

ECCLESIAL MYSTICISM IN THE *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES* OF IGNATIUS

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A STRIKING PARADOX confronts any attempt to assess the place of the Church in early Ignatian spirituality.* This spirituality has exerted an important influence upon the Church over the past centuries, yet paradoxically the reading of the *Spiritual Exercises* themselves, their meaning and their influence upon Catholic piety, has terminated in very different and mutually exclusive conclusions. On the one hand, so perceptive a philosopher of religion as Baron Friedrich von Hügel maintained that among the elements in authentic religion, the Jesuit heritage has placed its greatest weight upon the institutional, with the commensurate emphasis upon authority, submission, and obedience that emerges from such an orientation.¹ On the other hand, so heavily has the individual and the ascetical been accented in the standard commentaries on the Exercises, maintained Burkhart Schneider, that one must take issue with Lilly Zarncke and any number of traditional commentators to protest as a counterthesis that the Exercises are deeply concerned with the Church, that they "are not exclusively concerned with the single human being and his or her personal destiny." Schneider pays tribute to Hugo Rahner who "brought back to awareness the complete meaning of the Exercises and especially the central place the Church occupies within them."² Emphatically institutional or emphatically individualistic or something in between, what is the place occupied by the hierarchical or institutional Church in the *Spiritual Exercises*?

At a period such as ours, one that celebrates New Age spirituality and witnesses the alienation of so many intellectuals from institutional religion, such a question is by no means simply academic nor is its resolution an abstract exercise. Institutions and their use of au-

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¹ Baron Friedrich von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion as Studied in Saint Catherine of Genoa and Her Friends* (London: Dent, 1909) 1. 63.

² Burkhart Schneider, S.J., "Die Kirchlichkeit des heiligen Ignatius von Loyola," in *Sentire Ecclesiam*, ed. Jean Daniélou and Herbert Vorgrimler (Freiburg: Herder, 1961) 276. The work to which Schneider refers is L. Zarncke's *Die Exercitia Spiritualia des Ignatius von Loyola in ihren geistesgeschichtlichen Zusammenhängen* (Leipzig, 1931) 140–41.

thority have become highly suspect, and their internal battles have rendered them even more so. Margaret Steinfels has identified as of serious concern "the growing polarization in the Church and the breakdown of genuine dialogue," together with the unprecedented manner in which mass communications have made this internal estrangement and suspicion public property. This "current mood in the Church" has served to discredit further the religious value of the Church for many—to be dismissed as another embodiment of the institutional will to power.³ Some communal and spontaneously organized charismatic movements, ecological and therapeutic spiritualities, personalized prayer groups, the revival of native religions and of Eastern prayer forms have tended, in their diminishment of the institutional, to confirm this alienation and to marginalize the "institutional Church"—with all of its episodes of narrowness, power politics, controls, and intrigue—as religiously irrelevant, as an external, even an oppressive, inhibition of genuine religious experience and promise.

Do the Exercises have anything to say to this widespread alienation? Or do they subtly confirm it? More pointedly, do the Exercises foster an indifference to the ecclesial community as something peripheral, fading into unimportance before the Creator's "working immediately with the creature," or does the Church function vitally in the radical encounter with God during the Exercises?⁴ This is the question this article addresses, and its bears critically upon the meaning of the Exercises and their ability to respond to the religious issues of our time.

To delimit this question further, a short remark on the focus and method of this study is important. It makes no attempt to deal with Ignatian spirituality and ecclesiology as a whole. Such a vast and fundamental project would necessitate an investigation of the entirety of the Ignatian corpus both for the explicit treatments given to the Church and for those areas in which ecclesiology forms the context or the subtext, i.e., where an understanding of what constitutes the community of the faithful underlies what is asserted and, consequently, gives intelligibility to an overt statement. Secondly, it can be very misleading to speak of theology in the Spiritual Exercises because one can be led to expect systematic and articulate theory. This is not the case. In the Exercises, one is dealing with practice, not theory; but it is a practice that presupposes pivotally important understandings of

³ Margaret O'Brien Steinfels, "Are Politics of Change Fracturing the Church?" Address to the convention of the CORPUS [the Corps of Reserve Priests United for Service], June 22, 1991, as in *Origins* 21 (1991) 137–43, at 139.

⁴ *Exercises* 15. The Spanish text of the *Spiritual Exercises* is that of the Autograph as found in *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu* [MHSJ] vol. 100 = *Monumenta Ignatiana* [MI], new series 2, vol. 1: Sancti Ignatii de Loyola, *Exercitia spiritualia*, ed. Josephus Calveras and Candidus de Dalmases (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1969). The English translation used here is a modified version of that done by Joseph Rickaby (London: Burns, Oates, 1915); references are given by the numbered paragraphs.

those realities that are the great concerns of theology. Crucial theological understandings underlie the text and tell influentially upon its content, and these are often only indicated by the choice of a term or of a phrase or by a suggestion for prayer and discernment. The Exercises are a world in which theology—like love—is shown much more in deeds than in words! In theologizing about the Exercises, one strives to raise to the level of explicit statement or theory those convictions and meanings that are hidden and taken for granted, but influentially present in these guidelines for prayer, choice, and action.

The following study, then, assumes a very limited purpose. It attempts to deal only with the Spiritual Exercises, to ask something about the place the Church occupies within them, and, even here, to inquire only into some aspects of their implicit ecclesiology. It will inquire into its central question by attending to some of the images with which Ignatius symbolizes the Church. It will argue that the ecclesial metaphors of *militante*, *esposa*, and *madre* operate as more than theological commonplaces in the Exercises, that they illumine lines of argument or development within the progress of the Exercises, indicating that the Church possesses a profound importance—a taken-for-granted importance—in the internal structure of the Exercises and the religious experience in which it guides the exercitant. The world of the text comes to a focus in these images which occupy so slender a portion of its pages.

As a response to its governing question, this article wishes to explore the following hypothesis: that in making the Exercises, the exercitant comes to parallel in his or her fundamental choice (“election”) and experience of Christ (e.g. Annotation 15) the way in which the Church is related to Christ. This means that in making the Exercises, the exercitant is to become configured to the Church in its fundamental service and intimate experience of Christ, even more, that one comes to participate in that service and experience. In the exercitant, the Church is again to realize experientially its mission in the struggle for human salvation and its radical nature as the beloved of Christ.

ELECTION, SERVICE, AND STRUGGLE WITHIN THE CHURCH

“Church” does not appear often in the Exercises, perhaps fifteen times and initially in a very minor way. Thus the precepts “of the Church” are four times acknowledged.⁵ Four times the term designates a building of Catholic worship.⁶ Seven times it refers to the community, independent of buildings and precepts. But it is when the exercitant enters into the election that the Church suddenly achieves an articulated centrality, a position that colors everything that has gone before. It is extremely significant that the Church emerges explicitly

⁵ *Ibid.* 18, 42, 229.

⁶ *Ibid.* 88, 355, 358, 360. This usage is found both within and outside of the “Rules.”

here. For the election is to the Exercises what missions are to the Constitutions: their focal purpose.⁷

It is critically important to note that Ignatius frames the subject matter for any election within two criteria: first, such subjects must be either indifferent or good in themselves; and second, such subjects must also "militate within holy mother, the hierarchical Church (*militen dentro de la Sancta Madre Yglesia Hierárchica*)." To further emphasize these characteristics as essential prerequisites for a Christian choice of a state of life, Ignatius restates these same criteria negatively: the subjects for an election should not be evil (as opposed to good or indifferent) nor should they be "in opposition to her (the Church)."⁸ The second criterion, especially in its positive form, contributes a surprising, but evocative note.

