

## NOTE

### JESUITS AND THEOLOGY: YESTERDAY AND TODAY\*

The year 1991 is par excellence an Ignatian year. It marks the half-millennium since the birth of St. Ignatius of Loyola and the 450th year of the establishment of the Society of Jesus. It may be appropriate at this time, in a theological journal published under Jesuit auspices, to reflect on the theological achievements of the sons of St. Ignatius. Has there been, and is there, such a thing as Jesuit theology?

If Jesuit theology is taken to mean a brand of theology distinctive and common to all Jesuits, no such thing exists.<sup>1</sup> Jesuits do not follow any method proper to their Society, nor do they take any member of their own order as their theological mentor in the way that Augustinians might presumably follow St. Augustine, Dominicans might follow St. Thomas, and Franciscans might follow St. Bonaventure or Duns Scotus. In the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*<sup>2</sup> Ignatius called for lectures on Scripture (351, 464), on patristic theology (353, 366, 368), and, in scholastic theology, on the doctrine of Thomas Aquinas (464). In an explanatory declaration he further provided for lectures on Peter Lombard and, as circumstances might require, on "some compendium or book of scholastic theology that seems better adapted to these times of ours" (466).

In spite of this latitude in the choice of authorities, it appears that there are characteristic Jesuit concerns and themes in theology. These stem principally from the example and writings of St. Ignatius of Loyola.<sup>3</sup> Ignatius was not a professional theologian, but he spent nearly ten years of his life studying theology, and he picked able theologians as his first companions. In the *Constitutions* he prescribed four to six years of theological study for all Jesuit priests (418, 474, 476), and specified that all Jesuit colleges and universities should give the highest priority to theology as the discipline most conducive to the knowledge and love of

\* The original form of this note was an address delivered at the Boston Public Library on April 3, 1991 at the formal opening of the exhibit, "Jesuits in New England," which was one of the features of the Boston College celebration of the Ignatian anniversaries.

<sup>1</sup> See Avery Dulles, "St. Ignatius and the Jesuit Theological Tradition," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 14.2 (March 1982).

<sup>2</sup> The *Constitutions* are here cited according to the marginal numbers in George E. Ganss, ed., *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970).

<sup>3</sup> See Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968); also Harvey D. Egan, *Ignatius Loyola the Mystic* (Wilmington, Del.: Glazier, 1987).

God and the salvation of souls, which were the goals of the Jesuit order (446).

If one were to look for a common bond among Jesuit theologians, it would be found not so much in theology itself as in spirituality. Throughout the four and a half centuries of their existence Jesuits have drawn inspiration from the practical mysticism of St. Ignatius—that is to say, his gift for synthesizing contemplation and action. Sensitive as he was to the interior leading of the Holy Spirit, he dedicated his energies unswervingly to the service of the Church militant.

The rules laid down in the *Spiritual Exercises* on the discernment of spirits (313–36) and on the choice of a state of life (169–89) have given Jesuits a sense of the immediate presence of God, who calls each individual to union with Himself.<sup>4</sup> The director of the Exercises is admonished to let “the Creator and Lord in person communicate Himself to the devout soul” and “permit the Creator to deal directly with the creature” (15). But this personal mysticism was balanced in the case of Ignatius by intense devotion to the institutional Church. For him it was axiomatic that “In Christ our Lord, the bridegroom, and in His spouse the Church, only one Spirit holds sway, which governs and rules for the salvation of souls” (*Sp. Ex.* 365). In the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* and in the “Rules of Thinking with the Church” (*Sp. Ex.* 352–70) he stressed the need for unquestioning obedience to the hierarchy and especially to the pope as vicar of Christ on earth. In the *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius wrote affectionately of the “hierarchical Church” (170, 353, 355)—a term which he apparently was the first to use.<sup>5</sup>

Although he was greatly attached to prescribed methods in study, in spirituality, and in the apostolate, Ignatius, with his practical realism, repeatedly insisted on the importance of adapting one’s speech and behavior to the possibilities and requirements of concrete situations, taking account of “times, places, and persons.”<sup>6</sup> Faithful to these instructions, Jesuits have tried to adapt their efforts to the changing circumstances. Hence Jesuit theology has taken on different hues in different centuries. I find it convenient to distinguish three major periods which may be called, respectively, the age of Trent (from about 1550 to the late 18th century), the age of Vatican I (the 19th and early 20th centuries), and the age of Vatican II (from about 1940 to our own day).

<sup>4</sup> The *Spiritual Exercises* are here cited according to the translation of Louis J. Puhl, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1951). The paragraph numbers are standard.

<sup>5</sup> Yves Congar, *L’Eglise de S. Augustin à l’époque moderne* (Paris: Cerf, 1970) 369.

