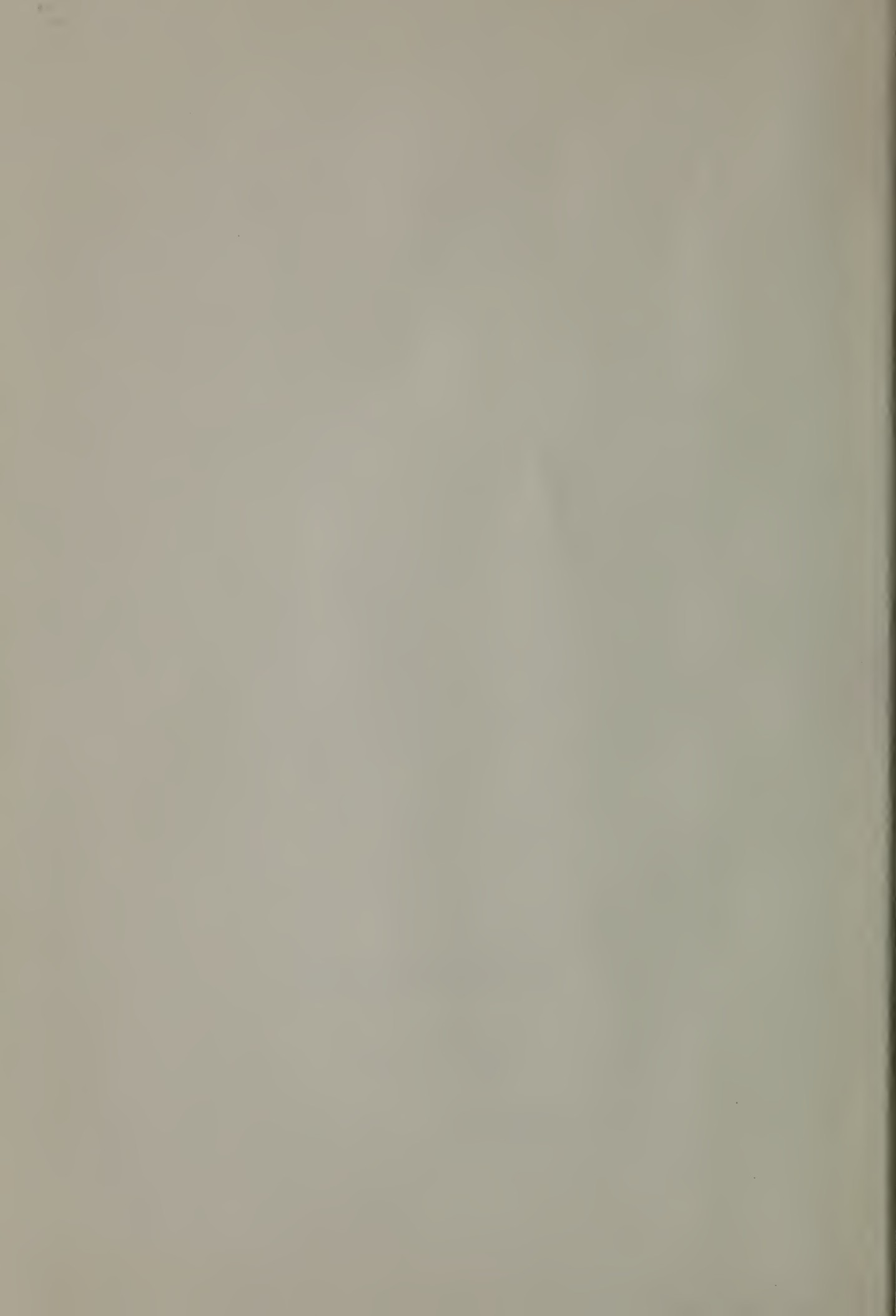


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STUDIES

in the Spirituality of Jesuits



On Thinking with the Church Today

John H. Wright, S.J.

George E. Ganss, S.J.

Ladislav Orsy, S.J.

Published by the American Assistancy Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality,
especially for American Jesuits working out their aggiornamento
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.

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I. THE CHURCH, CHANGING TODAY AS IN THE PAST

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Introductory Note

The Church today as a concrete, visible institution evokes many different reactions among Jesuits, as among Catholics generally. Some are impatient with what they regard as the slow pace with which needed changes are taking place. Others are annoyed and even deeply hurt by what seems to them a wholesale rejection of what is most sacred and dear. Some are inclined simply to "drop out" as far as possible; in some extreme cases they regard the entire institutional edifice as archaic, unresponsive, ineffectual, and irrelevant. Very few, it would appear, are content with things just as they are.

But the Society of Jesus as a religious order exists within the Church as a visible institution, or it does not exist at all. We cannot regard ourselves as a kind of independent corporation able to grow, work, and prosper whatever may happen to the rest of the Church. It is imperative that individually and collectively we Jesuits foster within ourselves, and communicate to those whom we serve, attitudes which strengthen, unify, and energize the Church as an instrument of the Kingdom of God in the world; also, that we eliminate attitudes which weaken, fragment, and paralyze it. Centuries ago this was St. Ignatius' concern when, at the end of the *Spiritual Exercises*, he wrote his little classic long known as the "Rules for Thinking with the Church," and, even more concretely, when he placed the whole Society of Jesus at the disposition of the Church through obedience to the pope.

Ignatius' rules, however, were directly related to the conditions of the sixteenth century, and many of them do not touch our contemporary

situation. Furthermore, to adopt attitudes that are genuinely realistic today and not merely abstractly desirable, we must endeavor to have a contemporary understanding of the Church, one that can lead to ways of promoting communion of hearts and minds within the Church today. Hence, the present issue of *Studies* contains three complementary essays: (1) a theological consideration of the Church, of the changes it is undergoing, and of the causes of disturbance within it; (2) the text of the "Rules for Thinking with the Church" which St. Ignatius wrote for his era, along with some brief explanation, and (3) some practical norms for positive, constructive attitudes toward the Church today.

A. The Church as Mystery

Any endeavor to understand the Church today, as at any point in its history, must begin by acknowledging that the Church is a mystery. We can understand it only partially, not fully. It is in some sense an object of our faith. We include it in the creed under the articles dealing with the Holy Spirit; for the Church exists and endures as a special work of God, and its intimate reality is accessible only to the believer. It is not just a gathering of like-minded men, of people who happen to share the same views on religion and morality. God calls it into being as a communion of those who respond to Him in faith, and acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Church is the first fruit of the Kingdom of God in the world, and it bears within itself the most important force for the spread and development of that Kingdom. A view of the Church which excludes or diminishes its essential mystery is radically mistaken.

To understand the Church as a mystery, to gain some insight into the changes it undergoes throughout its history, and to pinpoint some of the causes of the disturbances now troubling it, it seems useful to distinguish (but not separate) three aspects or dimensions of reality in the Church: (1) the outward, sensible, visible dimension, (2) the inner psychological, or socio-ethical dimension, and (3) the intimate spiritual and divine dimension. Almost every extended discussion of the Christian community in the New Testament provides a basis for this distinction. Two examples will suffice here.

St. John's First Letter begins: "This is what we proclaim to you: what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched--we speak of the word of life. (This life became visible: we have seen and bear witness to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life that was present to the Father and became visible to us.) What we have seen and heard we proclaim in turn to you, so that you may share life with us. This fellowship of ours is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-3).¹ We observe the sensible, visible reality in the proclamation itself, and also in "what we have seen and heard." The psychological, socio-ethical aspect is indicated by the community Christians have with one another, in their sharing life together. The divine dimension is shown in the references to eternal life, and to the community with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ.

The exhortation to unity in Ephesians 4:1-6 shows the same distinction of aspects: "I plead with you, then, as a prisoner for the Lord, to live a life worthy of the calling you have received, with perfect humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another lovingly. Make every effort to preserve the unity which has the Spirit as its origin and peace as its binding force. There is but one body and one Spirit, just as there is but one hope given all of you by your call. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all, and works through all, and is in all." The external, visible aspect is found in the apostle's words of exhortation, in the conduct of a worthy life, in the rite of baptism. The inner socio-ethical aspect is indicated by the humility of Christians, by their meekness, patience, forbearing love, faith, and hope. The divine level is shown in the unity caused by the Spirit, in the one Lord, the one God and Father who is over all, works through all, and is in all.²

All three dimensions of the Church are indispensably necessary; if any one of them were absent the Church would cease to be what it is. But they are not all equally important; that is, they do not all contribute positively in the same degree to the life and activity of the Church. The most important dimension is that of the indwelling Spirit, who unites believers into one community (Eph. 4:3-4; 2 Cor. 13:13), enlightens them with

the truth of Christ (Jn. 14:26; 16:13), leads them as children of God (Rom. 8:26), pours God's love into their hearts (Rom. 5:5), and begins eternal life in them as a pledge of God's faithfulness (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14). Second in importance are the human interior attitudes and activities by which we freely respond to the impulse of the Spirit: faith, obedience, prayer, love, trust, humility, joy, patience, and the like--all that interiorly constitutes our human acceptance of God's gifts and our relationships with one another in a single fellowship or community. Third and last in importance is everything external, observable, sensibly perceivable, in virtue of which Christians are truly a visible community, a recognizable society of persons. Here belong such things as preaching, liturgical rites, teaching, written laws, the Scriptures, and Christian conduct, especially works of love.³ Furthermore, the Church is visibly structured in such a way that responsibility for its well-being rests in a particular way upon certain members of the community charged with overseeing its life: the bishops.

