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Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits



The Road Often Traveled
Formation: "Living the Apostolic Body
of Christ in the Society"

Frank J. Houdek, S.J.

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THE SEMINAR ON JESUIT SPIRITUALITY

A group of Jesuits appointed from their provinces in the United States.

The Seminar studies topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and communicates the results to the members of the provinces. This is done in the spirit of Vatican II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the circumstances of modern times. The Seminar welcomes reactions or comments in regard to the material which it publishes.

The Seminar focuses its direct attention on the life and work of the Jesuits of the United States. The issues treated may be common also to Jesuits of other regions, to other priests, religious, and laity, to both men and women. Hence the Studies, while meant especially for American Jesuits, are not exclusively for them. Others who may find them helpful are cordially welcome to read them.

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The Road Too Often Traveled

*Formation: "Developing the Apostolic Body
of the Society"*



Frank J. Houdek, S.J.

Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits

23/1: January 1991

For your information . . .

On several occasions I have remarked that *Studies* welcomes comments from its readers about the topics with which it deals. The present issue of *Studies* exemplifies such responses in two ways. The essay by Father Houdek is, as he says, "an attempt to continue the dialogue" on contemporary Jesuit formation initiated in an earlier essay. The letter by Father Divarkar from India comments on the essay published last September on discernment and the psychology of decision making. Both of these contributions are examples of the thoughtful reflections and responses that the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality hopes to elicit through the pages of *Studies*. Please share **your** reflections in the letters which you send to *Studies*.

This issue brings news that a yearly subscription to *Studies* now costs \$8.50 and all individual issues will cost \$2.00 apiece. It has been about five years since *Studies* has changed its price. The recent increase in postage costs and a much higher annual bill for printing have imposed such an increase on us now. Full details for both domestic and foreign subscriptions are on the inside back cover.

In September I wrote about a possible delay in the November issue and gave a reason for it. The delay occurred but the cause was new and completely unexpected. A few days after we sent camera-ready copy to the printing company, it went bankrupt, with the consequent delay of that issue. Only now have we found what we hope will be a permanent arrangement. Unfortunately, that search brought a delay to this present issue too. Our apologies to all! I hope that we shall soon be back on schedule. That schedule includes a March issue on ministering to the young, one of the first ministries of the Society of Jesus, one in which Jesuits are surely engaged today and one which has many implications for Jesuit spirituality.

John W. Padberg, S.J.

Editor

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PART 1: SOME REFLECTIONS ON JESUIT FORMATION	3
Formation in the Society as Designed by Ignatius	3
The Loss of Flexibility	4
Relevancy as a Test	5
The Importance of <i>Et Cetera</i>	7
Consequences and Complications	8
Questions and Concerns	11
One Modest Proposal	18
PART 2: IMPLICATIONS FOR TERTIANSHIP	20
The Evidence of History	21
Recent Responses	29
CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS	32
SOURCES: <i>Francis Xavier's Documents on Departure for India</i>	37
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:	38

The Road Too Often Traveled

Formation: "Developing the Apostolic Body of the Society"

INTRODUCTION

In an earlier issue of *Studies*,¹ William Barry, S.J., addressed the intriguing issue of contemporary Jesuit formation. In that essay he offered an informed critique and personal reflection on the state of Jesuit formation in the United States and an invitation to the American Society to continue to discuss, debate, and refine our own understanding of contemporary Jesuit formation. This present article is an attempt to continue the dialogue which he started and to raise some further issues and concerns about our formation.² In addition, I intend to offer some more general reflections about our entire formation process and a more detailed examination of tertian-ship.

¹ William A. Barry, S.J., "Jesuit Formation Today: An Invitation to Dialogue and Involvement," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 20/5 (November 1988).

² I have borrowed the subtitle of my paper from the title of the Thirty-second General Congregation's Decree 6, suggesting the importance that the Fathers of the congregation attached to Jesuit formation.

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I base these reflections on my ministry of the past eighteen years. In September 1972 I was appointed master of novices of the Chicago and Detroit provinces. I did that work (successfully, I might add) for seven years, and then in September 1979 was appointed rector of the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley. I finished a full six years as rector, took a sabbatical, and returned to the faculty of JSTB in 1987. In the past three or four years, I have continued to direct a number of scholastics and have served as a consultant on religious formation for a number of religious communities in the Northern California area. Because of my major ministry in government and Jesuit formation, I have had to become very conversant with questions of Jesuit history, Jesuit formation, and Jesuit spirituality. During those years (1972–90), I have had the great privilege of engaging Jesuits at various ages and stages of religious formation and development—from novitiate to retirement, from the first experience of the Exercises to the last, from discerning novice experiments to discerning major decisions about personal ministry and the future of major apostolic institutions. I have engaged in serious discernment with brother Jesuits about most of the important issues of Jesuit life: admission, first vows, regency assignments, priestly ordination, ordained ministry, departure from the Society, and retirement.

In addition, in the course of these years I have also had the wonderful experience of sharing with tertians my own awareness and understanding of our Institute. I have been invited by various provinces and tertian masters to conduct workshops and discussions about our Constitutions, the Exercises, and the decrees of recent congregations. In the past fifteen years, I have engaged tertians from every province in the United States Assistancy and English Canada. In the main I have found them and their directors to be alert, sensitive, committed, and generous Jesuits. I have also found many of them quite concerned about the nature of tertianship, its purpose and direction, its necessity for them. Many found it inconvenient at a particular time of their life; others considered it simply another hoop that had to be negotiated as a prerequisite for com-

plete incorporation into the Society. They have expressed to me many questions about the structure of tertianship and the relevance of that structure for their future ministry. In most cases tertianship became an act of trust on their part, because neither individually nor as a group did they have much to say about the structure or direction of their particular tertian experience. That structure and direction had been programmatically set long before they entered it.

Further, at a recent meeting of the Seminar which is responsible for *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, the members of the group discussed their own religious formation, including tertianship. Obviously, the experiences of each individual varied widely; for each of us tertianship was a mixed experience. I think it true to say, however, that the more individuated the tertianship was, the more personally satisfying and successful an experience of religious formation it proved to be.

PART 1: SOME REFLECTIONS ON JESUIT FORMATION

By now this may seem to be an exercise in personal horn tooting. But I offer something of my history and recent ministry only as a warrant for the reflections which follow. I want to invite discussion and encourage dialogue about Jesuit formation in the hope that together we can better develop the apostolic body of the Society. I hope to raise our own consciousness and perhaps develop some new perspectives about our formation as it relates to the work of the Society and the Church.

Formation in the Society as Designed by Ignatius

I believe that the Constitutions and the spirit of our Institute have provided us with an admirable program of religious and professional ministerial formation that was gradually tested and refined during the first seventy-five years of our history and culminated in the *Ratio studiorum* promulgated under Claudio Aquaviva. This program took its inspiration from the basic outline provided in the

Constitutions written by Ignatius. It was a program that was wholly congruent with the religious and academic standards of its time and culture—for the most part, the European Renaissance and Reformation—and adapted entirely to the ministerial needs of the period of the Counter-Reformation. It was shaped by experience and underwent a variety of shifts and changes, additions and subtractions, innovations that failed and new approaches that were eminently successful. During this formative period the program was characterized preeminently by its flexibility and adaptability to the current needs of the Church and contemporary society.

In a very real sense, this formation program had no life of its own; it existed in relationship to the larger needs and concerns of the Church which it had been fashioned to serve. Really, then, the program shifted and changed as the contemporary needs of the Church shifted and changed. Though a basic structure remained constant, elements were added or subtracted as they proved useful in preparing a Jesuit minister qualified to meet contemporary ecclesial needs emerging with the passage of time.

