

Promotio Iustitiae

Ignatian Spirituality and social justice

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Editorial

Patxi Álvarez SJ

Often the teams at our social institutions want to delve deeper into the Ignatian spirituality which motivates their commitment. Often they do not know how. Certainly, Jesuits are usually well versed in Saint Ignatius' Spiritual Exercises, which summarise his spirituality; nevertheless, it isn't easy to build a bridge between the Exercises' dynamics and social work strictly speaking. The task becomes ever more complicated when, as tends to be the case, we want to discuss Ignatian spirituality collectively, in groups which are usually very pluralistic. Thus, we need to carry out an adaption of the Exercises to the very diverse circumstances of spiritual retreat for which Ignatius' proposition is intended.

In other words, we have the task of disseminating and adapting Ignatius' experience to circumstances different from the original; in our case, social work. Moreover, while the promotion of justice has roots in Ignatian spirituality, it is also certain that it is modelled by the manner in which this Ignatian tradition has been lived in the body of the Society in recent years. Therefore, a review of the recent texts of our General Congregations cannot be avoided. So, if we desire to study Ignatian spirituality in our teams, we need to carry out an adaptation of the sources and a revision of the latest Congregation's texts.

The text presented in this issue of *Promotio* assumes this double challenge. It uncovers seeds of the commitment to justice in Ignatius' spirituality and it cultivates them with the Society's recent evolution. In turn, it attempts to see how Ignatian spirituality enhances this work for justice. For this reason, the following article can be of particular help in training people and teams who want to further investigate Ignatian spirituality's background which drives its mission. It can be used for personal reading, but also for group training sessions. It contains a number of nuances which will surely provoke a continued exploration into the subject.

The text's author, José María Rambla SJ, is a learned Jesuit, who has a great knowledge of Ignatian sources and a singular capacity to tie Ignatius' experience to daily life. The author was asked to prepare the text for a Conference, as part of the Seminar on "Ignatian leadership and Social Justice", which took place in Loyola (Spain) in February 2013 with attendees from the UNIJES (Spain), AUSJAL (Latin America and the Caribbean) and AJCU (USA) universities. The author and the organisers of the Seminar have permitted this Secretariat to translate the document and publish it in *Promotio Iustitiae* in the various common languages. We are thankful to all for their generosity.



Distinctive traits of Ignatian spirituality from the perspective of social justice

Josep M. Rambla SJ

When speaking about Ignatian spirituality and social justice, an easy accord must be avoided: thinking that Ignatian spirituality already includes the dimension of social responsibility that it is understood to have today. This would be an anachronism. Moreover, it would be challenged by historical facts, some as recent as the number of people who have passed through Society of Jesus' schools, who have done Spiritual Exercises and have left without any type of conscience for economic, social and political injustice. All things considered, if we can speak of Ignatian spirituality in relation to social justice it is because some seed of the commitment to justice can be found in Ignatian spirituality or, at least, some shared theme or correlation between both. Conversely, in light of this relationship, work for social justice must necessarily offer some new complement or development to Ignatian spirituality.

To develop the theme proposed, I will first deal with the relationship between Ignatian spirituality and the task or commitment to justice; and then, I will demonstrate what Ignatian spirituality offers to a spirituality that struggles for social justice.

A. The relationship between Ignatian spirituality and the task of social justice

I will follow the following steps in this section: 1) Ignatius and Social Justice. 2) The Exercises in the same perspective. 3) The Society of Jesus and the poor. 4) Confirmation of the Society's history. 5) Conclusion.

1. Ignatius of Loyola

The immediate experience of God, the Holy Trinity

a) In his autobiographical account, Ignatius says that God taught him in Manresa as a schoolmaster teaches a child. Moreover, this teaching was of such intensity that he dared to say that he no longer needed the Bible to sustain his faith, as he could believe based solely on what he had experienced. This personal experience of God was from the beginning an experience of the Holy Trinity. In Manresa he was very alive and he gives testimony of this in

different ways.¹ Fr. Laínez, close friend and confidant of Ignatius, says that he had thought of writing a book about the Trinity.² And, at the end of his life, as he states in his Spiritual Diary, he received extraordinary grace through his relationship with the divine *personae*.

In one of his final conferences about Ignatian spirituality, Fr. Arrupe elaborated on this monographic theme: “The Trinitarian Inspiration of the Ignatian Charism”. In this manner, Arrupe expects to return to “the supreme and initial starting point: those experiences of Ignatius from which everything flows and which are the only ones that explain, in their ultimate meaning, both his spiritual self and his basic intuition. In a word: his Trinitarian inner life”.³ And, as regards the theme of my presentation, it must be outlined how, according to Arrupe, the Trinitarian experience, experience of a God which is communion, is rooted both in the experience of communion and in Ignatius’ human solidarity and spirituality.⁴ Also, we can add, it is found in the basis of his capacity for friendship and promotion of friendship, because “God is friendship”.

b) The Trinitarian experience of one God who loves the world and gives himself up for its liberation is embodied in Jesus, who will be for Ignatius the concrete and ultimate expression of service to humanity in his time. Jesus was etched into Ignatius’ heart to such an extent that a monk from Montserrat remembered him as a pilgrim “crazy for our Lord Jesus Christ”. Ignatius, in Manresa, was gifted many extraordinary experiences of Christ and he first cemented this love for Christ in his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he lived a sort of amorous idyll, worshipping the places where Jesus lived, served and died. The Eucharist was for Ignatius the most profound moment of his union with Christ. In any case, as time went by he discovered that the Holy Land was our land, our world, our society. Thus, his God, revealed in Jesus, is a God of the world, an all-encompassing God.

Conclusion: Historicisation of the faith

Íñigo comes out of his experience with *other eyes*, with another outlook on reality: because all things appear new to him. Moreover, he *integrates* all of reality’s dimensions (faith, spirituality, arts or culture, and society) into one unity and meaning. And this vision of reality’s profoundness, where the meaning of all things is captured, translates itself into a desire to help others with *action*. And, Christ is the *worldly* intervention of the transcendental God. We can, then, say that Ignatius’ spirituality, his charism, is the historicisation of faith, the historicisation of God. This can be summed up by the words of the bishop of Vic, Torras i Bages, who summarized God’s work in Ignatius at the beginning of the last century: “God took Íñigo from the world to make him a man of God and he returned him to the world to convert it into the Kingdom of God”. And, in his Spiritual Diary, we read this note: “Today, even when walking in the city, with a great joy in my heart, the blessed Trinity was brought before me”.⁵ It is in the city, among men, in the Kingdom’s task, where the Holy Trinity makes itself present.

¹ St. Ignatius, *Autobiography*, 28.

² *Fontes Narrativi*, I, 82.

³ Pedro Arrupe, *La identidad del jesuita en nuestros tiempos*, Sal Terrae, Santander, 1981, 392.

