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## Jorge Bergoglio and the theologians who shaped his reading of the *Spiritual Exercises*

### I. INTRODUCTION

We would be hard-pressed to call Pope Francis a theologian or a scholar, even if he did teach theology during the 1970s. His style resists any kind of strict delineation or orderly analysis. As our Holy Father, we know him as priest, pastor, shepherd, who makes use of the theological resources available to him insofar as they help feed the flock entrusted to him. He is also a writer. His work has been especially nourished by the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and we see evidence of this already in his earlier years as a Jesuit superior. A member of the Society of Jesus for more than 30 years (1958 to 1992), Jorge Mario Bergoglio published three books that dealt in some way with the Exercises, all during his last ten years before becoming a bishop<sup>1</sup>: *Meditations for Religious* in 1982<sup>2</sup>; then *Spiritual Reflections on Apostolic Life* in 1987<sup>3</sup>, which includes some meditations on the First Week and a reflection on the Ignatian *magis*; and finally *Reflections in Hope* in 1992, released just before Bergoglio was appointed Archbishop of Buenos Aires<sup>4</sup>, a work that

<sup>1</sup> *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola*, Herefordshire 2004 (hereinafter *SpEx*).

<sup>2</sup> *Meditaciones para religiosos*, Buenos Aires, 1982. It is – like the two books cited below, *infra* notes 3–4 – a gathering of various articles, most of them first published in the Argentine Jesuit journals *Boletín de Espiritualidad* and *Stromata*. Various chapters have been translated into English by Phillip Endean, with altered titles: «An Institution Living Its Charism», *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 45 (Autumn 2013) 13–29 (ch. 5); «Permanent Formation and Reconciliation», *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 45 (Autumn 2013) 30–37 (ch. 7); and «Leadership. The Big Picture and the Tiny Details», *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 45 (Winter 2013) 17–29 (ch. 9).

<sup>3</sup> *Reflexiones espirituales sobre la Vida apostólica*, Buenos Aires 1987.

<sup>4</sup> *Reflexiones en esperanza*, Buenos Aires 1992. On the origin of these meditations, see A. IVEREIGH, *The Great Reformer. Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*, New York 2014, 205–209.

uses both the Exercises and the Constitutions to discuss the need for reform of religious life<sup>5</sup>, published in anticipation of his reaching the age for episcopal resignation in 2011. In his thinking on the Exercises in these earlier works, we see the traces of many influences, some of whom were Bergoglio's own peers. At the Centro de Espiritualidad Ignaciana de Argentina in Buenos Aires (The Argentinian Center of Ignatian Spirituality), he collaborated with other Jesuits like Jaime Amadeo, José Luis Lazzanni, and above all Miguel A. Fiorito (b. 1916, SJ 1939-2005, d. 2005), the latter of whom wrote a detailed commentary of the Exercises<sup>6</sup>. Bergoglio himself acknowledges a special debt to Fiorito<sup>7</sup>, and indeed, according to Diego Fares, Pope Francis's interpretation and practice of the Exercises leans very heavily on this «true spiritual *maestro*», who belonged to the Argentinian Province for more than 40 years (under provincial superior Álvaro Restrepo)<sup>8</sup>. Following Fiorito, Bergoglio considers the Exercises to be Ignatius' *kerygma* that «seeks to prompt those “spiritual motions” by which the exercitant will make a radical choice or reform of one's life, placing it at the service of Christ in a concrete way»<sup>9</sup>. For him, as for the French Jesuits, the center of the Exercises is *election*<sup>10</sup>. On this point, Bergoglio is surely following the trail cleared by the theology of French Jesuit Gaston Fessard (b.

<sup>5</sup> Parts of this book were gathered in a later collection of Bergoglio's homilies and writings entitled *Mente abierta, corazón creyente*, Buenos Aires 2012 (*Open Mind, Faithful Heart. Reflections on Following Jesus*, New York, 2013 [chapter titles in the original Spanish publication have been altered in this English edition; our citations are taken from the e-book]).

<sup>6</sup> M.A. FIORITO, *Buscar y hallar la voluntad de Dios. Comentario práctico de los Ejercicios de san Ignacio de Loyola*, Buenos Aires 2000.

<sup>7</sup> See *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 7. «As their spiritual director he “made us go back to the Ignatian sources of discernment”, recalls the Chilean Fernando Montes: “It was Fiorito who sparked it all off.” The Argentine province's future leaders (novice masters, rectors of the Máximo, and provincials) of the 1970s and 1980s—above all Jorge Bergoglio, Andrés Swinnen, and Ernesto López Rosas—formed a group around Fiorito, helping him produce his new *Boletín de Espiritualidad* (“Bulletin of Spirituality”) off the college presses». A. IVEREIGH, *Great Reformer* (cf. nt. 4), 92.

<sup>8</sup> FIORITO, *Buscar y hallar* (cf. nt. 7), 11.

<sup>9</sup> D. FARES, «Aiuti per crescere nella capacità di discernere», *La Civiltà Cattolica* 168 (2017) 377–89, 384–85. «“We were all formed in the conviction that there is great power in prayer and that as Jesuits we can help others through *The Spiritual Exercises*,” recalls [Guillermo] Ortiz. “Every decision or choice had to be prayed over and discerned,” agrees another of the Jesuit scholastics at the time, Fernando Cervera. “[Bergoglio] taught us that every decision had a consequence, which had to be weighed”». IVEREIGH, *Great Reformer* (cf. nt. 4), 179.

<sup>10</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 96. See J. DE GUIBERT, *The Jesuits. Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, St. Louis 1986, 122–132. Michael Ivens S.J. very much stresses «the central importance of the theme of election in the Exercises». *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, Herefordshire, 1998, 12. For an opposite perspective, see P. ENDEAN, *Karl Rahner and Ignatian Spirituality*, Oxford 2001.

1897, SJ 1913-1978, d. 1978), whom Fiorito promoted among his confreres<sup>11</sup>.

Even more markedly, the Argentinian Centro was influenced by the theology of Erich Przywara (b. 1889, SJ 1908-1972, d. 1972). Although they knew the German Jesuit's expansive three-volume *Deus semper maior*<sup>12</sup>, Przywara impacted the Centro more directly by way of four studies published for the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ignatius' death—*Ignatianisch*—translated into Spanish by philosopher Alfonso López Quintás<sup>13</sup>. Bergoglio repeatedly references this short work, a kind of synthesis of Przywara's thought<sup>14</sup>.

The Centro opened Bergoglio's way to another German theologian: Romano Guardini (b. 1885, priest 1910-1968, d. 1968)<sup>15</sup>. Guardini's name does not appear directly in Bergoglio's writings before his 1992 *Reflections in Hope*, but López Quintás had already included it in his afterword to *Ignatianisch*, underlining the experiential character of knowledge, «the difference between intellectual obviousness [and] living certitude»<sup>16</sup>. In March 1986, Bergoglio went to Frankfurt, Germany, to work on a doctorate on Guardini, and in *Reflections*, we find many references to Guardini's *The Lord*<sup>17</sup> and *The End of*

<sup>11</sup> G. FESSARD, *Dialectique des Exercices spirituels*, I-III, Paris 1956, 1984). This is «el punto-clave de la interpretación de Fessard»: M.A. FIORITO, «Teoría y práctica de G. Fessard», *Ciencia y Fe* 13 (1957) 333–352, 339–340. Later (*ibid.*, 345), he quotes a passage from the Spanish version of Hans Urs von Balthasar's *Two Sisters in the Spirit* (orig. German, *Schwestern im Geist*, Einsiedeln 1970, Freiburg 1990<sup>4</sup>, 17). In *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 106, Bergoglio refers indeed to Fessard's interpretation of the «como si» (*SpEx* 186 *et passim*) (*Dialectique* I, 305–363). See M. BORGHESI, *Jorge Mario Bergoglio. Una biografía intelectual*, Milan 2017, 38-39. - Our article was completed before this work was published. The author attaches greater importance to Fiorito's studies on Bergoglio's thought than we have done.

<sup>12</sup> E. PRZYWARA, *Deus semper maior. Theologie der Exerziten*, I-III, Freiburg 1938, Vienna 1964<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> *Teologúmeno español y otros ensayos ignacianos*, Guadarrama 1962; orig. German, *Ignatianisch. Vier Studien zum vierhundertsten Todestag des Hlg. Ignatius von Loyola*, Frankfurt a. M. 1956.

<sup>14</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 16, 37, 143–144, 202. Afterwards, there are no further mentions.

<sup>15</sup> Bergoglio read *The Lord* as a novice, and Guardini's thoughts on modernity have fascinated him ever since. See IVEREIGH, *Great Reformer* (cf. nt. 4), 197–200. «Bergoglio gave the inaugural lecture of the 1989 academic year at the Universidad del Salvador on the need for a new “anthropology of politics”. It was the skeleton of what would have been, had he written it, the doctoral thesis: a sophisticated, if at times to a layman impenetrable, exploration of Guardini and Saint Ignatius. It is possible to find in this lecture the basis of his future addresses as cardinal at the Te Deum services in the cathedral on Argentina's national day, May 25, which he would use to help build a new civic culture». *Great Reformer* (cf. nt. 4), 202.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. A. LÓPEZ QUINTÁS, «Erich Przywara o la Passion de la Sintesis», in PRZYWARA, *Teologúmeno español* (cf. nt. 13), 151–183, 179 (referring to R. GUARDINI, *Religion und Offenbarung*, Mainz 1990, 165–66).

