

## SERVICE IN THE *ANALOGIA ENTIS* AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF ERICH PRZYWARA

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*In his study of metaphysics, Analogia entis, Erich Przywara presents service (Dienst) as the link between the analogy of being and a vision of human nature as essentially sent by God into creation. This account informs many of Przywara's spiritual writings, especially his commentaries on Ignatius's Spiritual Exercises and his studies of the Jesuit charism. The article argues that Przywara's spirituality of service, despite its limitations, offers an illuminating contrast to more-recent studies of Jesuit spirituality, which tend to prioritize interiority and personal experience.*

RECENT SCHOLARSHIP SHOWS growing interest in the work of Jesuit scholar Erich Przywara (1889–1972), best known for his (sometimes polemical) friendship with Karl Barth, as well as for his influence on Hans Urs von Balthasar, Edith Stein, and Karl Rahner.<sup>1</sup> Studies on Przywara have typically focused on *Analogia entis*, his dense and elusive treatment of “creaturely metaphysics.”<sup>2</sup> Although there is good reason to believe that

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<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to Przywara’s life and work, see Thomas F. O’Meara, *Erich Przywara, S.J.: His Theology and His World* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2002); Gustav Wilhelmy, “Erich Przywara: Ein Überblick,” in *Erich Przywara, 1889–1969: Eine Festgabe* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1969) 6–34. A fine treatment of Przywara’s life and work in the context of his collaboration with Hans Urs von Balthasar appears in Manfred Lochbrunner, *Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine Theologen-Kollegen* (Würzburg: Echter, 2009) 17–147. I thank John Betz, Aaron Pidel, S.J., and the anonymous TS referees for improving earlier drafts of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Erich Przywara, *Analogia entis: Metaphysik* (Munich: Kösel & Pustet, 1932). See also, among other works, the collection edited by Thomas Joseph White, O.P., *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or the Wisdom of God?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2011); Keith L. Johnson, *Karl Barth and the Analogia Entis* (New York: T. & T. Clark, 2007); Rudolf Stertenbrink, *Ein Weg zum Denken: Die*

Przywara himself saw that project as central to his theology,<sup>3</sup> an exclusive concern for *analogia entis* might suggest that his main academic interest is purely metaphysical, that is, an effort to provide an intellectually compelling, systematic account of the basis of all reality. Yet many of his most important writings focus on spiritual topics, especially as they relate to Ignatius of Loyola and the religious order he founded, the Society of Jesus. Indeed, some commentators have argued that Przywara's *Deus semper maior*, his monumental commentary on Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*, is the true key to understanding his philosophical and theological projects.<sup>4</sup>

Przywara's approach to spirituality centers on the model of the Jesuit as the *simul in actione contemplativus*.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to what one might expect from so abstract and speculative a thinker, Przywara pays less attention to the ascetic and monastic goal of mystical union than to the intramundane activity that characterizes the Jesuit charism. As Christian Lager has argued, Przywara's account of the nature of religious life and mysticism depends on his notion of "service" (*Dienst*).<sup>6</sup>

Przywara's notion of service differs from a program of humanitarian or philanthropic work. Drawing on a range of Catholic thinkers, especially Thomas Aquinas, Przywara relates human service to the "analogy of being." This framework allows him to defend his account of good works against charges of Pelagianism insofar as he can locate human causality within an economy dependent on divine primary causality. At the same time, by maintaining that this primary causality simultaneously guarantees

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*Analogia entis bei Erich Przywara* (Munich: Pustet, 1971); Hermann-Josef Zoche, *Zwischen Pantheismus und Theopanismus: Zur Grundlegung und Struktur der kreatürlichen und gnadenhaften Gottesbeziehung des Menschen nach der Analogielehre Erich Przywaras* (Augsburg: Universität Augsburg, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> Consider his comments in the early essay, "Gottese Erfahrung und Gottesbeweis," in *Religionsphilosophische Schriften*, vol. 2 of *Schriften* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1962) 3–13, at 7; originally published in *Stimmen der Zeit* 104 (1923) 12–19.

<sup>4</sup> James V. Zeitz, *Spirituality and Analogia entis according to Erich Przywara, S.J.* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1982), offers such an account of the relationship. Christian Lager, *Dienst: Kenosis in Schöpfung und Kreuz bei Erich Przywara SJ* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 2007) takes a similar approach.

<sup>5</sup> The famous phrase is from the *Adnotationes et meditationes in Evangelia . . .* of Jerónimo Nadal, S.J., one of Ignatius's early collaborators. Scholars now maintain that it mischaracterizes Nadal's thought; see William V. Bangert, S.J., *Jerome Nadal, S.J., 1507–1580: Tracking the First Generation of Jesuits*, ed. and compl. Thomas M. McCoog, S.J. (Chicago: Loyola University, 1992) 213–16; Joseph F. Conwell, S.J., *Walking in the Spirit: A Reflection on Jeronimo Nadal's Phrase "Contemplative Likewise in Action"* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Lager, *Dienst* 292. Lager focuses on the relationship between Przywara's theology of service as a theology of the Cross, thereby offering a thorough treatment of Przywara's Christology. Such considerations are beyond the scope of this paper.

the integrity of creaturely secondary causes, he can avoid a radical passivism that would present the individual as a mere vessel for spiritual experience (*Erleben*) or feelings. This “ontology of service” is central to Przywara’s account of the history of Ignatius and the Jesuit order.

In this article I first offer an introduction to Przywara’s theological vision and a synthesis of his notion of *Dienst* as it appears in *Analogia entis*. I then examine the presence of the notion in his spiritual writings, especially the *Deus semper maior*. I seek to show, first, the centrality of service to his understanding of the *Spiritual Exercises* and, second, the role of service in linking individual spirituality to participation in the church, especially in the Society of Jesus.

While acknowledging the limits of Przywara’s method, especially in its lack of attention to sources and history, I conclude by proposing that his insights offer a valuable resource to contemporary studies of the *Spiritual Exercises*. By paying careful attention to the dimension of service implicit in the text and a rigorous account of its metaphysical status, students of the *Exercises* might be equipped to articulate a spirituality that does not prioritize sentiment and often unstable notions of personal experience, but rather offers a robust vision of authentic human spiritual flourishing in self-giving service of the Lord.