<sup>6</sup> *Constitutions* 136, 455.

## THE AGE OF TRENT

The first period was that of the Counter Reformation, officially launched at the Council of Trent.<sup>7</sup> With Jesuits such as Diego Laynez and Alonso Salmerón serving as papal theologians, the Society contributed significantly to the teaching of Trent itself. After the council, the effort to implement its decrees gave unity and direction to the first great century of Jesuit theology.

Building on the humanism of the day, Jesuits defended the dignity of human nature, notwithstanding the effects of original sin. In this they opposed the pessimism of some Protestants and of the Jansenists, who looked on human nature as totally corrupt. Just as the *Spiritual Exercises* are designed to mobilize all human powers, including the memory and the imagination, the will and the intellect, for the greater glory of God, so Jesuit theology exhibits a high regard for human nature, human reason, and human freedom, seeking to capture them all for the service of the Creator and Redeemer.

Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* referred frequently to human freedom. He cautioned that one should not speak of grace in such a way as to diminish freedom (369). Faithful to this charge, Luiz de Molina and other Jesuits attempted to explain the operations of grace in such a way that human beings would be responsible for their own salvation or damnation.<sup>8</sup> Molina's system of reconciling God's dominion with human freedom was not acceptable to all Jesuits, but it was generally considered preferable to some other Catholic theories that verged too closely on the determinism of John Calvin. The prolonged controversy between Jesuits and Dominicans on the operations of actual grace is an unfortunate episode reflecting the contentiousness of the times.

As members of a society intended "especially for the defense and propagation of the faith,"<sup>9</sup> many Jesuits entered the fields of apologetical and polemical theology. Robert Bellarmine, probably the most eminent, constructed a brilliant defense of Catholicism against the positions of Luther, Calvin, and other Protestants. Peter Canisius and Robert Bellarmine wrote two of the most influential catechisms, intended to offset those of Luther and other Protestants.

In their educational apostolate Jesuits were concerned not only with elementary and secondary schooling, but also with university studies and

<sup>7</sup> Still useful for an introduction to this period is Gerard Smith, ed., *Jesuit Thinkers of the Renaissance* (Milwaukee: Marquette Univ., 1939). This symposium contains articles on Suárez, Molina, Lessius, and Bellarmine, among others.

<sup>8</sup> Luiz de Molina, *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis* (Lisbon, 1588).

<sup>9</sup> "Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus: The Bull *Exposcit debitum* of July 21, 1550," in Ganss, *Constitutions* 63-73, no. 3, p. 66.

the formation of a learned clergy. This involved the teaching of theology. Ignatius had ruled that "we should praise both positive theology and that of the scholastics" (*Sp. Ex.* 369). Not surprisingly, therefore, a number of early Jesuits, such as Maldonatus, Cornelius a Lapide, and Petavius, excelled in biblical and patristic erudition, while others, such as Toledo, Suárez, and de Lugo, ranked among the principal architects of a renewed scholasticism.

In the renewal of Thomism Jesuits worked side by side with Dominicans. Ignatius himself greatly admired the order and method of St. Thomas, having completed his theological studies at the Dominican convent on the rue Saint-Jacques in Paris. Many of the Jesuit theologians of the 16th century, including Francisco Toledo, Juan de Maldonado, Gregory of Valencia, and Francisco Suárez studied theology at Salamanca under Dominican masters such as Francisco de Vitoria, Melchior Cano, and Domingo Bañez. Scholasticism in the Jesuit tradition tended to be rather eclectic, since it drew from Scotus and other medieval authorities in addition to Thomas Aquinas. It was more systematic and deductive than the scholasticism of the high Middle Ages. No mere effort to repristinate the past, it took up many new questions arising out of recent advances in the sciences, geographical exploration, and modern philosophical systems. For several centuries this type of scholasticism was effectively used in Catholic higher education, and was paralleled, to some degree, in Protestant circles. But the heavy scholastic armor prevented this type of theology from adapting well to the modern environment. In our day it appears as excessively dogmatic, subtle, and, in its own way, rationalistic.

Granted the practical orientation of St. Ignatius, it should not be surprising that the early Society did much of its most fruitful work in the sphere of social and personal ethics. Although the Catholic human rights tradition had not yet come into its own, Jesuits were among its precursors. Suárez wrote in favor of the rights of women and slaves. De Lugo opposed the abuse of torture in judicial proceedings. Friedrich von Spee in his *Cautio criminalis* (1631) raised a storm by excoriating the injustices of witch trials. Many Jesuits wrote against tyranny and the doctrine of the divine right of kings. Suárez and Bellarmine insisted that just governments must rest upon the consent of the governed.