<sup>17</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 144, 167. See R. GUARDINI, *The Lord*, Washington DC 1996); orig. German, *Der Herr*, Würzburg 1949.

*the Modern World*, as well as his concept of «polar opposition»<sup>18</sup>. While defining the crisis of postmodernity, he cites the studies of López Quintás on Guardini<sup>19</sup>. Many texts from Bergoglio's 2012 collection *Open Mind, Faithful Heart*, quote *The Lord*, particularly when discussing the first few chapters of the Book of Revelation<sup>20</sup>. Like Guardini, and quite unlike Immanuel Kant, he understands «seeing» [*Anschauung*] as the creation of a space to welcome that which reveals itself. To be sure, Guardini promoted a very different kind of «spiritual exercises»<sup>21</sup> from those of Ignatius, and in fact he opposed the Ignatian tradition to some extent. However, what Bergoglio appropriates is not Guardini's—perhaps questionable—spiritual method, but rather his broader notion of «encounter»<sup>22</sup>.

In López Quintás' afterword, another important name appears, one that will emerge again in later publications from Bergoglio—indeed, the name of «one of Francis' favorite authors»<sup>23</sup>: the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar (b. 1905, SJ 1929-1950, d. 1988). Bergoglio cites him in a talk that he gave to the Sisters of Mary Ward in 1984. Bergoglio begins by quoting a word of advice from Mary Ward herself, a clear allusion to the Call of the King (*SpEx* 91-98): «Whoever wants to follow God within this institute as demanded by his state must necessarily love the Cross and be ready to suffer much for the love of Christ»<sup>24</sup>. Religious institutes, like the Church herself, are rooted in the Cross. «One cannot negotiate with the Cross[...]; one either embraces it or rejects it»<sup>25</sup>. The Cross, insists Bergoglio, is the base of every true Christian foundation, both communal and personal. Here, he quotes Balthasar: «The hour

<sup>18</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 281–299. In the lecture mentioned above, *supra* note 15, Bergoglio speaks of «a mutual interaction of realities» (IVEREIGH, *Great Reformer* [cf. nt. 4], 202). See R. GUARDINI, *The End of the Modern World*, New York 1957; orig. German, *Das Ende der Neuzeit*, Mainz 1986. Also: *Der Gegensatz. Versuche zu einer Philosophie des Lebendig-Konkreten*, Mainz 1998.

<sup>19</sup> A. LÓPEZ QUINTÁS, «Pasión de verdad y dialéctica en Romano Guardini», in R. GUARDINI, *El ocaso de la Edad Moderna*, Madrid 1981, 151–184; A. LÓPEZ QUINTÁS, *Romano Guardini: Maestro de vida*, Madrid 1966.

<sup>20</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 137ff.

<sup>21</sup> See R. GUARDINI, *Wille und Wahrheit. Geistliche Übungen*, Mainz 1991.

<sup>22</sup> See D. FARES, *Papa Francesco è come un bambù: Alle radici della cultura dell'incontro*, Milano 2014, 17ff. On intersubjectivity, see also the Balthasar quotations cited in A. LÓPEZ QUINTÁS, «Passion de la Sintesis» (cf. nt. 16), 172–173.

<sup>23</sup> FARES, *Papa Francesco è come un bambù* (cf. nt. 22), 12. Ivereigh, among the many names he references, scarcely mentions Balthasar.

<sup>24</sup> *Maria Ward y su Instituto* 66, quoted in *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 20; orig. German, INSTITUTUM BEATAE MARIAE VIRGINIS, *Maria Ward und ihr Institut: Nach Originaltexten*, München 1957, 60.

<sup>25</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 216.



of the Church's birth coincides with the hour of the vigil of death»<sup>26</sup>. In fact, the theologian's work *Cordula* (known in English as *The Moment of Christian Witness*) is a guiding motif throughout the whole talk. That same year, Bergoglio published an article on theological pluralism and Latin-American ecclesiology<sup>27</sup> in which he refers at length to Balthasar's book *Truth is Symphonic*. In 1992, in *Reflections in Hope*, he cites the same work from Balthasar, stressing again how true unity depends upon real pluriformity<sup>28</sup>. Here, as elsewhere, he draws upon Balthasar's interpretation of Glory (*pulchrum*), always intimately tied with Goodness and Truth, and the dialectic between event and vision<sup>29</sup>.

Among those of other scholars<sup>30</sup> the name Henri de Lubac (b. 1896, SJ 1913-1991, d. 1991) comes up a number of times in Bergoglio's first publications, particularly the concept of the *homme d'Église* («the man of the Church»), which he uses to help him understand the Rules for Thinking with the Church (*SpEx* 352ff.). With de Lubac, he emphasizes the necessary interrelationship between freedom, obedience, and Church unity<sup>31</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 205 (cf. 219). The exact quotation is: «In the Eucharist the hour of the Church's birth [...] coincid[es] with the hour of Christ's death». H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *The Moment of Christian Witness*, San Francisco 1994, 42; orig. German, *Cordula oder der Ernstfall*, Trier, 1987<sup>4</sup>, 31–32.

<sup>27</sup> «Sobre Pluralismo Teológico y Eclesiología Latinoamericana», *Stromata* 40 (1984) 321–331.

<sup>28</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 342. Cf. H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Truth Is Symphonic. Aspects of Christian Pluralism*, San Francisco 1987, 7–15; orig. German, *Wahrheit ist symphonisch*, Freiburg 2008<sup>2</sup>, 7–14.

<sup>29</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 137–38. Cf. H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Explorations in Theology I. Word Made Flesh*, San Francisco, 1989, 115–16; orig. German, *Verbum Caro*, Freiburg 1990<sup>3</sup>, 122–123.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Karol Wojtyła: Bergoglio discusses his book *Person and Act* through the study of his friend I. Quiles S.J., *Filosofía de la Persona según Karol Wojtyła*, Buenos Aires 1987; see *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 331–38; J. RATZINGER, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics. New Endeavors in Ecclesiology*, San Francisco 2008; orig. German, *Kirche, Ökumene und Politik*, Einsiedeln 1987; see *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 283–285.

<sup>31</sup> H. DE LUBAC, *The Splendor of the Church*, San Francisco 1986, 257–267; orig. French, *Méditation sur l'Église*, Œuvres complètes 8, Paris 2003, 224; cf. *ibid.*, 222–30. Bergoglio's attention to this work might have been drawn by Paul VI's talk from December 3, 1974, to the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (hereinafter GC32). J.W. PADBERG, ed., *Documents of the 31st and 32nd General Congregations of the Society of Jesus*, St. Louis MO 2009, 535. Cf. also IVEREIGH, *Great Reformer* (cf. nt. 4), 533 (quoting *Catholicism*). We remember that in 1973 Bergoglio took part as Provincial in the (dramatic) GC32 (1974–1975). De Lubac's name is cited several times in *Esperanza*. As a bishop, Bergoglio was «haunted» by the final pages of de Lubac's *Méditation*, says Ivereigh (*Great Reformer* (cf. nt. 4), 241), who further explains: «In an article he wrote in 1991 but did not publish until much later, Bergoglio used de Lubac's treatise to distinguish between sin and corruption» (*Great Reformer* (cf. nt. 4), 245).

Przywara, Guardini, von Balthasar, de Lubac: these are the four chief theologians whom Bergoglio cites most and who have informed his reading of the Spiritual Exercises. The Argentinian Jesuit has dealt—in his own unsystematic way—with various themes of the Exercises. We have chosen to focus on those in which the influence of these theologians seems more evident. There are other important topics for Francis, such as the Two Standards or the Paschal Mystery, that we will not address in the present paper.

## II. GOD INCARNATE AND EVER GREATER

Recognizing his debt to his master Przywara, Balthasar writes, speaking about the dynamic comparative of the *magis* in Ignatian spirituality:

The comparative [*más, mejor, etc.*] is like a crescendo opening up to the above, the rhythm of life and thought of the Society's Founder who, repulsed by any static positive or static superlative, sees in the unclosability of the *magis* the distinctive trait of the divine reality (*Deus semper maior*), as well as of the creaturely reality vis-à-vis God (*ad maiorem Dei gloriam*)<sup>32</sup>.

St. Ignatius himself makes the basic gratuitous act of our coming into existence the beginning of the Principle and Foundation: God our Lord creates us, saves us, and constitutes us as directed towards an *end*. «And this end», explains Bergoglio, «because it transcends us, gives us consistency»<sup>33</sup>. He continues: «The Principle and Foundation lays the foundation by affirming the wisdom of indifference and explaining how “we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created” (*SpEx* 23))»<sup>34</sup>. In interpreting the Exercises, Bergoglio stresses ever anew the movement of transcendence—the *open* comparative—that gives rhythm to human existence. This paved the way for him to a Przywarian understanding of the ever-greater God. Following the German theologian, he explores the meaning of Ignatius' word «*más*». The image of man Bergoglio sees in the Principle and Foundation with its *más*, is «the image of *Deus semper maior*»<sup>35</sup>, *intimior intimo meo*<sup>36</sup>. God himself, he explains, is ever greater and «never exhausts his manifestation at any moment»<sup>37</sup>. Referencing Przywara, he invites us to what he calls the «radical humility» of «recognizing the infinite distance that

<sup>32</sup> H.U. VON BALTHASAR, Afterword to *Die Exerzitien*, Freiburg 2010<sup>14</sup>, 105.

