

MY TURN

Three Jesuits respond to Fr Divarkar. Quite dissimilar in context and apostolic work, they are similar in finding radical issues in the article. Fr Peter Schineller writes from Nigeria: He relates the faith that does justice and Fr Divarkar's distinction between ignatian and Jesuit spirituality. He asks whether we should find a radical difference between the spirituality of the Exercises (which focus on individual) and the spirituality of the Constitutions (which focus on service of others). Fr Jean-Guy Saint-Arnaud writes from Québec: He touches briefly on the way we understand spirituality, then pursues Fr Divarkar's conviction that loyalty and obedience to the Absolute Other radicates an indifference that erupts into apostolic zeal. Fr L. Orlando Torres, breathing foundational air as novice director, writes from Puerto Rico: Loyal obedience links our human desiring with the divine desiring.

Insights and Questions Leading to More Questions

Fr Parmananda Divarkar brings enormous experience, scholarship, and energy to his wide-ranging essay, "Ignatian Loyalty, Jesuit Obedience." He hands his brother Jesuits a number of leading ideas, nuggets worth further reflection and scholarly exploration. Let me list four of these key ideas.

◆ First: The very title of his essay recalls a distinction being made regularly today between what is Ignatian and what is Jesuit. Later in the essay, he adds a third distinction when he writes of "the difference, if any" between Ignatian spirituality and basic Christian spirituality. All of these distinctions call for further reflection. ◆ Second: From his study of the Ignatian sources and his knowledge of Paul, Fr Divarkar sees a strong convergence between the Pauline and the Ignatian visions of the human, especially in regard to freedom. Here he challenges and calls for more extended research to see how far Ignatius does rely, explicitly or implicitly, on Pauline writings. ◆ Third: He teases out how Ignatius, with Paul, emphasizes that the key to being human is the ability to be out-going, ever transcending self, rather than the tendency to acquisition, which he terms a "pious selfishness." How this selflessness coheres with a legitimate care for self, in accord with a solid psychology, needs exploration. ◆ Fourth: Fr Divarkar portrays the development of consecrated life down the centuries by remarking how emphasis changed from one to another of the three vows. In the early days, celibacy was the affirmation of spiritual freedom; in medieval times, poverty; and with the dawn of the modern age, Ignatius extolled obedience. He develops this briefly, but again the reader eventually leaves the essay looking for further exploration.

Let me add to the richness of Fr. Divarkar's reflections by asking a teasing question on Ignatian and Jesuit spirituality. I wonder whether we must begin to distinguish more

clearly the spirituality of the early Ignatius of the *Exercises*, the pilgrim as presented in his *Memoirs*, from the spirituality of the later Ignatius, the Superior General in Rome as presented in his Letters and in the *Constitutions*. Here I rely upon a fascinating essay in Juan Luis Segundo's *Signs of the Times*, "Ignatius Loyola: Trial or Project?" (N.Y.: Orbis, 1993). Segundo contrasts two spiritualities or theologies. In the first, life is seen as a trial; we are to avoid sin, avoid hell, and get to heaven. In the second, we reach heaven by advancing the kingdom, by our project or involvement in history. Segundo says that the first model is characteristic of the *Exercises*; the second, of the letters Ignatius wrote as the Superior General.

I find it noteworthy, myself, that in the *Exercises*, service and love of neighbor receive very little emphasis. In the Principle and Foundation, the end of the human person is to serve God and save one's soul. This becomes a key criterion in any choice we make: the praise of God and the salvation of our soul [*SpEx* I69]. The needs of the neighbor, even the spiritual needs, receive little emphasis. Segundo maintains that even in the exercise on the Kingdom the decisive factor is the model of *trial* more than of *project*. The Contemplation to Attain Love, while it moves in the direction of the response of love, does not expand upon our call to love of neighbor or to increase the church or to build the kingdom. This is one reason why many Jesuits involved in social ministries find limitations in *Exercises*.

When Segundo moves to the letters of Ignatius, he finds a much more calculating theology. One of the aims of this theology is to address needs--in hospitals, in educational institutions, etc. In what Segundo calls a "theological quantum leap" we move from focus upon salvation of my soul to the service and salvation of the neighbor. I find this shift in the *Constitutions* as much as in the letters. There, the end of the Society is not simply to give glory to God and save one's soul. Rather, Jesuits "labor strenuously in giving aid toward the salvation and perfection of their neighbors" [3]. This combined end of saving one's own soul and assisting the neighbor is echoed in numerous passages [see 307, 351, and 812]. In some passages, though, the salvation of our own soul is not emphasized or even mentioned [308, 446, 813]. The aim of the Society is described solely as working for the salvation of the neighbor!