In social ethics Jesuits, to be sure, held no monopoly. Dominicans such as Bartolomé de Las Casas and Francisco de Vitoria were leaders in calling for reforms of the colonial system and for justice toward indigenous populations. Together with Suárez and de Lugo, Vitoria laid the groundwork for a theory of international law based on the law of nature. The Protestant Hugo Grotius, who perfected this theory, was indebted

to both the Dominican and Jesuit forerunners.

In moral theology Jesuits inherited the concern of St. Ignatius for the examination of conscience and the confession of sins. Attempting to implement the decrees of Trent on this subject, they perfected methods of examining one's conscience under the rubric of the Ten Commandments. To protect penitents from being weighed down by doubtful obligations, they developed the moral system known as probabilism, which gave preference to freedom in cases where there is no certain obligation. This system, first excogitated by the Dominican Bartolomé de Medina, was not peculiar to the Jesuits, nor was it held by all Jesuits, but it was commonly attributed to the Jesuit order, especially by adversaries such as Pascal.<sup>10</sup> In order to make the transition from general rules of conduct to particular cases Jesuit moralists made a generally discriminating (though sometimes exaggerated) use of casuistry.<sup>11</sup>

In their ecclesiology Bellarmine and other Jesuits of the Counter-Reformation were intensely loyal to what Ignatius had called the "hierarchical Church." Although these authors sought to counter exorbitant claims for the papacy, especially in temporal matters, they defended the primacy and infallibility of the pope, whom Ignatius had described as the supreme vicar of Christ on earth, and to whose direction he had entrusted the Society of Jesus.<sup>12</sup> The devotion of Jesuit theologians to the Holy See provoked bitter antagonism on the part of Gallicans in France, and like-minded groups in other countries, who wanted greater autonomy for national churches. This antagonism, indeed, was a major factor leading to the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773.

In the *Spiritual Exercises* Ignatius had recalled how Christ sends his disciples throughout the whole world and among all peoples (*Sp. Ex.* 145). In the Constitutions he prescribed that Jesuits should be ready to go wherever the pope might send them (308, 573, 609, etc.). Jesuits, working in North and South America and in Asia, experienced the need for missionary adaptation. They developed styles of theology that would permit Christianity to be preached and practiced in forms accommodated to the cultures of India and China. Some of these experiments were later condemned by Rome, but today many argue that the condemnations were unwarranted. In our multicultural world renewed efforts are being made at adaptation or, as it is now called, inculturation.

With their relatively optimistic view of human nature, Jesuits sought

<sup>10</sup> On probabilism and the Jesuits see John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987) 135-43. He discusses Medina on 135-38.

<sup>11</sup> See Albert R. Jonsen and Stephen Toulmin, *The Abuse of Casuistry: A History of Moral Reasoning* (Berkeley, Calif.: Univ. of Calif., 1988).

<sup>12</sup> "Formula of the Institute (1550)" nos. 2-4, pp. 64-66.

to devise theories that would explain the possibility for unevangelized persons to save their souls. Believing that God's salvific will extended to every individual, some held that pagans could be saved, with God's grace, by obeying the law of nature written on their hearts (cf. Romans 2:14-16).<sup>13</sup> Juan Martinez de Ripalda, in his *De ente supernaturali* (1634), maintained that every naturally virtuous act is elevated by God's grace and is therefore salutary. Pagans, even though they do not accept any particular truth as being revealed by God, would on this theory have faith in the broad sense (*fides late dicta*), insofar as their belief in naturally knowable truths is supernaturally illuminated by grace. For liberal views such as these some Jesuits were attacked by Jansenists and conservative Protestants.<sup>14</sup> Some of the 65 propositions condemned by the Holy Office in 1679 seem to repudiate the views of Ripalda and some of his disciples, such as Gilles Estrix, S.J.<sup>15</sup>

As this summary suggests, Jesuit theology in the baroque period scored impressive achievements. Repudiating the rigorism and fideism of the Jansenists and sectarian Protestants, it erected a broad platform for reasonable discussion with thoughtful Protestants and unbelievers. In opposition to Gallican movements that were tending to fragment the Church along national lines, Jesuits promoted the universal authority of the Holy See and missionary outreach to all nations. In the areas of moral and pastoral theology Jesuits provided a theoretical and practical framework appropriate for the post-Tridentine era. In an age of absolutism, their respect for conscience and their advocacy of natural rights contributed significantly to the growth of political philosophy and jurisprudence.

#### THE AGE OF VATICAN I

The second great period of Jesuit theology began in the early 19th century. After the Society of Jesus had been restored by Pius VII in 1814, the Jesuits collaborated closely with the popes, as had their predecessors in the Counter-Reformation. They favored the growing centralization that marked the pontificate of Pius IX.

