





# STUDIES

## in the Spirituality of Jesuits

On Continuity and Change. A Symposium, by

George E. Ganss, S.J.

John H. Wright, S.J.

John W. O'Malley, S.J.

Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J.

Avery Dulles, S.J.



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in the spirit of Vatican Council II

## THE AMERICAN ASSISTANCY SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

consists of a group of Jesuits from various provinces who are listed below. The members were appointed by the Fathers Provincial of the United States. The purpose of the Seminar is to study topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and to communicate the results to the members of the Assistancy. The hope is that this will lead to further discussion among all American Jesuits -- in private, or in small groups, or in community meetings. All this is done in the spirit of Vatican Council II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original charismatic inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the changed circumstances of modern times. The members of the Seminar welcome reactions or comments in regard to the topics they publish.

To achieve these purposes, especially amid today's pluralistic cultures, the Seminar must focus its direct attention sharply, frankly, and specifically on the problems, interests, and opportunities of the Jesuits of the United States. However, many of these interests are common also to Jesuits of other regions, or to other priests, religious men or women, or lay men or women. Hence the studies of the Seminar, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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## Editor's Introduction

The present symposium will be more easily understood if our readers know how the topic came to be treated. During the Assistancy Seminar's meeting of February 5 and 6, 1972, Father Walter L. Farrell, S.J., gave the members a progress report on the preparations for the Society's forthcoming General Congregation XXXII. Among other matters, he mentioned that one of the major problems and concerns, in the Church at large as well as in the Society, is that of continuity within reforms.

This led the Seminar to arrange a round table exploration at its next meeting, April 8 and 9, of the topic: Toward Finding Guiding Principles for Continuity and Change in the Society of Jesus. For example, what elements inherited from the past in the Society's Constitutions and traditions are still valid and helpful and hence should be retained, at least in substance? How can they be identified? And which elements, although serviceable in their day, ought perhaps now to be modified or even dropped?

One of our members, Father John H. Wright, consented to introduce the topic. The seminar further decided to invite three guests who had already published important studies pertinent to it. Hence on April 8, 1972, we had four quarter-hour presentations, those of Fathers Wright, John W. O'Malley, Leo J. O'Donovan, and Avery Dulles. Round table discussion followed.

Each speaker approached the topic from a different point of view. That is not surprising; but it did bring a surprise to the participants. The discussions seemed

to result more in several new approaches to the problem itself than in consensus or near consensus. Hence the topic took on new complexity and vastness which would require further exploration. Underlying the first enunciation of the problem, in the context of Father Farrell's presentation, was a perhaps unrecognized assumption, namely, that the problem was, at least in its origins, one which is predominantly legal and practical. That is true; but after the discussion it was also seen as one which could be much illumined by these new approaches which are more theoretical. Consequently, each speaker was requested to write his presentation (which had been chiefly oral) for further discussion. Moreover, because the legal problem of the "substantials" of the Institute of the Society of Jesus was seen to be an important element in the topic as a whole, the present editor was requested to compose a historical treatment of it and also this Foreword.

When the members of the Seminar had all five papers and could view them as a whole, they received still another surprise. The treatments, despite their different approaches to the problem, all pointed now in the same direction. Although the papers could not be said to bring forward a definitive solution of the problem, we seemed to have more convergences than differences. With regard to all of this, however, we invite our readers to be the final judges.

2. The "Substantials" of the Institute of the Society of Jesus  
George E. Ganss, S.J.

When the men or women who comprise some group become deeply and inspirationally convinced of a common purpose and cast about for a long-lasting means to achieve it, they commonly set themselves to compose a set of statutes or constitutions. This collection will be the code by which the members freely agree to abide for unified effort in pursuing their ends. It will also be the touchstone to judge those who freely apply for membership or to correct those who cease to cooperate. For any member, the original inspiring vision may occasionally be irritatingly confined by the code and the structures or traditions it sets up to achieve the common purpose. But without this institutionalization, the vision itself will soon dissipate and the organization will vanish.

By composing the code the founding members, whether aware of it or not, have entered the realm of law and all that it entails. Law is only one of many factors necessary to keep an organization existent and vital. But it is indispensable and the other factors cannot succeed if left without it. However, a code or constitution brings a train of consequences and contingencies. For example, with the passing of time this or that statute may require modification or else it will cease to be a good means toward attaining the organization's purpose. Or, what is a good means at one time may become even an obstacle in the new circumstances of a later date. On the other hand, some of the statutes seem to be essential to the very vision which originated the organization. If the modifications of them should be carried too far, it could cease to be what it originally was. In that case too the basic vision or purpose would no longer be achieved. Many members might find the sacrifices necessary for membership no longer worthwhile. Then the organization might wither.

All this could easily be exemplified through the history of many a religious institute, or through the founding fathers of the United States and its late constitutional history. The Constitution of 1783, some twelve pages in length, has by now been augmented by twenty-six amendments and a library of cases and interpretations. For our purposes, the process is

strikingly exemplified in a problem with which the delegates were faced in May, 1965, when they assembled for General Congregation XXXI of the Society of Jesus.

Awaiting them were hundreds of petitions (postulata), from individuals and provincial congregations, calling for reexamination or changes in regard to our legislation about prayer, grades, poverty, obedience, the life term of the general, community life, ministries, provincial congregations, and what not else. But many of those items were clearly among the "substantials of the Institute" (substantialia Instituti) which, according to the Epitome Instituti Societatis Iesu (no. 23, §§ 1, 2, 3), were "unchangeable," which a general congregation could indeed explain but not alter, and which provincial congregations were not permitted to treat. "Unchangeable"--by whom? Surely the pope could alter those laws. Many delegates thought that a solution lay in this: what one general congregation decrees can be revised or abrogated by a later congregation. Not so, others countered. At least the more important decrees of earlier congregations came under later papal approvals, for example, in 1584, 1814, 1886, and 1933. Hence they too had become papal laws outside the jurisdiction of a general congregation. What a tangle of laws and opinions there was at that date, May, 1965!

One key to unravelling the tangle is knowledge of the history of the problem. In capsule form, that history is this. Since the Society was novel in many respects, its Institute was attacked from within and without. Amid these efforts to pull the Society back into greater conformity with previous religious institutes, the early general congregations countered extremist proposals by stating that the "substantials" of the Institute should be preserved. Although they gave a description and a few examples, they used this term according to its metaphorical meaning in common parlance, as one of us might say, "I agree with the substance of your address." They thought it inexpedient to give a "scholastic definition" or a complete list. Gradually over the centuries, however, one or another point was termed "a substantial" in a general congregation and a list grew. In 1923 General Congregation XXVII, acting amid the atmosphere which had just

produced the codification of canon law, used the word "substantials" in a new and more technical sense, and drew up the long list<sup>1</sup> found in Epitome, no. 22. By 1965, however, many of these items found essential in the 1920's seemed to many unsuitable and productive of widespread unrest in the new circumstances of the 1960's. Hence General Congregation XXXI retained the earlier description of the "substantials" but dropped the lengthy list which too much impeded adaptation to changing circumstances.

The capsule description just given has now put us in position to review the whole history in greater detail, by studying key highlights of it in a more technical and documentary manner. God guided Ignatius of Loyola to a world view, stimulating a dynamic apostolic spirituality, which he inspirationally communicated to his nine companions. In 1539 they asked: Should each go his own apostolic way? Then their vision would die with themselves. Or should they try to preserve this charism by forming themselves into a new religious institute? They decided on the latter course and composed the "five chapters" of the First Sketch of the Institute of the Society of Jesus. These chapters were incorporated into the papal bull approving the Society in 1540, Regimini. It authorized Ignatius and the council of his companions to compose his more detailed statutes, the Constitutions of the Society. After ten years of experience, revision of some details was found necessary and incorporated into the new bull of 1550, Exposcit debitum, henceforth commonly called the Formula of the Institute.