⁴ Cf. *Ibid.*, 424-431, no.82-102.

⁵ 18th Feb 1544, no.55.

*The poor*⁶

Two periods can be distinguished in Ignatius' spiritual journey: the years after his conversion spent searching (1521-1539) and the period when his group of companions was formed, his apostolic objectives were defined and he began the Society of Jesus' activity (1539-1556).

a) During Íñigo's pilgrimage after the conversion, the life of poverty and poor people constantly appear: he gives his clothes to a poor person, he cries for the first time because they mistreat the same poor person, he goes to live in a hospital for the poor, he lives begging for alms, he distributes what he collects to the poor, he defends women who are in danger of being abused, he looks for resources to aid those in need, etc.

b) Later, bit by bit, as the group of companions is consolidated, he focuses firstly on the spiritual wellbeing of the people through "apostolic" activities (preaching, sacraments, faith education, spiritual exercises, theology, etc.) and also on the education of the youth. All in all, besides taking in about four hundred poor people, who in a period of severe shortage were half-dead from hunger and cold, he also promotes social works: the Catacombs to take in converted Jews, St. Marta to care for prostitutes, and collaborating in the assistance of orphans of war and plague.

c) Besides his personal experience, as recorded in the *Spiritual Diary*, being marked by a love for the life of poverty, like that of Jesus, the apostolic life of the Jesuits must be accompanied by service to the poor and the sick, as we know from his famous instructions to the Jesuits who go to the Council of Trent and other similar meetings; to the students of Padua, who are experiencing "its effects", that is to say, the hardship of true poverty, he writes, through the secretary Polanco, a letter in which is developed a very clear mysticism on poverty and solidarity with the poor.

Conclusion: A special sensitivity

In light of the above, we see that Ignatius' relationship with the poor is a constant in his life, despite reviewing different ways of accommodating it with the central apostolic charism of the Society of Jesus. It has been said that Ignatius loved poverty like St. Francis, but in a different way. We could also say that, like the saint of Assisi, he equally loved the poor, but through different methods. Thus, throughout Ignatius' entire life, we can deduce that he lived and tied a *special sensitivity for the poor and for poverty* to his apostolic charism. This sensitivity is what will allow, through the great flux of time and circumstances, very diverse interpretations of this mission, until reaching the commitment to social justice.

2. The Spiritual Exercises

Ignatius' profound spiritual experience took physical form in a spiritual teaching, the Spiritual Exercises, which help the person undertaking the Exercises to ready themselves to receive *God's communication* and then to view the world *from His viewpoint*, as Ignatius does in Manresa. He displays the Trinity's perspective of the world in the Exercises' contemplation on the Incarnation, where the Trinity is presented looking at the world which it decides to liberate. And, the person who does the exercises must identify with this perspective in such a

⁶ For more on this point, consult the collective work *Tradición ignaciana y solidaridad con los pobres* (Bilbao – Santander, Mensajero – Sal Terrae, 1990): José María Rambla, "El peregrino con los pobres" (17-35) and José Ignacio González Faus, "De la pobreza a los pobres. Notas sobre la trayectoria espiritual de Ignacio de Loyola" (37-67).

way that he finishes prepared to “love and serve, in all things”⁷ and to “seek and find God, in all things”.⁸ That is to say, he must assimilate the outlook of a God who contemplates and gives himself.

To achieve this, the Exercises are designed to transform the person so that he can open himself to the will of God, to strive for the greater good of others. In the Exercises’ mystagogy, the personal attitude which the candidate needs to develop can be differentiated from the type of Christian life which he must assimilate. The essential purpose is for Christ to begin to grow within the candidate.

a) The candidate has to achieve a *correct relationship with things*. He has to free himself from what tends to enslave him with the most ease, for example money, reputation, obsession with health, etc.; he has to gain a capacity for discernment and for evangelical decisions, in order to choose a form of personal life more aligned with the Gospel. But, “the other things” have to help in achieving life’s end. Thus, he must know how to combine the active search for this end, with the choice of the most helpful things. Consequentially, all the Spiritual Exercises are designed to eliminate disordered concerns, so as to discover divine will, and to be ready to receive it.

b) These dispositions constitute the opening of the spirit to *assimilate Christ’s way or feelings*, knowing him more personally, loving him and following him more each day. Christ appears with a merciful heart, in solidarity with a world filled with contrasts and suffering, assuming the life of “extreme poverty” with all its consequences, until dying for love. For this reason, the candidate will have to assimilate the wisdom Christ shows in life: progress by fighting greed and its consequences which stem from a life built on the unstable foundations of vanity and empty honours; all of which ends in a misled existence. To do this, one must love Jesus’ ways: poverty, simplicity, humility, that is to say, a life based in truth. It can already be seen that this way of life develops a special sensitivity to perceiving the reality of poverty and the suffering of others, while also developing the solidarity to help them and take on their suffering.

c) To achieve this, the Exercises present the *evangelical criteria*, which should guide the spiritual task of identifying with Christ in life and which, in their essence, can be condensed to evangelical poverty (*Standards and Manners of Humility*). Additionally, it must be highlighted that this spiritual experience is always conducted facing the world which God loves and wants to free through Christ’s life and actions, calling us to follow. Moreover, the Exercises propose specific guidelines on distributing personal possessions to the poor, making it the utmost priority.⁹ Guidelines are also given on the organized and appropriate use of life’s essential needs, which allows for very interesting and practical modern interpretations.¹⁰

⁷ *Spiritual Exercises*, 233.

⁸ *Monumenta Natalis*, V, 162.

⁹ Cf. *Exercises*, 344. Surely Ignatius is inspired here by an apocryphal gospel (cf. S. Arzubialde, *Ejercicios Espirituales de S. Ignacio. Historia y Análisis*, Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander, 2ª edición, 2009, 888). However, the tradition before Ignatius provides examples showing a different sequence of assets distribution: order, community, poor (Cf. P.H. Kolvenbach, “Ejercicios Espirituales y amor preferencial por los pobres”, in: *Decir... al “indecible”*. *Estudios sobre los Ejercicios Espirituales de San Ignacio*, Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander, 1999, 182; Arzubialde, *op.cit.*, 888).

