We Make the Examen for One Another

One of the first things we learned as novices was the importance of the Examen. Now, it is even more important because each of us is responsible for co-creating community for all of us. And so, if a community can exist only if it is composed of mature men, then our community is supported by each man's Examen. Four general congregations in a row, GC 31 to GC 34, insisted on its importance, and the last one left us a norm:

Twice daily the examination of conscience should be made, which, in accord with Ignatius's intent, contributes so much

to discernment regarding our entire apostolic life, to purity of heart, and to familiarity with God in the midst of an active life.⁶⁸

In the present discussion, we can add that it also contributes to being an active member of our community. Here and now, we are not in the active life where our Examen probed our habits of action and working together in ministry. Now, it looks at the “contemplative” dimension of our lives where, stripped of busyness, we are challenged to know how simple, mild, and intimate “God’s will” has been all along.

And we are going to be humiliated in our Examens. For example, grouching about food or washing machines is adolescent because none of that makes any real difference. It does not matter that someone did not fill up the gas tank. It does not matter that three homilies in a row were inaudible. It does not matter that getting supper took twenty minutes and that what came out is not what I had ordered. It does not matter. The motto of Saint Aloysius of Gonzaga, *quid hoc ad aeternitatem?*—of what use is this for eternity?—comes to mind almost daily and I wonder whether I ever took it seriously. Now, in this community of retirement, we must.

Ultimately, this enterprise belongs to prayer, and it does not matter that I do not know how to pray better, that I still roam into embarrassing fantasies, and that I fall asleep trying to pray. Even that does not really matter, because, as Paul teaches, “the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings” (Ro 8:26). And note that this is not Ignatian spirituality: it is revelation.

Finally, being stripped is humiliating, and grumbling about food or housing hides from me my resistance to being humbled. While we have spent our lives working at the disciplined asceticism of love of self, all the new things in a new house, including companions, now face us with how well we have learned to love ourselves so that we can love our neighbor as ourselves. This is where the Examen now applies for us, and it’s significant that our constitutions mandate only the Examen and one other format for prayer, that being the prayer of petition.

⁶⁸ CN 229; ed. Padberg, 261.

11. All Along, the Prayer of Petition

While other religious traditions hold out paradigmatic ways of praying—the Benedictine *Qui cantet, bis orat*, the Franciscan *Laudato si'*, and the Carmelite quiet of love, to name a few—our institute offers Ignatian contemplation—not as a norm for our daily prayer but as a kind of exercise. On this point, the *Constitutions* and *Complementary Norms* are casual and adult about our personal prayer practices, content to say only that “the prayer in which God communicates himself more abundantly is the better prayer.”⁶⁹ But our documents are very clear when mandating occasions for the prayer of petition—to begin with, for the Company itself. The norms that correspond to part 8 of the *Constitutions* state a theological doctrine that Jesuit community “takes its origin from the will of the Father joining us into one.”⁷⁰ Consequent on this origin, every Jesuit’s first community is “the entire body of the Society itself,” which is a “worldwide brotherhood.”⁷¹

When it comes to “praying for the Society,” then, we have to think of the whole globe and all the people in it—friends and enemies, sacred and secular. And as Master Ignatius so insisted, we “should also pray for friends and benefactors, living and dead, whether they request these prayers or not,” and for any who “are of greater importance for the common good” wherever our men are laboring.⁷²

Of course, we are also to pray for the church. On this note, retired US Jesuits knew a church that was aggressively independent and self-sufficient, and many fondly remember that “one, holy, catholic and apostolic church” with churches full on Sundays of well-dressed people. This distinctly “separate” church, emphatically Catholic and emphatically American, is gone. We now experience a reality where “the earthly and the heavenly city penetrate each other” with both sinfulness

⁶⁹ CN 225.2; ed. Padberg, 257.

⁷⁰ CN 314.1; ed. Padberg, 319.

⁷¹ CN 314.2; ed. Padberg, 319.

⁷² *Const.* 638; ed. Padberg, 294.

and holiness, as the council declared.⁷³ And so our church, far from being independent and self-contained, is a global kingdom.

