

STUDIES IN THE SPIRITUALITY OF JESUITS



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**Who Do You Say Ignatius Is?
Jesuit Fundamentalism and Beyond**

Philip Endean, S.J.

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.

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John A. Coleman, S.J., teaches Christian social ethics at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

Philip C. Fischer, S.J., is secretary of the Seminar and an editor at the Institute of Jesuit Sources.

Roger D. Haight, S.J., teaches systematic theology at Regis College, the Jesuit school of theology in Toronto.

Frank J. Houdek, S.J., teaches historical theology and spirituality at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley.

Arthur F. McGovern, S.J., teaches philosophy and is director of the Honors Program at the University of Detroit.

John J. Mueller, S.J., teaches systematic theology at St. Louis University.

John W. Padberg, S.J., is chairman of the Seminar, editor of *Studies*, and director and editor at the Institute of Jesuit Sources.

Michael J. O'Sullivan, S.J., teaches psychology at Loyola-Marymount University.

Paul A. Soukup, S.J., teaches communications at Santa Clara University and is director of studies for juniorate scholastics in the California Province.

John M. Staudenmaier, S.J., teaches the history of technology at the University of Detroit.

Philip Endean, S.J.

WHO DO YOU SAY IGNATIUS IS?

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For Your Information . . .

How does an issue of *Studies* get to you, its readers? In previous remarks here, I described how members of the Seminar on Jesuit Spirituality are chosen, what we do at Seminar meetings and the stages through which we put a paper which eventually becomes an issue of *Studies*. Now I would like to respond to the question at the top of this page.

Once the Seminar has accepted a paper and the author has sent to the editor his final version of it, revised in accord with the Seminar discussions in which he has participated, the editorial staff here reviews it for consistency with our manual of style. Then it is typed into our computer. Beginning with this current year's volume we have ourselves "typeset" it through the computer and through our laser printer as camera-ready copy. After both the typing and typesetting stages, we proofread the copy but, needless to say, we sometimes do miss items that fairly shout out "error" when the finished copy arrives from the printer. For those errors we here apologize and we thank our readers for calling our attention to them.

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Who are our readers? For the many complex answers to that simple question, see the next (January, 1988) issue of *Studies* when we shall have a report on the professional survey of readership carried out earlier this year.

Of course, *Studies* would not exist without the work of the Seminar members. To the four who in the course of the past year have ended their term of membership, Donald Gelpi, John Renard, Jerry Starratt and John Topel, my thanks as chairman of the Seminar and as editor of *Studies*. To the three new members, John Coleman, Frank Houdek and Michael O'Sullivan, a warm welcome.

Lastly, the next issue of *Studies* hopes to move you. It is by Dean Brackley of the New York Province and it deals with downward mobility.

John W. Padberg, S.J.

Editor

Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits

"Letters To The Editor" will begin in the next issue of *Studies*. A letter, in order to be considered for publication, should relate directly to an article published in *Studies*. Letters should ordinarily not exceed 750 words. They may be edited for reasons of space or clarity and publication is at the discretion of *Studies*. They should be typed double-spaced with wide margins and addressed: To the Editor, *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 3700 West Pine Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108.

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WHO DO YOU SAY IGNATIUS IS?

Jesuit Fundamentalism and Beyond

Philip Endean, S.J.*

INTRODUCTION: IGNATIUS OUR MODEL

Spring 1972. I was seventeen years old and a pupil at Stonyhurst College, a Jesuit boarding school in the north of England. It was nearing the end of term, and a number of us had volunteered for a supposedly silent retreat in Liverpool. It was not an inspiring retreat. For most of us the main reason we were there was that it got us off classes. Nevertheless, on the second of the three days, I got a funny feeling that I had experienced a few times before: a feeling that I might want to become a Jesuit. I needed to talk, so I went along to see the retreat director and stammered out what I thought was going on. Rightly, he did nothing then and there except listen supportively; but that evening he grabbed me in passing and suggested I might like to read Brodrick's *The Origin of the Jesuits*. It took me two years to act on that advice; but when I did, the experience was powerful. That book, despite its dated piety, managed to convey something of the spirit animating this odd, strangely attractive group of men called the Society of Jesus.

* Author's address: Campion Hall, Oxford, OX1 1QS, England.

Later, in the novitiate and beyond, the stories of Ignatius and the early companions (the distinction tended to become blurred) acquired another function. The things they thought, said, and did became norms for us to follow. For example, Ignatius gave up his penances and ministries for a time in order to study; so should today's young Jesuit. Ignatius wanted his men to be mobile, and not tied down in institutions; maybe, then, it will not be so bad if we have to get out of a couple of schools. Ignatius never intended the daily continuous hour of mental prayer to be a universal rule for the Society--still less that it should take place first thing in the morning; no need, therefore, to feel guilty about not praying this way. The early Jesuits saw their service to the Church and the world as specifically priestly; therefore we must not get our hands dirty in party politics. The first companions mounted a major relief operation for victims of the Rome famine in 1538; likewise we should get involved in social and political action. And so on.¹ Innovators and conservatives

1 Ignatius's decision to study on his return from the Holy Land is recounted in *Inigo: Original Testament. The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola*, translated by William Yeomans, S.J. (London: Inigo International Centre, 1985) [hereafter *Autobiography*], n. 50; and the application for the Society's scholastics is drawn by Nadal in *Pláticas Espirituales del P. Jerónimo Nadal, S.I., en Coimbra (1561)*, edited by Miguel Nicolau, S.J. (Granada: Facultad Teológica de la Compañía de Jesús, 1945), 67. On mobility, see John W. O'Malley, S.J., "To Travel to Any Part of the World: Jerónimo Nadal and the Jesuit Vocation," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 16/2 (March 1984); and Joseph Veale, "Ignatian Criteria for Choice of Ministries," *The Way Supplement*, 55, Spring 1986, 77-88. On the hour's continuous prayer in the morning, see E. Edward Kinerk, S.J., "When Jesuits Pray: A Perspective on the Prayer of Apostolic Persons," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 17/5 (November 1985), especially pp. 3-6; and, for a contrasting interpretation, *Selected Writings of Father Ledóchowski* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1945), 404-406. Ledóchowski, addressing the whole Society in 1934, admits the flexibility of Ignatius's own thought on the matter, but upholds the custom of the hour's meditation each morning on the ground that the "first fervor of Ours began to show signs of wearing down." Hence later generals and general congregations legitimately acted to introduce the legislation which remained in force till GC 31. Recent popes have repeatedly reminded the Society about the need for Jesuit promotion of justice to be conducted in conformity with our vocation as priests and religious. For a list of references, see *Documents of the 33rd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus*, edited by Donald R. Campion, S.J., and Albert C. Louapre, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1984), 54, n. 37. For an account of the 1538-1539 famine in Rome, see Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier* (details in fn. 8), 1. 445-446.

within our body will differ radically on substantive issues, but will share an important conviction about method. More or less expertly, both will feel entitled to argue from Ignatian precedent in support of their convictions.

The stories of Ignatius and the early companions, then, have an important twofold function in the Society's current life. On the one hand, they articulate the distinctive Jesuit identity and spirit; on the other, they furnish a source of norms and precedents in the light of which we can measure options facing us, now and for the future. This article raises searching questions about how the narratives of early Jesuit history can in fact fulfill these roles. It will have three parts. Part I will be brief and expository. It will aim simply to remind us of a familiar idea, namely, that religious orders are founded and sustained by a particular grace focused in the life of the founder. I shall bring together texts from magisterial and Jesuit sources. Part II will be skeptical in its thrust. I want to cast radical doubt on the *confidence* with which people--perhaps notably our superiors--make assertions about Ignatius; I claim that behind such confidence often lurks what I shall call "Jesuit fundamentalism." Finally, in Part III, I shall attempt to lead us beyond fundamentalism. I shall sketch a theology of Jesuit life that at once accommodates our rooted intuition of the significance of the Ignatian mythology, and yet pays due regard to the limitations of any historical knowledge.

One point of clarification. In this paper, I shall be concentrating chiefly on the *Autobiography* and on the secondary works which take it as their principal source. In addition, I shall occasionally advert to the *Constitutions* and other legislative writings. People might object that our knowledge of Ignatius derives, not principally from these texts, but rather from the *Spiritual Exercises*. However, though the Exercises clearly occupy a central place in Jesuit life, it is the other Ignatian texts--the biographical and legislative materials--which must contain

what actually *specifies* the Jesuit vocation. We must distinguish Ignatius the master of the Exercises and of discernment from Ignatius the founder of the Jesuits: Ignatian spirituality from Jesuit spirituality.

PART I. THE GRACE OF OUR VOCATION

1. The Magisterium

Vatican II's document *Perfectae Caritatis* deals with "the sensitive renewal (*renovatio accommodata*) of religious life." The second paragraph, gives a short description of this renewal:

The sensitive renewal of religious life comprises simultaneously both a continual return to the sources of Christian life as a whole and the original genius of foundations; and the adaptation of the latter to the changed conditions of the times.

The original genius (*primigenia inspiratio*) plays, therefore, a crucial role in the process of renewal. The good of the Church requires that each religious foundation have its own particular spirit and function; therefore the ideals and aims of each founder, together with the sound traditions of the institute, should be faithfully recognized (*agnoscantur*) and kept (*serventur*).² *Lumen*

2 Sacrosanctum Oecumenicum Concilium Vaticanum II, *Constitutiones Decreta Declarationes* (Vatican City: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1966), 335. "Accommodata renovatio vitae religiosae simul complectitur et continuum reditum ad omnis vitae christianae fontes primigeniamque institutorum inspirationem et aptationem ipsorum ad mutatas temporum condiciones." The translation is mine, although I owe the use of the words "sensitive" and "genius" to Fr. Peter Hackett, S.J., and have consulted *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, edited by Austin Flannery, O.P. (Northport, N.Y.: The Costello Publishing Company, 1984), 612. Fr. Hackett is retranslating *Perfectae Caritatis* for the forthcoming parallel text edition of *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, edited by Giuseppe Alberigo (Bologna: Istituto per le Scienze Religiose, 1973), currently being prepared by members of the British Jesuit province under the leadership of Fr. Norman Tanner, S.J. For illuminating treatments of the prehistory of this text, see discussions by Friedrich Wulf, in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder

Gentium states that the hierarchy must "ensure that religious institutes . . . develop and flourish in accordance with the spirit of their founders."³ Paul VI's 1971 apostolic exhortation *Evangelica Testificatio* recalls this teaching of the council and goes on to comment: "In this [the council] finds one of the principles for the present renewal and one of the most secure criteria for judging what each institute should undertake." Only through a proper synthesis of action and contemplation will apostolic religious attain their goal as religious, which Paul VI describes as follows: "to reawaken hearts to truth and to divine love in accordance with the charisms of your founders who were raised up by God within his Church."⁴

2. Jesuit Sources

Religious in general, and Jesuits in particular, have often echoed these ideas over the years since the Council. Thus, the Seminar which produces these *Studies* conducts itself "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." At the 1974 meeting of the Union of Superiors General, Fr. Arrupe gave a presentation entitled "The Future of Religious Life." In it, he identified the "foundational charism" as one of three "basic principles of renewal of religious institutes"--the other two being "a sound incarnation of religious life in the world" and "a right interpretation of the signs of the times." Of this foundational charism he wrote as follows:

The charism of the Founder is the element that characterizes every Institute. It expresses what is specific in our service of the Church and the world.

and Herder, 1968), 2. 335-340; and by J.M.R. Tillard, in *L'Adaptation et la Rénovation de la Vie Religieuse*, edited by J.M.R. Tillard and Y. Congar (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967), 84-86.

3 *Vatican Council II*, ed. Flannery, 405.

4 *Ibid.*, 685. If Flannery's index is reliable, this is the only place in recent magisterial documents where the Pauline term "charism" is used to refer to the inspiration lying behind a religious order.

In the charism we have the particular grace given to the Founder and through him to the Institute. Having to apply it and place it in opposition to modern circumstances, it is then indispensable that we reflect on it, search out its underlying meaning and discover those new reaches that perhaps up to now have remained hidden and unknown. Our fundamental charism may not be betrayed; rather we should push on to an ever greater understanding of it, applying it to actual historical situations.⁵

However, at least within the Society of Jesus, there was nothing new about the idea of a foundational grace or charism. On the contrary, it had been a major theme in the thought of Jerónimo Nadal. For Nadal, what grounds religious life is God's gift of a grace somehow over and above the graces given to Christians at large. Moreover, each religious family possesses its own special grace, a grace in some way focused in the founder.