The first and most essential function of the external, visible aspect of the Church is to manifest the internal, invisible aspects, both God's active presence and man's response in "faith that works through love" (see Gal. 5:6). This external manifestation is properly speaking a symbol of those internal aspects. "Symbol" in this context means that the external does not merely make the inner dimensions known, but it participates in their reality, and serves to sustain, strengthen, and communicate their presence and influence within the full mystery of the Church. Thus, in the sacraments God's saving action and man's believing acceptance of His action are manifested. Hence, through them God's grace is communicated to the believer. Through these various external elements we are enabled to share with one another, to hand on what we have received, to engage in a common life together, in short, to constitute a true community in Christ.

B. Changes in the Church

The changes of which we are most directly aware, the changes which annoy, encourage, trouble, stimulate, or simply puzzle are generally external changes: liturgical changes, like Mass in the vernacular; dis-

ciplinary changes, like permitting meat on Friday; changes in theological expression, like the shift from scholasticism; changes in popular devotions, like the gradual disappearance of benediction of the Blessed Sacrament; and many, many more. Changes of this sort have happened in almost every age of the Church, serving to modify its external features in different times and places.

But the roots of these changes are internal: they arise especially from the second aspect of the mystery of the Church, the psychological dimension of social and ethical attitudes and activities. For we are affected by the changing character of the world around us; and hence even within the sphere radically constituted by the sanctifying and unifying power of the Holy Spirit, our human responses undergo change. As we understand ourselves and the world differently, so we grasp differently God's gracious love and action toward us. Likewise, as the relations in human society generally are modified, these same modifications become gradually reflected in the social structure of the Church, which still remains faithful to the intention and guidance of God. Let us look briefly at each of these, at changes in understanding, and changes in social relationships.

1. Changes in Understanding

During the last several centuries, and especially during the last century and a half, man's understanding of himself and the world has changed immensely. This change is sometimes called the shift from the classical to the modern world view. Educated persons in the West four or five hundred years ago thought of the earth as the center of the whole universe, which had been brought into existence some six or seven thousand years before. From its origins the world was fundamentally stable. All the species and varieties of plants and animals were complete from the beginning. The world of nature below man operated in a fixed and determined way. It was constituted of four basic elements, fire, air, earth, and water, which were characterized by four basic qualities, hot, cold, dry, and wet. The human race itself was fundamentally unchanged throughout its history, in spite of the primal fall of our first parents. Truths and values were fixed in formulas that could be changed only by the addition of more explicit detail.

Tradition was the preferred source of knowledge.

The contrasts with the modern mentality are at once obvious. The earth, far from being the center of the universe, is a tiny planet circling around the sun, a star whose mass is more than 300,000 times that of the earth. The sun is a medium sized star in a galaxy of several hundred million stars. The galaxy itself is one of several hundred million such galaxies discernible in space. The age of the universe has stretched from thousands to billions of years. But probably more significant for our change of outlook is the recognition that the universe is not a fixed, stable reality, but is in process of development throughout all its vast reaches. A kind of historical relativity touches every human formulation of truth and value (without necessarily destroying or relativizing the truth or value so formulated). Knowledge from whatever source needs as far as possible to be verified or established through reference to contemporary experience and research.

The importance of this profound shift for the life of the Church probably appeared first in its impact on the study of Sacred Scripture. The change in outlook brought a recognition of the fact that the teaching of the inspired writers was profoundly influenced by cultural conditions. They expressed their message within the context and limitations of the world view they shared with their contemporaries. For example, in the description of God's creative activity given in the first chapter of *Genesis* we are told, "God made the dome, and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it" (Gen. 1:7). The ancient Hebrews thought of the sky as a solid dome⁴ holding back waters, which came through as rain when the windows of heaven were opened (see Gen. 7:11). Since it was plain to them that there was a dome up there, they described how God made it. The fact that there is no dome up there and that their view of the universe was completely primitive at this point does not invalidate the religious teaching conveyed here: God has made all things according to the plan of His wisdom.

What is true of the word of God in Scripture is true of the entire teaching activity of the Church: it is necessarily conditioned by the time and circumstances of its expression. This does not mean total relativism

nor the abandonment of all notions of objective truth. We do indeed see what we see, and we know what we know, but always from the perspective of our own situation, conditioned by our understanding of ourselves and the world. As Pope John XXIII said in his opening address to the Second Vatican Council, "The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another." We must always distinguish the *meaning* of a doctrine from its *conceptualization* and *expression*; and we must recognize that we can never find a timeless, perfect wording or way of grasping and conveying this meaning. For we can never lay hold of this meaning apart from some historically conditioned way of understanding and expressing it. A solemn definition of the Church's faith embodies an enduring, irreversible truth. The intended meaning will not someday be jettisoned in favor of its contradictory. But even this truth and meaning is only partially grasped, and its expression is tied to the language and (sometimes unconscious) presuppositions of a particular time and culture.

We accept the mystery of the Church then as an historically conditioned manifestation of God's enduring grace and mercy. Its structure, teachings, worship, and discipline concretely embody at a particular time and place the never failing work of Jesus Christ through the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Church seeks always to serve, proclaim, and worship the same Lord. But for us to be faithful to the God who calls and guides us, we must develop and deepen our response to Him in contact with the development going on within other areas of human life. To remain faithful, we must change. To affirm the same truth and meaning, we must alter our way of understanding and expression. And to be the same living and growing community sustained by the Holy Spirit, we must also modify our social relationships.

2. Changes in Social Relationships

One of the conclusions drawn from a worldwide survey of the Society a few years ago states: "There exist profound social changes which affect the whole of human life, and therefore also the life of the Church and of the Society. Certain institutions (among them the Church and the Society) evolve slowly. Those who direct them do not always belong to the younger

generation and are not living in contact with it. This produces violent clashes, especially when no structures exist for dialogue."⁵ These clashes frequently emerge as crises of authority. Perhaps what is happening can be described by using the terms of Transactional Analysis.⁶

For most of human history the relations binding society together were largely of the kind called "parent-child." Family, church, political and other organizations saw the person in authority as a kind of "parent," one whose views and decisions were binding and beyond question, much in the way in which a small child regards the determinations of his parents. This does not mean that "adult-adult" relationships were absent, but that the coherence of society was much more dependent on the "parent-child" kind. (Tradition as the most important source of knowledge fitted in very well with this.) But human society has been moving more and more toward a cohesion based on "adult-adult" relationships. Those in authority are not regarded as having of themselves the highest personal wisdom and as being thus the final arbiters of all decisions. Rather, they endeavor to avail themselves as fully as possible of the accumulated wisdom of the group, hearing and taking seriously the views of all affected by their decisions. They gather together the concerns of all for the common good, and they then make authoritative decisions growing out of their contact with all concerned. They are not parents placed over children, but adults functioning together with other adults. Through them the whole society speaks in order to direct individual members to the common goals of the group.

This conception of authority actually accords very well with the teaching of Christ about the future development of His Church: "You know how among the Gentiles those who seem to exercise authority lord it over them: their great ones make their importance felt. It cannot be like that among you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest; whoever wants to rank first among you must serve the needs of all. The Son of Man has not come to be served but to serve--to give his life in ransom for the many" (Mark 10:42-52).

This does not mean that every human society, including the Church, becomes a kind of democracy. Authority involves two elements, information on which a decision can be based, and the decision itself. Democracy

functions best from the standpoint of information, but suffers greatly from the standpoint of efficient, responsible, and genuinely innovative decision. In the case of monarchy, the situation is reversed: Information is less available, but decision making is easier. Each of these, of course, has its own special problems and dangers. The ideal would seem to be the situation where the one in authority is required to accept information from everyone, to listen to their views and take them seriously--to regard them as adults. The decision is finally the work of one or some kind of oligarchy, who are accountable to God and the community for that decision.

In the Church there are theological as well as sociological reasons for moving toward this understanding and way of exercising authority; for the Holy Spirit is given to the whole Church and to every Christian. He is at work in everyone, hierarchy and laity alike. One cannot legitimately neglect any genuine manifestation of His activity and guidance. It is thus not possible for someone to rule the Church simply "from on high," but only in close contact with the members of Christ's Body, discerning the movements of the Holy Spirit and "the signs of the times."

For the same reason, it should also be noted, the Church of today is not free to neglect the testimony of the Holy Spirit's guidance of the Church in the past. Continuity in the teaching and discipline of the Church is rooted in the conviction that the Spirit has always been with the Church, even if the human response to His presence has been limited, culturally conditioned, and at times half-hearted and mingled with self-interest. The tradition and the status quo do have a prior presumptive title to our loyalty, even in points where they do not actually embody the deposit of "faith delivered once for all to the saints" (Jude 3). For they are the successful results of centuries of effort and experience. But they have of themselves no absolute title to acceptance, and in the face of positive, forceful reasons arising from present awareness, they yield to the new. Yet this does not take place as a revolution and a rejection, but as a growth and development, in which the new is born in a context of profound continuity with the old.

