

FIRST THINGS

Four centuries, still revising

Four centuries ago this year, Jesuit General Claudio Aquaviva promulgated two documents: the *Ratio Studiorum* and the *Directorium Officiate Exercitiorum Spiritualium*. Each of these documents distilled what Jesuits had learned from long experience. The *Ratio Studiorum* (Plan of Studies) gathered Jesuits' experiences conducting schools. It created the plan which made those schools excellent for two centuries and more. The *Directorium Officiate* (Official Directory or Handbook) gathered Jesuit experience giving *Spiritual Exercises*. It created a handbook which shaped Exercises and retreats into the twentieth century. Neither of these documents is much read today; both are being honored in another way. Even a brief reflection on the two, however, casts some interesting light on current work in adapting ignatian spirituality at the turn of the millennium.

First, about the *Ratio Studiorum*. Anyone familiar with European history has heard of the *Ratio* but is probably as vague about its contents as about those in the United Nations' Charter. The broad picture is this: The *Ratio Studiorum* made plans for grade school, college, and university education. But it concentrated on the colleges. Other plans of study for colleges existed during the Renaissance, of course, and the *Ratio* borrowed a lot from them. But this particular *Ratio* succeeded—setting aside the facts that the faculty was well prepared and that the schools were free—in large measure because the Jesuits could shape their schools the way they wanted to. And they wanted to shape schools with the spirituality of *Spiritual Exercises*, a desire still moving ignatian educators four centuries later.

The traces of that spirituality run through the whole *Ratio*. Its several hundred pages, very like the pages of *Spiritual Exercises*, offer practical directives and very little theory. They give detailed directives on teaching and learning: the order of the day, the schedule for the entire year, the conduct of each class. The faculty are to adjust materials and activities to the real live students in front of them. They are to make sure the students

master one topic before going on to the next. The students who have mastered a subject are to help pass it on to the beginners. And the whole curriculum is laid out in detail by weeks and months, taking students from abecedarian children to youths ready for university studies.

There are two even clearer signs in the *Ratio* of the Exercises' influence: One, the pervasive conviction that learning comes with the student's activity. The driving concern in *Ratio* is not the teacher teaching or the material being covered but the student learning. And two, the dedication, made on the first page of the book, that all of this aims to bring students to know and love God in Christ.

Now, about the *Official Directory*. As the *Ratio* did not leap fully formed from a Jesuit brow, neither did the *Directory*. Other plans of study had existed before the *Ratio*; so had other handbooks on prayer and the interior life existed before the Jesuit directory. Inigo de Loyola, at the beginning of his pilgrimage, may well have known one of them: the *Ejercitatorio de la Vida Espiritual*, by the Abbot Garcia Jimenez de Cisneros of Montserrat, a book divided into four "weeks" with notes and additions. Inigo heard instruction from it during visits to Montserrat and he may well have read a handwritten Spanish abbreviation of it.

Very probably, Master Ignatius felt that he had finished with his directory when he had *Exercises* approved by the pope and printed in 1548. The early companions, on the other hand, felt that he could help a lot more and kept asking for what amounted to another directory. Famously, Master Ignatius agreed to do it, requested their exact questions and doubts, then died before writing more than a single page. Why he never wrote the directory is in dispute: did he think it impossible? not useful? less pressing than other business? What can hardly be disputed is that Master Ignatius felt that making the Exercises well would be preparation enough to pass them on, a useful thing to keep in mind in this age of the professionalization of every job in sight.

On the other hand, what is beyond dispute is that the earliest Jesuits wanted more direction to help them give the *Spiritual Exercises* faithfully. The men chivvied Frs General Lainez, Borgia, Mercurian, and Aquaviva for

forty years until they got it. What they got was the *Official Directory of 1599*.

It was promulgated four hundred years ago on 1 October by Fr General Aqua viva. It goes beyond the plain, dry directions of the practical *Ratio Studiorum* by including some theory, but not very far beyond. For instance, its introduction praises "the huge and almost unbelievable benefit" of making *Exercises* when they are made correctly. And a whole chapter explains how the *Exercises* embody the movement of the interior life from the purgative through the illuminative to the unitive way.

But on most of its pages, the *Directory* gives straightforward norms and procedures about who can make *Exercises* usefully and how to invite them to do it. Its forty brief chapters (each a couple of pages) discuss practical matters like making the hours of prayer and visiting with the one giving *Exercises*. They talk about using the book and what might be given to the exercitant in writing. They treat the four Weeks in turn, of course, detailing what might happen in them and how to handle the movement of spirits. Ten of the forty chapters, a quarter of the total, deal with the election of choice in life. Almost all of this would be expected in a handbook or directory applying *Spiritual Exercises*. But some things are surprising to those who have read only St Ignatius's book.