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Diego de Paiva d'Andrada in his *Orthodoxarum explicationum libri decem* (Venice and Cologne, 1564).

<sup>14</sup> Martin Chemnitz, in his *Examination of the Council of Trent* (1578; ET, 2 vols.; St. Louis: Concordia, 1971) 1.389-96, accuses Andrada of falling back into the errors of Pelagius.

<sup>15</sup> Prop. 23, "Fides late dicta ex testimonio creaturarum similive motivo ad iustificationem sufficit" (DS 2123). Here again, we are not dealing with an exclusively Jesuit position, since the Dominican Domingo Soto and the Franciscan Andrea Vega were at least as liberal as Ripalda. Some Jesuits, such as Gregory of Valencia, held to the more classical view that explicit faith in Christ was absolutely required for salvation under the new law.

The Roman College, where Toletus, Bellarmine, Suárez, and de Lugo had previously lectured, became once again the principal center of Jesuit theology. Giovanni Perrone, who taught at the Roman College almost continuously from 1824 until his death in 1876, developed an apologetics that struck a middle path between systems that gave too much scope either to faith or to reason. In close touch with theological trends in France and Germany, he was an advisor to Pope Gregory XVI in the condemnation of Georg Hermes and a mentor to Louis Eugène Bautain when the latter was accused of fideism. Perrone also exchanged views with John Henry Newman on the theory of doctrinal development. Supporting the traditional Jesuit devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, Perrone in 1846 proposed that this doctrine could be defined as a dogma of the faith. Pope Pius IX read Perrone's treatise and was convinced. In 1854 he defined the dogma in an apostolic constitution that had been drafted for the most part by Perrone's brilliant disciple, Carlo Passaglia.

Before and during Vatican I some prominent Jesuits, using organs such as *Civiltà cattolica*, were actively promoting the revival of scholasticism and the definition of papal infallibility.<sup>16</sup> Luigi Taparelli d'Azeglio and Matteo Liberatore, in Naples and in Rome, campaigned for the restoration of Thomistic philosophy and theology in all Catholic schools. In the preparatory phase of Vatican I two Jesuit pupils of Perrone, John Baptist Franzelin and Klemens Schrader, were the principal authors, respectively, of the proposed constitutions on Catholic faith and on the Church. When the council fathers called for a revision of the schema on the Church, they engaged the services of the German Jesuit Joseph Kleutgen, a convinced Thomist, to produce a new text. Kleutgen also took an active part in drafting the definition of papal infallibility.

After Vatican I Kleutgen and other Jesuits continued to labor for the restoration of Thomistic scholasticism as an alternative to modern systems based on Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, and Hegel, whose philosophies were regarded as inimical to Catholic orthodoxy. Kleutgen is generally believed to have drafted the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879), in which Leo XIII called for a revival of the wisdom of the Angelic Doctor.

Jesuit moral theology during this second period continued to furnish practical guidance to confessors. Increasing reliance was placed on natural law and papal teaching—two sources that were kept in harmony by the principle that the ecclesiastical magisterium was enlightened by the Holy Spirit in its grasp of naturally knowable truths. Jesuit moralists

<sup>16</sup> The role of Jesuits in the revival of scholastic philosophy is traced in Gerald A. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Seabury/Crossroad, 1977) 81–87, 135–41, 145–215, 226–40.

turned spontaneously to papal pronouncements, many of which had been drawn up with the assistance of Jesuits as close advisors. This was notably the case with regard to social ethics. Heinrich Pesch and other German Jesuits played a leading role in the development of Catholic social teaching from Leo XIII to Pius XII. Oswald von Nell-Breuning, as is well known, was the principal drafter of Pius XI's encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (1931).<sup>17</sup>

While a synthesis of neo-Thomism and papal teaching continued to dominate theological teaching at the Gregorian University and in Roman Jesuit circles, other currents were in the air. The English Jesuit George Tyrrell, a keen enthusiast for the *Spiritual Exercises*, with his eye on the Ignatian "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits," developed a theory of revelation that relied heavily on spiritual experience and the "sense of the faithful." The Jesuit leadership in Rome regarded Tyrrell as a Modernist and dismissed him from the order for insubordination. Henri Bremond, an authority on the history of spirituality, and a close friend of Tyrrell, was likewise separated from the Society partly, at least, because of quarrels with the Roman leadership.<sup>18</sup>

Other French Jesuits such as Pierre Rousselot protested against the rationalistic tendencies of neo-scholasticism, as exemplified, for instance, by the Jesuit Louis Billot, the dominant theologian at the Gregorian University.<sup>19</sup> Rousselot's doctrine that the infused light of faith was necessary for anyone to recognize and interpret the signs of God's revelation in history was considered too illuministic, and was officially disapproved by the Jesuit General, Vladimir Ledochowski.<sup>20</sup>

