The Spiritual Exercises

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From the Editor

Spiritual Exercises Bring Special Spirit to Campus

In *Conversations* 44, Fall 2013, I wrote my first page 1 introduction as the new editor. I had moved from *America* magazine in New York to a new mission as a translator and editor at the Institute of Jesuit Sources in St. Louis, right across Lindell Blvd. from St. Louis U. I wrote that it was great to be back at a campus, to sense the energy and excitement of a new school year, to feel the campus rhythms, to see the hope on many faces.

I have left that behind again. The Institute of Jesuit Sources, which translates and publishes basic Jesuit texts, has begun a new life at Boston College. And although I very much appreciated being part of it, I felt that I had done what I could for the project I was working on. So, with blessing from Jesuit superiors, I returned to New York and *America*, where great new things are happening.

This issue of *Conversations* features the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, the foundation of Jesuit spirituality and thus of the spirit that animates much of our mission in education. It is clear that these Exercises exert a growing influence over a lot of the college and university communities in explicit retreats based on them and in programs that seek to bring their dynamics to events and attitudes on campus and beyond. The Exercises make an impact on the teaching and the campus life of the Jesuits schools in many ways.

Some articles here take up specific aspects of the Exercises such as discernment; some show the impact on more defined areas like science of the arts; and some describe the long-term impact of the Exercises on individuals. We note too how the Exercises have something to offer a Buddhist or an atheist. Not every individual on every campus has felt the impact of the Exercises on individuals. We note too how the Exercises make an impact on the teaching and the campus life of the Jesuits schools in many ways.

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Before I moved from St. Louis to New York, I received permission to take a long drive and visit the places in the U.S. that are named after Jesuits. This project derived from my lifelong fascination with geography and maps. I limited my quest to cities and counties (Marquette, Wis. and Mich., and De Smet, S. Dk., for example) and geographic features (Pere Marquette River, Lake Charlevoix, Mount Roothan, among many others). To include parks, streets, and schools would have kept me behind the wheel for a decade or more. And though they did not strictly fit my definition, I visited 10 of the 11 Jesuit U.S. colleges and universities named for Jesuits. (The one I missed I had already visited recently.) I also passed by Xavier U. in New Orleans and Bellarmine U. in Louisville but missed St. Xavier near Chicago; these three are not Jesuit schools, of course.

These campus visits impressed on me once again the variety of the schools. Some are in the central city, others in outlying areas or suburbs. Some are spread out over many acres, others are more concentrated. But in all of their variety they pursue a common mission, and that mission finds its historic roots and its present heart in the spiritual heritage of St. Ignatius, particularly in his Spiritual Exercises.

And all of these schools make an impact on the local community beyond the campus. Sometimes this means simply street names – Loyola Avenue, Rockhurst Road. Sometimes it is a bit wider – Loyola Park and Loyola Beach or strip malls, pizza shops, and gas stations that bear the name of their nearby Jesuit school. But schools often have major impact on their communities in church life, neighborhood identity, and the local economy.

I saw the value of an engaged campus when I returned from my road trip and began packing up for my move. St. Louis had been making national news over the shooting death of Michael Brown and was awaiting the grand jury decision on indicting the police officer involved. The SLU campus was witnessing an occupy movement that took over the central clock tower and its surroundings. President Fred Pestello entered into conversations and resolved this crisis, urging the community to dig deeper into the causes of the “mire of chronic, systemic injustice” that many experience and saw here an opportunity to move forward. In the larger community, SLU professor of criminology and criminal justice Dr. Norman White was an articulate voice for justice and reason, and other faculty worked to help the situation. So too did students, including young Jesuits studying philosophy at SLU who joined efforts to address the anger and frustrations; among them Louie Hotop and Matt Wooters, who host a regular radio broadcast, “In Other News,” were at the clock tower and at Ferguson.

Our schools are about education, and that goes beyond classes and papers. Our schools are about spirit, and that goes beyond cheering for basketball or praying to pass a tough course. Our schools are about exercises of many kinds – academic exercises, physical exercises and, as our authors demonstrate here, Spiritual Exercises in a host of helpful ways.

Edward W. Schmidt, S.J., editor
The Spiritual Exercises began not as a book, but as an experience. The story is familiar. In 1521, at about the age of 30, Íñigo López de Loyola got hurt in a meaningless battle at Pamplona defending the honor of the Spanish crown. He spent six months convalescing at his family castle. For one of the few interludes in his life, the passionate, active Íñigo settled down and listened. He noticed movements of his soul that he was previously too distracted to notice: feelings, attractions, passions, ambitions, and dreams. Like any Basque, Íñigo was a religious man, but not very spiritual. But during this time, he explored the depths of his soul. Reading Ludolph of Saxony’s *Life of Christ* and a version of the lives of the saints, the young knight started to imagine a life different than one serving at court. Like the saints he was reading about, he too could serve Christ, as an itinerant teacher and servant of the poor.

Wisely, Íñigo decided to test these newly discovered desires. Once recuperated, he hit the road, intending to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. After an all-night vigil at the Benedictine mountaintop shrine at Montserrat, Íñigo, ever the romantic, laid his sword before the altar of Our Lady and donned the sackcloth of a beggar, signaling his change in life. Next, he stopped in the nearby town of Manresa. Intending to stay only a few days, he remained there for about ten months. He fell into a routine of prayer, fasting, spiritual conversation, and service to the sick and poor. Íñigo’s conversion was deepening.

These were intense months for Íñigo. He experienced heights of consolation in intimacy with God and depths of desolation, even despair. He reckoned with profound regrets from his former life in pursuit of riches, honors, and worldly glory, yet he came to know a God who was deeply and personally invested in him, in his words, like a school teacher instructing a pupil. He battled temptations of various sorts, and savored moments of profound interior freedom, even enjoying several mystical visions. His soul, in short, was being exercised.

All the while, Íñigo took notes, recording insights and subtle movements of his soul. He shared these experiences with spiritual counselors, refining his notes along the way. Íñigo began this spiritual record because he thought his insights and experiences could help him to help others. This journal was the beginning of the manual of prayer we now know as the Spiritual Exercises.

While main parts of the Exercises were composed before Íñigo left Manresa, they remained a work in progress as he gave the Exercises to various people on his travels and during his formal studies. Other directors too relied on his recordings as they gave the Exercises. For the most part, the text was completed by 1541, when Ignatius (the Latinized form of his name) had settled in Rome and the Society of Jesus had been instituted. Ignatius wrote the original version of the Exercises in Spanish and executed a Latin translation while studying in Paris about 1534. With papal approval in 1548, the Exercises were published in Latin, the version most widely used in the decades to follow.

Ignatius gave the Church the Spiritual Exercises as a testament to God’s gentle, persistent laboring in his life. Over his lifetime, Ignatius became convinced that the Exercises could help other people draw closer to God and discern God’s call in their lives, much as they had helped him. The Exercises have never been for Jesuits alone. Ignatius crafted the Exercises mostly as a layman, without any formal theological training, and he intended them to benefit the entire Church. Unlike the spiritual classics of John of the Cross, Thérèse de Lisieux, Thomas Merton, or Dorothy Day, the Exercises make for very dry reading. They read more like a cookbook.

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or instruction manual because Ignatius intended the book as a manual for those directing others through the Exercises. In one sense, there is nothing new in the Exercises: Ignatius relied on prayer forms and spiritual traditions deeply rooted in the Church. What is distinctive is how Ignatius artfully wove them together and how much he emphasized the experiential in the life of prayer.

Thus, the purpose of the Exercises is very practical: to grow in union with God, who frees us to “help souls,” as Ignatius often wrote, and to make good decisions about our lives. Ignatius invites us into an intimate encounter with God, revealed in Jesus Christ, so that we can learn to think and act more like Jesus. The Exercises help us grow in interior freedom from disordered attachments so that we can respond more generously to God’s call in our life. The Exercises demand much of us, engaging our intellect and emotions, our memory and will. The first Jesuits rightly called the Exercises a school of prayer, essential to the reform of the Church. The Exercises engage both head and heart and ground praying in the concrete realities of both the Scripture and one’s life. Making the Spiritual Exercises can be both exhilarating and exhausting, which explains why Ignatius compared making the Exercises to doing physical exercise.

The Exercises have a natural rhythm. Ignatius divided them into four “weeks.” These are not calendar weeks but phases or movements felt within a person who is praying through the Exercises. The Exercises begin slowly and gently as we consider the gift of God’s ongoing creation in the world and in us. Having recognized God’s boundless generosity and unconditional love for us, we naturally face our own limited response. We let God reveal to us patterns of sinfulness in our lives and our need for greater interior freedom. Having experienced God’s merciful love, we are moved to respond with greater generosity and to love and serve God and others more. As we pray through the life of Jesus Christ presented in the Gospels, we ask to know him more intimately so that we can love him more dearly and follow him more closely. We come to appreciate Jesus’ values and his vision of the world.

Such deeper intimacy leads us to want to accompany Jesus in his passion, the consummate expression of God’s faithfulness and love for us. Similarly, we walk with the Risen Lord in the joy of the resurrected life. We continue to learn from him as he consoles others. Finally, after savoring God’s love for us and our world throughout the Exercises, we pray to find God in all things, to love and serve God and others in concrete ways and with great generosity.

The discernment of spirits underlies the expanse of the Exercises. The one who discerns is like one who checks a compass to make sure one is heading in the right direction. In discernment of spirits, we, like Ignatius recovering from his battle wounds, notice the interior movements of our hearts, which include our thoughts, feelings, desires, attractions, and resistances. We determine where they are coming from and where they are leading us, and then we propose to act in a way that leads to greater faith, hope, and love.

This journey through the “weeks” of the Exercises is not necessarily linear. The director and one making the Exercises follow the lead of the Spirit, which can take them through different graces at different times. Ignatius’s own conversion taught him that God works with each person uniquely, so he insisted that the Exercises be adapted to meet the particular
needs of the one making them. The goal is drawing closer to God, not mechanically running through all of the exercises in order or in unison with others.

In keeping with this spirit of accommodation, the Exercises are given in a variety of forms. Some people can make the Exercises over 30 or more consecutive days, usually removed from regular life in a retreat house setting. Ignatius realized, however, that many do not have the luxury of time or resources to make a 30-day retreat. Thus, in what is called the 19th annotation retreat (because the adaptation is found in the 19th preliminary note that opens the Exercises), Ignatius described how a person may be directed through the entirety of the Exercises over an extended period of time, while continuing his or her daily affairs. Others, because of age, experience, life circumstance, or time constraints, cannot cover the full breadth of the Exercises. Instead, they pray through particular parts of the Exercises, such as during a weekend or weeklong retreat or a day of prayer.

As important as the role of the director is in navigating and adapting the retreat, Ignatius reminds us in the introductory notations that the chief spiritual director is God, who communicates with each person directly. Accordingly, the director should make every effort not to get in the way, respecting the autonomy of the person’s unique relationship with God.

Inspired by the Second Vatican Council’s call for religious orders to reclaim the sources of their original charism, the Society of Jesus has offered the Exercises in varied and creative ways to ever-increasing numbers of people. Making the Spiritual Exercises available to more people in different forms is especially important as laypersons assume more active roles in Jesuit colleges and universities. Such spiritual formation conveys the charism, the Society of Jesus has offered the Exercises in religious orders to reclaim the sources of their original charism.

A unique relationship with God.

Moreover, along with innovations in traditional classroom learning, some schools have applied new technologies to create online retreat and prayer experiences to reach even more students, faculty, staff, and alumni in their communities. The most time-and-resource intensive adaptation is the 19th annotation retreat for faculty and staff, offered over the course of an academic year. When individually directed, such retreats are usually accompanied by regular group meetings with others making the retreat. Given the challenge of finding enough qualified spiritual directors, some Jesuit works have moved to offering the Exercises to groups, facilitated by one spiritual director.

These various experiences of the Exercises have a profound impact not only on the person but on campus culture. Those who have experienced the spiritual tradition of the Jesuits in this very intentional and personal way understand the mission more deeply and feel connected to a cohort of others similarly committed to mission.

There is great demand for the Exercises by our partners in ministry. They reflect the “great spirit and generosity” that Ignatius determined was essential for one making the Exercises. Such holy desires are expressed not only by Catholic colleagues and students but more and more by those who come from the Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu traditions, as well as secular humanists. Offering the Exercises to non-Christians and humanists is the next frontier in the ministry of the Exercises, to which Jesuit Superior General Adolfo Nicolás has called us. In the pages that follow, we explore the opportunities and challenges of offering the Exercises to new audiences.

Finally, if the Exercises are to animate the work of the university, they cannot be confined to campus ministry: they must inform academic and student life. In this issue, we explore these connections. The Exercises, a school of prayer, offer a certain pedagogy that can translate to higher education settings. They teach habits of reflection that help students and others integrate experience, understanding, and moral decision-making, whether in classrooms, laboratories, residence halls, athletic fields, or community service sites. The Exercises provide a time-tested and flexible method to form character and conviction, which is the concern of educators.

At the time of his conversion and even when founding the Society, Ignatius did not imagine opening schools. Yet, because more formal education was needed in the Church, Ignatius adapted and responded to the need as early as 1548. As we imagine how best to serve the needs of the world and the Church today, we can rely on Ignatius’s legacy of the Exercises to meet the holy desires of our colleagues on campus and more deeply ingrain the Ignatian tradition in the rapidly changing landscape of Jesuit higher education.
From its foundation in the 16th century, the Society of Jesus has shown a continuous institutional commitment to the natural sciences, a new educational phenomenon in the Catholic Church. After a brief historical overview, we will attempt to find an understanding of this Jesuit dedication to science in the tradition of Ignatian spirituality.

The presence of Jesuits in different fields of the natural sciences has played a significant role both in the history of the Society of Jesus and in the history of science. In fact, the work of Jesuits in science must be seen in the context of the overall history of science. From its earliest days the Society began to undertake education as the key instrument of its apostolic work. Thus, the history of Jesuit involvement in the sciences begins with the first Jesuit schools. A few years after its founding in 1540 by St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), the Society began to get involved in education, starting with the training of its own members. In 1544 there were seven colleges or residences for Jesuit students near the universities of Paris, Louvain, Cologne, Padua, Alcalá de Henares, Valencia, and Coimbra. A few years later Jesuits began to establish their own institutions, where they themselves also took charge of teaching non-Jesuit students.

This establishment of colleges and universities was for St. Ignatius a new and somewhat unplanned orientation of the recently created religious order. Colleges became, even during St. Ignatius’s lifetime, the most important instrument of the order’s apostolic work. At his death in 1556 the Society of Jesus already had 35 colleges in different countries of Europe and one in India. The network of Jesuit schools and universities spread rapidly so that in the 18th century there were about 625 of them. Jesuits also established colleges and universities in America, India, and the Philippines. Scientific work progressed at almost all of these colleges in Europe, where astronomical observatories were installed. The extraordinary adventure of the Jesuit astronomers in China started, for instance, from one of those early colleges, the Roman College founded in 1551. Matteo Ricci studied there in the famous school of mathematics under Christopher Clavius, and from the time of his arrival to Beijing in 1601 science provided his entrance into Chinese culture. For 150 years thereafter, Jesuits were the directors of the Imperial Astronomical Observatory and held the dignity of mandarins.

