



PROGRESSIO

JEAN-CLAUDE DHOTEL S.J.

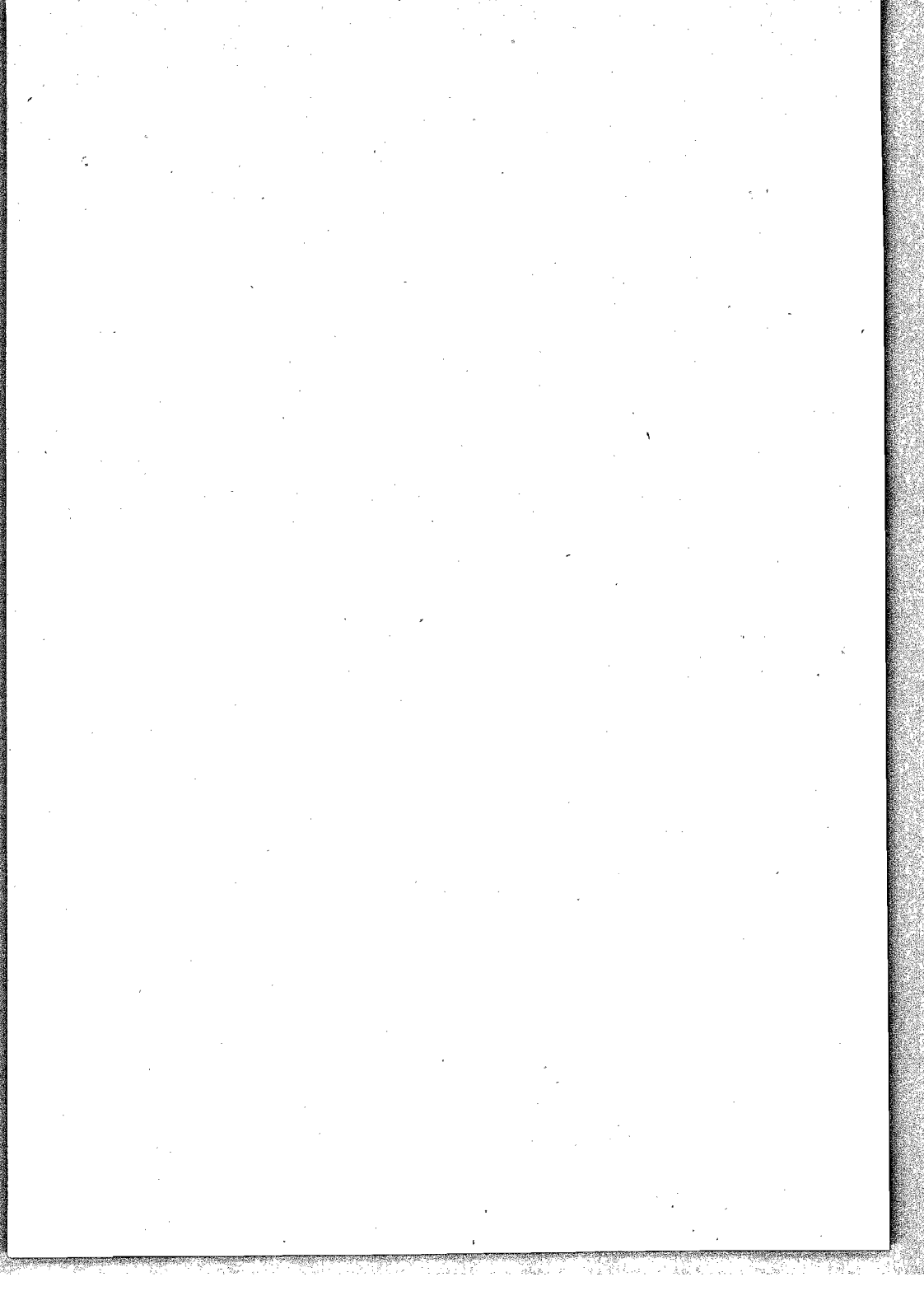
WHO ARE YOU, IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA?

SUPPLEMENT N. 27 - January 1986

PUBLICATION OF THE WORLD FEDERATION OF CHRISTIAN LIFE
COMMUNITIES * C.P. 6139 * Borgo S. Spirito 5 * 00195 ROME
ITALY * ENGLISH-SPANISH-FRENCH EDITIONS. EDITOR: José GSELL

Who are you, Ignatius of Loyola?

JEAN-CLAUDE DHOTEL S.J.



P R E F A C E

"Who are you?"

This sort of question always remains unanswered: we can never exhaust the mystery of a human person. As I finish writing, I still pose the question. And I hope that as the reader comes to the last line, he or she may want to know Ignatius of Loyola more.

A fascinating personality but, like all fascinating people, somewhat formidable. Reading allows us to keep a safe distance, and little by little, to let ourselves be 'tamed'. That is why I made the most of the time when I had a broken leg - a rather scratchy resemblance to the man wounded at Pamplona! - to write these pages.

And I would like to say a word or two about what I had in mind.

When he was about thirty, Ignatius, under the influence of God, had a decisive experience. His whole life - through innumerable ups and downs, trials, toing and froing, in a world shaken as it had not been since the barbarian invasions - was guided by being faithful to this experience. To share this experience with others, he brought it together in a booklet, the *Spiritual Exercises* - one of the rare books that was not written to be read. The Exercises are not really for talking about, or reading about - they are something to be done.

Many people have made the Exercises or retreats which have been an inspiring experience for them, and they continue to make them. In these times of uncertainty and confusion, but of great promise, too - which are characteristic of periods of change - they experience the value of the Exercises. However, they do not know their author. Some people even feel a sort of instinctive negative reaction against him, as if his name carried overtones of some forbidding, not to say, baleful, power. Ignatius frightens people. The Exercises are also a source of fear. But it

is rare for a person to experience them and not to give thanks to God for them.

Which being said, I have simply wanted to help people see that the Spiritual Exercises and the life of Ignatius are basically one. At the beginning of each of the nine chapters, a precise event - dated, like a page from a diary - marks a particular stage and turning-point, just like the Exercises which are divided up into weeks and days that mark out the spiritual journey. Then follow some lines from the book of the Exercises, and the content of the chapter illustrates the quotation from the Exercises, not by way of presenting doctrine, but simply by drawing from the life of Ignatius.

Apart from that, the material I have used I have taken from other sources. These pages were first written in 1972 and now the World Executive Council of the Christian Life Communities has chosen to republish them as a Supplement of Progressio, on the occasion of the next World Assembly at Loyola (1986).

No doubt the members of the CLC will recognise, in the life of Ignatius of Loyola, something of the way of life they have experienced and are experiencing, and will feel confirmed as members of the great Ignatian family.

What comes first is a vital experience of God, our Creator and Lord, "principle and foundation" of every spiritual undertaking, both personal and collective. A community can only really exist and make progress on the basis of an encounter with God where He "communicates Himself to the devout soul... inflames it with His love and praise, and disposes it for the way in which it could better serve God in the future" (S.E.15). Not that this experience is a solitary experience. Ignatius was never alone. From his convalescence at Loyola, it was his sister-in-law who got him the books which set him on his way and, as he read, the saints became his companions and stimulated his desire. At Manresa, he wanted to meet up with "spiritual persons" and to be helped by his confessor. But the moment of encounter, of immediate contact with no one in between, was a one to one, heart to heart affair, between him and his Creator.

What comes next is that the person whom God has taken and filled with his graces has a deep desire to communicate his experience and to live it with others. "To help souls" was the preoccupation of Ignatius Loyola from that time on. He set out for Jerusalem not only as a pilgrim but as an apostle of Christ. On his return, he decided to take up studies, to be able to pass on to others, in the language and culture of his time, what he himself had received. And he gathered companions around him so that this desire would spread. At Montmartre, on August 15th, 1534, the first seven companions, who had made the Spiritual Exercises, bound themselves to one another and offered themselves to the Lord. The community was born, not based on a natural fellow-feeling, but on the communion of desires. The friendship which united them would be given them into the bargain.

A community which put no limit on its apostolic ambition... That is why they would offer themselves to the Vicar of Christ, thereby accepting to be dispersed "everywhere in the world". The Society of Jesus was still not officially founded when Francis Xavier set off, never to see his companions again. However, perhaps no one more than he would have the feeling of being part of a body whose members were "so united among themselves and so closely bound together that no physical distance, no matter how great, could separate them..."

Is not this the way proposed to every CLC member and community: the way that Ignatius and his companions have opened up for us?

J.C.D.

TABLE OF CONTENT

FOREWORD

<i>a day in the year 1491</i>	1
I. A PARTICULAR MAN, A PARTICULAR EPOCH, A PARTICULAR WORLD	2

First Part:

A MAN TO SERVE CHRIST

<i>Monday, May 20, 1521</i>	11
II. THE DREAMS OF LOYOLA	12
<i>March 25, 1522</i>	18
III. WHAT IS THIS NEW LIFE?	19
<i>Friday, September 4, 1523</i>	33
IV. THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST	34
<i>February 2nd, 1528</i>	40
V. WISDOM AND FOLLY	41

Second Part:

COMPANIONS TO SERVE IN THE CHURCH

<i>August 15, 1534</i>	52
VI. CHOSEN TO BE HIS COMPANIONS	53
<i>mid-November, 1537</i>	63
VII. UNITED TO BE DISPERSED	64
<i>April 22, 1541</i>	73
VIII. FOR THE GROWTH OF THE BODY	74
<i>June 28, 1553</i>	83
IX. THE COURAGE TO UNDERTAKE	84
<i>July 31, 1556</i>	94

a day in the year 1491

No miracle marked the birth of Inigo of Loyola. A legend has it that he was born in a stable, on Christmas night. Historians simply say that he was born in 1491, without giving any more details.

In a similar vein, there was no journalist to cable the news of a "European miracle" when, several months later, a famished sailor from the Santa Maria sighted the coast of America; and there was no reporter at hand when, during the same period, the capture of Grenada by the armies of the king of Spain put an end to the Arab presence in western Europe.

No one in the family entourage realised how fortunate the thirteenth child and the last son of the lords of Loyola was, to be born into the world at that time. The "Casa Solar" - the name of the fortified establishment that housed the family - easily traced its roots back to the Middle Ages, and its way of life was more a reflection of the past. The invention of printing had hardly found its way into the "Casa" which was quite content with a "Book of the Hours", for it was a pious house, and an account book, for it was also a rich house...

Nevertheless the state of upheaval that was to beset Europe had begun: it was the time of the Renaissance, the dawn of modern times, or whatever else one might wish to call it... It was Ignatius' good fortune to be born at this same time.

Was it simply a matter of good fortune? No; there was more to it than that. There was something more which, starting from his conversion, he would pursue passionately through events, ideas, people - the search for God, "like someone labouring", in events, ideas, people.

"A contemplative in action", seeking to "see God in all things" in order to discover His will and to carry it out, he was to be precisely the man whom the Church and the world needed at that time.

I. A PARTICULAR MAN, A PARTICULAR EPOCH, A PARTICULAR WORLD

... to see the great extent of the surface of the earth, inhabited by so many different peoples, and especially to see the house and room of Our Lady in the city of Nazareth in the province of Galilee. The Three Divine Persons look down upon the whole expanse or circuit of all the earth, filled with human beings in such great diversity in dress and in manner of acting. Some are white, some black; some at peace, and some at war; some weeping, some laughing; some well, some sick; some coming into the world, and some dying...

Spiritual Exercises, nos. 102-106

The vision that St. Ignatius proposes for our meditation on the Incarnation in the Spiritual Exercises is as vast as the world and as detailed as a close-up picture - our planet as seen by a cosmonaut, and the tears of an African child. St. Luke's account gives the same perspective. When the angel speaks, the walls of the house at Nazareth melt away: it becomes as vast as "the house of Jacob", for a "kingdom that will never end"; it is thronged with "all generations" spoken of in the Magnificat, the mighty and the humble, the hungry filled with good things and the rich sent away empty...

Even though the house of the Loyolas may seem to have been built to withstand the four winds, we must open its doors and its windows and now leave the Basque country, Spain and Europe, to take in an overall glimpse of the life of Ignatius and "the expanse of the earth". For the will of God which will be shown to him at each stage will always be connected with the plan that was once revealed in the house of Nazareth.

THE LAST-BORN OF THE LOYOLAS

Fair hair, moustache and beard, black eyes. Height: 1.60 metres. Distinguishing characteristics (after 1521): limp in the right leg. Born in 1491 (?) at Azpeitia, province of Guipuzcoa, Spain. Father's name: Beltran; Mother's name: Marina Saenz de Licona. Professions (in succession): page, gentleman, (vagabond), student, priest, superior of the Society of Jesus. Successive domiciles: Azpeitia, Arevalo, Najera ('no fixed abode'), Barcelona, Alcala, Salamanca, Paris, Venice, Rome... In retrospect, this would have been the identity card of Inigo of Loyola.

Inigo was his first name. Later he would change it into the Latin form, perhaps out of devotion to Ignatius of Antioch. He was Basque, headstrong, stubborn, slightly taciturn, but lively and cheerful. Like all his family, he was faithful to the crown of Spain: three of his brothers were to die, from Mexico to Hungary, for the glory of Charles V.

His first years were happily spent with his nurse - for his mother had died shortly after his birth - and then he left the humble country people of the region to go away to Alcala, as a page in the court of the royal Treasurer. At the age of 25, he was occupied in the court of the viceroy of Navarre, and it was in this latter's service that a cannon-ball put an end to his career on the 20th of May, 1521.

What sort of career? Some people think that he was first and foremost a soldier and that the Society of Jesus is modelled, in its organisation, on the army, because of the words "company", "general", "obedience"... But, apart from the fact that these words are not taken from the military vocabulary and that discipline was very far from being the "moving force" behind the armed bands of the 16th century, we must realise that Inigo was not a professional soldier. Certainly he carried a sword, which was part of his wardrobe. And it was not just for appearances, like the pupils of the Polytechnic or the members of the Academy, for often it was in his hand, but to ward off trouble-makers at night, or for the beautiful eyes of

a lady... He had a sense of humour, of chivalry, of fidelity to the king; but no idea, except perhaps in a very basic way, of strategy, of tactics or even of discipline. His field of endeavour was rather the court than the battle-field. The high and colourful fashion of a gentleman, which he carried off with extreme elegance, was much more his style than military armour.

For the rest - though 'he had the faith', he was not exactly virtuous. We will never know what precisely happened at Azpeitia, during the Carnival of 1515, when an accusation was brought against him which mentioned "terrible crimes, perpetrated at night, with premeditation, cunning and treachery...", except that he got off scot-free!

Is there any need to say more? This first part of his life is summed up in a phrase in his Autobiography:

Up to the age of 26 he was a man given to the follies of the world; and what he enjoyed most was warlike sport, with a great and foolish desire to win fame.
[1]

As a matter of fact, he was like that till the age of thirty. And these thirty years are to be reckoned as very much a part of the world's history.

THE WORLD SCENE

When we look at the chronological schema (at the end of this chapter), we cannot help noticing the relationship between the events which occurred during the early years of Inigo, and those in which he was to play an active part later on. He came into the world as the curtain was being raised on one of the major changes of History. Three startling occurrences heralded this change.

[1] A PILGRIM'S TESTAMENT: The memoirs of Ignatius of Loyola. Newly translated by Parmananda R. Divarkar S.J. Rome 1983: n.1 (p.5). The Autobiography is written in the third person. Subsequent references are simply to "Autobiography".

The first was the capture of Grenada; Islam was driven out of western Europe. But the Crescent would press to the East, obliging Charles V to a war of attrition against Suliman. The war would prevent Ignatius and his companions from going to Jerusalem, but the desire to send his men to the land where Christ lived, to bring the Gospel to Islam, would always stay with him.

The second was Christopher Columbus discovering America, and Vasco de Gama opening the way to the Indies. The world was growing larger, calling forth apostles. The year when the Society was approved by the Pope, Francis Xavier would set out for the Indies, Japan, the threshold of China. Soon afterwards, a group of Jesuits would set sail for Brazil.

The third was the wars in Italy. The Renaissance was to become a European phenomenon. We do not know how interested Ignatius was in the construction of St. Peter's in Rome, or in Michaelangelo's work on the Sistine Chapel. But this contemporary of Rabelais - perhaps they bumped into each other in the Latin quarter - was to grasp the importance of secular culture and the "Humanities".

All these initiatives, provoked by events; were to be directed to one and the same end: reform in the Church.

At the time that the young Inigo was being fed by his nurse, the chair of St. Peter was occupied by the Borgia Pope, Alexander VI. A half a century later, Francis, grand-nephew of the Pope, was to be admitted into the Society of Jesus by Ignatius. He would be the third "General", and the Church would canonise in him the name of Borgia, borne by Alexander, Cesar and the all too famous Lucretia! Behind the story we have to read the passion of Ignatius for "our holy Mother, the Church", as he calls her, and for the reform of the Church.

It was also the hour of the Reformation. Some others were involved in this: Erasmus and Luther were senior to Ignatius, Calvin was his junior. Against all odds, suspected of heresy for 15 years and handed over to the Inquisitors on account of the "novelty" of the Spiritual Exercises and the style of life of his companions, he also would work to reform the Church, but from within.

For the "novelty" that he brought to the world derived its inspiration from a profound spiritual renewal, nourished by a keen attentiveness to the needs of the time, and authenticated by an absolute fidelity to the Church and a total obedience to the Vicar of Christ.

1556 saw the abdication of Charles V, and the death of Ignatius of Loyola; a coincidence... The Empire would be divided up, but the thousand Jesuits of that time had passed beyond the frontiers of the Empire. They were "everywhere in the world", everywhere where there were people "in such great diversity in dress and in manner of acting. Some are white, some black; some at peace, and some at war; some weeping, some laughing; some well, some sick; some coming into the world, and some dying...". They had been sent there where there was the most urgent and the most universal need. And the discernment of these needs had been made over 15 years in a little room in Rome where, right up to his last evening, in response to a call that went far beyond his personal resources, Ignatius had read the signs of the times.