The Loss of Flexibility

It was only about sixty years after the death of Ignatius that the program lost this kind of adaptability and flexibility. For whatever historical reason, the Society felt a need to standardize (read concretize!) many dimensions of Jesuit life and work during the generalate of Claudio Aquaviva in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. It was this process of standardization that sapped much of the flexible and discerning élan of Jesuit formation.

What I am saying is simply this: My knowledge of our history and my engagement in the ministry of Jesuit formation for more than eighteen years have convinced me that we have missed some essential reality in Jesuit formation. I believe that Ignatius left us a simply marvelous program and system of formation that was flexibly adaptable to the conditions and needs of his times. It was a program that was both stable and flexible, culturally relevant and

organized along sound ministerial lines conducive to the ecclesial needs which he faced in the mid-sixteenth century. Like many Jesuit readers of *Studies*, I was trained and educated and formed in this program. Even today I do not resent any part of it. It was for me the best that was available and it suited my needs and temperament in a very significant fashion.

Granted all this, however, a nagging perception and intuition continues to haunt me. Putting it in the baldest and most straightforward fashion, I would say that much of contemporary Jesuit formation in America is simply no longer relevant to the needs of the contemporary American Church. I know this is an exaggerated statement and may shock many of my readers. I certainly do not mean it as a criticism of the good, generous, and competent Jesuits who are engaged in the ministry of Jesuit formation at the present time. From experience I know that this work is difficult and demanding; I continue to see the American provinces delegating quite admirable Jesuits to this ministry. Nevertheless, I continue to feel that we are missing the point (or the boat?).

Relevancy as a Test

Why do I say this and what do I mean by saying it? Let me clarify my position even further. I believe that we inherited from Ignatius a process and program of formation that was exactly right for the culture and Church of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Historically we have continued to Band-Aid that program generation after generation in the hope that we could make it relevant to the contemporary scene, whatever form that might take. We have maintained the Ignatian structure of that program, I believe, without realizing that it was becoming increasingly less relevant to ministry in the modern world. It seems to me that this structure can no longer bear the weight of expectation that has been placed on it. The ministerial needs of the American Church in the twenty-first century already have a complexity that is absolutely mind-boggling. Those needs cannot be met and will not yield to a formation pro-

gram founded on a sixteenth-century format. In many ways, I feel, we are corporately blind to this fact.

During my "active" years in formation work, I attended countless meetings intended to review and renew one or other phase of Jesuit formation. I was a member of the Jesuit Conference Committee on Formation which drafted the regional order of studies that currently regulates Jesuit academic formation in America. I have attended wonderful meetings of the Theological Centers of the Jesuit Conference (comprising rectors, deans, and presidents of the North American theological centers). I have spent countless hours with directors of collegiate programs or teachers of philosophy, struggling to make sense out of their particular phase of Jesuit formation. Many of these meetings were directed to one or other stage of formation. We met to examine, to evaluate, to reformulate now the collegiate program, now regency, now the novitiate or theology or tertianship. Not once do I remember any substantive consideration of the underlying assumptions on which these phases of formation were based. Rather, all our effort was directed to maintaining the Ignatian program of formation.

In all these meetings many thoughtful and competent Jesuits were bending every effort to make Jesuit formation relevant to our Church and our culture. Deliberations about curricula, living situations, spiritual direction and ministerial supervision, choice of superiors and formation directors—all this and so much more have simply left us with notable fatigue and significant frustration. My own state of mind after almost twenty years of this work is one of perseverance suffused with a kind of quiet desperation. I have often left such formation meetings with the feeling that "it ain't much, but it's the best we've got."

Again, I am not writing this simply to discount or trash a remarkable program for religious formation. Nor is it my intention to trivialize the sensitive work and insight of those Jesuits who have done this work with absolute conviction and commitment. I too have done it, but now I find myself simply questioning whether

or not it was the thing to do, whether it was indeed worth doing at all. Let me carry these reflections a step further.

The Importance of *Et Cetera*

It seems to me that the most important word in the Jesuit Constitutions is the word "ETC." Yes, I said *et cetera* is the most important word in our Constitutions. What do I mean by that? Any careful reading of the Constitutions will show Ignatius's brilliance as a religious legislator. Invariably he presents a general principle of behavior which he fully intends to be normative, as if he said, "This manner of acting or proceeding is Jesuit and to be followed by Jesuits." He generally follows this normative statement by a number of qualifications to the effect that the prescription is to be applied according to persons, places, times, *et cetera*. He tends invariably to leave the application of the normative prescription to the *discreta caritas* of the person who is actually on the scene.³ What this means is that Ignatius preferred discretion to prescription, discernment to juridical statement, and flexibility to programmatic rigidity. Because of this brilliant approach to religious law and spiritual legislation, the Jesuit Constitutions have survived without rewriting or reformulation for over four hundred years. We are, in fact, the only major community in the world that has never revised its constitutions. Some of this flexibility, I believe, was lost during the period of Aquaviva and his successors, when more and more realities of Jesuit formation and Jesuit life were given what was

³ See, for example, *General Examen*, [60, 71]; *Constitutions* [142, 162, 178, 246]. See also [279] regarding its flexibility about the Spiritual Exercises for those in the novitiate; [285] allows for a tempering in the important matters of obedience and poverty. Note especially [746f], which allow the general to dispense from the Constitutions—an eminently flexible prescription. Also note *General Examen*, [71], which seems to imply that novitiate experiments may continue even during studies and after first vows. For the text of these references, see George Ganss, S.J., ed. and trans., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970). This work will be cited as *The Constitutions*.

intended to be a once-for-all formulation. Though this effort stabilized and organized in a needed fashion many facets of Jesuit life, it set a precedent for Jesuit formation that has deprived it of its vitality, flexibility, and adaptability to the pressing needs of ministry in the American Church.

Consequences and Complications

During my last years as rector of the Jesuit community at Berkeley, I questioned the Jesuit *ordinandi* about how they envisioned their future ministry. Facetiously I asked them, "What are you going to do when you grow up?" Unfortunately, this question proved to be more demanding and challenging than I had expected. So many of them had no sense of their preparation for Jesuit priestly ministry—they simply did not know what they could do, what they wanted to do, or what needed to be done. Even as I did, they sensed a disparity between the elaborate formation they had undergone and the actual complex needs of the Church which they were going to serve as ordained priests of the Society of Jesus. I mean these reflections, of course, not as an indictment of our scholastics in theology or of our young priests. These remarks are simply and purely phenomenological: they describe the phenomena of our current formation situation from the perspective of one Jesuit who has been actively involved in the work of Jesuit formation for almost twenty years.

Age Differences

Two other factors, one historical and the other psychological, complicate considerably the tenor and effectiveness of our current efforts at Jesuit formation in America. Historically, as George Ganss points out so well,⁴ Ignatius constructed his regimen of religious and academic formation for an audience that was predominantly

⁴ *The Constitutions*, 129n.

young and relatively unformed emotionally, professionally, religiously, and ministerially. In the first twenty-five years of our history, the data indicate, the vast majority of recruits for the Society were younger than twenty-five years old. It seems, in fact, that a considerable percentage of candidates were younger than twenty, a fair number of them as young as fourteen, and some as young as twelve or thirteen.

In addition, in a number of places in the Constitutions, Ignatius, supreme realist that he was, seems to suggest that candidates may be accepted who have not yet achieved the kind of maturity or freedom that is a prerequisite for the Spiritual Exercises.⁵ This was true under Ignatius and continued to be true during the generalate of Laínez. The formation program of the Constitutions, therefore, was not only adapted to the historically conditioned needs of a Counter-Reformation Church and culture, but also to a group who were considerably younger than is typically the case with the United States Assistancy Jesuits currently in formation.