### PRZYWARA’S THEOLOGICAL VISION

Since Przywara’s thought remains relatively unknown to English-speaking audiences, some introduction to its outlines and influences is necessary before considering his peculiar account of service. His corpus includes a number of monographs on the thinkers who came to affect his understanding of God, creation, and anthropology.<sup>7</sup> Among his works are “syntheses” of Augustine and Newman, which consist of excerpts from source material that are structured to reflect the general thought pattern of the original author.<sup>8</sup> Thus, for instance, he presents Newman’s thought in three stages: first, the recognition of God as source of morality and the individual in need of forgiveness; second, the role of Christ as Messiah and Savior;

<sup>7</sup> Some sense of the range of Przywara’s sources is evident in the subjects of his monographs: *Religionsbegründung: Max Scheler, J. H. Newman* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1923); *Kant heute* (München: Oldenbourg, 1930); *Hölderlin* (Nürnberg: Glock & Lutz, 1949); *Augustinisch: Ur-Haltung des Geistes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1970).

<sup>8</sup> Augustine, *Augustinus: Die Gestalt als Gefüge* arr. Erich Przywara (Leipzig: Jakob Hegner, 1934); ET, *An Augustine Synthesis* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958). Przywara’s compilation and translation of the Newman texts: J. H. Newman, *Christentum: Ein Aufbau aus seine Werke*, 8 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1922); ET, *The Heart of Newman: A Synthesis*, arranged by Erich Przywara, intro. and “Note” by H. Francis Davis, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2010). Regrettably,

and third, the redeemed individual's path in the Christian life.<sup>9</sup> Such an approach is typical of Przywara: throughout his writings he tends to present his subjects according to systematic and sometimes rigid taxonomies. Even when he comments on such untidy topics as church history, spirituality, and contemporary politics, he generally schematizes the material in terms of binary relationships and oppositions.

Przywara's synthesizing approach is especially evident in *Analogia entis*, his magnum opus composed around 1932.<sup>10</sup> Here he presents the analogy of being as the thought pattern of all Catholic philosophy.<sup>11</sup> For Przywara, the *analogia entis* informs all proper thinking about the relationship and the opposition between reflection on what is known and reflection on what exists, or, in his preferred language, the tension between "metanoetics" and "metaontics." In a dense and rigorous set of arguments, Przywara seeks to demonstrate that all attempts to explain reality either by starting exclusively from the phenomenon of human knowledge (metanoetics) or from what is in the world (metaontics) inevitably lead to impasses. The only viable alternative to such philosophies is a "creaturely" metaphysics that is based on the status of the human being as dependent on God yet possessing its own integrity.

For Przywara, the *analogia entis* grounds an authentic understanding of the created order, including human experience. Systematically locating the concept of *analogia entis* in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas, Przywara aims to show how the *analogia entis* functions as the intersection between an "intracreaturely" analogy that obtains immanently among creatures and the "vertical" analogy that corresponds to relations between the Creator and the creature.<sup>12</sup> The "intracreaturely" analogy, which figures prominently in the metaphysics of Aristotle, recognizes a "suspended middle" between creatures that oscillate between being and nonbeing and between act and potency; all creatures come to be and cease to exist according to a common back-and-forth

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neither translation of the syntheses of Augustine and Newman includes translations of Przywara's introductions. On Przywara's early syntheses of his subjects, see O'Meara, *Erich Przywara* 46.

<sup>9</sup> For a summary, see Davis, "Note," in *Heart of Newman* xxi–xxii, at xxi.

<sup>10</sup> The German original is included in Erich Przywara, *Schriften*, vol. 3, *Analogia entis: Metaphysik; Urstruktur und All-Rhythmus*, 8th ed. (Einsiedeln; Johannes, 1962), which I use for this article. Foundational studies of the work appear in Bernhard Gertz, *Glaubenswelt als Analogie: Die theologische Analogielehre Erich Przywaras und ihr Ort in der Auseinandersetzung um die analogia fidei* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1969); Stertenblich, *Ein Weg zum Denken*; Julio Terán Dutari, *Christentum und Metaphysik: Das Verhältnis beider nach der Analogielehre Erich Przywaras* (Munich: Berchmanskolleg, 1973).

<sup>11</sup> See remarks in Przywara, *Analogia entis* 74.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 65.

dynamic.<sup>13</sup> The vertical analogy, that “between God and creatures,” grounds the possibility of such a dynamic by providing an interconnection and an end for all creaturely analogies.<sup>14</sup>

According to Przywara, all previous thinkers attempt, with varying degrees of success, to communicate how the discrete realities of the cosmos relate to one another and how their mutual relations are rendered possible by their prior relationship to God, who is the “in-and-beyond” of all creatures. Because of the various analogies weaving together the universe, human beings can know creation and approach a provisional knowledge of the divine, a knowledge that inevitably succumbs to a profession of mystery.<sup>15</sup> Here, then, the trajectory of the *analogia entis* toward the ineffable leads Przywara to draw on the mysticism of negative theology as exemplified by Dionysius the Areopagite and his notion of the “dazzling darkness” (*hell-lichte Finsternis*).<sup>16</sup>

Ultimately, then, the *analogia entis* leads to consideration of the divine. Since Przywara believes that an adequate account of metaphysics requires a commitment to divine action in and beyond creation, he repeatedly introduces theological concerns into discussions of epistemology, ontology, ethics, and esthetics. The analogy of being is a “suspended relation” oscillating beyond what is beyond itself (ultimately, the God who Is) and what exists not at all. As the principle of metaphysics, it therefore requires an intimate, if ever elusive, relation between nonbeing, creation, and God.

### SERVICE IN ANALOGIA ENTIS

To identify Przywara’s distinctive vision of service (*Dienst*) within this broad theological framework, one must track remarks scattered throughout his vast corpus.<sup>17</sup> Regardless of the topic he treats, he maintains a rather consistent metaphysical understanding of *Dienst*. Service is never simply a

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 121.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 122.

<sup>15</sup> Przywara’s “ontological” understanding of the analogy of being extends well beyond any purely linguistic or grammatical account of analogical predication. Such an approach, especially for Aquinas, has many critics. See, for instance, Richard Schenk, *Der Gnade vollendeter Endlichkeit: Zur transzendentaltheologischen Auslegung der thomanischen Anthropologie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1989) 373; and Bruce Marshall, “Christ the End of Analogy” in White, ed., *Analogy of Being* 280–313.