<sup>33</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 51; «An Institution Living Its Charism» 20 [corrected].

<sup>34</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 96.

<sup>35</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 144.

<sup>37</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 77.

separates man from the Creator»<sup>38</sup>. *Semper maior est enim ille, quantumcumque creverimus*<sup>39</sup>: however much we grow, he will always be greater. Yet, this sense of an unsurpassable distance is only one side of our creatureliness; on the other side is a sweeter sense of «utmost humility» that «lies in the mildness of Mary»<sup>40</sup>, a joyful recognition that «[e]verything comes from him». «Man is created»: this is, for Bergoglio, the first «creaturely truth», a truth that «makes us free», «because this freedom is grace, gift»<sup>41</sup>.

For Przywara, God's self-revelation as *semper maior* takes place precisely in his descent into the great *profundum* of man. For Bergoglio, however, the «eagerness to increase the fire more and more» and the desire «to be transformed by fire into nothingness»<sup>42</sup>—central for the German Jesuit—is not quite present. In Bergoglio's eyes, the opposition between creation and Creator has been definitively bridged by the Incarnation. He declares in *Meditations for Religious*: «Jesus is the manifestation and concealment [cf. *SpEx* 196] of the *Deus semper maior*. In Him the divine transcendence has espoused our immanence»<sup>43</sup>. Far from being the ultimate stage of our rational conquest, the ever-greater God whom Ignatius says man must praise, revere, and serve is the living reality of the One who, in the descending, «kata-logical» movement of Love (*de arriba*, *SpEx* 184 etc.), freely reveals himself in his Incarnate Son.

The Lord Jesus, who reveals the ever-greater God, is the Word made man. Bergoglio makes Christ in the flesh his focal point. In fact, he reframes the

<sup>38</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 44, quoting E. PRZYWARA, *Teologúmeno español* (cf. nt. 13), 115–150 (orig. 107–149).

<sup>39</sup> AUGUSTINE, *In Ps.* 62, 16. Cf. PRZYWARA, *Teologúmeno español* (cf. nt. 13), 143–144 (orig. 141–42), with implicit reference to Denzinger 806. The German Jesuit places too much emphasis on the *dissimilitudo* (based on the inclusion of *tanta* in a former edition of Denzinger, later excised). Learning from Guardini (toward whom Przywara has some reservations, see *Teologúmeno español* [cf. nt. 13], 141–142 [orig. 139–140]), Bergoglio remedies the extremism of the German theologian with a Christology that emphasizes the dimension of encounter.

<sup>40</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 48.

<sup>41</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 21. By referring to Fessard and Guardini and their influence on Bergoglio, Borghesi (*Una biografia intellettuale*, cf. nt. 11) strongly stresses the «dialectic tension between grace and freedom» (*Una biografia intellettuale* [cf. nt. 11], 27), which—contrary to Hegel—is reconciled by the Mystery acting in history. Like Fessard, the Argentinian Jesuit would highlight «the idea of Christ as “punto di soluzione” of great contrasts» (*Una biografia intellettuale* [cf. nt. 11], 292). As for us, more than the philosophical notion of «unità antinómica» (*Una biografia intellettuale* [cf. nt. 11], 23), we underline in Bergoglio's interpretation of the *Exercises* the theological notion of «harmony» (Ignatius of Antioch), or «symphony» (Balthasar), a notion Pope Francis reaffirmed in a personal conversation with me in Santa Marta on June 13, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. PRZYWARA, *Teologúmeno español* (cf. nt. 13), 145 (orig. 143) (referring to AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, ch. 4, paras. 14, 22).

<sup>43</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 35.

open comparative in terms of God's paradoxical humility. In Christ, and only in Him, is it possible to bear the tension between «strength and weakness»<sup>44</sup>. «The God of our Jesuit heritage [is not only] the *Deus semper maior*, [but also] the *Incarinate God*. [He is at once] the Lord incarnate and ever greater than anything we could think or hope»<sup>45</sup>. And again Bergoglio:

When St. Ignatius offers us the meditation on Incarnation, he makes us travel around the whole universe: he brings us up to the throne of God and then to the house of Nazareth. He combines the largest and the smallest, as if to make us aware of what this nullification of the Lord means, both in his greatness and in his smallness<sup>46</sup>.

For him, as for Ignatius, the mysteries of Creation and Incarnation interweave tightly. Therefore, instead of one-sidedly emphasizing the Cross, as the later Przywara does, he presents us with «the Creator and Redeemer»<sup>47</sup>. Following Guardini, he sees in the earthly form of the eternal Son the encompassing *a priori* of creation<sup>48</sup> and so gives a Christological interpretation of the Principle and Foundation. «Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God» (*SpEx* 23), the Exercises say. For Bergoglio, as for Guardini<sup>49</sup>, as for Ignatius, the human being is defined by Christ. He writes in *Meditations for Religious*:

It is important to notice that in the Principle and Foundation, when St. Ignatius speaks of man or when he recommends certain attitudes, he is speaking to us of the Lord. That is why the first thing in these Exercises will be to contemplate the Lord whom St. Ignatius places before us. Thus, he tells us that “man is created”, but what matters is the reference to the Creator who stands out in all his grandeur when Ignatius says that God should be praised, revered, and served. He [...] wants to point us to the *Deus semper maior* who is the end for which we are created<sup>50</sup>.

### III. *SENTIR*, OR KNOWLEDGE THROUGH EXPERIENCE

In the subject who—with prevenient grace—welcomes revelation in all its objectivity, there takes place a spiritual *experience*, an experience of faith, an experience whose laws go far beyond those of consciousness or the natural faculties. The notion of *experiencia* plays a significant role in the Exercises (*SpEx* 176, 334), and for his part, Bergoglio has sought to further unpack its meaning,

<sup>44</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 246.

<sup>45</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 34–36.

<sup>46</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 288.

<sup>47</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 143. «Creator and Lord» (*SpEx* 5): *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 74, referring to *SpEx* 61.

<sup>48</sup> R. GUARDINI, *Das Wesen des Christentums*, Mainz 1991, 53–54.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. R. GUARDINI, *Der Herr* (cf. nt. 17), 388.

<sup>50</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 265.



using the studies of fellow Argentinian Jesuit Fr. Ismael Quiles<sup>51</sup>. Experience is a *relationship* that engages the whole of the human being, mind and body. In the active meaning of the term, it refers first of all to the impression that a subject receives from the outside, not from within. It thus points inexorably to man's being open to the other, as Bergoglio has it. Experience contains from the beginning both image and concept, sensed interiorly, but this includes for him always a dialogical dimension. Bergoglio cites Guardini: «Religious experience is not only a perception that would find its development and fulfillment in some knowledge, but an encounter in the full sense of the word»<sup>52</sup>. In this context, Bergoglio often also refers to the elegies of Hölderlin, a poet he probably got to know through Guardini's masterful monograph *Weltbild und Frömmigkeit*<sup>53</sup>. Where it reaches a real depth, experience is always at its core a «religious experience», a relation that aims at the whole of the divine being, in the venerable and blessed mystery of its immanence and transcendence. When one enters into contact with the divine Being, human action welcomes and continues God's own creative act. The relationship, then, is an infinite source of momentum, desire, and gift.

While working on his thesis, Bergoglio explored Guardini's notion of «encounter», which he takes as «true devotion», a being-moved by a «discreet» compassion in the relationship with the other<sup>54</sup>. In the Exercises, the spiritual director—acting on behalf of our Mother the hierarchical Church—has the task of preparing and disposing the exercitant for real prayer. In order to do so, the director has to be able to listen to his retreatant, to dialog with him, in an attitude that goes beyond the intellectual: the attitude of a heart touched in its very depths. Bergoglio promotes such nearness in *Reflections in Hope*: «As we take leave of ourselves, we encounter the flesh of our brothers and sisters, and we draw close to their flesh through service»<sup>55</sup>. Such service, which is rooted in discretion, that is, «measured» by God's will<sup>56</sup>, is the true sign of love<sup>57</sup>. The spiritual bond that director and exercitant form with one another is founded in mutual prayer and should be put into practice going towards each other in a fraternal rapport<sup>58</sup>. Trying to illustrate Bergoglio's own sensibility, Fr. Fares

<sup>51</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 235–36, 244–45. Quiles discovered in the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła an analysis of reality lived in «human experience», and he developed a conception of man characterized by what he called *in-sistencia* (or *in-sistencialismo*, a play on *existencialismo*).

<sup>52</sup> GUARDINI, *Religion und Offenbarung* (cf. nt. 16), 85–86.

<sup>53</sup> In particular, he quotes a poem dedicated to Hölderlin's grandmother: «*Vieles hast du erlebt*» («So much have you lived»).

<sup>54</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 248; cf. *Para religiosos*, 295.

<sup>55</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 174.

<sup>56</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 116.

<sup>57</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 243.

