





# STUDIES

## in the Spirituality of Jesuits



The Authentic Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius:  
Some Facts of History and Terminology Basic to  
Their Functional Efficacy Today

George E. Ganss, S.J.

Published by the American Assistency Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality,  
especially for American Jesuits working out their aggiornamento  
in the spirit of Vatican Council II



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## 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, in their meeting of October 3-9, 1968. The purpose of the Seminar is to study topics pertaining to the spiritual doctrine and practice of Jesuits, especially American Jesuits, and to communicate the results to the members of the Assistancy. The hope is that this will lead to further discussion among all American Jesuits - in private, or in small groups, or in community meetings. All this is done in the spirit of Vatican Council II's recommendation to religious institutes to recapture the original charismatic inspiration of their founders and to adapt it to the changed circumstances of modern times. The members of the Seminar welcome reactions or comments in regard to the topics they publish.

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

### THE MEMBERS OF THE SEMINAR ARE:

William J. Burke, S.J., Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass. 02167

Thomas E. Clarke, S.J., Woodstock College, Woodstock, Maryland 21163

James J. Doyle, S.J., Bellarmine School of Theology, 230 S. Lincoln Way, North Aurora, Illinois 60542

John C. Futrell, S.J., School of Divinity, St. Louis University, 200 North Spring. St. Louis, Missouri 63108

George E. Ganss, S.J., The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Fusz Memorial, 3700 West Pine, St. Louis, Missouri 63108 (Chairman of the Assistancy Seminar, and Editor of its Studies)

Hugo J. Gerleman, S.J., The Institute of Jesuit Sources, Fusz Memorial, 3700 West Pine, St. Louis, Missouri 63108 (Secretary of the Assistancy Seminar)

John C. Haughey, S.J., America Staff, 106 West 56th St., New York, New York 10019

David B. Knight, S.J., St. Charles College, Grand Coteau, La. 70541

Vincent J. O'Flaherty, S.J., St. Stanislaus Seminary, Florissant, Missouri 63032

John R. Sheets, S.J., Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53233

John H. Wright, S.J., Jesuit School of Theology, 1735 LeRoy Street, Berkeley, California 94709

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Fusz Memorial, St. Louis University,  
3700 West Pine Boulevard  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108

## C O N T E N T S

### THE AUTHENTIC SPIRITUAL EXERCISES OF ST. IGNATIUS: Some Facts of History and Terminology Basic to Their Functional Efficacy Today

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by

George E. Ganss, S.J.  
The Institute of Jesuit Sources  
Fusz Memorial  
3700 West Pine Boulevard  
St. Louis, Missouri 63108

Introductory: the purpose and the problem

The aim of the present study is to set forth a brief synthesis of our present knowledge of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, that is, to present a résumé which incorporates the most important information which modern research has furnished. Or in other words, the aim is to present an assembly of considerations which seem particularly relevant and basic to the functional efficacy of these authentic Exercises today. Toward achieving this hope and purpose, we shall discuss the primal power of the authentic Exercises of Ignatius and the art form through which he endeavored to communicate their dynamic force. Then we shall present in chronological order the most important evolutions in terminology and practice which took place, especially those after his death in 1556. Hopefully this procedure will be helpful, first, toward furthering the restoration of the practice of the authentic Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius which is fortunately arising today, and second, toward enabling retreat masters to walk more securely in their efforts to solve some vexing problems connected with the adaptations which Ignatius' little book inspired after his death.

This study is presented as a position paper. That is, the writer

takes a stand in which he sincerely believes, presents it with a view to stimulating informed discussion, and professes willingness to revise his opinions according to light which the discussion may furnish.

Much though not all of the point of the present study can be given by means of a homely comparison. When one likes pie but cannot obtain a whole pie, he praiseworthy takes whatever fraction he can get. But if he finds his quarter-pie unable to give all the nourishment of the whole, he should not blame the quarter which yields all that can be reasonably expected of it. Much less should he blame the whole pie for the lower yield of the part. He would do well, however, to devise means of obtaining a whole pie when he can, even if the occasions be relatively few. Moreover, if either advertiser or customer has somehow used terms obscurely and thus unwittingly led people to expect from a fraction the nourishment which only the whole can give, with subsequent complaints about an "over-sell," it would be wise to remedy the obscurity.

All of us have heard complaints roughly similar to these: "I find the annual retreat which I must make, when done according to the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, repetitious, dull, and uninspiring. I know in advance what the retreat master will say to me and my companions about this or that exercise. I am a Jesuit of the twentieth century (or perhaps, a nun, a brother, a priest, a layman, a laywoman), and the various parables or figures, such as a King or Two Standards, are no longer fresh or relevant. The Ignatian Spiritual Exercises have been over-praised." Murmurings such as these have contributed toward bringing these Exercises into considerable disfavor among some Jesuits as well as in other circles where they were formerly esteemed.

In many instances these grievances may be correct in regard to some of the adaptations which gradually evolved from Ignatius' Exercises after his death and were praiseworthy in their circumstances. But these complaints are not valid of his authentic and integral Spiritual Exercises as they were made until 1556 or somewhat later, and as they can be made today. Our knowledge of how they were made during Ignatius' lifetime

has been vastly expanded by modern research, especially that published by Fathers Iparraguirre in 1946 and De Guibert in 1953.<sup>1</sup>

It seems to the present writer that those complaints and the situation generating them have arisen in no small measure from an "over-sell." Terminology became ambiguous or confused. Statements valid only of Ignatius' full authentic Exercises were unwittingly applied by writers and speakers, or at least by their readers and hearers, to the later adaptations. When the results fell short of the promises, discontent arose. Sometimes the form or external framework of the Exercises drew too much attention to itself, to some suffocation of their inner dynamism. Sometimes, too, these adaptations, such as the annual eight-day retreat, did not receive the further adaptation they needed to keep them effective in new circumstances. This is partially explained by the fact that retreat masters feared that they might violate prescriptions of modern fathers general, or that their retreats would cease to be the genuine Ignatian Exercises. Clarification of this terminology may well be an aid in improving the effectiveness of Ignatius' Exercises today.

One caution is in order here. The present study is confined strictly to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. There are many other praiseworthy forms of retreats within the Church, all of them truly excellent and effective for their purposes. The present writer sincerely admires them. To depreciate them in any way is far from his intention. But, with a few exceptions which will be obvious in the context, they are outside the scope of his statements here as well as of his adequate knowledge.<sup>2</sup> This study deals, in fact, with what is basically, though not exclusively, a family problem which slowly and rather imperceptibly grew up through several centuries inside the Society of Jesus. Unless it is tackled precisely as such a family problem and pointedly and frankly, this study could easily weaken into ineffective generalities rather than come to grips with the necessary specific details. However, we happily have many

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1 The footnotes and list of abbreviations are below, on page 35.

non-Jesuit friends interested in the nature or history of Ignatius' Exercises. Possibly they too will find this study helpful, and they are cordially welcome to read it. They will soon observe, we know, that its dominant motive is to comply with the Vatican Council's recommendation that religious institutes restudy the primitive spirit of their founders.

The topic will be treated in these divisions: (I) What the authentic and integral Exercises were in practice until approximately 1556 -- including the history of the terminology; (II) the chief adaptations originating after 1556 -- including some difficulties arising from the adaptations and the terminology in official documents; (III) the practice of the authentic Exercises for today -- including discussion of a few other forms of retreats and the exercises of the Movement for a Better World.