This is a shift from *Exercises*, a shift that can be seen by comparing "Rules for the Distribution of Alms" [*SpEx* 337-44] with the extended treatment on mission in the

a trial spirituality and a project spirituality

Constitutions [Pt VII]. It is quite startling that in the rules on alms, basically no consideration is given to the condition or needs of those to whom aid is given. Rather, the emphasis is entirely upon the person who gives--what is best for him or her--and his or her eternal salvation. When we turn to the criteria for mission in the *Constitutions*, Ignatius has us look outward, beyond self, to the needs of the neighbor, primarily spiritual but also material.

Is this a shift from a spirituality that is applicable to everyone (as are *Exercises*) to a spirituality that is for Jesuit apostles (as are the *Constitutions*)? Or should we look

upon the *Exercises* as the first phase in everyone's Christian life (test spirituality), which then might be followed by a more apostolic vision (project spirituality)?

Alas! I have indicated that Fr. Divarkar teases us, and leaves us asking for further explanation and exploration. I fear that I have done the same in this brief question on the theologies and spiritualities of the *Exercises* and the *Constitutions*. But perhaps this is simply the best way of paying tribute to the essay of Fr. Divarkar.

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We Discover God's Will Deep in Our Own Wills

Fr Divarkar sums up Jesuit spirituality as the freedom of spirit in loyal obedience. I think this is the core of the experience of the Exercises which I would like to present by making reference to two of the Annotations at the beginning of Ignatius's little book.

In the first Annotation, Ignatius describes the process of the Exercises as "every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies, (afecciones desordenadas) and after it is rid, to seek and find the Divine Will..." It is clear here that the Exercises are a process of liberation so that we may be free to find God's will and do it. This process culminates in an election which is a free act of committing oneself to (obeying) what we have discovered to be the will of God.

Now the will of God is not separate from our own will. In fact, we discover God's will for us by entering deeply into our own will, what we truly want and desire. In coming into contact with our real desires we need to discern, since we have many desires which are not of God. The desires which are of God reveal our true identity as God's children in freedom, enabling us to transcend ourselves, to serve one another in love. Here the will of God is manifested in our inner selves: "the Spirit joins our spirit to bear witness that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

In the fifteenth Annotation, Ignatius says that "in the Spiritual Exercises, when seeking the Divine Will, it is more fitting and much better, that the Creator and Lord Himself should communicate Himself to His devout soul, embracing it (abrazándola) with His love and praise, and disposing it for the way in which it will be better able to serve Him in future." In this description, the Exercises are not about disordered affections or a process of liberation but a mystical experience of allowing oneself to be embraced or inflamed by God's love. This experience of

God's love gives us the freedom to be able "in all to love and serve." In other words, to embrace fully God's will.

Now we know that for Ignatius true discernment of God's will is a highly personal process of searching but, at the same time, a process that takes into account the community of the Church and, in a particular way, the missions entrusted to us by the Roman Pontiff. The purpose of this external checkpoint is "to avoid erring in the path of the Lord" (Const. 605).

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The Paradox at the Heart of Ignatian Spirituality

There are some authors who delight in silencing any possible questions by giving peremptory, definitive and complete answers to their readers. They leave them no room for any additional questions or thoughts. Others, writing on the same subject, know how to open windows, to stimulate further research because they answer questions by more incisive questions which help one's understanding to discover uncharted territories and to open onto new horizons. The essay of Fr Divarkar, "Ignatian loyalty and Jesuit obedience", falls into this second category.

I. The first series of reflections to which Fr Divarkar draws our attention centers on the distinction between "spirituality" and "spiritualities". If we want to understand anything about Christian or Pauline or Jesuit spirit-ualities, we will some day have to come to a mutual understanding on what is meant by "spirituality". We are plagued by a multitude of questions! For example, is it legitimate to identify *spirituality* with simple *interiority* as many proponents of the "New Age" do? Does such a "spirituality" that makes no reference to the transcendent really have meaning? Can we talk about an oriental or hindu or buddhist spirituality? What is meant by the expressions "the spirituality of work" and "the spirituality of leisure"? We hear much about the theology of liberation; but isn't it possible to talk also about a *spirituality* of liberation (as Van Breemen does)?

Spirituality is a way of life rather than a theory or way of thinking. In its broadest terms, spirituality designates the way we exercise our relation to God. In the Christian context, it refers to "living in the Spirit" as proposed by the Letter to the Galatians: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also follow the Spirit" (5:25). Or should we say that there is an underlying *basic* Christian spirituality which needs to be continually adjusted and made relevant at different times in history--such as the *Benedictine* spirituality of the sixth century, the *Dominican* or *Franciscan* spiritualities of the thirteenth century and

the *Ignatian* spirituality of the sixteenth century? Even though Fr Divarkar may seem to want to get rid of the distinction between ignatian spirituality and Jesuit spirituality which are closely linked to one another, he does recognize that the former finds its roots in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola and the latter corresponds to the spirituality of an apostolic group as expressed in the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus. In my opinion, such a distinction is of primary importance especially for non-Jesuit proponents of ignatian spirituality. There is no profit at all in ignoring it.