¹⁰ I refer to “Rules to Regulate One’s Eating” (Exx. 210-217) which can be applied not only in many aspects of life (travels, drinks, holidays, clothing, transport, etc.), but can also be extended to situations of social transcendence, like, for example, the struggle against world hunger. See: Thomas E. Clarke, “Jesus at Table: The Ignatian Rules and Human Hunger Today”, in: George P. Schnier (ed.), *Ignatian Spirituality in a Secular Age*,

d) The Paschal Mystery of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ has a central role in the spiritual journey. Jesus' cross is an invitation to bear the suffering of others, but with the guarantee, based on the resurrection, of "a new heaven and a new earth".

e) All the Ignatian teaching on discernment developed in the Spiritual Exercises, and applied by Ignatius in his personal experience and in the Society's government and its direction of affiliated people, is a mystagogy for taking specific decisions: In his life, Ignatius offers us a model of how to reach deliberate evangelical decisions in the contemplation on how the Society should express its poverty. Having analysed the advantages and disadvantages of making some assets available to its institutions (not to the Jesuits themselves, who have to live in absolute poverty) he decides they should pursue a path of absolute poverty, considering that Jesus preached in poverty and sent his disciples to do the same.¹¹

Conclusion: Knowledge and a teaching for a faith at the world's centre

The Spiritual Exercises will be *the teaching open to everyone*, not only for Jesuits, to open oneself up spiritually and to discover a personal and current way to "serve and love, in all things". Therefore, as a spiritual teaching, 1) they will help to assimilate Jesus' way of life and to adopt his sensitivity in a special way; 2) in this way Jesus, poor and humble, will be both the beginning and the basis of all decision-making; 3) and finally, they teach the Christian way of being in the centre of society, alongside the poor, until friendship with the poor makes us friends of Christ.¹²

3. The Society of Jesus

Origins

The Formula (or Rule) and the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, along with other fundamental documents and various Ignatian guidelines also offer a vast series of elements capable of inspiring a spirituality in line with the commitment to justice.

a) *The Society's Rule or Formula*. It is said that, while the Society's objective is spiritual (preaching, catechism, Spiritual Exercises, etc.), a Jesuit must be prepared to serve any human need (tending to prisoners, pacifying conflicts, etc.) Every Jesuit must be ready to carry out actions which, in time, serve the common good. Moreover, personally, a Jesuit must live with nothing more than life's basic necessities, embracing poverty as a sweet thing which cultivates happiness... the Society has a separated set of rules regarding poverty: the apostolic and social institutions can have some assets for their administration, but the Jesuits and their communities must have a lifestyle of personal and communal poverty and can only retain what is necessary for their basic upkeep.

b) *The Society's Constitutions*. Before entering the Society (or before the definitive commitment), a Jesuit is ordered to give up his possessions, being mindful that the poor must have priority (and not family) when they are shared out.¹³ Therefore, poverty must be loved like a mother;

Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, Wilfrid Laurier University Press, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 1984, 91-112.

¹¹ *Spiritual Diary*, no. 66; Deliberation on poverty. Advantages and reasons for having no fixed income, no.12.

¹² "Carta a los Padres y Hermanos del Colegio de Padua", in *San Ignacio, Obras Completas*, 2ª edición, 700-704.

¹³ Cf. *Constitutions*, 53. In one text, probably written by Ignatius himself, it is recommended that possessions should ideally be given to the poor rather than relations, provided there is no other obligation which is of sufficient significance and clarity to justify acting otherwise. (Cf. *Monumenta Ignatiana, Constitutions*, II, 42-43, note 5).

poverty is considered the mainstay which upholds the quality of the religious life, and a Jesuit is required to feel its effects. In the Jesuits' definitive commitment (final vows) a special attention to children is expressed, as a sign of dedication to those who are weak and can suffer ill-treatment. As regards schools, which in principle are intended for the education of Jesuit students, if laypeople are to be admitted, the poor ought to be the first served. In any case, as material poverty is a medium for evangelisation, as shown in Ignatius' mystical experience detailed in his Spiritual Diary, if any modification related to poverty must be made, it can only be to further restrict it.

Conclusion: An open project

In the above analysis a series of elements can be found relating to the Society's poverty and its dedication to the poor and people in situations of material destitution. This lays the foundation for the spirituality's leaning towards a preferential option for the poor and the struggle for justice. That being said, there is no mention of the presence of the structural dimension of poverty and injustice.

Therefore, one must pass from the letter to the spirit in order to outline the elements of the original Ignatian tradition which favour this progression: the service of faith has absolute supremacy, but includes a special sensitivity for helping the poor and the diverse forms of poverty; the openness to "what best serves the common good", with the specification of "depending on circumstances of time, places and people".

The present: focal option; the service of the faith and the promotion of justice

History of this option

a) General Congregation 32 (1974-75).¹⁴ GC 32 draws from the life which has developed since the 1950s (worker-priests, catholic worker movements, social centres, social works...) and is stimulated by the direction and the drive of Fr. Arrupe.¹⁵ The Society of Jesus reformulates its mission as "the service of faith and the promotion of justice that this faith implies." This option is the "focal point", that is to say, the objective of faith and justice has to inform everything: personal and community life, action and the institutions. From now on, then, it is said that neither can there be service to faith that doesn't include the promotion of justice, nor a promotion of justice that is not rooted, motivated, and directed by faith. Naturally, this profoundly repositions the Society of Jesus and generates many initiatives and activities, but also resistance and problems of practice and theory.¹⁶

The years which follow the GC 32 are ones of intense activity, of creation and reflection, of debate and tensions within the Society and within the Church. There is a serious effort made to be faithful to the line taken by GC 32: promoting new or already existing *institutions of*

¹⁴ Consult the reference work on the option taken by GC 32: Jean-Yves Calvez, *Fe y Justicia. La dimension social de la evangelización*, Sal Terrae, Santander, 1985.

¹⁵ An important moment of Fr. Arrupe's intervention was the speech given in Valencia to Jesuit alumni about education for justice (1972).

¹⁶ For example, questions and debates arise like: Is the nature of the Society's clerical role altered by putting the social service dimension at the heart of the mission? Is this not something concerning laypeople rather than clergymen? Do the Jesuits secularise if they are involved in an area which doesn't concern religious people? Do they become partisan when really Jesuits should serve everyone, including the rich? Do they overstep their duties by being involved in liberation movements, through political affiliation or even leadership? In the Society, should social action be put at the same level as the service of the word, as theology and teaching, and as the "pastoral"? Is the Faith and Justice option incorrectly identified with social action? Does this option lead too easily to the neglect of teaching or intellectual tasks?

reflection (Fe y Secularidad, The Pignatelli Centre, Cristianisme I Justícia, ... Fomento Social, Projet, Aggiornamenti Sociali, CIAS, ...). Education centres, pastoral work in the parish, the Spiritual Exercises, and associations related to the Society of Jesus are all renewed and reoriented... Also, the *Theology* feels the impact of the focal option. The life of *individuals and their communities* experiences significant changes (a poorer lifestyle, closer to the poor, insertion into working-class neighbourhoods, more shared community life, etc.) While it is not claimed that the changes are sufficient, the effort of renewal in line with the stance taken by GC 32 can certainly be noticed, and the Jesuit martyrs begin to support the sincerity of this commitment. Internal conflicts, which are a continuation of those originating due to GC 32's new direction (1965), now exacerbate, provoked further by the episcopates of certain countries, above all in Latin America, who often lack understanding or even disqualify some Jesuits and the activities of the Society. All leads, with the sickness of Fr. Arrupe (October 1981), to the intervention of John Paul II, who assigns a Papal Delegate to the ordinary government of the Society, the Italian Jesuit Paolo Dezza.