#### I. The authentic Exercises in practice until Ignatius' death, 1556

##### A. The primal power or inner dynamics of the authentic Exercises

The wellspring of these Spiritual Exercises was an intense religious experience deep in Ignatius' soul, an experience produced chiefly by God but with his willing cooperation. Ignatius underwent a change of heart which made him a lover of God and men, as eager as the bride in the Canticle of Canticles to tell the wonders of this love. Henceforth he felt an inner urge to communicate his experience, that is, to share it with others and excite them to do what they could to bring on a roughly similar experience within themselves. He well knew, of course, that it had to be their experience, not his - something as personal and unique within them as his was inside himself. To effect this communication he had to have recourse, like any love-poet, to artistic forms: some sort of framework of organized words and sentences. Into these media, as he dealt with other men or women one by one, he poured the intense feeling which had led him to catch fire and which, he then found, somehow with God's aid enkindled his hearers too. A holy man was dealing with open-minded friends. Whether he noticed it or not, his own strong personality coupled with his sincere love of God and men set up non-verbal communication perhaps more

effective than his words in moving his hearers to exercise themselves in similar religious experiences. In the sum total of these factors or forces we find the primal power, the inner dynamics, the throbbing and life-giving heart of the Spiritual Exercises which Ignatius gradually devised from 1522 at Manresa until 1548 at Rome, when his sheaf of notes became his published book.

Already in this capsule description we notice a distinction between the primal power of his Exercises and the art form through which he communicated it. As we proceed to examine more in detail what the authentic Spiritual Exercises were in his lifetime and still are today, we shall be aided by focussing our attention more sharply on that distinction.

Ignatius' intense religious experience included an outlook, mystically granted beside the Cardoner in 1522, by which he habitually viewed all things as coming forth from God and leading men back to Him. Ignatius made himself extraordinarily open to God, who in turn communicated Himself to him most abundantly. His intense spiritual experience, one prolonged throughout his life, was made up of a series of component experiences. These included a conversion, scruples, consolation and desolation, influences proceeding from good and evil spirits, an effort to discern the one kind from the other, and entrancing mystical favors which Ignatius designated simply by his comprehensive terms, "devotion" and "finding God." To Da Câmara he dictated, only a year before his death, that "he had frequently offended our Lord after he had begun to serve Him, but he had never consented to a mortal sin. On the contrary, he had gone on continually increasing in devotion, that is, in facility to find God, and now more than ever in all his life. And every time and at any hour that he wished to find God, he found Him. And now too he had visions, especially such as those which were mentioned earlier, in which he beheld Christ as a sun. And this often happened to him when he was about to speak of important things, and the vision came to confirm him."<sup>3</sup> That is also why it was so natural for him to put into a letter: "I beg you to make yourselves ready for His visitation and spiritual treasures with purity of

heart, with true humility, with one mind and will among you, and with outward and inward peace, namely that peace which makes Him who is called Prince of Peace to dwell and to reign in the soul.<sup>4</sup>

As his inner urge to share his love-experience with others drove him on, he cast about for means to lead them to seek and find similar exhilarating experiences for themselves. From time to time he jotted down notes of what he told them, and thus he little by little devised an art-form, the procedures and literary framework of the Exercises.

Already during his early studies at Alcalá in 1527, he "also worked at giving spiritual exercises" to some women, "and by this means he brought forth fruit to God's glory."<sup>5</sup> A few months later at Salamanca, he turned over to Bachelor Frias "all his papers, which were the Exercises, for examination."<sup>6</sup> Statements such as these reveal that, to guide others through these exercises, he had a gradually expanding sheaf of notes. He told Da Câmara, also in 1555, that "he had not composed all the Exercises at one time, but that certain things which he observed in his own soul and found useful to himself, he thought might also be useful for others, and so he put them down in writing, such as the examination of conscience. . . . The elections in particular . . . he had drawn from those changes of spirit and thought which he had when he was at Loyola still nursing his wounded leg."<sup>7</sup>

By these procedures Ignatius created a combination of an intense religious experience and an art form to communicate it to others. This form included, first, the series of exercises as made by his successive exercitants, and then his notes as they gradually expanded until they were the published book. About the nature of this combination many capable writers have expressed their opinions, which naturally differ like the interpretations of Vergil's Aeneid or Shakespeare's Hamlet. Here it suffices to recall, by large, bold strokes, only a few samples of important factors which various writers have stressed. There is a sequence of themes which puts before the exercitant the whole history of salvation: God's communication of Himself, man's response of sin, God's

new communication of Himself in Christ -- all arranged to stimulate the retreatant to make his personal response of love which will prove itself by deeds. There is a logical sequence of topics which is well calculated to produce a strong psychological impact of total commitment to God. This sequence is a march through conversion toward surrender to God through generous love, a whole series of stirring experiences for the exercitant. The Exercises are a school of prayer. In their entirety, they are addressed only to willing or eager exercitants, whom they stimulate to open themselves to the Holy Spirit's advances; to seek God's will and carry it out with vigor; to come to big decisions like the choice of a state of life without being moved by disordered affections; to desire to know, love, and follow Christ, come pleasure come pain, without being moved by disordered attachments, and to cooperate with Him in achieving His redemptive plan; to carry on by one's own inner energies in cooperation with God's grace. These and similar opinions vary in emphasis. But generally they supplement rather than contradict one another, and there is little need to choose one above another. They form a treasure chest from which a director can select what is most helpful in accordance with his own personality or the needs of his successive exercitants.

Thus in many respects the Exercises can be compared to a literary masterpiece. For example, a seer such as Shakespeare has a vision of human love, a vivid experience within himself. He expresses it by means of an art form, the drama of Romeo and Juliet, to enable many spectators to have much the same vivid experience within themselves. But ever afterwards his play is treated differently by successive directors or teachers. One of them recaptures and relives Shakespeare's vision, assuredly according to his personal interpretation; and he communicates it to spectators or students who become similarly thrilled. Another gains extensive knowledge of all the technicalities of the dramatic framework and follows them exactly. Yet he somehow gets bogged down by them, and his spectators or students find the play dull. So is it with Ignatius' Exercises. One director himself finds God through them. He

becomes a man of God and can use them as a means which stimulates others too to acquire a profound spiritual experience of their own. Another may know and love Ignatius' art form well but somehow become too engrossed with its details. His very eagerness to be faithful to them may lead him to regard the little book more as a code of laws to be faithfully observed than as a means to the end of the Exercises, excitation of a conversion experience within this exercitant. The form can attract too much importance to itself, to the detriment of the primal power or religious experience which it was intended to communicate. The recurrence of this phenomenon has been a commonplace in the history of the arts, especially after periods of creativity. Here, then, was a danger which Ignatius' Exercises could hardly escape.

#### B. The art form through which Ignatius communicated his experience

The primal power of Ignatius' Exercises and the art form he contrived to communicate it formed a close and harmonious union, comparable to that between soul and body. The primal power was far more important than the art form. This form, being an assembly of procedures, directives, and the like, was a means to the end of the authentic Exercises, interior religious experience. Yet in history after Ignatius' death, most of the difficulties have been connected with this form. Hence, most of our remaining space will be devoted to it.