Throughout the Constitutions Ignatius consistently adapted and dated his prescriptions to the audience for whom they were intended. He deals with his audience quite differently in Parts I-V than he does in Parts VI-X. The General Examen and the first half of the Constitutions deal with those in early Jesuit formation, a group that was indeed rather young, immature, and humanly and religiously unformed. The second half of the Constitutions (Parts VI-X) has reference to formed members and thus is far less juridical, ascetical, or disciplinary. Either half is very aptly and adequately accommodated to its particular audience, with the usual inbuilt Ignatian flexibility and adaptability. De facto, candidates in formation were chronologically young, psychologically immature, and religiously unformed. The first five parts of the Constitutions take this into account and are accommodated to what was on average a very young audience.

⁵ *General Examen*, [71]; *Constitutions*, [279].

This allows us, I think, to ask a very legitimate "what if" question. What if Ignatius were designing a formation program today for American Jesuits? What accommodations or adaptations might he make, given the socio-economic atmosphere and the distinctly different ecclesial needs of our contemporary scene? What if he were starting from scratch, as it were, with no historical precedents or institutional structures that had to be maintained simply because of a four-hundred-year tradition? How would he approach the notably different breed of young men, much older chronologically and much better formed professionally, who are seeking admission into the American Society in the late twentieth century? What shape would such a formation take to be relevant to contemporary needs and consonant with the abiding Ignatian vision?

Unresolved Issues

A second factor, psychological in nature, continues to complicate the formation endeavor in the American Society and perhaps in the world-wide Society as well. This is harder to document, but I think it is very much in evidence in many of our U.S. provinces. Let me again draw on personal experience to explain what I mean. Over the years I have had occasion and opportunity to confer professionally with any number of counselors, professional psychological clinicians, and psychiatrists. Most of them have treated Jesuits in their professional practice. Many have almost specialized in treating religious men and women, with not a few Jesuits among their clients. They have communicated to me a particular area of concern, suggesting to me some further questions about contemporary Jesuit formation.

In the practicing psychological community, there exists a strong suspicion that many religious, including Jesuits, make a significant religious commitment before they have personally resolved some important foundational issues. In some sense develop-

mental concerns are shelved or postponed in favor of generous commitment to religious values and a set of religious ideals that are alluring to the generosity of young men and women. Very often these foundational issues and concerns only come to the surface near the end of our ordinary formation program, either during theology or in the very early years immediately after ordination.

Questions of personal identity and freedom, concerns about intimacy and loneliness, troubling issues of relationship, sexuality, and community resurface with a power and force that become pre-occupying and sometimes paralyzing. The issues and concerns are real and, if left unresolved, erode significantly the quality of religious commitment and apostolic fruitfulness. They haunt our young Jesuits with a demanding kind of power. Whether we style them as new issues, questions, and concerns or the reemergence of old and unresolved foundational issues that have been neglected and are still unresolved, these matters are serious and significantly complicate life and ministry in the latter stages of ordinary Jesuit formation.⁶

This may seem to contradict my earlier reflections that today's candidates are more mature, responsible, and free than the younger candidates whom Ignatius accepted. I can only plead my conviction that such contradictions are inherent in today's complex and troubled formational climate. What I do know for a fact is that my own experience of dealing with Jesuits in theology or shortly after priestly ordination bears out the suspicions of many of the professional psychological workers.

Questions and Concerns

All of this material from experience, from our history and Institute, from contemporary life and associated phenomena has left

⁶ See Edward Kinerk, S.J., "A Model of Formation," *The Ignatian Constitutions Today, The Way*, Supplement No. 61 (Spring 1988), 94f, for some helpful reflections on this troubling phenomenon.

me with a variety of questions and concerns about our current program and style of Jesuit formation in America. I share them with you in the hope that they will be challenging and provocative, that they will compel us to ask a new set of questions about our future and our corporate hope as it is embodied in the young Jesuits whom we are currently "forming."

These questions are typical and characteristic of my concerns; the list is not exhaustive, but rather includes the assumptions and working principles which underpin our current formation program in this country. Let me, then, pose these questions and concerns for your personal rumination and reflection. Perhaps our corporate reflection, our shared experience and conversation, our communal concern about these important issues will renew our contemporary spiritual and academic formation in ways we never dreamed possible.

1. **Admissions:** I have long wondered if we have a congruent and coherent set of principles or policies regarding admission to the Society. What is really normative about our discernment about candidates? Is it enough simply that the candidate be a "good young man"? I doubt it! Are we looking solely for emotional balance? Certainly such balance is important, but is it enough? How is our selection process guided by our apostolic purposes, directions, and commitments? Are we really considering apostolic viability as a normative criterion for admission? Are we aware of and do we use the real need of the American Church as a touchstone for admission; that is, does the candidate offer any grounded hope that he can be made ready to minister to the actual needs of the Church in a largely agnostic, secularized, technological, and unchurched society?⁷ Does the candidate want to engage in this kind of apostolic ministry, even though it may be an extremely frustrating and fruitless enterprise? Unless we take these issues and concerns seriously, we run the risk, I fear, of accepting good young men whose personal interests and agenda become increasingly disparate and

⁷ See Barry, "Jesuit Formation Today," 25f.

divergent from those of the American Society of Jesus and the actual and urgent needs of the American ecclesial community.

We will simply have to face the fact that human goodness or emotional stability alone are not enough to warrant admission into the Society. The overriding concern has to be viability for the mission and work of the Society. Too often, I think, we have overlooked this simple fact and provoked serious frustration in ourselves and the candidates whom we have accepted. Too often we have allowed our focus to be blurred, and forgotten the simple truth that the Society is an essentially apostolic and ministerial community whose members must be "formable" to our apostolate.

2. **Novitiate:** In a sense, this has consistently proved to be the most stable and consistent stage of formation. It is the one about which we have the most detailed directives from Ignatius; its structures, methods, and purposes are most clearly spelled out in our Institute. And yet I do wonder if we have come to any shared and acceptable determination about the nature of the novitiate in an American context. Is it a place to resolve developmental issues, as I sometimes tried to do while I was master of novices? Or, rather, is it a place actually to measure and test the freedom and indifference of the candidate? Is it a place to test and evaluate the religious experience and commitment of the candidate or, instead, a situation in which to evaluate the apostolic potential of the candidate—potential which is congruent with the stated apostolic priorities of the Society?

How are the Ignatian experiments being utilized and adapted to the essentially different culture and context of our own day? Are the Spiritual Exercises being used as an authentic instrument of discernment about the candidate's call to the Society? Do we take this discernment seriously and test it by challenging apostolic experiments? What criteria are being used to determine a candidate's fitness for first vows? These are, I think, some of the more pressing concerns about the novitiate.

Furthermore, my own experience suggests that we should exercise a certain stringency regarding admission to the Society and first vows.⁸ As novice master I inclined originally to some leniency in these matters. I did recommend young men for admission and vows about whom I had questions and concerns that were significantly unresolved. This bias of mine to hopeful leniency proved to be a very faulty one. All of these young men have left the Society, some very shortly after vows. The experience taught me eventually to exercise the greatest care about questions of admission, especially to vows. My working rule became, Keep the entrance very narrow.

At one point, while we were in the preliminary planning stages for the Thirty-second General Congregation, I wrote to Fr. Arrupe suggesting a new consideration of first vows in the Society. Convinced that our tradition of perpetual first vows is a good one, I raised the question with Fr. Arrupe about the timing of our first vows. Might it not be better, I asked, to delay first vows any number of years until entrance into theology, to allow the candidate to be a member of the Society in some non-judicial fashion as he tests his fitness for the Society and the Society tests him for our life and ministry? It was one of the few times I ever received a "harsh" answer from Fr. Arrupe, who wrote to the effect that this was not to be considered. I still believe, however, that in some cases at least such an approach to first vows would make a good deal of sense. It would allow the candidate to remain in the Society and resolve some of the foundational issues mentioned earlier within its context, but without the canonical obligations of the vows. Perhaps such a practice would create more problems than it solved. It could, however, reclaim some of the flexibility about formation that Ignatius demonstrated in the Constitutions.