Clavius, from his influential position at the Roman College, made a great effort to introduce the teaching of mathematical science in Jesuit colleges, and this was finally accepted among the norms established for all Jesuit schools. The first official mention about teaching mathematics in Jesuit schools is found in the Constitutions, Part IV, written by St. Ignatius, where when treating about the subjects to be taught in the Jesuit universities he says: “there must be taught logic, physics, metaphysics and moral theology and also mathematics, with the due moderation for the end that is intended.”

This first century of the Society’s history coincided with the origins of modern science, and Jesuit professors were in contact with many of the key scientists of those times, such as Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), Johann Kepler (1571-1630), and Christian Huygens (1629-1695). (It is of some interest to note that later on among noted scientists who were students in Jesuit schools one finds...
Jesuit missionaries introduced European mathematics and astronomy to China and India. Jesuits explored the new lands of America from Canada to Patagonia, and they were the first Europeans to navigate the great rivers: the Mississippi, the Amazon, and the Orinoco. Their interest in geography led to an impressive work of cartography, preparing the first maps of many regions of America, China, India, Tibet, and Ethiopia.

This work was interrupted by the suppression of the order by Pope Clement XIV in 1773. After their restoration in 1814, the Jesuits found that the situation with respect to science had changed. Science had made great progress and was firmly established with branches in physics, chemistry, geology, and biology. The situation was thus very different from what it had been before the suppression of the Society. In this period Jesuit scientific work changed with respect to the earlier periods and had a somewhat apologetic character aimed against those who, especially during the Enlightenment, attacked the Church as an enemy of science. Science was considered by many to be a field that was alien, if not hostile, to religion. Jesuits felt the need to show by their scientific work that there is no incompatibility between science and faith. Beginning in 1825, Jesuits established a new network of about 70 observatories throughout the world. Those installed in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America were, in many instances, the first such scientific institutions in those countries.

After this overview of the five centuries of Jesuit scientific tradition, unique in the Catholic Church, one may wonder how this constant involvement of Jesuits in science is to be explained. Obviously other religious orders have also had important scientists. For example, the Augustinian Gregor Mendel was a pioneer in the understanding of genetics. But among Jesuits there has been a continuous, almost institutional, presence from the very founding of the Society up to the present day. We suggest that Ignatian spirituality is an important factor in an attempt to understand this phenomenon and that all aspects of that spirituality derive from the very nature of the universe that Jesuit scientists explore.

Science has shown that the evolution in the universe of complex organisms, including ourselves, has occurred by natural processes intrinsic to a universe which is about 14 billion years old and contains about $10^{22}$ stars. Evolution in an expanding universe is still occurring in marvelous ways. The universe is not all predetermined (see Conversations, No. 40, Protestant. 40-42). This scientific view of the evolutionary universe and of our place in it opens one to spiritual reflections which are at the core of Ignatian spirituality.

Such reflections bring us to recognize our role as co-creators in God’s continuous creation of the universe. We, in a special way, share in the creativity which God desired the universe to have. The apostolic work of a Jesuit derives from the very nature of the universe, and this has a particular significance for Jesuit scientists. Scientific research cannot be separated from faith, our relationship of love to God, the source of all creativity in the universe. Jesuit identity is much more than what Jesuits do. It is bound intimately to the very nature of the universe. From this foundational connection of Ignatian spirituality to the very nature of the universe which science explores we reflect upon the following characteristics of that spirituality.

In the early Society beginning with St. Ignatius there is the constant refrain: “finding God in all things.” This is particularly evident in the last meditation of the Spiritual Exercises, the “Contemplation to Attain Love.” Here one is asked: “to look how God dwells in creatures, in the elements, in the plants, in the animals, in men [in me, myself]… and to consider how God works and labors for me in all things created on the face of the earth.” Thus, all things, people, and circumstances are occasions for finding God.

Jerónimo Nadal, a companion of St. Ignatius, refers to what has been called the “Jesuit way” with the expression “contemplatives in action.” This implies a union between prayer and action. There is no activity, no matter how profane it may look, that cannot be transformed into prayer. Teaching mathematics or physics in a university, observing the light from a distant galaxy, or drawing a map of an unknown region are activities that a Jesuit finds perfectly compatible with his vocation. Through them he seeks to find God in his life.
Ignatian spirituality also places an emphasis on Christian service, which channels religious dedication outward into profane activities not usually associated with religious life. It embraces an active engagement with the world, which leads, in the spirit of science, to a respect for experience, testing, and proof by trial and error. For many, this may become a personal attitude, but for Jesuits it stems from the core of their spirituality. In this spirit Jesuits endeavor in their apostolic work to enter the field of scientific research as a mission territory. Thus patient work in observatories and laboratories is for Jesuits as proper as preaching or pastoral work in parish churches. For them science as knowledge and as an instrument for the good of humankind is also a means for the propagation of the Christian faith. In 1976 the Superior General Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991) put forward the same argument in a letter on the intellectual apostolate:

How can we make the Church present, and keep the necessary personal contacts in a social context of so vital importance as the scientific and technological, without giving to science the importance it deserves? How can we make a theological reflection that is intelligible without a profound knowledge of the scientific roots of this mentality?

Allied to this missionary character of Ignatian spirituality is a preference for situations and activities that may be called “frontier work.” Pope Benedict XVI recognized this when he said to the Jesuits: “As my Predecessors have said to you on various occasions, the Church needs you, relies on you, and continues to turn to you with trust, particularly to reach those physical and spiritual places which others do not reach or have difficulty in reaching.” This explains how a Jesuit may be praying in a Buddhist monastery or carrying out research in a particle accelerator. Jesuits are always searching for frontiers, for places and situations where the Christian message is not yet known. For example, this spirit drove Matteo Ricci and his companions in the 17th century to present themselves in the Imperial Court of China as astronomers of the West, adopting the dress and manners of Chinese scholars.

To summarize, we have shown how from their foundation in the 16th century Jesuits have shown a continuous and institutional commitment to the natural sciences. Carried out for the most part in conjunction with their educational commitments in a network of schools, colleges, and universities, it was marked by different characteristics in the two periods of Jesuit history, the first between the 16th and 18th centuries and the second from the 19th century until today. But the presence of Jesuits in science has continued throughout their long history. The basic motivation for such work is to be found in Ignatian spirituality, which is itself derived from spiritual reflections on the very nature of the universe. The core of this spirituality lies in the emphasis on finding God in all things, the union of prayer and work, a missionary spirit which seeks the greater glory of God, and the preference for work “on the frontiers.” This has often involved Jesuits in unconventional activities and situations, including scientific research. The Jesuit scientific tradition has a long history and is still alive. It serves as a special apostolate in the Catholic Church, characteristic of Ignatian spirituality.
The Spiritual Exercises and Art

By Thomas Lucas, S.J.

“Dateline: Paris, 1686. In the Jesuit college on the rue St. Jacques, rehearsals for the August ballet and play are in full swing. Onstage, Hercules slays monsters. Offstage, a killer is on the loose. And the Siamese ambassadors, on their way to see Louis XIV, are coming to the college show. Charles, the young Jesuit rhetoric teacher – and ballet producer – trying to do his job, keep his vows, and stop the murders, falls into the net of the first Paris police chief.”

So begins the teaser for Judith Rock’s 2010 novel The Rhetoric of Death. In this delightful historical who-dunit and the three brisk page-turners that follow it, Rock, a dance historian by training, evokes the rich tradition of theater, dance, the arts, and intrigue at the Jesuit Collège Louis-le-Grand in 17th-century Paris. Young Charles du Luc introduces the modern reader to the long line of Jesuit artists and their colleagues – composers, dance masters, scene painters, and artist-architects – who used to and continue to use and teach the arts in our educational institutions.

Although Ignatius Loyola didn’t have an artistic bone in his body, he bequeathed to the Jesuit order and its institutions a sensibility, an appreciation for the revelatory power of the imagination that was a breakthrough in the Western spiritual tradition. Unlike so many earlier spiritual writers who warned against fantasy or the use of images, Ignatius in his Spiritual Exercises encourages retreatants actively to use their imaginations as well as their intellects. While a few of the exercises are analytic or content-driven, the most important are exercises of the imagination: “contemplations” of the life of Jesus wherein the retreatants enter into the scene with eyes and ears and heart open. They begin with a visual composition “made by imagining the place.” And each day ends with an application of the senses: “to see the persons with the imaginative sense of sight…to hear what they say or could say, to smell and to taste…to touch with the sense of touch…always seeking to derive some profit from this” (SpEx 122-126). Ignatius thus connects the spiritual realm to the concrete world of the retreatant’s own sensory experience with all its symbolic and metaphorical furnishings. In short, those making the exercises are taught to trust their imaginative experience. No stranger himself to the uncharted and sometimes confounding places to which such trust can lead the untrained, Ignatius moreover laid out a simple yet effective check-

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valve mechanism for the overactive imagination in his rules for discernment.

Less than a decade after the opening of the first Jesuit college for lay students at Messina in 1548, *Fabulae Eruditiæ* (learned, if somewhat fractured fairytales) were being performed there. Even before Ignatius’s death in 1556, full-scale plays were being performed with his blessing at Rome’s flagship Collegio Romano and at the Jesuit college at Ingolstadt, Bavaria.

The 1586 version of the *Ratio Studiorum*, the Jesuits’ uniform educational code, recognized the dual value of performance for the young as training in poise and memory: “Our students and their parents become wonderfully enthusiastic, and at the same time very attached to our Society when we train the boys to show the result of their study, their acting ability and their ready memory on the stage.” From these beginnings, a rich and complex tradition of plays grew up in Jesuit colleges around the world: twice each year, and sometimes more frequently, from Vilnius to Cuzco, from Goa to Manila, the work of the colleges gave way to vast spectacles that filled the courtyards and theaters of the colleges.

Youngsters declaimed bowdlerized Latin and Greek reworkings of ancient classics and Christian stories composed in doggerel verse by overworked scholastics like Charles du Luc. *Intermedes*, dramatic intervals between the recitations, were filled with spirited dance numbers that inspired modern ballet practice, and their *son e lumière* extravaganzas were the 17th- and 18th-century equivalents of Industrial Light and Magic productions. Fireworks imported from the missions in China, flying students hoisted aloft on ropes and pulleys, and pet dogs pulling chariots filled with allegorical virtues and vices portrayed by little Benoit or Juan Pablo added visual interest. Important court composers like Marc Antoine Charpentier and Jean Baptiste Lully provided the scores; royal ballet masters like Pierre Beauchamps and Jesuit Fr. Joseph Jouvancy provided the choreography. Indeed, Jesuit theorists and historians produced five of the most important early treatises on ballet at the Collège Louis-le-Grand.

This tradition – 150,000 plays performed across the world over the first two centuries of Jesuit education, and countless more since the nineteenth-century restoration of the order after its suppression – was about more than entertainment, fun, and games. Theater, dance, and visual spectacle were not considered as ends in themselves but were seen as useful educational tools that formed morally astute citizens and socially competent persons who could comport themselves in public in a convincing way. They learned to sing and play instruments in church and on the stage. They were given the social tools to become presentable gentlemen, and, in the case of many, the opportunity to rise from their lower middle class origins into higher status. Although what we now call studio arts were not formally taught, applied arts were part of the program: students learned to sketch, construct, and paint trompe l’oeil scenery and were given practical lessons in rudimentary engineering so that their confrères flying above the stage on painted clouds would not crash.

*The New Moses* by Thomas Lucas, S.J. A fragmented view of an ancient Sinai icon.
The ribbon surrounding the MGM lion reading *Ars Gratia Artis*, “art for the sake of art,” would have been incomprehensible to Charles du Luc and his fellow professors. That 19th-century formulation, variously attributed to Théophile Gautier, Benjamin Constant, and Edgar Allan Poe, is profoundly at odds with what might be characterized as the “instrumental” view of the function of the arts in the early Jesuit tradition.

From the very beginning, the Jesuits used the arts for persuasion. They built grand and beautiful churches and imposing college buildings, recruited artists to join the order, and employed a stable of some of the best lay musicians, architects, and artists of the early modern and baroque periods. Gian Lorenzo Bernini was a close friend of Jesuit General Gian Paolo Oliva, and Carlo Maderno designed the basilica of St. Ignatius at Loyola in Spain. Rubens was a devout member of Jesuit sodalities. Yet it would be a serious mistake to consider the Society’s interest in the arts as a mere aesthetic oddity or concern for making the *bella figura*. The arts were seen as means to an end, never an end in themselves: concrete, visible, audible ways to come into contact with the invisible and inaudible realm of spirit.

The 1814 restoration of the Society of Jesus and its schools after the trauma of the suppression (1773-1814) saw the Jesuits return shell-shocked survivors of PTSS. In the half-century leading up to the suppression, the order’s schools had become locked into traditions and habits of mind that made it difficult if not impossible for them to adapt to the times with the same agility that marked the early years of Jesuit education. With the restoration, old customs were revived, old styles of pedagogy were resurrected, old artistic styles that looked backwards and not to the present were embraced anew. Novelty was eschewed at all costs, and with it a kind of benign philistinism came to rule in the Jesuits’ approach to the arts. Nothing too beautiful, nothing too lavish, nothing too daring was allowed. Following the fortress mentality of the institutional Church in the aftermath of the French Revolution and throughout the 19th and into the mid 20th centuries, caution was the watchword. For all practical purposes, no great art was inspired by or came out of Jesuit institutions, with the exception of the brilliant and tortured verse of English Jesuit Gerard Manley Hopkins. His work was unappreciated and unpublished during his short and painful life. Summarizing the attitudes of the age he wrote sadly, “Brilliancy does not suit us.”

So where does that leave us, in the second decade of the 21st century? Our institutions, both universities and colleges, have adopted modern curricula and have forgone the antique classical rigors of the *Ratio Studiorum*. While theater and music survived the suppression, the visual arts are a fairly recent addition to the offerings in many of our schools. Clearly, the notion that art is and must be instrumental is not generally accepted in the culture at large and in our art departments. The arts, visual and performing, are often the first target when budget cuts loom on the horizon. The less benign philistinism of our present age often enough consid-

ers the arts as charming if irrelevant and unprofitable remnants of bygone times.

Toward the end of his life and in the midst of much doubt and depression, Hopkins grappled with this same question in his sonnet “To what serves mortal beauty.” His answer could be the beginning of a discussion for us as educators in the Jesuit humanistic tradition:

TO what serves mortal beauty ’t – dangerous; does set dancing blood – the O-seal-that-so ’ feature, flung prouter form Than Purcell tune lets tread to? ’ See: it does this: keeps warm Men’s wits to the things that are; ’ what good means – where a glance Master more may than gaze, ’ gaze out of countenance. 5

Those lovely lads once, wet-fresh ’ windfalls of war’s storm, How then should Gregory, a father, ’ have gleaned else from swarmed Rome? But God to a nation ’ dealt that day’s dear chance. To man, that needs would worship ’ block or barren stone, Our law says: Love what are ’ love’s worthiest, were all known; 10 World’s loveliest – men’s selves. Self ’ flashes off frame and face. What do then? how meet beauty? ’ Merely meet it; own, Home at heart, heaven’s sweet gift; ’ then leave, let that alone. Yea, wish that though, wish all, ’ God’s better beauty, grace.