<sup>58</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 86–87.

takes a phrase from Guardini: there is true encounter with the other «when I am hurt by the beam of his being, when I am touched by his action»<sup>59</sup>. Bergoglio expresses something similar in *Reflections in Hope*:

Drawing close to all suffering flesh means opening our hearts, showing compassion, touching the wound, aiding the injured. It also means giving the innkeeper two denarii and guaranteeing payment for whatever else is spent. It is for this that we'll be judged. "Understanding" this is a matter of exercising not just our intellects but also our hearts and our feelings<sup>60</sup>.

With regard to prayer, Bergoglio recommends that we «contemplate [the] Lord with the experience of our father», that is, St. Ignatius<sup>61</sup>. «The fire of God's ever greater Glory which was blowing in Ignatius of Loyola—the word *ignis* is contained in his name—[ought to] pervade us, burning all vain self-regard and wrapping us in an inner flame that contracts and expands us, enlarges and shrinks us»<sup>62</sup>. There is no passivity in the way the *Exercises* ask us to contemplate. One should offer space to the scene and put himself at its disposal. His own effort is required, necessary, but it is not enough. *Seeing* is only possible when, first, there is something to be seen. Thing and eye, figure and perception have, according to Guardini, a primordial relationship<sup>63</sup>. Wherever not only «meditation»—like in the First Week—but «contemplation» is at stake, the human partner comes second in this relationship. Christian experience finds its source in the initiative that God took to reveal Himself through his Son, the only divine «expression of being» (Heb 1:3), the Word made man. It is not at all, therefore, about coping with the material, as in exegesis, but rather about watching and listening, in an encounter by which I let myself be touched by the object in its self-opening<sup>64</sup>.

Among the Exercises' methodological guidelines, Bergoglio highly values the Augustinian *memoria-intelligentia-voluntas* schema taken up by Ignatius (*SpEx* 45 et passim). The first of these faculties, memory, Przywara defines as «presence to oneself» (*praesentia sui*) flowing from one's transcendent origin.

<sup>59</sup> R. GUARDINI, *Freiheit, Gnade, Schicksal*, Mainz 1994, 44.

<sup>60</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 171–72; cf. *Mente abierta*, 180–81.

<sup>61</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 266, 289–90, referring to GC 32. *Para religiosos*, 81: «experiencia fundante que dio vida al Instituto».

<sup>62</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 11. Cf. PRZYWARA, *Teologúmeno español* (cf. nt. 13), 46 (orig. 38). Further on, the author stresses his trust that the spirit of the Order's Founder is still living in our days; cf. *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 289, with reference to GC32.

<sup>63</sup> «Organ and object form together a whole, a relationship, in which existence is carried out». R. GUARDINI, «Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis», in *Wurzeln eines großen Lebenswerks* IV, Mainz 2003, 43. Cf. LÓPEZ QUINTÁS, «Passion de la Sintesis» (cf. nt. 16), 171 (referring to R. GUARDINI, «Die Sinne», 30).

<sup>64</sup> R. GUARDINI, «Die Situation des Menschen», in *Unterscheidung des Christlichen I*, Mainz 1994, 244–264, 257.

This memory, which as Bergoglio puts it «accompanies us as a fact interpreted in the light of present consciousness», has for content «our personal journey» and above all «the way the Lord has sought after us», the grace of his presence in our life: «the benefits received, of Creation, Redemption, and particular gifts» (*SpEx* 234)<sup>65</sup>. The Christian experience of these benefits and gifts must envelop our whole being, which, like Christianity itself, is inseparably spiritual and sensible. Ignatius' Rules for Discernment of Spirits are adapted precisely to the minute laws of such experience. For Bergoglio, the «wisdom» of these rules is particularly related to the Ignatian *sentir*: feeling, sensing, hearing<sup>66</sup>. Christian experience is essentially made up of «spiritual motions» (*SpEx* 6, 227) whose origins lie «outside» the subject (32), in God Himself, who has the power to «move and attract [his] will» (175) by giving him «joy» (329) and even «consolation without previous cause» (330). As Bergoglio says in *Reflections in Hope*, the Spirit of the Lord brings us to experience «the faithfulness of the Lord of history», «the delight of belonging to the Kingdom, which constitutes the mystery of our identity»<sup>67</sup>.

#### IV. REVERENCE, LOVE, MAGNANIMITY

As we have already noted, in Ignatius there is—together with the inner «fire»—a note of reverence, discretion, and measure: a trait that Przywara gradually lost sight of. Bergoglio finds it in Guardini's notion of «encounter». A genuine interpersonal encounter requires freedom, respect, a just distance, right perspective, in order to create the conditions for a true appreciation of the other, or in Bergoglio's words «a true *piedad* towards the brethren»<sup>68</sup>. Such an attitude, which comes from prayer, grows out of a certain «dispossession»<sup>69</sup>, understood as obedience. A God-given mission impels the Christian to go out of himself (*salir*: *SpEx* 370), to empty himself completely, guided by his experience of God's *magis*<sup>70</sup>. Praise, reverence, and service, as Bergoglio defines them, are «the ritual expression of one who has understood, loved, and remembered (*SpEx* 246) Christ's mystery»<sup>71</sup>. The «reverent silence»<sup>72</sup> one keeps in approaching this mystery is the expression of a «reverent submission» before

<sup>65</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 232. Cf. PRZYWARA, *Deus semper maior* I (cf. nt. 13), 176.

<sup>66</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 95 (on *SpEx* 313, 176, 322).

<sup>67</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 39, 38.

<sup>68</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 248; cf. *Para religiosos*, 295.

<sup>69</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 181–82.

<sup>70</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 101.

<sup>71</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 266.

<sup>72</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 86.

«the Lord's Infinite Majesty»<sup>73</sup>, before the Firstborn of all creation, who appears in the smallness of a Child «born in the greatest poverty» (*SpEx* 116)<sup>74</sup>.

The reverence at stake in the encounter with another, rooted in the Word's becoming flesh, has its source in love rightly understood (cf. *SpEx* 231)<sup>75</sup>. Inspired by López Quintás and his use of Guardini and Balthasar, Bergoglio understands love (in the Ignatian sense) as a form of integration or reconciliation. According to Guardini, the object that manifests itself is, for the subject who offers it a space within itself, always already a unity of contrasting poles<sup>76</sup>. What is true in the realm of creation is much more so in the realm of biblical revelation. Balthasar interprets the love revealed in Jesus Christ and welcomed by his «true Bride» (*SpEx* 353) as a living, fulfilled unity of opposing principles. Incarnate love paradoxically integrates what mere human reason might consider to be contradictory. The Society of Jesus as founded in the Church<sup>77</sup> participates in this paradoxical integration of opposite poles insofar as its members renounce any self-assertion and open themselves up in a pure way, making room for the «Thou» in the mysterious unity of his presence, which is at once universal and concrete. One decisive characteristic of the Order is, according to Bergoglio, its capacity for «embracing conflicts»<sup>78</sup>. The Rules for Thinking with the Church (*SpEx* 352-370) are the touchstone of a Jesuit's fidelity, as he follows the call to harmonize the inevitable tensions of historical existence within his own life. Here Bergoglio agrees with Blaise Pascal: «In Jesus Christ all contradictions are reconciled»<sup>79</sup>.

In the Lord's divine person, hidden in the Passion and revealed in the Resurrection (cf. *SpEx* 223), Bergoglio sees the grounding of one of his favorite Jesuit mottos, found in the work of Hugo Rahner: *Non coerceri maximo, contineri tamen a minimo divinum est* [Not being limited by the greatest and yet contained in the smallest: this is divine]<sup>80</sup>. He often appeals to this aphorism which expresses, by the opposition of contradictory terms, the fundamental dynamism of the soul. For him, this anonymous ode to Ignatius is a good synthesis

<sup>73</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 147.

<sup>74</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 225, 267.

<sup>75</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 225; *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 54; cf. 236.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. LÓPEZ QUINTÁS, «Passion de la Sintesis» (cf. nt. 16), 161ff.

<sup>77</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 239.

<sup>78</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 105.

<sup>79</sup> B. PASCAL, *Pensées and Other Writings*, Oxford 2008, 166.

<sup>80</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 35 (mentioning Fessard's work and Fiorito's article «Teoría y práctica de Gaston Fessard»). See Fiorito (cf. nt. 11), 350-51. See also *Para religiosos*, 108, 114 («Leadership: The Big Picture and the Tiny Details», 17), 183. A young Jesuit wrote it in the sixteenth century, as a kind of portrait of Ignatius; later, Hölderlin placed it at the beginning of his *Hyperion*. Cf. H. RAHNER, «Die Grabschrift des Loyola», in *Ignatius von Loyola als Mensch und Theologe*, Freiburg 1964, 422-440.



of the attitude of heart that God invites us to have in both big and small things. In fact, it can be a litmus test for the spiritual life: whether we can recognize the divine reality in the small space in which it is contained while losing nothing of its absoluteness. The sense of universality corresponding to the worldwide mission of Christians does not demand that we lose a sense of particularity. «Humanly speaking», Balthasar explains, «the Lord is astounding, because he displays a purely divine quality—that of being at once wholly universal and wholly concrete—now within the human reality»<sup>81</sup>. In the contemplation of the King (*SpEx* 91 ff.), Ignatius invites us to consider how the call of Jesus addresses at the same time *todo el universo mundo* [the whole entire world] and *cada uno en particular* [each one in particular] (*SpEx* 95). The Lord does so because he «loves» every person in his sublimely personal «uniqueness»<sup>82</sup>.