"How shall that be?", asked the Virgin Mary. How did the dashing caballero come to this? It all began on the ramparts of Pamplona, Pentecost Sunday, 1521.

LIFE OF ST. IGNATIUS

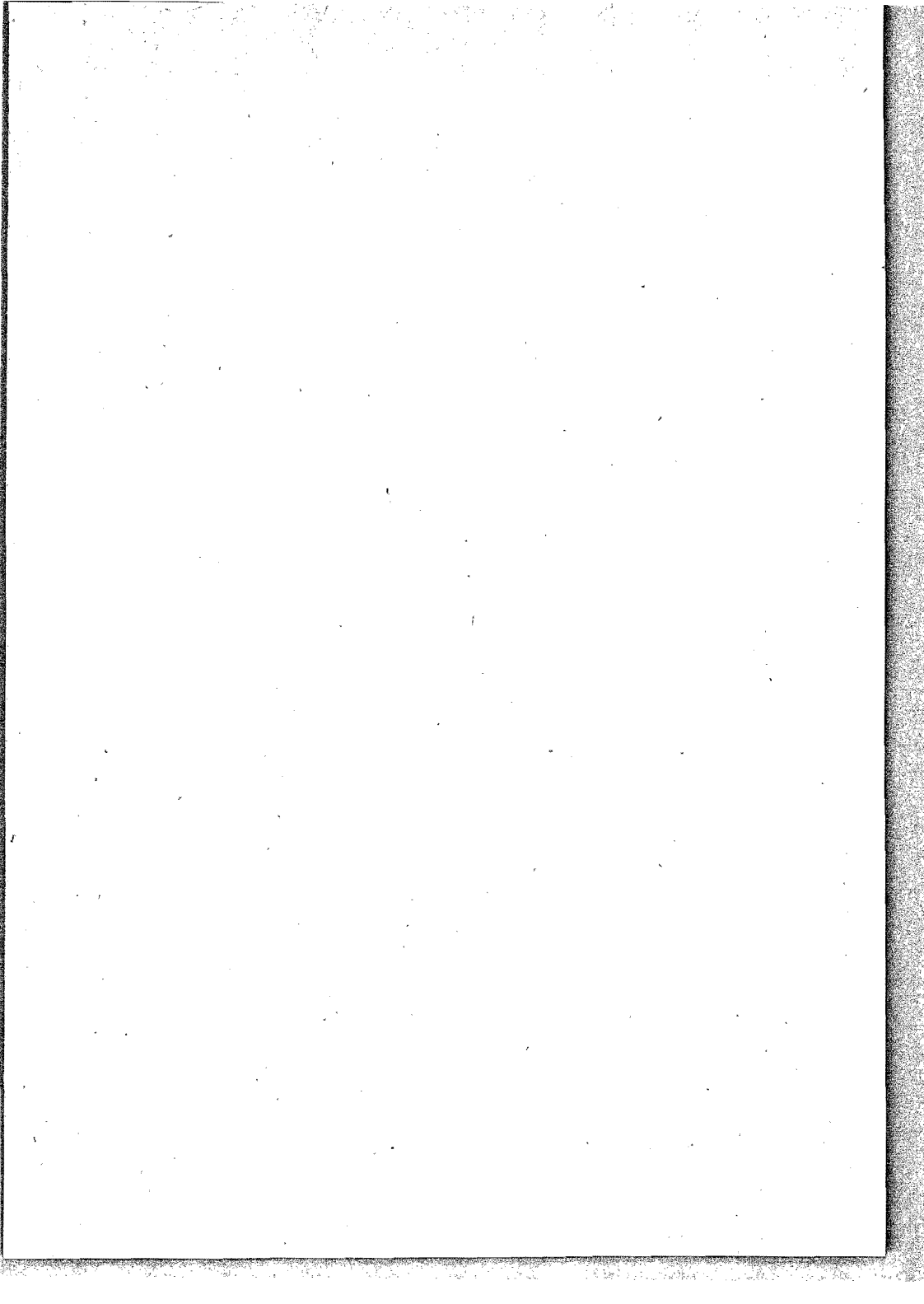
CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

Birth of Inigo of Loyola	1491	
	1492	Capture of Grenada Discovery of America
Page at Arevalo	1506	Construction of St. Peter's, Rome
	1509	Birth of Calvin
	1513	Leo X, Pope
"Terrible crimes" at Azpeitia	1515	Advent of Francis I; Marignan
In the service of the viceroy of Navarre	1519	Charles V, Emperor
	1520	Luther's break with Rome
Wounded at the siege of Pamplona	1521	The Turks at Belgrade
Time at Montserrat and Manresa	1522	
Pilgrimage to Jerusalem	1523	
Studies in Spain	1524	Pizzare among the Incas
Arrival at Paris	1528	Verrazzano off the coasts of America
The vow of the first companions at Montmartre	1534	Paul III, Pope
Inigo leaves Paris	1535	
Ordination of the companions at Venice; Arrival of the companions in Rome	1537	War between Venice and the Turks
Deliberation of the companions	1539	
Départure of Francis Xavier Approval of the Society of Jesus	1540	

Ignatius elected Superior General of the Society	1541	
	1545	Opening of the Council of Trent
	1546	Death of Luther
Paul III approves the Exercises	1548	
Francis Xavier in Japan	1549	
Confirmation of the Society	1550	Julius III, Pope
Death of Francis Xavier	1552	
	1555	Marcel II, Paul IV, Popes
Death of Ignatius (July 31)	1556	Abdication of Charles V

FIRST PART:

A MAN TO SERVE CHRIST



Monday, May 20, 1521

Inigo had just arrived in the citadel of Pamplona with some reinforcements for Miguel de Herrera, commander of the garrison. That morning, the French troops, led by André de Foix, had entered the town. It was but a brief episode in the struggle between Francis I and Charles V, which history would never have recorded had it not been for what befell Ignatius...

Herrera was contemplating surrendering. Inigo wanted to save honour. There was a brief discussion; Inigo won. Before mounting the ramparts, he confessed his sins to a companion in arms, according to a medieval custom, since there was no priest in the fortress.

After six hours of fighting, a cannon-ball broke Inigo's right leg, below the knee. The left leg was also wounded. He fell; immediately the battle was over.

Treated with great courtesy, if not competence, by the French - Ignatius tells us so himself - he was cared for, where he had fallen, for 15 days. Then he was taken on a litter, up hill and down dale, to Loyola (about 100 kilometers away). Once more he was in the hands of the doctors and the surgeons. The leg had to be broken a second time - a "butchery", he called it, though all he did was clench his fists.

He was very sick. On June 24, he was advised to receive the last sacraments. On the 28th he was considered lost. But at dawn on the feast of Saints Peter and Paul, he felt better; soon he would be out of danger.

On the 30th, Pamplona was retaken by the Spanish.

Too late for Inigo!

II. THE DREAMS OF LOYOLA

If such a summon of an earthly king to his subjects deserves our attention, how much more worthy of consideration is Christ our Lord, the eternal King, before whom is assembled the whole world. To all His summons goes forth...

Exercises, n.95

"I saw you when you were under the fig-tree", Jesus said to Nathaniel.

But what was Nathaniel doing, then, under the fig-tree? The simplest explanation is perhaps the best. If it is midday, and it is hot, and you come across the inviting shade of a fig-tree, isn't the obvious thing to do to accept the invitation and take a nap?... Most likely Nathaniel was dreaming. And as he was a passionately fierce Israelite, he was dreaming about his country and about the person who would rise up one day to liberate it, when Philip came to shake him: "Come quickly! I have found him!"

Something similar happened to Inigo. His condition improved so much that he demanded a new operation - aesthetic surgery, this time - to cut off a bone that was sticking out and to stretch the leg that had grown somewhat shorter. What would he not do to become once again a very attractive young man?

TO PASS THE TIME

Towards the month of September, we find him convalescing. There comes a moment, in this sort of experience, when all one can do is wait. The person feels well, but is bored. He often looks in the direction of the window like a bird in a cage. Then the least thought, the least breath of wind, a bunch of flowers that catches his eye... and his spirit soars. Inigo listened to the singing of the women as they sorted out the lentils in the courtyard below; further away, to an exchange between a farmer and his bullocks... Through the casement window of his room,

he looked at the trees in the orchard ripe with fruit, and the summer tints fading on the slopes of Mt. Isarraitz. Night drew on - it is not so easy to get to sleep when one cannot move around - and he turned his eyes to heaven and the stars...

There was also the question of reading. He had no great desire for serious books; what he needed was to escape. The novels piled up on his bedside table... Inigo asked his sister-in-law, Madeleine, to get him the fabled stories of Amadis and Tristan, the books of chivalry that are ready made for day-dreaming. But this kind of book was not to be found in such a serious house. And the pious Madeleine returned with a pile of large works that she found (heaven knows where!) - the Life of Christ, in four volumes, and The Golden Legend. For want of something better to read...

ALTERNATING DREAMS

THE LIFE OF CHRIST, by Ludolphe the Carthusian, is not just a simple account drawn from the Gospel and the Apocryphal writings; it is also - and especially - a book of spirituality. As for the Golden Legend, it is a symphony of quotations and stories drawn from the lives of the saints, all making the same point - to do great things, like Christ, for the love of God.

Contrary to expectations, Ignatius became quite involved. To do great things - was not that his own dream?... But here things got all mixed up! One moment the temporal king, the next moment the eternal King. One moment Our Lady, the next moment another lady. One dream was replaced by another.

The other lady certainly haunted his thoughts. Just like the novels of chivalry, which he did miss a little. He saw himself galloping over the countryside to join her, wiping out her enemies. He even tried to compose a madrigal. Because, he said, "the lady was not from the ordinary nobility; she was neither a countess, nor a duchess, but her condition was even more elevated". The Infanta of Castille, perhaps?... And so he gave his imagination free rein for two, three or four hours at a time.

Then he would take up the book and soon put it down as a new dream would replace the old one:

-- St. Dominic did that - well, I can do that too. St. Francis did this - well, I can do this too!

Then he would see himself as a hermit in the desert, dressed in sacking, living off wild herbs; or barefoot on the way to Jerusalem; or alone in a cave, giving himself over to the most frightful penances. Just like the saints. For the love of God.

Love?... The lady was not from the ordinary nobility, neither a countess nor a duchess... And so he would go back and forth until he fell asleep.

GOD GIVES JOY

Reading Ignatius' Autobiography, it is quite obvious that the imagination is his dominant faculty. "The fool of the house", perhaps, but without this grain of folly, would anyone have a history? However, these alternating dreams raised a question for him:

When he was thinking of those things of the world, he took much delight in them, but afterwards, when he was tired and put them aside, he found himself dry and dissatisfied. But when he thought of going to Jerusalem barefoot, and of eating nothing but plain vegetables and of practising all the other rigours that he saw in the saints, not only was he consoled when he had these thoughts, but even after putting them aside he remained satisfied and joyful. (Autobiography, n.8)

For the moment, just a simple observation, but actually the starting point for one of the most fundamental traits of Ignatian spirituality - the experience of discernment which sifts our imagination and feelings, not to curb them, but to draw out the best part.

He was somewhat sad after some thoughts, rather joyful after others. How did that happen? As yet he was not yet capable of answering the question, but naturally he

inclined towards joy. Soon, as these experiences repeated themselves and forced him to sift them subsequently, he came to find the answer. It was then, in the face of the kill-joys and sour-pusses of religion, in the face of those who cultivated gloomy looks, and those who saw nothing in a spiritual adventure except a bleak pilgrimage in a valley of tears, in the face of all mourners in literature and art that western christianity had produced - it was then that he dared to proclaim this good news:

It is characteristic of God and His Angels, when they act upon the soul, to give true happiness and spiritual joy, and to banish all the sadness and disturbances which are caused by the enemy. It is characteristic of the evil one to fight against such happiness and consolation... (Exercises, n.329)

This first criteria of "the discernment of spirits" is simple, clear and to the point. Perhaps very much so, for the enemy knows the subtleties that need to be raised at the appropriate time. But the process had begun.

THE CHOICE OF THE PENITENT

Between the temporal king and the eternal King, between the service of a high lady and of Our Lady, between the world and God, Inigo made a definitive choice, preferring joy to sadness. But soon he measured the distance to be crossed between the dream and the reality! A cannonball does not wipe out the history of a person's life! His past came to mind, no longer under the beguiling colours of glory and love, but in the light of God: the past of a sinner in a world of sin. And so his past lay before him, like a road to travel over so that he rejoin Christ and the saints. Now he knew that he could not speed over the stages nor skimp the time needed for repentance and conversion. So his way would be the way of a penitent. Among other ideas, the prospect of a pilgrimage came more and more to the fore.

Having taken his decision, the destructive dreams vanished. One night he saw an image of Our lady with the Infant Jesus.

From this sight he received for a considerable time very great consolation, and he was left with such loathing for his whole past life and especially for the things of the flesh, that it seemed to him that his spirit was rid of all the images that had been printed on it. (Autobiography, n.10)

There we have the first objective sign of Inigo's conversion; something has happened. It was the moment for taking stock of the situation.

Serious minded people would doubtless be amazed that such important decisions affecting a man's whole life should be based on dreams, imagination, feelings. To go on like that is surely not being serious. But if we say that, we also have to admit that God Himself is not really serious since, from Jacob to Joseph, from the boy Samuel to the Magi, from Jeremiah to the apostles Peter and Paul, there are numberless occasions when God has spoken to His friends through "dreams"... For this way is still the most simple one that God has chosen to make us understand that His plans do not come from our initiative, and are much greater than our assessment of what is real, even of what is possible! The important thing is to interpret the dreams. And that is also one of God's gifts...

It would seem that four stages have marked Inigo's stay at Loyola:

- 1) He was wholly captured by Christ and the saints. There and then, the image of Jesus that presented itself to him was that of a commanding leader who invites people to his service - similar to the sort of fascination that a young page arriving at the court of Arevalo must have experienced.
- 2) He was wholly captivated by the heroic aspect of this service - to do great things, and difficult things, to be distinguished with regard to this new king, like the knight who wants to accomplish great feats of arms.
- 3) In giving free rein to his imagination, he grew aware of the need to make a choice. It was impossible to pursue two dreams at the same time - to take up following Christ or to win the favours of a lady. This was a first experience of spiritual discernment.
- 4) But again, it was impossible to follow Christ without tending to be like Him. Conversion is not a "flash of

lightning". The enlightenment that came at Loyola mainly highlighted the dark side of his life. The way that he would follow would be the way of a penitent, but joyfully, to accomplish great things, to make himself worthy of serving Jesus Christ.

The period of convalescence was not only a time for dreams, but also for a plan that began to take shape.

IN THE SPRING-TIME

The last weeks would be a recapitulation of all that had taken place. He chose some very elegant sheets of paper, and carefully, like an expert copyist or even someone illuminating a manuscript, he copied out the main passages of what he had read - the words of Jesus in red, and the words of Our Lady in blue. During the rest of the time he prayed, not looking for anything new, simply coming back to the words he had understood, to savour them more deeply, to let them sink into his heart. He was just like a lover who spends the day after an 'encounter', thinking of all the wonderful things that have taken place. The special time for his prayer was the night time, looking up at the heavens and the stars: "I did it often, and for long periods, because this sight filled me with a great zest to serve Our Lord".

However, since all was going smoothly, now was the time to put his plan into operation. First of all, Jerusalem, that much was certain. And then? He did not know. Perhaps the Carthusians? Or a wandering life? He would see. The main thing was to get going. He had to indulge in a little subterfuge as Martin, the elder brother, suspected something he did not quite approve of... Was his Inigo going to become a missionary?

But who could hold back now when he heard the call of the Beloved:

... winter is past, the rains are over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth,
The season of glad songs has come,
The cooing of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.
Come then... come!

(Song of Songs 2,10-14)

It was the beginning of spring.

March 25, 1522

It is midnight. In the choir of the Church, the monks advance in procession to chant Matins for the feast of the Annunciation. We are at Montserrat, in the Benedictine monastery which clings to the sides of a majestic mountain projecting its sharp ridges against the sky of Catalonia.

Behind the grill there is one man mixed in with the crowd of pilgrims. His eyes gleam with the light reflected from the lamps that adorn the sanctuary. He gazes at the tranquil face of the wonderful romanesque statue of the Virgin, in painted wood. It is Inigo of Loyola. He is a little stiff in the sack-cloth he has just begun to wear. Immediately before he has hung up his sword and dagger as a votive offering.

These last days he has travelled the six hundred kilo meters from Loyola to Montserrat - a necessary stage on his journey to Barcelona where he must embark for Jerusalem, via Rome and Venice. He has arrived at the monastery on the evening of March 21st. For three days, with the help of a French monk, Jean Chanon, he has prepared his confession, for the sins of his life. He has received absolution yesterday and, for the first time, has spoken of his secret desire.

As the night wears on, the new 'knight', sometimes standing, sometimes kneeling, carries out his 'vigil of arms'. Before dawn, during the first Mass of the Annunciation, he receives the Body of Christ. At day-break, he leaves the monastery and, in great peace, he comes down from the mountain.

He does not take the road to Barcelona, towards the east, but turns north. To avoid being recognised? That is what he says, but this remark applies rather to when he first set out. To have a short break before his long voyage? On account of the plague that was raging in Barcelona? Most likely because Jean Chanon has advised him to prepare for his pilgrimage by some days of retreat, close to Montserrat, in a village where he would be welcomed either in the hospital, or in the convent of the Dominicans.

The village is called Manresa.

III. WHAT IS THIS NEW LIFE ?

Imagine you see the chief of all the enemy; consider how he summons innumerable demons, and scatters them throughout the whole world, to lay snares for men and bind them in chains.

Consider Christ our Lord, standing in a lowly place, beautiful and attractive. Consider how He chooses so many persons, apostles, disciples, and sends them throughout the whole world to seek to help all.