C. Sources of Disturbance in the Church

No doubt unhealthy disturbances can arise from many different causes. But in the case of the Church, because of its nature as a three-dimensional mystery (see page 2 above), these disorders ordinarily arise because one aspect of the Church is unduly emphasized. Some one aspect is considered apart from the others, as if it by itself alone constituted the essential reality of the Church. The history of the Church witnesses to the disturbing and even disastrous consequences of this kind of exaggeration. When some settled uniquely on the divine element in the Church, the indwelling Spirit of God, and regarded everything else as unnecessary and unimportant, there arose the concept of an invisible Church, made up solely of the enlightened or the predestined. Gnostics spoke this way in the early Church, the Cathari in the Middle Ages, and certain Protestant groups at the time of the Reformation.

Today we are more apt to put an undue stress on the psychological and socio-ethical. This leads, of course, to a merely human Church. The horizontal relations between human persons can completely absorb the vertical relation to God, and everything becomes caught up in social relevance alone, even to the neglect of the word of God, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the worship of the Father. Liturgy, if it persists, is just a social get-together. Religious experience and personal interpretation may be emphasized so that the claims of truth are regarded as unimportant. Theology becomes merely human speculation with no roots in faith. The group is a merely human unity, not the unity of the Holy Spirit. It lives simply in the present with no eschatological hope to guide it through life, a fragile association resulting from congeniality, or like-mindedness, or common needs.

But the disturbance seems most acute when undue emphasis is given to the external, visible aspects of the Church. The smooth running of the institution becomes the supreme value--and by that very fact becomes unattainable. Legalism can flourish, in which the fact of observing a particular prescription is more important than the value or goal the prescription was originally designed to achieve. A magical view of the Church can emerge, in which the visible not only manifests the divine, but controls it. It can mean a rigid conservatism in external customs, like

stubborn resistance to pastorally necessary liturgical changes. And it can mean on the other hand an equally intolerant rejection of any older external forms, no matter how helpful some continue to find them.

In almost every case where serious disturbance troubles the Church, there is an overemphasis on some one aspect of the mystery of the Church, with a corresponding neglect of other indispensable aspects. For us Jesuits, seeking to serve Christ and His people within the framework of the visible Church, it is necessary to adopt attitudes which truly foster the life and growth of the Body of Christ. We must distinguish without separating the aspects of the Church's mysterious reality; we must unite them without confusing them. We must value the external aspects of the Church's life, but see them as subordinated to its internal aspects and ministering to them. We must see our socio-ethical, psychological unity as rooted in our community in faith with the Holy Trinity, and promoting this union with the divine. We must, in short, see the whole Church as serving the Kingdom of God, as an instrument for making real in the world God's love, wisdom, and guidance.

II. ST. IGNATIUS' "RULES FOR THINKING WITH THE CHURCH"

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A. Introductory Background¹

The wording "Rules for Thinking with the Church" is not from Ignatius. But it is a reasonably sound abbreviation, now become classical through four centuries of usage outside the Society of Jesus as well as within it, which with fair but incomplete accuracy epitomizes the four lengthier titles² which he wrote or approved. These severally illumine one another by their very differences of phraseology. The formulation which is most basic and which perhaps best reveals Ignatius' own mind is that which he wrote in the autograph text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, [352]: "Toward acquiring the genuine attitude which we ought to maintain in the Church militant, the following directives should be observed" (*Para el sentido verdadero que en la Yglesia militante debemos tener, se guarden las reglas siguientes*).

Two words of this title require further explanation. *Sentido*, Englished above by "attitude," has long been a problem for translators. According to dictionaries of Spanish, the word can mean "sense, reason, feeling, understanding, import," or the like; and its verbal form, *sentir* can be turned by to "feel, perceive, hear, judge, endure, suffer, taste," and so forth. But no one of these words is fully satisfactory here. *Sentido* (or the Latin *sentire*) is one of the words which Ignatius often used with his own very personal nuances and which has been much discussed. In the present context, as often elsewhere, he means by it a perception which is basically intellectual but has been savored so repeatedly that the cognition or thinking has taken on emotional overtones and become a framework of reference which one uses instinctively to guide his practice or activities in life. Translators have been much vexed in their efforts to find one word in English which

conveys all Ignatius' nuances. "Thinking with the Church," classical as it has become, leaves out the affective reinforcement; "feeling" loses the rational basis; and both these words lose Ignatius' connotation of practice toward which the habitual mental state is oriented. "Attitude" is our choice because it can at least comprehend all these connotations, even though some explanation is necessary to make them evident.

"Rules" (*reglas*) as used in this title can also be easily misunderstood. Taken alone, the word has many possible meanings, ranging from obligatory precepts down through directives, suggestions, norms or criteria, all the way to mere maxims. Ignatius sometimes uses *reglas* to mean statutes, for example, in *Constitutions*, [136]. But that cannot be his meaning of *reglas* here in *Spiritual Exercises*, [352]. For the *Exercises* are a set of guidelines to be used with flexibility rather than a legal document. Moreover, an exercitant has no obligation even to make the Exercises. Hence, Ignatius is here conveying other meanings such as directives, suggestions, guides, aids, patterns, or models--somewhat as he did when he wrote (*SpEx*, [344]) that Christ is "our model and rule" (*dechado y regla nuestra*), or "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits" ([313, 328]).

In our day many persons within the Church, religious and lay, turn away from prescriptions of conduct imposed upon them by others, thinking that such formulations in the past were often excessive. To present Ignatius' Rules for Thinking with the Church as obligatory would of course repel these persons. But it would also miss his aim. He was interested in helping a sincere and voluntary exercitant to form for himself an interior attitude which included some norms--a habitual outlook by which he could guide himself in resonating with his Mother the Church as she was slowly finding her way amid the novel difficulties of his era. There was question of the exercitant, with help from his director, prayerfully thinking out for himself a strategy, within which he could vary his tactics as best he could to meet emerging situations which might surprise him.

Ignatius was not writing these Rules chiefly for the general public, but for a select and spontaneously interested audience: the directors of retreats and some exercitants. He placed the Rules at the very end of his

book, the *Exercises*. They were to be given only to those retreatants who would probably find them helpful. As the ancient Directories point out, they were meant especially for an exercitant who for nearly thirty days had been gazing with love on Christ and his Kingdom and had heard a call to help in spreading it, perhaps even among heretics or weak Catholics. For example, Polanco, Ignatius' secretary, states that in these Rules

. . . recommendation is given to those things which the heretics of our time, or those showing affinity to their doctrine, are prone to attack or scorn in their books, or sermons, or conversations. Consequently, these Rules are to be recommended as antidotes, especially to those who live in places or among persons where there is suspicion of heresy. Moreover, they serve not only to keep such an exercitant from erring by speaking privately or writing publicly in a manner other than proper, but they also help him to discern whether the statements and writings of others are departing from the Catholic Church's manner of thinking and speaking, and to advise others to be on their guard.⁴

The general background necessary to understand these Rules lies in Ignatius' world view--marvelously dynamic both for total dedication of self to God and for apostolic fruitfulness. By means natural and supernatural God led him to an intense desire to associate intimately with Christ and to cooperate with him in achieving God's unfolding plan of redemption. The Christ of his love was indeed he who had walked in Judaea, but also the glorified Christ seen at La Storta, who is still living and acting in and through his Church, particularly in the sovereign pontiff. That view is the well spring and spirit underlying all Ignatius did or wrote, including his ecclesiology.

He explicitly viewed the Church as Christ's Kingdom to be spread (*SpEx*, [91-98]), and as his mystical body governed on earth by his vicar (*Epp Ign*, V, 221; VIII, 460-467; *LettersIgn*, pp. 367-372), from whom all authority descends through hierarchically ordered superiors (*Cons*, [7, 603, 666, 736]). To discover and carry out the will of Christ, especially as manifested through these lawfully constituted officials, was a ruling passion of Ignatius' life (see, e.g., *SpEx*, [91, 135]).

Ignatius also viewed the Church as the Spouse of Christ and our Mother (*ibid.*, [353]). Moreover, in Christ as the Bridegroom and in the Church as his Spouse the one same Holy Spirit holds sway, who governs for the

salvation of souls ([365]). This concept of the Church as the Spouse of Christ and our Mother is the one on which he focuses most in these eighteen Rules. In them, too, he is thinking, not of the glorified Church as perfected after the Parousia, nor of the abstract, idealized Church of some theologian's dream, but of the Church militant in the concrete, with all the human defects found in many of her popes, bishops, priests, and members--defects which Ignatius knew very very well at first hand.

