

**Part II – ST. IGNATIUS' RULES on *Sentire cum Ecclesia* [SpEx ## 352-370]**
**A. SENTIRE CUM ECCLESIA<sup>100</sup>**
**The Missionary, Doctrinal Modality of Ecclesial Obedience [cf. CF # 2]**

**352: [RULES<sup>101</sup> FOR THINKING, JUDGING AND FEELING WITH THE CHURCH<sup>102</sup>] TO HAVE THE GENUINE ATTITUDE<sup>103</sup>, WHICH WE OUGHT TO**

<sup>100</sup> St. Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, nn. 352-370: their conclusion. [*Ignatius of Loyola. Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works. The Classics of Western Spirituality. NY. Mahwah: Paulist 1991, George Ganss, SJ, pp. 211-214. [cf. Appendix 2 for Latin rendition]*]. This is the **Missionary Modality** for Ecclesial Obedience.

<sup>101</sup> In Ignatian terminology: **Rules**, i.e., guidelines, directives, norms, or suggestion, to be prudently applied; but not obligations [o.c., note on p. 429, referring to n. 100 on Constitution n. 210: **Reglas**: this is the first of five sets of such directives which Ignatius terms *Rules*, in the *Exercises*: those on eating [210-217]; on discernment of spirits, I [313-317]; and II [328-336]; on distributing alms [337-344]; and on maintaining a genuine filial attitude in the Church [352-370].

Each set of these rules was given not to all retreatants, but according to the needs and desires of individuals [cf. *Directory*, c. 38, n. 1]. In all these cases it is important to attend to what he means by **rules**.

The classical Latin **regula** has many meanings: [1] a measuring rod; [2] a pattern, model, example, measure of right and wrong; [3] an obligation, or law.

In ecclesiastical Latin, **regula**, [and the Spanish, **regla**] often meant a rule imposing an obligation. However, by **rules** in the five sets mentioned, Ignatius cannot mean rules imposing an obligation, since an exercitant has no obligation even to make the *Exercises*. Therefore, he has other meanings according to contexts, such as directives, guidelines, norms, suggestions, or models, as when he wrote that **Christ is our Model and Rule**. [n. 344].

<sup>102</sup> This is an attempt [admittedly, with limited success] to pack the meaning of Ignatius' lengthy title into a short one for handy reference. Longstanding endeavors in the same direction have been: **Rules for Thinking with the Church** and **Rules of Orthodoxy**. They are accurate, but incomplete, for his lengthy title in SpEx 352 involves far more than the realm of thought, or correct belief.

His own title is found in three formulations which illumine one another [cf. **SpEx MHS, pp. 374-375**]. Of the three, that in the Autograph, A, best reveals his whole thought; but it receives clarifications from P and V, as will be seen in subsequent notes.

These well known and influential Rules were in the manuscript of the *Exercises*, during their revision in Rome [1539-1541], and possibly during Ignatius' stay in Paris [1528-1535]. In either case, they reflect the Church's stormy situation which he knew by experience in both periods. Many people were justly clamoring for the Church's reform. Some of them pointed out the abuses respectfully and properly, but others acted irreverently and dangerously. For example, one group, the *Illuminati* in Spain, and others like them in Paris, was practicing a pseudo-mysticism which ignored the doctrinal accuracy and scorned the precisions of Scholastic theology.

A second group consisted of those openly heretical, such as the *Lutheranizers* in Paris.

## MAINTAIN IN THE CHURCH MILITANT<sup>104</sup>, WE SHOULD OBSERVE THE FOLLOWING RULES.

In a grey area in between these two groups was a third, **disgruntled Catholics** and humanists who often gave reason to doubt whether their faith was still genuinely Catholic. They were critical of the Church, frequently uncharitable, sarcastic, or ambiguous. Erasmus is an example, with his captivating but mordant satires and exaggerations mocking the Pope, bishops, theologians, priests and nuns. Two years before Ignatius arrived in Paris, an edition of 20,000 copies of his *Praise of Folly* was exhausted. In 1526, the Sorbonne requested Parliament to condemn his *Colloquia*. In Rome, Ignatius contended with the persecutions stirred up by Landivar and the disgusted heretics, Mainardi, Mudarra and Barreda.

Most of these practices were contrary to Ignatius' temperament and typical procedures. For him, the Church was a **mother** and a **divinely established institution**, an **embodiment of the Kingdom of Christ**. Painfully aware of her defects, he loved her nonetheless and sought her renewal – but his tactics were **quiet, positive** and **constructive**. They aimed chiefly at interior reform of individuals through **conversations** and his *Spiritual Exercises*, and eventually they blossomed into his Society of Jesus with its educational system, foreign missions, and other ministries.

He placed these rules about the Church at the very end of his *Exercises*, and in them he is not argumentative or polemical. He is content to give calm counsel. He intended the rules precisely for an exercitant who for a month had been gazing in love on Christ, contemplating his calls for help in spreading his Kingdom and his example, and was now about to return to ordinary life, perhaps among heretics, or weak Catholics. Polanco states in his *Directory* that these rules are given as antidotes 'to those things which the heretics of our time, or those showing affinity to their doctrine, are prone to attack or scorn... Moreover they serve not only to keep such an exercitant from erring in speaking privately or writing publicly in a manner other than proper, but they also help him to discern whether the statements and writings of others are departing from the Catholic Church's manner of thinking and speaking, and to advise others to be on their guard.

Many of Ignatius' topics and details are as applicable in our day as in his, but many too are rather obsolete in our vastly changed circumstances. What is most important for any person now is to catch the **underlying tenor of a loyal attitude of his, or her own, and by it guide oneself and others to live and work in loving loyalty to the Church, Christ's Spouse and our Mother.**

Here is a brief bibliography:

AaVv, *Una lectura actual de las reglas para Sentire cum Ecclesia*, ROME: CIS 1983.

CORELLA, SJ, Jose', *Sentire la Iglesia. Comentario as las reglas ignacianas para el sentido verdadero de Iglesia*. Mensajero.Sal Terrae 1988

GANSS, 'Thinking with the Church': The Spirit of Ignatius' Rules. *The Way. Supplement* 20 [1973]

<sup>103</sup> *Sentido*: **sense, reason, feeling** and many other meanings, is often used by Ignatius with nuances of their own. Frequently, as here, it means **cognition** which is **basically intellectual**, but is savored so repeatedly that it becomes also **deeply emotional** and 'satisfies the soul'. Thus, it becomes **a habitual attitude of mind, a frame of reference instinctively used to guide one's life.**

<sup>104</sup> *Militant*: i.e., the Church on earth, with the human defects found in many of her popes, bishops, priests and other members.

**353: The First Rule.** With all judgment of our own put aside, we ought to keep our minds disposed and ready to be obedient in everything to the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church.<sup>105</sup>

**354: The Second.**<sup>106</sup> We should praise Confession to a priest, reception of the Most Blessed Sacrament once a year, and much more once a month, and still more every week, always with the required and proper conditions.

**355: The Third.** We should praise frequent attendance at Mass; also, chants, psalmody, and long prayers inside and outside the Church; and further, the schedules setting the times for the Divine Office as a whole, for prayers of every kind, and for all the canonical hours.

**356: The Fourth.** We should strongly praise religious institutes, virginity and continence, and marriage, too, but not as highly as the former.

**357: The Fifth.** We should praise the vows of religion, obedience, poverty, chastity, and vows to perform other works of supererogation which conduce to perfection. We should remember, too, that just as a vow is made in regard to matters which lead to evangelical perfection, so vows ought not to be made with respect to matters that withdraw one from it, such as to enter business, to get married, and the like.

**358: The Sixth.** We should praise relics of saints, by venerating the relics and praying to the saints. We should extol visits to stational churches, pilgrimages, indulgences for jubilees and crusades, and the lighting of candles in churches.

**359: The Seventh.** We should praise precepts of fast and abstinence, for example, in Lent, on Ember Days, Vigils, Fridays and Saturdays; also penances, not only interior but also exterior.

**360: The Eighth.** We ought to praise the ornamentations and structures of churches, also images, and their veneration according to what they represent.

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<sup>105</sup> This Rule is the fundamental principle underlying all the rest. It is developed by three groups of directives, which follow, and the Rules indicate. In no other place in the *Exercises*, does Ignatius so fully reveal his concept of the **Church; true Spouse of Christ, our Mother, and hierarchical**. But his concept is richer still. Elsewhere he describes her as **Christ's Kingdom to be spread** [91-95]; **the community of the faithful** [177]; **Roman** [Sp Ex 353]. And as **Christ's Mystical Body** governed on earth by His Vicar, from whom all authority descends **through hierarchically ordered superiors** [CSJ 7, 603, 666, 736].

<sup>106</sup> **Group I: Rules 2-9**, gives suggestions for establishing **an attitude on the devotions and way of life of loyal Catholics.**

**361: The Ninth.** Lastly, we should praise all the precepts of the Church, while keeping our mind ready to look for reasons for defending them, and not for attacking them in any way.

**363: The Tenth** <sup>107</sup>. We ought to be more inclined to approve and praise the decrees, recommendations and conduct of our superiors<sup>108</sup> than to speak against them. For although some of these acts are not or were not praiseworthy, to speak against them either by preaching in public or by conversing among the ordinary people would cause more murmuring and scandal than profit. And through this the people would become angry at their officials, whether civil or spiritual. However, just as it does harm to speak evil about officials among the ordinary people while they are absent, so it can be profitable to speak of their bad conduct who can bring about a remedy.

**363. The Eleventh.** We ought to praise both positive theology and scholastic theology.<sup>109</sup> For just as it is more characteristic of the positive doctors, such as

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<sup>107</sup> **Group II: Rules 10-12:** builds an outlook in regards to superiors in the Church, respectively in regard to jurisdiction, learning and sanctity. The fundamental principle of this group is in **Rule 10: *Be more inclined to praise than to blame.***

<sup>108</sup> **Mayores** means here and in other places, our superiors, the officials or authorities both ecclesiastical and civil.

<sup>109</sup> In the 1500's many humanists and reformers were reacting against the scholastic teachers and their methods, often with scorn, and putting more stress on Scripture, sometimes taken alone, or sometimes along with the Fathers. They set scholastic and positive theology in opposition, but Ignatius saw the good in both and presented the two as complementary. Thus through his *Exercises*, [363] and his colleges and universities, a widespread influence on the teaching and study of theology. On scholastic and positive theology, cf. CSJ 366, and its note here:

Ignatius names Sts. Augustine and Gregory as positive doctors, and Peter Lombard, Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure as scholastics. Scholastic theology was classified as speculative. By inductive and deductive methods and means it sought deeper understanding of God's revelation as found in Scripture and tradition. It was *faith seeking understanding* and in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries it was summed up through such works as the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard [1158] and the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas [+ 1274].

