

INTRODUCTION

Father General's letter to the Society of Jesus on the life and missions of the Chilean Jesuit Alberto Hurtado Cruchaga, S. J. (1901-1952), who has just been canonized by Pope Benedict XVI on October the 23, 2005, fits well in this issue of the Review of Ignatian Spirituality dealing with *correction or reformation to be done of anyone's state of life* [Sp. Ex.189]. Fr. Hurtado's memory encourages high ideals and elicits great desires. No deep reform of life is possible without new visioning of a chosen future life or life-style. Saints open for us new horizons and inspire generosity [Aut. 7, 2]. Alberto Hurtado is a role-model for us seeking inspiration in Ignatian Spirituality. This passionate Jesuit reminds us that all reform of life or life-styles have to take into consideration not only one's personal needs and aspirations but the entire mission we are called for by the Lord in the concrete context of history and culture. Self-referenced reform of life results in a poor and sad affair.

"Searching for Meaning," written by Brian O'Leary, S.J., is focusing our attention on our seeking new options in life. Who am I really in this phase of my life? What is it that keeps me going and committed? Where do my talents and energies direct me? What decisions give greater meaning to my life? These questions which touch meaning are present in any reform of life process, even if not always consciously explicit. Contemporary culture confronts us with big challenges in this respect. Introducing the methodology of discernment amidst the search for meaning provides us a needed Ignatian contribution.

In the Spiritual Exercises, encountering the Lord (Second Week), introduces either a *choice* (election) or a *reform of life* and each exercitant responds to the heavenly king with his or her life. Ignatius trusted his own conversion experience at Manresa and his knowledge of the Desert Fathers. These shaped Ignatius' prayer of the heart and assisted him through their example (see St. Onophrius - or Humphrey - in the Autobiography 20. Ignatius makes an indirect reference to the life of St. Humphrey the Hermit, as found in The Golden Legend).

Can the Desert Fathers and their stories again illustrate the reform of life as a lifelong tension that leads into God's heart? This is the narrative thrust of Mario Farrugia's contribution, "Journeying into God: the Desert Fathers."

The process of construction of the Sp. Ex. mirrors the autobiography of St. Ignatius and his evolving religious experience. This in turn interacts with history and the cultural changes all along these more than four centuries. The practice of giving the SpEx of St. Ignatius during all these years has enriched our understanding of religious experience. In "That Note at the End of the Second Week": [Sp. Ex. 189] and the Life Reform," Carlos Coupeau, S.J., goes through this development taking as references the text itself of the SpEx, the history of "tradition", and the actual context.

Modern cultural traits like the fragility of definite commitments, greater longevity of the human life-cycle, greater consciousness of the different phases of life, self-realization and the quest for pleasure, are not absent in the life of the Christian doing the Sp. Ex. "Psychosocial Issues: The Reform of Life" (Carlos Dominguez, S.J.), confront these dynamisms within the reform of life movement of the Sp.Ex. and its transforming grace.

Herbert Alphonso, S.J. "Life-Transformation in Depth Through the Ignatian Exercises" points towards a wider and radical understanding of "Reform of Life" within the context of God's gift of the personal vocation.

We thought it fit to end this issue on the Reform of Life with spiritual guidelines on discernment in the Ignatian tradition relating to our day to day options and in our important decisions. "Criteria of Making Life-Decisions" (Hans Zollner, S.J.).

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