“See: it does this: keeps warm/men’s wits to the things that are, what good means…” Hopkins reminds us that beauty, as expressed in art or in the elegance of a quadratic equation or a DNA helix or the sunrise, opens the heart to the deepest levels of our human experience: to ask the profound questions about meaning, value, goodness, dignity, and, ultimately, hope.

The multicultural milieu of the 21st century is, of course, radically different from that of baroque Europe or 19th-century England’s “Commonwealth of Christendom.” Our formerly all-male, mostly Catholic institutions now serve diverse and transcultural populations. As art historian Hans Belting characterizes it, in former times art served religion; in these modern days, at least in major capitals, the “religion of art” – *ars gratia artis* – erects museums that overshadow and strive to displace the cathedrals of old.

While our culture and our institutions have moved beyond the understanding that art must ever and always be instrumental, art continues to remind us that ultimate questions need to be asked. University arts programs have the advantage of being able to present those questions in a bewildering variety of non-linear, postdidactic, pebble-in-the-shoe ways.

For those who are believers, beyond that reminder is the hope of “God’s better beauty, grace;” for all, art challenges us with questions that can serve as antidotes to the paralyzing cynicism of “whatever.” As Hopkins insists, this is dangerous business, countercultural in the extreme. “Merely meet it; own/Home at heart, heaven’s sweet gift; then leave, let that alone.” The answers, art teaches us, are not what matters. The questions do.
Discernment in St. Ignatius Loyola

Guidelines for Individual Discernment

By Brian McDermott, S.J.

Ignatius wrote his guidelines for Christians who are desirous of growing in their relationship with God through friendship with Jesus and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The process of discernment helps the individual pay close attention to the evidence God is giving the person who has actively sought help from God in their decision-making.

Seeking God’s will in a particular situation is not a question of trying to determine what one thing God wants me to do, what one thing fits into a pre-established plan of God. God’s relationship with us is a mystery, but it helps us to choose a way of thinking about God’s will that allows room for both God’s freedom and our freedom. After all, that’s how God creates us, to be free partners in collaborating with the Divine as God strives to bring about the fullness of God’s reign. (God’s reign is the world as God desires it to be.)

I like to think of God as the master jazz musician who creatively makes use of whatever good choices we make so that those choices contribute to the realization of God’s project in the world, the bringing about of that reign.

The two basic conditions for authentic discernment are (1) the deep desire to seek God’s will because it is God’s will and (2) Ignatian “indifference,” or freedom from bias regarding the alternatives being considered, so that we are open to learning what God’s will is.

We are always seeking which one among several morally good alternatives will contribute to the “greater glory of God,” that is, will contribute more to the whole-making of creation (myself included) in union with God.

There are some limits to this whole process of Christian decision-making. (Here I am drawing on the great work of Fr. Jules Toner, S.J.)

1. Persons discerning God’s will may discern only how God wants them to use their own freedom. Ordinarily, I cannot discern how God wants someone else to use their freedom. For example, I can discern that God wants me to propose marriage to another person, but I cannot discern that God wants me to marry that person. Another freedom is most definitely in play here!
2. I am always discerning how God wants me to use my freedom in the here and now.
3. Given #2, future events neither confirm nor deny the rightness of a discerned decision. I may get sick tomorrow and not be able to continue to implement the decision made today. That just means that I

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need to do some more discerning in the new "here and now."

4. Another corollary of the above is that there is not an ounce of predication in discernment. I don’t learn about the shape of the future, even of the immediate future, from a well executed discernment process.

5. I can discern only about something that I have a right to discern. For example, I may not discern to do something sinful (to state the obvious) nor may I discern something that does not fit my state of life.

Ignatius offers three situations of Christian decision-making, each characterized by a different kind of evidence from God. I believe that these are three “pure” cases, which are very helpful for our learning. But in real life, many people make decisions, even very good ones, in a more complex, zigzag fashion.

In the first situation there is actually no need for discernment, at least at the very moment when the person is in this situation. There are three elements to the situation. First, the person finds him- or herself spontaneously drawn to a particular course of action. Second, at the same time the person has the cognitive sense that choosing this course action is of God. And third, the person finds that at the moment he or she is not able to doubt either the first or second aspects of the process. This eminently clear situation happens more often than we tend to think. (That doesn’t mean that the following day some questions might not arise: for example, what exactly was given me yesterday? Does the course of action fit what Christian faith tells me? Does the course of action fit my vocation and who I am as a person?)

Let me give a brief example. Anne is in a relationship that is bothering her greatly. She feels that something is terribly askew; she is in danger of losing connection with her true self. The spontaneous impulse arises in her to break off the relationship. Deep down she senses that this is in attunement with her true self (a way of saying that it is “of God”). She senses a deep conviction about the rightness of this move while at the same time she is very afraid that the consequence of this choice might be that she will be alone the rest of her life. Still, over time, she makes the choice to end the relationship, trusting in God.

The second situation involves the discerner making use of feelings of spiritual consolation and spiritual desolation. Spiritual consolation is a light or joyful feeling that is simultaneously experienced as encouraging deeper trust in God; spiritual desolation is a heavy or depressive feeling that is simultaneously experienced as discouraging one from trusting God or encouraging one to believe that God doesn’t really care. Ignatius further wants the discerner to determine whether the spiritual consolation is deceptive or authentic, that is, over time does it lead to God and the things of God or in the opposite direction.

As another example, for a couple of weeks David finds himself drawn a number of times to make a weekend silent retreat. He notices that each time the spontaneous impulse emerges out of authentic spiritual consolation. The impulse and the feeling are connected, with the latter acting like a root or matrix whence the impulse arises. This connection gives David reason to think that the impulse is of God. But then for a stretch of time he experiences himself a couple of times as drawn to spend the weekend with his aging father. Once again the spontaneous impulse is accompanied by authentic spiritual consolation. Because this situation confuses him, he brings the two experiences to someone experienced in spiritual consolation. The discerner tells him that the spontaneous impulse is accompanied by authentic spiritual consolation. Because this situation confuses him, he brings the two experiences to someone experienced in spiritual consolation. It becomes clear that the spiritual consolation accompanying the impulse to visit his father is considerably stronger than the earlier consolation. His guide suggests that this can be evidence that visiting his father would be more to God’s glory.

In the third situation, the person is relatively calm and, as in the other situations, deeply desirous of doing God's will. Not having intuitive certitude or spiritual feelings, the individual uses his or her reason, weighing pros and cons and considering possible consequences of the various courses of action. The person asks the Holy Spirit to guide the reasoning process to lead to what God desires for the person. The process is completed when the person senses that the questions that needed answering were indeed answered by the Spirit-guided reasoning process.

Jane, a young professor of social ethics at a Jesuit college, needs to make a decision about how to spend her sabbatical semester. Over time it becomes clear to her that she could spend the whole time writing several articles and trying to get them published. But she also recognizes that she might profitably spend a few weeks volunteering at a nearby L’Arche, a faith community whose core members are people with intellectual disabilities.

She prays earnestly for the Holy Spirit’s guidance while carefully weighing the pros and cons of the alternatives. She asks for Ignatian “indifference” as well, so as to be open to God's desire about the alternatives. Over time the most convincing reason for the second alternative is that it would provide an opportunity for her to be exposed to people on the margins, the kind of folks she teaches about all the time. She concludes her discernment process with the tentative decision to combine time at L’Arche with time devoted to writing. She offers her decision to God and asks for confirmation, if God is willing to give it. After some days she hears within herself the words: “Become friends with poor people!” She accepts this as confirmation because of the deep place within her from which the interior words emerged.

All three times are valid, each in its own right. Ignatius says that if time allows, we, like Jane, can ask God for confirmation, either by God’s giving us a different kind of evidence or a repetition of the evidence that helped us earlier.

Ignatian discernment of God's will is a process of partnering with God in one of the most important dimensions of human living: decision-making. By participating in this process we are seeking to discover how we can best contribute to God’s project in the world, the transformation of all things into the new creation God is laboring to bring about.
Group Discernment: Caring for the Common Good

By Brian McDermott, S.J.

Group discernment offers an opportunity for teams of people at a college or university to engage in decision-making with a more unbiased spirit than might otherwise be present in the process. The spiritual freedom at the heart of such a discernment offers hope that the decision arrived at will be more richly framed than otherwise and will better serve the common good. In addition, discernment allows the participants to partner with God in the process, thus deepening the resources for their decision.

A major feature that distinguishes group discernment from ordinary decision-making is that each member engages in individual discernment at every step of the process. This means that each member is always asking for the Holy Spirit’s assistance for openness, for freedom from bias, and for the grace to find what God wants the individual to bring to the table at each stage of the decision-making. Each member is praying and striving for a good measure of Ignatian “indifference,” volitional freedom, so as to be able to hear and do God’s will. In ordinary decision-making, the individuals may seek to become free of biases, but they usually advocate for a particular position without even thinking about seeking the Spirit’s assistance to do God’s will.

The second major difference from ordinary decision-making is that in group discernment all of the participating members seek to offer the very best input they can regarding all of the proposed alternatives. In ordinary group decision-making, individuals often have their own convictions about the correct way to proceed and seek to convince others of the rightness of their position. In group discernment, however, they desire to arrive at the richest possible framing of the issue(s) facing the group and the most robust expression of the cons and pros.

The overall decision-making process involves four stages: (1) evaluation (“what is the present state of affairs, dimension of the problem, seriousness of the crisis, etc.?); (2) recommendation (“what are alternatives we might choose to address the situation?”); (3) decision (“what will be done?”); and (4) implementation (“by whom and how will the agreed-upon decision be carried out?”). Evaluation and recommendation should be distinct from implementation of the decision. The roles of the individual members need to be clear at each stage. All members need to do their own individual discernment about what God wants them to bring to the table during the evaluation and recommendation stages. At the outset they need to be clear whether all members will be asked to contribute to the implementation stage or only certain designated members.

The seat of final decision-making must also be clear from the start. It can be a person, a subgroup, a majority vote of the discerning group, or a person or agency outside the group. The decision-maker is responsible for gathering all the input from the members, determining the course of action to take, and explaining the principal reasons for this course of action. If the decision-maker is a member of the discerning group, he or she has to be one voice among the many during the evaluation and recommendation.

Subsequent to the group discernment, the decision-maker will need to do his or her own individual discernment with regard to the actual decision (“given the discerned input of the group, what decision does God want me to make here and now?”). The discerned recommendation of the group informs but does not determine the final decision.

At each step of the process members must not seek to answer the question, “What does God want the group to do?” Rather, the question is always, “What is it that God wants me to say to the group to contribute to its corporate discernment?”

Discernment can involve healthy conflict, since God may be asking different individuals to bring forward different perspectives. The contributions of genuine individual discernment will never be contradictory, however,
because individual discernment always bears on how God wants the individual discerner to act freely in the here and now. In other words, in the context of group discernment, the individuals involved are always asking: “What insights, reasons, considerations does God want me to bring to the group at this juncture in the process?” There must be time for individual prayer and reflection before each group session; after that, individuals bring the fruit of their individual discernment to the group.

In considering alternatives the negative should be considered first and then, often in a second session, the positive. All must contribute to the session(s). In the course of the group deliberation it may well happen that a contribution from one or more of the discerners may call for a reframing of the question, issue, or alternatives. The point is to develop as rich a framing of the issues and alternatives as possible.

The discerning group needs to agree ahead of time about how to come to a conclusion about the recommendation(s) to be made to the final decision-maker. And it must agree at the start of the process to accept the decision-maker’s decision. The first two stages are consultative in nature. The decision-maker’s discernment, on the other hand, is the executive decision. At the end of the process the individual members need to pray for an open and cooperative spirit, particularly if the decision went contrary to their desires.

Let me offer a brief example of the process. A small team of administrators in university human resources is facing a challenge. Higher-ups have seriously reduced their budget for the new fiscal year, and they have to make some tough decisions about how to allocate their reduced funds. They can’t continue to fund all the projects they previously underwrote. What projects should be dropped or reduced in size?

All the members of the team have taken workshops at this Jesuit university on Ignatian values and discernment. They agree that they want to be discerning in their deciding. Not all members of the team are believers, but all are willing to relate to Spirit—that is, God or their true self—for assistance in their process.

The first thing they do is to meet and pray for the Spirit’s guidance during the whole process. They ask the Spirit’s guidance at each step, individually and as a group. Then they individually reflect on the best way to frame the alternatives. Returning to the full group, they share what they have come to individually, listening to each other very carefully. Then they go back to reflect and pray over the input from the whole group, and then they return again to the whole group to share what they sense is the best framing of the alternatives.

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To direct the Spiritual Exercises is to be a privileged witness to the deepening of the love relationship between God and the retreatant. I have had the opportunity to direct the full 30-day Exercises for about 30 men and women. I have also directed several people through the Spiritual Exercises in Everyday Life (SEEL), a program that spreads the Exercises throughout a period of several months at a less intense level. Finally, I have directed several people through an eight-day abbreviated version of the Exercises.

To direct the Exercises is to enter into the relationship between God and the retreatant in such a way that the true director of the retreat, the Holy Spirit, has as clear and free a hand with the retreatant as possible. In one sense, this means that I, as director, will do as much as I can to stay out of the way of the Spirit. In a more active sense, this means that I will try to positively nurture the relationship between God and the retreatant.

One aspect of this nurturing is to provide retreatants with a way to talk about their experiences in prayer. Some are unaccustomed to paying attention to the emotions and spiritual movements that arise during prayer. I can help them find the words to describe these and help sort them out. Others after several days of very easy and consoling prayer hit the wall with what seems to be a miserable, wasted day. This gives me an opening to discuss consolation and desolation in prayer, to validate their experience, and to tell them that this does not mean that their prayer is bad in some way.

A second aspect of this nurturing is to suggest the next step, based upon the retreatant’s experience so far. This is not telling the retreatant that, since this is day 14, the contemplation must be a particular Gospel passage. Rather, the Holy Spirit is the true director, and the retreatant and I are trying to discern the Spirit’s direction. As I listen to the retreatants’ experiences from day to day, and as the retreatants hear themselves, clarity of direction arises on many levels, from suggesting the particular day’s prayer to progressing through the main stages of the retreat, to discerning God’s call beyond the retreat.

In day-to-day steps, the Spirit might simply lead a retreatant through one of the Gospels. But often the Spirit may move in an unexpected way. For one retreatant, I suggested that, if so moved, she might look at the visitation of Mary to Elizabeth. This off-handed suggestion on my part led to an extremely fruitful and consoling prayer for the retreatant and gave her some important insight into her life outside the retreat. Many times, a little bump from the Spirit has prompted a prayer suggestion which ends up being valuable to the retreatant.

Retreatants move through the major stages of the retreat as the Holy Spirit directs, not according to some imposed schedule. Often they worry that they are behind or ahead of where they should be. My role as director is to keep retreatants focused on their own personal relationship with God. They may finish in 30 days, but with different amounts of time in each stage. One retreatant completed the 30-day retreat well after the official 30 days.

Inspiration does not stop at the end of the last day of the retreat. The Holy Spirit in the Spiritual Exercises helps enlighten the retreatant about the future and gives the retreatant the spiritual tools he or she needs to discern the continuing call. And this means my role as director phases out, leaving the retreatant better able to hear and to follow the Spirit in real life.