These works fostered devotion as well as knowledge, and presented God's whole redemptive plan. They furnished a comprehensive outlook by which persons could guide their lives. In the 1300's and 1400's, however, many scholastic teachers fell too often into a decadent dialectical of formalism. Their multiplied distinctions became irrelevant to the lives of ordinary people.

However, throughout the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Catholic scholars took care in studying the Fathers, whom Ignatius terms the **holy and positive doctors**. [Sp Ex 363]. During his 16<sup>th</sup> century, Catholic protagonists, too, alongside the Protestants, were developing the study of Scripture, the Fathers, canon law, and other sources of Catholic belief. Their methods became known as 'positive theology', and Ignatius was among the early writers to use this term. He saw the good in both scholastic and positive theology and presented the two as complementary. This thought of his is expressed briefly in SpEx 363 and is prescribed for his

St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Gregory, and the rest to stir up our affections toward loving and serving God our Lord in all things, so it is more characteristic of the scholastic teachers, such as St. Thomas, St. Bonaventure, the Master of the Sentences, and so on to define and explain for our times the matters necessary for salvation, and also to refute and explain all the errors and fallacies. For the scholastic teachers, being more modern, can avail themselves of an authentic understanding of Sacred Scripture and the holy positive doctors. Further still they, being enlightened and clarified by divine influence, make profitable use of the Councils, canons, and decrees of Holy Mother Church.

**364: The Twelfth.** We ought to be on our guard against comparing those of us who are still living with the blessed of the past.<sup>110</sup> For no small error is made when one says, for example, 'He knows more than Augustine', or 'He is another St. Francis, or even more', or, 'He is another St. Paul in goodness, holiness and the like.'

**365: The Thirteenth**<sup>111</sup> To keep ourselves right in all things, we ought to hold fast to this principle: What I see as white, I will believe to be black if the hierarchical Church thus determines it.<sup>112</sup> For we believe that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Spouse, there is one same Spirit, Who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord of ours who gave the ten commandments that our holy Mother Church is guided and governed.

**366: The Fourteenth.** It is granted that there is much truth in the statement that no one can be saved without being predestined and without having faith and grace. Nevertheless great caution is necessary in our manner of speaking and teaching about all these matters.

colleges and universities in CSJ nn. 351, 353, 366, 446, 464, 467. Thus through his *Exercises* his attitude exerted for centuries a wide-spread influence on the teaching and the study of theology.

<sup>110</sup> This is a caution against premature admiration of living persons even over canonized saints. In Ignatius' experience, e.g., with Landivar, Mudarra and Barreda in Rome in 1538, some living preachers were highly esteemed for a while but were disguising their heresy.

<sup>111</sup> **Group III, Rules 13-18 treats of doctrinal topics**, some of them controverted often passionately, and a manner of expounding them in the troubled 16<sup>th</sup> century. Again, the group begins with the fundamental principle in Rule 13, which is in substance a rephrasing of Rule I. [353].

<sup>112</sup> *Determina*: in the meaning of *decide*. Some texts use *defines it [definierit]*. Notice that Ignatius does not state that we ought to believe that white is black. Instead he writes, *what I see, as white, I would believe to be black*; and the Latin Vulgate in 1548 translated this by *what appears to my eyes as white*. In other words, the error would be in my hasty subjective judgment and not in the Church, because the Church is governed by the Holy Spirit and cannot err in her solemn definitions. This statement seems to be an allusion to Erasmus, who had written: 'Nor would black be white if the Roman Pontiff should pronounce it so, which I know he will never do.'

**367: The Fifteenth.** We ought not to fall into a habit of speaking much about predisposition. But if somehow the topic is brought up on occasions, it should be treated in such a way that the ordinary people do not fall into an error, as sometimes when they say: 'It is already determined whether I shall be saved or damned, and this cannot now be changed by my doing good or evil.' Through this they grow listless and neglect the works which lead to good and to the spiritual advancement of their souls.

**368: The Sixteenth.** In the same way we should notice with caution that by speaking much and emphatically about faith, without any distinction and explanation, we may give the people an occasion to grow listless and lazy in their works, either before or after these persons have a faith which is informed by charity.

**369: The Seventeenth.** Similarly, we ought not to speak so lengthily and emphatically about grace that we generate a poison harmful to freedom of the will. Hence, one may speak about faith and grace as much as possible, with God's help, for the greater praise of His Divine Majesty; but not in such ways or manners, especially in crimes as dangerous as our own, that works and free will are impaired or thought worthless.

**370: The Eighteenth.** It is granted that we should value above everything else the great service which is given to God because of pure love Nevertheless we should also strongly praise fear of his Divine Majesty. For not only is filial fear something pious and very holy, but so also is servile fear. Even if it brings a person nothing better or more useful, it greatly aids him or her to rise from mortal sin, and once this is accomplished, one may more easily advance to filial fear, which is wholly acceptable and pleasing to God our Lord, since it is inseparably united with love of Him.

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## B. A MODERN REFLECTION

### Harmony with the Church in Communion<sup>113</sup> Ignatian Obedience

1. Obedience [Rules 1 & 13]
2. Praise [Rules 2 – 12]

**Sp Ex 353:** **The First Rule.** With all judgment of our own put aside, we ought to keep our minds disposed and ready to be obedient in everything to the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church.<sup>114</sup>

**Sp Ex 365:** **The Thirteenth.**<sup>115</sup> To keep ourselves right in all things, we ought to hold fast to this principle: What I see as white, I will believe to be black if the hierarchical Church thus determines it.<sup>116</sup> For we believe that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, His Spouse, there is one same Spirit, Who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord of ours who gave the ten commandments that our holy Mother Church is guided and governed.

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<sup>113</sup> Jesus Corella, SJ, *Sentire la Iglesia. Comentario das reglas ignacianas para el sentido verdadero de Iglesia*. Mensajero-Sal Terrae 1995, pp. 110-142. [The notes that follow here are a running commentary on this text].

<sup>114</sup> This Rule is the fundamental principle underlying all the rest. It is developed by three groups of directives, which follow, and the Rules indicate. In no other place in the *Exercises*, does Ignatius so fully reveal his concept of the **Church; true Spouse of Christ, our Mother, and hierarchical**. But his concept is richer still. Elsewhere he describes her as **Christ's Kingdom to be spread** [91-95]; **the community of the faithful** [177]; **Roman** [*SpEx* 353]. And as **Christ's Mystical Body** governed on earth by His Vicar, from whom all authority descends **through hierarchically ordered superiors** [CSJ 7, 603, 666, 736].

<sup>115</sup> **Group III, Rules 13-18 treats of doctrinal topics**, some of them controverted often passionately, and a manner of expounding them in the troubled 16<sup>th</sup> century. Again, the group begins with **the fundamental principle in Rule 13, which is in substance a rephrasing of Rule I. [353]**.

<sup>116</sup> *Determina*: in the meaning of *decide*. Some texts use *defines it [definierit]*. Notice that Ignatius does not state that we ought to believe that white is black. Instead he writes, what I see, as white, I would believe to be black; and the Latin Vulgate in 1548 translated this by what appears to my eyes as white. In other words, the error would be in my hasty subjective judgment and not in the Church, because the Church is governed by the Holy Spirit and cannot err in her solemn definitions. This statement seems to be an allusion to Erasmus, who had written: 'Nor would black be white if the Roman Pontiff should pronounce it so, which I know he will never do.' [Perhaps a tranquilly lived modern application in the *sensuum defectui* of the *Tantum ergo*: what I see as bread, wine - faith tells me is the Real Presence...]. [One might also ponder the theory of *mega-history*: comparing the Mystery of Calvary for a believer, and the American author, Ernest Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* - as the end of all].

## Introduction

[1] Here we penetrate into one of the most important lines that recur in these Rules: the maintenance and the development of **ecclesial communion** in the heart of the retreatant. The Church needs to be lived as **a single entity**<sup>117</sup>, as a body, or more properly, as a **Person** [the total Christ] who does not acquire its unity by a mere juxtaposition of her elements, but in the harmony with which each member tends to the one vital shared end. There are different functions of one and the same being, in a vital coherent tendency. This is the ecclesial communion.

[2] The vital principal which maintains and develops this mutual correspondence is the Spirit of Jesus. Without Him, the cohesion would be lost. However, the Spirit is not enough. There are dynamic human beings who need to function to make this communion possible. Therefore, in the Church, the divine and the human both form a **mysterious couple**, nuptials, in which neither the human may take the place of the divine, nor the divine substitute for the human. If the human element in the Church functions badly, in that which refers to the 'person', or to the structural, the Church will function badly, despite the Church, who will groan, frustrated, in its interior, without being able to recreate this new 'cosmos', which is supposed to come down from the Trinity toward us. Thus, the Church will achieve its ends very clumsily, as has happened with some frequency throughout history. We need to be grateful that in the new Creation there has not taken place what happened at this first: ***His Kingdom will not end.***

[3] Among the various dynamic responses possible that would promote the ecclesial communion, Ignatius selected two for his Rules: **obedience** and **praise**. Both acquire their importance precisely beginning with the ideal of communion, toward which both are ordered and from which they flow. The reason is that obedience and praise are, in their turn, pedagogy of authentic communion, the path toward it, and its unmistakable expression, its most spontaneous fruit. But going, further, with reference to obedience, would it not have to be said that it is this ecclesial communion which justifies and gives legitimacy to genuine obedience in the Church? Would it not be for this reason why obedience to the Church so endeared itself to Ignatius in his Rules, for the urgency of the desired communion, or said even better, it is on this that it circulates?

[4] We play much on the theme of **ecclesial communion**, as to take care to put in movement all the legitimate means, both divine and human with a few to espouse it. Even more: it is not good to go begging with a certain stinginess the limits of these two attitudes, in that which communion finds its greatest support and expression. Ignatius posits an **integral obedience**, and a **generous praise**, which pour forth from the very heart of the retreatant, so much so that in his/her generous response to be the stable, firm, attractive expressions of one's feeling for the Church. One feels that he/she is 'Church' when there can be noted in this person certain manners of being, preferences, criteria, tendencies; and these are also such a person's desires and

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<sup>117</sup> cf. **A Stigmatine Retreat on Communion: [www.st-bertoni.com](http://www.st-bertoni.com)**

utopias. One at the same time discovers within personal sins, those of the Church, one's own laziness and that of the Church. One allows that the life of the Church is expressed in him/her, with the joy of **fraternity possessed**, of **participated filiation**, pardon already realized, which destroy the walls of separation and of hatred. There is noted the joy of having one sole heart and one soul. Likewise, one sole head, which make out of many one sole language. It is for this that obedience and praise come into the Church.