2. Fr Divarkar does not pursue this distinction. He invites us, rather, to consider the difference between Christian spirituality and ignatian spirituality. Ignatius, it is true, is a "primitive" from a spiritual point of view. He based his *Spiritual Exercises* on his own personal experience of meeting God, and not primarily on spiritual books or cultural heritage. Does this fact alone mean that he has adopted a Pauline anthropology with its division of the human person into spirit, soul, and body? If so, has Ignatius been able to avoid the Aristotelian dualism of soul and body? With this problematic back-drop, Fr Divarkar opens up a second set of reflections, another area of research. There are certain elements that would lead us to believe that Ignatius and Paul come together at the level of experience. The intense periods of interiorisation at Loyola and at Manresa helped Ignatius to discover, in his "discernment of spirits", his specifically spiritual dimension. These periods of interiorisation also allowed him to discover his interior self as exposed to the action of the Spirit. However, to what extent do the architectonic vision at the Cardoner and the later Christocentric experience of La Storta combine the great Pauline syntheses? It would be flattering to Ignatius if we were to respond affirmatively to that question and to suppose that "the findings of modern psychology on human development correspond to the teachings of Paul as handed down by Ignatius". Such an affirmation could be of enormous importance. However, it would have to be explored further and verified. Once again, this could be an interesting area of further research.

3. According to Cardinal Newman, when something appears at first blush contradictory or paradoxical, the implication is that we are confronted with a profound reality that must be welcomed with a great deal of attention. The comments of Fr Divarkar on the loyalty and obedience of Ignatius as cornerstones of freedom provide a stimulating invitation to pursue further our reflection. In the article (*CIS* 84, pp. 66-73) in which he proposes masculinity and youth as characteristics of Jesuit spirituality,

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Andrew Hamilton is amazed to find that there is "no insistence on obedience nor any reference to loyalty to the Pope" in the final document of the Thirty-Fourth General Congregation. He suggests that a certain practise of obedience and of loyalty to the Church and to the Pope

constitutes a check and a limit to freedom and availability and to the extrovert and forward-looking character of the Jesuit ideal.

Undoubtedly, it is in reaction against these suggestions that Fr Divarkar has written his article. He wants to establish that loyalty and obedience are at the very heart of Ignatian spirituality and that they are paradoxically sources of freedom and apostolic fervor. Ignatius encountered God at Loyola and at Manresa and he wagered his whole life on the grace of that meeting. By means of his difficult apprenticeship in discernment, he was passionately tuned to the voice of His Lord. Listening attentively to the Lord constitutes, for Ignatius, the fundamental obedience which is required to be unleashed and universalized in order to be united with the Church and concretely fleshed out in the fourth Jesuit vow. Fr Divarkar shows quite convincingly that an obedience that centers a person on the Absolute provides the means to achieve a radical relativization of everything else. Thus, it can lead to true freedom. It is this *centering* on God that can bring about the release that is called *freedom*. "Whoever clings to me I will deliver" (Ps 91:14). Paradoxically, a relation to God, far from ending up in a dependence or alienation, becomes, according to Ignatius, a source of liberation, of "indifference". God creates us free and creative. That is the basic teaching of the Gospel and of the Pauline corpus. The Ignatian Exercises belong to that perspective. What can be called into question is the practical carrying out of that freedom in a concrete exercise of obedience within the Society of Jesus. But has Jesuit spirituality remained faithful in this matter to Ignatian spirituality? Is personal obedience necessarily watered down when it is expected to be lived communally in an apostolic group? Some would claim that Ignatian mysticism was quickly lost by the Jesuits after the death of Ignatius because of the expansion of the Society and of its institutionalization--due, undoubtedly, to the rationalist current of the times. So, to what extent is it true--history will be able to tell us--that the ideal of a blind docility, nourished by the authoritarianism of superiors, took the place of spiritual government based on discernment? What is certain is that an obedience based on constraints and legalistic observances is absolutely at odds with the experience and thinking of Paul and Ignatius. Would there not be room, between the spiritual delinquency of a young "macho" and the pious egotism of a good senior religious, for that loyal freedom which the ignatian *Exercises* can give birth to, with the complicity of the Holy Spirit, in a generous heart? As Voltaire might well say: "There's matter here for much reflection!"

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