Besides the deepening of the relationship between God and the retreatant, I also find that my own relationship to God is enhanced by the process of directing the exercises. My own prayer life deepens. As I assist the retreatant, I am looking more explicitly for how the Spirit is moving. In giving instruction to the retreatant, I also am giving instruction to myself. As I ask the retreatant to describe his or her emotional events during prayer, I become more aware of those movements that are happening in me as I converse with the retreatant. Finally, the retreatants’ perspectives help me to refine and refresh my own.

I also find that my trust in the working of the Holy Spirit steadily increases as I gain more experiences in direction. At the beginning of a retreat, I often wonder just how and if everything will come together. And by the end I once again stand amazed at the wonderful and often completely unexpected ways in which the Holy Spirit accomplishes her mission.
language can be confusing, but spiritual language can be particularly confounding because its specialized terminology can take on several different meanings for the casual listener. Ignatian spirituality is not immune to this problem. Those who read *Conversations* are likely familiar with several Ignatian terms, such as “Magis,” “AMDG,” and “Examen,” that are parlayed about at meetings, on retreats, and in casual conversation on the job. Those of us who use these terms may assume that those to whom we are speaking understand loud and clear what we are communicating. This may not be the case.

One valuable resource for all students of the Exercises is the excellent book by Michael Ivens, S.J., *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises* (Gracewing Press, 1998). Ivens goes step-by-step through the Exercises and explains in detail what Ignatius was attempting to communicate to retreat directors (and indirectly to retreatants) through his language. Ivens is particularly helpful in explaining the terms *indifference*, *consolation*, and *desolation*.

Ten years ago I wrote a piece for the journal *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* titled, “Whatever! Is NOT Ignatian Indifference: Jesuits and the Ministry to Young Adults.” I recall at the time hearing young adults use the term “Whatever!” often to imply a lack of concern or a “blowing off” of something they had no time or patience to confront. I formed an image in my mind of an elderly Jesuit walking through a college campus, hearing students utter this term, and reflecting, “How wonderful that our young people today are so open to ‘whatever’ the Lord desires of them!” This was my tongue-in-cheek attempt to illustrate that not only do ministers need to understand young people’s language, but that we also need to translate our antiquated terminology so they can understand it. “Indifference” is a particularly troublesome word, as Ignatius’s intended meaning is so radically different from its use in the contemporary vernacular.

The word *indifference* appears in the Principle and Foundation at the beginning of the Exercises right after the annotations. According to Ivens, “indifference” need not possess a negative meaning. “The indifference of the Exercises is a stance before God, and what makes it possible – and also something quite other than either apathy or stoicism – is a positive desire for God and his will.” Indifference is a grace that ultimately opens our hearts to God so that we choose that which is the most good.

The late Dean Brackley, in his exquisite book *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times*, also attempts to clarify the meaning of indifference. “Indifference means inner freedom. It is the capacity to sense and then embrace what is best, even when that goes against our inclinations.” The most significant misunderstanding about indifference is that it means lack of passion or apathy. Not so, writes Brackley, “It means being so passionately and single-mindedly committed, so completely in love, that we are willing to sacrifice anything, including our lives, for the ultimate goal.” (Brackley, 12)

*Consolation* and *desolation* are also frustratingly ambiguous terms. When someone loses a loved one, we try to console them, meaning ease their pain and provide comfort. In common parlance, desolation implies despair or depression. Ignatius’s use of the terms consolation and desolation means something different entirely. These are spiritual terms, not derived from textbook psychology.

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*Say WHAT?!*  
*The Ambiguity of Ignatian Terminology*  
*By David Nantais*

David Nantais is director of university ministry and adjunct professor of philosophy and religious studies at University of Detroit Mercy.
Ivens sheds light on the intended meaning in the Exercises: “In the last analysis, consolation ‘consoles’ because whatever its form, whether unambiguous or implicit and discreet, it is a felt experience of God’s love building up the Christ-life in us. And what characterizes every form of spiritual desolation is a felt sense of dissonance which is the echo in consciousness of an influence tending of its nature to undermine the Christ-life, and hence in the case of a person who remains fundamentally Christ-oriented to contradict their most deep-seated inclinations.” (Ivens, 206)

Brackley also fleshes out the meaning of consolation and desolation. “Though pleasant, consolation is different from pleasure. Whereas pleasure passes with its stimulus, consolation produces abiding peace and joy.” (Brackley, 48) Consolation can feel like an intense high or it can be a subtle warmth. Brackley writes that consolation is definitely not equated with happiness, as it can also come in the form of “redemptive sorrow that heals and unites us to others – for example, when we are mourning the death of a friend and wish to be nowhere else but there, sharing that family’s loss.” (Brackley, 49) On the other hand, “Desolation drains us of energy. We are attracted to the gospel of self-satisfaction. We feel drawn backward into ourselves. Life feels burdensome, the thought of generous service repugnant, devotional practices boring and distasteful. God seems absent, God’s love unreal.” (Brackley, 49-50)

Language is fluid, which makes it both fascinating and frustrating. This is especially true of spiritual language, which needs to adapt to changing times while simultaneously maintaining aspects of the original intention of the author. In The Book Thief author Markus Zusak writes, “I have hated words and I have loved them, and I hope I have made them right.” I share this sentiment, and I think Ignatius would concur. If not, then, “Whatever!”.

Mission Matters:
What Do Jesuits Mean By Cura Personalis?

By Anthony McGinn, S.J.

When the Jesuits try to explain the background of their mission in education, they frequently point to the experience of their founder, Ignatius of Loyola, and his early companions. Their spiritual experiences provided the groundwork for the educational system that quickly developed after the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540.

Today the term Ignatian is used to describe all sorts of praiseworthy educational and formational developments; some, however, are only tangentially related to the experience of Ignatius and his companions.

Sometimes the use of Ignatian terms devolves into jargon. One of the most commonly misapplied Ignatian term is the Latin cura personalis, which means care for the individual person.

The personal care for students is hardly a unique Jesuit value. Claiming that cura personalis is distinctively Jesuit is tantamount to trying to copyright the alphabet. Perhaps there have been some cultures and schools where teachers were not expected to care about the students as persons. They are certainly the exception. The Jesuits have no monopoly on cura personalis, a quality one expects every teacher to have.

The first documented use of the term cura personalis in a Jesuit context appeared in a 1951 letter to provincial superiors by Jean-Baptiste Janssens, S.J., Superior General of the Jesuits. He urged the provincials to balance their concern for the welfare of Jesuit schools and other institutions with a care for individual Jesuits. Assignments of Jesuits should not be made solely for the benefit of the works; the provincial must also exercise cura personalis and consider the personal needs of the Jesuits.

Misunderstandings develop when one removes the Ignatian term from its original context. The term cura personalis was not widely used in Jesuit educational circles until about 30 years ago. For centuries, the Jesuits certainly practiced personal care for their students, but they did not write about it as if it were a constitutive part of the Society’s charism. Perhaps the contemporary concern for cura personalis reflects our own historically conditioned context rather than a value deeply rooted in the spiritual experience of Ignatius and the other the early Jesuits.

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I am what some people refer to as an “atheist” since I have never had experiences that would lead me to theism. This absence of theistic experiences has prevailed despite the fact that, for more than five decades, I have immersed myself in the study of religious traditions and communities, obtained three degrees in the study of religion, talked with countless others interested in this vital topic, and written a number of books that address religious traditions squarely. As I study religion, I use a perspective on the admittedly popular issue of “theism versus atheism” that may seem unusual to both theists and atheists alike. In summary, I prefer to get beyond the atheism/theism division.

This desire to get beyond the theism/atheism divide led me to pursue various aspects of the Spiritual Exercises with Tom Colgan, S.J., at Canisius College. Over time, Tom and I became good friends through sharing freely. On my side, I felt free to share my experiences of love found in family, a committed marriage, and friendships with people around the world. I was also able to share what I have learned from involvement in social causes that affirm the dignity of human lives and through writing and lecturing publicly about ethics and the importance of caring about the natural world and our nonhuman neighbors.

As I embarked upon my exploration of the Ignatian tradition with Fr. Tom, I recognized that what is at stake for many others who embark on this journey is not what was at stake for me. I respect that it is normal that theists seek in these Exercises an affirmation of their belief in God. I suspect, too, that what is at stake for non-theists who pursue this or any other wisdom tradition is something parallel – namely, an affirmation of their existing view.

But as I worked with Fr. Tom, I sensed that something else can be achieved through the Exercises and that this alternative achievement is separate and apart from an affirmation of one side or another of the stark dualism inherent in a “theism versus atheism” framing of our human search for meaning. For me, what is at stake in pursuing a wisdom tradition is something immediate about human life - this is our inevitable encounter with what drove Fr. Thomas Berry’s observation that “indeed we cannot be truly ourselves in any adequate manner without all our companion beings throughout the earth. The larger community constitutes our greater self.”

“I think that both theists and atheists encounter this aspect of our lives but sometimes fail to notice it or, if they do, to take it seriously. Berry’s insight is embodied in an equally important observation made by Viktor Frankl in his Man’s Search for Meaning: “self-actualization is possible only as a side-effect of self-transcendence.”

The Exercises, in my experience, repeatedly open one up to self-transcendence and the more-than-human world because, borrowing a phrase from Walter Burghardt, S.J., they immerse one in “a long, loving look at the real.” It takes Ignatian patience and humility, I think, as well as both generosity and a willingness to respect, to see other beings for who and what each really is. With this approach, one can discern the actualities of both humans and nonhumans only if one is willing to set aside one’s preexisting expectations and beliefs about the profound realities that surround us every day of our lives.

Although I sometimes fail in my efforts to live out these insights, I am deeply thankful for those features of the Ignatian spirituality tradition that prompt me to recognize that there are more foundational questions for me to ask than whether someone I encounter is an advocate of theism or atheism. Foremost among the questions I ask each day as I try to negotiate our extraordinarily complicated and frictiony human societies are “Does this person care about and help others?” and “If so, who are those others?”
Not long after the 2005 premiere of an interfaith work that I had composed as a response to the events of September 11, 2001, a colleague-friend and I sought out Randy Roche, S.J., co-director of LMU’s Center for Ignatian Spirituality, as a mentor for the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. During the course of study and contemplation that followed, I was never shy (as my co-exercitant and mentor can readily attest) to point out coherences between texts of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and texts that I have come to know through Buddhist study and practice. The “Principle and Foundation” (annotation 23), together with the insightful exegesis of Joseph A. Tetlow, S.J., comes to mind as an early example.

Father Tetlow’s exegesis reads: “When we are under no obligation of conscience, we ought to keep ourselves free of any fixed preference.” I could not help but be reminded of the Xinxin Ming (Faith-mind inscription) of the Third Zen Ancestor, Sengcan (d. ca 600 C.E.): “If you wish to know the truth, then hold to no opinions for or against anything. … To set up what you like against what you dislike is the disease of the mind.” (See: Harada, Shodo. Sansokanchi Zenji on believing in mind www.onedropzen.org/uploads/Shinjinnomei_first_part).

Before long, passages of Scripture also had begun to suggest resonance with Buddhist teachings. Compare Hebrews 2:9, in which Christ’s vow to “taste death for every man” aligns with the vow of a Bodhisatva to liberate all beings, “however numberless.” At a point several months into the Exercises, the prayer attributed to St. Teresa of Ávila came to my attention: “Christ has no body but yours.” As a meditation that seemed consonant with Ignatius’s “Contemplation of the Incarnation” [102–104], I adapted the text as, “Christ has no body now but mine.” The resonance here is with the Sixth Zen Ancestor, Hui-neng (638–713 C.E.): “Apart from your own Buddha nature, there is no other Buddha.”

In January, our consideration of “Matters about which an Election Should be Made” (Sp. Ex. 170–188) pointed to an earlier teaching within the Exercises “to have no desire for...benefice or anything else unless Divine Majesty has put proper order into those desires” (Sp. Ex. 16). Compare with the Daodejing (49): “The wise have no minds of their own.” Both passages call for ever deeper examination of the unquestioning assumption of a fixed self that claims, and thereby limits (some Buddhist texts say “imprisons”), identity.

In an essay entitled “Finding God in All Things,” Michael Himes has suggested that agape – which he translates from the Greek as “self-gift” – is the “least wrong” metaphor for God. Fr. Himes goes on to say that grace is the activity of God calling all things into being. In this respect, grace aligns in a very nearly exact way with the activity that Buddhism calls “conditioned co-origination” (Sanskrit: pratîtyasamutpāda; Japanese: engi). My principal teacher, Kyozan Joshu Sasaki, often referred to this as “dharma activity” and was equally content to call it “the embrace of God’s love.” That metaphor again!

If, as Fr. Teilhard de Chardin has written, “the problem to which all of this leads is love,” then we are obliged to ask what precisely is the problem. In my experience of both Ignatian and Buddhist spiritual practices, it is the conundrum of using myself to give myself away, of using will to attain to will-lessness, of “catching on and letting go” to the one moment at hand. And to a faith that in that moment Grace becomes me.

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Seven years ago I completed the Spiritual Exercises under the guidance of Darrell Burns, S.J. One can do the Exercises without departing for an extended retreat and instead make them while going on in one’s everyday normal course of life. That is what I did. I practiced them daily and met with my director once a week. This changed my whole perspective on life and, most particularly, on my artwork. Before my experience of the Exercises, I was a traditional landscape painter, concentrating on developing my skills and hoping that my art would be successful by looking the way I wanted it to look. Being so focused on the outcome brought a lot of strife because I was trying to control the end result. The Spiritual Exercises helped me understand that I am not the sole creator of my work, but a co-creator with God. I now listen to my work and allow it to give me the answers. I stay open in the creative process with a trust that all has a purpose, even the mistakes, twists, and turns, and that the end result is exactly as it is intended by God to be.

As I got to know St. Ignatius, I was surprised by how much I related to this man who lived at the turn of the 16th century. I was inspired to create a series of paintings based on his life and spirituality. I named these works *Adsum* because that is the Latin word for Mary’s response when Gabriel asked her to have the son of God. It means, “I am here and completely available and willing to serve God.” The Spiritual Exercises moved me closer to that point.

The third week of the Spiritual Exercises deals with the crucifixion and then resurrection of Christ. I realized that a God who can make something as ugly and horrible as what happened in the passion at Calvary into something beautiful can make anything I offer him into something beautiful as well. I discovered that my insecurities regarding my talents were blocking my creativity. Comparing my skills to other artists’ is a futile, masochistic habit. I relinquished these character defects to the Black Madonna just as St. Ignatius did with his sword as a statement that he would thereafter become a pilgrim for God. This is one of the best things I ever did for myself and my creative process, as it knocked those self-defeating thoughts out of the
This surrender allowed me to let go of others’ expectations of me as an artist, and rather than compare myself to other talented artists I now express art in my own unique way.

Ignatius Loyola’s Spiritual Exercises continue to be alive in my life today. All of those old paintings, which I considered a failure because I could not resolve them, now have new life. I see answers and beauty in those old paintings, and it’s a joy to paint on them. Each painting session begins with an acknowledgment of God’s grandeur and an offering up of my work for God’s purpose. I am now more interested in the process than concerned with the results.