In General Congregation I, assembled in 1558 to consider and approve the Constitutions then still in manuscript, it was asked whether it was licit to change anything in them. The congregation decreed that "nothing was to be done about the substantial Constitutions of our Institute" (" . . . de Constitutionibus substantialibus nostri Instituti," in Institutum S.J., [Florence, 1892-1893], II, 162, abbreviated hereafter as InstSJ). Here the word "substantial" has the non-technical meaning.

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<sup>1</sup> To make reference easy, this list is transcribed below as an Appendix, pages 7-10.

Ignatius himself had used substantia in this sense when he wrote of "la substantia de nuestro Instituto" in Constitutions, [193], and in related senses elsewhere (ibid., [2, 199, 801]). Little or no new meaning was added when G. C. II in 1565 stated that "nothing pertaining to the substantials of our Institute should be changed" (InstSJ, II, 195). Neither was new meaning added when G. C. IV in 1581 forbade the members of provincial congregations even to speak there, under any pretext whatsoever, of anything which is "against the essentials of the Society's Institute and Constitutions" (ibid., 253). It is interesting to note, in passing, that "essentials" (essentialia) was used as a synonym for "substantials" (substantialia).

From 1585 to 1590, however, serious troubles were brought on by the group of malcontents (perturbatores) in Spain. They enlisted in their cause the Inquisition and even Pope Sixtus V, whose incipient abetment was cut short by his death in 1590. They desired curtailment of the general's powers, alteration of manifestation of conscience, an unfavorable declaration about the vows of the scholastics, and a change in the title "Society of Jesus." Amid that turmoil many provincial congregations pressed G. C. V (1593-1594) for a declaration on: "What are the substantials of our Institute" which we are forbidden to discuss? After long discussion the congregation replied: "Those matters which are explicitly contained in the Formula of the Institute proposed to Julius III and which were confirmed by him and his other successors; or those matters which in the Formula were referred to our Constitutions for explanation, are . . . substantials of our Institute. And although there are other matters which pertain to the substance of our Institute, the Congregation has judged that it should not treat of them now . . ." (ibid., 274).

That description, however, did not remove the obscurities which had troubled many delegates. Hence in an "intercession" they pressed for further declaration as to what the substantials are, plus a list of some examples, to which the words "and matters similar to these" were to be added (ibid., 275). The Congregation obliged. The substantials are those

matters contained in the Formula of the Institute, and also "those matters without which those substantials cannot or can scarcely survive, such as . . . ." Five examples were given pertinent to the contemporary troubles: essential impediments to admission, dismissals without a judicial process, manifestation of conscience, manifesting others, and being manifested (*ibid.*, 282; cf. 594). The term "substantials" was now becoming more technical, and also accompanied by a list which would grow.

Pressure to augment the list increased. In G. C. VI (1608), a decree was passed "in favor of the substantials" that if even one delegate in a provincial congregation regarded a matter as one of the substantials, it was not to be treated (*ibid.*, 296). In G. C. VII (1609), petitions (postulata) again called for a catalogue of the substantials which provincial congregations were forbidden to treat. But after much deliberation, G. C. VII stated: ". . . beyond those matters stated in the Formula, it seems better to abstain deliberately from enumerating others, because they cannot all be included in a brief compendium" (*ibid.*, 330-331).

Limitations of space make it advisable to advance immediately to G. C. XXVII in 1923. The spirit of the time throughout the Church was one of righteous pride over the new Code of Canon Law of 1918. All the scattered and unwieldy Church legislation had been gathered, reviewed, strained, and then compressed into the 2,414 canons printed in one brief manual. A similar effort within the Society, sanctioned by G. C. XXVI in 1915, was brought to completion in G. C. XXVII (1923). It compressed into a collection of 318 brief decrees all the earlier ones of preceding congregations considered to be still valid. This collection was soon incorporated into the Epitome Instituti Societatis Iesu (1924, reprinted 1962).

G. C. XXVII was adapting the Society's law to the Church's new Code and the spirit which produced it. Hence the Congregation gave much attention to its chapter on "The Conservation of the Institute" (Collectio decretorum, nos. 12-16, repeated in Epitome Instituti, nos. 21-27); but it devoted little thought and no chapter to "The Adaptation of the Institute to Emerging Needs." It did not point out that what is important

or even substantial in one era may become unimportant or obstructive in another. And it added "immutable" to the definition of the substantials.

G. C. XXVII repeated the former definition of the substantials (Epitome, 21). Then it added a long list of matters it deemed substantial, some thirty-five items. It divided these into substantials of the first and second rank (*ibid.*, 22), and declared those of the first rank to be immutable (*ibid.*, 23). Seemingly, the reason for the immutability was history: Because of their reverence for Ignatius' Constitutions past general congregations had not changed them, and presumably future congregations would desire to show equal reverence. The congregation also reaffirmed the prohibition against treating of the substantials in provincial congregations or sending in petitions against them (*ibid.*, 722, § 2).

By 1965, all this put G. C. XXVII into contrast and conflict with the new spirit which had arisen in the world--the spirit which is reflected in the documents of Vatican Council II and G. C. XXXI. Both these bodies were concerned with both conservation and adaptation to modern circumstances, with continuity and changes. Throughout the Society many items which G. C. XXVII had listed as substantials were thought by many Jesuits to need modification or even abrogation, for example, the grades, or the life term of the general, or details of poverty. Some provincial congregations thought themselves still bound by the prohibition against discussing the substantials. But others, perhaps the majority, by intricate reasoning right or wrong thought that at least they had an excusing cause from the prohibition. Hence a truly great number of petitions awaiting the delegates who arrived in Rome in May, 1965, did request discussion, change, or abolition of numerous items hitherto listed as substantials.

In this atmosphere, G. C. XXXI produced its Decree 4 on "The Conservation and Renewal of the Institute." It reaffirmed the general description: the substantials are those matters contained in the Formula, and also those necessary for the preservation of those in it. The former can be explained by a general congregation but changed only by the Holy See; the latter may be changed by a general congregation when their connection with the Formula has been weakened by new circumstances. However, the



detailed listing of the substantials in Epitome, no. 22 (which is transcribed from Collectio decretorum Congregationum Generalium S.I. [1923, 1961]) was found to be inexpedient for our times and so was abrogated. Provincial congregations, too, were given the right to treat of the substantials. The norm for adaptations was clearly stated: whatever will contribute most in the circumstances to the knowledge, love, praise, and service of God. For St. Ignatius clearly conceived all our laws as means to God's greater glory and the help of souls.

Through these procedures of G. C. XXXI, we are hopefully in position to proceed in modern times toward providing both for proper continuity and for fitting changes or updating. The original and inspirational charism or vision is our most important heritage. Some laws, structures, and traditions are necessary to preserve it. But they are now clearly seen as means to further that charism, God's greater glory and the help of souls. Suitability as an apt means to attain St. Ignatius' major ends seems to be the chief test for naming something substantial in any given era.

#### Appendix. The Abrogated List of Substantials

For purposes of handy reference, the list which General Congregation XXXI found it expedient to abrogate is presented here, translated from Epitome Instituti Societatis Iesu, no. 22. It is important to notice that abrogation of the list as being an unsatisfactory or even troublesome catalogue did not abrogate any of the substantials which were on it.

\*                    \*                    \*

22--The substantials of the kind just described are those enumerated below and others like them, which have been added to the substantials either by a General Congregation or by the General for temporary usage:

#### I. The substantials of the first rank: contained in the Formula of the Institute

§ 1. The first substantial is that our Society is designated by the

name of Jesus.

§ 2. In respect to the end of the Society: It should devote itself not only to the salvation and perfection of its own members but also to the salvation and perfection of our fellowmen, by working for the defense and propagation of the faith and the progress of souls in Christian life.

§ 3. In respect to its universal government:

1<sup>o</sup>. The highest authority, to which the General himself is subject, is vested in the General Congregation, which ought to be convoked for affairs of greater moment.