To achieve all this there is needed **a certain dying to self**, a life-long *kenosis* [cf. Ph 2:5-11], let us never forget this. To die to one's isolation, in a certain sense; or if one would prefer, one's extreme self-centeredness. This is the 'step', the Pasch, in order to reach love and the belonging, or that feeling for the Church in greater depth towards the spirit.

[5] We are going to speak, of the first term, of obedience. Here, too, Ignatius begins with a very high standard. And after this, we will speak of his sense of praise, which is only understood well only after one had penetrated the mystery of obedience. We will distinguish the general attitude of praise and those concrete realities that should be praised in the Church.

[a] As Ignatius speaks of obedience in two of these Rules, the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 13<sup>th</sup>, we will comment on them together. The sole difference between the two lies in this that the 1<sup>st</sup> Rule is as the principle and the foundation of the rules, and describes **the attitude of obedience** as the point of departure. The 13<sup>th</sup> Rule which for some time closed the entire block of these Rules, after having had recourse to the mystagogic [theological] reflection on praise, both concrete and even going more deeply, both regarding its requirement as well as in the more explicit and detailed motivation.

[b] This is the typical Ignatian manner of proceeding. Between the 1<sup>st</sup> Rule and the 13<sup>th</sup> Rule there is the same difference, understanding the proportions, as between the Principle and the Foundation and the Contemplation in order to attain love in the *Exercises*. In both cases, the tactics are the same: in both cases, there is a mystery, going forward and with decision, however, very soberly in the beginning, in order to unveil in all its richness the 'core of the corresponding mystery', after having completed the transforming path of the whole process.

[6] In the course of the *Spiritual Exercises*, it is the mystery of the love of God as the unifying end for man and the personal response of freedom. In the *Rules* it is the same mystery, however, incarnated in that which we will the '**Mystery of the Church**.' And in these Rules, there succeeds practically the same goal: to seek the Mystery of the Church, the 1<sup>st</sup> Rule almost does not discover anything more than the clear attitude of entrance, a species of synthesis between the 'presupposition' and the Principle and Foundation, as was said earlier, in that which asks of us acceptance and esteem of the Church. It is in the 13<sup>th</sup> Rule, the last one on the path toward praise, in which we discover **the entire mystery, the spousal union of Christ with the Church**, the Church as '**Mother**', **hierarchical**, which is what **rules** and **governs** it.

[a] In the Contemplation to arouse love, it is love that we discovers. In this last Rule it is the Spirit. Is it not exactly the same? Do not the commentators say that **Contemplation toward Love**, is in reality the experience of Pentecost with the Spirit descending on the retreatant, inundating each in love, and making each capable by moving each to hand over each one's freedom? I do not find a better key in order to understand this **Rule** than the *Contemplation toward Love*. The reason is because the Spirit breaks into this **Rule**, as if it were a matter of a new Pentecost, and not just as a personal experience of the retreatant. The experience is as though he/she were at the beginning, in the Church, in what which the retreatant has to work through in order to incite spousal love which certainly is the only reality that is complete with the Lord Jesus.

[b] **To keep ourselves right in all things [Rule 13]**: The Spirit reveals to us that He rules the Church, and makes of it one flesh only with Jesus, as the only key of comprehension and the living of the mystery of communion, and also as the sole legitimacy of the path of total obedience.

[c] In the recent Congress on the **Spiritual Exercises** in Loyola, Spain, September 1991, someone asked why there is no mention of love in the Principle and Foundation. Just asking a question of this nature might manifest that the person had not yet discovered Ignatius' mystagogical [theological] sense. In the beginning, there did not exist any categories: mental, affective and not even spiritual, that would enable to understand what 'love' truly is. **Love is precisely that which is discovered in making the Spiritual Exercises, as it is the ultimate key to the Christian life.** And if someone falls into the danger of already understanding what this 'love' is from any less worthy categories, without at the same time achieving an overwhelming love desire for the divine by means of authentic 'love', in order to re-organize by means of it all other 'loves', I believe that it is necessary to live out the entire process and only in that way will anyone reach this Ignatian ideal of 'love.'

[d] Something like this occurs with the full process contained in these Rules. I am referring here especially to the first 13. It is only in the 13<sup>th</sup>, after different exercises of diverse harmonies, and quests of my own proper place in the Church, is the Spirit give to us as a Gift. With Him, comes the Gift of Communion [to catch up with 'love'], that free liberty of total obedience and the response of praise.

[e] From a structural point of view, the joining of the 13 presents the same structure as the human word. At least in their Indo-European roots, it is accustomed to distinguish the hard part of the consonants, at the beginning and the end of the root, and the more modulated and bland part of the center which is more reserved to the vowels, susceptible to significant variations – philologists call these 'alternances'. Here, the modulating factor is the praise – whereas the hard and resisting factor in order to support the 'alternances' of the praise is obedience. Both assure and express a loving belonging – they are, first of all, a language, and not a legal demand. Otherwise, they would lack meaning.

1. ***With all judgment of our own put aside, we ought to keep our minds disposed and ready... [Rule 1]***

a. The rhythm of the phrase leads to emphasizing the contrast between something that one has to give up, and that which must be posited to take its place. The Ignatian expression: ***all judgment put aside***, evokes a situation of election. In order to enter into the 'Elections' within the process of the ***Spiritual Exercises***, it is necessary to put aside one's own judgment: this means, some room has to be left for what is new that can be produced through the motions of the Spirit, which have shown us God's will. Each person needs to keep himself open, and the judgment shuts off the assumptions, and many times even our own heads.

b. Likewise, before Jesus, each one must lay aside his own personal judgment. This is just the contrary of what the religious authorities did in His time: in order not to lay it aside, in order to hold matters already resolved and clear, they rendered themselves incapable of the newness that was Jesus, and they judged all reality from the point of view of their own judgment. It is this kind of 'our own judgment' to which Ignatius refers here: an act of conclusive affirmation on something, for which one even comes to the point of saying; 'definitely, this is the way it is.

c. In the abundant variety of possible rational operations of each person, the judgment expresses a posture that is properly definitive, the fruit of previous operations which culminate in this, one's 'own' judgment. For this reason, Ignatius does not seek, for example, for one to lay aside simple apprehensions, or personal intuitions, or one's own evaluations of reality that can exercise oneself on an historical fact, or some realization of a person. All these intellectual operations are that through which the person approaches reality, understands it, reacts to it, perceives its importance sees the difficulties, or the advantages, foresees its effects. However, none of this so far is his 'judgment.' He remains open to new data, or to new interpretations. And this does not go counter to **obedience to the Church**. One does not for all this close his eyes in order not to see that which happens both within, as well as outside the Church, as though to obey without entering into it, would be more perfect than to obey by entering into it. The only reality that can block this obedience is the posture taken as one's position having been already taken, as having 'posited one's own judgment.'

d. There are individuals who think that to lay aside one's own judgment is not to see the reality, is to remain blank, or to deny oneself the capacity of evaluation of the ecclesial realities, or of those socio-cultural and historical realities which affect the Church. It does not have to be this way. It is not the same to *lay aside one's judgment* as not even '*to think*', and Ignatius does not ask the surrender of thought, but to put aside ones own judgment. It is not the same *to judge* and *to see*, and Ignatius does not ask not to see – he does not ask the renunciation of this latter. There is included here also the fact that some metaphysician looking at all this might say that to *lay aside one's judgment* there would be needed judgment to do even this.

e. This is always in order to an election, or to a determination which must be taken. It is as though Ignatius was asking us to **free ourselves from pre-judgments**, and not to convert them into judgments that would distance us from **ecclesial communion**. In place of proceeding on one's own, we ought always to remain within our position in the Church, in order to opt as members of the Church, and not as persons who are simply individuals.

f. For the rest, also Superiors, too, have to know how to *put aside* their own personal judgment, or opinion. In some early 'Determinations' of the Company, which probably proceeded from Deliberations which our first Fathers took in the first years of the history of the Company, and which do have an unmistakable Ignatian flavor, there is this following text:

*... Should the Superior, according to greater or lesser doubts in those matters which consist in his charge, ought to have greater or lesser recourse to those who are his brothers and sons in the Lord? And the answer is affirmative...*

*... After the Superior will have read such writings and will have come to understand such opinions [those of his brothers and his sons], having put aside all motions which could move them in accord with passion, ought to have recourse to his Creator and Lord, representing such opinions, **and laying aside his own personal view** [should be perchance have any], not seeking nor looking for any other goal that his greater glory and praise in all things, and in accord with this he ought to act according to his conscience ... The answer is affirmative...*

g. We note this contrast: on the one hand, the Superior should lay aside his own opinion, and then act according to his own conscience. This is a very Ignatian *spiritual exercise!* In a general way, it is a very Ignatian exercise to lay aside one's own judgment, and each one must make further reference in that which pertains to the Church. This implies a relationship with the process of the Discernment of Spirits, and included in human prudence is one's own thinking, keeping in mind that *it is genuine prudence not to trust in one's own prudence, and in a special way, in one own views, since men are not ordinarily good judges because of their passion.* [Ignatius' Letters]

h. Polanco offered a similar characterization regarding Ignatius: 'He was accustomed to using much the means of *laying aside his own judgment*, and to allow himself to judge through others, in whatever another might show himself to be more fixed in his view than was proper.' Speaking in his **Constitutions** regarding the impediments keeping one from entering into the Company, he included in these *that lack of judgment, or notable hardness in one's own view.*<sup>118</sup> This phrase, as we noted earlier, illumines the meaning of **laying aside one's judgment** of the rule under discussion, and this is why it is necessary to keep this one.

i. If one recently admitted should give certain signals that he cannot *dispose himself to live in obedience and to the **manner of proceeding of the Company [modus]***, either because he cannot, or because he does not seek to

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<sup>118</sup> Cf. CSJ n. 184. Fr. Bertoni speaks of **obstinacy [CF # 18]** and **Stubbornness [CF #20]** as impediments.

*overcome his own judgment* [CSJ n. 216], it is better to send him away from the Company. Thus, the Ignatian tactic of always having a witness for his own processes of discernment, which delivers one from himself, and from one's own contradictions, or false motions of a variety of spirits.

## 2. ...*We ought to keep our minds disposed and ready [to obey] ...*

a. This is the positive part of the phrase: there is a formidable contrast between the words: **judgment** and **mind** seemingly a similar idea expressed in that in what is asked of superiors between **their own opinion** and **conscience**:

- 'Judgment' is harsher, harder, less flexible. In judgment-making, we are so free if we allow ourselves that we hand over our capacity to make judgments, we are not going to be masters of our own selves.

