

## INTRODUCTION

Few aspects better reflect a spiritual charism than a way of accompanying others: both individuals and large social groups, for example, communities, towns, cultures, etc. This issue of the CIS focuses on the theme “A way of accompanying others in the Ignatian tradition” in order to help people, “to help souls” as St. Ignatius used to say.

The Ignatian mysticism, which is oriented to accompanying others, is more than a technique or pedagogical tool. It is a way of thinking, understanding, and acting. Thus the way and the character of accompanying people indicate a great deal about our own identity and also the way that we are related to ourselves, others, and the Lord Our God. The Ignatian manner of accompanying persons presupposes implicit convictions, attitudes, and a way of proceeding.

*Convictions.* We believe in each person's inner dynamism that guides and helps one to overcome crises and difficulties. We believe that God works in each person recreating someone every day as unique and special. We believe in human freedom that is able to create, progress, love, and choose. We believe that God's plan for humanity never destroys a human person's freedom and actualization, but rather presupposes and takes them into account for the building up of the Kingdom. We believe in human capabilities that can enable us to be better instruments for God's action. We believe that the unique absolute reality is God our Lord and his plan for salvation for us. The full enjoyment of creation and

creatures is discovered in the orderly use of these for the greater glory of God. We believe that God by the Incarnation offered himself to humanity. We believe that Christ is the paradigm of the human person. These convictions are reference points from which are measured successes and failures, life directions and service to the world.

*Attitudes.* The profoundly characteristic presuppositions of the Ignatian accompanying of others create an atmosphere where one relates to another in a certain way. This way, listening (SpEx. 22), means a positive presupposition toward the other, trusting and perceiving realities from the perspective of the other, one trusts their searches, discoveries, and journeys, in which God wishes some things to be realized; envisioning being open to and then introduced to new horizons of the person, whom one accompanies, this leads to an abundance of hope and of having “a great spirit and freedom” (SpEx 5) in order to have the possibility to let oneself be surprised by the signs of the Spirit.

*The way of proceeding.* This presupposes that the convictions and attitudes are practiced in the concrete situations of “helping,” of accompanying others. A way of proceeding that seeks dialogue (Auto. 27), that advances great desires (SpEx. 5), which enables someone to deal with crises and difficulties and to learn from them, so that one develops a more realistic attitude (SpEx. 4, 7 and 18), that prepares someone to take up one’s cross (Auto. 96). Finally this way of proceeding in accompanying others facilitates learning from the experience itself, creating bonds with others precisely in order to serve and trust more and better the Lord putting only my trust in Him (Auto. 35).

In the current issue of the Journal of Ignatian Spirituality (CIS 108), these convictions, attitudes, and a way of proceeding take form and shape in various matrices of accompanying others in the Ignatian manner: Spiritual Conversation (Germán Arana, S.J.), Pastoral Counseling in an Ignatian Context (Larry Yévenes, S.J.), Spiritual Accompanying in Daily Life (William A. Barry, S.J.) and Spiritual Accompanying during the Experience of the Spiritual Exercises (Hermann Rodríguez, S.J.). We want the reader to discover, appreciate, and dialogue with the authors of the articles.

The paradigm of this entire Ignatian mysticism in accompanying others

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is the way that the Lord Our God accompanied Ignatius in his spiritual journey. Thus the reflection on accompanying others begins with the presentation of this affirmation (Simon Decloux, S.J.). We end with some suggestions for ongoing formation (Edward Mercieca, S.J.) and encounter a vital model for our times, Blessed Alberto Hurtado, s.j. (Jaime Castellón, S.J.).

Finally these reflections want to serve as an incentive and invitation to participate actively in the Course/Workshop that the Secretariat of Ignatian Spirituality (SSI), at the Curia of the Society of Jesus in Rome, will offer in early 2006 and that has the same title as this issue. The description of the workshop — its content, invited instructors, and practical information — are found at the end of the journal.

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