

Exercises and Partnerships

An earlier attempt, modestly successful, to find out what ignatian colleagueship means was reported in this review (#96). A newer attempt, more successful in the measure that it involved colleagues personally, took place in the “Rome Consultation 2002 on Exercises and Partnership.” This review reports on the week-long experience during February, which read the present in the light of the recent past.

During the epoch of the Second Vatican Council and the first Sputnik, the laity were launching down-to-earth lay movements of evangelical life. Marriage Encounter, for instance, and Young Christian Workers brought laity, clergy, and religious closer together in faith-sharing and collaborating. Pope John Paul II recently named the matured movements a “new season of association of faithful laity” (*Christifideles laici*, no. 29).

The new season brought with it the impulse to adapt to current lay life the Church’s great religious charisms. The laity waited for no delegation or affiliation or even anyone’s permission. Why not the beautiful order of Benedictine life in the chaotic world? Why not Franciscan simplicity in a land of degraded ecology? Why not Carmelite contemplation in the noisy home? Never mind theory or argument. The faculty members in Marist schools just began asking for formation in Marist spirituality. Lay men and women went to Benedictine monasteries to learn centering prayer and contemplation. And of course, laity began making the *Spiritual Exercises*. That and some Jesuit apostolic needs have led to collaboration.

Ignatian collaboration, taken as a whole, truly did begin deep in the experiences of the Exercises. Fr Kolvenbach points to crucial relationships in that experience that underlie collaboration. He finds four actors in the dynamic of Exercises: God our Creator and Lord, the one giving Exercises and the one making them, and Master Ignatius in his text. Fr Kolvenbach explores in the discourse printed in this review how these four actors relate within the Exercises. He opened the issue of relationships to their depths.

How those relationships have brought us to ignatian collaboration, and how the spirituality of Exercises defines that collaboration, makes a complex story. The fifty participants in this February's Rome Consultation tried to tell it. What they told is reported sketchily further along in "Draft Minutes."

Defend this proposition: Each religious charism traveled its own route through the "new season of association of faithful laity."

Certainly the routes have differed. Some routes led to lay women sharing life in religious communities. Some led to simple partnerships in prayer and some, to a fairly elaborate set of relationships thought of as "families."

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Beyond informality, more than one congregation has shaped even juridical connections between religious and laity. It has become ordinary for a congregation to develop formal arrangements for this collaboration, as did the Religious of the Sacred Heart (see #96, p 98). Lay members may even have a measure of responsibility in setting apostolic priorities and making apostolic decisions. They attend official gatherings, up to and including general chapters, and in some rare

cases, laity even vote alongside the religious. These developments make serious people thoughtful and have raised compelling questions: Who has what vocation? Who decides what? Who finances this and how?

One route to sharing the charism has in the past been the third order. There may still be nearly twenty, but they are not what the 1917 Code of Canon Law described [702-706]. That code recognized three kinds of lay associations: pious associations, confraternities, and third orders. Each had its own norms and structures. The new Code (1983) – drawn up while many congregations were changing their ways of association – has amplified the ways lay associates can participate in the spirituality of the religious. Anyhow, when religious orders went back to the roots of their charisms, they noted that this stalk, the third order, had pretty well withered. Take the Marists as an example. After the first walk on the moon, the Marists trans-mogrified their third order into "Marist Fraternities," a very different kind of organization which in 1977 headed into autonomous self-governance.

There may be some kind of parallel in ignatian spirituality: the Jesuits and their Marian Sodalities. These latter – at least, a great percentage of them – transmogrified into Christian Life Communities in the sixties, moving from Jesuit supervision to lay autonomy. Discussion in the recent Rome Consultation suggested that the CLC may have wandered further from the Jesuits than the Marist Fraternities have wandered from their religious partner. Were the Marian Sodalities ever a kind of Jesuit Third Order? Not canonically and probably not in any sense. What would keep the Society from having a third order or at least some kind of formally bonded group? Is there something in ignatian spirituality inimical to it? Or is it just Jesuit individualism? Or merely history? Whatever the answers to these questions, the Company of Jesus has never and does not plan to have a third order. Occasionally, when a Jesuit's province is connecting better with the CLC or opening to Ignatian Associates, he stirs fear of a creeping third order. It is not an outstandingly bright worry.

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Though not in the shape of a third order, a more formal bonding by groups with the Society according to its charism has been and is being tried. The attempts, regularly noted in this review, have had mixed results. A few months ago, a provincial and a group decided that they would not attempt a formal bond, after the group had spent several years of prayerful study of the Jesuit *Constitutions*. On the other hand, the Ignatian Associates of Malta have formed a bond with the province (see #96, p 69), and hope to find spiritual guidance in the *Constitutions*. Their hope remains problematic (not for Fr Louis Sintas, #96, p 48). The Rome Consultation did not reach any firm conclusion whether lay colleagues may find spiritual nourishment in the Jesuit *Constitutions*.