Long before Ignatius, *militare Deo* had become a classic expression for religious life. In the latter days of the Roman Empire, it had come to designate a career of military or civil service. One can find it in one or another (religious) variation in the Prologue to the Rule of Saint Benedict, in the Conferences of John Cassian, in the Rule of St. Augustine, and in the Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus.⁹ The expression, as Antonio M. de Aldama points out, comes from the Vulgate translation of 2 Timothy 2:4: "Nemo militans Deo implicat se negotiis saecularibus."¹⁰ Ignatius extends this metaphor significantly: He locates the choice of the individual exercitant within the struggle that engages the Church. All of the options for a fundamental choice of Christian living now *militen dentro de la Sancta Madre Yglesia Hierárchica*. Participation in this struggle conditions the legitimacy of any Christian choice of a way of life whatsoever, whether religious, clerical, or lay. There is no provision for the ecclesially indifferent. Indeed, this appropriate subject matter for an Election is rephrased a few paragraphs later as "a life or state within the bounds of the Church," and the *militen* is further spelled out as "aiding one in the service (*servicio*) of God our Lord and in the salvation of one's soul."¹¹ The choice of a

⁷ *Constitutions*, Part 7 ("Missions").

⁸ *Ibid.* 170: "The first point: It is necessary that all things about which we want to make an election should be indifferent or good in themselves, and such as to militate within Holy Mother the Hierarchical Church, and not evil nor repugnant to her."

⁹ See the commentary and the bibliography on the phrase in the Prologue of the Benedictine Rule, "Domino Christo vero regi militaturus," in *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict in Latin and English with Notes*, ed. Timothy Fry et al. (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1981) 159 n. The authors note that such military metaphors are a commonplace both in the Rules of St. Benedict and in its sources, and "are indeed, a commonplace already in the New Testament"; the Rule "uses the image to depict the monastic life as a service of Christ, the present Lord and King" (*ibid.*).

¹⁰ Antonio M. de Aldama, *The Formula of the Institute: Notes for a Commentary*, trans. Ignatio Echániz (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1990) 38.

¹¹ *Exercises* 177: "The third occasion [for making an election] is in time of calm, considering first to what purpose the human person is born, namely, to praise God our Lord and save his soul; and desiring this, he chooses as means some life or state within

state of life was to be conditioned by its "militant" presence within this community.

This call to commitment issues directly from Ignatius's fundamental worldview. He saw struggle, even conflict, at the heart of human history, and this contradiction provides the context essential for understanding any major theme within his thought. Many major thinkers such as Darwin or Freud, Marx or Jefferson have seen struggle at the core of human existence. For Ignatius also, but in a very different manner, human history was fundamentally conflictual, continually embodying a radical struggle between the divine influence upon human choice and that of the "enemy of our human nature," between the human and the diabolical. It is an abiding characteristic of the diabolical within human history "to fight (*militar*) against such joy and spiritual consolation" that distinguishes the influence of God.¹² The *militar* that legitimizes an election is contradicted by the *militar* which permeates diabolical influence. To understand this historic contradiction—in order not to dismiss it as outmoded medieval mythology—one must grasp the meaning of the diabolical in the Exercises.

The cosmic engagement is not immediately between God and Satan, as if they were somehow or other coequals, as if there were a Manichean power of evil that paralleled the divine in strength. The struggle ranges immediately within the finite, between the human and the diabolical. In the Exercises, Satan is designated or even defined not as the enemy of God, but remarkably as the "enemy of our human nature."¹³ The term "Satan" never appears in the Exercises. "Lucifer" is confined to the "Meditation on the Two Standards," contrasted with the person and appeal of Christ, and identified as the *enemigo de natura humana*.¹⁴ The satanic, the diabolical, is the antihuman, the humanly destructive, and this sense of relentless, cosmic struggle retrieves in the Exercises the gospel understanding of the conflict that lies at the heart of human history and that engages Christ against the "ruler/prince of this world."¹⁵

This intrinsic contradiction between the *militen* of the election and the *militar* of the diabolical, is one that drives all of human history. It also determines that the Church, in continuity with Christ, must itself be *militante*.¹⁶ The subjects of election must "militate" within the

the bounds of the Church, that he may be aided in the service of God our Lord and in the salvation of his soul."

¹² "Rules for the Discernment of Spirits in the Second Week" (ibid. 329).

¹³ See ibid. 7, 10, 135, 136, 325, 326, 327, 334.

¹⁴ Ibid. 135; for "Lucifer," see 136, 137, and 138.

¹⁵ John 12:31–32; 14:30; 16:11; see 2 Cor 4:4; John 8:31–58; Rev 13:2, 4. Raymond Brown notes that "John's portrait of a struggle between the Prince of this world and Jesus is very close to the Qumran picture of a struggle between the angel of darkness and the prince of lights" (*The Gospel According to John I–XII*, Anchor Bible [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1966] 468 n. 31).

¹⁶ *Exercises* 352.

Church, for the Church itself is a principal agent in this struggle against the antihuman. This religious sensibility may be almost unintelligible to a bourgeois, domesticated Christianity that possesses no sense of the Church in conflict and looks to religious experience for the secure and the soothing. But one cannot understand the Church in the Exercises simply as mystery, as people of God, as herald, as servant, and hierarchical, if these understandings do not include also this agonistic sense of pervasive struggle. The Exercises understand "Church" as the community gathered around Christ, engaged in the mysterious and fundamental struggle that informs human history, i.e. the intractable conflict between the "call of the King" and the influences of the antihuman. Here the Exercises retrieve an ecclesial theme from the earliest writings in the Church: "For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."¹⁷ There is an ecclesial sense of "we"—a community in struggle—both in Ephesians and in the Exercises, and this engagement of the Church dictates that any serious Christian election must assess the contribution that any state of life can make to the Church in this struggle.

Once this underlying presence or subtext of the struggling Church is seen, so many things in the Exercises fall into an ecclesiological place. For instance, the example of the crusader King can illumine the continual call of Christ to discipleship, the basic, contrasting knowledge of the deceptions by the enemy of our human nature and of the influence of Christ can be set under warring battle standards, and even the "Rules for Discernment of Spirits" can be cast and internally differentiated according to the manner in which the exercitant is tempted. In so many ways, the ecclesiology of Ignatius takes its pattern from his Christology: it would not be false to say that both are understood in terms of their struggles and labors, their salvific purpose, and their enormous cost. The *Yglesia* is *militante*.¹⁸

Yves Congar has established that the phrase *ecclesia militans* in tandem with its counterdistinguished *ecclesia triumphans* took its rise during the second half of the 12th century.¹⁹ Until that period, the typical image for the Church had been drawn from pilgrimage, the *pars peregrinans* of the heavenly City of God. It is true that in Ambrose and Augustine, one can find expressions similar to that in Ignatius's first rule for the subject of an election. In his commentary on Luke, for

¹⁷ Eph 6:12; see Rom 8:38; Rev 12:7-9.

¹⁸ *Exercises* 352. In the Autograph text of the Exercises, the Spanish for "Church" is variously rendered *iglesia* (18, 88, 351) or, more frequently, *yglesia*.