b) General Congregations 33, 34, 35. These GCs reinforced the direction taken by GC 32, and added some clarifications and complementary elements:

GC 33 (1983) accepts Father Arrupe's resignation from the position of General and elects his substitute, Peter-Hans Kolvenbach. It must be highlighted that, in a delicate moment, far from reining in the advancements made by GC 32, GC 33 solemnly confirms the Congregation's definition of the Society of Jesus, reaffirming the most important decrees 2 and 4: These decrees "are the application today of the Formula of the Institute and of our Ignatian charism. They express our mission today in profound terms offering insights and guidelines for our future responses".¹⁷ In this Congregation the formulation "preferential option for the poor"¹⁸, which was already included in the documents of both the Latin American episcopate and the Holy See, but not in those of the Jesuits, appears for the first time.

GC 34 (1995) reaffirms GC 32's lines in the decrees 2, 3, 4 and 5, and gives added weight to the promotion of justice with articles on interreligious dialogue and inculturation, in which the option for faith and justice is the unifying factor.

In GC 35 (2008) the option for faith and justice is included in all its lines and is considered the great grace received by the Society, given the seal of approval by the martyrs.

Meaning of this option

In its essence, the Society's option for the service of faith and the promotion of justice is founded in these principles:

a) It is an update of the duty given to the Society by Paul VI of confronting the problem of atheism (1965), given that injustice disfigures the face of God, Father of all, and moreover the injustice of believers is one of the factors contributing to the spread of atheism. (*Gaudium et Spes*, 20)

b) The Christian faith is a faith in one God, defender of the poor, who wants to bring them a message of goodwill and who identifies with them. The final judgement is given in accordance to how we respond to the needs of the poor.

¹⁷ GC 33, D. 1, 38.

¹⁸ GC 33, D. 1, 48.

c) The Society of Jesus has as its objective the expansion and defence of the faith along with the further maturing of Christian belief. Thus, the authentic service of the Christian faith is born from the same nucleus of the Jesuit charism, which includes justice.

Some important specifications

a) The option for Faith and Justice isn't a specific activity, but a "focal option", that is to say, a real direction which has to inform everything: personal and community life, apostolic activities and institutions, and it must be the basic criterion of discernment and of decision-making.

b) The option for Faith and Justice comes from the service of the faith essential to the Society of Jesus' charism and not from the dedication to social activities spoken of in the Society's Formula.¹⁹ Undoubtedly, the practice of truly caring for the poor, which is already present in the Society's origins, is characteristically Ignatian; however, what marks the Society with a special sensitivity towards this option is both the reference to social work made in the Society's Rules, and St. Ignatius' government's practice of combining pastoral action with service to the sick and the poor.

c) Although not all Jesuits have to dedicate themselves to "social" activities, it can be said that action for justice is not a preparation or step before evangelisation, but that the very action forms part of evangelisation. In effect, Jesus didn't separate one from the other, as he came to save humanity in its entirety.²⁰

4. A confirmation: the Society's history

Throughout History

Ignatius and the Society of Jesus' spirit made it possible that in different ways, over the years, projects of real option for the poor and works for justice took shape. We will look at just some signs of this still embryonic spirituality.

a) *Actions for the poor and for justice.* In the 16th Century, the Society is ahead of its time in admitting natives to the clergy both in America (creoles, mestizos, indigenous peoples) and in Asia (India, Japan). For forty years *Pedro Claver* runs a constant service of help to the slaves which arrive half dead to the port of Cartagena de Indias. It is a prophetic and investigative service from the "perennial slave of slaves". The *Reductions of Paraguay*, for one and a half centuries (17th-18th) are a great social achievement in the defence of indigenous peoples in America, with great results and inevitable ambiguities.²¹ *Antoine Lavalette* promotes a commercial empire to help social action in favour of indigenous peoples in the Martinique from 1741. His idealism and boldness clashes with raids by pirates and corsairs and everything ends in bankruptcy, which turns into a deep economic and moral wound for the

¹⁹ Urbano Valero clearly supports this opinion which is not universally shared: the option for the service of faith and the promotion of justice is based in the Society's central mission, according to the Institute's Formula "the defence and spreading of the faith [...] without having to return to the Formula's reference to the charitable works which the Society can practice", in *El proyecto de renovación de la Compañía de Jesús (1965-2007)*, Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander, 2011, 181, note 58.

²⁰ Cf. A. Pieris, *El Reino de Dios para los pobres. El retorno a la fórmula de Jesús*, Mensajero, Bilbao, 2006, 32-37.

²¹ Franz Hochwälder questions whether Heaven on Earth is possible in his work about the reductions (*Así en la tierra como en el cielo*). Genocide is avoided, but an ethnocide is committed, according to some anthropologists. This subject subsequently gained popularity through the film "The Mission".

Society. During the *joint invasion of Germany by Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and Richelieu of France*, the Jesuits role in helping people overwhelmed by hunger and the destruction was extensive (food, shoes, accommodation), reaching heroic levels. More than 200 Jesuits gave their lives to the service of the sick in the first half of the 17th Century...

b) *Doctrinal, cultural and structural contribution to justice*. Only by putting yourself in the context of the 16th Century can the merit and the boldness of *José de Acosta* be fully valued, who published "The Apostolate for the Eternal Salvation of the Indians" (written: 1576; published: 1588). Superiors in Rome forcefully intervene when Jesuits in Africa are found to be complicit with the authorities regarding *slavery*; allowing the practice in their communities and, in a somewhat subtle manner, benefiting from their sale through third-parties. *Juan de Mariana* (1536) publishes "The King and his Instructions", dedicated to Felipe III about the ideals of a good governor. It deals with the legality of the removal of a tyrant and his death, if necessary. In France a Jesuit is executed in connection with an attempted assassination on Henry IV, accused of having conspiratorial literature in his room. In America, *Alfonso de Sandoval*, reacts against positions on slavery which are too condescending and he studies the form of conduct. *Antonio Vieira* (1608- 1697), in Brazil, founds more than 50 villages, translates the catechism into the vernaculars, teaches the path to reconciliation and peace... He also discovers and denounces the terrible injustices of the European slave traders.²² In China and India, *Mateo Ricci* and *Roberto de Nobili*, develop a religious and cultural (astronomy, linguistics) integration movement. Also, with truly social intentions, albeit at times very questionable, they manage to enter into the country beginning with those holding the most power and influence. In the end, they develop a way of involving themselves in the lives of the most impoverished, at least in India...