In an exhortation delivered in Spain in 1554, Nadal discusses the distinctive grace of a religious order in two separate ways. Firstly, he gives a juridical account, concentrating on the notion of a distinctive rule. Then he moves on to what he sees as a different kind of treatment, namely, that proper to an exhortation (*plática*) "in which what is said should be put forward and savored." In this context, he talks about the experience of a divine call:

. . . one must note that when our Lord wants to help his Church, he uses the following means. He stirs up a man, giving him a special grace and influence so that the man can serve him in a particular way, as he did with St. Francis, to whom he gave a powerful grace from which to draw help, for himself and for others, towards the goal for which we are all created. And a body, or congregation, came together in the same way, and set itself up, with that distinctiveness and

⁵ Pedro Arrupe, S.J., *Challenge to Religious Life Today*, edited by Jerome Aixela, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1979), pp. 157-173, esp. p. 161.

particularity of grace: this is what is called a particular form of religious life. The same applies to all the others.

In the same way, God stirred up Father Master Ignatius, imparting a grace to him, and through him to us. We follow this grace, and direct ourselves according to it. This is our particular way, in which we differ from other religious. We need to be sensitive to it and relish it as such; but there is no need for other religious to be sensitive to it. For they have their own particular way which they should follow.⁶

In Ignatius, God founded the Society. When a Jesuit learns about Ignatius, he is not simply learning about the historical origins of the organization which he has joined; rather, the life-pattern of Ignatius in some way foreshadows the life-pattern of every Jesuit. Ignatius is not merely the instrumental cause of the Society of Jesus; he is also a kind of formal cause. The Italian text of Nadal's 1561 Alcalá exhortations states the point clearly. As Ignatius followed the path of perfection through various episodes in his life, "it was more or less as if the Lord God founded the Society in him, and one sees the first FORM and grace which the Lord gave to the Society."⁷

6 *Epistolae et Instructiones P. Hieronymi Nadal*, 6 vols, in the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (hereafter abbreviated respectively as *MonNad* and *MHSJ*) 5, 37: "Esto se ha dicho hablando speculativamente de religión en común y particular; pero viniendo a la plática, en que es menester que lo dicho se ponga y se guste, se ha de notar que, queriendo Nuestro Señor ayudar a su Iglesia, usa deste modo: que excita a un hombre dándole una special gracia y influxo con que le sirva en modo particular, como lo hizo con S. Francisco, a quien dió una gracia eficaz con que se ayudasse a sí y a los otros para el fin que somos todos criados; y assi juntándose se hizo un cuerpo y congregación con aquella propiedad y particularidad de gracia, la qual se dize una particular religión; y así de todas las otras.

"De la mesma manera excitó Dios al P. M. Ignatio comunicándole una gracia y mediante él a nosotros, la qual seguimos, y nos regimos según ella; y este es nuestro particular modo en que differimos de los otros religiosos, y es menester que nosotros lo sintamos así y gustemos; pero los otros religiosos no es menester que lo sientan, porque tienen su modo particular, al qual es menester que sigan."

7 *MonNad* 5, 287: ". . . in lui quasi fundò la Compagnia il Signore Iddio, et si vede la prima FORMA et gratia che il Signore diede alla Compagnia." See also Miguel Nicolau, S.J., *Jerónimo Nadal, S.I., (1507-1580): Sus Obras y*

There are many riches in these texts, and we will return to Nadal in Part III. For the moment, I simply want to draw attention to one obvious point. If one accepts what Nadal and Vatican II say about the theology of religious life, it follows that religious can live out their vocations authentically and healthily only if they have, in some sense, reliable knowledge of the life and teachings of their founders. In general, we Jesuits are good at being sophisticated about biblical texts; but we assume all too easily that reliable knowledge about Ignatius is straightforwardly available to us. Not so--at least, not as far as I am concerned. In the next part of this paper, I want to explain why.

PART II. JESUIT FUNDAMENTALISM

1. The Shortcomings of Straightforward Narrative

In the preface to his 1979 biography of Ignatius, the late Cándido de Dalmases--who certainly had an unrivaled knowledge of the Ignatian biographical sources--admitted that even his work had serious limitations. All those competent to judge agree "that the true life of this saint has still to be written." Dalmases presents his work as a sketch (*ensayo*) or attempt, and his aim is modest: "straightforwardly to narrate (*narrar lisa y llanamente*) the life of St. Ignatius. "As he sees it, the elusive goal remains to be achieved."⁸

Doctrinas Espirituales (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1945), 148-151.

⁸ Cándido de Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola: Founder of the Jesuits* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985), xvii-xviii. When the present article was first being written, this English translation was unavailable, and I worked from the original: *El Padre Maestro Ignacio: Breve biografía Ignaciana* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1979). Fr. Jerome Aixalá, S.J., the translator of the published version, claims slightly to have adapted Dalmases's preface; and he and I differ, probably legitimately, in our readings of *lisa y llanamente* and *ensayo*; see *El Padre Maestro*, XI-XII. In general, I now refer to Dalmases in Aixalá's translation. However, since my own reading of the preface is central to the rhetoric of this paper, I have here made slight

Dalmases here distinguishes his kind of enterprise from, for example, what Schurhammer did for Francis Xavier or what Hugo Rahner did in his essay on the year 1537 in the lives of the first companions.⁹ These authors bring together every reference in the early sources to the events under discussion, and assemble a kind of biographical mosaic from the fragments. Perhaps the most brilliant example of this is Schurhammer's chapter entitled "Inigo the Leader (1540)." In the space of nineteen pages, with no less than 235 footnotes, Schurhammer describes Ignatius's daily life as Xavier would have seen it prior to his departure for Portugal and the East.¹⁰ Schurhammer uses the same method, on a smaller scale, in his account of the incident when Diego de Gouvea, principal of the Collège de Sainte-Barbe, decides to have Ignatius publicly flogged for enticing students away from the college's Sunday disputations. When the bell rings, summoning the students to witness the flogging, Ignatius goes right up to Gouvea and tells him that he is quite happy to suffer for Christ; but Gouvea should think of the scandal he would cause to the students whose piety Ignatius had fostered. Gouvea is completely won over, and relents. In a characteristic footnote, Schurhammer argues for the reliability

amendments to the published rendering.

Dalmases's book updates a number of older works. I am counting the following as the standard accounts of the early Jesuits and of Ignatius available in English: James Brodrick, S.J., *The Origin of the Jesuits* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1940); *The Progress of the Jesuits* (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1947); *Saint Ignatius Loyola: The Pilgrim Years* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Cudahy, 1956); Christopher Hollis, *Saint Ignatius* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1931); Paul Dudon, S.J., *Saint Ignatius of Loyola*, translated by William J. Young, S.J. (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1949); Mary Purcell, *The First Jesuit* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1981); Georg Schurhammer, S.J., *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times*, volume 1, *Europe (1506-1541)*, translated by M. Joseph Costelloe, S.J. (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1973). André Ravier, *Ignace de Loyola fonde la Compagnie de Jésus* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1974) only serves to reinforce many of the generalizations I shall be making about these works. An English translation is now available from Ignatius Press.

9 "The Year of Ignatius's Ordination: 1537," in Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius: The Man and the Priest*, translated by John Coyne (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1982), 5-19.

10 Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, 1. 475-493, especially fn. 1.

of a written source of Ribadaneira's dating from 1572. He chides other scholars for their carelessness in reading the sources and for running together two separate occasions on which Gouvea got annoyed with Ignatius.¹¹

Certainly, Ignatius's biographers so far have refrained from any large-scale, sustained attempt at this kind of writing. Perhaps, as Dalmases suggests in his foreword, the sheer abundance of documentary sources daunts them. Dalmases himself, Brodrick, and Dudon do not, on the whole, indulge in long discussions about what really happened to Ignatius at Manresa, which bits of the *Spiritual Exercises* were written when, or what exactly occurred between Ignatius and Simão Rodrigues in the early 1550s.¹²

Such limitations, though real enough in one sense, carry little theological weight. No one imagines that anything of major significance turns on the correct distinction of two separate misunderstandings between Ignatius and the college principal. However, the standard biographies of Ignatius have a far more serious limitation, a limitation which they share with more heavy-weight works such as Schurhammer's *Francis Xavier*: uncritical dependence on the early sources. Even at their most precise and exacting, Schurhammer, Dudon, and others work off a principle that can be formulated as follows: If an incident is reported in the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu*, then that story is true unless contradicted in another source of comparable venerability. When Dalmases describes his narrative as straightforward, one of the things he means is that it is readable and uncluttered. That much is admirable. However, simplicity and lack of clutter all too easily slide into what I am going to call "Jesuit fundamen-

11 Ibid., 142-143.

12 For a full discussion of whether or not Ignatius received some kind of advance revelation of the Society at Manresa, see Antonio Jiménez Oñate, S.J., *El Origen de la Compañía de Jesús: Carisma Fundacional y Génesis Histórica* (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1966). For an introduction to the problems regarding the prehistory and dating of the text of the *Spiritual Exercises*, see *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Exercitia Spiritualia*, 4-33, in MHSJ. The historical problems surrounding Ignatius's relationship with Rodrigues are outlined in an appendix to Brodrick, *Progress*, 309-321.

talism": If the *Autobiography* says that something happened, then it happened, and happened in the way the *Autobiography* says it did.

"Fundamentalist" is an emotive and potentially confusing word. It now has political and ecclesiological overtones, and its usage developed originally in Protestant contexts. In this essay I shall use the term in a narrow sense, to denote an approach to sacred texts--in particular, early Jesuit sources--which pays no attention to problems of interpretation.¹³ When conversing, or reading a text, we necessarily import an informal collection of background assumptions in order to understand the language used. These assumptions are of many different kinds: assumptions about the meanings of words, about the life-context from which a text arises, about literary genres, about other previously communicated information, and so on. In most exchanges such assumptions can be taken for granted, and we have no need explicitly to advert to them. Moreover, if we suspect that communication is beginning to go wrong, we can easily check things out and clarify the situation. However, with a text from the past, such as the *Autobiography*, checks of this kind become notably more problematic, and, to some

13 As I was making final revisions to this paper, a stimulating article appeared which expounds and exemplifies a broader use of the term: Patrick M. Arnold, "The Rise of Catholic Fundamentalism," *America*, 156 (January-June 1987), 297-302. Fr. Arnold argues that the "neo-orthodox" movement in contemporary American Catholicism is, on one level, merely a local version of "the worldwide socioreligious phenomenon known as fundamentalism." On another level, it represents a none too subtle temptation of the evil spirit, masquerading under the guise of piety and fidelity, directed against the postconciliar Church. Fundamentalists have been confused and angered by the convulsive social changes of our time. Their paranoia is directed, "not primarily at the actual agents of secularization . . . but mainly at co-religionists who appear to have adapted all too well to modernity through unholy compromise." Frequently, today's fundamentalists are "allied with right-wing or repressive political regimes in the hope of advancing theocratic policies"; and they "insist upon the absolute, infallible, inerrant and unambiguous authority of official religious texts." Only this final feature converges with my narrower usage; and even then, I would suggest that "Jesuit fundamentalism" originates, not from deliberate resistance to a more sophisticated and enlightened approach to sacred texts, but rather from simple lack of awareness. Precisely because I find Fr. Arnold's analysis of the contemporary wider phenomenon so persuasive, I want to make it absolutely clear that I accuse Brodrick, Dalmasés, and others of nothing worse than hermeneutical naiveté. I neither make nor wish to imply any harshly adverse judgments about their psychological health or religio-political stances.

extent, impossible. How do we know what a word such as "ministry" meant, back in the mid-sixteenth century? How were our foundational texts meant to be absorbed? (One only needs to look at our recent experiences of the Spiritual Exercises to see how important the answer to that question can be.) What was the life-context which stimulated Nadal, Gonçalves da Câmara, and others to write down biographical data about Ignatius?

Despite the difficulty of these and similar questions, any adequate, reliable interpretation of our foundational texts must engage with them. If we are unaware of these issues, or choose to ignore them, we become, in my narrow sense, Jesuit fundamentalists, and our understanding of our origins and of our charism may well be distorted or inappropriate. In what follows, I want to isolate four traps for the unwary: four sources of potential distortion in the conventional, straightforward biographies of Ignatius which we have available in English.

2. Four Traps for the Unwary

The time-frame of the early narratives

A straightforward narrative of the life of Ignatius and the coming together of the so-called first companions implies that everything of significance for the charism of the Society took place within the period covered by the Autobiography, that is, between 1521 and 1538.