Because of the Spiritual Exercises, I experience more moments in my studio that seem like a practical holy experience. There is an intersection in the creative process where my heart is guiding my hands and I experience timelessness as I am in the present moment, filled with love. Although there was a great deal of pain and frustration before this was experienced, I bow to all of my struggles and the Spiritual Exercises to get me to the point of knowing this.

Having gone to Catholic school my entire life I often took my faith and religion for granted. I always knew it was a part of me, as I was continually taught, but I did not always understand it and rarely placed much trust in my God. This, thankfully, changed as I matured and went through certain circumstances that made me actually want to turn to my faith for answers and guidance. I credit much of this change to my religion class during my sophomore year at Fairfield University.

I originally took this class to fulfill my core requirement and for the three credits it promised, nothing more. It was titled “Finding God in All Things.” After receiving the syllabus, I noticed a certain assignment that was quite different from anything I had ever been assigned before and, to be honest, I was less than thrilled with the time it required from my busy schedule. This assignment was titled “Spiritual Exercises” and required each student to meet with a spiritual counselor once a week to discuss certain faith-filled readings and to write a 10-page reflection paper about our experience with these meetings. Although I was at first skeptical and weary of this task, I dutifully met with my counselor every week.

My spiritual advisor’s name was Patricia Brennan, and she truly changed my life. She was kind, patient, and generous, among many other wonderful things. She simply cannot be properly described—that is how amazing I think she is.

I was hesitant and timid to open up to her at first, but she never pushed nor pried information out of me. She simply let me decide when that time would be. We first talked only about the religious passages that were assigned because I was still getting used to the idea of having a spiritual advisor.

But as the weeks went on, I found myself looking forward to our meetings and actually, for the first time, excited to talk about the religion I have been practicing and learning about my entire life. I read the biblical passages she assigned me and found myself fully understanding what they meant. I found comfort in the readings and relied on them when things were tough. It was also wonderful because I took these religious teachings to heart and was able to create a bridge between my faith and the rest of my life; my relationship with God was slowly becoming more and more important too. It was, for the first time, becoming a vital part of my day-to-day activities and this was completely my choice. Patricia just guided me.

Two years later I am grateful that my 19-year-old self decided to take “Finding God in All Things” and that Patricia Brennan was placed in my life. That year was a year of lots of events that tested my strength. The lessons and wisdom that Patricia gave me changed my life. She gave me the tools to understand, practice, and appreciate my faith.

I wish that everyone were able to have a “Spiritual Exercise” assignment. In a way it was amazing to have one hour a week dedicated to my religion and to strengthening my faith in God. I have never had an assignment leave as big of an impact as this one. Even two years later I am still grateful for it. It taught me that it is okay to question, study, practice, and lean on my faith. As a senior ready to graduate and transition into the next stage of my life, I will not only cherish my meetings with Patricia, but I will put to practice all that she taught me about myself and my religion. For that I will forever be in debt to her. ■

Maggie McKenzie is a senior at Fairfield University.
So, where do I live? In whom or what do I abide? Since beginning the process of entering the Society of Jesus a few years ago and subsequently following the Spiritual Exercises, I have encountered these questions as central to my spiritual life. Initially, I thought I was being asked about my association or membership. I discovered, however, that I am being asked how I proceed, live my life, and lead others.

When I consider the Contemplation on the Love of God, I am reminded that love is shown in deeds and in the mutual sharing of goods. In short, the Exercises invite me to live in love, to proceed in love, and to lead always in love, never in fear, resentment, anger, or regret.

Where I live impacts how I proceed. If I live in fear, I will act and respond in fear. However, when I live and abide in love, I act accordingly. During my experience of the Exercises, I spent a significant amount of time with the Gospel according to John in which one’s abode and dwelling is a recurring theme. Here I revisited the Greek words, mone and meno. Mone (νομισμα-) is a noun meaning room, dwelling, or abode. Meno (παραμένω - μένω) is a verb meaning to remain, stay, and abide. Throughout the Gospel, the Greek words are used to describe the call to discipleship which is modeled upon the relationship and community of the Trinitarian God: “In my father’s house, there are many dwellings” (14: 2); “I abide in the Father and the Father abides in me (14: 11); “Abide in me as I abide in you” (15: 4). This recurrence of “abide,” “dwelling,” “abide in,” and “live in” brings forth an intense call to rest in God, to make my home in God, to recline as a child does in the arms of a parent. Additionally, the call challenges me to release the past, future, and even my professional and self-development.

Where I live, abide, and move in God’s love, the tasks, both significant and quotidian, don’t become easier, but my way of proceeding will be consistent and clear. Clarity, after all, is not such a bad thing. That’s what happened to Ignatius at Manresa. After almost a year in reflection and composing the Exercises, while overlooking the Cardoner River, he received clarity. God wanted him to live, dwell, and abide…in his love and grace. I join him in prayer and with the belief that it will be enough.

Jerome Nadal, an early Jesuit, is credited the expression that “the world is our home.” For me, the Exercises transform Nadal’s phrase into questions: In what world do I live? Where do I abide? Where do I make my home, my dwelling place? On a daily basis, my colleagues and companions in the Jesuit enterprise of higher education should be able to know and understand “where I am coming from.”

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Fr. Thomas Curran, president of Rockhurst University, entered religious life as an Oblate of St. Francis de Sales and is currently in a transitional period as part of a process to become a Jesuit. Previously, he served as associate vice president for university relations and assistant to the president at Regis University.

By Thomas Curran
Lean In fever swept through the University of San Francisco last year. Sheryl Sandberg’s book seduced me. I bought it on impulse at the airport and could not put it down. I stared at the cover in awe of her beauty, her brilliance, her smile (not to mention the hair, makeup, outfit – the picture of effortless perfection). I wanted to be her. Not necessarily the COO of Facebook, but successful, fearless, relentless, clear, strong. And, yes, I wanted her hair.

The book not only seduced me; it affected my mood. What would I do if I were not afraid, I asked myself. Alarmingly, my answers were a bit extreme. How am I a victim of the “confidence gap,” I asked myself. Am I leaning into my career sufficiently? Am I ambitious enough? Successful enough? Is my husband an equal partner? What should I do as a Catholic woman to be a stronger leader, to bring more women to the table? I was stirred up.

At the same time, I was reading The Ignatian Adventure by Kevin O’Brien, S.J., in which he writes that rather than asking, “What should I do? What do I want?” we might ask, “What is God’s desire for me and our world? How is God inviting me to a more meaningful, more joyful life?” He suggests that God’s desires for us and our deepest desires are one and the same. These words stirred me in a different, deeper way.

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My spiritual director describes prayer as “leaning in to God.” So borrowing Sheryl Sandberg’s title and my spiritual director’s advice, I began to explore how Ignatian spirituality offers an additional pathway for women to lean in.

Accompanying a faculty colleague through the 19th-annotation program this past year, I was struck by how the Exercises are a training program for leaning into God completely and fully. For many, the Exercises are a yearlong test in doing less. How impossible it can seem for the overextended faculty or staff member to take time every day for prayer when there is pressure to publish, 24/7 email, high stakes decisions to make daily, plus complex parenting and household responsibilities. I learned with my directee how difficult it is for successful women to do less, to say no, and still feel worthy.

The tensions that Sheryl Sandberg brings to light are real, particularly for women in Jesuit Catholic universities. Sharing our experiences as women can be particularly intimidating when university hierarchies and clerical privilege coincide. Women are indeed socialized to be silent, to comply, to be Superwomen. Yet is it possible to imagine that God’s desires and our deepest desires as women are one and the same? Can the Exercises be a tool for all of us – women and men – to uncover passageways to partnership beyond our imaginations and current realities?

At a few key moments in my life, prayer has felt like jumping off a cliff into an abyss. It takes all the courage I have to imagine myself free falling into God’s hands, to trust fully in God’s presence. In that brief moment, I get a glimpse of the interior freedom that complete trust and faith offer. Richard Rohr, O.F.M., describes this as “letting go and falling into the part of you that is Love.” It is what Ignatius describes in the Suscipe prayer.

Paradoxically, it has been in those moments of radical trust and surrender in God when I have found strength I never knew I had. I figure out how to solve a complicated problem at work, I find the courage to have a difficult conversation or I complete a project that I never thought I could. Through the Exercises, I have gradually learned how to live, work, and speak with greater honesty, integrity, and occasionally fearlessness.

Sheryl Sandberg described her motivation for writing her book: “I tried to be authentic and shared my truth.” I am grateful that she did. And I am grateful the Spiritual Exercises offer women another invitation to lean in, share our truth, and know our worth.

Julia Dowd is the director of university ministry at the University of San Francisco.
A growing number of faculty, staff, and students on Jesuit campuses have undertaken the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, often through a retreat in daily life offered over the course of an academic year. For many, the experience is profound, even life-changing. People who have gone through the Exercises develop habits rooted in prayer, meditation, and contemplation of Scripture. They practice the Examen, a prayerful review of their day’s thoughts and activities. They discern where the interior movements of the heart are leading. They are set on a path of awakening, discovery, and renewal. The Exercises provide a mechanism for responding to God’s invitation to make reasoned decisions, to move from contemplation to action, and to serve others.

The transformative power of the Exercises is uniquely manifested for each individual, yet deeply seated in the importance of community. The Exercises radically reshaped my relationship to Georgetown as I became acutely aware of the Jesuit values that underpinned the institution. I was filled with gratitude for being at a school where “women and men for others” is not a slogan but a call to action. I sought to discern how I might embrace the university’s mission in my teaching, scholarship, and service. I felt empowered to “come out” as a Catholic on campus and to reinvigorate my faith commitment; at the same time I became more attuned to the splendor of other faith traditions. Still, the translation of the lessons of the Exercises into action did not happen quickly for me, and it remains a work in progress.

When I was making the Exercises, I initially placed pressure on myself to discern my calling and then respond by the end of the retreat. My spiritual director wisely pointed out that the Exercises offer a structure and foundation for making choices and that there is no expiration date on the call to serve alongside Christ. Kevin O’Brien, S.J., reinforces the notion that we hear and answer the call on our own terms, in our own time. He states in An Ignatian Prayer Adventure, “we don’t have to make any offering or commitment if we’re not ready. For now, we just want to be open enough to hear the call and to get excited about Christ’s engaging vision for us and the world.” Similarly, Dean Brackley, S.J., who labored among

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the poor and oppressed in El Salvador, observed in *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times* that recognizing and answering the call is something that may take time and patience. It can come to us in a “still small voice” – a whisper, a nudge, a barely perceptible thought.

Jesuit institutions offer a variety of opportunities for keeping people’s encounter with the Exercises alive as they continue their journey and listen for the call of that “still small voice.” Some schools provide spiritual directors who guide people as they delve further into the revelations of the Exercises. In fact, after making the Exercises some people are called to become spiritual directors themselves. There is an increasing need for trained spiritual directors on our campuses to accompany faculty, staff, and students as they embark on the Exercises as well as to guide people as they engage their faith and prayer life more generally. Programs in spiritual direction that range from noncredit seminars to certificate and degree programs are offered through many of our Jesuit schools.

Other resources on our campuses also encourage a sustained commitment to the Exercises. Speakers who present perspectives on Ignatian spirituality and the Jesuit mission can invigorate discernment. All of our schools have rich retreat programs that allow participants to reconnect with the Exercises and to have time for peaceful reflection and renewal. Online retreats also are available, like the one offered by Creighton University (see following story). Faculty and staff members can participate in programs and retreats that allow them to relate what they have gained through the Exercises to their work life, such as the Ignatian Colleagues Program, the AJCU Seminar for Leadership in Higher Education, the MAGIS program of the Jesuit Collaborative, and the Ignatian Leadership for Mission Retreat. Some universities offer pilgrimages where participants walk in the footsteps of St. Ignatius in Spain and Rome. Schools also sponsor domestic and international immersion experiences where participants encounter poverty and injustice firsthand and can engage in service activities. Travel to places like Kenya, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Appalachia, and the U.S./Mexico border can be transformational as people consider their life choices in light of the Exercises.

The support of a community of people who share the gift of the Exercises can be instrumental in helping individuals maintain their connection to Ignatian spirituality over the long haul. Holding seminars where people meet regularly to pray and dig more deeply into the meaning and practice of the Exercises is one way to create community. The seminar may be focused around a book, videos, or other materials that provide a starting point for discussion. In addition to the O’Brien and Brackley works cited above, *God’s Voice Within* by Mark E. Thibodeaux, S.J., and *Jesus: A Pilgrimage* by James Martin, S.J., are examples of texts that work well in this context. The primary purpose of these seminars, though, is not to cover the material but to bring people together for fellowship and conversation. Small, less formal groups that take place over breakfast or lunch may be inviting to people who are more comfortable in a relaxed setting. Groups can provide a safe haven for those who wish to engage in deep faith sharing. A strong sense of trust and camaraderie can build in these communities that ultimately can translate to greater harmony and cooperation in the workplace.

The Exercises provide a foundation for people in diverse roles to work on behalf of a common mission and to put into practice the spiritual values that animate Jesuit universities. For people who are used to individual endeavors, which is common among faculty and staff, this collaborative work can be challenging. As part of the community doing God’s work, illuminated by the Exercises, we can follow our hearts as we listen, learn, and act in concert.

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**Resources**

Quality online resources are available to acquaint people with the Spiritual Exercises and to help people continue on their journey after making the Exercises.

Creighton University Online retreats
http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/online.html

The Spiritual Exercises, Loyola Press
http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises/

The Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius Loyola: Renewal and Dynamics, Institute of Jesuit Sources (video series)
http://www.georgetown.edu/content/124263501852.html

Introduction to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, Sylvester Tan, S.J., at Loyola University, New Orleans (video lecture)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SeysvZf58Eg
In 1998, when the World Wide Web was only nine years old, Creighton University’s Online Ministries was born. The ministry was started at a time when many people still considered the internet a toy and few understood how it would change our reading, travel, shopping, learning, our prayer – and our lives. We certainly could not have predicted that our adaptation of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola would become a worldwide ministry available in nine languages, audio files, and a book.

The 450-year-old series of prayer experiences in the Spiritual Exercises came from Ignatius’s own life struggles and his deep desire to find out what God wanted for his life. His keen understanding of human nature and his experience of having a personal relationship with God – and discovering how to “speak to the Lord as you would a friend” – have changed the lives of countless people. But St. Ignatius could not have imagined his much-adapted Exercises on the internet, and neither did we.

In the spring of 1998 we used the internet as an easy way to distribute scripture readings to our colleagues making the annual six-week Lent retreat. We recruited people on campus to help us write a few paragraphs of reflection each day. We saw it as Creighton colleagues ministering to other colleagues on campus, and we thought it was a nice Lent project.

When we heard from a Maryland woman who had heard about our website from a priest she met in Hong Kong, we began to suspect the power of the internet was beyond...
Lwena, Angola. Women often lose limbs to unexploded land mines when attempting to plant their gardens. Although the civil war ended years ago, danger still exists because of the millions of landmines left behind.

Left: Omaha, Nebraska. Mother and child – 1983

Photo credit: Don Doll, S.J. The photography of Creighton's Father Doll also helped stir retreatants' imagination.
Creighton's campus and our imagining. We sensed that people wanted something more in their relationship with God.

We knew from our own very busy lives that daily prayer times were important, but not everyone was able to find the time for it. It was Ignatius himself who first began adapting his Exercises from the full 30-day immersion in prayer. We wondered whether we could possibly create a new adaptation of the Exercises.