<sup>16</sup> *Analogia entis* 134. On Przywara’s understanding of mysticism of darkness, especially as found in the Carmelites, see his “Karmel des Elends,” in *Crucis Mysterium: Das christliche Heute* (Vienna: Schöningh-Paderborn, 1939) 129–53.

<sup>17</sup> See, for instance, Erich Przywara, “Spanisches Theologumenon,” in *Ignatianisch* (Frankfurt: Josef Knecht, 1956) 11–30, esp. 26–30; “Theozentrische und anthropozentrische Frömmigkeit,” in *Ringel der Gegenwart: Gesammelte Aufsätze*

discrete act of charity; it is rather the activity that characterizes the creature qua creature, related analogically to the Creator.

In *Analogia entis* Przywara offers a concise summary of this view of service in the course of presenting the relationship between the “analogy of attribution” and the “analogy of proportion.”<sup>18</sup> These two analogies, standard in the Scholastic tradition, refer to distinct relations that obtain among discrete entities.<sup>19</sup> On the one hand, one can identify the “health” in “healthful” food as properly attributed to contributing to the “healthy” individual, according to an analogy of attribution; food itself is not “healthy,” but it can be understood to be so by contributing to the well-functioning person. On the other hand, analogy also corresponds to the relations among proportioned realities. By an analogy of proportion, the human relation between lord and servant shares some similarity with the transcendent relation between the divine Lord and creature; one proceeds from the experience of lords and servants in creation when one attempts to consider the relation between the heavenly Lord and creaturely servants. The limit on this approach to the divine, however, is always the teaching of the Fourth Lateran Council, which Przywara cites often: “within every ‘similarity, however great’ is an ‘ever greater dissimilarity’ between Creator and creature.”<sup>20</sup> No analogy of proportion can span the gap between Creator and creature.

While discussing these two analogies and their limits, Przywara turns somewhat abruptly to present their mutual implications in light of a “third” analogy that extends from the Creator to the creature:

The illimitable “suspended” analogy (*analogia proportionis secundum convenientiam proportionalitatis*) establishes a new “attributive” analogy (*analogia attributionis*), but one that proceeds not, as in the first moment, from below to above, but rather from above to below: from the *Deus semper maior*, the creature’s “realm of service” is “attributed” to it. The “ever greater dissimilarity” (*maior dissimilitudo*) here has a positive sense: that of the delimitation of a positive realm into which the creature is “sent forth” for the purpose of “performing a service.” “Sent forth” is to say that the creature receives its essential groundedness from the supereminent divine Is

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1922–1927, 2 vols. (Augsburg: B. Vilser, 1929) 1:443–68; on *Dienst* in marriage, see Erich Przywara, *Crucis Mysterium*, chap. 13.

<sup>18</sup> For a longer exposition of much of this material, including references to Przywara’s biography, see the discussion in Lagger, *Dienst* 70–103.

<sup>19</sup> The two analogies are also the subject of intense debate; for an introduction see Reinhard Hütter, “Attending to the Wisdom of God—from Effect to Cause, from Creation to God: A Relecture of the Analogy of Being according to Thomas Aquinas,” in *Analogy of Being* 209–45.

<sup>20</sup> “Inter Creatorem et creaturam non potest tanta similitudo notari, quin inter eos maior sit dissimilitudo notanda” [Denziger 432], cited in Przywara, *Analogia entis* 138. On the spiritual implications of the doctrine, see Hugo Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian*, trans. Michael Barry (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968) 2–3.

[*Ist*] (Truth, etc.). “Performing” underscores the active autonomy of the creature thus sent forth (*causae secundae*). “Service” clarifies the way in which this active positivity is only another and more acute form of the above-and-beyond of God (in the *maior dissimilitudo*): the mysticism of rapture is humbled by the distance between Lord and servant.<sup>21</sup>

Przywara carefully links the analogy of being to God’s causality in the created realm. Having previously argued that the tension between the intracreaturely analogy can be understood only by reference to a supracreaturely analogy, Przywara concludes that this ascending movement from a “horizontal” to a “vertical” analogy requires that the vertical analogy from creature to Creator simultaneously descend from Creator to creature.<sup>22</sup> Thus, creation bears an analogical relation to the transcendent God insofar as its integrity as a “realm” of being, truth, etc., is guaranteed only by God’s prior activity of creation. Since God is the “ever greater,” the in-and-beyond of all created reality, created causality cannot account for itself without reference to divine causality.<sup>23</sup>

Just as created being exists only insofar as it is in God and is ordered to God as its end, so too created activity, even the service offered by human free choice, is created by and ordered to God. Creation is somehow dependent on God to guarantee its independence. Przywara finds Aquinas’s doctrine of secondary causality especially pertinent here.<sup>24</sup> Within the realm of human causality, the service of the creature is in no way independent in the sense of being “released from” God’s creative activity; creaturely causes are not ultimate causes, but rather depend for their causality on God as the First Cause.

Creaturely service nevertheless possesses a genuine autonomy and an authentic freedom that comes in being sent forth by God. As Przywara puts it later in his text,

this setting apart of the creature [*Sich-abheben der Kreatur*], as the more proper revelation of God’s abundance, happens such that in setting itself apart the creature appears to take on the very traits of God, as an original ground of itself [*Urgrund ihrer selbst*] [and] as a creative cause [*schaffende Ursache*].<sup>25</sup>

Hence, far from endorsing a notion of service that would suggest a creature somehow independently contributing to God’s activity, Przywara presents

<sup>21</sup> Przywara, *Analogia entis* 139–40. I thank John Betz for allowing me, in preparing my own translation, to consult the version he is preparing in collaboration with David Bentley Hart (forthcoming from Eerdmans). Latin text is in the original.

<sup>22</sup> On this dynamic in the progression of analogy, see *ibid.* 104–21. For further discussion, see John Betz, “After Barth: A New Introduction to Erich Przywara’s *Analogia Entis*,” in *Analogy of Being* 35–88.

<sup>23</sup> On the “ever greater,” compare Przywara’s remarks in *Analogia entis* 57.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* 134–35.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 191–92.

service as the unfolding of God's own creative activity in the creaturely realm ("God's increasing proximity to the creature effects [the creature's] increasing independence [*Selbständigwerden*]").<sup>26</sup> The creature's dependence does not compromise, but rather guarantees, its status as a servant. Only by virtue of this dependence does the creature remain a servant and the Creator remain the Lord.