The reason is that serious adaptations of the paradigmatic directed thirty-day Exercises are clearly reflected in the *Official Directory of 1599*. Some of them evolved during Master Ignatius's life. For instance, Jesuits were already preaching the materials of the First Week. Master Ignatius expressed his opinion in a letter that one young Spaniard's preaching of the First Week was as good as anyone's. Jesuits were also giving Exercises to groups. In another letter, Master Ignatius suggested that himself; he thought it might be useful to give Exercises to a whole convent together, "though not as much good would be reaped by the group." These are preached Exercises and a group retreat. As will be obvious to anyone who has even glanced through *Spiritual Exercises*, early Jesuits found no mention in the book of groups and no instruction about preaching.

Even more adaptations were made during the forty years between Father General Ignatius's death and the end of the century. Jesuits and other religious had begun asking to make the Exercises again, and then even yearly. So Jesuits began giving *Exercises* again and again to the same person or people—to younger Jesuits in training, for instance, and to other religious. So came about the yearly, eight-day prayer experience, which shifted gradually from *doing the Exercises* to *making a retreat*. In these eight- or ten-day retreats, directors regularly gave more than the First Week: the *Directory*, talking about those "not too experienced in meditation" and those "with little instruction," urges giving all the materials of *Spiritual Exercises*, perhaps except the material on election. These significant adaptations had an odd outcome, according to the *Directory* itself: even in the 1590s, Jesuits had to "rid people of the idea that the *Exercises* are only for religious or persons who wish to become religious."

Many historians have assessed the influence of the *Ratio Studiorum* on Jesuit schools and on the world's education ever since. No one has assessed how much influence the *Official Directory of 1599* had on Jesuit retreat houses and on how religious and laity experienced *Spiritual Exercises* through the centuries. The *Directory* surely enabled giving Exercises to groups. These Exercises became retreats, and then preached retreats, a development enduringly fruitful from the first Vatican Council right up to the second. The *Directory* also encouraged adaptations of the *Exercises* to the annual retreat, which in turn facilitated great freedom in changing and even creating materials, particularly from the middle 1600s to the suppression of the Society. It seems to have created very considerable freedom, such that books of "Exercises" appeared that now read less like direct descendants of St Ignatius's book and more like third cousins five times removed.

Those freely written books were the records of retreats that had been preached again and again. And it was that kind of retreat that troubled Father General Jan Roothaan in the restored Society of the early 1800s. He judged that the Exercises were not giving good results in Society and Church because directors did not follow St Ignatius's book. His judgment has been confirmed by historians. He set out—as he wrote in a noteworthy

letter in 1834—to "foster and promote and, if need be, rekindle" the authentic experience of *Exercises* that lies at the heart of ignatian spirituality. Interestingly, though Fr Roothaan tried to create a new *Ratio Studiorum*, he did not try to create a new *Directory*. He was a man for the text, however (he re-translated the Latin of *Spiritual Exercises* and edited it again and again). So Jesuits stayed with the *Official Directory*, which favors following the text very closely.

As we understand now, the *Directory* was read in each epoch through the lenses of that epoch. As closely as Fr Roothaan followed the text, younger Jesuits still hankered after his preaching their annual retreat. And a century later, in 1935, Fr General Ledochowski would lay great stress on adapting the *Exercises* to those who make them. Today, we would understand *adapting* them to mean adapting them for each person and each experience of Exercises. Fr Ledochowski, in his day, with no hint of hesitation, meant adapting them to different groups—Jesuits in studies, religious brothers, teachers, and other groups. That understanding of the text of *Spiritual Exercises* and of the *Official Directory of 1599* was shaping retreats right up to Vatican II.

Out not any longer. Forty years ago we began to learn from a century of scholarship just how different the practice of *Spiritual Exercises* had grown from the practice of Master Ignatius and of the early Jesuits—and even from the plain meaning of the Annotations. Paralleling the forty years from Ignatius's death to the *Directory*, our forty years have brought about a lot of adaptations. They had to begin almost at ground zero. For at the beginning of these years, during the fifties and sixties, there were some in the ignatian tradition—Jesuits, Religious of the Cenacle, and a lot of other ignatian colleagues—who were convinced that *Spiritual Exercises* were a thing of the past, outmoded to the point of utter irrelevance. One author soberly compared them to the brainwashing done by Communists. Pope Paul VI said of the critics, "Quam vehementer errant!" How miserably wrong they are.