- 'mind': is something else. By this Spanish word there is understood an interior state of the individual, resulting from a coming together of operations and actual living, in which are included perceptions, motivations, evaluations, intentions, emotions and diverse desires.

b. In a letter redacted by Polanco, but then revised by Ignatius himself, written to a Scholastic who was finding obedience very difficult, and this same contrast comes up. In order to inspire the young Jesuit to obedience, the letter states: '... keep your *mind*, then, and leaving the uncertain and dangerous path of *your own judgment*, and follow the certain and sure path of holy obedience ...' The *mind* can dispose one toward obedience. It is that field in which many factors may enter, such as: the pre-existent and very vivid desire to maintain ecclesial union; my own personal sentiments of personal poverty that are prior also to any critique; the humble perception of my own ecclesial sins, and my own sins in general; a previous general tendency to save the proposition of my neighbor; a good motivation to obey; the arousal of the fact of being the judge in matters which affect me; or finally, a healthy sense of interior freedom in matters pertaining to the Church and the like. All this helps to overcome the reaction, which many times is quite mechanical, of my own judgment in matters of the Church. This means it should ask us for greater mental anchoring [cf. Heb 6:19], with the object of integrating the realities of the Church in a form that is more accessible to the entire person, and not only to his critical capacity.

c. Even more, with this substitution of **judgment** for **mind** there is suggested that the ambit of **feeling with the Church** is not to be reduced to what is strictly intellectual, or analytical – as would happen in the case in which the 'Church' would be merely a mental object. This whole context ought to refer, above all, to the area of relationship, because the Church is, above all, a question of the bonding of persons, of personal relationship, to which we approach more by the **mind** than by the **judgment**. One can undergo the exercise of broadening the capacity of including better other persons, to consider the others' point of view, that might be more positive, to comprehend, to tolerate. If we go forward only with the **judgment**, everything will be more difficult, not to say downright impossible. The reason for this is that in the **judgment**, there tends to prevail self-affirmation, while in the **mind** there is included the quest.

d. The broad area of **desire** must not be overlooked. The **mind** is a concept much linked to the world of desire. It is like a movement that lifts me to seek; it is an attitude that favors suggestions, it gains incentives for its own understanding, and drawing one up out of his own doubts and narrowness. It implies a very distinct manner of thinking, from desire then to think rather than remain in apathy. From this, the importance of what exists in me as a **mind** nourished by the desire to be 'Church', as a previous given prior to all conflict which then proceeds to present itself in the ecclesial inter-action. This is what it seems to me that Ignatius wants to say in this contrast between **judgment** and **mind**.

e. There are two adjectives which accompany the word *mind*: **disposed** and **ready**. These are significant in the light of any authentic theological discussion on the Church as Communion:

- **Disposed**: this means prepared before hand – this involves real commitment before hand, a real labor on the part of the individual. Realizing his own inner mechanisms and seeking to respond these and not to force them, the person disposes himself beforehand, in order to be able to arrive at the level of Christian obeying.

[1] This is not easy to do. It is necessary to know oneself well; one must be quite free interiorly, in order to motivate oneself to genuine obedience, within oneself. This is not a matter how others might appear to us, but much more how one appears to himself as a faith-filled believer, with inalienable responsibility, with regard to obedience. One cannot obey without motivations, or without desires to do this. Motives and desires that come to life many times not only from intrinsic values of the content of the mandate in what is being treated, but also from the level of pure faith, of those values superior to the Reign of God bound to the act of obedience as such, or of the healthy perception of one's own freedom in thinking. All this is well integrated within the person.

[2] The non-transferable commitment of each one is to work so these values might be indeed proper values, so that they might produce, within, affective impulses of the quest for Communion, of overcoming all difficulties. One necessary question is: 'Why not?' All of this is within the *mystique* of authentic obedience. To be prepared to obey is something much more than accepting obedience. It means to take an active part in it, as in one's own business, with one's own responsibility, independent of the responsibility of the superior – and beyond all this how, and why he can command. For my part, I dispose myself, psychologically and spiritually, and in so far as I am able, to the free and mysterious act of obedience.

[3] To prepare oneself to obey basically means to take the responsibility to walk toward personal maturity, without which there is no authentic obedience in the Church. To prepare oneself means to grow, and to free oneself. Of oneself, and based on false human respect that might move us to take other stances, and which have so little to do with authentic obedience – as, for example, to flatter the Superior, to make of him a myth, or to fear his reactions; or, to alienate oneself fanatically from his

personal opinions or tastes; and the lack of any desire to obey - is all that this Rule requires of us.

[4] This responsibility is made one's own from the fact that one assumes his '**becoming Church**', and one discovers himself being called to serve in a positive manner in it. This includes the responsibility each has as the 'first agent' with the Holy Spirit, for his own formation, the progressive elimination of impediments and the exercise of one's own capacities with a view toward obedience.

- **Ready**: this suggests a distinct aspect. The preparation for this is something that has to be experienced beforehand – this requires previous commitment, because it is a process. To be **ready**<sup>119</sup>, it is that challenge to remain on the pathway of ascent, with the yearning to break out into a run. It is more in accord with the genuine values of the reign of God that of obeying over that of commanding.<sup>120</sup> This means *to be for*, as tending by connaturality, toward obedience. This is a matter more of attitude which is to remain in life more as one who serves [cf. Lk 22:27]. Each is to seek that attitude of being unfettered, exercising availability, to remain in form, without demanding too many pre-requisites, maintaining agility of movement, the absence of excessive impediments, the desires to serve. In a word, a gesture, an occasion, would be sufficient to lead one to 'hasten, even fly' to obey.

[1] Commanding commits no fault that one be **ready**, disposed. On the contrary: it will be good that the one whose job it is to move others to act, when one ponders more slowly. Obeying, however, is able to maintain a more spontaneous rhythm. It is the privilege of those who serve, the genuinely poor.

[2] In order for this readiness toward obedience be a stable attitude, there is required a certain connaturality. Whatever type of attitude that is forced, which puts a man interiorly out of joint, might still allow him to function in one case, while it would not suffice for him in the Church in a stable manner [keeping in mind, however: faith is obedience (**DV 5**) – and theologians are called to surrender (cf. **LG 25**). We cannot remain in her as one would be fastened to a chain, or making an extraordinary effort each time that he is to act. One cannot posit the old objection that a violent obedience does not last: it will either move one to cease functioning, or it will damage the psychological health of the individual. Yet, the kingdom of heaven does suffer violence – and the Lord's grace will be sufficient for us to comply knowingly and lovingly to the Lord's will.

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<sup>119</sup> In the Stigmatine tradition, Fr. John Mary Marani, the Founder's first successor as Superior General, was long remembered for his slogan for the Apostolic Missionaries: ***Parati ad omnia!***

<sup>120</sup> Among the writings of Ignatius, that is one that is entitled: ***The Form of the Company, and Oblation*** [cf. **BAC**, p. 326] – there is related the process which his first companions followed in order to elect him Praepositus General. When in the first ballot he was unanimously elected, he stated that deep in his own soul he experienced a greater will to be governed than to command – he was unable to find in himself the sufficiency to rule over himself, let alone even think of striving to govern others.

[3] What St. Ignatius is looking for is that each one might hold to a certain pedagogy within himself in order **to be obedient in everything**. If to this there is added that care in the Superior of sending with utmost accuracy, and if obedience comes only when he succeeds in doing this, then all would hum right along an open road. In any case, it would always be good that **both**, the Superior and the one who has to obey, might hold a certain margin to supply for mutual possible deficiencies, without limiting himself simply to carry out a strict obligation. [In the end, the Superior has the right to command.]

### 3. To be Obedient in Everything

a. It would be difficult to think that Ignatius does not insist here somewhat on his convictions regarding **his spirituality of obedience**: in the light of his Formal **Letter on Obedience** [March 26, 1553] – or his concluding paragraphs to his **Spiritual Exercises**, [nn. 352-370]. Loving Obedience is often considered as **the characteristic virtue of the Society of Jesus**. His thought here is most penetrating and challenging. We need to allow to permeate our hearts and minds these great principles of his **obedience in everything**. It is clear that he is beginning from his own experience coupled with God's grace. The Saint learned to obey in the midst of all that he was doing under the guidance of God through His mandates, both positive and negative, those he might have found either agreeable, or disagreeable – that he received also from ecclesiastical authorities. He received many prohibitions throughout his life: Jerusalem, Alcalá, Salamanca, Paris. However, he was always led forward to levels of which he had been unaware.

b. Until he had realized his experience at La Storta, perhaps this proved to be the convincing key of his ideal of the Church. La Storta provided the confirmation of his arrival in Rome, where he had been promised God's special help there. That experience placed him in the 'Society, the Company of Jesus', God's Son, at the very heart of the Church. This was the realization of his identifying following of the Crucified Lord. The end result always was the same: to be in communion with the Most Blessed Trinity as the revelation of what 'Church' means, and it is to this that one undertakes the *Spiritual Exercises*, or strives to live the *Constitutions*. Mysteriously asks this of Mary, who leads him to her Son, leading him to the Church. This principle is what lies behind **obeying in all**. The practical living out of this would make real demands on Ignatius.

c. Departing from these principles, which are rather schematic, it might be deduced that the most unique innovation that sets Ignatius apart, is **to live Obedience in the Church habitually** as the simple, trustworthy and viable **mediation** in the quest for the divine will. For this reason, it is ordinarily united with spiritual discernment. Likewise it is necessary to detach the richness that the concept and the exercise of ecclesial obedience acquired, beginning with **Mission**. To command is, above all, to **send**; and to accept with all one's person the fact of being sent is to obey with that typically Ignatian obedience. It was in this manner that Ignatius and his companions come to Rome. The **Mission** forms part of the very Ignatian concept of obedience, and is always encountered within its horizon. It is included when this concept is referred to

**Corporative Obedience**, which is, as is known, came later in the Ignatian history, and which is **oriented more to the good internal functioning of the apostolic body**. In the final analysis, of this apostolic body is to function well, it is due to the **Mission**, which gives it meaning.

d. Let us recall, lastly, that for Ignatius, **to obey** is above all to be well integrated in the social body about which is spoken here, i.e., the Church. Not to function in an autarchic manner, on one's own, but rather in harmony with one's neighbor, as a living stone, or living member of a body. The relationship with the superior is motivated for, or orientated toward the total belonging, in life and mission, to this body, in which it knows that the Lord Jesus Christ seeks my life and my mission.

e. **To obey in everything:** is a very Ignatian expression. It is complex, totalizing, in both a quantitative and qualitative manner. This type of expression is very frequent in St. Ignatius – it is a combination of words that suggests a going to the very depths of the question, or a clear attitude, defined, without ambiguity. A like phrase is found in the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, Examen, chapter 4 – n. 103]: ... *a continual mortification in all possible matters*. This certainly means a continued succession of possible acts of mortification, which would lead us to live – and which even suggests an underlying attitude, a quality of a life of **abnegation, total renunciation**, that no one would ever want to leave aside.

f. Here, **to obey in everything** means to obey totally, even to the depths of oneself, with an obedience like that which Ignatius always recommended. This consists not only in the execution of the mandate, but that it should include the whole man, even to arriving at being a true living of the faith and love.<sup>121</sup> This is the quality of obedience to the Church which is being so highly recommended. That obedience to the Church which stops with exteriors is not good. The reason is that obedience such as this, which for Ignatius would hardly merit the name of 'obedience', cannot contain within itself the mystery of the Church, as its motive, nor to exercise it, as is asked for here. Only that obedience that is more profound, more totalizing, can serve as the basis of a living of this type. What Ignatius speaks about here is the obedience he learned at LaStorta. It is that loving obedience which is authentic communion. It is this obedience, even though it is at time with the cross on one's back.