The end of the Autobiography. - The narrative of Ignatius's *Autobiography* breaks off in 1538. The obscure episode in which the first companions are accused of being disguised Lutheran preachers comes to an end. The pope orders a formal judgment to be pronounced, and it turns out in favor of Ignatius and his group. Ignatius concludes:

With the help of the Pilgrim and the Companions, certain good works were begun in Rome as for example, the Catechumens, St.

Martha, the Orphans etc. Master Nadal can tell the rest.¹⁴

The remaining three paragraphs of the text are narrated by Gonçalves da Câmara. They report various sayings of Ignatius about the composition of the *Exercises* and the *Constitutions*; and give a few sketchy hints about Ignatius's visions.

If we take the text at face value, this cutoff point seems arbitrary and accidental. It seems that Gonçalves da Câmara simply had to leave Rome when Ignatius had reached this point; or that the reticence which Ignatius had shown when first asked to tell his story finally got the better of him.¹⁵ In the reader's mind, the cutoff at 1538 easily fuses with the written approval of the Society, given in 1540, and with the fact that Ignatius never again leaves Italy. His travels have finished. The overall effect is a powerful sense that the years 1538-1540 constitute the principal turning-point in the lives of Ignatius and of the first companions. Thus, once Ignatius gets to Rome, the standard biographies available in English shift from a chronological narrative to a thematic treatment. The exception is Brodrick's *Saint Ignatius Loyola*, which, like the *Autobiography* itself, simply breaks off at this point. The hidden implication--and all the more powerful for being unconscious and unintentional--is that everything of real significance has now been accomplished. The years of Ignatius's generalate are merely the living out of what has been established, of institutional consolidation and codification in rules and constitutions. Nothing of importance changed once the pope had definitively given his approval.

Nadal occasionally goes as far as making this a theological principle. In the second of his dialogues, dating from the early

14 *Autobiography* (see fn. 1), n. 98. For more documentation of this episode, see *Fontes Documentales de S. Ignatio*, in MHSJ, 542-548; for a full narrative, Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, 1. 421-437.

15 *Autobiography*, xviii-xxi. Perhaps some caution is required in interpreting the accounts surrounding the dictation of Gonçalves da Câmara's narrative. Maybe it was personally dictated by Ignatius; but in structure and detail it seems remarkably similar to earlier accounts attributed to Laínez and Polanco. It would be good to have a redaction-critical study of these early texts.

1560s, he explains why he deals at such length with the life of Ignatius:

The whole *raison d'être* of the Society's way of life is pretty well derived from the things Ignatius did and the way of life he followed back then, from the time he was called by God until he set up the Order; . . .¹⁶

The point I am concerned to make is this. The option to take the period of 1538-1540 as a watershed structures the way in which historians and readers read the early years of the Society. This option, however reasonable and convenient it may be, nevertheless remains an option. Other options are possible; and some, if taken, might yield fruitful insights.

Ignatius's years in Rome. - At the end of *The Origin of the Jesuits*, Brodrick sums up Ignatius's years in Rome:

Ignatius had begun with ten companions and a little loaned house in Rome. At the time of his death his Order possessed a hundred houses and a thousand members divided into the eleven provinces of Italy, Sicily, Portugal, Aragon, Castile, Andalusia, Upper Germany, Lower Germany, France, India, and Brazil.¹⁷

From an administrative point of view, the years 1540-1556 must surely have been years of bewilderingly rapid transformation. We get some idea of the changes over the years by reading through Ravier's admirable year-by-year summary of Ignatius's activities as general--a summary which draws principally from Polanco's *Chronicon*. The big names of the early Society do not, in fact, form a homogeneous group; they occupy positions of influence at different times. Xavier is away, and Favre and Codure dead, before

16 *MonNad* 5, 657: "Tota ratio instituti sumpta fere est ex actis Ignatii atque instituto vitae quod habuit iam inde postquam a Deo vocatus est, donec Ordinem institueret; . . ." See also *MonNad* 5, 287: "In questo discorso breve della vita del P. Ignatio *fin alla fondatione della Compagnia*, si vede un essemplar di quella" (my emphasis).

17 Brodrick, *Origin*, 262.

either Nadal or Polanco becomes really influential. Ignatius's own pastoral work tails off around 1550. On a number of issues of policy, he seems to have changed his mind in the course of his generalate. Erasmus comes to be regarded as heretical and dangerous only in the early 1550s; by 1554, Ignatius seems to have abandoned the practice of novitiate experiments, and to be advocating a much more monastic approach to formation; colleges for non-Jesuits, with all that they imply in terms of endowments and loss of mobility, gradually become a major activity, whereas the earliest legislative documents of the Society had insisted on catechesis pure and simple, seemingly without any kind of institutional structure.¹⁸

My concern here is limited. I am simply pointing out that the literary structure of the *Autobiography*, and of the modern works that use it as their chief source, discourages us from asking questions about how the Society developed after 1540. Yet things did change, remarkably quickly: Decisions were taken, choices were made, and a tradition of custom and practice gradually evolved.

Priesthood, religious life, and ministry. - We are in no position to construct a convincing overall account of the lines this process followed, or to chart the to-and-fro of the ongoing deliberations. There is, however, one aspect about which something can be said, an aspect particularly important in any discussion of

18 For the claim that Ignatius changed his mind with regard to Erasmus, see John Olin, "Erasmus and St. Ignatius Loyola," in *Six Essays on Erasmus* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1979), 75-92. For a similar claim with regard to novitiate experiments, see my "Origins of Apostolic Formation: Jerome Nadal and Novitiate Experiments," *The Way Supplement*, 39 (Winter 1980), 57-82, especially 71, 75. What puzzled me at the time of writing that article was how Nadal, in 1561, could be advocating a practice which Ignatius, according to a clear reference dating from 1554, had abandoned. It occurs to me now that one reason may be the link between the experiments and the biographical traditions surrounding Ignatius. Other perspectives on the subject are given in Joseph de Guibert, S.J., *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, translated by William J. Young, S.J. (Chicago: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964), 102-105; and Manuel Ruiz Jurado, S.J., *Orígenes del Noviciado en la Compañía de Jesús* (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1980). A good brief statement of the shift in Ignatius's thinking about education can be found in Joseph Thomas, S.J., *Le secret des Jésuites* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1984), 7-11.

the essential charism of the Society. I refer to the complex interrelationship in the Society between priesthood, religious life, and what has been called "gospel-inspired being-for-others," that is, a charismatic ministry in some way sitting lightly to official juridical structures.¹⁹

A recent essay by a Jesuit historian and canonist working in Spain, Estanislao Olivares, has intriguingly claimed that papal bulls regarding the early Jesuits used terms such as "order" or "religious institute" sparingly when referring to the Society--a habit shared by the companions themselves. Olivares conjectures that this was because the early Jesuits were sharply aware of differences between themselves and the religious orders they knew--so much so that they avoided the technical vocabulary of religious life when articulating their own aims and ideals.²⁰ It seems to have been unclear for some time whether or not the Society counted as a religious order. At the final session of the Council of Trent in 1563, the Society's position in this regard was ambiguous. In an official list of members of the council, dating from 1562, Laínez as general appears among the generals of religious orders, whereas Salmerón and Polanco counted as "secular theologians."²¹

Clearly, we must not push this point too far. Olivares overstates his case;²² and there is, undeniably, a vow of obedience

19 "ser-para-los-demás evangélico." The phrase is Luis de Diego's, in *La Opción Sacerdotal de Ignacio de Loyola y sus Compañeros [1515-1540]*, (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1975), 158. See also John W. O'Malley, S.J., "The Fourth Vow in its Ignatian Context," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 15/1 (January 1983), 8-9, 23-25.

20 "Aportación de la Compañía de Jesús a la vida religiosa en su época." *Manresa*, 56 (1984), 229-259, 345-364, especially 229-233.

21 Michel Dortel-Claudot, S.J., *Le Genre de vie extérieur de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1971), 10, fn. 4.

22 I do not possess the expertise--nor is this the place--to enter into full technical controversy with Olivares on the niceties of sixteenth-century canon law. I simply indicate the need for qualification of two of his points. Olivares states that no papal document talked of *religio Societatis Iesu* until 1591; and implies that it was only around that time that popes would use the term *ordo* in the Society's regard. It may indeed be that there is no direct use of *ordo* as a description of the Society until the late 1580s; however, in

to the Society's own superior general from 1539 onwards. Nevertheless, one is struck by the comparative absence of the terminology of religious life as such from the Formula of the Institute. The meaning of the word "Society" (*Societas, Compañía*) seems to start off as something rather close to "confraternity," that is, a federation of priests at the disposal of the pope, and not particularly large. Over time it comes to be a near synonym for "religious order."²³ This shift seems to be closely associated with the institutional consolidation of the group. Talk of a religious order becomes more common as Polanco burrows into Dominican legislation to find material for the *Constitutions*, and establishes a system of communication, with rules for letter writing. Look how documents multiply with the arrival of a secretary. It is at this relatively late stage that Nadal works out his theology of the special grace proper to the Jesuit *instituto* and *religión*. The identity and legal status of the early Jesuits was experimental, provisional, and constantly under attack. Miguel de Torres, sent as visitor to the Portuguese Province in 1553, tells Ignatius in a letter that he does not understand the Society's purpose or lifestyle, and needs to confer with Nadal for guidance--this, after Ignatius has been employing him on important and delicate missions for seven years.²⁴ A consensus on the

1571, the bull *Dum Indefessae* of Pius V declared the Society "to be mendicant by the logic of its foundation, to count among the other orders of mendicants, and to be held equal with them with regard to privileges." (*Declaratur Societas ex instituti ratione mendicans aliisque mendicantium Ordinibus connumeratur et privilegiis aequatur.*) See *Institutum Societatis Iesu: Litterae Apostolicae et Varia Rescripta et Indulta S. Sedis* (Florence, 1886), 44. Admittedly, one can still point to the relatively late date for this bull, and argue that an ambiguity persisted up to that point.

Again, Olivares's assertion that the phrase *religio Societatis Iesu* was first used in a papal document remarkably late entails his sliding over two much earlier texts. Nevertheless, the point may still be true as a generalization, with occasional exceptions.

23 On the word "Compañía," see Olivares, art. cit., 230-231; and an appendix by George E. Ganss, S.J., in *Cons.*, pp. 345-349.

24 *MonNad* 1, 774. I am indebted for this reference to Marcel Bataillon, "D'Erasmus à la Compagnie de Jésus: Protestation et intégration dans la Réforme Catholique" *Archives de Sociologie des Religions* 12 (1967), 57-81. This paragraph has been informed by Ravier, *Ignace de Loyola*; and by Antonio M. de

Society's way of life stabilizes only during the generalate of Aquaviva, when, after considerable conflict, freedom from choir and the lifetime authority of the general become definitively established.²⁵ Much remained to be done in 1540.

The case of Isabel Roser. - There are aspects of the Society's early history which seem puzzling if understood conventionally, but fall into place much more neatly against the kind of confused background I am suggesting. I take two examples. The first is Isabel Roser's coming to Rome, and getting the pope to put her under obedience to Ignatius. For Dalmases "it seems strange to us" that the pope agreed. It meant that the Society was now going to have to reckon with "a branch of feminine Jesuits, which was something not foreseen at the time of its foundation."²⁶ Quite so--to us it does indeed seem strange, accustomed as we are to the Society we know and love. But two comments need to be made. Firstly, Dalmases's language here implies that the crucial criterion for distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate development is whether or not the development was foreseen at some ill-defined earlier date. On this criterion alone, we have no evidence whatever that female Jesuits would have amounted to any more of an innovation than, say, local superiors or the annual eight-day retreat. Secondly, the dating of the affair is significant: 1545. The Society is still without developed legislation, and does not even have a serious secretary. It is still a small group; and it is

Aldama, S.J., "La Composición de las Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 42 (1973), 201-245, especially 207-211. See also Aloysio Hsü, S.J., *Dominican Presence in the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1971).

25 For brief treatments of the conflictive consolidation processes during the generalate of Aquaviva, see William V. Bangert, S.J., *A History of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1972), 97-105; and de Guibert, *Spiritual Doctrine*, 232-246. We should not forget that both Paul IV and Pius V had briefly imposed a fixed term of office for the superior general, and office in choir; see Brodrick, *Progress*, 27-31; 207-208, fn. 2.