An emphasis on the "ever greater distance" between servant and Lord allows Przywara to avoid certain exaggerations in the history of Christian spirituality. He can respond to the pervasive concern that endorsing human works or the holiness of the active life, as opposed to that of contemplation, entails the adoption of a Pelagian account of human work as released from God and therefore capable of justifying the servant apart from God.<sup>27</sup> One should here recall that the relationship between servant and lord in the creaturely realm is related by an analogy of proportion to the relationship between God as Lord to human being as servant; that is, although there is a point of similarity between the two pairs, the difference between them is infinitely greater. While the human lord can be said to depend on the existence of his servants for his status as lord, the divine Lord does not need his creaturely servants for him to remain Lord. At the same time, since service emanates from God's own creative activity, it has no self-sufficient status. The servant depends not merely conceptually, but also ontologically, on the Lord. In depending, the servant is continuously humbled by the ever-greater distance from the Lord.

These metaphysical deductions already contain implications for human praxis. The spirituality of the servant is the spirituality of dependence. Hence, the service that follows on mission, and not, say, on a program of self-perfecting asceticism that focuses on personal spiritual experience, functions as a model for the well-ordered spirituality that attends to the fundamental principle of the analogy of being. Indeed, in the closing sentence from the quotation above, Przywara seems to suggest that it is the contemplative life, characterized by the "mysticism of rapture," that must be humbled by a proper attention to all human activity. Here Przywara prioritizes service over experience (*Erleben*), a distinction he makes elsewhere in his writings.<sup>28</sup> Contemplative mysticism, he suggests, can exaggerate the similarity between Creator and creature and thereby obscure God as *semper maior*; mystical experience is easily misunderstood as "bridging the gap" between God and creature. The active life of service, by contrast, owns its dependent status insofar as it acknowledges itself as "service."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 191.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 134.

<sup>28</sup> See, for instance, Przywara's comments in "Gott in uns and Gott über uns," in *Ringens der Gegenwart* 2:546–47.



The notion of service in *Analogia entis* thus has ethical and spiritual implications even within metaphysical speculation. Przywara's summary presentation of service integrates a variety of ontological commitments in endorsing activity that places the proper emphasis on the *maior dissimilitudo* between God and creature. This intimate relation between his "creaturely metaphysics" and his account of *Dienst* can be detected in a range of Przywara's spiritual writings from various periods in his career.<sup>29</sup>

### SERVICE IN PRZYWARA'S SPIRITUAL WRITINGS

While Przywara's discussion of creaturely service in *Analogia entis* is brief, he pays special attention to the theme in his writings on Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*. He comments extensively on the *Exercises*, a manual for retreat directors, both to construct a theology of the text itself and to relate the spirituality of the *Exercises* to the specific charism of the Society of Jesus.<sup>30</sup> For Przywara, the priority of service in a variety of forms characterizes both the central end of the *Exercises* and the "religious type" of the Jesuit order.

#### Service in the *Spiritual Exercises*

The manual that Ignatius began composing around 1521 on the basis of his own mystical insights offers a careful and systematic introduction to prayer and the discernment of spirits for Christians who hope to conform their lives more to the divine will.<sup>31</sup> Divided into Four Weeks that loosely correspond to the three "ways" of traditional mysticism, namely, the *via purgativa*, the *via illuminativa*, and the *via unitiva*, the text of the *Exercises* offers a retreat director instructions and scriptural references to aid the retreatant in overcoming attachment to created things and thus to dispose him or her to the action of divine grace and to discern the will of God. Moreover, the *Exercises* also functions as a primary source for determining the distinctive charism of the Society of Jesus.

Throughout his manual Ignatius refers to the individual's end as the "service and praise [*servicio y alabanza*] of the Divine Majesty."<sup>32</sup> For

<sup>29</sup> See Lager, *Dienst* 90–103.

<sup>30</sup> In addition to Przywara's works treated in this article, see especially "Ikon Ignatius" and "Augustinus und Ignatianisch," in *Ignatianisch* 31–69 and 107–49; and "Ordenstand, Weltstand, Gesellschaft Jesu" and "Idee des Jesuiten in der Liturgie," in *Crucis Mysterium*, chaps. 6 and 8.

<sup>31</sup> I rely on George E. Ganss, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius: A Translation and Commentary* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992) (hereafter Ganss). Numbering in brackets corresponds to the standard division of the *Exercises*. The autograph text, which I occasionally cite, was composed in Spanish, and the *versio prima*, in Latin. See *ibid.* 8–10, 221–22.

<sup>32</sup> From the Preparatory Prayer [46].

instance, in the “Principle and Foundation” [23], an introductory meditation where Ignatius offers a summary of his theological anthropology, he maintains that the only end for which the individual should strive is the “service, honor, and glory” of God. Likewise, in the guide for making an “election” of a state of life [169–189], Ignatius stipulates that one must always consider the service of God as the end and all other elections—marriage or the life of the vows—as the means to that end.<sup>33</sup> Ignatius repeatedly exhorts the retreatant to embrace only the way of life that is *more* (*magis, más*) in the *service* of God.

### SERVICE IN PRZYWARA’S COMMENTARIES ON THE *EXERCISES*

Even in his earliest writings Przywara fixes on this feature of the end of human existence. In 1925 he published *Majestas divina* (ET, *The Divine Majesty*), a concise and somewhat poetic treatment of the Ignatian *Exercises* divided into four parts: Solitude, Service, Surrender, and Love.<sup>34</sup> Although these “key words” (*Kennwörter*) can be mapped onto the Four Weeks structure of the *Spiritual Exercises*, they are meant especially to characterize the piety and spirituality of the *Exercises* taken as a whole.<sup>35</sup> Hence, within the text itself Przywara labels *Dienst* the “foundation of the *Exercises*.”<sup>36</sup>

In *The Divine Majesty* “service” loosely corresponds to the task of the retreat’s Second Week, during which the retreatant is encouraged to meditate on the mysteries of the life of Christ, from the Annunciation to the Entry into Jerusalem. These meditations on “service” focus on how the Lord’s human actions manifest his obedience to and service of the heavenly Father. Through prayer and contemplation, the retreatant is meant to grow in understanding of the most appropriate manner of service that one can offer in turn.

In discussing service, Przywara insists that our imitation of it is never merely immanent or this-worldly; it is never simply a determination to maximize productivity or increase output. Rather, service actualizes our creaturely natures: one must realize one’s nature as a servant in order to live out one’s “mission” as a creature. This mission, moreover, is implicated in the individual’s eschatological fulfillment. He writes: “If the

<sup>33</sup> On the debate between the “electionists” and the “perfectionists” over the two “ends” of the *Spiritual Exercises*, see Ganss 147.