Along with reverence and love, therefore, magnanimity constitutes an essential feature of the Ignatian subject. The Exercises ask us to do everything «with great courage and heart»: *con grande ánimo y liberalidad*, (*SpEx* 5) that is, with magnanimity and liberality<sup>83</sup>. In contrast with the more limited mental horizon of the man of «weak constitution» (*de poco subyecto*) «who wants [...] to come to a certain degree of contentment of soul», the «ever more» emphasizes the spiritual impulse of the exercitant who undertakes the retreat with a *disposición* (*SpEx* 1) corresponding to the mystery's ever-greater magnitude. The person who, as the Principle and Foundation puts it, «makes oneself indifferent» and chooses only what is most conducive for him to the end for which he is created (*SpEx* 23), is characterized by a fruitful magnanimity, a greatness of soul. For such a person, the Jesuit aphorism of «*Non coerceri maximo*» expresses the two contrasting dimensions of a magnanimous spirit, who necessarily lives out the paradox of great and small. From his particular finite position, he looks always at the broader horizon.

<sup>81</sup> H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *The Grain of Wheat. Aphorisms*, San Francisco 1995, 63–64; orig. German, *Das Weizenkorn*, Trier 1989<sup>4</sup>, 62. The author continues: «Thus did he truly become all things to all men, and he simultaneously stands on every level of human experience and is to be found in every human situation, even in those that fully contradict and exclude one another. And yet, in so doing, he does not cease being wholly human. And he gives his holy ones a participation even in this quality. Now, if every Order has its own charism, participation in this quality of Christ's should be the charism of the Society of Jesus».

<sup>82</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 154. In *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 56–57, Bergoglio shows how one must combine the universality of the mission with the particularity of the space of action. He takes care that the mission with its transcendent dimension always remains grounded in a precise spot (in a community), which provides the complementary immanent dimension (cf. *Para religiosos*, 13). On the non-Hegelian notion of «universal concrete», see *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 342–343.

<sup>83</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 54–56, 88–91, 163.

Yet, Bergoglio reminds us, such magnanimity is «the daughter of the Cross»<sup>84</sup>. St. Ignatius demands that we Christians existentially harmonize our desire to go ever further with a prudent acknowledgement of the real possibilities. In answering Christ's call, we must remain within the boundaries established by God Himself. «It is of crucial importance», Bergoglio exhorts, «not to mistreat the limits [...]: mistreat the limits through excess [...] or through penury [...]. A limit that is set can never be closed to itself, made absolute: it must always maintain an opening to the horizon of affection and love, which ultimately expresses the good spirit that moves us»<sup>85</sup>. Bergoglio often stresses the principle of *discreta caritas*, discrete love<sup>86</sup>, and with this the capacity of seeing the whole in every single fragment (to use Balthasar's expression), which demands a true abnegation, simultaneously a refusal to close oneself and an acceptance of one's own limitations. Again, the sense of universality comes through the Incarnate Lord, and therefore is inextricable from the sense of the concrete in all its intrinsic limitedness. In Jesus Christ, every particular concrete reality serves as a spot where the infinite God lets himself be found<sup>87</sup>.

## V. MERCY AND SIN

The later Przywara's negative theology so much affirms the opposition between creation and Creator that it has a tendency to think of the Church as «Church *qua* Cross», to use Balthasar's phrase: the «place of contradiction (intersection) between the infinite (God) and the finite (creature), the place of a stressed contradiction between saint and sinner (accentuated intersection [*verschärfte Kreuzung*]), which is taken on by the God Crucified in the "Cross

<sup>84</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 222; cf. *Para religiosos*, 248 (quoting no. 728 of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus).

<sup>85</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 118–19 («Leadership: The Big Picture and the Tiny Details», 21 [corrected]).

<sup>86</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 77.

<sup>87</sup> See in this regard H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *A Theological Anthropology*, New York 1967; orig. German, *Das Ganze im Fragment*, Freiburg 1990<sup>2</sup>. «Wholeness streams and shines through the fragments. The more uninhibited this action is, the simpler is the consciousness the fragments have of their fragmentariness. And there seems to be a strange relationship between the spirit of streaming, shining wholeness and the spirit of abandonment of the fragment. It is as if to renounce all efforts to achieve wholeness is precisely to practice wholeness itself, as if God is nowhere nearer than in the humility and poverty of indifference, in the openness to death, in the renunciation of every hold on or attempt to make certain of God. The greater power which moves effortlessly through his renunciation—the power that works in his powerlessness—lies beyond power and impotence. And the salvation that is present in his defeat is so free that no one can prevent him from being the whole even in the fragment». *A Theological Anthropology*, 101 (orig. 122–123).

of the Cross”<sup>88</sup>. Like Przywara<sup>89</sup>, Bergoglio situates the First Week Exercises within the movement of the economy of Revelation going from original sin in Adam to redemption in Christ: «from our sin to mercy»<sup>90</sup>. But much more than the initial contradiction of sin, Bergoglio puts in the foreground our objective acknowledgment of Christ’s personal love for us. «In the cross», he announces, «is the history of the world: grace and sin, mercy and repentance»<sup>91</sup>. The experience of grace and sin, indeed, becomes concrete not in the unreal sphere of our mental representations, but only in the revealed reality of crucified Love. «The grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus» (1Tim 1,14). When at seventeen he, on the feast of Saint Matthew, had an experience of confession that unlocked his vocation, Bergoglio, not unlike St. Paul, felt the intervention of divine mercy poured out undeservedly upon him. The grace that led him out of darkness and carried him into God’s marvelous light brought sensibly along with it faith and love in his soul. Faith and love are «in Jesus Christ», who as God provides them and as Man has them, and who as crucified Lord makes us participate in his devoted offering to the Father. Here there is no longer any proportion (as was the case in the Old Covenant) between grace and merit.

Therefore, in Ignatian devotion the «colloquies with the crucified Lord» (*SpEx* 53, 61, 147, 198, 199 etc.)<sup>92</sup> have a central place, and the main matter of these colloquies is «gratitude»: the sense that, prior to any surrender I might make to Christ, my life has already been taken over by him<sup>93</sup>. So, as Bergoglio affirms in the spirit of Balthasar, we must «ask»<sup>94</sup> the Almighty Creator for the «grace» of «great and intense sorrow [...] for my sins» (*SpEx* 55)<sup>95</sup>, «once and many times again» (*SpEx* 59), «thanking him for giving me life up till now» (*SpEx* 60)<sup>96</sup>, in a colloquy about mercy (*SpEx* 61)<sup>97</sup>. At this point, I will have

<sup>88</sup> H.U. VON BALTHASAR, «Erich Przywara», in H.J. SCHULTZ, ed., *Tendenzen der Theologie im 20. Jahrhundert. Eine Geschichte in Porträts*, Stuttgart 1966, 354–359, 358–359.

<sup>89</sup> PRZYWARA, *Teologúmeno español* (cf. nt. 13), 67.

<sup>90</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 61 («Permanent Formation and Reconciliation»), 26 [corrected]).

<sup>91</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 89. See *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 58.

<sup>92</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 61 («Permanent Formation and Reconciliation»), 26); cf. *Para religiosos*, 278–281.

<sup>93</sup> See H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Explorations in Theology IV. Spirit and Institution*, San Francisco 1995, 167; orig. German, *Pneuma und Institution*, Einsiedeln 1974, 160–161.

<sup>94</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 167; 276.

<sup>95</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 168.

<sup>96</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 165.

<sup>97</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 171. Cf. POPE FRANCIS, «Address of Pope Francis to the 36th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus», Santa Sede, Vatican (last updated 24 October 2016), [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20161024\\_visita-compagnia-gesu.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/october/documents/papa-francesco_20161024_visita-compagnia-gesu.html).

not only the radical humility of «recognizing that our greatness lies in the acceptance of the ever-greater God»<sup>98</sup>, but also the joy of recognizing myself as «a sinner and, in spite of this, one elected by the Lord»<sup>99</sup>. In fact, our condition as sinners is founded on a history of grace<sup>100</sup>. Where I feel «shame and confusion» (*SpEx* 48), the Father responds, letting me «be touched by the saving flesh» of His Son<sup>101</sup>. Through the prayer of the *Anima Christi*, Ignatius makes us feel God's mercy, putting us in contact with the sanctifying body of the Lord in whose wounds we can hide and wherein our own wounds can heal. If we have fallen into hell because of our sins, having forgotten «His eternal love» (*SpEx* 65), Ignatius does not want to leave us there, but wants to better make us feel the «pity» of the Lord. Bergoglio points out how when he lowers us down to hell in the First Week, particularly in the fifth meditation, he still speaks of the Lord's «constant loving kindness and mercy towards me» (*SpEx* 71).