¹⁹ Yves Congar, "Eglise et cité de Dieu chez quelques auteurs cisterciens à l'époque des croisades," in *Études d'ecclésiologie médiévale* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1983) 8.190. For the statements about medieval ecclesiology throughout this paper, the author is profoundly and continually indebted to the studies of Yves Congar contained in this volume.

example, Ambrose speaks of "that Jerusalem which is from heaven, in which our faith 'militates' (*illa Jerusalem quae de coelo est, in qua militat fides nostra*)."²⁰ But not until the second half of the 12th century did "one begin to speak of *ecclesia militans* and of *ecclesia triumphans*, in the sense that the first remained in the second, in which it possessed its completion and crown. The consideration of the Church moves less from the top to the bottom, as with the Fathers, than from the bottom to the top."²¹

It seems obvious that this change in terminology reflected the rise of the Crusades. Christians could speak of moving towards the heavenly Jerusalem as a pilgrimage when that was the journey Europeans took towards the historic Jerusalem. By the middle of the 12th century, pilgrimage had been supplemented in the popular imagination by crusade. Even the pilgrims themselves as often as not were guarded by soldiers. Military religious orders had been founded and had begun to weave their ambiguous histories. The 12th century was a world aflame with the sounds of religious battle, the retaking of the Holy Land, the defense of Europe, even the "crusades" against heretics. It was hardly surprising that the Church would see itself in this perspective. By the beginning of the 13th century, this terminology was standard. The Church was beginning to see itself less as an eschatological reality, on pilgrimage within the world and moving towards the eternal Jerusalem, the heavenly City of God, and more as an *ecclesia militans*, at work and in a struggle in the world that would reach its completion in heaven.²²

Much of this had been set in motion by Gregory VII in his redressing the sense of *militare Deo*. For centuries, the monastic life had borne the title of *militia Christi*, a life of struggle defined by an eschatological hope and by the anticipation of heaven. So Congar maintains that those periods of human history which were strongest in their "eschatological density" were also those of the greatest monastic vitality. But Gregory expanded this notion of *militare* to designate any Christian life of efficacious love, one given over to the needs of one's neighbor and to the aid of the oppressed, and within this he situated the meaning and the urgency of the priesthood. Thus Gregory favored the institution of the canons regular, clerics and priests living a semimonastic life whose finality was the service of the faithful. For some laymen, he felt that a retirement from earthly responsibility even if done for monastic quiet was a desertion, a flight *de bello Christi*.²³ It is startling to find the quondam monk Gregory writing in this vein to the Abbot of Cluny about the entrance into monastic life of Hugh, Count of Burgundy: "Do

²⁰ Ambrose, *In Luc.*, lib. 7 (PL 15.1813b, as cited in Congar, "Eglise" 190 n. 82).

²¹ Congar, "Eglise" 191.

²² *Ibid.* 190.

²³ Yves Congar, "Modèle monastique et modèle sacerdotal en Occident de Grégoire VII (1073-1085) à Innocent III (1198)," in *Etudes d'ecclésiologie médiévale* 9.155-56. These paragraphs basically paraphrase Congar.

you not weigh, do you not consider in what great peril, in what great misery the holy church exists? . . . Behold! Those who seem to fear or to love God, flee from the war of Christ (*de bello Christi*), they put off the salvation of their brothers, and loving themselves only seek for rest."²⁴ So also the term "apostolic life," which had previously designated monastic life, came to be applied to "canons regular and to priests vowed to the apostolate and pastoral care."²⁵ All of these influences entered into the formulation of the turbulent Church of the 12th century as *ecclesia militans*.²⁶

Ignatius emerged out of this tradition even as another massive change in culture was rising in Europe. The medieval and chivalric was the language he spoke, and these images permeated his mentality and shaped much of his self-understanding. Spain was the last country in Western Europe to keep its forces in crusade, and Granada was to fall in 1492 before the armies of Ferdinand and Isabella. The long history of Spain's wars could only confirm what earlier crusades had formed in the European imagination. The chivalric symbols in the Exercises disclose an entire world in which one encounters pivotal emphases as upon oblation, the absoluteness of personal choice, the greater likeness to the Lord, and the primacy of loyal, unflagging service.

If *militante* constitutes one of the essential notes of the Church in history for Ignatius, not only the meaning of military engagement but the historical reference of the metaphor has to be grasped if this symbol is not to betray its central meaning. Jesuits have been strongly resistant to the military metaphor as indicative of their spirituality or marking their common life. They are more than a little reserved about readings that parallel their obedience to that of the British Light Brigade before Balaclava or about Newman's comparison of the Society of Jesus to the Hellenic phalanx of foot soldiers. And rightly so. *Militare* must be understood, if it is not to mislead.

The practices of war and even the meaning of "military" have been revolutionized since the time of Ignatius. Inducted into the army of a nation-state, physically trained and regimented in boot camp, drilled to march in step and to maneuver as a cohesive unit on the battlefield, even uniformly clothed, and so forth, the contemporary soldier, whether professional or draftee, bears little resemblance to the military figures of Ignatius's history and imagination. The knight did not lose his individuality and unique presence in the constitution of a larger, impersonal military force. The medieval army itself was more like an

²⁴ "Non perpendis, non consideras, in quanto periculo, in quanta miseria sancta versatur ecclesia? . . . Ecce qui Deum videntur timere vel amare, de bello Christi fugiunt, salutem fratrum postponunt et in se ipsos tantum amantes quietem requirunt" (*Registrum* 6.17 [January 2, 1079], as in Congar, "Modèle" 155 n. 11).

²⁵ Congar, "Modèle" 156.

²⁶ "Dans une société en transformation, l'Eglise se verra davantage agissante" (*ibid.*).

unruly amalgam of military *impressarios*, brought into coherence only by the loyalty of its members to the person and standard of the leader. The medieval conflict centered upon individual actions of heroic character, while the general battle possessed little more coherence than two fighting mobs. Intensely personalized, chivalry reached its highest point in the 12th and 13th century. By the time of Ignatius, it had begun to decline significantly, its force reduced by the emergence of lightly armed forces and trained infantry of pikemen and archers.²⁷ It awaited only the sophisticated but gentle laughter of Cervantes for the medieval imagination to yield before new cultural realities. But chivalry's purchase upon the mythology and symbolic world of Europe remained strong even after the massive changes in the tactics of warfare and the writing of romances.

These transformations in warfare were signaled already by armies such as that of André de Foix, with its 12,000 infantry men, 800 horsemen, and 29 cannon, lumbering towards the fateful battle of Pamplona of March 20, 1521.²⁸ That same year witnessed the publication of Niccolò Machiavelli's *Libri dell'arte della guerra*, the first of those many commentaries upon classical military texts which would revolutionize the art of warfare.²⁹ Still, August of 1521 also saw the fall of Tenochtitlán to Cortés, whose brutal army was kept together, however pathologically, by almost medieval ties to their leader. Something of J. H. Parry's understanding of the *conquistadores'* cult of the individual and "passion for personal reputation" would also find its place in the imaginative world that contextualized the young Ignatius.

This passion was vital in the mental make-up of the *conquistadores*, and goes far to explain their prickly pride, their dislike of discipline and regimentation, their insistence on being consulted about every decision. On the other hand, it also helps to explain their extravagant daring and their indifference to wounds and fatigue. They conducted themselves, and their chroniclers wrote, with the high seriousness of men conscious of taking part in great deeds.³⁰

²⁷ Cf. Martin Brett, "European History and Culture," in *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1992): *Macropaedia*, 18.623–24.

²⁸ Georg Schurhammer, *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times*, trans. Joseph Costelloe (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute, 1973) 1.58.

²⁹ Keith Roberts, *The Soldiers of the English Civil War 1: Infantry* (London: Osprey, 1989) 3–25. These beginnings of modern warfare were heavily indebted to a reading of such classical authors as Julius Frontinus and Claudius Aelianus, and to a retrieval of the Greek and Roman strategy and tactics which rang the death knell for the radically different methods of the medieval world.