<sup>34</sup> Erich Przywara, *Majestas divina: Ignatianische Frömmigkeit* (Augsburg: B. Filser, 1925); ET, *The Divine Majesty*, trans. Thomas Corbishley, S.J. (London: Collins, 1975). The ET renders Przywara’s admittedly odd sentence structure in a rather confusing free-verse. It also includes a dedication to the memory of Teilhard de Chardin, which does not appear in Przywara’s original.

<sup>35</sup> On *Frömmigkeit* as spirituality, see Zeitz, *Spirituality and Analogia Entis* 34–36.

<sup>36</sup> *Majestas divina* 25; this subhead does not appear in the ET.

meaning of your life is to be ‘one’ of his servants who stands before his face night and day waiting upon his command, what must be the inmost direction [*Richtung*] of your wishing and thinking and desiring and fearing and dreading?”<sup>37</sup>

The question encourages the exercitant to contemplate the end of all human action and to recognize that creaturely service is a “rehearsal” for the eschatological divine service. To borrow the language of *Analogia entis*, God as in-and-beyond the individual represents not only the end of human activity in the created order but also the ultimate perfection of all human works. Service, then, prepares the individual for the eternal destiny that awaits creation. As Przywara puts it, “in the service of faith, you prepare yourself for the service of vision.”<sup>38</sup> At no point, not even at the eschaton, is the *maior dissimilitudo* of the servant/Lord analogy of proportion overcome. At the same time, Przywara’s stipulation that the individual remains one of the Lord’s servants entails that service maintains a real integrity. The individual is not ultimately annihilated as he is subsumed into God or into some kind of undifferentiated “world soul.” Rather, he retains and offers his own unique service.

As the final chapter of *The Divine Majesty* explains, this service is best expressed in terms of love of God and love of neighbor as presented in the *Contemplatio ad amorem* [230–37], which functions as the culmination of the *Exercises*.<sup>39</sup> Here we find the centrality of Przywara’s account of the integrity of creaturely, secondary causes in his vision of the ethical life. Love of humanity is not merely tolerated as a derivative, inferior to the perfect love of God; rather fraternal love is the outpouring of God’s love insofar as each one’s brother or sister is, as the letter to John implies, “God made visible on earth.”<sup>40</sup> This conclusion is somewhat surprising; insofar as the final week represents the pinnacle of the “unitive” way, it can often be understood as endorsing a purely personal mystical exchange with the divine. Yet Przywara maintains that the end of the *Exercises* is not simply static contemplation of the “alone with the alone,” but rather a creaturely love that manifests itself in service.<sup>41</sup>

Here we recognize the ethical consequences of the discussion from *Analogia entis* that I considered above. Przywara’s account of divine and human love relies on a vision of the ever-greater God, while maintaining a respect for the integrity of human, secondary causality as the manifestation of God’s primary causality in the creaturely realm. Service becomes the

<sup>37</sup> *Divine Majesty* 48, translation modified.

<sup>38</sup> *Analogia entis* 30, my translation.

<sup>39</sup> On the *Contemplatio*, see Ganss 185.

<sup>40</sup> *Divine Majesty* 90.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 86–87.

term to express the relationship between these two causalities. Human, fraternal service is the necessary correlate of the divine service to which all Christians are called.

### Service in the *Deus semper maior*

Przywara extends his remarks on the role of service in the *Spiritual Exercises* in his three-volume commentary *Deus semper maior*.<sup>42</sup> Like many other commentators, he emphasizes the centrality of the *Exercises*' Principle and Foundation [23] for understanding the structure and the goal of the retreat. This concise passage, which appears at the beginning of the *Exercises*, offers a guiding norm to organize the content that follows in the manual itself. As we have seen, its first sentence, "human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God Our Lord, and by means of this to save their souls,"<sup>43</sup> places human service at the heart of the project of the *Exercises*. Only by maintaining a constant awareness of this ultimate end is it possible for the individual to be properly disposed to discern and elect the best means to attain that end.

In parsing the language of the Principle and Foundation (a project comprising almost 100 pages), Przywara begins by defining the essence of humanity as "creatureliness," in a move that should be familiar from *Analogia entis*.<sup>44</sup> He maintains the familiar balance between Pelagian and individualistic/experiential extremes: on the one hand such service is the result of a prior "reverence" for God, but on the other hand the service depends on God's prior action in the creature. Service, contrary to common perception, does not occur when the creature recognizes some need and decides to act, as though the initiative rested with the creature; rather the fact of the divine command is its very rationale.<sup>45</sup> In the words of *Analogia Entis*, God provides the "realm" into which the creature is sent. For Przywara, this is the only way service can be true service: "Otherwise, I still remain my own lord."<sup>46</sup> The servant must recognize that his service is not his own. As Przywara had determined in *Analogia entis*, service is analogically attributed to the servant only on account of the Lord's prior action.

### *Dienst and Gottesdienst*

While Przywara treats service most systematically as he comments on the Principle and Foundation, the theme recurs throughout the *Deus semper*

<sup>42</sup> Erich Przywara, *Deus semper maior: Theologie der Exerzitien*, 3 vols. (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1938).

<sup>43</sup> Ganss 32.

<sup>44</sup> Przywara, *Deus semper maior* 1:47–138.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.* 1:95; all translations of passages from *Deus semper maior* are mine.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

*maior*, often in unexpected ways. Perhaps most pervasive is the connection Przywara makes between service and the liturgy. Here, too, his systematic theological concerns, formulated through reflection on the *analogia entis*, are equally in play as he comments on Ignatius's text.

Przywara takes his point of departure from Ignatius's recommendations for "withdrawal" prior to making the *Exercises*. In Annotation 20 Ignatius recommends that the retreatant depart from his or her normal routine in order to focus more fully on the task of prayer. Przywara renders the Annotation thus:

In these [i.e., the abandonment of one's normal residence and commitments] he will, ordinarily, more benefit himself, the more he separates himself from all friends and acquaintances and from all earthly care, as by changing from the house where he was dwelling, and taking another house or room to live in, in as much privacy as he can.<sup>47</sup>

Such language could easily be read as recommending a removal from the social milieu in a monastic sense, as a sort of contemplative abandonment of the world. Przywara, however, notes that Annotation 20 merely requires that the retreatant change locations, not that he abandon society entirely; this is not a "solitude for the sake of solitude."<sup>48</sup> There is a liturgical and ecclesial dimension implicit in the very setting of the retreat.