⁸ See *Exposit debitum* (The Formula of the Institute), in Ganss, *The Constitutions*, 70f, [6]; *Constitutions*, [101-3, 14f, 163]. These prescriptions of the Ignatian Constitutions demonstrate stringent concern about admission to probation and vows.

3. Collegiate program and philosophy: I have in the past been an ardent supporter of our more traditional program of collegiate studies and philosophy. Along with many of my peers in the Society, I felt the need for cultural literacy and philosophical acumen to engage the concerns of our world and Church. I now have serious reservations about all of this, given the urgent needs of our world and Church. My concerns center around the following questions: Are there new areas of literacy that current ministry demands of us; for example, fluency and literacy in Spanish, computer literacy, skills at social analysis? Are these finding a meaningful and significant place in our current collegiate formation? What of the social sciences and communication arts and media skills as parts of ministerial formation during the collegiate program? What kind of philosophy, if any, is needed for ministerial competence in the American Church of the twenty-first century? What about a serious study of Freud and Marx to engage their contemporary followers from a thoroughly informed perspective? What about the sociological, economic, political, and social underpinning of liberation theology? How much do the needs of ministry to faith and justice really determine the curricula of collegiate studies and philosophy? the living situation during these years? the experience in apostolic ministry during these years? Is spiritual direction during this period helping to facilitate true apostolic prayer for the scholastics?

In other words, are we simply maintaining the prescriptions of the *Ratio studiorum* of 1599, thus avoiding a more serious and thoroughgoing reformulation of this entire period of formation? I am deeply convinced that significant rethinking of this important foundational period must be done. Band-Aids will no longer work here; the issues are too important for our future. The well-educated Renaissance man, long the product of this stage of formation, may well be too poorly prepared to meet the Church and the world in which he will actually have to live and work as an ordained Jesuit.

4. Regency: To my mind, this is one of the more troubled areas of current American Jesuit formation. Historically it is difficult to trace the development of this phase of formation. It is never explic-

itly mentioned in the Constitutions, though the practice of having scholastics teach in the colleges while they were in studies is a very early one. Ignatius allowed and encouraged this practice shortly after the foundation of our earliest schools for externs. Even though this "period of formation" existed, there is no mention of it in the Society's earliest congregations.

Further, given the current structure of formation in America, it is not clear who is really being served during these years of apostolic formation. Is this experience primarily intended for the ministerial growth and development of the scholastic or is it essentially meant for the well-being of the apostolic institution? Too often I have heard from scholastics entering theology that they found regency marking time at best and at worst an experience of personal frustration and desolation. Too often have scholastics come to theology emotionally distraught and spiritually stagnant because regency neither engaged their talents and their competency for ministry nor supported their deep desires for holiness. I do not intend in any way to denigrate or trivialize the wonderful work and commitment of Jesuits in secondary education. In many ways the apostolate of secondary education has remained one of the great glories of the American Society of Jesus. Still, it is not clear to me why high-school teaching has generally remained the normative regency experience in so many provinces, especially when fewer and fewer young Jesuit priests may intend to return to that apostolate. Why is this kind of ministry still regarded in so many quarters as the adequate touchstone for a young man's broad competence to carry out Jesuit ministry? Is there anything essentially inherent in this work that tells us whether a man can preach, counsel, reflect theologically, discern, do the faith and justice to which we are corporately committed?

I am not sure that this is the case, and so I am led to question the meaning and value of declaring such an experience to be ordinary and normative for Jesuits prior to theology. I am aware, certainly, that in many provinces there are alternatives for high-

school regency, but many of the same difficulties also attach to such alternatives.

Finally, whatever may be the experience of regency, what are we doing during that time to direct and refine the ministerial abilities of the scholastic, so that even prior to beginning theology he has a personal and engaging focus for the remainder of his priestly formation? Answering this question effectively would be one wonderful way to achieve the integration recommended by the Thirty-second General Congregation as a hallmark of contemporary Jesuit formation.⁹

5. **Theological formation:** Since I am currently engaged in ministry at one of our major theological centers, I am very reluctant to offer any negative critique of this important apostolic enterprise. I do believe that the theological centers do their work rather well. Thus, instead of criticizing, I prefer to raise the same kind of questions for our corporate reflection about formation.

I wonder, for example, about the timing and location of theological formation in our overall formation structure. Is it psychologically appropriate to send young men to a protracted period of studies at a time when they are humanly poised for fruitful impact on Church and society? Today most of our scholastics are coming to theology in their late twenties and early to middle thirties. They are passing through a time of life when most of their non-Jesuit peers are aggressively establishing themselves as men and women of competence, responsibility, and impact. In these young Jesuits lies a strong, purposeful drive for achievement, responsibility, decision making, and professional competence. What psychological effect, then, do they experience as they go to theology, become passive, lose the opportunity to make decisions, submit to a new study agenda which may well be incompatible with their own exigent

⁹ *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus*, ed. John W. Padberg, S.J. (St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977), D. 6, no. 140. The text of the decrees of these congregations can be found in this volume, which will be cited as *Documents*.

human needs? At a time when their energies and imagination, their verve and enthusiasm are actually directed to action and achievement, to forceful personal impact on the world in which they live, we are asking them to withdraw, to exit the fray and enter a life and world of study and books which may well hold no allure or attraction to them.

Thus, I find it not surprising that a goodly number of scholastics in theology get depressed or disoriented, that they feel adrift or frustrated, that they begin to image themselves in a different way of life. In a situation like this, timing can be everything. I am suggesting that perhaps our timing is off, that we miss the main chance of being successful in this most important stage of Jesuit formation. Would it be possible, for example, to make the timing of theology more flexible or to distribute theological formation throughout the program? Might this make the study of theology more attractive and fruitful for our people? Certainly, we should at the very least examine anew the ways that we teach theology and adapt our teaching modes to the life experience and insight of our students.

One Modest Proposal

I will turn to the question of tertianship in the second part of this paper. Now, as a kind of conclusion to these reflections and to this first part, I want to make one modest proposal concerning Jesuit formation in America. I simply suggest that we begin to take more seriously the recommendation formulated in the eighth and ninth decrees of the Thirty-first General Congregation.¹⁰ These two decrees insist over and over again that every stage of formation and the entire formation program should be controlled by the apostolic purposes of the Society. This insight alone calls us to a serious rethinking of our entire process of formation from admission to final vows and beyond. It states simply that we should accept no

¹⁰ [75-192]. I have in mind especially [71, 141f, 146].

candidate who is not clearly apt for our ministry, which the Thirty-second General Congregation subsequently defined as one of promoting faith and justice. It mandates us to carry on a serious social analysis and corporate theological reflection on the actual needs of the American Church in the twenty-first century and to create a new program of formation to meet those needs.

This means, of course, that we may have to become more really indifferent to our current institutional commitments if such an analysis shows that they are in fact no longer attuned to the current real needs of the American Church. It means that there is no longer any self-justifying Jesuit apostolate!

Perhaps we will need some outside agency to aid us in this endeavor—a group or individual who enters our reflection process without our unexamined assumptions, our antecedent biases, and our frequently unreflected-upon current commitments. Perhaps we are too wedded to a formation program and a set of ministerial commitments that miss the real needs of the American Church. More than one Jesuit has suggested this. In that case we could ironically continue to do a very good job in a misguided program that prepares young Jesuits for ministries that have no real relevance to a Church in crisis.