In modern times, during the 20th Century

The 20th Century was a time of great development in social action. I will only highlight a few examples of this vitality. *Antonio Vicent* and *Gabriel Palau*, following initiatives already underway in Europe, are stand out figures in Spain in social action with workers, at the beginning of the 20th Century. During the 20th Century, there are *sociologists and economists* of importance and real influence (*Nell-Breuning*, *Bigo*, *Yves Calvez*...). There is a flourishing of *worker-Jesuits* ("Misión Obrera") in different European and Latin American countries from midway through the last century, who have presence in working-class and marginal neighbourhoods, giving worker-sermons and participating in the struggles of the poor. Many Jesuits radically share *the life of the poor and excluded* (*Pere Closa*, *Egide van Broeckhoven*...). Also, a *liberation pastoral* is developed (many parishes in shanty-towns, *Rutilio Grande* in El Salvador...). We find Jesuits in *social leadership and action* (*Hurtado*, *Berrigan*, *García-Nieto*...). A significant group of Jesuits who *give their life to the commitment to justice* (*Alfred Delp*, *Yves de Montcheuil*, *Lluís Espinal*, the Jesuits of UCA in El Salvador). The promotion of justice reaches the domain of *education* (popular schools in Spain and Latin America, *Pedro Basiana* in Cochabamba). Also there are *thinkers and theologians* in the line of liberation theology (*Ellacuría*, *Sobrinho*, *Libânio*, *Pieris*, *González Faus*, *Codina*, *Sivatte*, *Alegre*...). Social centres and publications are abundant (*Action Populaire*, *Hogares de Cristo*, *CIAS*, *Cristianisme i Justícia*... *Projet*, *Fomento Social*, *Aggiornamenti Sociali*...). Also, there is a progressive *integration of sensitivity and social action with thought, theology and spirituality*.

²² Manuel Oliveira's film, "Word and Utopia", is an excellent representation of the personality, action and the controversy of Vieira.

Conclusion

To finish the above analysis, we can conclude that Ignatian spirituality offers the following aspects which foster a spirituality in the commitment for justice:

1. Ignatian spirituality is characterised by a special relationship with the world: Presence in the world in all its social fabric, integrating the distinct dimensions which human and social life bring and with a commitment to the transformation of the world in its entirety.
2. The service of the faith, essential to the Society's charism, carries a special sensitivity for evangelical poverty and, consequentially, for helping the poor.
3. The Society's charism is open to what serves the greater glory of God and the common good, it is contextualized throughout history, depending on places, times and people, and it permits a continuous and creative actualisation.
4. And, although, according to the Constitutions, Ignatius believes that directly pastoral activities (which also imply the option for justice) have primacy, some direct dedication to social action is obligatory, given that it forms part of evangelisation.

B. What Ignatian spirituality contributes to the commitment to justice

Considering, now, Ignatian spirituality in the promotion of justice, I draw from Ignatian Spirituality in its broad and authentic sense, that is to say, not confined to the Jesuit spirituality. Although many of the assertions I will make are from the Jesuit charism and way of life, I believe that they can be generally extrapolated from broad Ignatian spirituality, for non-Jesuits also.

1. *Honesty with the real*

In the *illumination at the Cardoner*, Íñigo, as he himself tells us in his personal account,²³ did not experience an otherworldly vision, rather he understood the world as a sort of integrative synthesis of the entire diverse reality: the domain of faith, of culture, and of spiritual life. He received a special capacity for assimilation, which we lack when we often lose ourselves in internal and external dispersion and disintegration.²⁴ Ignatian spirituality uses a most expressive term: "all (things)", to signify that the person must integrate all things, the material and the spiritual, the individual and the collective, the secular and the sacred, God and the world... and, also, they must implement these things, they must give everything.

At the beginning of the *Spiritual Exercises*, in *Principle and Foundation*, the candidate places himself in person before God, but not in isolation, rather in relation with "the other things". Then, in the prelude to the prayer, it's suggested that he put himself "seeing the place", that is to say, the reality of the world, of people, etc. Upon commencing the contemplation of

²³ *Autobiography*, 30.

²⁴ From this point Ignatius' charism is converted into one of "sin-thesis", of "com-position". According to W. Peters, Ignatius is a man of many parts, a man of order and harmony, who manages to unify opposing and apparently contradicting elements, and who proposes a way of ordering a world which "is everything but composed and ordered" and "a Church which also appears fractured, where dogma, liturgy, piety, asceticism, canon law, and exegesis all largely exist independently" ("San Ignacio de Loyola, profeta", *Concilium*, n. 37, 1968, 28-45).

Christ's life, during the contemplation of the Incarnation, he puts himself in God's perspective, who contemplates the whole world in its great variety of people and circumstances. This is because a Christian has to practice "honesty with the real" which Jon Sobrino speaks about as a condition of spiritual life.²⁵ What is the world and society like? Are we aware that the world is one of insulting inequality with a majority of poor people? Are we aware that the "first world" is nothing more than a sort of appendix of the world? He who is inspired by this Ignatian charism cannot close his eyes to reality in its variety, richness and complexity; he cannot be like the priest or the Levite in the Good Samaritan parable, passing by an injured humanity, thinking that he should dedicate himself to other things.

Moreover, reality, where the meeting with God takes place, is *concrete*. This is an important aspect, as it was for Jesus who was a man of concrete things: concrete people, concrete illness, concrete joy and suffering, concrete conflict... We, on the contrary, convert the real into something abstract and spiritual life into an evasion. A contemporary mystic, who lives the encounter with God in friendship and with the poor, writes in his diary: "This truly concrete world is the creation of the Father in the Son through the force of the Spirit." "The concrete world of the present, which is the creation of the present God."²⁶ And thus, the experience of many Jesuits and non-Jesuit companions, who are committed to social action and who share their lives with the poorest, can confirm that through this close and shared lifestyle, "reality becomes more *real*".²⁷

But this outlook is an *outlook of faith*, that is to say, one which comprehends things in their most profound meaning and reality, an outlook which doesn't value everything equally, which marks priorities. It is the perspective which means that "this faith makes us live with love" (Gal 5:6). A view through Christ's eyes, which feel affected by the suffering of men and understand its causes - injustice being one of the most insulting and blatant. We can say that the Exercises, and the Ignatian spirituality which is derived from them, are a lesson in vision: see all, don't compartmentalize spiritual life, integrate all things in a unified way, discovering one history.