Przywara proceeds to present the entire structure of the *Exercises* as intimately related to the liturgical order. Hence, the retreatant changes location, as Ignatius stipulates, "so that it be in his power to go each day to Mass and to Vespers, without fear that his acquaintances will put obstacles in his way."<sup>49</sup> Przywara finds here a foundational, if implicit, link between the service (*Dienst*) that is the end of the *Exercises* and the liturgy (*Gottesdienst*) in which the *Exercises* are embedded. Commenting on this passage he writes, "The liturgical life is the service of praise [*Lobdienst*] of the servant before the Lord."<sup>50</sup>

The concluding text of this same annotation helps clarify the nature of the separation that Ignatius recommends. All the various attempts to seclude oneself in making a retreat are not ordered to self-perfection, but rather to "disposition": as the *Exercises* state, "the more we unite ourselves to [the Lord] in this way, the more do we dispose ourselves to receive graces and gifts from his divine and supreme goodness."<sup>51</sup> The "exercise" (*Übung*) of the retreat is not a Pelagian effort to earn God's gifts, but rather an exercise toward disposing oneself (*Übung als Disposition*). The link

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 1:20; Przywara seems to have been influenced in this regard by his novice master, Johann Baptist Müller; see Wilhelmy, "Erich Przywara" 9.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 1:40.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 1:20.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 1:40.

<sup>51</sup> Ganss 29.

between practice and disposition in the Annotation leads Przywara to attribute the retreatant's activity in making the *Exercises* to the prior action of the Creator.

Przywara therefore takes the Annotation to illuminate a basic dynamic of the *Exercises* as a whole: the "practice" of the retreat is a matter of presenting oneself at the service of divine action. Przywara expresses this relationship between practice and self-disposing in terms of the liturgy: "The *Exercises* are the *practice* as *disposition* in the more profound sense of a *concentration on the One* [*Eine*], on the part of a single-minded [*einsichtig*] individual, who thus arrives at a unified [*einheitlich*] liturgy/service of God [*Gottesdienst*] and to an inner *freedom*."<sup>52</sup> For Przywara, the retreatant's preparations for receiving the graces of the *Exercises* are properly set within the liturgical order, which itself is a preparation for divine action. The servant acquires freedom only by entering into the quasi-liturgical service of making the *Exercises*; in this way the retreatant, qua servant, prepares for the loving and creative action of the Lord.

Moreover, although the *Exercises* themselves do not contain specific recommendations for using liturgical prayer or the psalms as the material for meditation during the retreat, they often refer to the liturgical hours as providing the structure for the sequence of prayers that a retreatant should follow.<sup>53</sup> Przywara repeatedly renders recommendations from the *Exercises* in terms of the practice of the Divine Office. For instance, according to Przywara, the still, self-recollection that Ignatius prescribes before beginning an hour of prayer corresponds to the *statio* of prayer in choir, that is, the moment of silence and self-examination when the monk prepares to enter into his stall. Likewise, the preparatory prayer that Ignatius offers before every meditation corresponds to the "Deus in adiutorium" ("God come to my assistance") of the Divine Office. Again, the "preambulatory" prayers parallel the opening antiphons of prayer in choir.<sup>54</sup> The order of the church's service is implicit in the retreatant's service. Przywara suggests that even if the exercitants are not living a monastic life, they are following the church's daily order in disposing themselves to receive the graces of the retreat.

This emphasis on the link between service and liturgy culminates in Przywara's treatment of the "Rules for Thinking, Judging, and Feeling with the Church" (nos. [352–70]), which are included among certain "additional

<sup>52</sup> Przywara, *Deus semper maior* 1:41, emphases original. The German includes a play on the language of unity in the practice of disposing oneself for the *Exercises*. Przywara seeks to emphasize that in such a practice there is no binary opposition, but rather an essential unity, between active preparation and passive obedience.

<sup>53</sup> See Ignatius's instructions at nos. [72], [128], [129], [130], and [148].

<sup>54</sup> Przywara, *Deus semper maior* 1:182–83.

rules” at the conclusion of the *Exercises*.<sup>55</sup> Przywara treats them with the material of the Fourth Week, although he acknowledges that such a move is not explicit in those meditations, which treat the matter of Christ’s resurrection and ascension.<sup>56</sup> But Przywara argues that the content of these rules is inherently connected to the direction of the Fourth Week, insofar as these are the rules for the “church militant,” or, as Przywara puts it, the *Kirche im Heeres-Dienst*.<sup>57</sup> The “militant” does not refer to a sort of contentious attitude, but rather to a disciplined and obedient service. The service of the *Exercises* is fundamentally bound to a divine service in the liturgy and a military service in the Church.

Again the ontology of service as presented in *Analogia entis* is implicit in Przywara’s account of the liturgical and ecclesiastical life in the *Exercises*. Przywara does not view the *Exercises* as culminating in a “mysticism of rapture” that would require the creature somehow to abandon his or her creaturely status in an ontological identification with God. He does not propose an individualized, atomistic vision of the “alone with the alone” that strives only for experience (*Erleben*). Rather, he sees Ignatius’s vision of the *Exercises* as respecting the individual’s creaturely status, which must actualize its relationship to all other creatures through participation in the liturgy and through membership in the church. As Przywara comments elsewhere, proper liturgical spirituality preserves religion from becoming “referred entirely to the human” (*Menschbezüglichkeit*); a theocentric piety maintains “religion as service, not as experience.”<sup>58</sup>

### **Contemplation and Action: Service and the “Religious Type” of the Society of Jesus**

The presence of *analogia entis* in Przywara’s vision of service, liturgy, ecclesiology, and prayer likewise influences Przywara’s view of the specific charism of Ignatius as well as the “religious type” of the Society of Jesus. These connections appear in a collection of four essays entitled

<sup>55</sup> The translation of *sentire*, often rendered simply as “thinking,” is from Ganss 133. On the history and placement of the Rules, see *ibid.* 197–98.

<sup>56</sup> Przywara, *Deus semper maior* 3:337.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* 3:337.