Just as he followed Balthasar's thinking on sin, Bergoglio also shared the theologian's Marian approach to mercy, but with his own sensibility. «There is only one sure way to enter into the labyrinth of our sins», he affirms: «by holding on to the wounded hand of Jesus»<sup>102</sup>. But how can we do so? His answer is that of a Jesuit—indeed, that of a Latin-American Jesuit: «[W]e need to pray to the Blessed Virgin, so beloved by our people, that she might be willing “to put [us] with her Son”»<sup>103</sup>. He further explains that the *piEDAD* of the Lord,

[the] warm and caressing hand of his mercy [...] has shaped itself for us into the image of Mary with her Son in her arms, dead and broken for our sins. God looks at our sin with a mother's warmth; so infinite is His mercy that here, where human logic would have set mere abhorrence and repugnance, he placed tenderness. And this tenderness awakens our devotion and fidelity [*piEDAD*]<sup>104</sup>.

«Imagining Christ our Lord present before me and nailed to the Cross» (*SpEx* 53), I, a sinner, see myself in Him and recognize this as a blessing. Contemplating the *Mater dolorosa* who holds the Crucified, I discover in his wounds the expression of His well-disposed closeness to me and of his unconditional love for me, and I find there consolation. In Bergoglio's words, «[i]t is consoling to contemplate Him: what constitutes us is the faith which the Lord has in us and the mercy which saves us»<sup>105</sup>. He will say similar things on the mysteries of

<sup>98</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 44.

<sup>99</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 171.

<sup>100</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 59.

<sup>101</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 280.

<sup>102</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 96.

<sup>103</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 50 («An Institution Living Its Charism», 19).

<sup>104</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 61 (Eng., 27).

<sup>105</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 51 (Eng., 20). Bergoglio refers to GC32 (d. 2, no. 1): «What is it to be a Jesuit today? It is to know that one is a sinner yet called to be a companion of Jesus».



the Passion in the Third Week<sup>106</sup>. With Balthasar, he holds that only faith, hope, and love can rightly guide all these Ignatian contemplations<sup>107</sup>.

## VI. THE CALL OF THE ETERNAL KING, OUR «SAVIOR GOD»

«What saves us is not just “the death and resurrection of Christ”, but Christ incarnate, Christ being born, Christ fasting, preaching, healing, dying, and rising»<sup>108</sup>. In Bergoglio’s meditations, the Mysteries of the Life of our Lord (*SpEx* 262ff.) take pride of place. The *Exercises* make us contemplate the parts that Jesus and the various characters around him play in salvation history, starting at the beginning of Christ’s life, when he had «just become Incarnate» (*SpEx* 109)<sup>109</sup>. Faithful to Ignatius’ directives<sup>110</sup>, Bergoglio always emphasizes the «course of history»<sup>111</sup> and, even more, in the wake of Balthasar, the «dramatic» nature<sup>112</sup> of this history’s manifold events. In his commentary on the narrative texts, he readily avails himself of Guardini’s book *The Lord*<sup>113</sup>, indeed praising this book’s ability to make visible the «living figures» of the Gospel and thus help us «enter into these “characters”», not just «by interpreting them allegorically or by representing them conceptually»<sup>114</sup>, but by looking at them concretely—a phenomenological approach that provides a historical background for the spiritual sense.

The characters of the Gospel—first of all Jesus—have an active position in the history of salvation, true actors. These characters together constitute the visible form that the saving event has assumed, and through them, this event reaches us in our life. In accordance, however, with the Catholic Tradition, Bergoglio is con-

<sup>106</sup> See, for example, *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 218–19.

<sup>107</sup> See, for example, H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Prayer*, San Francisco 1986, 301; orig. German, *Das betrachtende Gebet*, Freiburg 2003<sup>5</sup>, 265.

<sup>108</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 158; *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 30. In his study on St. Bonaventure, Romano Guardini stresses that the entire life of Christ possesses salvific significance.

<sup>109</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 36.

<sup>110</sup> *SpEx* 2, 102, 111, 137, 150, 191, 201, 219.

<sup>111</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 90ff. See H. DE LUBAC, *Medieval Exegesis* II, Edinburgh 2000; orig. French, *Exégèse médiévale* II, Paris 1993. «Scripture first delivers facts. [...] Divine revelation has not only taken place in time, in the course of history: it has also a historic form in its own right [elle a elle-même forme historique]. It is [...] a thing that has been accomplished. It is first of all a fact of history». *Medieval Exegesis*, 44 (orig. 429).

<sup>112</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 13. Bergoglio often makes use of this term. *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 102–03, 114, 188, 209, 215.

<sup>113</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 137–38.

<sup>114</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 137. See GUARDINI, *Der Herr* (cf. nt. 17), 629. Lubac wants us to «take great care that some generalized idea does not gradually come to take the place of the Person of Christ». *Splendor of the Church* (cf. nt. 31), 251 (orig. 217).

vinced that history does not suffice in introducing us into the mystery of Scripture. As Henri de Lubac reflects, the literal historical dimension «merely opens up for us a first door»<sup>115</sup>. One cannot enter into these «figures» without the dialectic between historical event and the *vision of faith*, which lets us open every finite truth to Christ. Discovering Christ in his newness requires first of all a concrete glance, but faith alone makes it possible for us to see the objective revelation of the Son in its historical uniqueness. To reach what de Lubac called «the order of spirit founded upon history and disengaged from history»<sup>116</sup>, we need, Bergoglio declares, «a heart well disposed by the active presence of the Holy Spirit»<sup>117</sup>. And he also says that Ignatius can help, since the saint «situates our devotion within the only possible *time*: the time of the Spirit, forming the history of the saving God»<sup>118</sup>.

Instead of moving from the human nature of Christ and searching it for something that leads us to recognize his divinity, Bergoglio, like Balthasar, sees in the Son's «Sacred Humanity» the only sure way of access to God—a quite Johannine approach. In opposition to what he calls a «reductionist Christology»<sup>119</sup>, he also stresses that the person of Jesus did not result from the union of two hypostases, as a later epiphenomenon. Meditating on the Two Standards (*SpEx* 136ff.), he elaborates, with reference to 1 John 4,1-6: «It is in the spirit of God to confess that the Word of God came into the flesh, *indivise et inconfuse*. [...] The discernment we practice is based [...] on faith in Christ, true God and true man, whose human nature is *indivise et inconfuse* united to his divinity»<sup>120</sup>. In this way, he clearly holds the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed: God has saved us in Christ<sup>121</sup>. Jesus Christ is the second Person of the Trinity as

<sup>115</sup> DE LUBAC, *Medieval Exegesis* II (cf. nt. 111), 82 (orig. 486).

<sup>116</sup> DE LUBAC, *Medieval Exegesis* II (cf. nt. 111), 82 (orig. 487).

<sup>117</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 189.

<sup>118</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 62 («An Institution Living Its Charism», 27). This time is the time of the Holy Church. With Ignatius and all the saints throughout the ages, the Church confesses her faith, with her «Light» (*Mente abierta* [cf. nt. 5], 95ff.) being Jesus Christ incarnate, Son of the eternal Father, crucified for the sins of the world, resurrected bodily by the power of the Holy Spirit. In Bergoglio's specifically Johannine approach to faith, he professes the *credo*. «Every manifestation of God points [...] to the epiphany of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ». *Mente abierta*, 106. «Jesus is the Father's only-begotten Son who comes into the world keenly aware of his mission of revealing the Father and fully empowered to carry it out». In all the stages of his earthly life, Jesus is the «revealer of God [...], of the triune mystery», and «as the only-begotten Son, he reflects God's authority». *Mente abierta*, 113.

<sup>119</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 35.

<sup>120</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 190–91 (referring to IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, *Letter to the Smyrnaens*, paras. 1–4).

<sup>121</sup> «He is impassible and immortal in His divinity, but in His humanity, He suffered for us and for our salvation a true bodily passion». J. NEUNER – J. DUPUIS, ed., *The Christian Faith*, New York 1996<sup>6</sup>, no. 23 (Denzinger 852). See also H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Theo-Drama* III, San Francisco 1992, 213–16; orig. German, *Theodramatik* II/2, Freiburg 1998<sup>2</sup>, 196–98.

a complete man, and he suffered and saved us as one unique, divine Person<sup>122</sup>. His flesh is the instrument of salvation. Bergoglio says in his book on hope: «It is in beholding the flesh of the Son that the Father grants salvation. It is through the wounds of Christ that we encounter the Father»<sup>123</sup>. This strong, constant emphasis on the «mystery of *piEDAD*», of Christ «manifested in the flesh», is something he shares in common with Balthasar<sup>124</sup>. In 1990, meditating on Hebrews 10,19-25, 39, Bergoglio gave a talk on the sacerdotal flesh of Christ<sup>125</sup>. The Lord's flesh speaks to us about humility, self-annihilation, and the cross. Before speaking about sin and mercy, he invites us «to discover, without becoming confused, the One who stands forever beyond all flesh, taking refuge precisely in the humility of this flesh»<sup>126</sup>. He warns of the temptation to «Neo-Docetism»: the worship of a «historical Christ but without flesh [...], a Christ risen who is not a living person, but an idea of hope or, at most, a religious or cultural “value” uprooted from the true love story of the Father for men»<sup>127</sup>.