26 A full account of this episode is given in Hugo Rahner, S.J., *St. Ignatius Loyola: Letters to Women* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1960), 276-295. Dalmases deals with it in *Ignatius of Loyola*, 253-255.

possible, in practice as well as in theory, for the pope to be directly involved in its everyday running. Its priestly identity is about to be qualified, in that Ignatius will shortly ask permission to admit temporal coadjutors. Why could not some of these be women? After all, Ignatius spent plenty of time in Barcelona back in the 1520s looking after convents and reforming them.²⁷ The episode is certainly not as bizarre as it initially looks. However, if we take Nadal's understanding of a grace focused in the life of the founder too literally, we are not free to interpret the data helpfully. Rather, we are constantly driven to refer everything of significance back to some obscurely defined primitive inspiration. The structure of our principal sources encourages this tendency. Yet the data yield coherent sense only if we abandon to some extent the traditional perspectives which those sources imply.

The problems in Portugal. - Again, if we bear in mind the provisionality of the early Society's self-understanding and agreed "way of proceeding," the misunderstandings between Ignatius and Simão Rodrigues become more intelligible. Jesuit biographers have not been kind to Rodrigues. For Dudon,

This man is not an insolent rebel, strutting about and blowing his trumpet to rally his friends against his leader. But he is shockingly disobedient all the same. With his humble and gentle words, he sticks to what he wants; and to cover his resistances, he does not lack quibbles or suspicious moves or a sort of shameless daring.²⁸

Brodrick puts it more gently and idiomatically:

. . . Father Simon went on being the big man at court and the adored man at Coimbra. His Jesuit subjects loved him intensely, partly because he deserved to be loved, and partly for the less noble reason that he allowed them to do pretty well as they listed. It all went to his head, never a very wise

27 Dudon, *Saint Ignatius*, 98-100.

28 *Ibid.*, 344.

head, and he gradually came to think and act almost in independence of St. Ignatius.²⁹

Dalmases's comment focuses on the deviant theology of religious life:

Unfortunately, the magnificent development of the Portuguese province was disturbed by a serious and profound crisis, the causes of which are not easy to specify. . . . It seems certain that precise direction (*una acertada dirección*) was lacking as the province developed. The fact is that before long symptoms appeared of a deviation from that type of religious life which had been drawn up for the Society. . . . Deviations arose toward two opposite extremes: on the one hand severity characterized by "holy follies" and spectacular external penances, and on the other a tendency to softness and the comforts of life. The principle of obedience failed (*falló*), a principle so fundamental in the Ignatian concept of religious life.³⁰

If we think of the Society as finally and definitively constituted by 1540, the whole episode seems both odd and disconcerting. Obviously, Rodrigues is a sick man, both mentally and physically. Nevertheless, this affair seems to present us with a rift between the central government of the early Society and one of the original ten companions--a man, moreover, occupying a key administrative position. Once again, however, the situation becomes less puzzling when one takes into account a few dates. The document recording the 1539 deliberations of the first companions makes it clear that obedience to a superior within the group (as contrasted with obedience to the pope) lies far from the center of gravity of the early consensus. It is introduced, with some hesitation, as a means of keeping the group together in the face of a new situation for them: that of permanent dispersion all over the then known

29 Brodrick, *Origin*, 242-243.

30 Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 208-209.

world.³¹ In the *Exercises*, it is poverty which epitomizes the following of Christ and constitutes the cardinal Ignatian value. Obedience takes over this primacy only later, as the Society's governing group in Rome make strenuous efforts to keep the powerful Portuguese and Spanish provinces under control.³² Even the most conservative and authoritarian of us must concede that it is simply false to regard obedience as "fundamental" to the Ignatian concept of religious life if "fundamental" refers to chronological priority. Rodrigues and others behave as they do, not because some previously established tradition of religious obedience had failed or collapsed--*falló*; rather, because such a tradition did not, at the institutional and corporate level, exist in the first place--*faltaba*. After all, Rodrigues had been away from Rome since 1540.

The Society's way of life, institutional style, and legal status were being worked out all through Ignatius's generalate and beyond. Moreover, the Society emerges from a highly confused Church, struggling to redefine itself in face of the Protestant challenge and a radically new cultural environment. Uncertainty and vacillation are only to be expected. Gradually a clear consensus of policy and doctrine develops, in the Roman communion as a whole and in the Society of Jesus in particular--a consensus shaped imperceptibly through innumerable concrete decisions. By contrast, the early texts tend to be read as implying that after 1540 nothing of substance changed. With the approval of the Formula of the Institute the Society is thereby in place, and there is nothing more to be said. In hindsight, admittedly, this implication makes legal and mythological sense of a sort; but if one is concentrating

31 For the text recording the deliberation, see John Carroll Futrell, S.J., *Making an Apostolic Community of Love* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 187-194.

32 The *locus classicus* for the claim that obedience is the central Ignatian virtue comes, of course, in the 1553 letter written by Ignatius to the Jesuits at Coimbra, *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Epistolae et Instructiones*, 12 volumes in MHSJ, 4, 670-671. For the observation about the earlier primacy of poverty, I am indebted to Fr. Michael Ivens, S.J. The curious may like to know that Fr. Ivens was the retreat giver referred to in the first paragraph of this paper.

on the historical development of the Society into one of the major institutions of the Counter-Reformation Church, the idea seems hopelessly false.

The gap between events and documents

A straightforward narrative of the early events in the history of the Society fails to make adequate critical allowance for the circumstances leading to the compilation and circulation of the documentary sources.

Filtered history. - The earliest texts that give a continuous account of Ignatius's life date from the late 1540s, and the *Autobiography* itself reproduces interviews given in 1553 and 1555. Much had occurred in the period since the events which these texts narrate; and, as I have just been trying to show, some of these developments may have decisively affected the Society's self-understanding. For us the foundational events of the Society are filtered through the memories and biases of a small number of individuals; and this filtering cannot but reflect those individuals' concerns and agenda in the years 1546-1555. There is an inevitable gap between these documents and the events they record--a gap for which we must allow in our reading.

Two consequences follow. Firstly, our knowledge of the life of Ignatius and of the early history of the Society is severely limited. We simply have what a relatively small number of people in leadership positions saw fit to write down. Even monumental Germanic scholarship, such as Schurhammer's, can only bring together all the extant fragments. Our sources merely give us more or less consciously selected details from a much wider picture, the greater part of which is irretrievably lost.

Secondly, the texts we have do not simply present us with the "events-in-themselves." When we read the accounts of Ignatius's experiences at Manresa and La Storta, we have an interplay between the events remembered, the concerns of the people who produced the

texts, and our own concerns. As T. S. Eliot put it in *The Dry Salvages*:

. . . the sudden illumination -
 We had the experience but missed the meaning,
 And approach to the meaning restores the experience
 In a different form . . .

Moreover, in the case of one whose way of life is followed by others,

. . .the past experience revived in the meaning
 Is not the experience of one life only
 But of many generations.

We cannot interpret these texts adequately, therefore, without taking into account the concerns of the circle who put them together. Of course, formidable problems arise when one tries to specify these concerns, but I think it possible to suggest two: the consolidation of the Society, and the need to protect against charges of heresy.

In the first place, from the late 1540s till perhaps the end of the century, the Jesuits in Rome were working to give the Society institutional grounding, and to maintain (or establish?) unity between the center and powerful branches in Spain and Portugal. The process was long, troublesome, and complex. We have already adverted to the problems with Simão Rodrigues; Bobadilla too had his complaints against the people in charge in Rome. Shortly after Ignatius's death, he challenged the authority of Laínez as vicar general. He claimed that government of the group should rest jointly and equally in the hands of the five survivors from the original ten companions until the *Constitutions* were ratified. As he put it to Paul IV:

The bull establishing our Society laid down that the constitutions were to be made by the first ten founders, but, in spite of this, Master Ignatius alone had any say in their composition, for he was an uncontrolled father and master,

and did whatever he liked.³³

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this claim, it appears part of a wider internal conflict. In such a context, the dissemination of the story of Ignatius may have political significance: it amounts to the propagation of a foundation myth. In 1561 Nadal told the Alcalá community that the first way of getting to know the Society and its particular grace is

talk in detail about our Father Ignatius, the beginning used by God as a means for imparting this grace, and willed to be the one to channel this calling to others.³⁴

And in the preface he wrote to the *Autobiography*, Gonçalves da Câmara records Nadal as saying that the dictation of the text was the true foundation of the Society.³⁵

The text we have presents Ignatius as a kind of prototype of the later Jesuit novice and scholastic. Generations of Jesuits have taken this story and seen in it the rhythms of their own formation: conversion (Loyola), novitiate and holy follies (Manresa-Jerusalem), studies (Barcelona-Alcalá-Salamanca-Paris), and journey's end with ordination (Italy). The *Autobiography* presents Ignatius in Barcelona humbly getting down to his Latin grammar in the company of inky schoolboys. Single-mindedly he suppresses his

33 This controverted episode is outlined most conveniently in Brodrick, *Progress*, 17-25, quotation at 18. See also Ravier, *Ignace de Loyola*, 296-333; and, for a fuller account, Manuel Ruiz Jurado, S.J., "La Figura de Jerónimo Nadal en la primera crisis grave de la Compañía (1556-1557)," *Manresa* 52 (1980), 135-154.

34 *MonNad* 5, 262: "El primero será el discurso en particular de nuestro Padre Ignacio, que es el principio que tomó Dios por medio para comunicar esta gracia, y quiso que fuese ministro de esta vocación."

35 *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio de Loyola*, 4 volumes in MHSJ, 1, 360: "esto era fundar verdaderamente la Compañía." Moreover, in the Alcalá text just quoted, the means taken by God may, grammatically, be *talk* about Ignatius, rather than Ignatius himself. In both cases, this is to take one interpretation, among a number of possible others, of texts attributed to Nadal; but, whether or not Nadal was conscious of the point, it is undeniable that the formation of a common mythology and rhetoric plays a crucial role in shaping a group's self-awareness.

desires for the apostolate and moderates his habits of prayer.³⁶ Manresa is written up as a period of intense solitude, of absorption in the self and in God. There are only two references to dealings with others of a pastoral kind, and both of these references are quite peripheral to the narrative.³⁷

However, the 1595 beatification processes in Manresa and Barcelona suggest significantly different pictures.³⁸ At least some of Ignatius's experiences in Manresa are publicly known and remembered. He cannot have been quite the solitary the *Autobiography* suggests. Equally, in Barcelona, Ignatius gets up to other things besides study--which in any case was by no means a prerequisite for ordination in the sixteenth century. This recent convert is in a position to reform convents--an activity which the *Autobiography* leaves unrecorded. The image of the prototypical Jesuit novice and scholastic seems to influence the way the text presents the Ignatius of the early 1520s. Maybe this perspective can be questioned.

Suspensions of heresy? - A second concern lying behind the early texts recounting Jesuit origins may be the need to guard the Society against charges of heresy. Between the years immediately after Ignatius's conversion and the 1550s, sharp changes took place in the religious climate of Spain and Italy. Ranks closed against Protestantism. A recent survey account of religion in sixteenth-century Spain regards the years around 1540 as a watershed. The period from the end of the previous century until that point

was a time of major reform and also of creative, diversified new spiritual and cultural trends. Both the Inquisition and the purification of Church institutions were deemed compatible

36 *Autobiography* (see fn. 1), nn. 54-55.

37 *Ibid.*, nn. 19-32.

38 The claims which the processes verified are set out in *Scripta de S. Ignatio*, 2 volumes in MHSJ, 2.355, 275-276. See also Dudon, *Saint Ignatius*, 97-102.

with scholarly development of a broadened Renaissance Catholic humanism and more sensitive personal expressions of internal religiosity.³⁹

Afterwards, coinciding with the redefinition and retrenchment achieved at the Council of Trent, rigidity and paranoia set in. Such a change may lie behind, for example, the creation of a tradition about Ignatius's hostility towards Erasmus. In his 1572 biography of Ignatius, Ribadaneira reports that Ignatius recoiled from Erasmus's *Enchiridion* as early as his time in Alcalá. This claim seems false, for a number of reasons. It is highly unlikely that Ignatius could have obtained the book before he got to Alcalá; and his confessor there, Diego Miona, was closely involved with Erasmian and illuminist circles in the city. Miona later joined the Society. Again, in 1538, as we have seen, the early Jesuits were accused of being disguised Lutheran preachers. The charge must at least have looked plausible. Certainly, Ignatius went to extraordinary lengths to get the Society's name cleared. Given the situation in Rome during the 1550s, perhaps some events from Ignatius's past would have led to problems for the Society had they become publicly known. Maybe the official biographical material glosses over or suppresses certain facts.⁴⁰

The fundamental point is this. Much of what is normally presented to us as *the* story of Ignatius and of the origins of the Society is based on uncorroborated evidence written down ten years later and more. If we are to assess the significance of that story for us today, we must make allowance for this gap between event and documentation.