<sup>58</sup> Erich Przywara, “Liturgische Erneuerung,” in *Katholische Krise* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1967) 74; original article published in two parts as, “Liturgische Bewegung—Ein Rückblick,” *Liturgische Zeitschrift* 2 (1930) 1–11, 41–49. Such a link between service and liturgy likewise corresponds to Przywara’s lifelong interest in the liturgical movement. Many of his essays explicitly discuss liturgical issues, and in a brief monograph, *Wandlung: Ein Christenweg* (Munich: B. Filser, 1925), he offers a “Christian path” patterned on the liturgical year. On Przywara’s involvement in the liturgical movement, see Zeitz, *Spirituality and Analogia entis* 78–81; and O’Meara, *Erich Przywara* 157–60. For some of his own reflections on the

*Ignatianisch*, which Przywara published in 1956.<sup>59</sup> In a number of his essays, he articulates the distinction between the founding charism of the Jesuits and the “religious types” of other great medieval monastic orders, such as the Benedictines, the Dominicans, and the Franciscans. As is widely known, one of the great innovations of the Jesuit *Constitutions* comes in Ignatius’s abrogation of the requirement of praying the Divine Office in choir. Such a move departed from the practice of then-established orders, which viewed the discipline of choir as the preeminent practice of religious life. The Jesuit exception met harsh criticism in Ignatius’s day; according to Przywara, Melchior Cano, the Dominican bishop and theologian, saw the new foundation as the work of the “Antichrist.”<sup>60</sup>

In response to this critique Przywara argues for an implicit continuity among the various types of religious life. Offering an argument similar to that found in *Deus semper maior*, Przywara presents Ignatius’s abrogation of the choir requirement as paradoxically expressing a greater devotion to the liturgy. Przywara identifies this connection between Jesuit spirituality and the liturgy in the life of Ignatius himself: just as Ignatius received his essential religious formation in the shadow of the Benedictine Abbey of Santa María de Montserrat near Barcelona, so the service characteristic of the Society of Jesus is fundamentally “cultic” in a manner that adumbrates the liturgical life of the church. Like Ignatius, the true Jesuit internalizes the monastery in order to extend it virtually to a wider world. Hence, the relationship between the structure of the *Exercises* and the Divine Office maps onto the relationship between the foundation of the Jesuits and the practice of the older religious orders. In this way, the charism of the Society of Jesus perfectly corresponds to Aquinas’s account of the religious life (*religio*) as the “service and cult of God.”<sup>61</sup>

This continuity between the older orders and the Society of Jesus manifests the centrality of service for the Jesuits. The primary service of the Society is distinctly “outward directed,” that is apostolic, insofar as service is always “sent.” Such an emphasis corresponds to Ignatius’s frequent references to readiness for mission and devotion to the vow of obedience at the heart of the order’s identity.<sup>62</sup> Jesuits actualize the service of the liturgical life in the same way as members of other orders; only the “realm” has changed. This is especially true in their famous fourth vow of

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movement, see his “Religiöse Bewegungen” and “Kirche als Lebensform” in *Ringen der Gegenwart* 1:3–18, 19–25. See also his poetic translation of the Roman liturgy, *Nuptiae Agni* (Nuremberg: Glock & Lutz, 1948).

<sup>59</sup> In particular, Erich Przywara, “Reliöser Typus der Gesellschaft Jesu,” in *Ignatianisch* 71–106.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 83.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 95.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 96–101.



obedience to the pope in regard to mission, which Przywara understands as a defining feature of the order.

Yet again, we can detect the influence of Przywara's vision of the "analogical" status of service. Here it informs his account of concrete developments in the history of religious life. Just as attention to creatureliness, as we saw in the passage from *Analogia entis*, leads to an awareness of creation as sent forth, that is, missioned, for the service of the Lord, so a careful attention to the foundation of the Society of Jesus as a "missionary" order illuminates the metaphysical operations at work in the charisms of the older orders, which centered on the liturgical as God's service (*Gottesdienst*). The Jesuits simply manifest universally, in the world, the same service that the older orders had reserved to fixed times and places of prayer. The identical service is here ordered to a wider, greater realm, in conformity with Ignatius's insistence on the *magis*.

Przywara's concept of service thus resides at the heart of his project, both informing and drawing upon the metaphysical speculations of *Analogia entis*. Moreover, as Lagger has shown, it deeply influences his Christology.<sup>63</sup> As I noted in considering the treatment of the servant meditations in *Deus semper maior*, Przywara sees the actions and sufferings of Christ as manifesting his human nature's created status. Through his humanity Christ is the most perfect servant in offering himself in self-sacrifice on the cross. Although investigating Przywara's Christology lies beyond my scope here, I want to highlight the christological trajectory of these preliminary reflections on Przywara's servant spirituality. Human beings can serve only insofar as they are conformed to Christ as the servant *par excellence*.<sup>64</sup>

### LIMITS OF PRZYWARA'S METHOD

To be sure, many contemporary scholars of the *Spiritual Exercises* and the Jesuit charism would be uncomfortable with Przywara's decidedly metaphysical account of Ignatius's inspirations. Indeed, Przywara's tendency to impose strict taxonomies on his subjects can seem procrustean. A quick review of the opening sections of *Analogia entis* shows how Przywara tends to lump a range of modern thinkers into discrete, opposing camps in order to present his own view as the only viable alternative.<sup>65</sup> In

<sup>63</sup> Lagger, *Dienst*, esp. 233–92.

<sup>64</sup> Lagger notes (*ibid.* 259) that Przywara cites the Phillipians hymn (Phil 2:6–11; "he took the form of a servant") more than 60 times in the *Deus semper maior* alone.

<sup>65</sup> According to the opposition "metaontic" and "metanoetic" in *Analogia entis* 3–9. For a concise summary of Przywara's systematization of his sources see Zeitz, *Spirituality and Analogia entis* 117–64.

the process, he often elides a particular thinker's own attempts to evade the pitfalls that Przywara notes.

This tendency relates to a more systemic difficulty in Przywara's spiritual writings. Przywara rarely considers the sorts of concerns that motivated his subjects and their proposals in the first place, especially the various historical influences inspiring a particular intellectual project. In commenting on the work of Ignatius, Przywara tends to treat the material as though his personal metaphysical vision corresponds perfectly to Ignatius's texts. This allows him to dispense entirely with footnotes and historical contexts.