In short, I suggest simply that we utilize the wise suggestions of our forebears and think and plan and form our members apostolically. I urge that we American Jesuits look more honestly and courageously at what our culture and Church need from us. I strongly recommend that we start from step one and allow NOTHING and NO ONE into Jesuit formation not patently and demonstrably ordered to our apostolic vision and priorities. If we did this, I suspect that we would create a surprisingly new, a surprisingly creative, and a far more effective formation for our membership.

PART 2: IMPLICATIONS FOR TERTIANSHIP

In the introduction to this paper, I offered a preliminary overview of the current problematic of tertianship. At the present time there are almost 350 young Jesuit priests in America and English-speaking Canada "awaiting tertianship," as the catalogue politely puts it. They have been ordained from two to ten years. Given the capacity of our current tertianship programs, it will take about six to ten years simply to deal with this backlog—even if all of these young Jesuits indeed wanted to do tertianship.

In recent months I have spoken to ten percent of these priests, thirty-five, that is, strictly at random and confidentially. I have called a few from every American province and spoken only to those whom I have never met personally. To each I addressed the same questions: Have you made tertianship? When do you plan to do so? Where and with whom do you plan to do tertianship? If you have been ordained more than five years, why have you deferred tertianship?

Granted that this was a random and incomplete sampling, still the answers were startling. With but one exception, all expressed no significant desire to do tertianship; in fact, some felt an aggressive resistance to doing it. The reasons, of course, varied, but most had to do with apostolic involvement and zealous enthusiasm about current ministry. Most were busy and effective young priests or were engrossed in graduate studies, refining their intellectual gifts for future ministry. Some feared the unknown quality of tertianship; others simply were too busy to reflect on anything but the urgency and immediacy of today. All spoke with enthusiasm about the Society, its vision, their commitment—something that I found quite consoling and edifying. Most expressed personal contentment—even consolation—about their Jesuit life and work. None were eager or especially willing to go to tertianship. Though technically still in formation, they considered themselves active, committed,

productive Jesuit priests. Many of them have emerged as responsible leaders, men of religious vision and Jesuit commitment in their provinces even though tertianship was still ahead of them. Of course, I took only a sampling of prospective tertians; the results, however, are rather typical of our situation and deserve examination in light of the entire context of Jesuit formation. They result in a very strange scenario indeed.

The Evidence of History

Actually, as a matter of fact, we should not be surprised by the contemporary state of tertianship or prospective tertians in America. I venture to say that this has always been the case in the Society. We simply have not known what to do with tertianship. Let us examine some history, which may reveal that our current problems with tertianship simply mirror perennial difficulties from the past.

Ignatius himself left us no clear vision of what tertianship could or should be. His remarks about it in the Constitutions are at best enigmatic. In the General Examen he notes that there should be a third year of probation for those who will be professed or spiritual coadjutors ([16]). In the same document he indicates that this year has some of the qualities and characteristics of the novitiate, but that it has much greater flexibility regarding the nature and choice of probationary experiments ([71]). Later, in the Constitutions he adds some minimal specification to flesh out his understanding of the experience ([514–16]). He urges this experience for scholastics after a time of demanding studies and styles it “the school of the heart” in which “spiritual and corporal pursuits” are central.¹¹ This is the extent of Ignatian material about tertianship! To my knowledge he has left no other significant document about this experience, neither in his correspondence nor in his own per-

¹¹ [516]; see Ganss, *The Constitutions*, [516]n (pp. 534f) for some further historical notes about the tertianship.

sonal journal nor in his autobiography. Moreover, there is nothing in his descriptions to legitimate the contour that tertianship has assumed in the past four hundred years.

Some further historical data will be helpful for our reflection. The "tertianship" of Polanco deserves notice. A contemporary of his describes for us how Polanco spent this time.¹² Polanco had been in the Society for six years; after he had exhibited excellent talent and attracted Ignatius's attention in Rome, he was sent to Florence in 1547 to make his tertianship. From Florence he went to tertian ministry in Pistoia, where his central experience as a tertian took place. What was it? Preaching in a parish, giving spiritual exercises to local priests, counseling priests and religious who wanted to go to work in India, initiating spiritual conversations with the local bishop and beginning to direct him in the Exercises. In this letter there is nothing to intimate that Polanco himself had done the Exercises a second time. In addition, it is clear that Ignatius himself recalled him to Rome to serve as his personal secretary long before he had completed this third year of probation. Apparently, for Ignatius the needs of the Society and/or the Church took precedence over his own prescriptions about the importance of tertianship. About the same time Laínez wrote to Ignatius to explain what was being done in "tertianship" in Ferrara. He wrote that they were preaching and counseling, hearing confessions, and ministering to the poor in hospitals. He said that the same was true in Bologna and Siena, where they were teaching the faith to young children with much approval from the children's parents.¹³ Hardly the more monastic and secluded type of tertianship we have come to expect as so typical in much of the Society.

¹² *Epistolæ et instructiones*, Monumenta Ignatiana, series 2, from the Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu (MHSI), vol. 22 (Madrid: 1903; Rome, 1964) 1:467.

¹³ José Manuel Aicardo, S.J., *Comentario a las Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús* (Madrid, 1919-32) 5:670.

A further interesting historical note: in response to a questionnaire from Ignatius in 1548, four of the *primi patres* of the Society who were working in Italy (Laínez, Salmerón, Broët, and Jay) designated ten companions who, in their opinion, could make their profession without supplementary probation, even without any further studies than what they had already completed.¹⁴ Included in this group of ten were both Nadal and Polanco. It seems that not only Ignatius but also the very co-founders of the Society shared the same understanding about any absolute need for tertianship prior to profession in the Society.

Equally interesting is the fact mentioned by Aicardo that nowhere in the instructions of Nadal is there any substantive reference to tertianship.¹⁵ Remember in this context that it was Nadal to whom Ignatius entrusted the explanation of the Constitutions to the Jesuits in the communities of Europe. Nowhere in any of these instructions or explanations does Nadal touch on the nature or necessity of this third year of probation.

The Pre-Suppression Society

Of further interest is what seems to be missing from Iparra-guirre's monumental history of the Spiritual Exercises. In this work he goes to extraordinary lengths to stress the widespread use and growth of the Exercises in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In a long section concerning their use and repetition among Jesuits, he lists a variety of ways that Jesuits used and repeated the Exercises. He comments on phenomena like the use of the Exercises for daily prayer, the Exercises in books of popular meditation, the Exercises used in preparation for renewal of vows, the Exercises partially repeated on special occasions, and their use by the great preach-

¹⁴ André Ravier, S.J., *Ignatius of Loyola and the Founding of the Society of Jesus*, trans. Maura Daly, Joan Daly, and Carson Daly (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 145.

¹⁵ *Comentario*, 5:674.

ers of the Society.¹⁶ Yet there is significant silence about their repetition during tertianship. He mentions the prescription of the Constitutions, but offers no further comment or documentation about this practice. Obviously, I find this to be a very curious oversight.

Further, as late as 1575, twenty years after the death of Ignatius, we find Polanco himself in Sicily trying to organize a tertianship according to the Constitutions.¹⁷ Thus as de Guibert has pointed out, for a rather long time these last formational experiences of the Constitutions were subjected to the whim of circumstances.¹⁸

So, even though novitiate houses were becoming common under Borgia and a new set of rules for novice masters came into vogue under Mercurian, it was only under Aquaviva that tertianship acquired a regular form just about sixty years after the death of Ignatius.¹⁹

It was only in 1616 that Aquaviva synthesized all of his earlier thinking and consultation about tertianship in his now-famous *Ordinatio de tertio anno probationis*.²⁰ It is this document which has remained foundational and normative for our practice and understanding of tertianship. How different a picture it presents from that of the early companions engaged in active Jesuit priestly ministry! How different it is from the tertianship of Polanco! Aquaviva simply mandates a contemplative and monastic format wholly removed from the dynamic life of the apostolate. He substitutes mo-

¹⁶ Ignacio Iparraguirre, S.J., *Historia de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio*, Bibliotheca Institutii Historici Societatis Jesu, vol. 7 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1955) 2:292-320; *Polanci Complementa*, MHSI, series 4, vol. 54 (Madrid, 1917) 2:391, 431, 495.