As these examples illustrate, a cleavage was developing between two major tendencies in Jesuit theology. The neo-scholastics, continuing in the line of Counter-Reformation dogmatics, based their theology on natural reason and on the authority of the papal and conciliar documents. A second group, out of favor in Rome, sought to connect theology more intimately with prayer and the experience of the Holy Spirit. Both groups

<sup>17</sup> In his article, "The Drafting of *Quadragesimo Anno*," Nell-Breuning mentions his utilization of the social philosophy of Gustav Gundlach, S.J., who was likewise a close advisor to popes on moral questions. This revealing article may be found in Charles E. Curran and Richard J. McCormick, eds., *Moral Theology 5: Official Catholic Social Teaching* (New York: Paulist, 1986) 60-68. Three other Jesuits (two French and one Belgian) were also involved in the drafting of QA. The contribution of Gustave Desbuquois of the Action populaire in Paris is noted in Paul Droulers, *Cattolicesimo sociale nei secoli XIX e XX* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1982) 390-91.

<sup>18</sup> On Tyrrell and Bremond, see David G. Schultenover, *George Tyrrell: In Search of Catholicism* (Shepherdstown, W.Va., 1981).

<sup>19</sup> See Pierre Rousselot, *The Eyes of Faith* (New York: Fordham Univ., 1990).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 113-17.



considered themselves faithful to the Jesuit sources. The first group appealed by preference to the "Rules for Thinking with the Church" and to selected passages from the *Constitutions*. The second group took their chief inspiration from the "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits" and the mysticism of Ignatius. The Ignatian synthesis between mysticism and obedience to hierarchical authority was in danger of falling apart.

#### THE AGE OF VATICAN II

The third major epoch of Jesuit theology may be dated from about 1940, though its foundations go back to the first decade of the century. It began as an internal critique of modern scholasticism inspired in great part by Rousselot and his associates. The Jesuits of Lyons and Fourvière rebelled against the dualism between nature and grace and between faith and reason that they found in the neo-scholasticism of the day. They objected that this theology, unfaithful to the true teaching of St. Thomas, depicted the supernatural as a superstructure, an unneeded supplement to a natural order that was complete and self-contained.<sup>21</sup>

These French Jesuits, under the leadership of Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou, sought to revitalize theology by turning to the patristic sources. In so doing they were faithful, at least in part, to St. Ignatius, who had taught that the positive doctors, such as Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory, should be praised because of their power to arouse the affections, so that people might better love and serve the Lord (*Sp. Ex.* 363).

Henri de Lubac, and to some degree Daniélou, promoted a prayerful method of reading Scripture, called "spiritual exegesis." They supported this by reference to Origen and other patristic and medieval authorities, who spoke of allegorical or spiritual meanings. In this meditative style of exegesis Jesuits were perhaps influenced by the biblical contemplations proposed by St. Ignatius in his *Spiritual Exercises*.<sup>22</sup>

De Lubac, Daniélou, and their colleagues did not revive the Fathers of the Church out of sheer antiquarian interest. They were convinced that the abstract conceptual theology of late scholasticism was based on an outdated rationalism and was unsuited to the modern mind. The warmer, more devotional theology of the Fathers, they believed, could speak better to contemporary readers. Thus the return to the biblical and patristic sources was intended as an updating of theology, and was motivated by

<sup>21</sup> The controversies preceding Vatican II are succinctly explained in Giacomo Martina, "The Historical Context in which the Idea of a New Ecumenical Council was Born," in René Latourelle, ed., *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives* 1 (New York: Paulist, 1988) 3-73.

<sup>22</sup> Hugo Rahner remarks on how the inner visitations of grace made it difficult for Ignatius to keep his attention fixed on the literal meaning of the words in Scripture or in the missal. See *Ignatius the Theologian* 19-20.

pastoral considerations. In their concern for present-day problems de Lubac wrote books on atheistic humanism and on Buddhism, while Daniélou engaged in lively exchanges with Protestant and Jewish thinkers of the day.

About the same time that the Jesuits of the Lyons Province were rehabilitating the Fathers, a number of others were striving to get away from an excessively institutional ecclesiology, set forth in narrowly juridical and societal categories. Emile Mersch in Belgium explored more deeply the idea of the Church as Christ's Mystical Body and spoke of the vital, organic relationships between the head and the members. In his vision Christ was not simply an object to be contemplated from outside, nor a teacher to whose word one must blindly submit. Living and present in the Holy Spirit, Christ becomes the very light in which all things are to be perceived. The new theology of the Mystical Body gave greater intelligibility to the Ignatian ideal of intimate familiarity with the triune God. The Dutch Jesuit Sebastian Tromp was the principal drafter of the important encyclical on the Mystical Body issued by Pius XII in 1943. This encyclical, while accepting a predominantly vital and organic ecclesiology, retained Bellarmine's emphasis on the visibility of the Church and on the authority of the pope as vicar of Christ.