39 Stanley G. Payne, *Spanish Catholicism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 25-26.

40 For fuller introductions to the problems referred to here, see the materials cited in fn. 14; the articles already cited by Olin (fn. 18) and Bataillon (fn. 24); Payne, *op. cit.*, 25-52; John E. Longhurst, "Saint Ignatius at Alcalá (1526-1527)," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 26 (1957), 252-256; and Mark Rotsaert, *Ignace de Loyola et les Renouveaux Spirituels en Castille au début du XVIe siècle* (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1982).

The biographical focus

A straightforward narrative of Ignatius's life tends to neglect political and social forces affecting the development of his movement.

The *Autobiography* is what that title implies: a narrative focused on one individual. An adequate interpretation of that narrative must involve some consideration of the social and political context in which Ignatius moved. Accounts of the origins of the Society tend to be merely paraphrases and compendia of strictly biographical sources. Thus Brodrick begins *The Origin of the Jesuits* with the following sentence: "The early history of the Society of Jesus is very largely the history of two Basque gentlemen, Ignatius Loyola and Francis Xavier." Such an approach obscures the extent to which Ignatius's movement must surely have been linked with the power centers of sixteenth-century Catholic Europe, to say nothing of broader sociological contexts.

Friends in high places? - Read uncritically, the standard accounts of the first companions' time in Paris seem like a religious version of *La Bohème*. Ignatius has to beg. When making the Exercises Favre eats and drinks nothing, apart from communion at Mass, for six full days. The Seine is so frozen that for eight days heavy wagons could be driven over it. Nothing daunted, Favre sleeps in a plain shirt on the floorboards and prays outside.⁴¹ It seems a world of idealistic, penniless students, with starvation and cold never far away.

Other data indicate a rather different picture. This group has access to the papal court almost as soon as it arrives in Rome. Moreover, Ignatius has previously had dealings with two important figures there, Ortiz and Carafa--dealings which lead him to judge it better that the others should go ahead, while he waits a little.⁴² We have letters dating from 1536 written by Ignatius

41 Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, 1.203.

42 *Ibid.*, 310, 334. Carafa was founder of the Theatines, and influential

to Jaime Cassador and Teresa Rejadell, religious figures in Barcelona at the time. The intimacy, detail, and tone of these letters indicate that Ignatius is still closely involved with ecclesiastical affairs in that city long after, according to the early sources, he has been anywhere near it.⁴³ When Ignatius arrives in Venice after his trip to the Basque country, he can make influential contacts almost immediately.⁴⁴ As early as 1542 the Society can attempt to mediate a misunderstanding between the papacy and the Portuguese court regarding the establishment of the Inquisition.⁴⁵ It enjoys, almost from the beginning, considerable royal patronage in Spain and Portugal, and quickly attracts a large number of recruits. Some of these, notably Francis Borgia, come from the highest circles. And yet, when a great-niece of Ignatius marries a Borgia, Araoz--admittedly, a kinsman of the bride--comments that the groom is getting the better of the deal.⁴⁶

I have no wish to undervalue the power of genuine holiness to attract people and to make its influence felt in history. Ignatius' movement got itself established, whereas other comparable groups failed. One reason for this, perhaps *the* reason, was that Ignatius could relate personally to people who mattered, such as Gouvea, Ortiz, and Paul III. But one must also make allowance for the tendency of biographical source material to pass over in silence important background factors.

at the Papal court; later he became Paul IV. He was one of the group that produced the 1537 document, *Consilium de emendanda ecclesia*. Ortiz had been, from 1530, assistant to Charles V's ambassador in Rome, with a special brief to deal with the divorce between Charles's aunt, Catherine of Aragon, and Henry VIII, king of England. After the former's death in 1536, Paul III had requested that Ortiz be kept in Rome in connection with the impending council (Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, 1.139, fn. 245).

43 *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Epistolae et Instructiones*, 1, 93-109.

Dalmases conjectures that the ship taken by Ignatius in 1535 on his journey from Valencia to Genoa stopped over at Barcelona *en route* (Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 136).

44 Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, 1.304

45 Hollis, *Saint Ignatius*, 203-204.

46 Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 21-22.

The meaning of poverty. - A further influence tempting us to neglect the contacts between the early Jesuits and people with power is the traditional insistence on the value of poverty. The early Jesuits were up-market. They certainly had financial problems, but they were well connected with the rich and powerful. Yet poverty mattered for them, enormously. No doubt, the key meditations of the Second Week, then as now, provocatively challenged the entire world view of anyone who fully entered into them. However, in the historical context, the rhetoric of poverty may also have had a more immediate function: to bolster and legitimate a new understanding of the clerical state, centering on pastoral responsibility and religious leadership rather than on the benefice and on feudal status.⁴⁷ If this is so, then it may not be simply a matter of institutionalization or decadence that the Society came later to soften its rhetoric and discipline of poverty. Rather, as the new understanding of priesthood took root in society as a whole, it became less necessary to insist on it; and, with the endowment of colleges, there arose the prospect of greater pastoral effectiveness. For us, in a world where billions are known to be suffering from hunger and from the inequitable distribution of resources, there is, undoubtedly, a tension between apostolic effectiveness and apostolic poverty. It may, however, be an anachronism to read this tension back into the period of the Society's origins.⁴⁸

47 This suggestion is based on the general account of Catholic Reform put forward by Hubert Jedin. It is neatly summarized in his essay "Did the Council of Trent Create a Prototype of the Priest?" in *Priesthood and Celibacy*, edited by J. Coppens and others (Milan: Editrice Ancora, 1972), 153-180. In *La Opción Sacerdotal* (see fn. 19), 123-126, Diego points out that, in the actual text of the *Exercises*, detachment is repeatedly exemplified by a person's attitude towards accepting a benefice. See *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, translated by Louis J. Puhl, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1951), nn. 16, 169, 171, 178, 181.

48 *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus*, edited by John W. Padberg, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977), 417, 490; George E. Ganss, S.J., "The Origin of Jesuit Colleges for Externs and the Controversies about their Poverty, 1539-1608," in Thomas H. Clancy, S.J., *An Introduction to Jesuit Life* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit

Political contexts. - We should always interpret spiritual rhetoric in the light of the social, economic, and political context. If one were comparing Jesuit culture in the United States and in Britain, much would turn on the differences in public policy regarding education in the two countries. In the U.S. after World War II, there was a great expansion of Catholic university education, stimulated by the G.I. Bill. In Britain, by contrast, we had the 1944 Butler Education Act, which provided free secondary education for all and gave a massive government subsidy to Catholic primary and secondary schools. These legislative provisions have profoundly influenced the ways in which we have lived out our vocations in the two countries over the last forty years. They have affected our choices of ministries, our lifestyles, our ways of training, and the contours of the policy options now being faced by the Society in both countries. Yet one will not find many references to this kind of political background influence in previous numbers of these *Studies*. Only in recent years has anyone working in spirituality or the theology of religious life thought it worthwhile to ask questions about "the context of our ministries." Similarly, the standard accounts of the early history of the Society obscure the need to assess the political background. Who paid for it all? Who were the early backers of the Society? Why did they support it? I suspect that one has to be a little skeptical about the traditions of the depravity of Ignatius's early youth. His time in Arévalo, in the household of a senior adviser to Ferdinand and Isabella, would have brought him close to a court-led religious reformation in Spain.⁴⁹ Obviously, I am here indulging in guesswork, unverified and unverifiable. I do

Sources, 1976), Appendix III.

49 On Ignatius's sojourn at Arévalo, see Dalmases, *Ignatius of Loyola*, 28-36. A full and detailed account, which rigorously eschews the kind of speculation I am making here, is Luis Fernández Martín, S.J., "El hogar donde Iñigo de Loyola se hizo hombre 1506-1517," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 49 (1980), 21-94. On reform movements in sixteenth-century Spain, see the works cited by Rotsaert (see fn. 40); Payne (see fn. 39), especially 38-40; and Diego (see fn. 19), 19-55.

so, not for the sake of putting forward wildly provocative theories, but rather to insist that we cannot claim, historically, to know the original inspiration of the Society of Jesus without some credible account of the sociopolitical context from which it emerged.

Shifting outlooks

A straightforward narrative based on the early sources tends to imply a basic similarity between the cultural outlook of the early Jesuits and our own.

I have just been pointing out the need to interpret religious language in terms of its sociopolitical context. We can extend this claim. In assessing the meaning of the early Jesuits' words and deeds, we need to attend not only to the political background, but also to the conventions and presuppositions contained in their contemporary culture.

Jesuit romanità. - The best way of illustrating this point is to take an example, and I shall take that of the interpretation of the *romanità* of the early Society, its link to the Roman pontiff "by a special bond of love and service."⁵⁰ This idea first appears in the biographical sources at the time of the Montmartre vows. As the *Autobiography* puts it:

At this time, they had all agreed upon what they were going to do, namely to go to Venice and Jerusalem and to spend their lives helping souls. If they could not obtain permission to stay in Jerusalem they would return to Rome and offer themselves to the Vicar of Christ so that he might employ them wherever he judged to be most for the glory of God and

50 GC 32, echoing Paul VI, included this phrase in its description of "the distinguishing mark" (*sic*) of the Society; see *DocsGC31&32*, 406, 524. The subject is fully discussed, with copious annotation, in John W. O'Malley, S.J., "The Fourth Vow in its Ignatian Context: A Historical Study," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 14/1 (January 1983). O'Malley's essay is critiqued in John R. Sheets, S.J., "The Fourth Vow of the Jesuits," *Review for Religious* 42 (1983), 518-529.

the good of souls.⁵¹

All too easily we read this and similar texts in the light of an ultramontane theology of the papacy, such as prevailed in Roman Catholicism between the two Vatican Councils. The pope has the only significant authority in the church; local bishops are merely branch officers. And indeed, that kind of theology may in fact underlie the early texts; I am not disputing that much. However, the point does have to be argued for; we cannot simply assume it. What have they been learning in Paris?⁵² Or are the writers of the early sources exaggerating what was originally a peripheral detail in order to cope with some demand of the papacy in the 1540s and 1550s?

Joachimite influence? - The need for this kind of inquiry becomes all the more clear when one sees that the textual data, looked at in itself, can fit quite different ecclesiological approaches. Let me take two possible examples. We know that the exotic prophecies of Joachim of Fiore influenced at least some Jesuits right through to the Suppression--and even beyond. Joachim was a twelfth-century Cistercian abbot and exegete, who eventually founded his own independent monastery. His visions were widely known in subsequent centuries. Two themes from his prophecies seem, in a Jesuit context, particularly relevant. One is that of

51 *Autobiography* (see fn. 1) n. 85. The differences between the early texts on this point are discussed in Pedro de Leturia, S.J., "Jerusalén y Roma en los Designios de San Ignacio de Loyola," most easily available in his collected *Estudios Ignacianos*, 2 volumes, edited by Ignacio Iparraguirre, S.J. (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1957), 1. 181-200.

52 Investigations into the theological influences on the first Jesuits in Paris have not, to my knowledge, dealt explicitly with contemporary understandings of the papacy. The relevant sections of Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier*, though admirably full, rather too easily assume that it was clear who was and who was not a heretic. Two suggestive essays are: Robert Rouquette, "Ignace de Loyola dans le Paris intellectuel du XVI^e siècle," *Etudes*, 290 (1956), 18-40; and Henri Bernard-Maitre, "La Préréforme humaniste de l'université de Paris aux origines de la Compagnie de Jésus (1525-1536)" in a 3 volume *Festschrift* for Henri de Lubac, *L'homme devant Dieu* (Lyon, 1964), 2. 223-233. My description of Catholic ecclesiology between the two Vatican Councils is indebted to Kenneth E. Untener, "Local Church and Universal Church," *America* 151 (July-December 1984), 201-205.

the angelic pope presiding over a new, third age (the first two being those of the old and new covenants), whose reign would be marked by spiritual authority, holy liberty, and ecumenical unity. The papacy's dominion "will extend from sea to sea and to the ends of the earth." The other theme is that of two orders of spiritual men who will lead the Church from the present order, through the trials of Antichrist, into the peace and beatitude of the new age. One of these two orders was to be eremitical; the other would be active, blending the lives of contemplation and of engagement in the world. It would preach and evangelize, and be learned in languages in order to proclaim the gospel over the whole world and gather the final harvest. This second order would be designated in the name of Jesus.⁵³

Now, a number of details from the early Society *might* fall into place quite neatly if one assumed a millennialist theological background. The exciting mission ideas--Constantinople, Cyprus, Jerusalem, and Ethiopia--could derive from some papally centered eschatological dream.⁵⁴ The *Constitutions* seem to indicate that travel is the normal mode of Jesuit life; maybe this reflects the urgency of the final preaching and the universality of the impending consummation.⁵⁵ In 1548 Andrés Oviedo and Francisco Onfroy, living in Gandía, occasioned a rumpus. They appear to have claimed some kind of prophetic inspiration. One of their contentions was that Francis Borgia was to be the angelic pope. The principal documentation of this episode is limited to an extremely hostile report, drawn up in Rome; yet, even in this document, Ignatius and Polanco object, not to the claim itself, but rather to the indiscre-

53 These data are taken from Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London: SPCK, 1976), 28-29, 72-73, 116. The author discusses Joachite influence among the Jesuits on pp. 116-124, 132-135, and 166-167. I am grateful to Father Robert Murray, S.J., for bringing this book to my attention.