³⁰ J. H. Parry, *The Ages of Reconnaissance* (Cleveland: World, 1963) 31. Parry equates this mentality with a Renaissance attitude of mind, but it comes very much out of chivalry and the desire of the knight to distinguish himself by great deeds. Parry later admits that the "concept of the Renaissance is elusive and hard to define" and that it was "more medieval than many historians have supposed," that Prince Henry of Portugal and his exploring captains acted within medieval horizons, and that even Columbus "embarked on his famous enterprise with an intellectual equipment that was mainly medieval and traditional" (*ibid.* 35–36).

Neither the writings that introduced modern tactics and strategies nor the massive armies that France and Spain were hurling at one another during the Great Italian Wars—"the first modern war"³¹—that stretched from 1494 until 1559, came to dominate Ignatius's imagination. This imagination, with its perspective on human conflict, was far more medieval. While recuperating from Pamplona at Castle Loyola—with Manresa and its contribution to the Spiritual Exercises only a few months in the future—Ignatius, who all of his previous life "had taken special delight in the exercise of arms, with a great and vain desire of winning glory," asked very naturally for the literature that nourished such a life. "He had been much given to reading worldly books of fiction and knight errantry, and feeling well enough to read, he asked for some of these books to help while away the time."³² *Amadis of Gaul* was unavailable, but it bespoke the culture and the horizon in which Ignatius understood the books that he did receive, Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi cartuxano romancado por fray Ambrosio*, and Jacobus de Voragine's *Flos Sanctorum*.³³

Thus Ignatius came to interpret and to symbolize the profound contradiction that lies central to all human history not as a struggle between social or even religious, but impersonal forces, but primarily as a battle between persons and even communities. Massive armies there would be, but these were seen emerging as personal responses to a personal call. Each army gathered around its leader, represented by a characteristic battle standard: "the one of Christ, supreme captain and our lord; the other of Lucifer, the mortal enemy of our human nature (*la una de Xro, summo capitán y señor nuestro, la otra de Lucifer, mortal enemigo de nuestra humana natura*)."³⁴ This massive and continual battle within history is not between human beings so much as it is about human beings and the destiny of human life—Lucifer commissions innumerable demons while Christ sends out human beings, i.e. apostles, disciples, etc.³⁵ Fundamentally it is the human vs. the antihuman and, in this sense, the "diabolical."

What is to be crushed or defeated are not other human persons, then, but the diabolical, "the mortal enemy of our human nature," the irretrievably and destructively antihuman. What is asked from God, as the exercitant deliberately enters into this confrontation between

³¹ Correlli Barnett, *Britain and Her Army 1509–1970* (New York: Morrow, 1970) 4.

³² *Autobiography* nos. 1 and 5, as in *St. Ignatius' Own Story* trans. William J. Young (Chicago: Regnery, 1956) 7–9. At Ignatius's beginnings in the spiritual life, the lives of the saints and the call to holiness were perceived through this chivalric literature, so "he continued his way to Montserrat, thinking as usual of the great deeds he was going to do for the love of God. As his mind was filled with the adventures of Amadis of Gaul and such books, thoughts corresponding to these adventures came to his mind" (*ibid.* no. 17).

³³ Paul Dudon, *St. Ignatius of Loyola*, trans. William J. Young (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1949) 42–44.

³⁴ *Exercises* 136.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 141, 145.

“world-historical figures,” is a knowledge of the strategy or method of each and the grace to imitate Christ.³⁶ All human life confronts and is caught up in this conflict. So in the “Two Standards,” Ignatius even saw each human being as the object of two, radically contradictory personal “vocations,” one a call from Christ and the other from this figure of human destruction, two contradictory calls into two contradictory communities: “Christ calls and desires all under His standard, while Lucifer on the contrary under his (*Xro llama y quiere a todos debaxo de su bandera, y Lucifer al contrario debaxo de la suya*).”³⁷

The prerequisites for the subject of an election, then, embody something essential to the nature of the Church: the Church is in struggle. For the election must emerge as a response to the militant Lord, a way of being received under his battle standard.³⁸ Through the election, the struggles of the *ecclesia militans* reach a new human embodiment in those whose lives *militen dentro de sancta madre Yglesia hierárchica*.

The implications of this for the contemporary Church seem urgent. Through the election, the exercitant is drawn into a union with Christ in a life that struggles against the “enemy of our human nature”—even though this call into conflict may scandalize some. How else can one assess, for example, that secularization of human existence which extinguishes faith and makes impossible that charity which is the destiny offered to human beings, destructive economic and political structures that dehumanize millions, massive movements for the killing of the unborn in what the present pope has called “a culture of death,” the sophisticated acceptance of religious despair as intrinsic to a realistic grasp of human life, and so forth. The Ignatian insistence that the diabolical is the antihuman obviously premises and leads to a radical religious critique of culture. One understands alienation, oppression, and exploitation religiously when one sees them as satanic.

If the Church is to be true to itself in any culture, it will be *militante*—not be soothed into an establishment that is an inauthentic peace. If the election is to be sound, the exercitant comes to participate in the struggling Church, united with the Church, and configured to Christ as the Church is configured to Christ in this struggle. Thus an essential meaning of the Church is carried in the struggles of those men and women against the dehumanizing, the diabolical. They embody this radical commitment of the Church to its mission, as this understanding of the Church clarifies the election and, thus, the purpose of the Exercises.

Hence the title with which the Autograph of the Exercises introduces the explicit treatment of the Church: “Para el sentido verdadero que en la Yglesia militante debemos tener, se guarden las reglas

³⁶ Ibid. 139.

³⁸ Ibid. 147.

³⁷ Ibid. 137.

siguientes."³⁹ While the title picks up the essential theme of struggle, the rules Ignatius introduces here advance further the implication of Church throughout the Exercises.

THE CHURCH AS BRIDE AND MOTHER

Does *la Yglesia militante* suggest, then, that Ignatius saw the Church fundamentally as an army, albeit a medieval army, gathered around its leader with its banners unfurled for battle? Is Ignatius arguing for the kind of institutional model which "dramatizes the Church as an army set in array against Satan and the powers of evil," a model criticized during the Second Vatican Council by Bishop Emile de Smedt as a triumphalistic institutional ecclesiology, "scarcely in keeping with the condition of the People of God as a 'little flock' following the humble Jesus?"⁴⁰ There are certainly dimensions of struggle and conflict in the Exercises: the notion of radical and pervasive conflict, the engagement of Christ within it, the struggle with personalized evil, with "principalities and powers in high places," the choice and commitments that attend basic Catholic life and even the overtones of the "offering of greater worth," etc. But for all the chivalric world present in Ignatius's thinking, the army metaphor by no means captures the Ignatian vision of Church, nor do the Exercises ever refer to the Church under this metaphor. It is one thing to say that the Church must be *militante*; it is quite another to make army its principal image. Ignatius does the first; he does not do the second.

To understand the Church and the life in the Spirit in the Exercises, one must proceed deeper. One must come to understand the feminine nouns that Ignatius understood in apposition to "Church," standard metaphors at his time and ours, but ones that he chose to place in his text and used to illumine the fundamental experience or movement of the Exercises.⁴¹

Perhaps for this, one can take as a point of departure the magisterial study of Ignatian spirituality by Joseph de Guibert. "One very clear and noteworthy characteristic of Ignatius's diary, as of all the documents that we have about his interior life, is the total absence of what could be called the 'nuptial' aspect of the mystical union." De Guibert acknowledges that Ignatius does present the Church under this metaphor, but never the individual person. Classic phrases, coined and used by other authors for the intimate union of the soul with God or with Christ, like "spiritual marriage" or "transforming union," are absent. "On the contrary, what pervades all Ignatius' relations with the Divine Persons and with Christ is the humble and loving attitude

³⁹ Literally: "For the true sense of things which we should maintain in the Church militant, the following rules are to be observed (ibid. 353).