The French Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin, going beyond the image of the Mystical Body, looked on Christ as the center and crown of the whole created order.<sup>23</sup> He spoke of the universal or cosmic Christ as the Alpha and Omega. Regarding the whole world as the "divine milieu," Teilhard could proclaim, with Ignatius, that God was to be found in all things. In his type of theology it made eminent sense to speak of all creatures, in the words of Ignatius, as "bathed in the blood of Christ, images of God, temples of the Holy Spirit."<sup>24</sup> Teilhard was undoubtedly inspired, in part, by the Christology of the *Spiritual Exercises*. De Lubac in his two books on Teilhard de Chardin insists on the Ignatian inspiration.<sup>25</sup>

Teilhard thought of himself as an apostle to the world of science. Of that world he wrote, "There lie the Indies that call me more strongly than St. Francis Xavier's."<sup>26</sup> Teilhard's synthesis of science and theology was based on scientific theories that may not be broadly accepted today; it also neglected some important theological data. But his efforts at

<sup>23</sup> See Christopher F. Mooney, *Teilhard de Chardin and the Mystery of Christ* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

<sup>24</sup> Letter of October 8, 1552; *Monumenta historica Societatis Iesu, Monumenta Ignatiana*, I, *Epistolae et Instructiones S. Ignatii* 12.252; quoted by Hugo Rahner in *Ignatius the Theologian* 65, 84, 126.

<sup>25</sup> Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (New York: Desclée, 1967); *Teilhard de Chardin: The Man and His Meaning* (New York: Mentor-Omega, 1965).

<sup>26</sup> *Letters from a Traveller* (London: Collins, 1962) 128.

harmonization were a welcome change from the mutual indifference and hostility between the disciplines that had been widely prevalent since the age of Galileo.

The efforts of the French Jesuits to revitalize theology by a return to the biblical and patristic sources and by a more positive stance toward modern philosophical systems were welcomed by some of the hierarchy and by many of the French Dominicans, including Marie-Dominique Chenu and Yves Congar, who had been engaged in a similar effort. But opposition developed particularly among the Dominicans of the Toulouse Province, whose fears found an echo in high places in Rome. Pius XII was persuaded to issue several stern warnings, notably in his encyclical *Humani generis* (1950), which affirmed the validity of "perennial philosophy" and of the method of Thomas Aquinas. This encyclical, and the rigorous manner in which it was enforced by the Jesuit and Dominican religious superiors, constituted a severe, if only temporary, setback for progressive theology.

During the 1950s many Jesuits began to explore the theological potentialities of the apostolic spirituality of St. Ignatius and his first companions. The original sources were studied with fresh enthusiasm. Hugo Rahner, building on the previous work of Joseph de Guibert and Erich Przywara, wrote eloquently about the mystical theology of Ignatius. In France Maurice Giuliani and others explored the sources of Jesuit spirituality in the review *Christus*, founded in 1954. Gaston Fessard gave a new theological interpretation to the "dialectic" of the *Spiritual Exercises*, placing a strong accent on the "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits."

At Vatican Council II the Jesuits took a significant, though not a preeminent, role.<sup>27</sup> Sebastian Tromp had been the secretary of the Theological Commission that drew up the preliminary schemas. Many of these schemas were considered too rigid and polemical, and were rejected by the bishops. In the revision of the schemas the popes gave exceptional powers to the German Jesuit biblical scholar, Augustine Bea, whom John XXIII had named president of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Karl Rahner and many other Jesuit theology professors served on various commissions. Although excluded from the first session, de Lubac and Daniélou were invited to the later sessions as experts. The American Jesuit John Courtney Murray, who had been under suspicion during the 1950s for his views on church-state relations, was likewise excluded from the first session, but he later played a crucial role in

<sup>27</sup> See G. Martina, "The Historical Context" 55; also Karl Heinz Neufeld, "In the Service of the Council: Bishops and Theologians at the Second Vatican Council (for Cardinal Henri de Lubac on His Ninetieth Birthday)," in Latourelle, *Vatican II: Assessment and Perspectives* 1.74-105.

drawing up the Declaration on Religious Freedom.

Since Vatican II transcendental theology achieved a certain dominance on the Catholic scene, thanks especially to two brilliant Jesuits, Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan. This movement could trace its philosophical ancestry to the Belgian Jesuit Joseph Maréchal and its theological ancestry to Pierre Rousselot. It also has a certain basis in the writings of St. Ignatius, who had spoken in the *Spiritual Exercises* (184) of the love of God descending from above. In the *Constitutions* Ignatius had written of "the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts" (134).

