

AT THE FRONTIERS

Where are the frontiers in ignatian spirituality at the beginning of the third millennium? There are frontiers in giving Spiritual Exercises to every kind of person. There are frontiers in constructing an ignatian spirituality that can energize political action and a renewed evangelization of faithful Christians. And there are frontiers in places: Moscow, for instance, and the virtual place called the web. There are older frontiers, too: each human heart that has to decide to follow and serve Christ the King.

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THE INTERVIEW WITH VITALIANO NANAGAS attests to his brisk involvement with Philippine politics and economics. But all during the ruction, Mr Nañagas has been teaching three people how to pray, two of whom he has led into the Exercises in Daily Life. He regularly attends the meetings of the “Ignatian Circle,” a group of some twenty experienced Jesuit and Lay retreat guides who meet at the Center of Ignatian Spirituality in Manila. Their topic this Fall, shaped by articles in this review (First Things in #89 and #91) concerns Jesuit-Lay collaboration. For information about the Ignatian Circle, contact: Fr Pasquale Giordano, S.J. / Loyola School of Theology / Ateneo de Manila University / P.O.Box 240, U.P. Post Office / 1144 Quezon City, Metro Manila / Philippines. From Abroad: FAX +63-2 426 5967.

AS SOON AS THE ICE MELTS, the Jesuits in Russia will begin promoting a kind of spiritual Second Spring. Fr Jerzy Karpinski, Regional Superior, reports from Moscow that the Jesuits in Russia are getting more and more appeals to give *Spiritual Exercises* and spiritual direction. During the coming Spring, they will continue the usual retreats to priests and religious women, add *Exercises* for seminarians preparing for ordination, and launch a month-long Exercises in Daily Life for laity. Even apart from the ice, however, there are two big troubles: too few directors, and not enough materials in Russian. Fr Karpinski has appealed to the Jesuits and col-

leagues in Europe for help. If you can't translate a director to Moscow, you might be able to send some spare materials for translation there. When you think of something in any language at all, contact Fr Jerzy Karpinski, S.J. <jesuitmoscow@glasnet.ru>

CALCUTTA'S IMAGE IS MASSES OF FOLK IN MASSIVE POVERTY. But more goes on there than poverty and helping throw-away people to die with dignity. For instance, Mrs Daphne Stockman, colleague of the Udayani Jesuit Institute and member of the Council on Ignatian Spirituality, quietly and persistently goes about forming adults in their faith, concentrating on leaders and animators of the Christian Life Community. She uses materials and processes that would be recognized everywhere as ignatian, but with some differences. Her focus is not on the *individual* but on the *person*, constantly called by God all during life to act in Church and world. In the exercise of "faith history," for example, she takes people beyond their own life story to "God as the God of history... the Word sharing in the history of humanity and turning it into a history of salvation from within." She points out that the process of individuals' recounting their faith history to the small group "will give a solid basis and 'foundation' for all that we do." Even with students—Christian and non-Christian—the message is "that we are created to serve God and People and go back to God... Service is a key word." The image on the front page of Mrs Stockman's simple materials is two large hands, palms open, offering and supporting. The one pair of hands somehow seem massively promising. Contact: Mrs Daphne Stockman, c/o Udayani Jesuit Institute / 76 Rali Ahmad Kidwai Road / Calcutta 700016 W. B. / India.

NOTRE DAME DU WEB, the French Jesuits and the Religious of the Cenacle are calling their elegant website. The collaborators rather boldly proclaim it "the first ignatian spiritual center on the internet." Perhaps they mean in French, since before NDWEB began on 11 February this year, ignatian websites were up in English, Spanish and Portuguese. But it may be that they really do mean *first*, on the grounds that it is not just another website but an "ignatian spiritual center." Whichever, they have a fertile idea. The site, easy to pull down and moderately interactive, is divided into three

segments. The first invites prayer with “a psalm, a gospel reading, a work of art, a passage of spiritual reading.” Each of these is colorfully and encouragingly treated as a gateway to prayer. The second segment “Au jour le jour” [Day by day], begins by inviting visitors to post their intentions to be prayed for by communities of Trappists, Benedictines, and the Religious of the Cenacle. Then it offers a sort of spiritual chat page on prayer, suggests an approach to the daily examen, gives the readings for the following Sunday, and presents a saint for the day.