⁴⁰ As reported by Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974) 36.

⁴¹ See esp. *Exercises* 170, 353, 363, 365.

of the servant."⁴² This led to de Guibert's distinguishing Ignatius's "mysticism of service" from a "mysticism of union."⁴³

One might question whether this assertion by even so great a scholar in Jesuit spirituality does justice to such pivotal statements about the union with Christ or with God as those found in the 15th annotation and in the first rule for making an election according to the second mode.⁴⁴ But before undertaking such an inquiry, it must be remarked initially that de Guibert does not explore the exception he noted to the general absence of the nuptial metaphor in Ignatius, the union between Christ and the Church. It must be further remarked that the Church comes up for very little discussion during de Guibert's exploration of Ignatian mysticism. Yet these exceptions and the Church may be more significant here than meets the eye. One might ask whether the Church and the metaphors with which Ignatius presents the Church provide a key for a deeper understanding of the Exercises as a whole and also a continuity between a mysticism of union and a mysticism of service.

Is it significant for the Exercises as a whole that the Rules *para el sentido verdadero . . . en la Yglesia militante* advance the understanding of the Church under two metaphors, that of spouse and that of mother?⁴⁵ Both are feminine images, as contrasted with the strongly masculine accent within chivalric struggle. Both are unitive metaphors which imply an alternative term: bride or spouse bespeaks husband, mother bespeaks child or children. Ignatius in both cases explicitly states what this implied term is. The Church is the "true spouse of Christ our Lord"; the Church is "our holy mother."⁴⁶ As spouse, the Church embodies a union with Christ; as mother, the Church embodies a union among all believers.⁴⁷ The first is the concern of this study.

It is obviously not the case in the Exercises that the person in isolation is united to Christ through service nor that the Church, abstracted from its members, is united to Christ through mystical union. Rather, as has been noted, both the life or state of the person as well as its activity are *dentro de la Iglesia*.⁴⁸ When the Church is symbolized

⁴² Joseph de Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice. A Historical Study*, trans. William J. Young, ed. George E. Ganss (Chicago: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964) 55–56.

⁴³ "In regard to its general orientation, it [Ignatius's mysticism] is a mysticism of service because of love, rather than a mysticism of loving union" (ibid. 50).

⁴⁴ *Exercises* 15, 184; see below.

⁴⁵ Ibid. 353, 365; for *madre* alone, see 170, 363.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 353.

⁴⁷ Ephesians 5:21–33.

⁴⁸ *Exercises* 351. In this sixth rule for scruples, Ignatius seems to be giving a phenomenology of good Christian choice: the person wants to do or to say something "within the Church" and something within the understanding of the authorities of the Church—presumably both within orthodoxy and obedience—and something to the glory of God. For the life or state of the soul "within the Church," see ibid. 170, 177; for the activity of the soul within the Church, see ibid. 351.

in some way as spouse, the nuptial mysticism of loving union is present, and this receives its explicit articulation not in the body of the Exercises, but in the Rules *para el sentido verdadero . . . en la Yglesia militante*.

Historians have noted how derivative these directives are from the Council of Sens, a meeting of the bishops of that province in Paris in 1528, and from the summary appendix by the canon of Chartres, Jean Clichtove, commissioned by this same Council and entitled "A Compendium of the truths that pertain to the faith against the errors of the Lutherans, from the statements and acts of the Council of Sens that took place in Paris."⁴⁹ Further and contrary to popular persuasion, in no way do these Rules occupy a central position in the Exercises. Early directories or "annotations" of the Exercises such as those of Polanco, Mirón, or Dávila recognized their secondary character, seeing these Rules primarily as antidotes against contemporary heresies and then as aids to keep preachers, teachers, and writers from error. Hence Mirón could go so far as to say that "communiter non dantur." Much has been made subsequently of these Rules, but not by the early directories, and their general assessment was followed in the directory of 1591 and in the official directory of 1599.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, though these Rules are not central to the Exercises, they have their place within the entire text by the choice of Ignatius. If not of the first importance, they do offer—like everything in the Exercises—important clues to the meaning of the entire document as well as directives for the direction of souls. Derivative they certainly are, although only because Ignatius chose to be derivative in this manner, i.e. to assimilate this influence into the Exercises. The important thing is not whether Ignatius originated these Rules, but that he modified and chose to incorporate the work of others into the Exercises. It is interesting to compare the first decree of the Council of Sens on faith with the first rule of Ignatius to see how profound an influence the Council actually exercised. In both cases, the reason for doctrinal orthodoxy and ecclesiastical obedience is that Christ has made the Church his spouse. So the Council's decree on faith begins, "Since Christ has taken to himself the Church as his spouse in faith . . . (*Cum ecclesiam in fide Christus sibi desponsaverit . . .*)", while Ignatius speaks of an obedience "to the true spouse of Christ our Lord, which is

⁴⁹ "Compendium veritatum ad fidem pertinentium contra erroneas Lutheranorum assertiones ex dictis et actis in Senonensi Concilio quod Parisiis celebratum est" (Schurhammer 244, 133); see Paul Dudon, "The Council of Sens and the 'Rules of Orthodoxy,'" in *St. Ignatius of Loyola* 457–62.

⁵⁰ These directories can be found in the MHSJ, vol. 76 = MI, new series 2, vol. 2.327–28 [Polanco], 403–4 [Mirón], and 529 [Dávila]. This reserve was followed in the directory of 1591 and in the official directory of 1599. Mirón's judgment about these Rules: "communiter non dantur; sed quando oportuerit, in secunda hebdomada ubi de status vitae reformando agitur, tradi poterunt." For a very balanced assessment of the origin and very moderate importance of these Rules, see John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1993) 49–50.

our holy mother, the hierarchical Church (*a la vera sposa de Christo nuestro Señor, que es la nuestra sancta Madre Yglesia hierárchica*).⁵¹ This metaphor of the Church as spouse came, of course, both to Ignatius and to the bishops of Sens from Sacred Scripture and the tradition of the Church. It was a central symbol for the Church in the Middle Ages, and in taking it up Ignatius shows himself once more to be in continuity with medieval usage.

Congar has pointed out in his studies in medieval ecclesiology that among the many images which St. Bernard used for Church, his preference did not rest on body or on temple, but on spouse. Bernard's "spontaneous term" for the Church was *Sponsa Christi*, following in this usage the Augustinian traditional employment of Ephesians 5: 32.⁵² But the referent of this metaphor could range in both Augustine and in Bernard from the individual Christian, to all Christians, to the Church as a unity. Bernard could find in this metaphor mystical union between the soul and Christ, between all Christians and Christ, or between the Church as such and Christ. And these were not separate realities: "For Saint Bernard, was the spouse the Church or the individual soul loving God, or the totality of souls loving God? It is, for him, all of that because that, for him, is the same thing."⁵³ To speak of Christ as the spouse of the Church was to speak of each and every Christian. The mysticism of the Church's status was realized in the soul of each of its members and in them all, while each of the members was united with Christ only insofar as the individual person was *intra Ecclesiam*.⁵⁴ The individual soul participated in the mystical union between the Church and Christ. Thus Bernard could attend to each of these realizations of mystical unity in his classic commentary on the Canticle of Canticles. As each was caught up in the mystery of the Church itself, so he or she participated in the mystical union between Church and Christ: ". . . [the Church] lays claim to the title of spouse. And although none of us would presume to arrogate to his own soul the title of spouse of the Lord, nevertheless we are members of the Church which rightly glories in this name and in the reality that it signifies. Thus we may assume a share in this glory. For what all of us simultaneously possess in a full and perfect manner, that each single one of us undoubtedly possesses by participation."⁵⁵

⁵¹ Dudon 461; *Exercises* 353.