2. *The charism of action*

The vision on the banks of the Cardoner, where Íñigo, filled with God, turns himself towards the world and all things appear new to him, had a particular significance, that of a call to action to change things, people, to "*help souls*". God dragged Íñigo from the world to make him a man of God and returned him to the world to transform it into the Kingdom of God. Thus, the call to serve others is found in the very heart of Ignatius' mystical experience. Following a period of isolation and a rigorous and at times punishing penitence, Ignatius experiences the great illumination which makes him see all things anew, through the eyes of faith. From this moment of such intense union with God and of fresh perspective on the world, he now only thinks to help others. It will be the *leitmotif* which accompanies him everywhere (Barcelona, The Holy Land, Barcelona, Alcalá, Salamanca, Paris) until he finds in Rome the

²⁵ Jon Sobrino, *Liberación con Espíritu, Apuntes para una nueva espiritualidad*, Sal Terrae, Santander, 1985, 24-29.

²⁶ Josep M. Rambla, *Dios, la amistad y los pobres. La mística de Egide van Broeckhoven, jesuita obrero*, Sal Terrae, Santander, 2007, 80 and 166.

²⁷ Cf. Elías López Pérez – Jacques Haers, "JRS: Faith doing Justice. Discernment From and With Refugees", *Gregorianum* 93, 3 (2012), 549-572. Citation on 560. In this article, based on an experience in a refugee camp, many fundamental aspects of Ignatian spirituality for justice are specifically developed. See also: Elías López, "JRS: La Reconciliación y la Paz en el mundo de hoy", *CIS. Revista de Espiritualidad Ignaciana*, no.128, 42 (2011) 29-41.

specific way to fulfil his service. In this long geographical and, above all, spiritual pilgrimage, with a "*quid agendum*" (what to do?) as a burden, he develops intellectually, elaborates a method of spiritual guidance (the Exercises) to help others, and gathers together a group of companions. Between 1539 and 1540 a collective, cooperative project aimed at helping others finishes taking shape: the Society of Jesus.

We note, however, that the aim is to engage in *active* service, like Jesus, who travelled and passed doing good to all. Within the great variety of charisms in the Church, the Ignatian charism is very marked by action: travel the world to where the greatest glory of God – the common good – awaits. And this journeying is to "do", to develop activities which "depending on time, places and people" are the most necessary. Therefore, the God who appears in the Exercises is one who looks at the world, decides to "redeem" it, decides to liberate it. And, at the end of the Exercises, before coming out of retreat, the candidate encounters a God who "works" in the world, a reflection of what Jesus says: "My father is always at his work" (John 5:17).

According to Ignatius there is no point in talking about the *dangers of action*, more so he references the dangers of prayer or, better put, he doesn't value prayer in terms of the time spent doing it, but rather for the dispositions of the heart, even if the time dedicated to prayer is limited. He is conscious that both action and prayer, things which are truly good, can deteriorate; what gives them value is not so much the activities themselves, but rather the love which motivates them. Action is not a consequence of prayer, rather a place of contemplation and of union with God. Thus, we can conclude that if the struggle for justice is an action, through Ignatian spirituality we find a way of reconciling action and struggle with the practical life of spirituality. This is true, only if it is for the justice of the Kingdom of God (cf. Matt 6:33).²⁸

Moreover, a characteristic of this Ignatian service to others is the *relationship of friendship and creation of a community*, because Ignatius was a man of great friendships and his project was one of a Society of "friends in the Lord". Both the spirituality of the Exercises, marked by the relationship with God and Christ,²⁹ and the very way of proceeding of the Society, searching for collaborators or building a network,³⁰ are exponents of this way of serving in friendship and collaboration. The evangelical image which guides Ignatius always is that of Jesus and his disciples who are sent to preach and do good; that is to say, the image of Jesus in action and of the disciples in their mission of evangelisation. Moreover, today we are becoming conscious of the fact that our service to others should begin by generating friendship.

3. *Discernment and interventions*

Ignatius spent *his life searching*: what was he to do? How was he to do it? This is because living in the centre of society and knowing what the greatest need is and discerning what the most adequate methods to help are, is essential for people of action and service. This is what happened to Ignatius once he had decided to serve others. From 1523 to 1539 he went always with the question "what must I do?". The Holy Land or Europe? Layman or priest? Alone or accompanied? Religious life in its current form or another type of ecclesiastic existence? "*he never presupposed the spirit*" (Jerónimo Nadal). And, once the Society of Jesus had been

²⁸ Cf. López – Haers's article, *op. cit.*, in which a three dimensional policy of action is developed in a concrete and vital way: accompany, serve, defend.

²⁹ Cf. Josep M. Rambla, *El arte de la amistad en Ignacio de Loyola*, Collection AYUDAR, CCJ – EIDES, no. 51.

³⁰ Cf. GC 35, D. 6, *Collaboration at the Heart of Mission*.

founded, he continued with his spirit open to discover what would best serve the greater Glory of God, which is the greatest service to others. For this reason discernment is the indispensable tool for people who aren't caught on old-fashioned formulas or on out of date ideas and commitments, and are open to serving in a changing world and society: evangelical lucidity is discovering what the true necessities are, and how to suitably respond to them.

The Exercises is not the book of answers, as everyone must conduct their own search, but rather the *book of questions*, that is to say, a teaching for an adequate search, guided by evangelical wisdom. Discernment will be, then, a type of "existential feeling" (Karl Rahner), essential to interpreting, through the eyes of the Gospel, the necessities which exist in society and how to respond to them in Christ's way. To "make today's history like Jesus made his in his time" (Jon Sobrino).

Now then, evangelical action for justice imposes on us a *discernment of the objectives and interventions* (human, economic, social, associative, etc.), as we must be open to the broad range of means presented to us. In accordance with the integrating spirit which I spoke of in points 1 and 2, one mustn't exclude any type of intervention as long as it isn't anti-evangelical (lies, fraud, exploitation, manipulation of liberty, etc.). However, not all legitimate interventions are equally valid, not all are equally evangelical. Discernment is the art of identifying the suitable interventions, a very characteristic aspect of Ignatian spirituality, especially in relation to the struggle for justice.

In this analysis of reality, to see what must be done to achieve justice, *all forms of faint-heartedness* must be avoided when faced with the great plurality of possibilities offering themselves; but at the same time evangelical wisdom must be employed to choose the most suitable interventions so as to arrive at the intended objective.

In conclusion, the spirituality of justice implicates a *lucidity of discernment*, given that one is continually faced with choice: for one objective or another, for one manner to make use of profession or money or another, for one political choice or another, for one activity or another... Man is "*homo quaerens*", and Ignatian spirituality, founded by Íñigo who asked himself continually "what to do?", outlines this human condition and offers an adequate teaching.