2<sup>o</sup>. Only the General Congregation has authority to establish Constitutions, to change them once established, and to determine other more serious and perpetual matters.

3<sup>o</sup>. The Superior General is to be elected by a General Congregation.

4<sup>o</sup>. The form of government in the Society is monarchical, contained in the determinations of the one Superior.

5<sup>o</sup>. The Superior General, except for the matters reserved to a General Congregation, has full authority; and he exercises it, not in a capitular manner nor through a deliberative vote of his consultors, but with a vote merely consultative.

6<sup>o</sup>. The assignment of grades and the distribution of offices belongs entirely to the Superior General or those to whom he communicates this authority.

7<sup>o</sup>. The nature of government in the Society is paternal, so that it shows the gentleness, kindness, and charity of Christ.

§ 4. In respect to government in particular:

1<sup>o</sup>. Admission to the Society or the first vows is exercised by the Superiors, and not in a capitular manner or by a deliberative vote of the Consultors.

2<sup>o</sup>. Even those not solemnly professed can be admitted to sacred orders.

3<sup>o</sup>. There is not a determined time for admission to one's grade; that is, no one is to be raised to his grade unless he has given full satisfaction to the Society.

§ 5. In respect to general means:

1<sup>o</sup>. In the Society there are diverse grades: those of the Scholastics, the Coadjutors spiritual as well as temporal, and the solemnly Professed.

2<sup>o</sup>. The Society of Jesus and its individual members, especially the solemnly Professed, serve with a special obligation of obedience to the Roman Pontiff.

3<sup>o</sup>. The norm of living in the Society, in respect to food, clothing, and other exterior matters, is adjusted to the approved and common usage of upright priests; and it does not include ordinary bodily penances which are to be practiced under obligation.

4<sup>o</sup>. The Society does not hold choir.

5<sup>o</sup>. All ought to be ready to spend their lives in any region of the world where there is hope of greater service of God and help of souls; also, to be ready for any offices and ministries, especially for any missions whatsoever.

§ 6. In respect to particular means:

1<sup>o</sup>. The vows of the Scholastics and Coadjutors, although perpetual, are simple, not solemn; perpetual on the side of the members, but with a perpetuity subject to a condition on the side of the Society; nevertheless, those who pronounce them are truly and properly religious.

2<sup>o</sup>. The Professed pronounce four solemn vows.

3<sup>o</sup>. They are not able to acquire, even in common, any civil right to any produce or to the retention of any stable goods, except those which are proper for their own use and habitation.

4<sup>o</sup>. Superintendency over the temporal goods belongs to the Professed Society, which however may not convert any of the goods of the colleges to its own uses (Formula, [5]).

5<sup>o</sup>. No compensation for the ministries proper to the Society, as enumerated in the Formula, may be allowed.

6<sup>o</sup>. All ought to show obedience to their Superiors, and they should acknowledge Christ as present in them; and they ought to excel in this virtue, seeing that it is peculiar to the Society.

7<sup>o</sup>. The chief ministries of the Society are: for the defense and

propagation of the faith and the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine, to carry on public sermons and lectures and any other ministry whatsoever of the word of God; to give the Spiritual Exercises; to hear the confessions of the faithful and administer the other sacraments; and to exercise works of charity, in accordance with what will seem best for the greater glory of God and the common good.

II. The substantials of the second rank: connected with those mentioned above

§ 7. General Congregations have declared the following to be substantials:

1<sup>o</sup>. There are some essential impediments which exclude one from the Society.

2<sup>o</sup>. It is not necessary to use the judicial form in dismissals; and after the Code the Holy See confirmed this, except only for the dismissal of the solemnly Professed.

3<sup>o</sup>. The account of conscience is to be given to the Superior; and the Holy See approved this prescription after the Code.

4<sup>o</sup>. Each one ought to be content that all the defects noticed in himself should be manifested to Superiors by anyone who has known them outside of confession or the account of conscience, and not through the seeking of counsel under promise of secrecy.

5<sup>o</sup>. All ought to be willing to manifest one another with proper love and charity.

6<sup>o</sup>. The Superior General is elected for life.

7<sup>o</sup>. The Society exercises provident care over the General through the Assistants and the Admonitor.

8<sup>o</sup>. A Provincial Congregation has no jurisdiction.

9<sup>o</sup>. The novitiate in the Society ordinarily has a duration of two years.

10<sup>o</sup>. After the studies in the Society are completed, the third probation ordinarily precedes the final vows of priests.

11<sup>o</sup>. The vow of poverty of the formed Coadjutors has the same effects as a solemn vow.

### 3. Continuity and Change in the Renewal of the Society of Jesus

John H. Wright, S.J.

The Second Vatican Council summoned the whole Church to a new openness to the vivifying power of the Holy Spirit. In particular, it invited religious to renew themselves both as individuals and as communities. It indicated two ways in which this religious renewal was to take place, first, by the return to the original sources which inspired the foundations of the particular community, and second, by adaptation of the life of the community to the present circumstances of the world. The first of these principles is a principle of continuity, the second a principle of change. The Council made no real attempt to inter-relate these principles either theoretically or practically. It is not immediately clear how a principle of continuity and a principle of change can be both operative at the same time. Indeed, in some cases, the attempt to put these principles into operation has resulted in confusion, sometimes even in catastrophe.

Evidently there are ways of understanding these principles that are inconsistent with the kind of renewal to which the Council is calling us. The return to sources cannot be simply a literal and wooden reinstallation of what was said or done at some period in the past. Neither, on the other hand, can adaptation be simply "conformity to this world," a kind of cultural transformation by the circumstances around us that would destroy our religious identity.

Let us first consider how principles of continuity and change operate generally in human society and then look at the task that confronts us in the renewal of the Society of Jesus.

#### I

The basic continuity in any human enterprise is found in the goals that it pursues, and in the enduring intention of pursuing them. A society or a profession is recognizably one and the same throughout a long history because its pursuit of a goal remains the same. These goals may be regarded from two points of view, either as abstract values or as concrete embodiments of those values. For example, the practice of medicine as a

profession throughout many centuries, even many millenia, has remained identifiably one because its goal, namely health, has remained the same. The means medicine has used to promote health have varied greatly. Nevertheless, there has remained an identifiable, continuous profession which is that of medicine. Or take another example. The profession of law has been a concern for the orderly processes that promote the common good. Particular laws, methods of interpretation and enforcement may vary throughout history and from culture to culture; and yet law as an identifiably unified area of human concern remains continuously the same. It should be noted that concrete goals can sometimes become obsolete, although the abstract value remains and continues to inspire in a new concrete embodiment. For example, the Order of Trinitarians for the Redemption of Captives had as a concrete goal at its origin that of rescuing Christians from enslavement to the Saracens. This is no longer a problem, and yet the values of freedom and generosity continue to draw people to this vocation.

We may say in general that so long as the abstract value or goal remains identifiably the same, and so long as it continues to find some concrete embodiment and thereby to draw and to determine human choice effectively, then we have within the area affected by this goal a basic continuity. The human enterprise, society, or profession can be seen as enduring.

Adaptation to circumstances in human undertakings generally comes about in two basic ways: (1) the abstract goal is concretely embodied in a different way; change in this instance is sometimes fairly radical; or (2) the means being used to pursue the goal are changed and made more effective. However, there is a third kind of adaptation which is even more profound than either of these. In this case the abstract value itself, while remaining identifiably the same, is understood differently, and expressed differently because of the different conceptual framework in which it is now grasped and expressed. When this kind of change takes place, a new understanding develops that requires adaptations all along the line. For example, truth as a value may remain constant, and yet the way in which truth is understood, for example, in scientific or religious

matters, can vary. And as that variation takes place, the concrete embodiments of this value and the means employed in pursuing it will also shift. Scientific truth, to take one example, was at one time conceived as a set of laws which governed the operation of the material universe as if it were a great machine. All things were thought to be subject in their least details to these unvarying, inexorable laws. Scientific truth no longer is thought of as being found in laws of this sort but in statistical generalizations expressing relatively constant aspects of the universe in which chance and spontaneity and freedom are genuine characteristics.