Exercises, nos. 140-145

We have to gloss over many things if we want to imagine, today, the Manresa Ignatius would speak about, a long time afterwards, in connection with all his decisions: "I am referring to Manresa..." However, the sharp ridges of Montserrat, in the distance, have not changed, nor, once we move into the country, have the banks of the Cardoner, with its over-hanging grottos.

The person who has just knocked on the door of the hospital of St. Lucy, the evening of March 25, 1522, is he already Saint Ignatius of Loyola? From a distance of thirty years, here is what he has to say about himself:

On the way something happened to him which it would be well to record, so one may understand how Our Lord dealt with this soul, which was still blind, though greatly desirous of serving him as far as his knowledge went. Thus, he decided to do great penances, no longer with an eye to satisfying for his sins so much as to please and gratify God. So when it occurred to him to do some penance that the saints practised, he determined to do the same and even more.

From these thoughts he derived all his consolation, not looking at any interior thing, nor knowing what humility was or charity or patience; or the discre-

tion that regulates and measures these virtues. His whole intention was to do such great external works because the saints had done so for the glory of God, without considering any more particular detail. (Autobiography, n.14)

This judgment is too nuanced to be attributed to any kind of false humility. Ignatius recognised his deep desires for sanctity and, especially, that he was being led by Christ. But he noted two important things: first of all, his blindness of soul, not realising that the "great exterior works" of the saints were only spontaneous expressions, so to speak, of their interior virtues - "humility, charity and patience". When these virtues are lacking, there is a great risk that the imitation of the saints degenerates in simply aping them and that the beginner in the spiritual life may be caught up in vainglory which leads to spiritual pride. And secondly, he noted his lack of "discretion", or discernment, and the account of his Autobiography gives several instances of this lack.

INDISCRETIONS

For example, there was the story of the Moor he had met while he was riding to Montserrat. After a heated discussion about the Virgin Mary, Inigo left the final decision to the mule. If it took the wide road, he would pursue the infidel and finish him off, or, if it took the narrow road, he would let him go in peace. It was Our Lord's wish, he tells us, that the mule should take the narrow road of mercy towards the poor man. So much the better for him! But there were other criteria for coming to this decision...

Also, was there not something rather childish about his dramatic vigil at Montserrat? Elsewhere he admits that he had taken the example from Amadis de Gaule... Moreover, granted that it was praiseworthy for him to have given his clothes to a beggar, he might have suspected that the poor man would fall into the hands of the police - which, in fact, did happen - and that he would be accused of having stolen them.

At Manresa, he was to let his hair and fingernails grow long, because previously he had cared about them - as though holiness and cleanliness could not go well together. He would refuse meat and wine, he would go for eight days without taking anything and, sure enough, he would fall ill.

So much for the indiscretions. As for the temptation to vainglory; that was quite subtle.

THE TAIL OF THE SERPENT

The first part of Inigo's stay at Manresa, from March to July, was a period of calm. Each morning he would beg his food, assist at the liturgy in the Cathedral - Mass, vespers and compline; and the rest of the time he prayed or talked with spiritual persons. He went to confession and communion every Sunday, a rare event in those days. His favourite reading was the account of the Passion. We can picture him, as he recalls his confession at Montserrat, standing at the foot of the Cross and asking his Lord questions, in a very familiar way, "as one friend talks to another" (Exercises, n.54):

-- My Creator, how is it that you became man? How have you passed from eternal life to death here in time, so as to die for my sins? And as for myself, what have I done for Christ? What should I do for Christ? (Exercises, n.53).

Nevertheless, at other times, some unusual things happened:

While in this hospice it often happened that in broad daylight he saw something in the air near him. It gave him great consolation because it was very beautiful - remarkably so. He could not discern very well the kind of thing it was, but in a way it seemed to him to have the form of a serpent with many things that shone like eyes, though they were not. He found great pleasure and consolation in seeing this thing, and the oftener he saw it the more his consolation grew. When it disappeared, he was displeased. (Autobiography, n.19)

Hallucination of someone who is not eating properly? It would not seem so, for the image was to return even when Inigo had stopped fasting. What is important is the relationship between this "thing" and his state of soul: something that shone, with things like eyes, and gave him consolation.

At another time, a thought connected with this vision, though distinct from it, came to him:

-- How will you be able to sustain this sort of life for the next seventy years that lie in front of you?

This time he gave as good as he got:

-- Oh! you miserable thing! Can you promise me even one hour of living?

In other words, when the temptation was clear and he felt himself on the verge of being discouraged, Inigo did not forget the lesson of Loyola - he reacted quickly and effectively. But he would learn in the days to come that the "enemy" was able to transform himself into "an angel of light" initially "suggesting thoughts that are suited to a devout soul, and ending by suggesting his own". "We must carefully observe the whole course of our thoughts", for it is only at the end of our course of thoughts that "the enemy of our human nature can be detected and recognised by his trail of evil" (Exercises, nos.332-334).

This disguised form of things that shine like eyes - is it not the projection of a very common human sentiment? "You are a fine chap... People look up to you. You are brilliant... You are admired..." Later, still at Manresa, when Inigo, actually quite sick, thought he was dying, a thought came to him, saying in effect - "You are a just man". Such is the movement from vanity to the terrible temptation of pride. But, at this stage, he knew how to recognise the origin of the beguiling vision.

-- For the love of God, he said to the people who came to visit him after this moment of alarm, if ever again you see me at the point of death, I beg you to shout at me: "Sinner"!

But for the moment, things were still not quite so clear. He noted, with a certain anxiety, the changes that were taking place within himself towards the middle of summer: sometimes an inner emptiness, a kind of dreariness that dissipated his taste for prayer; at other times, it was as though someone had lifted the mantle of sadness from his shoulders. Now, he was in no way in control of these changes; he no longer had control of his dreams. It seemed to him that he depended from Another...

-- What is this new life that we are now beginning?

Terror gripped him at the realisation that he no longer belonged to himself.

THE LIAR AND THE MURDERER

Terror and resistance appeared alongside his great desires. "When you were young...you walked where you liked ... somebody else will take you where you would rather not go", Jesus said to Peter (John 21,18-19). And John adds: "In these words, he indicated the kind of death by which Peter would give glory to God".

Inigo did not yet know the kind of death he had to pass through. He wanted to give glory to God, but by the means that he intended to choose. And so God, for a time, was to leave him to his own resources, until he understood that the power of God unfolds through human weakness.

From July to October, in a cell in the convent of the Dominicans, he passed through a terrible depression. "Darkness of soul, turmoil of spirit, inclination to what is low and earthly, restlessness rising from many disturbances and temptations which lead to want of faith, want of hope, want of love," he would write in his Spiritual Exercises (317). Such is desolation. In the present case, the crisis was triggered off by scruples.

At Montserrat, Inigo had made a careful and comprehensive confession. We can imagine him recalling all the sins of his life, year by year, endeavouring to recall the places and circumstances, the castle and its surroundings at Loyola, the court at Arevalo, that of Najera; the relationships he had enjoyed, his companions when he was

younger who had shared his pleasures; the different occupations he had taken up... (Exercises, n.56)

But now the "father of lies" came again to tempt him, starting from very basic truths. After the sin of the angels and the sin of Adam, one mortal sin, committed by anyone, was sufficient for that person to end up in hell... And what if he were the person who had forgotten all about such a sin?...

All at once he felt himself cut off - cut off from God and all creation. Alone, he no longer mattered.

-- Who am I, in comparison with all men and women? And who are all men and women in comparison with all the angels and saints in paradise? And what is all creation in comparison with God? As for me, left to myself, what am I capable of? Corruption, shabbiness... I am like an ulcer, a source of revolting poison... I wanted to be united with God, and now look at me - I am as far away from Him as ignorance is from wisdom, weakness is from strength, iniquity is from justice, depravity is from goodness... (cf. Exercises, n.58)

In this total confusion, he had the intuition that he should not go back on his former resolution. He had to face up to the situation. He increased his penances, he fasted a whole week, he persevered in his prayer, he consulted his confessor. Nothing changed. The only taste in his mouth was the taste of death.

The madness of self-destruction is the final temptation thrown up by him who is a "murderer from the beginning". A person who ends up in hell... Inigo heard the howling of the damned. In his cell was a gaping hole; he could not even see its bottom. He would throw himself down it...

-- No, Lord, I will do nothing to offend you!

At the edge of the abyss, this was the only thread his fidelity could cling to. Left to himself, he could do no more - like someone mortally wounded, left on the battle-field. He surrendered:

-- Help me, Lord, since I find no remedy from people nor from any creature. If I thought I was supposed to find

it, no labour would be too great for me. Show me, Lord, where to discover it. Even if I had to follow a little dog to get the remedy from it, I would do it.

And then it was, he tells us, that "the Lord wished me to come to my senses, as though from a dream".

Inigo had just discovered the depths of humility; he cried out in admiration, with profound love...

-- I am alive! I exist! The angels have prayed for me, the saints have prayed for me. I am not dead, I have not been thrown into hell, I have continued to exist through the services of the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, fruits, birds, fish, animals.. The tale of creation goes on in spite of the sin of man. Inigo has been reconciled (cf. Exercises, n.60).

Later, in the Spiritual Exercises, he would take up again the challenging meditations of this period. Not to make others pass through the same trials he had experienced, but so that they would learn anew to love humbly, humanly: "...if because of my faults I forget the love of the eternal Lord, at least the fear of these punishments will keep me from falling into sin" (Exercises, n.65). That is why all these meditations end in an act of thanksgiving - so that the sin may be known within the tenderness and mercy of our Creator and Lord.

LIKE A SCHOOLMASTER

During the last months of his stay at Manresa, Inigo opened himself up to being enlightened by God "who treated him... just as a schoolmaster treats a child whom he is teaching" (Autobiography, n.27). It was a time of grace when "the Creator and Lord in person communicates Himself to the devout soul in quest of the divine will, inflames it with His love and praise, and disposes it for the way in which it can better serve God in the future" (Exercises, n.15).

What was the nature of these communications? In speaking of them, Ignatius often used the word "see", which is natural enough when it is a question of light. However, they were not visions or "apparitions". When he said "I saw", that means - "I understood, I grasped",

though these verbs do not convey the experience, either; intuitions, if you like, but carrying a certitude that placed them beyond doubt. Sometimes they were accompanied by very stark images. But the important thing is what he "saw" which turned him into "another man with another mind" (Autobiography, n.30), and gave birth to the little book of the Spiritual Exercises.

LOVE COMMUNICATES ITSELF

First of all, there was his experience of the most Holy Trinity, like "three keys of an organ", each giving its note and the three forming a perfect harmony. He was caught in prayer on the steps of the monastery of St. Dominic (which perhaps explains the relation with the three musical keys)... The feeling was so intense that he could not control himself. A procession was going out of the monastery; he followed it mechanically, unable to hold back his tears. The feeling was so strong that, all his life, he was to experience deep devotion every time he prayed to the Holy Trinity (Autobiography, n.28).

This was a determining experience for him. This mystery, so easily impoverished by speculation, became for Ignatius, the source of his whole spiritual life - the point from which everything came and to which it returned, in a never-ending movement, a never-ending communication. Anyone who would habitually contemplate this mystery would be incapable of settling down into self-satisfaction. To name the mystery, Ignatius would say "Majestas divina" - which the word "majesty" does not quite capture. It is the God who is "always greater", the One to whom, in prayer and in action, the "always more" (*magis*) is addressed. But this "*magis*" is no longer on the level of an ascetical performance; it expresses the whole way of being of someone who is caught up and carried away in the divine activity, so that, from this time on, the divine activity is master of what such a person does.

Once the manner in which God had created the world was presented to his understanding with great spiritual joy. He seemed to see something white; from which some rays were coming, and God made light from this (Autobiography, n.29).

It is characteristic of love to act and to communicate itself. And so Ignatius sees "how God works and labours... in all creatures upon the face of the earth"; and all created things descend "from above as the rays of light descend from the sun, and as the waters flow from their fountains..." (Exercises, nos.236-237). This contemplation will lead him to "see God in all things", to become a "contemplative in action" which characterises the person of Ignatian spirituality. It will lead him to respect things and persons. They tell the story that every time he would meet a brother in the house at Rome, a smile would light up his whole face, to such an extent that he had to watch this automatic reaction which could be somewhat disconcerting to those who did not know the reason. Likewise, he would say to the novices that they should show people the respect due to them "in such a manner that by observing one another they grow in devotion and praise God our Lord, whom each one should endeavour to recognise in his neighbour as in His image" (Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, n.250).

He saw the same kind of image - something white, from which rays were coming - one day during mass, at the elevation. The Body of Christ in the Eucharist would not be an inert presence for him, but the luminous centre of the world in a state of permanent creation (Autobiography, n.29).

As a matter of fact, the humanity of Christ, as an image of God, gives a perfect likeness. While still at Manresa, Ignatius said he saw the humanity of Christ "often and for a long time...with interior eyes..." (Autobiography, n.29). His devotion to Christ does not date from there; it was rooted in his Spanish faith and it came to the fore during his convalescence. But the visions of Manresa placed the humanity of Christ more fittingly within the whole context of creation. Like every created reality, it has come forth from God to return to Him. But in it, the Son has become man, invested with a mission: Jesus Christ is the One Sent from the Father.

The contemplation of the mysteries of the life of Christ, as they are arranged in the Exercises, begins with the moment when the Son offers Himself to His Father and

becomes involved in the world to save men and women through snatching them from the powers of evil and inviting them to follow Him. And so since Christ, to accomplish this mission, calls disciples, to be like Christ - for Ignatius - would no longer consist in choosing this or that example of the saints as he pleased, but rather in responding to the call of Christ, to be sent, in his turn, as Christ had been sent, and to offer himself unconditionally for the task, as Christ had offered Himself for the salvation of the world.

Through these revelations on the Trinity, creation, the Eucharist and the humanity of Christ, the "school-master" had almost finished His teaching and the disciple had the audacity to say:

These things he saw strengthened him then and always gave him such strength in his faith that he has often thought to himself: if there were no Scriptures to teach us these matters of faith, he would be resolved to die for them, solely because of what he had seen (Autobiography, n.29).

ALONG THE BANKS OF THE CARDONER

What yet remained was to bring all these experiences together. And he was given this grace, too, through the enlightenment he received beside the Cardoner river. Inigo was going to the little church of St. Paul the Hermit. After having walked along in prayer for some time, he sat down, looking at the waters of the river which flowed below him. And there -

the eyes of his understanding began to be opened; not that he saw any vision, but he understood and learnt many things, both spiritual matters and matters of faith and of scholarship, and this with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him. The details that he understood then, though there were many, cannot be stated, but only that he experienced a great clarity in his understanding. This was such that in the whole course of his life, after completing 62 years, even if he gathered up all the various

helps he may have had from God and all the various things he has known, even adding them all together, he does not think he had got as much as at that one time. This left his understanding so very enlightened that he felt as if he were another man with another mind (Autobiography, n.30).

There is no need to believe that Inigo suddenly became a walking encyclopedia. Doubtless what he grasped in this "overall view" encompassing the realities of "the spiritual life, faith and scholarship" was the relation between the mysteries of Faith (the Trinity, creation, the Eucharist, the Incarnation) and where his present world, in that first quarter of the 16th century, was going - the place of man in the universe and the meaning of his own existence in creation which is directed to God. Speaking for myself, even if I am mistaken, I like to see the enlightenment experienced at the Cardoner in the "Principle and Foundation" of the Exercises, though expressed in a different style and language.

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. The other things on the face of the earth are created for man to help him in attaining the end for which he is created.

Hence, man is to make use of them in as far as they help him in the attainment of his end, and he must rid himself of them in as far as they prove a hindrance to him.

Therefore, we must make ourselves indifferent to all created things, as far as we are allowed free choice and are not under any prohibition. Consequently, as far as we are concerned, we should not prefer health to sickness, riches to poverty, honour to dishonour, a long life to a short life. The same holds for all other things.

Our one desire and choice should be what is more conducive to the end for which we are created. (Exercises, n.23)

Everything is summoned, everything is directed, not in a static order where each thing remains in its own place, but within the movement that bears creation up and on. "Christ at the head", followed by the throng of people who are interiorly free in the midst of all created things.

So my life has a meaning. And I will pass along, surrounded by the marvels of creation, not like some frivolous person who lightly takes what comes his way, only to see it wither in his hands, but knowing where I am going and where the world is going. If I have an attitude of 'indifference', that is not because I am insensitive to the beauty of the world, to human potential, to the joys of living. Rather it is because I do not yet know what will lead me more effectively to what God expects of me. Perhaps it may be some gloomy office, or the lack of resources for what I would like to accomplish, or some infirmity of mind or body, or a few years of living to accomplish the work of a century. I only know one thing - that I must enter into the way Christ has opened up for the liberation of the world. I only want one thing - to be the servant of such a wonderful design.

Perhaps that is what Inigo was thinking, as he gave thanks to God at the foot of a cross that was nearby.

THE NEW MAN

During this period of "enlightenment", a certain number of changes occurred in Inigo's behaviour, not very noticeable, but still significant.

From this time on he spent a good deal of time in talking to people. Was not this time wasted that could have been spent with the Lord? Or at least in catching up on his sleep?... As though by chance, it was just as he was going to sleep that the most lofty thoughts came to him... "...he began to doubt... whether that enlightenment came from a good spirit. He concluded that it would be better to ignore it and to sleep for the allotted time. And so he did" (Autobiography, n.26).

There was another change regarding his food. In spite of the objections of his confessor, he was certain that he should start eating meat again... Then, his appearance - "...after he began to be consoled by God, and saw the fruit which he bore in dealing with souls, he gave up those extremes he had formerly practised, and now he cut his nails and his hair" (Autobiography, n.29). Finally, his health - he was prepared to dress better.

Rather a meagre balance-sheet? We should rather look at the reasons behind these changes, and the way Inigo went about making his decisions. Two considerations led up to the decisions - consolation in prayer and the apostolic fruit of his conversations.