Naturally, Ignatius' Rules reflect the environment in which he lived: in Spain (1491-1527), Paris (1528-1534), and Rome (1538-1556). Those who did not think with the Church or rightly within her in his day can be divided (as also in other eras, our own included) into three groups. First, there were those who practiced a mysticism which ignores dogmatic accuracy and scorns scholastic theology with its precisions. Such were many *alumbrosos*⁵ in Spain. Second, there were those openly heretical, such as Luther, Melancthon, and the *Lutherizantes* at the University of Paris. Claiming that they were restoring the pure Gospel and the Fathers, they ridiculed scholastic theology.⁶ Third, somewhere between the first two groups were the critical or disgruntled Catholics. They often gave reason for doubt about the genuinity of their faith; and their procedures were perhaps more dangerous for the spiritual welfare of the faithful than the blatant attacks of those openly heretical. Though outwardly still Catholic, they were critical of the Church, often lacked charity, sometimes used open attack and sometimes satire, lampoon, or insinuating and ambiguous statements. Erasmus is an example in point. This chief of the humanists remained a Catholic but also the mortal enemy of scholasticism, which he strove to replace by the Gospel and Fathers as interpreted and proclaimed by himself. His professed aim was to reform the abuses in the Church--and they were many. But the means he used were satire as captivating as it was biting, exaggerations, caricature, unwarranted generalizations, scandalous stories often his own fiction, and continual mocking of the pope, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, and various practices or even doctrines of the Church. In those early days of printing his works had enormous vogue.

In May, 1526, the Sorbonne petitioned Parlement to condemn Erasmus'

Colloquia and listed these complaints, among others: He mocked the vow of pilgrimage to Jerusalem; spoke with shameful irreverence of sacramental confession; denied that transgression of precepts of the Church is grave sin, thus making confession of sin unnecessary, on the ground that it was ordered by the Church, not God; condemned the ornamentation of churches as mortal sin; compared Reuclin to St. Jerome and placed him among the saints without the authority of the Church; claimed that marriage is preferable to virginity and conjugal chastity better than that of priests and religious. Throughout Ignatius' stay there (1528-1534), Erasmus' works remained a center of stormy controversy.⁷

This was the atmosphere in which Ignatius composed the substance of his Rules for Thinking with the Church. To a loyal lover of the Church such as he was, many of the elements floating in that atmosphere seemed to be pollution. He reacted, not by public attack against his opponents, but by a far more positive step, the devising of his Rules as guides to spiritual renewal for individuals. Very probably, Rules 1 through 12 had substantially their present form when Ignatius left Paris in 1534, and Rules 14 through 18 were composed in Italy before 1541.⁸

B. The Text of Ignatius' Rules, with Brief Commentary

At first reading, Ignatius' Rules may appear to be a haphazard assembly of counsels, without much order or logical sequence, as even some competent commentators have thought. But the division, structure, and exposition which Leturia has published seem magisterial to the present writer and he follows it here.⁹

Ignatius states his fundamental principle in Rule 1:

[353]--1. We ought to keep our minds disposed and ready, with all judgment of our own put aside, to be obedient in everything to the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church.

Then he develops this basic guideline by three groups of directives. Group 1 (Rules 2-9) gives suggestions for establishing an attitude about the devotions and way of life of loyal Catholics:

[354]--2. We should praise confession to a priest, reception of the most Blessed Sacrament once a year, and much more

once a month, and still more every week, with the required and proper conditions.

[355]--3. We should praise frequent attendance at Mass; also, chants, psalmody, and long prayers inside and outside the church; and furthermore, the hours ordained at an appointed time for the whole Divine Office, for every kind of prayer, and for all the canonical hours.

[356]--4. We should strongly praise religious institutes, virginity and continence, and not marriage as highly as any of these.

[357]--5. We should praise the vows of religion, obedience, poverty, chastity, and other works of supererogation which conduce to perfection. We should remember, too, that just as a vow is made in regard to matters which lead toward evangelical perfection, so one ought not to be made with respect to matters which withdraw one from it, such as to enter business, to get married, and the like.

[358]--6. We should value relics of saints, by venerating the relics and praying to the saints; we should extol devotional visits, pilgrimages, indulgences, including those for jubilees and crusades, and the lighting of candles in churches.

[359]--7. We should praise precepts of fast and abstinence, for example, in Lent, on ember days, vigils, Fridays, and Saturday; also penances, not only interior but also exterior.

[360]--8. We ought to praise the ornamentations and structures of churches, also images, and their veneration according to what they represent.

[361]--9. Lastly, we should praise all the precepts of the Church, while keeping our mind ready to look for reasons for defending them and not for attacking them in any way.

Group 2 (Rules 10-12) builds up a sympathetic and understanding mental outlook with respect to three classes of superiors in the Church, respectively in matters of jurisdiction, learning, and sanctity:

[362]--10. We ought to be inclined and ready to approve and praise the decrees, recommendations, and conduct of our superiors; for although some of these acts are not or were not praiseworthy, to speak against them either by preaching in public or by conversing among the ordinary people would cause more murmuring and scandal than profit. And thus the people would become angry at their superiors, whether secular or spiritual. However, just as it does harm to speak evil of superiors among the ordinary people while they are absent, so it can be profitable to speak of their bad conduct to persons who can bring about a remedy.

[363]--11. We ought to praise both positive theology and scholastic theology. For just as it is more characteristic of the positive doctors, such as St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the rest, to stir up our affections toward loving and serving God our Lord in all things, so it is more characteristic of the scholastic teachers, such as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, the Master of the Sentences, and so on, to define and explain for our times the matters necessary for salvation, and also to refute and explain all the errors and fallacies. For the scholastic teachers, being more recent, can profit from a correct understanding of Sacred Scripture and the holy positive doctors. Furthermore, they are enlightened by clarifications through divine influence and profit from the councils, canons, and decrees of our holy Mother Church.

[364]--12. We ought to be on our guard against comparing those of us who are still living and the blessed of the past. For no small error is made in this, for example, when one says, "He knows more than St. Augustine," or "He is another St. Francis, or even more," or "He is another St. Paul in goodness and holiness," and so forth.

Group 3 (Rules 13-19) treats of complex doctrinal truths, controverted (often passionately) in his day and not yet fully solved in our own, and a manner of expounding them prudently in the troubled, questioning sixteenth century.

[365]--13. To keep ourselves right in all things, we ought to hold fast to this principle: What I see as white, I would believe to be black if the hierarchical Church would thus determine it. We believe that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, his Spouse, there is the one same Spirit who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls. For the Spirit, our Lord, who gave the ten commandments, is also the same one by whom our holy Mother the Church is governed and guided.

[366]--14. It is granted that there is much truth in the statement that no one can be saved without being predestined, and without having faith and grace. Yet there is much to be cautious about in regard to the manner of speaking and teaching about all these matters.

[367]--15. We ought not to make a habit of speaking much about predestination. But if somehow it is spoken about sometimes, it should be treated in such a way that the ordinary people do not fall into an error, as sometimes happens when they say: "It is already determined whether I shall be saved or damned, and this cannot now be changed by my doing good or evil." Through this they grow listless and neglect the works which lead to the salvation and spiritual advancement of their souls.

[368]--16. In the same way we should notice with caution that by speaking much and emphatically of faith, without a distinction and explanation, we may give the people an occasion for growing listless and lazy in their works, either before or after these persons have been informed with charity.

[369]--17. Similarly, we ought not to speak so lengthily and emphatically about grace that we generate a poison harmful to liberty. Hence one may speak about faith and grace, as far as possible with God's help, for the greater praise of his divine majesty, but not in such ways or manners, especially in times as dangerous as our own, that works and free will are impaired or thought valueless.

[370]--18. Granted that we should value above everything else the great service which is given to God out of pure love, we should strongly praise fear of his Divine Majesty. For not only is filial fear something pious and very holy, but so also is servile fear. When it brings the man nothing better or more useful, it helps him much to rise from mortal sin; and once he has risen, he easily attains to filial fear, which is wholly acceptable and pleasing to God our Lord, since it remains along with love of him.

Ignatius began his Rules with a first principle and foundation underlying all the rest: The hierarchical Church is the true Spouse of Christ and our Mother, and we should be habitually disposed to give obedience, even of judgment, to her pronouncements. This connotes, of course, Ignatius' whole concept of obedience; and that concept includes prayerful reflection on a command and constructive representation when occasion demands. But neither here or later in the Rules is Ignatius entering into precise theological argumentation about their respective content, either with manifest heretics or cantankerous Catholics. He is writing the language, not of apologetics or of theology (though he draws from it), but of love. Any true man may well see human defects in his mother. But he loves her still and endeavors to help her, both by trying tactfully and respectfully to remedy the defects if possible and by defending her against unreasonable, over-hasty, or captious criticism. So is it also in regard to the Church. She has indeed many human defects. But only one who in spite of them still views her with love as his Mother and the Spouse of Christ is likely to grasp the spirit or tenor of thought running through all these Rules.

In the third group, Rules 13-18, Rule 13 has been much discussed and

often attacked. Careful attention must be paid to the precision of its wording. If the hierarchical Church should define something to be black which the exercitant privately and perhaps too hastily sees ("what *I see*" *que yo veo*) as white, as a lover he would be disposed to admit humbly that the error might lie in his own deficient perception and still believe with the Church. But he is not asked to think that white is black.

What, then, can we say is the spirit of St. Ignatius' eighteen Rules for thinking with the Church? The trend of his thought is not that of giving theological or apologetic arguments to refute the *alumbrados*, or heretics, or doubtfully loyal Catholics of his day. Rather, he is offering directives or suggestions whereby his exercitant, a lover of Christ and the Church, will prayerfully think out for himself a strategy for the days and years ahead. That is, with the help of God's grace he will establish a habitual attitude by which he can guide himself and others to live and work in loving loyalty to the Church, Christ's Spouse and our Mother, even amid the undesirable examples or doctrinal obscurities and errors which are stumbling blocks in his own way.