Happily, the last forty years have shown exactly how those critics were miserably wrong: Too many of us had been taking the eight-day retreat preached to vast pews of religious as *The Spiritual Exercises*. Echo of the 1590s. We have amended that opinion during our forty years. We have accomplished a retrieval of the authentic *Spiritual Exercises* which, though historically astonishing, we now take for granted: individual direction, adaptation to faith doing justice, incorporation of conciliar renewals, inculturation of materials; Exercises in Daily Life, complete *Exercises* in stages, preparation days or weeks, simple exercises according to Annotation 18; laity making thirty-day Exercises, laity directing every kind of Exercises, programs to train lay directors, programs of every kind conducted by laity; materials and handbooks in every language and format. This all happened in the last forty years or fewer, as many changes as during the decades leading up to the *Official Directory of 1599*.

Can that *Directory* help us remain faithful to Master Ignatius, as it has helped in the past? Probably not. While scholarship has taught us to use the book of *Spiritual Exercises* much better, scholarship has also taught that we cannot make much use of the *Official Directory of 1599*. Current practical experience indicated the same thing. A survey of the Council on Ignatian Spirituality (Who would use the directory if not they?) suggests that these directors and scholars, when they have paid any attention at all to the *Directory*, do not find it readily useful. For instance, when *Collection Christus* published *Ecrit*, its fine volume of the writings of St Ignatius (1991), Executive Editor Maurice Giuliani prepared a careful edition of the document but with the concurrence of other editors chose not to print it. His opinion (rooted in both scholarship and practice) was and is that the *Official Directory of 1599* demands careful and extensive critical handling even in those matters in which it can be applied. Not many besides Fr Giuliani can manage that.

Actually, we are honoring the two four-century-old documents in another way. by writing new ones in the many areas where ignatian spirituality thrives. For instance, during these forty years, schools in the ignatian tradition weighed the *Ratio Studiorum* as a help in their ministry. They

found that a renewal could not be a renovation: the original *Ratio* structured day, week, semester, and curriculum. Today, all of these are structured by the state or a friendly accrediting agency. Consequently, the work of educators in the ignatian tradition turned out to be imbuing their school's education with ignatian spirituality. A worldwide effort produced in 1986 in *The Characteristics of Jesuit Education*, a directory which "sharpened and activated" the spiritual vision that had enlivened the original *Ratio* during earlier centuries. The handbook—it can reasonably be called a *directory* in its original sense—has been an important factor in the notably re-focused and enlivened schools sponsored by Jesuits and other Ignatian Congregations.

The same impulse—the one named on the first page of the *Ratio* that everything is aimed to bring the student to the knowledge and love of God—has moved Jesuits and ignatian colleagues in other fields. Jesuits in the social apostolate, for instance, have made a global effort during the last few years to find out how ignatian spirituality marks Jesuit social ministries. The effort reached a semi-final step last year: *The Characteristics of Jesuit Social Ministry*. This directory will be worked with for two years and then take final form in the year 2000. It is intended mainly for Jesuits.

Another effort has been intended for both Jesuits and their colleagues working with refugees. They have been working towards a kind of directory that would enunciate how ignatian spirituality plays out in this ministry. A recent stage in that effort appears further on in this review: Mark Raper's *Accompaniment and Welcome*. Jesuits and their colleagues in interreligious work try to say how ignatian spirituality shapes that ministry. (They often begin with paragraph 22 of *Spiritual Exercises*.) Jesuits in parishes have been hammering away at how ignatian spirituality shapes work down in those trenches. And religious women in Ignatian Congregations have been finding, all during these forty years, how the "ignatian charism" focuses the congregations' mission and ministry. Interestingly, during just the last dozen years or so, *charism* has become the main concern in incorporating lay associates into the congregations, a fact that the Ignatian Apostolic Network and the Christian Life Community have noted.

All of these efforts are analogous to the effort that produced *Ratio Studiorum* four hundred years ago. Other well known efforts are analogous

to those that produced the *Directorium Officiate* that same year. No one feels ready for another official directory. Many, however, feel the need of hammering out some kind of handbook or directory that will allow remaining faithful to *Spiritual Exercises* as colleagues up and down the line adopt and adapt them to times and cultures. Their efforts are not imprisoned by print, and go beyond documents to programs. The Institute for Contemporary Spirituality (Scranton, U.S.A.), for instance, produced in 1990 a series of twelve videotapes on "Ignatian Spirituality and the Directed Retreat," and supplied handbooks to guide study. An effort that goes beyond print to program is reported later in this issue of the review, complete with the extraordinary handbooks and scholarly studies that give it shape: Sr Lise Robitaille's "Some Reflections".

