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Il presente numero, che chiude il quattordicesimo anno di pubblicazione della rivista, propone cinque articoli inediti e tre articoli nella sezione *Rassegna di riviste*.

Aprire l'elenco degli inediti Alex Villas Boas, docente di teologia alla Pontificia Università Portoghese (Lisbona), con uno studio sulla comprensione degli *Esercizi Spirituali* in due grandi teologi del secolo scorso, Karl Rahner e Hans Urs von Balthasar. Segue lo studio di Ricardo Aldana, professore di teologia al Seminario di Granada e di Córdoba, sul concetto ignaziano di *hacer reverencia*. Il terzo articolo è di Rolphy Pinto s.j., docente all'Istituto di Spiritualità della Pontificia Università Gregoriana (Roma), che sviluppa la teoria e la pratica del discernimento in San Francesco Saverio. Il quarto articolo è di Monica Borsari, laureata in Scienze Politiche all'Università di Bologna, attualmente licenzianda in Spiritualità Ignaziana alla Pontificia Università Gregoriana, che tratta la questione dell'appartenenza alla Compagnia di Gesù di Giovanna d'Austria (1547-1578). Chiude la sezione Juan Dejo s.j., docente di storia all'Università Antonio Ruiz de Montoya (Lima), con una presentazione del trattato mistico di Antonio Ruiz de Montoya s.j. (1585-1652), *El silex del amor divino* (1640).

Tra gli articoli della sezione *Rassegna delle riviste*, annoveriamo per primo quello di Rogelio García Mateo s.j., pubblicato nell'anno 2003 nella rivista *Gregorianum*, tratta Ignazio di Loyola in prospettiva protestante. Il secondo articolo, di Elías Royón s.j., apparso nella rivista *Manresa* nell'anno 2015, che considera il modo di vivere e accompagnare le *passività* della vita religiosa, cioè quella tappa dell'esistenza del religioso o della religiosa che abbandona la vita attiva, *l'azione*, per motivi di malattia o di vecchiaia. Il terzo e ultimo articolo, edito dalla rivista *The Way* nel 2019, è di Oscar Momanyi s.j., che racconta la sua esperienza religiosa pluriculturale tra il Sud Sudan e gli Stati Uniti.

The Understanding of the *Spiritual Exercises* in Karl Rahner and Hans Urs von Balthasar

by ALEX VILLAS BOAS*

The purpose of this paper is to make a comparative analysis of the understanding of Saint Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* in two great theologians who influenced the period after Vatican Council II in the twentieth century, Karl Rahner (1904–1984) and Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988). This analysis aims to identify the image of God as it appears in their respective theological projects, that employing the inductive method, in Rahner's theological anthropology, and that employing the deductive method, in Balthasar's theological aesthetics, and to identify how such images of God are involved in contemplative practice according to their respective theological understandings, both trying to adapt the Ignatian experience to the contemporary person, each theologian in his own way. Therefore, this study intends to analyze how the author's understanding of the *Spiritual Exercises* is presented within each theological project and then to identify the similarities and differences between them. Such analysis intends to recognize how these two theologians of great scope understood spirituality first as a part of human existence and, in this context, how they understood the knowledge of God as the revelation of meaning and the source of new understanding in the search for an authentic life, even given their distinct accents both existential and on the Christian mystical tradition.

Introduction

The proposal of the present article¹ is to analyze how two of the greatest theologians who influenced post-conciliar theology tried to translate Ignatian spirituality for the contemporary individual in the twentieth century. The initial hypothesis regards the

* ALEX VILLAS BOAS, professor of theology at the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná (PUC PR), Brazil and Scientific Coordinator of the Center for Research in Theology and Religion Studies of the Portuguese Catholic University (CITER UCP), Portugal.

¹ This paper results from post-doctoral research supervised by Prof. Dr. Rossano Zas Friz De Col, S.J., at the Institute of Spirituality of the Pontifical Gregorian University. Special thanks to the Research Foundation of the State of Rio de Janeiro – FAPERJ.

understanding of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola² as elaborated by Karl Rahner (1904–1984) and Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988) as a strategy for a dialogue with culture, seeing spirituality first as part of human existence, rather than as an institutionalized religious matter.

The research on this topic has encountered the problem of not finding any previously published work presenting a comparative analysis of the understandings of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola of these two theologians. Previous authors' comparative analyses have addressed other topics present in both author's theological projects, such as Conway's work³ analyzing Balthasar's critique of Rahner's "anonymous Christianity", a question that can highlight the accent which Balthasar's perspective gives to Catholic identity, as well as Rahner's accent on otherness and on those who no longer give credence to the Christian faith. Cordovilla Pérez seeks to ground the reading of creation in a Christological key, recognizing a "grammar of the Mystery of Christ" in Rahner and a "dialectic of love" in Balthasar, through which each, in his own way, develops a Christ-centered theological project.⁴ Holzer proposes an analysis of the Trinitarian theology in both authors, emphasizing Balthasar's descending theological logic as a kenosis of the absolute and Rahner's ascending theological logic as the transcendence of existence called forth by God's self-communication.⁵ Chun investigates their eschatology and the role which the binomial Cross-Resurrection has in each theological project, seeing in Balthasar the glory of love and in Rahner the freedom of grace allowing one to conform oneself to the death and resurrection of Christ.⁶ Römelt proposes an analysis of how the two theological projects focus on the matter of moral theology, one emphasizing sacrifice and the other emphasizing freedom, as in certain respects one or the other may be appropriate for a responsible Christian conscience.⁷ In addition, there are two projects which gather contributions from researchers about one or the other author, such as Scriptural interpretation, dialogue with philosophy, and patristic interpretation, seeing in Balthasar's project an insistence on the search for truth and in Rahner's project the search for a Church in diaspora, recognizing agreement in both projects on the common Ignatian origin of the theology of both authors and which projects both attempt to bring together the contribution of each of the theologians, overcoming a polemical analysis.⁸

² From here on, *SE*.

³ CONWAY, E., "The anonymous Christian – A relativized Christianity? An Evaluation of Hans Urs von Balthasar's criticisms of Karl Rahner's theory of the anonymous Christian". *Seris XXIII Theology*. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

⁴ PÉREZ, Á. C., *Gramática de la Encarnación: La creación en Cristo en la teología de K. Rahner y Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Serie I: Estudios. Madrid: Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 2004, pp. 423–464.

⁵ HOLZER, V., *Le Dieu Trinité dans l'Histoire: Le différend théologique Balthasar-Rahner*. Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1995, pp. 55–149.

⁶ CHUN, J. M., *Transformazione della Morte: Libertà di grazia in K. Rahner, gloria d'amore in H.U. von Balthasar*. Assisi: Cittadella Editrice, 2013, pp. 259–309.

⁷ RÖMELT, J., *Personales Gottesverständnis in heutiger Moraltheologie: auf dem Hintergrund der Theologie von K. Rhaner und H. U. v. Balthasar*. Innsbrucker theologische Studien. Band 21, 1988, pp. 89–109.

⁸ HOLZER, V.; GAGEY, H. J. (eds.), *Balthasar, Rahner: Deux pensées en contraste*. Collection "Theolo-

In order to analyze the understanding of the Ignatian *Exercises* of each of the two authors, we tried to select the relevant texts of both: for Balthasar the work organized by Jaques Servis in 2009 entitled *Textos de Ejercicios Espirituales*⁹ was used, and for Rahner the 1965 *Betrachtungen zum Ignatianischen Exerzitenbuch*¹⁰ and another text taken from the notes of retreats he led, published in 1970 and entitled *Einübung priesterlicher Existenz*.¹¹ The investigation procedure consisted in situating the theological projects' general lines of enquiry or, more precisely, the Rahnerian theological anthropology and the Balthasarian theological aesthetic, and, in a second moment, mapping out how the Ignatian themes and structures of thought were presented in both, with their distinct nuances. Finally, there follows an analysis of the convergences and divergences.

1. The *Spiritual Exercises* in Karl Rahner

Saint Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* [SE] had a fundamental influence on the theology of the Jesuit Karl Rahner. In his theological anthropology, the *metaphysics of knowledge* is related with the *logic of existential knowledge*. Rahner sees in Ignatius of Loyola a "radical 'existentialist' Christian" [*Radikaler christlicher "existentialist"*]¹² prototypical of a change of epoch.¹³ Among the existential influences with which Rahner dialogues, he clearly mentions the need for a "logotherapy" [*Logotherapie*]¹⁴ that would act as a *preambula fidei* for a "mystagogy" and would help the person to become aware of the "transcendence experience" in the "concrete world". In this sense, it could be said that the *Exercises*, from the standpoint of the German Jesuit, can be understood as provoking a sense of God in the human search for meaning, that is, the search for the meaning of life, and can be understood as the experience that would offer the "conditions of possibility" for a metaphysical knowledge. This Rahnerian perspective assimilates the Kantian criticism concerning the excessive abstraction of the Second Scholasticism, instead aiming to overcome the perception of mysticism as mere "piety" or "devotion", in favor of an "existential spirituality" or even the capacity to live existentially "now" in the situation which the eschatological new times will "still" introduce. Thus, such spirituality must be marked by a relationship with the living God who acts in the

gia". Paris: Bayard, 2005; S. Zucal. "Rahner e Balthasar", In *Humanitas – Rivista Bimestrale di Cultura*, Anno LX, n. 6. Brescia: Editrice Morciana, 2005.

⁹ BALTHASAR, H. U. v., *Textos de Ejercicios Espirituales*. Selección e introducción por Jacques Servais. Col. Manresa. Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero/Santander: Ediciones Sal Terrae, 2009.

¹⁰ RAHNER, K., *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitenbuch*. München: Kösel Verlag, 1965.

¹¹ *Einübung priesterlicher Existenz*. Freiburg im Breisgau. Verlag Herder KG, 1970.

¹² Ibidem, p. 23.

¹³ *Rede des Ignatius von Loyola an einen Jesuiten von heute* In *Sämtliche Werke*. Band 25. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2008, pp. 10–38.

¹⁴ *Grundkurs des Glaubens: Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums*. Freiburg-Basel: Herder, 1984, p. 68.

most intimate reality of history, in the heart of the human being created by Him, without falling into a merely existential “horizontal humanism”. It must be a spirituality that receives from God Himself, in the very concreteness of life, the acceptance of life as a complete absence of guarantee. The absence expressed in the death of Jesus, within the mysterious abyss of God and the confidence of Jesus in Him, results in a kind of “personal norm”, a “principle of internal structuring” on the path of faith, hope, and love which leads to infinite “truth” and “freedom” as a result of “God’s Salvation”. Therefore, the Christian existence is marked by a spirituality that integrates intimacy and reality as the most concrete dimensions of life, *pathos* and *praxis*.¹⁵

The *SE* as a logic of existential knowledge aim for a new consciousness of one’s own history and for a Christian way of offering the conditions for a more authentic life. It is a logophatic process of knowledge with the ability to move the affections (*SE* n. 363) [*pathos*] toward what gives meaning to human life [*logos*], becoming concretized in a life project [*praxis*] as the [re]invention of one’s own existence [*poiesis*] caused by the dynamism of the action of grace, both affective and effective.¹⁶ The analysis of the question of God in Rahner is best classified as the analysis of the “structure of human knowledge”, and therefore he focuses not so much on the metaphysics of Being as an Absolute that coincides with God, but rather on a metaphysics of knowledge of human reality in such a way that this meaning is given through knowing the human reality, and so the knowledge of one’s self in God can unveil another possibility of history. The theoretical and objective word cannot answer for the subject, and, when it tries, it does so in a fragmented way, as such a personal response requires knowledge of oneself, from the very depths, requiring an encounter with the most truthful and fearful aspects of oneself. Therefore, it is an experience which attracts and repels, which enchants and frightens, which arouses and puts to flight, and to which no voice can clearly respond on its own, except the experience itself. Self-knowledge is confronted with the mystery of the human and his untransferable duty of authentically inventing his own existence as, in fact, his own.

1.1. *The Principle and Foundation in Rahner*

Rahner sees in the Principle and Foundation [PF] a “formal structure”¹⁷ acting as a “guiding line” which gains “concrete forms” [*konkrete Gestalt*] of existence from each meditation and which corresponds to the fundamental idea, as “essential universal propositions, which express the structure of the human.” Attention should be paid to this concreteness of the structured contents within the existential logic of the *SE* since, for the German theologian, the “Christian intelligence of God” is “essentially practical”¹⁸, and so, to the extent that experience of the objective content gains a subjective form in

¹⁵ *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, op. cit, pp. 368–380.

¹⁶ *Das Dynamische in der Kirche*. Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder KG, 1958, pp. 77–79.

¹⁷ *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, p. 19.

¹⁸ Idem.

one's existence, while receiving/welcoming grace, such reception occurs in the form of a decision in favor of or against the cause of the affective impressions, restoring the Christian *Know thyself*.¹⁹

Rahner places the PF as an "introduction to the Mystery" in a sort of theological maieutic, insofar as one draws from one's own experience an image of God which allows one to understand the image not only as an objective datum but, above all, as a "peculiar feeling" and "originating" experience [*Ursprung*], it being in this original experience that one finds the place where the dogmatic formulation was coined. Here it is not enough to know that it is possible to call God "Father", but rather to discover, effectively because affectively, the feeling toward God of *Abba* and the sense of how He makes Himself the presence of love in history. The "conceptual relationship" and the "thematic" of God are preceded by the "originating", "athematic and transcendental" relationship in which the dogmatic theme emerges, which theme becomes meaningful as an objective secondary conceptual relation because it carries a given identity which is revived in the subjective relationship to the Mystery. From this significant and original relationship emerges the existential sense of theological meaning, and so one begins to "capture" God in the "roots of existence", that is, in the desire for meaning present in the relationship, awakening to the "spiritual existence" which is the "mysticism" of having a "look at God" as a new perception that enables one to experience God's presence which radiates love (*agape*) and changes the "*pathos*" of human sensibility, such that it wants to love and not only to be loved.

It is then, when the desire is mobilized, that the "language about God" acquires meaning that causes one to think of life from this new awareness of the need to love. Having completed such an experience of meaning, one begins to see dogma as the bearer of meaning.

From the relationship with the "*pati Dei*" (author's emphasis), such human *pathos* is radically reoriented, *from loving [in order] to be loved, to [that] being loved [which frees one] to love*: the affective mystery of a God such that human life affects Him and He "opens Himself to us," thus revealing His will to love, which unveils to the human being another possibility of the being of his being as being to love.²⁰

Grace, as God's free self-communication, causes one to love and serve in all things and constitutes an "essential structure" known as Ignatian "indifference", which is a victory over "radical and profound selfishness" and which shows oneself to be affectively available, open to receiving the inspirations of love in countless circumstances. This freedom of attitude is preceded by an affective freedom that reveals itself as capable of being free from any attachment to or dependence on affection and, particularly, from dependence on those realities that provoke certain affections. The pursuit of this free-

¹⁹ SCANNONE, J. C., "Die Logik des Existentiellen und Geschichtlichen nach Karl Rahner" In VORGRIMLER, Herbert (dir.), *Wagnis Theologie: Erfahrungen mit der Theologie Karl Rahners*. Freiburg/Basel/Wien: Herder, 1979, pp. 83–98.

²⁰ RAHNER, K. *Einübung priesterlicher Existenz*, op. cit., pp. 17–32.

dom is a Christian life “odyssey” that is lived in this spiritual practice always in some new circumstances which are to be encountered in a “new and distinctive way”. This indifference, as an overcoming of attachment, allows the affective organization of the willingness to accept the direction chosen and understood as the inspiration and orientation of the “will for the better means, for the right way” in which one might “love God more”.

Thus, the *more* [*magis*] one loves God, the *more* one experiences the distancing of oneself from dependence on things, whether [the impulse be] to choose them or not. One becomes more free to say a clear “yes” to what leads to God and His immense love in the concrete reality of things. Rahner calls [the key polarities] the instinct of vitality (health–sickness), the instinct of possession (poverty–wealth), the instinct of esteem (honor–dishonor), and one’s own instinct of being (life–death). Otherwise, the freedom of Ignatian indifference should “leave all things”²¹ in order to find them in God, as a means of approaching this Mystery and as a refusal of what would lead to such selfishness and self-sufficiency as would go to the point of taking from the other to give to oneself. The dynamic of the PF realizes itself as a progressive freedom to choose to be in the presence of that Mystery which generates love and inaugurates the Kingdom of God in one’s own existence and which allows one to discover what it can be to live outside the dynamic of structuring selfishness.

1.2. *The First Week in Rahner*

The First Week of the *Exercises* aims to illuminate the condition of one’s graced limitation along with the condition of one’s being marked by the desire (gift and task) to liberate one’s freedom. [This is a process of] welcoming one’s inner movements which lead to real freedom, such as the freedom to place oneself before one’s own conditioning, which situates the self as part of a contradiction.

The mystery of sin is linked to its “pathogenic” nature as something that involves the awareness of being affected by a reality while finding oneself without the structure of freedom necessary in order not to give in to the attachment it provokes. An issue to be considered is not only that human beings suffer because they sin, but that they sin because they suffer. Not being able to leave behind what makes them suffer is a mark of their existence that affects their own way of being, that is, as “ontically sinful”. Therein is the “nature of sin”, insofar as the human being is a free being and is able to refuse the offer of love because he is also marked by suffering and thus he refuses to educate the self for that freedom which is the exercise of a continual renunciation of selfishness.²²

The exercises of the First Week aim to illuminate the human condition in its vulnerable affective structure which constitutes the root of the nature of what is called sin, resulting in an inability to react. In this condition of not being able to react, the human being sees the impediment, tending to exonerate himself from his responsibility, from

²¹ *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitiën buch*, pp. 27–31.

²² *Ibidem*, pp. 29–44; 64.

his own guilt. Here is the source of his “existential anguish” because, instead of recognizing the reality, in the pain of his anguish he “represses” it.

He also tends to confuse guilt with a “tragic fate” and thus blames God, seeing in his fate a form of punishment, or he might even “absolutize himself” such that he “neither believes in nor wants the forgiveness of guilt”. He goes on to create an “exalted fantasy” in which the human allows the possibility of contradiction, thus creating the “absurdity” that, while being of equal condition, yet sees himself as superior to others.

Consequently, in his inability to react to the events that destabilize him, he tends to deny his guilt, for to assimilate it without the conditions of hope would lead to an existence of “despair”. However, the knowledge of the cause of guilt remains “repressed”, and so the individual remains unknown to himself. This entails an “attempt against the meaning” of human freedom which prevents him from daring to “take the leap” of radically relativizing what is limited and overcoming his dependence and thus stops him “before the abyss,” before the depth of his own being, from which anguish emerges as a plea for recognition.

Hence, the cognitive dynamic of the First Week is to “taste” affectively the “sinful structure,” the “desert” of existence, and the “inner bestiality” in order to give taste, smell, palpability, voice, and visibility to anguish. The refusal of this movement of grace happens exactly as a flight from anguish. Here, grace emerges exactly from the awareness of anguish illuminated by grace and recognizes how God is present as a *second cause* which provokes a dialectical tension between one’s conditioning and one’s willingness to find the meaning of life, in order to protect the person from extreme absurdity.

The existential knowledge of sin is a grace. In a moment of perception, “a sudden leap from darkness to a light...allows evaluating” the “concrete situation” in which the exercitant finds himself, inasmuch as, with a cry of anguish, he also encounters the presence of God who remains the same and who loves the same even when the meaning of life fades. Dogmatic thematization, therefore, is not reduced to thematic “conceptualization”, but arises as a sign that allows “an original self-knowledge”. In regard to sin, it concerns the existential dynamic of becoming aware of the capacity to construct one’s own story by making vital choices to reconstruct that history, for freedom is not found in being dispensed from one’s conditioning but in choosing the best way, given those conditions.²³

A “no” said to oneself and to one’s own deeper will is also a “no” to God. This is not done by a rejection of one’s own life and of the conquest of free choices in the daily act of existence, as God is exactly this movement of freeing the will, since freedom in its “original essence” is linked directly to the capacity for “original realization of existence” in a “permanent threat that the free subject represents for himself”, not for a time, but as a “permanent existential” that accompanies the entire subjective, individual history.

In this way, even those who do not confess the theme of God can somehow respond to the call of conscience in the search for the good and for a more authentic meaning for

²³ *Grundkurs des Glaubens: Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums*. Freiburg-Basel: Herder, 1984, p. 29; pp. 120–124.

life, and can thus respond with an “athematic yes” to God as the guide to the “whither of transcendence”. His thematic refusal is rooted in a “childish and distorted” image of God. The theme of “anonymous Christianity” does not dispense with the need for thematization, since this is, for Rahner, a mystagogical itinerary. Rather, it seeks to relate more clearly the Mystery of God with freedom, as a mystery of freedom in which God Himself is not thematically accepted but remains moving within human freedom as “the freedom of the subject with respect to himself”, for the solid construction of his own history as a story worthy of being lived.

Dogmatic formulation is not dismissed but is invited to transpose its language so that human freedom can invoke this Mystery of God that already acts within history itself. Faith is thereby born from the recognition of action, not from an *a priori* thematic existence. It allows the subject to find in the theme a language adequate for experience, where the *conversio ad phantasmata* becomes a *conversio ad historiam*, a “concrete truth that appears plastically in history.” The First Week seeks a more genuine image of God who “could have abandoned us to our doom” and did not do so.²⁴

The “existential meaning of the dogma of Original Sin” reveals the “sign of contradiction” within human freedom, and therefore Original Sin must not be seen as something committed by someone [Adam] and which has been biologically transmitted, nor as something natural to the human being, in the sense of being of God’s *creation*. Instead, it is something proper to the human condition as an “original existential constituent” of the first living man. As such, it should be meditated on as “our sin, as the peculiar situation of each of us.” This is at once the responsible recognition of one’s “weakness” and the discovery of a “remarkable force of freedom”.²⁵

1.3. The Second Week: The Christology of the SE and the Unveiling of the Magis

The Second Week, within the Rahnerian perspective, is directed to creating in the exercitant the necessary conditions of an “elective posture” and “readiness of mind”, that is, an embracing of the thoughts and feelings aroused by the contemplation of the person of Jesus Christ as a cipher of the enigma of life, in which the exercitant discovers himself deciphering a Christological Mystery through a growing dialogue with Jesus Christ, culminating in friendship with Him. The Christological cipher of the enigma of life allows the recognition of a soteriological presence in the existential dynamics of the lived experiences, and thus one comes to an understanding of oneself, allowing one to understand “one’s past in starting from the events of one’s present.” In the Rahnerian anthropology this “elective posture” or “readiness of mind” constitutes the “human being as a hearer of the Word” and constitutes a way of receiving the revelation as God’s *self-communication* which gathers from the individual’s own history a thematic elucidation in which the individual begins to understand the dogmatic theme because he un-

²⁴ *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, p. 48.

²⁵ *Grundkurs des Glaubens*, p. 136.

derstands himself in light of it and so deciphers the enigma of his own existence. This is something radically different from an imposition of dogmatisms.²⁶

Accordingly, the semantic revelation and process of self-communication of God is an event that has an impact on the total existence of the human being. It is given in “correspondence to the nature of the human being, whose being consists in being present to himself and in having personal responsibility for himself in relation to the other in consciousness and freedom”. This manifestation appears as a co-response, in that one comes to the encounter of prayer as a movement of searching for meaning and discovers, from the poetic theological *cipher*, the person of Jesus Christ. The exercitant’s search is not, then, lost in a monologue, but is, rather, a dialogue with this One toward whom the theme of the Second Week indicates a journey of learning. The exercitant knows God as a response to his search, but also as a new question planted in the seeker, and thus prayer as a search co-respondent, as one responds to the other in his own questions.

The *divine self-communication* as grace is a *permanent existential* in the human being, meaning that Revelation is not a mere conceptual doctrine, but a “transcendental experience” from a reinterpretation of subjective history that notes a guiding thread conveying meaning, as a sign of the non-abandonment of oneself to God caused by guilt. Revelation thus asserts itself as a new “original subjectivity” from which the subject becomes sensitive to another logic of knowledge, the theological, that is, while discovering a correspondence of “absolute proximity” in the question of the meaning of God (*Theós logos*) in the search for human meaning.

The discovery of the divine self-communication which allows for the thematic confirmation of Revelation is given in the retrieval of freedom for the choice of this more (*magis*). Moreover, “salvation not realized in freedom cannot be salvation,” and thus the “history of salvation is also the history of the freedom of the human being.” In the *Exercises*, such salvation operates as an imaginative process composed of the themes of Tradition, the exercitant’s subjective history, and his imagination of his time, as “there is no concept without imagination, and even the most abstract of metaphysical languages operates with images, analogies, and representations as *conversio ad phantasmata*, as Thomas Aquinas would have said.”²⁷

Revelation as God’s self-communication takes place as an *existential reception* of a meaning-producing experience. It has, in the person of Jesus Christ, its “original form” (*Urform*)²⁸ as “receptor” and “climax” and cannot be known only by “dogmatic theory imposed on the human being from the outside.” Thus, Jesus Christ is the “abbreviated Word of God,” a “cipher of God Himself” and of the human itself for all eternity, given the density of meaning (*excessus*) in his *teândric* reality. As a result, “all theology continues to be anthropology for all eternity”, the unity of the “question which arises historically (which is the human being) and of the answer (which is God).” Thus “Christology

²⁶ *Einübung priesterlicher Existenz*, pp. 71–72.

²⁷ *Grundkurs des Glaubens*, pp. 146–224.

²⁸ *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitiën buch*, p. 100.

constitutes the beginning and the end of anthropology, and this anthropology, in its most radical realization, is, for all eternity, theology.” So, then, it is known in a “transcendental experience,” or, in other words, in a “transcendental Christology” through “grace”, in the ontological sense, that is, by “ontic participation in the divine intimacy” that unfolds in the affective disposition for the “imitation” of Him as a “concrete assimilation of Christ participating in life,” penetrating directly into the world. The knowledge of Christ is given as an existential identification with the person of Jesus Christ as a “change-in-the-other”²⁹ that, by “affecting” individuals, calls forth our freedom for following Him as a path of “existential realization.”³⁰

Therefore, the Gospel causes not a mere “reflection”, but a dynamism that operates to “conform and drive what is produced deep in the soul” so that the reception of grace unfolds within the “prolongation” of the Mystery of Christ. Such a structure is composed of an “existence in reference to otherness” with the desire of the disposition to live by “accepting, affirming, and purely loving the otherness”, as it is so for Christ. Moreover, in such an extension of Christ’s life in one’s own existence, one must wish to find it in each “new situation” of life, seeking the “*potentia* of the divine Pneuma” in which one seeks “self-decision” and “self-responsibility”. It is an existential decision to imitate Christ concretely in order to “hear the individual imperative of God”, that is, to assimilate from Jesus Christ the willingness to do God’s will.. Here lies the greatness of Christian existence, in remaining in God’s will, namely, in the “service of God’s Kingdom”, knowing how to read and welcome the divine calls that move the thoughts and feelings toward the decision to be taken concretely, seeking and welcoming the serenity and joy of Christian existence in the service of others.

Transcendental Christology is situated in the *communicatio idiomatum*, the participation in Christ’s life as a participation in the Trinitarian life and its inexhaustible seduction to go further, a course that always involves a novelty of perspective because it is recognized as an access to a new depth, in which it unfolds in a new consciousness of the very same history, as a correspondence that appeals to, and is attributed to, the divine *Pneuma* that presents infinite forms of the unique Mystery known as “agape in person” [*Die Agape in Person*]. The follow-up, then, is not mere repetition of abstract ideas or established customs, but an “acceptance” of a dynamism of grace which reveals the meaning of Jesus’ life and which coincides with the deepest yearning to exist.³¹

The contemplation of the Gospel scenes aims to provoke a *transubstantiation* of one’s life itself, as one rediscovers oneself before the text, but also welcomes the inner movements inspired by Jesus’ life:

What happens, in the strictest sacramental sense, in the Sacrifice of the Mass also happens truly in the remembrance [zikaron] of the believer in the contemplation of the other mysteries of the life of Jesus; contemplation is not reduced to a mere speculative inhabiting of

²⁹ *Grundkurs des Glaubens*, pp. 266–270.

³⁰ *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitiën buch*, p. 116-117.

³¹ *Grundkurs des Glaubens*, p. 128.

the story of Jesus, but what is there in a certain mystery reveals itself and offers the grace contained within it.³²

The life of Jesus is the place of the manifestation of the “Christocentrism of all reality,” the way in which God assumes all reality and our human history and in which, in Jesus’ life, grace is manifested in this humanity. The Christian life is thus understood as a *transubstantiation*, as a “Eucharist” of everyday life making itself available so that God might be served by us for a “profound reconnection to the brothers and sisters.”³³

1.4. The Third Week: The Theological Anthropology of the Cross

The Mysteries of the *Third Week* should be seen as purifying the theodicy of seeing in God the first cause of suffering or of positing the need for a *Cur Deus Homo* as a way of repaying a debt, instead starting from the theandric reality of Jesus Christ which is derived from an inductive theology which must, therefore, find the presence of the Mystery in human life and, in a special way, the sense of this presence in human suffering which remains a mystery, but no greater than the Mystery of the love of God which itself encompasses the mystery of freedom, both lived kenotically by Christ, and thus is the epifanic center of the revelation of meaning.

Rahner presents a “Logos of the Cross” in which the Crucified manifests Himself as a sign of the “meaning of one’s life”, a sign containing not only the *dynamis* of God, in which His powerlessness manifests His strength, but containing also the guarantee that, in the way in which He reveals Himself and in which He labors in powerlessness, one may come to know His *sophia*.³⁴ The Cross as the *meaning of the life of Christ* is a “sign of salvation” that produces a theology of death in which it is necessary to distinguish the difference between suffering and the Cross. There is suffering which is the fruit of the “monstrous blindness of sin” which is revealed by the Cross as a “manifest absurdity”, given the prophetic tradition that God does not abandon the just,³⁵ for the “abysmal misery” of the human being when he responds incredulously to his anguish may provoke “infernal possibilities” for the lives of others and an “immense obfuscation of the mystery.” The human being incurs the risk of assuming his status as a sinner by not believing in the “immense love of God” in its excess of meaning in the face of all absurdity, and thus arises the temptation of adopting an “anti-Christ attitude” in which one does not recognize the other as a brother and one also stops seeking what is just.

The Cross reveals that which is “most profound in the human being” and that of which he is capable and, at the same time, it reveals that the “meaning of the world is the need for love.” The Crucified One reveals His experience of abandonment, wherein Jesus is confronted with the “catastrophe of His existence, the failure of His mission,

³² *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, p. 159.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 204; *Einübung priesterlicher Existenz*, pp. 203–207.

³⁴ *Einübung priesterlicher Existenz*, pp. 227–229.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 233–234; *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, p. 223; 213.

the abandonment of His friends, the repudiation of His nation”, and the “betrayal of the Apostles”, and with the “sin of the world” and its inability of [self-]redemption is made manifest. Also exactly here, in the Crucified One, is made known a “supernatural passion” in which the face of the One who suffers is the “same face of God” and is made known in a profound proximity to the “irruption” that “manifests its power”, since no condition of sin can overcome the “unconditional love of God” from which emerges a “vital act”, not only to endure the suffering, but to assume the consequences of that for which He dedicated His existence. This is where the Cross is a suffering as an act of fidelity to that which gives meaning to His life, and He finds in God the strength to sustain Him, despite the consequences, in His fundamental decision to maintain as His life project the Kingdom of God.³⁶

In the Spiritual Exercises the scenes of Christ’s life are contemplated to transpose them under a *ratio personae*, such that the life of Christ becomes the existential logic of the very life in which the exercitant’s personality is constructed. Especially the Third Week must provoke an “availability for the Passion, a readiness “to accept the Cross in one’s life” not as a settled resignation, but as a way of not despairing or abandoning the meaning of life before the fateful. There is in Rahner’s Third Week an anthropology of the Cross manifested in life not as subservience, but with the “sobriety of a realistic human being”, accepting the death of the human being in Christ as the death of the capacity to be opposed to Christ. There the exercitant has to ask himself, “What does the Cross of Christ mean in my life?”, and he must then confront what can be a cause of the loss of what gives life its meaning. The meaning of life for Christianity passes through the confrontation with what is absurd and meaningless and which occupies one’s own existence. The Cross is the death of the absurd as the determinant of freedom and is, rather, the salvific movement into freedom that can trust God to maintain its horizon of meaning. Each manifestation of the daily Cross purifies one’s freedom to assume his life project in a more faithful and convinced way, for it manifests itself as something through which one gives one’s life.

1.5. The Fourth Week: Paschal Logic in Rahner’s Eschatology

Given that Rahner sees in Ignatius an “authentic modern existentialist”, the *Fourth Week*, within the logic of existential knowledge, focuses on understanding the meaning of life regarding the *Logos* of glory and resurrection present in the life of Jesus Christ. The exercitant considers Christ in his resurrected condition or, more, in how He entered into His Father’s life, not as a static contemplation but in order to perceive the *Resurrection* as an “event” in a “personalized” movement of the history of salvation. The exercitant seeks not only to understand but to penetrate the scene of the Mystery, in order to apprehend the “effects of the Resurrection” and to encounter the *joy* typical of the Risen One.

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 177–236.

This *Resurrection*, which impacts on existence, is not a naive *hope* that all things will always be well because of the mystical experience, nor will it end the possibility of sadness and distress or even be the mere announcement of something that “one day we will participate in.” Instead, it falls within the eschatological nature of the question of that “*not yet realized in its fullness*” which has as its goal “infinity in God”,³⁷ as long as one can perceive and experience one’s “own history” *already* being “transcended in God” as the bearer of a “following” of the Risen One, not as “magical”, as if the experience of transcendence were a “remedy to convert the world into a paradise”, but as the “internal structure of our existence in grace” that provides a “full integration” of the factors of existence. It is, therefore, not something that magically avoids the fateful, but which contemplates in the Resurrected One the existential possibility of being “triumphant on the Cross”. The scenes of the Fourth Week are presented as a “*signum prognosticum*”, as a “sign that surpasses and transcends our time”, and it is precisely by this overcoming that it is the source of hope which makes it possible to make a “leap” to believing that “everything that happens in the world is settled in the triumph of Christ” because the “resurrected condition” comes from the condition of being the “Son of the Cross” and must have an impact on existence, as the human condition of vanquishing the Cross without losing the meaning of one’s life.

Such a sign, insofar as it both manifests and hides the Mystery, points to the *Risen One* as the “living center” and “heart of the world” while “penetrating with death” the center of reality marked by contradiction, suffering, and closure in itself, and there it “mobilizes all the forces of the world”, manifesting to human freedom a *Telos* of life with His Life which illuminates and inflames the reality of the human being in grace. Hence, the person of Jesus Christ is a “pedagogue”³⁸ for the Resurrection that is existentially illuminated in the “meaning of the glorification of the Son” as a disposition for the “infusion of the Spirit” as life in the “transfiguring Spirit.” That allows real relations with the three divine Persons through the way each affects existence and thus grasps the “theology of eternity” in its anthropological reading as a “theology of the proximity of God.”³⁹

This *Signum Prognosticum* must be experienced as an “internal conviction which derives from the Words of Christ,”⁴⁰ in which it is concretized as an opening of the affective and intellectual perception of the Spirit’s promise, which moves from conviction to experience that the Spirit of Christ “is stronger in us than is the ancient anguish.”⁴¹ The fruits or effects of this penetration into the Mystery behind the scene is a “higher degree of peace.” The resurrected condition happens as life in the Spirit which welcomes the “Fruits of the Spirit” as effects that structure the affections and dispose the will for greater freedom in deciding on what is best. It goes “beyond all finitude”

³⁷ *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, pp. 236–243.

³⁸ *Einübung priesterlicher Existenz*, pp. 235–260.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 240–241.

⁴⁰ *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, p. 240.

⁴¹ *Einübung priesterlicher Existenz*, p. 239.

and extends human values to be compatible with the values of the Kingdom, so as to reach the immensity of the heart of Jesus. This occurs in a “continuous acting” of the Spirit until the “love of the Lord will know no more defeat”, resulting in that anticipated joy of the Resurrection which leads love to its “maturity.” This mature and conscious love, that remaining in God which leads the heart, is that which constitutes the *Sentire cum Ecclesia* because it is a grace that unites the hearts and by which the Spirit of “Pentecost” unites itself to the hearts of others.⁴²

16. The *Contemplatio Ad Amorem*: Rahner’s Theology of Praxis

The *Contemplation to Attain Love* is an “existential theology” which, at the end of the Exercises, connects with the *Principle and Foundation* to conclude a journey of love in the *Ignatian Odyssey*, for the Christian pilgrimage begins in the love of God as the foundation of Christian existence and goes back to Him as our home and choice and as the “essential structure” which awakens in the consciousness the possibility of cooperating with the Spirit’s action in ordering the affections to “seek God in all things” in order to love and serve Him in every situation. Thus, “love is able to manifest itself as prayer, gratitude, and an instrument of service” which impels us toward what is *more* human. It is this “love that truly saves us” and that makes the “world transparent” so as to contemplate the presence of this infinite love in everything, because God, as *Agape*, is the one who comes out of Himself to descend to the creatures and there is made known as a “love that goes out on a mission of service to the world.” Such a disposition seeks to *contemplate* God as “God gives Himself”, as “God dwells in” the world, as “God labors”, as “God descends”, manifesting His characteristics of justice, kindness, and mercy as “rays”, all indicating the Source, the “sun” by which we might “see” all things in “an authentic and profound way,” in order to open ourselves to an “always greater love of God” and to that “deepest root of the human being” known as “freedom”. So we might fall in love with His Kingdom project: “God leads us to fall in love with the concrete things of the world always according to the sovereign will of God.”⁴³

2. The *Spiritual Exercises* in Hans Urs von Balthasar and his Theological Aesthetics

Ignatian contemplation receives in Balthasar the mediation of his theological aesthetics, in which the theological discourse fulfills the function of preparing for experience as an affirmation of the human, such as the kenotic movement that is unveiled by the aesthetics or the doctrine of perception of the form of God which reveals itself (and

⁴² Ibidem, pp. 235–268; *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, pp. 236–256.

⁴³ Ibidem, pp. 247–276; Ibidem, p. 263.

constitutes his fundamental theology). In this dynamic, the possibility of an act of faith is understood as the ability to “see [such beauty] well,” more than as a “precision of the conceptual scope” which “lacks the erotic dynamic” of the Mystery present in dogmatic formalism.⁴⁴

The *Theological Aesthetics* of the Swiss theologian is not a research about the aesthetic ornaments in theology, which would result in an aesthetic theology, but a study of the presence of an aesthetic element in theological intelligence as a manifestation of the harmony between immanence and transcendence that has its apex in the Incarnation of Christ. The theological aesthetics aims to make visible the beauty of Christ’s presence in the world and has at its center an awakening to the mystical experience.⁴⁵ The Balthasarian project consists of two parts: fundamental theology and dogmatic theology. His fundamental theology focuses on the theory of perception, that is, on how the *aesthetics* or the *doctrine of the perception of the form of God as He reveals Himself* opens up the question regarding which conditions of possibility are required to “see well” or, in other words, to perceive the beauty of Christ in the world through the conception of *Gestalt* in Goethe’s manner.⁴⁶

Balthasar refers to what he calls Anselm of Canterbury’s “ecclesiological-existential form” to formulate an “aesthetic reason” as a “Christian contemplative reason” whose object is the “true reality” within a Platonic conception of the ideal. It is above all Plotinus, according to the Swiss author, with whom the Canterbury theologian would have made a perfect synthesis. In formulating an Anselmian *pulchritudo rationis*, Balthasar identifies three points: 1) a life founded on truth and available to the truth, and by this eliminating the lethal “insensitivity”, distancing everything that prevents the spirit from capturing what is just; 2) the conceptual effort to achieve the *intellectus*, the capture of the thing from within; and 3) pure delight and happiness (*delectatio, beatitudo*) discovered in the truth, which comes both by grace and by merit.

In the Balthasarian reading of Anselm, the Christian faith has the function of seeking the truth of things in order to attain their original beauty, and this coincides with the biblical images. It is up to theology to offer a reason that presents the deep beauty of these images, and especially the most beautiful, which is that of Christ, as the perfect image of God which is made known. This task, called metaphysics or, as the Swiss author prefers, theological aesthetics, aims at the perception of divine manifestations. The Swiss ex-Jesuit refers to the notion of *Gestalt* or figure which takes on the *species* or *form* and the *light* or *splendor* of theology, behaving in the figure as *integritas, proportio*, and *claritas*. The figure is a manifestation of the beauty by which it configures (*Gestalt*)

⁴⁴ BALTHASAR, H. U. v., *Gloria: Una Estética Teológica*. Vol. 1: La Percepción de la Forma. Madrid: Ediciones Encuentro, 1985, pp. 125–126.

⁴⁵ PALUMBO, C. A., “La experiencia mística como corazón de la Estética Teológica de Hans Urs von Balthasar”. *Teoliterária – Revista Brasileira de Literaturas e Teologias*, v. 3, n.6, (2013), pp. 10–23.

⁴⁶ BALTHASAR, H. U. v., *Gloria: Una Estética Teológica*. Vol. 1-6: Metafísica: Edad Moderna. Madrid: Encuentro, 1986-2006; CONWAY, E., *The anonymous Christian*, op. cit, p. 36.

the existence of being. In the Balthasarian phenomenology, the figure appearing [*Erscheinende Gestalt*] is beautiful only because there is a compliance [*Wohlgefallen*] not only with that which it allows itself to show [*Sich-Zeigen*], but also with that which it gives of itself [*Sich-Schenken*] in that manifestation. The beauty of the figure is given in the depth of the truth and goodness of reality that manifests itself as something inexhaustibly precious and fascinating.

What distances the vision from the perception of the “eyes of the faith” is founded on metaphysical alienation and on an individual rationality that reduces the Truth to a personal opinion, to a truth of the ego. Therefore, in order for the figure to be received as a manifestation of divine beauty, we must have a theological understanding of the figure, through a fair interpretation which is based on a double evidence: 1) that objective, in which God is evident among men, so that there is enough light that one is prompted to believe; and 2) that subjective, by the capacity of consciousness that recognizes, in its appearance, the very appearance of God. It is in subjectivity that faith has eyes to perceive what has been brought into the light, such that the notion of the figure multiplies and diversifies as a spiritual figure, a figure of life, of beauty, of truth, and of goodness.

Such a figure always refers to the archetypal figure of Christ, as the sacraments, following the Augustinian tradition, are the figure of Christ, the outward form that manifests itself and which corresponds to the content of an inner depth,⁴⁷ in the Heideggerian style, in the unhiding (*Aletheia*) as an “openness to being”. Doctrine is the way to educate the eyes of faith so that one grasps for oneself the visibility of God, so that Balthasar’s dogmatic theology presents itself as a doctrine of rapture and ecstasy, the radiant character of the form being an opening to the truth.⁴⁸

However, Balthasar understands that theology must turn to itself, to its starting point, namely, the Incarnation, for there is found the historical and unrepeatably manifestation of the will of God, becoming a “historical norm” because it is “from the individual existence of Christ” that the bestowal of meaning on all other existences is derived. Balthasarian Christology understands “existence” as theological “reception”, as an opening to the bestowal of being in “time”, that is, in history, or even as “openness to the will of the Father”. For this reason, Christ, as the supreme prototype of the human being, is made an archetype and a kind of aesthetic canon that forms history,⁴⁹ maintaining His presence by means of His spouse, the Church, through its “participation in the personality of Christ”, and thus makes Himself present in its “expansion” and “communication”.⁵⁰ Existence is the reception of grace, which is a Christological form of existence, a figure of Christ, and every authentic figure of individual life or history must converge into this Christological configuration which has its full expression in Baptism, in the Eucharist and, although imperfectly, in the Church. The Christ figure does not reveal

⁴⁷ *Gloria: Una Estética Teológica*. Vol. 1, p. 111.

⁴⁸ *Teologia da História*. São Paulo: Novo Século/Fonte Editorial, 2005, p. 93.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, pp. 27–29; 34.

⁵⁰ *Ensayos teológicos II*. Sponsa Verbi. 2.ed. Madrid: Ediciones Encuentro, Cristiandad, 2001, p. 148.

itself in its comprehensibility, for, as Augustine says, *se comprehendis non est Deus*, but rather in its credibility, for the more one understands something of the Christly aesthetic as a work of art, the more shines forth its “incomprehensible genius.”⁵¹ Such a recompilation of the theological tradition Balthasar sees also in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, not only as “traditional” but as something that can be seen as within the “great tradition of European thought.”⁵²

2.1. *The Principle and Foundation in von Balthasar*

Balthasar sees the *Principle and Foundation* as presenting “all human and Christian truth” and as serving as an “ABC” for those who “are in search of access to Christianity.” However, access to Christianity is also a “quest to reach oneself” as “the human essentially needs God”, similar to Michelangelo’s “Adam” who “helplessly extends his finger” to the infinite which, however, “it cannot reach if the Horizon does not come to meet him.” There Balthasar unites two maxims of Western thought, that of Protagoras, that “man is the measure of all things”, and that of Thomas Aquinas, that “God is indispensable” for the human being to find its end, and that, in the end, it is also a personal end.⁵³

In addition, the *PF* works as a “kind of *philosophical prelude*” to the four Weeks of the *Exercises* [emphasis added], in which it is affirmed from the ancient philosophy that “the human being comes from the divine world and that all his endeavor focuses on returning to it.” In this Greek assumption, the Patristic-Medieval *Imago Dei* and the category *Homoiousios* are in a dialogue in which the Christ appears as an “archetype” which recreates the human “image” by introducing the “true knowledge, renewing the human being in the image of the Creator (Col 3.10)”, recreating the “old man” as a “new man”. This knowledge of Christ indicates the “meaning of the human”, a “for what”, which is a way of life in “covenant with God”.⁵⁴

All the dynamics of the *PF* are presented in this life in *covenant with God* and are present in the previously existing Hebrew wisdom as witnessed by its Scriptures, especially in the Psalms as praise (Pss 94, 145), reverence (Ps 89:12), and service (Ps 119). Yet, the “Old Testament miracle rises in Jesus Christ to become a mystery that consolidates that which is achieved in the Old Testament and at the same time illuminates the areas that remained dark.”⁵⁵ Balthasar is also critical of the Greek “ascension” schemes which start from the “anticipation of the Absolute” and result in the “relativization of the the limited and ephemeral (until reaching the radicalisms of the *Stoa* and of *Buddhism*),” unfolding in “solitary schemes” and “individualisms”, even though they may be seen as a

⁵¹ *Gloria: Una Estética Teológica*. Vol. 1, p. 171.

⁵² *Textos de Ejercicios Espirituales*, op. cit., p. 128.

⁵³ *Idem*.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 130.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 131–133.

kind of “mass ecstasy”, as “illusory exaltations of the individual”, something like the Protinian “*monos pro monon*”. Thus the praise, reverence, and service of the Ignatian definition of human being moves from God to the human being in an exemplary way, giving great “assistance to the other” and, at the same time, being both a “cause of social and political order” and the “core of a religion more centered and more profound.”

This substitution of Greek schemes for Christian ones is present in the Ignatian dynamics, which move from the “craving for the power of the kings” to the “want-to-be-more” which is possible only by “self-abasement” as a “pure attitude of service even to taking the ‘lowest position’ at table.” Such a dynamic, which has its source in Christ, is seen from the Balthasarian perspective on the Cross as “Glory to the Father, reverence to His Name, and service” up until death, and even “the most painful death”, as the “culmination” of the *Principle and Foundation*, namely, in the praise given to the Father, in the “reverent distance” as a key to the reading of Matthew’s abandonment (Mt 27.46), and in the “supreme service” (the mission entrusted is accomplished, cf. Jn 19.30). Even *Sheol*, where the light of the Covenant did not penetrate, is incorporated into human destiny, as desired by God, thus saving the human being from his “social anxiety regarding the absolute upon which he would like to build his life, and in which he would like to see himself absorbed”, an internal movement that would be “unnatural”.⁵⁶

There is a substitution of the Ascensional desire structure [*desiderium*], with its underlying danger of “selfishness that revolves around itself”, with the “co-descendant” service of God to the human being. As “*praise and joy* for the unattainable alterity of the other”, as “*reverential respect* of that other” as someone whom one ought always “to respect with responsibility”, and as “*service* which, in the everyday duty of one’s reciprocal engagements, in whichever profession, takes the human being to his religious fullness”, namely, “the descent of Christ into the perfect service of the Father [which] reaches its perfection when there is food and drink for his brothers, the human beings giving us an example.”⁵⁷

The Balthasarian model of the PF is of praise and reverence and of a service which is the Cross, a model of service “as perfect on earth as it is in heaven” and which “erases the dividing line between heaven and earth.” The PF is an expression of the Ignatian “logic of indifference,” a “relentless logic” that seeks to “overcome all the disordered affections” which, “in advance, compel the person to follow what attracts him”, but also to “avoid what is painful” and to “hide [such disorder] perfectly behind the [excuse of] tendencies natural to all human beings.” From Balthasar’s perspective such *disorder* should be seen not as anthropological but, rather, as theological, especially in the matter of God’s will for each particular individual. Against the *disorder* is opposed the *disposition* to “find and do the will of God”, and its exercise is that which “prepares and disposes the soul.”⁵⁸ The overcoming of *disorder* [SE 23] as the antithesis of *disposition*

⁵⁶ Ibidem, pp. 132–135.

⁵⁷ Idem.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, pp. 134–137.

[SE 1] is a path of “self-transcendence of the human being by praise, reverence, and service,” but it also implies “the manner in which the sacrifice of the Cross is present in the Eucharist” as a way of stripping oneself of “illusions,” chimeras, and sins in order to “follow naked the naked Christ” [*nudus nudum Christum*], and thus to awaken an attitude of “seeking the very center of the Gospel” in the “heart of existence.”⁵⁹

The logic of indifference leads to the “logic of the more” [*magis*], because it unfolds the “abandonment” to God as the fruit of Ignatian indifference, of the person’s accepting what God has chosen for that person. The *more* is expressed in the “greater glory of God” [*ad majorem Dei gloriam*], in which one must “wish to consume one’s existence” and of which there is no comparative, for, in the way of Anselm of Canterbury, the *always-greater* is “incomprehensibly-greater” and, “if it is possible to understand it, it is not God” [*Si comprehendis non est Deus*]. Therein lies the impossibility of a Gestalt of the beauty of the love of God, the source of growth in obedience.⁶⁰ The *Gestalt* of Trinitarian Love lies in this obedience of the Cross, which Balthasar himself came to know in the hermeneutics of his own experience. However, before surrendering himself without reservation to the service of the One who calls unconditionally, like Ignatius in the meditation of the *Temporal King*, what touches him as an enlightening experience on his way is to follow the *path* of Ignatius, the “wounded one of Pamplona,” in that this path manifests the action of God which “breaks our existence in order to heal it and to make of it the instrument which is needed.” By this he means “to be placed with the crucified Lord, as Ignatius was, and to become his companion following the Father’s will.” There Balthasar understands that “he would have to obey, to serve, but without yet knowing to whom.”⁶¹

2.2. The First Week: The Conception of Mercy and Balthasar’s Hamartiology

For Balthasar, after the desire for *indifference* has been obtained as a grace, the *First Week* is presented as a “hell of self-knowledge”:

A purifier and a preparatory step, which before the Cross of Jesus, leaves the sinner naked of all awareness of having something as good as his own, so that, empty of himself, he enters the path of following [Christ].⁶²

For the Swiss theologian, the purgative way of the *First Week* passes through a consciousness of the radical human corruption, of the human’s not having any goodness of its own, in which very moment of the Exercises “penetrates” into one’s life the “light of God’s judgment, the light of the terrible seriousness of the Cross.” This *emptiness* is the result of the purification of the “illusions we conjure about any constructing and achiev-

⁵⁹ Ibidem, pp. 119–120.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, pp. 141–144.

⁶¹ Ibidem, pp. 99–100.

⁶² Ibidem, p. 173.

ing seemingly by our own forces,” a “humiliation until we understand the possibility of our own perdition.” In the theological sense, distinct from the anthropological, at least textually speaking, in what it says with regard to the Balthasarian perspective on the *Exercises*, *disorder* coincides with sin. This “great emptiness” that the *First Week* should cause must also “open up an immense abyss” that makes possible both a “deep emotion because of one’s own disorder” and a “longing for the true order of life”. This begins the disposition (availability, first movement) so that God may then *put* the exercitant *into place* (dis-ponere, second movement). Thus, there is a liberation of one’s freedom, of “finite freedom as availability toward infinite freedom”, that assumes a rupture with the “multiple bonds of the Self.” Such a “rupture”, for Balthasar, has to be “accomplished through a systematic, perhaps tedious effort.” The *First Week* is presented as an invitation to the “self-denial which is required in the following of Christ”, which “may include a moment of asceticism, self-discipline, and conscious renunciation of many things”, which abnegation ought to be directed, not to oneself—as would be the case with the Buddhist, according to the Swiss theologian—but to the Christ-model, as the “Cross is never an end in itself but a path toward the salvation of the world or toward participation in its fecundity in the Savior’s company.”⁶³

For the Swiss priest, even “an ascetic[ism] and a mystic[ism] built on the natural desire of the divine vision” (*desiderium naturale visionis*) would be “anthropocentric”. That is, “the human being, his desire, his eros, the realization of himself—in short, his perfection—constitutes, in this case, the measure and the end.” On the contrary, the ascetic[ism] and the mystic[ism] would be “theocentric” which would take as its starting point the “creaturely character of the human being and its radical requirements”, namely, the praise, reverence, and service of the Lord and “obedience to Him.”⁶⁴

In the face of the experience of sin and the possible condemnation by the “Absolute Norm”, the “Son of Man,” the Cross is the principle of true objectivity and subjectivity, for “from the contemplation of the Cross there is a place for meditation on one’s sins and on those of the world.” From a “Christian point of view”, according to the Swiss author, “there is no fruitful meditation on sins outside that which leads to confession, and the origin of confession is the Cross.” In addition, “only in the light of the Cross and the judgment regarding sin that is realized on it can the sinner hope to understand and to evaluate, in some measure, what is his sin.” Not even the “conscience”, good or bad, “however necessary its function may be, will suffice by itself”, for “sin is, by its essence, a lie, and, consequently, there is an obscuring of the inner vision” which can result in a “global despair.” Hence it is from the Cross that there comes the “correct objectivity” (God’s desired measure of understanding of sin) and the “correct subjectivity” (God’s desired measure of contrition, conversion, and lived repentance) regarding sin. There is a “dialectic of the Cross”, of recognizing in the contemplation of the Cross the being deserving of one’s own condemnation as the “murderer of eternal Love” and, at the

⁶³ Ibidem, pp. 174–175.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, pp. 175–176.

same time, of recognizing in that contemplation that the vicarious death of Christ *pro me* invites the following of Christ as obedience. Such a dialectical movement is seen by the Swiss theologian as the “nucleus of the authentically Catholic Tradition.”⁶⁵

But the “dialectic of hell” consists in that the believer, “because he believes” and “because he loves”, has the task of “having to approve the condemning sentence of the Father on the sinner” and the “terribly severe judgment that is the Father’s”, then only “faith and love” are the attitudes that “expect all good from the Father”, and this “expectation of all good includes the acceptance of just condemnation”, just because the Son assumes the sins that are those of the creatures [“because the Son took over for me and in my place”]. According to Balthasar’s perspective, this meditation is an “intelligible ambivalence to worldly intelligence” but is “clear and unfathomable for faith.” God’s mercy manifests itself in the beauty of the Cross, as terrible as it may be, and the obedience of the Son for the love of the children of God composes the *Gestalt* of repentance and the beginning of the inner disposition [availability].⁶⁶

2.3. *The Second Week: Balthasar’s Esthaurologic Christology*

The contemplation of Jesus’s life inaugurates the Christian following, which,

being open to everything, will confer on each one, by imprinting it with grace, the form of life which *descends from above* [author’s emphasis], in which one can, as matter fully moldable by God, respond to His will and thus “come to perfection” in one’s Christian Life.⁶⁷

Such perfection consists in “not being deaf, but ready and diligent” to respond to Christ’s call, which call continues throughout the contemplation of Jesus’s life, producing the *Gestalt* of the Christological figure, in order to be able to “collaborate with Him in the election”:

To opt for God’s choice for him, to renounce his freedom as a pure creature—a freedom set loose by original sin, set against that of God (Take, Lord and receive all my freedom... [SE 234])⁶⁸

The election is seen by Balthasar as the center of the Ignatian *Exercises* and as putting “the totality of life at stake”, for in it one finds one’s “own identity in God.” In the election is found a more pronounced Balthasarian *esthaurologic* (*sthauros*) Christology than the Christology of the public life, although without denying it, for, just as the “spiritual combat of Christ” had fundamental importance for the “reconciliation of the world”, the “combat of the disciple of Christ” must have essentially social dimensions, “never isolating the drama of Christ from the drama of the Church.”⁶⁹ Christ’s missionary pro-

⁶⁵ Ibidem, pp. 180–181.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, pp. 182–185.