With this in mind, we want to focus our prayer on those whom our Company serves and those in authority who can help the people and our work. Just now, we are feeling “the temporal rulers and noble and powerful persons whose

It may turn out that what a retirement community needs to discern most is how to work together to create the community of love that Jesus Christ hopes for.

favor or disfavor does much toward opening or closing the gate to the service of God and the good of souls.”⁷⁴ Plainly, our prayer cannot be small and safe. We are praying with Christ, and his and “our struggle is not with

flesh and blood but with the principalities, with the powers, with the world rulers of this present darkness, with the evil spirits in the heavens” (Ep 6:12). As such, this conflict goes far beyond our imaginations; but the Church we pray for is not a fantasy. Rather, it is a collection of sinful, saved people who have been elected by God Almighty to live “human history, which sin will keep in great disarray until the splendor of God’s sons is fully revealed.”⁷⁵

From this perspective, our daily lives necessarily will reflect the concreteness of the church. We probably all have lists of family, friends, and colleagues whose needs we pray God to meet, as well as lists of the Jesuits who formed and governed us and of our close Jesuit friends. We also must listen to Jesus’s command to “love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you,” where the persecutors might include President Vladimir Putin and the Daniel Ortega as well as less awesome local politicians who have trouble handling the truth (Mt 5:44). In all of this, what matters is that I place myself in the neediest parts of the church, where Christians are beaten and driven away, where a dictator closes

⁷³ *Gaudium et Spes* (December 7, 1965), §40, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html, (hereafter cited as GS).

⁷⁴ *Const.* 824; ed. Padberg, 406.

⁷⁵ GS, §40.

our university and steals our residence, where bishops are drawn to wealth and power, and where parishioners have weak leaders. When I deliberately do this, I am making myself in a fresh way a man for those others who really need God's help and mercy. But if we don't make this payer regularly—if we are not one of those who mourns the ills of human history—who regularly mutter "God help us" at the news—then we have not been living our mission in a Jesuit retirement house.

12. A Jesuit Retirement Facility: A Place of Prayer . . .

Jerónimo Nadal (1507–1580) famously declared of us that by the journey, "the whole world becomes our house."⁷⁶ But now our home is not the road: our home is a house. But to be clear, we are not a spirituality center or a residence for Jesuits working in various ministries; rather, we are a house of prayer where each of us is called to pray. Furthermore, none of us is praying alone, even if we do not say the Office in common, and the *Constitutions* and *Complementary Norms* give some suggestions on how to do it.

The first means is daily Mass, since we are most essentially "a faith community that comes together in the Eucharist. . . . More than anything else," sharing in the Eucharist "makes us one companionship totally dedicated to Christ's mission in today's world."⁷⁷ And we can add to this some practices of the preconiliar novitiates and juniorates: "both communities and individuals should cherish daily converse with Christ the Lord in visiting the Blessed Sacrament."⁷⁸

Second, the *Complementary Norms* push another "daily converse": "Insofar as their apostolic character permits, Jesuit communities should come together daily for some brief common prayer."⁷⁹ Sadly, however, few of us have lived often in communities that

⁷⁶ Jerónimo Nadal, *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal*, V:54, quoted in John W. O'Malley, SJ, "To Travel to Any Part of the World: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation," *STUDIES* 16, no. 2 (March 1984): 6.

⁷⁷ CN 227.1; ed. Padberg, 259.

⁷⁸ CN 227.2; ed. Padberg, 259.

⁷⁹ CN 230; ed. Padberg, 261.

scheduled a daily time of common prayer. What is clear in a retirement community is that our “apostolic character” not only “permits” a time of common prayer but seems to ask for it.

A third suggestion to make our community a prayerful one is to get into spiritual conversations, dialogue, and discourse about our prayer and apostolic work. On this point, another norm requires that “at times” the superior schedule “a longer period for prayerful interchange as an opportunity for reflecting before God on the mission of the community and, at the same time, for expressing the apostolic character of our prayer.”⁸⁰ Yet even the superiors most interested in these gatherings find calling and planning them prickly affairs.