With explicit references to St. Ignatius, Rahner and Lonergan maintained that theology must proceed in the light of an immediate experience of God as He bestows Himself in grace. Lonergan in his work on theological method gave crucial importance to religious conversion, which he attributed to the love that God pours into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 5:5).<sup>28</sup> The experience of "being in love with God," according to Lonergan, "corresponds to St. Ignatius Loyola's consolation that has no cause, as expounded by Karl Rahner."<sup>29</sup>

Rahner characterized his own theology as an attempt to spell out the implications of the experience of the Holy Spirit that St. Ignatius wished to deepen and clarify through his *Spiritual Exercises*.<sup>30</sup> All theology, Rahner asserted, should have a mystical dimension; it should be nourished by the experience of grace. Using this inner experience as a starting point, Rahner radically transformed the traditional theses of scholastic theology. He arrived at a new synthesis which sought to build on the real though tenuously perceived experience of grace as a basis for religious dialogue among believers and unbelievers.

In contemporary Jesuit moral teaching, and especially among disciples of Rahner, one may note a tendency to place less emphasis on biblical precepts and ecclesiastical laws, and to accentuate the individual's responsibility to innovate, applying the message of the gospel to concrete situations.<sup>31</sup> This emphasis on personal responsibility, vocation, and discernment is in fundamental accord with the principles of St. Ignatius regarding the method of deciding how a given individual—I myself—

<sup>28</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 105.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 106. The reference is to Karl Rahner, *The Dynamic Element in the Church* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1964) 129–42. In this work Rahner contends that the Ignatian "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits" are "the first and so far the only detailed attempt" for ascertaining the will of God for a particular individual in a given concrete situation (115).

<sup>30</sup> "Foreword," *Theological Investigations* 16 (New York: Seabury/Crossroad, 1979) viii.

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Josef Fuchs, "Innovative Morality," *Theology Digest* 37 (Winter 1990) 303–12.

should follow Christ today. But as used by some contemporary moralists these existential principles stand in tension with the natural law tradition and with the Jesuit ideal of unquestioning obedience to the hierarchical Church.

In comparison with the Jesuit theology of the first four centuries, that of the 20th century gives greater prominence to the mystical dimension, but generally maintains the firm spirit of service to the Church militant. When Roman authorities objected to certain opinions of de Lubac, Daniélou, Murray, and Rahner in the 1950s, these authors submitted without complaint, and waited patiently until they were vindicated at Vatican II. De Lubac frequently quoted the saying of Origen, "For myself, I desire to be truly ecclesiastic."<sup>32</sup> The man of the Church, he wrote, "will always make it his concern to think not only 'with the Church' but 'in the Church'."<sup>33</sup> De Lubac was unshakable in his obedience to the hierarchical Church and especially to the bishop of Rome in whom he recognized, as had Ignatius of Loyola, "the master of the whole household of Christ."<sup>34</sup>

Rahner, for his part, held that Jesuits must remain loyal to the papacy because that is in a special way their heritage, but he added that it is necessary above all to serve the papacy as it will be in the future, so that it may be a help and not a hindrance to the unity of Christendom.<sup>35</sup>

#### LOOKING AHEAD

The patterns of Jesuit theology in the 1990s are as yet somewhat uncertain. Many Jesuits, like other Catholics, are avidly pursuing the kind of dialogue and experimentation that became popular with Vatican II. After a decade of intra-Christian ecumenism, some are studying the non-Christian religions with new theological seriousness.<sup>36</sup> Others are investigating the theological implications of the political and social struggles of our time. Although Jesuits have not dominated Latin American liberation theology, Juan Luis Segundo and Jon Sobrino, among others, have been prominent in the movement, and have wrestled with the problem of reconciling their programs with the principles of St.

<sup>32</sup> *The Splendour of the Church* (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1956) 178, quoting Origen, *In Lucam*, hom. 2 and 16.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* 184, quoting the Latin text of *Sp. Ex.* 352.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 199. He gives no reference to the source in Ignatius.

<sup>35</sup> Ignatius of Loyola Speaks to the Modern Jesuit," in *Ignatius of Loyola* (London: Collins, 1979) 32; cf. German original: Karl Rahner, *Ignatius von Loyola* (Freiburg: Herder, 1978) 32. The English translation of this book is deficient.

<sup>36</sup> The work of Hugo M. Enomiya-Lasalle, William Johnston, and Hans Waldenfels in dialogue with Japanese Buddhism may be cited as exemplary. Jesuits in India have been conducting a similar dialogue with Hinduism.