Religious truth, too, has undergone some kind of change in its basic understanding. If you think of religious truth as finally and definitively embodied in certain propositions, then the only conceivable development or change that can take place is the translation of these same propositions into other languages, along with logical deductions of the implications of these propositions. If, however, religious truth is thought of as being found first in a continuing revelation of God in the interior of the human spirit and in the events of history, a revelation that reached a summit of meaning in the Incarnation, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, then religious truth will not be expressed in any final set of propositions, but in the ongoing attempts of human concepts and language to tell ever more perfectly what God continues to communicate to us. This does, of course, require great attention and respect in regard to earlier propositional formulations; but the process of change is not merely one of deduction.

The kind of change that we are experiencing today and the sort of adaptation that we are making seem to fall largely into this third, most profound kind of adaptation, both in the Church and in the Society of Jesus. An expanding vision makes the older formulations simply a special instance, a particular way in which the self-communication of God can be understood, rather than a timeless and invariable formula. It is somewhat like Euclidian space which, in a relativistic world manifesting an Einsteinian space-time continuum, is a special instance. It is not false, but it is no longer seen as an adequate expression of the structure of the world.

## II

The task, then, that confronts us may be summed up under four headings, the first of which concerns continuity, and the other three adaptation. First, we must recall and express abstractly and symbolically the values that originally inspired the Society of Jesus and have been continuously operative in her history. Second, we must see whether these values should be reformulated or reconceptualized in the light of expanding human awareness in other fields. In doing this we must carefully note the basis of identity or continuity between the new and the old formulations. Third, we must consider how these newly formulated values may best be embodied today. Attention here, of course, must be given to the ways in which they are de facto embodied; but we must seek for the best possible embodiment, all things considered. This will affect both our inner life as a community of Christians sharing with one another, and also our apostolates as we endeavor to share our faith and Christian life with others. Fourth, we must ask what means today, all things considered, are most suited to work toward these goals, toward the effective embodiment of these enduring values in our world.

It is clear that the renewal of the Society of Jesus requires an intensification in our continuity and a boldness and confidence in our adaptation. Without genuine, basic continuity we evidently cease to be; and without creative adaptation inspired by the Holy Spirit we become ineffective and irrelevant.



#### 4. Change and Continuity in Jesuit History

John W. O'Malley, S.J.

Historians constantly wrestle with the problem of change and continuity. Most people today probably view the historian as dealing primarily with change. He tells us how things were long ago, and we expect to be struck with how different they are today. "How times have changed!"

Curiously enough, one of the most important ways in which things have changed is the way we view the historian's task. Only within the past few centuries has the historian been considered as dealing primarily with change. Formerly he was supposed to deal with stability. Earlier ages expected him to guarantee continuity in human history. He reassured the present that it was not really different from the past.

During the Italian Renaissance a sophisticated consciousness of discrepancy between past and present began to develop. That consciousness expanded through the centuries to produce the acute sensitivity to anachronism which characterizes contemporary man and especially the contemporary historian. What distinguishes contemporary historical consciousness from previous consciousness is its awareness of discontinuity or change in history. The contemporary historian finds he must reject older "philosophies of history" which stressed continuity--variously described as historical "substantialism," "primitivism," "moralism," and the like--for a philosophy of history which can deal more successfully with the fact of change.

The source of change in history is not hard to discover. It is man himself, the subject of the historian's inquiry. Man is, within limits, free. He is capable of change. He can reverse himself, be discontinuous with himself. If this discontinuity is in favor of religion, we call it conversion. If the discontinuity has sufficient political and social repercussions, we call it revolution. If the discontinuity has ecclesiastical repercussions and supposedly is in melius, we call it reform.

There are notable discontinuities between the Luther of 1505 and the Luther of 1545. Because of an unusual convergence of factors, this means there are notable discontinuities between the Germany of 1505 and the Germany of 1545. Somewhat closer to home, there are notable discontinuities between the Ignatius of 1515 and the Ignatius of 1555, with corresponding

discontinuities between the Catholicism of 1515 and the Catholicism of 1555.

For the historian, perhaps the most disturbing area of historical discontinuity is that of historical interpretation. The historian's understanding of the past changes. Thus discontinuity cuts into the historian's own home territory. Nineteenth-century historians, for example, labored diligently over their "definitive" studies and their "authentic" interpretations. They were serious, honest, and highly qualified professionals. Today their definitive studies are being redefined, and their authentic interpretations are criticized for being more redolent of the nineteenth century than of the antique era they were discussing.

De Guibert's study of Jesuit spirituality provides us with a striking recent instance of this phenomenon of shifting authenticity. His book is a work of great merit, but as one reads it today it is hard to believe that it was written only a generation ago. Missing entirely from the book, for instance, is any mention of "communal discernment." From De Guibert's description of the style of Jesuit spirituality and obedience, it would be possible to infer that he might even consider such discernment foreign to our spirit. Even the idea of the Jesuit as a "contemplative in action," so familiar to us, is barely adverted to by De Guibert. On the other hand, emphasis is placed on the need for superiors to humble their subjects by imposing "severe reprimands and harsh penances" for the slightest failures in obedience. The spiritual style of St. John Berchmans and St. Aloysius is described with detail and approval, whereas Matteo Ricci is not mentioned at all. St. John de Britto is mentioned only casually. What I am trying to say is that De Guibert's study, which received such widespread approbation in Jesuit circles upon its first appearance, would hardly be as uncritically accepted today. What has happened?

We have changed. The documents have not changed. The data which the past offers has not changed. We have changed. The historian, even the historian of spirituality, stands in history and changes with it. Therefore, as he reads the past he reads it differently than his predecessors did. He reads it to find answers to his questions, and thus he extracts from it different responses. Like his predecessors, he

highlights some aspects of the data and he throws other aspects into the shadows. He is not being perverse or dishonest as he does this. On the contrary, he is being honest. He can only ask questions which are meaningful and relevant to himself and to his own generation.

The disconcerting result of such a fact, however, is that we have a shifting authenticity and a changing past. The past changes--that is, our understanding of the past changes--because we change. We have a different past than our predecessors did because we are different. Honest study of the past will never provide us with a neat system of defined substantialia which will successfully defy all revisionism. Nor will it provide us with a definitively authentic statement of our spirituality. Such a task is beyond human capabilities.

Where does this leave us? Is not the very idea of "Jesuit spirituality" eviscerated of all meaning if each person and each generation changes it to suit its own needs? All authenticity and continuity seem lost. And if authenticity and continuity are lost, so is identity. The problem is a serious one.

It is perhaps also a problem which we have so far viewed too exclusively in terms of change. Contemporary historians are so preoccupied with what changes in history that they often fail to give due attention to history's continuities. But in some ways the continuities are more impressive than the changes.

In discussing history, however, we must first of all recall that the past does not live in the present except in ourselves, in our conscious or unconscious memories. The past which is not remembered is a past which does not exist. The past viewed either as continuity or as discontinuity is a past created within ourselves. Nonetheless, there are realities outside ourselves which allow us to re-create the past for ourselves. These realities, though they can be employed as data for discovering discontinuities, very often are also our best source for discovering and preserving a sense of continuity, a sense of identity. For the sake of simplicity, they can be reduced to two categories: forms and documents.

A Gothic cathedral is a form. It suggests, perhaps even requires,

a certain style of worship. It tends to impose a certain continuity in deportment and, thus, a certain continuity in attitude. Rules of etiquette do the same thing. In an organization, rules of procedure or methods of government do the same. Forms form. Sudden and frequent changes in form, no matter how convincingly justified on a rational basis, can be destructive for the organization because they break the sense of continuity within it. They break the sense of identity and make self-definition more difficult. These forms should be changed only for serious reasons. Ignatius' instinct for this psychological truth emerges simply from the fact that he imposed on the Society a constitutional form.