##### 1. The terminology

In the history of Christian spirituality from about 750 until the appearance in 1500 of Abbot García Cisneros' Ejercitatorio de la vida espiritual at Montserrat, the words "spiritual exercises" (exercitia spiritualia) were used with great frequency to designate the activities, training, and counsels which pertain to the practice of the spiritual life. The terms rarely differed much in meaning from Ignatius' own definition (Spiritual Exercises, [1]): "by the name of spiritual exercises is meant every manner of examining one's conscience, meditating, contemplating, praying vocally or mentally, and other spiritual activities by which progress is made."<sup>8</sup>



These terms, therefore, were used to express a wide and fluid meaning, which they have retained until the present. Within the Society of Jesus, however, another more restricted and technical meaning gradually arose inside the stream of earlier usage: the spiritual exercises (los ejercicios espirituales, exercitia spiritualia) employed as terms denoting the particular sequence of exercises through which Ignatius guided exercitants such as Xavier or Favre at Paris in the 1530's. After 1548 the terms acquired still another meaning: Ignatius' printed book. That book arose out of the sheaf of notes in Spanish which he had gradually expanded (Autobiography, no. 99) while he guided exercitants and adapted his presentations to their individual needs. In these notes the terms occurred often and in their traditional sense, that is, merely to designate the exercitant's activities. An example is, "en los ejercicios que se siguen."<sup>9</sup> Then in time the words were used as the title of the book: Exercitia spiritualia, or Los ejercicios espirituales, often translated into English as Spiritual Exercises or The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.

Both usages of the terms, the wider, more ancient one and the technical one to indicate Ignatius' sequence or his printed book, have persisted side by side from roughly 1535 until now. Further still, the book itself provided (in Annotations 18 and 19) for adaptations, selections, and abbreviations, and these adaptations or selections too were referred to as "the spiritual exercises." Hence there were at least four different objects all designated by the one term, "los ejercicios espirituales." The way was open for readers to read the wrong meanings into a writer's terms and acquire fuzzy concepts.

In the present article, the writer will use the following editorial distinctions for the sake of clarity: spiritual exercises (lower case) to mean any spiritual activities; the Spiritual Exercises (capitalized) to mean Ignatius' sequence of spiritual exercises made or given, and Spiritual Exercises or The Spiritual Exercises (underlined for italicization) to mean his published book of directives for such exercises.

But, we should remember, the early Jesuits were innocent of such distinctions of editorial practice. As the manuscripts show, they simply wrote los ejercicios espirituales or exercitia spiritualia, without capitals, quotation marks, or underlining, to refer to any one of the cases or all of them.

## 2. The authentic and integral Exercises in practice

The case in which all the merits and praises of the Exercises are verified fully and eminently is that of the authentic and integral Exercises. Examples of exercitants whom Ignatius himself coached through them for a month are Castro in 1528, Favre and Xavier in or near 1534, Helyar in 1536 or 1537, and Nadal in 1545. In Ignatius' and his companions' ordinary practice of giving these authentic and integral Exercises the following characteristics were present.

There was (1) one director (2) personally guiding for a full month (3) one exercitant (4) who was voluntarily and eagerly making the integral Exercises (5) for the first time in his life and (6) for the serious purpose of discovering how he could best comply with God's good pleasure for him, for example, either by choosing a state of life or by improving his spiritual life within an already permanent state.<sup>10</sup>

To each of these six characteristics of the ordinary practice isolated or partial exceptions will perhaps be found. They show that even here Ignatius' practice was supple rather than rigid. More frequently these retreats centered around an election of a state of life, but often they did not. Xavier, for example, had made his election before beginning the Exercises; and in them he sought greater fervor in carrying it out. Often the director and retreatant knew each other well before the Exercises began. These authentic Exercises were conducted, not by one-way communication from director to retreatant (as is usually the case in retreats to a group), but by dialogue between the director and exercitant. Ordinarily the director visited him rather briefly once a day or every other day, but longer or more frequently if reason arose.<sup>11</sup> Thus the two came to know each other well even if they had been previously unacquainted,

and the director could adapt his presentation to the motions of grace or other needs of the one exercitant. Genuine discernment of spirits could take place under the director's guidance. When this discernment is genuine, it is usually a lengthy, time-consuming process spread out over many days and one to which a definite point of termination cannot be set in advance. The exercitant also had abundant time for solitude in which he could open himself to God's visitations. The unctuous pondering of the topics, one by one according to the director's guidance in a sequence revealing God's quest of man throughout the history of salvation and man's response, was a novel spiritual experience. Hence it generally produced a strong psychological impact, which was often the vehicle of extraordinarily strong grace. During the thirty days a director could also continue his ordinary occupations, or direct several exercitants simultaneously.<sup>12</sup> But he did not guide them in an assembled group.

In the authentic Exercises, the role of the director was of great importance and original in many respects. Although treatises on spiritual exercises anterior to Ignatius, such as Cisneros' Ejercitatorio, presupposed a director, they were addressed primarily to the exercitant. An important original feature of Ignatius' book was that it was addressed primarily to the director.<sup>13</sup> It was not a book for a tyro athlete about "How to Play Tennis," but rather one for his coach on "How to Coach a Capable and Eager Player," allowing full play to his own activity, energy, openness to God, and ingenuity under His grace. The role expected of the director can be compared to that of an orchestra leader. On paper is a set of notes. One director or set of musicians can follow them with minute accuracy and still produce a dull performance. Another director can take those same notes, instruments, and musicians, and through them he can create, so that everything is life and inspiration. Ignatius' ideal director had to be like the latter director. His function was to stimulate the exercitant's desires, moderate his progress and speed through the sequence of topics, ask how the contemplations were succeeding, be available for counseling and help in discerning the spirits. But it was also to make himself superfluous, that is, to let God deal directly

with the exercitant that he might himself carry on henceforward by energy from within.

After a given contemplation was completed, Ignatius often handed it in written form to the exercitant as an aid for reviewing; but he did not give him the whole sheaf of his notes in advance. After the sheaf became a printed book in 1548, Ignatius was reluctant to communicate it to those who had not first made the Exercises. To Alexis Fontana, who had requested a copy of the book, he wrote on October 8, 1555: "I am sending you a book of the Exercises, that it may be useful to you. . . . The fact is that the force and energy of the Exercises consists in practice and activity, as their very name makes clear; and yet I did not find myself able to refuse your request. However, if possible, the book should be given only after the Exercises have been made."<sup>14</sup> Clearly, therefore, the sheaf of notes, and later the printed book, was the body of the Exercises and the director their life-giving soul.

### 3. Authentic adaptations of the integral Exercises before 1556

From the start Ignatius built capacity for adaptation into his method (SpEx, [18-20]). Hence for persons unable for whatever reasons to go through the integral Exercises, the early Jesuits devised multifarious adaptations to fit the circumstances. Some persons came to prepare for a general confession and the Jesuits selected those exercises deemed most likely to help them. Some exercitants came with no precise aim but a vague desire of spiritual progress through these Exercises whose praises they had heard from others. Some came to learn the art of prayer, some to reform their lives, some to seek spiritual direction, some hoping to learn a way to greater perfection. The Jesuit directors adjusted their procedure to each case. Ignatius commended these adaptations in his letters (e.g., EppIgn, I, 388 in 1546), his book (SpEx, [18-20]), and his Constitutions (e.g., [98, 196, 409, 649]). For example, one capable of much progress but too occupied to apply all his time to the Exercises could make them by devoting an hour and a half a day for several months (SpEx, [19]). His general outlook appears in Constitutions, [649]:

The Spiritual Exercises should not be given in their entirety except to a few persons, namely, those of such a character that from their progress much fruit is expected for the glory of God. But the exercises of the first week can be made available for large numbers; and some examinations of conscience and methods of prayer (especially the first of those which are touched on in the Exercises) can also be given far more widely; for anyone who has good will is probably capable of these exercises.