III. ON BEING ONE WITH THE CHURCH TODAY

by

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Introductory Note

In his varying titles on the successive texts of his well-known "Rules for Thinking with the Church," St. Ignatius uses various forms of the Spanish *sentir* and the Latin *sentire*. As the preceding article has explained, it is difficult to translate his *sentir* into English. He is writing about an attitude in a human person which in a very deep level inspires his way of thinking and feeling and also his course of action.

"To feel" would fall short of his original meaning, since the term "to feel" in English does not reach to the same depths. Feelings move on a more superficial level.

Louis J. Puhl translates Ignatius' *sentido* by "for thinking"--for clearness and to remain traditional, as he explains in his note. Although thinking reaches to a deeper level than feeling, it introduces here an element too exclusively intellectual which Ignatius' *sentir*, *sentido*, and *ad sentiendum* do not have.

Thomas Corbishley gives a paraphrase and speaks of following "The Mind of the Church," in order that "we may hold the opinions we should hold in the Church." Such expressions, we fear, do not express all the internal richness of Ignatius' *sentido* either.

Hence at the risk of introducing still another imperfect rendering, we use the expression "to be one with the Church" to translate "*ut cum . . . Ecclesia . . . sentiamus.*"

The advantage we feel with "being one with the Church" is that it reaches to a depth that the other English terms cannot achieve. It falls short, though, in secondary meanings or connotations. It speaks more of

a steady condition than of developing for oneself attitudes for thinking, feeling, and acting constructively within the Church. To make suggestions toward doing this is our true goal in this paper.

A. Problems in an Attempt to Formulate New "Rules" for Today

St. Ignatius, in the sixteenth century, formulated a number of clear and practical guidelines or attitudes, which he termed "Rules," toward preserving the unity of the Church. Those Rules have proved their value. They have been a means not only toward promoting the fidelity of individuals to the hierarchical Church, but also toward increasing the intensity of ecclesial *communio* among all the members.

Our original idea was to attempt to create guidelines which would be similar but more suited for the twentieth century, rules that could play the role of a touchstone of fidelity and unity.

However, as soon as we tried to draft new rules, we realized that what was done usefully and fruitfully in the sixteenth century, may not be so easily accomplished in the twentieth. Besides the obvious fact that it is difficult to imitate Ignatius, the subject-matter has become much more complex than it was some four hundred years ago. There are many reasons for the difference.

Ignatius lived in a world culturally much more unified than we do. Consequently, he could give norms that had a universal appeal among loyal Catholics. His rules were easy to understand and to use. We live in an age of pluralism. For us, it is difficult to construe rules of a similarly universal appeal. Many would not accept them, or at least some of them.

Moreover, the Church then faced specific issues arising from the comparatively well-defined movements of the Reformation, such as a lack of respect for relics, denial of purgatory, and so forth. Ignatius formulated guidelines against such disruptive trends. The attitudes and actions he suggested to the faithful were pertinent answers to precise problems. Today the theoretical and practical issues that the Church must face are so far more numerous that to respond with precise rules is virtually impossible.

In short, Ignatius, in his rules for being one with the Church, responded to questions raised by his contemporaries. Since his world was

more circumscribed than ours, he could give norms that formed a manageable body. Today, the issues raised in the Church and about the Church, cover a much larger field. Also they emerge in a vastly more expanded cultural context. Therefore new guidelines must cover a broader field, and respond to diverse particular needs. It follows that to formulate rules analogous to those of Ignatius is a highly complex enterprise today.

Our approach, therefore, is somewhat unusual. We change the question.

Ignatius raised the question: "What precise norms could be given to retreat masters, retreatants, and preachers to strengthen their unity with the Church?" Also, "What guidelines can they give to the faithful?"

To obviate the difficulty that comes from cultural pluralism and from the multiplicity of issues in the Church, we put the starting question in a different way: "How can preachers and retreat masters be helped toward creating practical guidelines for strengthening their own unity with the Church, and then that of those who listen to them?"

This shift in the question is the clue to understanding our approach. We stop one step short of the goal of Ignatius. He gave rules to be applied. He did not expect any of his followers to change them significantly. We suggest that because of the complexity of our age it is better to introduce a retreat master into the *art of formulating* rules which are suitable in his circumstances, rather than to give him precise and detailed norms. This supposes a creative capacity in him, in addition to the usual conditions of some holiness and a good deal of learning.

To conclude from our approach that a director of retreats should not give some down to earth advice is to misunderstand our method. He should give such advice whenever it is warranted. But it is precisely he who should know, there and then, what practical directions must be given. Our aim is to prompt him to be creative in the right way, not to give him something that he needs only to repeat.

1. A Methodology toward Creativity

Since our aim is to help a person to create the right rules, either for himself or for those who are under his care, we propose the following methodology.

The horizon of the person who wants to create rules today must be extended beyond the problems of the sixteenth century. We hope to achieve this by two steps. First, by introducing the reader to the thoughts of St. Paul, who too in the first century gave rules for being one with the Church. Second, by construing a somewhat general pattern of rules or suggestions that may be a source of inspiration in the twentieth century. The thought of Ignatius will be located between the two. Hopefully the three sets of rules, taken together, will provide considerable inspiration to the reader toward creativity in his own particular circumstances.

St. Paul gives a set of rules for being one with the Church in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. From there we take our inspiration. Our intention is not to give a full and detailed explanation of Paul's attitude toward the universal Church as described in the whole Pauline corpus. For a good reason, we present only a part of his thought. The First Epistle to the Corinthians has an internal unity. It is addressed to one specific or local church, beset with difficulties both doctrinal and practical. The guidelines given by Paul respond to a unique concrete historical situation, as do the Rules given by Ignatius.

Ignatius' concern was about the universal Church, but Paul's problem was slightly different: "How can we build the Church of Corinth?" The different questions inspire diverse practical rules. To contrast them helps us to see the issues in a broader historical context. In reporting Paul's guidelines, we shall remain as close to his text as we can, and our comments will be succinct.

After having studied Paul, we shall return to Ignatius. Since the text of his Rules for Thinking with the Church are known to the reader and are available on pages 16-19 of this booklet, we do not repeat them. We raise, however, the question about the literary form of those rules with the hope of finding some hermeneutical principles that will help us to formulate new guidelines out of old sources.

Then, a set of new guidelines will follow with a caution and a difference. While Ignatius intended his rules to be applied directly in teaching and spiritual counseling, the guidelines we propose are rather meant to help the preacher and the director. He will be enriched by three

models, one from biblical times, one from the sixteenth century, and one reflecting on our problems and difficulties. From these he can make his choices and create for himself practical suggestions which he can pass on to those under his care. Or, as the case may be, he can give them the models and ask them to create good practical rules for themselves.

2. Sample Rules from St. Paul for Being One with the Church

Paul's attention was focused on a particular church, that of Corinth. At that time of the over-riding importance of the local churches, to be one with the Church meant to be one with that local church. The set of guidelines which emerges from the First Letter to the Corinthians can now be presented as follows.

a. Christ is not parcelled out; therefore no Christian should use slogans like "I am for Paul," "I am for Apollos," "I am for Cephas." All must be for Christ, in the name of whom all were baptized (see 1 Cor. 1:10-16).

This is a rule against divisions in the community: Give your heart to Christ, and do not cultivate individual ministers unduly.

b. Members of the community should not demand miracles as the Jews do. They should not look for wisdom as the Greeks do. They should be content with knowing the crucified Christ (1:17-25).

This is a fundamental rule for unity: A Christian Community is born from the knowledge of Christ. All know and should preach him, the crucified one, risen from the dead by God's power.

c. If someone associates himself with another who is leading an immoral life or is a usurer, or idolatrous, or a slanderer, or a drunkard, or dishonest, he makes himself, too, unworthy to be among the saints (6:9-11).

d. A Christian must not take his complaint against another to the law courts of the unjust instead of before the saints (6:9-11).

To carry on a litigation before the pagans is to break the unity of the community of saints.

e. Let yourself be wronged and let yourself be cheated (6:7-8).

The foolishness of Christ must be an operating principle in the life of the Church.

f. Since the body of a Christian is one of the parts that make up the body of Christ, he cannot take one of these parts, his body, and join it at the same time to that of a prostitute (6:12-20).

The sin of an individual harms the whole body of Christ.

g. Christians should not hesitate to eat anything that is sold in butcher shops. There is no need to raise questions of conscience. These members of Christ are free. But if food can be an occasion of a brother's downfall, Christians should never eat meat in case of being the cause of the brother's downfall (10:23-30).

Paul urges us to responsibility for one another even at times when it means some sacrifice of our precious freedom.

h. A Christian maintains the traditions just as they had been passed down to him. Therefore, a man should pray or prophesy in community with his head covered. For a woman, however, it is a sign of disrespect if she prays or prophesies unveiled (11:1-16).

Paul's horizon, too, is controlled by the social customs of his time.

i. Once Christians all come together as a community, there must not be separate factions among them, that is, separate groups, one rich in food and drink while the other is poor and therefore hungry and thirsty. A Christian never embarrasses poor people (11:17-22).