The Jesuit *Constitutions and Norms* propose to Jesuits “a way to God.” There are other ignatian ways: Christian Life Communities and their “General Principles,” for instance. And the Ignatian Apostolic Network, Ignatian Friends, Ignatian Associates, and a plethora of less formal and organized ways. These ways do not stand up unshakeably under close scrutiny, even if friendly. Jesuits and their colleagues were quite unanimous in the Rome

Consultation: apart from the experience of *Exercises*, which goes for a finite time and then ends, there does not now exist a clear, detailed set of spiritual practices which add up to an *ignatian spirituality*. That work begs to be done, as Fr Alex Lefrank pointed out after thirty years' experience, beginning with figuring out who is going to define *ignatian spirituality*.

Close association between Jesuits and their partners will hinge on mission and will remain problematic. Discuss.

An association so close as to blur the line between Jesuits and their lay colleagues, to get back to that, has not taken root among the ignatian cohort. On the Jesuit side, part of the reason lies in their congregations. Thus, even in demanding collaboration with the laity in mission, the last general congregation insisted that Jesuits respect the lay vocation [331]. The Thirty-Third General Congregation had earlier on drawn an explicit distinction between ignatian spirituality and Jesuit spirituality [51]. Currently, the instinct among ignatian colleagues seems to be to keep a rather neat distinction between lay and Jesuit. It seems imperative as other distinctions blur – between secular and sacred, for instance, and between clerical and lay roles within the Church. A summary if pejorative expression of this instinct came up more than once in the Rome Consultation: “No one wants to turn laity into *little Jesuits*.”

Right. At the same time, everyone – well, almost everyone – wants Jesuits and their colleagues to really share the ignatian charism. How are they managing that? There is an answer for individuals and a number of answers for groups. Individuals, in very small numbers and in very few provinces, are taking promises or private vows of devotion that are recognized by a provincial. In this way, the colleague and the Society form what the last congregation called “a closer bond.” This arrangement would seem on the face of it to make *little Jesuits*, but according to our present legislation, this bond is not a juridical bond. It is, however, an old tradition and no one currently has any problem with it, particularly after Fr General's clear guidelines on it. Anyhow, the last congregation fudged a bit and gave individual close bonding a special place, carefully circumscribed [357-59].

But groups, forming in impressive numbers everywhere there are Jesuits, are not so easily circumscribed. *Associates, friends, companions, colleagues*,

networks, partners are making a connection – tight or moderate or loose – with a Jesuit institution, province, or assistancy. Some groups, problematically, are making their bond with a single Jesuit (figure what happens when, one way or another, he passes on). By the time of this February’s consultation, the fifty participants had to represent, among other kinds of groups: programs of ignatian pedagogy, Jesuit retreat house teams, Apostolic Networks, Ignatian Associates, directors of lay formation programs, teams for training those who give Exercises, trustees of Jesuit institutions, and laity and religious in Jesuit governance.

In all of their cases, it emerged, the glue in the bond between Jesuits and their partners proved to be a new kind of co-responsibility for mission. Partnership in the ignatian tradition does not mean sharing pious practices – a good thing in itself – but enacting God’s hopes in the real world. This is actually the ancient true ignatian relationship between Jesuits and their colleagues. It has now to be put into the dynamic context of the mission of the Church in the world. The Church has changed considerably its tendency to distinguish secular and sacred. The change can be instantiated easily. Interreligious dialogue, far from being uniquely religious, pokes into ongoing politics. Faith doing justice generates highly visible socioeconomic movements. Inculturation of Christ’s revelation, including catechesis, is taking Christians into all manner of civil conflict. Obviously, what “lay mission” includes has to be broadened and deepened.

General Congregation Thirty-One had said in 1966 that the laity have “their own proper mission in secular affairs” [GC31, 580]. Don’t skip over the expression, *secular affairs*. In its postconciliar time, the congregation was being faithful to the way the Church thought then. It stressed the “just autonomy of secular affairs” and divided *secular* from *sacred* as cleanly as red from green [*Gaudium et Spes* 36]. The laity had work to do in the world, to put it too baldly, and the Jesuits had work to do in religion. For long years, respecting this distinction meant trying to keep lay ministries and Jesuit ministries as distinct as the colors red and green just mentioned. The CLC’s option for autonomy was colored by this rather nominalistic impulse. So Jesuit schools for years – down to this day in some places – figured that their mission was a *Jesuit* mission, period. Perhaps lay faculty could help with the work.