The use of capitals and underlining in the passage just above is that of modern editing. A glance at these words, and those of Examen, [98] cited just below, as they appear in the photographic copy of the manuscript of the Constitutions, quickly shows that Ignatius wrote merely the one term, "ejercicios" or "ejercicios espirituales" to mean either (1) ordinary spiritual activities, or (2) the whole sequence of the integral and authentic Exercises, or (3) adaptations of them, or (4) the published book itself. Close scrutiny of the context usually reveals precisely which meaning he had in mind, but occasionally one is left in doubt.

It is now sufficiently clear that when the early Jesuits could not get the whole of the Exercises, they devised adaptations and took whatever fraction they could. Their ingenuity in devising adaptations to fit emerging circumstances, and that of their successors right down to today, remains praiseworthy, even if some of those adaptations may need further adjustment to remain effective and attractive today.

## II. The chief adaptations of the art form after 1556

The new adaptations arose by gradual evolution chiefly after Ignatius' death. Most of us are more familiar with them than with the authentic and integral Exercises as practiced in his day. The adaptations made within the first decades after 1556 can usually be detected in germ in the practice during his lifetime, but their actual appearance and form came only later as a result of adjustments to new circumstances. Our treatment here will embrace (A) repetitions of the Exercises, (B) the Exercises given to assembled groups, (C) some difficulties arising from the adaptations, and (D) the terminology used in official documents from 1556 until today.

### A. Repetitions of the Exercises

Ignatius commended repetitions of individual exercises within the integral Exercises (e.g., in SpEx, [62, 118, 164]), and of some of them on other occasions long after the thirty-day experience of them had been completed. He wrote that as a novice came to the time of vows toward the close of his two years of novitiate,

He should previously recollect himself for a period of one week, to make his confession better and to confirm himself in his first determination. During this time, too, he should make some of the former Exercises or some others. Afterwards he will make his oblation and vows ... (Examen, [98]).

But he does not appear to have envisaged an abbreviated repetition of the whole sequence of exercises in his book, at least as an ordinary thing for Jesuits. Neither did he expect a repetition of the thirty-day retreat. An exception to this statement may seem to be the case of Adalbert Bautek, recounted among the instances of haphazard early practice reported by Nadal. But we do not know that Ignatius was involved in what Bautek did. He made the Exercises for 18 days three times at Ingolstadt before he entered the Society in 1556, and later at Rome one time for eight days and another for ten.<sup>15</sup> The obligation of tertian fathers to repeat the thirty-day retreat is first clear from the undated Regulae Instructoris patrum tertiae probationis (InstSJ, III, 118), which refers back to General Congregation XII of 1682. The practice of the short retreat that condensed the whole of the Exercises into eight or ten days was begun in 1588 by Canisius.<sup>16</sup>

Decree 29 of General Congregation VI in 1609 obliged all Jesuits to make the Spiritual Exercises for eight or ten days each year.<sup>17</sup> This decree had a widespread effect both inside and outside the Society. Hitherto the Exercises had been made on special occasions, most of them rare or extraordinary; henceforth they were to be made annually. The practice became prevalent not only in the Society but in virtually all other religious communities. The words of Pope Benedict XIV in his Apostolic Letter Quantum secessus clearly presuppose this widespread practice. In 1917, the Code of Canon Law made "exercitia spiritualia"

obligatory annually for all religious (Canon 595, 1<sup>o</sup>) and every three years for diocesan priests (Canon 126). This does not oblige them to the Ignatian Exercises or their practices, such as silence. Some bishops and superiors have desired them and others have preferred other methods.'

#### B. The Exercises given to assembled groups

The giving of the Exercises to small groups seemingly occurred, on a small scale, among the early Jesuits. In 1551 Jay gave the Exercises to Cardinal Truchsess "and others" in the abbey of Ottobeuren. Possibly this was a group retreat. In 1555 Ignatius wrote of the possibility of one nun giving the Exercises to several others. Gradually later on retreats in common were held to promote the reform of religious communities, for example in Freiburg, Switzerland, in 1590.<sup>18</sup>

Retreat houses also arose through a slow evolution. In a letter of 1547, Ignatius expressed his desire to have a special house for training the novices, which could also serve for those who wished to make the Exercises, and where skilled directors could be stationed.<sup>19</sup> The idea of retreat houses is here in germ, but its realization had to wait. For long the Exercises were given in the ordinary houses of the Society, and especially in the colleges. In 1599 Aquaviva advised generosity in receiving retreatants in them. In 1579 St. Charles Borromeo built a house for giving retreats. Others too began to appear. In 1628 at Beauvais St. Vincent de Paul initiated retreats in common for ordinands. One of them was made by Louis Eudo de Kerlivio, who as a priest in 1660 devoted a building, originally planned to be a seminary, to the giving of retreats of eight days to ecclesiastics and others. The Jesuit Vincent Huby enthusiastically cooperated. From this time on retreat houses for men and women, and also group retreats, multiplied first in France, and then also in Italy, Spain, Austria, Bohemia, and Poland. In these houses "closed retreats" were given to groups numbering sometimes a hundred persons.<sup>20</sup> Retreats were also given to religious communities, e.g., in Belgium.<sup>21</sup>

Still further adaptations came with the passing of time: group

retreats further abbreviated -- to five days, to three, sometimes to two or even one day. Not infrequently these abbreviated retreats "preached" to groups were still called, by retreat masters or in the promotional literature of retreat houses, "the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius," either because they consisted of a selection of exercises from the first week of Ignatius' book, or because they followed its general sequence of thought. Those making or writing such statements may have known that these adaptations were not the authentic Exercises; but too often their hearers or readers did not. A climate arose in which it became increasingly difficult to escape the trap of applying to adaptations statements of praise which in reality are valid only of the authentic and integral Exercises.

#### C. Some difficulties arising from the adaptations

All too often in human affairs, solution of one difficulty soon generates a new problem. The adaptations of the Exercises did not escape this misfortune. Virtually all these adaptations were good for their purposes, usually the best practice possible in the circumstances. But undesirable effects became apparent in time. Each new adaptation was so small a departure from immediately preceding practice that it excited no apprehension. But when we today after some four centuries compare the practice we have known with the procedure used during Ignatius' lifetime, we find the difference truly great. Important examples of the difficulties are these.

Genuine discernment of spirits is an important part of the authentic Exercises. It is sometimes attended by danger of self-deception, and is usually a complicated process requiring long cooperation in several leisurely visits or discussions between the exercitant and a capable director who knows him well. In the adaptations, especially the retreats preached to groups, genuine discernment became difficult or impossible in proportion to the size of the group and the fewness of days.

Furthermore, when religious were making the Exercises annually, and in some cases largely because of the obligation and with some reluctance,



the psychological impact characteristic of the first encounter with the complete authentic Exercises was often much impaired or even destroyed. This was only natural. Nevertheless, it opened the way for the complaints that the Exercises are repetitious, dull, over-rated, no longer an effective means to attain their own end with these retreatants. As already mentioned, the charge is usually invalid if applied to the authentic and integral Exercises when made for the first time. But it may well be a warning that further adjustment of the adaptations are necessary today or there may be few takers. Even the authentic though not integral Exercises can produce their proper effect only with exercitants who make them willingly and with some eagerness. A few decades ago if exercitants found themselves cold toward a retreat, they were willing to blame themselves for lack of disposition or effort. They no longer react that way. In the present climate they clamor for a new system. This begets still another difficulty -- or rather, a challenge, which we shall treat below.