Personal inspiration is not always reliable and, since the "visions" of the "serpent", Inigo knew that not every consolation necessarily came from God. Personal discernment was necessary and also the discernment of others - in this case, the confessor. But it was Inigo who was inspired and it was himself, in the last resort, who decided to eat meat. Whatever may be the order of the steps taken, we always find four elements in the process of an Ignatian decision: the inspiration, personal discernment, verification by the Church or its confirmation, and the decision. The spirit of obedience does not turn people into robots, even if the quest is never on one's own, and the decision can be reversed.

But just as important was the apostolic motivation for the changes. Here we see more clearly still "the new man" that Inigo became at Manresa: a man identified with the design of God which Christ carries out in the Church. The illuminations he received converge on this point. This is also the conclusion he came to at the end of his stay:

At this time there was a long period during which he was very eager to converse on spiritual matters and to find persons who could deal with them. Meanwhile, the time was approaching when he planned to set out for Jerusalem. (Autobiography, n.34)

He no longer considered the solitude of the Carthusians. He wanted to help others as much as he wanted to be

helped himself. Apostolate and companionship - this was the seed from which would grow the idea of the Society of Jesus. He could not be otherwise after receiving the revelation of the love of the Trinity continuously communicated to the whole of creation, and after contemplating Jesus Christ in the Gospel and the Eucharist. Moreover, he had heard Christ's call and seen humanity as a body of people in movement towards the Father; and he had seen the world as it was before it was wrested from the enemy, for Christ and with Him.

- However, he set out alone, to practise - as he said - "faith, hope and charity". On the little romanesque bridge by which he had entered Manresa, he took leave of his friends, on February 18th, 1523...

Towards the sea.

Friday, September 4, 1523

The group of pilgrims, among whom is numbered Inigo, are in sight of Jerusalem. They have reached Jaffa on the 24th of August, but for administrative reasons, they have been able to leave the boat only on the 31st. The following day, accompanied by a Turkish escort and a Franciscan father, they have set out mounted on small asses.

That morning a Spaniard named Diego Manes stops the convoy:

-- Soon we will arrive at the spot from where we will be able to see the Holy City. To prepare ourselves - to still our minds and to open our hearts - I suggest we go the rest of the way in silence.

Soon they see the cross which precedes the procession of the monks coming to welcome them. They dismount.

And here is Jerusalem, shining in the sun! They are filled with joy and their hearts are light.

For the pilgrim Inigo, the return trip between Barcelona and Jerusalem would last almost eleven months. He embarked on March 12th, and before arriving at Gaeta, he had already endured a tempest for five days. The plague was raging in Italy, and the ports and the towns were closed. He arrived in Rome, alone, on Palm Sunday, received the Pope's blessing and set out for Venice on April 7th. He stayed several weeks in Venice, looking for a ship. Finally he was able to embark for Cyprus on July 14th.

He stayed only twenty days in Jerusalem; he was back in Barcelona by mid-February, 1524.

In the "Autobiography", the account of the voyage takes two chapters out of ten, as if Ignatius really enjoyed talking about it - the memories are extremely precise, there is a mixture of the comic and the tragic, and throughout the tale, there is an element of youthful impetuosity.

Though converted, Inigo was still a man!

IV. THE HUMANITY OF JESUS CHRIST

...seeing in imagination the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Consider its length, its breadth; whether level, or through valleys and over hills. Observe also the place or cave where Christ is born; whether big or little; whether high or low; and how it is arranged.

...seeing the persons, namely, our Lady, St. Joseph, the maid, and the Child Jesus after His birth. I will make myself a poor little unworthy slave, and as though present, look upon them, contemplate them, and serve them in their needs with all possible homage and reverence.

...see and consider what they are doing, for example, making the journey and labouring that our Lord might be born in extreme poverty, and that after many labours, after hunger, thirst, heat, and cold, after insults and outrages, He might die on the cross, and all this for me.

Exercises, nos. 112-116

Perhaps Inigo carried in his pilgrim's satchel the text of the contemplation on the Nativity that we find in the Spiritual Exercises. He was to experience intensely what he had read in *The Life of Christ*, and the plan he had formed at Loyola and meditated over at Manresa.

But it was less as a penitent than as a companion that he had undertaken the voyage. For he had discovered that, to be associated with Christ sent on mission, he had to be like Him who called him, "...to labour with Him, that by following Him in suffering, he might follow Him in glory" (Exercises, n. 95). Hence his resolution:

His firm intention was to remain in Jerusalem, continually visiting those holy places; and in addition to this vocation, he also planned to help souls. (Autobiography, n. 45)

The plan was not to be realised. But during the whole voyage, nothing interfered with his program for contemplating the mystery of the Nativity - hunger, thirst, heat and cold, injustices and insults... And the words of St. Paul could well complete the story: "... in danger from rivers and in danger from brigands... in danger in the towns, danger at sea and danger from so-called brothers..." (2 Cor 11,26). But, above all, there was the joy of not being treated better than his Lord.

POVERTY AS HOPE

It is impossible to recount, in detail, the exciting adventures of the voyage: the reader is recommended to read for himself the account Ignatius gives in his *Autobiography*. We will content ourselves with simply mentioning some aspects which marked Inigo's desire to be like Jesus Christ "poor and humble".

In his memoirs, money figures very prominently. He seems to have been most careful not to acquire any, and to get rid of it when he had some! When the boat left the port at Barcelona, five little coins shone in the sun on a bench beside the sea. Inigo was already extremely put out at being obliged to take some provisions with him, and so he left the coins there, quite deliberately. He would have nothing more "than the hope he placed in God".

In vain was he repeatedly told that it was impossible to go to Jerusalem without money; he stuck to his position - "Not a penny!" On each occasion that he was given an amount of money, he could not wait to distribute it to the poor. During the return voyage to Cyprus, he was almost left behind. The captain of the ship refused to take someone on board who had no money.

-- But he is a saint! said Inigo's friends.

-- Well, if he is a saint, he should be able to make the crossing like St. James!

Eventually it was not the angels who provided transport as happened (according to the legend) to the body of the patron saint of Spain, but a more obliging captain...

As it turned out, Inigo made many friends whom he would meet up with again as he passed more than once through the same places. At Venice, where it was very cold, he was given a piece of cloth that he wrapped around his delicate stomach, and a handful of silver coins of Julius II. But at Ferrara, a beggar asked him for money. He gave him a small coin worth several sous. Naturally, a second one came along; he gave him a larger amount. A third one came - he only had the silver coins of Julius II left! And then he was swamped by such a crowd that at the end of handing out the money, he had to excuse himself:

-- I am very sorry, my friends, but I have nothing left...

For Inigo, as for Francis of Assisi, poverty was not a source of sadness. On the strength of the experience of his voyage, he would say to his followers: "All should love poverty as a mother, and according to the measure of holy discretion all should...feel some effects of it..." (Constitutions, n.287). To love poverty because Jesus chose to be poor. To love it as a mother because there is no evangelical poverty unless there is hope.

AND INSULTS FOR LOVE

In response to the call of Jesus, Inigo had made this prayer:

...it is my earnest desire and my deliberate choice, provided only it is for Your greater service and praise, to imitate You in bearing all wrongs and all abuse and all poverty, both actual and spiritual, should Your most holy majesty deign to choose and admit me to such a state of life. (Exercises, n.98)

Living like a tramp and looking like someone who was suffering from the plague, it was only a question of time before his prayer was answered.

However, there was one condition in his prayer: "...should Your most holy majesty deign to choose and admit me..." Humility begins with obedience.

At the time when the pilgrims were about to start their return trip, he went to the Father Guardian of the Franciscan Convent to explain to him his plan to remain in Jerusalem. He was not asking for lodgings, but only that someone would be kind enough, from time to time, to hear his confession. The Guardian saw no major objection, but he had to refer the matter to the Provincial. The Provincial arrived, exchanged pleasantries, and then poured cold water on the idea!

-- I have considered the proposal. You cannot remain here; it is too dangerous. Others have had the same idea - some are dead, and some have been taken by the Turks.

-- That does not matter; I am quite prepared to die or to go to prison!

-- Yes, but... if you end up in prison, we will be obliged to ransom you. And that costs a lot. And we are very poor... No, you will leave tomorrow with the other pilgrims.

-- In that case, I must tell your Reverence that what I plan to do is quite settled and I cannot go back on it for any reason.

At this point of the exchange, the good Father saw red:

-- Since you are so stubborn, I will call upon all the resources at my disposal. We have the authority, from the Apostolic See, to send away, or to keep here anyone we see fit. Moreover, we have the power to excommunicate anyone who refuses to obey us. I will show you the Bulls...

Thereupon, Inigo replied that he had no need to see them. He had resisted the man in front of him quite courteously, but at the mention of the Apostolic See, he had already come to the conclusion: "...it is not Our Lord's will that I remain in these holy places..." (Autobiography, nos.46-47). He would resume his journey, until he knew clearly, through the voice of the Church, where the Master wanted to lead him. And that would last for about fifteen years.

As for bearing insults out of love, he had experienced them, and he was going to experience them some more! Because he had slipped away, without permission, to revisit the Mount of Olives, he was brought back with a few hefty whacks of a staff to help him on his way. And it was as though he saw Christ, with him, being led by the cohort of soldiers.

On the return trip, after the tempest, the plague, the Turks and the Franciscans, he stumbled into a war! Between Ferrara and Genoa, he had to cross the front separating the armies of the French and the Emperor. Was he a spy? Taken by the soldiers of the Emperor (Charles V), he was submitted to the kind of harsh treatment meted out to all suspects: interrogated, forced to take off his clothes, searched... the soldiers led him to the captain "who would make him talk".

On the way the pilgrim had some sort of impression of when Christ was led away, but this was not a vision like the others. He was led through three main streets, and he went without any sadness, but rather with joy and satisfaction. (Autobiography, nos.51-52)

THE COMPOSITION OF PLACE

One last point, concerning prayer, owes its origin to the experience of Jerusalem. People are sometimes surprised that St. Ignatius attaches importance to what he calls - "the composition of place":

... When the contemplation or meditation is on something visible,... the representation will consist in seeing in imagination the material place where the object is that we wish to contemplate. I said the material place, for example, the temple, or the mountain where Jesus or His Mother is, according to the subject matter of the contemplation. (Exercises, n.47)

An example will illustrate the attitude behind this insistence. During the pilgrimage, Inigo had seen the Holy

Places first as we would on a guided tour, always "on the double": there were so many things to see, some genuine and some apocryphal though held to be genuine, for legends grow like weeds in the accumulated dust of historical places. Inigo would have liked to stop, go back again, pray. The night before his departure, he slipped away...

On Mount Olivet there is a stone from which Our Lord rose up to heaven, and his footprints are still seen there; this was what he wanted to see again. So without saying anything or taking a guide (for those who go without a Turk as guide run a great risk), he slipped away from the others and went alone to Mount Olivet. But the guards would not let him enter. He gave them a penknife that he carried, and after praying with great consolation, he felt the desire to go to Bethphage. While there he remembered that he had not noted on Mount Olivet on what side the right foot was, or on what side the left. Returning there, I think he gave his scissors to the guards so they would let him enter. (Autobiography, n.47)

Sheer naivety, perhaps. Or rather, is it not the case that, for Ignatius, prayer is not an intellectual exercise nor an escape from reality? The imagination plays a part, like all the faculties of the soul and body: it is a matter of being present to what we see. The "composition of place" is only a "prelude" to contemplation, and the very contemplation of the humanity of Christ is only a way of moving from the visible to the invisible. If Inigo went back to the Mount of Olives to see which way Christ's feet were facing, it was because he wanted to know where Christ was looking so that he himself, when he prayed later on, could place himself directly under the gaze of the Lord, and understand better His last words, as though addressed to him...

"If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand wither" (Ps 137). Inigo would never forget. For the christian memory renders present the mystery that it evokes - "Do this in memory of me".

Febzuazy 2, 1528

In those days, people coming from the South entered Paris by the gate of Saint-Jacques, which was situated very close to the present Soufflot street. From the heights of Montrouge, where he arrived this Candlemass day, Inigo would have been able to see the many steeples which thronged the Latin quarter. Further away, beyond the Sainte-Chapelle and the towers of Notre Dame, he would have been able to make out the green hill of the Martyrs..

Since his return from Jerusalem, he had become a student. He had spent more than two years at Barcelona, sixteen months at the University of Alcala, some weeks at the University of Salamanca. These were rather chequered periods, and the results were hardly brilliant, from an academic point of view. He had come to Paris to start again from scratch...

As he had a little money, he went down the hill to a "pension" where some Spaniards had lodgings. Two months later, he would be put out on the streets, without a penny, obliged to beg, and sheltering with pilgrims passing through Paris, at the hospital of Saint-Jacques (located at the site now occupied by number 135 in the street of Saint-Denis). His circumstances were such that after sunrise - this was the regulation of the hospital - he had to hurry to the Seine, cross the "isle of the City", climb up the hill of Sainte-Geneviève, quite out of breath, and, in spite of all that, he could never manage to arrive on time for the courses at the College of Montaigu where he learnt Latin with the urchins of Paris.

Montaigu! "The galley-slaves of the Moors and Tartars, the murderers in penal servitude, certainly even the dogs in your house are treated better than the unfortunate inmates of that college! And if I were king of Paris, may the devil take me if I did not set fire to the place and burn its principal and tutors who tolerate such inhumanity before their very eyes."

These biting words came from the pen of Rabelais. But what did it matter! The studies were not bad; Erasmus had recently taught at Montaigu, and the young Calvin had just left.

And besides, Inigo had seen so many other things.

V. WISDOM AND FOLLY

This is the most perfect kind of humility. It consists in this. If we suppose that the first and second kind attained, then whenever the praise and glory of the Divine Majesty would be equally served, in order to imitate and be in reality more like Christ our Lord, I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor, rather than riches; insults with Christ loaded with them, rather than honours; I desire to be accounted as worthless and a fool for Christ, rather than to be esteemed as wise and prudent in this world.

Exercises, n.167

"I choose humiliations with Christ humiliated..." We may wonder what is the relationship between this desire of Inigo, so firmly expressed in "the Third degree of Humility" of the Exercises, and this new undertaking which would absorb ten years of his life - to study..., that is, to move in the circles of "the wise and prudent of this world".

The answer, first and foremost, is to be found in the actual facts: Inigo never suffered so much at the hands of the "wise and prudent", Church people moreover, as during his years of study. But there is more than a mere coincidence here, as we shall see, at the risk of gaining a better understanding, even desire of what, at first sight, seems to us so disconcerting and so extravagant in this "Third degree of Humility".

However, at the beginning, there was the responsibility of seeing through what he had undertaken.

STUDIES, LEADING TO WHAT?

Inigo's father, who was lining up his son to be a cleric, had tried very hard to get a tutor to come to the

castle of Loyola. But the boy did not take kindly to Latin grammar. He learnt to read, he loved to write and he sang very well, but that was all. At the court of Arevalo, between feats of arms, he tried to write poetry and play some musical instruments. Music and poetry - hardly the approach found in schools!

At Manresa, God was his "schoolmaster". There is truth in the legend - the Exercises were dictated to him, not as we see in the naive paintings, but in the secret of a spiritual experience. He took several pages of his experience with him on his voyage to the Holy Land. He tried them out with some people and saw the fruits: it was a good tree. So why graft on the ponderous trappings of scholasticism? Why this decision that he had taken at Venice during his return voyage?

After the pilgrim realized that it was not God's will that he remain in Jerusalem, he continually pondered within himself what he ought to do; and eventually he was rather inclined to study for some time so he would be able to help souls, and he decided to go to Barcelona. (Autobiography, n.50)

"What must I do?" He was no longer searching for the goal that he had found but the means to choose "among all created things", to be more able "to help souls". Now, at the time that he was living, the lay state did not seem very suitable for certain forms of the Church's apostolate. To speak of God a man had to be a priest, and to be a priest, he had to study. So, did Inigo take the decision to study, in order to become a priest, as is often claimed?

This reason seems contradicted by the facts. At Venice he did not envisage the priesthood. He had not yet braved the theologians to be convinced of the necessity to become one himself. Even after he had encountered them at Alcala and Salamanca, if he was persuaded that he should pursue his studies, he never knew what would be his state of life. Would he join a religious order, or journey through the world? He was still asking himself the question at the time when he left Spain. On March 3rd, 1528, he wrote to Ines Pascual, his benefactress from Barcelona:

At a favorable moment, and in excellent health, I have arrived at this city of Paris, through the grace and goodness of God our Lord, on February 2nd. I am presently studying there until the Lord calls me to something else. [1]

He was already a student for three years, but he did not know if his studies were for the priesthood. How come?

Since the enlightenment at the Cardoner, he was sure of the light he had received in regard to "the spiritual life, faith and scholarship". He believed that the Exercises were an instrument capable of transforming hearts, even the world. But his notes needed to be made credible for others, as they were for himself. The Holy Spirit, who had inspired them, and the Church, which must approve them, could not contradict each other. Now, the Church would only approve the Exercises if they were in conformity with Scripture and Tradition. So that is why, initially, Inigo decided to acquire the scholarship and the culture of the Church. It was a matter of planting the Exercises within the history of the people of God.

It was basically a question of being in communion. Inigo wished to be a servant of the Church, not outside time in a heavenly Church, but at this point of time, with the culture, the struggles and the language of the Church and the world in which he lived. If the Exercises were only a book, they would be passed on as a book from generation to generation. But they were more a dialogue between persons: between the Creator and the Creature, and also - to open up this mysterious dialogue - between the person giving the Exercises and the one receiving them. This dialogue needed to be expressed in a living and present-day language, in a contemporary culture which would enable people to communicate with one another, and, like the apostle, to make oneself "a Jew with the Jews, a Greek with the Greeks".

[1] Quoted by H. Rahner S.J., *Ignace de Loyola et les femmes de son temps*, DDB. coll. Christus, vol.1, p.286.

The decision at Venice was full of this plan. And because it was an apostolic venture, Inigo would have the extraordinary courage, at the age of thirty-three, to learn the rudiments of Latin grammar surrounded by "urchins".