⁵² Yves Congar, "L'ecclésiologie de S. Bernard," in *Etudes d'ecclésiologie médiévale* 7.136-37.

⁵³ "Pour S. Bernard, l'épouse est-elle l'Eglise ou l'âme individuelle aimant Dieu, ou l'ensemble des âmes aimants Dieu? Elle est, pour lui, tout cela car cela, pour lui, est la même chose" (ibid. 141).

⁵⁴ Ibid. 142 and n. 4.

⁵⁵ "Ipsa [Ecclesia] audacter secureque sese nominat sponsam. . . . Quod etsi nemo nostrum sibi arrogare praesumat, ut animam suam quis audeat sponsam Domini appellare, quoniam tamen de Ecclesia sumus, quae merito hoc nomine et re nominis gloriatur, non immerito gloriae huius participium usurpamus. Quod enim simul omnes plene integreque possedimus, hoc singuli sine contradictione participamus" (Bernard, *Cant.* 12.11;

This tradition of mystical participation in the nuptial union between Christ and his Church is important to bear in mind when one finds this usage in Ignatius's explicit treatment of ecclesiology. In his Letter to Claudius, the Emperor of Abyssinia, for example, Ignatius made a similar ecclesial assertion and substantiated it, as would Bernard, with a reference to the Canticle: "The Catholic Church is one throughout the whole world, and it is impossible for one to be attached to the Roman Pontiff and another to the Alexandrian. As Christ the Bridegroom is one, so the Church, His Spouse, is only one, of whom Solomon, speaking in the name of Christ our Lord, says in the Canticles, 'One is my dove'" (Canticle 6:8).⁵⁶ One should notice that the spousal metaphor is critical to Ignatius's argument; it is not simply a commonplace let fall in an argument whose warrant is other. The Church must be one because it is the bride of Christ.

Further, whatever one says with de Guibert about the presence of this nuptial symbol in Ignatius, one cannot say it occurred by accident. One needs only to compare the three editions of the Formula of the Institute to see this metaphor deliberately introduced into the mature formulation of the purpose of the Society. In the *Quinque capitula*, submitted to Paul III on September 3, 1539, the initial conditional sentence that describes the finality of the Society was put in this way: "Whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God (*Deo militare*) beneath the banner of the cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the name of Jesus, and to serve the Lord alone and his vicar . . ."⁵⁷ The bull of approbation, *Regimini militantis Ecclesiae*, appearing the next year and dated September 27, 1540, altered this initial clause only slightly by attaching "Romano Pontifici" to identify "his vicar on earth."⁵⁸ Ten years later, a new bull of confirmation appeared, containing a new redaction of the Formula of the Institute, one that carried many of the developments which ten years of experience of the Society of Jesus and the composition of the Constitutions had suggested—as well as the possibility of a deeper influence of Polanco upon the formulation of the text itself. The clause in question was significantly changed, as the centrality of the Church became more expressly

English translation [modified] from Bernard of Clairvaux, *On the Song of Songs*, trans. by Kilian Walsh [Spencer, Mass.: Cistercian, 1971] 1.86); see Congar, "Bernard" 142 n. 4.

⁵⁶ Ignatius of Loyola to Claude, Emperor of Abyssinia (February 23, 1555), *Letters of Ignatius of Loyola*, selected and translated by William J. Young (Chicago: Loyola University, 1959) 369.

⁵⁷ The Spanish text of the various versions of the *Formula Instituti* can be found in MHSJ, vol. 63 = MI, series 3, vol 1, ed. A. Codina (Rome: Borgo S. Spirito, 1934); hereafter abbreviated as *ConstMHSJ* 1. For this citation from the *Quinque capitula*, *ConstMHSJ* 1.16: "Quicumque in Societate nostra, quam Iesu nomine insigniri cupimus, vult sub crucis vexillo Deo militare et soli Domino atque eius in terris vicario servire."

⁵⁸ "... vult sub crucis vexillo Deo militare et soli Domino atque *Romano Pontifici*, eius in terris Vicario, servire" (italics added to indicate changes in prior text) (*ConstMHSJ* 1.26).

articulated: "to serve the Lord alone and the Church, His spouse, under the Roman Pontif, the vicar of Christ on earth."⁵⁹ Now the direct objects of service are Christ and the Church—not Christ and the Roman Pontiff as previously. The Roman Pontiff is the one under whom the Society is to serve the Church. The Church makes its entrance into this pivotal section of the Formula both as the spouse of Christ and as the focus of service, while the Roman Pontiff is seen in his relationship not only to Christ, as vicar, but to the rest of the Church as director of the work that is done for its service.

Significantly, in this same lengthy sentence, the social *opera caritatis* are greatly expanded, bringing back into this text an emphasis from the *Quinque capitula* which had been omitted in *Regimini militantis ecclesiae*—another sign of a fuller sense of Church and one commensurate with what Ignatius and his companions were already doing. This is the context in which the redacted Formula introduces the note of the Church as the spouse of Christ. What is most significant is that this nuptial metaphor is taken as the key which links the Church to Christ, just as the term "vicar" links the Roman Pontiff to Christ. This new and final edition of the Formula suggests a certain parallelism: just as to understand the nature and function of the Roman Pontiff, one must above all understand that he is the vicar of Christ, that he represents Christ's care for the whole Church, so, in order to understand the nature of the Church, one must understand it as the spouse of Christ.

For the double relationship, the Church as spouse and as mother, one must turn to Anselm. Here the immediate issue was not one of mystical unity but of political liberty. Anselm was struggling with successive English monarchs for the freedom of the Church and the abolition of lay investiture. Because the Church is the spouse of Christ, it must be free. Because it is the mother of the faithful, that through which all were made children of God, Christian princes should not attempt to dominate the Church, but to guard and defend it. To Baldwin, King of Jerusalem, Anselm wrote around 1102, "God wishes his spouse to be free, not a slave. Those who treat and honor her as sons do their mother prove themselves to be her sons and the sons of God."⁶⁰ To Clementia, Countess of Flanders, he wrote sometime after 1100, "Princes should not think that the spouse of God, their mother (if they

⁵⁹ ". . . vult sub crucis vexillo Deo militare et soli Domino ac *Ecclesiae ipsius sponsae* sub Romano Pontifice Christi in terris Vicario servire" (*ConstMHSJ* 1.375). In the bull of approbation, *Exposcit debitum*, Julius III explicitly alludes to the part that experience played in this new elaboration.

⁶⁰ "Liberam vult deus esse sponsam suam, non ancillam. Qui eam sicut filii matrem tractant et honorant, ver se filios eius et filio dei esse probant [sic]" (Epistola ad Balderwinum regem Hierosolymorum as in S. Anselmi, *Opera omnia*, ed. F. S. Schmitt [Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1949] 4, no. 235, p. 143; English translation [modified] from *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, translated and annotated by Walter Fröhlich (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian, 1993) 2.211.

are Christians) was given to them as a hereditary dominion, but rather entrusted to them by God so that may merit to become her coheirs to honor and defend her."⁶¹ "Spouse" and "mother" had become commonplace images from which one could argue to freedom and political support.

In Ignatius, the argument from "spouse" and "mother" does not conclude to a political settlement, but to a religious habit of mind: "a spirit open and prompt to obey in all things."⁶² Ignatius is not speaking directly of an act of obedience, but of an antecedent disposition towards obedience to the Church, because the Church is "the spouse of Christ and our holy mother." So to Claudius, Ignatius could write, "Solomon the wise is thinking of Church when he says in Proverbs: 'Forsake not the law of thy Mother'" (Proverbs 1:8).⁶³

The metaphors of spouse and mother provide for an intimate unity: of Christ with the Church, His spouse, and of us the members of the Church with the Church, their mother. Both indicate a unique kind of love: Christ's care for the Church with a love that is nuptial; the Church's care for its members with a love that is maternal. But the unity among these three constituents itself remains open to the further question: What is it that unites them? What is it that lies at the heart of these two metaphors and gives them their meaning, internal consistency, and depth?