Balthasar says that «when we meditate on a saying or scene of the Gospel, we do not meditate on a text but on him of whom the text treats and to whom it points: the person of Jesus Christ» and, indissolubly, «the constellation of his fellow men» within which Christ stands as *God-man*<sup>128</sup>. According to Bergoglio, «[t]he encounter with Jesus always involves a call»<sup>129</sup>, because he is the Logos, the «creative word»<sup>130</sup>. Jesus «makes himself seen», «speaks to us»<sup>131</sup>, wants «to communicate Himself to his devout soul, inflaming it with his love and praise»,

<sup>122</sup> He cites Maximus the Confessor several times: *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 131; *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 167. In *Esperanza*, 121–22, referring to Maximus (see *Centuries on Knowledge* 1: 8–13), he explains: «Satan enjoyed eating the flesh of the Son of Man without realizing [...] that with that bite he choked on the hook, he ate the poison of divinity that would have completely destroyed him». Bergoglio tapped into the Augustinian studies of Quiles. *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 235–36.

<sup>123</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 230.

<sup>124</sup> See again Balthasar's book *Prayer* (cf. nt. 107), 155–175 (orig. 136–155).

<sup>125</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 59–78.

<sup>126</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 36; cf. *Para religiosos*, 164.

<sup>127</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 76; cf. *Esperanza*, 70. This conviction will lead him to advise: «We are universal, but we are not abstract». *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 292. He discerns the danger here: «It is striking that any deviation occurred over the course of Church history has had a strong impact on the body of the Lord: on the Eucharist or on the poor (who are the sore body of Christ) or on the body of the Church, especially against her union with her head». *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 190.

<sup>128</sup> H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Christian Meditation*, San Francisco 1989, 34; orig. German, *Christlich meditieren*, Freiburg 1995<sup>2</sup>, 34. See also *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*, San Francisco 1986, 136; *Der antirömischer Affekt*, Trier 1989<sup>2</sup>, 115.

<sup>129</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 15–16. The world, too, convinces the Christian of the necessity of a radical Christian commitment. *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 289.

<sup>130</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 147.

<sup>131</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 141.

as Ignatius has it (*SpEx* 15)<sup>132</sup>. Bergoglio reminds us that in the Exercises, the director must grant his retreatant the space to be «immediately (*immediate*)» (*ibid.*) worked on by God, and in turn the exercitant must «allow himself to be encountered»<sup>133</sup>. Bergoglio, therefore, wants us to go to Jesus «with a ready heart and great desire»<sup>134</sup>, «to let ourselves be touched by the revelation of grace that makes possible the “discovery” of the Lord»<sup>135</sup>. Thus, explaining the matter for prayer in the *Exercises*, the director must remind the exercitant not to omit the dialogues with God. Every exercise is meant to start with a prayer appealing to God (*SpEx* 46), «Thy infinite Goodness», and then to «Thy glorious Mother and all the Saints of the heavenly Court» (*SpEx* 97). He stresses very much these moments of petition and colloquy with «the Three Divine Persons», with «the Eternal Word incarnate», or with «our Mother and Lady» (*SpEx* 109). Through the prayerful encounter with Jesus and the other characters of the Gospel, but first through the experience of sin and mercy, we then discover more and more existentially the Lord who «becomes for us the Eternal King» and «calls us» (*SpEx* 91)<sup>136</sup>. Like Balthasar, Bergoglio understands the four-week exercises as contemplation of—and listening to—the Word that takes the form of a call, *hic et nunc*. They both hold that Ignatius’ intention in the Exercises was not so much to offer a guidebook for taking the right path or reaching perfection, but more to help Christians to learn obedience as Jesus himself did<sup>137</sup>. In the Call of the King, we must beg for the grace «not to be deaf to his call, but prompt and diligent to fulfill His most holy will» (*SpEx* 91), to seek and find God’s will revealed to a pure conscience (*SpEx* 172). And then, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit (365), Jesus manifests himself.

## VII. IGNATIAN SENSUS ECCLESIAE

Bergoglio refers often to the Ignatian Rules for Thinking with the Church. He dedicates many of his reflections about religious life to them<sup>138</sup>. As Provincial he also encouraged his fellow Jesuits to live their mission and obedience with a true *sensus Ecclesiae*<sup>139</sup>. To him, the Church is the *pueblo* (the people)

<sup>132</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 17, 115 (referring to *SpEx* 316).

<sup>133</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 15.

<sup>134</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 14.

<sup>135</sup> *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 129.

<sup>136</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 53.

<sup>137</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 21ff., 149 («Jesus Answers with Faith and Obedience»). Cf. H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Explorations in Theology II. Spouse of the Word*, San Francisco, 1991, 43–79; orig. German, H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Sponsa Verbi*, Einsiedeln 1971, 45–79.

<sup>138</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 128–33.

<sup>139</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 90–91. He quotes the document from GC32 on «The Union



who have received from Christ His fullness of divine life, in order to diffuse it among all those baptized, the *pueblo fiel*, the people of faith<sup>140</sup>. As early as the end of the seventeenth century, and again more recently in 1960s Latin America, the Exercises have been used in mission work as a privileged means of evangelization for rural populations. In sermons, the preacher would lead the faithful before Jesus our Lord, our Creator and Savior, exposing them to the topics of sin and mercy, teaching them to pray, to make an examination of conscience, and to confess (cf. *SpEx* 18). Bergoglio practiced this kind of ministry and through it developed an appreciation for the poor and the simple. Although lacking high culture, they are often exemplars of a «true belonging to the body of Christ»<sup>141</sup>. These people, these believers with whom his priestly mission led him into close contact, are the «faithful people» («our people pray», he says), a «holy believing people»<sup>142</sup>, a people that, he insists, «does not divorce its Christian faith from its historical projects»<sup>143</sup>. They often listen better to their inner Master than intellectuals do. No wonder, then, that Bergoglio emphasizes the privileged place that the «common people» (*el pueblo menudo*: *SpEx* 367) occupy in the Church. Having a right sense of the Church means feeling in oneself the docility of which they are a paragon<sup>144</sup>. Frequently, they are the guardians of an elemental but just faith<sup>145</sup>. In the spirit of Vatican II—and echoing Jesuit theologians like Bellarmine and Suarez—Bergoglio speaks of the infallibility of the believing people; «the entire body of faithful, anointed as they are by the Holy One (1John 2:20,27), cannot err *in credendo*»; they are indeed the Church who «religiously hears the Word of God and faithfully proclaims it»<sup>146</sup>. «Our people has a soul», he underlines, «[a]nd because we

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of Minds and Hearts»: «Our being united among ourselves depends, in the last analysis, on our being united in both mind and heart to the Church that Christ founded». PADBERG, *General Congregations* (cf. nt. 31), 479.

<sup>140</sup> On Bergoglio's ideas about *pueblo* and inculturation, see IVEREIGH, *Great Reformer* (cf. nt. 4), 184–186.

<sup>141</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 219.

<sup>142</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 146, 151, 158.

<sup>143</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 48–49 («An Institution Living Its Charism», 18 [corrected]).

<sup>144</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 128–33.

<sup>145</sup> «Our people are faithful to the teaching: they baptize their children, love Mary, are not ashamed of the cross, etc». *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 16. Throughout the history of the Church, salvation has often come through them. «Thus, for example», he observes, «the way out of the endless Trinitarian disputes did not open up in the ideologist monologues that pretended to be dialogues, but in the shepherds who leaned on the life of the faithful people and discovered that this people retained their profound wisdom, nose, and superior knowledge all in faith, perhaps not rationalized in categories but certain in its orientation». *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 94.

<sup>146</sup> *Dei Verbum (Incipit)* and *Lumen Gentium*, § 12 (the official English translation for *in credendo* is «in matters of belief»).

can talk of the soul of a people, we can talk about its undertakings, its way of seeing reality, its sensibility»<sup>147</sup>.

For de Lubac and Bergoglio alike, «the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our holy Mother the Church hierarchical» (First Rule) does not first of all mean the hierarchical Church as personified in the Petrine ministry. Rather, it is the Church as mystery, still visible in the new People of God. Bergoglio sees this people as intimately connected with a true sense of time, that is, time in God, which «saves us from the bondage of the moment—the time that sets us within the history of the holy, faithful people, making us fruitful»<sup>148</sup>. And the Lord has created us to take part in this people, as Bergoglio intuits. «We are born», he tells us in *Meditations for Religious*, «for holiness in a holy body: that of our mother Church»<sup>149</sup>. The Lord truly makes this body his own. As Irenaeus says—and Bergoglio with him—the virgin birth of Jesus, «given against all expectation», is still continued today in the «regeneration [of believers] which flows through faith», in a «new birth [...] from the Virgin's womb»<sup>150</sup>. He underscores the centrality of Mary's own faith and obedience in this regeneration. If the *pueblo fiel* invoke Mary, this is because they recognize in her not only the Mother of the Savior, but the Mother of all believers. With this, we can understand why the Exercises' colloquies with our Lady have such importance for him<sup>151</sup>.

For the Argentinian Jesuit, again channeling de Lubac, our Mother the Church goes hand in hand with the Mother of God. Commenting on *la nuestra santa Madre Iglesia jerárquica*—«our holy Mother the hierarchical Church», to his eyes one of Ignatius' «favorite expression[s]»—Bergoglio makes this clear:

The mystery of the Church is strictly tied to the mystery of Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church. Mary gives birth to us and raises us, and the Church does also. Mary helps us grow, and the Church does also. And at the hour of death, the priest bids us farewell in the name of the Church and leaves us in the arms of Mary. [...] When we look at the Church, we must feel the same devotion we have for the Virgin Mary<sup>152</sup>.