Nevertheless, at times the external forms must be changed, unless the organization is to suffer great harm or even die. We can only view the regularization of papal elections in the eleventh century by putting them into the hands of the cardinals, for instance, as a proper move. It saved the papacy from baronial and imperial domination. But it was a move which would lead to almost a redefinition of the papal office. In other words, changes of form are sometimes necessary, though they almost invariably imply an interruption of one aspect of continuity. In this type of change, continuity of form is, hopefully, being sacrificed for a more vital authenticity.

The other source for continuity is written documents when they are studied as sources of inspiration and self-definition. These documents are subject to the interpretative vagaries of each individual who reads them. Each reader imposes his own limitations on their meaning. At the same time, the documents impose their limitations on the reader. No person of sound mind, for instance, will maintain that the style and spirit of the Rule of St. Benedict is the same as the style and spirit of the Spiritual Exercises. Every sensitive student of the Spiritual Exercises will discover a continuity of understanding between himself and other sensitive students which in most cases will be stronger than the differences of interpretation. This should be especially true if the Exercises have been used as an instrument for personal conversion and not merely as an historical document. As Jesuits we are extremely fortunate to have such a document as a force for cohesion and continuity

among us. It is one of those primordial statements which has been a source of almost limitless religious meaning. This is a phenomenon which can be historically verified, even without entering into the more theological and fundamental question of the continuity of God's call to us.

Besides these two external, almost palpable, sources for a sense of continuity, there is another which is less easily grasped. It is what we might call tradition or, more accurately, a community of interpretation. Historians are produced by a previous generation of historians, and hence they are culturally linked with them. Given the limitations of human intelligence and imagination, historians can only in part break their interpretative dependence on their mentors. This is the other side of the fact that the historian himself cannot step outside history.

Jesuits are formed by a previous generation of Jesuits. In so many subtle ways, for better or for worse, we are culturally linked with them, continuous with them. Even if we wanted a complete break with this tradition, it would not be psychologically possible for us. It is this realization which has often been the source of despair for religious reformers!

In balance, it perhaps has to be admitted that historical continuities are stronger than their discontinuities. It is the professional hazard of historians to overemphasize the discontinuities, just as it seems endemic to Catholicism, and especially to religious orders within Catholicism, to overemphasize the continuities.

If we are to survive as a vital and viable organization, we must not allow ourselves to be locked into a system of procedures or substantialia which answered the questions of some previous generation but which do not answer ours. We must retain our intelligence, our freedom, and our cultivation of "the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts." All societies perforce change, whether they want to or not, whether they are aware of it or not. Our care must be only that our change is "authentic." Where we differ from previous generations of Jesuits is that we are forced to admit a shifting or a manifold or, in perhaps more Thomistic terms, an analogous authenticity.

What was authentic for Aquaviva is not necessarily authentic for us. What was authentic for De Guibert is not necessarily authentic for us.

On the other hand, if we wish to remain faithful to St. Ignatius' inspiration, we must be cautious about changing forms which help give a sense of continuity with it. Here, however, we have perhaps been overly cautious in the past. Most important of all, certainly, is the realization that we must insist upon recourse to those documents of our tradition which best capture the primordial experience of God's call. Our interpretation of the meaning of these documents will vary, but the attempt to live in accordance with them should evoke in us a sense of continuity backwards in history and, perhaps even more significant, a sense of continuity and bond with all Jesuits trying to live their vocations today.

## 5. Reflections on Continuity, Identity, and Fulfillment

Leo J. O'Donovan, S.J.

For our discussion of continuity and change in the present development of the Society of Jesus I should like to propose three theses which situate the idea of continuity in an explicitly anthropological and theological way. These brief reflections are meant to contribute to a clarification of some presuppositions which we often neglect to examine before evaluating whether new undertakings or ways of life can be characterized as Jesuit in any meaningful sense of the word. And wherever the presuppositions on what it means to "remain Jesuit" are assumed rather than personally assimilated, the level of community anxiety, distrust, and ineffectiveness seems to rise rather considerably.

My first thesis would be this: The continuity of truly personal reality may have an important natural base, but it is primarily and critically a free achievement.

I mean to distinguish here between the continuum which is subject to study by physical science, the continuum which is represented by man's factual presence in the universe over the last one or two million years, and the continuum of a personally free mankind which has generated the phenomenon of history as such. The first of these, the physical continuum, may be said to be ultimately meaningless without the latter two, the fact of man's presence in the world and the history of his presence; indeed, it seems proper to say that it exists for them. But a crucial insight into the relations among the various sciences of our world today recognizes that however much they may be related and interdependent, nevertheless special methods are appropriate to each, and a special method is above all appropriate for studying and understanding the world not only as including man but as specifically historical. (Insistence on this point, I think, is one of the chief contributions of Bernard Lonergan's Insight.) Every idea of continuity which is applied to real personal history embodies and relates to countless other ideas on the relation between the individual and society, on the study of man and of history, on the personal and historical dialectic of chance, necessity,

and freedom. There are always, in other words, anthropological and historiographical presuppositions to any idea of continuity we use in whatever context. Here the revealing, diagnostic question is: What do we think of as typically continuous? Is it inanimate nature or human nature, the self or mankind, history or, perhaps, the Church? What, to put it another way, is our model for continuity?

So often we confuse the natural base of continuity with its true essence. Most typically we try to overcome a static, reified view of the world by conceiving it instead in terms of some organic model--with the continuity appropriate to nature apart from man. But a more adequate philosophical reflection on nature shows it to be unthinkable apart from man. "Nature" can only be finally thought out when it is conceived as freely subsumed by the more comprehensive reality of which we ourselves form an irreplaceable part: the human race, mankind. In man the order of nature is brought into a new system of relations which are subject to ratification or rejection, development or dissolution, according as an informed and free society chooses. And thus the natural base of continuity in the most fully human sense is constituted by any aspect of man which exists prior to, and one might say in anticipation of, free personal assumption and integration of the human material in question, be it a mental ability, a social issue, or a venerable institution.

What I am trying to emphasize here is the difference between continuity which is natural and that which is truly personal. In Karl Rahner's words, "man is a 'person' in so far as he freely disposes of himself by his decision, possesses his own definitive reality in the act of making a free decision about himself. By 'nature' is meant all that in man which must be given prior to this disposal of himself, as its object and the condition of its possibility, and in so far as this is the case" (Theological Investigations, I, page 362, footnote 2). From the point of view of our present discussion, then, I think it can be said that established orders of every kind, individual and social, form the natural basis from which we must continuously create an open future and in that way achieve continuity with our past.



Continuity with our past and future is a matter above all of free responsibility, of the effort to carry forward the best of the past into a future which is fundamentally mysterious and, even more markedly than the present, contingent to its core. Particularly at those critical junctures when new patterns of human experience seem to be emerging, continuity may be supported but it is never guaranteed by established orders or by structures of any sort. The continuity of human time can never be automatic or mechanical, though we so often incline to conceive it so, and this is true in analogous ways for the historical person and the historical period. In the response to challenges, in action and endurance, we must again and again generate continuity and live it out from within, not follow it through from without. (This is a point on which we can learn from those biologists who understand life not as a property added on to matter but rather as a development of the inner potentialities of matter; "interiority" of some sort is thus an unavoidable category for a truly self-conscious science of life. It is, incidentally, in Rahner's systematic reflection on this truth that he has developed his valuable notion of active self-transcendence under the transcendental causality of God; this he sees as the fundamental structure of the created order which develops as a unified, redeemed process including irreducible discontinuity.)