The great scholar on ignatian spirituality, Ignatius Iparraguirre, judged that a greater effort went into creating the *Official Directory of 1599* than went into creating the *Ratio Studiorum*. Judging by efforts going on today, he may have been right: new translations of St Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*, studies to make the text entirely understood, handbooks that help guiding and making Exercises well. The second "Notes for the One Giving Exercises" belong among these efforts. All of them together appropriately mark the fourth centenary of a text which proclaims that it is always to be adapted.

THE FIRST AND FINAL PARAGRAPHS OF SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

[i] *First Annotation.* The first annotation is that by this name of Spiritual Exercises is meant every way of examining one's conscience, of meditating, of contemplating, of praying vocally and mentally, and of performing other spiritual actions, as will be said later. For as strolling, walking, and running are bodily exercises, so every way of preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies, and, after it is rid, to seek and find the Divine Will as to the management of one's life for the salvation of the soul, is called a spiritual exercise.

-The first paragraph of "Annotations"

[370] *Eighteenth Rule.* Although serving God our Lord much out of pure love is to be esteemed above all; we ought to praise much the fear of His Divine Majesty, because not only filial fear is a thing pious and most holy, but even servile fear—when the person reaches nothing else better or more useful—helps much to get out of mortal sin. And when one is out, one easily comes to filial fear, which is all acceptable and grateful to God our Lord, as being at one with the Divine Love.

-The final rule: "To Have the True Sentiment Which We Ought to Have in the Church Militant"

THOUGHTFUL RESPONSES to "Notes for the One Giving Exercises" came from groups and individuals. Some were more substantive and detailed than others; all were helpful to this year's committee. Several have already appeared in the *R&view*, #88: Frs Andreas Falkner, Gundikar Hock, and Alex Lefrank, SJ, the Gruppe fur Ignatianische Spiritualitat of Frankfort; twenty members of the Cebu Seminar; Andrew Hamilton, SJ, of Australia; Fr Michele Lavra, SJ, of Italy. One response appears in this issue: Sr Use Robitaille, SSCh, for Centre Manrese team. Among others, many of whom are directors (Dir.) of a retreat house, center, or program: Daniel Maria Agacino, SJ, Uruguay; George Aschenbrenner, SJ, Dir., USA; Cesare Bosatra, SJ, Dir., Italy; Jaime Castellon, SJ, Asst. Postulator General, Chile & Rome; Stacy Gates-Carney, Dir., USA; Gilles Cusson, SJ, Canada & Central America; Rene De Haes, SJ, Dir., Kinshasa; Parmananda Divarkar, SJ, CIS India; Michael Drennan, SJ, Dir., Ireland; Philip Endean, SJ, CIS England; Josefina Errazuriz, CIS Chile; James and Joan Felling, CIS USA; Larry Gooley, SJ, CLC, USA; Guilbert Guerin, SJ, Dir., Taiwan; Joyceann Hagen, Prov. Asst. for Ministries, USA; Tadeusz Hajduk, SJ, Dir., Poland; Alan Harrison, SJ, England; Francisco Ivern, SJ, Provincial, Brazil; Guido Jonquieres, SJ, President of Latin American Directors, Chile; Ramon Juste, SJ, Assist. Coord., Southern Latin America; Juan Jose Madariaga, SJ, Dir. and author, Venezuela; Vincent Magri, SJ, Dir., Malta; Jacques Martineau, SJ, Dir., Canada; Paul Nicholson, SJ, England; Anthony Nye, SJ, England; Nemes Odon, SJ, Japan and Hungary; Gerald O'Mahony, SJ, England; Raul Pache de Paiva, SJ, Dir., Brazil; Janez Poljansek, SJ, Master of Novices, Slovenia; Josep Maria Rambla, SJ, Dir., Spain; Judith A. Roemer, Dir., USA; Jerry Rosario, SJ, Assist. Pastoral Coord., India; Fernando Salas, SJ, Eccl. Asst. World CLC / CVX, Rome; Pietro Schiavone, SJ, Dir., Italy; Anthony Sequeira, SJ, Dir., Kenya; Philip Shano, SJ, Dir., Canada; Carol Ann Smith, SHCJ, University Ignatian Center, USA; John F. Talbot, SJ, Dir., Puerto Rico; Ian Tomlinson, SJ, England; Orlando Torres, SJ., Provincial, Puerto Rico; Normal R. Walling, SJ, Hong Kong.