54 Suggestively, Dalmases groups these together: *Ignatius of Loyola*, 225-231.

55 For a fuller exposition of this point--and a saner interpretation--see Brian E. Daley, S.J., "In Ten Thousand Places: Christian Universality and the Jesuit Mission," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 17/2 (March 1985), 3-10.

tion with which people make it.⁵⁶ Even Laínez, as general, when commenting in 1559 on the *General Examen*, glosses the phrase "least Society" by remarking that God sent Jesuits into the world "at the eleventh hour."⁵⁷

. . . or resolving tensions? - Alternatively, we could speculate that the real agenda being run when the early Jesuits talk about the special bond with the papacy is the establishment of a negotiated institutional accord. In its early stages Ignatius's movement appears almost constantly in conflict with ecclesiastical authority. The early Jesuits claimed a charismatic call for their ministry, a ministry distinguished by its pecuniary disinterestedness, its professionalism, and its primary focus on pastoral care. This must have sat uneasily with a hierarchy structured in terms of the feudal benefice system, and a paranoid, heresy-hunting Inquisition. Through its special relationship with the pope, the Society receives juridical legitimation, a *missio canonica*; moreover, it effectively escapes from the control of any hierarch other than the pope. Furthermore, instant communication between Rome and, say, Paraguay is a comparatively recent development. The authoritarian picture of the hierarchical Church given in the Rules for Thinking with the Church and similar documents should perhaps be interpreted as the rhetorical cement of a difficult and tense relationship. After all, a commitment expressed in that kind of hyperbole is probably insecure; only rocky marriages require the parties constantly to regale each other with protestations of love. Jesuit rhetoric and tradition contain a paradoxical interplay, between freedom and imaginativeness on the one hand, and deference to authority on the other. Against the background I am here sketching, we might become able to resolve the seeming contradiction.

56 *Sancti Ignatii de Loyola Epistolae et Instructiones*, 12, 632-654, especially 648. A full treatment of this episode, though one which may be excessively unsympathetic to Oviedo and Onfroy, is Manuel Ruiz Jurado, S.J., "Un Caso de Profetismo Reformista en la Compañía de Jesús, Gandía 1547-1549," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 43 (1974), 217-266.

57 *Fontes Narrativi* (see fn. 35), 131.

I am not for one moment seriously advocating that we need to understand the early Society as a group of millennialist prophets; and, though I do believe that the second approach I have indicated might well turn out to be fruitful and productive, much work remains before that belief can be substantiated.⁵⁸ Again, my major point concerns method. There is no reason a priori why these, or other, approaches are any less legitimate than the one which simply presupposes Vatican I ultramontanism. We cannot claim historical knowledge of our founding charism unless we have some coherent grasp of the theological presuppositions undergirding the foundational texts. And, at the moment, our evidence seems hopelessly fragmentary.

One final point. For the sake of convenience, I have conducted the argument of this section purely in terms of theologies. However, what matters for historical interpretation is not so much the theologies as such, but rather the human relationships and interactions which these theologies articulate. To bring out the point, let us look again at the doctrine of the papacy. During the communications revolution of the past century, the doctrine as such has not changed greatly; if anything, it has softened. The sociological reality, by contrast, has undergone a profound transformation. A pope surrounded with the aura of infallibility in a world of jet travel and simultaneous communication is a very different social phenomenon from Pio Nono, locked as he was in the Vatican shortly after the invention of the railway engine. If I may adapt the language of transubstantiation, the words remain but the social substance is completely transformed.⁵⁹

58 I argue for this more fully, though still not fully enough, in my *Preti Riformati: a comparison of ideas and styles of ministry in early Lutheranism and the early Jesuits* (Th.M thesis, Weston School of Theology, 1985). Both groups are committed to clerical reform. For both, priesthood is a matter primarily of disinterested pastoral care and the ministry of the word. Both have an authority problem. Luther copes with this by simply breaking with Rome; the early Jesuits, by contrast, forge a fragile relational consensus with the hierarchy through ongoing diplomatic activity, and by negotiating canonical structures that free them from the benefice system.

59 This turn of phrase is taken from the last sentence of a fascinating

In the case of the early Jesuits, then, what we have to assess is not so much the theories of the papacy held by key theologians in their theological discourse; but rather, those theories as commonly understood in the interplay of cultural and social forces operative in sixteenth-century Europe at large.

3. The Limits of Historical Knowledge

I have been attacking a fundamentalist position which can be summarized as follows: If we want to know about the early Society, we simply read the early sources without further ado. Rarely do people explicitly state that position, but it nevertheless pervades both the biographies of Ignatius currently available in English, and many of our everyday ways of thinking about the early Society. I am insisting, by contrast, that even in the simple acts of reading and retelling, we import presuppositions from our own life-contexts. These presuppositions could be different, leading thus to different interpretations and readings of the sources. Therefore, the choice of interpretative assumptions is a matter demanding critical attention.

Suppose we were trying to present a synthetic account of the thought of Ronald Reagan. In this case, we know, or can easily learn, the significances and appropriate uses of a wide range of technical and semi-technical terms: New Deal, Sunbelt, Republicanism, liberal, star wars, Teflon. With the early Jesuits the situation is different. Many terms which, on this analogy, would parallel those I have just listed are problematic: reform, papacy, orthodoxy, Erasmianism, foreign missions. Their meanings have to be painstakingly reconstructed by church historians; and we are a long way from having definitive answers to the questions. In this situation of ignorance, we tend to supply replacement assumptions uncritically, drawing them from our own culture and practice.

article about Catholicism in Victorian Manchester: Gerard Connolly, "The Transubstantiation of Myth: Towards a New Popular History of Nineteenth-century Catholicism in England," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 35 (1984), 78-104.

Nevertheless, in theory, we can find at least partial solutions for this sort of problem. One can readily imagine scholarly projects that would improve our understanding of the early Jesuits. An example would be a critical historical biography of Nadal, supplementing Nicolau's 1949 theological study. Another real possibility would be an investigation of the Society's relationships with one or more of the royal courts of sixteenth-century Europe. The raw materials are almost certainly there to be found in the *Monumenta*, the big Assistancy histories, and national archives. The results might turn out to be fascinating, and significantly modify our understandings of the Ignatian documents.

Historians, then, can be expected to give us some answers, even though with great difficulty. But more abstract, theoretical problems enter in too, and finally rule out any possibility of arriving at an absolute, unquestionable historical truth. Biographies of Reagan written in the early years of his presidency would naturally have tended to see his winning the 1980 election as the key event of his life; and this perception would determine the structure of the narrative. (Contrast the film biography of John F. Kennedy, shown to visitors at his memorial library in Boston, which centers on the slain hero; or on any likely account of Jimmy Carter, which would surely focus on the 1979-1981 Iranian hostage crisis.) As Reagan's presidency moves to its close, different sorts of account are appearing, focusing more on his achievements and failings during his term of office. The choices of focus are indefinitely variable. To write a biography at all implies that the study of one individual person constitutes a helpful approach to human reality--an assumption that could well be questioned. Again, we might be interested in Reagan as a paradigm of conversion from New Deal liberalism to his present political stance; or as a representative illustration of how divorce has become acceptable in American public life. Our prior interests, questions and assumptions shape our perception of the data and shape the ways in which we transmit the facts to others.

What I have been calling straightforward narratives of the early Society's history imply that the major question to be asked

is: What features in the lives of Ignatius and of the first ten companions led to the approval by Paul III of the first, 1540, version of the Formula of the Institute? I have been suggesting that the really significant questions are rather different. How did a consensus regarding the Jesuits' new approaches to priesthood and religious life become established and consolidated? Why did Aquaviva win the showdowns during his generalate? How had Nadal, Polanco, and others prepared the way for this success? An educational historian, or a Marxist historian, would want to ask different questions again. We cannot definitively resolve this kind of divergence; equally, different theoretical approaches to the Society's early history will generate different historical accounts of the primitive inspiration supposedly enjoying normative status.

No doubt I could develop further the analogy between our imaginary study of Reagan and our readings of the early Ignatian texts. However, the main point is by now clear. Not only, to use Dalmases's phrase, has the true biography of Ignatius not been written yet; it never can be. Our perception of Ignatius and the early Society is at once incomplete and relative to the patterns of relevance and significance we look for. Historians can and should work to diminish our factual ignorance; but there cannot be any avoiding the relativity of the theoretical perspective through which we read the facts and, indeed, decide what is to count as a fact. Earlier, I described fundamentalist assumptions as "traps for the unwary." In one sense that metaphor is misleading, in that it implies we can bypass the traps. We cannot--at least, not all of them. There is no possibility of an assumption-free reading--nor, in many cases, are there nonfundamentalist or "correct" assumptions which we can simply substitute for the discredited familiar perspectives. Rather, we must strive for a critical awareness that any perspective on the past entails limitations, distortions, and blind spots. Any historical account will reveal some things and conceal others.

PART III. . . . AND BEYOND

1. Commitment and the Limits of Knowledge

If what I have said so far is broadly correct, we face a difficult dilemma. On the one hand, we must not evade the instability and incompleteness of any historical understanding; on the other, we still need to see the story of Ignatius and the early Jesuits as an adequate basis for a life-commitment. Somehow or other, "what Ignatius did" or "what God did in Ignatius" must normatively express, at least in part, our own self-understanding under God.

No doubt many readers will have picked up echoes of modern discussions in Christology. Critical historical method both liberates and unsettles. It is not as though one can read the Scriptures only if one is a professional exegete, or the Ignatian sources only if one has a doctorate in Renaissance history. The real point is less elitist and objectionable, but ultimately more radical still. In principle, any historical understanding is shifting and relative. How, then, can we possibly make faith-commitments which purport to rest on historical events, whether at Calvary or La Storta?

In this part of my paper, I want to put forth two basic theses. Firstly, any viable account of the grace of our vocation as focused in the founder must involve a three-way interaction between God, ourselves, and past events. I shall suggest below that in at least one place Nadal implies such a view. Secondly, the life of Ignatius indeed does matter for us, and matters profoundly; but we discover what that claim actually amounts to--its cash value for our lived practice--only through ongoing discernment.

I contrast an *interactive* account of our foundational charism with a *classicist* account. On a classicist theory, God implanted all that mattered into the mind and heart of Ignatius (and/or the first companions?). As Jesuits we somehow share in this gift. We can easily identify and formulate this grace, which specifies the

fundamental nature of the Society. We can, indeed must, adapt it to the needs of the time; but anything amounting to an alteration of it or deviation from it is strictly forbidden.⁶⁰ Such a view purports to provide an element of unchanging security, security on which one can stake one's life. Something stays the same amid the ravages of time. For many reasons, fundamentalism and classicism remain alive and well in church life today. I hope in this essay to help provide more suitable alternatives.

2. Nadal on Grace: A Transforming Relationship

As we have seen, the idea of a specific grace proper to the Jesuit vocation was dear to Nadal. The question then arises: How did Nadal understand the notion of grace? I doubt that a full, systematic answer can be given. Nadal's writings on grace as such are few and fragmentary, and they seem closely linked, both with his theology of religious life and with the intricacies of the sixteenth-century controversies on this theme.⁶¹ Rather, at the

60 The term is, of course, Bernard Lonergan's. See *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), 301: "The classicist is no pluralist. He knows that circumstances alter cases but he is far more deeply convinced that circumstances are somehow accidental and that, beyond them, there is some substance or kernel or root that fits in with classicist assumptions of stability, fixity, immutability. Things have their specific natures; these natures, at least in principle, are to be known adequately through the properties they possess and the laws they obey."