4. The commitment to social justice as a spiritual experience

In Ignatius there is no rupture between the sacred and the secular, so much so that he could be considered a "worldly saint" (Burkhardt Schneider). This can be seen in Ignatius' conception of the Society of Jesus, which is essentially presbyteral. On describing the Jesuits' own activities, he does not limit them to the strictly *ministerial* or *pastoral* spheres of preaching, sacraments and promotion of the faith, but rather also includes the reconciliation of peoples who live in conflict, attention to the sick and prisoners, and other forms of *charity*. Moreover, little by little he introduces tasks like youth or university education, science, art or social action into the Society, which becomes an important part of its mission.³¹

The longing for God, to feel him and encounter him, tends to beat and burn in the hearts of believers. And, as shown above, it is apparent that in Ignatian spirituality, the desire for God emanates from and is nourished by life. It is normal that the person who has identified both

³¹ These innovations are so important that their need for suitable and sufficient resources to work continuously in a fixed place modifies the Society's initial poverty structure, and the practice of constantly moving to different places.

with the Holy Trinity who loves the world, and with Christ who calls us to follow him in the current story – using his sensitivity and judgement to serve others, above all the poorest – feels God’s presence in this mission rooted in God. *It’s a question of meeting* God in action, because, as Ignatius himself reminds us, God “works”. Ignatius employs the category *encounter*, and not *contemplation*, which is more Nadal’s. Contemplation is more derived from faith; encounter, from charity. Contemplation has more to do with spiritual intelligence; encounter has to do with emotion. Encountering in life in action, as Henri Sanson declares,³² is a way of walking shoulder to shoulder with God. Ignatius encourages a search for God not only through prayer, which certainly shouldn’t be lacking, but also in life’s diverse situations and activities: walking, speaking, working, studying, in all that we do. Through this we can feel joy and devotion. It should not surprise us at all, then, that those who struggle alongside the poor, those favoured by God, live a true spiritual experience.

Specifically, work for justice, which is not just an ethical requirement but rather an intrinsic part of faith, can become a spiritual experience. Those who live the faith through social love can find in this experience of struggling in union with God, not only the force to continue the struggle, but also the warmth of an emotional experience and the fullness of a relationship with God. Ignatius proposes a virtually identical case to his students; saying, dedicate yourselves intensely to study and leave little time for prayer: find God in everything, in walking, in talking, in seeing or doing anything. Consequentially, with this understanding of spiritual experience, Ignatius said to the Duke of Gandía, Francisco de Borja, who was very committed to prayer, that he should reduce the time dedicated to prayer and dedicate more to the administration of his duchy and to his studies, because finding God in things other than prayer is of greater grace to Him.³³ He says to a Jesuit, who is worried because he has to dedicate himself too much to administrative tasks, that these occupations, given that they are realized as part of the apostolic mission, *are spiritual and more elevated than contemplation*.³⁴ According to Ignatius, what makes an activity spiritual is not its nature, but the love which drives and informs it. In this sense, he would agree that “your bread is a material thing, but your brother’s bread is a spiritual thing” (N. Berdiaeff).

Naturally, this spiritual experience imposes a cost of judgement in finding out what God truly wants in the way He wants. Making our existence a true “worship” requires a profound personal transformation, as St. Paul reminds us (cf. Rom 12:1-5). Ignatius denominates this transformation a mortification, not of the body, but of the understanding, so as to “think like God and not like men” (cf. Mark 8:33), and also of the will, so as to identify with God’s will (cf. Heb 10:10).³⁵

This quality of Ignatian spirituality often seems surprising and disconcerting to some, when they realise that Christians dedicated to social and political commitments are people of very profound faith, people of a life of prayer, people of very evangelic feeling towards valuations and options. As a consequence, it isn’t strange that this rupture between the sacred and the secular makes Ignatian spirituality one which is very suitable for the secular world.³⁶

³² *Espiritualidad de la vida activa*, Herder, Barcelona.

³³ Among other letters and instructions, see: “Carta al P. Antonio Brandao”: *Obras Completas*, 2ª edición, 763. Also: “Carta a Francisco de Borja, 20 de septiembre, 1548”: *ibíd.*, 711-714.

³⁴ “Carta al P. Manuel Godinho, 31 de enero, 1552”: *Obras Completas*, 2ª edición, 781-782

³⁵ I explore this in greater detail in “Espiritualidad cristiana en la lucha por la justicia”, in *La justicia que brota de la fe*, Sal Terrae, Santander and in “Hallar a Dios en todas las cosas. Lo cotidiano como experiencia espiritual”, in *Conferencia*, 1991, 239-252.

³⁶ Egide, a worker-Jesuit, writes: “Life here is beautiful, very realistic and beautiful, totally in communion with this world, the concrete world of today, which is the God’s creation today... Here, now, Brussels, these concrete

5. Assume the risk

"Today, the greatest safety is in risk", was repeated with Arrupe. It seems clear that at the end of an era we can't be held back by fear of not finding the perfectly correct path. This doesn't mean legitimising any-old lunacy, nor does it mean falling into "temptation with the appearance of good", of an apparent prudence which is really fear and faint-heartedness, which won't accept risk in order to open paths, or enter into places or initiatives which present certain dangers. And we know well that not only does the Spirit pacify, but it agitates, destabilises...

Ignatius says to a Jesuit who is afraid of accepting the role of confessor and advisor to the King of Portugal that he must undoubtedly accept it, because if we stop for fear of the dangers that a certain action brings, we will never do any good.³⁷ To another, who felt bewildered because he was laden with administrative paperwork and legal disputes and he believed that this was worshiping the idol Baal, he says that if the things he does are good, and the means are not anti-evangelical, carrying them out is to collaborate with the work of God, who is the author of all, including the material and "profane" world.³⁸

Due to Ignatian spirituality's capacity to immerse itself in a world full of ambiguity and risks, one historian said about the Jesuits:

"The Jesuits did not content themselves with serving as "soldiers of Christ" in the silence of convents and in council debates. They spread across the world, to the cabinets of monarchs, to parliaments and universities, to the audience rooms of Asian tyrants, to the firesides of red-skins, to conferences of learned people, and to political platforms (...) They wanted to be considered worldly people, among worldly people [...] Therefore, in this worldly sphere, they cannot escape worldly criticism".³⁹

In effect, if Jesuits enter in the domain of educating and teaching the bourgeoisie or in universities, or even businessmen, with the intention of educating for change, they slip into the world of misunderstandings and ambiguities. If they are liberation theologians they support popular movements, introducing themselves to a domain quite criticised by many. If a Jesuit dies in the Spanish Civil War, he is understood by some and misinterpreted by others. If a Jesuit is assassinated because he has stood with the liberation movements of Latin America, there will be those who say he involved himself in politics. Or perhaps someone will say he was a martyr, not of faith, but of justice... And we know well that it is not necessary to die for the option of justice, and that this risk not only affects Jesuits, but also any person who takes this option, given that faithfulness to the Gospel of justice often has repercussions for one's reputation, in relationships with family and friends, in professional and working life. Jesus said, "If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:20). Fr. Arrupe and the now numerous present-day Jesuits, not only the martyrs, are true testimony to the risk brought by this spirituality, which while being profoundly joyful by being evangelic, is neither placid nor tranquil.

men, in this molten filth, our friends too...: all of this is reality, and this reality is sacred, because it is the only place where God can reach us and, therefore, where he touches us. Even if he had to choose between the burning bush and Brussels, he would choose Brussels" (in Josep. M. Rambla, *Dios, la amistad y los pobres*, op. cit., 166).

