

MY TURN

The Report to the Procurators' Congregation (review #104) elicited numerous knowledgeable reflections from ignatian colleagues. The following three have particular expertise in their own areas.

Annotation 18: Keeping Christ in Sight in the Church

Precis: The author, a participant in Rome Consulation 2004, responds to paragraphs 3, 11, and 13 in the Fr Tetlow's Report. Experienced givers of the Exercises in Australia, lay and Jesuit, formed an association. They had to decide standards for membership and how they apply to laity and Jesuits. The group currently searches for an appropriate appreciation of Annotation 18. The experience of its chair, recounted here, highlights the annotation's applications and importance.

Using the development of “Companions in the Ministry of the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises” (Companions) as a framework, I will describe my own experience of receiving and giving Annotation 18 Exercises. In this way I hope to provide some indications about the potential of Annotation 18 exercises for helping us to keep Christ in sight in the Church. Along the way I will offer some thoughts about the desirability of experience and formation for the giver of Annotation 18 Exercises.

Companions is a national professional association setting standards of formation, ethical practice, and accountability for Jesuits, lay people, and religious engaged in the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises. Companions does not offer programmes of formation; that task belongs to other organisations. An annual three day conference-retreat helps members to create a sense of community as we celebrate our desire to bring Christ to the world by way of the Spiritual Exercises.

As inaugural chair of Companions, I have experienced first hand the

complexities involved in bringing this initiative to life. Of relevance here is the strong discussion of criteria for membership. After lengthy deliberation, Companions decided to offer three levels of membership: those qualified to give the Spiritual Exercises according to Annotations 19 and 20, those qualified to give Annotation 18 Exercises, and those who are students enrolled in programmes of formation.

Criteria for Annotation 19 and 20 membership have been relatively easy to develop and the applications relatively easy to process. Eligibility criteria at this level include a minimum of two hundred classroom contact hours plus non-contact study hours together with a minimum of fifty hours of supervision, either one-to-one or in a group. Demonstrating equivalent competence may satisfy these criteria; however, applicants should normally meet a substantial proportion of the formal requirements. These are the requirements that most students enrolled in programs are working to meet.

Developing criteria for Annotation 18 membership has been more challenging. What exactly are Annotation 18 Exercises? How can one be considered qualified to give them? What does the giver of Annotation 18 Exercises do? Must the giver of Annotation 18 Exercises be supervised? Can one go off on one's own and give Annotation 18 Exercises?

The committee welcomes the current discussion in the international Ignatian community concerning giving and receiving Annotation 18 Exercises. We feel we have only just begun to explicate the practice and potential of these exercises. In Australia, they are usually offered in the context of a parish reflection day or weekend, perhaps focusing on the examen and simple prayer. The three-week retreat in daily life is also considered an application of Annotation 18. The annotation addresses the matter of aptitude for particular exercises and the implications of that deserve more study.

Criteria pertaining to Annotation 18 membership in Companions includes a minimum of one hundred classroom contact hours plus non-contact hours, and a minimum of twenty hours of one-to-one or group supervision. As in the case of Annotation 19 and 20 membership, applicants may apply by demonstrating equivalent competence.

Over time, I've heard arguments ranging from the need for freedom to

give Annotation 18 Exercises “spontaneously” to the need for givers of Annotation 18 to have completed rigorous formation courses with ongoing individual and group supervision. My experience of being part of the Companions committee charged with the responsibility of steering the most appropriate way through these strongly contested issues dissuades me from offering a theoretical discussion. Instead, I will be ignatian. I will tell you a story so that we may reflect together on my experience as a receiver and giver of these exercises.

Many years ago, I moved to the Catholic Church from a Protestant faith tradition to which I had chosen to make a strong commitment. While I was still in this tradition, Catholic friends invited me to help renew their parish youth mass, and, perhaps a year or so later, as my friends went forward to receive communion, I heard some disturbing news: “If you want to keep me in sight, follow me here.” Initially it seemed sensible to decline. However, ensuing desolation encouraged me to re-think my position.

I began my inquiry into the Church through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.) coordinated by members of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. We progressed according to our understanding that the Spirit was drawing us to the Lord, and that the Lord would place us with Christ in the context of institutional commitment. To some extent, instruction throughout the initiation programme could be compared to giving and receiving Annotation 18 Exercises. Prayer, reflection on life in preparation for general confession, sacraments, scripture, the commandments, consideration of faith acting justly, and a little theology disposed candidates to the prompting of the Spirit.

My conversion to Catholicism invited a second stretch of desolation which left me longing for my former church community and my work in evangelisation. I was referred to a Jesuit to talk about my despair and

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over time we made some sense of my experience. The examen helped me to find tranquillity as I grappled with change, and I began to attend mass during the week as well as on the weekend because that was where I expected to catch sight of Christ.