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Thirty years of experience teaches that ignatian spirituality cannot sustain a red-green distinction between secular and sacred, or between lay mission and clerical mission. Neither can the hierarchical magisterium of the Church, for that matter. The Jesuit schools just mentioned are illustrative. Doing what the congregation called for, Jesuits set out to share “the direction, administration, even the government” of their schools [GC31, 588]. That is, to share the *work* afoot. Rather promptly and quite dramatically, they asked lay men and women to be principals and presidents. Later in this review, Jenny Go tells a starchy story about one woman’s role in that adventure. As she points out, Jesuit colleagues – lay and religious – were not quick to grasp that sharing power necessarily required sharing spirituality. She recognizes that the question now, for lay and Jesuit colleagues both, is whether both can help establish and share the “inspiration, orientation, and direction” of schools. She indicates the further step: If laity share the ignatian inspiration and orientation of schools, they will help define what *ignatian spirituality* is. The plot thickens.

The ministry of Exercises is central to lay-Jesuit partnership. Explain.

All of this is about how the “laity are taking on greater responsibility for the ministry of the Church” in the world, to use the words of the last congregation [336]. Hans Van Leeuwen, later in this review, tells about one way that the secular and the holy got intertwined: the ministry of *Spiritual Exercises*. For just when the laity began looking for their own mission, the Jesuits were re-discovering the ministry of *Spiritual Exercises*. Perhaps a bit more accurately, they were discovering what an extraordinarily applicable and powerful instrument the Exercises prove to be for creating spirituality in everyday life. Anyhow, the lay search for mission and the Jesuit search for authentic Exercises proved a providential convergence.

By now, how the *Spiritual Exercises* changed has to be told fast, before attention drifts from a story too well known. Back at Spunik time, in 1966, Father General Pedro Arrupe called experts to Loyola to re-define the authentic practice of the Annotations. They come. They meet. Suddenly, they are giving directed retreats. Almost as swiftly, looking back: religious women

give the long retreat; laity make the long retreat; Jesuit retreat houses invite women onto their staffs. Schools form faculty and staff in spirituality. Then the Exercises in Daily Life, Annotations 18 and 19; programs of lay formation in ignatian spirituality; programs to make lay directors of Exercises.

And these changes were merely the externals. More formally, everyone came to understand that the Exercises are not designed primarily to bring fervor to convents and seminaries. They are designed to help disciples find what God wants in and with their lives. They foment a spirituality for doing everyday life, a spirituality for the marketplace. They sanctify home making, money making, and running schools and political parties. These, they *sanctify*. So much for the red-green distinction between sacred and secular, clerical and lay roles.

Officially, Jesuits came to think of the Exercises as central to how the Jesuits helped the laity find their own vocation. But the earlier the thinking, the more uneven the partnership in Exercises. Back in the forties, the Exercises were a matter of Jesuits “giving spiritual conferences

and directing the Spiritual Exercises,” activities which were then indistinguishable (GC29 dec 29). Jesuits talked at adult laity, certainly doing good and as certainly defining collaboration. But in the seventies, the Thirty-Second General Congregation re-defined the partnership and how Jesuits would work with laity. It recommended Jesuits today “*in humility ... learn how to serve from those we seek to serve*” [39]. Maybe Jesuits have, at least in one particular: they slowly learned that the laity in Jesuit schools, parishes, almost anywhere, desire what the *Spiritual Exercises*, particularly according to Annotations 18 and 19, have to offer. The congregation wrote penetratingly about what they have to offer: “The pedagogy of the Exercises is a pedagogy of discernment. It teaches one to discover for oneself where God is calling one, what God wants one to do, as one is, where one is, among one’s own people” [106]. More briefly, the *Spiritual Exercises* are one proven way to find one’s mission in life. Precisely what today’s laity are looking for.

This ministry of Exercises had one deep effect. It dissipated among ignatian colleagues a clean division between secular and sacred. The

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hierarchical Church, in guarded but generous terms, was doing the same. Pope John Paul II expressed the profound hope in *Christifideles Laici* that the laity take “an active, conscientious, and responsible part in the mission of the Church in this great moment of history” (3). Quite plainly, the “secular affairs” of the laity’s ministry include not only social, political, economic, and humanitarian affairs, but also the affair of spirituality in the marketplace (GC34, doc. 13, 344). This new thrust, as it is read by John Paul II, produces not so much a new spirituality as “new kinds of evangelization.” No surprise: ignatian is an old spirituality, even if nothing like as old as Benedictine, Franciscan, and Dominican. But those who follow it are evangelizing in new ways. This has to do with mission.

Mission is central to the partnerships among Jesuits and their lay colleagues. Describe.