Love is practical.

j. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is important. That is, the variety of his gifts should be respected by all (12:4-11).

A community is healthy when there is diversity in unity.

k. Accept the part that God has given you and that you must play in the whole body of Christ. Make your full contribution according to your gifts. Never envy others for what they have, and give scope to their gifts (12:12-30).

Respect God's gift in yourself, give all you can to the community.

l. Be ambitious for the higher gifts. Never put the gift of prophecy or of understanding above love (12:31--13:1-13).

If the hierarchy of gifts is not respected, all will suffer.

m. Love in a community is always practical, patient, and kind. It is never jealous, never boastful or conceited, never rude or selfish. It does not take offense and it is not resentful (13:4-7).

n. Hope for spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, for the

benefit of the community. If you have gifts that are not for the benefit of the community, such as the gift of tongues, pray to be enabled to turn it to the good of the community by interpreting it (14:1-19).

o. Whenever a meeting takes place, each should contribute, but always for the common good. This is achieved by everyone being ready with a song or a sermon or a revelation; or by being ready to use his gift of tongues, preferably with an interpretation (14:26-32).

p. Avoid stupid questions such as: How are dead people raised? And what sort of body do they have when they come back? If such questions are raised, Christians should never give in, never admit defeat, never argue, but explain patiently the content of their faith, as Paul himself did (15:35-38).

q. Each one was to give what he can afford so that a collection could be made for the saints who are poor (16:1-4).

Many more rules could be gathered from the writings of Paul. These just given form a unity. They all deal with the problems of the Church of Corinth. They point to attitudes that lead toward actions to preserve the unity of that church and to promote its growth or to "build a church," (as Paul liked to say it).

Paul and Ignatius are not far apart. Paul had in view the community of Corinth. Ignatius had in view the universal Church, or more accurately, the Church in Western Europe, which was then experiencing the trauma brought about by the Reformation. Each responded to specific questions. Each designated attitudes that led to practical actions.

The aim of both writers is to build up attitudes in the members of the community that will lead to actions, that--to use the expression of Paul--will edify, that is, build the Church. 'To build' means to contribute to the construction of an edifice, by laying stone on stone. It is not mere "edification" by moral example. Both writers direct their readers to practical deeds in a concrete world, to deeds that strengthen the Church.

Their rules are not necessarily concerned, not always anyway, with the profession of faith or with the proclamation of divine truth. They are meant to guide the community towards unity.

Nor are their rules always concerned with what is absolutely right or wrong. Often they extend to actions that in themselves are indifferent,

but, for the sake of the "edification" of the community, are better performed or omitted as the case may be.

To sum it up, there is a common trend in the rules but the rules themselves differentiate according to the demand of an age, of a place, of a particular community, or even of an individual person.

It follows that if we want to construct some rules analogous to the rules of Paul and Ignatius today, we have to keep the common trend but respect the differentiation in time and space.

3. Some Reflections on the Inspiration of St. Ignatius

The rules of Ignatius have sprung from a desire to be one with the Church. He wrote directives "ad . . . vere sentiendum in Ecclesia," but it would be more correct to say that he tried to answer the question: How can we grow into an increasing unity, *communio*, with the Church?

The unity that he sought was in many ways external, but his main concern was with the internal.

The unity that he sought was dynamic. It was an increasing intensity in dedication to the point of someone's total giving of himself in the service of the Church.

The fundamental question that he answered through his rules was how to be a living member of a living body. How can a member contribute internally and externally to the health and development of the whole body? He enumerated a number of contributions fitting for his days. In a world that displays more sophistication and broader differentiation, the variety of contributions increases.

He was also convinced that reform was best accomplished by men of positive attitudes who in prayer, zeal, and humility proclaim the Gospel and praise the Church--rather than by men of negative attitudes who amid cynicism, satire, and self-righteousness focus on faults and denounce limitations of Church and churchmen.

4. What Inspiration Should Animate New Rules for Today?

The rules should state the overall importance of fidelity to an internal inspiration. This corresponds to the *attitude* of Ignatius. The

rules should stress the importance of an external profession of faith in the visible church. This is a recognition of the incarnational process. The internal inspiration leads a person to an external reality.

The rules must take recognition of a new and sophisticated understanding of the Church. Outside of the unity of the Catholic communion, there are other ecclesial communities. Here we have a new development quite inconceivable for Ignatius. In our day, to be ecumenical, to respect Christian realities outside the Catholic communion, is precisely to be one with the Church today.

The rules must name certain signs of unity that are particularly relevant in our own day. At the time of Paul, the eating of meat offered to idols became an important issue for the unity of the Church. At the time of Ignatius, veneration of images, pilgrimages, and the like became the signs of an interior attitude towards the Catholic community. In our time there may be specific external actions that acquire similar importance.

The sign value of the external actions may be subject to variations from one place to another, or even at the same place from one type of community to another, for example, a parish community, a university community, and so forth.

The rules must oppose present disintegrating forces in the Church and must reinforce trends that build the community. As virtually any age, today there are strong disintegrating forces working against the Church from inside and outside. They are not unified, they do not spring from the one secular or religious ideology, and they cannot be identified by a few well defined ideas or actions. Therefore a great deal of spiritual and theological sophistication is necessary to recognize them. Also as at any age, today the forces of life in the Church are at work. They, too, reach a degree of complexity that makes it more difficult to identify them with the same clarity and simplicity which Ignatius was able to use at his own time.

The last but not the least inspiration animating proposed new rules should be a harmony between the sacred and the secular. This cannot be stressed enough today, for confusion around this problem reigns supreme. No wonder. First, behind it all lurks the eternal theological question

about the relationship between man's capacity to enter into divine life and his incapacity to acquire it by himself, or, in more traditional terms, between divine grace and human nature, between the supernatural and the natural, between what can be a gift only and what can be achieved by human effort. This may sound so abstract as to seem irrelevant. But secularization is a practical issue and it touches the Church deeply. Often practice has its roots in theory, even if we are not aware of the fact.

Excesses can occur in two directions. At times respect for the sacred can go so far as to deny the goodness of this creation and the ability of man to contribute to its development. But also, at times the value of the secular can be extolled to the point where the need for God's transcendental gifts appears to be minimal or unimportant, with the result that the fundamental task of the Church appears to be something less than the communication of divine life.

To deal with this issue, St. Paul gives good practical guidelines in his First Letter to the Corinthians, chapters 12 and 13, where he speaks about charity as the animating force of Christian life. He is dialectical in his explanation: He states the truth by presenting opposite extremes.

In that well known passage he states that prophetic powers, faith that moves mountains, generosity that gives away all possessions and even one's own body to be burned, all these magnificent gifts and deeds are nothing if they are not animated by charity.

But if charity is present in a person, he will be patient and kind, he will not be jealous or conceited. He will not be rude or selfish, and he will not take offense or be resentful. When he has charity his humanity will blossom out.

His exposition there is an analogue by which we can understand what it means to be one with the Church in our times too. Someone can indeed perform magnificent acts of humanity and generosity; but if they are not inserted into a sacred and transcendental dimension, they are not signs of unity with the Church.

But if that sacred and transcendental dimension is there, and Christian faith, hope, and love are shining through all the actions, there is

unity with the Church. Moreover, generous acts will follow. Vice versa, a lack of humanity can be a proof of lack of unity with the Christian community.

The presence of human attitudes and actions does not necessarily indicate that they spring from charity, neither do they prove that the person is one with the Church. The absence of ordinary human virtues, such as justice, kindness, and patience, indicate that the person has no charity and consequently is not one with the Church.

B. Some Rules for the Twentieth Century.

The following rules are of general character. Our aim is not to provide the reader with precise instructions but to lay the foundations on which he can build from his own resources. This will allow for a great variety of responses and for different emphases within the framework of a basic unity.

1. The fundamental attitude of a Christian who desires to be one with the Church must be an interior alertness to the movements of grace that come from the Spirit of God. The Spirit will bear witness, in his mind and heart, that there is a Church of God to which we should hearken. The Christian eager to be one with the Church cannot go along with those who claim to be following the inspiration of the Spirit and simultaneously to have no need of an institutional Church.

In this connection there is a parallel important to notice. In the minds and hearts of those who are alert to perceive the Spirit's movements, he witnesses to the truth of God's word. Similarly, in the minds and hearts of those thus alert he witnesses to the truth of the Church. Insistence on this interior attitude of alertness to the Spirit is more important in our days than in earlier times because of the strains and stresses of our technological age; and also, because many human persons are held captive by the communications media which invade their persons in a massive assault. They drown out the low voice in which the Spirit speaks.

2. To be one with the Church means to be one with a mystery. But the Church is not a disembodied mystery. It takes on a human form in space and time. To be one with a mystery that exists also in time and space entails two obscurities: acceptance of arrangements made by infinite wisdom which we cannot understand, and

acceptance of a contingent human reality which is so human that sometimes it is difficult to see the strength of God behind it.

To proclaim the Church is to proclaim a mystery. To proclaim a mystery is to declare our knowledge and ignorance at the same time.

This rule may have some relevance for men of our age. Empirical sciences do not like mysteries. Still less do they admit a reality that we cannot hope to explore fully, a reality that is beyond our capacity to know.