¹⁷ *Polanci Complementa* 2:391, 431, 495.

¹⁸ Joseph de Guibert, S.J., "Le Généralat d'Aquaviva et l'histoire de la spiritualité," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 10 (Jan.-June 1941): 64.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 64f.

²⁰ *Institutum Societatis Iesu* (Florence, 1892-93) 3:262-67. This work will hereafter be cited as *Institutum*.

nastic practices of solitude, silence, and controlled environment for the dynamic experience of Polanco and the others in 1547 (266f).

Unfortunately, I believe, subsequent general congregations and Fathers General cite this document over and over again as the norm to which any and every tertianship must conform. I am not convinced in any way that Aquaviva's *ordinatio* really captured what Ignatius intended and what he and his first companions experienced during their sojourn in Venice in 1536–37.²¹ This experience in Venice was anything but the secluded monastic existence mandated by Aquaviva. Clearly, subsequent congregations took Aquaviva's legislation very seriously indeed. From the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth, congregation after congregation has followed the *ordinatio* of Aquaviva and insisted on the integrity of the tertianship as he outlined it.²²

Throughout this history there was at least one bright spot. The Eighth General Congregation under Carafa in 1645–46 decreed that those who finished studies prior to entering the Society were dispensed from tertianship, provided they had been seriously tested in other ministries.²³ The decree states that such candidates may be solemnly professed without doing the traditional tertianship prescribed by Aquaviva. This certainly seems to follow the tenor of the prescription in the Constitutions and suggests that it is the rigor and intensity of studies that Ignatius wanted to temper by the "school of the heart."

²¹ Joseph de Guibert, S.J., *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice: A Historical Study*, trans. William J. Young, S.J. (St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964), 36f and especially 37, n. 40. See also Ganss, *The Constitutions*, p. 234n.

²² GC 18, D. 22, no. 6, *Institutum* 2:445; GC 20, D. 12, no. 5, *Institutum* 2:471; GC 22, D. 44, no. 1, *Institutum* 2:495. This Twenty-second Congregation in 1853 under Fr. General Beckx explicitly cites the *ordinatio* of Aquaviva.

²³ D. 9, *Institutum* 2:346.

The congregations of the eighteenth century prior to the suppression simply reiterate the importance and necessity of tertianship according to the model mandated by Aquaviva. The Sixteenth General Congregation, for example, in 1730–31 forbade provincials to dispense from tertianship—a practice which was apparently quite widespread during this period.²⁴ The Eighteenth General Congregation again took up the cause of tertianship, mandating in the strongest possible terms that all were to complete it integrally.²⁵ Clearly such a mandate would not have been needed had there not been an abuse to be corrected!

The Restored Society

The period of the restoration in the nineteenth century was characterized by very marked conservatism and traditionalism. Every attempt was made to restore the Society to its pristine integrity. During this period the Society became the chief supporter of Pius IX and Leo XIII in their attempts to institute a conservative reform of the Church. The congregations of this period mirror this conservatism and traditionalism. When tertianship is mentioned in these congregations, it is only to urge its completion in the style recommended by Aquaviva.²⁶

When we enter the twentieth century, the situation becomes even more confused. In 1910 Fr. General Wernz addressed an instruction about tertianship to the whole Society. Close examination of the text shows it to be simply an elaboration and detailed explicitation of the ordination of Aquaviva.²⁷ Wernz makes explicit reference to Aquaviva's document and reiterates the tertianship program that is outlined there. For the next fifty years, Wernz's instruction

²⁴ D. 34, *Institutum* 2:431.

²⁵ D. 22, no. 5, *Institutum* 2:445. See also GC 19, D. 11, *Institutum* 1:49.

²⁶ GC 20, D. 8 and D. 12, no. 5, *Institutum* 2:470f; GC 22, D. 44, no. 1, *Institutum* 2:495

²⁷ *Acta Romana* (AR) 1:21-31. This document is dated Feb. 2, 1910.

and the document of Aquaviva on which it is based were normative for the tertianship of the Restored Society. What does this mean? That for fifty years and more we have been urging a tertianship formation program that originated in the early seventeenth century and probably significantly differed from what Ignatius himself underwent and subsequently recommended in the Constitutions. It is also interesting to note that less than two years later Wernz had to urge again the exact observance of his instruction of 1910, apparently because large numbers of Jesuits were still not doing tertianship.²⁸ How very strange!

Three great generals, Ledóchowski, Janssens, and Arrupe, dominated what remained of twentieth-century Jesuit history. In some way each of them contributed to the confusion surrounding the reality of tertianship. Ledóchowski wrote the first of a number of instructions on tertianship in March 1926.²⁹ It is clear from a footnote in that document that Fr. Ledóchowski was conscious of drawing heavily on the ordination of Aquaviva and the earlier instruction of Wernz. He simply restates in exhortative and prescriptive language the traditional picture of tertianship dating back to the early seventeenth century. He prescribes monastic practices as normative, even though the Society is not a monastic community. He pays lip service to the apostolic nature of tertianship, but then so restricts this aspect of the program that it almost fades out of existence. In short, he makes no accommodation to a post-World War I Society in need of a new breed of Jesuit priestly ministers.

A few years later he addressed the tertian masters of the world about their work and urged that the tertian Fathers further retrench their ministerial involvement. His aggressive interdiction of letters for the tertians and their access to contemporary journals and periodicals is but another sign of "withdrawal from the world"

²⁸ AR 1:48-50, in a document dated Nov. 24, 1912.

²⁹ AR 6:495-502.

which he consistently encouraged.³⁰ Shortly before this he had explicitly and severely limited the scope, the nature, and the duration of ministry for the tertians.³¹ Once again, how different was this program from that experienced by Polanco in 1547!

Ledóchowski seemed to have recognized to some extent that Jesuits experienced considerable resistance to this form of tertianship. He noted that when tertianship is delayed one can experience a divided heart about doing it.³² The remedy he prescribes in his letter is simply to allow no delay—that the only reason for any deferring of tertianship is “insuperable necessity.”

Fr. Janssens persisted in exactly this same thinking about tertianship, basing it on the same authorities—Aquaviva, Wernz, Ledóchowski. In his address to the procurators in 1950, he castigates tertian masters for being too indulgent to tertians in the matter of ministry.³³ Consistently he literally equated tertianship with the novitiate, although the Constitutions never did this. He seemed to think that the prospective tertian had not grown or developed or matured in any way in the years since the novitiate.

In both 1957 and 1960 he wrote to all provincials rather lengthy *monita* (admonitions) about tertianship.³⁴ Each document recalls the traditional doctrine about tertianship which he garnered from his predecessors Aquaviva, Wernz, and Ledóchowski. Each was sent under the rubric of warning or admonition about tertianship. Each viewed tertianship literally as a novitiate, and each regarded this novitiate as a monastic desert experience of solitude, prayer, study, and interior discipline. Hardly, as we said earlier, the kind of novitiate or tertianship that Ignatius envisioned. With ter-

³⁰ AR 6:86f.

³¹ AR 6:275-78.

³² AR 8:164f, in a document dated June 9, 1935.

³³ AR 11:871f. This address was given on Sept. 30, 1950.

³⁴ AR 13:208-14, in a document dated May 31, 1957; AR 13:781-83, in a document dated June 21, 1960.

tianship understood in such a way, is it any wonder that many good, committed, and generous Jesuits resisted it?