⁶⁷ Ibidem, p. 189.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, p. 190.

⁶⁹ Ibidem, pp. 201–202.

gram and its being centered on the Cross is a scandal not only for the world but also for the whole Church, with the election being presented through an “image of God centered on personal sovereignty” and the “image of the human being” in a *via negativa*, that is, accentuating that “it is not centered on the aspirations and longings of the heart and its cravings for absolute realization”, but on the availability [disposition] to fulfill God’s will, which “never”, “neither in its entirety nor in its details”, can be deduced from our nature.

There is, in Balthasar’s understanding of freedom, an Augustinian anthropological assumption that appears in the Second Week Christology and, consequently, in the Ignatian journey, resulting in the understanding of freedom as arising from obedience under the sign of the Cross, the place where God’s will is realized and human nature humbles itself. If the other religions, for the Swiss theologian, “seek to escape from suffering”, “Christ has made Himself man to suffer more than anyone could ever have suffered”, and the one who wants to prevent it “is His adversary”. It follows that the Christian is the one called to an imperative:

Take up your own cross for love of me and for the good of your brothers, for whose salvation you must suffer. There is no other way of salvation outside of me. Your salvation does not consist in liberating your *ego* but in offering your *ego* [author’s emphasis] incessantly for others, and this is not achievable without pain and without the Cross.⁷⁰

On the Ignatian journey, in the Meditation on the Two Standards, the Augustinian paradigm is also chosen, so as to think of the “demonic kingdom of Babylon” and the “heavenly Kingdom of Christ” in the context of “intimate attitudes with God” inviting us to a “dialectic of humility” as a disposition to “intimate and growing humiliation.” Within the Three Modes of Humility the process begins with a willingness to “obey in all things the law of God our Lord” (Old Testament) and moves to the “foolishness of the Cross” as an “indication of availability [disposition]” to the will of God, which leads to the “election of the Cross” (New Testament), understanding the dynamics of the “Ignatian doctrine of indifference” as an existential doctrine common to the two Testaments.⁷¹ The presupposition of the election is “to believe in the calling”, and this “means offering and sacrificing the totality of the self, with its desires and pursuits, to a mission of unpredictable reach” wherein one comes to feel like a “citizen of heaven.”⁷²

Christ’s public life is seen as a “general call” to the Christian life (in which the option of the marital state will usually follow) and then some receive a “particular call” in response to which one would normally follow a “priestly life” or the “evangelical counsels”. Although Balthasar does not deny the importance of family, there is an Augustinian reminiscence or an Augustinian aspect with regard to matrimonial life, seeing it as a state to which one does not receive a particular call:

⁷⁰ Ibidem, p. 193.

⁷¹ Ibidem, pp. 204–205

⁷² Ibidem, p. 219.

No Christian not blinded by prejudice will ever say of himself that he has chosen the marital state because of a divine election, comparable with the election and the call that recognizes and experiences in itself a vocation to the priesthood or the personal following of the religious life. Whoever chooses marriage is simply the one who has not previously made such a particular election in his soul and who chooses the marital state with the best conscience in the world, without feeling guilty of any imperfection, but also without boasting of following a path particularly chosen by God.⁷³

Christ “chose” to live this *general call* in the first place with the Incarnation and, in a second moment, to accept a *particular call*, which in His case results in the election of the Cross, the source of all special calls.

2.4. *The Third Week: Theodramatics*

The Ignatian journey (Kingdom [SE 91SS], the Two Standards [SE 136SS], and the Three Ways of Humility [SE 165ss]) are seen as the “foundation of obedience”, the fruit hoped for in order to welcome “the noble passion to serve the crucified Lord” and thus to assume the “willingness [disposition] to obey,” the “spirit of the true Bride of Christ.”⁷⁴ The *esthaurologic* understanding of the Christian existence in Balthasar’s perspective reaches its climax in the *Third Week*, focusing on the “Cross of Christ” on which is exposed “the Father’s Love.”⁷⁵

The merciful love of the Father is seen as the gift of the Son to save the lost sinner, and this is “the work of God” [SE 236] who “manifests Himself by assuming the supreme risk of surrendering his Son for a lost world,” where the Son “descends into the abyss of the sinner’s abandonment, even to the loss of the Father” and the “most strenuous search for the God that was lost.”⁷⁶

The Eucharist is seen as a “body given for you” (Mc 14, 24), an example of how to “dispose of oneself” in order to be “surrendered-available [disposed]”. The “Father’s hour” is presented as a “terrible baptism” to which the Christian must respond with the help of the grace of the “configuration of the human being in the image of the Crucified Jesus” and by a “pure consent to the descending movement of God” that “leads to the Cross through the *Kenosis*”, a movement of obedience. Passion is a *soteriological* grace and those who makes the *Exercises*, especially the Jesuits, must wish to follow Christ laden with humiliations as the “authentically Christological grace of the Passion”, as an essential aspect of their being called to “total love”. This is the only way that the *Exercises* begin to “make themselves intelligible.”⁷⁷

⁷³ Ibidem, p. 198.

⁷⁴ Ibidem, p. 225.

⁷⁵ Ibidem, p. 236.

⁷⁶ Ibidem, p. 226.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, pp. 229–235.

Balthasar's ecclesiology included, understanding the "Catholic concept of the Church (that of Augustine and of the whole tradition)" is presented as a Body co-crucified with Christ and as the Spouse of Christ who suffers with Him at the foot of the Cross". In addition, the Swiss theologian presents himself as amazed by this fact:

It is strange and humiliating for Catholic theology that no theologian has brought to mind the idea of taking, as the theme for a Christological-ecclesiological study, the numberless documents about the experience of abandonment by God lived by canonized and non-canonized Christians.⁷⁸

The Cross must be understood in the "dialectic of 'consolation' and 'desolation'" in which each welcome movement of the disposition to obedience can find consolation.

2.5. Fourth Week: Balthasar's Eschatology of Easter's Logic

For Balthasar "All faith is, from start to finish, faith in Resurrection," although "in it is included the contemplation of the Cross."⁷⁹ The "Christian existence" is seen "essentially" as "availability for the call and as a follower of Christ" in "all episodes of his life, even to the Cross", but also "to the Resurrection" understood as "the development of the Church". Mary asks that "the Incarnation of the Word, consummated on the Cross and in the Resurrection, be communicated to the entire community". From this dynamic it follows that obedience to Christ unfolds in "personal obedience that is integrated into the ministerial structure of the Church and submits to it: great and supreme self-denial". "Obedience as the realization of the most intimate spousal attitude of the same Church to Christ" is "the core of following Christ: *Ecce ancilla*."⁸⁰

In Balthasar's conception, "for Ignatius, everything happens in a theology of obedience" which mirrors "Christ's obedience to the Father". The "Trinitarian obedience" is objectively revealed and offered to the world in the obedience of Christ, and by Christ is revealed and offered entire to the Spouse of Christ, which is the Church, which has in Mary its origin and its always generative bosom.⁸¹

Balthasar's *sentire cum Ecclesia* is derived from the "feeling [*sentire*] that arrived into fullness in Mary," an example of how the "feeling [*sentire*] with the Church is a *feeling-in-oneself* the obedience of the Church," a fruit of the Spirit which is poured out after the Resurrection as the "universalization of Jesus's life under the action of the Holy Spirit,"⁸² the path back to the Father.⁸³

⁷⁸ Ibidem, p. 236.

⁷⁹ Ibidem, p. 179.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, pp. 241–243.

⁸¹ Ibidem, p. 244.

⁸² Ibidem, pp. 241–250.

⁸³ *El Misterio pascual In Mysterium Salutis: Fundamentos de la Dogmática como historia de salvación* 3/1. Madrid, 1969, p. 288.

2.6. The *Contemplatio ad Amorem*: Theology of the Balthasarian Praxis

In the *Contemplatio ad Amorem*, it is the Church “in its own self-transcendence and surpassing itself in the same” which teaches us to find God in all things, yet God’s dialogue with the world is given as a “drama” between “infinite freedom and finite freedom” and has as its “last word” the Cross, which is God’s way of working, the dialectic of the Cross, source and the expression of Balthasar’s *Theodramatics*.⁸⁴

The Contemplation to Attain Love aims to see in all things this love of the Father who sends the Son to die for the sins and gives the Spirit [which enables one] to live the dialectic of the Cross and to acknowledge the call. In the soteriological act, the divine *economy* is the dialectic of the Cross as “commitment”, and this is the “original image” of God [*Urbild*].⁸⁵

Conclusion

The differing concepts of the *Spiritual Exercises* in Rahner and Balthasar, as well as their respective theological projects, converge in the necessity of an existential approach to Ignatian spirituality, whether as a *logic of existential knowledge* in Rahner or as an existential configuration [*Gestalt*] of love promoted by the aesthetics of glory, but in an existence marked by the sign of the Cross, in von Balthasar.

If a limit of Rahner’s project is the issue of language, the *Theological Aesthetics* being a far more advanced resource, I would risk saying here, however, that in the Balthasarian conception of the *Spiritual Exercises* Catholic identity is accentuated, often criticizing other traditions, such as the Lutheran and the Buddhist, as well as Greek thought, and highlighting a certain superiority of the Catholic tradition, while in Rahner the accent is placed on the alterity, adapting to the needs of the contemporary individual and “the change of epoch” and, for this very reason, to a “new orientation of the Christian Life.”⁸⁶

In this sense, there are some divergent elements, such as the soteriology of the PF, which, in Balthasar, accentuate the necessity of recognizing the Christian God present in the need to praise and revere and “thus to save himself”, besides serving, while Rahner, given the question of anonymous Christianity, emphasizes serving as an agapic-soteriological element *par excellence* that shifts one away from “apathy and indolence”.⁸⁷

Although both criticize any comparison of Christianity with a Stoic form of asceticism,⁸⁸ the Swiss theologian points to the realization of the *SE* in an “ascetic and mysti-

⁸⁴ *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory* – vol. I: Prolegomena. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988.

⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 251–261.

⁸⁶ BALTHASAR, *Textos de Ejercicios Espirituales*, op. cit., p. 134; 181; 193; RAHNER, *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitienbuch*, p. 13.

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 131–132; *ibidem*, p. 28.

⁸⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 193; *ibidem*, p. 28.

cally passionate way, and with scrupulous observance of the commandments” and with the willingness “not to avoid what is painful”, as well as requiring a “systematic effort” which is at times “tedious”. In contrast, the German Jesuit accentuates the “impulse of grace” and the “spiritual life” as a “living in God and for God” as a “pure gift of God’s free grace”, and, similarly, the “grace of the Cross” is not limited to “maintaining the silence of sorrow”, but the “asceticism” is a “dimension of a concrete praxis” which does not cease to call for existential cooperation with grace as a way of welcoming it.⁸⁹

In addition, the Balthasarian accent on obedience connects to the *si comprehendis non est Deus* as adherence to faith and love even in the face of the terrible judgments of the Father, which leads to a growing obedience, whereas in Rahner the understanding of the Mystery, even without exhausting it, is fundamental to the knowledge of oneself and to the recognition of God’s love, which results in a liberation from the hamartiological effects in personal history.⁹⁰ Grace, as an animator of liberty, also has distinct accents since, for the one theologian, freedom is the “foundation of obedience” and, for the other, freedom establishes a *praxis* which moves one from the indifference of a “Christianity from birth” to a “Christianity by choice”.⁹¹

It is worth mentioning that there is in Balthasar’s perspective a disparaging accent on the anthropological question which, by accentuating the Cross, sees Christian existence as sacrifice and as a “citizen[ship] of heaven”, whereas in Rahner’s perspective, even without its becoming an optimism, there is a more positive vision of life which allows a pedagogical understanding of the growth in grace, acting on what is possible [“let us perform with love the love we can now do”] and asking for grace for the *magis* [“Give me what I do not achieve”] without dramatizing [“we would not dramatize”].⁹²

There is in both authors, despite their different situations and accents, an awareness of the inherent bond between faith and justice in the social and political order, and the Swiss theologian, at least in the writings on the *SE*, is more explicit.⁹³ However, Rahner’s conception of *praxis* is positioned to identify the signs of the Spirit’s action in the world, an element that better allows the contextual theologies to unfold.

Despite Balthasar’s *esthaurocentric* aesthetic, present even in its Ignatian perspective, there is a *harmonization of conflict* that insists on seeing the beauty of the Father’s love on the Cross. This is not to say here that the work of Balthasar is deficient in these aspects which have a place in the Catholic Tradition, but rather that there is a risk of receiving this aesthetic of the Cross in the *SE* in an imagination which has serious limits for carrying out a critical look at history, incurring the risk of harmonizing the conflicts of reality and thus feeding into the social pathology of a litigious culture. One thing is the acceptance of fate and the recognition of God’s love which does not abandon us

⁸⁹ Ibidem, p. 130; 137; 174; ibidem, p. 71.

⁹⁰ Ibidem, p. 142; ibidem, p. 70-71.

⁹¹ Ibidem, p. 225; ibidem, p. 28; 71.

⁹² Ibidem, p. 219; ibidem, pp. 272–273.

⁹³ Ibidem, p. 135; ibidem, pp. 62–65.

when facing suffering, and another is the harmonization of conflicts being used as a silencing of the suffering of others and as an ignorance of historical causes, including unjust ones, given that an immature vision of faith can create this perception. As Balthasar himself points out, such a one can feel like a “citizen of another world”, but deep down these are symptoms of “indifference regarding the world and society, complexes of sensuality not overcome, and, above all, fear of life.” Such feelings, especially the “inferiority complexes” of “almost all young people”, produce “blockages” which yield “irritating noises” in the discernment of reality.⁹⁴

This does not mean that there is no awareness of the theology of the Cross in the Rahnerian understanding of the *SE*; rather, the Cross is read as a “manifest absurdity” and is considered as a dimension of the conflict even in the scenes of Jesus’s life, such as that of His being forgotten in the Temple, understood as a “very real conflict” between Mary and Joseph. The Cross is seen not as the harmonization of conflicts, especially in the face of the fateful existential, but as the “sobriety of a realistic individual” who, instead of “despairing”, offers himself in an “exercise of availability for [a sharing in] the Passion of Christ.”⁹⁵

It does not seem to us that Rahner’s theological project and his appreciation for Ignatian spirituality, more extensive than what Balthasar includes, is responsible for “leaving aside prayer”, as this sounds like an absurdity. Moreover, even the Balthasarian concept of the *Exercises* admits that, in the deepest core of religion, the question of justice and its unfolding in the social and political order is present.⁹⁶ Mysticism and social commitment are two intrinsic factors in the two great theologians, both heirs to contemplation in action. The difference lies in how to interpret the alterities of the new times.

⁹⁴ BALTHASAR, *Textos de Ejercicios Espirituales*, op. cit. p. 222.

⁹⁵ RAHNER, *Betrachtungen zum ignatianischen Exerzitiienbuch*, p. 211; 159; pp. 232–233.

⁹⁶ BALTHASAR, *Textos de Ejercicios Espirituales*, p. 135.

Hacer reverencia

di RICARDO ALDANA*

A partir de una observación del Papa Francisco sobre la dificultad de los cristianos de hoy para adorar a Dios, nos proponemos salir al encuentro de dicha dificultad desde el punto de vista de la reverencia a Dios que San Ignacio de Loyola incluye en el Principio y Fundamento de sus Ejercicios espirituales. Después de intentar calibrar la dificultad, el artículo aborda el vocabulario ignaciano de la reverencia como adoración a Dios, y su prolongación o refracción como respeto por cada hombre. En seguida se contempla la cuestión metafísica, suscitada en la historia de la espiritualidad por la adoración que exige al hombre desasimiento de sí para ser en Dios. Finalmente se emprende un recorrido teológico que ayude a determinar la adoración en sentido cristiano, yendo de la cristología a la teología trinitaria para finalmente volver al Fundamento de la creaturalidad del hombre con la respuesta, esperamos, a la dificultad inicial: la pobreza evangélica.

1. Introducción: una advertencia del Papa Francisco

En un libro entrevista publicado en el año 2018, se expresaba hermosamente el Papa Francisco sobre la adoración, pero al mismo tiempo hacía una advertencia sorprendente sobre la praxis actual cristiana de la adoración. Con su habitual agudeza de formador, casi de maestro de novicios, introduce ese sano escepticismo sobre nosotros mismos y nuestras prácticas de oración, para proponer la verdad de la adoración como algo que configura la vida cristiana, especialmente la vida religiosa:

«No se trata solamente de ponerse a adorar el Santísimo en el Sagrario... La adoración es algo que te desnuda y te presenta ante Dios tal cual eres. Adorar es decir: “Tú eres grande, yo no soy nada”. Es estar en la presencia de Dios. Esto se da también en la oración formal de adoración del Santísimo, pero también se da en esa humildad esencial que maneja la persona consagrada. Lo que hace esa humildad esencial del religioso es ese espíritu de oración. Nosotros hemos perdido la capacidad de adoración, como también hemos perdido, en parte, la capacidad para la oración de alabanza. Ahora, con la Renovación Carismática, esta capacidad de alabanza la estamos recuperando un poco. Pero la de adoración todavía es un desafío. Hemos de volver a tener ese espíritu adorador del Padre en Espíritu y en Verdad que, obviamente, también se hace crecer en la oración formal adorando en silencio. La

* RICARDO ALDANA, Siervo de Jesús, profesor en el Seminario de Granada y de Córdoba, email ricardoaldanaval@yahoo.es

adoración nos ayuda, sobre todo, a ubicarnos correctamente ante Dios y decirle: “Tú solo eres Santo, tú solo Señor, tú solo altísimo Jesucristo”»¹.

¿Cómo entender la pérdida de la capacidad de adoración a la se refiere el Papa? Desde luego, se trata de algo intraeclesial y en ello reside la fuerza de la afirmación. Es decir, no es directamente una crítica al mundo moderno olvidado de Dios, aunque seguramente sí lo es a la «mundanidad espiritual» que afecta a la Iglesia «convirtiéndola en una Iglesia autorreferencial que se hace incapaz de ser fecunda... [Tal mundanidad es] una actitud radicalmente antropocéntrica. Se presenta como desprendimiento de la otra mundanidad pero, en verdad, en vez de buscar la gloria del Señor, busca la gloria humana»².

Estas últimas palabras recuerdan las de San Juan: «¿Cómo podéis creer vosotros que aceptáis gloria unos de otros y no buscáis la gloria de Dios que viene del único Dios?» (Jn 5, 44). Pero la observación del Papa parece referirse a un déficit de contemplación, que acontece, al menos en buena medida, inadvertidamente. La *proskynesis* que en la Biblia se hace siempre ante lo divino, también cuando es representado por un hombre, es un movimiento del cuerpo que lleva consigo el alma, de modo que es todo el ser del hombre el que se somete al Creador. Pero si el cuerpo no conlleva ya el alma en la *proskynesis*, porque aunque el cuerpo se pliegue al imperio del espíritu, esta ya no puede postrarse ante Dios... ¿Quién puede sanar la libertad enferma?

Es claro que la observación del Papa sobre la incapacidad de adorar no se refiere solo a la dificultad de todos y de siempre para orar, que solo resuelve el Espíritu Santo (Rom 8, 26-27), esa dificultad que expresa la oración de San Anselmo al inicio del *Proslogium*: «Señor, Dios mío, enseña a mi corazón dónde y de qué modo te pueda buscar, dónde y de qué modo te pueda encontrar. Señor, si no estás aquí, ¿dónde te buscaré ausente? Si estás en todas partes, ¿por qué no te veo presente?»³. Más bien se refiere la advertencia a un condicionamiento actual de nuestra fe que parece agudizar la dificultad de «no saber pedir como conviene» (Rom 8, 26).

Quizás la indicación sobre la desnudez ofrece una clave para comprender este condicionamiento actual: si adorar es presentarse desnudos ante Dios, la incapacidad de adorar, ¿no proviene de la casi invencible tendencia del hombre moderno a cubrir el yo, pero no necesariamente de un revestimiento glorioso, sino a causa de la desesperación o la enfermedad mortal, que según Kierkegaard, surge de no poder apoyar el yo en el poder del Creador, con la consecuente incapacidad de no poder ser uno mismo mientras se quiere serlo a toda costa?⁴ Un *amor sui* que es *odium sui*, un desesperado amor de ser lo que no soy, que es un odio desesperado de lo que soy, y que no aleja tanto a Dios del hombre cuanto al hombre de Dios. La cosas se han invertido, porque el verdadero *odium sui* (Lc 14, 26) es odio al yo autoproyectado que no descansa en el amor absoluto de Dios,

¹ PAPA FRANCISCO, *La fuerza de la vocación. Una conversación con Fernando Prado*, Publicaciones Claretianas, Madrid 2018, 72-73.

² Ibid. 86.88.

³ SAN ANSELMO DE CANTERBURY, *Proslogio* cap. I, en *Obras Completas I*, BAC, Madrid 2008, 360.

⁴ Cf. S. KIERKEGAARD, *La enfermedad mortal*, Ed. Trotta, Madrid 2008, 33-42.

mientras que el auténtico *amor sui* es descubrirse mirado por Dios con amor infinito, en verdadera desnudez, la del cuerpo del Crucificado, según las conocidas palabras finales del *Diario de un Cura rural*, de Bernanos: «Odiarse a uno mismo es más fácil de lo que se cree. La gracia es olvidarse... La gracia de las gracias sería la de amarse humildemente a uno mismo, como un miembro doliente más, no importa cual, de Jesucristo»⁵. Si el cristiano en su oración intenta abandonarse en Dios, pero *sciens nesciens, volens nolens*, se reviste ante Dios porque no puede empezar a rezar sino en el yo aislado, no podrá adorar.

¿O se puede pensar, con Charles Taylor, en una (posiblemente) satisfactoria identidad moderna del yo recuperando la tradición de la idea del Bien más grande que el hombre, pero ahora vinculante no tanto del hombre cuanto del yo, de modo que el Bien se transforma primariamente en “mi bien”?⁶ El intento de Taylor es el de sostener, mediante una constructiva filosofía narrativa, un fundamento del yo del hombre moderno en el bien incondicional, sin referencia a Dios, a partir de la conciencia subjetiva y común del valor y dignidad de la vida humana, con lo que implica de respeto por los demás. Es decir, se trata de buscar el «trasfondo» que respalda nuestras intuiciones morales y espirituales... la ontología moral que respalda dichas intuiciones»⁷, descuidada, olvidada y negada en nuestra época. Nos parece que hay que estar de acuerdo en que es necesario para el hombre de hoy intentar pasar de la relación Bien-hombre a la relación Bien-yo. Solo que habría que considerar más detenidamente no solo el carácter dialógico de las tradiciones humanas de la conciencia del Bien, sino también la profundidad y verticalidad dialógica del bien, es decir su fundamento absoluto trascendente al hombre. Taylor ve las cosas en este sentido cuando recurre a la distinción entre bienes e hiperbienes⁸, siendo estos últimos aquellos bienes cuya bondad rige ámbitos enteros de otros bienes. Solo que, habiendo metodológicamente excluido la trascendencia de la idea de Bien para construir la identidad moderna desde la fenomenología de la historia o desde una filosofía narrativa⁹, no queda claro que la identidad alcance a ser tal que se pueda entregar en el lance del amor. Desde la fe conocemos que el Bien tiene desde toda la eternidad la forma bien definida –unidad en la trinidad– de los que se aman. Pero ya la investigación filosófica puede saber que no basta una fenomenología antropológica de la receptividad del ser y del bien, porque, precisamente por ello, se requiere una filosofía del agradecimiento y de la oración, como no han dejado de ver y enseñar algunos pensadores cristianos¹⁰.

⁵ G. BERNANOS, *Journal d'un curé de campagne*, Librairie Plon, Paris 2005, 311.

⁶ Cf. CH. TAYLOR, *Fuentes del yo. La construcción de la identidad moderna*, Ed. Paidós, Barcelona-Buenos Aires-México 1996.

⁷ Ibid. 22.

⁸ Id. 80ss.

⁹ Cf. 89ss. Nos parece que Taylor es demasiado unilateral acerca del impacto de la ciencia moderna sobre la metafísica platónica de la participación, que habría quedado en ruinas. Para una valoración de esta filosofía narrativa de la identidad, cf. A. ÁLVAREZ GARRIDO, *Identidad personal y donación*, Eutelequia, Madrid 2010, 60-69.

¹⁰ Cf. C. BRUAIRE, *L'affirmation de Dieu. Essai sur la logique de l'existence*, Seuil, Paris 1964; F. ULRICH, *Gebet als geschöplicher Grundakt*, Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln 1973. Sobre la oración en el corazón de la

En las palabras citadas del Papa la referencia a la alabanza junto a la adoración, lleva a pensar en el Principio y Fundamento de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio: «El hombre es criado para alabar, hacer reverencia...» [Ej 23], pues en «hacer reverencia» hay que entender, si bien no exclusivamente, sí fundamentalmente el acto de adoración. Creemos que precisamente este aspecto del Principio y Fundamento, que expresaremos como unidad de amor y reverencia, puede ser hoy signo de autenticidad religiosa para el hombre de la sociedad secularizada, que conoce la crítica de la psicología religiosa y sospecha de los movimientos religiosos que parecen identificarse con el Reino de Dios o con Dios mismo, perdiendo precisamente el sentido de la reverencia ante el misterio de la existencia. Y por eso la adoración puede ser también fundamento que envuelva las palabras de la evangelización y del culto cristiano: «La adoración sin palabras y sin liturgia, en un tiempo de larga incubación, puede dar a luz algo así como un lenguaje válido que lleve consigo el signo de la reverencia de modo creíble»¹¹.

2. Sobre el vocabulario ignaciano y el concepto de la adoración

Si la voz «Adoración» no aparece en el *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana* publicado en España, Rogelio García Mateo muestra cómo «reverencia», junto con «acatamiento», son las palabras ignacianas recurrentes que se refieren a la adoración. Los campos semánticos de los dos términos son coincidentes en los textos de Ignacio, de un modo destacado en el *Diario Espiritual*, con su acentuada devoción trinitaria, en donde los dos aparecen unas 20 veces juntos, y a ellos se unen con alguna frecuencia «humildad» y «amor». La definición de reverencia en los Ejercicios también vincula las dos palabras y nos acerca al concepto tradicional de adoración: «Entiendo reverencia, cuando en el nombrar de su Criador y Señor, considerando, acata aquel honor y reverencia debida» [Ej 38]. Comenta García Mateo: «Se trata, pues, de una actitud que manifiesta profundo respeto, honor y adoración a Dios por ser Él quien es. Todo lo que Dios hace es para su adoración y gloria, pues Él es el único Dios... En su presencia surge en el hombre la actitud del amor que adora y hace reverencia»¹².

filosofía, habría que mencionar el sentido de la obra entera de M. Blondel, cf. P. FAVRAUX, *Une philosophie du médiateur: Maurice Blondel*, Lethiellieux, Presses Universitaires de Namur, Paris-Namur 1987, y de J. Marechal, cf. D. MORETTO, *Il dinamismo intellettuale davanti al mistero. La questione del soprannaturale nel percorso speculativo di J. Marechal*, Ed. Glossa, Milano 2001.

¹¹ H. U. VON BALTHASAR, "Liturgie und Ehrfurcht", en *Sponsa Verbi*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln 1971, 481.

¹² R. GARCÍA MATEO, "Acatamiento-reverencia", en J. GARCÍA DE CASTRO (Dir.) *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, Ed. Mensajero y Ed. Sal Terrae, Bilbao-Santander 2007, 77-79, aquí 78-79. Esta interpretación de la palabra "acatamiento" puede hoy suscitar algún estupor, por lo que es útil la observación de que «originalmente, a. significó "mirar con atención, admirar, contemplar"; después, hacia el siglo XVI, se usa también con el sentido de "tributar homenaje de sumisión", y se amplía posteriormente a la actitud de reconocer la autoridad de alguien con respeto y veneración» (Id. 77).

De la unión de amor y reverencia da testimonio elocuente también la noble retórica de Ignacio en su epistolario, pues en ella «amor y reverencia» son recurso enfático, humilde a la vez que inapelable, de su exhortación. «Por *amor y reverencia* a Dios nuestro Señor» pide y exhorta Ignacio en 1532 a su hermano Martín a buscar la gloria del cielo [Epp I, 81] y en 1536 a Juan Pedro Carafa, futuro Paulo IV, que lea el escrito que le dirige queriendo encontrar en él la buena intención de la reforma de la Iglesia que los dos deseaban [Epp I, 115]. También «por *amor y reverencia a Dios N. S.*» debe Pedro Fabro, según carta de 1542, escribir según lo acordado para provecho de los prójimos [Epp I, 236-237], y Nicolas Bobadilla, cuya ironía se encuentra con el buen humor de Ignacio en 1543, debe hacer lo mismo [Epp I, 281]. «Por *amor y reverencia* de Dios N. S.», ya en 1551, los miembros de la Compañía de Jesús congregados en Roma para la revisión de las Constituciones, deben pensar en elegir otro superior por cumplir la divina voluntad [Epp III, 304]. Seguramente por el mismo motivo, decidieron que no cambiarían de superior.

Pero el vocabulario de amor, reverencia, acatamiento y humildad, como ya se decía, se adensa en el *Diario Espiritual*, especialmente en un momento en el que se hace más explícitamente temática la consideración: «En este intervalo de tiempo me parecía que la humildad, reverencia y acatamiento, no debía ser temeroso, mas amoroso, y así esto me asentaba en el ánimo, que fientadamente dezía: “Dadme humildad amorosa, y así de reverencia y acatamiento”; recibiendo en estas palabras nuevas visitaciones. Asimismo refutando lágrimas por advertir a esta humildad amorosa, etc.» [De 178]. Continuando con esta descripción, Ignacio expresa cómo experimenta que la reverencia a Dios no se detiene en la Majestad de Dios, sino que se refiere también a las criaturas: «Después en el día gozándome mucho en acordarme desto, parecerme que no pararía en esto, mas que lo mismo después sería con las criaturas, es a saber, humildad amorosa etc.; si no fuese en tiempos para honra de Dios nuestro Señor, como en este evangelio dize: Similis ero vobis, mendax» [De 179]. De estas palabras se desprende una luz sobre la comprensión de la creaturalidad del Principio y Fundamento: la radical orientación a Dios del hombre no mira solo a Dios desde el mundo sino también al mundo desde Dios.

Hugo Rahner hace dos observaciones sobre esta unidad de amor, a Dios y al prójimo, y reverencia. Primero, su relación con la creaturalidad del Fundamento, que sigue siendo tal aún en la más alta experiencia espiritual:

«Para Ignacio la Trinidad de Dios es, también en el último lance del amor, “Majestad” y... para él, también “en el torrente de lágrimas y devoción” y en la felicidad de la suave “música celestial” que resonaba ya en su oído terreno [Epp III, 137], el eterno Padre sigue siendo “Creador y Señor”. Por eso la oración que ha dejado como más característica de su ser dice: “Oh Dios, dame humildad llena de *amor y reverencia amante*” [Epp III, 131]»¹³.

En segundo lugar, la refracción de amor y reverencia como prudencia exquisita en el trato con el prójimo:

¹³ O. KARRER-H. RAHNER, *Ignatius von Loyola. Geistliche Briefe*, Benzinger & Co., Einsiedeln² 1942, 286.

«Porque él “ama a Dios en todas las cosas y a todas en Él”, por eso quiere saber acomodar “las palabras y la acciones” [*MScripta* I, 517] a cada uno, en un santo amor que “a cada uno da lo suyo distinguiendo”... no pidiendo para sí nada porque en Dios se tiene todo [cf. *Ej* 234], pensando siempre y sólo en atribuir a otros lo mejor, poniendo más atención de corazón a todos los demás que a sí mismo, “estimándolos en su ánima todos como si fuesen Superiores, y exteriormente teniéndoles el respeto y la *reverencia* que corresponde al estado de cada uno, con llaneza y simplicidad religiosa; en manera que considerando los unos a los otros, crezcan en devoción y alaben a Dios nuestro Señor a quien cada uno debe procurar de reconocer en el otro como en su imagen” [*Co* 250]»¹⁴.

Si solo el amor descubre y reverencia al Totalmente otro vertical, que es Dios, también solo el amor descubre y reverencia al totalmente otro horizontal, que es el prójimo, mediante la posición del propio yo ante Dios. En efecto, la reverencia a Dios implica la distancia que Él mismo respeta, pues su plenitud y perfección no nos absorbe. Por eso, «la reverencia tiene también el sentido de hacernos personas. Con la sola alabanza y servicio nunca llegaríamos a la conciencia de ser un yo. Debemos serlo para poder cumplir nuestro destino. Si, al contrario, conociéramos solo la reverencia, nos quedaríamos en la “primera semana” de los Ejercicios»¹⁵. Descubrirse persona ante a Dios es descubrir ya a los hombres en la misma posición, en su verdadera situación real.

Ahora bien, es claro que el amor y reverencia a los hombres desciende «de arriba, del amor de Dios nuestro Señor» [*Ej* 338]. Aquí nos referimos sobre todo a la reverencia que adora a Dios, considerando que la adoración es el acto fundamental de la reverencia frente a la Majestad de Dios y el respeto a los hombres se deriva de esta adoración. Como todo el Principio y Fundamento, la reverencia nunca queda atrás sino que acompaña toda la vida cristiana con su dinamismo: si la alabanza celebra y la reverencia hace silencio, hay que concebir los dos actos como co-implicados, pues, en el fondo, el amor no solo une a los que se aman, sino que también los distingue, los afirma como irreduciblemente distintos. En el lenguaje llano y profundo de Adrienne von Speyr: «Del amor, alegre por poder alabar, debe crecer incondicionalmente la reverencia, de otro modo el que alaba sería insoportable para el que es alabado. Con su alabanza persistente se volvería impertinente, pesado, aburrido. Por eso la alabanza misma exige que uno esté un paso atrás... Se necesita este espacio libre entre los dos, de otro modo el amor sería asfixiado»¹⁶. De ahí que, en la oración, la reverencia se manifiesta en el hecho de que «todos los estremecimientos de la unión se realizan en el más profundo estremecimiento de la adoración»¹⁷.

Volviendo a la experiencia de Ignacio, Hugo Rahner describe la unidad de amor y reverencia en su trato con Dios: «Con su profunda compenetración con Dios, que, como él mismo confiesa, “cada y cada momento en que quería hallar a Dios, lo hallaba” [*MS-*

¹⁴ H. RAHNER, “Einführung” a O. KARRER-H. RAHNER, *Ignatius von Loyola. Geistliche Briefe*, 54-55.

¹⁵ A. VON SPEYR, *Ignatiana*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Einsiedeln 1974, 339.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ H. U. VON BALTHASAR, “Patrística, Escolástica y nosotros”, en *Toletana* 24 (2011) 67.

cripta 1, 97) con la abundancia de su consolación, y cuya vida es un gran hallar-a-Dios y amar-a-Dios en todas las cosas... sin embargo, con toda esta experiencia mística, sigue siendo señor de la voluntad, traza límites al deseo de unión, razonando virilmente, manteniendo reverencia ante Dios, y por eso muy distinto de las exaltaciones de algunos místicos medievales y modernos de todo el mundo»¹⁸. Por su parte, Karl Rahner describe con claridad y vigor la experiencia de Ignacio como unión con el Dios trinitario a la que se añade, dice, una creciente incomprendibilidad¹⁹. Seguramente hay que reconocer en la incomprendibilidad un aspecto de la reverencia, en cambio no se ve claramente el sentido del adjetivo “creciente”. ¿No abraza el amor las dos cosas, la unión y la distancia con su no-comprender, y no necesariamente en la sucesión de ambas sino en simultaneidad, aunque la experiencia conozca acentuaciones en uno y otro sentido? De nuevo, la visión de Hugo Rahner puede completar y precisar: la permanente mística trinitaria de Ignacio debe expresarse en la misión más y más como mística eclesial, con todas las dificultades y contradicciones que esto implica²⁰.

Según lo dicho, el amor no se ve limitado por la reverencia sino que esta es un elemento esencial de aquel. Como acto fundamental de la reverencia, la adoración se puede entender como entrega amorosa a Dios de todo lo recibido de Él, como glorificación de la fuente de todos los bienes. La posible etimología de ad-oratio como beso o entrega del propio aliento vital puede representar este acto de entrega²¹. En una adoración así queda incluida, evidentemente, la alabanza y el agradecimiento, que deben acompañar la oración enteramente. Hans Urs von Balthasar sugiere al orante cristiano acercarse a la palabra de Dios, mediante los “puntos” de oración, «con la voluntad de adorar, partiendo de ella y volviendo a ella, sin salir de ella en ningún momento»²², y ofrece esta definición: «Adorar significa reconocer por anticipado e incondicionalmente la realidad y verdad absolutas de la Palabra, someterse a ella hasta los más íntimos pliegues del alma, estar prontos a acogerla dejándolo todo el espacio de la propia existencia. En la Palabra se revela al orante el ser infinito y majestuoso de Dios en tres personas; ante Él no puede el orante entregarse a un discurso mental solitario y monológico, sino que debe abrir cada acto a una entrega que se dirige a un tú»²³.

La adoración aparece así como el movimiento fundamental de la oración cristiana, porque solo la adoración permite escuchar a Dios como Dios. Si se adora a Dios, todo vuelve a ser entregado a Él y todo vuelve a empezar desde Él. Sin la adoración Dios no puede ser percibido realmente como Dios. La adoración, en cambio, permite ese realis-

¹⁸ H. RAHNER, “Einführung”, 56.

¹⁹ Cf. K. RAHNER, “Discorso di Ignazio di Loyola a un gesuita odierno”, en K. RAHNER, P. IMHOF, N. LOOSE, *Ignazio di Loyola*, Edizione Paoline, Roma 1979, 13-15

²⁰ Cf. H. RAHNER, *Ignacio de Loyola y su histórica formación espiritual*, Ed. Sal Terrae, Santander 1955, 49-98

²¹ Cf. BENEDICTO XVI, Homilía del 21 de agosto 2005.

²² H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Tessalonicher und Pastoralbriefe des Heiligen Paulus*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Freiburg² 1992, 8.

²³ Ibid.

mo bíblico, en última instancia cristológico, del que habla Benedicto XVI, constitutivo de la oración y de aquello que la oración forma en el cristiano como modo de ver y sentir, de pensar y querer: «Quien conoce la Palabra divina conoce también plenamente el sentido de cada criatura. En efecto, si todas las cosas “se mantienen” en aquel que es “anterior a todo” (Col 1, 17), quien construye la propia vida sobre su Palabra edifica verdaderamente de manera sólida y duradera. La Palabra de Dios nos impulsa a cambiar nuestro concepto de realismo: realista es quien reconoce en el Verbo de Dios el fundamento de todo»²⁴. La oración desde la Escritura hace posible «la consideración de la realidad como obra de la santísima Trinidad a través del Verbo divino»²⁵.

3. Adoración e indiferencia. La cuestión metafísica

El lenguaje de la adoración, como reconocimiento de la verdadera divinidad de Dios, es próximo al lenguaje del santo abandono, del dejar hacer (*Gelassenheit* en la tradición de la mística renana), de la indiferencia²⁶.

Sin embargo, es necesario confrontar las versiones del abandono que poseen una carga hermenéutica radical, debido a su valencia metafísica. ¿Es necesario destruir la criatura para adorar al Creador? En su célebre Sermón *Beati Pauperes* Meister Eckhart pide una pobreza más radical que la que ha predicado su hermano en religión, «el Obispo Alberto [Magno]». La pobreza ha de ser más que no querer nada en el sentido de aspirar solo a cumplir la voluntad divina, pues «mientras el hombre tenga la voluntad de cumplir la preciosa voluntad de Dios, no posee la pobreza de la que hablamos, pues en él todavía hay una voluntad que quiere satisfacer a Dios y eso no es la pobreza correcta. Pues si el hombre quiere ser verdaderamente pobre debe mantenerse tan vacío de su voluntad como hacía cuando él todavía no era»²⁷. Ser pobre es hallarme «en mi primera causa»²⁸. El criterio del no-ser-todavía, como criterio de la verdadera pobreza, se aplica también al saber: «tan vacío de todo saber que no sepa ni conozca ni encuentre que Dios vive en él... Pues cuando el hombre estaba en el ser eterno de Dios, no vivía en él nada más... Por eso decimos que el hombre debe estar tan vacío de sí mismo, tal como lo era cuando [todavía] no era, y dejar actuar a Dios como él quiera, para que el hombre se mantenga vacío»²⁹. Y vale también para la extrema pobreza del no tener nada, que no es ceder todo lugar a Dios, sino no tener un lugar para Dios y dejar que «sea Él mismo el lugar en donde quiere actuar... En esta

²⁴ BENEDICTO XVI, *Verbum Domini* 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.* 11.

²⁶ H. RAHNER ha apuntado que «Ignacio y los suyos, particularmente Fabro y Canisio, estaban desde el comienzo en relaciones cordiales con los círculos místicos del sur de la Baja Alemania» (*Ignatius von Loyola. Geistliche Briefe*, 245), detallando en seguida algunos hechos de esta amistad, como la publicación de Tauler por obra de Canisio, con la ayuda del Prior de la Cartuja de Colonia, Gerardo Kalckbrenner.

²⁷ M. ECKHART, “Los pobres de espíritu”, en *El fruto de la nada*, Madrid, Alianza Ed. 2018, 107.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.* 108-109.

pobreza reencuentra el hombre el ser eterno que él ya había sido y que ahora es y que será eternamente»³⁰. Todo esto presupone que Dios no es exactamente *Ipsum Esse Subsistens* sino que Dios está por encima del ser: «Dios ni es un ser ni es inteligible, ni conoce esto o ni lo otro. Por eso Dios es está vacío de todas las cosas y [por ello] es todas las cosas»³¹. De ahí que no se trata, finalmente, de tener a Dios como Creador, sino de pasar de esta relación a simplemente volver a no ser para ser en Él más allá del ser: «Por eso ruego a Dios que me vacíe de Dios, pues mi ser esencial está por encima de Dios, en la medida en que comprendemos a Dios como origen de las criaturas. En aquel ser de Dios en donde Dios está por encima del ser y de toda diferencia, allí era yo mismo, allí me quise a mí mismo, y me conocí a mí mismo en la voluntad de crear a este hombre que soy yo... Y por eso soy no nacido y en el modo de mi no haber nacido no puedo morir jamás»³².

Desde el punto de vista de la adoración, habría entonces que caminar hacia atrás, hasta el momento en que Dios me creó, seguir andando y cruzar el umbral, para no ser. Las palabras de Eckhart, también en este sermón, tienen sin duda ese sonido evangélico que le ha valido ser considerado un maestro cristiano a pesar de las censuras³³. Se podría recordar aquí, en favor de él, la necesidad que tiene la espiritualidad cristiana de recurrir a la idea de «la nada» para mantener viva la relación orante y adorante. «Yo soy la que no es... tú eres el que es, mi ser»³⁴, escribe Santa Catalina de Siena. Santo Tomás de Aquino había afinado los conceptos precisando que la nada no tiene ninguna consistencia ni reside en nada real, pero es una imagen necesaria para no confundir al Creador con la criatura: «Cuando algo se hace de la nada, el ser de aquello que se hace está en algo consistente; el no ser no está en lo consistente ni en algo real, sino solo en algo imaginario. Como fuera del universo no hay ninguna dimensión real, sino solo imaginaria, según la cual podemos decir que Dios puede hacer algo fuera del universo solamente... En ello es posible imaginar algo consistente en lo que finalmente no se da ente alguno»³⁵. Con San Juan de la Cruz se puede añadir que evocar la nada es necesario para hablar del amor a Dios: «en aquella inflamación amorosa del corazón el alma por amor se resuelve en nada»³⁶. La paradoja de Ángel Silesius: «El mundo es una hermosísima nada»³⁷, expresa también misma necesidad de la imagen de la nada para afirmar el ser de la creación: *creatio ex nihilo* porque *in Deo*.

³⁰ Ibid. 110-111.

³¹ Ibid. 109.

³² Ibid. 111-112.

³³ Cf. B. FARELY, *Eckhart, Tauler y Seuze. Vida y doctrina del Maestro y de sus dos mejores discípulos*, EDIBESA, Madrid 2000, 210-212 et passim. Se puede dar la razón a Adrienne von Speyr cuando reconoce en Eckhart una auténtica experiencia cristiana de oración extática, siempre humilde, si bien «lo que suena a exageración en sus teorías es solo pobreza de expresión. No es suficientemente elocuente para decir todo con sencillez» (*Das Allerheiligenbuch I*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln 1966, 360).

³⁴ STA. CATALINA DE SIENA, *Diálogo* 134, en *Obras*, BAC, Madrid 1996, 331.

³⁵ *De potentia*, q. 3 a. 1 ad 10.

³⁶ *Cántico espiritual* 1, 18. *Obras Completas*, BAC Madrid 2005, 613.

³⁷ Frase que dejó escrita el cuaderno de un amigo. Cit. en H. U. VON BALTHASAR, “Nachwort” a ANGELUS SILESIUS, *Cherubinischer Wandersmann*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Einsiedeln² 1980, 100.

Aun así parece claro que la idea de Meister Eckhart de pobreza, que aparece aquí solo como ejemplo de una tendencia mucho más general a eliminar la criatura para alabar al Creador³⁸, contrasta con la indiferencia ignaciana, sin que se pueda decir que no tenga ninguna relación con ella. Podemos aceptar la síntesis de Balthasar: «La autoabnegación en Ignacio no es menos radical que en Francisco o en Eckhart, sin embargo, asume la metafísica tomista de la causa segunda, finalmente de la analogía entis tomada en serio, por lo que alcanza la síntesis interna de las dos corrientes principales – “escolástica” y “mística” – que en la Edad Media corrían en paralelo»³⁹.

La indiferencia que «es menester» según el Principio y Fundamento no es meramente pasiva, sino un «*hacerse* indiferente a todas las cosas criadas» [Ej 23] y así permanecer en una disponibilidad activa para hacer la voluntad de Dios, como se ve sobre todo en la reaparición temática de la indiferencia a propósito de la elección en la segunda semana de los ejercicios [Ej 157, 170, 179] (también aquí como adjetivo, nunca como sustantivo “indiferencia”, que daría más lugar a pensar en *apatheia* o *Gelassenheit*). Se trata de «querer o no querer» [Ej 155] lo que Dios quiere o no quiere para mí. El momento de no-hacer-diferencia es un acto de amor a Dios que permite trascender todo el orden de lo creado para afirmar con Dios la creación entera y «mirar cómo Dios habita en las criaturas» [Ej 235], más aún, «cómo Dios trabaja y labora por mí en todas las cosas criadas sobre la haz de la tierra» [Ej 236]. La indiferencia es un amor que, pasivamente, no escoge ninguna criatura porque, activamente, está determinado, *ab origine* y por determinación refrendada mil veces en la gracia del examen y del discernimiento, a dejar a Dios poner la diferencia. Los dos momentos son simultáneos en el mismo acto de amor y reverencia por el que se dice «tomad, Señor, y recibid, toda mi libertad» [Ej 234].

Seguramente hay que volver siempre a la conciencia de que a un carisma extraordinario como el de San Ignacio corresponde una altura difícil de mantener por parte de la comprensión teológica. «El principio de una indiferencia activa, como Ignacio lo entendía, era una cima escarpada, que su numerosa descendencia intelectual tenía que conquistar siempre de nuevo»⁴⁰.

En todo esto lo que nos interesa es el acto de adoración que, desde el punto de vista ignaciano, está vinculado a la indiferencia que no confunde a Dios con las criaturas pero no tiene necesidad de su eliminación para sostener el primado absoluto de Dios. Entre el amar a Dios *sobre* todas las cosas y hallar a Dios *en* todas ellas, la indiferencia según Ignacio descubre una identidad, un equilibrio teórico y práctico. Para Hugo Rahner esto se concreta en esa cualidad de la mística ignaciana que le permite ser al mismo tiempo

³⁸ «El momento de teo-panismo de Eckhart a Fénelon queda como un flanco abierto para la especulación idealista. Visto el conjunto, solo Ignacio de Loyola ha poseído el equilibrio» (H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Herlichkeit III I 2, Im Raum der Metaphysik. Neuzeit*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Einsiedeln² 1965, 485). «Este trascendentalismo de Eckhart a Caussade no puede ser establecido como la forma última de la “metafísica” cristiana (tal forma última no puede darse)» (Ibid. 491).

³⁹ Ibid. 459.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 465. Cf. la descripción de la historia inmediata de la cuestión en autores importante de la Compañía de Jesús, en Ibid. 465-466.

divino-trinitaria e incarnatoria-ecclesial, unión que, por lo demás, el mismo estudioso jesuita presenta como rasgo auténticamente cristiano de la mística⁴¹. Por tanto, la oración cristiana puede dirigirse a Dios con el mundo y también a Dios en sí mismo, y en ambos casos el momento de adoración produce el orden cristiano del primado absoluto de Dios, que no necesita al mundo pero que lo ha querido necesitar. El amor consiste en que Dios «nos amó primero» (1 Jn 4, 10): no es necesario eliminar el “nos” para que Dios sea amor absoluto en sí mismo, sin nosotros. Si fuera necesario, el primado absoluto no sería el del amor, con su libertad más allá de todo motivo, sino algún género de saber. Por eso, nos parece, la disyuntiva final es siempre la que se da entre el saber absoluto, gnóstico o hegeliano o marxista, y el amor absoluto evangélico y especialmente joánico. E ignaciano⁴².

Podemos, en consecuencia, pensar en la adoración como un acto de entrega libre y amorosa de todo lo creado al Creador, como glorificación de Dios en sí mismo por parte sus criaturas. Y, como ejemplo sublime, cabe aquí recordar las *Alabanzas del Dios altísimo* de San Francisco de Asís:

«Tú eres santo, Señor Dios único,
 el que haces maravillas (cf. Sal 76,15).
 Tú eres el fuerte,
 tú eres el grande (cf. Sal 85,10),
 tú eres el altísimo,
 tú eres el omnipotente,
 tú, Padre santo (Jn 17,11),
 rey del cielo y de la tierra (cf. Mt 11,25).
 Tú eres trino y uno, Señor Dios de dioses (cf. Sal 135,2),
 tú eres el bien, todo el bien, el sumo bien,
 Señor Dios vivo y verdadero (cf. 1 Tes 1,9).
 Tú eres el amor, la caridad (cf. 1 Jn 4, 8.16);
 tú eres la sabiduría,
 tú eres la humildad,
 tú eres la paciencia (Sal 70,5),
 tú eres la belleza,
 tú eres la seguridad,
 tú eres el descanso.
 Tú eres el gozo y la alegría (cf. Sal 50, 10),
 tú eres nuestra esperanza,
 tú eres la justicia,
 tú eres la templanza, tú eres todo, nuestra riqueza a satisfacción.

⁴¹ Cf. la breve historia de grandes antecedentes de Ignacio en este sentido, Ignacio de Antioquía, Basilio, Benito, Agustín, Catalina de Siena y Bernardino de Siena, en H. RAHNER, *Ignacio de Loyola y su histórica formación espiritual*, 59-80.

⁴² En los maestros mencionados como Eckhart o Fénelon no hay que sospechar la preponderancia de nada que no sea el amor, solo que su sistemática parece entrañar la posibilidad del deslizamiento racionalista.

Tú eres la belleza,
 tú eres la mansedumbre,
 tú eres el protector (Sal 30,5),
 tú eres el custodio y defensor; tú eres la fortaleza (cf. Sal 42,2),
 tú eres el refugio.
 Tú eres nuestra esperanza,
 tú eres nuestra fe,
 tú eres nuestra caridad,
 tú eres toda nuestra dulzura,
 tú eres nuestra vida eterna nuestra,
 grande y admirable Señor,
 Dios omnipotente, misericordioso Salvador»⁴³.

A esta expresión poética de la adoración corresponde el lugar de la misma como puede vislumbrarlo la metafísica. La adoración es para Santo Tomás un acto exterior (en correspondencia a la bíblica *proskynesis* o postración⁴⁴), imperado por la devoción interior, un acto de la virtud de la religión que es parte de la virtud de la justicia, pero parte «potencial», es decir, abierta por la diferencia ontológica entre el ser y el ente y entre el Creador y la criatura a todo el espacio del ser más allá del objeto propio de la justicia⁴⁵. Para Balthasar esta analogía del ser, que puede considerar a la criatura semejante al Creador dentro de una mayor desemejanza, es distintiva, como hemos visto, de la indiferencia ignaciana, pero no sin una formulación nueva de la analogía sobre considerada desde la libertad y la elección (elegir libremente según la elección de Dios para mí [cf. *Ej* 135; también 98, 146, etc.]), lo que pertenece a una línea de pensamiento no exactamente tomista.

Es coherente con lo anterior la aplicación de la metafísica de los trascendentales del ser a la definición de la adoración que da el mismo teólogo suizo: adoración es

«el acto por el que lo reconocemos con todo nuestro ser como Dios, nuestro Dios... que solo Dios es por sí mismo, mientras todo lo creado existe sólo por Su querer y actuar omnipotentes y, por ende, no tiene sus raíces en sí mismo, sino en Él, el único incondicionado y absoluto. Reconocer, por tanto, que Dios es lo verdadero por antonomasia, la quintaesencia de toda verdad y, en consecuencia, que Él siempre tiene razón en lo que quiera hacer o dejar acontecer... Reconocer que Dios es el bien por antonomasia, la quintaesencia de toda bondad, y por tanto no sólo siempre tiene razón, sino que por su ser y sus disposiciones es digno de ser amado también de modo incondicional, amado con la donación reverente de todo nuestro corazón. Reconocer que Dios es absolutamente bello, la quintaesencia de toda belleza, y por tanto debemos darle razón con sumo entusiasmo y servirle con júbilo»⁴⁶.

⁴³ FRANCISCO y CLARA DE ASÍS, *Escritos*, Ediciones franciscanas Aranzazu, Ávila 2013, 63-64.

⁴⁴ Sobre la *proskynesis* en la Escritura, cf. J. RATZINGER, *El espíritu de la liturgia. Una introducción*, Ed. Cristiandad, Madrid 2005, 209-219.

⁴⁵ Cf. STO. TOMÁS DE AQUINO, *Summa Theol.* II, II, q. 80, a. 1 y q. 84, a. 1 y a. 2.

⁴⁶ *Navidad y adoración*, Ediciones San Juan, versión electrónica www.edicionessanjuan.es 2017, 4.

La metafísica, según el mismo Santo Tomás, no puede tener a Dios como objeto, sino indirectamente, como la causa del ser creado que es su objeto propio⁴⁷. Por eso el acto de adoración, por el que el don de Dios se entrega a Dios, es la última palabra sobre el ser del mundo si la analogía del ser se concibe como expresión manifestación del amor divino: «El misterio del amor divino es de tal manera luminoso... es tal que su noche deslumbradora solo puede recibir gloria mediante la adoración»⁴⁸. La adoración del amor divino es la última palabra de la verdad del mundo.

4. Teología

La afirmación de una valencia metafísica de la adoración no resuelve aun la cuestión estrictamente teológica de la concepción cristiana de la adoración: ¿qué es adorar desde el punto de vista no ya de la criatura que se vuelve al Creador, sino desde el punto de vista del Creador mismo que en la revelación de sí mismo y de su propósito respecto del hombre y del mundo se dirige a su criatura humana? Los dos puntos de vista no pueden contradecirse ni pueden simplemente coincidir, porque la concepción cristiana de la creación es inseparable del misterio de Cristo y del misterio de la Trinidad divina, de modo que también la verdad de la creación es revelación del Dios de Jesucristo.

Para abordar la cuestión teológica de la adoración, convendrá, por tanto, dar tres pasos en la argumentación: la cristología, la teología trinitaria, para finalmente volver al Principio y Fundamento según tales consideraciones.

4.1 Cristología y adoración

4.1.1 Evangelium Christi o cristología implícita

La exégesis de los evangelios ha puesto de relieve que la predicación de Jesús del Reino de Dios es al mismo tiempo una apertura a los hombres de su relación personal con el Dios al que llama Padre. En expresión sintética de Heinz Schürmann, la teología de Jesús es el Padre y la escatología de Jesús es el Reino⁴⁹. El amor al Padre y la obediencia a la misión dada por el Padre constituyen el centro cordial de la existencia de Jesucristo, de modo que es la oración de Jesús al Padre la revelación de este centro. Benedicto XVI, ha sostenido que, exegética y teológicamente, la oración de Jesús es un lugar especial del desvelamiento de su relación con el Padre, pues las breves noticias sobre su oración «descorren un poco el velo del misterio, nos permiten asomarnos a la existencia filial de Jesús, entrever el origen último de sus acciones, de sus enseñanzas y de su sufri-

⁴⁷ La metafísica considera a Dios, pero no como su objeto propio, que es “solo el ens commune” (*Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, prooemium). Cf. *Super Boethii De Trinitate*, pars 3 q. 5 a. 4 co. 4.