At times it is more difficult to accept the human reality of the Church than the mystery that it hides. We can be repelled by shortsightedness, narrowness, even sinfulness in God's chosen ones. Yet, having all that is the way in which the Church exists. It is not a community of persons confirmed in holiness, but of sinners in the process of being healed. There is divine strength operating in them: the word of God, the sacraments, the inspirations of the Spirit. But this strength is working in a community of sinful and limited men. Blessed are those who are not shocked by God's unfolding plan, and can recognize a divine presence behind a human reality.

This problem is not without some analogy with the one that the first disciples of Jesus encountered. They had to go beyond human appearances to see in Jesus the one sent by God.

3. We must confess our faith in the Church before our fellow men.

If the Church is a sign for all nations, *lumen gentium*, once we know about the sign, we must proclaim it publicly. Again, there is an analogy in the Scriptures. Just as John the Baptist pointed to Christ as the Savior of Israel, so Christians must point to the Church as the sacrament for the world (*sacramentum mundi*), or the saving mystery of God.

4. We must seek an increasing understanding of the mystery of the Church, especially of the harmony of the divine and human elements in it.

We hesitate to say which is more important today, the divine or the human element. There is a strong trend to treat the Church as sociological or anthropological phenomenon with little respect for the divine. There is, perhaps, an even stronger trend, especially among fervent Christians, to forget about the human element in the Church and to confuse a

community of sinners who have known God's mercy with a community of saints who will sin no more.

Both trends are damaging. The former would reduce the Church to a mere human institution that we can manipulate at pleasure, the latter imposes an impossible demand on it that is more than God ever intended to ask for. The truth lies in that harmony between the two, the divine and the human, which is difficult to find.

This search for understanding is perhaps more important today than it ever was in history. Most of us have our own opinions and perhaps hold them too tenaciously. A peaceful but unrelenting search will free us from misguided and unfounded dogmatism, and it will also set us on an honest course with built in corrective elements. If we are in possession of truth, a rightly critical attitude will in time only confirm it. If we are in error, hard questions will expose our mistake sooner or later.

A Christian who is always ready to make firm statements about the Church, be they progressive or conservative, may have little realization of the mystery. Another who has many questions may be much closer to God who is revealing himself in our history.

There is a season for firm statements, and there is a season for new questions.

5. Those who are in authority in the Church hold their power in trust. They should use it according to the mind and heart of the Lord. He attracted the crowds by the goodness of his message. He never compelled anyone to follow him.

Priests are often trustees of "power in the Lord." They have no right to use it for self-satisfaction; it must be used in its entirety for the "edification" of Christ's body, the Church.

6. The right attitude in the Church toward authority is to recognize it truthfully. There are two ways of introducing falsehood into our attitude towards authority in the Church: by downgrading it or by upgrading it.

To downgrade authority means not to accept it when it is clearly there. To upgrade it means to project more strength into ecclesiastical acts or pronouncements than the Church ever intended to put there.

Both attitudes are a breach of unity with the Church. They depart

from truth, hence they invite disaster sooner or later.

There is little problem among Catholics in understanding what it means to downgrade authority. But there is a problem in understanding the cor-ruptive nature of an attitude that upgrades authority. How many times we heard that a good Catholic is not content with believing what is an article of faith. He does more: he gives his assent to other commonly held beliefs as well. The statement is ambiguous. A good Catholic must give his assent as far as the Church gives its own, neither more or less.

In some cases the Church pronounced a judgment in human terms about the true meaning of a mystery, for example, when the Council of Nicaea stated that the Father and the Son are of the same substance: one in their divinity but distinct in their personhood.

In many cases, though, the Church has not reached a definitive judgment; it is only in progress toward the fullness of truth. Then the right attitude for the faithful Catholic is to give his assent to an honest and detached search, to accept every piece of evidence for what it is worth, to purge himself from prejudices and biases, so that when the Church comes to a final determination of the truth, he can accept it and see the Spirit at work. To jump ahead of the Church, and to hold for divine truth what the Church has not accepted as such is, at best, misguided zeal and, at worst, religious fanaticism. But not to join the common search for more light, not to consider rich insights that emerge during the search, is to remain on the margin of a community of faith. To achieve some understanding of a mystery is a slow process. To be one with the Church, we must enter into the search and accept its hazards wholeheartedly.

In particular, wisdom is necessary to recognize the right measure of authority in the words of the prelates of the Church. The pope and the bishops can speak with the full power given them by the Spirit. But they can do so in fairly well defined circumstances only. If the conditions are verified, there should be a positive response; this is what our faith in the Church demands. If the conditions are not verified, there still should be respect for the persons and for what they say, but not to the point of confusing human words with revealed truth.

7. To divide the Church sharply into institutional and

charismatic Church is to divide the body of Christ. Not one who does that can be one with the Church.

There are no two separate entities, the institutional Church and the charismatic Church. There is but one body of Christ which is animated by his Spirit and reveals itself as a human community. Because it is a human community it cannot manifest itself except through certain organizational and institutional structures. Such structures are not perfect; they never were and they never will be. They display the whole gamut of human limitations. After all, the Church is a community of sinners.

To the end of time there will be a dialectical process in the Church between the demands of the living Spirit of Christ, and the slow response of our sinful nature. At times the Spirit will prevail; at times men will fail to answer his call. The structures will reflect these movements in diverse directions. They will never be so good that they need no further improvement. But they will never be so bad that they destroy the community. To be one with the Church means to work for improvement all the time, and yet to accept cheerfully the fact that there is a limit to all improvements.

8. All gifts in the Church should be respected. A charism given to a person directly by the Spirit should be honored. Likewise, a charism given through sacramental consecration should be highly esteemed.

It is more difficult to check the authenticity of a personal charism. And it may require stronger faith to acknowledge the strength of sacrament in a fragile man.

9. Weaknesses in the Church call for compassion and healing action.

There are, there were, and there will be weaknesses in the Church. What should be the response of a Christian? It cannot be anything else than the Christian response that is compassion. Bitter criticism and aggressive accusation do not heal wounds. If anything, they aggravate the condition of the sick. Besides, those attitudes hardly proceed from faith, hope and love.

10. To love the Church means to remain in visible unity with the community. If the community suffers from infirmities,

compassion requires a healing presence.

No community in need of improvement ever got better because good men left it. To leave the Church as a "prophetic gesture" is false prophecy.

11. The first duty of every Christian who wants to be one with the Church is to share in the mandate that the Church received from Christ, that is, to partake in the proclamation of the Good News. Each must announce, to his capacity, that Christ died and was raised from the dead; also, that through him, in him, and with him we shall experience the resurrection and share in the life of God without end.

The good news must never be obscured, must never take secondary place to anything. Obviously enough, however, it should be preached with all the discretion needed in given circumstances.

In particular, those who are consecrated priests have been given the mandate to preach the Gospel. They should speak the word of God forcefully rather than lament the evils of the world endlessly.

12. Fidelity to the Church may demand that a Christian should speak the truth as best he sees it, even if by doing so he incurs human displeasure.

Fidelity to the Church begins with fidelity to one's own interior light regulated by faith and reason.

This faith requires fidelity to the whole reality of the Church: to the pope, the bishops, and the faithful. The Spirit of God works through all of them, although in different ways.

A sound movement of reform, or a deeper understanding of a mystery, may arise anywhere in the Church. It may encounter opposition among either prelates or people before it is officially approved. Or, a sound stance may incur initial and emotional resistance, from virtually any individual or group. Between the first inspiration and the concluding judgment there can be many conflicts. Fidelity then requires a simple and honest participation in the search, and the acceptance of human conditions. At times, members of the hierarchy may manifest their displeasure; at times pressure groups may voice their condemnation. We do not suggest that this is the ordinary case. But a person faithful to the Church should know that he may be exposed to both: the loss of esteem in high places, and the loss of popularity in other places. He remains one with the Church if he continues

to serve them all.

The historical circumstances surrounding Vatican Council II offer good examples. Several theologians who were prominent within it had been penalized or even silenced before the Council opened. But through the Council the judgment of the Church eventually clarified the issues, and these theologians were cleared of the former charges. How wrong they would have been if they had ceased to work, to reflect, and to speak when the opportunity was offered. Thanks to their fidelity, we are all enriched. Christ never promised that the mystery of the cross will be absent in the internal life of the Church, but he certainly did not encourage anybody to impose the same mystery on another.

Popular resistance to the social teaching of the Church can be an example on the other side. A Christian proclaiming and defending it may be so effectively ostracized that he virtually becomes excommunicated by a particular group. Fidelity may well mean then that he must continue to speak whether it is, in St. Paul's phraseology (2 Tim. 4:2), "convenient or inconvenient."

13. Fidelity to the Church may require an extreme sacrifice.

Extreme demands are rare, but they do occur. A good historical example is the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773. The Jesuits of that day accepted the decree of suppression.

14. To be one with the Church means to hear the cry of those who thirst and hunger for righteousness, that is, for the light of the Gospel and for the strength of God's grace.

The cry may be articulate or inarticulate. The task of the Church is to hear it even when it is not spoken, and to respond to it even when the call is muted. This is the cry that comes from the greatest depth of a human being, and asks for liberation from the slavery of sin and death. It is a cry that asks for life, and for life with no limit. The Church has been commissioned to perceive this cry; and no one can be a good and active member without wanting to hear it and respond to it.