My experience of the R.C.I.A., the Renewal, and Annotation 18 Exercises reminds me of Ignatius' months in Manresa and his experience of tranquillity followed by doubt and then illumination. Interestingly, Nadal tells us that at this time Ignatius was exercising himself for some time on the points of the First Week, and that the fruit of these exercises was his increased desire to imitate Christ and be of service to society. As others have commented, particularly with reference to the illumination beside the Cardoner, Ignatius emerged from his experience at Manresa completely transformed in his interior self. This transformation was not just one more turning point in his life; it would affect the founding and entire existence of the Society.

Clearly my own progress was the fruit of Annotation 18 Exercises. In time I made the Annotation 19 retreat because I evidenced the "necessary apti-tude" for this more demanding experience. Annotation 18 Exercises can be an effective instrument for ascertaining suitability for Annotation 19 and 20 retreats. At the end of the First Week of my Annotation 19 retreat, the guide explained that I was progressing well, and that I indicated the necessary aptitude for continuing on to the Second Week. An assessment at the end of the First Week echoes the extensive reference to aptitude in the Annotation 18.

Not long after my Annotation 19 retreat, I was asked to work in a Jesuit parish with men and women who were struggling, as I had struggled, with the transition into full communion with the Catholic Church. The guide who had given me my retreat acted as my mentor in this work, and generous assistance from parish staff was always available. My way of proceeding was to offer parts of my own Annotation 19 retreat, as seemed helpful, particularly the examen, prayer with the Gospels, Commandments, gifts of the Spirit, and sacraments. Much depended on the person's aptitude and desire for progress.

Today most people who come to see me are Catholic women and men

who are searching for a generous and realistic appreciation of both self and Church. I've found that a good way of proceeding is to engage in the informality of Ignatian spiritual conversation. The examen provides the framework and other Annotation 18 Exercises provide stimulus for conversation. Much can be gained by offering conversational opportunities for women and men to consider the reality and implications of being a member of the Church in our wonderful but hurting society.

I hope my story shows something about the potential for Annotation 18 Exercises to help people keep Christ in sight in the Church. I suggest that these exercises can provoke strong spiritual movement, which warrants for the giver a formation and at least some form of mentoring. Belonging to a community of mission is an ignatian way of proceeding and so the question about going off on one's own to give exercises isn't really a question after all.

Recently I made an Annotation 20 retreat in Spain at the Cova Sant Ignasi and the Centro de San Ignacio de Loyola. This wonderful, life-shaping experience strengthens my hope that Companions will continue to contribute to the conversation about what is required so that givers of Exercises can more effectively help others keep Christ in sight in the Church.

Ruth Morgan
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An Umbrella for the Provinces

Precis: The author has been national president of the Christian Life Communities in the United States and an international advisor for many years. She is at present on the staff of the Detroit Province in charge of public relations and communications. She responds broadly to the paragraph 12 of the report on spirituality to the past procurators' congregation.

I have heard the word “diminishment” spoken more and more these days, as there are not as many Jesuit Novices as there were and the provinces are aging. But perhaps diminishment can be looked at as a call to the Society of Jesus. And along with the call comes a challenge.

I believe the call and challenge to the Society today is to look more deeply to the foundational importance and continuance of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. We have such a powerful spirituality, marked on all sides by the gift of discernment. On a personal level, I can truly say I have grown in it and find it invaluable in determining my commitments and way of life. I am very deeply involved in Christian Life Communities and have been for more than forty years. When I felt the call to be involved in CLC, it was ignatian spirituality that drew me. In today’s world we take so many things for granted. We don’t take valuable time to consider what is most important and what is for “the greater honor and glory of God”. Ignatian spirituality and the Exercises provide essential tools in this regard.

Ignatian spirituality has important implications on an organizational level, as well. When I reflect back on some of the leadership positions I held in the CLC Movement, I recall that some of the most painful and joyful experiences came when we had decisions to make. Those situations where we took the time to use our tools of discernment were by far the most productive and powerful. In hindsight, I can also see by contrast that those situations that were most difficult and that we did not resolve satisfactorily were the ones where we did not trust and follow an ignatian discernment process, letting our decisions grow and mature.

How would I see an increased emphasis on ignatian spirituality and the Exercises reflected within the Society? What would it look like? Well, it would seem to me that it should be evident in organizational structure. In other words, alongside assistants for pastoral and social ministries, finances and education – and always working in collaboration with them – should be an Assistant for the Ministry of Spirituality and Integration of the Spiritual Exercises. To a certain extent (as was noted in paragraph 12 of the Report) this is already happening in many Jesuit provinces

throughout the world. To be clear: What I am suggesting would take the process a step farther, so that *all* provinces would include assistants for ignatian spirituality, and *all* substantive decisions would be weighed using ignatian tools. You might say I am looking for an ideal situation – I guess I am. But please allow me to dream and put this into context.