What I have been suggesting, then, is that true continuity, for man, can only be a free achievement, the result of responsible action. And this brings me to a second thesis: Continuity, understood thus as freely enduring responsibility, is an aspect of and is secondary to identity taken in the sense of self-creation and self-possession or, in a word, of self-agency. The identity of a man determining his life or of a society constructing its culture is what is shaped continuously or not, it is the active selfhood which we see ourselves responsible for continuing or not. Here the diagnostic question is: How do we identify ourselves? Or: why do we have a model or models of continuity? I would agree with Ladislas Orsy that the next General Congregation should be restrained in speaking about our Jesuit identity (see Studies IV, 3 [June, 1972], 97). I would also agree that actual identity cannot be defined, strictly speaking. But

the perception of how identity is developing at a given point in history can be important for anyone interested not only in preserving identity but also in enriching it.

If it is only in terms of identity that continuity is finally valuable, then we can understand why men can practically accept in their lives a certain, and often very pronounced, dialectic of continuity and discontinuity, of freely achieved order and free transcendence of any given order. In our experience, such a mix of continuity and discontinuity seems essential for the development both of self and of society. We accept it, I think, fundamentally because we experience identity emerging out of it. This is also why the predictable quality of a good man's behavior defines the orientation and direction of his self-agency but does not define simply all he does; the former we term his character or identity, the latter is the whole continuous range of his activity. Such predictability can also be affirmed, analogously, of a social unit.

This primacy of identity over continuity as a personal and ontological category also has a moral dimension. In our true identity, thought and action are composed in a unique way; becoming a person, being someone, is a singular creative embodiment and unification of possibilities of being and value which only persons in society can conjoin. In appreciating someone I have come to know, I praise not just his moral qualities but him-- for what he is. It is symptomatic that we have a special name for someone who endures with composure through trying times, that we call him patient; we most admire not the action but the man who is, identifiably, patient. John W. O'Malley has pointed out the modern historian's acute awareness of discontinuity or change in history, and he specified man himself as the source of change. It is we who change, it is our identity which is in question: who we freely have become, are, and may be. To say that the process may or may not be authentic is to acknowledge that it is moral persons whose identity is in process of formation and that they are faced with radical questions about the good life. (Reference might be made here to William W. Meissner's helpful article on "Erikson's Truth: The Search for Ethical Identity," Theological Studies, XXXI [1970], 310-19.)

Because of this primacy of identity over continuity as an ontological category which is also moral, it is disquieting on several levels to hear that the Catholic postulate on the relation of present Church doctrine to the past is continuity, while the Protestant postulate is discontinuity. There are contrary positions espoused by many Protestant authors, H. Richard Niebuhr to name but one. But whatever the intricacies of the argument, and they may well be substantial, it is always a delicate matter. Continuity is the result in the historical order of free responsible action, and it is personal and social identity which exists continuously. Thus, when we criticize a given community's concern or relative lack of concern for continuity, we are at least indirectly criticizing its identity. It is personal fidelity which is put in question, and not just a certain number of principles.

Let me suggest now a third thesis on this matter, and one which is explicitly theological. It is this: Mankind as it awaits from God the active truth about itself, even in judgment against itself, is called God's people, the body of Christ, the Church. What is summarized here is the eschatological structure of continuity and identity, the perception--in the first instance a social act--that there is a source and goal to all human identity, a redeeming creator who promises and bears forward the fulfillment of our mutual self-agency towards communion with him. And here the diagnostic question is: Who is the source of identity for us? Who is the model? Is someone truly "interior intimo meo" as my life moves on with my fellow men?

For the man of faith, the fulfillment of identity which continuously and continually occurs in history is not a validation of abstract values but a consummately personal reality: the Kingdom of God establishing a new heaven and a new earth. The responsibility and hope for this necessarily transcendent realization of our lives together dynamizes those lives constantly forward from their foundation in God's steadfast love for us in the past to his full self-revelation in the final coming of his Son. "On this earth that kingdom is already present in mystery," as we read in Gaudium et spes (no. 39); "when the Lord returns, it will be

brought into full flower."

And thus, the more Christians reflect on time and identity, the more they realize, as Rudolf Bultmann pointed out in his Gifford Lectures in 1955, "that historical phenomena are not what they are in pure individual isolation, but only in their relation to the future for which they have importance. We may say: To each historical phenomenon belongs its future, a future in which alone it will appear as that which it really is--to speak precisely we must say: the future in which it evermore appears as that which it is. For ultimately it will show itself in its very essence only when history has reached its end." Can we not say precisely this of our Society? And doesn't such a hope both relativize and radicalize our concern for Jesuit identity in the midst of a world shocked by the pace of the future's approach? Bultmann, of course, was translating the Pauline view of the free human self-realization which is possible only through the gracious presence of eternity to time. Our continual effort to be the men God might enable us to be leads us ever deeper into the mystery of his loving purposes, where alone we find or, better, are enabled to accept our true selves. But a similar perspective pertains also to Jesuits seeking together to surrender themselves to the best service of the Kingdom, where alone they hope to find themselves.

In a lecture at the 1971 Conference on Hope and the Future of Mankind which was sponsored by Trinity Institute, Union Theological Seminary, and Woodstock College, Wolfhart Pannenberg made a similar point when he argued that "the essence of things is not to be conceived as something nontemporal, but it depends on the temporal process and will be decided upon only by its outcome, although it may be the identity of things long past." Time is truly revealed, in other words, only in eternity; it is essential that our identity, before God, has yet to attain its full truth. And thus, in a most significant sense, fidelity to our Jesuit sources is a force for continuity only insofar as it is a moment in the forward dynamic of the Society toward the attainment of its true mission in the Church; adaptation to present circumstances, on the other hand, is a constant evidence of an effort at continuity.

Put another way: We should be chary of contrasting continuity with changes and the return to our sources with adaptation. For identity is conserved only by adapting to the new challenges put to it, and our sources can only be recovered through a process of interacting with new circumstances which give us new reasons to seek and value the springs of life. In the historical order, origins are significant only insofar as they develop, and adaptation loses its value when there is no longer an identifiable agent of adaptation. "Correspondingly," said Pannenberg, "eternity--being the realm of essential truth--is not to be conceived as nontemporal, but constituted by the historical process and especially by its final outcome." "And when everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will be subject in his turn to the One who subjected all things to him, so that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

This eschatological perspective on human continuity and identity is found at the heart of the preaching of Jesus of Nazareth. "The 'growth' parables," writes Rudolf Schnackenburg, "should not be employed to substantiate a wholly present or a wholly future concept of the reign of God but just that polarity between the beginning and the end, between sowing and harvest, between the unobtrusive present and the full future revelation of the glory of God's rule and kingship. There is also a continuous, unbroken relation between 'now' and 'then,' not because of any immanent process due to earthly or human forces but through the intervention of God who manifests in the works of Jesus the kingly rule which one day will be shown forth in all its splendour" (God's Rule and Kingdom, page 159). The mature Christian lives within and through this tension of a growth for which not he but the Lord is the harvester. But the tension is meant to pass (1 Cor. 7:31) and the glory of God's rule to be shown forth in all its splendor. The images for that final revelation and consummation are countless and will remain so. But probably no one has focused them more tersely than Irenaeus: gloria enim Dei homo vivens. And few men have succeeded in translating this into a program for action as effectively as did Ignatius and his companions: ad majorem Dei gloriam.

In brief, then, continuity and still more identity must be eschatologically understood. It is precisely in his reflection on the manner

of the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:35-58 that Paul asserts a dialectical unity of continuity and discontinuity in view of transformation: from the perishable shall come the imperishable, from the contemptible the glorious, from the weak the powerful; in short, men who have shared life according to a mortal principle will then share it according to an immortal principle, fully alive to the glory of God.

To summarize these reflections, we can say that the continuous effort to achieve true human identity is born from the hope of final transformation in the Kingdom of God. In reflecting on the Society's part in this process, I suggest that the category of continuity is indeed important but that identity is more basic and, most important of all, that the process of identity rests only in God.