⁴⁸ H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Theologik I. Wahrheit der Welt*, Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln 1985, 312.

⁴⁹ Cf. H. SCHÜRMAN, “Jesu Tod als Heilstod im Kontext seiner Basileia-Verkündigung”, en *Jesus - Gestalt und Geheimnis*, Bonifatius, Paderborn 1994, 168-185.

miento. Este “orar” de Jesús es la conversación del Hijo con el Padre, en la que están implicadas la conciencia y la voluntad humanas, el alma humana de Jesús, de forma que la “oración” del hombre pueda llegar a ser una participación en la comunión del Hijo con el Padre»⁵⁰. Esto es especialmente manifiesto en la enseñanza de Jesús del Padre nuestro a los discípulos, como invitación a participar de su propia oración: «Sólo quien ha reconocido lo “propiamente jesuánico” en la figura de la totalidad del Padre nuestro y en ella ha reconocido lo “propiamente jesuánico” como cristología incoativa-implícita, ha comprendido la oración de Jesús en su profundidad»⁵¹.

En la oración de Jesús su modo de adorar al Padre es único y novedoso. Él es el iniciador de una nueva adoración, porque con Él «llega la hora y ya está aquí en que los adoradores verdaderos adorarán al Padre en espíritu y en verdad, porque así quiere el Padre que lo adoren» (Jn 4, 23). La condición cristológica de esta nueva adoración es inseparable de la condición de enviado de Jesús⁵², que implica un “no ser sin el Padre” o “no ser sino en el amor del Padre”, un no tener donde reclinar la cabeza ni dónde depositar su espíritu sino en las manos del Padre (Lc 23, 46)⁵³. Aquí está también el origen de la pobreza evangélica y de su bienaventuranza⁵⁴.

También para San Ignacio Jesús es el arquetipo de esa «suma pobreza espiritual» [*Ej* 146 y 147] o simplemente «suma pobreza» [*Ej* 116] que podemos identificar como la «nada» propiamente evangélica, y que es condición para la adoración. Al respecto, en la *Deliberación sobre la pobreza*, dos expresiones del discernimiento de Ignacio llaman la atención: «La Compañía toma mayores fuerzas espirituales y mayor devoción asimilando y viendo al Hijo de la Virgen, nuestro Criador y Señor, tanto pobre y en tantas adversidades»⁵⁵. El título de “Hijo de la Virgen” es en nuestro contexto especialmente expre-

⁵⁰ J. RATZINGER-BENEDICTO XVI, *Jesús de Nazaret I*, 12.

⁵¹ H. SCHÜRMANN, “Das ‘eigentlich Jesuanische’ im Gebet Jesu. Jesu Beten als Schlüssel für das Verständnis seiner Verkündigung”, en *Jesús - Gestalt und Geheimnis*, 63.

⁵² Sobre la misión como categoría cristológica fundamental, cf. H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Theo-dramatik II. II 2. Die Personen in Christus*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Freiburg² 1998, 136ss.

⁵³ Una “cristología del vacío”, como la que se refleja en la interpretación que hace Pierre de Bérulle de la subsistencia de la naturaleza humana de Cristo en la hipóstasis del Verbo eterno, como despojo, pérdida y privación de lo que corresponde a la naturaleza (cf. PIERRE DE BÉRULLE, *Discursos y Elevaciones*, BAC, Madrid 2003, 44ss) no parece hacer plena justicia a la doctrina del III Concilio de Constantinopla (DH 555-558), que canonizó la de Máximo Confesor sobre las dos voluntades, divina y humana, y las dos operaciones (energeiai). Cf. “Record of the Trial”, y “Dispute at Byza”, en P. ALLEN and BROWNEN NEIL (Eds.), *Maximus the Confessor and his Companions. Documents from Exile*, Oxford University Press, London 2002, 48-74, esp. 63-65, y 77-119, esp. 83-85. Todavía más problemática parece la interpretación de John Milbank de la no-personalidad humana de Jesucristo, en J. MILBANK, *The Word Made Strange*, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford 1998, 156-165.

⁵⁴ Kierkegaard ha intuido que la misma autoridad de la revelación se fundamenta en la pobreza, no solo en la del apóstol que no es el genio que expone su propio mensaje, sino en la de Cristo que, como Dios-Hombre, posee una autoridad que le es dada por el Padre. Cf. S. KIERKEGAARD, *The Book on Adler*, en *Fear and Trembling and the Book on Adler*, Every Man’s Library, New York-London-Toronto 1994, 199-215, esp 208-209.

⁵⁵ “Deliberación sobre la pobreza”, en *Obras*, BAC 2013, 267.

sivo, pues evoca e introduce en ese ámbito de los pobres de Yahvé que es propio de los evangelios de la infancia. De este ambiente se pasa a la comunión eclesial con su centro en la eucaristía: «Parece que con mayor afecto se une con la Iglesia, seyendo uniformes en no tener cosa alguna, considerando en el sacramento a Cristo pobre»⁵⁶. Esta pobreza es la que el cristiano reconoce en la vida de humillaciones del Señor, de la que se confecta «la misma vestidura y librea de su Señor» [Co 101] que el [que quiere entrar en la Compañía de Jesús y el] cristiano debe desear vestir.

Decimos que esta *suma pobreza* es la que permite la adoración cristiana, porque es Jesucristo el que la ha vivido y establecido como relación con Dios. Ver en el sacramento a Cristo pobre resume estas cosas, porque el culto con Cristo al Padre tiene lugar en *su* pobreza, en la que se manifiesta su relación eterna de filiación, por lo que, al mismo tiempo, es culto a Jesucristo mismo. Por eso hay que hacer una segunda consideración cristológica sobre la adoración.

4.1.2. Evangelium de Christo o *crisología explícita*

El anuncio del Reino de Dios por parte del Señor, por la vinculación de su persona con el Reino que anuncia, da lugar necesariamente al anuncio de Jesús por parte de la Iglesia, a la que podemos considerar sacramento del Reino de Dios, sin identificarla con él⁵⁷. Por lo que aquí interesa, Jesucristo, adorador del Padre, es también adorado junto con el Padre. De nuevo, Benedicto XVI lo expone refiriéndose al milagro de la tempestad calmada:

«Los discípulos se dicen unos a otros: “¿Quién es éste? ¡Hasta el viento y las aguas le obedecen!” (Mc 4, 41). En este contexto también el “Yo soy” tiene otro sonido: es más que el simple identificarse de Jesús; aquí parece resonar también el misterioso “Yo soy” de los escritos de Juan. En cualquier caso, no cabe duda de que todo el acontecimiento se presenta como una teofanía, como un encuentro con el misterio divino de Jesús, por lo que Mateo, con gran lógica, concluye con la adoración (proskynesis) y las palabras de los discípulos: “Realmente eres el Hijo de Dios” (Mt 14, 33)»⁵⁸.

Sobre la adoración «en Espíritu y Verdad», Ignace de la Potterie ve la novedad, por un lado en que solo en el Hijo de Dios encarnado tiene lugar, en la edad mesiánica, la plenitud de la presencia de Dios, pues ahora es revelado como Padre, y por otro lado y sobre todo en que «la adoración “en la Verdad” no es posible sino *en la irradiación de esta Verdad de Jesús* como en un lugar de culto y permaneciendo en estrecha comunión con Él. Esta adoración tiene por tanto un carácter fundamentalmente cristológico; se practica “in Christo”. Pero tiene al mismo tiempo y por lo mismo, un significado trascendente y trinitario... Pues aquel que es adorado, no es solamente Dios, es *el Padre*; el

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Lumen Gentium* 5.

⁵⁸ *Jesús de Nazaret* I, 140.

que inspira esta adoración cristiana es *el Espíritu Santo*; y la luz en la cual se practica es la verdad que aporta *Jesús* en la revelación de sí mismo»⁵⁹.

Podemos tomar estas indicaciones exegéticas como fundamento bíblico de lo que la tradición ha comprendido como adoración de Jesucristo también en *su santa humanidad*. Por su parte, San Ignacio invita también a contemplar la humanidad de Cristo en su unión con su divinidad: «Para Ignacio no hay un Dios separado de la sacratísima humanidad de Cristo, pensamiento que él comparte con Teresa de Jesús»⁶⁰. «El Cristo de Ignacio es la segunda persona de la Trinidad que se ha hecho carne. En este Cristo, humanidad y divinidad no se separan»⁶¹. Por eso a Jesucristo corresponden los títulos divinos de «rey eterno y señor universal» [Ej 97], «eterno Señor de todas las cosas» [Ej 98], «Criador y Redemptor» [229], por lo que es inseparable del «Criador y Señor» tantas veces evocado en los Ejercicios. Y por eso hay que percibir lo divino en lo humano de Jesús, al oler y gustar «la infinita suavidad y dulzura de la divinidad del ánima y sus virtudes» [Ej 124].

Sin embargo, la contemplación de la humanidad de Cristo tiene en Ignacio tonos particulares. En la mística descrita por Ignacio en cinco puntos [cf. *Au* 28-30], como intermedio en la narración de su vida, el cuarto de ellos es la humanidad de Cristo y el quinto la ilustración en el Cardoner: «En este tiempo (de la visión del Cardoner) le dio el Señor grande conocimiento y sentimientos muy vivos de los misterios divinos y de la Iglesia. Aquí le comunicó N. S. los ejercicios, guiándole desta manera, para que todo se emplease en el servicio suyo y salud de las almas, lo qual le mostró *con devoción* especialmente en dos ejercicios, scilicet, del rey y de las Banderas. Aquí entendió su fin y aquello a que todo se debía aplicar y tener por escopo en todas sus obras, que es el que tiene ahora la Compañía»⁶². Hugo Rahner, que cita este testimonio de Jerónimo de Nadal, concluye de esta visión sintética de la mística ignaciana que «la conmovedora consideración de la vida de Jesús, tomada de Ludolfo de Sajonia y puesta en el primer libro espiritual en tinta roja, se cambia ahora en *Los misterios de la vida de Cristo nuestro Señor*, que con lógica inexorable van disponéndose ordenadamente al fin de la elección. Y precisamente por eso se diferencia Ignacio tan radicalmente de la *Devotio moderna*, cuya digamos amorfa *Imitatio Iesu*, en Ignacio de Manresa se ha completamente transformado en el seguimiento de *Christus praesens in Ecclesia militante*»⁶³.

⁵⁹ I. DE LA POTTERIE, *La verité dans Saint Jean II. Le croyant et la verité*, Biblical Institute Press, Roma 1977, 705-706.

⁶⁰ A. CORDOVILLA, «Rasgos del Dios de Ignacio», en G. URRIBARI (Ed.), *Dogmática ignaciana*, U. P. de Comillas, Ed. Sal Terrae, Ed. Mensajero, Madrid-Bilbao, 73-96, aquí 78. Cabe recordar que, al respecto, Teresa de Jesús se remite no solo a su experiencia, sino a San Pablo y a la tradición contemplativa: «Yo he mirado con cuidado, después que esto he entendido, de algunos santos, grandes contemplativos, y no iban por otro camino. San Francisco de muestras de ello en las llagas; San Antonio de Padua, el Niño; San Bernardo se deleitaba en la Humanidad, Santa Catalina de Siena... otros muchos» (*Libro de su vida* cap. 22, 7, en *Obras completas*, Ed. Monte Carmelo, Burgos 2004, 218).

⁶¹ G. URRIBARI, «Líneas maestras de la cristología ignaciana», en G. Urríbari (Ed.), *Dogmática ignaciana*, 133-175, aquí 137.

⁶² JERÓNIMO DE NADAL, cit. en H. RAHNER, *Ignacio de Loyola y su histórica formación espiritual*, 54.

⁶³ *Ibid.* 55.

Con todo esto solo queremos establecer que la reverencia debida solo a Dios es inseparable de la adoración de la santa humanidad del Señor, si bien la novedad ignaciana se señala en una penetración especial en el origen evangélico de la *proskynesis* ante Jesucristo, y esto en dos aspectos: toda la unión de lo divino y lo humano de Jesús de Nazaret aparece en Ignacio más explícitamente como relación con el Padre, es decir, en su aspecto trinitario⁶⁴, y como punto de partida y renovación del conocimiento del «Verbo eterno encarnado, para más le servir y seguir» [Ej 130] y por ello de la libertad que elige cosas que «militen dentro de la santa madre Iglesia jerárquica» [Ej 169]. A la adoración acompañada así el movimiento de Cristo que viene del Padre y tiene la voluntad «de conquistar todo el mundo y todos los enemigos, y así entrar en la gloria de mi Padre» [Ej 95].

4.2 Trinidad de Dios

Como se ha podido ver, el aspecto cristológico de la oración cristiana es inseparable del trinitario (hasta el punto de que nuestra distinción parece por momentos artificiosa) porque Jesús mismo ora y reverencia al Padre y con Él el cristiano se dirige al Padre.

Este aspecto trinitario de la oración se puede expresar en el hecho de que si el Hijo busca en todo la gloria del Padre, el Padre busca en todo la gloria del Hijo. Valga aquí recordar la oración de Jesús y su respuesta, que en Jn 12, 27-28 parece reflejar la Oración de Getsemaní de los sinópticos: «Padre, glorifica tu Nombre». Vino entonces una voz del cielo: «Le he glorificado y de nuevo le glorificaré» (Jn 12, 28). Observa Xavier Léon-Dufour que en la respuesta del Padre «el verbo no tiene complemento directo. Es “el Nombre” sin duda el que se sobrentiende... Sin embargo, se puede leer también: “Te he glorificado y te glorificaré todavía”. Jesús ha pedido la glorificación del Padre, lo cual está en conformidad con su éxtasis habitual hacia Él (cf. 1, 1.18). Pero la gloria de Dios no es sino la manifestación plena y eficaz de la su amor al mundo, y coincide por tanto con la obra del Hijo, por quien son reunidos los creyentes y entran en comunión con Dios. La omisión de un complemento directo es sin duda intencional, a fin de marcar la unidad de la “gloria”»⁶⁵. Más explícitamente Jesús pide ser glorificado por el Padre en la llamada oración sacerdotal: «Ahora, Padre, glorifícame tú, junto a ti, con la gloria que tenía a tu lado antes que el mundo fuese» (Jn 17, 5). El exégeta comenta: «El Hijo le pide a Dios ser glorificado “junto a Él mismo (*pará seautoi*)”: le pide a volver a la gloria que tenía “junto a Él (*pará soi*)”... Al final de su oración, Jesús dirá que esta gloria original procede del amor con el que el Padre lo ha amado desde “antes de la fundación del mundo” (17, 24)... Las dos peticiones son complementarias. La primera (17, 1-12)

⁶⁴ «El primero en la historia de la espiritualidad que percibió la Trinidad como acción –como el Dios que sigue trabajando, llenando siempre el universo y despertando activamente la vida divina en todas las cosas para la salvación de la humanidad. Si el monje inspirado contempla, el Ignacio inspirado trabaja- adhiriéndose con todo su corazón a los designios de la Trinidad, ofreciéndose a actuar en sinergia con la Trinidad para que su labor sea para la gloria de la Trinidad» (P.-H. KOLVENBACH, cit. en WILLIAM A. BARRY, “Oración ignaciana”, *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana* 1373).

⁶⁵ X. LÉON-DUFOUR, *Lectura del Evangelio de Juan II*, Ed. Sígueme, Salamanca 1992, 374.

indica la glorificación del Hijo en su aspecto *ad extra*, por la que el mismo Padre será glorificado. La segunda petición, en estilo directo, hace vislumbrar la gloria secreta, *ad intra*, de aquel a quien el prólogo llama Logos»⁶⁶.

La revelación del Padre, que según Louis Bouyer hace del cuarto evangelio no un *Evangelium de amore*, que trataría de un amor indeterminado, sino un *Evangelium amoris* que es *Evangelium de Patre*, pues el Padre es fuente de todo el amor trinitario⁶⁷, implica tanto la manifestación del Padre como aquel hacia quien se dirige la oración de Jesús y, con Jesús, la de los cristianos, como la manifestación de la mirada original del Padre que se posa y complace en el Hijo. Se trata siempre del Padre que lo es por su relación con el Hijo, el Dios y Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo (cf. Ef 1, 3; 2 Cor 1, 3) y por ello respecto de los hombres: «“El Dios y Padre” es casi un *único* concepto. Con ello se caracteriza a Dios como el Dios paternal y el Padre divino de Jesucristo, que es “nuestro Señor”, y en quien nosotros encontramos también a Dios como Dios y Padre nuestro»⁶⁸. Es para Jesús «mi Padre y vuestro Padre, mi Dios y vuestro Dios» (Jn 20, 17), en donde la distinción tiene el sentido de «subrayar que la relación de los discípulos con el Padre se ha transformado en su propia relación. No se trata simplemente de la reconciliación entre Dios y los hombres, sino de la entrada de los creyentes en el amor que desde siempre une al Padre y al Hijo»⁶⁹.

Esta introducción en el amor eterno intratrinitario implica la eterna reciprocidad de las miradas, por decirlo así, entre el Padre y el Hijo. En esa reciprocidad hay que reconocer la raíz primera de la oración cristiana, lo cual se hace especialmente patente en la mística de San Ignacio. Ángel Cordovilla lo ve así sobre todo en el relato de la experiencia de La Storta [Au 96], en la que Ignacio vio que el Padre lo ponía con su Hijo, pidiéndole tomar a Ignacio como compañero: «La acción de Dios Padre de ponerlo con su Hijo expresa la participación creyente en la misma relación de amor entre el Padre y el Hijo...En mi opinión, aquí se da más plenamente una mística trinitaria que cuando se afirma, sin más, que cada una de las oraciones va dirigida a cada una de las personas divinas... El creyente es introducido en la misma vida de Dios al ser colocado en el lugar del Hijo, mostrándose así la incorporación del ser humano al dinamismo trinitario de la vida de Dios»⁷⁰. Cordovilla justamente ve aquí, en la participación del amor del Hijo por el Padre, el fundamento de la participación del cristiano en la misión de Cristo de glorificar al Padre, como se ve en el modo en que mística trinitaria y discernimiento sobre la misión se entretajan en el *Diario espiritual*. Sin separar de ninguna manera el *Deus in se* del *Deus pro me* o *pro nobis*, la oración ignaciana puede contemplar a Dios que se da al hombre en su Hijo y su Espíritu en la gracia de la fe y la misión, y también a Dios sobre

⁶⁶ X. LÉON-DUFOUR, *Lectura del Evangelio de Juan III*, Ed. Sígueme, Salamanca 1995, 232.

⁶⁷ Cf. L. BOUYER, *Le Père invisible*, Ed. du Cerf, Paris 1975, 223ss.

⁶⁸ H. SCHLIER, *La Carta a los Efesios*, Ed. Sígueme, Salamanca 2006, 55.

⁶⁹ X. LÉON-DUFOUR, *Lectura del Evangelio de Juan IV*, Ed. Sígueme, Salamanca 1998, 185.

⁷⁰ A. CORDOVILLA, 85-86. Podría matizarse que la oración a cada una de las personas divinas incluye también el aspecto de introducción al dinamismo trinitario, pues las personas no lo son sino en la relación entre ellas. Pero en todo caso hay que estar de acuerdo con la explicitación.

todas las cosas en su vida divina trinitaria: «Conocía, sentía o veía, *Dominus scit*, que, al hablar al Padre, solo con ver que era una persona de la Santísima Trinidad, mi amor extendía a toda la Trinidad, ya que las demás personas estaba en la persona del Padre esencialmente. Otro tanto sentía en la oración al Hijo; otro tanto en la del Espíritu Santo» [De 63]. Ignacio «contempla a las personas divinas en su relación *pericorética*, la inhabitación mutua de las personas divinas a través de la unidad esencial»⁷¹.

Es el intercambio trinitario el que encuentra también H. U. von Balthasar como explicación del *magis* que encontramos entre los puntos de la *Contemplación para alcanzar amor* de los Ejercicios. Porque si en el primero se contempla cómo Dios quiere dárseme en cada uno de sus dones y en consecuencia quiere «dárseme en cuanto puede según su ordenación divina» [Ej 234], «el último y cuarto paso es una superación del primero... Hay que llamar “economía” al dramáticamente móvil abajar-se y entregar-se de Dios a su criatura»⁷². Si el mundo, según el segundo punto, es habitado por Dios, es porque el mundo solo tiene su lugar auténtico en Dios, «lo que significa en su vida trinitaria que, como tal, es un interminable fluir de las divinas Personas, una de otra, una hacia otra, una en otra. Un donarse cada una siempre en acto»⁷³. Esta autodonación eterna intratrinitaria hace posible la autodonación de Dios a la criatura, porque esta tiene lugar en aquella, y el mundo «es, para las personas divinas que se dan mutuamente a sí mismas, una afortunada oportunidad para el don: el Padre Creador regala el mundo al Hijo Redentor, el cual lo pone... a los pies del Padre como Reino consumado, pero a la vez es, de nuevo, constituido Cabeza y Recapitulación de toda la obra del mundo. El Espíritu de ambos, el “Tercero”, es tanto el que inspira este interminable ciclo de donación como el que lo hace actual y lo consume, pero no como si todo desembocara en Él, sino que todo es conducido por Él en el Hijo hacia el Padre, el cual, por su parte es fuente y origen de todo solo en la medida en que Él es el que fluye desde sí hacia el Hijo y el Espíritu»⁷⁴.

También la respuesta del hombre se funda en esa vitalidad intradivina. Y esto especialmente en la oración: «No se puede contemplar desde fuera el movimiento intradivino, no se puede ser tampoco ser portado por él en modo puramente pasivo; se requiere para ello un consentimiento del que contempla, el cual es co-introducido por la gracia de Dios en el ser divino que fluye. La gracia de María fue la de dar a luz como humilde sierva al Hijo eterno junto con el Padre. La gracia del Hijo encarnado es hacernos partícipes de su nacimiento eterno del Padre y así llevarnos consigo en su movimiento de regreso hacia el Padre. La gracia de ambos es donarnos su Espíritu común no solo como un resultado (pues el Espíritu no puede ser tal), sino como Alguien que procede siempre ahora también desde nosotros, cuando Padre e Hijo nos introduce en su espiración del Espíritu... El que medita cristianamente es siempre de nuevo conducido a este misterio»⁷⁵.

⁷¹ Ibid. 92.

⁷² H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Christiliche meditieren*, Joahnnes Verlag Einsiedeln, Freiburg 1995, 93.

⁷³ Ibid. 94.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 95.

⁷⁵ Ibid. 95-96.

Por todo esto, la adoración de Dios y toda la vida cristiana de oración, tiene su fundamento en la donación que el Padre hace al Hijo de su sustancia y que el Hijo recibe como amor personal del Padre y por amor al Padre, en el *semper-magis* del Espíritu Santo. Este intercambio puede ser considerado ya como diálogo del que depende absolutamente el ser de cada persona divina, es decir, como oración. «De da la referencialidad recíproca de admiración mutua, más aun, de adoración, de mutuo agradecimiento infinito (del Padre porque el Hijo eternamente se deja engendrar, del Hijo porque el Padre se dona eternamente), de súplica recíproca (del Padre, porque el Hijo quiere cumplir todos sus deseos, del Hijo, porque el Padre permite al Hijo cumplir también sus deseos más extremados); un referirse uno al otro, propio del amor absoluto, el cual aparentemente debería bastarse eternamente, pero su carácter íntimo es de un desbordamiento tal que produce –uno quisiera decir “de improviso”- a Uno más...el tercero en Dios (Tertuliano)»⁷⁶. Balthasar toma esta idea de Adrienne von Speyr, y remite a su libro *Die Welt des Gebetes*, en donde se expone ampliamente la oración intratrinitaria como fundamento de la oración cristiana. Aquí nos limitamos a un texto alusivo:

«El ser eternamente en reciprocidad de las tres divinas Personas en la unidad, es un intercambio en adoración eterna recíproca: diálogo y oración en uno. Y si bien la reciprocidad eterna se funda en la unidad, el acto eterno de oración es efectivo y determinante, en un siempre-más de la determinación de lo propio de cada Persona... Cada una de las Personas que recibe adoración de las otras dos, comunica siempre inmediatamente lo recibido a las otras. Este compartir en Dios es muy importante para nosotros los hombres, porque nos muestra cómo toda unilateralidad tiene que ser continuamente superada»⁷⁷.

El fundamento de la adoración en el amor adorante intratrinitario es también lo que hace de la teología, como conocimiento de Dios, «esencialmente acto de adoración y oración»⁷⁸. Y permite la reinterpretación del apofatismo en el que desemboca el discurso sobre Dios: no se trata del silencio propio de la teología negativa filosófica, «porque las flechas de todos los conceptos y palabras caen al suelo antes de su meta; al final de la teología cristiana está un silencio distinto: el de la adoración, que, a causa de la desmesura de lo concedido, pierde la voz»⁷⁹.

4.3 El hombre es criado para hacer reverencia

Es necesario ahora volver a la creaturalidad del hombre como su Principio y Fundamento. La verdad bíblica de la creación no puede ser separada de la cristología y la teología trinitaria sin dejarla caer en el insulso deísmo ilustrado que no puede mover ni a amor ni a alabanza, y sustituye la reverencia por una especie de resignación que con

⁷⁶ *Theologik III. Der Geist der Wahrheit*, 145-146.

⁷⁷ A. VON SPEYR, *Das Wort und die Mystik II. Objektive Mystik*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln 1970, 83.

⁷⁸ H. U. VON BALTHASAR, “Theologie und Heiligkeit”, en *Verbum Caro*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Freiburg³ 1990, 222.

⁷⁹ *Theologik II. Wahrheit Gottes*, 98.

facilidad pasa a ser resentimiento contra la precariedad de lo humano, lo que suele alternarse con el proyecto megalómano de una humanidad nueva producida por los (pre)hombres. En cambio, si el hombre recibe su ser del amor trinitario como se manifiesta en el misterio de Cristo resucitado, entonces no puede dejar de agradecer y alabar, y ponerse al servicio. Su reverencia y acatamiento no procederán ya del miedo sino de la nobleza que reconoce la gratuidad del amor absoluto, frente al cual «todos los que tuvieren juicio y razón ofrescerán todas sus personas» [Ej 96].

Henri de Lubac ha sugerido a propósito de esto que «podría haber –osemos esta paradoja- un Prometeo cristiano»⁸⁰, es decir, un Prometeo que no arrebatara para los hombres los bienes divinos, sino que los recibe y conquista por vocación divina. Si ya en Grecia la virtud es concebida como una superación continua de la naturaleza humana, una segunda naturaleza, y los poetas someten todo lo humano a la prueba divina del destino que revela la dignidad sobrehumana del héroe, no deja de pesar sobre estas sublimes concepciones la sombra del pesimismo antropológico⁸¹; y si el prometeísmo moderno consiste en la liberación del hombre mediante la eliminación de la obediencia a Dios, en cambio, cuando la vocación divina del hombre se hace audible en Cristo como «l'appel de l'amour»⁸², entonces la constante superación de lo humano no tiene que darse mediante la eliminación del hombre ni la eliminación de Dios, sino mediante «la aceptación... de la llamada a una destinación más sublime, hasta la unión con su Creador»⁸³. Ser cristiano es aspirar ciertamente al Hombre Nuevo, es decir, a vivir en Cristo. «Que el hombre prosiga, mientras dure el mundo, el gesto de Prometeo: que ilumine a cada siglo un fuego nuevo, base material para un nuevo desarrollo humano... Pero que al mismo tiempo implore el descenso del único Fuego sin cuya quemadura nada podrá ser purificado, consumado, salvado, eternizado: *Emite Spiritum tuum et creabuntur, et renovabis faciem terrae*»⁸⁴.

La creación es entonces concebida como llamamiento y como misión⁸⁵. Esto es lo que encontramos también en la teología de la creaturalidad de Pierre Ganne: «Decir que Dios es creador, es decir que Él no hace nada sino que Él hace que los seres se hagan. *El amor suscita una libertad que se crea a sí misma*. Ella no podría crearse sin esta iniciativa, sin este llamamiento del Otro, sin esta relación con el Otro... Necesitamos acoger esta presencia secreta, profunda, de un Dios que sigue engendrando a sus hijos, de un Dios que quiere sus hijos *colaboren* en su propia génesis»⁸⁶. Para afirmar esto,

⁸⁰ H. DE LUBAC, “La recherche d’un homme nouveau”, en *Révélation divine – Affrontements mystiques – Athéisme et sens de l’homme*, Œuvres Complètes IV 2006, 262.

⁸¹ Cf. H. DE LUBAC, *Le mystère du surnaturel*, Œuvres Complètes XII, Ed. du Cerf, Paris 2000, 155-177.

⁸² Cf. Ibid. 273-291.

⁸³ H. DE LUBAC, “La recherche d’un homme nouveau”, 271.

⁸⁴ Ibid. 305.

⁸⁵ Cf. H. U. VON BALTHASAR, *Christlicher Stand*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Einsiedeln² 1981, 56-65.

⁸⁶ P. GANNE, *Êtes-vous libre?*, cit. como epígrafe en *Pierre Ganne s. j. (1904-1979). La théologie chrétienne, pédagogie de la liberté*, Paris, Médiasévres 2009, 5.

Ganne se apoya en la unidad de los misterios cristianos de Creación, Jesucristo y Trinidad, porque la libertad-obediencia propia del amor, como don más alto de Dios al hombre, es sostenida por la donación que hace Dios de Sí mismo, de modo que «no es casualidad que el cristiano halle simultáneamente o pierda simultáneamente el sentido de la Creación, el sentido de la Trinidad, el sentido de la Resurrección, el sentido de la Fe viva como crítica radical del mundo»⁸⁷. No basta decir *creatio ex nihilo*, porque crear, aun en la experiencia humana, consiste en «hacer que surja una *novedad* radical, que no existía en ninguna parte. Eso “Nuevo”, en efecto, es lo que marca de un cabo al otro la nueva Creación en Jesucristo»⁸⁸. Para Ganne, si se pierde el sentido de la creación, el cristianismo se convierte inevitablemente en ideología. Y esta parece ser la crisis del cristianismo moderno que no acierta a adorar: «¿crisis de civilización? ¿crisis de cultura? Sin duda alguna, pero sobre todo de existencia humana cristiana, en su relación de dependencia y de conocimiento para con su Creador»⁸⁹.

Todo esto significa que la reverencia a Dios implica un momento de reverencia por el don de Dios que es el hombre mismo. Entonces se da la adoración cristiana: ante la majestad del amor divino que se compromete por el hombre, la nobleza humana no puede sino responder entregando todo a la mayor gloria de Dios, o, como glosa Balthasar, «a la mayor gloria del amor de Dios»⁹⁰. No se trata de servilismo, dice San Agustín respondiendo a los filósofos que censuran el arrodillarse como comportamiento de bárbaros, pues la adoración cristiana no es ante el dinero ni la egolatría: «La humildad de Cristo y su amor, que llegó hasta la cruz, nos han liberado de estos poderes, y ante esta humildad nos arrodillamos»⁹¹. Y si, como dice Pedro Fabro, «bueno es que el alma esté detenida en su cuerpo»⁹², es sobre todo porque a veces el alma se despista en los horizontes del “infinito malo”, y puede entonces el cuerpo encarnar el espíritu de oración que, por decirlo así, pasando del *pneuma* al *soma*, con el movimiento de postración de este, pone la *psyché* ante Dios, como los pasos del hombre cansado pueden llevar su agobio a la alegría de la meta.

Si hablamos ahora de reverencia ante la Majestad de Dios, y hemos reconocido la pobreza evangélica en la raíz misma de la adoración cristiana, la visión de Pierre Ganne, de la pobreza, nos permite introducir el Fundamento de los Ejercicios, expresado por San Ignacio en modo más bien abstracto, como definición del fin del hombre, en la dramática bíblica por la que discurre el teólogo jesuita con acento especialmente profético. El mismo Ignacio lo hace sobre todo a propósito de la elección en la segunda semana de los ejercicios, cuando el Fundamento ha de vivirse como indiferencia en las condiciones reales de la vida, en el dramatismo de la libertad que responde a la Libertad.

⁸⁷ P. GANNE, *La creación: una dependencia para la libertad*, Ed. Sal Terrae, Santander 1980, 87.

⁸⁸ Ibid. 115.

⁸⁹ Ibid. 101.

⁹⁰ *Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Freiburg⁶ 2000, 6. «La humildad de Cristo

⁹¹ Cit. en J. RATZINGER, *El espíritu de la liturgia*, 210.

⁹² Memorial 179, en A. ALBURQUERQUE (Ed.), *En el corazón de la reforma. «Recuerdos espirituales del Beato Pedro Fabro, S.J.*, Mensajero-Sal Terrae, Bilbao-Santander 215.

En nuestra época este dramatismo toma la forma de oposición: «nos encontramos ante dos filosofías... que tienen en común reconocer la libertad como un absoluto. Pero, o bien este absoluto está cerrado en sí mismo y quiere hacerse dios sin Dios, o bien se comprende como apertura y relación, como amor, y quiere hacerse dios en el don de Dios... O bien la libertad se bautiza en ella misma y en solo en ella, o bien se bautiza en el Espíritu Santo. Tal es el fondo del debate entre el rico y el pobre»⁹³. Por eso, para encontrar al Dios vivo es necesario recordar la experiencia de la Alianza de Dios con Israel: «Fundamentalmente hoy estamos en la misma situación que los Pobres de Yahvé: pobres de Jesucristo, nos corresponde discernir cuáles son las potencias que pretenden definir e instaurar el verdadero advenir del hombre»⁹⁴. Solo Israel nos proporciona un sentido de la realidad que puede incluir tanto a Dios y su cielo como la historia, sin tener que separarlos o ponerlos contradicción. El modo de vivir la historia a partir de la Alianza hace que el futuro, dice Ganne, se viva como el ad-venir de Dios a los hombres. Por eso la pobreza es un sí y es un no, es elegir la elección de Dios que quiere ser el Dios de Israel, y es al mismo tiempo crítica de los poderes de este mundo que se presentan como salvación, como porvenir de Israel, como sentido de la historia (alianzas con Egipto, Asiria, con la sabiduría de este mundo, con la dominación de lo divino mediante el culto idolátrico). La pobreza «era el único camino posible de fidelidad a la promesa del Dios vivo... Los pobres de Yahvé... dijeron “no”, un no consciente y decidido a las pretensiones de los poderosos»⁹⁵. Y si la profecía se ejerce como la crítica de los pobres a los poderes de este mundo que se cierran a su origen en Dios y como rotundo “no” de la libertad a la mentira y la injusticia, este aspecto negativo tiene sentido solo por el aspecto positivo, el de la esperanza de los pobres que «se apoyaba en Dios, que los amaba, y es a Dios a quien se dirigía enteramente el “sí” de su libertad, ese “sí” que daba un sentido positivo a su situación angustiosa»⁹⁶. Así, el Pobre de Yahvé «no se permite definir su existencia de hombre, su historia y su avenir absoluto sino por su relación con Yahvé, con su venida, su día y su reino... La pobreza compromete enteramente al hombre: es decisión y opción del corazón, de la libertad profunda que plantea así el sentido global de la vida. La pobreza se confunde concretamente con la fe y hace posible la peregrinación de la esperanza»⁹⁷.

Solo el pobre tiene esperanza verdadera, que no consiste en proyectar ansiosamente el futuro, sino en poder dejárselo a Dios: La esperanza de los pobres «no es para mañana, sino para hoy, “el hoy de Dios”... anuncia siempre un comienzo, incluso si ese comienzo humilde y frágil hace pensar en un germen, en una yema o en un niño, en ese “niño que se nos ha dado” (Is 9, 5) y que viene desde lo más profundo del avenir. La esperanza, más aún, el comienzo absoluto, el comienzo del avenir absoluto, las primicias

⁹³ *Le pauvre et le prophète*, Éd. Anne Sigier, Québec 2003, 106.

⁹⁴ Ibid. 45.

⁹⁵ Ibid. 42-43.

⁹⁶ Ibid. 88-89.

⁹⁷ Ibid. 44-45.

de la “nueva creación”»⁹⁸. Es así como los pobres encarnan el espíritu de profecía, como Presencia y Adviento de Dios y porvenir de los hombres en Dios: «El pobre y el profeta no se apoyan en el vacío de un futuro, sino en la plenitud de un avenir, en el Dios que es y que viene»⁹⁹. Así los profetas podían discernir «los “signos” de la Presencia que hacen posibles, hasta el final, la libertad y el amor... Los profetas no buscan la verdad en la soledad de su propio cuestionarse, sino en el “Otro”, en la Presencia que se hace signo para ellos, que se anticipa graciosamente a ellos y que es el Amor Creador»¹⁰⁰.

Y así la perseverancia de los pobres es reverencia a la majestad del amor divino derramado por Cristo en las tinieblas del mundo. Es este derramamiento el que revela el amor que movía a Dios ya el primer día de la creación. Ciertamente el conocimiento en la fe de estas cosas no elimina las preguntas de la vida humana. Dios no es para el pobre la solución mágica de todo, sino la fuente del amor que comunica a su libertad lo absoluto de la divina. Por eso, «la decisión del pobre con respecto al Reino de Dios y al avenir de la humanidad es el acta de nacimiento del hombre histórico, la mutación radical en la que se inicia y enraíza la “nueva creación”... El pobre es creador, no vive en un mundo todo hecho. No espera de ningún modo que le caigan del cielo ideas o decisiones prefabricadas. Su conocimiento del Creador le libera de estas funestas ilusiones que aprisionan al hombre religioso y al hombre irreligioso, que, en este sentido, tienen la misma enfermedad»¹⁰¹.

Y así, solo el pobre es libre para adorar el amor divino del Padre, del Hijo y del Espíritu Santo. Porque si en estas ideas de *El pobre y el profeta* no aparece la palabra adoración, sí aparece la inmediatez que permite «inmediate el obrar al Criador con la criatura, y a la criatura con su Criador y Señor» [Ej 15], gracias a la pobreza que permite tener al Dios que se hace amor pobre como única riqueza.

5. Conclusión

La dificultad para adorar que encuentra hoy el cristiano, nos parece poder concluir, tiene remedio en la «suma pobreza espiritual», la pobreza evangélica que como respuesta de fe al amor de Dios permite al hombre sentir su nada al mismo tiempo que el don de que lo hace ser libre para el amor. El pobre hace reverencia a la majestad del amor trinitario, que incluye la raíz de la pobreza de Cristo, Hijo de Dios encarnado, en la rica pobreza de las divinas personas, que no son sino en la relación entre ellas. En efecto, en el «ver y considerar las divinas personas» [Ej 106] hay una percepción de lo absoluto del amor que procura la alegría plena: «estamos en comunión con el Padre y con su Hijo Jesucristo. Os escribimos esto para que vuestro gozo sea pleno» (1 Jn 1, 4).

⁹⁸ Ibid. 86.

⁹⁹ Ibid. 89.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. 92-93.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. 107-108.

Tal vez los hombres hemos agotado en buena medida la sensibilidad religiosa que por una u otra vía invitaban a la reverencia ante lo sagrado. Pero queda siempre la Sagrada Escritura con su novedad respecto de toda religiosidad. La aprobación del Papa Pablo III del Libro de los Ejercicios los considera «ex sacris scripturis et vita spiritualis experimentis elicitis»¹⁰², sacados de las Sagradas Escrituras y de la experiencia de la vida espiritual. «Están hechos de Biblia y experiencia... Me parece que los Ejercicios pueden verse como una respuesta a la exigencia del Vaticano II: que se dé a todos los fieles un modo práctico de iniciarse en la *lectio divina continua* de la Escritura. Este es, para mí, uno de los puntos de mayor actualidad de los Ejercicios»¹⁰³. Si el Card. Martini, autor de estas palabras, piensa sobre todo en los misterios de la vida Cristo, podemos añadir que también el Principio y Fundamento pertenece a la Escritura, aunque no se citen en él las palabras bíblicas correspondientes. H. U. von Balthasar ha señalado a los Salmos como origen, el solo posible dado el contexto de la tradición disponible a Ignacio, de la redacción del Fundamento¹⁰⁴.

Pero la Escritura presupone una Palabra anterior a ella, la Palabra viva de la revelación de Dios cuya plenitud es Jesucristo. La Escritura es palabra viva como testimonio del Espíritu sobre la única Palabra del Padre, de modo que aquella nos permite escuchar esta con su sonido original pre-escriturístico. Por su parte, Adrienne von Speyr ha descrito los Ejercicios como experiencia de la Iglesia en su origen, en el surgir de la fe ante la Palabra viva¹⁰⁵. Para la autora suiza, como la plenitud de la Palabra de Dios es Jesucristo, la plenitud de la fe es María, lo que se refleja en los Ejercicios discreta pero claramente. Como Ejercicios de esta fe en tal Palabra, ellos permiten recorrer el camino desde la doctrina eclesial a la palabra bíblica y desde esta a la experiencia *in actu primo revelationis*. Es entonces Jesucristo el que abre el entendimiento para la comprensión del Padre y de su designio. Y es en esta comprensión en que la fe misma nos concede y nos pide hacer reverencia a Dios nuestro Señor.

¹⁰² Mon. Ign. II, 1, 76

¹⁰³ C. M. MARTINI, “Ejercicios espirituales y momento actual”, en J. M. GARCÍA LOMAS (Ed.), *Ejercicios espirituales y mundo de hoy. Congreso internacional de Ejercicios. Loyola, 20-26 septiembre 1991*, Mensajero-Sal Terrae, Bilbao-Santander, 13-14.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. H. U. VON BALTHASAR, “Homo creatus est”, en *Homo creatus est*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Einsiedeln 1986, 11-19.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. A. VON SPEYR, *Kreuz und Hölle II. Johannes Verlag, Einsiedeln 1972*, 394-396.

to feel within my soul his most holy will...

Discernment in Francis Xavier

by PAUL ROLPHY PINTO S.J.*

Discernment played a vital role in the life of Ignatius of Loyola. He often concludes his letters asking for God's grace to "know his most holy will and entirely fulfill it". Francis Xavier, his "least son [from] farthest exile",¹ concludes his letters in a similar way, asking that "we may feel within our souls his most holy will and perfectly fulfill it".² Ignatius and Francis, sincere seekers of God's will, fulfilled in their lives the necessary conditions of humility, discretion and love for the Church in order to discern well.³ They also fulfilled the discerned will of God "more perfectly".

The focus of this article is discernment in the life of Francis Xavier. How did he discern the will of God? How did he make his decisions? Can we observe a development in his process of discernment? I will attempt to answer these questions by examining closely some major decisions of his life, which include his decision to embrace the Ignatian ideal and his decisions to go on three path-breaking missions, namely, to the Malay Archipelago, Japan and China. To exemplify his decisions with regard to missionary strategies, I will also consider the case of Francis's encounter with the duke of Yamaguchi.

The letters of Francis Xavier will be the principle source of this work. The primary purpose of the letters of Francis was not to give an account of how he discerned the will of God for his life. The letters were intended to communicate what was taking place in the mission and to resolve the emerging conflicts in the field. He often wrote or dictated his letters in a great hurry with the ship ready to weigh anchor from the shores. He narrates what is uppermost in his mind and heart without systematically ordering the concerns regarding the evangelising mission.⁴ In the midst of his narrations and descriptions

* PAUL ROLPHY PINTO S.J., docente di teologia presso l'Istituto di Spiritualità della Pontificia Università Gregoriana, pinto@unigre.it

¹ *Doc.* 97.23. Letters and instructions of Francis are designated as *Documents (Doc)* in M. Joseph Costelloe, ed., *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992).

² *Doc.* 20.15. (*Doc.* 52.4). Other similar endings, *Docs.* 52.4, 61.5, 70.15, 71.13, 76.5, 83.5. In other contexts, *Docs.*

50.2, 51.2, 55.1, 59.21, 70.10, 83.1, 129.4.

³ These are the conditions named as necessary for discernment to happen by Pope Francis in Post-Synodal *Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia*, 300.

⁴ Cf. Alfredo Verdoy, *San Francisco Javier: El Molinero de Dios* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2006), 21-22; Xavier Añoveros Trías de Bes, 'Cartas y Documentos Escritos Por San Francisco Javier', *Príncipe de Viana* 64, no. 230 (2003), 600.

one also comes across instances where he shares his spiritual experiences. It is in these sharings that one has a glimpse of the desires emerging in his soul and how he discerns them. This article closely analyses some such passages in their historical context.

1. Francis, man of great Ambitions

Peter Favre writes in his *Memoriale* of how in Paris Ignatius, Francis and he lived in the same room, sharing the same food and purse. He goes on to say that finally they also came to desire and will the same thing.⁵ It is not entirely clear in the paragraph whether Peter is including Francis in the verb *llegamos*, but the “*por fin*” seems to indicate the inclusion. In any case, Ignatius won over Peter to the Lord far more easily than he did Francis. Ignatius was very tenacious in his intent of winning Francis over to the service of the Lord. It took Ignatius about three years to persuade Francis to take part in his vision. Well known are the words that Auger put into the mouth of Polanco, “I have heard our great molders of men, Ignatius, say that Francis Xavier was the lumpiest dough he had ever kneaded”.⁶ Manuel Teixeira, the first biographer of Francis, tells us that Francis was harder to win over than was Peter. Francis posed greater difficulty to change. Though he liked to converse with Ignatius and enjoyed his friendship, Francis but resisted risking a change in the state of life because he was naturally inclined to the honour and splendor of the world.⁷

What brought Francis to Paris? It was the precarious situation of the Castle of Xavier and the helplessness of the family.⁸ The military carrier of his elder brothers Miguel

⁵ “Por fin llegamos a tener los mismos deseos y el mismo querer”. Antonio Alburquerque, ed., *En El Corazón de La Reforma: «Recuerdos Espirituales» Del Beato Pedro Fabro, S.J.*, Manresa [Sal Terrae] (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero, 1999), 116.

⁶ *Fontes Narrativi* III, 282 [now on *Font. narr.*]. Cf. James Brodrick, *Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552)* (London: Burns Oates, 1952), 43.

⁷ Cf. *Monumenta Xaveriana* II, 818 [now on MX]; Alburquerque, *En El Corazón de La Reforma*, 27.

⁸ His father, Don Juan de Jaso, had died in 1515. Three year prior, around 1512, Castile had taken possession of Navarre. In 1516 there was an attempt to free Navarre which failed, and the nobles who had taken part in the rebellion were punished by the Spanish crown. The castle of Xavier was among those which bore the brunt. The watchtower was halved in height, and the privilege of collecting taxes was annulled. Francis was ten at the time. He witnessed the insult and the disgrace to the family. In 1521, Miguel and Juan, the two brother of Francis, fought with the French in the siege that captured Pamplona. Ignatius was hit by the cannon ball while trying to defend the city. The French hold over Pamplona did not last long. The Spanish defeated the French in July of the same year. Miguel was taken prisoner, and Juan fled to the fort of Fuenterrabia. (Miguel, who escaped from prison of Pamplona, also later took refuge in the same fort) . Here the Navarre-French resistance held on till February, 1524. In April of the same year King Charles I of Castile granted an ample amnesty to the rebellious nobles of Navarre. Miguel and Juan returned to the Castle and recovered the lost status of nobility, but the family's financial status was still in tatters. In this context, Francis, now eighteen, was sent to the University of Paris. Cf. José Enrique Ruiz de Galarreta, *Francisco de Javier, Biografía Crítica* (Pamplona: José Enrique Ruiz de Galarreta, 2006), 18-21.

and Juan met with disaster. Francis now was the hope of the family to restore its prestige and honour. The family invested its meagre resources in Francis and chose for him the most prestigious university of the time, the Sorbonne in Paris. By custom, the youngest male of the family was destined for studies. Studies in those days meant an ecclesiastical carrier. Francis had taken his tonsure as a cleric of the diocese of Pamplona.⁹ He, more than his brothers, wanted to prove himself and to attain honour for his family.¹⁰ He was clearly ambitious. He had obtained the certificate of nobility in order to procure a canonical benefice in Pamplona, to which, in all likelihood, he was elected.¹¹ His goal was even beyond that, a bishopric.

Francis left his native land in the summer of 1525 and never returned. He renounced in 1536 the canonical benefice which he had so ardently sought, all in favour of “the way of poverty and the cross of Christ”.¹² This was the first major and crucial decision he took. It is true that Ignatius played a pivotal role in Francis’s decision, but the decision was that of Francis. How did he discern? And why?

The purpose for which Francis had come to Paris, chasing his ambitions, was “normal” for any youth in his place. His ambition was considered legitimate in his cultural context. He would not have felt any demand to reconsider his goal. Ignatius had to begin by making Francis aware of a choice between the good he was determined to attain and a greater good, the way of Christ. Francis did not even take Ignatius seriously. On the contrary, he did not let slip any opportunity to ridicule the Basque nobleman.¹³ Ignatius opted to enter through Francis’s door to exit through his own.¹⁴ Finances arriving from the Castle of Xavier were barely sufficient to maintain the type of lifestyle to which Francis was accustomed. Ignatius supported him with the money¹⁵ procured from his fund raising visits to the Low Countries. Moreover, when Francis was teaching philosophy as a regent,¹⁶ Ignatius recommended Francis’s classes to the pupils and made sure that his classroom was full.¹⁷ The attitude of Francis towards Ignatius changed

⁹ Cf. Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier, His Life, His Times, Vol. I Europe 1506-1541*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe, vol. I, 4 vols (Rome: The Jesuit Historical Institute, 1973), 74.

¹⁰ Cf. José María Recondo, *San Francisco Javier: Vida y Obra* (Madrid: La Editorial Católica, 1988), 145.

¹¹ Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 155-158, 272.

¹² *Font. narr.* I, 100. Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 272.

¹³ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 172.

¹⁴ In the third instruction to Alfonso Salmerón and Paschase Broët regarding their mission to Ireland, composed in early September 1541, Ignatius writes, “In any conversation where we are trying to win a person over and ensnare him for the greater service of God our Lord, we should adopt the same procedure the enemy uses with a good soul [*SpEx* [332]]—he always for evil and we always for good. The enemy enters through the other’s door and comes out his own”. John W. Padberg and John L. McCarthy, eds., *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions*, trans. Martin E. Palmer (Saint Louis (MO): Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2006), 66. *SpEx* = *Spiritual Exercises*. Text in George E. Ganss, ed., *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992).

¹⁵ Cf. *Doc.* 1.6.

¹⁶ He started the teaching as a regent in the Collège de Beauvais in 1530.

¹⁷ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 159.

gradually. He won Francis over to himself, but that was not Ignatius's main objective. Ignatius wanted Francis to dream the dreams that God had in store for him.

Traditionally it is said that Ignatius won Francis over to God with these words, "What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (Mt 16: 26). The tradition goes back to one of the early biographies of Francis by Tursellinus, *Vita Francisci Xaverii*.¹⁸ It is both probable and possible that Ignatius made use of these words of our Lord in his spiritual conversations with Francis. The impact of these words is notable in Francis as, years later, he would use the very same gospel verse to exhort King John III of Portugal. The verse is cited three times in his Letters¹⁹ and is one of the very few Scripture quotations in his entire literary corpus.

What transpired between the start of the friendship which developed between Francis and Ignatius and the making of the vows of Montmartre in 15th Aug 1534?²⁰ One could infer that the continuing spiritual conversations, supposedly involving Scripture verses such as Mt 16: 26, would have initiated a process of discernment in Francis. The gospel verse "what does it profit..." is a practical criterion or rule for discernment within the gospels. An authentic discernment questions prior convictions—things once taken for granted and considered natural and normal—and it places one's life in a crisis.²¹ Francis wanted to earn name and fame in the world and to re-establish the honour and prestige of his family. What was at stake now was the salvation of his own soul. He must have felt the inner tension caused by two types of spiritual movements, some inducing him to hold onto the passing worldly ambitions and others inspiring him to set his heart on lasting, other-worldly realities. From the decision he took, that of making the vows, it can be further inferred that the prospect of serving the Lord in radical poverty caused enduring consolation in his soul.

There is no record of this discernment process in Francis's own words. What we do possess is a letter of Francis to his brother Juan dated 25 March 1535. Ignatius himself was the bearer of the letter. He was visiting his hometown, Loyola, for health reasons. Francis makes an allusion to the change he had gone through and to the accompaniment of Ignatius in that process. From the content of the letter, it is also clear that Francis's family was receiving conflicting reports from Paris, some of which held Ignatius in a bad light. Francis defends Ignatius and affirms how beneficent God has been to him through Ignatius:

In order that your Grace may clearly know what a great favor our Lord has done to me by having me come to know Lord Master Ignatius, I give you my word of honor through this

¹⁸ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 178, note 219.

¹⁹ *Docs.* 63.4, 90.25.

²⁰ Cf. *Autob* [85], Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 212. *Autob* = *Autobiography*. Text in Parmananda Roque Divarkar, ed., *A Pilgrim's Testament: The Memoirs of Ignatius of Loyola* (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995).

²¹ Cf. Toni Català, 'Discernimento y Vida Cotidiana', *Cristianisme i Justícia*, no. 22. Available at https://www.cristianismeijusticia.net/sites/default/files/pdf/eies22_0.pdf, 2.

letter that I shall never, as long as I live, be able to repay the great debt which I owe him, both for his having frequently assisted me in my needs with money and friends, and for having been the reason why I abandoned some evil companions whom I, through lack of experience, did not recognize as such. [...] I do not know when I can ever repay Lord Master Ignatius for this alone, that he was the reason why I did not converse, or have any dealings, with persons who outwardly appeared to be good but were inwardly full of heresies, as has been shown by their works.²² I therefore entreat your Grace to receive him as you would my own self, since through his good services he has placed me so greatly in his debt.

I earnestly entreat you not to fail to converse freely with Lord Ignatius and to believe what he tells you. His advice and conversation can be of great advantage to you, since he is a great man of God and of a very good life. I again ask you as a favor not to fail to do this; and whatever Lord Master Ignatius will tell your Grace on my behalf, do me the favor of giving as much credit to him as you would to me in person. Your Grace can learn more about my needs and difficulties from him than from any other person in the world, for he knows more about my poverty and wretchedness than anyone else in the world.²³

It becomes clear from the Letter that Ignatius accompanied Francis very closely. Francis laid his heart open before Ignatius. An adequately accompanied discernment process renders a high degree of authenticity to the process. At the end of the process, Francis, with six others, made the vows of poverty, chastity and a pilgrimage to the Holy Land.²⁴ Francis made his “Election” even before he made his Spiritual Exercises.²⁵ He did not change his determination professed through the vows after making the Exercises, which implies that the experience of the Exercises confirmed his Election.

2. Chance or Providence?

Ignatius chose his second Parisian companion as his first secretary. He and his first companions, after the Deliberations of March to June 1539, chose to institute the new order. After the oral approbation of the Society by Pope Paul III on 9 September 1539 and until his departure from Rome to Lisbon on 14 March 1540, for less than a year, Francis served Ignatius as his secretary. The missioning to India came suddenly. King John III of Portugal requested that the Pope give to him men of the newly founded order to be sent to India in order to “increase our holy Catholic faith”.²⁶ The Pope commissioned two priests to go India, leaving Ignatius to choose them. The choice fell on Rodrigues and Bobadilla. Rodrigues was sent to Portugal by sea. Bobadilla was to join Dom

²² A distinction between good and apparent good is made, bearing resemblance to the fifth and sixth rules of the Second Week. *SpEx* [332-333].

²³ *Doc.* 1, 6-7.

²⁴ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 214.

²⁵ Francis made his Exercises in September 1534, soon after the vows of Montmartre. He couldn't make them earlier as he could not interrupt his teaching assignment in the Collège de Beauvais. Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 216.

²⁶ Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier I*, 543.

Pedro Mascarenhas, the Ambassador of John III, returning from Rome to Lisbon overland. Bobadilla took ill. The day before the departure of Mascarenhas, who could not wait any longer, Ignatius summoned his secretary and said, “*Esta es vuestra empresa!* (This is a task for you!)” To this Xavier replied with great joy and readiness: “*Pues, sus! Héme aquí!* (Good enough! I am ready)”²⁷ Francis *decided* to obey. The great joy he felt in his soul is an indication that the joy was caused by an interior movement coming from the good spirit. Francis’s discernment in this case was instantaneous. Could this be considered as a case of the First Time of making a sound election? In the First Time, “a devout person, without doubting or being able to doubt, carries out what was proposed”²⁸

Was this missioning a chance happening or providential for Francis? About two years prior, in May 1537, Francis was returning to Venice from the Eternal City and had Laynez as his travel companion. During the journey, he had a recurring dream which he recounted to his companion: “Jesus, how exhausted I am! Do you know what I dreamt? I dreamt that I was carrying an Indian on my back, and he was so heavy that I was almost crushed.”²⁹ At this point, the intention of the First Companions was that they would go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Yet, God was “revealing” his will to Francis through a dream which was at variance with the intent of the Companions. In the gospel of Matthew, Joseph, who wanted to dismiss Mary discreetly, after a dream, decides to take her as his wife (Cf. Mt 1: 18-25). The Magi, after a dream, returned home through a different route (Cf. Mt 2: 1-12). Dreams of this revelatory nature are a sort of *locus theologicus* for discernment.