I envision ignatian spirituality and the Exercises as a huge umbrella, over-arching and encompassing each province (and perhaps each assistancy). The umbrella, in my mind, represents ignatian spirituality in all of its forms, and with all of its dynamics. Beneath this umbrella one would first find the provincial. Working with the provincial, at the highest level, should be a layperson (woman or man) and a Jesuit (where possible) whose primary responsibility is to assist the provincial in carrying out the works of the province, by helping to keep those works grounded in and consistent with ignatian spirituality. Assistants and Counsellors would continue to operate in their present form, as would the province apostolates (i.e., social, pastoral, missions, retreat houses, development, communications, finances, formation, education, health care, CIC, JVC, ILVC, etc.). The new element that I foresee is that all of these would communicate regularly with the assistants to the provincial whose responsibility is to ensure that every work is infused and in concert with ignatian spirituality.

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In my experience, in many cases, decisions within and among Jesuit provinces and apostolic works are not measured or processed using our gift of ignatian discernment. This is an enormous loss. To help integrate ignatian spirituality as a consistent mark of Jesuit decision-making, and to help guarantee that this rich resource is both known and implemented at all levels, the provincial's assistant(s) for spirituality could be utilized at all levels, for instance, as resources for training, as leaders and facilitators for individual and group discernment processes, and so forth.

Fear of the unknown may well come into play if this "ignatian spirituality umbrella" and these new assistants' positions were to be

created and implemented in each province. However, I truly believe that patience, deep listening, faith sharing and on-going evaluation among the various parties would make the model workable – and a living model, itself, of strong ignatian discernment.

While I was reflecting on this question, I was traveling and in one airport I walked into the chapel. While there, I came across a wonderful piece of frayed fabric hanging on the wall. It seemed to be there for travelers, as it depicted many roads and hills and valleys. The descriptive title read: “*Frayed* represents both a present time, when the fabric of life is worn and raveling, and a possible future time offering a variety of new patterns or opportunities. The task of moving from the old to the new requires trust and courage.”

It struck me then and does now that perhaps we who hold ignatian spirituality dear need it to be more a part of the everyday “fabric” of our lives. We must not be afraid to look at new opportunities to apply and live it out consistently, with courage and with great enthusiasm. One very concrete way to do this would be for provinces to operate at every level under an “ignatian umbrella”, with persons in leadership explicitly identified and trained to serve as resources in this context. Can the provinces and assistancies take such a leap of faith?

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Reviving the Ignatian Culture in the South Asian Assistancy

Precis: The author is the director of the Ignatian Spirituality Institute for South Asia, based in Mumbai. He holds a doctorate in ignatian spirituality from St Louis University and participated in the Rome Consultation 2002. He responds to the Report by surveying the situation of ignatian spirituality in India.

Reflecting on the various works of Jesuits, one sometimes wonders if many of these good and effective ministries are the fruits of the Spiritual Exercises and based on the Ignatian pathway to God. Jesuits in South Asia are involved in very challenging and sometimes extraordinary works. But once again the question one asks is, Would they be doing differently if they were not members of the Society of Jesus?

Karl Rahner had once said that ignatian spirituality and mysticism belong to the future. That future seems to be now. People in different parts of the world are thirsting for spirituality today more than ever. Buddhists shrines and Hindu gurus cannot cope with the crowds that flock around them trying to find answers to their everyday questions and the meaning of their lives.

Church theologians and ignatian scholars are now confronted with the growing burning issue of this age, namely, the theology of pluralism. The relationship between Christianity and the world religions has replaced Libe-ration Theology, that held center stage for a little over two decades. Western certainty and superiority is losing its hold on the masses that are sincerely searching for a meaningful relationship with the spiritual and the divine. Fortifying the well or beautifying it without any interest in the river of life forces those who are both sincere and mature to look elsewhere.

IGNIS, The Ignatian Spirituality Institute for South Asia, has tried to respond to this reality by attempting to revive the ignatian culture in the Assistancy. The various ignatian ministries are meant to give people a taste of how profound, effective, and relevant ignatian spirituality is especially in this day and age.

The Ignatian Syllabus for Jesuit Scholastics. Superiors and provincials have been aware and concerned for many years that after the Novitiate most Jesuits do not hear about Ignatius or our spiritual heritage until tertianship. Whatever a Jesuit manages to pick up during these years

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hopefully will last for some time. Many attempts were made in the past to draw up a plan but none seemed to have worked. IGNIS has worked out a detailed syllabus for each and every stage of formation from the end of the novitiate until ordination. The Assistancy Delegate for Formation, Joseph Thadavanal, has enforced this syllabus, appointing those in charge of the various stages of formation in every province to be responsible for the implementation of this project and accountable to him.