## 6. The Contemporary Relevance of the Ignatian Vision

Avery Dulles, S.J.

Contemporary theologians, reflecting on the vicissitudes of history, call attention to certain radical shifts in which a whole civilization appears to be thrust suddenly into a new era. When such an epochal shift occurs, man's deepest convictions and values are set into a fresh context and have to be articulated in irreducibly new ways.<sup>1</sup> From the religious standpoint, the periods of the Old Testament, the New Testament, the patristic age, the Middle Ages, and modern times are commonly designated as distinct epochs. Vatican II recognized that "today the human race is passing through a new stage of its history",<sup>2</sup> a stage in which all reality is coming to be viewed in dynamic, evolutionary terms, contrasting with the relatively static outlook of the past.<sup>3</sup> "The living conditions of modern man have been so profoundly changed in their social and cultural dimensions that we can speak of a new age in human history."<sup>4</sup> In view of this radical transition the Council called for an aggiornamento of the whole Church and for an "appropriate renewal" of the religious life as practiced in the various orders and congregations.

In efforts at renewal one is constantly faced by the problem of distinguishing between time-conditioned tenets or practices and the essential or constitutive features of any given institution, without which it would no longer be itself. In the past century, it became common to solve this problem by differentiating between "substantials," which must always abide, and "accidentals", which may come and go. In the Church itself, the substantials were alleged to be of "divine institution" and hence beyond the capacity of any human authority to change. In the case of the Society of Jesus the supposed substantials were culled from the writings of St. Ignatius, and especially from the Formula of the Institute approved by Julius III. Any change in the fundamental constitution of the Society, it was argued, would be tantamount to a dissolution of the order founded by St. Ignatius and confirmed by the Holy See.

The substantialist solution was intended to provide sufficient scope for adaptability while preventing any changes that would denature the

Church or the Society and thus compromise its distinctive identity. For various reasons, however, the solution was unsatisfactory. In the first place, it proved impossible to reach agreement as to how the substantials are to be identified. As regards the Church as a whole, the power of decision was attributed to the universal magisterium, which was alleged to be infallible--but there were difficulties both with the concept of infallibility (witness the recent controversy sparked by Hans Küng!) and with the enumeration of the occasions on which the magisterium had spoken infallibly. In the Society of Jesus the power of determination was assumed by the general congregations, which however made no claim to infallibility. Thus one could always wonder whether the substantials had been correctly identified.

A second difficulty arose with regard to historical research. In ecclesiology, exegetes and Church historians found it impossible to show, on the basis of scientific study, that Jesus Christ had formally revealed all the dogmas of the modern Church. Nor was it verifiable that Jesus had established the papal-episcopal form of government or that he had instituted the seven sacraments. The appeal to divine institution as the ground for acceptance looked suspiciously like "ideology" in the Marxist sense of the word--that is, a theory concocted in order to reinforce the existing power structures.

Thirdly, it was most difficult, on the theoretical level, to see how certain particular statements and actions of the founders of the Church or of a religious order could have been exempted from historical conditioning and thus be immutable. If man is a truly historical being, historicity should presumably leave its mark upon everything that man perceives, thinks, says, and does.

Finally the substance-accident method of dealing with the problem of historical change failed to provide either the desired continuity or the desired flexibility in the ongoing life of the institutions. In the realm of "accidentals" it opened the way to total discontinuity, thus emasculating the force of tradition. In the realm of "substantials," on the other hand, the theory ran the risk of imposing certain forms



and structures in perpetuum, even though they were to become useless or counterproductive.

This last point deserves some elaboration. Since the secularization process of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Western man has had a growing conviction that he himself is responsible for the convictions he professes and the institutions of the society in which he lives. Laws and governments are deemed to be justified to the extent that they further the purposes for which the societies in question exist. If social structures become irremediably dysfunctional, they are considered unwarranted even though they may have been originally set up by fully competent authority. To the contemporary mind it seems incredible that God would will the continuance of an institution, even one that he himself had established, if and when it became an impediment to the goals of the society itself. The chief justification for social structures is now commonly held to be the pragmatic one.

Since many Jesuits have been imbued with a substantialistic understanding of continuity, the rejection of this understanding results in a certain malaise. Are we not laying ourselves open to sheer Heraclitean flux? To alleviate this fear it is well to point out that the substantialistic theory of continuity, in the forms familiar to us, did not receive official Roman Catholic acceptance until the nineteenth century. The Roman theology of the Restorationist period (the period in which not only the French monarchy but also the Society of Jesus was restored to existence!), seeking to meet the threat of historical relativism, imported into Catholic theology the characteristic principles of the neoclassicism of the previous century. In point of fact, the idea that the essentials of any reality had to be permanent and immutable owes more to Greek philosophy than to biblical revelation. As Collingwood has shown, some of the ancient pagan authors applied this substantialist mode of thinking to historical entities. For Titus Livy, Collingwood points out, "Rome is a substance, changeless and eternal . . . . Hence the origin of Rome, as he describes it, was a kind of miraculous leap into existence of the complete city as it existed at a later date . . . . Rome is

described as 'the eternal city.' Why is Rome so called? Because people still think of Rome, as Livy thought of her, substantialistically, non-historically."<sup>5</sup>

As an alternative to the substantialist approach in theology, the so-called "New Hermeneutic," taking advantage of certain insights of Martin Heidegger, proposes a complex method of "retrieving" the insights contained in ancient texts.<sup>6</sup> This method accepts the fact that any human formulation is conditioned by the historicocultural situation of the times, but it holds that foundational thinkers, whether in philosophy or in theology, achieved insights that can be translated and re-expressed at a later time and in a new context--even more cogently, perhaps, than they were initially set forth. From the perspectives of a later period one may purify the earlier formulas of the limitations imposed upon them by circumstance. To make contact with the true inspiration of the original, and to express what the author himself could not succeed in expressing, the interpreter must take advantage of the way the same reality that manifested itself to the first writer now manifests itself anew to the modern reader. The hermeneutical process is circular, or at least cyclical. The interpreter, living in a later age, does not hesitate to address his own questions to the ancient text. The text, if it authentically responds to analogous questions posed in the past, provides the interpreter with a corrective whereby he can improve the formulation of his own questions. Thus a kind of dialogue takes place in which the past and the present mutually criticize and enrich each other.

If one accepts this hermeneutical approach to continuity and change, one will not seek to formulate the abiding identity of the Church or of a religious order in terms of a set of objectifiable concepts, institutions, or practices. In a given epoch, a religious organization will be able to reflect a historically conditioned but permanently significant contact with the God of grace. In the case of the Church as a whole, its true identity is to be found at a point this side of dogmatic formulations or social institutionalizations. The Church is in the first instance the ineffable mystery of God's dwelling with man. The Church can and must

renew itself in every age so as better to show forth the mystery of God's redeeming love extended to all men in Christ.

The abiding attributes of the Church--and notably the four "marks" of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity--are to be realized in new and original ways according to the needs and possibilities of successive epochs. In a certain sense the four marks of the Church may be called "transcendentals" since they are not definable by abstract, univocal concepts. They are to be embodied in analogously similar forms in accordance with varying situations. To understand how the mystery of the Church should be preached or institutionalized in a given culture one must have a lived experience of, and a dynamic participation in, the community of grace. Ecclesiological insight therefore depends on a certain con-naturality or intersubjectivity between the interpreter and the reality he is interpreting.

The problem of continuity and change in the Society of Jesus is not perfectly identical with the ecclesiological problem. The Society does not have a divine founder, nor is its existence to the end of time divinely guaranteed. It is not the mystical body of St. Ignatius, nor is it animated by his spirit in the same sense that the Church at large is animated by the Holy Spirit. Unlike the Church, the Society has no necessary attributes and therefore one cannot antecedently predict the limits of its mutability. As contrasted with the Church, the Jesuit order could have a second or third founder who might give it a new vision and a new direction.