ALCALA AND THE "ALUMBRADOS" ("the enlightened ones")

After two years of grammar at Barcelona, Inigo enrolled at the University of Alcala, to follow the "Arts" course there - mainly philosophy. His apostolic zeal prevailed over his desire for formation. Living in community with four companions - already -, he gave the Exercises and taught catechism. The five men were soon noted in the city. They were called "the gray robes", on account of their common clothing; but also - and this was more serious - the "alumbrados"...

A vast movement of spiritual renewal stirred christianity at the beginning of the 16th century. The "alumbrados" or "enlightened ones" were part of it. They were not heretics. They sought God in new ways. But the tendency among many of them was to think that once they had found the secret of union with God, the rest was secondary, even useless. "The rest", in other words, the sacraments, traditional prayers and, finally, since the sacrament of penance was discredited, the precepts of morality...

Now, here was a man who himself taught a particular way of union with God, and here were people who stood out by the way they dressed! The Inquisitors of Toledo were alerted. "They are going to make a mess of you and your companions," Inigo was told. That was in November 1526.

They only held one inquiry and left Juan Rodriguez Figueroa, Vicar general, in charge of the process. The conclusion was reassuring: he had nothing to say on the matter of doctrine and the way of life of the companions; nevertheless they were to stop being so conspicuous by the common way they dressed. Inigo accepted the sentence, but not without remarking rather tartly:

-- I do not see the point of these inquisitions. The other day a priest refused one of us communion, under the pretext that the person went to communion each week. I have experienced the same sort of difficulty myself in this matter. Has any sort of heresy been discovered in us, yes or no?

-- No, replied Figueroa; if they find one, they will burn you.

-- But they will burn you, too, if they find one in you.

Humility leaves room for such rejoinders!

Inigo was more or less undisturbed for several weeks, and then, one morning, he was led off to prison... Through his doing, it was said, two women, mother and daughter, and a very pretty daughter, moreover, had fled from Alcala. For Inigo to be cleared, it was necessary to await the return of the fugitives, who had set out on a pilgrimage against his advice. He was only released after forty-two days. And since a sentence had to be passed, the former sentence was reinforced with greater severity: he and his friends had to dress like all the students, and were to refrain from speaking on matters of faith until they had done four more years of studies.

Since "they were closing the door for him to help souls" (Autobiography, nos.58-63), Inigo resolved to leave Alcala and to set out for Salamanca.

SALAMANCA AND THE ERRORS OF ERASMUS

His stay at Salamanca was brief - two months... including three weeks in prison! In the Autobiography, Inigo lingers over the episode - what was at stake, in the process, was the actual content of the Exercises.

About ten or twelve days after his arrival - mid-July 1527 - he was invited to a meal at the convent of the Dominicans. As a matter of fact, it turned out to be an interrogation: "What do you preach? What things of God do you speak about? How do you speak about the virtues and vices?" And then came the question to trap him:

-- No one can speak of the virtues and vices except in one of two ways: either through acquired knowledge, or through the Holy Spirit. Now, there is no question of acquired knowledge, therefore it is through the Holy Spirit.

Inigo kept quiet, scenting the trap... But the Dominican grew impatient:

-- Explain yourself! At this present moment when so many errors of Erasmus are being spread abroad and of so many others who have led the world astray, you do not want to give an account of what you are teaching?

Erasmus! Having been under suspicion as an "alumbrado", here was a new suspicion. At that very time, at Valladolid, a process was being instigated against the great humanist of the Renaissance. Was it the concern for orthodoxy that had brought this quarrel on him... or the resentment of the monks to whom he had shown little consideration in his works? Inigo knew The Manual of the Christian Soldier of Erasmus. One of his disciples and first biographers, Pedro Ribadeneira, claimed that he had experienced an instinctive aversion for it because, as he read this book, he felt his devotion grow cold. The truth has to be much more complex because we find more points in common than divergences between the Exercises and the Manual: the fundamental orientation of the human person to God, the relativity of created things in relation to this end, the primacy of interior religion, devotion centred on Christ, the necessity of discernment... But it is probable that the religious sensitivity of Inigo reacted against the lack of warmth of this teaching: Erasmus was not a saint, his devotion was too restrained, too balanced. Besides, he must have been hurt in his sense of the Church and his respect for Tradition by a frank opposition, in the Manual, with regard to traditional forms of piety, like fasting, pilgrimages, and so on, and by a certain casualness with regard to the hierarchical Church. Which being the case, the allusion of the Dominican was quite inappropriate.

Nevertheless, Inigo was once again shut up first in the convent, then in prison. He handed over the manuscript of the Exercises to his judges. They found nothing to

criticise in the area of faith, but they wanted to know something more about his moral theology: as a matter of fact, at the beginning of the booklet, there were some notes to help people in their examination of conscience.

-- Whether I have said the truth or not, that is for you to decide, Inigo said to them. And if it is not the truth, condemn what I say.

This style of rejoinder, which recalls those of Joan of Arc before her judges, is an excellent illustration of what humility meant in the life of Inigo. It embraced submission to authority, but in no way denied what he believed to be true. He would not rest until the Exercises were definitively recognised by the Church. Not for his reputation, but "for the glory of God and the salvation of souls". To obtain this, he was ready to endure anything, and even be glad about it:

-- I assure you, he said to one of his judges, that there are not so many leg-irons in Salamanca that I would not desire even more for the love of God.

There we have the "third degree of humility". Love is folly, but even this depth of love still highlights the wisdom of discernment.

Inigo learnt a great deal from the experience of the processes at Alcala and Salamanca. He realised that, to defend the Exercises, he needed to work still more, even though this meant sacrificing a direct and immediate apostolate. He also recognised that it was not necessary to be conspicuous in the way he dressed in order to help people. But, for all that, he refused to accept the restrictions imposed on his apostolate as valid. After the sentence at Salamanca had been read, which reiterated the sentence of Alcala, he protested:

-- I will do what the sentence requires, but I do not accept it because, without condemning me on any point, you effectively seal my lips so that I am no longer of service to my neighbour to the extent that I could be (Autobiography, nos.64-72).

There and then, he mounted his ass and left his country.

PARIS, OR THE LIFE OF A STUDENT

Since, for all sorts of reasons, his studies had not been conducted with the complete seriousness they required, Inigo would go to resume them, at Paris, starting from the very beginning. It was typical of him - no half-measures. He wiped the slate clean and began all over again, with the same passion of his Manresa days where he discovered his "new life", with the same uncompromising attitude he had shown on his departure for Jerusalem: "Not a penny!" For he was inspired by the same love, for the same purpose.

Everything that was secondary would go by the board.

Self-love, certainly. But what a victory over himself, to take his place once again, at the age of 37, on the benches at Montaigu, beside the urchins of Paris, to decline - "mensa, mensa, mensam"....!

He gave up the consolations he was experiencing in prayer; during the courses, he was often distracted by spiritual thoughts; he told his professor about this and promised him "never to miss a word of his course as long as he could find bread and water to live on". However, according to one of his close friends, he had to do himself "considerable violence to be able to control his spirit, in relation to the teachers of this world, as it was so accustomed to the best Teacher, who is the Holy Spirit". Moreover, God took him at his word: his stay in Paris would be marked by a great spiritual dryness.

There was something else he renounced - his desire for radical poverty. Lodging in a hospital three kilometers from the College, only being allowed out of the hospital after day-break when the courses began quite some time before that - those circumstances did not make for a serious approach to study. Moreover, to make ends meet, he tried to find a position as a domestic tutor, like the poor students, imagining that his master would be Christ, and that the fortunate students who lodged with the tutor would be the apostles, whom he would readily obey. But, not finding such a position, he went to look for money where it was to be found: among the rich Spaniards in Flanders and even as far as England, to be able to find

suitable lodgings, meet the expenses of his studies, and even pay for the "pots" which washed down his university successes.

He did not completely renounce the apostolate since this was the time when, through the Exercises, he won over his first companions, Peter Favre and Francis Xavier. But the more he progressed in his studies, the more time he gave to work: "At the University, he says, 'I do not speak to anyone of the things of God; but once the course is over, we'll be back to business as usual'" (Autobiography, n.82). Each thing at the proper time.

All the same, he could not say no to the immediate demands of charity which obliged him to drop everything when his neighbour was in need. One day he learnt that the Spaniard who had robbed him of his money when he had arrived in Paris was gravely ill at Rouen. To set out to help him was a reasonable thing to do. But the poor fellow in need - it was Christ Himself who was calling. And so the response should be filled with the folly of love! He would set out, bare-foot without eating or drinking during the hundred-twenty kilometers he had to cover... At the very thought of this, fear gripped his heart from the moment he woke up and stayed with him as he passed through the gate of Saint-Denis, on his way to the plain of Monceau, in the direction of Argenteuil. But once he had passed this market-town, on the hill which overlooked Paris, it suddenly left him and he left full of energy and joy, to the point of crying out to the flowers of the field how good God was! (Autobiography, n.79).

Apart from this indispensable touch of madness, and several others, he was a sensible student.

He had chosen Paris, not for reasons of intellectual prestige which the Spanish universities had no cause to envy, but for reasons of "method and program". Education in Spain was based on the course for Masters. In Paris it was based on practical exercises, repetitions, the personal interest of the master in his pupils, with the better students taking the weaker ones under their wing. Briefly, the Parisian method was not dissimilar to that of the "Spiritual Exercises". It is not surprising that Inigo had been attracted by it.

Clear progress ensued. After twenty months of Humanities at Montaigu (Latin and rhetoric), he enrolled at the College of Sainte-Barbe in October 1529. He received the Bacalaureate in December 1532, and became "Master of Arts" (pretty well the equivalent of Master of Letters in Classics and Philosophy) in March 1533. From this time on he was called "Master Ignatius". This proved to be his highest title from the University, since his theological studies with the Dominicans at their convent (he clearly did not bear grudges!) would be interrupted in 1535 by a serious illness.

When he was about to leave Paris, he learnt that a process had been introduced against him. The "affair of the Placards"* had only recently occurred, and the Inquisition was redoubling its zeal against everything which seemed to it to give off a whiff of heresy. So then, once again, because it concerned what was closest to his heart, Ignatius insisted on being cleared of all suspicion. In vain did the Inquisitor reassure him; he demanded that the process should be pursued then and there, or at least that the remarks of the Inquisitor should be recorded by a clerk of the court before witnesses. Which was duly done. Ignatius was able to set out for Spain again to recover his strength. He left the reputation of the Exercises intact at Paris.

Through his studies, he had acquired the wisdom "of the wise and prudent".

But he had won over companions to the "folly" of love. He also left them in Paris, but to meet up again with them soon. Actually, for several months, the story of his life had changed from "I" to "we".

* On the morning of Sunday, October 18, 1534, a series of placards had appeared all over Paris, attacking the traditional catholic doctrine on the Eucharist.

SECOND PART:

COMPANIONS TO SERVE IN THE CHURCH

August 15, 1534

The surroundings were the same - almost, anyway. But they were seen from higher up as the seven companions climbed the hill of Montmartre, covered with vineyards, and dotted with windmills. Before reaching the top of the hill, they came to the chapel of the Shrine of the Martyrs, standing alone in the countryside. It was there, according to the legend, that St. Denis and his companions were beheaded (the present site of number 11 in the street Yvonne-le-Tac).

Peter Favre, the only priest in the group, celebrated the Mass of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin: *Gaudeamus omnes!*... At the moment of communion, he turned around to his companions, holding the Host in his hand. Then each one took a vow of chastity, evangelical poverty, and also a vow to set out on mission to Jerusalem, if the voyage were possible within a certain period of time.

After Mass, they walked around the hill to the west; the present Girardon Square marks the spring of St. Denis. They settled down there in the shade for a picnic with the food they had brought and some bunches of fresh grapes from Montmartre. The scene recalls the last chapter of St. John. They talked, were silent, sometimes they laughed... Forty years later, one of them would recall "the joy and exultation" of this day.

At sun-set, they returned down the hill to Paris, "praising and blessing God"...

A beautiful summer day - no overtones of some kind of foundation going on. We need the perspective of history to give credence to the plaque attached to the present chapel of the Shrine of the Martyrs, which records that "the Society of Jesus recognises Ignatius of Loyola as its father, and Paris as its mother".

However, that is the truth: on the 15th of August, 1534, seven men bound themselves together to Jesus Christ, for a common undertaking.

Their names were Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier, Alphonse Salmeron, Jacques Lainez, Nicolas Bobadilla and Simon Rodrigues.

VI. CHOSEN TO BE HIS COMPANIONS

Consider the address which Christ our Lord makes to all His servants and friends whom He sends on this enterprise, recommending to them to seek to help all, first by attracting them to the highest spiritual poverty, and should it please the Divine Majesty, and should He deign to choose them for it, even to actual poverty. Secondly, they should lead them to a desire for insults and contempt; for from these springs humility. Hence, there will be three steps: the first, poverty as opposed to riches; the second, insults or contempt as opposed to the honour of this world; the third, humility as opposed to pride.

Exercises, n.146

For a longtime the breath of the Spirit was leading Inigo to a room in the College of St. Barbara; he entered the College in September 1529, some days before the students returned.

Up to this point, the ways that Inigo had followed had seemed like blind alleys. As he tried new experiences, it was revealed to him, in one way or another, that they were not the will of God. And each time, instead of stubbornly tussling with the obstacle, he had branched out in a new direction, or retraced his steps, quite flexibly, without denying anything of the experience. However, he would retain something of all this for the formation of the young Jesuits. He would make them undergo such experiences, or "experiments", which tried and tested the young men. Like himself, the novice would make the Exercises, go on pilgrimage, look after the sick in a hospital, and so on, before undertaking his studies. It was also through these experiments that the novice would learn humility.

However, ever since Manresa, a desire was constantly in the heart of Inigo - to share with others what he had experienced and wished to experience in the future. At the

beginning, he had done this with some devoted women at Manresa and Barcelona; then, with the companions who had followed him during the time of his studies in Spain. Setting out for Paris, he had arranged to meet up with them again, but they did not turn up. At Paris once again, he had tried, through the Exercises, to carry out his plan to form a group of companions, without any more success.

Finally, with what little baggage he had, the old student of Montaigu, who had just enrolled in the "Arts" course, entered the circular room whose walls followed the lines of one of the turrets of the building...

ROOM-MATES

The two students who already occupied the room made a place for him rather grudgingly. They had been together four years and, in spite of the differences in their social conditions, had become very good friends. Inevitably the 'newcomer' disturbed them... They were not to know just how much!

The first to become sympathetic was Peter Favre, because he was asked to be tutor to the old student. He was born in 1506 at Villaret, a village of Savoy, in a family of small farmers. He wanted to study at any cost and his parents had to let go of the young shepherd, which he was. So there he was, already with his licentiate... This is what he has to say:

That year Inigo entered the college of Sainte-Barbe, sharing our room, with the intention of following the course of Arts to begin on the feast of Saint-Remi, and it is our teacher who had to be responsible for this course. I am forever grateful for this meeting which Divine Providence arranged for my good and my salvation: for after It had seen to it that I would instruct this holy man, my initial contacts with him were quite superficial, then they became intimate, and eventually we ended up living a common life where the two of us shared the same room, the same table and the same purse. (The Memorial of Blessed Peter Favre, n.8)

"Two of us..." - as though the third member had remained on the fringe. The third person was Francis Xavier, aged 23 like Peter, while Inigo was 38. It is true that their relations were not immediately cordial. Both were Spaniards, but there was a difference - one was a Basque and the other came from Navarre. Both were nobles, but as poles apart as two people could be in their attitude to "worldly honours" - one had renounced them, and the other frantically courted them. And as for appearances - one was poorly dressed, sick, handicapped, with all his vitality concentrated in his striking gaze; the other was a handsome young man, elegant, and enjoyed a fine reputation for sport in the University...

Above all a gentleman, Francis nevertheless had to welcome the new arrival with the polite smile of the grand lord who keeps his distance. As for Inigo, he was certainly charmed from the first meeting. He had to deal with an ambitious person, just like himself. But what plans would be the measure of their ambitions? That is the question that he was to put to Xavier, when the moment came. While he bided his time, he went out of his way to win his friendship by small services, especially with regard to money, for Francis lived beyond his means while Inigo, who lived on less than nothing, was able to help him.

THE CARTHUSIANS OF VAUVERT

A little beyond the gate of Saint-Jacques, the Carthusians had built a beautiful monastery, surrounded by a famous enclosure, part of which today is covered by the Luxembourg gardens. There, on Sunday, Inigo and his friends assisted at Mass and celebrated the day of the Lord in silent reflection and spiritual conversation.

Soon, as it turned out, Peter Favre was no longer alone with him. Another student, Simon Rodrigues, Portuguese, and two young Spaniards, Diego Lainez and Alphonse Salmeron, 29 years old, had, in their turn, been charmed by Inigo. The latest addition was Nicolas Bobadilla who arrived in Paris, as poor as Job, in the spring of 1533. By this time, Francis Xavier had finally joined the group.

Spiritual conversation, together with discernment, is one of the two charisms of Ignatius. He was possessed of the very rare gift of translating into words what he had experienced in his prayer. We might recall the day, at Manresa, when he had a "vision" of the Holy Trinity: "...nor after eating could he stop talking about the Most Holy Trinity, using many comparisons in great variety and with much joy and consolation" (Autobiography, n.28). This "spiritual energy", to speak like the theologians of the East, built up within him like a flash of lightning and with such intensity that tears leapt to his eyes; yet later on he was able to break it down into words that were intelligible and familiar to others.

Moreover, all sorts of contacts, often with people who disagreed with him, and the determination to "seek God" in the person of those who spoke with him - these had given him this sense of dialogue, and it was a dialogue that progressed instead of going round in circles. At the beginning of his Exercises he had written this "presupposition" for every exchange between people, which all those who take part in meetings, forums and gathering of every kind, should always bear in mind:

...it is necessary to suppose that every good Christian is more ready to put a good interpretation on another's statement than to condemn it as false. If an orthodox construction cannot be put on a proposition, the one who made it should be asked how he understands it. If he is in error, he should be corrected with all kindness. If this does not suffice, all appropriate means should be used to bring him to a correct interpretation, and so defend the proposition from error. (Exercises, n.22)

More than likely, it was in this way, at the Carthusians' place at Vauvert, that Inigo prepared his friends for the Exercises, which would give birth to the Society of Jesus. For he did not spring the Exercises on people, especially those six! Peter Favre, the first, made them in 1534, after four years of spiritual 'dialogue'. And Francis, the last because he was "the toughest material that Ignatius had ever handled" only made them after the vow at Montmartre.