#### 4. To be obedient in everything to the True Spouse of Christ Our Lord

a. We arrive here at the key point: the *terminus* of the act of obedience is thus described. Since it is true that for all practical purposes, it is necessary to obey concrete ecclesiastical superiors. However, their persons are not the *terminus* of the act of obedience. If one obeys within a referential context which is precisely that of **feeling with the Church** – and that to which in the final analysis, it is all remitted in order for the act of obedience to be genuinely **ecclesial**. Only the Church, as such, is

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<sup>121</sup> cf. Letter on Obedience, Masrch 26, 1853: execution, obedience of will, obedience of intellect: cf. nn. 5-7 – this is the 'holocaust'. [cf. CF ## 142-149, 3 levels of obedience].

the genuine referential terminus of this common act, mine and of the one constituted in authority, which is the 'command/ obey.'

b. To obey **the true Spouse** of Christ: most would not agree that the **true Spouse of Christ** is no one in particular in the Church.<sup>122</sup> Only the Church, precisely realized in its totality, representative of the Mystery of Jesus Christ, is **the authentic Spouse**. Neither is always just the Hierarchy, collectively considered, the Spouse. It is true that in immediate matters, and in concrete questions, one obeys the hierarchy, because this exercises this basic function in the Church, that of expressing and urging the mandate with an order to its good functioning, as the human reality which it is. However, it needs to be kept in mind that St. Ignatius identifies the **true Spouse of Christ**, and the **Church as Mother, is the Hierarchical Church: which is our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church.**

c. Strictly speaking, for some the act of obedience, in its integrity. With all its interior value, is the Church. In the same manner that each of us belongs to the Church, and not any single member of the hierarchy, or some particular representatives of the hierarchy – even though each one is always under the jurisdiction of a determined superior – and all the members of the Church are under the Pope – the 'content' of Ignatius' 4<sup>th</sup> vow is the person of the Holy Father.

d. The effort has been to say today that St. Ignatius in this phrase, taken in total isolation, might not be explicitly speaking of obeying the members of the Hierarchy of the Church, but to **the Church as the Spouse of Christ** – this distinction is offered by some, but is certainly not accepted by all. It is as though one were saying: the obedience to the Church means to recognize her as Spouse, and to think of her as such. And the contrary is true: for a believer, to think of the Church as Spouse is to arouse oneself to obey her, in a response which is fundamentally love, **one of communion-identification with her.**

e. The title **Spouse**, is not a mere literary adornment, in the sober Ignatian style, but instinctively pours forth, as the first title from the loving heart of Ignatius, in reference to the Church. We are at the very beginning of his Rules. It is the first that breaks out of the ground, and, as generally happens in his writing-style, besides being the first, it is also the **fundamental** principle of the 17 Rules that follow here. This is **the fundamental principle**. All the rest of these Rules are derived from this **founding experience** which Ignatius wants to transmit to the one on Retreat, or joining the Jesuits: **the Church is the Spouse of Jesus Christ**, and each one needs to consider her as such in the most concrete realities of life. There is required a reverential love, and a consequential love, one that is efficacious, and not merely platonic, merely abstract.

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<sup>122</sup> Some would maintain that the image of the Church as **Spouse emphasizes choice**; while the emphasis on the Church as **Mother**, would be **union**.

f. This image of the **Church-Spouse** is the primordial image referred to in these rules. And these are the composition of a man, most sober in expressions of love:

[1] It has been frequently noted how in the Ignatian spirituality there are lacking mystical expressions which manifest the nuptial theme, so frequent in other Spanish saints, to describe mystical union. However, there is a 'mysticism of service', with great emphasis on the Spanish *servir*- and to oblige.

[2] This is true when we consider only Ignatius' life-style and personal expressions regarding his own life. However, this is not true regarding his idea and metaphors regarding the Church. While in his Diary, and other documents regarding his own interior life, the nuptial theme seems absent – whereas in the *Spiritual Exercises* and the *Constitutions*, Ignatius presents the Church as the Spouse of Christ. Yet, this does not seem to be a mere literary expression in Ignatius.

[3] The metaphor seems to manifest a deep aspect in Ignatius' thought, one that is much alive in the heart of the Jesuit Founder. She, the Church, and not some individual person in particular, is the Spouse. However, it needs to be kept in mind that the main emphasis in the Ignatian charism in this context is the person of the Holy Father, as is noted by the Saint's insistence throughout his *Constitutions* to the *obsequium Romani Pontificis, Vicarii Christi*. Other mystical spiritualities manifest mysterious espousals of the soul with God. Ignatius manifests a strong communitarian, **corporate** sense in his love. He is the mover toward the **union of souls** as the source of mutual love in the Company.<sup>123</sup> He lives his personal mysticism most sublimely treating the problems of the Company and its *Constitutions*, as his *Spiritual Diary* clearly indicates. This strong **corporate sense** is that which without doubt leads him to resonate more profoundly with the Church, in all that refers to her: she is the **one, unique Spouse**. In the final analysis, she is the key of the very union of each particular person with Jesus Christ, because the Church is **the place of encounter**, in which each member becomes inter-twined with the Head, and seeks to be **re-capitulated** in the Church. It is in the Church, or in reference to her, that we are loved. This is Ignatius' thought.

g. From this theological insight, it is quite true that this perspective is much more precise than would that more private and individual bond ever could be. A profound depth of Ignatian spirituality is noted here in terms of nuptials – both **mystical** as well as **corporate**.

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<sup>123</sup> Cf. St. Gaspar *Original Constitutions*, **Part X De Unione, seu Unitate Membrorum**: both **juridical union**, but **fundamentally** spiritual harmony of **hearts**].

## 5. Which is our Holy Mother the [Hierarchical] <sup>124</sup> Church

a. As a result, one could not exaggerate this type of life-style in Ignatius. This enthusiastic out-pouring in Ignatius tends often to be balanced in him with others – but, in all of them there predominates the respect and a certain sentiment of humble contrast. His main model throughout is **the relationship of Jesus Christ with His Father**. This is a sentiment of faith that produces in Ignatius a clear sensation of ‘otherness’, identification, union with Christ, with respect to the Church. **For Jesus Christ, the Church is His Spouse**. For us, the Church is our **Mother**. Both titles as are clear in the tradition of the Church, come together also in Ignatius. His is the sentiment of unworthiness, a certain contrast between his own situation and that of the Church, which orients him toward another type of union, more proper to himself, that of ‘unworthy slave’<sup>125</sup>. His is a **union of service**, of **instrumentality [the blind man’s cane]**, and his ultimate ideal, **filiation [in His ‘company’, ‘society’]**. Obedience to the Church is, then, motivated in a humble love, the fruit of perception of the contrast of his own unworthiness and the dignity of the **Spouse-Mother, the Hierarchical Church**. In this context, and always, obedience for St. Ignatius is a form of humble and loving service, proper to one who has been received under the standard of Jesus, despite his sins.

b. It would be good to emphasize here that the sentiment of humble ‘otherness’ with respect to the Church does not originate in Ignatius coming from his ‘Two Classes of Persons’, or states within her. It is not just that he felt himself to be a rank-less, lowly soldier, standing at attention before the Hierarchy, which has been constituted by the Holy Spirit [cf. Ac 20] in the divine power of spiritual authority, and should be revered. However, this sense of ‘otherness’ is familiar to us in our own time. The sense of lowliness that inspires, and establishes obedience to the **Holy Spouse-Mother Hierarchical Church** is above all, an experience, spiritual in nature, interior, in so far as Ignatius considers himself a **Servant** of the Church, by the will of Jesus Christ, His Eternal Lord and Supreme Captain. There has to be some insistence on the person of the Roman Pontiff. Mentioned so often in the Ignatian rule. The Society is called to **serve the Church, the Spouse of Christ, under the Roman Pontiff**.

c. It is from Ignatius’ **Mysticism of Service**, of his **Lord and Supreme Captain**, incarnate in the Church under the Holy Father, that his language on obedience flows. To obey the **Spouse-Mother** is to belong to the Church, to serve her in an active manner. To continue the image: it is to be called in her **in one and the same flesh**, with the Lord Jesus, as the Spouse with her Husband. It means to reverence her, and to be full of esteem for her. And this is the fundamental necessary **Ignatian ecclesial obedience**, his ‘**interior guiding principle**’ in serving the Church. Ignatius speaks of the two levels as though they were inseparable, thinking of both

<sup>124</sup> Surprisingly, the author – P. José Corella, SJ, [o.c., p. 123] has not included the determining adjective here – but, it is, of course, implied as his explanation indicates. The citation of some Papal documents would be of great help here asking for obedience in both Intellect and Will.

<sup>125</sup> *SpEx* n. 114.

with absolute spontaneity. This means that Ignatian obedience to the Church as presented in this Rule, cannot be fully understood, nor exercised, without this **interior, spousal** and at the same time, **filial** experience. A real present-day danger is to see this lofty ideal of ecclesial service riddled and truly weakened with endless rationalizations based primarily on human logic, personal, socio-cultural and psychological structures.

d. In order for this beautiful Ignatian ideal to be lived to the spiritual depth that the Founder understood it, these experiences can be lived with reverence to the Supreme Authority in the Church keeping in mind this view of 'Church.' The Spouse of Christ, for many today, does not mean the hierarchical Church, no matter how respectable this might seem. Yet, the Ignatian ideal was clearly the Church in the concrete, not some 'abstract person' – it is this Church, with its present leaders. And this obedience needs to be ever greater, ***ad maiorem Dei gloriam*** - for the **ever greater service of this Church**. The exercise of ecclesial obedience and the daily living of the **mysticism of spousal and filial service** is very Ignatian.