In a single sentence in the "Rules for Thinking in the Church," Ignatius indicates that the doctrine of spouse-and-mother has its foundation in an understanding of the Spirit of God, in an implicit pneumatology, if you will. What is common among all three components is the Spirit of God. "Between Christ our Lord, the bridegroom, and the Church, His bride, there is the same Spirit that governs and guides us [members of the Church] to the salvation of our souls because by the same Spirit and Lord of ours, who gave us the ten commandments, our Holy Mother Church is guided and governed."⁶⁴ What does Christ give to the Church which constitutes it his spouse? The Holy Spirit. What

⁶¹ "Non enim debent principes sponsam dei, matrem suam, si Christiani sunt, aestimare sibi datam in haereditariam dominationem, sed a deo sibi commendatam, ut eius cohaeredes mereantur esse ad reverentiam et defensionem" (Epistola ad Clementiam comitissam Flandriae), in S. Anselmi, *Opera omnia*, ed. E. S. Schmitt (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1949) 4, no. 249, pp. 159–60; English translation [modified] from *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. and annotated Walter Fröhlich, 2.233–34. For these texts and others like them as well as for this estimation of Anselm, see Yves Congar, "L'église chez saint Anselme," in *Etudes d'ecclésiologie médiévale* 6.390–91.

⁶² *Exercises* 353.

⁶³ *Letters of Ignatius* 372.

⁶⁴ *Exercises* 365. The Holy Spirit guides human beings especially through "writing and imprinting the interior law of charity" within them. See also *Constitutions*, Preamble (no. 134). This charity, on the other hand, is that by which a person is principally united with God (no. 813) and by which her or his actions are governed, so that one can be taught by the Holy Spirit or governed by it (nos. 414, 489, 624). So much is this the case, that Ignatius can say in very difficult cases that "the charity and discretion of the Holy Spirit will indicate the manner which ought to be used" (no. 219).

does the Church instrumentally and sacramentally communicate to its members, the gift which directs their lives and governs them? The Holy Spirit. If *Yglesia militante* was ultimately in continuity with "subtext" Christology, *Yglesia esposa y madre* is ultimately a continuation of "subtext" pneumatology.

The only other time in the Exercises when the Holy Spirit is expressly mentioned (apart from this single and foundational statement in the "Rules") is during the contemplation of the life of Christ, especially during the appearances of the resurrected Christ, who is presented as the source of the Holy Spirit for his disciples: "dales el Espíritu Sancto," and "mandóles que en Hierusalen esperasen el Espíritu Sancto prometido."⁶⁵ In the points for the Fourth Week, Christ is explicitly described as exercising the "office of consoler": the source of consolation, "as friends are habitually this for one another."⁶⁶ The contemplations offered for this week indicate this as the gift of the Holy Spirit, the one gift that is present throughout this week.

"The same Spirit that guides and governs us" gives the key to the nature of this experience of the Spirit within the Exercises. For that by which the Church is united with Christ and that by which the Church is generated and governed now realizes itself within the depths of the exercitant: the Spirit of God. This government and guidance lies at the heart of the Ignatian Exercises. It can also be found in critically important moments in the explicit assertions of the Constitutions. There union with the Spirit of the Lord is habitually seen in terms of guidance and governance.⁶⁷ The Holy Spirit guides human beings especially through "writing and imprinting the interior law of charity" within them.⁶⁸ But this same charity or love of friendship is that by which the person is principally united with God.⁶⁹ Guidance and union proceed from the same source, the Holy Spirit.

Categorically, to bring into play a Rahnerian distinction, the Spirit governs through the hierarchical authorities, the prophets, preachers, confessors, and teachers in the Church, through commandments and precepts, through sacraments and Scripture and Tradition, through all of those external means which build up the Body of Christ. Transcendentally, the Spirit guides and governs by the change in human subjectivity, especially through the charity or love of friendship that draws and transforms into unity all human affectivity. "The love which moves me and makes me choose such a thing should come down from above (*de arriba*), from the love of God in such a fashion that the

⁶⁵ *Exercises* 263, 273, 304, 307, 312.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 224.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Constitutions*, Preamble (134); 2.3 (219); 4.10 (414); 7.2 (624); 8.6 (700, 701). So much does the guidance of the Holy Spirit and discretion come out of charity that Ignatius can say in very difficult cases that "the charity and discretion of the Holy Spirit will indicate the manner that ought to be used" (219). In other places, he unites them through the phrase "discreta caritas."

⁶⁸ *Constitutions*, Preamble (134).

⁶⁹ *Constitutions* 10 (813).

one who chooses should feel (*sienta*) first in himself that love which he has, greater or less, for the thing which he chooses, is solely for the sake of His Creator and Lord."⁷⁰ It is in this way that the "Divine Majesty puts order in her desires and so changes her first affection that the reason for desiring and holding one or the other of these things shall be solely the service, honor and glory of His Divine Majesty."⁷¹ This experience of love transforms human affectivity and gives human choice/election its direction. It is the greater love that puts order into the lesser loves. And this is itself the effect of the Spirit of God within the human person.

But, more precisely, what is the most fundamental experience of love or charity in the Exercises that can so transform affectivity, that brings the person into such integrity, and that can indicate the path of the election? This is a pivotal question if one is to understand the foundational dynamics of the Exercises.

In the Fifteenth Annotation, Ignatius symbolizes this action as the "embrace" in which Christ, the Creator and Lord, holds the soul, and he further insists that it is the pivotal experience in making the Exercises. Ignatius directed that during the Exercises, the one who gives the Exercises is not to intrude himself or herself into the decision the exercitant is making. Why? "It is more suitable and much better in seeking the divine will [which is the purpose of the Exercises], that the Creator and Lord Himself should impart Himself to His devout soul, *embracing her (abraçándola)* to His love and praise, and disposing her for the way in which she can better hereafter serve Him." Nothing can be more intimate than this embrace; it is for the Creator "to work immediately (*immediate obrar*) with the creature and the creature with her Creator and Lord."⁷² The action here is absolutely fundamental and central to the Exercises. The symbol in which it is expressed seems evidently nuptial, and the reality which is cast in this metaphor is one of intimate and immediate communication in love.⁷³

⁷⁰ Exercises 184.

⁷¹ Annotation 16, in *ibid.* 16.

⁷² *Ibid.* 15. The Spanish here is taken from the 1969 edition found in the above cited redaction in the MHSJ.MI, series 2, vol. 1. The Versio Vulgata seems to have caught this sense of the passage with the Latin *amplexans*, while the various early redactions of Versiones Primae (P1 of 1541 and P2 of 1547) have made it the more generic *acceptando*. *Abraçándola* is also the reading given in the 1919 edition of the *Spiritual Exercises*. On the other hand, Iparraguirre notes that Father Fernández Zapico, following a considerably less authenticated manuscript tradition, argues for *abrasándola*, "to burn, inflame," rather than "to embrace" (Ignacio Iparraguirre and Candido de Dalmases, in *San Ignacio de Loyola Obras Completas* [Madrid: BAC, 1982] 210 n. 12). Zapico explains the variant readings as following from a confusion between "ç" and "s" whose figure was extended beneath the line. The reading given in this text, however, is almost universally held, and its similarity to the argument in the Letter to Borgia (see below) strengthens this reading.