In his speech at the end of GC 32, touching on the controversy over grades, Paul VI seems to be using a classicist theology of religious charism in insisting on his concerns about the priestly nature of the Society: "Some of you, perhaps in order to inject new vigor into the life of your Society, thought that it would be necessary to introduce substantially new elements into the Formula of the Institute. . . . For our part, We cannot allow changes based on such reasoning to enter into your religious institute, which is of its very nature so special and so fully approved, not only by historical experience but also by hardly doubtful indications of divine protection. We feel that the Society must indeed be adapted and adjusted to this age of ours and must be enriched with new vitality, but always in accord with the principles of the Gospel and the Institute. It must not be transformed or deformed" (DocsGC31&32 [see fn. 48], 543).

61 For a clear and elegant discussion of the arguments on this topic during the Council of Trent's first session, see Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972); and for the problems arising a generation later from Molina's theology of grace and freedom, see Bangert, *History* (see fn. 25), 115-116.

risk of myself falling into a fundamentalist trap, I want simply to draw attention to one significant passage.⁶² It comes from the second of the exhortations given by Nadal at Coimbra in 1561. Here, Nadal expressly states that he will discuss grace in general, before moving on to the specific grace of a religious vocation. He opens with a brief reference to the scholastic tradition and then launches into a long rhetorical statement of God's plan for our salvation. Conventionally enough, Nadal speaks of God's mercy and love, and of our unworthiness.⁶³ But the moral he draws, and his conclusion, are interesting:

This ought to give rise to a great sense of disorientation and inadequacy within us, as we look at how much God did on his part, and at how little we deserved it from him. For we were his enemies, and we were doing nothing but offending him and infringing his most holy will. On the other hand, we should also derive great consolation, and food for much sweet and gentle meditation, seeing the great love with which the Lord has dealt with us, suffering so much for us: how much he valued us when we were totally unworthy--giving himself for us like this, and dying so shamefully.

62 Three other fragments seem particularly interesting: a) *MonNad* 5, 116-117, in which Nadal links the grace of religious vocation with the idea of predestination; b) *MonNad* 5, 658, where Nadal's character Philalethes ("lover of truth") claims that the Latin word *gratia* denotes the same reality as the Greek *charis* and the Hebrew *ḥen*, but that whereas the Latin word expresses the reality in terms of "what inheres in us," the Greek and the Hebrew focus on God's initiative, goodness, and good pleasure; c) *MonNad, Orationis Observationes*, 136, where Nadal draws on a number of subtle scholastic distinctions in order to express his sense of the rich variety of grace.

63 *Pláticas Coimbra*, 49-50. "He clearly showed that these were his desires when he opened the inner heart of his mercy and chose to come to the world in the likeness of a sinner--clothed so wretchedly, for, in comparison with his dignity, our humanity was indeed wretched; chose to take on his shoulders the cross and the shameful death which that meant, and thereby to establish a full abundance of grace, through which everyone would be freed, redeemed, and set at peace with the eternal Father--whose kindness was unsurpassably shown forth in this wonderful deed of our being set to rights. For, in order for this to happen, he chose to give the only Son he had, and in such a way that on him fell the rigor of his justice for what our sins deserved, and to us were shown the treasures of his mercy; on him fell the toils, the insults, and the tribulations; on us what they won and merited."

However, this should not be in such a way that we attribute the love with which he dealt with us to what we deserve--but rather to his immense kindness which motivated him. Thus, with profound humility, we should strive to incorporate our thoughts and feelings into such a mystery. The greater the imparting of his gifts and graces, the more we should humble ourselves, and submit ourselves before the awe-inspiring presence of God; and pray to the Lord that since he has done the whole thing, he may choose to continue the inpouring of grace which he has given, and carry it forward with his favor and help, so that we can grow more and more in his service and love. We should stir ourselves to go along with the grace that works in us, and work with it for the glory of his divine name.

Thus, as is clearly evident, God our Lord imparts grace in this life, and has already imparted that great full abundance of it in his most sacred Passion, through which he has made us all able for his glory, opening for us the way so that we can reach it and be saved.

Nadal here goes beyond scholastic categories. The incarnation and crucifixion established, once and for all, an order of grace. As we recall these events, we find in ourselves first in existential confusion, and then in other-centered consolation. With humility we must let ourselves melt into the imaginative experience, and incorporate our minds and hearts into such a mystery (*mezclar nuestra consideración en tal misterio*). Through this experience, the "great, full abundance" (*gran plenitud*) of grace that has already been imparted (*ya comunicada*) through the passion becomes a reality "in this life" (*en esta vida*). Nadal seems to be giving a deeply felt exposition of the method of imaginative contemplation of the mysteries of our Lord, as given in the *Spiritual Exercises*. There is at least an affinity between the passage quoted here and Ignatius's description of consolation.⁶⁴ The imaginative experience

64 *Spiritual Exercises* (see fn. 47), n. 316.

draws us into "the awe-inspiring presence of God" (*divino acatamiento*);⁶⁵ and there we find a new center for our lives.

Implicit in this text, then, we have the germ of a theology of grace involving a three-way interaction. God transforms us in and through the symbolic use of an element of tradition--in this case, the story of Christ's incarnation and death. Here, grace is seen as an experience of relationship with God, triggered by a Christian memory. The recollection of Jesus mediates this grace, not by informing us about a set of properties or qualities, but rather by catalyzing and facilitating free ongoing encounter. As the noted British Jesuit ecumenist Edward Yarnold puts it: "Grace . . . is not conceived as a thing: it is the transformation (as the Greek Fathers boldly said, the deification, *theosis*) of human life."⁶⁶ The paradoxes of the standard arguments about grace and freedom become intelligible as attempts to point towards an experience of enabling dependence, of service which is perfect freedom, of self-fulfillment in God-centeredness.

If we think of the grace of our vocation in classicist terms, the pliability and indefiniteness of historical knowledge constitute a fatal objection to the coherence of the idea. By contrast, we can readily extend this interactive account in order to accommodate shifts in historical understanding. Each individual and each generation will remember features of cherished traditions differently, in the light of their own questions and favored patterns of relevance. The ongoing process through which we reinterpret religious symbolisms matches the obvious truth that God calls each one of us, individually and together, to a particular and unique quality of relationship .

65 For a sensitive exposition of Ignatius's use of this word, see Charles E. O'Neill, S.J., "*Acatamiento: Ignatian Reverence in History and Contemporary Culture*," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*, 8/1 (January 1976), 2-8.

66 "Grace," in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1983), 245. See also *MonNad, Orationis Observationes*, 242-243: ". . . as a result of grace, our soul receives a kind of divine perfection--a sort of form divinely imprinted on our soul, from which and through which in Christ we are first made partakers of the divine nature (*ex qua et per quam in Christo consortes primum efficitur divinae naturae*).

Moreover, this account of grace as such which I have derived from Nadal suggests rather easily a corresponding account of the specifically Jesuit grace. In the passage from the Coimbra exhortations I quoted above, the transformative experience of grace was set in motion by meditation on the Cross and the Incarnation, that is, on central features of the Christian heritage shared by all who participate in it. But maybe other memories also can provoke this kind of experience: memories of a religious founder, of saints, even of work done, of holidays, of friendships. If so, then we can think of the specific grace of a religious order as a transformative experience set in motion by memories and symbols particular to that group's history. On such an account, the test of a Jesuit vocation is whether a person experiences God's transforming love and grace in and through Jesuit traditions.

3. The Quest for the Past's Significance

The open-endedness of our founding

A classicist account of religious charisms sees them as fixed and reified. The story of Ignatius and the first companions sets limits beyond which we may not legitimately venture. By contrast, the interactive account which I am sketching places religious charism in the context of an ongoing relationship between God and a specific group of unique individuals. As we change, so does our style of relating to God--and so too do the perspectives through which we understand the beginnings of that relationship. If we are genuinely living our commitment as religious, the stories of Ignatius and the first companions should constantly yield new significances and richnesses.

When, therefore, we talk about "fidelity to our charism," we are talking primarily about following the ongoing promptings of the Spirit as articulated through a particular tradition. In itself our history should not constitute a focus of loyalty, and we are free, under God, to make radical changes and reinterpretations. The British theologian Nicholas Lash, in an elegantly

clear essay entitled "What Authority Has Our Past?" writes as follows:

Jesus of Nazareth lived in the past. Nevertheless, to attribute unique and unsurpassable revelatory authority to God's revelation in Jesus, to God's revelation *as* Jesus, is to attribute unique and unsurpassable authority to an aspect of the past not *because* it is past, but because this past event is perceived, even today, to embody God's promise for the future.⁶⁷

The revelatory significance of Jesus's life and death centers, not so much on the events that occurred almost two thousand years ago, but rather on the new possibilities for relationship with God which those events disclosed and made possible. Fidelity to Jesus is not, therefore, a slavish attempt to reproduce his historical behavior, but rather participation in the new divine intimacy he reveals. We cannot specify in advance the concrete realizations of this intimacy; we simply have the abiding promise of God's fidelity, and the challenge to respond in freedom to the divine love. Hence, as Lash puts it, "it makes no sense to speak of 'preserving' revelation, but only of continuing its history, which is the history of faith."⁶⁸ The life of Christ gives us the "form" of the Christian way of life; the "material" has to be worked out in discerning freedom. To borrow the language of 1 John: we are God's children now; we do not know what we shall be; but we do know that we shall be like Christ.⁶⁹

Similarly, what God did in the lives of Ignatius and the first companions decisively specifies the quality of relationship to which God calls Jesuits. Just as the life history of Jesus

67 Nicholas Lash, *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London: SCM Press, 1986), 53. All four of the essays in part II of this volume are instructive for our dealing with the problems under discussion here: "Performing the Scriptures," "What Authority Has Our Past?", "How Do We Know Where We Are?" and "What Might Martyrdom Mean?"

68 Ibid.

69 See 1 John 3:2.

shapes his followers' experience of God, so, for Jesuits, the story of Ignatius further specifies the form of our encounter with grace--specifies it in a way peculiar to ourselves. We need, then, to claim *that* God acted in and through Ignatius in ways that continue to be significant for us as Jesuits; but we can be quite flexible, even agnostic, about just *how*. The history of Ignatius has normative force for us insofar as it shapes and catalyzes our experience of God's ongoing self-gift, together with our free response.

Classicist and interactive understandings of religious charism will both draw on the results of historical research, but will use them in radically different ways. For the classicist, historians give us straightforward, clear answers to the question, "What happened?"; and from these we simply read off what we can and cannot allow ourselves to do. I have claimed that such a procedure requires a certainty and stability in our knowledge of the past which we cannot attain. Moreover, there are also powerful objections to the subpersonal understanding of grace which the classicist account implies. By contrast, an interactive theology of religious charism requires from historians not straightforward answers so much as insights into the past which foster relational growth. Historical study disposes us for God's grace, at work through the symbolic use of our history.

This disposing has two aspects, reflecting the twofold limitation--incompleteness and relativity--of all historical understanding. Insofar as our knowledge of the past remains partial, historians expand and correct it; insofar as our understanding of the past is relative to a given set of interpretative assumptions, historians can help us see it in new perspectives, and relate to it differently. Thus, for example, the historical claims I made in Part II of this paper, if accepted, at once provide fresh information and, additionally, free us to engage with the traditions stemming from Ignatius in new ways.⁷⁰ For many Jesuits today,

⁷⁰ The complex and subtle relationship between these two aspects of the historian's creative role requires much more exploration. I throw out two

reading Brodrick, Dudon, or Dalmases might well provoke a sense of alienation--even guilt--arising from the contrast between our present confused and conflictive situation and the impression of self-confidence and clarity given by these accounts. Effectively, I have been suggesting that the standard biographies of Ignatius hitherto available in English are written from a standpoint characteristic of preconciliar Catholicism. Other readings of our origins--themselves equally relative--are possible and might give us a corporate self-image more adequate for today's situation.