The dream of carrying an Indian³⁰ on his back was a sort of premonition of what God had in store for Francis. In this sense, the improvised missioning of Francis to India was not by chance. He would have seen it as providential, a fulfilment of what he had seen in the dream. Further, it can be affirmed that God was instilling in the heart of Francis, without his being aware, a desire to go on mission to the Far East. The category of “desire” is something that appears in the Letters of Francis when he is speaking of the processes of discernment, as will be seen later. The experience of the recurring dream occurring in the span of roughly two years (birth of the desire) and his being sent on mission (confirmation of the desire) would have further introduced Francis into the school of discernment. He would have learnt to pay attention to the movements of the spirits in the form of desires. Did he nurture the desire placed in his heart by God in the two year period? It is difficult to say. However, his ready and joyful acceptance of the mission seems to hint at an affirmative answer.

²⁷ *Font. narr* II, 381; Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier* I, 554.

²⁸ *SpEx* [175].

²⁹ *Font. narr.* II, 381-382; Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier* I, 339.

³⁰ Whether an Indian of the Orient or an Indian of the Occident, i.e., a native American, is not immediately clear.

3. To the “Islands of Hope in God”³¹

Being sent to India is equivalent to being sent nowhere! India in the XVIth century did not mean the present Indian subcontinent. It meant also the entire territory to the east of the Indian subcontinent.³² Francis’s first destination was Goa, the headquarters of the Portuguese colony in India. In his first leg of the ministry, Francis laboured largely in the eastern Fishery Coast, with the Paravas and Macuas. He was again *sent* there,³³ to take care of the Christians baptised between 1536 and 1537, around six years before his arrival in Goa.

Francis laboured lovingly and intensely for over two years with the Paravas. Gradually he began taking stock of the situation in which he found himself. The Paravas, the pearl fishers, were at the receiving end from all quarters—the local kings, the merchants, and other people of influence, both local and foreign (Arabs and Portuguese). They were perhaps most exploited by the Portuguese themselves, the supposed protectors of the poor baptised Christians. The immoral conduct of the Portuguese and their greed for money,³⁴ far from being a help in the spread of the Kingdom, were a huge hindrance to Francis’s apostolic labours. Like Ignatius, his true father,³⁵ who, at a similar crossroads of life, asked the crucial question *quid agendum*,³⁶ Francis too paused to ask a similar question. From Nagapatam on 7 April 1545 he wrote to Mansilhas,

Since I do not know what will happen in Jaffnapatam, I am undecided as to whether I should go to Malacca or remain here. During the whole month of May I shall consequently deliberate on whether I should go there or not.³⁷

The word “deliberate” (the Portuguese *determinare*) is a technical word in the Ignatian vocabulary for an explicit process of discernment. A discernment process culminates in a deliberation. In order to deliberate, Francis retired to a lonely place, to the cave of the martyrdom of St. Thomas at Mailapur (present day Chennai).

What were Francis’s options?³⁸ Some of the available options were continuing the missionary activity in the Fishery Coast, going to Abyssinia (Ethiopia), going to Ceylon,

³¹ *Doc.* 59.4. Francis says that it is better to call the Islands of Moro “Islands of Hope in God”.

³² “For Portuguese India in the fullest sense extended from ‘the Cape to China’”. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 135.

³³ The “instruction and strengthening” of over fifty-thousand Paravas who had been baptised on the Malabar Coast was the principal reason why John III sent Francis to India. Though Goa was the first destination in India, it was just a temporary one. Francis, who reached Goa in May, had to wait until the end of September for better weather in order to sail to Cape Comerin. Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 158.

³⁴ Francis spoke of wrongdoings of the Portuguese officers with emphasis in his letters to John III: “I am amazed at seeing how those who come from there find so many moods, tenses, and participles for this poor verb ‘*Rapio, rapis*’”. *Doc.* 49.7.

³⁵ Cf. *Doc.* 4.4.

³⁶ Cf. *Autob* [50].

³⁷ *Doc.* 50.3.

³⁸ Cf. *SpEx* [178].

and going to the Macassar Islands.³⁹ The Fishery Coast was being looked after by Mansilhas and four other secular priests.⁴⁰ Franciscans were active in the major Portuguese strongholds such as Goa, Cochin, Cannanore and Cranganore.⁴¹ In a letter to Mansilhas from Manapar on 11 September 1544, Francis expresses his desire of going to the land of Preste, i.e., Abyssinia.⁴² The desire for martyrdom may have been latent in that request.⁴³ This desire was nothing more than a mirage. The conquest of the ruler of Jaffnapatam (Ceylon), the persecutor of the neophytes,⁴⁴ did not take place as Francis had hoped.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, on 26 January 1545, Antonio de Paiva brought extensive official news of the conversion of two kings of the Macassar Islands.⁴⁶ Amidst this scenario, Francis expresses his uncertainty to Mansilhas (7 April 1545): “I am not as yet certain about my own future”.⁴⁷

In the spring of 1545 Francis was in Negapatam, north of the Fishery Coast. The Christians were being persecuted in Cape Comerin, in the south. He could not even go there to join Mansilhas due to strong contrary winds. He wrote to Master Diogo and Micer Paulo in Goa on 8 May 1545, from Mailapur, that he was compelled to go to San Thomé.⁴⁸ Here Francis spent four months, between April and August 1545, in prayer, penance and discernment, seeking light and clarity from God. In the same letter he says,

In this holy house [of St. Thomé] I deemed it my duty to engage myself in asking God our Lord to grant me to feel within my soul his most holy will, along with a firm resolve to fulfill it and a sure hope that “he who has given the desire will also grant its execution”.⁴⁹

The choice was narrowed down to the Macassar Islands. Francis had gathered rudimentary information about the region. The situation was favourable there for evangelisation. In the above mentioned letter to Mansilhas he also says,

I have been definitely informed that the people in the regions of Malacca are well disposed for the service of God, and that many fail to become Christians and our holy faith to be increased for the lack of someone to work there.⁵⁰

In the Fishery Coast, the Christians were being persecuted and exploited. Unable to bear their pain, was Francis escaping to Macassar?⁵¹ When he retired to San Thomé, did

³⁹ Cf. Luis M. Bermejo, *Unto the Indies: Life of St. Francis Xavier* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2000), 115.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Doc.* 51.2.

⁴¹ Cf. Bermejo, *Unto the Indies*, 117.

⁴² *Doc.* 41.4.

⁴³ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 508.

⁴⁴ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 471.

⁴⁵ Cf. *Doc.* 51.1, Bermejo, *Unto the Indies*, 117.

⁴⁶ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 521-522, 588.

⁴⁷ *Doc.* 50.1.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Doc.* 51.1.

⁴⁹ *Doc.* 51.1.

⁵⁰ *Doc.* 50.3.

⁵¹ Cf. Xavier Léon-Dufour, *San Francisco Javier: Itinerario Místico Del Apóstol*, trans. Felipe Aguirre (Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 1998), 204.

he know that Simão Vaz was murdered by the people of Morotai in 1535?⁵² Did he also know that the people of Moro were extremely treacherous and mixed poison in the food they served? It is difficult to say. But he definitely had this information when he was writing from Amboina to his Companions in Europe on 10 May 1546.⁵³

“At the tomb of the apostle [St. Thomas], Master Francis sought for light in the painful darkness. Where was God calling him?”⁵⁴ Gaspar Coelho, the Chaplain of the tomb of St. Thomas, was Francis’s confidant. He opened his heart to Coelho in spiritual conversation and sacramental confession.⁵⁵ This was a time of ongoing purification for Francis. In the midst of confusion⁵⁶ and mixed motivations, one can find it difficult to perceive with clarity the will of God. Francis was agitated by assaults of the Evil One, who places many obstacles in the path of the soul that sincerely seeks God’s will. Francis fought with the devil during this period, even receiving physical blows.⁵⁷

The letter of 8 May gives more details of the proceedings of Francis’s discernment process:

In keeping with his usual mercy, God has been pleased to be mindful of me; and with great interior consolation I have felt, and have come to know, that it is his will that I go to those regions of Malacca, where some have recently become Christians, in order to give them the reasons for, and the teachings of, our true and holy faith [...]. Since they have of their own free will become Christians, it is fitting, my dearest brothers, that they should receive much help from us.

I hope in God our Lord that he will grant me much grace on this voyage, for he has granted me, with great satisfaction to my soul and spiritual consolation, the favor of making me feel that it is his most holy will that I go to those regions of Macassar which have recently become Christian. I am so determined to carry out what God gives me to experience within my soul that it seems to me that I would be going against God’s will if I did not do so, and that he would not grant me his grace either in this life or in the next. If no Portuguese ships are sailing this year for Malacca, I shall go on a Moorish or pagan ship. I have so much faith in God our Lord, dearest brothers, for whose love alone I am making this voyage, that even if there were no ship sailing this year from this coast but only a *catamaran* [a raft made of three or four logs lashed together], I would confidently go on it, placing all my hopes in God.⁵⁸

Francis had discerned the spiritual movements within his soul. The movements he felt when he thought of going to the Macassar regions caused great spiritual consolation in his soul. He discerned that this consolation which he felt was so authentic and deep that it served to confirm that the desire to go Macassar was placed in his soul by God.

⁵² Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier III*, 274.

⁵³ Cf. *Doc.* 55.4.

⁵⁴ Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 588.

⁵⁵ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 589.

⁵⁶ Cf. *SpEx* [140]. The smoke mentioned here by Ignatius is a symbol of confusion.

⁵⁷ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 591.

⁵⁸ *Doc.* 51. 1-2.

What was a “sign of God” for Ignatius in order to determine whether the decision he made was the will of God? The uncontested sign was the mission indicated by the Vicar of Christ.⁵⁹ The missioning of Francis Xavier to India is one such case. Francis, in his turn, was convinced that he was fulfilling the will of God when he obeyed his superior, Ignatius. Once in the mission field, Francis often had to make many decisions by himself. Ignatius, after entrusting a difficult mission to his companions in the faraway lands, gave them the freedom to make decisions depending on the context of the place.⁶⁰ The decision Francis made to go to the Macassar region is in this purview. How, then, does one know that the decision made is also the will of God? What are the signs?

According to Ignatius, there are three preliminary steps to the interpreting of a sign of God which result in an authentically spiritual decision: to have authority or responsibility for making the decision or participating in it, to pray to God to bestow his light, and to be inwardly free of all preference and of all personal passion.⁶¹

Francis fulfilled these conditions. The decision to go to the Macassar region was not a participative decision, but Francis was endowed with the authority to make the decision. According to Ravier, for Ignatius the decision-making passes through five major phases.⁶² Francis’s decision-making passes through those phases, except for the consultative phase, as he did not have any companions around. Even through correspondence such consultation would have been almost impossible due to the large distance between Europe and Asia and the time taken in receiving a reply (a minimum of two years, in the best of conditions). Nonetheless, there are instances of Francis’s seeking advice from Ignatius on how to conduct himself in the mission lands.⁶³

Francis gathered as much information as he could about the various options at his disposal. He weighed the pros and cons of every option.⁶⁴ Some options had to be discarded because their execution was practically not possible. Of those that were possible, Francis felt that the option of going to the Macassar region would best *serve* the Lord. He would place this option before the Lord in total interior purity and personal disinterest, in other words, *indifference*.⁶⁵ This is a necessary condition before one can

⁵⁹ Cf. André Ravier, *Ignatius of Loyola and the Founding of the Society of Jesus*, trans. Maura Daly, Joan Daly, and Carson Daly (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987), 332.

⁶⁰ Cf. Padberg and McCarthy, *Ignatius of Loyola: Letters and Instructions*, 81, 574; Ravier, *Ignatius of Loyola and the Founding of the Society of Jesus*, 245.

⁶¹ Ravier, *Ignatius of Loyola and the Founding of the Society of Jesus*, 340.

⁶² 1. *The information phase*; 2. *The deliberation phase*: the responsible parties examine the advantages and disadvantages of adopting or rejecting the plan; 3. *The interrogation of God in prayer phase*: [...] the one responsible and each of his advisers pray again and strive to perceive with total interior purity and personal disinterest [...]; 4. *The decision phase*; 5. One last time, the one who has made the *decision offers it to God in prayer*. Cf. Ravier, *Ignatius of Loyola and the Founding of the Society*, 340-341.

⁶³ Cf. *Doc.* 11.6; 15.15.

⁶⁴ Cf. *SpEx* [181].

⁶⁵ Cf. *SpEx* [179].

begin an authentic discernment process.⁶⁶ Though Francis did not have Jesuit companions around, he conversed with Coelho. The confessions he made are an indication of his desire to attain internal purity and indifference. Confiding in someone trustworthy reduces the risk of being deceived by the Evil One and of confusing one's own will for God's will. Finally, the intense spiritual consolation that accompanied the thought of going to Macassar served him as a sign and confirmation from God to decide to go to Macassar. He was convinced that, if he did not execute the desire he had experienced, he would be disobeying God.

"Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God..."⁶⁷ are the opening words of the Principle and Foundation. The principal purpose of Francis in going to the Macassar region was for the praise and service of God. In order to serve better one needs to choose or to decide better, and in order to take a decision in accordance with God's will, one needs to discern well. Through a patient and careful discernment, Francis felt Christ the King calling him to Macassar, and Francis responded readily and diligently.⁶⁸ He saw his mission as one of opening the path for others to follow, and so he became the spearhead.⁶⁹ The young, nineteen year old Francis who had arrived in Paris had great dreams for oneself, but now he was dreaming even greater things for God.

4. Japan. Many Strings in the Harp⁷⁰

Francis laboured in the Malay Archipelago for about two years (1545-1547). He waited in Malacca between July and December 1547 to embark back to Cochin, India. The Portuguese had discovered Japan five year earlier.⁷¹ Towards the end of the first week of December, a Portuguese captain, Jorge Alvares, introduced to Francis a Japanese fugitive he had brought along from Japan, Anjiro (Paul of the Holy Faith would later become his baptismal name). Anjiro (then age 35) had two other companions. He had learnt sufficient Portuguese to be able to converse by this time. Francis had eight more days to get acquainted with the new friends. They opened up before him a new world with great prospects for evangelisation. Francis learnt from Anjiro that the Japanese were a highly cultured people, guided by reason, and that if Francis answered their questions intelligently, they would embrace Christianity. The Portuguese merchants who

⁶⁶ Letter of Fr. General Arturo Sosa to the Whole Society On Discernment in Common, 27 September 2017. See <http://www.sjweb.info/adusum/documents/docslstLCt2.cfm> [access 14.02.2018]. The contents of the letter are similar to the phases of decision-making mentioned by Ravier.

⁶⁷ *SpEx* [23].

⁶⁸ Cf. *SpEx* [91-100].

⁶⁹ Cf. *Docs.* 98.9, 107.18, 137.4; Bermejo, *Unto the Indies*, 115; Léon-Dufour, *San Francisco Javier*, 238, 243.

⁷⁰ Cf. Léon-Dufour, *San Francisco Javier*, 115.

⁷¹ Cf. *Doc.* 59.15; Nuno da Silva Gonçalves, 'Francesco Saverio, Missionario al Di Là Dei Confini', *Civiltà Cattolica*, no. 4061 (2019), 423.

had come from Japan told Francis that if he went to Japan he would draw more profit for God there than he had among the Indians. The first seeds of the desire to God Japan were sown in Francis's soul. Anjiro and his companions sailed to Goa by a different ship and were admitted in the College of St. Paul.⁷²

The desire to go to Japan was conceived in December 1547. Francis set sail for Japan in April of 1549. The idea had matured during the one and half year period with discernment and with consultation with the companions in India. On returning from Malacca, Francis wrote to his Companions residing in Rome from Cochin on 20 January 1548,

All the Portuguese merchants coming from Japan tell me that if I go there I shall do great service for God our Lord, more than with the pagans of India, for they are a very reasonable people. From what I have experienced within my soul, it seems to me that either I or another of the Society will go within two years to Japan, even if the voyage there is full of dangers because of the violent storms and the Chinese pirates who sail that sea in search of booty and cause the loss of many ships.⁷³

On the same day he wrote to Ignatius,

I have not as yet definitely decided on whether a year and a half from now I should go myself to Japan with one or two of the Society, or whether I should first send two of our Society there. But it is certain that I shall either go myself or send others. At the present time, I am more inclined towards going myself. I am asking God to let me know clearly what is more in keeping with his holy will.⁷⁴

Also, on the same day he wrote to King John III in similar fashion, expressing what was going on within his soul.⁷⁵ The doubting indicates the presence of different movements he was experiencing within his soul. From what Francis wrote it becomes clear that he spent time, mostly likely during his voyage, praying and discerning about the mission to Japan.

After dispatching those letters, Francis got busy supervising missionary activities on the Fishery Coast. He travelled to Goa and Bassein. Amidst the governmental concerns, it is likely that he discussed his plans with the fellow companions. Meanwhile, Lancilotto (superior at Goa) had gathered more information regarding the geography, religion and culture of Japan from Anjiro and his two companions in the College of St. Paul. While in Goa, Francis had access to the report about Japan drawn up by Lancilotto for the Governor Garcia de Sá⁷⁶ and had occasion to converse more at leisure with Anjiro. Francis's discernment would have been influenced by the facts that polygamy was not in practice in Japan and that there were no competing religions there, as there were in

⁷² Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier III*, 268-272, 336, 384; *Doc.* 59.15-19.

⁷³ *Doc.* 59.18.

⁷⁴ *Doc.* 60. 4.

⁷⁵ Cf. *Doc.* 61.9.

⁷⁶ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier III*, 479-491. For example, from what Francis learnt from Anjiro, he would decide not to eat meat and fish in Japan in order not to scandalize the priests there. Cf. *Doc.* 85.14.

India.⁷⁷ Besides, there was no Portuguese presence in Japan. The bad example of the Portuguese was a negative influence in India.⁷⁸ From Anjiro Francis had learnt that the Japanese valued the example of life highly. In April of 1548, he wrote to his friend Diogo Pereira in Cochin about the voyage and pilgrimage he hoped to make to Japan.⁷⁹ Back in Cochin at the beginning of 1549, he wrote to Ignatius on 12 January:

I shall not refrain from going to Japan because of what I have so keenly felt within my soul, even though I were certain that I would see greater dangers than I have ever encountered before, for I have great hopes in God our Lord that our holy faith will be greatly increased in those regions.⁸⁰

Francis gives more details about how he arrived at the decision to go to Japan in his letter to King John III, writing from Malacca on 20 June 1549 while en route to Japan:

Because of the abundant information which I had received about the excellent prospects in the islands of Japan for the increase of our holy faith, and because I had been informed by many reliable persons who had been on those islands of Japan, I decided to ask God our Lord that, if it were to his greater service for me to go to those regions, he might grant me the great grace to experience his holy will within my soul and the strength to perfectly fulfill it. It pleased His Divine Majesty to grant me to experience within my soul that it would be to his service for me to go to Japan, and I thus left India to fulfill what God our Lord granted me many times to experience with respect to my going to serve him in Japan.⁸¹

Ignatius writes in the *Spiritual Exercises*:

The Second Time [for making a sound Election] is present when sufficient clarity and knowledge are received from the experience of consolations and desolations, and from experience in the discernment of various spirits.⁸²

Francis says, “our Lord granted me many times to experience”, indicating that he experienced a repeated and enduring consolation when he felt the spirit moving him to go to Japan. This consolation was a sign that the movement was caused by the good spirit. The purpose of the mission, once again, is clear: for the greater glory and service of God.

A paragraph from the *Autography Directory* of Ignatius sheds some more light on the *Second Time* for making a sound election and, consequently, on the discernment of Francis. Ignatius writes,

Among the three modes [times] of making an election, if God does not move him in the first he should dwell on the second, that of recognizing his vocation by the experience of

⁷⁷ Cf. Leela D’Souza, “Saint Francis Xavier and the Jesuits in Goa: The Socio-Political Context”, in *Jesuits in India: History and Culture*, ed. Délio de Mendonça (Anand-Goa: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash—Xavier Centre of Historical Research, 2007), 46.

⁷⁸ Cf. Alfredo Verdoy, *San Francisco Javier: El Molinero de Dios* (Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2006), 146.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Doc.* 65.1.

⁸⁰ *Doc.* 70.10.

⁸¹ *Doc.* 83.1. Here Xavier is also weighing the pros and cons of going to Japan.

⁸² *SpEx* [176].

consolations and desolations. Then, as he continues with meditations on Christ our Lord, he should examine, when he finds himself in consolation in which direction God is moving him; similarly in desolation.⁸³

Is Francis taking recourse to the experience of consolation only as a confirmation of the decisions he took? Though he does not make a clear cut distinction between the movements experienced during the time of consolation and consolation experienced while thinking about going to Macassar and Japan, there are indications to show that he did examine in which direction God was moving him while he found himself in consolation. Two instances can be highlighted from what is already quoted above: With respect to Macassar, "... with great interior consolation I have felt, and have come to know, that it is his will that I go to those regions of Malacca",⁸⁴ and with respect to Japan, "It pleased His Divine Majesty to grant me to experience within my soul that it would be to his service for me to go to Japan".⁸⁵ Francis paid attention to the counsels received during the experience of consolation because in the time of consolation it is chiefly the good spirit who guides, while in desolation chiefly the evil spirit.⁸⁶

To Japan, Francis was not going alone. The availability of more missionaries allowed him the freedom to take along a couple of Jesuit companions, Father Cosme de Torres and Brother Juan Fernández. Anjiro and the two Japanese, of course, joined Francis, and they mediated the mission.⁸⁷ Francis had mentioned about sending or taking "one or two of our Society" to Japan in his letter to Ignatius on returning from Malacca. Thus, considering going as a team had formed part of his discernment.

The mission to the Malay Archipelago and Japan are two cases of discernment with regard to the choice of a mission. Francis also had to discern with regard to mission strategy. One illustrative case is that of the audience with the duke of Yamaguchi. Becoming all things to all people (Cf. 1Cor 9: 19-23) was a principle that governed the activity of the Apostle of the Indies. He adopted the poor lifestyle of the poor of India and Indonesia. On arriving in Goa, Francis, the Apostolic Nuncio, took residence in the hospital. He asked Dom Luis, the overseer of the hospital, for a *loba* (a cotton sleeveless cassock) and was given an elegant silk *loba*. Francis refused it and insisted upon wearing the cotton one, like the rest of simple clergy in Goa.⁸⁸ Francis lived a life of radical poverty, service and prayer. People around him immediately recognised in him a man of God.⁸⁹

⁸³ *Autography Directory of St. Ignatius* [18] in Martin E. Palmer, ed., *On Giving the Spiritual Exercises: The Early Jesuit Manuscript Directories and the Official Directory of 1599* (St. Louis (MO): The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), 9. "recognizing his vocation" in this context would mean the mission to which the Lord is calling.

⁸⁴ *Doc.* 51.1.

⁸⁵ *Doc.* 83.1.

⁸⁶ Cf. *SpEx* [318]; Brian O. McDermott, 'Spiritual Consolation and Its Role in the Second Time of Election', *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 50, no. 4 (2018), 41-42.

⁸⁷ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier III*, 630.

⁸⁸ Cf. MX II, 842-845; Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier II*, 205.

⁸⁹ Cf. Valignano, *Historia del Principio*, 48; MX II, 844.

In Japan, Francis continued with the same lifestyle, even in the midst of extremely cold weather conditions. He gave up eating meat and drinking wine in order not to cause scandal to the priests of Japan.⁹⁰ The people in Japan were not impressed by the example of life of Francis. On the contrary, he was despised and ridiculed.⁹¹ The doctrine he was preaching was barely appreciated.

Towards the end of August 1550, Francis set out for the royal court at Miyako. On the way, in the beginning of November, he came across the large city of Yamaguchi. His presence there attracted a lot of attention from the many nobles of the city, as the news spread that foreign preachers had come from Tenjiku, the land of Shaka (the Buddha). So Francis interrupted the journey to Miyako to proclaim the Gospel in Yamaguchi until mid-December. The powerful duke of Yamaguchi, prince Ôuchi Yoshitaka, came to know from his secretary, Naitô Okimori, of the sensation Francis and Fernández had caused in the city. He wished to see them. On the day destined for the audience, Francis and Fernández went in their poor clothes to the palace of the duke. Their message failed to impress the duke, and they were quickly dismissed. Undeterred, Francis hoped that he would obtain permission from the king of Japan at Miyako to preach the Gospel. On arriving in Miyako, he was disappointed by the grim reality of the capital. King Ô of Miyako was king in only name. He had no actual authority over Japan. What is more, he even refused to see the preachers from Tenjiku. During the journey, along the way, they had received nothing but contempt. Their foreign garb was a laughing stock. After a brief eleven days stay in the Miyako, Francis and his companions began the journey back to Yamaguchi.⁹²

Francis was convinced that the lifestyle he had adopted was the best way of living out the evangelical counsel of poverty, but he had to consider whether he was really “becoming all things to all people” in Japan. Discernment challenged his convictions. He soon realised that the new context necessitated a change. The way he fulfilled the vow of poverty had to go beyond material poverty. Francis was a man given to making his daily examination of conscience. He began to pay keen attention to the reality around him. Questioning his convictions, i.e., discerning, may have shaken him up and even placed his life in a crisis. But he was not afraid to make changes. He realised that the vow of poverty had a spiritual dimension, deeper and more interior than the merely material. His past convictions became an obstacle to his finding and fulfilling the will of God. He would have realised that it was the Evil One who was moving him interiorly to hold on to his convictions with regard to material poverty, even though such actual poverty is laudable. He had to give up those convictions and what he thought were the time-tested methods of evangelisation and to become poor spiritually. He had to empty himself and to adopt new strategies. New wine, new wineskins (Cf. Mt 9: 14-17).

⁹⁰ Cf. *Doc.* 85.14.

⁹¹ Cf. Ferdinand Tournier, ‘S. François Xavier d’Après Un Manuscrit Inédit Du P. Auger’, *Études* 109, no. n.a (1906), 667; Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier IV*, 193, 196.

⁹² Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier IV*, 152, 158, 161, 212-213.

Francis's harp had more strings than one. He came up with a new plan. He sought a fresh audience with the duke of Yamaguchi through Naitô. The audience was granted. By end of April 1551, they were back in the court of Yoshitaka. This time they went better dressed, in silk and satin, and were carrying copious gifts and letters. Francis went as the ambassador of the governor of India.⁹³ He related the story in his letter to his Companions in Europe written from Cochin on 29 January 1552:

The duke was delighted with the present and the letter. He offered us many things, but we refused to accept any of them, even though he tried to give us much gold and silver. We then told him that if he wished to grant us a favor, all that we wanted was that he would give us his permission to preach the law of God in his lands and that those who wished to accept it might do so. He very graciously granted us permission for this [...] He also gave us a monastery, like a college, so that we might stay there.⁹⁴

Francis entered through the duke's door and came out of his own. Though Francis does not make mention of an explicit process of discernment, it is implicit in his way of proceeding and change of strategies.

5. The Blue Mountains Beckon

Francis knew of China well before he came to know of Japan. In his letter to his Companions in Europe written from Amboina on 10 May 1546 he mentions China. While he was in Malacca in the previous months he had met a Portuguese merchant who had been in China. From that moment on, he began urging various people to gather information about the cultures and religions of China.⁹⁵ By January 1548 he sent reports of China and Japan to Rome.⁹⁶ He established contacts with people travelling to China. On 2 April 1548, from Goa, he wrote to his friend Diogo Pereira in Cochin who was going to China, encouraging him and giving him spiritual advice.⁹⁷

However, the desire to go to China began to galvanise him when Francis was on Japanese soil. He speaks about it in his Great Letter about Japan to his Companions in Europe written on 29 January 1552, on his retrun to Cochin. He had found that the Japanese held the Chinese in high esteem, and from this Francis deduced that Chinese were highly cultured. Further, he felt that, if the Chinese embraced the Christian faith, the Japanese would follow suit⁹⁸:

I believe that I shall go this year of 1552 to where the king of China is residing, since it is a land where the law of our Lord Jesus Christ could be greatly increased. If it is accepted

⁹³ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier IV*, 216-217.

⁹⁴ *Doc.* 96.16.

⁹⁵ *Doc.* 55.15-16.

⁹⁶ Cf. *Doc.* 60.2.

⁹⁷ Cf. *Doc.* 65.

⁹⁸ Cf. *Docs.* 96.50; 97.19.

there, this will be of great assistance in Japan for confounding the sects in which they believe. From Liampo, which is one of the main cities of China, the crossing to Japan by sea is only eighty leagues.⁹⁹

On the same day he wrote to Ignatius,

If there should be no obstacles here in India to prevent me from leaving this year, 1552, I hope to go to China for the great service of our God which can be rendered both in China and Japan; for, if the Japanese learn that the Chinese have accepted the law of God, they will more quickly lose their faith in their sects. I have great hopes that both the Chinese and the Japanese, through the Society of the name of Jesus, will abandon their idolatries and [will] worship God and Jesus Christ, the Savior of all nations.¹⁰⁰

At this stage, Francis was using expressions such as “I believe that I shall go” and “I hope to go to China”. This could indicate that he had not come to a final decision. Weeks before sailing for China from Goa, he communicated his decision to go China to Gonçalo Rodrigues and Simão Rodrigues.¹⁰¹ Few days later, on 9 April 1552, he wrote to Ignatius from Goa what was destined to be his last letter to the General of the Society, saying,

Six days from now [...], three of us of the Society, two priests and one lay brother, are going to the court of the king of China which is near Japan, a land that is extremely large and inhabited by a very gifted race and by many scholars. From information which I have received, they are greatly devoted to learning; and the more learned one is, the more noble and esteemed he is. All the paganism of the sects in Japan has come from China. We are going with great confidence in God our Lord that his name will be manifested in China.¹⁰²

Six years went by between the first mention of China in the Letters of Francis and the actual decision to go to China. What we know from his surviving Letters is his decision to go China. Did he go through a process of discernment before making the decision to go to China? With regard to his going to the Macassar region and to Japan, as has noted above, there was process of discernment involved before making the decision. He gathered as much information as he could about the places he wished to visit. To a certain extent, he weighed the advantages and disadvantages of the various options available to him. More importantly, he spoke of how the desire was born, of the various movements that he experienced within his soul and of how the intense experience of spiritual consolation led him to take the final decision. The beginning of the process of discernment was the birth of the desire. The middle was a gathering of information, sifting it out, and then taking up the matter in prayer before God. The end was the making of a final decision based on his experiences of spiritual consolation or desolation. In the case of the mission to China, the beginning is present and the middle is partially present, but there is hardly any mention of the spiritual movements in the soul. He plainly communicates only his final decision.

⁹⁹ *Doc.* 96.51.

¹⁰⁰ *Doc.* 97.15.

¹⁰¹ Cf. *Docs.* 102.8; 103.2. On 22 and 27 March 1552 respectively.

¹⁰² *Doc.* 110.2

Could one conclude, from the contents of his Letters, that Francis did not go through a process of discernment before deciding to go to China? One should keep in mind that the main purpose of the Letters was to communicate news of the missions and affairs of the Society's government. The genre of the letters is not that of a spiritual journal. Though Francis often spoke of his spiritual experiences, he obviously did not record all of them in his Letters. Considering this, it is difficult to say whether Francis took up a process of discernment prior to deciding to go China. The letters do not speak of such a process of discernment. That does not mean that, in fact, there was no process. The letter Francis wrote to Father Francisco Pérez in Malacca from Sancian on 22 October 1552 does make a veiled reference to his habitual way of perceiving the will of God:

The first [danger] is to cease to trust and confide in the mercy of God, since it is for his love and service that we are going to manifest his law and Jesus Christ his Son, our Redeemer and Lord, as he well knows. Since, through his holy mercy, **he gave us these desires**, it would now be a much greater danger to distrust his mercy and power through fear of the dangers which we could incur in his service—for, if it is to his greater service, he will protect us from the dangers of this life—than it would be to endure all the evils which could be inflicted upon us by the enemies of God, since without the leave and permission of God the demons and their ministers cannot harm us in any way.¹⁰³

Once Francis was convinced that a particular desire was placed in his heart by God, nothing stopped him from executing it. Not fulfilling the will of God which he had so perceived was, for him, tantamount to disobeying God.¹⁰⁴ From the human point of view, the mission to China was disastrous. Many questions arise with regard to Francis's discernment and with his subsequent decision with regard to the mission to China.

Did Francis make a sound election? The idea of going to China was conceived while Francis was in Japan. On his return, he found in Malacca that the letter from Ignatius appointing him Provincial of the Indies was waiting for him. Given this new status, should he not have remained in Goa in order to govern, sending someone else to China? This was the opinion of Ignatius, as was made known in his famous letter recalling Francis to Rome.¹⁰⁵

Was Francis's decision taken hastily? Francis has won the title *El Divino Impaciente*.¹⁰⁶ Is a virtue made of his impatience by adding to it the prefix "*divino*"? He had meticulously planned a Portuguese embassy to the king of China from Malacca. His heart was afire with zeal to continue the voyage to China when he reached Malacca from Goa (mid-June 1552). What a disappointment when he discovered what had come to be of

¹⁰³ *Doc.* 131.4. Emphasis mine. See also 131.6.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *Doc.* 51.2.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. *Doc.* 137a.1. The letter was written on 28 June 1553. Francis was dead over six month prior. Yet, Ignatius, the writer of *SpEx* [22], believed that it was the divine wisdom guiding Francis. Lancilotto, meanwhile, had already opposed Francis's going to Japan and had written about it to Ignatius. Cf. Verdoy, *San Francisco*, 147.

¹⁰⁶ A theatrical work by José María Pemán, 1933.

the embassy! Due to the conflict between two brothers, Alvaro da Ataide (the first captain of the sea of Malacca) and Pedro da Silva (the captain of the ship *Santa Cruz* that was to take the embassy to China), the embassy had completely fallen apart.¹⁰⁷ Should he have persisted on going even after the embassy fell apart?¹⁰⁸ Was he carried away by his enthusiasm to introduce Christian faith in China without considering “to which side reason more inclines”?¹⁰⁹ Nothing could extinguish the fire in his soul. His trust in God was indomitable.

Further, once in Sancian, by early November, those who were to sail with him to Canton abandoned him one after the other. The confrere Alvaro Ferreira, after hearing the horrifying stories of the dungeons of China from the fugitive Manuel de Chaves, backed out. Pero Lopes, the voluntary interpreter, followed suit.¹¹⁰ When all human support was waning, Francis’s trust in God was waxing. On 12 November 1552 he wrote, “We, Antonio, Cristovão and I, are going with the help of God.”¹¹¹

Once again, going by human logic, it might seem that Francis did not make a sound discernment about going to China. God’s ways, though, are mysterious. The zeal for the Lord’s mission had consumed Francis (Cf. Ps 69: 9). He undertook every mission purely motivated by the love of God and for his service and greater glory. What seemed a disaster, humanly speaking, brought much glory to God. “All things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose” (Rm 8: 28), writes St. Paul. The grain of wheat fell to the ground on the Island of Sancian, but it produced much fruit across the blue mountains that had beckoned Francis. God did not let Francis down. God made Francis his channel, the grace he had most desired. He opened the door for the preaching of the Gospel.¹¹² Moses did have a view of the Promised Land from Mount Nebo, but he did not cross over (Cf. Dt 34: 1ff). His descendants did. Francis was only three leagues away from his destination, breathing his last while waiting for the Chinese agent to take him across. Matteo Ricci and Michele Ruggieri, Francis’s “descendants”, crossed over, fulfilling the dream he had harboured for God.

Francis’ mission was purely motivated by the love of God. The mission, concretely, meant for Francis “the propagation of the faith”.¹¹³ The desire to carry the faith to the ends of the earth is an underlying common denominator that guided all of Francis’ discernment processes.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Doc.* 124.1; Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier IV*, 584-586.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. J. Enrique Ruiz de Galarreta, “Francisco Javier, ¿arquetipo de Misionero?”, *Manresa* 78, no. 306 (2006), 39-40.

¹⁰⁹ *SpEx* [182].

¹¹⁰ Cf. Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier IV*, 635.

¹¹¹ *Doc.* 135.9. Cristovão backed out a day before Francis’s death, 3 December.

¹¹² Cf. *Doc.* 99a.1.

¹¹³ *Formula of the Institute 1540* [1] in John W. Padberg, ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms* (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

¹¹⁴ Francis mentions this motivating principle in the excerpts I have quoted from his letters in this article: “our holy faith will be greatly increased” (*Doc.* 50.3), “for the increase of our holy faith” (*Doc.* 83.1), “that

Conclusion

The early discernment processes of Francis were slow and prolonged. He explicitly took time out to discern. In making the unchangeable election of a state of life,¹¹⁵ his discernment process was assisted by Ignatius. In all likelihood, Gasper Coelho assisted Francis when he was discerning about sailing to the Malay Archipelago. The language used by Francis to speak about discernment, though the term discernment itself is not explicitly used, indicates that he discerned according to the mind of Ignatius. The later discernment processes were faster and briefer. It is but natural that, with experience, he became familiar with God's habitual way of dealing with him. This may explain why he employed less time in discernment and perceived God's will more quickly. In a way, with time and the experiences of life, he became expert in the art of discernment.

Luis Bermejo writes, "It is always the second mode of making an election as outlined by Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises that Francis utilizes exclusively".¹¹⁶ For Bermejo, this is unfortunate because, according to him, Francis does not make use of the First Method of the Third Time of Making a Sound and Good Election.¹¹⁷ In this method, one has recourse to the use of reason. Bermejo does not seem to be fully justified in this critique. It has been seen that Francis took keen interest in gathering information about the various possibilities he was considering and spoke with people who had been to the lands that he would possibly visit. Based on what he learnt, he discarded certain possibilities, considering only the "reasonable" choices. Francis does not clearly distinguish the different times for making an Election. It should be kept in mind that Francis was writing *letters* and not a *spiritual journal*¹¹⁸ in which one would probably make those distinctions. In any case, whether proceeding in the Second Time or using the First Method of the Third Time, one needs to seek confirmation from the Lord with regard to the decision made. The confirmation is often *felt* through the experience of either spiritual consolation or desolation. In the *Spiritual Diary* Ignatius sought confirmation of the decision he had made with regard to the radical poverty in the Society in the experience of spiritual consolation. Fr. General Arturo Sosa writes, "Discernment needs these elements [information, capacity to argue rationally] but it is not limited to them.

our holy faith will be greatly increased in those regions" (*Doc.* 70.10), "where the law of our Lord Jesus Christ could be greatly increased" (*Doc.* 96.51), they "will abandon their idolatries and [will] worship God and Jesus Christ, the Savior of all nations" (*Doc.* 97.15), "his name will be manifested in China" (*Doc.* 110.2).

¹¹⁵ Cf. *SpEx* [172].

¹¹⁶ Bermejo, *Unto the Indies*, 195. See also pp. 117-118.

¹¹⁷ Cf. *SpEx* [178-183].

¹¹⁸ Did Francis keep a spiritual diary? In two of his letters, he highly recommends the practice to others. To Barzaeus he says, "What you should do most of all while meditating on these points is to note very attentively the things which God our Lord gives you to feel within your soul" (*Doc.* 116.8). Francis give similar instructions to Antonio de Heredia (Cf. *Doc.* 120.8). Both these instructions are composed prior to navigating to China. Could this not indicate that Francis taking note of his own spiritual movements?

Discernment ultimately has to do with spiritual movements”.¹¹⁹ Francis certainly stood out in perceiving the will of God “from the experience of consolations and desolations, and from the experience in the discernment of various spirits”.¹²⁰

On 5 July 1553 Ignatius wrote the following to Francis:

Your Reverence should be well advised about two things which from experience have been found to be very useful, even necessary, in these regions. One is that each provincial, or local superior, or rector of a college where there are a certain number, should have a collateral [...]. The second is that the said provincials and rectors should have some individuals, from among those who are more mature and discreet, designated as a council, with whom they should consult about things of some importance that they are dealing with.¹²¹

It can be inferred from the content of the letter that Ignatius was writing to Francis after he got reports of his way of proceeding in India. The will of God one *clearly* feels in the soul needs be authenticated. One may be deceived. If one relies fully on personal convictions, he runs the risk of becoming a norm unto himself. Other than Gaspar Coelho, we do not know of any other person in whom Francis confided in the Indies. With regard to Francis’s discernments to go to Japan and to China, there is no explicit evidence indicating whether he consulted regarding his decision with someone “mature and discreet”.¹²² In this particular aspect, Francis’s model of discernment is certainly not imitable. A process of discernment, to be authentic, needs to be accompanied by someone “mature and discreet”.

Francis was exploring an uncharted terrain, both physically and spiritually. His way of discernment offers us several insights. The possible flaws in his discernment processes alert us. With near certainty we can affirm one thing: that Francis acted with purity of intention. He did not seek his own glory or interest. He only sought God’s greater glory. “But not every action is truly for God’s greater glory”, says Fr. Kolvenbach:

Consequently, Ignatius offers a way to discover and choose God’s will. “Discernment” is pivotal [...]. With all the competing values that bombard us today, making free human choice is never easy. We very rarely find that all of the reasons for a decision are on one side. There is always a pull and tug. This is where discernment becomes crucial. Discernment requires getting the facts and then reflecting, sorting out the motives that impel us, weighing values and priorities, considering how significant decisions will impact on the poor, deciding, and living with our decisions.¹²³

These words of Kolvenbach resonate with the praxis of Francis.

¹¹⁹ Letter of Fr. General Arturo Sosa to the Whole Society On Discernment in Common, no. 7.

¹²⁰ *SpEx* [176].

¹²¹ *Doc.* 137b.3.

¹²² Bermejo writes, “I do not recall ever reading in his correspondence that he consulted others before deciding, even when he was Provincial. It was surely a serious drawback in his character”. *Unto the Indies*, 118.

¹²³ Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, “Ignatian Pedagogy: A Practical Approach”, An address delivered to the participants at the International Workshop (Villa Cavalletti, 1993), available at <https://kolvenbach.jesuitgeneral.org/en/archive?view=archivo&id=8,5>.

Giovanna d'Austria e la Compagnia di Gesù

«Con privilegio così speciale, e sola?»

di MONICA BORSARI*

1. Presentazione del tema e motivazione della scelta

L'articolo intende presentare la relazione tra Giovanna d'Austria, figlia minore dell'imperatore Carlo V, reggente di Spagna dal 1554 al 1559, e la Compagnia di Gesù. In particolare, sarà sollevata la questione se quella della Principessa fu piena ed effettiva appartenenza alla Compagnia di Gesù.

I motivi che mi hanno indotto a scegliere il tema sono fondamentalmente tre. Primo, l'interesse per quello che nella storia della Compagnia è tuttora considerato, quasi unanimemente, un «miracolo irripetibile»¹. Secondo, la curiosità di comprendere come una

* MONICA BORSARI, laureata in Scienze Politiche all'Università di Bologna, attualmente licenzianda in Spiritualità Ignaziana alla Pontificia Università Gregoriana, monica.borsari@gmail.com

¹ Così si esprime lo storico Ricardo García-Villoslada a proposito della principessa Giovanna d'Austria: R. GARCÍA-VILLOSLADA, *Sant' Ignazio di Loyola. Una nuova biografia*, Cinisello Balsamo (MI) 1997², 883. Anche John W. O' Malley liquida l'episodio rapidamente, affermando «L'esperimento non fu mai più ripetuto»: J.W. O'MALLEY, *I primi gesuiti*, Milano 1999, 86. Nella sua celebre raccolta epistolare, Hugo Rahner parla di Giovanna come «unica gesuitessa nella storia della Chiesa»: H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, Milano 1968, 56. Tuttavia, nel maggio 2004, in occasione del Colloquio internazionale sul tema «La Compagnia di Gesù nella penisola iberica nei secoli XVI-XVII», organizzato dal Centro di Storia della Spiritualità dell'Università di Oporto, José Martínez de la Escalera della Pontificia Università Comillas di Madrid ha presentato uno studio sul caso dell'aristocratica Caterina de Mendoza (Granada, 5 febbraio 1542 – Alcalá de Henares, 15 febbraio 1602), ignorato da tutti gli storici moderni, nonostante il Padre Alonso de Ezquerro lo avesse trattato ampiamente nel suo «Historia del Colegio de Alcalá» del 1633. A partire dal 1566, a più riprese, Caterina chiese l'incorporazione nella Compagnia; cosa che le fu concessa nel 1600. Pronunciò i voti secondo il rito e la formula approvati nelle *Costituzioni* per i coadiutori non sacerdoti, pubblicamente, durante la Messa celebrata dal Padre Provinciale Hernando Lucero nella chiesa del collegio dei Padri Gesuiti ad Alcalá, il giorno di san Giovanni Battista, 24 giugno 1600. Cf. J. MARTÍNEZ DE LA ESCALERA, «Mujeres Jesuíticas y Mujeres Jesuitas», *A Companhia de Jesus na Península Ibérica nos sécs. XVI e XVII. Espiritualidade e cultura. Actas do Colóquio Internacional – Maio 2004*, II, Porto, Instituto de Cultura Portuguesa da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto – Centro Interuniversitário de História da Espiritualidade da Universidade do Porto, Porto 2004, 369-383. Si veda anche la lettera al Padre Generale con la richiesta di ammissione contenuta in FRANCISCUS DE BORJA, *Monumenta Borgia*, VII, Valencia – Roma 2009, 691-692. Anche

giovane donna con autorità di governo, membro della monarchia più potente d'Europa, sia riuscita a conciliare l'inconciliabile: il suo ruolo e i suoi doveri politici con i voti religiosi nella Compagnia. Terzo, l'opportunità, a partire dal caso peculiare di Giovanna d'Austria – che agli occhi di molti permane negli annali della Compagnia solo come una nota a piè di pagina o poco più – di riflettere sull'oggi.

Nel suo discorso in occasione della giornata della donna celebrata con la rete internazionale *Voices of Faith*, l'8 marzo 2017, l'attuale superiore generale della Compagnia di Gesù, P. Arturo Sosa, dichiarò: «Possiamo ascoltare accuratamente le esperienze delle donne impegnate nella sfera pubblica, sentire come lavorano insieme ed essere ispirati dal loro coraggio. Queste sono storie per fare l'impossibile»². Ritengo che tra le storie che fanno l'impossibile possa rientrare a pieno titolo anche quella di Giovanna d'Austria. Una storia che merita di essere conosciuta³.

2. Un carattere profondamente religioso

Le fonti storiche consegnano un'immagine di Giovanna d'Austria coerente con quanto trasmettono i quadri dello spagnolo Alonso Sánchez Coello e dell'olandese Antonio Moro van Dashorst, i pittori di corte preferiti dagli Asburgo insieme a Tiziano, che l'hanno più volte ritratta. «Discreta e religiosa» secondo il biografo di Filippo II, Luis Cabrera de Córdoba; «bella, una spagnola dai modi alteri», per l'ambasciatore veneziano Paolo Tiepolo; «eccezionalmente bella con apparenza maestosa», per il cortigiano francese Pierre de Bourdeille; con una natura mascolina, secondo l'ambasciatore Federico Badoero, che in una lettera al Senato veneziano del 1559 arriva a scrivere: «in quanto alla volontà, è sì virile, che mostra avere più sentimento d'huomo che di femmina»:

Enrique García Hernán conferma il caso di Caterina de Mendoza durante il generalato di Claudio Acquaviva e aggiunge che nel 1546, dietro istanza di Francesco Borgia, Ignazio acconsentì che si creasse una «compagnia di signore e di altre che gli [a Borgia] sembrassero giuste e sante in Nostro Signore», concludendo che sebbene «questa memoria ignaziana sulla fondazione di donne gesuite non sia giunta fino a noi, non c'è dubbio che, fino all'estate del 1546, Ignazio non era risoluto del tutto a chiudere le porte. Al contrario.»: cf. E. GARCÍA HERNÁN, *Ignacio de Loyola*, Madrid 2013, 344.

² «We can listen carefully to the experience of women in the public sphere, hear how they work together, and be inspired by their courage. These are stories of doing the impossible.»: A. M. SOSA ABASCAL, «Voices of Faith 2017 Stirring the Waters – Making the Impossible Possible» [ultima consultazione: 01.05.2019], <http://www.jcsaweb.org/father-generals-speech-womens-day>.

³ L'articolo non intende aggiungere novità ai contributi scientifici già a disposizione della comunità accademica internazionale ma, più modestamente, rendere accessibile ai lettori di lingua italiana quanto la ricerca e la riflessione sulle fonti ha sinora pubblicato. Chi scrive si è accostata alla questione del rapporto tra Ignazio e la Compagnia di Gesù da una parte e le donne dall'altra, nell'ambito del corso *Ignatius and Women* offerto alla Pontificia Università Gregoriana nell'anno accademico 2018-2019. Colgo l'occasione per ringraziare la Prof.ssa Donna Lynn Orsuto, le mie compagne e i miei compagni, tra cui sei Gesuiti (quattro Padri da India, Stati Uniti e Sud Corea; un Fratello dal Kenia e uno Scolastico dall'Ungheria) per lo studio condiviso, il dialogo e il confronto condotti in *parresía* e spirito fraterno.

queste testimonianze sono emblematiche e comunicano l'ammirazione che Giovanna suscitava non solo presso le corti straniere, ma anche in patria⁴. Lo stesso imperatore Carlo V, nel documento da lui redatto a Bruxelles il 31 marzo 1554, in cui decretava l'investitura della figlia a luogotenente generale dei territori peninsulari castigliani, ne esaltava «la virtù, le grandi qualità e gli encomiabili costumi»⁵, riconoscendole doti di prudenza e ordine – due principi fondamentali nell'arte di governo – nonostante l'inesperienza politica dovuta alla sua giovane età. Giovanna, infatti, aveva allora diciotto anni e da poco più di due mesi era rimasta vedova.

Nata a Madrid il 24 giugno 1535, Giovanna rimase orfana di madre a quattro anni. A otto non ancora compiuti, era già stata promessa a suo cugino, l'Infante di Portogallo Giovanni Manuele, più giovane di lei di due anni e figlio di Caterina, sorella minore di Carlo V, secondo molti quella dama di alto rango che fece palpitare il cuore al convalescente di Loyola⁶. La sua educazione venne affidata alla nobildonna portoghese Leonor Mascarenhas, tanto fedele e vicina a Ignazio da farle meritare il titolo, come ad altre sue corrispondenti epistolari del resto, di «madre della Compagnia di Gesù»⁷. La formazione di Giovanna, molto rigorosa e curata nei minimi dettagli, era in vista del regno⁸. Versata nella letteratura latina, greca e portoghese, suonava vari strumenti musicali, amava l'arte e il collezionismo. Si circondò di oggetti ricercati di ogni sorta: libri, ritratti, miniature, medaglie, camei, strumenti musicali, tappezzeria fiamminga, preziosi e altri manufatti di lusso provenienti dai territori d'oltremare e dall'estremo oriente. Il gusto per l'esotico conviveva con quello per il religioso, le porcellane Ming con le reliquie⁹.

⁴ A. JORDAN GSCHWEND, «Los retratos de Juana de Austria posteriores a 1554: La imagen de una princesa de Portugal, una regente de España y una jesuita», *ReS* 151 (2002) 42.

⁵ A. VILLACORTA BAÑOS-GARCÍA, *La Jesuita. Juana de Austria*, Barcelona 2005, 207.

⁶ R. GARCÍA-VILLOSLADA, *Sant' Ignazio di Loyola*, 42.

⁷ H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 601.

⁸ A riguardo Elizabeth Rhodes scrive: «Juana had been provided with an education befitting an imperial princess and her iron-clad will was unshakeable. A cog in the imperial machine, she was raised like a man». J.W. O'MALLEY – *al.*, ed., *The Jesuits II. Cultures, Sciences and the Arts, 1540-1773*, E. RHODES, Chap. III, «Join the Jesuits, See the World: Women and the Society of Jesus», 44.

⁹ C'è da dire che la Corona portoghese aveva gusti e stile assai diversi da quelli degli Asburgo. La Corte portoghese all'epoca di re Manuele I di Aviz – il nonno di Giovanni Manuele, marito di Giovanna – era contrassegnata dal lusso e dall'ostentazione. Pare che il contatto con il fasto dell'India influenzò i reali portoghesi, facendo loro sviluppare un gusto esotico ridondante, incline all'esibizionismo e alla teatralità. Don Manuele attraversava Lisbona con un corteo simile a quello di un rajah: lo precedevano un rinoceronte, cinque elefanti e un cavallo dalla Persia, mentre lo seguiva una banda di tamburelli e trombe. Questa sontuosità venne però temperata dalle tre mogli dell'esuberante sovrano – due figlie e una nipote dei Re Cattolici – che introdussero a corte uno stile più sobrio e marcatamente religioso. È indubbio che il matrimonio di Giovanni III, figlio di Manuele I, con Caterina d'Austria, cresciuta nel rigore austero del palazzo di Tordesillas, inaugurò un nuovo corso. In particolare, l'osservanza stretta dei principi religiosi e l'esaltazione pubblica della religione cattolica divennero tratti distintivi del regno di Giovanni III e Caterina, che introdussero l'Inquisizione in Portogallo e assicurarono un appoggio incondizionato alla Compagnia di Gesù, considerata più adatta degli ordini mendicanti tradizionali alle missioni nelle Indie. Cf. A. VILLACORTA BAÑOS-GARCÍA, *La Jesuita*, 177-178. Ciò detto, probabilmente la

Giovanna era degna erede dei Cattolicissimi di Spagna: nonostante le enormi ricchezze del vasto impero asburgico, mantenne sempre un tratto profondamente religioso, di grande pietà, devozione e rispetto per la Chiesa e la sfera del sacro, uniti a generosa carità verso i deboli e i bisognosi. Questa sua naturale inclinazione sbocciò definitivamente in seguito a un paio di passaggi drammatici e all'ingresso nella sua vita di alcune figure cruciali.

Il 2 gennaio 1554 moriva il marito Giovanni Manuele, sposato appena due anni prima, e diciotto giorni dopo nacque il loro figlio Sebastiano, futuro re di Portogallo. Passati neppure quattro mesi, Giovanna rientrò in Spagna, richiamata dal padre Carlo V per governare i territori iberici in seguito alla partenza del fratello Filippo II alla volta dell'Inghilterra, dove avrebbe sposato Maria Tudor. Giovanna lasciò il Portogallo e suo figlio definitivamente. Non tornò mai più a vederlo, pur rimanendo in contatto epistolare con lui. Malgrado vari tentativi di combinare un nuovo matrimonio, Giovanna rifiutò fermamente di risposarsi. Nel 1559, a ventiquattro anni, terminata la sua missione come reggente, si trasferì da Valladolid a Madrid, nel monastero di Nostra Signora della Consolazione, più noto come monastero delle *Descalzas Reales*, ossia delle Scalze Reali.

Fondato da Giovanna stessa nella casa in cui nacque e destinato a religiose dell'ordine delle Sorelle povere di santa Chiara, il monastero delle *Descalzas* divenne la sua dimora per quattordici anni, fino alla morte, avvenuta il 7 settembre 1573 a causa di un cancro uterino. Giovanna non vi entrò come suora. Devota alla Corona, alla Chiesa e alla Compagnia di Gesù – nella quale, come si vedrà meglio più avanti, venne ammessa come scolastico sotto lo pseudonimo di Mateo Sánchez – la Principessa rimase sempre attivamente impegnata nelle questioni politiche e religiose, conducendo una vita in un certo senso ibrida, metà secolare e metà religiosa.

Concepì la sua fondazione come un luogo di raccoglimento, penitenza, pietà e preghiera. Nonostante l'atmosfera austera che vi si percepiva, il luogo portava il sigillo dei suoi interventi principeschi, non solo dal punto di vista architettonico e artistico. Giovanna, infatti, stabilì che le religiose designate a entrare nelle *Descalzas Reales* dovessero essere «las mejores y más santas» e avere «limpieza de sangre»¹⁰, dunque essere appartenenti all'alta nobiltà spagnola e non cristiane convertite¹¹. Ne fissò il numero in trenta-

giovane Giovanna, nei suoi anni alla corte portoghese, deve aver subito il fascino dell'esotismo che si respirava in casa Aviz. Che anche questo non abbia contribuito, più tardi, a farle maturare un netto distacco dalle vanità e dai simboli della gloria mondana?