Nevertheless, Fr. General Arturo Sosa recently has required of every community a couple of such prayerful interchanges on the *De Statu* and even has urged moving them into communal discernment. But here, Fr. Sosa was not inventing something new, as the *Complementary Norms* had already decreed that “discernment, both personal and in community,” which “is central to our way of proceeding.”⁸¹ Note too that this discernment is not about ideas but is entirely practical. Leaving the final decision to the superior, it should reveal “the concrete ways whereby that mission is to be accomplished and the procedure by which it is to be evaluated and revised in the light of actual performance.”⁸²

Presumably, a superior reasonably can expect some communal discernment of a mature and stable community. However, we must reflect realistically on what difficulties this might pose for a retirement community. Think here of the wide range of physical, mental, social, and spiritual conditions among members of a community like ours and of how ready and able our men are to discern. It may turn out that what a retirement community needs to discern most is how to work together to create the community of love that Jesus Christ hopes for. Asking for his Spirit’s help, we too should hope for it.

⁸⁰ CN 226.2; ed. Padberg, 259.

⁸¹ CN 150.2; ed. Padberg, 221.

⁸² CN 151.1; ed. Padberg, 221.

13. . . . a Place of Suffering and Joy

Here, in the final days of our lives, we find how we have hoped in the Lord. For we are reminded by the daily news that we do not look forward to a humanity perfected by technology and living in peace. Plain observation proves how fatuous is that rationalistic hope. And revelation confirms that sin will keep the history of humankind will be “in great disarray until the splendor of God’s sons is fully revealed.”⁸³

The “splendor of God’s sons”—the horizon revealed to us—is the “resurrection of the body and life everlasting” that we declare in the Apostles’ Creed. More splendid still, as St. Paul teaches, is the hope that “creation itself would be set free from slavery to corruption and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God” (Ro 8:21). And “when our earthly pilgrimage is done, that we may come to an eternal dwelling place and live with you forever,” along with the Lady Mary and Joseph and all the other saints.⁸⁴

The days of our pilgrimage, though, can be long, especially when we get sick. During them, the *Complementary Norms* tell us, old Jesuits are missioned not only to “pray for the Church and the Society” but also to “unite their personal suffering and limitations to the worldwide salvific ministry of the Church and the Society.”⁸⁵ Of course, we have for all our Jesuit lives “offered up” our prayers and sufferings to God’s glory. But five centuries of recorded and reflected-on experience since the time of the first Companions make our offering something deeper. We can each say, with St. Paul, “in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of his body, which is the church” (Col 1:24). This opens some profound truths we have to consider in prayer.

We are the church, and it is our sufferings that Christ has still to undergo. This might give us pause, but Revelation says the profound

⁸³ GS, §40.

⁸⁴ Eucharistic Prayer for Use in Masses for Various Needs I, *The Roman Missal: English Translation according to the Third Typical Edition* (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Corp., 2011), 629.

⁸⁵ CN 244.3; ed. Padberg, 267.

reality is that “Christ’s sufferings overflow to us” (2 Co 1:5). In these long days, we are offered this consolation, the *conocimiento interior* that the limitations and sufferings we freely accept for the sake of his body, the church, are already the sufferings of Christ. Our affliction thus does not begin within our own human weakness. It begins, rather, as we might have grasped during the long retreat, with “what Christ our Lord suffers in his human nature, or desires to suffer.”⁸⁶

He is our creator and redeemer, who chose to suffer with us, beginning with his birth in an animal stall and ending with his bitter passion. And for our part, we are his mystical Body, members one of another, such that what we suffer is the overflow of the immense, unlimited love that the Trinity pours out on creation. In this vein, Pope Francis pointed out that we are, to “stretch the word” a bit, “co-creators” with God.⁸⁷ We now need to finish that: We are also, in a way, “co-sufferers” with Christ.

Theologians are now pointing out what some of the early Fathers of the Church knew: if the whole Trinity suffered with Jesus of Nazareth on his cross, then the whole Trinity suffers alike with each of us destined to be formed in his image, even when we suffer (Ro 8:29). From this perspective, he is creating us moment by moment, and he is creating our soul and the blood and the tissue filled with pain and the brain that manages it bluntly and badly. In short, God is free to choose to have human experiences and God is in fact choosing to have them. To put this another way, the human obedience and love of Jesus of Nazareth is the perfect human response to the infinite divine love God pours out creating. For through the Incarnation, we receive the graced experience that the limitations and sufferings each of us undergo, as our Redeemer has joined to his own humankind’s hoarse response to the love the Father is pouring on us all.