At its best and most exciting, historical research liberates us. It gives us new resources from our past with which to face today's challenges. Earlier we saw that *Perfectae Caritatis* described the "sensitive renewal" of religious life as involving a continual process of "return" to origins. We might gloss this "continual return" as the continual quest for perspectives in which our foundational texts, memories, and symbols provoke consolation--a consolation in and through which God draws us forward into an open future.

observations, in the hope of stimulating reflection and discussion. Firstly, the two questions "What happened?" and "What does it mean for us today?" must not be held too far apart. Often the discovery of new "brute" facts arises from a historian's dissatisfaction with received interpretations and from the consequent attempt to come at the past in the light of new perspectives. As was said above, interpreters' theoretical assumptions will determine what they find factually significant. See the essay, "What Might Martyrdom Mean?" in Lash, op. cit. Secondly, in the process of renewal, the question "What happened?" is subordinate to the question of contemporary significance. In footnote 1 above I drew attention to the contrast between a letter of Father General Ledóchowski, stressing the obligation of the hour's mediation in the early morning, and less rigid understandings, exemplified by Kinerk. Both agree that Ignatius took a flexible line on the matter and that subsequent generals and general congregations tightened up. The difference turns on interpretation: on beliefs about how a religious group should function, about freedom, rules, and uniformity. One suspects that neither party would change his stance on the practical issue were we to discover, improbably if not impossibly, new data suggesting a significantly different account of Ignatius's mind on the matter. This observation suggests that the primary question is "What helps us respond to God's grace now?"; and that data from the past suggest, catalyze, and support--but do not determine--answers to that question. Though I insist below that any authentic development in the Jesuit charism must "refer" to a bedrock of "brute" fact about Jesuit origins, just *how* we make that reference remains open to our freedom and to that of the Spirit.

Protections against chaos

So far, I have urged that we should understand the stories of Jesuit origins as expansive and life-giving; and I have suggested that the "sensitive renewal" of our religious lives consists, in part, of a quest for perspectives through which the stories of our origins can mediate a certain God-given verve and élan. It might seem that I have replaced Jesuit fundamentalism with Jesuit anarchy. After all, change the presuppositions with which you come to the texts, and you can read them in more or less any way you please. What Shakespeare's Enobarbus said of Cleopatra might seem to apply also to the dynamism at the heart of any Christian vocation:

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety.⁷¹

Let me specify, then, four ways in which the story of Ignatius, and the ways in which it has traditionally been interpreted, can and should continue to exert normative, even restrictive, force. Firstly, whatever the problems with our knowledge of the past, some things happened and others did not. I have claimed that our knowledge of Jesuit origins is both partial, and relative to a set of interpretative assumptions. Furthermore, I have recommended that we should be healthily skeptical when people make dogmatic assertions about Jesuit history. But we do know *something*, even if only a little; and, although the facts of our origins may be construed and formulated in many different ways, nevertheless, some things were the case and others were not. This sort of reflection may enable us to make some very obvious and broad claims about current practice. For example, no life of thorough selfishness (though how would we ever recognize such a life?) could ever embody the Ignatian charism. Equally, however, no result of historical research will ever, in itself, settle more detailed and controverted questions such as how we should pray or what ministries befit our calling as priests and religious. The stories of our founding charism can bear an indefinitely extensive

⁷¹ William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii., Enobarbus's penultimate speech.

variety of interpretation and reinterpretation. But any reading must refer back to the facts we possess.

Secondly, however, not every possible reinterpretation of Ignatius is blessed by the Spirit's consolation. We cannot bring just *any* set of questions to the known data and be graced with the life-giving kind of experience I have tried to evoke. God leads us along some paths--and not along others. And, of course, the discernment of authentic divine consolation is no easy matter.

Thirdly, any reinterpretation of our past must reckon with the limits of human adaptability. Over the past twenty-five years and more, Jesuit life has changed radically. To take one example, the traditional understanding of obedience has been transformed, a change accompanied by a thorough rereading of relevant Ignatian sources. References to the account of conscience have come to the fore, displacing the 1553 letter on obedience.⁷² Changes like this will not become institutionally established if they proceed at a rate faster than the body at large can cope with them. The past has to be grieved for. Jesuit pioneers face a painful trade-off. On the one hand, they can push ahead and endanger the cohesion of the group; on the other, they can wait for consensus and risk betraying their vision of what could be.

Finally, we Jesuits cannot reinterpret our history and self-understanding without reference to others. Changes will be effective only if we work through them in consensus with those among whom we live and work. Take the analogy of a suburban married

72 It is interesting to compare what GC 31 and GC 32 said about the account of conscience (*DocsGC31&32*, 162-164, 478-479, 485) with the treatment found in a standard commentary on the old *Summary of the Constitutions*: Arthur Vermeersch, S.J., *Miles Christi Iesu* (El Paso: Revista Católica Press, 1951). In the modern texts the underlying theory seems to be twofold. Firstly, the desires and aversions of the individual are one indication, among others, of the will of God; secondly, the will of God may be disclosed in and through dialogue and conversation. For Vermeersch, things are very different. The account of conscience amounts to an act of self-humiliation, satisfying perfectly our desire for sacrifice, and cutting harshly against the grain of our nature. "Even our good thoughts and our brave acts reveal the presence of graces to which we are faithful only in part. . . . The account of conscience invites us to forget our honor and scorn our self-love for the sake of Christ" (*Miles*, 451-461, quotation from 452-453).

woman with school-age children, who feels called, under God, to missionary work in El Salvador. She will not be able to follow that call unless she somehow integrates it with the more conventional relationships that have hitherto shaped who she is. Integration may take many forms. She might decide that her marriage is inauthentic and seek a divorce or an annulment; she might wait until the children are raised and her husband can join her; she might decide that her sense of being called in this way is illusory and that suburban married life remains her true vocation. The point I am making is this: Her previous options and existing relationships circumscribe her room for maneuver in discerning her vocation. The same applies to a religious order contemplating changes in ministry and lifestyle. We can only be the Jesuits that our pasts have made us and that others can live with. If we initiate changes, we thereby also begin to alter the terms of the implicit relational contract between ourselves and others, in society at large and in the Church in particular. Under this rubric, popes and others may reasonably question developments within religious orders. We talk too easily about, say, our implementation of Decree 4 of GC 32; however, that document requires not only our own conversion, but also that of those among whom we live our lives and exercise our ministries.

CONCLUSION: THE QUESTION OF OUR IDENTITY

This paper has had two thrusts. Firstly, it has pointed to the relativity and provisionality of all historical understanding, and hence to formidable difficulties in deciding just what the "original genius" of the Society of Jesus, or of any body of religious, amounts to. It is worth stating clearly that I, in a way that some would find naively sanguine, do believe that there are some right and wrong answers to some historical problems. However, in the concrete case of the early history of the Society, many of these answers happen to be unavailable to us; moreover, there are further, more abstract questions to which clear-cut answers are impossible. Secondly, this paper has tried to give a

theological account of religious charism. Given that this notion evidently demands some reference to the early history of a religious institute, I have tried to outline an understanding which makes due allowance for the historical difficulties in question.

In a recent article, Thomas E. Clarke writes as follows:

Spiritual fundamentalism . . . is verified to the extent that any primordial word--of the bible, of the official Church, of a charismatic founder--becomes opaque to the point of ceasing to mediate our trusting union with the God who, in promising us ultimate security, calls us to a radical penultimate insecurity. Fundamentalism falls within the range of the idolatrous quest for a security that is both tangible and absolute. What makes it an especially insidious temptation is that it takes on the guise of piety and total dedication to the word of God.⁷³

Running through my own paper has been an attack on two heretical "isms": fundamentalism and classicism. Both imply that grace can be pinned down, analyzed, and possessed once and for all. We must reject such accounts firmly, on both historical and religious grounds. Rather, we must let our texts and tradition mediate a divine relationship: a relationship which, as it grows, constantly leads us to find new meanings by asking primordial questions: Who do you say the Son of Man is? Who do you say Ignatius is?

When we say that a religious foundation has a special grace focused in its founder, a grace to which its members must be faithful, I suggest that what we mean is this: Firstly, that from the founder there originates a tradition of memory and symbol, the boundaries of which we cannot precisely define; secondly, that God and the members of that foundation relate to each other in a particular, common way, through that tradition; thirdly, that religious are called, not to reproduce something already given and achieved in their founders, but rather to continue their traditions responsibly and discerningly.

⁷³ Thomas E. Clarke, "Fundamentalism and Prejudice," *The Way* 27 (1987), 34-41, at 37-38.

In February 1977, now a final-year undergraduate at Oxford, I wrote a letter, after much deliberation, to the British Jesuit master of novices, asking if I could join the Society in the following September. I then went out for tea with a retired Baptist minister, a widower who had become a Catholic shortly after retiring from the ministry. Now in his seventies, he did valuable unofficial pastoral work among the Catholic students. As the tea was brewing, I told him that I had just written *The Letter*, and that I felt drained and terrified. "Aha, I'm preaching on Sunday," he rejoined (such things were allowed in those happy days); "just you wait!" The sermon turned out to be a powerful meditation on the call of the apostles and concluded by quoting the final paragraph of Albert Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus*:

He comes to us as One unknown, without a name, as of old, by the lake-side, He came to those men who knew Him not. He speaks to us the same word: "Follow thou me!" and sets us to the tasks which He has to fulfil for our time. He commands. And to those who obey Him, whether they be wise or simple, He will reveal Himself in the toils, the conflicts, the sufferings which they shall pass through in His fellowship, and, as an ineffable mystery, they shall learn in their own experience Who He is.⁷⁴

At the same liturgy, I formed part of a choir which sang a haunting Monteverdi motet about that privileged form of discipleship--martyrdom. The music and the homily combined completely to overcome

⁷⁴ Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* (New York: The Macmillan Press, 1966), 403. The passionate final chapter of this seminal classic indicates points both of convergence and disagreement with my own position on historical study and religious commitment; but as I have not had the opportunity to study Schweitzer's text in full, I do not wish to discuss the matter here. For the sake of completeness, however, we should note that, in the original, Schweitzer talks about "peace" (*Frieden*) in Jesus' fellowship as well as about "the toils, the conflicts, the suffering"; and that the final sentence ends, not with a period, but suggestively, with three dots (Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung* [Munich: Siebenstern Taschenbuch Verlag, 1966], 2 volumes, 2. 630).

me--so much so that I could only be disgracefully rude to my friend after Mass when he came up to me and said, "See what I mean?" The following morning I woke up and groggily stretched out my hand to turn on the radio. The news was being read. Three members of the province I was hoping to join had been shot dead during the night in Zimbabwe.

The stories of Jesus, crucified and risen, and of Ignatius, the pilgrim apostle, express and articulate distinctive qualities of the Christian life and the Jesuit life. However, they fulfill this role not by giving blueprints or comprehensive analyses or inventories of customs and laws; rather, they beckon us, drawing us along paths of discipleship, discovery, and discernment. They say to us, in effect:

If you do believe in and commit yourself to this frame of reference, this point of judgement, you may expect to live with a continual breaking and recovery of this same frame of reference, at deeper and deeper levels.⁷⁵

Our sense of meaning and identity as Jesuits constantly passes through cycles of loss and recovery, death and resurrection. Our security comes, not simply from what we know of the past, nor from any law or constitution setting out norms of behavior for us, but rather from the creative fidelity of God, at work then and at work now, at once ever old and ever new.⁷⁶

75 I am here adapting and quoting Rowan Williams, "What is Catholic Orthodoxy?" in *Essays Catholic and Radical*, edited by Kenneth Leech and Rowan Williams (London: The Bowerdean Press, 1983), 11-25, at 19-20.

76 This paper has been three years gestating, and numerous friends on both sides of the Atlantic will recognize traces of their helpful comments and suggestions. Many of the ideas contained in it were developed during the academic year 1984-1985, which I spent at Weston School of Theology following the Th.M program. The first version of Part II was a course paper for Fr. John Padberg, S.J. Special thanks are due to him, as also to Fr. John O'Malley, S.J., who supervised the bulk of my work at Weston. A broader, more inspirational debt is due to Fr. Billy Hewett, S.J., creator of *Inigo*. His imaginative use of Ignatius's *Autobiography* in a variety of ways of helping people with prayer provoked in me a question: "Why is this project, for all its surface zaniness, on the track of something highly important and significant?" I hope I have provided the beginnings of an answer.

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THE AUTHOR

As a young Jesuit priest, Cándido de Dalmases became a member of the Jesuit Historical Institute in Rome in 1938, where he is still active. His chief work soon became the editing of critical editions of primary sources about St. Ignatius—notably the four volumes of *Fontes narrativi de Sancto Ignatio* (1943-1965), *Exercitia Spiritualia: Textus* (1969), and *Fontes Documentales* (1977). He has also published many other books and articles.

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