Through cross-checking, we can get some idea of the content of these exchanges. It was to do with the christian life, a sort of catechism, really, but experienced from within, at the point where the life of God enters into direct contact with a man of flesh and blood, like fire coming into contact with ice. Through a certain type of examination of conscience - indeed, quite simply! - Inigo helped create this daily contact between faith and life, allowing "the Creator to communicate Himself to the faithful soul". It is not a question of balancing out the positive and the negative aspects of a person's life, as necessary as this evaluation may be to give a concrete content to prayer. But the person is taken up in a movement of thanksgiving and contrition which, day after day, opens their heart more widely to the 'intrusion' of God and refines their soul until it becomes sensitive to the least whispers of divine love. Then the sacraments stop being rites and become "tangible signs" of love. It is also then that the person arrives at the critical point where a choice becomes inescapable - it is impossible to serve two masters... This is the moment when Inigo chose to land the person in the solitude of the Spiritual Exercises.

THE THIRTY DAYS

From 1532, Peter Favre had taken the decision to "follow Inigo in a poor life". As for Francis Xavier, he had soon been turned upside down to the point of wanting to give up his teaching at the college of Dormans-Beauvais, to give himself to prayer. Inigo moderated the enthusiasm of the one and the other - the time was not yet ripe.

Peter made the Exercises during the winter of 1534, after a stay in Savoy. That winter, from all accounts, was extremely bitter and the Seine was frozen over. He threw himself headlong into the Exercises, neither eating nor drinking during the first week, nor having a fire in his room. No doubt excessive, but not contrary to the spirit of spiritual exercises, as athletes do exactly the same in their field when they push themselves, temporarily, to

the limits of human resistance. Likewise in prayer, the dimensions of freedom are established through encountering its limits: so the meditation on the sins leads to some understanding of the absolute "no" and the meditation on Hell, which ends in a prayer of thanksgiving, enables the person to conceive the possibility of an absolute "yes" in response to the call of Christ.

Peter was ripe for this response when Inigo asked him to stop his fast and to have a fire. Then, as he gave himself day after day to contemplating the mysteries of the life of Christ, he found the peace that he had looked for in vain until that moment.

His "election" - the central point of the Exercises where the human will clings unconditionally to the will of God for what is henceforth a common enterprise - confirmed his previous resolution: he would follow Inigo "in a poor life", "without the least suggestion of coveting the honours and privileges of the world". Before he had lived in a perpetual state of indecision, but from now on the die was cast:

Previously, I mean to say before I had fixed the direction of my life, thanks to the help that God gave me through Inigo, I had always been uncertain of my way, blown about by every wind, one day wanting to marry, another day wanting to become a doctor, or a judge, or a teacher, or a doctor of theology, or a clerk without any qualifications, and sometimes even wanting to be a monk; I was at the mercy of these winds, of whatever happened to be floating about, in other words, subject to the whim of the moment. As I have said, the Lord delivered me from all these compulsions through the consolations of his Spirit, and he made me take the decision to become a priest, to be entirely devoted to his service; on my own merits, I will never be adequate to the loftiness of such a task, nor of his call nor of his choice, but gratitude obliges me to respond to him with all the labours of which I will be capable, in body and soul. (Memorial, n.14)

In these lines taken from a personal journal, the person familiar with the Exercises recognises the specific traits of the Ignatian experience; "the call and the choice" of Christ, the attraction of poverty and the refusal of honours in order to be with Christ poor and humble, the discernment of spiritual consolations leading to the decision to follow Christ in a fixed state of life, finally the commitment to apostolic work, not seen as a duty, but in a spirit of gratitude which returns back to God the graces received... So there is a movement which faithfully embraces the life of Christ, contemplated day by day, from his decision to become man to his return to the Father's right hand.

Turn by turn the six companions underwent the same experience. What came out of it was that henceforth nothing could ever separate them. So they tried to foresee what they would do together. There was no problem with regard to their state of life and life-style: they would be priests and would live in poverty at the service of others. But where? At Jerusalem, if that were possible. If not, they would present themselves to the Vicar of Christ "so that he would send them where he might judge it most for the glory of God and helpful to souls". What period of time would they allow? They gave themselves a year from the time they would be together at Venice to find an opportunity for embarking.

Having considered all possibilities, they went on pilgrimage to Montmartre on the morning of the Assumption, 1534, and bound themselves by vow in joy and light-heartedness. That day was a 'birth-day'.

"THINKING ('FEELING') WITH THE CHURCH"

The vow at Montmartre was in line with the Exercises: "for the glory of God and the help of souls". More than a resolution, it was a choice made with deep feeling, conceived within the prayer of a Church community. Like the Apostles after the Ascension, they waited for its "confirmation". If that did not come, in other words, if the voyage to Jerusalem did not eventuate, they would turn to the wider community of the universal Church, that is,

to the Pope, for other missions in line with their plan of going wherever the needs were most urgent, and the good to be expected was more lasting and more universal. There were not two plans, one for the group and the other for the Church, one a matter of private initiative and the other a matter of universal obedience, but two possibilities inspired by the same service. In both cases, it was the service of the Church which inspired the companions, by a sort of instinct, a "feeling" ("thinking"), as Ignatius said.

Owing to this instinct, the small group had avoided closing themselves in on the warmth of their communion. The danger was real in those days as it is today. If the chroniclers dwell on the violent incidents caused by the clash between Catholics and Protestants, the unrest in people's hearts was much deeper than these manifestations. Many more or less acknowledged supporters of the Reform lived in groups noted for their fervour, and Francis Xavier had been charmed by "these companions who were exteriorly irreproachable" (Letter of Francis to his family) and who saw no other resolution for their problems than an actual break with the institutional Church.

In the face of this phenomenon, Ignatius added some pages to the book of the Exercises at the time when the group of companions was being formed: "The following rules should be observed to foster the true attitude of mind we ought to have in the Church Militant" (Exercises, nos. 353-370). Very much marked by their period, these rules, in their details, are often out of date. But it is very important for us that they are clearly marked by their period. Because, for Ignatius, the Church is not outside time; it is made up of people and through the action of people cooperating with God in History. Certainly, everything that is historical is contingent; yesterday it was indulgences, crusades and Friday abstinence, which Ignatius, among other things, recommends for "praise"; today it is the implementation of Vatican Council II; tomorrow, other problems will arise, to the extent that "the face of this world" will change; but, in everything new that comes up and to which the Church responds, it is always a question of the cooperation between God and people.

That is why the "first rule" is and always will be relevant:

We must put aside all judgment of our own, and keep the mind ever ready and prompt to obey in all things the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, our holy Mother, the hierarchical Church. (Exercises, n.353)

It is all a matter of the "heart" and of "disponibility", of solidarity and of service. The Church is "the Spouse", and therefore linked to Christ. She is "Mother", therefore we cannot live outside of her, outside of this 'militant' community of men and women who profess their faith in Jesus Christ. Some of these people, even at the head of the Church, are not exactly irreproachable - Ignatius knew a thing or two about that! Moreover, "to put aside all judgment of our own" is not to abdicate our intelligence nor our conscience. It is not a question of foregoing criticism, but rather of submitting it to those who "can apply a remedy" to the evil, instead of publicly airing one's criticism (Exercises, n.362). "To put aside all judgment of our own" is effectively to abandon my claim to uphold my personal judgment against that of my community, or the judgment of my community against that of the universal Church... It is impossible to accept such a "letting-go" without a heartfelt, or, if one prefers, a 'conjugal' attachment: "For I must be convinced that in Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and in His spouse the Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls" (Exercises, n.365).

Obedience to the Church is neither servile nor inhuman, but an offering of one's freedom. So it was the same movement of the heart which drew the seven companions to Montmartre to offer themselves to Christ in a consecration of their life in common and which, quite soon, would lead them to Rome, to offer themselves to the Pope, to be sent on mission.

"UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN"

On the morning of the 16th of August, life returned to normal. Francis Xavier made the Exercises before the students returned. On the feast of Saint-Rémi, everyone resumed work, Francis at the college of Dormans, the others at Sainte-Barbe or with the Dominicans. Inigo immersed himself in theology.

But not for long. At the beginning of 1535 he fell seriously ill. He had stones in both kidneys and he suffered violent seizures of pain as they passed through his body. One seizure lasted sixteen or seventeen hours, with fever, vomiting and a cold sweat. The doctors who were consulted advised his native air, and the companions approved. Inigo would make the most of his stay to tidy up the family affairs of his friends as well as his own.

They deliberated one last time. Inigo was forced to interrupt his studies, but the others should continue and complete theirs. They agreed to meet at Venice at the beginning of the year 1537. Perhaps they considered the possibility of recruiting new companions: when they met again in Venice they would be not seven but eleven. Three Frenchmen would be added to the group in Paris, Claude Jay, a friend of Peter, Paschase Broet and Jean Codure. From his side, Inigo would take in Diego Hoces, from Malaga, "the first of the companions to die" (in 1538).

Thereupon the friends pooled their money to buy a small horse, and Inigo passed one last time through the gate of Saint-Jacques, on his way to Spain.

Farewell to Paris! Aurevoir to the companions!

mid-November, 1537

Accompanied by Jacques Lainez and Peter Favre, the "pilgrim" - as he liked to call himself - arrived at the end of his voyage. But it was not Jerusalem which he had dreamed about so much, right up to the last moment... It was Rome, it was the Church at its most visible, most human, most tangled level.

The three travellers were about fifteen kilometers from the city. At a cross-road, at a place called La Storta, "the bend", there was a little chapel. Inigo went in to finish the prayer he had been making since the beginning of the journey, the prayer a person makes in the Exercises at the crucial moment of the "election": "A colloquy should be addressed to Our Lady, asking her to obtain for me from her Son and Lord the grace to be received under His standard..." Ah! yes, may the Madonna be so kind as to place me with her Son!

In the chapel of La Storta, he suddenly had this certitude: "God placed him with his Son. No more would he have the courage to doubt this thing, namely that God the Father had placed him with his Son".

When he came out, his companions saw his face shining and plied him with questions. But what could he say? How could he relate the experience?

-- It seemed to me that God the Father imprinted these words in my heart: "I will be with you in Rome". I do not know what is going to happen to us. Perhaps we will be crucified in Rome... I believed I saw Christ with his cross on his shoulder and, beside Him, the eternal Father who said to his Son: "I want you to take this man for your servant". And Jesus said to me: "I want you to serve us"...

They took up their journey again, towards the heart of the Church militant. To fight is to suffer. Their climb to Rome recalled another journey: "Now we are going up to Jerusalem and the Son of Man is going to be handed over..."

As they arrived at the outskirts, Ignatius said to his companions:

-- I notice the windows are closed...

VII. UNITED TO BE DISPERSED

In every good choice, as far as depends on us, our intention must be simple. I must consider only the end for which I am created... Hence, whatever I choose must help me to this end for which I am created. I must not subject and fit the end to the means, but the means to the end...

It is necessary that all matters of which we wish to make a choice be either indifferent or good in themselves, and such that they are lawful within our Holy Mother, the hierarchical Church...

Let him desire and seek nothing except the greater praise and glory of God our Lord... For every one must keep in mind that in all that concerns the spiritual life his progress will be in proportion to his surrender of self-love and of his own will and interests.

Exercises, nos.169,170,189

Arriving in Rome, the companions knew that their identification with Christ poor and humiliated in the service of the Church would undoubtedly involve persecutions, but would be first of all, for each one and for the whole group, an attitude of mind: "...to the extent that a person sets aside his love, his will and his own interests". To set oneself aside and to leave one's community - this was the common inspiration that would dominate both their spiritual life and their apostolic action.

To see the truth of this, we have only to look at what happened during the months which followed after Inigo left Paris: the community, in the sense of actually living together or being close by, only lasted, in a permanent way, for the duration of their stay in the Latin quarter.

May 1535. Inigo arrived at Azpeitia, his native city. In spite of family pressures, he stayed at the hospice, looking after the poor. Then he left to arrange family affairs with the parents of his companions.

January 1536. We find him at Venice where he tried to continue with his studies as he was waiting for his companions. He also gave the Exercises.

November 1536. Anticipating the date they had agreed on, the nine companions left Paris for Venice. Delighted as they were to see one another again, they did not remain together - they spread out among the hospitals of the city.

March 1537. The companions, except for Ignatius, went to Rome to receive the blessing of the Pope on their trip to the Holy Land. Those who were not priests received permission to be ordained, which took place, Ignatius included, at Venice on June 24th. They hoped to celebrate their first Mass at Bethlehem. But at that time, Venice broke diplomatic relations with the Great Turk. The pilgrim ship did not sail.

July 1537. Rather than wait at Venice till the time they had fixed on expired, the companions dispersed, two by two, in the neighbouring towns. Ignatius, Favre and Lainez set themselves up in Venice, in the ruins of the deserted monastery of Vivarolo. All of them gathered there in September to celebrate their first Mass (Ignatius preferred still to wait): the shell of the building at Vivarolo "without doors or windows" resembled very closely the grotto at Bethlehem... During this time together, after they had prayed and reflected, they decided on a name for themselves: "Society of Jesus".

October 1537. Another dispersion: as the prospect of their voyage receded more and more, the field of their mission grew. Always two by two, they left for Sienna, Bologna, Ferrara, Padua... Ignatius, Favre and Lainez took the road to Rome, where we have met them at the cross-roads of La Storta.

Easter 1538. All were in Rome. Their conviction was clear: their union had to be compatible with the fact that they would live dispersed. How to resolve this problem? They would deliberate about it.

THE DELIBERATION OF 1539

Since, from their arrival, their days were filled with apostolic work, they would come together at night, for as long as was needed. The deliberation, begun at the beginning of Lent, 1539, was only finished the 24th of June. Let us follow the account of this deliberation [1].

Lent was drawing to a close. The time was approaching for us to be scattered and parted from one another. We were eagerly anticipating this time so that we could the sooner achieve our appointed goal on which we had set our minds and hearts. We therefore resolved to get together for a good long time before our dispersal and to discuss our vocation and covenanted way of life. Some of us were French, others Spanish, Savoyards, or Portuguese. After meeting for many sessions, there was a cleavage of sentiments and opinions about our situation. While we all had one mind and heart in seeking God's gracious and perfect will according to the scope of our vocation; nevertheless, regarding the more readily effective and more fruitful ways of achieving God's will for ourselves and others, we held diverse views... At last we made a decision. In full agreement we settled on this: that we would give ourselves to prayer, Masses and meditations more fervently than usual and, after doing our very best we would for the rest cast all our concerns on the Lord...

We began, therefore, to expend every human effort. We proposed to ourselves some questions worthy of careful consideration and forethought at this opportune time. Throughout the day, we were accustomed to ponder and meditate on these and to prayerfully search into them. At night each one shared with the

[1] cf. Jules J. Toner S.J., "The Deliberation that started the Jesuits", *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits*. June 1974, pp.185ff.

group what he judged to be more appropriate and helpful, with the intention that all with one mind would embrace the truer way of thinking, tested and commended by the more powerful reasons and by majority vote.

Neither in this preamble nor in the rest of the document is the name of Ignatius mentioned: the group as such was carrying out the deliberation. Friendship had not erased the differences of temperament nor of nationality in the group yet their common design was clear. They did not come together about this design, for, according to the spirit of the Exercises, it was a question "not of ordering and subjecting the end to the means but the means to the end". Each one, then, through prayer, set himself once more in "the line of the call". This proved no obstacle to their setting up a 'time-table' for the day and a method of working. Then they moved into the heart of the discussion.

ONE BODY

The first question that they raised with regard to their dispersion was apparently resolved without difficulty:

...would it or would it not be more advantageous for our purpose to be so joined and bound together in one body that no physical distance, no matter how great, would separate us?... In the end we established the affirmative side of the question, that is, that in as much as our most kind and affectionate Lord had deigned to gather us together and unite us, men so spiritually weak and from such diverse geographical and cultural backgrounds, we ought not split apart what God has gathered and united; on the contrary, we ought day by day to strengthen and stabilize our union, rendering ourselves one body with special concern for each other, in order to effect the greater spiritual good of our fellow men. For united spiritual strength is more robust and braver in any arduous enterprise than it would be if segmented.

But how was this body to be set up, as it was conceived, obviously, with a view to being "fruitful"? What would be the organic link between these men physically dispersed? And if, as one wished, the body had to develop, what would guarantee its unity and cohesion?

All of us had already pronounced a vow of perpetual chastity and a vow of poverty... would it (then) be advantageous to pronounce a third vow, namely, of obedience to someone from among us, in order that we might more sincerely and with greater praise and merit be able to fulfill the will of God in all details of our lives as well as in carrying out the authoritative decision of the pope, to whom we have most willingly offered our all, will, intellect, strength, and the like?

So the question of obedience within the body was raised. The companions had already decided to obey the Pope: it was a fundamental point of their plan, which, consequently, they were not prepared to go back on. But this obedience was an 'outward movement' as it sent them on mission. On the other hand, they were not ignorant of the great monastic tradition of the virtue of obedience in imitation of Christ. Now the idea of being obedient to one of their number appeared under a new aspect - a way of achieving their desire for union in and for dispersion. But as happens every time when people try to embody some plan in concrete and precise terms, they began to experience difficulties and found themselves not quite in agreement. It was necessary to stop the deliberation and revise the method:

When we had persisted in prayer and thought for many days without hitting upon any satisfactory resolution of our uncertainty, we put our hope in the Lord and started to cast about for better ways of working out such a resolution.