#### D. The terminology in official documents from 1556 until today

During the centuries when the adaptations just described were slowly evolving, there were many official Jesuit and papal documents which dealt with the Exercises. In these documents too the one same term, "spiritual exercises," was used to mean (1) the authentic and integral Spiritual Exercises, or (2) adaptations of them such as abbreviated and obligatory retreats preached to a group, or (3) ordinary spiritual activities such as daily exercises of piety, or (4) Ignatius' printed book. Hence arose great and even habitual imprecision in the use of the words "exercitia spiritualia." Even where writers used the terms with precision or the context made their meaning indubitable, readers could so easily read a different meaning into their words. Illustrative samples of these documents follow. They preserve the same usage of capitals, small letters, and italics which is found in their sources, chiefly the Institutum Societatis Iesu, 3 volumes (Florence, 1892-1893) and the Acta Romana Societatis Iesu (Rome, 1906-), abbreviated respectively as InstSJ and

ARSJ. These sources are available in most of our houses.

1 The Official Directory of 1599 (InstSJ, III, 505)

From the Introduction

1. Among other instruments which God...has deigned to bestow upon our Society...the Spiritual Exercises stand in a place not at all the lowest...

2. ...these Exercises consist of certain spiritual patterns (documenta) which, as the preface to this book states ...Ignatius composed...

From Chapter 1

7. It should be noted, however, if we speak of the integral and complete Exercises, that St. Ignatius thought they should be given, not to all indiscriminately, but only to a select few who seem to be capable of greater things.

From Chapter 10. On the manner of giving the Exercises to Ours

1. ...to those entering the Society, all the integral Exercises should certainly be given, and according to the form laid down in the book. ...

2. Further on in the course of time, when it happens that they recollect themselves (se colligant) to make Exercises, they ought to make them several times, for example, two or three, if not integral at least those of the first week, and also some meditations from the following weeks, such as the Kingdom of Christ, the incarnation, the Lord's temptation, the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, the passion, and that to excite love, to the extent that opportunity and time allow.

These passages manifestly mirror adaptations and new practices which had not yet taken shape in Ignatius' lifetime, such as the suggestion to repeat pretty much the whole sequence of the Exercises, two or three times. This is not yet the annual retreat. The phrase in Chapter 10, 1, "when they recollect themselves" to repeat Exercises is interesting terminology.

2 Decree 29 of General Congregation VI, 1608 (InstSJ, II, 302; cf. 551)

... the Congregation decreed: ...

2. That each year all should devote themselves to the Spiritual Exercises for eight or ten continuous days, and that this might be done altogether efficaciously, the annual practice of the Spiritual Exercises was established...

- 3 General Congregation VII in 1615 (InstSJ, II, 326, cf. 552)  
 Care should be taken that the annual Spiritual Exercises... should be made exactly by all ... and that the proportion and method should be preserved which are customary in the integral Exercises...
- 4 General Congregation XVIII in 1755 (InstSJ, II, 444)  
 [Superiors] should carefully see to it that ... the Spiritual Exercises are made accurately and fruitfully each year by each one.
- 5 Quantum secessus of Pope Benedict XIV, March 19, 1753 (InstSJ, I, 301)

By 1750 the practice of short retreats preached to groups of laymen and laywomen, often in retreat houses, was widespread; and the giving of periodic group retreats to religious was also the ordinary practice. Hence it is reasonable to infer that these adaptations, rather than the authentic and integral Exercises, are what Pope Benedict XIV and his readers had chiefly in mind as they read the following words from his Apostolic Letter Quantum secessus of March 19, 1753 (InstSJ, I, 301):

Experience has shown how much those retreats removed from all the clash of human affairs, in which the faithful dwell for a while and exercise themselves in meditations pertaining to eternity ...

Indeed, since St. Ignatius ... composed that admirable book of Exercises ... there has manifestly been no family of the Religious Orders which has not taken up this salutary institution.

- 6 General Congregation XXIV in 1892 (InstSJ, II, 521)

Here too, in the restored Society, short retreats for lay persons, rather than the authentic and integral Exercises, were the chief focus of attention when the Congregation recommended to the general that he should promote as vigorously as possible

the spiritual care of men, especially of workers and the poor, and that he should strive to lead them, by means of the Spiritual Exercises and our Sodalities, in accordance with the Society's pristine norm, to all the practices of piety and charity ...

- 7 Fr. Ledochowski, "On the Retreats of Ours," June 9, 1935, in (ARSJ, VII, 178; Selected Writings of Father Ledochowski, page 760)

... I think it is hardly necessary to remind you that the Exercises of St. Ignatius, and not others, should be given to Ours...

... we must never omit those meditations and contemplations which, in the Ignatian method, can be called fundamental: the Principle and Foundation .. the Kingdom of Christ ... the Two Standards, the Three Classes .. the Three Degrees of Humility ... the Contemplation for ... Divine Love ...

- 8 Letter of Fr. Janssens "On the Spiritual Exercises, "July 2, 1948 (ARSJ, XI, 472; English in Woodstock Letters, LXXVIII (1949), 7

Those essentials, which we should preserve as perfectly as possible when we ourselves make the Exercises or when we give them to Ours, seem to be approximately these: (a), that we should lay aside all concern for worldly matters ... (b) That the soul itself should treat with God and be acted on by Him ... (c) That, with all due respect to the adaptation mentioned in Annotation XVIII, those eager "to profit in every possible way" should make the Exercises "in the exact order in which they are set down," omitting nothing from the meditations and contemplations which are proposed as necessary in the book of the Exercises. For example: ... the Foundation, ... sin and hell in the first week are essential, likewise ... the Kingdom ... mysteries ... Two Standards ... Three Classes ... Three Degrees of Humility ... Passion and Resurrection ... Contemplation for Love ...

I think it useful to apply briefly, even to the Exercises given to externs, the three aforementioned points ...

The third principle is that all the Exercises of our Holy Father be proposed to the exercitant in their totality and in the proper manner, even if he be a layman ... (ARSJ, XI, 475, 476, WL (1949), 10, 11).

### III. The practice of the authentic Exercises for today

#### A. The authentic and integral Exercises

The research of the past quarter century has vastly improved our knowledge of Ignatius' mystical gifts, of his Spiritual Exercises which in no small measure spring from and reflect his mystical prayer, and of the discernment of spirits which is so important a part of his Exercises. As a result, a restoration of the primitive practice of the Exercises is becoming more apparent today. The movement is still in its infancy but very promising. It arises partially from experimentation in the manner of giving and making the Exercises, and it affects both the authentic

integral Exercises and adaptations which are clearly authentic because they contain so much genuine Ignatian practice, such as directed retreats of eight days. It seems that some comments on each type are in order, and that greater precision in the use of terminology will further them both.

#### A. The authentic and integral Exercises

The gradual restoration of the primitive practice in regard to the authentic and integral Exercises appears from these examples. Until some ten years ago, the thirty-day retreats in the Society's tertianships were group retreats in which the tertianmaster addressed the assembled retreatants for a half-hour or so five times a day. Now, thanks largely to the practice inaugurated by Father Maurice Schuermans at Tronchiennes, Belgium, which has been imitated so widely, almost all these retreats to tertians are directed retreats in which the instructor speaks to the exercitants as a group perhaps once a day but also visits each retreatant every one or two days for private direction. As a result of the present transitional unrest in the Church, many provinces have suffered a considerable decrease of vocations. From this misfortune, one good drawn by Providence is already visible. In at least three instances known to the present writer (at Milford, Poughkeepsie, and Florissant), masters of novices have guided novices through the long retreat on a one to one basis. Usually one instructor guided several novices simultaneously, as was done also in Ignatius' lifetime. In the tertianship of the Religious of the Cenacle in Rome, the thirty-day retreat to the tertian sisters has been given as a directed retreat. The Exercises of thirty days have been given with marked success to laymen and laywomen, especially to sodalists, at Cleveland. Usually this was done with small groups. But the Jesuit directors there, building on their past experience, are laying plans for further progress, experimentation, and development in the future. No doubt there are other instances of approach or experimentation unknown to the present writer, toward restoration of the primitive practice of the authentic and integral Exercises.