Recent Responses

The Thirty-first General Congregation again took up the issue of tertianship after electing Fr. Arrupe as general. At this congregation the first break in this tradition occurred—more than four hundred years after the death of Ignatius. In an introductory historical decree, the congregation notes for the first time that there are indeed structural difficulties with tertianship. It states very directly that these structures are not necessary to achieve the goals of tertianship, nor do they come from the Constitutions or general congregations, but from instructions of particular Fathers General. It then recommends a period of experimentation to renew these structures so that they better fit contemporary needs.³⁵ In two later decrees on formation and tertianship, the congregation follows the recommendation of the preliminary subcommission. In the decree on formation there is a new statement about tertianship and its essentially active and pastoral character. The monastic model which characterized the earlier tradition is no longer in evidence (D. 8, nos. 42–45).

The decree on tertianship is revolutionary in our tradition. In the most direct language possible, it underscores the difficulties in current tertianship programs and mandates a period of thoroughgoing experimentation to discover new methods and structures which better achieve the ends of tertianship. It permits these experiments to be done in an inculturated fashion on a regional basis. It also reclaims the apostolic quality and character of tertianship (D. 10, no. 42).

Fr. Arrupe took all of this very seriously in the early days of his generalate. He began a serious consultation with tertian masters

³⁵ "Historical Preface to the Decrees of the 31st General Congregation," *Documents*, 29, section 16.

throughout the world and in the next five years issued a series of documents concerning tertianship. In a letter to the provincials and tertian masters in 1967, he intimates that there are still those who are denigrating tertianship as a useless institution; but he reaffirms its value and objectives and proposes normative parameters within which further structural experimentation may occur. He allows the deferral of tertianship for as much as three years after theology, a notable departure from our previous tradition. This document is characterized by a flexibility found in no earlier instruction about tertianship. It encourages serious apostolic ministry and even envisages some part of tertianship being done prior to ordination. It continues the period of experimentation decreed by the Thirty-first General Congregation.³⁶

After this period of consultation about tertianship had gone on for three years, after a meeting of tertian masters in Rome, in 1970 he proposed further adaptations in the structure of tertianship.³⁷ He also accepted the major recommendations of the tertian masters and fixed the boundaries for continued experimentation and adaptation. In the first place, he noted that the difficulties with tertianship had been perennial throughout our history, and that a new set of problems had sprung up because of contemporary ecclesial needs and developments—problems stemming from new social concerns, ecclesial renewal, and psychological considerations. His candor about the problems and difficulties of tertianship was amazing. He added two new notes to the notion of “probation” in tertianship: it was, he declared, a time to reconsider and reconcile oneself to the real Society of today and a time to confront oneself with a Society that is imperfect but under the direction of God’s Spirit in its mission (553).

He then appended to this letter the report and recommendations of the tertian masters, which he accepted as the working norm

³⁶ AR 15:52-57, in a document dated Sept. 8, 1967.

³⁷ AR 15:543-59.

for tertianship until the following general congregation (554–59). The flexibility of this document is quite marvelous. It allows five different structural forms of tertianship and encourages each provincial to adopt a form suited to the particular needs of his cultural region and province (557). The document reclaims the importance and value of the Exercises and the truly apostolic experiments which expose the tertian to the insecurity of the really poor. The document stands as one of the most innovative statements about formation ever made in the Society.

The Thirty-second General Congregation and Thereafter

All of this experimentation finally came to a head at the Thirty-second General Congregation at which two plans for tertianship were approved (D. 7). Unfortunately, the decree seems a step backward, at least to this writer. It has nothing to say about the various options proposed by the tertian masters and approved by Fr. Arrupe in 1970. It makes no mention at all of continued flexibility regarding structure, time, or apostolic experiments. It is as if all the former consultations and recommendations had never happened. The Thirty-second General Congregation was in many ways one of our most splendid achievements; perhaps its agenda was too large or demanding to accomplish still more. In any event, its decree on tertianship was not one of its better moments.

That the situation remained troubled is clear from a subsequent letter of Fr. Arrupe in which he notes that there are still many priests and Brothers who have deferred tertianship for too long a time. By way of exception he allows special forms of tertianship in such cases.³⁸ He urges again that the situation be resolved as soon as possible and not be allowed to recur.

³⁸ AR 16:516-20.

Finally, we have his words to the Sixty-sixth Congregation of Procurators in 1978.³⁹ Though sounding a note of optimism and encouragement about tertianship, he nonetheless spoke of provinces where eighty or more eligible members had not done tertianship and where they had deferred this program for ten or more years after priestly ordination. He admitted that the situation was now somewhat better, but only because of “emergency solutions” and reduced forms of tertianship which he had allowed simply out of necessity. He concluded his address by saying, “We must strive to structure the tertianship anew as soon as possible so that it may answer to the needs of our times.” It is almost twelve years since he made that recommendation; to my knowledge nothing substantive has been done to respond to his appeal and initiative in this most important matter.

While Fr. Paolo Dezza was papal delegate, he sent a letter that probably demonstrates better than do Arrupe’s suggestions the actual temper about tertianship during this period. In it he refused to grant a provincial’s request for an individuated tertianship, an option which Fr. Arrupe would have allowed, to judge from a letter that he had written in 1970.⁴⁰ Father Dezza’s reasons for refusal are, on the surface, plausible. To my mind, however, the letter illustrates a retrograde mentality about tertianship—a return to the Aquaviva-Ledóchowski-Janssens mentality, a mentality that represents the problem with tertianship.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

I am fully aware that this has been a long historical presentation. My purpose has been to show that the tertianship has always been in trouble. I think we took a wrong direction in the early years when tertianship was in its formative stages after the death of Ignatius. Once that happened, the troubles began and took on a life

³⁹ AR 17:470, in an address delivered on Sept. 27, 1978.

⁴⁰ AR 18:928f.

of their own. Over and over again congregations legitimated the direction given in those early years. Over and over again they urged us not to defer or avoid tertianship, clearly indicating that there were many, many priests and others who were deferring or delaying or completely avoiding it.

The present situation is not much better than it was at any time in the past. About 350 of our priests in the provinces of the United States still await tertianship, many of them simply not looking forward to it with any verve or enthusiasm. We continue in our corporate thinking to affirm the value and importance of tertianship and yet do very little to adapt it, as Arrupe recommended, to the pressing needs of our times. No wonder that so many Jesuits find the thought of tertianship distasteful.

It is easy, of course, to point to the difficulties about tertianship. Many of us probably have our own horror stories about our personal experience of tertianship. It is, I think, far more difficult to suggest any really workable remedy or solution to the situation in which we currently find ourselves.

What I again offer, therefore, are a few points for reflection, which may give some light and some hope to resolve this current situation.

1. Experimentation: Allow or encourage local experimentation about every aspect of tertianship and its structure. Take, for example, the question of the Exercises. Why not allow something like a tertian Nineteenth Annotation retreat during which the tertian could learn by experience the apostolic prayer which we have always valued so much? Someone has suggested that we may be in a situation of continual transition. Perhaps this means that continual experimentation rather than facile and stable programs would better serve the ends and purposes of tertianship. Perhaps, too, such continual experimentation would teach all of us—the formed Society, tertians, and tertian masters—a good deal more about apostolic discernment.

2. Discrete individuation: Experience tells me that no program meets anyone's individuated needs. At best a program approximates the common group needs. Each person in a tertian group will have his own rhythms, temperament, desires, and difficulties. Is it possible to recognize this fact in our tertianship programs more than we currently do? Granted that there is significant individuation in the ministry experiments of many American tertianships, still I believe that a good deal more could be done, making it possible for the tertians to learn a good deal more about real discernment because they had experienced it in their own life and ministry.