³⁷ "Carta al P. Diego Mirón, 1 febrero 1553": *Obras Completas*, 2ª edición, 804-806.

³⁸ "Carta al P. Juan Álvarez, 18 julio 1549": *Obras Completas*, 2ª edición, 720-721.

³⁹ René Fülöp Miller, *Macht und Geheimnis der Jesuiten*, cited in J. Lacouture, *Jesuitas, II, Los continuadores*, Ediciones Paidós, Barcelona, 1992, 9.

6. *A spirituality alongside other spiritualities*

The Ignatian spirituality, as we have seen, is one which is well suited to the struggle for justice. An indication of this is the role it is given by the very father of liberation theology, Gustavo Gutiérrez, in his work *We Drink from Our Own Wells*. Of course, Ignatian spirituality for justice is but one spirituality alongside many others and only in this way is it valid; because spiritualities are forms of ecclesiastical charism, and no charism can claim to be above the rest, less so that it is all encompassing. Only to give an example, we will see how other spiritualities complement Ignatian spirituality.

Without excluding its active contribution to the cause of justice, the monastic spirituality is generally an eschatological spirituality, or one which anticipates absolute peace and praise in the Kingdom of God. And, in this way, it is an investigative sign of the Kingdom of God rooted on earth, but which transcends our relationships and is grace. The spirituality of Charles Foucauld is living testimony of the poor and silent Jesus of Nazareth who shares the condition of a large part of humanity through his simple and poor lifestyle. It is an action for justice making humanly real Jesus' closeness to the poorest, offering them a taste of eternal bliss.

In summary, if Ignatian spirituality is a gift of God in the world and in the Church, particularly in the aspect of the struggle for justice, it would be nothing were it not complemented by other Christian spiritualities or charism, because Christ's bottomless riches are endless and overcome all particular forms of living the Gospel.

C. General conclusion

1. *A theoretical conclusion: the "spiritual person"*

Arrupe was a "man of God", of an intense and very singular personal experience. And it is precisely he who drove the Society of Jesus towards making, in harmony with Ignatian spirituality, a serious commitment to the service of justice as an integral part of our service to faith. He was very aware that this would cause serious problems, and that he would have to "assume the risk". These problems manifested themselves within the Society of Jesus, and also outside the Society, specifically from the Church's high authorities. The very discourse which I will refer to and from which I extract my final synthesis, provoked distancings from the Society which were very painful for him. Addressing lay alumni of the Society of Jesus, he expressed that the objective of our educational centres is the development of caring people, conscious that Christian life carries a decided option for the poorest and, as a consequence, a commitment to changing society, creating "agents of change" and promoting justice. In this context, his words illuminate excellently the sense of this spirituality struggling for social justice and will serve to conclude and synthesise this essay:

"Only the man of God, the 'spiritual man', in the sense of being elevated by the Spirit, can be the man for others in the long run, the man for justice, capable of contributing a true transformation of the world, who eliminates from himself structures of sin.

The first trait of our life in the Spirit is undoubtedly love: it is the motor behind everything. But it is not enough just to love, one has to love discretely. And here is where the second sense of what we understand to be a spiritual man comes into play.

This concrete world, from which we need to banish injustice, inhabits us and also society's structure, and in fact is a combination of the Holy Spirit and of sin. For this reason, in the

struggle for justice, we need the gifts of council and discernment, the charism of spiritual discretion, to know how to separate, in all aspect of the world, what pertains to God and what pertains to sin. Observation and sociological analysis of reality is not enough...

This is the ideal of man, who is the object of our formative efforts, the 'spiritual' man... he is the 'homo spiritualis' who, because he is capable of loving, even enemies in this evil world, is also capable of transforming the world. Through the charism of discernment, he is capable of discovering and actively joining in with the most profound and efficient dynamism in history; that which drives the construction already underway of the Kingdom of God".⁴⁰

Justice and Kingdom of God, love and discernment are like the coordinates of a Christian spirituality in the struggle for justice and they define the character of a spiritual person.

2. A practical conclusion

Egide van Broekhoven is a Jesuit, mystic in the strong sense of the word, that is to say with extraordinary gifts of God, who in the depths of the Trinitarian experience discovered God *intimior intimo tuo*, the experience of friendship and particularly friendship with the poor. A working class Jesuit, he dies in a labour accident in December 1967. I will consult just a few texts of his spiritual diary which confirm what I have tried to express in the above analysis.⁴¹

a) *Trinitarian experience in the centre of the city.* "On the way to the clinic, great consolation, complete mystical experience: as if from the Ocean of God, from his infinite power, the Son came to me; as in a personal meeting I was placed in this world in the Son, by the Son in his divinity and in his humanity, and as such I go towards the world in order to go towards the Father, with the Father in the Son... I experienced the Fullness of the life around me and, for this reason, a great force inhabited me, with a great peace, knowing that I am there where Love wants me to be."

b) *Experience of God in the poor.* "The experience of God, give yourself up to the poor." "Another reason which drove me towards this life was a great desire for God; and God, I thought, can in no place be found more than in the reality of the world of today, preferably among the poorest of the poor."

c) *Risk everything.* "I rest in the very centre of the storm, on the new wave of loving impulse. It is in this particular medium, de-Christianised, tough to the point of exhausting and desensitising, where I find my way of contemplative life (Carthusian, Trappist...). The jump into this medium is for me a leap into the Carthusian or Trappist life: leave everything, risk everything, sell everything – for God."

Having ended this essay with some complementary testaments to Ignatian spirituality in its social commitment, we could remember with Fr. Nadal that we, as followers of Ignatius, trust to receive the same grace that was granted to him.

Original in Spanish

⁴⁰ Pedro Arrupe, S.I., "Formación para la promoción de la justicia", in *La Iglesia de hoy y del futuro*, Mensajero – Sal Terrae, Bilbao – Santander, 1982, 357-358.

⁴¹ Cf. the work cited in footnote 25. The texts cited are found in the pages 72, 81, 218, 75. Other testimonies of Ignatian spirituality in the struggle for justice can be seen in Josep M. Rambla, "Espiritualidad ignaciana y lucha por la justicia", in *Mística y compromiso por la justicia*, Cristianisme i Justícia, Barcelona, 2011, 53-82, particularly in pages 75-82.

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