When working together, both laity and Jesuits were concerned that Jesuits not co-opt the laity mission. How could Jesuits turn an employee into a colleague without asking him or her to take on the Jesuits’ mission? First it became clear that the mission of an institution is not entirely the same as the Jesuits’ mission worldwide. Then, at a deeper level, it became clear that partnership means co-responsibility for the *mission* as well as for the budget or the bells. The Jesuit and the lay colleagues participate in a mission which they have together defined. Anyhow, that’s the idea and it’s what happens when Jesuits listen to those whom they serve to find out how to serve. Tricky business, and a lot of loose ends. One problem came up in the consultation: in the end, who makes the decisions?

Paradoxically, the worry about co-opting laity into specifically *Jesuit* apostolates has been allayed further by lay participation in Jesuit internal governance, for reasons that are joyfully clear in Joyceann Hagen’s paper, printed further along. Some Jesuits expect that eventually Jesuits will have laymen in the general congregations (and even laywomen, God forbid!). That may take a while and may ultimately be considered unwise. But currently lay men and women share the governance in a number of Jesuit assistancies and provinces. In a very few, like Venezuela, lay associates are formally included in discerning what apostolates the province will get into.

It is a truism by now that first Jesuits had co-workers, then cooperators, then colleagues, and now – well, partners, perhaps. In most areas, Jesuits and laity shared an apostolic work first and only later, perhaps rather much later, came to share ignatian spirituality in its rich depths. This development is visible in schools – in many provinces, though unhappily not yet in all – but the development is also visible in other Jesuit apostolates and institutions. In retreat houses, for instance, religious women were first brought on team to do specific tasks like direct religious women. Now, they are full members of the houses' teams and are affecting the way the Exercises are both thought about and practiced. In Paraguay, for instance, the team discerns in common the schedule, activities, and invitations to Santos Martires, and also the interpretation of inculturated *Spiritual Exercises*.

Centers for social concern refract the same changes. Earlier on, Jesuits directed them rather single-handedly and perhaps single-mindedly. They tended to take up the current “burning issues,” which has seemed to mean whatever great issues shook society at a given time. Many still choose that way. But some centers like that in Zambia have teams of collaborators who, looking past the glare of burning issues, first discern what the real and root issues are, choose among them, and then decide as a team what to do about them. This is at least something of what is meant by sharing spirituality, apostolic discernment, and the determination of mission.

This is one answer – clearly not a very common one – to the last congregation's declaration that Jesuits will no longer be making a self-centered declaration when they talk about “our apostolates” [254]. They will be, the congregation said, “men *for* other and men *with* others.”

Jesuits and their colleagues will continue developing a distinctive ignatian way of associating. Summarize.

What this “men *with* others” actually means is still emerging. It surely means further formation for Jesuits, who were chided in the Rome Consultation for knowing all too well how to work alone and not knowing much

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at all about working on teams (Jesuits joined the chiding). “Men *with* others” probably also means that everyone get clearer about the Jesuit role in assuring the authenticity of the Exercises as the source of ignatian spirituality. The Salesians declared about lay partnerships that the Salesians were the “heart of this experience and the faithful memory of the Salesian spirit.” Are the Jesuits? Whose will be the “faithful memory of the ignatian spirit”? Look at the worldwide alumni/ae associations, the association of Jesuit business schools and others like it, the IJELP, the JRS, the Ignatian Associates, the Ignatian Apostolic Networks, the CLC – who’s at the heart? Whose will be the long, long memory?

For many spiritualities, the *with others* is summed up in the word *family*. The Dominicans chose this language in their General Chapter in Mexico in 1992: “After some thirty years, this is a reality: the re-appearance and development of The Dominican Family.” Probably a majority of the congregations use this “family” metaphor. So did the Synod of Bishops about religious life and so does the Code of Canon law [canon 677]. Ignatian collaborators have shied away from calling themselves “family.” Yet it is a good metaphor, speaking worlds. What keeps the ignatian partners from using it?

Perhaps ignatian spirituality and its traditional language suggests a response. Through discerning prayer and love, partners come to think, value, see the world, and decide together in Christ. They act in Christ; they share Christ’s mission in their own collaborating. Worldwide, it is clear, they become friends, going beyond the need in any time and place for belonging to a community. Worldwide, ignatian partners talk about themselves as Friends in the Lord. Not family, just friends.

Friends, however, in action. This kind of partnership is what *Spiritual Exercises* have produced from the beginning. Perhaps ignatian associations will develop *communion* rather than *community*. Communion – friends and associates preparing, fortifying, encouraging one another in a great and perhaps perilous enterprise. Communion is the relationship Fr Kolvenbach assigns to the one who gives and the one who makes the Exercises. Communion is what the participants in the Rome Consultation kept coming back to. Friends in a mission they have all helped identify as what God wants to do now, here, among these people.