¹⁰ S. CABALLERO ROMERO, «Epigraffa en el Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales de Madrid: el sepulcro de la Princesa Juana de Austria», *AbIn* 3 (2015) 85.

¹¹ Dal XV secolo la questione controversa della «limpieza de sangre» divenne centrale in Spagna e avviò numerose e accese dispute. Varie comunità spagnole adottarono statuti volti a colpire i cristiani «impuri» o «nuovi» o «convertiti» (dall'ebraismo), limitando o impedendo loro qualsiasi partecipazione in ambito sia civile sia religioso. Nella stessa Compagnia di Gesù non mancarono i contrasti. La buona disposizione di Ignazio dovette fare i conti con le posizioni intransigenti della Corona e delle gerarchie ecclesiastiche. Il 23 dicembre 1593 la V Congregazione Generale della Compagnia approvò gli statuti della «limpieza de sangre», proibendo l'ammissione nell'ordine dei cristiani nuovi. Per una disamina approfondita di questo capitolo oscuro della storia spagnola: A.A. SICROFF, *Los estatutos de limpieza de*

tré, quanti gli anni di Cristo quando morì. La prima badessa fu Anna Borgia, che cambiò il nome in Giovanna della Croce, sorella del Duca-Gesuita che ebbe un ruolo chiave nella vita spirituale della Principessa, come si approfondirà a breve.

Le *Descalzas* erano un'oasi di vita contemplativa e di estrema povertà, in obbedienza alla Regola di santa Chiara, dove le religiose vivevano solo di elemosine e carità. Infatti, non potevano possedere alcuna rendita, né ritenere niente di loro proprietà. Erano chiamate a vivere una vita umile e nascosta, staccata dagli affari mondani, unicamente rivolta a lodare e servire Dio. Giovanna profuse molte energie nell'assicurare l'osservanza di tali regole. Schierata a favore del partito ebolista, contrapposto a quello albista, la Principessa divenne un'esponente di primo piano di quel movimento riformatore noto come la «Osservanza», avviato dai Francescani nel XV secolo e poi diffusosi anche negli altri ordini religiosi, che propugnava il rinnovamento spirituale e una religiosità raccolta. Nel regno di Castiglia si impose per volere dell'autorevole cardinale Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros. L'inclinazione verso la religiosità del raccoglimento spinse Giovanna, probabilmente nei primi anni di vedovanza, a pronunciare un voto di ammissione all'ordine francescano.

Oltre a questo, merita ricordare che la clausura femminile fu oggetto di inequivocabili deliberazioni al concilio di Trento. A quel tempo le religiose, anche se appartenenti a rami femminili di ordini maschili di vita attiva o mista come ad esempio i Domenicani, erano tenute alla clausura e non era ammesso alcun tipo di apostolato *extra claustra*, pena essere perseguite dal braccio secolare¹². In seguito, la costituzione *Circa pastoralis* del 1566 stabilì un legame diretto tra professione e clausura: quest'ultima fu estesa a tutti gli istituti religiosi femminili, comprese le terziarie con voti semplici. In tal modo, fu imposta la professione solenne a tutte le religiose e, in caso di rifiuto, fu decretato il divieto di accettare novizie, condannando così la comunità all'estinzione. La costituzione di Pio V, in breve, riconosceva una sola categoria di religiose: quella di chi professava

sangre: controversias entre los siglos XV y XVII, Madrid 1985; J. HERNÁNDEZ FRANCO, *Sangre limpia, sangre española. El debate sobre los estatutos de limpieza (siglos XV-XVII)*, Madrid 2011. Per la dialettica interna alla Compagnia circa l'argomento: E. REY, «San Ignacio de Loyola y la limpieza de sangre», *Razón y Fe* 153 (1956) 173-204; J. PLAZAOLA, ed., *Ignacio de Loyola y su tiempo: Congreso internacional de historia (9-13 septiembre 1991)*, Bilbao 1992, F. DE BORJA MEDINA, «Ignacio de Loyola y la limpieza de sangre» 579-615; P.-A. FABRE, «La conversion infinie des conversos. Des "nouveaux-chrétiens" dans la Compagnie de Jésus au 16e siècle», *AnHSoc* 4 (1999) 875-893; R.A. MARYKS, *The Jesuit Order as a synagogue of Jews: Jesuits of Jewish ancestry and purity-of-blood laws in the early Society of Jesus*, Leiden – Boston 2010; ID., ed., *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola: Life, Spirituality, Influence*, Leiden – Boston 2014, ID., Chap. VI, «Ignatius of Loyola and the Converso Question», 84-102.

¹² Durante la sessione XXV del concilio di Trento fu approvato il *Decretum de regularibus et monialibus*. L'inizio del capitolo V recita: «Il santo sinodo, rinnovando la costituzione di Bonifacio VIII *Periculoso*, comanda ai vescovi, sotto minaccia del divino giudizio e dell'eterna maledizione, di provvedere che in tutti i monasteri loro soggetti [...] sia diligentemente ripristinata la clausura delle monache, nel caso fosse stata violata [...]. Puniranno i disobbedienti e gli oppositori con le censure ecclesiastiche e altre pene, senza riguardo agli appelli interposti e ricorrendo, se necessario, all'aiuto del braccio secolare. Il santo sinodo esorta tutti i principi cristiani a prestare questo aiuto, e sotto pena di scomunica *ipso facto*, vi obbliga tutti i magistrati secolari». G. ALBERIGO – al., ed., *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, Bologna 2013³, 777-778.

voti solenni e viveva in stretta clausura. La lettera apostolica *Lubricum vitæ genus* del 1568 non fece altro che reiterare tale quadro, ordinando a tutte le terziarie di pronunciare voti solenni e accettare la disciplina monastica. Circa tre secoli dovettero passare perché fosse concessa piena approvazione alle religiose che si sentivano chiamate alla vita apostolica professando solo voti semplici.

In questo contesto, le *Descalzas Reales* divennero l'emblema della religiosità contro-riformista postridentina. Giovanna d'Austria fu una zelante esecutrice dei decreti di Trento, che inculcarono ai sovrani dei nascenti stati moderni di ergersi a fedeli difensori e servitori della fede cattolica. Sebbene il monastero delle *Descalzas* sia indubbiamente la sua più grande realizzazione, Giovanna dimostrò la sua fervente carità realizzando molte opere pie, come ad esempio l'ospedale della Misericordia, attiguo alle *Descalzas*, per la cura delle stesse monache ma anche per quella di malati, chierici e soldati; così come una casa per bambine abbandonate, orfane o molto povere e il collegio sant'Agostino ad Alcalá de Henares¹³.

Oltre all'educazione ricevuta, la vedovanza precoce, la religiosità del raccoglimento e le deliberazioni tridentine, ci fu un altro fattore che contribuì ad accentuare l'inclinazione religiosa di Giovanna: le sue amicizie spirituali. Tra queste, si stagliano i nomi di due grandi santi: Francesco Borgia e Teresa d'Avila. In particolare, come già accennato, Borgia ebbe un ruolo chiave nella vita spirituale della Principessa.

Amico intimo di Carlo V e della sua famiglia, confessore e direttore spirituale di Giovanna, il primo a darle gli esercizi spirituali in forma breve durante la settimana santa del 1551 nella località castigliana di Toro, Borgia ebbe una influenza decisiva nell'orientamento e nella maturazione religiosa della giovane Asburgo, specialmente nel quinquennio della sua reggenza (1554-1559). Lasciati i giochi di carte e i libri mondani¹⁴, la giovane *gobernadora* impresso al suo stile di vita una svolta significativa, come mostrano le parole del P. Bartolomeo de Bustamante tramandate nel *Chronicon* di Polanco.

Il grande profitto spirituale di S.A. si mostra in tutto il palazzo, e c'è da benedire molto il Signore vedendo la devozione e i santi esercizi che vi sono. Tanto che comunemente si dice

¹³ Le opere di carità hanno uno spazio considerevole anche nel testamento di Giovanna, quello depositato il 12 gennaio 1573, l'anno della morte, cui fu aggiunto un *codicillo* il 31 agosto. La cosa meriterebbe uno studio a parte. Qui basti registrare la generosità magnanima della Principessa che si preoccupa di riscattare i carcerati insolventi, sfamare i poveri, vestire gli ignudi, fornire lenzuola e coperte agli ospedali e agli ostelli per i pellegrini e che dimostra una speciale attenzione alle bambine povere, in particolare a quelle rimaste orfane e alle figlie di prostitute. Cf. A. VILLACORTA BAÑOS-GARCÍA, *La Jesuita*, 525-575.

¹⁴ Al termine della sua vita, la biblioteca personale della Principessa annoverava centinaia di libri, dei generi più disparati, ma in maggioranza di carattere spirituale, teologico, liturgico e musicale. L'inventario dei suoi beni, pubblicato solo parzialmente, include breviari, messali, liturgie delle ore, salteri (anche in italiano e portoghese), libri di devozione alla SS. Trinità, alla Passione di Nostro Signore, alla Beata Vergine Maria, a san Giovanni Battista, a san Giacomo Apostolo e riguardanti pratiche pietose a santuari locali. Oltre a volumi di autori cristiani antichi – spiccano Origene e Agostino –, di personalità a lei coeve note per la loro statura spirituale e libri sulla Terra Santa, con rilegature preziose contenenti reliquie. Cf. ID., 482-483.

che sembra più un monastero che un palazzo, perché le dame, il cui principale intento di solito era quello di cercare di essere servite dai cavalieri e dai galanti, ora cercano soltanto come servire meglio Dio nostro Signore; di conseguenza alcune delle migliori sembra che siano decise a farsi monache¹⁵.

Le assidue frequentazioni di Borgia e di Antonio Araoz, nipote di Ignazio e primo provinciale di Spagna, probabilmente ispirarono Giovanna e contribuirono a farle maturare la decisione di chiedere l'ammissione nella Compagnia durante l'estate del 1554. Tuttavia, occorre precisare che Borgia mai spinse la Principessa in tale direzione¹⁶.

Borgia dunque, non Ignazio, ebbe un'importanza capitale nell'iniziare Giovanna al nuovo «modo di procedere»¹⁷ nelle cose di Dio di cui la Compagnia si faceva interprete. A mio avviso, questo è un punto cruciale. Già IV duca di Gandía, marchese di Lombay, Grande di Spagna e viceré di Catalogna, Borgia era un aristocratico di alto rango che decise di lasciare carriera, famiglia e proprietà in seguito a due eventi traumatici: le morti della regina Isabella (la madre di Giovanna) e la moglie Eleonora, sua prima dama di corte, che gli aveva dato otto figli. La prima biografia di Borgia, redatta dal suo confessore Dionisio Vázquez – a cui si ispirarono numerosi scritti successivi; scritti di tenore agiografico che influenzarono la caratteristica iconografia del santo di Gandía, rappresentato spesso con un cranio, talvolta incoronato – tramanda che alla vista del cadavere deformato e ripugnante della Regina, una volta bellissima, il Duca rimase talmente scioccato da esclamare: «No más servir a Señor que se me pueda morir». In realtà, la sua conversione fu un lento, intimo e progressivo processo. Ne segnò probabilmente l'avvio la morte stessa della ancor giovane sovrana, più che il momento della sepoltura; la cui memoria si rinnovò sette anni più tardi con il decesso della moglie Eleonora, da cui, curiosamente, a partire dall'anno della morte di Isabella, non tornò ad avere figli, sebbene entrambi fossero ancora giovani e nonostante la prolifica tradizione familiare¹⁸.

Quando i Padri riuniti a Roma discussero l'ammissione di Giovanna alla Compagnia, certamente considerarono il precedente di Borgia. Come lei, anche lui figura di spicco dell'alta politica e uomo di palazzo, anche lui rimase vedovo, anche lui entrò segretamente – almeno all'inizio – tra le file dei Gesuiti. È possibile dunque scorgere un parallelo tra il Duca e la Principessa.

Un altro elemento da ritenere inoltre, emerge dalle lettere di Borgia a Ignazio, in cui egli racconta la dedizione e l'impegno profusi da Giovanna a favore della Compagnia in

¹⁵ R. GARCÍA-VILLOSLADA, *Sant'Ignazio di Loyola*, 842.

¹⁶ Araoz era invece partitario di un ramo femminile della Compagnia, come emerge chiaramente nell'epistolario raccolto da Rahner. Cf. H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 98. In particolare la nota 37 rimanda ai capitoli relativi a Isabel de Josa, Sebastiana Exarch, Giovanna de Cardona e Teresa Rejadell.

¹⁷ L'espressione propria è *nuestro modo de proceder*. Per una disamina rimandiamo alla voce «modo di procedere» a cura di Ignacio Iglesias in J. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, ed., *DEI*, Col. Manresa 37, Bilbao – Santander 2007² 1269-1273.

¹⁸ Cf. W. SOTO ARTUÑEDO, «Francisco de Borja y Andalucía», *Proyección* 238 (2010) 241-270.

Spagna¹⁹. Queste lettere testimoniano che la Principessa non era primariamente motivata da una devozione personale nei confronti di Ignazio, ma da un senso di profonda appartenenza al corpo della Compagnia. A me sembra qui di poter rilevare una differenza non da poco tra Giovanna e Isabel Roser.

3. «Con privilegio così speciale, e sola»

La richiesta di ammissione nella Compagnia da parte di Giovanna dovette piombare sulla Curia come un fulmine. La vicenda della Roser con i suoi strascichi e conseguenze era appena dietro l'angolo. Lo *status* della candidata non era fattore – è proprio il caso di dirlo – da lasciare «indifferenti». Certamente il caso suscitò un fitto dibattito, sebbene sommerso, tra una ristretta *leadership* di Gesuiti.

La questione era politicamente sensibile e le implicazioni erano molteplici. La Principessa era vedova ma ancora giovane e sarebbe potuta nuovamente rientrare come utile pedina nello scacchiere dei matrimoni combinati di casa Asburgo. Inoltre, ammetterla nella Compagnia avrebbe comportato il rischio di far infuriare il padre, già di per sé non certo favorevole ai Gesuiti. Allo stesso tempo, respingere la richiesta avrebbe rischiato di inimicarsi la reggente di Spagna, una mossa che avrebbe avuto serie conseguenze per la missione apostolica della Compagnia in quel paese, in cui l'opposizione nei suoi confronti andava ben oltre il pettegolezzo e la calunnia. Ancora, l'ammissione di Giovanna sarebbe stata un caso eccezionale non solo perché donna, ma anche perché la sua condizione sarebbe stata problematica riguardo a tutti i voti che i Gesuiti sono tenuti a professare²⁰.

¹⁹ Si vedano le lettere n. 82, 93 bis, 96, 103, 123, 132, 148, 151, 152, 164, 181, 204 in FRANCISCUS DE BORJA, *Monumenta Borgia*, III, Matriti 1908.

²⁰ Quattro (ma non sempre) sono i voti e le categorie nella Compagnia di Gesù. *L'Esame Generale* – un documento in cui sono offerte informazioni sulla Compagnia a coloro che sono ad essa candidati e che funge da premessa alle *Costituzioni* –, oltre i voti di obbedienza, povertà e castità, ne prevede un quarto «all'attuale o futuro Sommo Pontefice, come al Vicario di Cristo nostro Signore, [...] di andare ovunque le verrà comandato da Sua Santità, tra i fedeli o gl'infedeli, per ciò che si riferisce al culto divino e al bene della religione cristiana, senza addurre scuse e senza chieder nulla per le spese di viaggio» (EG [7]). Il documento prosegue poi, precisano le quattro categorie di «soggetti che sono accolti nella Compagnia, considerata nel suo insieme» (EG [10]). La prima categoria è costituita da coloro che «vengono accolti in Compagnia per farvi la professione di quattro voti solenni. [...] Tutti, poi, devono essere sacerdoti prima della professione» (EG [12]). «La seconda categoria è composta di quelli che sono accolti come coadiutori per servire Dio e aiutare la Compagnia nelle sue attività spirituali e temporali. [...] Questi, dopo i loro esperimenti e prove, faranno i tre voti semplici di obbedienza, di povertà e di castità, senza il quarto voto di obbedienza al Papa e senza alcun altro voto solenne» (EG [13]). «La terza categoria è composta di quelli che sono accolti come scolastici» (EG [14]). «La quarta categoria è composta di quelli che vengono ammessi indeterminatamente per il grado, per il quale col tempo si dimostreranno capaci» (EG [15]). Il testo contempla inoltre un altro caso: «Oltre queste quattro categorie di soggetti, vi sono alcuni ammessi alla professione solenne di tre voti, conforme alla Bolla di Giulio III» (EG [11]). Il testo citato è quello approvato nella 34ª Congregazione Generale del 1995: *Costituzioni della Compagnia di Gesù annotate dalla Congregazione Generale 34ª: Norme Complementari approvate dalla medesima Congregazione*, Roma 1997.

Per sbrogliare la matassa Ignazio convocò cinque tra i più sapienti dei suoi²¹, tenendo la cosa nel massimo riserbo. La consulta straordinaria si riunì a Roma il 26 ottobre del 1554 e deliberò di ammettere Giovanna come scolastico, secondo la V parte delle *Costituzioni* dell'ordine. Il testo dei voti che fu proposto è una formula antica in castigliano che, nei suoi passaggi fondamentali, è una traduzione della prima che si trova nella versione A delle *Costituzioni*, approvate dai Padri che poterono convenire a Roma tra la fine del 1550 e l'inizio del 1551. Non si tratta dunque del testo che Nadal diffuse nella penisola iberica tra il 1553 e il 1554 e che più tardi comparirà nelle *Costituzioni* del 1556. I voti erano semplici e non pubblici, sebbene la Compagnia esigesse che fossero pronunciati. Tali voti semplici – innovazione introdotta da Ignazio non senza contestazioni – erano autentici voti di povertà, castità e obbedienza, ma compromettevano solo chi li pronunciava, mentre l'ordine si riservava la libertà di rompere l'impegno se il candidato non era ritenuto idoneo o per qualche altro giusto motivo. Si poteva conservare la proprietà dei beni senza farne uso fino al pronunciamento della professione. Solo al termine degli studi si emettevano i voti solenni, che a quel punto vincolavano anche l'ordine, e solo in quel momento si rinunciava alla proprietà dei propri beni²². Osserva giustamente Rahner:

Questa disposizione giuridica delle Costituzioni dell'Ordine, concepita all'inizio per i gesuiti in corso di formazione, veniva a essere in questo momento particolarmente adatta a cavar d'imbarazzo il fondatore della Compagnia in questo caso specifico: egli non era obbligato a respingere la candidatura di Sua Altezza, ma era in grado di ammetterla nell'Ordine a titolo revocabile²³.

Così fu ammessa Giovanna d'Austria nella Compagnia di Gesù, senza che il suo nome fosse mai pronunciato, né avrebbe dovuto esserlo in futuro. La Principessa difatti entrò sotto lo pseudonimo di Mateo Sánchez, mutato poi in Montoya dopo la morte di Ignazio²⁴. Il privilegio speciale e unico che i Padri avevano concesso doveva rimanere «sotto il sigillo del segreto come in confessione». Questo perché «se il fatto si venisse a sapere, potrebbe costituire un precedente perché altra persona del genere crei imbarazzo alla Compagnia sollecitando la propria ammissione»²⁵. Inoltre, la persona in questione non avrebbe dovuto «cambiare né abito né casa, né dare alcun altro segno del suo nuovo stato; è sufficiente che la cosa stia tra la sua anima e Dio nostro Signore»²⁶.

²¹ Si tratta di Jerónimo Nadal, Martín de Olave, Cristóbal de Madrid, Luis Gonçalves da Câmara e Juan Alfonso de Polanco, segretario di Ignazio. I nomi sono riportati nel documento che contiene le conclusioni della consultazione. Cf. H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 100.

²² J.L. PEREIRA IGLESIAS – *al.*, ed., *Felipe II y su tiempo*, Cádiz 1999; W. SOTO ARTUÑEDO, «Juana de Austria ¿de la compañía de Jesús?», 584-585.

²³ H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 99.

²⁴ Restano ignoti i motivi di questo cambio di nome.

²⁵ H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 101.

²⁶ *Id.*, 101. Ci sembra troppo netto e ingeneroso, almeno nella traduzione italiana offerta da Agostino Miggiano, il giudizio di Rahner su Giovanna quando afferma: «Questa [Giovanna] era ben lungi dall'entrare veramente in un convento; tuttavia si fece sistemare alcuni appartamenti contigui al suo

Non esiste alcuna fonte diretta che documenti i voti della Principessa; non ne conosciamo dunque i dettagli di tempo, luogo, circostanza, ma è da supporre che siano avvenuti sotto la guida di Borgia. Tuttavia, abbiamo almeno due importanti documenti che, in modo obliquo, provano che questi sono stati effettivamente pronunciati. Il primo è la lettera di Ignazio datata 3 gennaio 1555, in cui indirizza a Giovanna parole forti: «[...] supplico umilmente Vostra Altezza di considerarci come interamente suoi; lo siamo in nostro Signore»²⁷. Il secondo è il resoconto di Polanco nel *Chronicon*, in cui fa riferimento alla commutazione del voto di Giovanna²⁸, probabilmente ottenuta da papa Giulio III da parte di Ignazio nel novembre del 1554, senza che fosse indicato il nome del beneficiario della concessione.

Un'eco della lettera di Ignazio sopra citata si trova nelle parole che Giovanna indirizza a Borgia, quando, dopo aver visitato a Tordesillas la nonna paterna morente, Giovanna detta la pazza, sceglie di passare la notte nella casa della Compagnia a Simancas e scrive: «Tutte le case dei Gesuiti le considero come mie»²⁹.

monastero, dove prese l'abitudine di ritirarsi per i suoi raccoglimenti spirituali. [...] Siamo comunque informati che, sino alla morte, Giovanna dimora di tanto in tanto presso il re Filippo, si reca ad Aranjuez, accompagna i piccoli arciduchi di Vienna, Ernesto e Rodolfo, alla caccia alla lepre e, soprattutto, può ora dedicarsi, senza essere disturbata, alla musica per la quale va pazza. Riferiamo questi particolari solo per tratteggiare il destino ascetico dei suoi voti di gesuita e mostrare quanto sant'Ignazio fosse stato saggio a tenere aperta, per ogni utile fine, la porta d'uscita dalla vita religiosa». Cf. *Ibid.*, 114-115. Riteniamo, piuttosto, che Giovanna si mantenesse ligia a quanto stabilito dai Padri a Roma: «Non cambiare né abito né casa, né dare alcun altro segno del suo nuovo stato». Rimasta vedova, Giovanna vestì unicamente di nero e in modo dimesso rispetto agli usi e costumi propri del suo rango. Forse il motivo era solo quello della vedovanza e vi era anche l'intenzione di conformarsi al colore dell'abito dei Gesuiti. Un elemento da segnalare poi è che, sin dal periodo della reggenza, riceveva con un velo che le copriva il volto, che scopriva solo per un breve istante, perché fosse riconosciuta dai suoi interlocutori. Come leggere questa scelta? Bizzarria, vezzo, autodifesa, cautela? Lo storico Villacorta Baños-García interpreta come *modestia piadosa*: cf. A. VILLACORTA BAÑOS-GARCÍA, *La Jesuita*, 223. Inoltre, lo stesso Villacorta riporta la testimonianza di uno dei confessori alle *Descalzas*, il francescano Juan Carrillo, secondo cui la Principessa portava il cilicio, trascorreva molte ore in preghiera nell'oratorio del monastero che lei stessa fece costruire, unendosi spesso al coro delle monache nella preghiera del mattutino. Cf. *Ibid.* 514.

²⁷ *Id.*, 102.

²⁸ «N., quae votum Religionis emiserat, cupiebat illud in Societatis votum commutare, et eius obedientiae se subicere: quamvis, propter eminentiam eius status, id intelligi ab aliis non expediebat. Injunctum est autem negotium P. Ignatio, ut commutationem hanc a Summo Pontifice obtineret, et tacito personae nomine obtinuit. Et quia P. Franciscus Borgia dubitabat, an hujusmodi obedientiam admittere deberet (nec enim id Societatis consuetudine ferebat), non solum P. Ignatium ei significavit quod admittere liceret, sed in virtutem obedientiae eidem injunxit, ut admitteret». Cit. in W. SOTO ARTUÑEDO, «Juana de Austria ¿de la compañía de Jesús?», 585.

²⁹ H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 103. È da precisare che la casa non era più abitata dai Gesuiti, che si erano trasferiti in quella che divenne la sede del noviziato. Borgia non aveva ancora pronunciato il voto gesuitico di «non pretendere fuori della Compagnia prelazione o dignità alcuna, né acconsentire all'elezione della propria persona per un simile incarico, per quanto sta in loro, se non vengono costretti per obbedienza da chi può loro comandare sotto pena di peccato». Borgia non l'aveva ancora pronunciato, nonostante avesse fatto la professione solenne il 1° febbraio 1548. Fu proprio a Simancas, nel noviziato da lui appena fondato, che il 22 agosto 1554 «Borgia pronunciò i suoi

A questo punto si possono avanzare alcune osservazioni.

In primo luogo, è da notare che, a differenza di Isabel Roser e le sue due compagne, Giovanna è stata ammessa nella Compagnia dai suoi stessi superiori senza ambiguità e non come conseguenza o sotto ingiunzione di un ordine pontificio. In secondo luogo, si deve evidenziare che il solo grado di incorporazione permanente per il quale Giovanna sarebbe stata candidabile è quello dei coadiutori temporali, dal momento che i professi e i coadiutori spirituali dovevano essere ordinati. Terzo, il carattere di prova dell'iniziale ammissione della Principessa servì a proteggere la Compagnia dalle serie conseguenze legali e politiche in cui sarebbe potuta incorrere accettando la reggente di Spagna nell'ordine. Infine, va ricordato che più tardi, nella bolla *Ascendente Domino* del 1584, Papa Gregorio XIII decretò che chiunque avesse asserito che i Gesuiti con voti semplici non erano dei religiosi, sarebbe incorso nella scomunica *latae sententiae*³⁰.

Nonostante l'assoluto silenzio circa i dettagli, in obbedienza alle direttive della Curia, la prova dei voti di Giovanna sta nel suo assiduo e appassionato lavoro in favore della Compagnia, come testimonia la corrispondenza epistolare tra i vertici dell'ordine. Inoltre, un altro indizio eloquente è che tali lettere non trattano solo dei «servizi politici» in cui Giovanna si prodigava, ma anche della sua crescita spirituale. A questo proposito Rahner scrisse:

Il Padre Generale ha preso sul serio la vocazione della figlia dell'imperatore. Si può dire che non parta lettera per la Spagna in cui il Padre Araoz o gli altri padri non siano o informati dei servizi resi dalla reggente o pregati di ottenere da lei. [...] La prova che sant'Ignazio e i suoi successori presero sul serio l'appartenenza della principessa al loro Ordine, sebbene unica nel suo genere e tenuta segreta, è data dalle ripetute relazioni mandate a Roma sui suoi progressi nella virtù³¹.

4. Mateo Sánchez e il suo impegno militante

James Reites individua tre aree principali in cui Ignazio coinvolse le donne: il patronato, in cui esse offrivano un supporto finanziario alle varie opere apostoliche della Compagnia; l'intermediazione e la difesa, soprattutto nel caso di nobildonne di alto rango, nelle condizioni di poter far pesare la loro influenza in sede politica ed ecclesiale; la collaborazione attiva nelle opere apostoliche. Molti di questi ambiti si sovrapponevano, poiché alcune donne erano impegnate in tutti e tre³². Giovanna fu una di queste. All'inizio del 1555 il segretario Polanco scrisse:

voti semplici che normalmente accompagnano la professione solenne (tra i quali c'è quello di rifiutare la dignità, se il papa non le impone sotto pena di peccato)»; cf. R. GARCÍA-VILLOSLADA, *Sant'Ignazio di Loyola*, 833.

³⁰ M. FOIS, «Il Generale dei Gesuiti Claudio Acquaviva (1581-1615)», *AHP* 40 (2002) 204-205.

³¹ H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 104-106.

³² J.W. REITES, «Ignatius and Ministry with Women», *The Way Supplement* 74 (1992) 7.

La principessa reggente di Spagna ha sì grande simpatia per la Compagnia che è impossibile pensare che altri, di alta o bassa condizione, ne abbia di più. Lo dimostra favorendoci in tutto ciò che può riguardarci, con un'amicizia specialissima e un atteggiamento di intima fiducia verso tutti i Padri della Compagnia³³.

Lo stesso Ignazio, al termine della sua vita terrena, fece mettere per iscritto riguardo la Principessa: «Ne proviamo infinita consolazione»³⁴.

L'impegno di Giovanna a favore della Compagnia o al suo fianco, ad esempio nella difesa delle deliberazioni tridentine, fu notevole e costante. Il suo carattere volitivo, appassionato e imperioso era temperato da modi garbati e misurati, frutto di arguzia e intelligenza nell'arte di governo. Si dimostrò coraggiosa e al contempo prudente, con un'intraprendenza e un piglio decisionale non comuni. Anche in situazioni sfavorevoli non rimase a guardare, come quando si trattò di patrocinare alcune richieste per conto della Compagnia presso papa Paolo IV, tramite l'ambasciatore di Spagna a Roma. Era nota, infatti, la diffidenza di quel papa nei confronti della Compagnia e dello stesso Ignazio, così come la reazione di questi all'elezione al soglio pontificio del Carafa, trasmessa da Gonçalves da Câmara: «se le revolvieron todos los huesos»³⁵. Peraltro, anche la Corona spagnola era avversata da Paolo IV, che prediligeva i francesi.

Numerosi sono stati gli interventi di Giovanna, diretti e indiretti, a sostegno dei Gesuiti in Spagna. Ne riportiamo un elenco, certamente non esaustivo.

Nell'ambito del patronato, Giovanna finanziò molte scuole della Compagnia. Subito dopo la sua ammissione nell'ordine, la Principessa donò tremila ducati per la fondazione del Collegio di Valladolid. In seguito, ottenne l'autorizzazione per l'apertura del Collegio di Piacenza; finanziò il Collegio romano; affidò alla duchessa Eleonora di Toledo la fondazione del Collegio di Firenze; facilitò l'ammissione della Compagnia nelle Fiandre intercedendo presso il padre, per ottenere l'apertura di un Collegio a Lovanio, progetto che stava molto a cuore a Ignazio. Inoltre, nel suo testamento dispose un lascito di duecentomila *maravedís* ai Gesuiti di Madrid e ordinò ai suoi esecutori testamentari di trattare con l'arcivescovo di Coimbra e con le persone più autorevoli e distinte della città, affinché l'Università di Coimbra, in accordo con i Padri del Collegio locale, selezionasse e inviasse ogni tre anni sei teologi della Compagnia a evangelizzare le Indie portoghesi, assegnando loro trecentomila *maravedís* come sostentamento³⁶.

La reggente usò il suo potere con determinazione, schierandosi in difesa della Compagnia in alcuni episodi eclatanti. Non per niente García-Villoslada, nella sua biografia sul santo di Loyola, scrisse che «fu singolare provvidenza di Dio che il tempo delle grandi bufere sopportate dalla navicella della Compagnia in Spagna [...] abbiano coinciso in gran parte con l'austero governo della reggente gesuitica»³⁷. Un esempio di que-

³³ H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 105.

³⁴ ID., 105.

³⁵ FN I, 581.

³⁶ A. VILLACORTA BAÑOS-GARCÍA, *La Jesuita*, 549-551.

³⁷ R. GARCÍA-VILLOSLADA, *Sant'Ignazio di Loyola*, 845.

sti interventi risoluti di Giovanna, fu l'ingiunzione, tramite il presidente del Consiglio reale, al celebre teologo Melchiorre Cano di ritirarsi nella sua diocesi di Canarias. Cano era un Domenicano, tra i più agguerriti oppositori dei Gesuiti che, insieme al cardinale arcivescovo di Toledo Martínez Guijarro, noto come *Siliceus*, molto vicino a Paolo IV, si era ferocemente scagliato contro il libretto e la pratica degli *Esercizi Spirituali*. Giovanna non si fece intimidire e intervenne non solo per zittire il religioso e ridimensionare il porporato, ma si spinse fino a impedire l'ingresso in Spagna di qualsiasi informazione negativa da Roma – frequenti erano infatti le minacce di scomunica contro i sovrani Asburgo – vigilando porti e frontiere.

Un caso particolarmente doloroso per i Gesuiti fu poi quello di Saragozza. Lì i Padri vennero non soltanto calunniati attraverso una campagna malevola di manifesti e disegni offensivi, ma furono presi letteralmente a pietrate e l'arcivescovo della città, Hernando de Aragón – peraltro zio di Francesco Borgia – fece affiggere un editto alle pareti della cappella dei Gesuiti in cui proibì al popolo di partecipare a qualsiasi ufficio divino, sotto pena di scomunica³⁸. Giovanna scese in campo giocando di sponda, coinvolgendo cioè il viceré Pedro Martínez de Luna e l'Inquisizione. Non usò la spada ma la penna, scrivendo lettere a più riprese con «virile fermezza e decisione»³⁹ e alla fine la spuntò: i Padri poterono fare ritorno in città accompagnati dal popolo in processione.

Un altro ambito che vide Giovanna schierata in prima linea fu quello della riforma monastica in Catalogna, questione che premeva molto alla Compagnia. Ci limitiamo a segnalare il tema, perché per la sua ampiezza non può essere qui trattato.

Infine, merita ricordare due circostanze che videro come protagonisti la Principessa e Borgia. La prima, è l'intervento di Giovanna volto a impedire il cardinalato di Borgia. Leggiamo in un passaggio del *Chronicon* riportato da García-Villoslada:

Lo stesso Francesco fece sì che la principessa Giovanna scrivesse al principe Filippo II di non occuparsi più di questo affare [l'offerta del Cardinalato a Borgia], e all'imperatore di non permettere di ritornarvi sopra. Il padre Ignazio trattò col pontefice Giulio III in maniera tale che la compagnia rimase del tutto sicura e libera da ogni timore⁴⁰.

La seconda è un episodio che fu di grande consolazione per la Compagnia: la riconciliazione dell'imperatore Carlo V con i Gesuiti. L'intercessione di Giovanna creò le condizioni perché Borgia potesse raggiungere il suo augusto padre a Jarandilla, nelle vicinanze di Cáceres, poco prima del ritiro nel monastero di Yuste. In un clima di intima cordialità, l'anziano sovrano e il fedele amico Gesuita poterono finalmente parlarsi a cuore aperto, come racconta lo stesso Borgia a Laínez in una lettera del 28 dicembre 1556, in cui parla di se stesso in terza persona, utilizzando la denominazione crittografica di Rafael de Saa:

³⁸ Per i dettagli della triste vicenda: ID., 845-848; A. VILLACORTA BAÑOS-GARCÍA, *La Jesuita*, 226-229.

³⁹ R. GARCÍA-VILLOSLADA, *Sant'Ignazio di Loyola*, 845.

⁴⁰ ID., 834.

«[Rafael] lo informò molto particolarmente delle cose della Compagnia, della quale non aveva una opinione tanto buona a causa di informazioni cattive che gli avevano dato. [...] Il padre di Mateo Sánchez si mostrò molto contento, e sorpreso di quelli che avevano osato dirgli il contrario di tali cose»⁴¹.

In questa come in altre occasioni, Giovanna si dimostrò capace di preparare il terreno, tessere, mediare, ricomporre. Leggendo quanto hanno scritto di lei alcuni storici autorevoli, si rimane stupiti nel ripercorrere le sue prese di posizione e le sue decisioni, considerando la giovane età: aveva diciannove anni quando prese possesso della reggenza e al contempo chiese di entrare nella Compagnia. Anche le sue lettere – quelle raccolte nel volume di Rahner per lo meno – mai tradiscono l’attitudine regale e, pur non mancando di affetto, sono sempre calibrate, senza sbavature emotive e toni scomposti. Una testimonianza della sua risolutezza è la lettera che scrisse a Ignazio il 7 febbraio 1556, per impedire che Borgia e Araoz fossero destinati altrove:

Affinché questi due Padri non possano spostarsi senza mia autorizzazione, vogliate darmi autorità su di essi in modo che io possa comandar loro in nome dell’obbedienza; mi farete così grandissimo piacere.

Sapendo la cura di tutta la Compagnia nel raccomandare a Dio le Loro Maestà e noi stessi, desidero ancora una volta chiedervi una preghiera particolare per me, affinché nostro Signore si degni di fare di me la sua serva.

Commenta Rahner: «Vero è che il generale, abituato all’obbedienza, non aveva ancora ricevuto a Roma una simile lettera piena di domande insieme pie e regalmente imperiose»⁴².

⁴¹ ID., 837-838.

⁴² H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 107. Alla luce di questo episodio si potrebbe asserire che la Principessa non fosse incline a rispettare il voto di obbedienza, elemento costitutivo della vocazione gesuitica. Credo che una tale affermazione sarebbe troppo unilaterale per tre motivi. Primo, è necessario tenere conto della giovane età di Giovanna, del suo ruolo e delle circostanze. Giovanna all’epoca aveva vent’anni e si trovava a ricoprire la carica di reggente di Spagna in una congiuntura nazionale e internazionale assai complessa e delicata. Al netto del piglio deciso che la caratterizzava e del fatto che fosse stata educata a comandare, è comprensibile immaginare che la giovane *gobernadora* non volesse perdere interlocutori preziosi e di fiducia – che conoscevano bene la mappa del potere all’interno come all’esterno dei confini spagnoli, nonché il funzionamento del palazzo, insieme ai suoi intrighi – e dunque temesse di rimanere sola o comunque circondata da referenti che non avessero la statura e le conoscenze alla pari di un Borgia. È ingenuo infatti pensare che la conversazione con il Duca si mantenesse su un piano esclusivamente spirituale. Proprio per questo motivo, va da sé che l’accompagnamento spirituale di Giovanna era più esigente, anche in termini di frequenza e durata, di una qualsiasi altra donna. D’altronde, i Gesuiti erano costantemente richiamati al criterio dell’adattamento in tutti i loro *consueta ministeria*, ossia ad adattare ciò che dicevano e facevano a tempi, circostanze e persone. Secondo, la Principessa diede ampia prova della sua abnegazione nei confronti della Compagnia di Gesù in molteplici situazioni, di cui abbiamo già detto, assecondando le richieste che provenivano dal suo governo romano e non solo. Terzo, limitandoci alla prima generazione di Gesuiti, vi furono casi spinosi di intemperanze all’interno della Compagnia, che necessitarono richiami all’obbedienza: i più noti sono quelli di Simão Rodrigues e Nicolás Bobadilla. Cf. J.W. E. GARCÍA HERNÁN, *Ignacio de Loyola*, 416-417; J.W. O’MALLEY, *I primi gesuiti*, 363-370; A.L. FISHER, «A Study in Early Jesuit Government: the

Varie relazioni inviate dalla Spagna a Roma anche dopo la morte di Ignazio attestano i «progressi nella virtù» della Principessa. A questo proposito, così scriveva Borgia al generale Laínez nell'ottobre del 1558: «Cresce continuamente nello spirito e nella pia devozione verso la Compagnia; è una persona che capisce benissimo l'Istituto dell'Ordine ed è veramente affezionata a tutte le nostre cose»⁴³.

5. Fu piena appartenenza?

Alla luce di quanto è stato detto, possiamo considerare Giovanna d'Austria una vera Gesuita?

A mio parere il punto dirimente la questione è la combinazione dell'identità religiosa con il ruolo regale di Giovanna e i doveri ad esso connessi. La questione è controversa perché il caso presenta diversi tipi di tensioni. Una di queste è, ad esempio, la relazione complessa e dinamica tra mobilità e disponibilità, due dei requisiti fondamentali della vocazione gesuitica.

La libertà di movimento era un mezzo essenziale nella visione apostolica di Ignazio e dei primi compagni, la *conditio sine qua non* per «ayudar a las ánimas». Il nuovo «modo di procedere» necessitava gente flessibile, versatile, sempre pronta e disponibile. Ignazio voleva i suoi liberi, «affinché [la Compagnia] potesse correre senza ostacoli dietro le maggiori necessità, senza legarci a compiti particolari»⁴⁴. La missione universale della Compagnia chiedeva ai suoi membri di «restare, per così dire, col piede alzato, per poter correre liberamente da un posto all'altro»⁴⁵. Tale concezione della vita religiosa aveva sollevato controversie, sospetti e opposizione sin dall'inizio: se questo accadde nei confronti di un gruppo di uomini, *a fortiori* era inammissibile per delle donne⁴⁶.

Nature and Origins of the Dissent of Nicolás Bobadilla», *Viator* 10 (1979) 397-431. Quanto ai pettegolezzi che la relazione di Giovanna con Araoz e soprattutto con Borgia sollevò, non c'è di che stupirsi: tale pratica, comune a molti purtroppo, è la via più breve per gettare discredito sulle persone e macchiarne la reputazione, specie quando c'è di mezzo una donna bella e intelligente.

⁴³ H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 106.

⁴⁴ Così scriveva Ignazio al Gesuita Michele Torres: cf. ID., 380.

⁴⁵ Le parole di Ignazio sono in risposta al giurista spagnolo Mateo Murranos, sostenitore di un ramo femminile nella Compagnia: cf. ID., 380.

⁴⁶ «Of supreme importance to him was the principle of universal mission and mobility for his fledgling Society of Jesus. [...] The freedom and flexibility in Ignatius' new concept of religious life for men had already given rise to substantial controversy. Given prevailing views on the place of women in society, and scandals, real or imagined, involving breaches of nuns' enclosure, he was strongly averse to violating social and moral codes with a branch of women Jesuits»: T. WORCESTER, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits*, Cambridge 2008, G. SIMMONDS, Chap. VII, «Women Jesuits?», 120; «In short, any intimate alliance with women for a group of men whose mission was to move unencumbered around the world would have constituted what the Alcalà Inquisition had specifically prohibited for Ignatius: a new way of living»: R.A. MARYKS, ed., *A Companion to Ignatius of Loyola*, E. RHODES, Chap. II, «Ignatius, Women and the Leyenda de los santos», 21.

Tuttavia, al tempo dell'ammissione di Giovanna nella Compagnia, già c'era stata un'evoluzione nella comprensione del significato di disponibilità e mobilità apostoliche. Un esempio calzante è l'impegno crescente dei Gesuiti nel fondare e gestire scuole. Con l'istituzione dei collegi, la Compagnia aumentò il suo impegno in un ministero che richiedeva una presenza più stabile e costante. È da notare che nelle *Costituzioni* del 1541 era prescritto: «No estudios ni lecciones en la Compañía» e appena cinque anni dopo venne fondato il primo collegio a Gandía!⁴⁷

Come giudicare dunque Giovanna in rapporto a disponibilità e mobilità? Riteniamo che, considerati i fattori in gioco e le circostanze, l'opinione di Lisa Fullam non sia troppo azzardata o massimalista. Fullam sostiene che Giovanna visse e morì da Gesuita: sebbene non potesse essere inviata in qualunque luogo, era comunque attivamente impegnata nel mondo per conto della Compagnia e la sua influenza si dispiegava liberamente per l'intera Spagna e ovunque nell'impero i Gesuiti necessitavano il suo intervento. Il ruolo politico di Giovanna le conferiva un modo unico di essere a disposizione per il lavoro apostolico della Compagnia e il suo profondo legame con la missione dell'ordine traspariva dallo zelo con cui ne promuoveva e difendeva le opere. Il suo non fu mero patronato: la sua dedizione nel condurre vita religiosa, per come le fu possibile – e l'interesse per il suo benessere spirituale che ricevette in cambio dai Gesuiti – rivela uno sforzo sincero per entrare nella vita della Compagnia, per quanto la situazione lo permetteva⁴⁸.

Lo scopo di Fullam è dimostrare che Ignazio riteneva il ruolo delle donne nell'Europa del XVI secolo incompatibile e persino in contraddizione con la vocazione gesuitica. Nello specifico, egli credeva che le donne del suo tempo fossero impossibilitate a pro-

⁴⁷ Quando Francesco Borgia seppe della fondazione di un collegio-residenza della Compagnia a Valencia nel 1544, volle fare lo stesso a Gandía, nonostante non fosse città universitaria. L'insegnamento doveva essere impartito dagli stessi Gesuiti e la scuola doveva essere aperta anche ai laici. Uno degli scopi a giustificazione di tale scelta era l'educazione dei figli dei *moriscos*. Ignazio accettò per deferenza nei confronti del Duca e Paolo III concedette persino il rango di *Studium generale*. In tal modo, non solo il collegio di Gandía divenne la prima università diretta esclusivamente da Gesuiti, ma divenne pure il primo collegio «misto» per Gesuiti e laici. Anche in India, a Goa, pare che sin dal 1542 alcuni Gesuiti insegnassero a circa seicento giovani tra i dieci e i vent'anni, sebbene in qualità di assistenti. Solo nel 1548 ne assunsero la direzione. Il modello Gandía destò interesse, tanto che nel 1547 in Sicilia, il viceré chiese a Ignazio la fondazione di una scuola sull'isola. L'anno dopo il collegio di Messina aprì le sue porte. Cf. W. SOTO ARTUÑEDO, «El apostolado ignaciano de la educación: *Institutio puerorum* para la *reformatio mundi*», *Man* 89 (2017) 317-328; J.W. O'MALLEY, *I primi gesuiti*, 224-226.

⁴⁸ «In a political sense, certainly: Juana was in no sense cloistered – on the contrary, she was engaged and active in the world on behalf of the Society. And while she herself could not be sent «to whatsoever place», surely her influence moved freely over the whole of Spain and throughout the empire to facilitate the Jesuits' work. Juana was «missioned» in the exercise of her influence, wherever the Jesuits needed her: her political position gave her an almost unique mode of availability for the work of the Society. Her profound sense of connection to the Society's mission can be seen in her dedication to promoting and defending its work. Juana was not merely an advocate for the Society: her dedication to living out religious life as well as she could – and the Jesuits' concern for her spiritual well-being in return – reveal a true effort to enter into the life of the Society as completely as her political circumstances permitted». Cf. L. FULLAM, «Juana, SJ: the Past and Future? Status of Women in the Society of Jesus», *SSJ* 31 (1999) 29-30.

mettere quel genere di disponibilità alla missione che sta al cuore della chiamata in Compagnia. Giovanna, in modo certamente *sui generis*, riuscì ad aggirare gli ostacoli che precludevano alle donne una vita religiosa simile a quella dei Gesuiti: il suo ruolo politico fu la via che le permise di vivere un certo tipo di disponibilità apostolica per conto della Compagnia e, allo stesso tempo, la leva che servì a impedirle di forzare la mano alla *leadership* della Curia circa la domanda della sua ammissione.

Oltre a questo, commenta Fullam, i Padri ammisero Giovanna in modo sorprendentemente ordinario. Ciò che è importante è proprio l'ammissione della Principessa avvenuta in modo regolare, liberamente deliberata: dopo che tutto fu considerato e vagliato, i Padri decisero che Giovanna era una Gesuita – una Gesuita *sui generis* senza dubbio, ma comunque una Gesuita⁴⁹.

Oggi ci sono molteplici forme per interpretare e incarnare la vocazione gesuitica, sentendosi a casa all'interno di un corpo religioso variegato quanto il mondo, eppure accomunato da uno stesso «modo di procedere» e da uno stesso fine: la maggior gloria di Dio e il bene delle anime. Nel Cinquecento, agli inizi della Compagnia, per come ha potuto, Giovanna si è inventata la sua.

6. Apertura

Nonostante l'eccezionalità del caso dunque, Giovanna costituisce oggettivamente un precedente; un precedente molto condizionato, certo, ma comunque un precedente. Dopo di lei è attestato il caso di Caterina de Mendoza⁵⁰, che meriterebbe di essere ulteriormente studiato, almeno per tre motivi: le *Costituzioni* erano già state approvate, Caterina era nobile ma non aveva una posizione al pari di Giovanna e non c'era di mezzo un altro Borgia. Quindi la sua richiesta di ammissione non presentava elementi tali da mettere il governo romano della Compagnia in un *cul-de-sac*. Se ci siano stati altri casi, non è dato sapere, poiché mancano le fonti documentali.

Come ha notato José García de Castro, ciò che colpisce nelle generazioni successive a Ignazio, è una sorta di «processo di barocchismo» della percezione gesuitica della donna, che in non pochi aspetti – anche teologici – si distanzia, talvolta enormemente, dalla sensibilità e dal giudizio del Loyola⁵¹. La donna evocava pericolo, tentazione o peccato⁵². E oggi?

⁴⁹ «It is her ordinary admission, freely undertaken, that is salient about Juana's case: when all was said and done, the Jesuits decided that Juana was a Jesuit – an unusual Jesuit, to be sure, but a Jesuit nonetheless». ID., 30-31.

⁵⁰ Cf. nota 1.

⁵¹ «Como algo propio de la época, también la percepción jesuítica de la mujer entró con el paso del tiempo, en un *proceso de barroquización* que fue en no pocos aspectos – también teológicos – tomando distancia, a veces enorme distancia, de la sensibilidad y parecer de Ignacio de Loyola.»: F. RIVAS, ed., *Iguals y diferentes. Interrelación entre mujeres y varones cristianos a lo largo de la historia*, Madrid 2012, J. GARCÍA DE CASTRO VALDÉS, Cap. V, «Las mujeres y los primeros jesuitas», 282.

⁵² Cf. J. BURRIEZA SÁNCHEZ, «La percepción de la mujer (siglos XVI-XVIII)», *IH* 25 (2005) 85-116.

La Compagnia di Gesù ha preso una posizione netta nella sua Congregazione Generale 34, con il decreto 14 intitolato «I gesuiti e la condizione della donna nella Chiesa e nella società civile». Il testo è inequivocabile.

Ci portiamo ancora dietro [...] l'eredità della discriminazione sistematica contro le donne. Lo si rileva all'interno delle strutture economiche, sociali, politiche, religiose e persino linguistiche delle nostre società [...]. Abbiamo ben presente il danno apportato al Popolo di Dio, in alcune culture, dall'alienazione delle donne, che non si sentono più a casa propria nella Chiesa e non sono più in grado di trasmettere integralmente i valori cristiani alle loro famiglie, agli amici e ai colleghi. [...] Noi gesuiti chiediamo anzitutto a Dio la grazia della conversione. Abbiamo fatto parte di una tradizione civile ed ecclesiale che ha recato offesa alle donne e, come molti uomini, scopriamo in noi la tendenza a dire a noi stessi che non esiste alcun problema. Magari senza volerlo, siamo stati spesso complici di una forma di clericalismo che ha rafforzato il predominio maschile dandogli il sigillo dell'approvazione divina. Riconoscendo questo, noi vogliamo reagire personalmente e comunitariamente, e intendiamo fare tutto quanto possibile per cambiare questa inaccettabile situazione⁵³.

Dieci anni dopo la pubblicazione del decreto 14, Javier Burrieza ancora si domanda: «Sarà arrivato il momento dei “segni dei tempi” nella concezione della donna nella Compagnia di Gesù?»⁵⁴.

Ma a dieci anni da Burrieza, Francesco Rossi de Gasperis non esitava a parlare di «“quasi-schizofrenia” tra quanto, fin da principio, Ignazio e i gesuiti hanno fatto, e fanno, per l'emancipazione spirituale e sociale delle donne, e il loro comportamento ufficiale, oltre al modo di parlare di esse, ancor oggi ben poco libero dai vietati pregiudizi comuni»⁵⁵. Dedicando una sezione a «Le donne nella fondazione e nell'“industria” della Compagnia» in uno dei suoi libri più recenti – un distillato a lungo riflettuto e pregato della sua comprensione della persona e dell'esperienza spirituale del Pellegrino –, Rossi de Gasperis è giunto a scrivere parole ardite:

Un certo «misoginismo» non sembra superato, ancor oggi, da una «maschilistica sufficienza clericale» diffusa nella Compagnia, che almeno «ufficialmente» si distingue per una mancanza di innocente e spontanea semplicità, che sia autenticamente e serenamente virile. [...] Ho l'impressione che questo capitolo delle donne nell'opera e nella vita di Ignazio sia molto più complesso e irrisolto di quanto non pensiamo. [...] Mentalità e misure «canoniche» erano ispirate, oltre a tutto il resto, anche da una disistima, se non da un vero e proprio disprezzo, delle donne da parte dei maschi. Il risultato di questo tipo di cultura ambigua e contraddittoria è che una folla di donne, sia personalmente sia come congregazioni femminili, è cresciuta spiritualmente, culturalmente, teologicamente e apostolicamente all'ombra

⁵³ PROVINCIA D'ITALIA DELLA COMPAGNIA DI GESÙ, *Decreti della Congregazione Generale 34^a (15^a dalla Restaurazione della Compagnia)* 1995, Roma 1996, 188-190.

⁵⁴ «¿Habrà, pues, llegado ya el “signo de los tiempos” en la concepción de la mujer en la Compañía de Jesús?»: J. BURRIEZA SÁNCHEZ, «La percepción de la mujer», 116.

⁵⁵ F. ROSSI DE GASPERIS, *Un Pellegrino che “comincia da Gerusalemme”: Esercizi spirituali sull'«Autobiografia» di Ignazio di Loyola con riferimenti al «Cammino dell'uomo» di Martin Buber*, Milano 2015, 389-390.

e a fianco dei gesuiti, senza venire mai integrata nella Compagnia, ma tenuta sempre in secondo piano, e quasi celata pudicamente agli occhi del pubblico e dell'autorità ecclesiastica. Alla Compagnia di Gesù, come conseguenza, è venuto a mancare quell'equilibrato complemento umano, proprio della creazione, così fecondo, che hanno i grandi ordini monastici e, in una certa misura anche conventuali (con i loro secondi e terzi ordini). [...] Se, nei confronti delle donne, ci fosse nella Compagnia meno vuoto ufficiale di «femminino», che ci avvicina un poco ai monaci del monte Athos, e un po' più di quell'equilibrio casto dei grandi santi e delle grandi sante, uniti tra loro da veri affetto fraterno e tenerezza evangelica, che non sono mai mancati, e non mancano tuttora in seno alla Chiesa cattolica, non ci sarebbe forse tra noi un'atmosfera meno fredda e forse più serena di quella che ha fatto soffrire non poco uomini come, per esempio, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin o Karl Rahner, e forse molti altri? E non fa parte, questa chiara ed esplicita integrazione e armonizzazione casta tra il mascolino e il femminino, di una missione da realizzare perché una vita consacrata a Dio e al suo regno sia davvero «cristiana», di «nuova alleanza» (cfr. Gal 3,28)? [...] Pensare a un «aiuto delle anime», così come lo concepisce Ignazio, a un'«industria» dell'aiuto spirituale dell'umanità, escludendo dal corpo della Compagnia una parte del genere umano, come le donne, appare oggi alquanto fuori tempo e fuori luogo. Può essere vero che questo ministero comporti dei dispiaceri e non sia privo di ansie, di rischi e di critiche. Ma non sono questi rischi che per primo ha corso Gesù durante la sua diaconia messianica?⁵⁶

Vent'anni sono passati dal denso articolo di Lisa Fullam che abbiamo citato⁵⁷. L'autrice chiedeva di iniziare un processo di discernimento in un modo che, a suo giudizio, avrebbe dovuto essere fedele alla storia della Compagnia, alla visione fondativa di Ignazio e, coerentemente, fedele allo sviluppo di tale visione nel nostro tempo attuale⁵⁸. Si potrebbe dire che Fullam invitava la Compagnia a una rilettura della propria storia e ad aprire un dibattito – in dialogo anche con l'esterno – in vista di un «aggiornamento», per ricorrere a una categoria chiave del Vaticano II. Alla luce dei mutamenti sociali e culturali avvenuti nella Chiesa e nel mondo, offriva pertanto alcune considerazioni che avrebbero potuto servire a orientare un riesame della questione se ammettere le donne nella Compagnia.

Fullam non ignorava, ovviamente, che il carisma ignaziano fosse già vissuto da numerosi istituti religiosi femminili che hanno assunto non soltanto gli *Esercizi spirituali* come loro testo spirituale di riferimento, ma persino le *Costituzioni* della Compagnia di Gesù – talvolta in parte, talaltra integralmente – come testo fondatore e ispiratore della

⁵⁶ Id., 387-391.

⁵⁷ Cf. nota 46.