In living our mission here to pray, we might then begin by listening to the Spirit’s interpretation of our sicknesses and failings. “For as Christ’s

⁸⁶ *SpEx* 195; ed. Ganss, p. 82.

⁸⁷ Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, with Austen Ivereigh (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2020), 4.

sufferings overflow to us, so through Christ does our encouragement also overflow" (2 Co 1:5). And he is with us all days, even to the end.

14. . . . and Finally, a Place of Care for the Dying

Part 6 of the *Constitutions* deals with how matured Jesuits live. In tune with the Bona Mors Confraternity, this section begins with two paragraphs about our way of dying. They suggest first that a dying Jesuit "ought . . . to be aided by the very special prayers of all the members of the community, until he has given up his soul to his Creator" and receive Reconciliation and the Anointing of the Sick while able to appreciate them."⁸⁸ Also, as is well done in our houses, community members are faithfully to accompany him during his last days: "Besides others who may come in to witness the sick man's death, in greater or lesser number as the superior judges, some ought to be especially assigned to keep him company."⁸⁹ As Juan Polanco wrote this, he could hardly have forgotten that he had left the mortally ill Ignatius alone and resting quietly, had gone to finish a couple of urgent letters, and returned to find his friend dead. As such, we do not want to imitate him but rather are being careful to accompany our dying men, often in a group reciting the prayers for the dying.

Here, note that we Jesuits have always prayed for our dead. Apart from being one of the four monthly intentions for which we are to offer a Mass, "all the priests of the community should celebrate a Mass for his soul" the morning after a man's death, "and the rest should offer a special prayer asking God's mercy for him."⁹⁰ And in a particularly fine sign of brotherly care, "notice that the same should be done ought to be sent to the other places of the Society which the superior thinks proper" to prompt their prayers.⁹¹

⁸⁸ *Const.* 595–96; ed. Padberg, 266.

⁸⁹ *Const.* 596; ed. Padberg, 266.

⁹⁰ "Appendix II: Mass Intentions to Be Offered by Jesuits Each Month and Sacramental Formulas," *2023–2024 Jesuit Ordo: The Order of Celebration for the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours for Jesuits in the United States* (Chestnut Hill, MA: IJS, Boston College), 229; *Const.* 598; ed. Padberg, 268.

⁹¹ *Const.* 601; ed. Padberg, 268.

15. To End Where We Began

What will keep our Company going is the subject of part 10 of the *Constitutions*. Right at the beginning, we read:

It appears that care should be taken in general that all the members of the Society devote themselves to the solid and perfect virtues and to spiritual pursuits, and attach greater importance to them than to learning and other natural and human gifts. For these interior gifts are necessary to make those exterior means efficacious for the end which is being sought. . . . Such means are, for example, goodness and virtue, and especially charity, and a pure intention of the divine service, and familiarity with God our Lord in spiritual exercises of devotion, and sincere zeal for souls for the sake of the glory of the one who created and redeemed them and not for any other benefit."⁹²

The point here is that, while we may be retired from active ministry, we are not retired from being Jesuits. Indeed, we are still at work making our tree good so that the fruits will be good (Mt 7:15–20). And now, our tree is no longer in the wilderness of busyness and striving: instead, we are in an orchard where all of us are making the tree good.

This is true to the very end of our days: God does, for certain, love us as we are. But God loves us far too much to leave us as we are. For this reason, the Holy Spirit continues refining the treasure we hold in earthen vessels (2 Co 4:7).

At the end, the life that I am living now is the life I will live in glory—the same life; only then, “we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is” (1 Jn 3:2). This is God’s work, and it is his work that our Company has helped many men like our present community—and God only knows how many others of his making—to persevere to “be like him,” to his greater glory.

⁹² *Const.* 813; ed. Padberg, 400.

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