The syllabus covers the major writings of Ignatius: the *Autobiography*, *Spiritual Exercises*, *Constitutions*, the *Spiritual Journal*, and a few selected letters. Significant documents of the post-Vatican II general congregations are included in the syllabus together with some of the writings of our superiors general, Fr Arrupe and Fr Kolvenbach. The syllabus is directly related to the stage of formation the scholastic is in and relevant to his life situation. It is worked out both personally and in groups. Every year each scholastic has an assignment that has to be turned in to the person in charge.

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The Ignatian Seminar. The Ignatian Seminar runs every year from 4 January until 4 April in Mumbai. In the last seven years, it has had an average of 12 participants a year. For Whom: Jesuits, priests, religious, and lay persons who are personally interested in using ignatian spirituality in their ministry as directors of novices, juniors, or tertians; in spiritual direction, retreats, or in their personal lives. The Method: The Seminar is an in-depth study of the basic writings of St. Ignatius: the *Mysticism of the Testament* (*Autobiography*) and the *Spiritual Journal*, the dynamics of the *Spiritual Exercises*, and the spirituality of the *Constitutions*. There are no lectures. Each participant first studies the Ignatian text and supplementary sources that are provided. The participants then meet in their study groups to pool personal findings, reflections, questions, and clarifications. The director of the seminar does a final summing up. Help is also made available for those interested in preparing short courses in

ignatian spirituality, retreats of three, five, eight, or thirty days, and so forth. A re-capitulation of the Ignatian sources is made through the study of Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*.

Philip Terrasa, S.J., helps out in the practical part of the seminar, that is, using ignatian principles in our ministry, especially in spiritual direction and retreats. The participants also form groups for spiritual conversation, in which they share how what is studied becomes a part of their personal lives. The seminar concludes with a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Francis Xavier in Goa followed by an 8-day ignatian retreat from 26 March to 4 April.

The seminar has so far trained several Jesuit novice directors and those of other religious congregations. Five of the men running tertianships in India at present have done it. The Ignatian Seminar has also trained men and women to be spiritual directors in houses of formation. Jesuits and others have gained confidence in making and giving the Exercises, even the long retreat of Annotation 20. So far, the seminar has drawn participants from different parts of India and from the United States, Spain, Singapore, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.

IGNIS and The Jesuit Educational Association (JEA). The secretary of JEA, Herman Castelino, SJ, has organized meetings of principals and headmasters of Jesuit schools in the southern and the central zones. These include ten of the twenty province units of the assistancy. IGNIS helped participants from the schools first to create an ignatian culture among the Jesuit team and then to train the teaching staff to pass it on to the students and the parents. IGNIS has also conducted programmes for the teaching staff of schools run by Jesuits and others, even non-Christians that were looking for spirituality in their personal lives and in the school environment.

IGNIS and Jesuit Provinces. Over the years, Jesuit provincials and provincials of some other religious congregations whose lives are based on Ignatian Spirituality have organized graded programmes for significant members of the province and sometimes for the whole province. Most of these programmes have ended with a retreat for the senior members and another for the ones in formation. IGNIS has so far worked with fifteen

Jesuit provinces in South Asia. A couple of provinces have formed a province team for studying, growing in, and fostering ignatian spirituality in their own lives and the lives of others in the province.

IGNIS and the CLC. The Christian Life Community in India under the leadership of Jesuit Anthony V. DSouza, its newly appointed Ecclesiastical Assistant, has come alive once again. The focus now is on the spiritual foundation of the CLC. IGNIS has done several programmes for the National Executive Committee of the CLC. Beginning with the basic writings of Ignatius, IGNIS has been able to help the CLC leadership explore and experience the mystical heights of the spiritual heritage. These in turn have gone back to their individual areas and passed on the precious ignatian way to other CLC members.

IGNIS and the Charismatic Renewal. The Charismatic Renewal leadership in certain parts of India has turned to IGNIS to help them with the tools of ignatian discernment. The dynamics and principles involved in ignatian discernment have taught people to make discernment not just a method or a strategy, but a way of life.

Conclusion. With the support of the provincial of India and the members of the Jesuit Conference of South Asia, IGNIS is hopeful of deepening the ignatian experience among the Jesuits and those they work with. It also hopes to extend its ministries to those other provinces that might need extra help. After the experience with the Jesuit schools, IGNIS would like to venture into other assistancy organizations such as Jesuits in Pastoral Work, Social Action, and Youth Ministry etc. And hopefully, we will revive not just a Jesuit culture but also one based and founded on the principles of the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius. We shall then be proud of following and leading others along the ignatian pathway through life.

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