⁵⁸ Così Fullam: «This is an invitation to a discernment, a complex process of “heart and soul and mind and strength.” Of course, I don't hope to settle this question here, but rather to begin to ask it in a way that is faithful to the history of the Society and the founding vision of Ignatius, and also faithful to the development of that founding vision in our own time. This is a study that asks the Society to see in its history an opportunity to examine again a question dating back to the days of the first Jesuits. As I conclude this paper, I'll offer some modern-day considerations built on this history. I will ask what some modern-day considerations built on this history. I will ask what some of the questions are that need to be addressed if we are to raise this issue again today». Cf. Id., 2.

loro istituzione religiosa⁵⁹. Tali istituti non si considerano un ramo femminile della Compagnia di Gesù; non hanno mai inteso esserlo, né desiderano esserlo. Al contrario, si tratta di istituzioni totalmente autonome, che tengono a preservare tale autonomia⁶⁰. La questione è altra. Senza mettere in discussione la legittimità e la validità di percorsi indipendenti ma paralleli – che peraltro spesso collaborano efficacemente con i Gesuiti in vari ambiti della pastorale come della ricerca e della riflessione teologica – si tratta di ascoltare le tante voci – femminili certo, ma qualcuna anche all'interno della stessa Compagnia di Gesù – che chiedono un riesame del tema dell'ammissione delle donne in Compagnia, partendo da presupposti nuovi e prospettive nuove, dal momento che la realtà è nuova. Talvolta si ha l'impressione che si continui a ripetere risposte vecchie a domande nuove. I cambiamenti epocali, i processi storici, con le loro dinamiche inappellabili e sfide esigenti, chiedono creatività e coraggio, chiedono risposte nuove all'insegna dell'*et-et* e non dell'*aut-aut*.

Le domande avanzate da Fullam mantengono tutta la loro forza. Ne scegliamo alcune, perché non le riteniamo ideologicamente pretestuose o troppo audaci. Ci paiono invece piuttosto logiche, considerando la mondializzazione, l'emancipazione femminile – almeno in occidente – e il fatto che la storia, sia quella umana in generale, sia quella ecclesiale, è un cantiere sempre aperto e dinamico.

Come comprendere Giovanna per il nostro tempo? Se la missione della Compagnia è essere «uomini e donne per gli altri»⁶¹, l'inclusione delle donne nella sua vita e nella sua opera rafforzerebbe la sua disponibilità, la sua flessibilità, la sua abilità a parlare alle culture odierne in un modo al contempo familiare e profetico, incoraggiante e sfidante? Che cosa è *ad majorem Dei gloriam* oggi?

Nel rispondere alle suddette domande, Fullam esplorava tre questioni principali, sollevando peraltro altre domande. Per prima cosa focalizzava il tema dell'inculturazione: quali le implicazioni per la Compagnia dopo il profondo cambiamento della condizione femminile? La seconda questione era il sacerdozio: sebbene la maggioranza dei Gesuiti al tempo di Ignazio non fosse costituita da ordinati⁶², ora è quasi normale esserlo.

⁵⁹ Alla voce «Institutos religiosos femeninos ligados a la Compañía de Jesús» nel *Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, Jeanne de Charry ha censito 23 istituti religiosi femminili legati a vario titolo alla Compagnia di Gesù, fondati nel periodo 1540-1773 e ben 209 dopo la sua restaurazione del 1814: O'NEILL, C.E. – DOMÍNGUEZ, J.M.^a, ed., *DHCJ*, III, Roma – Madrid 2001, 2050-2056.

⁶⁰ Chi scrive ha potuto discutere l'argomento *de visu* con una Madre Generale e altre rappresentanti di suddetti istituti religiosi.

⁶¹ Così si esprimeva il generale Pedro Arrupe nel 1973, in occasione di un memorabile discorso agli ex alunni dei collegi dei Gesuiti di Europa. Cf. P. ARRUPE, «Hombres y Mujeres para los demás», *Cu. EIDES* 76 (2015).

⁶² Scrive J.W. O'Malley: «Come ora dovrebbe essere chiaro, gran parte del ministero nella Compagnia veniva svolto da persone che non erano ordinate. Più fundamentalmente, la garanzia per tutti i ministeri derivava secondo loro non dall'ordinazione, ma dall'accettazione della chiamata a essere un membro della Compagnia di Gesù. I gesuiti discussero spesso e diffusamente di quella chiamata, ma rarissimamente parlarono di una "chiamata al sacerdozio"». J.W. O'MALLEY, *I primi gesuiti*, 174.

Possono dunque le donne essere Gesuite anche se non possono essere ordinate? Da ultimo, l'autrice argomentava il suo pensiero in favore dell'incorporazione delle donne nella Compagnia offrendo piste di riflessione, senza la pretesa di essere esaustiva.

Circa il primo punto, Fullam rinviava al decreto 14 della Congregazione Generale 34 già evocato, che riconosce la questione femminile come un tema urgente per la Chiesa intera e dunque anche per la Compagnia, nondimeno impegnata al fianco delle donne in molti servizi e missioni. Riguardo al sacerdozio, Fullam evidenziava che, sebbene esso sia un aspetto importante del ministero per la maggior parte dei Gesuiti, tuttavia, non è un prerequisito per l'appartenenza alla Compagnia, come la presenza dei Fratelli Gesuiti dimostra da oltre quattro secoli. Infine, Fullam indicava cinque punti o prospettive da cui partire a riflettere: un riesame della natura, della portata e della specificità della vocazione gesuitica; un nuovo modello di collaborazione in una Chiesa divisa; un *focus* sul ruolo dei religiosi consacrati nella collaborazione con i laici; una risposta a un bisogno pastorale; il *magis*.

Non potendo qui entrare nei dettagli, ci limitiamo a riportare la sua conclusione. La richiesta di Giovanna di entrare in Compagnia provocò una disamina da parte di una ristretta *leadership* circa i confini dell'identità gesuitica ed ebbe come risultato la determinazione che, sebbene in modo atipico, lei rientrava in quei confini: Giovanna divenne Gesuita, non assumendo una categoria speciale, ma semplicemente come scolastico. Oggigiorno, le donne hanno raggiunto un livello di autodeterminazione sociale senza precedenti e hanno una libertà che era privilegio di pochi nelle epoche passate. Proprio tale libertà è la preconditione per riconsiderare la portata, l'estensione, il perimetro dell'identità gesuitica e meditare su come la Compagnia metterà in pratica la sua dichiarazione di solidarietà con le donne, presente nel decreto 14 già citato. Per Fullam, forse è arrivato il tempo di aprire un dibattito e rivalutare la possibilità di incorporare le donne nella Compagnia di Gesù.

Ci è sembrato opportuno riportare alcuni passaggi del contributo di Fullman perché la sua prospettiva non è un caso isolato negli Stati Uniti d'America. Tutt'altro! Forse anche in Europa altre donne si sentono di condividere il suo punto di vista ma, probabilmente a causa del contesto culturale e della situazione ecclesiale, diversi rispetto a quelli di oltreoceano, ancora si esita a esprimere la propria posizione con la stessa franchezza e libertà. Forse per timore di sentirsi additate o di perdere occasioni di collaborazione con la stessa Compagnia, si preferisce non aprire alcuna discussione, anche nei circuiti informali e non ufficiali. Di fatto, il tema di un possibile riesame dell'ammissione delle donne non è in agenda. La questione è così rivoluzionaria da spaventare?

Ma ciò che stupisce di più è la lettura piuttosto univoca che ne viene data, come fosse un argomento già archiviato perché non previsto nelle *Costituzioni*. La storia, conosciuta con sguardo critico e pacificato, si rivela sempre molto complessa e bisogna considerare i fattori in gioco da più prospettive, non limitandosi a letture sommarie e interpretazioni riduttive.

Alla fin fine però, i cristiani sono chiamati a misurarsi sul Vangelo: questo è il canone normativo per tutti, così com'è stato trasmesso dalla tradizione apostolica e interpretato

dal magistero vivo della Chiesa⁶³. Le Regole e le Costituzioni, senza voler togliere nulla al loro peso e valore, vengono dopo e possono richiedere aggiustamenti in taluni aspetti, a distanza di tempo, se lo Spirito Santo conduce e conferma in una nuova direzione.

John W. Padberg, riferendosi a un lavoro di Anne Carr, ha fatto sua quella che l'autrice chiama l'«agenda delle donne nella Chiesa»⁶⁴. Tre i compiti principali che, secondo Padberg, sono da considerare anche nella relazione delle donne con la Compagnia: una lettura critica del passato, che mostri gli aspetti denigratori della visione della donna, presenti all'interno della tradizione cristiana; il recupero della «storia perduta» delle donne nella stessa tradizione cristiana, a partire dalle fonti bibliche; una revisione delle categorie cristiane con metodi che prendano sul serio l'uguaglianza e l'esperienza delle donne. Riguardo a quest'ultimo punto, Padberg afferma che tale opera non potrà essere svolta senza l'aiuto dell'immaginazione. Nota però che nella Chiesa e, più in generale, nella vita, solitamente non mancano né intelligenza né buona volontà, ma spesso manca l'immaginazione⁶⁵. La storia della Chiesa dimostra che i cambiamenti non avvengono facilmente e che di solito richiedono secoli. Lo stesso Padberg riporta una breve lista di esempi che provano come la Chiesa abbia mutato posizione in alcuni suoi insegnamenti, in tempi tutto sommato recenti: la legittimità della schiavitù, quella delle guerre sante o crociate contro l'islam, la persecuzione degli eretici, la libertà religiosa, il prestito a interesse, l'uso della lingua nazionale nella liturgia⁶⁶; a cui si potrebbe aggiungere molto altro, basti menzionare la recente decisione di papa Francesco circa la pena di morte⁶⁷.

Se volessimo considerare la questione femminile e fare la stessa operazione, la lista dei cambiamenti sarebbe lunga e non è qui il caso. Molta acqua è passata sotto i ponti dai tempi di Isabel de Josa!⁶⁸

⁶³ Cf. CONCILIO VATICANO II, Costituzione dogmatica *Dei Verbum*, 18.11.1965, nn. 8-10.

⁶⁴ Cf. A. E. CARR, *Transforming grace: Christian tradition and women's experience*, San Francisco 1988.

⁶⁵ J.W. PADBERG, «Los jesuitas y las mujeres, las mujeres y los jesuitas», *Man* 81 (2009) 72.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Il 1° agosto 2018 papa Francesco ha approvato con un Rescritto la nuova redazione del n. 2267 del Catechismo della Chiesa Cattolica, dichiarando la pena di morte «inammissibile perché attenta all'inviolabilità e dignità della persona». Ricordiamo inoltre che la sua abolizione nello Stato pontificio risale appena al secolo scorso, avvenuta per volontà di Paolo VI nel 1969.

⁶⁸ Isabel de Josa, amica spirituale di Ignazio, lo sostenne economicamente negli studi a Parigi. Era l'orgoglio del circolo delle dame barcellonesi per la sua elevata cultura (si esprimeva in un latino fluido ed elegante, sostenendo discussioni filosofiche secondo le tesi scotiste). Arrivata a Roma nel 1543, due anni dopo predicava pubblicamente e per questo fu accusata davanti a papa Paolo III. Il Pontefice decretò che non predicasse, ma che si limitasse a leggere. Isabel continuò a fare come prima, tenendo però un libro aperto in mano, che ogni tanto sfogliava per mantenere la forma. Cf. J. MARTÍNEZ DE LA ESCALERA, «Mujeres Jesuiticas y Mujeres Jesuitas», 371; H. RAHNER, *Ignazio di Loyola e le donne del suo tempo*, 435-438.

7. Conclusioni

Giovanna d'Austria/Mateo Sánchez non fu un simulacro. Rimasta vedova e ammesa nella Compagnia lo stesso anno della morte del marito, prese la decisione di non risposarsi e di vivere castamente. Nonostante le forti pressioni su di lei, di fatto non si risposò più. Visse in modo sobrio e per certi versi austero, considerato il suo *status*, abitando nel monastero delle *Descalzas Reales* per quattordici anni, fino alla morte. Visse in obbedienza alla Chiesa e alla Compagnia, mantenendo il suo segreto fino alla fine. Servì la Compagnia difendendola e supportandola con coraggio e fedeltà. Fu una vera Gesuita? Come Lisa Fullam ha scritto, «she came as close as she could»⁶⁹. Condividiamo la sua opinione.

È vero che gli effetti dei voti di Giovanna non furono come quelli di tutti gli altri scolastici e che siamo in presenza di un'aporìa. Il suo caso fu talmente peculiare da comportare un inevitabile adattamento del disciplinare. In concreto, Giovanna poté rispettare in modo pieno solamente il voto di castità. Tuttavia, abnegazione, disponibilità e senso della missione – fattori cruciali del nuovo «modo di procedere» dei Gesuiti – non le mancarono: fu senza dubbio una straordinaria collaboratrice della Compagnia e la sua fu piena filiazione spirituale.

L'essere donna, il ruolo, le circostanze, il contesto socio-culturale – tanto civile quanto ecclesiale – spinsero i Padri riuniti a Roma a elaborare una via creativa per consentire l'ammissione della reggente di Spagna tra i Gesuiti. Significativamente, non cercarono una formula per impedirne l'ingresso. Tale risposta interattiva con la realtà, che cioè interagisce con essa e la assume nel suo dinamismo, porta i tratti tipici dello stile ignaziano.

Chi può dire se, dopo che Ignazio ha buttato giù definitivamente il muro che separava monaci e religiosi dal resto del popolo di Dio⁷⁰, ci sarà qualcuno tra i suoi figli che oserà avanzare ulteriormente e aprirà nuove brecce altrove?

P. Arturo Sosa, in occasione della sua prima omelia da Generale pronunciata nella chiesa del Gesù a Roma, il 15 ottobre 2016, memoria di una grande amica spirituale di Giovanna d'Austria, santa Teresa d'Avila, esordiva con le seguenti parole:

Carissimi fratelli, pochi giorni fa, in questa stessa chiesa del Gesù, dove riposano i resti di sant'Ignazio e Pedro Arrupe, p. Bruno Cadorè ci ha invitati ad avere l'audacia dell'improbabile come l'atteggiamento proprio delle persone di fede che cercano di testimoniarla nella complessa attualità dell'Umanità. Ci ha invitati a lasciare indietro la paura e a remare verso il largo come l'atteggiamento per essere nello stesso tempo creativi e fedeli durante la Congregazione Generale. Certo, l'audacia della quale abbiamo bisogno per essere servitori della missione del Cristo Gesù può sgorgare soltanto dalla fede. Perciò il nostro sguardo è in primo luogo indirizzato a Dio, *perché uno solo è il Padre vostro, quello del cielo*, come ci ricorda il brano del Vangelo appena ascoltato. E come ci ricorda la Formula Instituti al n.1:

⁶⁹ ID., 27.

⁷⁰ Cf. C. LOWNY, *Heroic leadership: best practices from an unlikely 450-years-old company that changed the world*, Chicago 2003, 141.

«[il Gesuita] faccia in modo di avere dinanzi agli occhi, finché vivrà, prima di ogni altra cosa, Iddio, e poi la forma di questo suo Istituto». Anzi, è il cuore intero che vogliamo avere in sintonia col Padre Misericordioso, il Dio che è solo Amore, il nostro Principio e Fondamento. Il cuore di ciascuno di noi e anche il cuore del corpo della Compagnia. Se la nostra fede è come quella di Maria, la mamma di Gesù e la Madre della Compagnia di Gesù, la nostra audacia può andare ancora più avanti e cercare non solo l'improbabile, ma l'impossibile, perché *nulla è impossibile a Dio*⁷¹.

Oggi non sembra che i tempi siano maturi per un riesame dell'ammissione delle donne in Compagnia. Al contrario, sembra che abbia ragione García-Villoslada e che Giovanna d'Austria sia destinata a restare un «miracolo irripetibile». Ma chi può prevedere come si dispiegherà il piano salvifico di Dio? Lo Spirito, che infallibilmente conduce la storia, alla fine, compirà ciò che conta: *ut unum sint, ad majorem Dei gloriam!*

⁷¹ A. M. SOSA ABASCAL, Omelia nella chiesa del Gesù, [ultima consultazione: 14.05.2019], <http://www.cyberteologia.it/2016/10/la-prima-omelia-del-generale-dei-gesuiti-p-arturo-sosa-sj/>.

Sigle e Abbreviazioni

<i>AbIn</i>	<i>Ab Initio</i>
<i>AHP</i>	<i>Archivum Historiae Pontificiae</i>
<i>AnHSoc</i>	<i>Annales: Histoire, Sciences Sociales</i>
<i>Cf.,cf.</i>	<i>confer(endum)</i>
<i>Cap.</i>	Capitolo
<i>Chap.</i>	<i>Chapter</i>
<i>Cu.</i>	<i>Cuaderno</i>
<i>DEI</i>	Diccionario de Espiritualidad Ignaciana
<i>DHCJ</i>	Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús
<i>DV</i>	Costituzione dogmatica sulla Divina Rivelazione <i>Dei Verbum</i>
<i>ed.</i>	<i>Edidit</i>
<i>EG</i>	<i>Exame Generale</i>
<i>EIDES</i>	Escuela Ignaciana de Espiritualidad
<i>ES</i>	Esercizi Spirituali
<i>FN</i>	Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignacio de Loyola et de Societatis Iesu initiis
<i>GEI</i>	Grupo de Espiritualidad Ignaciana
<i>Ibid.</i>	<i>Ibidem</i>
<i>Id.</i>	<i>Idem</i>
<i>IH</i>	<i>Investigaciones históricas: Época moderna y contemporánea</i>
<i>Man</i>	Manresa
<i>MHSI</i>	<i>Monumena Historica Societas Iesu</i>
<i>NDM</i>	<i>Nuovo Dizionario di Mistica</i>
<i>Proyección</i>	<i>Proyección. Teología y mundo actual</i>
<i>RdT</i>	<i>Rassegna di Teologia</i>
<i>ReS</i>	<i>Reales sitios</i>
<i>RR</i>	<i>Review for Religious</i>
<i>SSJ</i>	<i>Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits</i>
<i>TD</i>	<i>Theology Digest</i>

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A Mystic Treatise rooted in Missionary work: Ruiz de Montoya's *Silex of Divine Love* (1640)

by JUAN DEJO S.J.*

Introduction

Talking about mysticism in Jesuit language has always been a controversial topic¹. Ignatius of Loyola's spiritual style proposes the image of "pilgrim" to express another way of living an intimacy with God. Saint Ignatius autobiography refers to two experiences that can be understood as properly mystical (if we follow a model of supernatural experiences associated with the so-called "visions"): first at the Cardoner River, when "the eyes of his soul were opened. He did not have any special vision, but his mind was enlightened on many subjects, spiritual and intellectual."² and finally on his way to Rome at the small chapel of La Storta, where he experienced something foundational for the Institute of the Society when he saw God the Father "placing him with the Son". Amidst the rescued remains of his Spiritual Journal, we find his discernment to scrutinize if Jesuit Churches should have or not have income -a crucial issue to define the coherence between professed Jesuit houses and their mission. His Journal records constant sensitivity and bodily weariness, experiences similar to those of other mystics in the History of Spirituality.

However, Jesuit missions have not been not associated with the mystical tradition; moreover, there was a certain reserve, at least at the beginning, toward everything that could be identified as monastic or conventual life. Members of the Society realized that they should adapt to a new religious style in which union with God was experienced through concrete action for the sake (i.e., *salvation*) of others. In other words, if we seek to identify a mystical dimension in Ignatius of Loyola's spirituality, we should study

* JUAN DEJO S.J. is a theologian and historian specialized in history of spirituality. He is Professor of the Program of Humanities at the University Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, in Lima, Perú and responsible of Jesuit Archives & Patrimony of the Peruvian Province, juan.dejo@uarm.pe

¹ E. Pacho, Pacho. *El apogeo de la la Mística cristiana*. Burgos, Monte Carmelo. 2008; Joseph de Guibert SJ, prefers the concept of "mysticism of service" rather than of "union" (*La espiritualidad de la Compañía de Jesús*, Santander, Sal Terrae 1955); Giuliani, Maurice. "Une histoire de la spiritualité de la Compagnie de Jésus". *Christus*, 2004, 202, p. 28-38.

² San Ignacio de Loyola, *Obras*. Madrid: BAC, *Autobiografía* [30], p. 119.

apostolic activities and not expect to find what was understood hitherto as mysticism's *sine qua non* condition, an *isolated* life.³

I do not believe that the debate has been adequately settled, perhaps because we usually tend to correlate mystical experience with altered states of consciousness, linked to a holistic perception, distinct from the common uses of language and consciousness. Psychological analysis of mysticism tends to make parallels between the experience of being united with God and an altered state of consciousness, generating the prejudice that the latter might be intrinsically attached to mystical experience.⁴

In this article I will try, rescinding from this prejudice disseminated even among scholars⁵, to present some ideas that contribute to this discussion, not only with regard to what we assume about mystical experiences, but also how union with God, understood from the perspective of Ignatian spirituality, places Jesuits in a tension they have tried to resolve by means of different dynamics of self-interpretation. I will aim to do this through the analysis of Antonio Ruiz de Montoya's spiritual goals, showing some aspects of these complex crossroads revealed in his only remaining unpublished treatise, the *Silex of divine love*.

1. The context of the Jesuit mission within aboriginal cultures in South America

The purpose of "saving souls", as described in the *Formula Instituti*, was not easy to accomplish in American territory, at least in the way it was expected during the first years of the expansion of Jesuit missions. After a first territorial exploration of apostolic possibilities, which took longer than imagined, in Peru Jesuits were able to establish a system in conformity with European standards, shaped by the pace of their expansion. Schools were the core of their activities, milestones in their territorial advances and in turn, starting points for consequent explorations, providing sustainability through the further foundations of new schools.⁶

³ Simon Decloux *La Voie ignatienne : à la plus grande gloire de Dieu*, Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1982; Jacques Jouitteau *Une spiritualité pour l'homme d'action*, Paris, Cahiers du CFPC, 1997; Rahner *L'Esprit ignatien : Écrits sur les Exercices et sur la spiritualité du fondateur de l'Ordre*, Paris, Cerf, 2016; Janet Ruffing RSM. "Ignatian Mysticism of Service". In: J. Ruffing RSM (ed) *Mysticism and Social Transformation*. Syracuse University Press, 2001, pp. 104-128.

⁴ Etzel Cardena, Steven Jay Lynn, and Stanley Krippner. *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence* American. Washington DC, Psychological Association, 2014.

⁵ Evelyn Underhill *Practical Mysticism*. NY, Penguin Random House, [1914] 2003; David Turner. *The Darkness of God: Negativity in Christian Mysticism* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1995; Carl J. Arico *A Taste of Silence: A Guide to the Fundamentals of Centering Prayer*. New York, Continuum, 1999; Bernard McGinn. *The Foundations of Mysticism. Origins to the Fifth Century*. New York, Crossroad 1991, especially the Appendix "Theological Foundations: The Modern Study of Mysticism".

⁶ Juan Dejo SJ. "La misión jesuita en el Perú (ss. XVI-XVII)". In Juan Dejo SJ, Luis E. Wuffarden, Ramón Mujica (eds). *San Pedro de Lima*. Lima, Banco de Crédito del Perú, 2018.

Approximately thirty years after their arrival in Peru and having already explored the heart of the Andes, Jesuits went beyond those borders, opening the way to the northern and southern territories, establishing new settlements in what is now Ecuador, Chile and Paraguay.

Jesuits who arrived in such geographically complex territories had to face difficulties in organizing their regular religious life. In addition, the challenges of “accommodation” with new cultures meant drew the attention of their Metropolitan peers who expressed great surprise about what they saw as the excess flexibility of Peruvian Jesuits regarding adherence to religious customs⁷. Furthermore, another difficulty was the way the Americans interacted with aboriginal cultures, whose beliefs and practices others understood within the Western European Christian conceptual framework. Hence, engaging in dialogue was difficult, unless it was similar to one that Jesuit missionaries posed in Asia, as in China, where Jesuits tried to build bridges to attract Chinese scholars to Christian worship. However, the tendency to understand religion based on the paradigm of transcendent divinities and the prejudice of to identify concrete objects of worship and representation of divinities as “idolatry”, did not permit an understanding of the special connection of local American people to nature. Therefore, the perception of “animism” as *idolatry* made it very difficult, if not impossible, to promote what we now call nowadays an “interreligious dialogue.”

From the beginning, the Jesuits in Peru tried to communicate the foundations of the Christian faith and to eradicate native beliefs that were almost immediately interpreted as idolatry. Towards the end of 16th century, printed grammar books and vocabularies circulated. In addition, handwritten copies of books in a variety of languages accompanied Jesuits in their journey over the Andes. According to stories about one of the most famous of these missionaries, Alonso de Barzana was able to speak eleven languages that were eventually turned into grammars and dictionaries; however, all of them have been lost.

This effort to communicate Christian faith in native languages, unfolded in a relatively peaceful way until 1609, when the infamous “eradication of idolatries” was launched in a region (Huarochirí) that was also the site where Jesuits tried their first stable doctrinal work (‘parish of Indians’) shortly after their arrival in Peru. The experiment failed, but 40 years later, in that same place, persistence of “idolatries” was still at stake.⁸

⁷ Juan Dejo SJ. *Mística y espiritualidad en la misión jesuita del Perú y el Paraguay (siglos XVI-XVII)*. Two volumes. Lima, Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya-Biblioteca Nacional del Perú, 2018b

⁸ We must interpret them not necessarily all as religious cults around divinities, but as patterns of devotions and reciprocity toward forces of nature, to certain extent, “sacralized”. Pierre Duviols has raised questions about the interpretation of religious animist patterns among ancient peruvians: “Camaquen upani: un concepto animista de los antiguos peruanos”. In: *Escritos de Historia andina*, Lima, Biblioteca Nacional del Perú-Institut Français d’études andines. p. 147- 173. Reciprocity was (an still is) a common mechanism among Andean people that has been object of an abundant “ethnohistorical” peruvian historiography not sufficiently applied to understand andean religious patterns and that could help to analyze in different manner the way Missionaries were confused by their western lenses : E. Mayer & G. Alberti (1974). *Reciprocidad e intercambio en los andes*, IEP, Lima; Franklin Pease (1973) *El dios creador andino*. Mosca Azul Editores, Lima; John Murra (1975). *Formaciones económicas y políticas*

During the same time a number of Jesuits started to move to the southeast, where they founded a new province in Paraguay. In the first group, which arrived at present-day Córdoba, Argentina, was the first Father provincial, Diego de Torres, and a young novice, Antonio Ruiz de Montoya.⁹

It is interesting to notice that Diego de Torres was part of a generation that was under the influence of mystical currents of *recollected* origin. In fact, his novice master was Baltasar Alvarez, Saint Theresa's confessor and a passionate promoter of an affective method of prayer which fell under suspicion along with that of Antonio Cordeses¹⁰. Those were the times when Jesuits still felt threatened by the strong influence of older monastic practices, urging important authorities as Jerome Nadal to reinforce the institutional identity of the Society, especially for the newer members. General Aquaviva had to settle this concern towards the end of 16th Century insisting on faithfulness to distinctiveness of prayer within the Society¹¹. It is not easy to imagine how these debates were experienced by the new generations that were already serving as missionaries far away from European territories. Nevertheless we can read between the lines of Ruiz de Montoya's manuscript, how that atmosphere certainly influenced his personal and communitarian spiritual experience.

2. Reconciling mystical and Ignatian tradition as an ascetic endeavor in Jesuit Mission

"*Silex* of divine love" brings an old image of Flemish mystical tradition -going back to Saint Jerome and also Albert The Great: the *scintilla*, a spark ignited from *Silex*, a

del mundo andino. Instituto de Estudios Peruanos. Lima; María Rostworowski (1983). *Estructuras andinas del poder: ideología religiosa y política*, IEP, Lima; Cáceres, Efraín 1986. "El agua como fuente de vida: Traslación y escape en los mitos andinos". En *Allpanchis Phuturinga* N° 28. Instituto Pastoral Andino. Cusco; Demarest, Arthur. *Wiracocha: The Nature and Antiquity of the Andean High God*. Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Harvard University. Cambridge, 1981.

⁹ His life has been recovered recently by José Luis Rouillon SJ, Introducción a la edición del *Silex del Divino Amor*, Lima, Pontificia Universidad Católica. 1991; *Vida de Antonio Ruiz de Montoya*, Lima, Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, 2001; Juan Dejo SJ (2018b). *Mística y espiritualidad en la misión jesuita del Perú...* op. cit., Vol. 1, introducción, P. I.

¹⁰ One of the concepts used by Baltasar Alvarez, extracted from mystical tradition, was the "entrance in *caliginem*", to denote the mystery accessed by contemplative prayer. Ruiz de Montoya used many times this notion in his treatise. Had he heard it through his master of novices, a former Baltasar Alvarez disciple? Cf. De la Puente, Luis *Vida del padre Baltasar Álvarez*, Red ediciones S.L., Madrid, [1615] (2020), p. 403.

¹¹ "Instructio R. P. C. Aquaviva pro Superioribus ad augendum conservandumque spiritum in Societate : De spiritu et oratione" In: *Institutum* 1893, p. 330-331; "De spiritu renovatione procuranda, deque disciplina religiosa augenda", chapter 1: "Ad orationis et devotionis studium excitandum", *Ibid.*, pp. 368-369; "Sobre la práctica de la oración y la penitencia según el Instituto" (1917 [1590]), *Cartas selectas de los Padres Generales a los Padres y Hermanos de la Compañía de Jesús*, pp. 56-67. Oña, Madrid.

stone that served as the first human prehistoric tool. In the Church's tradition there was also another idea that has fallen nowadays into obscurity: *synderesis*. Saint Thomas Aquinas refers to it metaphorically as *scintilla conscientiae*¹². Mystics mentioned it as a spark arisen thanks to God's inhabitation in soul; Richard of Saint Victor and other European spiritual writers did the same through their speculative mysticism. Although Ruiz de Montoya did not associate this "spark" as *synderesis*, he indeed preferred the image of an "eye" to recall the importance of a mind fully committed to focus on God. This state of mind was in Nordic mysticism highlighted as the peak of union with God. Therefore, the title of Ruiz de Montoya's treatise contains a clear epistemological statement.

The *Silex* works as a mosaic of European ideas interwoven with an intentionality given by the missionary's experience in a completely different cultural background. The most remarkable fact, the purpose of advocating for this type of prayer, accounts for a constant discernment on issues that have been (and continue to be) fundamental to Jesuit spiritual practices, absence of a regular and communitarian rhythm of prayer. In other words, the *Silex* is a narrative that promotes effectiveness of active prayer as well as a suggested methodology to be experienced within any apostolic effort. It is not surprising that conventual orders, in their traditional or observant lines, appreciate the prayer that was gradually defined as "mental" as much as choral. Mental prayer, being part of personal friars and monks' spiritual exercises, shifted to non-consecrated lay people, becoming an attractive subject for spiritual exercises incorporated into everyday life.

By 14th Century personal prayer seems to have reached sufficient maturity to give rise to treaties such as Hugo of Balma's, a landmark in the process of methodological elaboration and analysis of prayer; his Spanish translation as "Mystical Theology" qualifies for being part of this new paradoxical epistemology that is Mysticism. A meticulous structure to improve personal self-awareness was inspired by *Devotio Moderna* thus granting knowledge of the truth itself, that is, God. In another work I developed the archeology of mental prayer behind the *Silex*.¹³

Thanks to Ignatius of Loyola, mental prayer evolved from a mere list of advice on how to meditate or contemplate Jesus' life, to a concrete methodical practice aimed at strengthening empathy with Him, pursuing a closer identification (*Imitatio*) with Christ. This method focused on a "semantic void" at the peak of deep meditation, eventually losing awareness of the essence of Christian prayer, as an encounter with the Absolute Other that welcomes and guides all the creatures. However, the idea of being a pathway towards the highest state of an encounter with God, that is, a state of high stillness of consciousness, exerted an enormous influence on devout spirits of that time. From Bernardino de Laredo onwards, authors already referred to that state as *Contemplation*. In turn, it was understood as the moment when consciousness reaches a superlative knowledge that scholastics and spiritual writers agreed to call *mystic*.

¹² Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theologica*. Madrid : Editorial Católica. *De veritate* 1978, 16, 1, obj 1; 17, 2 ad. 3.

¹³ Juan Dejo SJ, *Mística y Espiritualidad...* op. cit., Vol.1 Chap. 7.

Whenever in this book we will say hidden or secret infused science or wisdom or mystical theology or aspiration exercise, it should be understood as a sudden, temporary mental elevation, in which the soul, by divine teaching, is suddenly elevated to unite by pure love and the only affective way to his most loving God, without any thought in which no intellectual cause intervenes, either by understanding, or by natural reason.¹⁴

These ideas influenced many Jesuits for whom Ignatian methodology was less easy to understand because of its uniqueness and innovative character with no similar precedents. One of the first Jesuits trying to integrate traditional mystical understanding of mental prayer with Ignatian practices was Antonio Cordeses¹⁵. When Jesuit institutions were expanding all over Europe (1540-1570), traditional practices of mental prayer were perceived as opposed to apostolic purposes, because of their affinity with monastic life. Some years later Jesuit authorities started to tolerate and accept these practices (Leturia 1955: 27-29), considering them as something not entirely foreign to the Society of Jesus's methods (with a special care to highlight the differences, however). In any case, the truth is that visions, ecstasy or rapture, ("arrobos"), remained as signals of special graces "obtained" by practitioners. In fact, representations of Ignatius, through Ribadeneyra's Ignatius biography and its Barbe's engravings, clearly showed the Society of Jesus's founder as a saint *due to* special graces given to him, highlighting a mystical character that was far from being encouraged by the first generation of Jesuits.

Almost eighty years after Cordeses (or Alvarez) first attempted to conciliate mystical mental prayer and Ignatian spirituality, Ruiz de Montoya wrote his treatise in Peru. Some years after his death, another Peruvian author, the Dominican Juan Meléndez, went even further, making references in his *Menologium*, to "pure love", a concept later developed in Molinos' *quietism*¹⁶. In other words, when Ruiz de Montoya wrote the *Silex*, "mental prayer" was identified almost exclusively with recollection of the senses and this in turn as the only mystical path. Therefore, despite (or thanks to) the open dialog by Ignatian followers with mystical traditions, some confusion remained unexplained and in need to be resolved. In this narrative, Ruiz de Montoya's proposal is

¹⁴ Bernarndino de Laredo. OFM., de. *Subida del Monte Sión*. Madrid, BAC. 1998 [1535], p. 185.

¹⁵ To understand the evolution of Society of Jesus's attitude towards mysticism, I recommend Joseph de Guibert SJ. *La Espiritualidad de la Compañía de Jesús...* op.cit., chap. 5, especially regarding the roles that Cordeses and Baltasar Álvarez played as a complex knot unleashed some years after under Fr. General Mercuriano's government, with the systematization carried out by Acquaviva and finally then, with Fr. Vitelleschi.

¹⁶ Some Spanish authors were already in the same way before Molinos disclosure. An author like Antonio Rojas or López Navarro worked some concepts very similar to Ruiz de Montoya's, like *act of faith*: Rojas 1621 quoted by Gabriel María Verd Conradi, SJ. Antonio de Rojas, sus obras, su condena, sus «poesías místicas» y el soneto «No me mueve, mi Dios, para quererte», *Archivo Teológico Granadino* 80, 2017, p. 79-171 ; Gabriel Lopez Navarro OM. *Theologia Mystica. Vnion y Ivnta perfecta de la alma con Dios en este destierro por medio de la oracion de contemplacion en vista sencilla de fe. Recogida de la Divina Escritura, Padres de la Iglesia y Doctores Mysticos*. Madrid, Imprenta Real, [1640] 1651 ; also: Melquiades Andrés *Historia de la mística del siglo de oro en España y América*. Madrid BAC, 1996, p. 326-329; Juan Dejo SJ, *Mística y espiritualidad...* op.cit., Vol. 1, P. III, chapters 6-8.

analogous to his contemporary colleagues in Spain, sustaining that union with God was possible to attain in the midst of apostolic action.

The challenge was launched by Ignatius of Loyola, who in his so-called “Autobiography”, asserted to have experienced an ease to see God in all things. Making an act of “presence of God” is crucial to understand how the spirituality founded by Ignatius could influence spiritual searches of his followers a century later in a very different cultural context. Enthusiastically attracted to follow these indications, some Jesuits from the second generation like Baltasar Álvarez started (though ahead of his time) to reconcile traditional mysticism with Ignatius’ path. In the decade of 1560-70, seeking to justify his method (closely connected with the withdrawal of senses, rejected by many important authorities of the Society), he said:

And this is according to what our father Ignacio experienced, that having used a lot of time, and well, the instruction of meditations that he left us, then he came to a different and higher position, as an end of the former, part of which God gives to others in their beginnings; this is the path of silence, the presence of God, and to hear him, as people say, in his life, because *in oratione se habebat passive*, enjoying what he was given, and receiving in silence and hearing, *quam active*, working with mental discourses...¹⁷

The extreme caution of the institute regarding the prevalence of silence and recollection as privileged access of mystical life, thus, a real union with God, leaves the impression that prayer did not cease for Jesuits to be a matter of inquiry and experimentation. Diego Alvarez de Paz, who became provincial of Peru, spent his youth tormented by scruples due to his tendency to recollection¹⁸. Despite his initial anxieties, years later, as he grew in the Society of Jesus, he incorporated the concept of “affective prayer” in his *Inquisitione pacis et studio orationis* (1623), in which he concluded that powers of the Soul, Understanding and Free Will, are totally simplified and united in the contemplative’s mind.

Almost at the same time, in Spain, another Jesuit, Luis de la Palma established a concordance between the four weeks of the Ignatian *Spiritual Exercises* with the traditional mystical path divided in three ways (“*vías*”), determining that contemplation does

¹⁷ B. Alvarez, *Escritos espirituales Introd. biográfica y ed. Camilo Ma. Abad y Faustino Boado*, Barcelona, J. Flors, 1961, p. 243-244. The idea of making a mental image of God’s presence will have a development related with ignatian spiritual practices. After Alvarez first essays, Francisco de Arias went further with *Aprovechamiento espiritual : va dividido en dos partes...* (Impresso en Valencia : en casa de Pedro Patricio Mey, 1588), the second one was dedicated in part to propose an “exercise of the presence of God”. The idea was enthusiastically followed by those who started to write about a spirituality of “the mixed way (*la vía mixta*)”: Diego Alvarez de Paz for example. Ruiz de Montoya propose his “act of faith” provided the awareness of the presence of God, *vide infra*. Juan Dejo SJ., *Mística y espiritualidad...*, op. cit, Vol. 1, Chapter 7-8.

¹⁸ Fr. General Aquaviva answered to Fr. Provincial Atienza regarding young Fr. Alvarez de Paz, “...whose spirit seemed retired to others and, even he informs me, is believed not to be suited for the Society (...) Your reverence please console and encourage him on behalf of me, making him to see that our Society will be pleased if he focuses on his lectures and studies for God Our Lord has given him those talents”. F. Egaña SJ (ed), F. (1586). *Monumenta Peruana*, vol.4, Letter of Fr. General C. Aquaviva SJ to Fr. Juan de Atienza SJ, February 24th 1586: p. 156.

not verify its achievements through divine consolations, but in coherence with individual behavior after a transcendental experience occurs. Criteria for discerning this integrity comes from Jesus Christ, our role model, who pursued union with neighbors as an analogy to closeness with God. Those who reach the heights of contemplative consolations, but without perseverance in their spiritual exercises, are threatened to fall into the sin of pride because of “the harshness of judgment and love of their own interest, rather than the love of service and of divine glory”¹⁹. The importance of discernment is key to sustaining closeness with God. Service, that is, action for the sake of the neighbor’s good, as an indicator of consistency of contemplation, was assumed in Jesuits’ corporate identity as a form of asceticism lived in *praxis*: action for the common good.

... it is concluded that virtuous deeds are the proof of true love, and those that help the spirit to rise above itself in true contemplation: and that when these works are lacking, one can fear that love is only words, and feigned affections and feelings, which seem to raise wings to fly high, remain on the ground, because they do not seek God with love of charity, but with the crooked intention they seek themselves”²⁰.

La Palma was one of the first who put into perspective the amount of time spent in prayer. Speaking of mental prayer, La Palma says there are two ways to practice. One is reserving a special moment, with cessation of activities and external senses. The second is

... when inside the same occupations and in the midst of business, attention is stolen for a moment to raise it to God asking for forgiveness of sins by offering me and my actions for his greater glory, by examining my thoughts, words and deeds to see if they go according to the rule of his most holy will, giving thanks or asking for thanks, or in any way, because there are innumerable ones there, to lift the heart to God.²¹

He will later say that this mode is the easiest one since no occupation can be so onerous that it can block “these brief absences to enjoy, even without any kind of display, the presence of God.”²²

We have little research about how these spiritual hegemonic theories from Europe were transferred to Jesuit missions abroad, where they faced other cultures with different spiritual sensitiveness. In addition to this process, institutional rhetoric about ascetic spirituality was bound to exhaust apostolic duties accomplished by Jesuits. Impressive roles played by their martyrs attracted much attention, leading Jesuits to a self-awareness of being grounded in their blood, something only comparable to the Church’s origins. One of the letters sent by Fr. José de Acosta, then provincial of Peru to Father General, suggested that Fr. Juan de Zúñiga’s recent death, was not only an outcome of

¹⁹ Luis La Palma. *Práctica y breve declaración del Camino espiritual de la manera que lo enseña el bienaventurado Padre San Ignacio en su libro de los Ejercicios*. Barcelona, Jaime Subirana, 1860 [1627] II, p. 62.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

²² *Ibidem*

his intense missionary work, but also as an example, that caused “great edification” and “a new desire to serve the Lord who provides such end to his people”. Acosta, along with Father General Aquaviva, understood suffering as a “prize” for a life fully devoted to apostolate. Mission as a *purgative* (ascetic) space, while allowing *union* with God, meant an evolution for Jesuit spiritual representations, because until then, only recollected life had the prestige of providing a real union with Divinity.

The reinterpretation of Mission as an ascetic space characterized the Peruvian spiritual narrative in the annual letters, opening to experience a new spirituality, out of stability provided by the scholastic theologians. Then, Jesuits could expand their missions into exceptionally vulnerable places, giving them the opportunity to sacrifice their whole life allowing them to compare their era with the ancient times of the Early Church’s martyrdom. This is the background of ideas supporting Ruiz de Montoya recommendations in his treatise.²³

Mission’s extreme vulnerability of engagement in continuous activities will be presented as a privileged condition to support effectiveness for a “contemplation in action”, launched by an “act of faith”, symbolically represented through the image of the sparks fired by a *Silex*.

3. Ruiz de Montoya’s reinvention of *Contemplation as an act of faith*

Theories on Contemplation date several centuries back before the Spanish Golden Age of Spiritual Theology; Richard of Saint Victor was one of the main supporters of Contemplation as a “free and penetrating gaze of mind (*mens*), suspended in admiration of manifestations of wisdom.”²⁴ In his treatise, Richard the cleric distinguishes this activity as differentiated from Meditation and Cogitation, both belonging to the same movements of the mind, culminating in contemplative stillness. Years later, Saint Thomas Aquinas, focusing on the contemplative “way” (as a way of life), declared:

We are now speaking of the contemplative life as applicable to man. Now according to Dionysius (cf. *Divine Names* VII) between man and angel there is this difference, that an angel perceives the truth by simple apprehension, whereas man arrives at the perception of a simple truth by a process from several premises. Accordingly, then, the contemplative life has one act wherein it is finally completed, namely the contemplation of truth, and from this act it derives its unity.²⁵

²³ We must hear the echoes of daily and exhaustive work at the missions behind Ruiz de Montoya’s spiritual recommendations. His biographer Francisco Jarque shows clearly this relationship: Francisco Jarque *Antonio Ruiz de Montoya en las Indias*. 4 vols. Madrid, Victoriano 1900 [1661]; Suárez, [1661] 1900, Vol. 2, Lib I, Cap. XXVI: p. 7.

²⁴ Richard de Saint-Victor. *The Mystical Ark*. New York, Paulist Press. 1979, IV, p. 157.

²⁵ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, op.cit., II-II^{ae} q. 180 art. 3.

Aquinas amplified Richard of St. Victor's image of *gaze* and understood that the contemplative act is, ultimately, a contemplation of truth. Epistemological interest placed on this purpose cannot be denied. Not surprisingly, Aquinas wrote a Theological *Summa* that was at the same time a philosophical as well as an anthropological study framed by the religious quest for God, identified (confused?) with gnoseological truth. With him, the notion of "contemplation" (as prayer) obtained the meaning of being the summit of religious life as a result of theoretical inquiry, but without closing the doors to its precedent signature: life's achievement experience. Under the influence of the Dominican Saint, scholasticism "appropriated" contemplative experience to take it into a specific hermeneutic direction, giving birth to a specialized bibliography elaborated by monks, convent friars and clerics; some were more or less influenced by scholastic language, exonerating them, to certain extent, from the suspicion of *alumbadismo*. During 16th to 17th Centuries we find at one side, Saint Teresa of Avila, whose great merit was to speak about her encounter with "truth", as a mystical encounter with God; at the other extreme we find many scholastic authors following up these indications so as to devise more and more complex arguments, contradicting the simplicity that defines this act, as a mere "gaze".²⁶

This evolution of spiritual literature stemmed from some dilemmas that included the fear of a revelation exclusively based on individual's experiences without a real awareness of its intrinsic state-of-grace nature, that is, a total gratuity originated in the Divine Will. That is why monks' meditations were placed within a scholastic interpretation, generating a hybrid specimen called "Mystical Theology". Paradoxically at the same time (circa 17th Century), this genre gradually weakened, leaving a trace of spiritual treatises for laymen and *connoisseurs*, whose instrumental character was meant to collaborate in attaining "perfection" of their devout souls.²⁷

Part of the success lay in the association of spiritual perfection with supernatural events, which devout people imagined as an effect of their spiritual exercises, increasing at the same time curiosity to live in the flesh those experiences profusely portrayed in mystical iconography and spiritual representations of the time. Theoretically, the scholastic definition of this experience was a "*simple view / gaze of understanding*". It was the pivot of many spiritual theories. Within these essays, we cannot ignore some authors' concern -as the aforementioned La Palma, Luis de la Puente or Alvarez de Paz- to discern these practices out of the framework of "recollected" life. "Simple gaze of understanding" led to some stumbling blocks, such as the dangerous interpretation of "suspended understanding" (due to the process of simplification), with harmful consequences of deviation into *quietism*. On the other hand, basing prayer in affection, also appeared as risky, since it gave the impression of being result of an individual's "pure love", a sort of Free Will radical expression thus diminishing God's grace.

²⁶ V.gr. Thomas De Jesús, *Práctica de la viva fe de que el ivsto vive y se svstenta*. Brussels, Huberto Antonio, 1617; Fray José de Jesús María Quiroga. *Apología Mística. En defensa de la Contemplación, Madrid, Anejos del Boletín de la Real Academia española*, LII, 1992. Chapters 9, 17.

²⁷ To this respect: Michel de Certeau, *La Fable mystique*. Paris, Gallimard, 1982: chapter 3.

This context at the beginning of 17th Century and within Spanish Carmelite circles, elicited a difference between “infused” and “acquired” contemplation, reflecting new interpretations of the old dilemma between work and grace. Thomas de Jesús OCD, author of *Tratado del conocimiento oscuro de Dios afirmativo y negativo y modo de unirse con Dios por amor*, mentions that acquired contemplation is realized through our own efforts. The path of contemplative prayer reaches a greater abstraction of understanding when the mind fixes its attention on faith mysteries, preparing for God’s intervention. This latter action is experienced as grace, and consequently, it is called *infused contemplation*. Although Thomas de Jesús was the first to make this differentiation, its origin can be traced to practitioners of Nordic Mysticism, such Heyndrick Herp, who said that the Soul “exercises its Will to reach God, and in response, God sends light”²⁸. Most authors of Hispanic origin during the first half of 17th Century agreed to consider contemplation from these two aspects. Certainly, not everyone stresses the same way on how to deal with dilemmas caused by interaction between works and grace in prayer. Thomas de Jesús was worried that “infused” contemplation could be perceived as impossible to attain by a common man’s faith. That is why he strives to enhance his notion of “acquired contemplation making a negative speculation - that is, through denial of concepts, ideas and images - a way to meet God as a path of faith. Therefore, speculative reason through denials could not be confused with suspicious quietism but led to a profound consciousness, transcending ordinary mechanisms of understanding, and providing a dark knowledge, typical of faith, a “general” (i.e., universal) and pure love, as proclaimed in his *Práctica viva de la Fe*:

First, to enliven the virtue of faith (provided that divine supernatural mysteries are offered and exceed our capacity) is to surrender and captivate our understanding with promptness, certainty, obedience and truth of what we cannot understand. Remembering what the apostle says: “*Oh depth of wisdom mysteries of our God, how incomprehensible are his judgments and how high his ways?*” and what Isaiah said: *Quis nouit sensum Domini?* Who could ever know what God feels? Thus, they have to see if the articles of our faith (as ineffable mysteries and incomprehensible as is God himself) and that faith itself threaten ruin to those who want to scrutinize them. And that is why they are of faith, because we cannot reach or understand them, nor force them, nor delight in having faith in things that exceed our understanding, to have more to offer God, and together, to have such a great and wonderful God. His works and mysteries are also equally wonderful and his greatness exceeds our capacity.²⁹

Thus “acquired” contemplation limits “infused” but does not necessarily determine it. It is a process of total Ego detachment and thereupon prepares the subject’s receptivity to God’s grace. Being aware of God’s presence, Ruiz de Montoya’s idea of “act of faith”, took the place of the former scholastic definition of Contemplation as *simple gaze of understanding* and became a statement to overcome opposition between work and grace, with a different and simplified methodology to contemplate God in an active daily basis.

²⁸ Teodoro Martin, Introduction to Enrique Herp. *Directorio de contemplativos (espejo de perfección)*. Salamanca, Sígueme, 1991 [1595], pp. 11-52.

²⁹ Thomas of Jesus, OCD. *Práctica de la viva fee ... op. cit.*, f. 200- 222.

Still, his interest in proving the contemplative nature of this method in regular routine, resumed the tradition of negative theology. Ruiz de Montoya's *Silex* gathers many arguments and recommendations from authors already then defined as "mystical". He quoted indirectly Tauler, and specifically, Ruysbroeck³⁰. Saint Teresa is equally present³¹, as well as Saint Thomas and certainly, Pseudo Dionysus. Contemporary European bibliography at that time holds similarities with Ruiz de Montoya's text. Debate about the relationship between work and grace, already mentioned, behind his argument, prompts us to three types of interrogation: one, soteriological: *what is more determinant in human salvation, task or grace?* Another one is ecclesiological: *can we consider it worthy to name as "religious" ("consecrated") a life without the community routines of daily prayer but instead involved in constant apostolic activities?* Finally, from a Spiritual Theology perspective: *is the practice of prayer of union with God only linked to contemplative and recollected life, or is it possible to achieve that union in the midst of an active life?* I believe these questions are fundamental for believers and for the evolution of Catholic Imagination; they reached a certain maturity in 17th Century but nonetheless, they have not found until today a theological explanation correlated and able to solve the aforementioned dilemma. On the contrary: responses fluctuate from one extreme to the other. There has been much discussion in the past years about charisms; behind the analysis of a work such as Ruiz de Montoya's, which includes both ascetic and scholastic tradition, underlie many questions opened by St. Ignatius of Loyola's charism. Ruiz de Montoya's interweaving of spiritual theories was made at the same time as his restless work in daily contact with a culture of very different origins than his. *Silex's* theoretical design defines his spiritual practice as a Jesuit, unfolding a collection of knowledge not all coming from institutional documentation or authors, but also from many other sources of that time; his reflection vigorously echoes European Christian humanism in "the Indies"; he is up to date with academic discussion, also paying close attention to scholastic style. And certainly, he is a great observer of Nature. Methodically, he navigates between two poles, one linked to traditional mental prayer, avoiding the proliferation of thoughts and the other one, associated with the act of faith, looking to tune everywhere with God's presence. These two "practices" synthesize to make contemplation in action more concrete, a paradoxical definition that finally, ends up being a mystical one.

Withdraw your understanding of every creature, whatever it may be, and rigorously abstract your thinking from it, in the manner of a beast of burden; God unites you with him and *ego semper tecum* and you will be, if in faith alone, you have a fixed and invariable thought, and your will be enlightened by the first cause. This was explained by the great Dionysus, that we get rid of the senses and the understanding of all intelligible creation was

³⁰ Antonio Ruiz de Montoya. *Silex del divino amor* ... In: Juan Dejo SJ. *Mística y espiritualidad*... op. cit. Vol. 2, f. 76v.

³¹ Aviso 20", *Silex*, In: *Ibid*, II. f. 42r. From now on I will quote Ruiz de Montoya with the "*Silex*" reference, following its last transcription published in Juan Dejo SJ. *Mística y espiritualidad*... Op. cit., Vol. 2.

to be banished, being attentive only to the clear rays of divine darkness of faith, in which the divine truth inhabits, warning that in all that we discuss here, it is not about passive abstraction - which you will find ahead- but an active and supernatural one, to which your *industry* can withdraw in the company of divine grace.³²

Here we see Ruiz de Montoya employs two similar concepts to “acquired” and “infused”: “active” and “passive”. In other words, he suggests that the practice of “acquired” (or “active”) contemplation is “supernatural” because it is a co-activity with Divine grace: the *industry*, that is, the individual work, *withdraws* (ambiguous term denoting coactivity here) by his own will, to let divine grace to operate over subject’s will. In other words, human action is co-performed with God.

Another term we should highlight is “abstraction”, because it shows an affiliation with the tradition of speculative mysticism or negative theology, relative to detachment of any thought or idea leading the practitioner to mystical nakedness of understanding. This process drives the individual to the *excessus mentis* referred by Ruiz de Montoya³³. Another horizon to understand reality opens up to the individual, and if he/she remains concentrated on his daily activities, this is, properly speaking, a contemplation in action.

As we can see, it is a conceptual transfer of the simple idea of understanding as an intuition of truth, into the act of love and faith. Indeed, knowledge becomes intuition. Beyond the concept, he understands an act of faith as an act of love embracing the presence of God. The “gaze/sight” of understanding acquires the connotation of an act of faith before the presence of God being at the same time, communication of Mystery. This defines the communication that arises out of love as the highest stage of contemplation

... love consists of an interchange between the two parties; that is to say in the lover’s giving and communicating to the beloved what he or she has or out of what one has or can have; and so also the beloved to the lover. Thus if the one has knowledge, one gives to the other who lacks it. The same is true of honors, of riches; and so the one to the other³⁴.

This communication, occurring at this high state of contemplation, concludes the Spiritual Exercises with a “simple gaze”, finally taken as an epistemological vehicle for intuition according Ruiz de Montoya.

Through the understanding to find, believing that in the immense chaos in which God is present, and do this without comparisons or figures, or sensitivity of any kind, but with a very simple view, with which he knows that he cannot know; and with an insightful intuition which he sees that in no way can he see something from which understanding comes out, that what he cannot neither know nor see is the first and most non-created entity.³⁵

³² *Silex*, f. 71v.-72r.

³³ *Silex* 143r. Undoubtedly there are precedents in Jesuit ascetic literature: Luis La Palma speaks about God’s charity that *stresses us to mental excess in our relation with God* (“Aprieta para tener excesos mentales en el trato con Dios” ...): Luis La Palma, *Camino...* op. cit., II, p. 91.

³⁴ Ignatius of Loyola’s *Spiritual Exercise*. In: Op. cit., [231], p. 272.

³⁵ *Silex*, f. 85v.-86r.

Intuition requires an individual's extreme concentration (that of the simple gaze) to allow and sustain the contemplative act:

... if you descend to particularize the things you are giving up, you will be distracted from that intuition to whom the soul must be attentive, with only Will and Mind, because the understanding must not operate in passing, diffusing, arguing or knowing what it cannot, being incomprehensible.³⁶

Hence, the act of contemplating love involves the realization of individual love, while reaching its origin or source. To the extent that the body and, especially, the mind — involving the language or discursive cogitation— interfere with the process, Ruiz de Montoya felt inclined to follow the Nordic tradition and 16th Century Spanish mysticism, promoting him to flee from any mental operation.

4. The *Silex* as an interpretation of “contemplation in action”

Up to this point we could say that Ruiz de Montoya denied the substance of Ignatian contemplation. But it would be more convenient to remember Jesuit sensitiveness at that time and how they understood Ignatius of Loyola's contemplation. Jesuit authors already cited such as de la Puente or La Palma took the “contemplation to attain love” from Spiritual Exercises, as its source, inviting one to see the world animated by Divine activity. Also Saint Ignatius's life narratives increasingly focused on his supernatural experiences to the extent that they re-define him as a Mystic at the end of 16th Century. His endurance of great pains due to “infused contemplations” —as Jesuit circles finally called this spiritual state— was seen to overcome the resistance to accept mysticism as something characteristic of Ignatian spirituality. We should consider how Jesuits were involved in this tension in order to understand their religious identity as “contemplatives in action”.