## 6. The Place of the Roman Pontiff

a. It is pointed out in recent times that nowhere in these Rules, nor in the rest of the ***Spiritual Exercises***, is there any allusion whatever to the person of the Holy Father. However, it does appear in the Jesuit Founder's **Letter on Obedience [March 26, 1553]**:

*...And what I have said of obedience is not only to be understood of individuals with reference to their immediate Superiors, but also of Rectors and local Superiors with reference to Provincials, and of Provincials with reference to the General, and of the General towards him whom God our Lord has given as Superior, His Vicar on earth ...Even in the angels there is the subordination of one hierarchy to another; and in all the heavens, and all the bodies that are moved, the lowest by the highest, and the highest, in their turn, unto the Supreme Mover of all. We see the same on earth in well-governed states, and in the hierarchy of the Church, the members of which render their obedience to the one universal Vicar of Christ our Lord. And the better this subordination is kept, the better the government, but when it is lacking everyone can see what outstanding faults ensue. And therefore, in this Congregation, in which our Lord has given me some charge, I desire that this virtue be as perfect as if the whole welfare of the Society depended on it ... [n. 20]*

b. St. Francis Borgia commented on this letter to the whole Society:

*... As to the virtue of obedience which is the purpose and guide of the Society and its tower of defense, although I might call attention to some things, I shall rather refer you to the excellent and admirable letter which our Father Ignatius, of happy memory, has written on that virtue; he has said all, and left nothing more to be said: **Hoc fac et***

*vives.* [Lk 10:28]. *I hope in the Lord that if we do what is there set down, we shall be true sons of obedience...*<sup>126</sup>

c. There are moments of **mystical inspiration** which enkindle and enrapture – and there are moments of dedicated **activity** when concrete plans are made. This is more or less how Ignatius' own life unfolded. The **Rules** under discussion have been placed by Ignatius between these two levels: thus one can speak of the necessity of obedience, beginning from the vibrant impulse of love, even without further and particular references to the operational nature of obedience. We need to ponder the spiritual depth of the Founder, the source of these initiatives – moving the person making the *Spiritual Exercises* to return to the life he is living, to the every-day Church of which he is a member, once the retreat is over. Ignatius insists strongly on the necessity of keeping uppermost in mind this affective dedication, and including aspects of the lived mysticism. To the service of the Church, in order to reach the desired level of being an efficacious and operative member in her – this is the basis of being capable of **feeling, believing with the Church**.

d. The Pope is present in the **Formula** of the Institute of the Company of Jesus founded by St. Ignatius [cf. CSJ n. 1; cf. also nn. 16; 17; 26; 27; 375; 377]. With much greater detail, the Pope is present in **Part VII** of the Constitutions of St. Ignatius, **De Missionibus**, the first part of the Constitutions developed by the Founder [cf. CSJ nn. 210-214; 560-570] – it is here that there is planned the apostolic strategy of the service of the Church. This is described succinctly by St. Ignatius as **to assist souls**. These are various stages of one and the same **experience of total dedication in obedience to the Church**. There needs to be an on-going quest within the Company for the most efficient manner of service in obedience to the Supreme Shepherd. It would suffice to recall to mind the **Fourth Vow**.

e. However, it can also be noted that it is only in the context of the conclusion to the **Spiritual Exercises** [that of striving to lead one to discern how to live with deeper commitment in a more Christ-like manner] that there is found the formula, perhaps originating with Erasmus' facetious rejection of it: **What I see as white, I will believe to be black if the hierarchical Church thus determines it** [**Rule 13, SpEx n. 365**]. This challenging principle is not found in a context of concrete operation. Nbr is it imposed on the Jesuits, those who are indeed called, and who profess solemnly to be totally committed to personal abnegation in carrying out the Pontifical Mission, is this placed in the their Constitutions. It is not found in the *Formula*, or in any similar norm that might serve as an immediate operative criterion. The emphasis here is on **a total obedience in the hierarchical Church to the person of the Holy Father in the matter of Pontifical Mission**. This is a higher level of living, responding to the Gospel – this is the Ignatian manner of living: And truly though I wish you to be perfect in all spiritual gifts and ornaments, yet especially do I

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<sup>126</sup> Fr. Manuel Maria Espinosa Polit, SJ, *Perfect Obedience. Commentary on the Letter on Obedience of St. Ignatius of Loyola*. Westminster: Newman 1947, p. 31.

desire [as you have understood of me heretofore] to see you most eminent in the virtue of obedience ...<sup>127</sup>

f. The matter sometimes is placed in more general terms, it is necessary to ponder the heart of the **Formula** and the Jesuit **Constitutions**. In the heart of Ignatius, this bond to the **Vicar of Christ, the Pope**, may be thought of as the ultimate link of a unique process, which raised Ignatius, as this on an ***Itinerary of the Mind***, a kind of **spiritual pilgrimage** that began in Jerusalem and ended at the feet of Paul III. The principal points of arrival in this spiritual pilgrimage toward the Church are the following: Jerusalem, Paris, LaStorta, and on entering Rome, the Vicar of Christ. Each of these points of arrival held an essential and specific stopping off place in the Ignatian charism, and none one should forget that each of these localities left a lasting impact on his understanding:

- **Jerusalem**: represents an overcoming of an interpretation of the Mysteries of Jesus life as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> century a.D. – here, Ignatius came to understand that Jesus had **risen, ascended** to the right hand of the Father, that He lives on in the Spirit and in the Church: the ‘integral’ Paschal Mystery. However, it must also be kept in mind that Manresa was for Ignatius, his ‘**Early Church**’ – Nadal had noted that already in Manresa he began to treat of the interior of his soul and the variety of his spirits, giving him the lord in this great realization, and very **vivid sentiments of the divine mysteries alive and active in the Church**.

- **Paris**: represents the discovery of that which would be of great help in assisting souls, by taking on a more organic form. This is where St. Ignatius realized more acutely the enormous value of more study, and of **having more ‘good’ men, who were also ‘learned’ men**, and well prepared. He had come to know the Church as more anchored in the past and sorely in need of a profound renewal, in order for it to be reinvigorated.

- **Montmarte**: here there came to him the realization of the possibility that to come to the service of the Vicar of Christ, there was need of reproducing, Company-wide, the specific nature of Christ’s **Filiation**, which he saw as being the **Father’s Envoy**. He thought this required of him a pilgrimage to the same land where Jesus was ‘sent’ for the first time to the Church.

- **La Storta**: this led to a deeper sense of the identification with Jesus Christ by **servicing and loving the Church** – the actual Church of its time, by giving one’s life for her. This implies serving Jesus with His Cross on one’s shoulders: for here one will suffer many contradictions. Rome, the roman Church, is universal, which all want to serve in the most efficacious manner, with the full meaning of what is always the **greater service** applying this to apostolic fruitfulness.

- **the Vicar of Christ**: to fulfill all this, the quest is to be sent by the Vicar of Christ, to any part of the world, wherever there may be the **greater need**. [cf. CSJ nn.622, ff.].

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<sup>127</sup> Cf. Espinosa, o.c., p. 38 text from Ignatius’ ***Book of Rules***.

**g.** Such that is the process of the unfolding of the Ignatian charism. There is thus explained how the times of devotion and even of mystical grace were intimately bound with those moments of planning and apostolic discernment, in a harmony that would permeate throughout the entire Company of Jesus and its service in all times. The *Formula* of 1550 offers **a synthesis of the full maturity of this charism**. The emphasis is on serving only the Lord and His Spouse, the Church, under the Roman Pontiff. To serve the **Church-Spouse-Mother** will culminate in the **Ignatian Mysticism of serving souls**. To place oneself at the disposition of the Roman Pontiff will culminate in what is ever the **greater** in that preferred universal efficacy, as if this dedication to the Pope would assure the greater harvest, the greater apostolic fruitfulness of ecclesial love.

**h.** **It is the Church that we have been called to serve and obey in all, under the Roman Pontiff.** It is not merely in this, or that area, or even just here and there, or now and then. The vocation is to serve her in all her universality, both geographical and qualitative, so that this love might indeed obtain greater results. In order to achieve this there is nothing better, considering the most efficacious plan of operation, than to place ourselves entirely at the disposition of the Roman Pontiff, to be sent, to serve with the greater criteria of a greater service, as we want to do. All is to be done without ever forgetting '**the greater devotion in obedience to the Holy See**' [cf. *Formula*], founded in that which the person of the Pope means in a church of communion and full belonging.

**i.** We do not always live with due clarity and articulation this level of our Church commitment. The wonderful challenge of Pope John Paul II, **Totus Tuus**, dedicated to Mary, a unique Model of the Church.

## **7. Toward Communion with the Entire Church.**

**a.** With reference to the **Spouse**, we are all called to the one holiness, while there is **a divinely constituted hierarchy**. Our differences of parties, categories, and even level of perfection are indifferent – even though the central vocation is to holiness. The great challenge is personal holiness and truly qualified, competent apostolic efficacy. It is beginning with these sublime goals: holiness to be communicated, that we receive from the **Holy Spirit**. He is the source of all we are, and all we receive, as sharing in **Christ's** Filiation and Mission, in service of the **Father**. All is born within us through the Church, **Christ's Spouse** and **our Mother**, and to her we are all called to be dedicated, as to the **Spouse** of Christ. She establishes this free circulation of the Communion of Saints, in which we are rich with divine gifts, and still in the disarray of real spiritual poverty, as a Church.

**b.** To belong to the Church means: to give of oneself, and to receive, without defensive isolation. The **human heart** is a great teacher: it does not hoard its own blood – it continually receives it, and sends it forth – to hold it back would be the death of the organism. The obedience that is asked for by Ignatius in his First and Thirteenth **Rules** are not stifling but freeing us to live more sublimely our Filiation. We are being challenged to a profound level of oblation, **obsequium** to live that of Jesus

Christ Himself: ***as the Father has sent me, I now send you!*** [Jn 20:19, f.]. This is what the difficult vocation [cf. **CF # 185**] asks of us, and this vocation is not **temerarious**. In pondering **the integral Paschal Mystery of the Fourth Week** of the *Spiritual Exercises*, **this is the ideal**.

c. It needs to be pointed out that this is the transcendent ideal of obedience in the Church. For Christ's great goal that we might all be one – and for Ignatius' great ambition to work for souls, such finality is what moves us. All we do needs to be measured toward ecclesial communion. Ignatius is crystal clear here and minces no words in his challenges for **Obedience**: both **Missionary** [Part VII – ***sentire cum Ecclesia***] and **Corporate** [**Letter on Obedience**, March 26, 1553, about **40 months before his death**] – we are pondering here his most mature thought. We are not allowed to have ambiguity in our own conduct - as this brings about a given deterioration of the living organism. Vatican II has challenged us to **reveal**, and **not conceal** the face, the mind of Christ Jesus. This is the time – early in the Third Millennium – to intensify our personal mission, to make it more competent. The Bark of Peter is not a restricted Noah's Ark – nor a steel box, but a net. While it is open for all, it is challenging to all who are called to be Missionaries of the Spouse of Christ. The role is to look for the lost sheep – the ship-wrecked, those lost in the darkness – to bring them to the Light of the Nations. We need to supply the oil for the lamps in the night.

d. The great catch-words are the challenges: **obedience**, **mission** and **communion** - some would distinguish two kinds of obedience:

- **vertical**: this is one much connected with the personal Mission of Jesus Christ;
- **horizontal**: the emphasis here is more communion.