Often the task of the Church can be less than to respond to a cry; it may well consist in helping human persons to become aware of their deepest need, to awake hunger and thirst for righteousness in a world that

worships its own idols in the form of money, power, and endless excitement of the senses. There is no rule for saying how to make men aware of a dimension of life that they do not possess; there too, a creative approach is necessary. Since the Spirit works in every human person, we are well grounded in hope even before we begin.

15. To be one with the Church is to accept the mandate "to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor" (Luke 4:18-19).

To work for freedom, justice, and peace is an integral part of the task of the Church. Basically, this is a mission to heal the minds and hearts of men so that they come to respect one another's rights and dignity. Evil in human society has its roots in human beings who for selfish ends misuse the blessings of this creation.

The Church must uphold before the nations the right of man to freedom; without that right there is no respect for human dignity even if material goods abound. Since freedom is an intangible spiritual value, no one should be more sensitive about it than the Christian Church and those who want to be one with it.

Injustice exists in minds and the hearts before it can exist in the outside world. The Church is eminently qualified to speak the truth in two ways, by denouncing the lack of humanity and by setting high the evangelical standards. No one can be one with the Church without fulfilling this task to the best of his abilities.

To God the whole human person is precious; He wants to save him in every way, in body and in spirit. It is precisely this *wholeness* that should be the distinctive mark of the saving work of the Church. While its effort is directed toward material justice, it wants to give fulfillment to man by offering him the word of God as well. And while it offers God's word, it wants to demonstrate palpably his goodness too.

16. *Communio* with the consecrated episcopate and with the See of Rome is a touchstone of unity with the Church.

This rule in its simplicity comes down to us from the early centuries. *Communio* is an ancient term; any translation would do it injustice. Its

radical meaning is unity. In the Church, external manifestations of unity are necessary; law, customs, and conventions have their role to play. But the interior bond established by the Spirit is what truly holds the many members together; and obedience to the Spirit is what creates *communio*. In the early centuries there was no strong organization to secure the unity of the Christian Church; the duty to uphold the unity of the body rested more perceptibly upon each member.

There is no union with the Church without this *communio*, which in fact must extend to all who belong to the Church. But the bishops have a particular place in the social body: they succeed the apostles, and their consecration endows them with a "power in the Spirit" that others do not have. Among them, one is the principle of unity, the rock on which the Church rests. He is the successor of Peter, the bishop of Rome.

To be one with the Church means to be in a *communio* of faith and love with the bishops and the pope.

17. To work for the healing of the divisions among Christians is a sacred duty of every member of the Church.

All baptized Christians are one; through the sacrament they received the same Spirit. Yet, in their beliefs they became divided. Then this division ripped apart their social body as well. To be one with the Church means to experience the unity of Christians at the deepest level, and to experience the pain of division where it occurs. To share the work toward unity is to partake in the instinctive movement of the whole body that seeks to restore its own health and wholeness again. No member in the body can stand apart while this healing process is going on.

18. The Church respects the work of the Spirit in every man; so should those who are one with the Church.

A subtle duty, difficult to define because the work of the Spirit in human beings is so mysterious. Yet, it is a real duty, best manifested in sincere respect for other religious beliefs, for freedom of conscience, for men's legitimate aspirations all over the world.

19. The Church should promote the cultural progress of all men. The members of the Church should do this too.

God loved this world so much that He has given his only begotten Son

to save it. Therefore, a Christian should love this world too, and find himself at home in it.

He should not become the slave of any culture, neither should he become the enemy of a particular culture as long as it is substantially good. He should walk with an independence that only God can give, build the temporal world wholeheartedly, and then bring the dimensions of divine life into it. This is the paradox of Christian existence, shared by all the members of the Church.

Conclusion

Unity with the Church cannot be achieved overnight. More particularly, this unity cannot be realized through all the members' conforming themselves to some precise pattern. Christians grow into deeper unity slowly, gradually, at times joyfully and at times painfully, as their faith in the reality of Christian community deepens and their understanding of the mystery expands.

Such growth is intensely personal. The most any writer can do is to awaken the desire for unity, articulate its scope, and indicate the right direction for progress.

Therefore this essay remains open ended, and intentionally so. All that has been said leads up to a question which each one must put to himself: What should I do in my particular, concrete, and personal circumstances to be one with the Church? Enough has been given to set the scene for personal creativity.

We are so much the descendants of an age that stressed firm rules that such an ending may provoke reactions and a reluctance to go any further. The desire of some of us for precise norms given by someone else can be strong; yet, in this complex age of ours, there is no other safe path into the future than the path of personal creativity with responsibility.

The emphasis has been shifted from ready made rules to trustworthy persons. The problems of our times are so manifold, and the solutions we need must be so delicately balanced, that we cannot any longer rely on

detailed rules as much as formerly. We must put our trust in persons who have been tried and have been found faithful. Out of the depth of their learning, and from their experience of both divine wisdom and human foolishness, they can show or state intelligently how they were able to be one with the Church in their circumstances. And we can try to follow their example.

FOOTNOTES FOR I: THE CHURCH, CHANGING TODAY AS IN THE PAST

- 1 This and other translations of the Scriptures are taken from the *New American Bible*.
- 2 For similar descriptions of the Church which reveal a basis for distinguishing three aspects or dimensions within it see Rom. 12:1-8; 1 Cor. 12:4-30; Col. 1:24-29; 2 Thess. 2:13-17; Tit. 1:1-9; Jas. 2:1-7.
- 3 Some external aspects of the Church belong more fully to its essential reality and are linked more intimately to the interior divine dimension than others. An official creed or profession of faith, for example, since it is the community's authentic expression of the action of God in its life, is more integrally part of the Church than a theological work, in which an individual believer endeavors to express his understanding of faith and its credal formulation. The creed is much less subject to change and development than the theological work.
- 4 See the apt illustration, "The World of the Hebrews," opposite Gen. 1:6-8 in the *New American Bible*.
- 5 Press Service (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis), No. 4 (1971), p. 11.
- 6 Transactional Analysis, as a way of understanding and expressing the way persons interact, has been popularized in such works as *Games People Play*, by Eric Berne, M.D., and *I'm OK, You're OK*, by Thomas A. Harris, M.D. Put very simply, Parent, Adult, and Child are three aspects of every human personality; they form the bases of relating to other human beings in different ways. The Parent embodies the inherited, unquestioned views communicated and accepted very early in life; the Parent can afterwards, of course, accumulate more details and attitudes. The Parent seeks to pass these along as items to be accepted with a similar unquestioning attitude. The Child embodies all the spontaneous, internal responses of the person to external events and persons, especially as these occurred in early childhood. Finally, the Adult is the intelligent enquirer and evaluator of data from both Parent and Child, as well as from ongoing experience.

FOOTNOTES FOR II: ST. IGNATIUS' "RULES FOR THINKING WITH THE CHURCH"

The Text of St. Ignatius' Rules is repeated here from my article "Thinking with the Church: The Spirit of St. Ignatius's Rules" in *The Way*, Supplement 20 (Autumn, 1973), pages 72-82, with permission of the editors. The other material too is a condensation and adaptation of that article.

These titles are found in parallel columns on pages 404-405 of volume 100 of the series *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu: S. Ignatii de Loyola Exercitia spiritualia. Textuum antiquissimorum nova editio* (Rome, 1969). For the abbreviations used here (e.g., *Spiritual Exercises* as *SpEx*), see pp. 358-362 of St. Ignatius, *The Constitutions . . . , Translated with an Introduction . . .* by George E. Ganss, S.J. (St. Louis, 1970).

See P. de Leturia, S.J., "Sentido verdadero en la Iglesia militante," *Estudios Ignacianos* (Rome, 1957), II, 153. For a lengthier discussion, with references to various opinions, see I. Iparraguirre, S.J., *Vocabulario de Ejercicios Espirituales: Ensayo de hermenéutica Ignaciana* (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1972), pp. 192-197.

"Directorium Polanci," no. 112, in *Directoria Exercitiorum Spiritualium* (1540-1599), MHSJ (Rome, 1955), p. 327; see also pp. 248, 281, 292, 403-404, 529, 550, 561, 743.

On the *alumbrados*, see, e.g., J.M. Granero, S.J., *San Ignacio de Loyola: Panoramas de su vida* (Madrid, 1967), pp. 217-223, esp. p. 220.

On the Lutherans at Paris, see G. Schurhammer, S.J., translated by M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J., *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times*, Vol. I, *Europe, 1506-1541* (Rome: Historical Institute of the Society of Jesus, 1973), 119-125; also, Granero, op. cit., pp. 232-235.

On Erasmus, see Schurhammer-Costelloe, op. cit., 125-136, esp. 131-134; Granero, op. cit., pp. 239-241.

On the intricacies of dating the Rules, see Leturia, op. cit., II, 149-186, esp. pp. 149, 171, 175, 181; also, Granero, op. cit., pp. 250-252; and Pinard de la Boullaye, *Les étapes de rédaction des Exercices de S. Ignace* (Paris, 1950), pp. 22-24.

Leturia, op. cit., 175-186. The translation of the Rules given here is my own.

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