Ignatius.<sup>37</sup> Since the early 1970s there has been, even outside Latin America, a strong emphasis on the links between the service of faith and the promotion of social justice. The 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus in 1974 gave further impetus to this trend.

For these new directions to bear fruit, theology must retain some agreed methods and norms. The scholasticism of the recent past had a well-articulated set of authorities, and in their absence theology is today threatened by confusion and disintegration. It lacks generally accepted principles for settling internal disputes.

The crisis, however, is not unprecedented. In the 16th century theology was in disarray because medieval scholasticism had been devastated by the mockery of the humanists and hostility of the Protestant reformers. The Jesuits, together with the Dominicans, were the primary architects of a new, updated scholasticism in which discipline and coherence were restored. In the 19th century, chaos again threatened because of the incursions of Cartesian rationalism and Kantian skepticism. The Society of Jesus threw its weight behind the neo-scholastic revival, which served the Church very well for a century of rapid growth.

It is too early to predict how the present crisis will be met. Will the solution consist in some new form of scholasticism adapted to the present day? Can any scholasticism do justice to the personal, communal, experiential, and symbolic aspects of faith, as we have come to understand it? Only time will tell. Whatever the solution, Jesuits are surely challenged to take part in its discovery and implementation.

Any system acceptable to Jesuits must, quite evidently, conform to the spirit of Ignatius and the heritage of the Society he founded. On the one hand it must be animated by a mystical dynamism toward the ever-greater God, who surpasses all concepts and institutions. On the other hand it must be humbly committed to the service of the hierarchical Church. By keeping in view both the transcendent mystery of God and the human ecclesial mediation, Jesuit theology can retain both its freedom and its fidelity, its openness to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and its conformity to sound and traditional teaching. It can simultaneously keep faith with the past and be oriented to the future.

Preserving both its mystical and its ecclesial foci, Jesuit theology will, I believe, remain strongly Christocentric, as it has been, for instance, in the cases of Mersch, Teilhard de Chardin, de Lubac, and Rahner. Christ, in a preeminent way, is the meeting point of the divine and the human.

<sup>37</sup> See Juan Luis Segundo, *Jesus of Nazareth Yesterday and Today 4: The Christ of the Spiritual Exercises* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1987); Jon Sobrino, "The Christ of the Ignatian Exercises," *Christology at the Crossroads* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1978) 396-424.

For Ignatius of Loyola, Christ in his humanity is the pattern of the service that all disciples are bound to give, while in his divinity he is the Creator and Lord whom Christians are to serve and obey in all things. An authentic Christocentrism is the best guarantee that neither the divine nor the human dimension will be neglected.

In summary, then, Jesuit theology may be expected to be marked by a mysticism of grace, Christocentrism, ecclesial loyalty, esteem for the human, respect for freedom, and adaptability to changing situations. None of these six attributes is exclusively proper to the Jesuit order, but the teaching and example of St. Ignatius, which embodied all six, will naturally tend to affect the theological style of his sons in the Society. It would be surprising if principles so deeply inscribed in the spirituality of the founder were not to leave their mark on the theology of his successors.

The historical overview in these pages has been no exercise of idle curiosity. It is offered as a help for discerning the qualities that must characterize Jesuit endeavors in the present. The inquiry has been carried out in the conviction that a revisitation of the past is often the best preparation for encountering the future. The achievements of earlier generations, limited and time-conditioned though they have always been, can inspire and direct the efforts of Jesuits today.

*Fordham University*

AVERY DULLES, S.J.

#### Copyright and Use:

**As an ATLAS user, you may print, download, or send articles for individual use according to fair use as defined by U.S. and international copyright law and as otherwise authorized under your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement.**

**No content may be copied or emailed to multiple sites or publicly posted without the copyright holder(s)' express written permission. Any use, decompiling, reproduction, or distribution of this journal in excess of fair use provisions may be a violation of copyright law.**

This journal is made available to you through the ATLAS collection with permission from the copyright holder(s). The copyright holder for an entire issue of a journal typically is the journal owner, who also may own the copyright in each article. However, for certain articles, the author of the article may maintain the copyright in the article. Please contact the copyright holder(s) to request permission to use an article or specific work for any use not covered by the fair use provisions of the copyright laws or covered by your respective ATLAS subscriber agreement. For information regarding the copyright holder(s), please refer to the copyright information in the journal, if available, or contact ATLA to request contact information for the copyright holder(s).

#### About ATLAS:

The ATLA Serials (ATLAS®) collection contains electronic versions of previously published religion and theology journals reproduced with permission. The ATLAS collection is owned and managed by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and received initial funding from Lilly Endowment Inc.

The design and final form of this electronic document is the property of the American Theological Library Association.