The clear danger, of course is to divide these – they need to be complementary. As a Church, our main thrust is for the greater honor and glory of the most Blessed Trinity.

St. Ignatius also has his distinctions that are coordinated:

- **Missionary Obedience**; the 4<sup>th</sup> Vow, Part VII, ***De Missionibus***, the original Ignatian ideal.
- **Corporate Obedience**: a Superior General for Life - when this is 'loving', it is the source of the ***Union, Unity***: not only **juridical**, but **union** of hearts. St. Ignatius explains this in his rule, Constitution 659 – and Fr. Bertoni in **Part X**, following the **Missionary Dispersion of Part IX, on the Apostolic Missionaries**:

...This **union of spirits** is achieved for the most part through **the bond of obedience**, and this maintains always in its vigor. Those who are sent out to work 'in the field of the Lord' from the Houses, in so far as this is possible, should be persons well exercised in it, and that those who are superiors in the Company are to give good example in this matter for others ... [CSJ, n. 659].

e. The other aspect of obedience, that bonding with the union of souls, or communion, is also typical of Ignatius. Obedience is something that one gives to another, in a real exchange of solidarity, when it is lived in the Christian way. It is

important that the 'superiors', 'the elders' – all those individuals who are constituted in some form of authority, should be in the forefront **in feeling with the Church**. It is not the Church that needs to be adapted to feel with its membership – but, **it is the members that need to 'feel with the Total Church.'**

f. As a result, one cannot speak of obedience only in a superficial manner, or as something outside, or merely as a '*let it be*', '*so-be-it*', of an improper distance with respect to what is mandated. But, whatever it means to obey all, and every one of the orders, or prescriptions that might be given, that which these **rules** demand of me with a certain level of totality and without any beating around the bush, is to live in obedience from the very depths of myself, as the attitude which generates a very attractive, motivated communion and belonging. These **Rules** do not pretend that anyone is without sin. However, the retreatant is to take much care and to be fortified within, that attitude described here.

## 7. To keep ourselves right in all things... [Rule 13]

a. **To see something as white**, means **to ascertain**. It is the certain movement of the arrow which reaches its bull's eye. It means to achieve its final objective, the goal. It is necessary to understand this expression also in the key of the Principle and Foundation: **for** - as the *means* are meant *for* the end, which is what is meant by Ignatius' insistence: **in everything**. [This is like faith: which supplies for the defect of the senses in discerning the true nature of the Eucharist in St. Thomas', **Tantum Ergo** – with the emphasis on: **sensuum defectu**].

b. Having been brought to some level of spiritual maturity in the course of the **Spiritual Exercises**, this is precisely what the Retreatant seeks. He is not yet very much concerned with this sublime quests for good, because he accepts, or may not accept what is said, or because of other circumstances of a personal type. What he seeks is precisely to 'ascertain', and this in all freedom, with respect to himself and others, achieved in the **Spiritual Exercises**. He experiences some anxiety to reach, much like the arrow, the objective uncovered for him, desired and possibly elected during the retreat. This is **the end which he pretends**, that which he truly desires, because the desires are now being better ordered.

c. There is in this Rule a yearning for efficacy, as there always is in Ignatius. There is also evidence of one's **overcoming himself**. We do not search precisely in this Rule any concern for one's own fulfillment, or for some challenge to 'seek good.' We are here already beyond that. We are now in the dynamic of 'transcending self' which presupposes clearly sufficient results in the previous processes of maturation. And this is not just talking for the sake of talking, because if we are to pretend that this rule is faithfully accomplished by persons who are still immature, we can still reap great losses both in the psychologist as well as in the Religious. This Rule is not for beginners, but rather for a man already raised to a certain level of Christian maturity by the **Spiritual Exercises** already completed, so in one in whom human maturity is presupposed.

d. ***In All Things***: this is by now an Ignatian expression with which we are quite familiar. We do not give it solely a quantitative meaning: to ascertain always, in all things and in each of the dilemmas of life, as Ignatius would promise here to ascertain always with the number of one's lot. This Rule is in order to gain all well organized alternatives, and not to err in anything. God has not granted us any such talismans which the Church herself does not fully possess, and which for that matter would destroy the human being.

e. ***To keep ourselves right in all things***, means to ascertain in truth, to ascertain to the depths of truth, to ascertain in a final manner. No one in the Church is guaranteed in everything so that he/she would never make a mistake, never to commit any errors, more or less partial. The Church herself many times needs to traverse torturous pathways. The Retreatant, in obeying the Church, will ascertain ***in all things***, in a *composed sense*, to arrive at the end which is offered here, even though at times this might be through pathways that are not always in conformity with human logic, which for that matter is not to be desired that it happen frequently. Faith does not destroy reason, however, but elevates – the logic of the Cross surpasses that mere 'common' sense, applying a democratic approach [for the sake of seeing what people 'want' rather than what is needed] - to what is to be believed, or lived in morality.

f. ***To keep ourselves right in all things*** in a definitive manner may not always totally overcome equivocations along the way. We have rightfully become in the Church very accustomed to the Spirit Who guides us, to recast plans of salvation in the broad scope. Redemption, [or, 'Church', for that matter] for example, assumes many 'Models', each one presenting in a limited manner the union of Infinite Divine Mercy with abysmal human misery. We need to handle, integrate, the many human obstacles – the Hierarchy itself is at the service of God's Word. Pope John Paul II challenges the College of Bishops <sup>128</sup>. As a result, this challenging **Rule 13** neither affirms the absence of all false steps in the Church, nor does it provide any support for presumption. There are partial errors, both in Church members as well as in each individual. What is primarily affirmed here is that, in one way or in another, there will be ascertained ***in plenitude***, according to **Rule 13** that which has been prepared for and decided that all need to obey in plenitude in the Church, according to the **Rule 1: we ought to keep our minds disposed and ready to be obedient in everything to the true Spouse of Christ our Lord, which is our Holy Mother the hierarchical Church ...**

g. By the same principle, this Rule 13 is not opposed to certain faith-filled critical assessments of the exercise of the Magisterium <sup>129</sup> in a given matter. If these

<sup>128</sup> ***Apostolos Suos*** [May 21, 1993 - Ascension] – College of Bishops

Introduction

1. Collegial Union
2. Episcopal Conferences
3. Complementary Norms
4. Eucharist & Episcopacy [Louis Bouyer]

<sup>129</sup> The Magisterium and theological discussion offers many insights as a guide-line in this matter:

discussions are conducted with modesty and kindness, such opinions and conversations in no way would threaten ecclesial communion. Let us not forget that authentic Communion pluralizes the Church with all the contributions of the personnel gifts of those who make it up. When we are one heart and soul, then indeed the Church, or community, is increased, intensified, as Fr. Bertoni noted in his *Original Constitutions*, copying here from Suarez:

**266. St. John Chrysostom commenting elegantly on that expression in John [cf. 17:11 b, 21, 22], 'that they may be one even as we are', states: 'Nothing can be compared to the harmony and mutual union of wills – for by it, one becomes many. For if there are two, or ten, in agreement, an individual will no longer be just one person, but each one of the community will be as ten, and you will find one in the ten, and ten in the one.' And further on: 'This is the excellence of love, in the strength of which one is both indivisible and multiple, and one can be in many places at once, in Persia and also in Rome. And what nature cannot do, love can' [Hom. 71, in Jn 16].**

**h.** While on the one hand it would be horrible to imagine a Church in which there are no differences of opinion, we do know that pluralism can enrich faith, but at the same time, truly challenge charity, union. This Rule would not block the ecclesial dynamism of fraternal correction, in the style of Paul and Peter, a fraternal sharing of

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communication of differing approaches and a real dialogue between the hierarchy, thinkers and the people.<sup>130</sup> Some positions that are taken have at times proven to be contumacious, and these exacerbate the difficulties. There have been criticisms that have tended to generalize an evil that are generally negative and these tend toward disengaging one from the Church – into an isolating self-sufficiency. This is always dangerous, and therefore, one who may discover this tendency within, and tends to be isolated in his tendency to the great harm to communion.

i. The objective of this **Rule 13** and its first motivation is communion. In the Ignatian style, one may note 'a structure of contrasts':

- I/ we<sup>131</sup>: in the first part of the rule, the first person singular pronoun is used – and in the latter part, it is the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural. This legislation does not mean to surrender creativity, for the theologian's task is to assist the Magisterium.<sup>132</sup> However, it does tend toward overcoming, surpassing isolation of the first person singular – as sometimes occurs in praying the Creed: both '**we**' and '**I**' are used in praying the **Creed**. This is a clarion call to the communion of life. Over-insistence on the 'first person singular' brings to mind the old saying: the challenge in some forms of **mysticism** is that it is born in the **mist** – ends in **schism** – because of the big **ego** in the middle!<sup>133</sup> This is really the style of the entire **Spiritual Exercises** – from the solitude of the First Week, in the reflection of one's own sins - there is passage to the 1<sup>st</sup> person plural, **we**, of the Reign of God, as one is being received with many others then, under the Standard of Jesus Christ. It is necessary to get up from one's own self-love, from one's own interests, which at times place before us clear colors in order to see the reality, and in this we might think of the Third Week of the Spiritual Exercises, in order to lead us to the Resurrection and Ascension of the Fourth Week. By this time, the Retreatant is being led to be more of a part of the 'we' in the Church. The invitation in **Rule 13** is to become an enthusiastic part of the Communion of the Church. This means to overcome isolation, without destroying each one's gifted individuality. The emphasis is Blessed Pope John's oft-quoted saying: 'In necessary matters, let there be unity – in matters of open discussion, let there be freedom – but in all, let there be charity.'

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<sup>130</sup> The Vatican considered this also with regarding to the harmony in mission between Religious and Bishops – cf. **Mutuae Relationes April 23, 1978**.

<sup>131</sup> CCC ##, 26, ff.: 'I believe – We believe'.

<sup>132</sup> cf. **The Task of the Theologian** - Dulles, Ratzinger.

<sup>133</sup> Fr. Paul Murray, OP. **[NB]**: There is an important Ecclesial dimension of the Faith – noted also in **Dei Verbum**.