One way to reinforce the sense that contemplation does not depend on recollection or reclusion, was to redirect the analysis of spiritual practices towards literature named “ascetic”, whose most important Hispanic representatives, were Luis De la Puente, Luis la Palma, Alonso Rodríguez, and Diego Alvarez de Paz (the previously mentioned missionary in Peru who explored mystical traditions interwoven with Ignatian sources, and who highlighted psychic-mental states (“graces” as singularities). This happened despite their coinciding with dissemination of narratives intended to approach the founder as a mystic, highlighting supernatural aspects of his “infused” contemplations. Even if Luis de la Puente did not use this last concept, he described the highest contemplation as an “elevation of our mind to see the things of God with insight, suspension and admiration” reached after an *ascetic journey*. Then, he proposed union with God inside an active life. De la Puente speaks of the process of gradual abstraction from intellectual

³⁶ *Silex*, f. 127v.

visions until concluding in “acts of charity” throughout a contemplation similar to Mystics, speaking of an “*experimental knowledge of God*” as one of its effects³⁷

These essays of complementary ideas between mystical experience and apostolic asceticism were characteristic of Jesuits spiritual endeavors during the first half of 17th Century. In different ways, they were developing a theory that sought to define almost literally the ideal of “contemplative in action”. This is what some of these authors called “mixed methodology” which, in my opinion, should be associated with the process of self-understanding of Jesuit spiritual identity³⁸.

Approximately 30 years after the main publications of these authors, Ruiz de Montoya launched his proposal at the core of the South American mission. His purpose seems similar to that of Jesuits and non-Jesuit authors of his time³⁹. His methodology gives a special place to asceticism according Nordic-rooted mystical tradition: it is a process involved in intellectual abstraction. He did not go so far as Lallemant to say that “infused contemplation” was necessary to become a true apostle⁴⁰, but it is clear that he promoted the rejection of mental discursiveness; even imagination, in spite of its prestigious place in Ignatian spirituality, was dismissed. In this sense, it is an example of Jesuits’ efforts to harmonize both mystical and Ignatian heritages in a single practice. The Peruvian missionary tried almost literally to solve the question of how to be a contemplative in action; if De la Puente, or Alonso Rodriguez, considered the highest moment of contemplative prayer as a unitive state whose effects are a confusion of senses, Ruiz de Montoya thought that practitioners remained in total awareness of God’s presence in that very moment.

The way *Silex’s* author conceives contemplation in the midst of action would therefore be as a particular attention, a high state of consciousness instantly lived as inhabited by the presence of God. As happens in the practice of Eastern *mantra*, Ruiz de Montoya recommends avoiding being distracted from full attention to the presence of God, repeating: *I Enjoy, I Praise, I desire, I resign, I Imitate, One, I surrender or I sacrifice*

³⁷ Luis De la Puente. *Guía espiritual en la que se trata de la oración, meditación y contemplación*. Madrid, viuda de Alonso Martín, segunda impresión. *Guía espiritual en la que se trata de la oración, meditación y contemplación*. Madrid, viuda de Alonso Martín, segunda impresión, 1614 [1609]. P. III, Chap. III, 2., p. 534; also: pp. 243-245.

³⁸ Joseph de Guibert. *La Espiritualidad de la Compañía de Jesús...* op. cit., pp. 148; 187-188 quotes some Cordeses unedited writings, but also Alvarez de Paz’.

³⁹ V.gr. Rojas *Vida del Espíritu para tener oración y unión con Dios, según los sagrados Doctores que en la contemplación, unión y mística Teología mas se aventajaron*. An important work that has recently analyzed by Verd “Antonio de Rojas, sus obras, su condena, sus “poesías místicas” y el soneto “No me mueve, mi Dios, para quererte”. *Archivo Teológico Granadino*, 80, 2017, pp. 79-171; also: López Navarro *Theologia Mystica. Vnion y Ivnta perfecta de la alma con Dios en este destierro por medio de la oracion de contemplacion en vista sencilla de fe. Recogida de la Divina Escritura, Padres de la Iglesia y Doctores Mysticos*. Madrid, Imprenta Real. 1651 [1640]; Caldera *Teología mística y discreción de espíritus: ejercicio de la fe divina y de la oración mental* 1629 [1623]; Juan Bretón *Mística Teología*, Madrid, casa de la viuda de Alonso Martin. 1614.

⁴⁰ Joseph de Guibert SJ. *La espiritualidad de la Compañía de Jesús...* op.cit., p. 254.

*myself, I pray*⁴¹. However, this is not one of the most original features of *Silex*. In my opinion, what constitutes the boldest jump of the text is to have placed as the best example of this practice, an indigenous Paraguayan daily exercise. I have previously identified this character thanks to the references made by Ruiz de Montoya's first biographer, Jesuit Francisco Jarque, from this passage of *Silex*⁴². Furthermore and most important, through this example he showed how in everyday activities it is possible to achieve a full attention to God's presence, thanks to the awareness of living a deep alterity arising from the act of faith.

So that you are truly persuaded that this exercise is for everyone, that is, if you are new, or old in virtue and exercise of prayer, I want to remind you of Ignatius, that principal Indian, with whom you communicated and who for fifty-five years lived gently, kept the natural law in its purity, content with only one woman, with no offense from nobody. He received Baptism at such a mature age, that he carefully applied himself to the study of divine law, which he carefully applied to his memory, and to his good will. He continuously heard Mass every day before going to work on his estates. Coming back to the town before entering his house, he entered God's, where with affection of a living faith, he adored the living sacrament of the Eucharist and, as a source of grace he daily communicated much to him; the points of his prayer, the speeches, the composition of place was always to believe that God was in every present place. This act of faith only went through his continuous exercise; and without any another teacher than divine light, he excelled in virtue that his works were testimony of his guilt-free life.⁴³

Ruiz de Montoya shows a contemplative prayer in full action as no other than a reminiscence of the founder's spiritual experience: *to see God in all things*. Ruiz de Montoya turned this "act", into a "composition of place" being the beginning as well as the end (objective accomplished) of the sentence. The Indigenous -named *Ignacio*- became the master:

Remember that you walked through those days eager to find an easy way to continually have the presence of the First Cause, and heaven wanted that this new in faith, to you, an ancient exerciser, teach you in a single act of faith, what you were looking for.⁴⁴

Ignacio the Guarani had not developed this ability because of his conversion but because he was an *ancient exerciser*. Already in his "gentile" state he had not only preserved a moral according to the principles brought from Christian culture, but also lived with a spirit that simply transferred that devotion to the Christian God.

⁴¹ *Gócome, alavo, deseo, renuncio, imito, uno, entrego o sacrificio, ruego: Silex: f 67v*. Similar to some of mindfulness practices currently promoted from Eastern tradition; Ruiz de Montoya puts this Contemplation as correlate to daily activities proposing plenty attention to *find* (originally *see*) God in all things more suited with a Christian way of meditation, as being not only in a pure awareness state but committed with an Other, in this case a Transcendent One.

⁴² Jarque 1900 [1661] Vol. 4, Book IV, Chapter XXV, p. 150.

⁴³ *Silex*, f. 96v.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, f. 96v.

Leaving one day his praiseworthy exercise of hearing mass, without you // asking him something or even seeing the concept of the character of his spirit, he spoke to you in this way: “Once I wake up, I believe that God is present there; and accompanied by this memory I start my day; together with my family and leading the choir, I pray with them all the prayers. Then I go to hear my mass, where I continue my memory and act of faith that there is God present; with this same memory I go back to my house, I summon my people to go to work, I go with them and all the way I keep this memory, which I never lose while the labor lasts. Coming back to town, my thinking on the road is only that there is God, present and accompanying me. With this same thought I enter the church first before my house; there I adore the Lord and I thank him for the continuous care he has for me, with which happily I entered my house to rest, and while I eat, I do not forget that God is there. With this I sleep and this is my continuous exercise. (*Ibid*, f. 97r.)

Ruiz de Montoya places in Ignacio Piraycí’s mouth the same state of continuous recollection that Jerónimo Nadal witnessed in Saint Ignatius of Loyola⁴⁵. The difference is that while Loyola’s deep concentration in the presence of God appears as a gratuitousness beyond a personal will -to the extent that he could be distracted from activities in which he was engaged-, the Indigenous experienced it as an act emerging from his own will, looking for not being distracted by daily activities to feel God’s presence in all things.

Silex of divine love is a complex *colonial* text, which Ruiz de Montoya probably wrote at irregular intervals throughout his very intense missionary life, interweaving a narrative in order to help every Jesuit missionary overflow with the urgency of “saving souls” and become inhabited by the question of the best way to follow the example of their founder who, from his saintly nature, had come to be truly contemplative in action.

⁴⁵ Joseph de Guibert SJ. *La espiritualidad de la Compañía de Jesús*....op. cit., p. 20: quoted from *Monumenta Historica Societate Iesu, Epistolae: ab anno 1546 ad 1577. Selecta Natalis monumenta in ejus epistolis commemorata*, Volume 4, p. 661.

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Ignacio de Loyola en perspectiva protestante

Un reciente libro del prof. em. de Historia de la Iglesia Gottfried Maron y, un tiempo, presidente de la Federación evangélica alemana (Präsident des Evangelischen Bundes), titulado *Ignatius von Loyola. Mystik - Theologie - Kirche* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001, 301 pags.), retoma un tema importante de la investigación ignaziana, a saber, la idea o la imagen que de él se ha hecho el cristianismo luterano. El significado del tema concierne no sólo a las relaciones de la Compañía de Jesús con el luteranismo, sino obviamente también a las del diálogo ecuménico en general.

1. Retrospectiva

En la mirada histórica que da el prof. Maron al final de su libro, sorprende el que, a los diez años de la muerte del fundador de la Compañía de Jesús (31 de julio de 1556), ni siquiera el nombre del que ha pasado a la historia como «Antilutero» fuera conocido entre los protestantes alemanes (p. 270), a pesar de que los efectos de su obra, aunque incipientes todavía, se dejaban ya sentir desde octubre de 1540, con la llegada del primer jesuita que pisó tierras alemanas, el savoyano Pierre Lefavre. Recién aprobada la nueva orden, fue enviado para acompañar al teólogo de Carlos V, Pedro Ortiz, que debía intervenir en los coloquios con los protestantes durante la dieta de Worms (diciembre de 1541). Lefavre no intervino directamente en los coloquios; confiesa, predica, da ejercicios.

En sus primeros pasos la acción de los jesuitas en Alemania fue esporádica y siempre por encargo de la Santa Sede hasta llegar a ser con P. Canisio, a partir de 1550, un verdadero programa de acción. Fue en este año cuando Ignacio accedió a la petición del duque de Baviera de enviar tres jesuitas teólogos a la Universidad de Ingolstadt con el fin de paliar la confusión doctrinal, la decaden-

cia moral del clero y los comienzos de la Reforma en el ducado de Baviera. Ignacio escogió al castellano A. Salmerón, al savoyano C. Jayo y al nerlandés P. Canisio. Es éste, como es sabido, el que despliega la mayor actividad jesuítica en las regiones del Imperio alemán, llegando a ser en 1555 el primer superior provincial de Alemania. No cabe duda de que la Compañía de Jesús en los dominios del Imperio alemán estuvo identificada con la persona de Canisio, por tanto no es de extrañar que los protestantes lo consideraran como el fundador de ella. Lo que sí es más que extraño, siempre según Maron, es que se considerase también como fundador a Gian Pietro Carafa, que, aunque en un principio mantuvo buenas relaciones con Ignacio, pronto fue uno de sus más netos adversarios, sobre todo una vez fue elegido papa tomando el nombre de Paolo IV.

Todo ello muestra lo impreciso que resultaba para los partidarios de la Reforma expresar qué era propiamente la Compañía de Jesús, aunque ciertamente las reacciones parecen que fueron desde un principio bastante negativas a juzgar por lo que dice Canisio al conde Oswald II en una carta del 30 de diciembre de 1544: por envidia nos llaman jesuitas¹. Este apelativo se usaba entonces en Centroeuropa en sentido despectivo, dicho de una persona hipócrita, que aparece muy piadosa pero internamente tiene unas intenciones puramente egoístas. En un examen de conciencia de 1519 se hace la pregunta de si se ha dejado de enseñar la palabra de Dios por temor a se llamado fariseo, *jesuita*, hipócrita o beguino². Sin embargo, en un principio, el nombre *jesuita* tenía un gran significado, como puede leerse en la «Vita Christi» de Ludolfo de Sajonia (1300-1378), que tan importante fue para el cambio de vida del mismo fundador de la Compañía de Jesús (cf. Au 5-11)³, donde se dice: «Así como por la gracia del bautismo, de Cristo se llaman cristianos; así en la gloria celeste, de Jesús seremos llamados *jesuitas*, es decir, por el Salvador salvados⁴. En cualquier caso, esta denominación,

¹ Cf. L. KOCH, *Jesuiten-Lexicon*, Paderborn, Bonifacius, 1934, 916 s.

² Cf. *Ibid.*

³ Los textos ignacianos se citan según la edición manual *Obras de san Ignacio de Loyola*, ed. C. DE DALMASES/M. RUIZ JURADO, Madrid, BAC, 1991, con las abreviaturas: Au = Autobiografía, EE = Ejercicios Espirituales.

⁴ Citado en R. GARCÍA-VILLOSLADA, *S. Ignacio de Loyola. Nueva biografía*, Madrid, BAC, 1986, 159 s.

aunque nunca ha sido oficial, se propagó desde Alemania rápidamente para designar a los miembros de la orden fundada por san Ignacio.

Más adelante, explica Maron que fue a través de un antiguo novicio de la Compañía E. Hasenmüller († 1585), que se hizo protestante, por el que llegó a conocerse que el fundador de los jesuitas era Ignacio de Loyola, del cual trata en el primer capítulo de su «Historia Jesuitici Ordinis» (Frankfurt, 1593), que lleva el título «De primo Jesuitarum autore & conditore, Ignatio Loyola» (p. 270).

Cierto que en estos momentos no había un interés por conocer objetivamente los hechos históricos. El espíritu de controversia y de polémica los manipulaba según el bando en que se encontraba el autor de turno. Así, constata Maron cómo el nombre de «Ignatius» se derivó de la etimología «ignis» (fuego), relacionándolo con el fuego del infierno, y «Loyola» se asoció a «leo» (león), es decir, león rugiente. De este modo se presenta al fundador de la Compañía como un hombre violento, enviado no por Dios sino por el demonio. Insultos de este tipo se hacían por parte católica a Lutero y a sus seguidores. Ciertamente, como es sabido, mutuos fueron los desprecios y las condenas, hasta llegar a las penas capitales y a las sangrientas y largas guerras de religión.

En este sentido, el enfrentamiento Reforma / Contrarreforma necesitaba de líderes, de prototipos que representaran, idealmente, uno y otro bando. Si la Reforma veía en Lutero y Calvino sus promotores y dirigentes, la Contrarreforma también tuvo que encontrar sus figuras prototípicas. Fueron los primeros jesuitas los que vieron en Ignacio al antagonista de Lutero, como muestra la biografía oficial *Vida del Padre Ignacio de Loyola* (1572), escrita por P. Ribadeneira, poniendo en paralelismo histórico antagónico ambos personajes:

«Cuando del abismo Martín Lutero (surgió) como monstruo infernal, acompañado de su escuadrón de abominables y diabólicos ministros..., al mismo tiempo envió Dios nuestro Señor de socorro otro varón y capitán a su Iglesia, en todo contrario a Lutero, para con su espíritu invencible y armas poderosas y divinas valiosamente le resistiese y pelease las batallas del Señor»⁵.

⁵ *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu* (MHSI) Fontes narrativi, IV. 339 s.

Si se tiene en cuenta que esta biografía, en cuanto oficial, era la fuente más autorizada para informarse sobre la figura del fundador de la Compañía, y que estuvo en vigencia prácticamente hasta el generalato de Pedro Arrupe, es decir hasta el Concilio Vaticano II, que pidió a las ordenes religiosas en el decreto «Perfectae charitatis» redescubrir el carisma fundacional para actualizarlo según el «aggiornamento» requerido por el Concilio para toda la Iglesia, no es de extrañar, pues, que incluso J. Lortz, uno de los historiadores que más ha contribuido a revisar la imagen católica de Lutero, en 1940 todavía afirmase: «Con su grandiosa plenitud de sentido interior aparece Ignacio (y su obra) como el gran Antilutero».⁶

Si la imagen del Ignacio hagiográfico, Antilutero, tuvo por parte católica una vigencia incuestionada por lo menos hasta el Vaticano II, de parte protestante, sin embargo, la revisión histórica, comenzó, como resalta Maron (p. 273), ya en la primera mitad del siglo XIX con la obra del historiador Leopold von Ranke *Geschichte der Papste* (Berlín 1834). Pero el interés por la objetividad histórica se vio de nuevo perturbado por las ideas nacionalistas de la segunda mitad del siglo XIX: se buscaba otra vez figuras que representasen no ya sólo las creencias religiosas sino también la «nación» y la «raza». Así surgió la imagen de Lutero promotor de la conciencia germánica frente a la romanidad de los pueblos meridionales. Ignacio, por el contrario, se consideró como representante del catolicismo meridional, de la romanidad y del papado que intentan extenderse entre los pueblos germanos. En esta línea menciona Maron el libro de E. Gothein *Ignatius von Loyola und die Gegenreformation* (Halle 1895).

El nuevo interés por la objetividad histórica que aparece a principios del siglo XX, llevó a la superación de la visión nacionalista. Esto lo ve reflejado Maron en el libro de K. Holl *Die geistlichen Übungen des Ignatius von Loyola* (Tubinga 1905), pero sobre todo con los trabajos de H. Boehmer (1868-1927) *Studien zur Geschichte der Gesellschaft Jesu I, Loyola* (Bonn 1914). Boehmer es, continúa Maron, el punto culminante pero también, desgraciadamente, el final de los estudios protestantes sobre Ignacio y la Compañía de Jesús (p. 275). El libro de Maron supone, por tanto, después de

⁶ *Die Reformation in Deutschland*, vol. II, Friburgo 1940, 138.

casi un siglo, la primera publicación amplia que se ocupa del Santo de Loyola desde la perspectiva protestante. He aquí algunas observaciones.

2. Escritura y mística

El primer capítulo, titulado «Die Heilige Schrift» (p. 19-43), pone de relieve, siguiendo a Boehmer, lo importante que fueron los libros para el desarrollo espiritual de Loyola, aunque generalmente se le considere poco dado a ellos. Tras presentar la «Vita Christi» de Ludolfo de Sajonia, y la «Imitatio Christi» de T. de Kempis, Maron subraya la ausencia de Sagrada Escritura como tal entre las lecturas que cambiaron la vida del convaleciente de Loyola. Esto no es de extrañar, según Maron, ya que al que no sabía latín le era muy difícil poder leer la Biblia, por estar prohibida su difusión en lengua vernácula en aquel tiempo en España. Será, pues, durante los estudios teológicos en París (1533) cuando Ignacio llegue a tener un trato no simplemente espiritual sino estudioso con la Escritura.

Con todo, Maron encuentra en Ignacio una actitud de reserva ante ella; lo cual le lleva a examinar críticamente la afirmación de Ruhstorfer según la cual Ignacio, en su trato con la Biblia, se halla más próximo al Humanismo y a la Reforma que a la Edad Media (p. 30). Maron, sin embargo, piensa lo contrario, sobre todo en lo referente a los Ejercicios, pues ellos, exceptuando el primer ejercicio (EE 51) que trata de la creación y caída de Adán y Eva, pasan por alto el Antiguo Testamento, por tanto se hace, para Maron, casi imposible una consideración histórico-salvífica de ellos. En esto y en sus observaciones al material bíblico que ofrecen los Ejercicios, «centrados más en la contemplación de la persona y vida de Jesús que en la Palabra de Dios» (p. 32 s), se puede decir que Maron hace una lectura demasiado literalista del texto ignaciano.

Los Ejercicios, como es sabido, no son un libro para ser leído sino ante todo un método para ser realizado, por ello, para entenderlos de verdad, es necesario hacerlos. En su puesta en acción cabe siempre una adaptabilidad según la persona que los hace y que los da, y, aunque se centren en los Evangelios tratando a penas del Antiguo Testamento, no por ello se olvidan del resto de la historia de la salvación, por la sencilla razón de que toda ella está siempre latente en los mismos Evangelios. Por otra parte, el concepto «histo-

ria de la salvación» tiene un significado bastante amplio⁷. En sentido cristiano, los grandes hechos de la historia de la salvación se resumen en el Credo. El Símbolo Apostólico presenta, por tanto, una síntesis de ella, centrándola en la creación del Padre, en la encarnación, muerte, resurrección y ascensión del Hijo y en la venida del Espíritu Santo para constituir la Iglesia. Estos son precisamente los hechos salvadores en los cuales se sitúan los Ejercicios: la creación, en el Principio y fundamento y en la Primera Semana; la encarnación, en la Segunda Semana; la muerte, la resurrección y ascensión en la Tercera y Cuarta Semanas; el Espíritu Santo y la Iglesia, en las Reglas para sentir en la Iglesia. Los Ejercicios, pues, por estar enraizados en los Evangelios, o sea, en el misterio de Cristo, se hallan firmemente orientados según el movimiento histórico-salvífico que éste implica y, por consiguiente, entenderlos así no solamente no es nada rebuscado sino su marco más idóneo, como ya mostró el *Primer Congreso Internacional de Ejercicios Espirituales* (Loyola 1966), en el que 43 especialistas de diversas materias (Espiritualidad, Escritura, Teología, Psicología) trataron de ellos estudiándolos según la teología histórico-salvífica que el Concilio Vaticano II acababa de presentar en sus documentos⁸.

A esto hay que agregar que Maron muestra un concepto demasiado textualista de la Palabra de Dios, lo cual le conduce a bifurcar ésta y la persona de Cristo, afirmando que los Ejercicios no llevan tanto a la meditación de la Palabra en el texto evangélico, si no más bien a la contemplación de escenas de la vida de Cristo (p. 32, 39). Ciertamente que los Ejercicios tienen una preferencia por la meditación con imágenes (mentales) que se forman en la «composición de lugar» según el pasaje evangélico (EE 101-108, etc.). Pero esto no solamente no aleja de la Palabra de Dios sino que es una ayuda metódica para interiorizarla. Es la misma Biblia y el mismo Jesús que ha anunciado su mensaje con tantas imágenes y parábolas. Por lo demás, Jesús está contemplado precisamente como el «Verbo eterno encarnado» (EE 130); por lo tanto, al proponer los

⁷ Cf. «Heilsgeschichte»: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol. IV, 13336 ss.; *Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. III, 1584 ss.

⁸ C. ESPINOSA (ed). *Los Ejercicios de san Ignacio a la luz del Vaticano II*, Madrid, BAC, 1968.

pasajes evangélicos de los misterios de su vida, Ignacio es consciente de no proponer otra contemplación sino la de la Palabra de Dios, la cual, para él, evidentemente más que un texto es una persona viviente, que hay que «conocer, amar y seguir» (EE *ibid*).

Con este fin, él hace una selección de diversos pasajes según el objetivo de los Ejercicios. Este proceder no fragmenta en trozos, como afirma Maron (p. 38), la Palabra de Dios; como no la fragmenta el Año Litúrgico, que también hace una selección. En ambos casos se trata de un proceder pedagógico-pastoral, sostenido por el hecho de que la Palabra de Dios, aunque está fijada en un libro, se hace verdad viva y eficaz cuando personalmente se lee o se medita algo de ella, o cuando se proclama o se celebra comunitariamente alguno de sus pasajes («*pars pro toto*»). Estas características de la trasmisión meditativa, comunitaria y coloquial, es decir, también testimonial de la Palabra divina son las que aparecen en los Ejercicios al preveer que ellos se hagan con el acompañamiento de una persona experimentada en la vida espiritual («el que da los ejercicios»), y cuya función principal es «narrar fielmente la historia de la contemplación o meditación, discurriendo solamente por los puntos con breve o sumaria declaración» (EE 2). Por tanto, no se podrá decir, como afirma Maron (p. 41), que el «oír» la Palabra esté ausente en los Ejercicios. La experiencia contemplativa personal del que hace los ejercicios va continuamente acompañada por la escucha de la Palabra, resumida en los «puntos» del que los da.

A continuación analiza Maron el concepto de «fe» en los Ejercicios, llegando al resultado de que en ellos se halla preponderantemente la «*fides quae*», la fe como doctrina de la Iglesia (*ibid*), quedando en segundo plano la «*fides qua*», la fe como experiencia personal. Pero si es precisamente esto uno de los objetivos principales de los Ejercicios: el que la Palabra (Cristo) no se quede en doctrina o texto (*fides quae*) si no que se haga experiencia personal (*fides qua*) en la vida del ejercitante. Y fue precisamente el peligro de caer en un exceso de «*fides qua*», es decir, el subjetivismo religioso, lo que condujo a Ignacio a añadir las reglas del sentir en la Iglesia (EE 352-370).

Por las observaciones críticas que hace Maron a los Ejercicios, se puede, pues, deducir que, aunque él muestra un buen conocimiento de ellos en cuanto a su contenido, sin embargo, su interpretación no parece cumplir la condición fundamental, arriba indicada:

que para entenderlos plenamente hay que haberlos hecho.

Por otra parte, hay que reconocer que Maron tiene razón cuando afirma que la relación de Ignacio con la Escritura es distinta a la de Lutero; no tiene la «pureza» que él halla en éste (p. 41 s.), para quien la Escritura tiene un valor supremo, expresado en el «sola Scriptura»; pero al mismo tiempo no debería olvidar la importancia que tuvo también para el Reformador y para su método teológico la espiritualidad cristocéntrica de la mística⁹ y la devotio moderna de la «Imitatio Christi» del Kempis, hasta el punto que se ha afirmado que Lutero no hubiese llegado a la «theologia crucis» sin este contexto espiritual¹⁰, que es también en el que se mueve Ignacio¹¹.

La diferencia entre Lutero y Loyola la ve culminar Maron en la declaración de Ignacio respecto a la veracidad de sus «visiones»:

«Estas cosas que ha visto le confirmaron siempre en la fe, que muchas veces ha pensado consigo: Si no huviese Escritura que nos enseñase estas cosas de la fe, él se determinaría a morir por ellas, solamente por lo que ha visto» (Au 29).

Esto conduce a Maron a decir que de este modo Ignacio declara la importancia que tienen para él las experiencias visionarias, hasta el punto que la Escritura se le hace «casi superflua» (p. 42). Esta deducción es bastante exagerada y solamente se puede llegar a ella partiendo del ya mencionado principio protestante del «sola Scriptura», que puede llevar en no pocos casos a un textualismo casi fundamentalista de la Palabra de Dios. Lo que Ignacio da a entender en esta frase es, más bien, el gran valor que tiene para él la «fides qua», que precisamente Maron le reprochaba, como hemos notado antes, no hallarla muy presente en los Ejercicios. La «fides qua» necesita, por otra parte, del texto de la Escritura («fides quae») para no derivar en el subjetivismo religioso; por tanto, no pierde para Ignacio la categoría de fuente de la Revelación, en cuanto

⁹ Admiraba los sermones de Tauler y el opúsculo anónimo *Theologia Deutsch* que trata de la vida de perfección. Cf. E. ISELOH, *Luther und die Mystik: I ASHEIM* (Ed.), *Kirche, Mystik und das Natürliche bei Luther*, Göttingen 1967.

¹⁰ Cf. W. LOEWENICH, *Luthers Theologia crucis*, Vitten 1984.

¹¹ Cf. R. GARCÍA MATEO, *Ignacio de Loyola. Su espiritualidad y su mundo cultural*, Bilbao, Mensajero, 2000, 230 ss.

«norma normans non normata» de la experiencia religiosa personal y comunitaria, así lo reconoce también el Breve pontificio que aprueba los Ejercicios: «quaedam documenta sive exercitia spiritualia, (Ignatius) ex Sacris Scripturis et vitae spiritualis experimentis elicitata composuerit»¹².

Por otra parte, hay que poner de relieve que existe una fuente ignaciana que Maron no parece conocer, que son los llamados «Exercitia Magistri Ioannis». Se trata de un texto de los Ejercicios, que es casi desconocido, pero que se halla en la edición crítica y oficial de la Monumenta Ignaciana. La particularidad de este texto es que se escribió bajo la revisión del mismo Ignacio, como muestran algunas notas autógrafas, y, aunque es incompleto (sólo llega hasta la meditación de los Tres binarios), está comentado con numerosas citas bíblicas, sobre todo de los Evangelios y de las epístolas paulinas, pero también del Antiguo Testamento: Génesis, Sapienciales, Profetas¹³.

La diferencia entre Ignacio y Lutero está, pues, en que el primero parte más de la Palabra divina experimentada en la contemplación de la persona de Cristo (*Verbum Dei incarnatum*), mientras que el segundo la ve más como Escritura (*Verbum Dei scriptum*). Si el peligro de Ignacio es enajenarse del texto escrito, el de Lutero es acentuarlo demasiado, cayendo en el biblicismo.

Otro tipo de dificultades surgen, para Maron, al considerar los «coloquios» previstos en los Ejercicios, que para él representan una cierta novedad entre las prácticas piadosas (p. 76). El centro de la oración en los Ejercicios es, sin duda, el «coloquio» que «se hace propiamente hablando, así como un amigo habla a otro, o un siervo a su señor, cuándo pidiendo alguna gracia, cuándo culpándose por algún mal hecho, cuándo comunicando sus cosas y queriendo consejo en ellas» (EE 54). O sea, se trata de una conversación entre el hombre y Dios en la que sobresale la nota de intimidad y familiaridad, que el mismo Ignacio muestra haber practicado, sobre todo en el Diario Espiritual.

Pues bien, tal familiaridad le parece a Maron excesiva, pues aunque este tipo de oración se halle ya en la Biblia, por ejemplo:

¹² Monumenta Historica SI (vol. 100), *Exercitia Spiritualia*, Romae 1967, 76.

¹³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 518-609; y H. ALPHONSO (a cura), *Sant'Ignazio di Loyola, Exercitia Spiritualia. Testi complementari*, Roma, ADP, 2000, 125-289.

«Yavé platicaba con Moises cara a cara, como conversa un hombre con su amigo» (Ex 33, 11) y sobre todo en el modo de orar de Jesús, llamando a Dios «Abba», se trata, sin embargo, según Maron, de figuras excépcionales, cuya relación con Dios no se debe generalizar, pues se puede caer fácilmente en una familiaridad que se transpase la infinita diferencia que existe entre la creatura y el Creador (p. 77). Esta objeción es aplicable en opinión de Maron a toda experiencia mística.

Obviamente, ningún místico cristiano quiere reducir la divinidad a su experiencia personal, limitando la infinita transcendencia divina. Esto sería incluso diabólico. La familiaridad con Dios que Ignacio preconiza, no se olvida nunca de resaltar, como el mismo Maron, aunque sólo de pasada, reconoce, «la soberana Majestad divina,» a la que únicamente se puede acercar el creyente con «humildad,» «reverencia» y «acatamiento», como muestra E. Przywara en su comentario teológico a los Ejercicios, titulado precisamente *Deus semper maior*. Sólo desde esta premisa es posible la mística cristiana, la intimidad y la familiaridad con Dios, a la cual sólo se llega verdadera y profundamente siguiendo a Cristo hasta la cruz. Por ello la Tercera Semana de los Ejercicios, en la que se contempla la pasión y muerte de Cristo, es la «conditio sine qua non» para una auténtica familiaridad con Dios. El Dios-Trinidad, en cuanto ser absoluto y onnipotente, nos tiene como seres finitos lejos de él, pero en cuanto Padre nos atrae hacia sí personalmente por medio de la cruz de su Hijo y la fuerza del Espíritu, comunicando una relación de alianza, de amistad con él, haciéndonos incluso hijos en el Hijo (Gal 4, 4-6; Rm 8, 12-26).

En la mística ignaciana no se experimenta otra cosa sino aquello que constituye el ser cristiano como tal: «estar creado a imagen y semejanza de Dios», «ser hijo suyo», «morir y resucitar con Cristo», «vivir según el Espíritu», como anticipo, aunque imperfecto y transitorio, de la «visio beatifica»¹⁴. El místico subraya, pues, que el ser cristiano no consiste sólo en la acción litúrgica, en la escucha de la Palabra, en la fidelidad doctrinal, moral, socio-política, sino también en una vivencia profunda de unión con el Dios uno y trino en Cristo, que surge como consecuencia de la fe en él. «Si alguno me ama,

¹⁴ Cf. R. GARCÍA MATEO, Ignacio de Loyola. Su espiritualidad... op. cit. 96 ss.

guardará mis enseñanzas, y mi Padre le amará; y vendremos a él y pondremos en él nuestra morada» (Jn 14, 22). También Lutero, al considerar la «santificación» como una regeneración ética, apela a la teología del admirable intercambio, afirmando que los creyentes en Cristo son completamente divinizados: «ganz und gar vergottet werden»¹⁵; en el sentido de que lo que pertenece al creyente se hace propio de Cristo, y lo que pertenece a Cristo se convierte en posesión del creyente.

El método ignaciano supone siempre la gracia de Cristo, y es sólo, partiendo de ella, cómo se pueden hacer los Ejercicios, los cuales no desconocen que la vivencia religiosa puede tener y de hecho siempre comporta algo de terrible, incomprensible y tremendo, como el mismo Ignacio vivió durante la crisis manresana (Au 22-25). De aquí también que la acción de la imaginación no signifique que la contemplación se convierta en una mera proyección imaginaria en sentido de Feuerbach, como se pregunta Maron (p. 78), pues la presencia de Dios en el creyente es, pese a su carácter misterioso, no por ello irreal, sino, como se citaba antes, una «morada» permanente, un «templo». Es esta verdad neotestamentaria la que posibilita que el Dios inconmensurable e inaccesible pueda hallarse fácilmente y a todas las horas que el creyente lo invoque, sin que por ello se pretenda poseerlo o disponer de él a su antojo, como un comodín. La «oscuridad» de la fe persiste, pese a toda familiaridad o éxtasis, como muestran las «noches» sanjuanistas. La experiencia sucesiva de elementos extáticos y humillantes, de lejanía y familiaridad, no es en absoluto contradictoria, como muestran los relatos autobiográficos de los místicos, en los que, pese a toda unión mística, nunca desaparece, se hace incluso más intensa la percepción de la indignidad creatural delante de Dios. Esta, podríamos decir, sería la interpretación, desde la experiencia mística, del «simul iustus et peccator» luterano.

El mismo Ignacio durante la crisis de Manresa constató profundamente su grande indignidad ante la grandeza infinita de Dios, llegando incluso a sentir la tentación de suicidio, pero fue también confortado con su más alta experiencia mística (Au 24, 30). En rea-

¹⁵ Predigten, 1526: Werke, 20, 229.

lidad, tales experiencias de abandono y de intimidación con Dios, sólo se pueden entender cristianamente como participación vivencial en el misterio pascual, como dice Pablo: «Sufro en mi carne lo que aún falta a la pasión de Cristo» (Col 1, 24).

En la comparación que establece Maron con otros místicos, como Juan de la Cruz, destaca el hecho de que en Ignacio no aparezca la mística nupcial (p. 82), en la que Maron ve el peligro de una fusión esencial (*Wesensverschmelzung*) entre lo divino y lo humano que conduciría a una mística panteísta. Pero, aquí hay que resaltar que, para Juan de la Cruz, el «matrimonio místico» no está entendido como fusión ontológica entre el alma y Dios, sino sólo como «unión de voluntades»¹⁶, o sea ético-espiritual; aunque también es verdad que el lenguaje de la mística nupcial es, debido a su fuerte carga emotiva y pastoral, a veces bastante atrevido, como es atrevida también la frase de Lutero, citada antes, pronunciada asimismo en un contexto pastoral.

3. Teología, Iglesia

En lo que respecta al aspecto teológico del pensamiento ignaciano, Maron destaca, en primer lugar, el hecho de que Ignacio comenzó su actividad apostólica como laico (p. 86), que va desde sus primeras «conversaciones no temporales» con algunas mujeres en Manresa (1522) hasta la ordenación sacerdotal en Venecia (junio, 1537). En sus primeros años antes de los estudios universitarios, su teología se centra sobre todo en sus propias experiencias místicas, que conducen a Maron a distinguir tres aspectos: (a) Una piedad popular católica, centrada en el seguimiento de Cristo; (b) la «discrección de espíritus», vivida en él mismo durante el periodo de conversión, que le acerca a una teología de la experiencia, que culminará en la ilustración del Cardoner, que le llevará (c) a una forma particular de teología mística (p. 89).

Con estos presupuestos ya se vislumbra que los estudios universitarios tendrán, para él, un significado muy distinto del que tuvo para un estudiante común, en particular por el motivo apostólico que le guía. En este sentido, Maron constata claros influjos del

¹⁶ Cf. Subida del monte Carmelo, Libro 2, cap. 5.

humanismo y de Erasmo, y destaca que el tono antierasmiano de las Reglas para sentir en la Iglesia, lejos de significar una hostilidad general hacia el humanismo, muestra, más bien, una apertura selectiva (p. 107). Respecto a los estudios filosófico-teológicos, Maron, tras hacer una descripción de ellos, subraya la presencia del pensamiento aristotélico y tomasiano, así como de la «teología positiva», concepto que, según él, no hay que reducir a la Escritura y a los Padres, sino que se extiende en el caso de Ignacio también a la espiritualidad, la moral y la pastoral (p. 110-118).

Importancia decisiva atribuye Maron a Ignacio en lo que se refiere a la renovación de los estudios eclesiásticos y de la teología católica, reconociéndole que, pese a que Ignacio no fue ningún humanista, contribuyó de hecho a la aplicación y desarrollo de los «*studia humanitatis*» tanto como un Melanchton (p. 123).

La parte que se refiere a la relación de Ignacio con la Iglesia es una de las más detalladas del libro (p. 131-163), aquí se percibe bien cómo el profesor de historia eclesiástica está más en su materia. Comienza preguntándose por qué en Ignacio no se halla una crítica a la Iglesia como aparece en santos tan poco sospechosos de hostiles a ella como Catalina de Siena. Sus propias experiencias negativas con la autoridad eclesiástica, que le reportaron una serie de procesos, llegando incluso a meterlo en la cárcel y con cadenas, no se traducen en crítica sino en acción apostólica, «ayudar las ánimas». A esto lo llama Maron una crítica sin palabras, una crítica de la acción (p. 131), aunque Ignacio no acepta sin replicar las sentencias de los tribunales cuando considera que no responde a los cargos que se le imputan. Así, al leerle el tribunal de Salamanca la sentencia, dijo:

«que él haría todo lo que la sentencia mandaba, mas que no la aceptaría; pues sin condenarle en ninguna cosa, le cerraban la boca para que no ayudase los próximos en lo que pudiese. Y por mucho que instó el doctor Frías, que se demostraba muy afectado, el peregrino no dijo más, sino que en cuanto estuviese en la jurisdicción de Salamanca haría lo que se mandaba» (Au 70).

La actitud positiva de Ignacio ante la Iglesia, pese a todo proceso y castigo, la ve Maron hecha programa en las «reglas para sentir en la Iglesia militante», que se encuentran al final de los Ejercicios. De las dieciocho once de ellas comienza con el término «ala-

bar». Alabar el confesarse, el comulgar, el oír misa, el recitar cantos y salmos, los votos de religión, etc. Se trata de una larga lista que va desde los sacramentos hasta las prácticas de devoción, peregrinajes y velas. En esta serie de alabanzas ve Maron el deseo de superar la actitud polémica de la época respecto a la Iglesia. El programa ignaciano es de veneración y de amor a la Iglesia, pese a sus muchos defectos (p. 136), pero incluye a la vez una actitud de reforma interna y externa, de modo que no se trata en primer lugar de «Contrarreforma», sino de «Reforma católica».

Pasando a comentar las reglas se fija en la trece, que contiene la conocida frase: «Debemos siempre tener, para en todo acertar, que lo blanco que yo veo, creer que es negro, si la Iglesia hierarchica así lo determina». Según Maron (p. 138), esta afirmación está en perfecta consonancia con la primera regla que dice: «Depuesto todo juicio, debemos tener ánimo aparejado y prompto para obedecer en todo a la vera sposa de Christo nuestro Señor, que es la nuestra sancta madre Iglesia hierarchica». Se trata, pues, de reconocer y avivar la obediencia a la Iglesia, debido a que «entre Christo nuestro Señor, esposo, y la Iglesia su esposa, es el mismo espíritu que nos gobierna y rige para la salud de nuestras ánimas» (EE 365).

En efecto, a diferencia de la idea protestante que subraya el primado de la Escritura para llegar al conocimiento cierto de la salvación en Cristo, la eclesiología católica preconiza que esta función directiva de la Escritura no se puede separar de la enseñanza viva de los sucesores de los apóstoles: *Qui vos audit, me audit*. Ciertamente que la frase de lo blanco y de lo negro no se puede entender literalmente. Eso significaría que la obediencia a la Iglesia podría llevar al católico a negar lo evidente, aceptando ciegamente cualquier arbitrariedad o capricho de la jerarquía. Esto sería un disparate. Tal frase, como Maron dice, se hallaba en el ambiente de la época y había sido utilizada por Erasmo: «Neque ideo nigrum esset album, si ita pronuntiaret Romanus Pontifex». Pero Erasmo añade: «quod illum scio nunquam facturum»¹⁷. O sea que Erasmo está seguro de que el Papa nunca obligará a negar lo evidente, pues esto significaría, como decimos, una arbitrariedad absurda. Ignacio usa, pues, intencionadamente una expresión hiperbólica para subrayar la impor-

¹⁷ Supputationes, 1527: Opera omnia, 1706, IX, 517.

tancia de la Iglesia jerárquica como criterio de verdad, en unos momentos en que ella era cuestionada precisamente en nombre del Espíritu del Evangelio. Ignacio, por el contrario, piensa que Iglesia y Espíritu no se pueden contradecir, por la sencilla razón de que ella es obra de él. Esto, de otro lado, no significa que no puedan surgir tensiones y conflictos. El mismo Ignacio, como Francisco de Asís, Catalina de Siena y tantos otros, conoce muy al vivo el choque con la autoridad eclesiástica, como veíamos antes.

La eclesialidad de Ignacio no es producto de una aceptación ciega o conformista de la autoridad eclesiástica, como la frase de lo blanco y de lo negro, tomada literalmente, puede inducir y de hecho ha inducido. Desde su cambio de vida él busca a Dios en lo interior de su experiencia religiosa, en espíritu y en verdad. Sin embargo, a medida que entra en contacto con la realidad circundante, su verdad no la absolutizada, enajenándola de las instancias y de las instituciones que le rodean, pero tampoco la relativiza de modo superficial o conformista, sino que entabla algo muy propio de su modo de ser: un proceso de discernimiento. De este modo surge una eclesialidad que comporta una doble fidelidad: a sí mismo, a la llamada personal y a la comunidad eclesial, porque se está convencido de que en ambas actúa el mismo Espíritu. De aquí que sus desencuentros con la autoridad eclesiástica no estén vistos simplemente en sentido negativo, como impedimento o cortapisa a su deseo apostólico. A través de ellos Ignacio ha visto, más bien, madurar su vocación y misión. Así, como consecuencia de su primer desencuentro (en Jerusalén), Ignacio se decide a estudiar, cosa muy lejana de su primer proyecto apostólico; en el momento que «entendió que era voluntad de Dios que no estuviese en Jerusalén, siempre vino consigo pensando qué haría, y al final se inclinaba más a estudiar algún tiempo para poder ayudar a las ánimas» (Au 50). La opción por el estudio lo abrirá al mundo del saber y del humanismo, que hará de él un santo de los tiempos modernos.

Los papas y los reyes son para Ignacio, como para el cristiano de la época, representantes de la autoridad divina. Sin embargo, él está convencido de que hay ciertos puntos de la nueva Orden, de tal manera constitutivos, que la llevarían a perder su identidad si se cediera algo en ellos, por ejemplo, la exclusión de dignidades eclesiásticas. Los papas Paulo III y Julio II que quisieron hacer cardenales a los jesuitas F. de Borja y a D. Laínez, tropezaron con las objec-

ciones de Ignacio y desistieron de ello. Si la frase de lo blanco y de lo negro se tomase al pie de la letra, este modo de proceder se habría hecho imposible. Queda, pues, corroborado cómo la eclesialidad ignaciana descansa sobre una doble fidelidad – a la llamada personal y a la comunidad eclesial –, que a veces ciertamente puede hacerse dramática, pero siempre tendrá la excelencia de ayudar a eliminar tanto el subjetivismo religioso y teológico como el objetivismo institucionalista¹⁸. Ambos extremos bloquean la acción del Espíritu. Este peligro parece denunciarlo Maron al constatar cómo las «reglas del sentir en la Iglesia», pensadas dentro del conexto de la «Reforma católica», se convirtieron por medio de algunos jesuitas, en particular J. Nadal y P. Canisio, en un programa institucionalista y contrarreformista (p. 144).

En la última parte de este capítulo (145-163) Maron hace un estudio de las «Notae Ecclesiae» en sentido ignaciano, destacando que, aunque Ignacio no ha escrito ninguna eclesiología, sin embargo, las «reglas para sentir en la Iglesia» muestran un buen conocimiento práctico de los problemas eclesiales de su tiempo, hasta el punto de llamarlas un «pequeño compendio de eclesiología ignaciana»

4. La Compañía de Jesús

A este tema dedica Maron los últimos capítulos de su libro. Se detiene primero a analizar el nombre como tal, resaltando el hecho de que la denominación «Compañía de Jesús», reproduce exactamente la experiencia de la Storta, cerca de Roma, cuando Ignacio «vio que el Padre lo ponía con el Hijo» (Au 96) (p. 164). De este modo pone Maron en primer plano el aspecto místico-cristocéntrico que subyace a esta denominación, dejando con toda razón en la trastienda el origen militar que tantas veces se le ha dado y se le da.

El cristocentrismo ignaciano, que el mismo nombre de la Compañía ya manifiesta, da pie a Maron para hacer algunas consideraciones sobre la cristología ignaciana; destaca que no se trata de algo sistemático sino principalmente de experiencias religiosas perso-

¹⁸ Cf. R. GARCÍA MATEO, *La spiritualità ignaziana* in Henri de Lubac: A. Russo / G. COFFELE (a cura), *Divinarum rerum notitia. La teologia tra filosofia e storia. Studi in onore del Cardinale Walter Kasper*, Roma, Studium, 2001, 214 ss.

nales. Sin embargo, él piensa que algunas de sus expresiones deben interrogarse desde su contenido teológico como, por ejemplo, la que dice «Christo nuestro Criador y Señor», tan frecuente en los escritos ignacianos. A él le resulta una expresión bastante enigmática, pues parece confundirse a Cristo con el Dios-Padre, creador del cielo y de la tierra; lo cual lleva a Maron a suponer si no habría aquí un «cierto monofisitismo» (p. 171).

Sin duda, la expresión «Christo nuestro Criador y Señor», tomada aisladamente, puede resultar ambigua, pero la ambigüedad se disipa y revela su profundo significado cristológico, cuando se la considera desde la mística trinitaria ignaciana, reflejada en los Ejercicios, particularmente en la contemplación del misterio de la encarnación:

«El primer preámbulo es traer la historia de la cosa que tengo de contemplar; que es aquí cómo las tres personas divinas miraban toda la planicie o redondez de todo el mundo llena de hombres, y cómo, viendo que todos descendían al infierno, se determina en la su eternidad que la segunda persona se haga hombre para salvar el género humano, y así venida la plenitud de los tiempos embiando al ángel Gabriel a Nuestra Señora...» (EE 102).

Así se presenta cómo toda la Trinidad toma parte en la encarnación, de manera que, en consonancia con la teología de ambos misterios, ésta tiene su fuente y explicación en la Trinidad, la cual, a su vez, se manifiesta y actúa históricamente a través de la encarnación de la segunda Persona. Pero si ella está prevista «desde la su eternidad», el motivo de la encarnación no se puede reducir solamente a la acción pecaminosa de la humanidad, sino que, en el fondo, lo que con ella se revela es una voluntad salvífica eterna. O, como se dice en el *Principio y fundamento*: «El hombre ha sido criado para alabar, hacer reverencia y servir a Dios nuestro Señor y mediante esto salvar su alma» (EE 23). La creación del hombre implica, pues, desde un principio, una intención salvadora. El Padre es el principio y fin supremo de todas las cosas; pero se trata de un universo creado con la potencia del Espíritu a través del Hijo. Fuera de él, por tanto, nada es concebible, nada puede existir, como dice el prólogo del Evangelio de san Juan (Jn 1, 3-10; cf. 1Cor 8, 6; Col 1, 15-20).

El modelo tan difundido en la época de Ignacio, y en la nues-

tra, según el cual el mundo y el hombre han sido creados por Dios, pero el hombre cayó en pecado, y sólo puede obtener la salvación a través de Cristo, sin ser falso, es reductivo, porque la creación aparece como un simple antecedente desligado del plan salvífico. En la visión ignaziana, sin embargo, creación y redención son acciones salvíficas distintas, pero inseparables como expresiones de la única voluntad salvífica divina. En este sentido Cristo es mediador no sólo de la redención sino también de la creación y puede ser llamado, sin por ello caer en sospecha de monifisitismo: «Criador y redentor nuestro»¹⁹.

Bastante lograda es la exposición que hace Maron de la nueva Orden, su peculiaridad evangélica, enraizada en la idea del seguimiento, su estructura apostólica de «ayudar los próximos», su novedad entre las diversas Ordenes religiosas, la importancia de la obediencia y el sentido misionero del cuarto voto al romano pontífice (p. 175-200). Pero al tratar los Ejercicios, aparece otra vez la objeción, que ya vimos, sobre la falta de contenido bíblico. Así, analizando lo que se llama título: «Ejercicios espirituales para vencer a sí mismo y ordenar su vida sin determinarse por afección alguna que determinada sea» (EE 21), se sorprende Maron de lo poco bíblico que es éste (p. 206). Igualmente con la famosa «indiferencia». Tanto lo uno como lo otro, él lo considera originario del estoicismo cristiano, muy presente en el Kempis y en la *devotio* moderna en general. A lo que hay que responder que la recepción del estoicismo no comienza con la *devotio* moderna, sino que se encuentra ya en los Sapienciales y particularmente en Pablo²⁰, y que continuó en la patrística, hasta el punto que surgió un pseudoepistolario entre Pablo y Séneca²¹. Todo ello muestra lo difícil que se hace sostener hasta sus últimas consecuencias el principio de la «sola Scriptura», entendido desde un purismo excluyente. Además, en un librito de la *devotio* moderna como el Kempis se pueden verificar más de mil citas bíbli-

¹⁹ Cf. R. GARCÍA MATEO, Ignacio de Loyola. Su espiritualidad..., op. cit. 113 s., 320 s.

²⁰ Cf. CORNISH M.L., Pauline Theology and Stoic Philosophy: *Journal of the American Akademy of Religion. Supplement 17 (1979) 1-21*.

²¹ Cf. L. BOCCIOLINI PALAGI (Ed.), Epistolario apócrifo di Seneca e San Paolo, Firenze 1985; y M. SPANNEUT, Les normes morales du stoïcisme chez les Peres de l'Eglise: *Studia Moralia 19 (1981) 153-175*.

cas, pero resaltando a la vez lo que es fundamental en la vida cristiana: «Si scires totam Bibliam exterius et omnium philosophorum dicta: quid totum prodesset sine caritate Dei et gratia?» (I, 1, 10).

Al final del libro Maron se hace la pregunta: ¿Hasta qué punto Ignacio fue un reformador? (p. 232-268). Una cosa queda clara para él: Ignacio, por estar en la línea de la devotio moderna que busca en primer lugar una reforma interior y una acción apostólica de servicio al prójimo, se halla lejos del contrarreformismo militante en que se le ha encasillado como «anti» (p. 243, 281 ss).

Que un protestante y profesor de Historia de la Iglesia se distancie de la imagen antiluterana y contrarreformista que de Ignacio se ha hecho, es una agradable sorpresa que comunica a su libro una nota de apertura a un hipotético «diálogo ecuménico» entre san Ignacio de Loyola y Martín Lutero, es decir a un encuentro actual entre jesuitas y protestantes. O, como él mismo afirma: «a aprender unos de otros y a colaborar» (p. 281).

Las diferencias obviamente subsisten y no se deben silenciar (nada más contrario al espíritu ecuménico), pero, como hemos intentado mostrar, algunas de las objeciones que Maron resalta se deben más a su posición teológica que a la realidad objetiva de lo que él critica. En particular, me gustaría subrayar al estimado prof. Maron esto: que al gran interés y aprecio que muestra en su libro por Ignacio de Loyola, parece faltarle, como dijimos, una cosa fundamental: haber hecho los Ejercicios ignacianos. Muchos de los interrogantes que él ve en la relación de Ignacio con la Escritura y con la mística, hubiesen encontrado una interpretación mucho más matizada, si hubiesen tenido como base la experiencia de ellos. Su libro, por tanto, merece históricamente nuestra consideración, teológicamente, sin embargo, hay que hacerle, como se ha expuesto arriba, más de un interrogante. Tal vez sea éste al mismo tiempo uno sus méritos principales: poder suscitar un diálogo que pueda clarificar las objeciones que en él se hacen, pues ellas tocan aspectos fundamentales de la espiritualidad ignaciana.

No en último lugar, hay que decir que, aunque Maron muestra un buen conocimiento de la bibliografía ignaciana, ésta se reduce principalmente a lo existente en alemán, desconociendo gran parte de lo publicado en español, sobre todo el importante volumen de las ponencias del Simposio Internacional (Loyola 15-19 Septiembre 1997), publicado por J. Plazaola: *Fuentes de los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio*, Bilbao, Mensajero, 1998.

Con todo, los aspectos positivos del libro son más que los criticables. Esperemos que éstos se tengan en cuenta en una eventual segunda edición.

ROGELIO GARCÍA MATEO, S.I.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Gottfried Maron, Prof. em. für Kirchengeschichte an der Evangelischen Fakultät der Universität Kiel, hat ein wichtiges Buch über Ignatius von Loyola geschrieben. Der vorliegende Artikel nimmt die kritischen Bemerkungen, die Maron an die ignazianische Spiritualität richtet, ernst, vor allem die Problematik, die das Schriftsverständnis und die Mystik betrifft. Zugleich wird auch die Bedeutung seines Buches für die Ignatiusforschung anerkannt, besonders in Hinblick auf die ignatianische Ekklesiologie und auf den ökumenischen Dialog.

Aprender a vivir y acompañar las “pasividades”

Elías Royón

Los religiosos y las religiosas estamos acostumbrados en estos tiempos a que se nos advierta de la necesidad de “aprender” a vivir nuestra acción apostólica en esas coordenadas que hacen posible que sea auténticamente “misión”, salvando las tentaciones del activismo y la dispersión. Las demandas y urgencias pastorales son tan fuertes, y los recursos humanos cada vez más exiguos, que con frecuencia, nuestro modo de vivir está en consonancia con el de muchos de nuestros contemporáneos. Nos encontramos también como ellos, cansados e incluso con sensación de agotamiento. No es extraño, pues, que se nos advierta de la necesidad de “aprender” a vivir ordenadamente la “acción”. Aprender a vivir el equilibrio entre contemplación y acción/misión, que ha sido siempre un deseo de todo apóstol, y que es condición para la madurez humana y espiritual. Incluso, más que el equilibrio, la interacción entre ambas, que es el ideal de la vida del espíritu.

Es cierto que no siempre las causas son el exceso de trabajo; están presentes otros motivos: la falta de un discernimiento en la elección de las tareas, el contagio del sinsentido cultural por el que corremos el riesgo de encontrarnos ansiosos; la necesidad de sentirnos ante nosotros mismos y ante los demás protagonistas, eficaces, útiles, valorados, reconocidos, gratificados afectivamente, etc. Todo lo cual lleva a ese activismo poco fecundo, que agota y dispersa, porque dificulta la contemplación y la unificación personal.¹

Sin duda, pues, necesitamos que se nos enseñe a vivir esa “acción,” tan íntimamente ligada a nuestra vocación; porque hemos sido elegidos para “estar con Él y ser enviados a predicar” (Mc 3,14). Es también una llamada de nuestro tiempo; una nueva ascesis que proporciona una verdadera unidad interior.

¹ Cf. Papa Francisco, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 82 ss.

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Necesidad de saber vivir la “pasión”

Sin embargo, y casi como una paradoja, nos apremia el “saber” vivir la “pasión”; quizás porque la situación que acabamos de describir nos atrapa con tanta fuerza, que olvidamos que los momentos de pasividad forman parte de nuestra condición humana, y que por tanto vendrán; a veces pronto, y siempre, antes de lo que deseáramos y antes de lo que esperamos. La diferencia con el aprender a vivir la acción está en que de esta faceta de nuestra vida apenas se habla, nos disgusta, nos deja de mal humor; y casi nos negamos a que se nos enseñe algo sobre ella: siempre es pronto, todavía nos consideramos con bastantes fuerzas para seguir trabajando, nos creemos con buena salud, disimulamos, cuando no negamos, los achaques... Necesitamos ciertamente “aprender” a reconocer y convivir con las “pasividades”.