In her children, the Church is *casta meretrix*: «Her holiness is reflected in the face of Mary, the sinless [...] and pure; but she does not forget that in her womb

<sup>147</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 47 («An Institution Living Its Charism»), 16–17 [corrected]).

<sup>148</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 56 (Eng., 23).

<sup>149</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 240.

<sup>150</sup> IRENAEUS, *Adversus Haereses*, IV: 33.4 (cited in SC 100, 812–813). In *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 144, Bergoglio refers to *Adv. Haer.* III: 22.4 as quoted in *Lumen Gentium*, § 56 and JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris Mater*, § 19.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. also *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 176–77 (referring to *SpEx* 63), 247–248; *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 74. See H.U. VON BALTHASAR, *Explorations in Theology V. Man Is Created*, San Francisco 2014, 41–42; orig. German, *Homo creatus est*, Einsiedeln 1986, 33–34.

<sup>152</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 239 = *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 43. Cf. *Mente abierta*, 65; *Para religiosos*, 239–245.

she gathers the children of Eve, the mother of sinful men»<sup>153</sup>. He also unpacks Mary's title «Mother of the Church»: «The grief-stricken silence of the widowed Church impresses itself upon us as we behold Mary at the foot of the cross»<sup>154</sup>. But this works also in the opposite direction. If we love Mary, we must also love the Church, as de Lubac holds so firmly in *Méditation sur l'Église*. Again from *Meditations for Religious*: «We must love the mystery of the Church's fruitfulness just as we love the mystery of the Virgin Mother Mary»<sup>155</sup>.

The Church's fidelity towards her absolutely faithful Bridegroom brings us to our own faithful fecundity<sup>156</sup>. We in fact belong to a «body» that is first of all the «body of the Church»<sup>157</sup>. Bergoglio teaches his fellow Christians that the «family» we form is «what, for St. Ignatius, deserves the warmest name we can stammer or whisper [...]: the name of Holy Mother»<sup>158</sup>. Inspired by Ignatius, particularly his vision at La Storta just before founding the Society, the Jesuit counsels the people to «pray to the Blessed Virgin, so beloved by our people, that she might be willing to place us with her Son, and also thereby, in this simple request, to recover our *identity as men of the Church*»<sup>159</sup>. Here we recognize an expression dear to Henri de Lubac: *homme d'Église*. In his famous passages on «our temptations concerning the Church»<sup>160</sup>, the French Jesuit denounced «those mundane attitudes that are riddled with “spiritual worldliness”»<sup>161</sup>, another expression that Bergoglio has often taken up himself<sup>162</sup>. The Argentine wants us to act against the temptations offered by what he calls «reductionisms

<sup>153</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 240. See Balthasar's handling of the topic in *Spouse of the Word* (cf. nt. 137), 43–79 (orig. 45–79).

<sup>154</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 243.

<sup>155</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 243.

<sup>156</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 243.

<sup>157</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 248.

<sup>158</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 60 («An Institution Living Its Charism», 26 [corrected]).

<sup>159</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 50 (Eng., 19 [underlined in the original]).

<sup>160</sup> DE LUBAC, *Splendor of the Church* (cf. nt. 31), 279–313 (orig. 241–271). On the expression, see also page 194, translated as «churchmen» (orig. «hommes d'Église»). In *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 260, et passim, he refers to the French Jesuit studies on Joachim.

<sup>161</sup> See *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 161–162. We find the expression «*mondanité spirituelle*» (translated as «worldliness of the mind») in DE LUBAC, *Splendor of the Church* (cf. nt. 31), 377 (orig. 327). Paul VI alludes to it in his talk to GC32 (Padberg, *General Congregations* [cf. nt. 31], 533). Bergoglio has more recently explained the nature of the temptation «that Paul VI labeled *spiritus vertiginis* and what de Lubac called “worldly spirituality”»: «A temptation that is not primarily moral but spiritual as it distracts us from what is essential: namely, to be *aprovechamiento*, to leave an imprint or a mark in history, especially on the lives of the smallest». «Address to the 36th General Congregation» (cf. nt. 97).

<sup>162</sup> *Esperanza* (cf. nt. 4), 187; cf. *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 208; *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 66, 267; *Mente abierta* (cf. nt. 5), 85. In his talk to GC32, Paul VI cites de Lubac's *Catholicisme*. Œuvres complètes 7, Paris, 2003, 248 (*Catholicism*, San Francisco, 1988, 289–90).

through emphasis»<sup>163</sup>, recovering thus the full meaning of the Catholic *et* and «mak[ing] our own diversity accomplish the authentic Catholic unity»<sup>164</sup>.

### VIII. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It would be foolhardy to attempt a systematic presentation of Bergoglio's thought, given his intuitive and unsystematic style. Of course, one can never come to know the whole by simply adding up its parts. In this essay, we hope to have shown, through a few central topics, the richness of his unitary and complex vision of the Exercises. In a typically Catholic spirit, shared by de Lubac and Balthasar both, Bergoglio always somehow lets the whole Truth appear in each of his meditations, and lets every little fragment witness to this Wholeness. In unpacking the Exercises, Bergoglio leads us to a life of *magis*, of the ever more, but he also maintains a respect for the limitations inherent in our creatureliness and our Christian mission—a process that requires discernment, another key theme for Francis that has been left out of this paper. He reminds us to accept limits without absolutizing them, letting them be instead open to the horizon of love<sup>165</sup>.

In his constant references to the Ignatian method, Bergoglio approaches a genuine sense of what our Founder intended—and still intends—to give: a «way and order» (*modo y orden, SpEx 2*). Form lives from discipline and renunciation. The truth that the *Exercises* want to convey is the truth from above, the will of God, greater than all the twitches and cramps of our subjectivity. In order that this truth might enter our thinking, we have to bow down—and this means dying to ourselves, which alone makes room in our life for the all-embracing love of God. And yet Bergoglio, like Ignatius, never forgets that the Christian life is both a process and a decision, made within Christ's own history and choice; and it demands time—not that of our own choosing but the time of the Holy Spirit, who *effects* God's salvific history. The time of our own mission falls within this. Here, too, as on so many other points we have mentioned, Bergoglio draws from the fruits of de Lubac, Balthasar, and Guardini's work.

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<sup>163</sup> *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 131–33 (referring to *SpEx* 367, 368, 370).

<sup>164</sup> *Vida apostólica* (cf. nt. 3), 267–68. We have above referred to Balthasar's book *Truth Is Symphonic* (cf. nt. 8), which he uses often. In *In the Fullness of Faith*, San Francisco, 1988 (*Katholisch*, Einsiedeln 1975), Balthasar shows that «a (“hierarchically”) superordinate reality can so inform a subordinate plurality that the latter is lifted up into the former's unity without being robbed of its distinctive character». *Ibid.*, 15 (orig. 8).

<sup>165</sup> Cf. *Para religiosos* (cf. nt. 2), 33–34.



**SOMMARIO**

J. M. Bergoglio was initiated into the method of the Ignatian Exercises by Fr. M. A. Fiorito who, within the Argentinian SJ Province, promoted the interpretation of Gaston Fessard. From this French Jesuit, he picked up the notion of a dialectic tension between grace and freedom, which—contrary to Hegel—is reconciled by the Mystery acting in history. Through the studies of A. López Quintás, he got to reading Erich Przywara, with his conception of the ever-greater God. Later he dealt with Romano Guardini and in particular his concept of «polar opposition». Most decisive, however, in the fashioning of Bergoglio's specific understanding of the Exercises were H.U. von Balthasar and, in some measure, Henri de Lubac. This article demonstrates the distinctive influence of these authors on some central themes from the Spiritual Exercises: God incarnate and ever-greater; *sentir*, or knowledge through experience; reverence, love, magnanimity; the relationship between mercy and sin; the call of Christ; and the *sensus ecclesiae*.

*Keywords:* Bergoglio, Pope Francis, Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, Fessard, Przywara, Guardini, Balthasar, de Lubac, experience, mercy

**SUMMARY**

J. M. Bergoglio è stato iniziato al metodo degli Esercizi ignaziani da p. M. A. Fiorito che promuoveva l'interpretazione di Gaston Fessard nella Provincia SJ argentina. Dal gesuita francese ricavò la nozione di una tensione dialettica tra grazia e libertà, che, contrariamente a Hegel, è riconciliata dal Mistero che agisce nella storia. Attraverso gli studi di A. López Quintás scoprì Erich Przywara con la sua concezione del Dio sempre più grande. Successivamente si occupò di Romano Guardini e approfondì in particolare il suo concetto di «opposizione polare». A dare forma alla sua comprensione specifica degli Esercizi fu, tuttavia, soprattutto decisiva la lettura di H.U. von Balthasar e, in qualche misura, quella di Henri de Lubac. Questo articolo mostra l'influenza peculiare di questi autori su alcuni temi centrali degli Esercizi Spirituali: Dio incarnato e sempre più grande; *sentir* o conoscere mediante l'esperienza; la riverenza, l'amore, la magnanimità; la relazione tra misericordia e peccato; la chiamata di Cristo; e il *sensus ecclesiae*.

*Parole chiave:* Bergoglio, Papa Francesco, Ignazio, Esercizi spirituali, Fessard, Przywara, Guardini, Balthasar, de Lubac, esperienza, misericordia