### C. THE CLASSICAL PRESENTATION: Fr. Jerome NADAL, SJ The rationale of the Jesuit Vocation<sup>134</sup>

#### Presentation

The phases of the spiritual life which are considered to be constitutive of the active, superior life [both contemplative and missionary] of Fr. Jerome Nadal can be beautifully represented in the ultimate mysteries of the Economy of Redemption as lived by Jesus Christ:

- in the **Death of Christ**, there was communicated for Fr. Nadal Penance of the spirit;
- in the **Resurrection of Christ**, as presented in the Fourth Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, Fr. Nadal contemplated the spiritual life of grace;
- in the **Ascension** Nadal recalled the life of contemplation and the entire elevation of mind;
- finally, the **Descent of the Holy Spirit** on the Early Church, in the Mission of the Holy Spirit, Nadal noted the most sublime image of that ***life superior to the merely active, or to the merely contemplative life***. In virtue of this Nadal noted that not only do we live spiritually and that we contemplate, but that **through both** we are able to share with others and we are able to evangelize others on **the manner of proceeding** in piously living and there can be enkindled in others charity into their hearts and that each Jesuit can reach out to others or assist in procuring **salvation and perfection** for them<sup>135</sup>.

1. **The Particular Grace of the Company**<sup>136</sup>: came to the Jesuit Founder in his vision at La Storta. For the Saint, the foundation of the Company was Jesus Christ Crucified. For it was through the Cross that He redeemed the human race, and suffered such enormous afflictions and crosses each day in His Mystical Body. The Company is called, then, to follow after Christ in her many persecutions, to work in company with Jesus, in His society, for the salvation of souls. For Ignatius, his vision was '**crucial**', 'cruci-form': he perceived Jesus, carrying His Cross, and he felt himself being called to fall in after Him, in His service. The promise he heard from the pages of Scripture: ***I will be with you!***

This is the synthesis of the Founder's trust – and this is the **special grace [cf. CF # 185]** - in the integrity of the Paschal Mystery, the Risen Christ will not suffer further. He is asking others to follow in this *militia* to be His Companions by means of the Cross. This is the cap-stone of the Society of Jesus, in its 'Christological charism.' It is of great help to think consciously that we are indeed following Jesus Christ, Who still carries His Cross in the militant Church. We follow Him with our own crosses and

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Miguel NICOLAU, SJ, *Jeronimo Nadal [1507-1580]. Sus obras y doctrinas espirituales*. Madrid 1949, pp. 530-536.

<sup>135</sup> o.c., p. 333.

<sup>136</sup> o.c., pp. 342-361, *passim*.

are asked to remain faithful right through to the end. Our Crosses, our 'spiritual sacrifices' [cf. Rm 12:1; 1 P 2:2, ff.] are poverty, shame, our labors, our sorrows, and even our deaths. Our Crosses are already resplendent in the light of His Resurrection.

We are all called to be the companions of Jesus Christ, to live in His Society, to follow him in the Spiritual Combat, as this [battle] rages in His Mystical Body. Our following of Christ is imitation of Him – our challenge is to fight on to be poor and chaste, to accept rejection: this is how we take up our Cross and serve in His militia.

**2. Two Key Meditations: Service of the King, the image of the Two Standards:** the former of these two images presented the ideal of serving in the ranks of Christ the King, of being enrolled in His *militia* – this is the ordinary vocation of the follower of Ignatius. The underlying 'reason of this vocation' is to attend to the intellectual and spiritual progress of souls, as the Apostolic Bulls teach this as presented in the Constitutions. In order to accomplish this **difficult vocation**, there is a **special grace** of the call from God. There is a war on – and the Powers of Darkness will not prevail in this difficult struggle. Through community, the individual joins in with companions in a joint service – to inspire His followers, God promises a reward which is literally 'out of this world.' Christ came into this world in order to conquer it, and hand it over to His Father, to render it obedient to His Father: ***I have conquered the world*** [Jn 16:33], Christ is the ultimate reason for all our victories, so there is a pressing need to remain close to Him. We are the *coadjutors of God* [cf. 1 Co 3:9]. We are His **cooperators**. Christ wants of all in His Society for them to participate in the spoils of His victory already won, and that they apply it to making up for what is still lacking in the sufferings of Christ [cf. **Col 1:24**].

Through the permanent relational character of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, we remain related to the conquering Christ – and through grace, we participate in the very nature of God [cf. 2 P 1:4]. Christ suffers in his Church militant and He leads it through His Companions to the Victory of His Resurrection. The standard under which we are called to wage this fierce combat is the luminous Sign of the Cross, as the only path to the Resurrection.

An all out war has been proclaimed against the enemies of God: while the combat is difficult, the end result has already been won in the Resurrection of Christ and His Realm as they remain in open hostility with sin, heresy, the lack of perfection. We need always to be 'on the ready' – take up the Cross of Christ in our Apostolic Mission under obedience.

**3. The Cross of Jesus Christ:** an underlying Ignatian principle is that in order to follow Jesus Christ, it is necessary to follow Him with His Cross: the Jesuit is not in the Company, Society, of Christ unless carrying His Cross. Christ still does this in His Church [cf. Col 1:24]. So, a believer cannot be genuinely seen as carrying a cross unless each one practices abnegation. With efficacious will, putting to death past vices, the hunger for honors, and the putting aside all temporal goods, surrenders one's own will and proper judgment [grades of Jesuit obedience]. One needs the good will to realize all this, and to bring it to execution in so far as each man can.

All are called in this vocation to follow, imitate Jesus Christ still suffering in His Church – Col 1:24 seems very close to the surface throughout here. The Cross is not

exhausted merely by carrying out one's duties, but to accept whatever shame there might be attached to this, as Christ did. Each one in this vocation is ardently challenged to reject all what pertains to this world and which is not Christ, as all else is an obstacles to total self-giving to Christ.

It is necessary to **seek the Lord in all things** – and in order to embrace Christ, one must also embrace His Cross. Christ will never be found in the Church separated from His Cross. He carried this for us, and continually offers Himself to us. The Scriptures tell us that it was simply [*hypothetically*] 'necessary' for Christ to have suffered these things and so enter into His glory [cf. Lk 24:26]. There is no other avenue toward contemplation [cf. **DV 8; SC 2** – the vocation of the whole Church] – unless from the meditation on the Passion of Christ, and by cultivating the taste and desire for the Cross: whoever follows Him, must take up His Cross each day [cf. Mt 16<sup>o</sup>24; Lk 9:23].

The Cross is the ultimate explanation of both the Church, and the Company of Jesus. The Company of Jesus was considered to be a certain body of men, made up of statutes, tending toward eternal life. The missions and the work of the community are comparable to wings which raise up the congregation toward the heavenly Jerusalem by means of tribulations, labors and persecutions.

**4. The Imitation of the Apostles:** this following of Jesus Christ, in this particular **obediential modality** [corporate, as well as Missionary, Doctrinal obedience] is so proper to the Society of Jesus in the mind of Fr. Nadal that it is little more than an imitation of the life of the Apostles. These men were given the title of **apostles** – **missionaries** so that they might come to know, experience Jesus Christ. The Apostles were sent by Jesus on His Mission received from the Father, that of announcing the Gospel in a variety of modes [***quodcumque Verbi Dei Ministerium***], and of administering the sacraments. This is what Ignatius meant in his *Formula* by his expression: ***universum verbi Dei ministerium***. The Company is called to all this – it shares its ministry of the word of God in sacred conferences, explanations of the Scriptures, teaching Catechism to children and the unlettered, in pious conversations, giving retreats to communities, and missions to parishes, along with the administration of the sacraments. In brief terms, this is what is meant by *every ministry of the word of God*.

The Apostles were sent in every land [***quocumque***] by the Lord Jesus [cf. ***Euntes docete...!*** - the Missionary Discourse after the resurrection – cf. Mt 28] – the Jesuits were sent into every land by the Roman Pontiff. The Apostles wandered the face of the globe – and did not have stable monasteries, but they sought the Lord in all things, in every place, with every ministry, and every soul. This is the **principal end** of the Society: that they, like the fishermen Apostles, were called to wander the face of the globe to extend the Kingdom of Heaven by 'fishing' believers from all the streams of life.

For the **Original 12**, their **vows** were the **Lord's evangelical counsels**. There was **no distinct habit** for the Apostles – thus in Rome and everywhere, the early Jesuits dressed as did the better clergymen of their area. While the Apostles prayed in the Company of Jesus, they did not assume the practice of **monastic Choir**. Their main task was to communicate the Body of the Lord, and for their ministries, simply imitate the **Apostolic Mode of Living: in obedience to Christ Jesus – by obeying**

**the Roman Pontiff – modeled on the obedient Jesus, as He was to His Father.** The Society simply imitated the **Apostolic endeavor.** The Jesuits professed themselves to be **servants of the Roman Pontiff [obsequi – servire – auxiliary].**

Being in the Company of Jesus, they were taught how to pray, to give up their own goods – they undertook the six Experiences of Formation: working in hospitals; going on pilgrimage unsupported; extended practice in preaching if they are priests; teaching catechism to the young and unlettered.

**5. The Heart of the Jesuit Vocation<sup>137</sup>:** the very core of this calling is to place one's entire life under the care of Jesus Christ, in His activity, movements and directions. **The incarnate manifestation of the Will of the Risen Christ is the will of the Roman Pontiff.** The solemn **Fourth Vow** is the profession of **the full imitation of Jesus Christ.** All is meant to be done in the Society for the greater glory of God.

As there are various levels of gravity, importance in Apostolic Service, St. Ignatius devised a diversity of **Grades of Service and Juridical Belonging,** accommodated to the seriousness of the various works of the Apostolic Mission, the various talents of each candidate and the variety of talents. The main ask in the Society is the almost restless search to **serve the Lord in all things, to seek Him everywhere, in the perpetual business of winning over souls for Jesus Christ.** Each candidate [*quicumque*] is called to the perfection of intellect and spirit, in accord with native talent and graces received. All learning is subordinated to the spiritual life.

There is a gradated approach to Apostolic Service and Juridical membership: the Six Experiments are a gradual preparation for the **more grave ministries, accommodated always** to the changing times, places and needs of the Roman Pontiff. All are called to serve Jesus Christ, the Son of God - through the Church, the Spouse of Christ – represented by the person of the Roman Pontiff.

There is required supreme reverence and observance publicly manifested toward the Apostolic See and the person of the Roman Pontiff. He is the Vicar of Christ, the Bishop and Pastor of the Universal Church, whose dignity and authority of jurisdiction on earth is supreme. Along with this, it is only right that reverence should be shown to all bishops, Pastors in the universal hierarchy of the Roman Church.

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<sup>137</sup> Nicolau, o.c., pp. 530, ff. *ratio Vocationis Societatis Iesu.*