⁷³ "Embrace," e.g., figures very importantly in a quite different context in John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love* 4.14–16; see *Vida y Obras de San Juan de la Cruz*, ed. Crisogno de Jesus, Matias del Niño Jesus, and Lucinio del SS. Sacramento (Madrid:

Here the nuptial metaphor no longer denotes simply the relationship between the Church as a whole and Christ, but between the individual soul and Christ. As St. Bernard did frequently, Ignatius also seems to be able to move from the Church as a whole to the individual soul in a relationship of intimate love with the "Creator and Lord," and to see this love as that through which Christ governs and guides the soul, that by which He will bring the soul "to His love and praise." It is this experience rather than any other that will "dispose her [the soul] for the way in which she can better serve him afterwards." The soul participates in the mystical union marked between the Church, this concrete community of disciples, and Christ. The soul is configured to the Church in the Church's relationship to Christ.

The explicit use of this nuptial metaphor is rare in Ignatius, but it can be found in a remarkable letter to Francis Borgia which also speaks of self-communication and embrace. Ignatius urges Borgia to drop the discipline-to-blood—so current within the Spanish piety of that century—and instead "to seek more immediately the Lord of all, or, what comes to the same thing, see His most holy gifts." These gifts Ignatius specifies as "acts of faith, hope, and charity, joy and spiritual repose, tears, intense consolation, elevation of mind, divine "impressions" and illuminations." By these and other such gifts God "communicates more of Himself" (*más se comunica*). Ignatius wants Borgia to be increasingly numbered among those "embraced (*abraçados*) and united with or by means of such gifts that are most holy."⁷⁴

One last instance of this same metaphor might be found in the *Spiritual Diary* for February 18, 1544, though the language admits of divergent interpretations: "Last night, a little before retiring to bed, I felt some warmth, devotion and great trust that I would find the Divine Persons or grace in them now that I was coming to the end. After I had gone to bed, I had special consolation in thinking of Them, embracing me (*abraçándose*) with interior exultation in my soul."⁷⁵ This metaphor of the embrace of God is one way of expressing that which is central to Ignatian mysticism: that God communicates Himself immediately and intimately to the soul.

BAC, 1964) 924–25. In Ignatius, this intimacy and immediacy, cast similarly in nuptial metaphor in the 15th Annotation, is the fundamental experience by which God brings affectivity into order and directs a persons during the Exercises.

⁷⁴ "... toda guiada y ordenada para la otra sin fin, *abraçados* y unidos con los tales '*santísimos*' *dones*" (italics added) (Ignatius to Francis Borgia [September 20, 1548], MHSI. MI, I. *EppIgn* II, ed. M. Lecina et al. [Matriti: Lopez del Horno, 1904] 235–36).

⁷⁵ Ignatius, *Spiritual Diary* (February 18), MHSI.MI, series 3, I, p. 98; English translation [modified] from *Inigo: Discernment Log-Book: The Spiritual Diary of Saint Ignatius Loyola*, ed. and trans. Joseph A. Munitiz, S.J. (London: Inigo Enterprises, 1987) 32. While the gifted editor and translator of this text reads this word (*abraçándose*) as derived from *abrasar* (to burn) rather than from *abraçar* (to embrace), he states that all of the interpreters seem to have opted for this second sense (ibid. n. 43). Some take the *abraçadome* as a finite verb, rather than as a participle, and have Ignatius embracing himself. This seems less likely.

Certainly the Spiritual Exercises do not expand these metaphors and directives into a full theology of a nuptial mysticism of union as Saint Bernard did. There is no "theology" in this sense in the Exercises, only directions in phrases and fragments opening up to a world that needs theology for its hermeneutic. But there are enough indications here to suggest that this theme is not simply absent, that it represents an important dynamic in the Exercises, and that it depends for its recognition upon a prior understanding of being *dentro de la Iglesia*. The understanding of the Church's relation with Christ illumines statements which Ignatius makes about the way that Christ lives and moves in the soul. Further study should be done to see if it underlies other aspects of the Exercises, for example what Ignatius has to say about consolation, especially *consolación sin causa precedente*.

A FINAL WORD

What, then, is the place occupied by the hierarchical or institutional Church in the Spiritual Exercises? It is more than simply the context in which the soul experiences God. The Church's own relationship with Christ becomes the embodiment and paradigm according to which and within which the exercitant realizes her or his own relationship to Christ. In being what it is, the Church itself indicates what the exercitant can become. In a very real way, the Church realizes again its relationship to Christ in the exercitant's relationship to Christ; in a very real way, the exercitant comes to participate in the mission and the fundamental experience of the Church.

The Church as *militante* illumines much of the world that situates the meditations and contemplations, the actual content or subject for prayer in the Exercises and the matter for election by which one comes to serve Christ against the forces of the antihuman. The Church as spouse illumines the immediacy and intensity of love by which the Christ communicates Himself to the exercitant and draws the exercitant into a love that makes it possible to recognize and follow the guidance of God in one's life. As the logical extension of his Christology and pneumatology—if one can use such scientific language for the directions and brief points that aid the exercitant in the practice of the Exercises—Ignatius's understanding of the Church as part of the subtext of his Exercises participates in the same trinitarian orientation that would come to dominate his prayer. For the Church, "the holy Church," participates in the two divine missions, that of incarnate Word and indwelling Spirit, that constitute the salvation of the human race. As the Church reaches a new realization within them, the exercitants participate in the mystical union of the Church with Christ—both through their union with Christ in service and the intimate experience of love through the Spirit.

If "mysticism" means a habitual and passive experience of the unspeakable mystery of God, an experience that engages both awareness

and love in an infused loving knowledge or contemplation, there are at least two characteristics of the ecclesial mysticism of the Exercises.

There is first and obviously in Ignatius a mysticism of service, in which one is "with Christ," as follower and disciple. This call to be one with Christ in service is profound in the great meditations and contemplations of the Exercises, and de Guibert has found it a constant orientation in the *Spiritual Diary*. This is hardly surprising since in both cases, Ignatius is concerned with finding a way in which God can be served *con grande animo*. This concern can show itself in everything from the very general criteria for making an election of a state of life to something so concrete as the determination about a fixed income for the churches of the Society. The call to serve is always within the Church—a particular call within the Church's more comprehensive call. The mysticism of service is a participation in the essential struggle of the Church, united with Christ, in its service to the Kingdom and its resistance to the *enimigo de natura humana*.

But this is also at the same time a mysticism of loving union. This intimate union is the fundamental experience that transforms human affectivity and guides a person as instrument in the service of Christ. "Union" and "service" are two dimensions of the same mystical unity with God, because the Exercises foster a union not with a God who is abstracted from human needs, but who is at work for the salvation of human beings. So in the great summary "Contemplation for Attaining Love," one gives oneself, becomes united in "love and grace" with the God who is "at work in all created things" for human salvation and from whom all human goods descend. This is to be united with God the way that God is and the way that God has given Himself to us.

The mystical in the Exercises, in its dimensions of service and of union, is not opposed to the institutional. The mystical is served by the institutional, and in turn the mystical must inform and characterize the institutional. In sharing in the relationship between the entire Church and Christ, the contemporary exercitant is drawn into a deeper union with God, into a personal embodiment of the nature and the mission of the Church—into something unspeakably grander than the uses or abuses of its political life or the pervasive sinfulness of its members—into a life and community of human beings transformed and directed by the Spirit of God towards the service of God's kingdom.

Not all contemporary developments in ecclesiology can be found adumbrated even in the subtext of the Exercises. It is important, however, to assert the subtle but critical position of the Church in the Exercises, an assertion that allows the Exercises to grow into their own promise—as the Church develops in its own self-understanding—over the four and a half centuries since their initial composition.