But these suffice for the present. The number of those who made the integral Exercises in the early Society was comparatively small and the work spread only slowly. We too must be content with a slow but solid spread. But we can and should work, where possible, toward providing opportunities for those select few who of themselves desire to make the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises according to their authentic and complete manner.

#### B. Adaptations which are still authentic Ignatian Exercises

Among the adaptations dating from the early post-Ignatian era which clearly long remained the authentic (even though not integral) Ignatian Exercises, the abbreviated retreat of eight days made annually by religious is perhaps the most important, at least in the Society. Its nearness to being the authentic Exercises slowly diminished in proportion to its becoming a preached retreat and to its admitting greater and greater numbers. To name some number as a cut off point would be an arbitrary and controverted procedure. Nevertheless, when exercitants were preached to as an assembled group and numbered one or two hundred, one can safely say that the retreat had ceased to merit the name of authentic Ignatian Exercises. The body, the sequence of topics, may have remained, but the soul, the activity of the director, was no longer that of the authentic Ignatian practice. Moreover, genuine discernment of spirits could scarcely take place.

However, a modern restoration of the authentic practice of the Ignatian era is happily under way, especially in the directed eight-day retreats. Especially with our scholastics, experiments in great variety have been under way the past few years. Scholastics, sometimes singly or sometimes in a small group, have made their annual retreat under the direction of an experienced father. Some of these experiments retained perhaps too many of the characteristics of a group retreat; but many also resulted in a recovery of authentic Ignatian practice, with the order, methods, and other important characteristics of the authentic and integral Exercises proportionately preserved. Rather similar

experiments have been conducted successfully in retreats of sisters, brothers, and priests. In one American province of the Religious of the Cenacle, a center to train directors who can give the authentic Exercises is being established, and four sisters appointed for this purpose are now carrying the project into practice. There is good reason to hope that our growing knowledge of what the authentic practice was in the Ignatian and early post-Ignatian eras will cause these efforts and experiments to be more and more fruitful.

Success in this work will obviously require much updating adaptation from what the Exercises were in practice when Vatican II opened in 1962. When Ignatius and his contemporaries endeavored to communicate their religious experiences with others by means of the framework of the Exercises, the terms and language they used were the latest updating in their era of the spiritual doctrine, practice, and terminology of the late Middle Ages. When for similar purposes we use that framework, which in its major structures is still serviceable today, we must make it carry the spirituality and terminology of Vatican Council II and its era. Happily, books and essays which offer suggestions for such adaptation are abundant.<sup>22</sup>

### C. Further adaptations inspired by the Exercises

However, many of the most knotty problems which impede the giving of the Spiritual Exercises today are connected with the legitimacy of adaptations. Some adjustments, such as a directed eight-day retreat, are clearly within the category of the authentic Exercises. Others at an opposite pole have clearly passed outside that category, for example, two days of lectures, with dialogue, films, and music, about the Christian attitude on race. These are indeed spiritual exercises altogether praiseworthy for their purpose, but also something simply different from the Ignatian Exercises. In between the two poles are innumerable gradations and just where to draw the dividing line will ever be controversial. Yet in making adaptations a point is reached beyond which the result cannot honestly be called the authentic Exercises of Ignatius.

### 1. Some problems and challenges

Vexed by the problem just indicated, Jesuit fathers general and other superiors have issued cautions against excesses in adaptation, for example, by directives issued in 1935 and 1948. These official pronouncements achieved much good, especially amid the circumstances of their own decades. To criticize them unfavorably today would be ungracious and anachronistic. Like other things human, however, such pronouncements have now brought on new problems. In a situation so fraught with intangibles, the cautions have occasioned perplexed consciences in many loyal Jesuits. Even amid the vastly altered and still rapidly changing mentalities of our post-conciliar era, zealous retreat masters have feared to make further adaptations in eight-day or three-day group retreats, even in cases where these further adaptations seemed altogether necessary if these spiritual activities were to remain effective means with certain audiences to attaining the end of the Exercises today. Aggiornamento of the official directives for the Exercises is as necessary as that for the Code of Canon Law.

This problem is manifestly delicate because it involves official pronouncements of fathers general; and only equally high authority can give official modifications or interpretations of them. However, studies and discussions on a horizontal level can prepare the way for an updating of official directives on the Exercises which must come from above. If the problems presented to modern minds by these past pronouncements on the Exercises are to be solved, frank though reverent discussion seems necessary. Here too, it seems, considerable help toward a solution can be gained from study of the terminology used in the past and then, with the help of such clarification, from devising a more precise terminology for the future.

The problem can be put clearly if we take some sample past pronouncements. In the passages cited above (pages 19 and 20), Fathers Ledochowski in 1935 and Jannsens in 1948 listed certain topics as approximately essential if the Exercises, as given to Jesuits or even to extern



are to remain authentic. The list opened the way for all too many to infer, not only then but even in recent years, that if a retreat master included those topics, for example in an eight-day retreat to a hundred assembled sisters, he had given the authentic Exercises. But such a retreat is already an adaptation advanced rather far from the authentic ancient practice of the Exercises as known from recent research. If circumstances, such as the obligation imposed by canon law or the dearth of retreat masters, make such retreats necessary, is it not better perhaps to call them something like "adaptations inspired by the Exercises"?

Another aspect of the problem can be illuminated from the following replies of Father Ledochowski.

- a. On giving the Exercises according to the mind of St. Ignatius. May 12, 1922 (ARSJ, III, 480)

In regard to the giving of sacred retreats by Ours, I wish to give this admonition and to recommend to Your Reverences, that they should always be given as faithfully as possible to the mind of St. Ignatius. For constant experience, to which very many bishops added the approval of their testimony this year, shows that the benefits deriving from retreats are more numerous and solid in proportion to their accuracy in following the norm of the golden book of the Exercises. If we keep that always in mind, externs, whether priests or laymen, will of their own accord come back again and again to our retreats.

- b. On the duration and method of the Exercises. June 24, 1924 (ARSJ, V, 142)

The principle should be held to as faithfully as possible that for making the Spiritual Exercises three integral days are necessary...

However excellent social works are in themselves, the mingling of sermons on them into the Exercises cannot be tolerated, even on pretext of better adapting the Exercises to our times. Let us preserve the Exercises precisely as our Holy Founder envisaged them and taught, by practice and word, that they should be given. Those who make retreats with us expect and desire this and nothing else from us. ...

- c. On the same topic. July 27, 1924 (ARSJ, V, 143)

If on occasion shorter assemblies are judged opportune or are held through necessity, it is better to call them recollections, not "Exercises."

Fathers applied to this work should make great effort

that exercitants ponder in solitude the truths proposed in the Exercises...Therefore it also seems that the word preacher (concionator) should be avoided when there is question of giving the Exercises ...

d. On the same topic. February 1, 1926 (ARSJ, V, 573)

... it would be an illusion to depart more or less, for the sake of variety or accommodation, from the genuine Exercises of St. Ignatius, and nevertheless expect the fruit which the Exercises themselves customarily produce ...