3. Personal responsibility: From the random sampling that I have done, this is one of the more conflictual elements of tertianship. Many of those awaiting tertianship do fear the surrender of personal responsibility and the limited autonomy that they enjoy in their current ministry. They do fear the passivity that has marked tertianship in the past, and it is right that they should. Is it possible, therefore, from the very beginning to grant tertians a responsible share in shaping the tertian program? Why must it be a program that is replicated year after year simply because the program worked once and it is convenient to do the same thing again? I have found that people do best in a program that they have had a part in shaping. This kind of responsible engagement might indeed make our tertianships more attractive and much more effective.

4. Apostolic quality: One of the criticisms that I have leveled against tertianship is that it has been fashioned from a monastic perspective. Its structures and methods would be very appropriate to people whose vocation was strictly monastic and contemplative. This is not our calling and we should not, therefore, complete our religious formation in a monastic and purely contemplative environment and program.⁴¹ We are being formed to active apostolic and

⁴¹ Parker J. Palmer writes:

Contemporary images of what it means to be spiritual tend to value the inward search over the outward act, silence over sound,
(continued...)

contemplative life. We have honored too much the contemplative dimension, to the loss of our apostolic reality. I urge that we do everything possible to reclaim as aggressively as possible this dimension of tertianship. It might be that in doing this our tertians would become increasingly more aware and sensitive to the real needs of our Church and society in America. Perhaps freed from the parochial constraints of their prior ministry, they may discover more of the pressing needs in our world.

E. Considerations about prayer: One other point deserves our attention. It is true, of course, that the Exercises form the very life blood of the Society. The question does remain, however, whether an individual tertian needs to repeat this experience during tertianship. It is clear that the Exercises are for the most part discursive prayer; that is to say, they lead to active, imaginative, cognitive, and affective prayer. Is such prayer always appropriate for a given tertian? Is it not possible—in fact, hoped for—that our young priests will have grown in prayer to some gift of nondiscursive prayer? In such a case the Exercises would, in fact, be counterproductive for the spiritual growth of the individual. I believe that this matter deserves serious attention from both tertians and their directors.

My suggestions are modest. Combined they could lead to the kind of renewal and reform of tertianship that Fr. Arrupe hoped for in the early seventies. In some real sense I feel that this could be one of the finest tributes that we could offer him—that at his initia-

⁴¹ (...continued)

solitude over interaction, centeredness and quietude and balance over engagement and animation and struggle. If one is called to monastic life, those images can be empowering. But if one is called to the world of action, the same images can disenfranchise the soul, for they tend to devalue the energies of active life rather than encourage us to move with those energies toward wholeness. (*The Active Life: A Spirituality of Work, Creativity and Caring* [Harper and Rowe, 1990], 7)

tive and urging we found again the power and beauty of what Ignatius intended in his legislation about tertianship.

I conclude as did Father William Barry in his earlier paper on Jesuit formation: "This is a working paper, something for all of us to work on, to discuss, to argue about, to refine. I make no claims to completeness or even to being correct in all my statements. Our life is on the line, and under God it is in our hands."⁴²

⁴² "Jesuit Formation Today," 50.

SOURCES

Francis Xavier's Documents on Departure for India

Before leaving Rome for Portugal and India, St. Francis Xavier on March 15, 1540, wrote and signed the following three documents, giving his approval to the Constitutions yet to be written, voting for the general yet to be elected, and pronouncing his vows in the Society yet to be established. An English translation of Xavier's letters will be published this year by the Institute of Jesuit Sources.

1. I, Francis, say the following: If His Holiness will approve of our way of life, I shall agree to all that the Society will determine with respect to our constitutions, rules, and way of life, those members of the Society who could be conveniently convoked and summoned having been brought together in Rome; and, since His Holiness is sending many of us to different places outside Italy, and we cannot thus be all brought together, I hereby say and promise that I shall approve of everything that those who can come together shall have ordered, whether they be two or three, or whoever they may be. And I therefore, with this document signed by my own hand, declare and promise that I shall agree to all that will be decided by them.

2. I, Francis, also say and affirm, being in no way persuaded by anyone, that in my judgment the one who is to be elected as the leader of our Society, whom we must all obey, should be, it seems to me, speaking in accordance with my own conscience, our old and true father, Don Ignatius, who with no

little effort brought us all together, and who, not without effort, will be able to preserve, govern, and cause us to advance from good to better, since he has a greater knowledge of each one of us than anyone else. And after his death, I am speaking from what I feel within my soul as if I should have to die for it, I say that it should be Father Micer Pierre Favre; and God is my witness that I am not saying anything except what I think. And in witness to its truth, I sign this with my own hand.

3. Also, after the Society will have come together and elected its leader, I, Francis, now promise for that time perpetual obedience, poverty, and chastity; and thus, my dearest father in Christ Laínez, I ask you, for the service of God our Lord, that you, in my absence, present in my stead this my resolve together with the three vows of religion to the leader whom you will have elected, since I promise to keep them from this day on for the time when this will happen. And, as a witness to its truth, I sign this with my own hand.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor,

I have just received *Studies* (Sept. '90), and read with great interest and profit Michael O'Sullivan's essay on "discernment and the psychology of decision making." His explanations and cautions are most pertinent. But he is silent about a factor of paramount importance for Ignatius. The Exercises speak of a special kind of feeling and cognition that is qualified as "interior": "sentir . . . internamente" [2], "conocimiento interno" [104].

This "interiority" appears repeatedly in the original text, but unfortunately gets lost in translation. It indicates a level of perception and response, more profound than ordinary feeling and cognition, which Ignatius discovered in his earliest religious experience. The Autobiography points to it in a marginal note: "This was his first reflection on the things of God; and later, when he composed the Exercises, this was his starting point in clarifying the matter of diversity of spirits" [8].

What happened was that while convalescing in Loyola, his head entertained two series of thoughts, of romantic adventures and of heroic asceticism. His heart found equal satisfaction in both, so that he could spend hours on either.

But little by little his attention was drawn to a deeper level of awareness, where he noticed a difference. This awareness transcends, and in a sense combines, affectivity and cognition as usually understood. In fact the Exercises propose a prayer for **feeling interior cognition**: "para que sienta interno conocimiento" [63].

Greco-scholastic (and traditional Western) anthropology, with its "rational animal," has no room for this deeper level of contact with reality, which is recognized in Oriental spirituality. Ignatius employs the language of his time and place; but he operates with what is rather a biblical model: Paul speaks of "your whole being—spirit, soul and body" (1 Thess. 5:23). Soul and body together make up flesh, or human nature, to which feeling and cognition belong. Spirit corresponds to the person, and is elsewhere referred to by Paul as "inner self" (Eph. 3:16), which in Latin is "interior homo." So it may well be that that is where Ignatius got his "interno," which today might be rendered as "personal."

Both Paul and Ignatius believe that the Holy Spirit, whilst influencing us in many ways, also can and does act directly in our inmost being. "The Spirit joins with our spirit to bear witness that we are

children of God . . . enabling us to cry out, Abba, Father" (Rom. 8: 15f). This is echoed in the Exercises when the director is warned not to come in God's way, for "in the quest for the divine will it is far better that the Creator and Lord himself deal with the soul that is attached to him setting it ablaze with his love and praise" [15].

The filial "Abba" response at the personal level"—not as I will, but as you will" (Matt. 26:39)—is what discernment is all about. And it is also the basic consolation that guides the whole process—what the Exercises call "any growth in faith, hope and love, or any interior joy that invites and draws a person to heavenly and spiritual progress, so that one rests quietly in the

Creator and Lord" [316]. Note: interior joy.

Obviously, all our "powers" and every means at our disposal must be brought to bear on a sound decision. Precisely so, but we must not ignore a key element. The subject could be developed further; but this is only a letter, and the intention is simply to alert readers of *Studies* (and writers too!) to what seems to be a serious omission in the present, as well as past, treatment of discernment according to Ignatius.

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