As spiritual directors, my colleague Fr. Andy Alexander, S.J., and I both knew that this long tradition had been handed down generation after generation, person to person in the director/retreatant relationship, and we both understood the power of that. Yet we heard from people who lacked access to a director or retreat house. We spent the summer of 1998 in prayer and discernment and decided humbly, if boldly, that Ignatius would approve of what we envisioned.

Ignatius recommended 90 minutes of prayer each day for those doing the Exercises in daily life, but we knew this would discourage some people. Our idea was to offer five to ten minutes of retreat material each week but not give the retreatant a set time to pray. Ignatius tells us to ask for the grace we want to receive when we begin to pray. We suggested asking for that grace continually during each day: at the moment we awaken, while brushing teeth or showering, while walking across campus to a meeting, while doing laundry or going to work.

Guided by the Exercises, we outlined the retreat for 34 weeks. We launched the retreat website in mid September, 1998. We created a guide or overview of each week, along with a “Getting Started” page with points for prayer and a little more explanation for those who wanted that. We used simple language because the reader would not have anyone to ask for clarification.

Our colleague, Larry Gillick, S.J., added an encouragement column for each week of the retreat.

Another Creighton colleague, renowned photographer, Don Doll, S.J., generously offered 34 photos from his vast archives to use for each week of the retreat. We added a line of scripture to each photo so people could pray with those. We realized that we could add another dimension to the retreat by teaching people to set that photo as the background on their desktops each week – an ever-changing reminder of the grace to pray for that week.

The early retreatants asked for printable versions and then audio versions, which we added. They asked for and we added guidelines for using the retreat in a group and suggestions if they were alone. (In 2009, Loyola Press published the Online Retreat in a book, Retreat in the Real World.)

We added a sharing link, where people could send in their anonymous reflections on a particular retreat week. Over the years tens of thousands of sharings have been added. Those in the retreat often read the sharing week by week and have the sense of a worldwide community all praying this experience together.

We wrote the retreat imagining someone making the retreat alone, without access to a spiritual director. How to deal with the sin of the first week without all of the personal cues a director watches for? We wrote it carefully, with cautions about guilt and depression and tried to keep the focus not on our sin but on God’s love for us; yet clearly we could not delve as deeply into sin as if we were accompanying someone in person.

We were surprised how many people took the retreat to their own spiritual director or were led to it by a director. Parishes, small faith communities, spouses, groups gathering in coffee shops, or brothers sharing a phone call made the retreat together.

The Online Retreat is not for everyone. We found that many times people began the retreat but drifted away. For some, it did not feel like a “real” retreat if they were not asked to pray an hour a day. Others did not want to pray alone and needed an organized group. There was early resistance to “praying at a computer.” Some objected to our adaptation of the Exercises saying it was not authentic, did not use the proper language, did not require enough prayer, and did not continue the traditional relationship with a spiritual director.

In the ending weeks of the retreat, we asked retreatants about their experiences and were overwhelmed at the responses. We heard from many who could not have made the retreat any other way: a rancher 70 miles from town; a dying woman in Scotland; a woman whose husband’s work had taken them to Saudi Arabia, where Christian faith is prohibited; and a quadriplegic man who made the retreat at his computer, using a pencil in his mouth.

Retreatants rejoiced in their new relationship with God and in their ability to talk to Jesus heart-to-heart in the shower or grocery store. One wrote movingly, “I returned to the Church and joined the little prayer group there – tears of joy!!”

An RCIA director used some of the material in her work saying, “It enriched my reflections and let me be more spontaneous in prayer experiences.”

From a minister: “I was given the support of a loving Christ to look at some difficult areas of life – and then with the help of a wise confessor identify the resistances, the sin – and find reconciliation, forgiveness and freedom that I have not experienced before.”

Another wrote: “The background for the week was always in my mind, and I thought of it often. I am growing with each week. One of my biggest graces is the warmth I feel toward my relationship with God.”

The Online Ministries website has grown to 9,000 pages which received nearly 25 million hits last year from 143 countries. But beyond our deep love and belief in the power of Ignatius’s Spiritual Exercises, we did not understand the impact of our small website when we launched it in 1998. Our experience of a pastoral and loving God is one we have been humbled to share with others.
I went away to college grudgingly. I had graduated from a small high school in a town with one stoplight, and I had plans to attend the community college before transferring (if I had to).

I cried through all of my application letters and trudged to the back of the line at each college campus visit. My mother signed me up for visit day at University of Detroit Mercy’s (UDM), the university I was adamant I would not attend simply because she had gone there. That all changed when I stepped foot on campus.

Though fenced off from the outside, everyone I met embraced the school’s close location to Detroit. I was engrossed with the clock tower that housed a family of falcons and broke from the tour group for a bit to explore the nearly hidden staircases in the library. After three years studying English at the university, I have left behind the child who loved a small town and have become an involved campus leader with a passion for the city of Detroit.

My decision to major in the liberal arts has allowed for my intellectual and ethical growth. Unlike science and math, where there is only one right answer, the liberal arts are just that: liberal. There is no one right way to look at or approach something. My mind has opened so much through UDM’s classes, particularly how I view the world through a minority perspective. Studying literature would be impossible without entering into someone else’s worldview for a period of time – I think that’s why liberal arts majors are often so involved in social justice.

The Jesuit influence on education at UDM provides students with opportunities to immerse themselves in social justice activities – something I’ve been able to continue through my participation in campus organizations such as residence life, Greek life, and the honors program. Through my service experiences at UDM, I’ve built relationships I’d never have forged otherwise. I still keep in contact with the two young women I was paired with in Conversation Partners, a volunteer program that connected foreign exchange students with American students. Those women are now working at law firms in China. I’ve done things I didn’t think possible. I helped to tear down the foundation of an abandoned house for Blight Busters in Detroit with a group of freshmen and faculty. I moved cinder blocks and lumber last summer for Habitat for Humanity with fellow Greek life members. These experiences would not have been possible without the Jesuit belief that the entire world is our home.

Despite the constancy of the belief in the prestige of math and science, I have found liberal arts to be challenging and rewarding in ways that connect to the Detroit community around me, letting me apply my learning to my new home. To incoming freshmen unsure of what to study, I tell them: Major in liberal arts, but only if you are curious and want to discover incredible things about yourself and those around you. Major in liberal arts, but only if you want your opinions to be heard and for class discussions to resonate long after you leave the room. Major in liberal arts, but only if you have passion.

UDM’s mission envelops Jesuit thinking and encompasses the liberal arts’ sense of understanding by integrating students with the urban setting around them. It holds high standards for its students and aims to encourage them to gain deeper intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and social development. This development will allow us to acknowledge that our privilege on campus can extend outside of the gate if we take it with us with open minds, arms, and hearts.

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Encounters with Spirited Exercise

The Eloquent Education of the Mind and Heart

By Cinthia Gannett

DAY 1. As I sit with a fine-tipped blue pen and coffee at the local cafe, feeling the quiet solidity of the table and the simple pleasure of soft leaf-patterned bench, I begin my exercise. It is a time of circling in to find focus and meaning, to suit myself to the writing/thinking task at hand – a time that invites me to the fullness of ideas not yet present. It requires patience; it requires sorting through the natural vivid cacophony of the mind. I must discover how to address the topic of my relation to Ignatian pedagogy, which derives from the Spiritual Exercises. In the spirit of those Exercises, I shuttle recursively from reflection, to experience, to action and back again, letting those various encounters shape and reshape the form of this essay.

DAY 2. I write from innocence as much as experience, as Blake might put it. But that experience matters, I think. Experience and exercise. Because, as I understand them, the Spiritual Exercises of Loyola and the Jesuits do not constitute a closed or static type of experience but rather a host of flexible exercises or activities intended to open the whole person to the grace of the world and one’s own agency in living an informed, mindful, and compassionate life. For non-Jesuits and non-Catholics, it is this expansive, educational process that can be fostered in what is termed “Ignatian pedagogy.”

DAY 3. My educational encounters with the Spiritual Exercises are several, though like most faculty and staff I have not undertaken a full retreat. I encounter them regularly, albeit tacitly, in the kinds of Ignatian pedagogical practices sponsored at my university. I have read about the role and place of the Exercises often in histories of Jesuit education. They have become an ongoing locus of scholarly interest as part of the multiyear research on our forthcoming collection, Traditions of Eloquence: The Jesuits and Modern Rhetorical Studies. (Gannett and Brereton, Fordham University Press, 2015.)

DAY 4. To get a deeper feel for how the Spiritual Exercises work spiritually in a single eloquent instance, I recently read Paul Mariani’s memoir, Thirty Days: On Retreat with the Exercises of St. Ignatius. Indeed, I have committed to doing them at Fairfield this fall – to engage in deeper discernment as a teacher, scholar, and whole person.

DAY 5. My life and work is words. I teach courses in rhetoric and composition, grammar and rhetorical pedagogy. Like the early Jesuits and, before them, the classical rhetoricians and philosophers, I am interested in the nature of the human being as *homo symbolicus*, as a species uniquely endowed with the ability to create identities, knowledge, and social relationships through language and to take action (to inquire, to make decisions, to resolve disputes, to hurt or heal) through language. So it is natural that my way toward the educative work of Spiritual Exercises is through their action as communication, through the work of speaking and listening, through the complex dialogic experience of meaning-making itself, which ties us to ourselves, to others, and to the universe of named and not-yet-named ideas and understandings. The Spiritual Exercises as I have experienced them are a form of attunement of the world and the word/Word – the inner and outer conversations that connect learning, knowing, being on the continuum of *rhetorica humana* and *rhetorica divina*.

I am not alone. Many who work most closely with the Spiritual Exercises use these metaphors of “communication,” “conversation,” “colloquy” and “dialogue” to explain what they are and how they work. They observe how these complex communicative processes work to instruct, delight, and inspire. These are, not coincidentally, the primary aims of rhetoric. Some Jesuit scholars place rhetoric – all the “ministries of the word” and the actions they entail – as centering the Jesuit enterprise collectively.

DAY 6. Manresa and Montserrat. Years ago, when I was teaching at Loyola University in Baltimore, I was able to do the Ignatian pilgrimage with colleagues from several Jesuit colleges. We read the Spiritual Exercises and O’Malley’s *The First Jesuits* in preparation for the trip. But it was only when we arrived at Montserrat and Manresa that they began to have meaning for me. Not Catholic and only vaguely attached to formal Christianity, being in these extraordinary places, even for just a
few days, took me into the moment of the Exercises in a profound and embodied way.

The remote, high, austere rocky paths of Montserrat and the dark cool sacred space of the abbey, perched at the edge of the precipice, touched some deep dim chord in all of us. The crisp clear air, the tiny mountain flowers that line the ancient trails, the magnificent valleys below, by their very composition of place, encourage reflection on the place of humans in a much larger cosmos. It is easy to imagine Loyola looking out from that high holy place and imagining what God must see, even as he could see himself also as simple pilgrim, tiny in the scale of things.

At Manresa, chapels and buildings now stand in his honor, but the cavern is still a primitive holy place, where one is transported into the scene of the warrior turned seeker, and the murmur of prayer, petition, and meditation surrounds all. A faint echo of the original Exercises lives in that stone cell where Loyola was being educated by this special inner dialogue with God and writing notes on these lessons – what would become the Spiritual Exercises.

**DAY 7. The Spiritual Exercises, Ignatian Pedagogy, and *Eloquentia Perfecta***

For several years, I have been studying the history of Jesuit education, focusing on one of its cornerstones, the aim of *eloquentia perfecta*, and exploring ways to reanimate that aim for the current highly rhetorical age. The rich rhetorical education in the humanities and the liberal arts, which included “erudition,” knowledge domains we now see as disciplines, has prepared students of every social status to participate in informed civil and productive ways in the scholarly, social, and public conversations for centuries. This Jesuit commitment to “the Ministries of the Word” (O’Malley 91) resulted in a distinctive and dynamic set of traditions that integrated the spiritual, intellectual, and civic uses of language.

For me, what distinguishes Jesuit education with its aim of *eloquentia perfecta* from other enduring similar educational projects is the potential for this integration of mind and heart through spiritual exercise. It uses the classical notion of “the good person speaking well for the common good,” the intellectual rigor of argumentation, and the inner-directed dialogic activities of the Spiritual Exercises reframed as Ignatian pedagogy. This rich integrative process of reflection, educative experience, and civic action is also vitally aligned with current educational theory. As composition-rhetoric scholar Kathleen Blake Yancey explains, “When we reflect, we call upon the cognitive, the affective, the intuitive, putting these into play with each other …” (6).

**DAY 8.** Since well before I came into contact with Jesuit education, I have studied journaling traditions, the kind of reflective practices which share a kinship with Loyola’s Exercises and Ignatian pedagogy. Loyola kept a journal during his extended discernment process and revised his notes on the Exercises many times, so he clearly saw the value of this kind of writing. Journals offer a special discursive space to move into the moment of stillness (not necessarily silence) to name, weigh, and work through the deep task of listening to some wiser inner/other voices and of coming to know one’s self through this kind of regular, recorded dialogue. Many journals treat daily and important life choices, writing to learn, healing from great sorrow, caring for the conscience, and cultivating joy and appreciation for life’s gifts. The spiritual journal tradition charts the quandaries and courses of individual spiritual journeys. The acts of mind, heart, and spirit are joined through regular reflection in what Virginia Woolf calls the journal – “a capacious hold-all.” The regular reflective writing I invite my students to engage in enacts a powerful form of learning in keeping with Ignatian pedagogy.

**DAY 9.** The practice of joining rhetoric and reflection centers my teaching philosophy and practice. In first year writing and reading courses, for example, students read and write about Ignatian pedagogy and *eloquentia perfecta* in order to engage with the Jesuit educational mission directly. They undertake frequent reflective activities to consider their own intellectual and personal paths, and they formally examine the nature of the rich and extensive Jesuit core curriculum to actively synthesize their learning across classes and disciplines. They learn to rely on each other and collaborate, seeing knowledge as a kind of social good, not just a personal good. They undertake research projects to foster their intellectual curiosities and also explicitly contribute to “the common good.”

Students present in a variety of media and public fora, hosting the national day on writing, generating public blogs, creating multi-artifactual portfolios, participating in university colloquia – in sum, exercising their developing voices to speak up and speak out into the larger communities they will inhabit. As a rhetorician and writing program director, I enact an Ignatian pedagogy as I foster eloquentia perfecta – studying language and rhetoric in all its forms is a means of coming to know one’s self, others, the world, and the Word and to be able to take action accordingly.
Given the vast array of available texts on Ignatian spirituality and the limited space available for this annotated bibliography, I narrowly focus upon books I have used in my graduate and undergraduate courses at Fordham University, the Jesuit School of Theology (Berkeley), and the Graduate Theological Union.


David Lonsdale's *Eyes to See, Ears to Hear: An Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000) offers a broad overview of Ignatian topics. I recommend this book for those with little or no background in the topic.


Two books focus upon contemporary engagements with Ignatian topics. Dean Brackley's *The Call to Discernment in Troubled Times: New Perspectives on the Transformative Wisdom of Ignatius of Loyola* (NY: Crossroad, 2004) offers a global and social justice perspective to the appropriation of Ignatian spirituality. Roger Haight's *Christian Spirituality for Seekers: Reflections on the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2012) addresses an intended audience of secular, alienated, and post-Christian seekers, challenging its readers to reread Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises within a postmodern, secular, and scientific context. Haight's approach is such that classroom discussions on his material have been lively.