Those official statements are couched in a curial style which was customary then in the Roman Congregations of the Church and in religious orders too. The style was expected and acceptable then and the documents accomplished much good. But in our post-conciliar era when many desire a more realistic manner of expressing laws and directives, they contain elements which please and displease, all mingled together. They enshrine many sound ideals and wise suggestions which careful scrutiny reveals and which all of us desire to preserve as far as possible. But they are also one-sided in their presentation, ignore real difficulties which the loyal retreat masters have painfully experienced. Thus they create a credibility gap detrimental to hope and further effort. These directors have indeed found some retreatants who desire authentic Ignatian Exercises; but they have also found others who have loudly expressed their dissatisfaction with them, spread their discontent at their imposition, and ceased to invite Jesuit retreat masters where once they were in popular demand. A legal pronouncement which cannot be applied successfully in practice is no longer a good means to preserve one's ideals, however sound they may be. The statements cited just above can scarcely be applied literally or rigidly today, in the manner which was once so often used with laws in Anglo-Saxon culture. The inconveniences are so great that excusing causes are present in innumerable cases. Hence it is important to find some better way to express the ideals which avoids the features which irritate the modern mind.

At least part of the difficulty lies in the terminology. Although Father Ledochowski used the term Spiritual Exercises, he was referring

chiefly to eight-day or three-day group retreats, many of them obligatory periodic repetitions. This is clear from such phrases as "externs ... will come back again and again," "for making the Spiritual Exercises three integral days are necessary," shorter assemblies would be better named "recollections." Hence what he is discussing is something already outside the authentic and integral Exercises. Possibly everything short of those integral Exercises ought to be designated by "recollection" or some other suitable term. Moreover, since these adaptations are already outside the authentic Ignatian Exercises, their being adapted further still ought not to be feared as much as it has been in the past.

Still another aspect of our contemporary problem is this. Ignatius regarded the Exercises as means to their general end: some form of increased union with God. This is true both of the integral Exercises and their clearly legitimate adaptations. Ignatius regarded them as means of exceptional efficacy, but not as the only means to their end or as necessarily the best means for all persons. In any case their end, increased union with God, is more important than the means.

The authentic and integral Exercises can yield their full fruit only for one who makes them voluntarily and with some eagerness; and this is proportionately valid of adaptations like the annual obligatory retreat for religious. Canon law obliges them to make spiritual exercises, but not the Ignatian Exercises. It may well happen that this or that religious has a mental block against the Ignatius Exercises. He may find them, for example, too repetitious, or monotonous, or that they no longer produce for him an impact of spiritual experience, and all the rest we nowadays so often hear. For such a one, some other form of spiritual exercises, such as those customarily conducted by priests of other orders, may well be a better means to the end of the Ignatian Exercises than these Exercises made with reluctance or lethargy. To compel him to make the Ignatian Exercises would seem to be against Ignatius' own principle: There is no worse mistake in spiritual things than to desire to lead others by the same path one follows for himself. To compel him would

also be to acquire an unfavorable press-agent.

In our modern circumstances it seems to be highly important for us to devise facilities through which those who desire, comparatively few though they may be, to make the authentic and integral Exercises, or their clearly legitimate adaptations, can do so. Then, in regard to those who desire or need some spiritual exercises but will not make the authentic Exercises voluntarily, we need not fear further adaptations as much as we did in the past. We feared that we might step outside the pale of the authentic Ignatian Exercises. Now, however, we see more clearly that we were already outside that pale.

## 2. The authentic Exercises and those of the Movement for a Better World

The spiritual exercises of the Movement for a Better World can be called an original and highly modern adaptation which was inspired by the Exercises of St. Ignatius. Since the Holy See has requested the Society to promote this movement<sup>23</sup> and since Pope Paul VI has again commended it so strongly on March 12, 1969, it seems wise to discuss it briefly here. Some, hitherto able to have only a vague or fragmentary knowledge of this movement, have expressed apprehensions that its retreats might conflict or compete with the Ignatian Exercises.

To begin with the basic information, the Movement for a Better World aims to infuse into individuals and groups the spirit of mutual charity and unity which bring about the social presence of Christ. The movement was begun by the well-known Italian Jesuit and radio orator, Father Riccardo Lombardi. It took its name from the message of February 10, 1952, in which Pope Pius XII called himself "the herald of a better world willed by God" and asked for a renewal of the structures of Society (AAS, XLIV [1952], 158-162). Father Lombardi responded by organizing spiritual exercises or retreats of five to ten days, based largely on the doctrine of the Mystical Body and Christian community. Under the guidance of a "retreat team," usually consisting of a priest, a religious (brother or sister), and a layman (often a husband or wife), the

retreatants of the group endeavor not merely to study Christian community but to live it, by means of sharing their religious experiences and dialoguing about them throughout the days of the retreat.<sup>24</sup>

Since 1952 thousands of these retreats have been conducted in over twenty countries, and especially in Rocca di Papa, near Rome, for large numbers of Bishops (including Council Fathers), diocesan and religious priests, nuns, lay men and women. Promotional groups have now been established on every continent. For use in these retreats Father Lombardi composed his book, Esertazioni per un mondo Migliore (Rome, 1958). The English adaptation is Towards a New World (New York, 1958). This handbook is addressed principally to the exercitant and enables him to review and study more extensively what the director presented in attractive but sketchy manner. In this orientation it differs a little from Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, which is addressed primarily to the director. Father Lombardi has recently revised these retreats into exercises in the spirituality of Vatican Council II. He correspondingly revised his earlier book into Per vivere il Concilio [Toward Living Out the Council] (Milano, 1968), of which an English translation is in progress. He has also established the Centro Internazionale Pio XII at Rocca di Papa. At this Center, one of the pastoral activities is a succession of ten-week Institutes on Post-Conciliar Spirituality, in various languages. These Institutes are for any persons who are engaged in the renewal of the Church, and especially for those who are involved in the spiritual formation of others. The first of these courses ended in mid-March, 1969. Just before its close, on March 12 Pope Paul VI addressed to those finishing it, as well as the multitude thronging St. Peters, the words of strong praise which appeared on the front page of Osservatore Romano for that date. (The English text is in the English edition of March 20, page 12, with the picture on page 1). The American headquarters are: Movement for a Better World, 127 R Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

Father Lombardi and two American Jesuits, Fathers John Comey and

Eugene Tucker, conducted one of his retreats at Florissant, Missouri, March 28 - April 5, 1969, for sixty-two Jesuits from nine provinces. The present writer made this retreat. He found it an impressive spiritual experience, particularly appropriate for the era of tensions in which we live. This experience led him to the following opinions.

The authentic Ignatian Exercises and the exercises in post-conciliar spirituality of the Better World Movement are supplementary to each other and not in conflict or competition. Both have the same general goal: to bring the exercitant to some form of increased union with God and to commitment to leaven his social environment. But this common target is approached from different directions. The direct thrust of the Ignatian Exercises is to stimulate the individual to close union with God that he may improve his social environment as an apostle. The direct thrust of the exercise of the Better World Movement is to stimulate the individual to improve his communitarian environment in accordance with God's plan, through better knowledge and love of his neighbors. He soon becomes aware that for this he must be personally united with God.

The common target is also approached by different means. In the Ignatian Exercises, silence is an important means, to enable the exercitant to commune better with God and make himself open to His lights. In the Better World exercises, this means is replaced by another, a special type of dialogue carefully directed toward fostering understanding and love. By this dialogue exercitants who were previously not well acquainted with one another, or perhaps even at variance, come to know one another as persons, sympathetically understand one another's points of view, and live together in cooperative Christian charity.