The third segment offers “A retreat on the Internet.” Until now, this retreat is a three-week experience for individuals, families, parishes, or groups. Materials are posted every third day for this “Journey of prayer in the midst of everyday life.” But currently in preparation is “Force 2”, a three-month Exercises in Daily Life for those who have already finished the “Journey of prayer.” Anyone teaching French, whether to native speakers or on the frontiers of enculturation, might want to give their wired students this address: <<http://ndweb.free.fr>>

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LAY FRIENDS IN THE LORD, Mrs Cristina A. Ong explains, gathers members of the High School department of the Ateneo de Manila. The Friends began in the Exercises in Daily Life made by a few teachers in 1992. The group organized and was made part of the school’s administrative structure in 1996, with Mrs Ong as coordinator. The Friends now number thirty-six teachers and staff members. They have managed the surprising feat of writing a complete “Mission-Vision” statement in two sentences. It is worth repeating in full: “We Lay Friends in the Lord are a lay initiated group of Jesuit co-workers who commit to journey together with the support of the Jesuits in proclaiming and witnessing to the Kingdom of God, thereby enlivening the Church. We share our different personal gifts and the charism of St. Ignatius, particularly the Spiritual Exercises.”

Well and good. And how will they manage all of that? At the beginning of this academic year, they spent a day and a half in prayer and reflection on three topics: the Call of the King, how each one knows Christ, and what

Christian community really is. Coordinator Ong and Spiritual Adviser Fr Arsenio C. Nuñez relate an “important event” at the end of the days of prayer. During the final Mass, twenty-eight of those present freely made this Promise:

SOLEMN PROMISE TO GOD. Eternal Lord of all things, I make my offering with your favor and help. I make it in the presence of your infinite Goodness, and of your glorious Mother, and all the holy men and women in your heavenly court and the community of Lay Friends in the Lord. I wish and desire, and it is my deliberate decision, provided only that it is for your greater service and praise, to make Christ the center of my life and share Him to my family and everyone I encounter.

Brief statements; long labor. The page of “this offering for a period of one year” was signed and counter-signed by the Spiritual Adviser. Contact: Cristina A. Ong and Fr Arsenio C. Nuñez, S.J. / Ateneo de Manila High School / Loyola Heights, Quezon City / P.O.Box 154 / Manila / 1099 Philippines. From abroad, Tel: +63-2 924 4601.

A **BEST-SELLER IT WILL NOT BE.** But—by his own account—spiritual, pastoral, ecclesiastical, and social motives moved Bolivia’s Fr Fernando Alvarado Castro, S.J., to translate *Spiritual Exercises* into Quechua. This is the language of about a third of the population of Bolivia and of considerable populations in Peru, Ecuador, and the northern parts of Argentina. Fr Alvarado gives a careful scholarly explanation of his method and sources in the “Prologue” to the translation. This inculcates confidence. He also gives his rationale for doing all this work, explaining how *Exercises* touch the lives of the simplest folk in Bolivia as well as of the “important and influential.” Somehow, his rationale inculcates not only confidence but a kind of hopeful joy. May be it should be a best-seller. Contact: Fr Fernando Alvarado Castro, S.J. / Calle Venezuela 68 esq. Anselmo Tapia / Ciudad Satélite, Casilla 227 / Potosí, Bolivia. From abroad, FAX +591-62 42 737.

H **ERE’S AN IDEA.** Set up an endowment for the spiritual formation of lay women and men in Jesuit circles, networks, and institutions. There already exist several types of “endowment.” Sometimes, for instance, a school uses

current funds to support a Jesuit or two to do the work. This is how Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta supports Pusat Studi Ignatian (see the review #92), and how the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Quito has supported a university program of Exercises in Daily Life for nine years now (see the review #89).

The endowment can be more permanent than a mobile Jesuit or two, and more concrete. This is simplest when money given to Jesuits can be re-allocated into a fund limited to the purpose. A recent case involves the Jesuit community at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles). With all the necessary permissions, the community of Jesuit faculty and administrators has returned two million dollars to the university to enable it to establish the Center for Ignatian Spirituality. According to Fr Thomas Powers SJ, director of the new center, the center will develop programs that faculty and staff can take back to their classes and departments—programs that further the ignatian goals of service, faith, and learning. And the endowment means that this mission can be carried on by ignatian lay colleagues as well as by Jesuits.

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More than one retreat house has an endowment to support needy retreatants; and more than one province has given money, ad hoc, to support the spiritual formation of colleagues. Perhaps a permanent endowment for the spiritual formation of colleagues is an idea whose time has come. Contact: Fr Michael E. Engh, S.J., Rector / Loyola Marymount Jesuit Community. From abroad, FAX: +1-310 338 3002.

TELLING THIS STORY IS TRICKY, because a director recounts it about one of his retreatants. But it is worth taking the trouble to guard confidentiality because this is a story that tells about the attraction and power of *Spiritual Exercises* in the lives of the least privileged.