Especially with undergraduates, I find that offering additional primary materials enhances the classroom engagement with Ignatian spirituality. For example, the edited collection by the brother and sister team of Kevin Burke, S.J., and Eileen Burke-Sullivan, entitled *The Ignatian Tradition* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2009), a volume in the Spirituality in History Series, edited by Phyllis Zagano, offers 20 excerpts from the writings of mostly Jesuit and a few lay authors whose writings variously express an Ignatian vision. Running chronologically from Ignatius Loyola to George Ganss, the collection includes Jesuit saints, martyrs, scholars, and social activists, as well as laywomen such as Mary Ward, the 17th-century founder of a Jesuit-inspired congregation of English Ladies, and Josée Gsell, a leader in the Ignatian inspired Christian Life Community movement during the second half of the 20th century.

Francis X. McAloon, S.J., is a professor of Christian spirituality and Ignatian studies in the graduate school of religion and religious education at Fordham University.
For Ignatius, the vital dynamic of the *Spiritual Exercises* is the individual person’s encounter with the Spirit of Truth. It is not surprising, therefore, that we find in his principles and directions for guiding others in the process of the *Spiritual Exercises*, a perfect description of the pedagogical role of the teacher as one whose job is not merely to inform but to help the student progress in the truth” (From *Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach* 1993, #26, in The Jesuit Ratio Studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives, ed. by Vincent J. Duminuco, S.J. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 46.)

At first glance directing retreatants and teaching students seem quite different activities with quite different purposes. However, Ignatius’s own remark that at Manresa “God was dealing with him in the same way a school teacher deals with a child while instructing him” (*Autobiography* no. 27, Tylenda trans.) suggested that directing the Exercises and teaching might have important similarities: the retreat director sets the matter for prayer just as the teacher assigns the matter for study. And as a retreatant’s own prayer activities (meditations, contemplations, repetitions, petitions, and colloquies) are essential to “making the Exercises,” so too the student’s own activities (reading, reflecting, writing, and reviewing) are essential to learning. And just as retreatants meet with the director to report the thoughts, emotions, intentions that have been elicited in the prayer periods, so too students must make known to the teacher their understanding and appreciation of the matter studied.

While we can find such similarities between retreat director/retreatant and teacher/student relations, there are major differences: A director of the full thirty-day Exercises can direct relatively few retreatants at a time. An experienced and energetic director with as few as six or seven directees has most likely reached the maximum number that he can effectively direct. On the other hand, college teachers who may be teaching three courses per semester often have a total of sixty to ninety (or more) students. Learning students’ names can be a challenge, never mind learning their individual personal, family, and educational histories. The lack of such knowledge precludes teachers from designing learning exercises tailored to individuals’ particular needs and capacities. Furthermore, the sheer number of students renders utterly impossible a daily hour-long conversation with each student such as the director has with each retreatant.

Mass education is based on broad generalizations about students at different ages, and about the subject-matters they need to master (reading, writing, arithmetic) and the order in which they need to learn these subjects, moving from simpler content to more difficult. As historians have noted, Jesuit schools, as well as other schools founded in the 16th century, introduced into humanities curricula order and sequence (which characterized the arts curriculum at the University of Paris where Ignatius and his early companions studied).

By now, the order and sequence for achieving a mastery of basic academic subjects have been well established. Teacher education is based on this knowledge. Aspiring teachers choose to major in early childhood education, or kindergarten education, or elementary education, or secondary education, to mention only the broadest of categories. And subject matters are similarly age specific, for example elementary science education, is different from high school physics or chemistry.

The director/retreatant dynamic can be more closely realized in senior theses, capstone projects, and collaborative research, which involve students working one on one with faculty. Such activities are typically reserved for advanced third-year and fourth-year students since they presume significant prior learning.

Applying the model of director/retreatant means that it is teachers who must meet the particular personal and educational needs of students. Today, however, many such student needs are met by specialists in counseling, writing, and other such centers (e.g., tutorial and other extra help for students doing poorly or students with special education needs). The individual faculty member should be alert for signs that a particular student might need or benefit from a particular service. The faculty member’s role typically is to refer students to those trained to give the particular assistance needed. Thus in schools and colleges, many typical individual needs of students are met not by teachers but by trained professionals working together in counseling and other such centers. Attention to individual student needs is typically realized by many divisions, offices, and centers, each staffed by experts at meeting particular needs. Many have the opportunity to make significant contributions to students’ intellectual and spiritual development, teachers for sure but also many others. Indeed, “It takes a village.”

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The Rise of Consumer Culture and Cura Personalis

By David J. Burns

The rise of consumer culture has provided conveniences and entertainment that earlier populations could only dream of. Indeed, most today live with luxuries like air-conditioning and virtually unlimited assortments of foods unimaginable by royalty in times past.

Consumer culture is arguably one of the most pervasive and most difficult issues of our time. Although it has brought many beneficial advances, negative effects of consumer culture on society and individuals are far-reaching. Several of the most significant societal and interpersonal problems today, be it human trafficking or the commoditization of individuals, arise from and/or are energized by consumer culture.

More specifically, consumer culture is reframing individuals’ lives and their relationships with others – issues at the forefront of the focus of Jesuit education and Jesuit concern. A recent document from Xavier University, “Seeking Integration and Wisdom: The Xavier Way,” states that the university is rooted in the Catholic ideals of:

- the sacred character of all creation,
- the dignity of every human person
- the mutually informing relationship between faith and reason, and
- our moral responsibility to care for creation and for those suffering in the world.

To integrate these ideals within today’s culture, it is necessary to address the consumer culture and its manifestations.

To further attention onto consumer culture, I had the opportunity to lead a Lilly Summer Seminar for College Teachers on “What Does it Mean to be Human in Consumer Culture? Implications for the Church and Christian Scholars.” Twelve scholars and I spent three weeks last summer at Xavier University examining the social significance of consumer culture, analyzing its effects on individuals and society, and exploring appropriate and effective individual and group responses.

As a consequence of the seminar, each participant is preparing to integrate discussions on consumer culture into at least one if not all of the courses that they teach. Furthermore, several are planning to offer entire courses focusing on aspects of consumer culture, bringing the discussion to their students.

Each participant is also developing a research paper exploring various aspects of consumer culture from the viewpoints of their particular disciplines. The papers will likely form the basis of a book of readings to serve as a pedagogical resource and to spur additional research on this subject.

Given its ubiquitous nature, consumer culture affects and infiltrates all areas of life, raising important philosophical, ethical, and religious questions. Jesuit colleges and universities are uniquely positioned to take a lead in examining and addressing the effects of consumer culture on individuals and societies. By doing so, Jesuit colleges and universities can best help students to be whole persons – understanding that they were created for relationships with God, with others, and with oneself and how these relationships can be best manifest. Consumer culture interferes with these relationships and attempts to offer relationships of different natures as inferior substitutes. Giving students a clear understanding of the effects of consumer culture provides them with the tools needed to lead truly productive and meaningful lives for themselves, but more importantly for society.

David J. Burns is professor of marketing at Xavier University and has previously served as director of faculty programs in the division of mission and identity.
The crowning athletic achievements of my life are two silver medals from my only season on the freshman wrestling team at St. Louis University High School. Despite my long dry spell in the athletic world, I have recently begun to appreciate the value of taking five minutes to stretch my muscles to prepare myself for any physical activity in my day. I prioritize this time every day to ensure that my muscles will be ready to function when I need them for anything more intensive than my ten minute walk across campus.

Similarly, I have found value in my daily Examen to stretch my awareness and expression of gratitude in my life. I make time in my cramped schedule for this spiritual stretch, because I know that it prepares me for more demanding exercises in the future. The Spiritual Exercises require a more intensive use of my reflective muscles, just as a wrestling tournament requires the intensive use of other muscles. Both of these strenuous activities require different types of training and commitment. My experiences with the Exercises would not have been the same without first straining to say my Examen every day or struggling to enter imaginatively into Scripture. I have experienced the Spiritual Exercises mostly in an academic setting, either in a classroom or through a school-sponsored retreat. Although short, certain moments of studying the Exercises have allowed me to deepen my understanding of my relationship with God through Scripture and through my imagination. For example, one time in reflecting on the Annunciation, I thought about what Mary would have been doing before and after talking with Gabriel. I can imagine her working on household chores inside, as she is often depicted. Then after her life-changing conversation, she may have had a moment of thinking about whether she could or should go back to doing the same mundane chores. This imagining brought out two points for me. Firstly, that God can enter our lives even in everyday moments to change us permanently. Secondly, when life-changing events occur in my life, I have the choice of responding lovingly and openly as Mary did or of continuing to live my life as if it had not changed at all. This segment of the Spiritual Exercises especially prompts me be receptive to these significant moments in my life where I have a chance to say “Yes” and to grow for the better.

The invitation of the Spiritual Exercises to imagine conversations with Jesus has helped my understanding of my personal relationship with him. Often, it is easy for me to appreciate Christ as an idea or as a historical figure, but it is much more difficult for me to think about my relationship with Jesus as a someone with a personality, who has conversations, who makes jokes, and who cares intimately for me as an individual. In reflecting on Peter's threefold denial of Jesus, I imagined what I would say as Peter in talking with Jesus after this denial. As a result of my daily Examens, I was able to connect moments when I had a high opinion of my own morality, compared to which I fell vastly short in my actions. How could I justify that moment when I ignored a friend whom I had not seen in a while because I was in a hurry, even though I like to congratulate myself on keeping up with old friends? In imaginative conversation with Christ, I realized I had failed to live up to my own standards and promises as Peter did. I imagined Jesus bluntly telling me, “Yeah, you messed up.” Then he might say, “But you can always come back and make it right again.” Just as Peter made a threefold profession of love for Christ, this reflection helped me to seek amends after making mistakes both with friends and in my relationship with Jesus. The use of imagination and Ignatian contemplation has helped me to envision more readily the personal relationship of Jesus with myself and with others.

These experiences have helped me carve out both short and long periods to prepare for living each new day for the greater glory of God. It is one thing to pray that I may “toil and not seek for rest,” but my experiences of the Spiritual Exercises have shown me that the most abundant toiling in my life will require me to stretch a little first.

Philip Nahlik attended St. Louis University High School and is now a junior at Loyola University Chicago.
As Jesuit colleges and universities seek to integrate mission into the life of their campuses, many are ramping up their university leaders' knowledge of mission related areas including their personal encounter with Ignatian spirituality. The Ignatian Colleagues Program (ICP) was designed to offer time, space, and a supportive community for participants to delve deeper into Jesuit and Catholic history, spirituality, and pedagogy in order to advance the future of Jesuit higher education.

Conceived through a collaborative effort among presidents, provincials, mission officers, and rectors from the Heartland Delta region, the 18-month program engages senior administrators and faculty from Jesuit colleges throughout the United States in a curriculum of online workshops, a silent retreat, an immersion experience, a mission-centered project, and a capstone experience. Ignatian colleagues keep a journal of their experiences and post online summaries of their reflection essays. Sharing an Ignatian reverence for human, spiritual freedom, ICP avoids anything like indoctrination and welcomes diverse participants. Now under the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU), ICP is currently housed on the campus of Fairfield University.

The high quality of the program since its inception six years ago owes much to the leadership of executive director Edward Peck, Ph.D. (John Carroll University). Additionally, collaborative efforts and significant dedication to fostering mission between Peck and other senior leaders across many Jesuit campuses have made ICP a great success. Mission and identity officers, campus presidents, theologians, spiritual directors, senior administrators and other experts have served as workshop presenters and leadership team members for the program.

Key companions to Ignatian Colleagues are their campus coordinators. Coordinators meet monthly with current members to help them reflect on and integrate their experience. They also act as a sounding board as participants plan their final projects. Additionally, coordinators bring together current and former ICP members to connect with one another and to discuss how they can further the Jesuit and Catholic mission on their own campus and beyond.

Joseph DeFeo is the new executive director of the Ignatian Colleagues Program. Special thanks to Thomas Kelly, professor of theology at Creighton University and ICP immersion coordinator, for contributing to this article. For more information on the Ignatian Colleagues Program and to view mission project outlines see www.ignatiancolleagues.org.
Online Learning
A series of six online workshops provides a foundation for learning about and reflecting on key Jesuit and Catholic concepts. Developed by theologians, Jesuits, and staff, each workshop contains approximately 10-12 hours of material including articles, videos, and reflection essay prompts. Some workshops topics include Ignatius as a spiritual administrator, Ignatian humanism and pedagogy, faith and justice, secularity, Jesuit education, Catholicity, and discernment.

Teleconference conversations guided by a facilitator invite colleagues to dig deeply into the material, listen to experts, and engage in conversation in light of current issues facing campuses. Topics have included how Jesuit and/or Catholic schools are or “should be” and a case study about the Mass of the Holy Spirit with the goal of remaining welcoming to persons of other or of no faith perspectives. Conversations like these help participants consider alternatives and integrate mission in ways that fit their campus culture.

Silent Retreat
An in depth experience of Ignatian spirituality is foundational for helping colleagues better understand the spirituality that animates the Jesuit educational system for which they (and all) are responsible. The Magis retreat is an eight-day silent retreat based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Each day, talks are given on a particular Ignatian theme and participants are accompanied by a spiritual companion to discuss their ongoing experience. While initially some colleagues have concerns about remaining silent for an entire week, attendees are often pleasantly surprised at the many gifts received through this experience.

One retreatant has commented:

The Magis retreat was a welcomed gift that allowed me to step back and enter deeply into silence and prayer to remember and renew my commitment to the work that I do [at SU]. There was something about being on retreat with those who share the commitment to Jesuit Higher Education and who come with such openness to the experience that made the retreat especially meaningful. It was a grace-filled week of rest and re-centering punctuated by surprises, like a tornado siren in the middle of Mass and a doe and her fawn in the morning fog. (Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos, Seattle University)

If colleagues are unable to attend the Magis retreat they attend other retreats such as the Ignatian Leadership for Mission coordinated through the Jesuit Collaborative or other retreats available on their campus. Colleagues of all faith and spiritual backgrounds are invited to participate in one of these retreat opportunities.

Immersion
One of the goals of this program is to help foster a well-educated solidarity and an appreciation of the Jesuit commitment to a faith that does justice. Ignatian Colleagues travel to countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic and to our own border to encounter the marginalized, to listen and learn from those who live there. The ICP immersion is not intended to “save,” “help” or “fix” anything but rather to encounter and to learn, to hold a posture of being learners who know very little about where they are or about the reality faced by the people who live there.

After direct contact with and listening to the poor and to experts on the social, economic, and political history of a given context, time is set aside for processing and ultimately reflecting on questions such as:

• What does this have to do with us as administrators and faculty at Jesuit universities and colleges?
• What does this encounter demand from me as an administrator or faculty member at my institution?
• How far do we extend our responsibility to others outside of our comfort zone?