Each type of exercises is well suited to achieve results which the other is less likely to produce. The Ignatian Exercises seem better suited to lead one to a deeper and stronger personal union with God. But he might well exercise this union for a long time, for example, by examining his conscience diligently and honestly, without discovering that he is misunderstanding his brethren or irritating them. The Better

World exercises are better suited to awaken him to this oversight and enable him to take his part better in his Christian communitarian functioning. In our day the Church, many religious communities, and parishes are filled with tensions and polarities: between progressives and conservatives, the old and young, black and white, legalists and anti-legalists, and what not else. Father Lombardi is deeply convinced that the precisely directed dialogue of his exercises is an important means to help in saving the Church or the communities within it amid these tensions. He also has solid reasons to believe, as he told us, that a similar opinion of Archbishop Benelli and of the Holy Father is what prompted the latter's public commendation of the movement on March 12, 1969.

Some exercitants, too, have a temperament better satisfied spiritually by the Ignatian Exercises, others a temperament better fulfilled by those of the Better World. Almost any one person would do well to profit on some occasions from the Ignatian Exercises or their adaptations, and at other times by those of the Movement for a Better World. Father Lombardi recounted an opinion expressed by one experienced spiritual director with which he agreed: for many a person a truly beneficial sequence of spiritual experiences would consist of a cursillo to give a spiritual shock or awakening to one who needed it, then the Ignatian Exercises to add lasting depth to the conversion, and finally, after some years, a Better World retreat to add dimensions which even the Ignatian Exercises may have missed or allowed to recede into oblivion. Father Lombardi also thought that a Better World retreat made occasionally as a substitute for the annual Ignatian retreat would be a benefit to almost any Jesuit. The Ignatian and Lombardian exercises are indeed supplementary rather than conflicting or competitive.

#### Concluding reflections

The chief threads of this entire study can now be drawn together in concluding reflections. A restoration of the authentic and integral Ignatian Exercises, in accordance with their primitive practice now better known from recent research, is fortunately gaining momentum. These

authentic Exercises, especially when integral, provide a far better situation in which the primal power of Ignatius' Exercises can produce their proper effect. That inner dynamism and the religious experience it can bring are more important than the art form which is the means to the end and from which so many difficulties and controversies have arisen. To foster this growing movement by providing facilities for such retreatants and their directors should be numbered among our more important ministries.

There are, too, adaptations which are the authentic even though not integral Exercises of Ignatius. These also merit from us a special care and effort. They preserve the genuine practice of the more skillful directors of the Ignatian era. Examples are directed retreats -- of eight days or even less, for priests, religious, or lay persons. These Exercises aim to obtain whatever fraction of the fruit of the complete authentic Exercises is possible in the circumstances. To foster this growing movement by providing facilities for such retreatants and directors should also be numbered among our more important ministries.

There are other adaptations which drew their original inspiration from the Ignatian Exercises but have advanced so far from them that now they can scarcely be called authentic Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. Yet they accomplish much good. And they are far more effective to achieve the general end of his Exercises, some form of increased union with God, than these authentic Exercises are if thrust upon persons reluctant to make them. Since they are scarcely Ignatian Exercises to start with, we can feel freer than formerly to adapt them farther still. Little can be gained by worry or discussion as to whether this or that form of these exercises has or has not passed over some hairline supposed to divide legitimate from excessive adaptations of the Ignatian Exercises. It seems more important to use whatever means is available to make such retreats more attractive and effective with retreatants, even in large groups, who will draw some spiritual profit from them but who cannot be reached today by the authentic Exercises of Ignatius.



In all our efforts in this line, it seems, help will be gained by developing greater precision of terminology than we have used in the past, or even by devising a new nomenclature which more clearly and unmistakably distinguishes the separate types of spiritual exercises or retreats. The terminology, or even slogan, might be something like the following. The authentic and integral Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius -- for the capable few who desire them. The authentic adapted Spiritual Exercises -- for those who desire them but have a sound reason not to make the integral Exercises. Other recollections, spiritual exercises, spiritual activities, or retreats -- for those who can profit from them but do not of their own accord desire the authentic Ignatian Exercises. Some such procedure may well make Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises more effective in producing their proper effect and in functioning as a gradually spreading leaven today.



## FOOTNOTES

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AHSJ -- Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu
- DeGuiJes -- De Guibert, Joseph, S.J. The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice (Chicago, 1964)
- EppIgn -- S. Ignatii ... Epistolae et Instructiones. 12 vols.
- InstSJ -- Institutum Societatis Iesu. 3 vols. (Florence, 1892-1893)
- LettersIgn -- Letters of St. Ignatius. Trans. W.J. Young (Chicago, 1959)
- MonNad -- Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal. 5 vols. MHSJ (Madrid, 1898-1905; Rome, 1962)
- NCathEnc -- The New Catholic Encyclopedia. (New York, 1967)
- SpEx -- The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

1 See DeGuiJes, esp. pp. 80-83, 115-116, 122; 125, 131-132, 237, 301-306, 489-492, 533, 540-542, 683-685. Father De Guibert wrote from 1935 until his death in 1942. However, his work was published in French only in 1953 and in English only in 1964. See also Ignacio Iparraguirre, S.J., Historia de la práctica de los Ejercicios espirituales de san Ignacio de Loyola, vol. I, ... en vida de su autor (1522-1556) (Rome, 1946); vol. II, ... hasta la promulgación del Directorio oficial (1556-1599) (Rome, 1955), esp. I, 29\*-33\*, 42\*-44\*, 164-216.

2 A book on the many new forms of retreats currently emerging in colleges and universities is being prepared by Fathers James Blumeyer, S.J., and Frank Gross, and will be published soon by Fides Press, Notre Dame, Indiana.

3 Autobiography, nos. 99-100, cited in DeGuiJes, p. 41.

4 EppIgn, I, 687; LettersIgn, p. 159.

5 Autobiography, no. 57.

6 Ibid., no. 67.

7 Ibid., no. 99.

8 L. Hertling, "De usu nominis Exercitiorum Spiritualium ante S.P. Ignatium," AHSJ, II (1923), 316-318.

9 SpEx, [1].

- 10 DeGuiJes, esp. pp. 125, 131-132; Iparraguirre, Historia, I, 19\*-34\*, 174-180.
- 11 Iparraguirre, I, 165.
- 12 Ibid., I, 166.
- 13 Ibid., I, 32\*-33\*.
- 14 EppIgn, IX, 701.
- 15 MonNad, II, 527-589; cf. DeGuiJes, p. 82.
- 16 NCathEnc, XIII, 578; cf. M. Viller and M. Olphe-Galliard, in Revue d'ascétique et de mystique, XV (1934), 4-33.
- 17 InstSJ, II, 302; cf. DeGuiJes, p. 237.
- 18 DeGuiJes, p. 125.
- 19 EppIgn, I, 603.
- 20 DeGuiJes, pp. 303-304.
- 21 DeGuiJes, p. 72, 303<sup>73</sup>, referring to Poncelet, Histoire, II, 399, 40
- 22 Especially noteworthy is the collection of papers from the World Congress of the Exercises, held at Loyola, Spain, in 1966: Los Ejercicios de san Ignacio a la luz del Vaticano II (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1968). The Program to Adapt the Spiritual Exercises, 144 Grand Street, Jersey City, N.J. 07302, has made many of the most useful of these papers available in English, e.g., those by Fathers Dumeige, Granero, Iparraguirre, Lyonnet, Magaña, Mollat, Solano, and Stanley.
- 23 (p. 27) Acta Romana, XIV (1965), 600; cf. XIV (1962, 238-239; XIV (1966), 722-723.
- 24 NCathEnc, X, 56.