The director is a young husband and father. The program he works in is one of the well-established ones that form lay spiritual leaders for parishes. The person he talks about is elderly—for literary balance, let's make it a woman—and an active leader in her poor parish. She had always

attended most activities in her parish, so for three months she faithfully attended some prayer sessions presented by the director and his team. Then at their invitation, she began the Exercises in Daily Life. At first, she seemed a bit run-of-the-mill, nothing special. But the director reports:

“She was articulate during our weekly meetings. She would listen intently as I explained to her the material for the coming week. Despite her age, I discovered that she was at home and comfortable with Ignatian prayer. I was convinced that she was praying and believed that she was

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serious in her desire to grow in her relationship with the Lord. She had desolations as well as consolations in her prayer. A couple of times during our weekly meeting, she would be scarce with words but she would be sharing a lot of tears at how the Lord had touched her in her prayer. Then one afternoon, I was in her area and decided to drop by and say hello. The house was quiet when I arrived. From a distance I saw her sitting in

a corner with a child. It was one of her grand-daughters reading something to her. It was on this visit that I discovered that this person doesn't know how to read and write. Every day she would ask one of her grand-daughters to read for her the material for prayer before going through her period of prayer. This I found out when we were about to end the retreat. She was indeed special.” Contact: If you are moved to learn more about bringing *Spiritual Exercises* to simple people, contact this office and we'll figure something out.

IN TAIWAN, BEING UNREADY IS FROWNED ON, for some potent political reasons. The local Catholics are taking stock about their religious readiness, and the Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception have set up a Spirituality Center to help. Its first director, Sister Marthe Lai, attended the Asian Pacific Assistancy's seminar and workshop on *Spiritual Exercises* last summer. Back on Taiwan, she took four different groups through Fr John Veltri's “Directed Prayer in a Church Setting.” Her summary report:

“In the local Church of Taiwan, many Christians are able to take leadership in different church organizations, but not yet in ministry of retreat and spiritual direction. I realized that they need training before we talk about collaboration on this project. Therefore, I think the first mission of our Spirituality Center is to provide a formation program to laity. I hope in two years there will be lay people to participate in giving Spiritual Exercises, retreats, and on-going spiritual direction.” This is turning a frown into energetic action. And considering how things stand on Taiwan, the two years allowed may turn out to be plenty time to go from zero to full speed. Contact: Sr Marthe Lai, MIC / 30 Lane 148 / Fuhsing s. Rd., Sect. 2 / Taipei 106 Taiwan.

IF I HAVE GIVEN NO SIGNS OF LIFE UNTIL NOW, explains CIS member Juan Miguel Zaldua in a tardy report, “it is because I have been preoccupied with organizing and running the IV Curso-Taller Internacional para Acompañantes de Ejercicios (The Fourth International Workshop for Guides of the Exercises).” This seminar-workshop was set up by the provincials of Latin America in 1994 to respond to the need for well-trained guides of Exercises. Its faculty includes the most experienced Latin American experts, lay and religious, and the participants are generally pretty experienced, themselves. It is conducted by CLACIES, the organization of all the heads of Latin America’s Ignatian Centers of Spirituality. Since the second six-week session in 1996, it has been held in Venezuela. “Well,” Fr Zaldua writes, “tomorrow we end this fourth session, which has been attended by 41 participants—12 Jesuits, 3 lay people, a diocesan priest, and 25 religious of 8 congregations. We came from 14 different countries. We have not yet done the general evaluation, but the feeling is positive. People are satisfied.” As they have been at the end of the first three Workshops. Contact: Juan Miguel Zaldua, S.J. / Apartado 4241 / Caracas 1010-A / Venezuela. Or use the internet. <laicos@etheron.net >

CLOSE YOUR EYES. PICTURE “THE IGNATIAN LAY VOLUNTEER CORPS.” Smiling bronzed youthful heaped-up faces? Not in the U.S.A.’s Maryland Province. There, ILVC faces are smiling men and women in their fifties, sixties, and seventies. The corps invites (mostly retired) people to meet

some of the needs of the poor in their local communities by giving twenty hours a week for nine months each year. The corps also asks them to pray and to reflect on their experiences in service. ILVC began in 1995 with a dozen volunteers in three cities and has grown to sixty volunteers in eight cities. Organizers Fr James Conroy and Fr Charles Costello expect it to move soon into three more cities in three other provinces.

Now close your eyes and imagine hundreds of retired men and women in scores of countries responding to this kind of invitation. Quite an image. Why not? Contact: Kevin J. O'Brien / Director of Ignatian Apostolic Partnerships. From abroad: FAX +1-410 825 2365. <kjobrien01@aol.com>