What many often realize is that all are in solidarity with someone or some group. As one participant wrote:

Our immersion trip to El Salvador has had a profound impact on my faith and understanding of the Ignatian mission to serve “wherever the need is greatest.” What stands out for me now is how we, as leaders committed to a faith that does justice, will answer the call of those who asked us to share their stories. (Jeremy Langford, Chicago-Detroit Province office)

Thus a “well-educated” solidarity becomes a possibility when participants choose to learn about a place, encounter the people there, and recognize a call to walk with them on their journey through how they walk their own.

Final Project and Capstone
One of the outcomes of the ICP is for participants to design, implement, and evaluate a strategically significant work-related project that advances the mission of their institution in light of what they appropriate through the program. Mission projects have engaged undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, staff, and administrators and are as diverse as the participants.

ICP projects integrate mission in areas such as faculty, staff, board of trustees, student development, student conduct, employee orientation, strategic planning, marketing, and course redesigns to include Ignatian pedagogy,
social analysis, catholic social teaching, diversity, and/or reflection. Additionally, several projects have integrated mission into our graduate and professional schools.

The capstone experience brings the cohort together one final time where they share their projects and explore how to foster the Ignatian heritage on their own campuses. A missioning ceremony signifies the successful completion of the program.

**Outcomes & Looking Ahead**

The outcomes for ICP are both personal and institutional. For some, their experience have been transformative, as noted by one participant:

I came to the experience ready to engage on an intellectual level, but it wasn’t until I opened my heart that I became a learner. In doing so I made myself vulnerable to the experience, my colleagues and the Nicaraguan people. From that vulnerability came strength – strength in character, strength in conviction, strength to use my voice for justice and strength to be a woman in service with and for others. (Tanya Winegard, Creighton University)

In addition to assessing the program to learn which experiences are most powerful for participants, the program seeks to understand more about the long-lasting and sustaining influence of participants and their mission projects related to integrating mission across our universities.

Six years of the Ignatian Colleagues Program have produced over 300 participants throughout most of our campuses. Each year, participating universities find a growing number of senior administrators, faculty, and staff who are well grounded in our Ignatian heritage and are ready to engage decision making and strategic planning in ways that authentically reflect our Jesuit and Catholic sensibilities. As Jesuit schools respond to Jesuit Superior General Fr. Adolfo Nicolás’s call to better utilize our Jesuit network, perhaps one of the best contributions of ICP is the many long-lasting professional and personal relationships formed among participants. These relationships cross titles, roles, responsibilities, and campuses. The more these multicampus relationships are formed, the more colleagues at each school are aware of, think, and act in ways that go beyond any one campus and foster in all a deeper identity as an association of Jesuit colleges and universities.

Moving forward, ICP hopes to assist campuses, individually and collectively, in taking advantage of this rich resource of Ignatian Colleague Program alumni/ae and leveraging one of Jesuit higher education’s strongest value propositions. ■

### Alpha Sigma Nu

Alpha Sigma Nu is the honor society of the Jesuit colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and Korea. For 35 years, Alpha Sigma Nu has designated awards for outstanding books published by members of the Jesuit higher education community. The awards in 2014 were for works in the category “the humanities.” This year’s winners were announced in October.

For theology: **Icons of Hope: The “Last Things” in Catholic Imagination** by John E. Thiel, Fairfield University. (University of Notre Dame Press, 2013)

For philosophy/ethics: **The Ethics of Interrogation: Professional Responsibility in an Age of Terror** by Paul Lauritzen, John Carroll University (Georgetown University Press, 2013)

For literature/fine arts: **The Children of 1965: On Writing, and Not Writing, as an Asian American** by Min Hyoung Song, Boston College. (Duke University Press, 2013)

For history: **The Maroons of Prospect Bluff and Their Quest for Freedom in the Atlantic World** by Nathaniel Millett, Saint Louis University (University Press of Florida, 2013)

The category for the 2015 awards will be “the sciences.” The honor society is celebrating its centennial throughout 2015. Information on the awards and on other topics is available on their website: www.alphasigmanu.org.
The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) consists of 28 member schools today. What would the difference be if the AJCU had 33 member institutions instead? From the perspective of the Jesuits’ former New Orleans Province, the difference might simply have been the inclusion of St. Charles College of Grand Coteau, La., the College of the Immaculate Conception of New Orleans, St. Mary’s University of Galveston, Tex., the College of the Sacred Heart of Augusta, Ga., and Loyola College of New Orleans. All of these schools had been part of the educational landscape in the American South but closed their doors between 1912 and 1922. After 1922, the Jesuits of the South operated only Loyola University of New Orleans and Spring Hill College of Mobile, Ala. What had occurred that five of seven Jesuit colleges would close their doors during a single decade? What distinguished Loyola and Spring Hill from the other five schools? These questions and many more are the focus of R. Eric Platt’s new book *Sacrifice and Survival: Identity, Mission, and Jesuit Higher Education in the American South*.

R. Eric Platt, a professor of higher education at University of Southern Mississippi, by not being affiliated with a Jesuit institution, brings a new perspective to the study of Jesuit education. Platt’s emphasis on institutional survivability and willingness to consider all colleges of a given province, even those which have been closed, make his book a markedly new contribution. Furthermore, Jesuit schools currently place tremendous emphasis on mission and identity, but Platt’s guiding question – how do mission, identity, and local relationships, which he refers to as “town and gown,” help explain whether a school remained open or closed its door? – is a new one.

Despite not being connected to a Jesuit institution, Platt’s research both in secondary sources concerning the Jesuits, Jesuit education and the American South and, more importantly, in numerous archival collections of the New Orleans Province gives him a strong basis from which to work. This research allows him to narrate the arduous roads each of these seven Jesuit colleges had to navigate trying to make it in the American South. One of the schools, St. Charles College, faced fires, a flood, yellow fever, isolation, and changing curricular expectations. Though this college in Grand Coteau, La., may have faced the most extreme challenges (a claim those who lived through the hurricane of 1900 at St. Mary’s College in...
Fr. Agustín Udías (see story, page 5) has just published an English translation of his book about the contributions of the Jesuits to science, *Jesuit Contribution to Science: A History*. In this new English edition, he has limited the mention of Spanish authors of lesser importance and has added more about what motivated the dedication of Jesuits to science. In the epilogue he relates dedication to science with Ignatian spirituality. This book is the first to join the earlier Jesuit scientists with the modern ones, highlighting the continuity between the two periods and the difference between them.

**A Jesuit’s Reading List**

Ray Schroth, S.J., literary editor at *America* magazine and former editor of *Conversations*, recently published the America Reading List online, which includes book lists he put together at four different Jesuit universities over two decades resulting in 150 short essays with 270 book suggestions. Fr. Schroth came up with the idea for these essays while teaching at Fordham University in the 1970s. “I’ve always felt the main role of the teacher is to introduce the student to other people, and by other people I mean people throughout world history – the great artists and the great writers. I made a big point of assigning a lot of books.”

Galveston, Tex., would surely have disputed) each and every school had to deal with an environment that in one way or another was hostile.

The book’s five chapters provide space for Platt to acknowledge contextual and unifying dynamics and to give specific attention to each of the colleges. The first two chapters, which study the Society of Jesus, the Jesuit tradition of education, and the 19th-century context of the American South, are well suited for readers generally unfamiliar with the Jesuits. The remaining three chapters group the seven colleges and tell their stories. The third chapter, titled “Failure to Survive,” examines the stories of St. Charles College (1837-1922), St. Mary’s University (1854-1922), and the College of the Sacred Heart (1900-1917). The fourth chapter, “Closure and Amalgamation,” looks at the two New Orleans colleges, Loyola (1904-1912) and Immaculate Conception (1849-1912), which blended into Loyola University. Finally, chapter five, “Institutional Survival,” looks at the only two which continued in operation, Loyola University (1912-present) and Spring Hill (1837-present).

The greatest contribution of *Sacrifice and Survival* is found in the carefully constructed accounts of each of the seven New Orleans Province colleges. Platt’s careful archival work allows him to draw out the Jesuits, local community members, and students as they responded to the trials of establishing, maintaining, and attending Catholic colleges in the 19th- and early 20th-century American South. This book provides a more unified and significant treatment of these colleges than is perhaps available in any other single source.

Though the research and narration of the book come through extremely strong, the conclusions Platt seeks to draw are weaker. His assumption that identity, mission, and local relationships influenced a school’s ability to stay open is undoubtedly true. However, the contention could have been strengthened by a more thorough and explicit comparative analysis of how those three factors differed from college to college and, perhaps even more importantly, how these compared to other significant factors. Furthermore, while survival of colleges is emphasized over measurements of their success, the use of the term *failure*, particularly in reference to St. Charles College and St. Mary’s University, seems misleading. Might it be more precise to say that the Jesuits sacrificed those two colleges for the sake of Loyola University?

The value of *Sacrifice and Survival* is immediately seen in its presentation of the generally forgotten stories of five late 19th- and early 20th-century Jesuit colleges. However, the book’s even greater enduring impact might come from the way it inherently challenges those involved in Jesuit colleges and universities in the present to consider how institutions relate to one another and how concepts of sacrifice and survival might still be important today.
What are you living for? What would you die for? Few of us would say “the truth.” Lucía Cerna, a Salvadoran woman who worked as a housekeeper in the Jesuit Community at the Universidad Centroamericano (UCA) in San Salvador, chose to risk her life by speaking truth to power. As primary witness to the massacre at the UCA on November 16, 1989, Cerna testified to the reality that it was the Salvadoran military who carried out the killings. “My life changed in one moment.... I never thought my life would change. I just thought to tell the truth” (p. 90).

In La Verdad: A Witness to the Salvadoran Martyrs, a book jointly published by Santa Clara University and Orbis Press in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the UCA martyrs, Cerna shares her harrowing life story in dialogue with her friend, co-author, and historian, Mary Jo Ignoffo. Cerna begins by recounting her childhood in a town outside of San Salvador, where she and her brothers lived with their mentally-ill grandmother and abusive grandfather, subsisting on the edge of the agricultural estate of one of the fourteen ruling families of El Salvador. “I think the people of that town would say my family was the most poor of all. I will tell you why. I picked up garbage nobody wanted, but I needed it. We had hunger” (p. 3). After her grandmother died, Cerna began to work as a housekeeper in San Salvador and met and married her first husband. He worked as a gardener for another one of the fourteen land-owning families, but after his employer was kidnapped and killed by the guerrilla resistance, he became desperate for money, and Cerna notes: “he changed, first in the mind and then the face. Maybe he was depressed; I don’t know. But when his face changed to hate, I felt scared” (p. 22). Cerna recalls stories of her husband’s abuse and ultimate death and how he kept their two children from her. Cerna’s accounts of her own life, including the oppression and struggles of her family, echo the realidad of hundreds of thousands in El Salvador’s landscape.

In 1980, through the recommendation of her aunt, Cerna came to work as a housekeeper at Loyola Center, a retreat house near the UCA, and later at the UCA offices as well. Cerna notes how respected she felt by the Jesuits, how much they regarded the significance of her work and her humanity. “The priests appreciated my work.... They offered respect. Never before did I have that” (p. xxiv). When the civil war left her village without power and water for several days in 1989, it was Cerna’s confidence in the Jesuits’ care that compelled her to seek refuge and support for her family at the UCA. The Cernas arrived the afternoon of November 15, 1989, and Padre Nacho [Ignacio Martín-Baró, S.J.] offered them space in an empty guest house on the campus.

Reviewed by Theresa Ladrigan-Whelpley

Theresa Ladrigan-Whelpley serves as director of Institutes and Spirituality in the Ignation Center for Jesuit Education at Santa Clara University.
Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J., urged in a commencement address he delivered seven years before his death: “What then does a university do, immersed in this reality? Transform it? Yes. Do everything possible so that liberty is victorious over oppression, justice over injustice, love over hate? Yes. Without this overall commitment, we would not be a university, and even less so would we be a Catholic university.”

That night Lucía Cerna awoke to a tremendous uproar and loud shooting. She reflects: “My blood went cold, like ice…. Then Padre Nacho yelled…’this is an injustice!’ Now I wonder if he was yelling…because he knew I was in that room and he knows me. He knew I would hear and I would tell. I would not let anything stop me from telling” (p. 83). Indeed, Cerna did tell what she saw from her open window that early morning under the full moon. However, after being whisked out of the country for her own protection, Cerna was interrogated for seven days in Miami by the FBI and a Salvadoran colonel, who withheld food from her and her family in an effort to press her into changing her story. The fact that the murders were strategically planned and carried out by a Salvadoran military which had been funded, trained, and weaponized by the United States government in the name of anti-communism was not a welcome truth.

The Jesuits at the UCA were seeking to use the resources at their disposal to stand with those who were being oppressed and dehumanized by the ruling oligarchy in El Salvador. As we continue to discern how we are called to realize our mission as Jesuit, Catholic universities in the 21st century, the story of La Verdad: A Witness to the Salvadoran Martyrs reminds us that our work is urgent and the stakes are high. Seeking and living truth in the service of justice is risky business. But if the transformation of our world is the end for which we have been created, we will find strength and company in the witness of La Verdad.
The National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education

The goal of the National Seminar on Jesuit Higher Education and its publication Conversations is to strengthen the Jesuit identity of our 28 colleges and universities. First, each issue is written to stimulate the campus dialogue – through departmental discussions or faculty symposiums – on the pursuit of various ideals. Second, through our various departments – feature articles, forums, book reviews, reports, and Talking Back – we want to keep the conversation going to build on the progress we have made. Our members, representing various institutions and disciplines, visit three colleges and universities a year and listen to groups of faculty and students in order to decide the themes for each issue.

Members of the Seminar

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Writing for Conversations

Most of the articles are commissioned according to a certain theme for each issue, but we welcome unsolicited manuscripts. Ideally they should explore an idea that will generate discussion. Try to avoid articles that simply describe a worthy local project. Guidelines.

• Please keep unsolicited submissions to 1000-1200 words. We may ask for reductions depending on the topic.
• Do not include footnotes. Incorporate any needed references into the text.
• The Conversations style sheet is available on request.
• We welcome photographs, fully captioned, preferable of action rather than posed shots.
• Send the manuscript as a Microsoft Word attachment to conversamag@gmail.com

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COMING UP Issue #48 (Fall 2015) Jesuit Higher Education-Confronting Challenges.
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Washington, DC, 1789
Saint Louis University
Saint Louis, 1818
Spring Hill College
Mobile, 1830
Xavier University
Cincinnati, 1831
Fordham University
New York, 1841
College of the Holy Cross
Worcester, 1843
Saint Joseph's University
Philadelphia, 1851
Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, 1851
Loyola University Maryland
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University of San Francisco
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Boston College
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University of Detroit Mercy
Detroit, 1877
Regis University
Denver, 1877
Creighton University
Omaha, 1878
Marquette University
Milwaukee, 1881
John Carroll University
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Gonzaga University
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Seattle, 1891
Rockhurst University
Kansas City, 1910
Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, 1911
Loyola University New Orleans
New Orleans, 1912
Fairfield University
Fairfield, 1942
Le Moyne College
Syracuse, 1946
Wheeling Jesuit University
Wheeling, 1954

Coming in Fall 2015:
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Confronting Challenges

TENSLEEP, WYOMING. During his annual retreat Fr. Doll, S.J., celebrated mass with a fellow priest. They then shared the insights of the day at 9,000 feet in the Little Bighorn mountains. Photo credit: Don Doll, S.J.