Por otra parte, somos conscientes de la realidad de nuestras Congregaciones: unas edades medias crecidas, abundantes casas de mayores o enfermerías; cada año crece el número de jubilados, y el de los que se incorporan a esta situación. Todos los Institutos hacen un esfuerzo notable por atender a las necesidades materiales de estos hermanos y hermanas que han desgastado su vida por el Reino. Es un bello ejemplo del compartir evangélico propio de la vida religiosa; del tener todo en común, de la comunidad primitiva, ideal y motivación de la fraternidad religiosa. Como todos los enfermos y ancianos, tienen una serie de necesidades: fisiológicas, psicológicas, espirituales que es muy importante identificarlas en cada persona y atenderlas convenientemente. Se hacen esfuerzos para preparar a los religiosos/as o al personal laico para que pueda dar respuesta, con profesionalidad y sensibilidad espiritual, a estas debilidades.

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Una experiencia compartida

Los Superiores son conscientes de las dificultades que esta pastoral plantea, porque de una pastoral muy especializada se trata; tengo presente cuando escribo esto, la experiencia de haber dialogado, en diversas ocasiones, en sesiones de un seminario interno en la Confer Nacional, sobre estas situaciones que tanto tiempo ocupan y tantas preocupaciones causan. Hemos dialogado sobre muchos de los aspectos que se refieren a este tema; así por ejemplo: los diversos criterios para decidir cuándo se deben destinar a los religiosos/as mayores de las comunidades activas a las comunidades de enfermerías; conveníamos en que las necesidades materiales estaban cubiertas; que había estudios de proyección económica y sociológica de lo que los Institutos necesitarían en el futuro para atender estas necesidades; que existe la posi-

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bilidad de encontrar asociaciones laicas que tienen una gran profesionalidad y sentido religioso para atender las enfermerías cuando los religiosos solos ya no puedan prestar este servicio; si sería oportuno, como pobres que somos, ir a vivir a residencias de ancianos de la seguridad social, etc.

Sin embargo, la perplejidad era grande y generalmente compartida, cuando nos preguntábamos por un programa bien articulado para atender a las necesidades psicológicas y espirituales que incluya, como algo muy esencial, la preparación para aceptar la nueva situación tan llena de despojos sociales y afectivos, de debilidad, de dolor físico, de crecientes pasividades. Tampoco estaba fuera de la preocupación de los Superiores, el comprobar que no están ausentes situaciones de una fe débil y una confianza desdibujada para ir poniendo la vida en decrecimiento en las manos del Dios de Bondad y Misericordia; para aceptar irse perdiendo poco a poco en un horizonte de muerte que lleva a la luz y la vida verdadera.

No están ausentes situaciones de una fe débil y una confianza desdibujada para ir poniendo la vida en decrecimiento, en las manos del Dios de Bondad y Misericordia.

Causas de esta situación

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Evidentemente que el diálogo entre los Superiores, se adentraba tanto en el intento de descubrir las causas de estas situaciones, como en el buscar respuestas que hagan eficaz la preparación para esta etapa de la vida, y que puedan prevenir las consecuencias. Las causas pueden ser tan diferentes como diversas son las personas; como diversos han sido sus procesos vitales y los componentes psicológicos de cada uno. Pero a la vez, hemos de afirmar que no es indiferente el contagio, llamémoslo así, de la cultura contemporánea en todo lo referente a las pasividades y al resumen de todas ellas, que es la muerte. Nos referiremos pronto a este influjo cultural, pero antes, hemos de reconocer que la generación que en estos años compone la franja de jubilados y ancianos, sufrió un proceso de secularización en los años del postconcilio; de estos años se ha dicho, ciertamente con mucho de injusto, que la vida religiosa activa descuidó su “alma,” profesionalizándose al servicio de causas meramente humanas, que la vida religiosa perdió su norte y en consecuencia su identidad; que el Cristo en que creíamos y anunciábamos era más un profeta denunciador de injusticias que el Hijo de Dios encarnado para nuestra salvación. Tal vez algo de cierto haya en estas afirmaciones; eran consecuencias no pretendidas del proceso de renovación posterior al Concilio; pero lo que nos interesa aquí es constatar que ese

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ambiente desposeyó a muchos de una devoción y unas prácticas que habían sido apoyo a la fe y a la vida espiritual; que con los años se han recuperado, aunque no en todos los casos.²

Pero ha influido más, sin duda, una serie de aspectos de la cultura actual que ha afectado a toda nuestra sociedad, y en ella a la comunidad cristiana, en todo lo relativo a la muerte y a su entorno, especialmente a los procesos de debilidad, enfermedad, vejez, que la preceden. Nuestra cultura de la satisfacción no sabe bien cómo tratar el acontecimiento último de la vida humana, porque en realidad no acepta la debilidad del hombre, quien debe conseguir y defender la felicidad como si fuera un “derecho humano.” Se busca ansiosamente una vida sin dolor, sin sufrimiento alguno; y cuando éste aparece y lo hace en su manifestación más extrema, la muerte, solo sabe mirarla de lejos, quitándole todo espacio social.³

Tendremos que preguntarnos, a este respecto, cómo resuenan en nuestro interior, temas, tan profundamente humanos como la felicidad, el éxito, la realización, la perfección humana... al contrastarlos con las palabras de Jesús: quien se obsesiona en ganar su vida, la pierde; quien la pierde por mí, la gana (Mt 16,25). Necesitamos dar sentido a esa paradoja de Jesús en medio de aquellas realidades que nuestra sociedad y nuestra cultura nos ofrecen continuamente como ofertas de felicidad, de éxito, de realización... y entender cuáles son los contenidos evangélicos de esas realidades que, por humanas, no podemos despreciar con una falsa ascética. Será útil entrar en nosotros mismos y releer estas coordenadas como parte de nuestra propia vivencia y no sólo como parte de la cultura que respiramos.

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La cultura contemporánea ante la muerte

Aunque venimos de una civilización que ha sabido tratar con la muerte y ponerle palabras, como muestran los grandes textos de nuestra cultura, desde los filosóficos y literarios, hasta los poéticos o místicos, sin embargo, “la cultura actual oculta, silencia e ignora la muerte... Hoy es más difícil que en otras épocas afrontar la muerte, vivir el morir y ayudar a los otros a que tengan una muerte digna”.⁴ Una muerte, pues, temida a nivel personal, y a la vez escondida y privatizada socialmente. En nuestra “sociedad líquida” (Bauman), tan invadida de individualismo, el fenómeno más uni-

² Cf. José A. García, *Desde el Vaticano II hasta hoy, cuatro paradigmas de Vida Religiosa*, CON EL, Suplemento Vida Nueva, n. 6, 2012, p.12.

³ Cf. Javier de la Torre, *Una mirada a la muerte desde la teología cristiana*, en *Sal Terrae*, octubre 2014, pp. 739 ss.

⁴ Comisión Episcopal de Pastoral de la CEE, *Vivir el morir. Mensaje del día del enfermo 1993*.

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versal, la muerte, ha perdido su sentido social, y se corre el riesgo de dejar al individuo solo a la hora de enfrentarse a ella. Se esconde en los hospitales y el duelo se relega fuera del ámbito de la comunidad. En otra dimensión, recordemos como en las letanías de los santos se pedía ser liberados, “de la muerte repentina e imprevista;” hoy se prefiere, aún entre los religiosos, una muerte rápida, instantánea, sin sufrimiento, sin darse cuenta. La “buena muerte de antaño” ha dado paso al deseo, al menos en muchos, de una “muerte dulce.”⁵

Es difícil, casi imposible, que todo este ambiente cultural tan socialmente aceptado y por tanto, tan amplia y profundamente extendido, no afecte, en su totalidad o en parte, a los religiosos. La experiencia confirma esta intuición, y de aquí nace la preocupación y la responsabilidad de los Superiores, que debe ser de todos los consagrados, de asumir la necesidad de disponernos para este momento, así como también de saber acompañar a otros; conscientes de que educarnos para la muerte es educarnos para la vida. Por eso, no se trata de prepararse para una “buena muerte,” sino de aprender a vivir las “pasividades” que se suceden necesariamente en el camino de la vida humana; la consumación de sus pasividades y disminuciones es la muerte. Efectivamente, Teilhardde Chardin (1881-1955), en el *Medio Divino*, formula la necesidad de aprender a asumir todo aquello que nos disminuye, la pasividad humana, “inconmensurablemente más extensa y más profunda” que la acción. El ser humano debe, pues, amar y aceptar sus pasividades, tanto como su capacidad de acción, porque Dios puede hallarse “en y por toda muerte.” Y en otro momento, añade: “preguntémonos en qué condiciones, nuestras muertes aparentes, es decir los despojos de nuestra existencia, pueden integrarse en la instauración del Reino y del Medio Divino.”

En nuestra “sociedad líquida”, el fenómeno más universal, la muerte, ha perdido su sentido social, y se corre el riesgo de dejar al individuo solo a la hora de enfrentarse a ella.

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Posibles ayudas para vivir el morir

Acogiendo esta sugerencia del gran jesuita francés, nos disponemos a exponer algunas de esas ayudas para vivir el morir que lleva consigo esos despojos de nuestra existencia. No se improvisa, hay que educarse y edu-

⁵ Rudesindo Delgado, *Pastoral del morir*, en *Sal Terrae*, octubre 2014, pág. 755. Cf. Javier de la Torre, *Pensar y sentir la muerte. El arte del buen morir*, Universidad Pontificia Comillas/San Pablo, Madrid 2012, pp. 201-249.

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car, prepararse y acompañar. Hay que reintroducir con naturalidad el hecho de la muerte, la última gran pasividad, en nuestros esquemas mentales y afectivos, y llenar de humanidad y compasión el proceso de aceptación de las pasividades: el ir perdiendo poco a poco las fuerzas y el sentir como crece la debilidad.

Fácilmente olvidamos los bienes recibidos, las obras que Dios ha hecho en nosotros y por nuestro medio. Estos olvidos impiden acoger y aceptar la debilidad actual.

No basta que las necesidades materiales estén cubiertas; que tengamos en nuestras casas de mayores y enfermerías personas profesionales que atiendan las necesidades fisiológicas, supriman o alivien el dolor físico y logren el mayor bienestar corporal posible. No basta a ningún ser humano, pero, en algún sentido, menos aún a los religiosos. Hay que buscar respuesta a las necesidades espirituales.

Mirar al pasado: sanar heridas

En estas situaciones de vejez o enfermedad, con frecuencia nos detenemos en recordar el pasado, mirar el futuro, y quejarnos del presente. A veces repasamos el pasado con nostalgia, todo tiempo pasado siempre fue mejor; pero fácilmente lo recordamos con una memoria débil: olvidamos los bienes recibidos, las obras que Dios ha hecho en nosotros y por nuestro medio, los frutos apostólicos, la creatividad pastoral, la entrega y la fidelidad en el seguimiento. Estos olvidos impiden acoger y aceptar la debilidad actual. En cambio, el recuerdo agradecido, favorece la confianza y nos abre a la esperanza en el futuro. Por eso es importante releer la propia vida desde la fe y la confianza en la bondad del Señor. Alivia y evita deprimirse el sentir la pobreza del balance de la propia vida en la presencia de Dios, porque lleva a sentirse aceptado y a aceptar, a reconciliarse consigo mismo y con los demás, y a ponerse confiadamente en sus manos.

También las pasividades propias de la edad o la enfermedad: la conciencia de la propia finitud, el miedo, la angustia, la sensación de impotencia y abandono... pueden ser “divinizadas” en esta lectura confiada. Ayudemos a otros a este ejercicio de creer en la misericordia y agradecer la historia vivida. Curar el pasado ayuda a vivir el futuro con esperanza y esto es ayudar a vivir la muerte de los despojos existenciales.

Encontrar a Dios en todas las cosas

La *Contemplación para alcanzar amor* [Ej 230] de los Ejercicios nos proporciona una ayuda eficaz para prepararnos a vivir el encuentro defini-

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tivo; nos sitúa en una actitud de agradecimiento existencial; al “reconocer” que todo es don y gracia, surge el impulso de vivir en acción de gracias a Dios, por “tanto bien recibido”. Reconocemos su presencia en cada don, en todas las cosas; por tanto, si lo descubrimos en la “acción”, también será posible descubrirle en la “pasión.” Se trata de la actitud fruto del proceso de desasimiento interior en el encuentro, a lo largo de la experiencia de los Ejercicios, con el Señor que nos invita a “más amarle y servirle,” a identificarnos con Él, a vivir con Él y como Él, que Ignacio llama “indiferencia;” una actitud que nos lleva a poner en el centro de la existencia a Dios, como único Señor, y considerar todo el resto como relativo. Desde ahí no hay situación que no pueda ser agradecida, que no pueda ser convertida en signo de un amor misericordioso, aunque a veces, esté envuelto en el misterio, y nos cueste el llegar a reconocerlo como don.

Enviados también en la debilidad

La ayuda para vivir el proceso final de nuestra existencia que ahora presentamos, pertenece plenamente al ámbito de la preparación; nada se improvisa, y con frecuencia nuestras actitudes y comportamientos terminales, el cómo vivimos la “pasión,” reflejan, e incluso agrandan, cómo hemos vivido la “acción.” Aquí se sitúa la vivencia de la actividad apostólica.

Recordemos ante todo, que la misión es parte integral de la vocación; no hay vocación sin envío, ni misión que no sea la respuesta a una llamada del Señor. Este es su sentido más genuino; por eso la misión es, en primer lugar y sobre todo, un compromiso con la persona de Jesús. Un compromiso que, como la vocación, se extiende a toda la vida, no solo a las etapas de “acción”, sino que perdura en la enfermedad, en la vejez, en la debilidad, es decir en la “pasividad.” Nos entronca con Jesús y su misión. Toda la vida de Jesús es misión. Jesús es misión. Nuestra vida, pues, como llamados y enviados, es misión.

Ignacio en la meditación del Rey Eternal [Ej 91] expresa con gran claridad esta realidad. A la llamada de Cristo nuestro Señor [Ej 95] considera dos respuestas, primero la de “todos los que tuvieran juicio y razón”, que ofrecerán “todas sus personas al trabajo”. Es la respuesta para realizar un proyecto: “conquistar todo el mundo y todos los enemigos”. Pero contempla una segunda respuesta, la de aquellos que “más se querrán afectar y señalar en todo servicio de su Rey eterno y Señor universal” [Ej 97]. Se trata de una respuesta desde el amor, de quien ha sentido la misericordia como respuesta a su conversión. Una respuesta desde el “*magis*.” “más afectarse”. ¿Pero, a qué se ofrecen? Podría suponerse que se ofrecerán

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hasta el extremo de la entrega, hasta derramar la última gota de sangre en ese proyecto de “conquistar todo el mundo y todos los enemigos”. Sin embargo, la respuesta se transforma en una oblación, en un deseo del alma de ser elegidos, para ser imitadores de Jesús: “yo quiero y deseo, y es mi determinación deliberada, en pasar todas injurias y todo vituperio y toda pobreza tanto actual como espiritual” [Ej 98]. Es decir, la respuesta es desear identificarse con el Señor, vivir con Él y como Él, en pobreza y en humildad.

Evidentemente las dos respuestas deben ser integradas, pero esta segunda se puede vivir en la “acción” y en la “pasividad” de la enfermedad y la vejez, hasta en el momento mismo de la muerte. En cada etapa de la vida hay un modo diverso de vivir la pobreza y la humildad; y ciertamente en la debilidad y en el deterioro, físico o psicológico, en las “pasividades” en general, vivimos una particular pobreza y sufrimos nuevas situaciones de humillación. Las tareas no podrán realizarse, pero la misión continúa. Hay pues, una bella conclusión que llena de gozo el corazón: somos enviados también en la debilidad.

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Jesús nos salva del miedo a la muerte

Efectivamente, la identificación con Cristo, como tarea cristiana de toda la vida, es la auténtica preparación para el encuentro definitivo; pero a la vez, es una ayuda consoladora para vivir los momentos de muerte que, como venimos repitiendo, constituyen las “pasividades” a las que no podemos escapar, y que en palabras de Teilhard “de instante en instante nos sustraen a nosotros mismos para empujarnos hacia el fin”. “Pero superemos la muerte, añade él, descubriendo a Dios en ella. Y lo Divino se hallará con ello instalado en el corazón de nosotros mismos, en el último reducto que parecía poder escapársele”. A este descubrimiento, que implica el superar el miedo a la muerte, nos conduce la Palabra de Dios, y su realización hace posible la salvación de Jesús.

“Jesús por su muerte libera a cuantos por temor a la muerte estaban sometidos de por vida a la esclavitud” (Hebr 2,14-15). El miedo a la muerte es una de las experiencias más humanas que existe. Es un hecho existencial que, de algún modo, es imposible de eliminar. No se puede combatir con el razonamiento, porque pertenece a otra dimensión del ser humano. A pesar de la fe, la muerte es esencialmente “oscura” y no evita un fondo

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de angustia aun en el cristiano. Podemos fingir muchas cosas, pero es difícil fingir el coraje frente a la muerte; cuando nos vemos afectados por una enfermedad grave, surge un temor que no podemos dominar, revelándonos que, en realidad, no hemos superado el miedo a morir.

Pero el miedo a la muerte es también el símbolo de todos los miedos a perder, a dar y a entregarse; no están ausentes de nuestro egocentrismo y del afán de acaparar, que moviliza el instinto de conservación y el deseo de seguridad; son símbolo también de los miedos a los despojos físicos, psicológicos, sociales, afectivos que protagoniza el ser humano en la vida, pero especialmente en la vejez, en la enfermedad, junto a la soledad, el cansancio, la pérdida de atención y del gusto por el trabajo... Son todo pasividades, formas de anticipación de la muerte; por eso los vivimos con temor y nos quitan la libertad. De aquí que necesitemos no suprimir, porque es imposible, pero sí superar el miedo a todo lo que puede llevar en sí la imagen de la muerte. Sin esta superación no estamos verdaderamente identificados con Jesús.

Jesús sintió la angustia y el temor a la muerte

¿Cómo nos libera Jesús de esa esclavitud de que habla la carta a los Hebreos? Pasando por ese mismo miedo, por la angustia del temor a la muerte, y abriéndose a la voluntad del Padre. Jesús nos hace capaces de un acto de confianza total en Dios para poder “dejarlo todo”, superando el miedo a la inseguridad del “dejar” y aceptando los efectos de los “despojos” con que la vida nos va erosionando. También aquí hay un aspecto de nuestra identificación con Jesús: llevar a la totalidad la condición del seguimiento: “dejándolo todo, le siguieron”. Quedarse solo en las manos del Padre, imitando a Jesús en su entrega radical de la cruz: todo está cumplido.

Los textos del Nuevo Testamento nos presentan a Jesús en lucha con este nudo de la existencia humana que es la angustia de la muerte; nos resulta difícil de comprender puesto que es el Hijo de Dios, pero Jesús quiso participar de nuestra condición humana, y tuvo miedo a morir: “comenzó a sentir terror y angustia, y les dijo: mi alma está triste hasta el punto de morir” (Mc 14,33-34). Lucas comenta: “Y sumido en agonía, insistía más en la oración; sudaba como gotas de sangre, que corrían por el suelo” (Lc 22,44). También el evangelista Juan que no narra la escena de Getsemaní, nos describe igualmente a Jesús en lucha con el miedo a la muerte: “...Ahora estoy profundamente angustiado ¿y qué voy a decir? ¡Padre líbrame de esta hora! Pero ¡si he llegado a esta hora para esto!” (Jn 12,27). Y el autor de la carta a los Hebreos habla de que Jesús “presentó

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con gran clamor y lágrimas oraciones y súplicas al que podía salvarle de la muerte” (Hebr 5,7).⁶

Jesús padece la angustia humana ante una muerte que sabe cercana; un cáliz que no es simplemente la muerte biológica, sino la condensación de todo el pecado de la humanidad. Y en la angustia implora al Padre “aparta de mí este cáliz”, pero después de una intensa lucha interior en la oración, se entrega a la voluntad del Padre: “no se haga lo que yo quiero, sino lo que quieres tú” (Mc 14,35-36). Hasta aquí se extiende lo que había sido su alimento (cf. Jn 4,34) y el sello más profundo de su identidad: “estar en las cosas del Padre” (cf. Lc 2,49). Renueva la aceptación de ser “enviado” para salvar a la humanidad, según el designio salvífico del Padre. Va a la muerte en un acto de libertad suprema: “nadie me quita la vida, la doy yo voluntariamente” (Jn 10,18). Efectivamente, la muerte de Cristo es expresión de su amorosa obediencia, de su libre entrega al Padre. Pero podríamos decir que, como hombre, vivió muriendo cada vez que en su existencia cumplía la voluntad de Aquél que le había enviado.

Conclusión

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Los religiosos seremos verdaderamente libres cuando le imitemos, pasando por la prueba del miedo a las pasividades, aprendiendo a confiar. Un día ya lejano, lo dejamos “todo” para seguir al Señor, pero llega una etapa de la vida en la que ese “todo” adquiere un particular sentido de totalidad; contra nuestra voluntad, se nos impone la debilidad que anuncia el final de la existencia; para entonces deberíamos estar disponibles, para ese acto de libertad por el que confiar y abandonarse en las manos del Padre.

Quisiera terminar con el testimonio del Cardenal Martini. En la presentación de un libro sobre Pablo VI en Milán, 3 octubre 2008, el cardenal ya enfermo, elogió las palabras del Papa Montini en uno de sus escritos sobre la muerte: “un texto demasiado bello, maravilloso, lírico...” y añadió sus propios sentimientos: “sería tan bello poder decir: Jesús ha afrontado la muerte en nuestro lugar para que podamos ir al cielo por un sendero cuajado de flores... En vez de eso, Dios ha querido que experimentemos el miedo de pasar por el duro trance de la muerte y de la oscuridad... He recobrado la paz ante la inevitable realidad de la muerte, cuando he comprendido que sin la muerte nunca seríamos capaces de un acto de total confianza en Dios, sin posibilidad de una salida de escape... Lo que impone la muerte es un acto definitivo de confianza... Deseamos estar con Jesús y este deseo lo expresamos a ojos cerrados, ciegamente, dejando todo en sus manos.”

⁶ Carlo María Martini, *Creo en la vida eterna*, San Pablo Madrid 2012, pp. 17-37.

FINDING GOD IN SOUTH SUDAN AND THE USA

Oscar Momanyi

JERÓNIMO NADAL'S often-cited phrase, 'the world is our house', fascinated me the first time I came across it.¹ As a Jesuit, I have had the opportunity to live in many different contexts as I have studied and worked with people of various cultures. The richness of their cultural diversity and the depth of their love for God and God's people have been hallmarks of the Jesuits I have met so far on that journey. Nadal's words are a reality in my Jesuit life.

My most recent Jesuit journeys brought me to two contrasting worlds, one of great material deprivation and the other of great abundance: South Sudan and the United States of America respectively. Both worlds are in different ways 'frontiers' for the experience of God's presence and love. Frontiers, according to the thirty-fifth Jesuit General Congregation, are 'those physical and spiritual places' where Jesuits work but which 'others do not reach or have difficulty in reaching'.² These frontiers are what Pope Francis calls in *Evangelii Gaudium* the peripheries of society. He says,

... each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey His call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the 'peripheries' in need of the light of the Gospel (n. 20).

I lived and worked in South Sudan for two years from 2012 to 2014 for my regency, and in the United States from 2014 to 2018 for my theological studies.³ My journey to these frontiers helped me to grow closer to God and God's people.

¹ MHSJ MN 5, 54.

² Benedict XVI, 'Address to the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus', 21 February 2008, n. 2, in GC 35.

³ Regency is a stage in Jesuit formation which involves living in a community and working in a ministry—often teaching—for two or three years before embarking upon theological studies.

I should like to reflect on the spiritual experiences I had and the lessons I learnt from Jesuits and other men and women when I lived in these two places. How did I find God in these two deeply contrasting contexts? What challenges did those contexts present to me in my quest to be close to God and the people of God?

Faith and Hope amid Material Deprivation

The Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005) destroyed most of Sudan's infrastructure and left the people with physical and emotional wounds. South Sudan got its independence on 9 July 2011. One year later, in July 2012, I was sent to work as a teacher at Loyola Secondary School in the town of Wau.⁴

In accepting this mission I remembered the message of Pope Paul VI on a visit to Uganda in 1969: 'by now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves. The Church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil.'⁵ I had never thought seriously about mission in that way before. I had assumed that missionaries only came from Europe and the United States to work in Africa, as I had observed in my native country of Kenya. I had not thought of Africans as missionaries within their own continent.



Prayers at Loyola Secondary School

⁴ This school is the first Jesuit ministry in Sudan, started by Jesuits from the former Detroit Province in 1982.

⁵ Paul VI, homily at the eucharistic celebration concluding the symposium of the bishops of Africa, Kampala, Uganda, 31 July 1969.

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When I received my assignment I was energized by the fact that I was going to be a missionary to my own African people. I was happy, too, that I was responding to Pope Francis's exhortation not to forget the people living on the margins of society, such as those in South Sudan.

In my life and ministry in South Sudan, I was moved by the poverty that I saw. However I could also see that people were happy. Where did that happiness, and their deep sense of dependence on God, come from? I took the vow of poverty three years before I got to South Sudan. However, arriving there, that vow took on a different dimension. I kept asking myself: how can I live my vow of poverty in a more radical way, in a way that can be more freeing and lead to this happiness that abundance cannot provide? The people of South Sudan taught me the true meaning of the beatitude, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven' (Matthew 5:3). I met men and women dedicated to the service of people in great need. Their enthusiasm for the saving work of God gave me encouragement and hope for the future of this new country. I met many people who had left their comfort zones in order to be with the poor who needed them. Sometimes it was that presence, more than any material assistance, that the local people needed.

My students at Loyola Secondary School were intelligent, creative, hopeful and full of initiative. The poverty and the precarious situation in the country made me expect to find resentful people who were without hope. On the contrary, they were full of joy and happiness even though they had so little. Most were born during the Second Sudanese Civil War, and the resilience they showed was spectacular. I was happy to be there to share my life with them. My initial fear of going to a country so recently at war dissipated when I encountered the joyful and hopeful young South Sudanese men and women at Loyola. My students' faith in God was unshakeable. They taught me how to depend on God's providence in the midst of material deprivation.

The school was unlike other Jesuit schools I had seen in Africa. The infrastructure was inadequate; the students were much older—some were over thirty; and trained teachers were difficult to find. Later, I learnt that what I was witnessing was 'emergency education' in a post-war situation—an approach to education that responds to the needs of communities affected by war in an adaptable way.

South Sudan had barely been independent for two years when violence broke out again. A civil war, mainly between the two major ethnic groups, the Nuer and the Dinka, began in December 2013 and led

to the disintegration of the country into a state of chaos.⁶ At the time I was away on my annual retreat. Immediately after the eruption of the war, my provincial asked all the Jesuits assigned to work in South Sudan who were out of the country to return. On 18 January 2014, I travelled back to South Sudan from Kenya. As I was disembarking at the Juba International Airport, I saw a huge Russian Antonov aeroplane. Many people were carrying domestic paraphernalia such as mattresses, blankets, pots and pans, and were running to board the Antonov in order to be evacuated.

Watching what was unfolding that day made me feel so sad. The South Sudanese people had suffered decades of war, and now their chance of peace was about to be taken away again. I wanted to do something to help them, but there was nothing for me to do. I just surrendered the situation to God. I was afraid because the soldiers at the airport, who were wielding M-16s, looked trigger-happy. I thought that shooting could start at any time. However, deep within me, I felt God's abiding presence promising that all would be well and that I was not to lose hope.

In Juba that January I saw many NGO people being evacuated. I felt so scared and unsure whether I was supposed to be getting into the country or getting out of it like the NGO people. However, I reminded myself that I was not an NGO employee, but someone motivated by a Christ-centred mission urging me to stay with people who were suffering and oppressed at a time when they needed consolation, support and reassurance. That is what my provincial was telling me by asking me to get back to South Sudan. I kept reminding myself that, as a witness to the message of Christ, I am called to stand with the suffering people of God. That thought made my return to South Sudan easier. I felt confirmed by God that I was doing the right thing. My mission in South Sudan taught me to be a person of faith, hope and love in the midst of uncertainty and under the threat of war and violence.

Although the situation in which I was working was precarious, even threatening, I felt God's presence. It was a time to depend on God's providence and love. Many times, I felt abandoned and insecure, but thinking about the local people who had no choice but to live in that situation kept me going. As time went by I developed a deep love for the people and I wanted to journey with them in all they were experiencing.

⁶ See John Ashworth, 'South Sudan: How is the Church Responding to Africa's Forgotten War?' *The Tablet* (12 January 2017).

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Living out of my comfort zone helped me grow in my trust in God's providence. When I felt insecure, I kept remembering that I was on God's mission and not my own.

It was disturbing to realise that the problems of South Sudan cannot be solved in the near future. Living with that reality was hard. However, God granted me the grace to realise that my presence and solidarity with the South Sudanese was what was important. Christ continually calls each Christian to be a witness to the gospel through a positive presence in challenging situations. Christian friendship and hospitality are the most important gift that the people of South Sudan need. The people of South Sudan radiate humanity, are full of dignity and warmth. They welcome newcomers as strangers who must become friends. It was an honour to serve them and to share my life with them.

Coming to America

I saw the Eddie Murphy comedy *Coming to America* while I was in high school in the 1990s. Murphy plays the role of the young and extremely pampered Crown Prince Akeem of the fictional African kingdom of Zamunda. He hates his privileged but constrained life and wants to be free to follow his deepest desires. When his parents present him with a bride whom he has never met, Akeem decides to look for one he can love. He and his friend travel to the New York City borough of Queens and rent a filthy apartment in Long Island, where they get their first experience of culture shock. I, like most of my high-school mates, had a dream of going to the United States, the land of the free, just like Crown Prince Akeem. When I got to the USA, the romantic Hollywood idea that I had about it disappeared. I noticed that the challenges I faced back in Africa are also found in the US, but in a different form. I realised that the USA as depicted in Hollywood movies is not the real USA.

Going to the US to study theology—at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California—was my first time living outside the African continent. Being away from my own culture was rough in the beginning, and the culture shock took many months to overcome. My first encounter with the many different US cultures—African American, Hispanic, Caucasian, among others—was overwhelming. It was humbling to see how the USA is a kind of mosaic of people from all over the world. I had lived for a significant period in three African countries other than Kenya, but could still identify with the different African cultures that I

encountered. There were many similarities between my Kenyan culture and those I found in South Sudan, Tanzania and Zimbabwe, and so I did not experience a significant culture shock.

It was also my first time living with Jesuits from all over the world: from India, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Russia, Japan, Hungary, Slovakia, Burkina Faso, Germany and Croatia, among other countries. It was an enriching experience to see how these diverse people from diverse cultures could come to live together in harmony. Studying in such an international environment helped me appreciate the Society of Jesus as worldwide reality. I learnt in the novitiate that, in theory, I had joined the whole Society of Jesus, not merely a Province. That theory became a reality to me when I saw the Jesuits in my community from all over the world who were 'friends in the Lord' brought together in 'union of hearts and minds'.⁷ The experience made me feel open to being sent to work in any part of the world where there is a need for me to work for the greater glory of God.

Being a Black, Non-American Jesuit in the United States

The first thing that surprised me when I got to the USA was how race was a controversial subject. I had never been so conscious of my blackness when I lived in Africa, but a few months after my arrival in the US an African American friend told me 'the moment you stepped into the US, your race became an issue for debate'. That shocked me because I had heard about racial tensions in the United States, but did not know what the debates around race and racism in the US were.

My first frightening experience was learning about the police killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island in July 2014. That incident and the protests around it traumatized me for months.⁸ Even after the tragic death of Eric, cases of police brutality, including the shooting of black people, have continued to occur.⁹ Afterwards, I heard about the Black Lives Matter movement and its activities nationwide, but also about those who were responding with the slogan 'All Lives Matter!' I was so confused and

⁷ Antonio M. de Aldama, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus: An Introductory Commentary on the Constitutions* (St Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1998), 265.

⁸ Eric Garner died when New York police placed him in a chokehold while arresting him for a minor offence. Despite the death being ruled as a homicide the officer involved was not indicted for manslaughter, leading to widespread protests.

⁹ See Josh Hafner, 'Police Killings of Black Men in the US and What Happened to the Officers', *USA Today* (30 March 2018), available at <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/03/29/police-killings-black-men-us-and-what-happened-officers/469467002/>.



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scared about what was going on. What if I walked down the block and got shot just because I was black? Back home in Africa my family and friends kept asking me: are you safe in the USA? Paradoxically, they never asked me that question when I lived in South Sudan. They knew that, somehow, I would be safe. But the new situation of racism in the US scared them so much that they thought that I would die. While I lived in a war situation in South Sudan, I did not feel as scared as I felt in my first few months in the USA because of the colour of my skin.

Two years after my arrival, the Jesuit School of Theology began a series of reflections on racism that I found very insightful. They helped me as an African not only to begin to appreciate how the racism in the US affects me as a black non-American Jesuit, but also to think about the vice of tribalism that is endemic to Africa. Racism and tribalism are both forms of exclusion that need to be challenged by the Christian value of inclusivity.

A question that nagged at me was: why do we only have about fifteen African American Jesuits in the United States? I was invited to attend a formation gathering in Clarkston, Michigan. At that meeting, I felt lost because I was the only black person in the room. It felt like sitting in an exclusive club. There were a few Asian Americans and some Hispanic Jesuits present at the meeting, but no one else black. A scholastic asked the provincial why there were no African Americans in formation at that time. I was not convinced by the answer given that day. I did not understand why there are almost no black vocations for the Society in

the US, even though the Jesuits have high schools and other institutions dedicated to the education of black people. Since there are very few African American Jesuits, it was almost impossible for me to have a meaningful conversation with fellow black Jesuits of the US Society of Jesus and hence I felt that I did not grow in my understanding of the African American Jesuit experience.

I was invited to preach on Black History Month 2018 at St Patrick's Church in West Oakland, California, where I worked for three years.¹⁰ I was worried because my experience and culture as a black non-American are different from that of African Americans. I had to struggle to understand African Americans although we have the same skin colour. How could I preach about black history in the United States, when I am so ignorant of that history? My first instinct was to say no: I said to myself, 'the fact that I am black is not good enough to justify my preaching on black history in the USA'. But, after wrestling with that thought for a while, I took up the challenge; by then I had four years of experience of being a black person in the United States, and I also knew that I could draw on my experience from Africa in ways that could illuminate black experience in the US. I believed that the Spirit would lead me through the whole process.

Discovering the Black theology of James H. Cone, Jaime Phelps, Shawn M. Copeland, Cornel West, Brian N. Massingale and other African American theologians was an eye-opener.¹¹ I began to understand the plight of African American people theologically. I also endeavoured to put Black theology into conversation with African theology as I studied; that was one great gift I received in the US. I was surprised by how the two are so different, reflecting their different contexts. Black theology, as I have come to understand it, has its starting point in the experience of slavery and racism in the United States, while African theology begins from the perspective of the colonial and post-colonial experience of the continent.¹² I had an initial resistance to Black theology since I felt that racism is not part of my experience as a non-American

¹⁰ 'Black History Month is an annual celebration of the achievements of African Americans and a time for recognizing the central role of blacks in US history. The event grew out of "Negro History Week", the brainchild of the noted historian Carter G. Woodson and other prominent African Americans. Since 1976, every US president has officially designated the month of February as Black History Month. Other countries around the world, including Canada and the United Kingdom, also devote a month to celebrating black history': <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month>, accessed 2 January 2018.

¹¹ For more on Black theology see James H. Cone, *Black Theology and Black Power* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997).

¹² Bénédet Bujo, *African Theology in Its Social Context* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 17–20.

black but, as I continued to live in the US, I realised that I was not cushioned from racism, and thus I had to do something about my naïveté. I soon felt that being in the USA as a black person without confronting racism is to be complicit with racist attitudes inherent in the country. Therefore, I started to take discussions of race seriously.

The suffering and discrimination that African American brothers and sisters endure in the USA have helped me to understand the meaning of hope and resilience in new ways. African Americans undergo many little deaths in their lives, times when they feel that all hope is gone, but there are many resurrections too. As I interacted with my fellow black people in the US, I could see these resurrections in their families, workplaces, schools and communities. These people know how to celebrate life; the brightly coloured clothes, the drums, the dancing, the music, the food and all that was showcased during Black History Month every February were signs of hope for a better future. African American people's faith in God moved me just as the faith of the South Sudanese had. They taught me to believe that everything is in God's hands. God walks with the suffering people; God is always on the side of the oppressed.¹³ I believe that the suffering that black people endure will not last forever, a day will come when all men and women, whatever their race, 'will be able to sit down together in the table of brotherhood and sisterhood'.¹⁴

**God is
always on the
side of the
oppressed**

Jesuits Owning Slaves?

I was shocked to learn that the Jesuits in the US had owned slaves. The question that kept nagging me as an African Jesuit was: how am I complicit in that dark history? As a member of the Jesuit order, I am not outside the social sin committed by the Society of Jesus. That reality affects me although I am removed by many years from the sin itself. Being part of the race that was oppressed by slavery, I nevertheless find it hard to condemn the Society to which I belong for the sins it committed against black people who came from Africa. The fact that US Jesuits had owned slaves was shocking to me; but it did not blind me to the reality that the US Jesuits have also done good things in Africa—such as founding the Loyola Secondary School where I worked in South

¹³ See James H. Cone, *God of the Oppressed* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1997).

¹⁴ Martin Luther King, 'I Have a Dream', speech given at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, August 1968; published edition (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993), 22.

Sudan. This is the ambivalent history with which I am called to live as an African Jesuit. I am part of an order that is capable of both good and evil. This fact helped me to reflect on my own capacity for good and evil and thus to be attentive to the movements of the spirits in my life in order to avoid evil and do good.

Georgetown University's apology for owning slaves moved me. On 18 April 2017, it apologised for its role in the 1838 sale of 272 enslaved individuals for the university's benefit. The apology took place in the company of more than a hundred descendants of slaves.¹⁵ As an African, I felt that that was a good move in the right direction. However, as a black non-American Jesuit, I felt that it had come too late in history; as people who examine our consciences frequently, I think that the Jesuits should have apologised many years ago.

I believe that this sin affects me as a black Jesuit and I feel called to solidarity with the black people in the USA who suffer from the consequences of slavery. In my work at St Patrick's Church in West Oakland, I tried to reach out and be in solidarity with the African American community as a way of standing with people oppressed by a sin that my order committed against their ancestors. This was my small way of saying that I am part of the problem, and thus I am sorry and ready to confront that past.

Living Religious Vows Contextually?

As an African Jesuit living in the USA, I noticed the difference in how Jesuits lived the vows of obedience, chastity and poverty in the two different contexts. These vows, especially obedience and poverty, are lived contextually. The form of the vows is the same in all contexts, but their interpretation and living out are slightly different from one situation to another.

An example will suffice. One day I overheard a US Jesuit asking a Jesuit from Africa: 'do you have a villa house in your Province?' I was amused by the question because, in a country such as South Sudan, where ordinary people are struggling to survive, the Jesuits cannot have the luxury of a villa house—a place set aside for rest and relaxation: that would not be feasible contextually. Furthermore, many provinces in Africa

¹⁵ See 'Georgetown Apologizes for the 1839 Sale of 272 Slaves, Dedicates Buildings', <https://www.georgetown.edu/news/liturgy-remembrance-contrition-hope-slavery>, accessed 2 January 2018.

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do not have the resources to own such a house. Things such as the villa house, which would be considered as acceptable within the vow of poverty in the USA, may not necessarily be viewed in the same way elsewhere in the Jesuit world. This fact reminded me of the need for adaptability and flexibility in understanding the contexts in which Jesuits live.

I had heard about consumerism in the United States while I lived in Africa. Consumerism, from a sociological perspective, 'is the belief that personal well-being and happiness depends to a very large extent on the level of personal consumption, particularly on the purchase of material goods'.¹⁶ Living in the US, I saw its effects first-hand. There was always a temptation and pressure to follow what was the dominant trend in society. I was surprised by how frequently some Jesuits changed their phones. I bought an iPhone 5 which, at the time when I bought it, I felt was too expensive. Four years later, some people were shocked that I still had the same phone. That experience made me reflect on how I live my vow of poverty in a consumerist society. As I lived in the USA, I prayed for the grace to resist the consumerist culture and live a frugal life for the greater glory of God. At the same time, I noticed that most people in the US are not rich and consumerist, as I had thought. They live modest lives and sometimes struggle to make ends meet.

On the vow of obedience, I was amazed by the amount of trust that superiors in the USA had in the Jesuits, and their openness to the work



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¹⁶ Rachel Dwyer 'Expanding Homes and Increasing Inequalities: US Housing Development and the Residential Segregation of the Affluent', *Social Problems*, 54 (2007), 23.

of the Spirit through prayer and discernment. I was equally surprised to learn for the first time that in the USA Jesuits apply for jobs like any other person and are sent to work in specific missions by the provincial only once they have been hired after a long interviewing process. My experience of mission in Africa was that Jesuits discern with the provincial and then he sends them directly on a mission without this application process. I had to understand that mission, too, was done contextually and that my experience was limited.

Moving as a vowed religious from Africa to the United States was both joyful and challenging. Negotiating contextual differences was difficult for me, and I needed a lot of spiritual capital to understand the new context in which I was living instead of making rash judgments.

On Personal Relationships: American and African Ways

I grew up in a context in which an African communitarian ethos was the norm, in which people derive their identity from personal relations in the community. Communal belonging defines a person's identity.¹⁷ It is in such a communitarian context that African concepts such as *Ujamaa* and *Ubuntu* emerge. These focus on a person as he or she is related to the community and not just as an individual.

Ujamaa is a Kiswahili word which connotes familyhood, togetherness and fraternity.¹⁸ It was popularised by Tanzania's first president, the Venerable Mwalimu Julius Nyerere.¹⁹ In articulating the meaning of *Ujamaa*, Nyerere used other expressions alongside *familyhood*, such as caring, well-being, reciprocity, togetherness and universal hospitality.²⁰ In *Ujamaa* spirituality, a person becomes fully human when he or she is in communion with others. Conversely, *Ubuntu* is derived from the Xhosa people of South Africa. It is a 'worldview based on the primary values of intense humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion, and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in the spirit of family'.²¹ Both *Ujamaa* and *Ubuntu* focus on the communal aspects of a person first before considering him or her as an individual.

¹⁷ See Laurenti Magesa, *What Is Not Sacred? African Spirituality* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2013), 45–46.

¹⁸ Oliver Alozie Onwubiko, *The Church in Mission in the Light of Ecclesia in Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines, 2001), 34.

¹⁹ A Cause for the canonization of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere is ongoing. See <http://www.catholicstandardgh.com/beatification-cause-for-julius-nyerere.html>.

²⁰ Julius Nyerere, *Ujamaa: Essays on Socialism* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford UP, 1968), 1–12.

²¹ Johann Broodryk, *Ubuntu: Life Lessons from Africa* (Tshwane: Ubuntu School of Philosophy, 2002), 56.

As I lived in the USA, I felt that my African communitarian ethos was undermined by an individualist ethos within US culture. I knew about US individualism before I arrived, but I did not understand it until I started living there. Relationships in the US, according to my experience, centre around individual freedom and self-reliance, and decisions are made on an individual basis with little influence from the community. This was very difficult to understand for a person who comes from a communitarian culture. I also felt that most people in the US used 'I' too much in their conversations. I was surprised by that because in Africa 'we' predominates over 'I'. Most Africans believe in the maxim, 'I am because we are and since we are, therefore I am'.²²

I think that a dialogue between the African communitarian ethos of *Ujamaa* and *Ubuntu*, and the US individualist ethos can be mutually enriching. Both world-views have their merits and demerits. On the one hand, excessive communitarianism can stifle creativity. On the other, excessive individualism can destroy personal relationships. A moderate amount of individualism, coupled with what Kwame Gyekye refers to as 'moderate communitarianism', which values creativity and freedom, can help Jesuits and others from both worlds to grow in becoming authentic 'friends in the Lord'.²³

While in the USA, I developed a habit of taking a bus or a train instead of driving a car in order to be close to the ordinary people. Encountering people in this was illuminating. I felt God's presence by just looking at people's faces and observing what was going on. Sometimes, I encountered people with mental illness or under the influence of hard drugs. Being on a train or a bus was an opportunity to experience the joys and struggles of the people by just being present and aware that God was always there in the midst of the challenges that people experience.

What surprised me in most buses and trains in the United States was how people minded their own business. Everyone was on the phone or had a book to read. No one seemed to care about others unless he or she knew them. This felt like a world of isolation such as I had not experienced in South Sudan or Kenya. In Kenya, *matatu* minibuses are

²² John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1990), 141.

²³ Kwame Gyekye argues against extreme communitarianism by advocating for a moderate form of communalism. He affirms that human persons are rational, capable of virtuous conduct and can make moral judgments. He further argues that the community does not create these 'mental features', but only discovers and nurtures them. They play a major role in who a person can become; therefore, personhood is not wholly bestowed on the individual by the community. See Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity: Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience* (New York: Oxford UP, 1997), 53.



the common means of transport.²⁴ In a *matatu*, people talk, crack jokes and laugh with one another even if they are strangers. There is a lively spirit in *matatus*, especially in the countryside. When I travelled in the USA I missed this spirit.

My Ministry at St Patrick's Parish

I liked working as a high-school teacher in South Sudan, and I longed to find a place where I could do some form of ministry when I came to the US to study theology. While I was studying I had the opportunity to be part of the church community at St Patrick's parish in West Oakland, a poor neighbourhood in the San Francisco Bay area. St Patrick's is a teaching parish for the Jesuit School of Theology, where students learn contextual theology.²⁵ I learnt how to be a minister and to journey with people on the margins of a wealthy society during my time at St Patrick's.

St Patrick's parish was established in 1887 to serve the needs of Irish immigrants who were employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company in Oakland. By the 1950s, it had slowly become a mixed parish, with Mexican immigrants and African Americans joining the community. In 1999, the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley took up the responsibility

²⁴ *Matatu* is a Swahili word connoting 'three'. The original *matatus* were covered pickup trucks which had three benches with people sitting facing one another. Therefore, they had to talk to each other, or at least make eye contact.

²⁵ For more on contextual theology, see Stephen Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002).

of running the parish. By this time it was populated by African Americans and people from various Latin American countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico. The Irish population had moved out of the neighbourhood by the time the Jesuits took over the parish.²⁶ Throughout its history, St Patrick's parish has always been welcoming to people of different ethnicities. I, too, felt welcomed there as a newly arrived African student who was trying to find a place in the US ecclesial context.

During my time, the parish was about two-thirds Hispanic and a third African American. The two communities at St Patrick's worshipped separately. This was my first encounter with the idea of a 'shared parish', where people from different ethnicities worship in their own languages while having minimal interaction with members of the other language groups. Shared parishes occur in multi-ethnic contexts where racial and cultural communities use one worshipping space. Brett Hoover argues that the co-location of distinctness in a shared physical space creates a dynamic that suggests more than integration or mixing. It entails a renegotiation of resources, time, space, participation and leadership models. This level of interaction reflects a 'sharing' that has sociological implications and theological import. Viewed this way, 'the shared parish offers an alternative means of understanding cultural diversity beyond paradigms of multiculturalism and assimilation'.²⁷

It was fascinating to witness such a shared parish in the USA because in Africa most parishes are homogeneous. Although tribal differences occur in African parishes, there is enough commonality between tribes at the level of culture and language that it is easy for churches to operate in homogenous ways. It is unimaginable in much of Africa to think of a shared parish in the US sense. The experience I had at St Patrick's widened my horizons about what it means to belong to a parish. Since globalisation, urbanisation and immigration continue to affect the whole world, I think some African parishes, especially in urban areas, may soon become 'shared parishes' like St Patrick's. I am glad that I learnt how to be a minister in such a context, in case I may be called to work in a shared parish in Africa.

²⁶ For a detailed history of St Patrick's parish see Jeffrey Lewis, *After Changes Upon Changes: A Centennial History of St Patrick Parish* (Techny: Divine Word Missionaries, 1987).

²⁷ See Brett C. Hoover, *The Shared Parish: Latinos, Anglos, and the Future of US Catholicism* (New York: NYUP, 2014).

My first encounter with Hispanic culture and spirituality was at St Patrick's. Even though I did not know Spanish, I was attracted to the Hispanic liturgies and how the Hispanic people are so devoted to the Church. The Hispanic community taught me the value of popular piety and devotion to Our Lady, which had not been a central part of my spirituality. The Hispanic parishioners' devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe transformed my relationship with Mary. There were two images of Our Lady in the church: one of Our Lady of Guadalupe and the other of Our Lady of Africa. Praying in that church reminded me how central Mary, as a mother figure, is to both communities. Our Lady continues to pray for the people of God whatever their ethnicity and race, and they all identify with her motherly care.

I was fascinated to see how the Hispanic community integrated their faith and culture. I first witnessed a *quinceañera* ceremony and the symbols that accompany it at St Patrick's. The *quinceañera* liturgy and the festivity afterwards are a celebration of a girl's transformation from girlhood to young adulthood.²⁸ In most parts of Africa, such cultural rites of passage are separated from the Church. Encountering the Hispanic community at St Patrick's I learnt that some African practices involving the initiation of boys and girls into adulthood, are also sacred and could be integrated into the church liturgy as a way of finding God in all things. The Hispanic people at St Patrick's taught me that faith and culture are not separate.

The African American community was also exuberant, with gospel music and a lot of dancing. The English Mass went on for two and a half, sometimes three, hours. That style of Mass was very different from what I was used to in Africa. I took a long time to get accustomed to the gospel songs and the long preaching. I learnt, as I continued to immerse myself in the black Catholic community at St Patrick's, that most black Catholics in America are converts, especially from the Baptist and other Protestant Churches, and they come to the Roman Catholic Church with their former worship styles. I was accustomed to long, lively liturgies in Africa, but those I experienced at West Oakland were different. I had to become inculturated in this new liturgical environment. The West Oakland context helped me discern how to be a minister who takes cultures seriously, that is, a minister who does 'culture-sensitive ministry'.²⁹

²⁸ See Julia Alvarez, *Once upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in America* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2007).

²⁹ See Kenneth McGuire, Eduardo Fernández and Anne Hansen, *Culture-Sensitive Ministry: Helpful Strategies for Pastoral Ministers* (New York: Paulist, 2010).

The two St Patrick's communities experienced some tensions, which are inevitable when two cultures meet. Learning to navigate cultural tensions yet remaining faithful to the message of Christ was an important lesson for me. As an outsider, I was alien to both the Hispanic and African American cultures, but I slowly learnt aspects of them through observation and interaction with the parishioners.

I was shocked by the fear I saw in the parish, in both communities, after the rise of Donald Trump to the US presidency in 2016. The xenophobia, white supremacy and exclusionary policies—such as the ban on people from certain Muslim countries entering the US—that undermine the dignity of minorities were disturbing. In one of my confirmation classes, I asked my Hispanic students what they wanted to change in their lives during Lent. One of them said, 'I would like to change Trump!' The immigration issue in the larger Bay Area, which is considered a sanctuary for immigrants, continued to baffle me. What could I do, as a foreigner who has no say in the policies of the country? The only response to my helplessness was to be in solidarity with the people in my church community who were threatened by unjust immigration laws.

However, despite the uncertainty and fear of deportation, there remained a sense of home and family in the parish; there was social support among people who would otherwise have nowhere to feel secure. It was common to see people eating together and enjoying lively conversations after Mass. A variety of Latin American foods were served: Salvadorean *popusa*, and Mexican *tacos* and *enchiladas* among others. I was happy to enjoy these foods, which I had never seen in my life before, with a people whose culture I was barely starting to understand. I felt a sense of togetherness and communion as we ate together.

I experienced black hospitality as I worked at St Patrick's, too. As an African, I brought with me the idea of Church-as-family which the African bishops desired for the Church in Africa after the First African Synod of 1994.³⁰ At St Patrick's I was able to see the family model of Church in practice. Community-building activities and initiatives, such as eating together, emphasizing the sign of peace during the Mass and so on, made the black community at St Patrick's a welcoming one to a person coming from Africa. I met some parishioners who travelled over fifty miles to come to the church because they felt that they belonged to

³⁰ See John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Africa: Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Church in Africa and Its Evangelizing Mission towards the Year 2000* (Nairobi: Paulines, 1995), n. 63.



Mass at St Patrick's

St Patrick's—that was their home. I was enriched by the resilience of the black community and the value they placed on their culture even amidst the threat of exclusionary narratives and racism.

St Patrick's provided an opportunity for me to get out of the classroom at the Graduate Theological Union and experience what Vincent Donovan calls 'grassroots theology': a non-academic lived theology that comes from people's experience.³¹ 'For whom am I doing theology?' was one of the fundamental questions that I asked myself, and the St Patrick community helped me to understand that I did not do theology for its own sake, but for the sake of the people of God. I also learnt, in a practical way, about collaborative ministry while at the parish. I noticed that in the US Church collaborative ministry between the laity and the clergy is given priority. Where I have worked as a Jesuit in Africa such collaborative ministry was not emphasized. Working at St Patrick's, I was able to see collaborative ministry up close and make it a ministerial skill that I would take back home to Africa. I learnt that laypeople are not subordinate to the clergy, but equal partners in the proclamation of the reign of God.

Some Lessons from Both Worlds

Even though people in South Sudan are poor, they share the little resources they have in the spirit of communalism. It was difficult to find

³¹ See Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1978).

people living in destitution on the street. The people knew how to pull together and help those who are struggling. Witnessing homelessness in a country of abundance such as the United States shocked me. I could not understand how the country's great technological and economic advancement could coexist with the crisis of homelessness. I think US society can learn from developing countries such as South Sudan about the value of sharing.

During my stay in the United States, I had a chance to visit Red Cloud Indian School at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Pine Ridge is located in Shannon County—one of the poorest counties in the United States.³² Visiting the various churches where the Jesuits minister on the reservation made me think that I was not in the US any more. The poverty I saw there was comparable to what I saw in South Sudan. Even in parts of the wealthy USA, poverty is as endemic as it is in developing countries. I was inspired to see the solidarity of the Jesuits at Pine Ridge with the Oglala Lakota people. They were helping to break the vicious circle created by the injustices done to the native people over the centuries. I felt a deep connection to these Jesuits since they were working in conditions not unlike those in which I worked in South Sudan. Thousands of miles apart, on two different frontiers, Jesuits were living in solidarity with the poor.

While I was in South Sudan I was confronted by insecurity and gun violence because of the civil war. I had to rely on God's protection and stay out of harm's way as much as I could. Many local people lost their lives. When I arrived in West Oakland, however, gun violence was also a common occurrence. One night, a few months before I arrived there, a gang member had been shot a few blocks from St Patrick's parish, and his body lay where it fell until daylight. Such incidents in the Bay Area itself, and reports of gun violence in other parts of the US were frightening. Seeing violence in both South Sudan and the US taught me that God is the one who protects. Even in the wealthy and seemingly peaceful USA it is possible to die through a random act of violence. I learnt that wherever I am, trust in God's protection is what is important.

Things were always uncertain in South Sudan, and the predictability and precision of some things in the USA surprised me. Using the internet to get directions or phone apps to get real-time departure and arrival

³² For details about the work of the Jesuits at Pine Ridge, see Ross Enochs, *The Jesuit Mission to the Lakota Sioux: A Study of Pastoral Ministry, 1886–1945* (Kansas City: Sheed and Ward, 1996).

times for public transport was new to me. Where was divine providence in all that? It was difficult to see God's guiding hand when things were so predictable. I felt that predictability could tempt people to be too independent of one another, and too independent of God and God's action in the world. The mostly unpredictable life in South Sudan helped me to trust in God's providence.

Living alongside US Jesuits, I felt enriched culturally and challenged to think differently. But I think that my presence and that of other African Jesuits sharing our lives, culture and experience enriched the US Jesuits too. The experience of living in South Sudan and in the United States has helped me to appreciate the need for adaptability and flexibility in relation to the cultures that a Jesuit encounters. I learnt how to negotiate new cultures and manage culture shock, and about the challenges that both deprivation and abundance bring. I also learnt that frontiers are not only to be found in countries where there is material deprivation, but also in wealthy ones.

Oscar Momanyi SJ is the vocation director of the Jesuits in Kenya. He studied at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley from 2012 to 2014.

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