REVIEW OF LIFE

This break was significant: we are blocked, what can we do to get going again? They were in the process of experiencing together what the Exercises call "desolation": they no longer saw things clearly, darkness was all around them. In such a case, says St. Ignatius, "we must never change our former resolution" - so the deliberation had to continue - "(but) it will be very advantageous to intensify our activity... (and) insist more upon prayer, upon meditation, and on much examination of ourselves" (Exercises, n.319). In this spirit, after having considered different possibilities, they took three decisions:

1. Each would ready himself beforehand, would take time for prayer, Masses, and meditation in order to strive for joy and peace in the Holy Spirit regarding obedience, laboring as much as he could to have a predilection for obeying rather than commanding, when the consequent glory of God and the praise of his majesty would be equal.
2. None of the companions would communicate with any other about this matter at issue or inquire about his reasoning on it. The point was to prevent anyone from being persuaded by another and, therefore, biased more toward obedience or the contrary. This way each would desire as more advantageous only what he derived from his own prayer and meditation.
3. Each one would think of himself as a stranger to our group who would have no expectation of joining it. Thinking this way he would escape being carried by his emotions more to one opinion and judgment; rather, as a stranger, he would speak his thought to the group about having or not having obedience, would by his judgment confirm and recommend what he believed would be for God's greater service and would more secure the Company's lasting preservation.

There is no need to underline further the wisdom of this emphasis on developing spiritual freedom... and its relevance for our time of community decision-making.

OBEDIENCE FOR SERVICE

The deliberation immediately resumed. First of all, objections were considered: was not the vow of obedience contrary to their fundamental plan? The reasons recorded manifested this anxiety: in reality, the conjunction of the three vows - poverty, chastity, obedience - would place the companions in a well-defined category, that of "religious". Now, apart from the fact that religious, in general, had at that time a poor reputation among the faithful, would not the companions run the risk, through being in the category of religious, of being subject to the common law of religious with the obligations that entailed, for example, that of residing in a convent or of singing the office in choir? This appeared to them incompatible with their plan "to go everywhere in the world".

The reasons in favor reflected the same preoccupation: obedience was necessary so that there would be someone responsible for the coordination and execution of the apostolic missions; it was equally indispensable for the maintenance, cohesion and development of the body. Reasons of an ascetical nature only came in the third place.

It was, then, through reflecting deeply on the interaction between union and dispersion that they came to their conclusion, "not by a majority vote, but with complete unanimity: it was highly preferable and most necessary for us to render obedience to one of our number".

Other question remained in the air, but the essential point had been settled. Also, during the month of May, Ignatius was charged with drawing up and submitting to the companions a "Formula of the Institute", a sort of charter which would be presented to the Pope for his approval.

Everything in this "Formula"-and in the Constitutions which would be a further development of it - is centred around the two poles of their plan: union for dispersion, or "the body" for "mission". Mission took first place: consecrated to Jesus, the companions considered themselves

as men who were sent. And since it was a question of concrete mission, historically and locally determined following the needs of the moment, it would be from the Vicar of Christ that they would receive them.

...the members were to go to any place whatsoever where the vicar of Christ judges it expedient to send them for the greater glory of God and the good of souls, whether among the faithful or the infidels. The Society did not mean any particular place, but rather that it was to be distributed into diverse regions and places throughout the world, and it desired to proceed more correctly in this matter by leaving the distribution of its members to the sovereign pontiff. (Constitutions, n.603)

This link with the Pope, with a view to the missions, would be made explicit, for Jesuits, through a special vow of obedience. Always in the context of apostolic mobility, they would live the poverty of the Gospel and would refuse dignities, except at the express order of the Pope. Likewise, to assure a greater freedom of movement, they would not be obliged to perform common penances nor to celebrate the office in choir like monks.

As for the union between the members of the body, their cohesion and their apostolic vigour, it would be the "Appointed General" - 'general' in the sense of universal and so in no way referring to the military hierarchy!-who would be primarily responsible. Elected by his companions, he would watch over the preservation of the original inspiration, the formation of the young, the discernment of what would be most apt to fulfill a particular mission, and the bond between the companions scattered throughout the world. Each one would have the closest possible relation with him or his delegates, so that the knowledge of one another would be as human and deep as possible, and so that the dictum would be always true: "Society of Jesus, community of love".

The deliberation of 1539 ended with the following words:

In all our deliberations over the questions just spoken of and others, we followed the order of discussion and the procedure described above, always giving attention to both sides of every question. Our efforts lasted for almost three months, from the middle of Lent until the feast of John the Baptist. On that day, but not without long vigils, much prayer, and labor of mind and body preceding deliberation and decision, all our business was completed and terminated in a spirit of gladness and harmony.

THE CLOSED WINDOWS

The euphoria was short lived. Paul III favourably received the text of the "Formula", but the pontifical approval remained to be put in form. The document did the rounds of the offices... and was blocked on the way! After Alcalá, Salamanca, Paris and Venice, was it any surprise to Ignatius? Since their arrival in Rome, the companions had been odiously calumniated, and he had had to request an audience with the Pope to put an end to the slander.

This time it was in the Formula of the Institute, because of some points that distinguished the companions from other religious, that the Master of the Sacred Palace sniffed the air of Lutheranism!... At a loss, but not giving up, Ignatius asked his companions to pray more insistently, saw to it that his powerful friends in the Curia got to work, and toned down his text slightly...

But it took more than a year before the Bull of approbation was signed, and consequently, before the Society of Jesus was officially founded on September 27th, 1540.

April 22, 1541

The scene was Rome, in the basilica of St. Paul-outside-the-walls. Six of the companions - for the others had already set out on mission - were making their solemn profession in the chapel of Our Lady. After Ignatius, who was celebrating the Mass and had turned around to face them, with the host in his hand, each one in turn pronounced his offering:

"I (Jean Codure, Jacques Lainez, Alphonse Salmeron, Paschase Broet, Claude Jay) promise to Almighty God, in the presence of His Virgin Mother, the whole heavenly court, and in the presence of the Society, and to you, Ignatius Loyola, who holds the place of God, perpetual poverty, chastity and obedience, according to the manner of living contained in the Bull of the Society of Jesus and in the Constitutions promulgated or to be promulgated. I further promise a special obedience to the Sovereign Pontiff in regard to the missions mentioned in the Bull. I also promise obedience with regard to instructing children in the rudiments of the faith, according to the same Bull and the Constitutions".

After the Mass, they gave one another the kiss of peace. Ignatius relates that then "he felt a great calm that persisted and continued to grow to the praise of Jesus Christ our Saviour".

Only two days before had he accepted the unanimous election of the companions who, on April 9th, had chosen him as superior general. Before setting out for Portugal, Francis Xavier and Simon Rodrigues had given their vote; Peter Favre had sent his from Germany. But Ignatius had asked for time to reflect.

Previously, after his ordination, he had waited eighteen months to celebrate his first Mass. He had said it on December 25th, 1538, at St. Mary-Major, where there was one of the first reproductions of the crib of Bethlehem. He was sure now that Rome would be his "Holy Land".

That day he was at St. Paul-outside-the-walls because of his companions, all of whom would leave or had already left the precincts of the city. But he, that evening, would go back inside the walls, and would not go out any more.

He would remain to keep together in unity and cohesion the body that would grow.

VIII. FOR THE GROWTH OF THE BODY

Take, Lord, and accept all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To You, O Lord, I return it. All is Yours, dispose of it wholly according to Your will. Give me Your love and Your grace, for this is sufficient for me.

Exercises, n.234

The house was old and ramshackle, but it had the advantage of being in the centre of Rome, near the Capitol and the papal residence, opposite a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of the Way (Santa Maria della Strada). Soon the Society would gain responsibility for the parish and would be able to build on the vacant land of the neighbourhood. Then Ignatius would install himself in the presbytery - three small rooms with a low ceiling which henceforth would be his residence.

His work was mainly drawing up the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: they would not be finished at his death as they were continually held up to take into account the remarks of the companions and new experiences.

Like the Exercises and all the decisions he took from day to day, the Constitutions were conceived in prayer. We have evidence of this thanks to some hand-written notes which escaped destruction and which are known as - The Spiritual Diary of St. Ignatius [1]. They let us into a secret that his friends did not know about while he was living.

THE MAN AT PRAYER

It was not that, like Jesus' apostles, they had not tried to surprise him. Lainez, in particular, who makes this observation:

[1] Published by the Centre of Ignatian Spirituality, Rome, 1979.

At night he climbed a terrace or went up on the roof of the house, with the sky above him, and he would remain absolutely still. He would stand there and take off his hat; without stirring he would fix his eyes on the heavens for a short while. Then, sinking to his knees, he would make a lowly gesture of reverence to God. After that he would sit on a bench, for his body's weakness did not permit him to do otherwise. There he was, head uncovered, tears trickling drop by drop, in such sweetness and silence, that no sob, no sigh, no noise, no movement of the body was noticed. [2]

What Lainez saw is described in the Exercises: a suitable place for the retreat, a gesture of reverence which marks the beginning of one's prayer, choosing the posture that most helps the person find what he/she is looking for, quiet and physical stillness to keep one's attention alert. But his description shows at what point gestures and attitudes are by no means "recipes", that is, extreme precautions which get in the way of prayer and take away its spontaneity, but rather do they seem so natural and fit in with the flow of prayer.

Ignatius also recommended that one should prepare the time for prayer by thinking of it in the evening, before going to sleep; and in the morning when one woke up. Up to the last years of his life, in his room, he read the texts for Mass the day before and "he anticipated everything", as one of his close friends wrote. He noted in his Diary what had been his first thought as he woke up, and the reflection he made before prayer: "I wanted to get ready for Mass, but doubted to whom and how to commend myself first. In this doubt, I knelt down, and wondering how I should begin"... (Diary, n.15)

[2] Quoted in the Life of St. Ignatius by Pedro Ribadeneira.

What is important from the side of the person praying is the beginning. Ignatius insists very much on this point: choosing the place, the time, the attitude, one's self-offering, the ways of praying, the close link between prayer and breathing; but also the choice of subject-matter, beginning from the tangible, using one's imagination, the end one hopes to attain. In brief, everything which expresses that the person can only begin from where he/she is, that a person can only pray out of his/her reality. The way we talk about it, sometimes we speak as if we could fly, with just a flip of the wing, to the heart of the Blessed Trinity! Now, even at the end of his life, Ignatius, familiar as he was with the Trinity, still passed through "mediators" as he says and recommends to be done: "Ask Our Lady so that she may ask her Son, ask the Son so that He may ask the Father" (Exercises, n.147). It is simply that we need, if we are humbly honest, to begin from the tangible, to see, to imagine, to pass by familiar paths; we need texts which tell a story, events which happen; we need the Blessed Virgin who was one of us; and we need Jesus who dwelt among us... To be carried beyond all this is not our affair. When Ignatius speaks of what happened to him under the action of God, it is always in passive terms: to feel, receive, to be invaded, seized, carried away...

AN ELECTION OF FORTY DAYS

The action of God responds to this passivity, as was the case for the drawing up of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus. Perhaps from nowhere else, apart from the Diary, can we get a better grasp of the mutual integration of a person's prayer and work.

The method which he followed while he was drafting the Constitutions was to say Mass each day and to present to God the point that he was treating, and to pray over it; he always had tears at prayer and Mass. I wished to see all those papers on the Constitutions, and asked him to let me have them a while; he would not. (Autobiography, n.101)

The account of the Autobiography finishes with this note by Louis Gonsalves da Camara (to whom Ignatius dictated his memoirs). More fortunate than he, we possess the "papers" spoken about. At that time, Ignatius was reflecting on what should be the system of poverty in the Society.[3] According to the classic method, he had listed on a sheet of paper the reasons for and the reasons against a particular system. Personally he was inclined towards a radical poverty. But did this inclination come from God or from himself? To know this, he wanted to obtain from God a "confirmation": this is the key-note of the Diary at this time.

I sat down, considering, as it were in general, whether I should have complete or partial revenue, or nothing at all, and I lost all desire to see any reasons. At this moment other lights came to me, namely, how the Son first sent the Apostles to preach in poverty, and afterwards, the Holy Spirit, giving His Spirit and the gift of tongues, confirmed them, and thus the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit, all Three Persons confirmed the mission... I made the offering of perfect poverty... holding it as ratified and valid, etc. (Diary, n.10: morning of February 15th, before Mass)

But this overall confirmation of the Holy Trinity that he ardently sought because it is the heart of every human decision which is taken according to the will of God, suddenly seemed to be put in question - through his own fault, he says, as he neglected to ask the three Persons. "I...came upon a period of heaviness and aridity in all spiritual things", and he passed several days as if he were "in exile". He felt a strong impulse to say, as he was preparing for Mass:

[3] More precisely, he was wondering if the Churches of the Society could possess revenue. The period covered by the Diary goes from February 2nd, 1544 to February 27th, 1545. But the time for his election lasted only the first forty days - February 2nd - March 12th.

"Eternal Father, confirm me; Eternal Son, confirm me; Eternal Spirit, confirm me; Holy Trinity, confirm me; my only God, confirm me!" I said this with great earnestness and with much devotion and tears, very often repeated and very interiorly felt. Saying once, "Eternal Father, will You not confirm me?" understanding that He had, and the same to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. (Diary, n.17; February 18th, morning, while preparing for Mass)

The confirmation he was waiting for came on February 23rd:

While preparing the altar, the thought of Jesus occurring to me, I felt a movement to follow Him, it seemed to me interiorly, since He was the head of the Society, a greater argument to proceed in complete poverty than all the other human reasons, although I thought that all the reasons of the past elections tended towards the same decision... thinking that the appearance of Jesus was in some way from the Most Holy Trinity, I recalled the day when the Father placed me with the Son. (Diary, n.22: in the manuscript, this last phrase is in brackets)

This entry expresses the same movement as the illuminations of Manresa: from the Trinity to Jesus, from Jesus to the Trinity. Ignatius and the Society were caught up in this movement; he was sure of this since the vision of La Storta, which he felt the need to recall here, as if it were a confirmation.

But in the following days, he recognised that, in his impatience, he had perhaps not been faithful in allowing himself to be led by God. Also, his prayer brought him to a greater "respect" for God and a greater disinterestedness from his side. On March 12th, he gave up looking for other "signs". Maurice Giuliani S.J. observes: "It was a matter of deciding in favor of total poverty. Searching for the will of God on this point, Ignatius found something more - the secret of interior poverty".

"DISCRETA CARIDAD" (discerning love)

This disponibility, which is the fruit of the integration of prayer and reflection, finds its expression in a certain flexibility which seems to characterise the Constitutions. In drawing them up, Ignatius had not only to transcribe a current experience; he also thought of the future. He was in the midst of living through the upheavals of the 16th century. He knew that history would have other upheavals in store for the Society. Moreover, he wanted the body to develop. What would be the principle sufficiently firm so that neither numbers nor the tenor of the times would water down the original inspiration, and yet sufficiently flexible to be adaptable to the laws of growth and the changes of history?

After much soul-searching, Ignatius forged an original formula to express this principle: "discreta caridad". We will not try to give a translation: "discretion" has no overtones of timidity, reserve, short-sighted prudence, nor 'the middle course', wariness, diplomatic precautions. What Ignatius wants to highlight in this expression is an indissoluble link between love (caridad) and discernment (discreta).

Love is the dynamic movement that takes its source in the Trinity and returns to it. In us, it is the sense of the infinite in virtue of which none of our desires are ever fulfilled and "our hearts are restless until they rest in God" (St. Augustine). For the disciple, it is the conviction of not having done anything yet and of always wanting to do "more". Finally, it is this spiritual sense which enables the person "to see God in all things".

Discernment, for Ignatius, is the incarnation of love. It is, in us, the sense of being limited which obliges us to choose the best service from among so many other possibilities, and which expresses the divine love in a concrete human action. It is the humble quest for what God wants "here and now".

Love without discernment is a dream which bypasses the ordinary human paths and loses itself in a boundless realm without any real content. Discernment without love is an arid quest which, incapable of grasping the finality of human action, becomes bogged down in activism.

Only the combination "love-discernment", perfectly lived out in Jesus Christ, Love incarnated, makes for the synthesis of contemplation and action, desire and effectiveness, the universal and the particular.

Such is the principle which dominated the drawing up of the Constitutions.

The response to the invitations of love, "for the greater glory of God", always beyond reach, and "the greater good of people", encountered in every circumstances - can this be captured in rules? "The interior law which the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts" is sufficient. But Constitutions are necessary to propose criteria for discernment which will permit the Society and each of its members "to proceed better along the path of divine service..." (Constitutions, n.134).

And so, to respond to the invitations, the body has to grow. But it will be difficult to admit new members into the Society; they will be tested, and those who are not suitable for this kind of life will be helped to find another way (Constitutions, 1st, 2nd and 3rd parts). Those who remain are destined to "travel the different parts of the world", to help all persons. However, they will begin by long years of study, for the basic idea is not to form an association of winsome vagabonds, but men who are as competent as possible, capable of dealing with all the disciplines and of identifying with every culture (Constitutions, 4th part).

Then they will be incorporated into the Society, promising to obey the Pope to be completely disponible for the missions, promising also to have a particular concern for the instruction of children in the faith, so that they may remember, even if they are engaged in the most brilliant ministries, that the glory of God is to be pursued in the most humble of services. Obedience will give them the attitude of being servants, poverty will make them free: bound to Christ, free to serve, so as to liberate people and bind them to Jesus Christ (Constitutions, 5th and 6th parts). In the choice of missions and missionaries,

he who gives the mission will be guided by the criteria of love, "the more universal the good, the more divine", as well as by the criteria of effectiveness, "the more urgent, the more lasting". But the person sent should himself discern, in the actual concrete situation, what means are most suitable to accomplish his mission - he is not a mere puppet (Constitutions, 7th part).

Dispersed out of love, the companions will be united through love: obedience will keep them united, prayer will gather them together in Christ, but they will not neglect the simple ways of correspondence, circulating news, hospitality and periodic 'get-togethers'. Though the General is responsible for the unity, less by centralisation than by being in communion, each one, in his own situation, undertakes to maintain and foster the body, according to his means (Constitutions, 8th, 9th and 10th parts).