In point of fact, however, the Society has had only one real founder, Ignatius of Loyola. Those who wish to renew the Society in our time generally seek to go back to the insights and aims of Ignatius himself. Can we do this without falling into archaism--that is to say, without alienating ourselves from the world in which we are to live and work? Historical study makes it evident that Ignatius was a man of his own times, a Spanish Catholic nobleman of the Renaissance. This is partly to his credit, but it creates problems for Jesuits who wish to follow him today. From our perspectives it is quite evident that Ignatius was limited by

the perspectives of his own culture. His general theory of social organization was highly authoritarian, monarchical, and hierarchical. He was aristocratic and élitist, whereas we live in an age of democratization. We think of authority as emanating from the group rather than as being imposed upon the group from above. In ecclesiology, Ignatius was too much of a papal centralist to leave much scope for the modern notions of collegiality and shared authority. Finally, Ignatius' view of salvation was, by twentieth century standards, too individualistic and supernaturalistic. Intent upon saving souls by purely spiritual means, he had very little interest in what we would call the social apostolate. Can the modern Jesuit, then, pattern his religious orientations upon those of St. Ignatius?

Thanks to modern hermeneutical methodology, this question may be answered in the affirmative. After studying Ignatius in his own historical context we can retrieve his fundamental insights and transpose them into our own time. We can grasp the dynamic intentionality of his inspiration and say in his name what he, in his own historical context, could not succeed in saying. The great spiritual principles of Ignatius, when liberated from the limitations of his own particular culture, are still immensely powerful. We find it easy to respond to his deep sense of the mystery of the ever-greater God, his alertness to the signs of the times, his spirit of generous and self-denying service, and his wide vision of the universal spiritual good. The Ignatian concepts of the magis, indifference, the third kind of humility, the discernment of spirits, being a contemplative in action, and finding God in all things are highly meaningful to the contemporary Jesuit. The unity and permanence of the Society, I believe, rest far more upon the apostolic spirituality of St. Ignatius, as enshrined in these foundational principles, than in his theological doctrines or his legislative achievements.

Some of the Ignatian principles, in fact, are more evidently appropriate in our day than they would have seemed in the sixteenth century. I should like to illustrate this point by reference to three salient characteristics of our time: planetization, secularization, and

personalization.

Planetization, that is, the confluence of all streams of human culture into a single history in which each interacts with all, makes the global and international spirit of St. Ignatius not only desirable but imperative. The world needs men who are not exclusively preoccupied with the advancement of a particular nation or group but genuinely concerned with the total good of the human race regardless of geographical, ethnic, and sociological frontiers. Ignatius knew how to combat the natural human tendency to particularism, and he has much to teach his successors today in this regard. Thanks to his inspiration and to the new possibilities of our own situation, we can apply his principles in ways that go far beyond anything he could have foreseen. We can engage in interdisciplinary studies, interracialism, ecumenism, and religious dialogue without feeling that we are departing from the initial thrust of the Jesuit vocation.

Secularization, as I here use the term, means the interpenetration of the sacred and the profane. All about us we are witnessing the dismantling of what were viewed as inviolable sacred structures. The new religiosity of our day seeks the divine in the midst of earthly realities. Here, too, Ignatius was a pioneer. Though much attracted to the sacral seclusion of the monastic life, with its devotional liturgy and peaceful contemplation, he shunned these blessings for his Society, preferring what he regarded as the greater good of involvement in the turbulent world of the cities. He wanted his companions to be, as we might say today, where the action was, and to move easily among men of influence in secular affairs. He therefore dared to launch the unprecedented experiment of a religious order not distinguished by any special habit, exempt from choir duties, and lacking many elements then considered essential to the religious life. He desired in his followers a certain worldliness--a disposition to make the fullest use of human and natural gifts and a sensitivity to the presence of God in all things. In an age of desacralization, the secular mysticism of St. Ignatius holds great attraction.

A third characteristic of our time is personalization. "A sense of the dignity of the human person has been impressing itself more and more

deeply on the consciousness of contemporary man."<sup>7</sup> "The social order and its development must unceasingly work to the benefit of the human person if the disposition of affairs is to be subordinate to the personal realm and not contrariwise, as the Lord indicated when He said that the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."<sup>8</sup> With his eye for the concrete and the particular, Ignatius relied very little on external laws and structures. He believed that each individual must seek out his personal vocation by prayer leading to an existential choice. In all Jesuits he demanded a deeply interior commitment to God and to the Church and a high degree of spiritual discernment. His principles for individual and communal decision-making are strikingly modern.

For these reasons it would be a serious mistake to seek to pin down the Jesuit identity by reference to juridical structures, even those which general congregations have called "substantials." Whether the Society has a superior general with a lifelong term of office, whether it has professed fathers of four vows, and whether it is governed by means of general congregations--questions such as these should be answered according to what is presently required for the greater glory of God. The fundamental vision of St. Ignatius would be distorted if it were interpreted in a rigid and legalistic way. Built into the original idea of the Society is a maximum of flexibility to meet the demands of persons, places, and circumstances. Jesuit identity demands a pioneering spirit, and ongoing commitment to innovation, and a capacity in the Society itself to reshape its own structures according to the needs and opportunities of the moment.

In an earlier paper for this series, Thomas E. Clarke touched on the problem of those who ask: in view of all the changes occurring in the Society, is it still the institution that I joined? In response he pointed out that the vows, correctly understood, are not so much a contract as a covenant. "There will be a verbal and conceptual indefiniteness in covenant which contrasts with the dynamics of a contract, in which the ideal is to provide for all contingencies in advance."<sup>9</sup> The identity of the vowed religious and that of the Jesuit, he declared, "shares in

the mysterious character of the Church herself."<sup>10</sup> The identity is a lived reality, existential in character. "We are never fully in possession of the meaning of religious or of Jesuit life. Precisely for this reason, each community and its members must be constantly involved in a process of corporate discernment, in which the effort will be to discover the particular forms which, especially in times of radical cultural change, will mediate the identical vision from which the community lives."<sup>11</sup>

This view fully accords with the contention I have made in this paper that the ongoing identity of the Society of Jesus cannot be adequately pinned down in conceptual formulations or juridical structures. The ideals by which the Society lives may have to be radically reinterpreted and re-institutionalized in accordance with the needs and possibilities of different cultures. For our own age the vocation of the Society would appear to demand an insatiable restlessness toward the more universal good, a bold involvement in the world, and an intense personalization in the process of religious decision. This threefold orientation of the Jesuit life grows authentically out of the religious genius of St. Ignatius of Loyola. As a foundational thinker he speaks powerfully to his followers today.

## FOOTNOTES

1. For a recent discussion of epochal shifts, see Heribert Muhlen, Entsakralisierung: ein epochales Schlagwort in seiner Bedeutung für die Zukunft der christlichen Kirchen (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1971), especially pp. 48-52 and 177-185.
2. Gaudium et spes, no. 4, in W. A. Abbott, S.J. (ed.), The Documents of Vatican II (New York: America Press, 1966), p. 202.
3. Ibid., no. 5, p. 203.
4. Ibid., no. 54, p. 260.
5. R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 42-43.
6. For a brief account of Heidegger's method of "retrieve" see Paul J. Achtemeier, An Introduction to the New Hermeneutic (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), pp. 41-54.
7. Vatican II, Dignitatis Humanae, no. 1; Abbott, p. 675.
8. Gaudium et spes, no. 26; Abbott, p. 225.
9. T. E. Clarke, S.J., "Jesuit Commitment--Fraternal Covenant?", Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits, Vol. III, no. 3 (June, 1971), p. 75.
10. Ibid., p. 87.
11. Ibid.



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Pages 156-158 just below contain check lists of the publications of the Institute of Jesuit Sources and of the Assistancy Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality.

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