Such was Ignatius, such will be every Jesuit who is faithful to his vocation: "impatient of limitations", but capable of passing his life within the four walls of a small room. A Jesuit of the 17th century has said as much in a very striking and thought-provoking phrase: "Not to be circumscribed by the greatest and yet able to be contained within the smallest - that is divine". "The greatest" is love; "the smallest" is discernment.

"GIVE ME A LOVING HUMILITY"

On March 30th, 1544 Ignatius noted in his Diary:

I thought that humility, reverence and respect should not be fearful but loving, and this was so firmly established in my mind that I said confidently: "Give me a loving humility, and thus reverence and respect," receiving fresh consolations in these words. I also resisted tears to turn my attention to this loving humility, etc. Later in the day, I had much joy in remembering this, and I thought that I should not stop there, but that the same would be true later of creatures, that is, loving humility..." (Diary, n.14)

"Humildad amorosa" -is this not the same as "discreta caridad" with the terms simply reversed? Before his Creator and Lord, Ignatius felt quite insignificant, but, drawn by Him, he felt himself carried away in the dynamic movement of the Trinitarian love. If it pleased God, it would be the same for "this least Society of Jesus" (Constitutions, n.134)

No, nothing will stop him, nothing will hold him back - neither the love of his brothers nor of everyone in the world, neither the music nor the chestnuts of his native country, neither humble joys nor great afflictions - provided God and His service come first. How could he stop once he had broken down all barriers with the words:

"Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty..."

June 28, 1553

Extract from a letter of Ignatius to Francis Xavier.

Very dear brother in Our Lord,

We have received here your letters of January 28th, 1552 later than usual..., and that is why you will not have received a reply as quickly as I would have liked. We have learnt that God our Lord, through your ministry, has opened the gate to the preaching of his Gospel and to the conversion of the pagans in Japan and China. We are greatly consoled in his Divine Majesty. We hope that He will be known and glorified each day among the nations who will increase his flock in time and space, under the divine favour (...)

(However), considering the greater service of God our Lord, and the help to be given to souls in these countries whose welfare depends on Portugal, I have decided to ask you, in the name of holy obedience, to take - from the many roads open to you - the road to Portugal, at the first available opportunity. So that you may be able to help the people over there understand better this request, as they will want to keep hold of you for the good of the Indies; I will tell you the reasons which, from this side, lead me to this decision; they also take the good of the Indies into account.

First of all, you know how very important, for the conservation and growth of christianity in these countries, in Guinea and in Brazil, are the favourable directives that the king of Portugal can promulgate (...) Besides, it is of the utmost importance that the Holy See has accurate and complete information on matters concerning the Indians, from someone it trusts (...) You also know how very important it is for the welfare of the Indies that the men who are sent there should be suitable for the goal in view in these countries or elsewhere. Your coming to Portugal and Rome will be most helpful in this regard (...) Independently of these considerations, I think that you will certainly arouse the king's interest on the question of Ethiopia. For so many years he has been going to do something there, but there is nothing to show for it and the same for the Congo and Brazil (...)

I recommend myself, with all my heart, to your prayers and I ask the divine and sovereign Goodness to deign to give his perfect grace to all so that we may always have the sense of his most holy will. All yours in our Lord.

Ignatius

IX. THE COURAGE TO UNDERTAKE

It is characteristic of the good spirit to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and peace. This He does by making all easy, by removing all obstacles so that the soul goes forward in doing good.

Exercises, n.315

Francis Xavier did not receive the letter we have just read. He had died on December 2nd, 1552, on the little island Sancian, on the threshold of China. The news only reached Rome three years later!

We can imagine Francis reading, familiarly, over the shoulder of his master as he was writing... Ignatius ended another letter with the words: "All yours, without ever being able to forget you". And Francis replied: "I have read these words with tears, and with tears I write them. Filled with memories of days gone by, I think of the great love you have had and always have for me..."

"The memories of days gone by" are the years of companionship, until one day in the spring of 1540 when Ignatius let Xavier know that the king of Portugal was asking for men for the Indies:

-- Esta es vuestra empresa! (That is a job for you!)

-- Pues! Sus! Meme aqui! (In that case, here I am, let's go!)

The apostle set off just like that! Lisbon, the Cape, India, the Moluccas, Japan, the ports of China - almost 100,000 kilometers all told!

During this time, at Santa Maria della Strada, the requests flowed in for Asia, Africa, America; the Pope wanted theologians for the Council which had just opened at Trent; men were also needed for the 'pressure points' of the Reformation, Germany, France, Ireland. People were clamouring for colleges, and the Jesuits found themselves teachers... How to respond?

This question, more than a desire to see his friend once more, explains the letter of June 1553 which was dictated by a concern for the more universal good. Francis had to be brought back to the place where decisions were being made. Though he were to be taken away from Asia, this would be for Asia itself, but also for Guinea, Brazil, the Congo and Ethiopia... His force of persuasion would stimulate the king of Portugal, his apostolic enthusiasm would attract vocations, his experience would enable the discernment of what was most appropriate. His joy would do the rest...

THE CALL TO JOY

One of the letters of Francis had caused quite a commotion at Rome, Portugal and Paris. Dated from Cochin, January 15th, 1544, it was spread around in the ways that letters circulated in those days, and in particular it said:

Many times I am seized with the thought of going to the schools of your lands and there cry out like a man who has lost his mind, and especially at the University of Paris, telling those in the Sorbonne who have a greater regard for learning than for willing so that they might dispose themselves to produce fruit with it (...) Then they would be greatly moved, and taking means and making spiritual exercises to know within their soul the will of God, conforming themselves to it rather than to their own inclinations, they would say: "Lord, here I am! What would you that I should do? Send me wherever you will; and if necessary, even to the Indians!" With how much greater consolation would they then live (...)

I can tell you nothing more about these parts than that the consolations which God our Lord gives to those who go among these pagans and convert them to the faith of Christ are so great that, if there is ever any joy in this life, this can be said to be it. (...) Oh, if those who study letters used as much effort in helping themselves to relish these consola-

tions, how they would labour day and night to know them! Oh, if those joys which a student seeks in understanding that which he is studying, he should seek in order to assist his neighbours to appreciate that which is necessary so that they may know and serve God, with how much greater consolation and preparation would they give an account of themselves ... [1]

A call to set out, a call to joy. Not the sort of joy that graciously reclines in a posture of self-satisfaction, but the sort of joy that inspires people for new undertakings, like Mary after the Annunciation. The sort of joy that Ignatius says is proper to God when He comes to visit us. In spite of the trials of his last years, it was to be found in the heart of Ignatius and gave courage to those who met him to undertake ventures and to persevere with them, in the house in Rome, in the city, and throughout the world.

AT SANTA MARIA DELLA STRADA

The house was too small, sometimes too noisy for Ignatius' liking, crawling with novices, a place to 'stop-over' for those who returned from some mission, just like a busy 'watering-hole' some days...

Every day he saw two of his close friends: his secretary, Juan de Polanco, a glutton for work with a very keen mind; and Louis Gonçalves da Camara, in charge of running the house, and a man who was extremely adept at winking out confidences. We owe to him the text of the Autobiography and a Memorial, which tells what happened, day by day, in the house of Santa Maria della Strada, from January 26 to October 23, 1555.

[1] Georg Schurhammer S.J. Francis Xavier: his life and times, translated by M. Joseph Costelloe S.J.; Vol.2, pp.407-409.

What is striking is the atmosphere of extraordinary simplicity in the place. Everyone venerated Ignatius as an exceptional man, but no one had to watch his words. He wanted to be called by his baptismal name; one day when one of his relatives came to visit him, the door-keeper announced - "Inigo! Araoz is here and wants to speak with you..." At table, he discussed current affairs with those eating with him. He ate very little himself, but he took his time, to finish when the others did. The usual fare hardly made the table groan under its weight: one day someone turned up with a few eggs... and tooth-picks! Whereupon, another at the table commented that the tooth-picks were quite superfluous... Ignatius was very amused at this remark.

Within the house, he had two special concerns: those who were sick and those who were having problems. Each day he discussed them all with Gonçalves. In spite of pressing financial difficulties, he arranged for a house to be bought in the country, "The Vineyard"; he provided games and organised them: something like hopscotch (!), and quoits.

He restored the morale of those who were flagging. To someone who saw himself as unworthy, he told, with tears, the sins of his life; to another who had just told him that he could not take any more, he replied: "Off you go then, that's all right!", but with such a tone of voice and with such a look that his very matter-of-factness dissolved the discouragement. Though the formation of the young was very demanding, it was always measured - nothing resembling the all too famous "Jesuit mould". A novice, from a noble Roman family, seemed to be quite upset at having to build a wall next to the street, where everybody could see him: "that is not your work, he told him, you have something else to do in the house". The story is also told that one day, Pedro Ribadeneira, quite a young novice, imitated Ignatius' limp behind his back, and found himself in the position of having to name his own penance. Pedro asked for a day-off for everyone...and the tradition has continued of having a holiday in honour of "the broken leg"!

However, the rule of life was austere, and Ignatius kept an eye out for the smallest breaches, especially those which had bad effects for others. He did not keep the monopoly for giving penances: for example, the cook had to give them to anyone who was absent from a meal without giving notice, even if he were a professor of theology, or had been held up by the Pope! Many also were sent away, but Gonçalves notes that they left with warm feelings towards Ignatius and the Society.

Friendship seemed to be very much the characteristic note of the community. Ignatius radiated it - he wanted companions rather than "sons". And friendship came back to him through small attentions, especially when he was sick: someone brought him roasted chestnuts, the way they were done in Azpeitia, or André des Freux was asked to play the harpsichord for him. And the music set him back on his feet! A source of courage for others, he also received it from others.

IN THE CITY

The house was open to the city, and the city included the papal court on the one hand, and the crowd of poor people on the other: two worlds!...

Since their arrival, the companions had turned to the poor, and not only to preach the good word to them. During the winter of 1538-39, they turned their house into a refuge to help the people worn out with hunger and cold. They were involved with the Jews, prostitutes, young girls in difficult circumstances. They were able to mobilise their energies in favour of the most underprivileged.

The other world was the court. Ignatius had known four Popes in Rome. Paul III, who approved the Society, and Julius III, who confirmed it, were in favour of reforming the Church, but they did not have the courage to grasp the nettle: "If the Pope were to reform himself, Ignatius used to say, himself and his household, and the Cardinals of

Rome, there would be nothing more to do, and everything else would take care of itself quite quickly". The man that he was hoping for, Marcel II, died three weeks after his election. His successor could prove dangerous to the Society. Cardinal, Gian Pietro Carafa had tried to oppose the foundation of the Society: on May 23, 1555, he was elected under the name of Paul IV.

At this news, relates Gonçalves, Ignatius felt a surge of emotion and his face changed and, as I learnt afterwards, he shook in every bone in his body. He got up without saying a word and went into the chapel to pray; a little later, he came out, as happy and as content as if the election were exactly what he wanted. (Memorial of Gonçalves, n.93)

Had he not said himself that a quarter of an hour's prayer would be enough for him to regain his composure if the Society were to be suppressed? His courage in the face of trials had its source in God, like everything else.

In the undertakings that he conceived, writes Gonçalves again, he seemed very often to act without any human prudence (...) He seemed, on the contrary, to do everything relying only on his trust in God. But as much as he seemed to by-pass human prudence when he conceived his undertakings, just as much did he use all human and divine prudence when he pursued his undertakings and looked for means to promote them. It seems that he first went thoroughly with God into what he undertook; but as for us, since we were not a party to his exchange with God, we were astounded to see how he undertook things. (Memorial, n.234)

This way of acting we find in the sentence attributed to him:

Let this be the first rule of whatever you undertake: trust in God, as though its success depended entirely on you, and not on God; nevertheless, do everything

you can for your undertaking, as though you had nothing to do, and God, everything. [2]

EUROPEAN POLITICS

"Everything you can.. all possible means", even politics, provided that the enterprise has first "been gone into thoroughly with God".

There has been so much talk of the "power" of the Jesuits that contemporary biographers are extremely discreet on the political activity of the founder... as though this means were unworthy of him and his apostolic plan. Too many Christians think of politics in this way, in spite of examples in the Church. Others regret that we do not find in the work of Ignatius the echo of a struggle against the forms of oppression of his time. Though it is true that he was not really in a position to pose problems that would emerge only much later in people's awareness, we should note, however, that his insistence on talking of church benefices in the book of the Exercises was not by chance nor an example plucked out of the air: rather, he was aware, from the experience in his own family, that the people who owned such benefices formed a privileged class who oppressed the little people.

It still remains that he was interested in what may be termed the over-all political scene, and that this interest, as strange as it may seem, was not unconnected with his global plan. Why suggest to Charles V to arm a

[2] This sentence has seemed so paradoxical that some have thought it makes more sense to change the order of the subordinate clauses. Gaston Fessard, in his *Dialectique des Exercices*, p. 305 and ff., offers the following explanation: to trust in God presupposes that God wants our human activity to unfold in all our undertakings, "as though success depended entirely on me, not on God"; but human action must finally be referred to God in whom every human enterprise finds its fulfillment.

fleet in the Mediterranean? Why write a letter to Peter Canisius, Jesuit missionary, about the settlement of the German question?

One thing at least will not surprise us: he was very much aware of two 'hot spots' in Europe and the meeting point of two moments of History - in the Mediterranean, the war against Islam which belonged more properly to the middle ages; and in Germany, the Reformation and the sundering of christianity which are a phenomenon of modern times.

In 1552, Charles V was worn out in his defensive battles against Soliman. With his naval project, Ignatius suggested he regain the initiative. Not for the glory of battle, but to save the christians led off into slavery and often compelled to deny their faith; to re-establish communications between Spain and Italy, between Europe, Africa and the Near East; to realise the vow of Montmartre

...

In Germany, the country was divided by the religious question. The official "dialogues" achieved nothing. King Ferdinand was discouraged. The letter of Ignatius, which is a series of proposals for things to be done, is not a Counter-Reformation program, but a way of saying to the leaders: "Enough of this fear and vacillation! Take a good look at all your possible initiatives and choose the ones that seem best; and then make your decisions and move to action. Then you will recover your confidence and composure through actually doing something".

Confront the situation, recover the initiative, choose the means, persevere courageously - these are, as we can see, the same advice as in the Exercises. We really should not be surprised at this, for here we have a man whose life was so integrated that he could say, in his last days, that "Every time, any hour, that he wished to find God, he found him" (Autobiography, n.99).

EVERYWHERE IN THE WORLD

He found Him even more, assuredly, in the correspondence that he kept up. Each day, dozens of letters went out from Santa Maria della Strada, destined for towns in Europe, the Indies, Japan, addressed to his own men or to other individuals, responsible - according to their different offices - for the destiny of men and women. More than six thousand have been recovered, but how many have been lost?... "I have to write to the whole world... The other evening we calculated that the letters we are presently sending out, to all the different places, have reached the two-hundred fifty mark", he wrote already in 1542.

The number in no way lessened the quality. Each letter was drafted twice. He asked Peter Favre, gently, to do the same. Basically he said: put yourself in my place; your letters contain precise information, but it is all over the place, and so mixed up with affectionate asides and confidences that I can't possibly hand them around! So, if you wish, write two letters - one for information, the other more confidential.

One cannot help noticing how the daily life of Ignatius was integrated with the spirit of the **Exercises**, in this area of correspondence: "The first is that love ought to manifest itself in deeds rather than in words. The Second is that love consists in a mutual sharing of goods" (**Exercises**, nos. 230-231). If he insists so much on correspondence in the Society, that is because communication is the expression of communion. The letters that he sent were often re-copied and sent around. The ones that he received had to be such that they could be shown to others. For the communion of the members among themselves was fostered for an even wider communion - the communion of all people in the Body of Christ. And it belonged to the Society, in all humility, to assure the growth of the Body. That is why, just as "acts are worth more than words", so information is worth more than affectionate asides, as it makes for a better discernment of what is to be undertaken.

At the centre of the net-work, Ignatius was mainly the man of discernment and decision, completely caught in the Spirit of God and the expectations of men. In the Constitutions, in giving a profile of the General he says:

...he ought to be endowed with great understanding and judgment, in order that this talent may not fail him either in the speculative or the practical matters which may arise. And although learning is highly necessary for one who will have so many learned men in his charge, still more necessary is prudence along with experience in spiritual and interior matters, that he may be able to discern the various spirits and to give counsel and remedies to so many who will have spiritual necessities. He also needs discretion in exterior matters and a manner of handling such diverse affairs as well as of conversing with such various persons from within and without the Society. (Constitutions, n.729)

He was not thinking to describe himself! But it is very much a self-portrait...

And he lived all that, to the very end, when the last mail went out on the evening of July 30, 1556...

July 31, 1556

At the beginning of the month, Ignatius had gone to get some rest at "The Vineyard". He was quite exhausted, and his pain was intolerable... Had the moment come to rejoin his companions, Diego Hoces "the first to die", and Jean Codure, just after the profession at St. Paul-outside-the-walls, and Peter Favre on his return from his travels, and Francis, on the threshold of China?...

Towards the end of the month, he had returned to Santa Maria della Strada, and was in the hands of the doctor.

The previous evening, Thursday, he was still discussing current affairs as he did every day. Then he asked Juan de Polanco to go to the Pope, to ask him for the blessing of the dying. But the doctor was not concerned, and Polanco remarked that there was still some important mail to send off rather urgently. The mail! The companions!...

-- That is all right. Do as you wish. I leave it to you.

And he remained alone.

Towards midnight, the brother who lived in the room next-door heard :

-- My God!

Then silence.

At dawn on the 31st, they went into his room. He was in his last agony. Polanco rushed off to the residence of the Pope. When he returned with the blessing, Inigo was dead.

A thousand companions, spread "throughout the world", were to hear, little by little, the news announced by Polanco: he has gone "without calling us to give us his blessing, without designating his successor, without having put the finishing touch to the Constitutions, without any of the solemn gestures that the servants of God usually give.. He died just like anyone else in the world".