Such an approach obscures certain simple observations about Ignatius and his background; often it is best to explain Ignatius's language or proposals as a standard trope from his sources. For instance, in articulating an Ignatian notion of service in the *Deus semper maior*, Przywara spends many pages parsing the distinction between "service" and "reverence and praise."<sup>66</sup> Yet, as George Ganss shows in his commentary on the *Exercises*, the formula was probably mere rhetorical shorthand, even hendiadys, for the common assumption that humanity should honor divinity. Ignatius simply inherited the formula from medieval sources, particularly Peter Lombard.<sup>67</sup>

Likewise, Przywara's treatment of the "Application of the Senses" (nos. [121–126]), the fifth exercise of the first day, which recurs throughout the *Exercises*, is strangely compressed, hardly exploring the activity of these meditations at all.<sup>68</sup> Przywara presents these instructions poetically, as that which goes "from the comprehensible and the certifiable and the ponderable to the sensation of the atmosphere and to the breathing of the breath."<sup>69</sup> Relating the exercise to 2 Corinthians 2:14 ("spread the fragrance of the knowledge of God everywhere"), Przywara identifies the application of the senses as a movement beyond conceptual knowledge toward a higher tasting of the divine. This elegant characterization of the method makes no mention of its ancestry in patristic sources and its prominent role in late medieval piety. In this tradition, the application of the senses does not seem aimed at distinguishing "the comprehensible" from "the atmosphere," but rather more simply at encouraging an interiorized, personal engagement with Scripture.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Przywara, *Deus semper maior* 1:94–117.

<sup>67</sup> Ganss (212) shows precisely how Ignatius here borrows from, yet modifies, a statement from Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.

<sup>68</sup> Przywara, *Deus semper maior* 2:34–35.

<sup>69</sup> "Vom Begreifbaren und Feststellbaren und Wägbaren in das Spüren der Atmosphäre und das Atmen im Atmen über" (ibid. 2:34).

<sup>70</sup> For a thorough study, see Philip Endean, "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses," *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990) 391–418; and Hugo Rahner, "Die 'Anwendung der

Of course, Przywara's seeming indifference to historical influence might not impugn his fundamental insight. Ignatius may have subtly adapted his sources to his own distinctive vision of the spiritual life, which Przywara otherwise successfully communicates. Yet Przywara should at least have acknowledged the antecedents insofar as they shed light on the ways that Ignatius adopted and modified the earlier tradition.

To be sure, Przywara's approach to the *Exercises* and to Ignatian spirituality reflects the concerns of an earlier generation of scholarship more comfortable with metaphysical categories, which looked more readily to identify the broad framework of the spiritual thought than to apply such thought to daily life and experience. One might compare, for instance, Gaston Fessard's *La dialectique des "Exercices spirituels" de S. Ignace de Loyola*, an extended attempt to understand Ignatius's writings in terms of Hegelian dialectic.<sup>71</sup> While Fessard acknowledges that his reading might not correspond precisely to the mind of Ignatius, he argues that approaching the *Exercises* by means of relevant philosophical categories reveals the underlying dynamics at work in the 30-day retreat. Like Przywara, Fessard offers not only a prose exposition of these dynamics but also an intricate schematic "architecture" of the *Exercises* themselves.<sup>72</sup> The result is a rather idiosyncratic taxonomy of Ignatius's more personal and experiential vision. Any attempt to recruit such accounts, including Przywara's work, for contemporary study of the *Exercises* must supplement their systematic considerations with a more careful review of the historical material.

### RESOURCES FOR CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS OF THE EXERCISES

Acknowledging the limitations of Przywara's method, I conclude with a brief discussion of his relevance for today's study of spirituality. Przywara's grounding of service within his creaturely metaphysics has much to offer students of Ignatius and the *Exercises*. Przywara most likely brackets issues of historical dependence and genealogy because he is most keen to articulate the guiding principles of the *Exercises*. Hence, his vision

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Sinne' in der Betrachtungsmethode des hl. Ignatius von Loyola," in *Ignatius von Loyola als Mensch und Theologe* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1964) 344–69; ET, "The Application of the Senses," in *Ignatius the Theologian*, trans. Michael Barry (New York: Herder & Herder, 1968) 181–213.

<sup>71</sup> Two vols. (Paris: Aubier, 1956); Fessard himself admits that his speculative concerns are not explicit for Ignatius (*Dialectique* 7). For a comparative study of the theological commentaries on the *Exercises*, see Michael Schneider, "Unterscheidung der Geister": Die ignatianischen Exerzitien in der Deutung von E. Przywara, K. Rahner, und G. Fessard (Innsbruck: Tyrolia, 1983).

<sup>72</sup> See the insert at the end of Fessard, *Dialectique*, vol. 1. Compare the diagram in *Deus semper maior* 3:406.

of the interrelationship among philosophy, theology, liturgy, prayer, and ecclesiology provides an ample, if sometimes rigid, framework from which to consider the various features of Jesuit spirituality.

Comparison with more recent studies on the *Exercises* helps illustrate the value of Przywara's approach. David Fleming's *A Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises* provides a representative example of a more personalized, experiential understanding of Ignatian spirituality.<sup>73</sup> This text, which "is intended to be a gateway to St. Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises*," offers a revised and updated translation of the original manual in language and images more accessible to contemporary readers.<sup>74</sup> While Fleming's differences with Przywara could be illustrated with numerous instances throughout the text, I will consider only his rendering of Annotation 20 considered above.

Fleming updates the text to say that certain advantages follow upon a separation from our usual surroundings:

Ordinarily, if we want to give ourselves over to the movement of these Exercises, it is most helpful to go apart from what usually surrounds us. . . . There are many advantages which come from this separation, for example: (1) if I am so intent on responding ever better to the love of God wherever it will lead me in my life, I will find the kind of quiet in which the movement of God in my life becomes all the more apparent; (2) my mind will not find itself divided over many cares, but rather its one concern will be to follow the lead of God; (3) in a similar way, my powers of loving, too, will be focused for this amount of time solely upon God, and the response which I will be able to make is all the more intense and intimate because the demand for such a response is so single.<sup>75</sup>

Fleming successfully communicates one of the annotation's central concerns: the more we can free ourselves from distraction, the more we can focus on God's work in our lives. As he indicates, an interior silence allows us easier access to the divine and gives us freedom from commitments so that we may focus more on God's life.

At the same time, in the effort to employ more accessible images, Fleming begins to modify Ignatius's meaning, at least as we saw them presented by Przywara. First, Fleming removes the suggestion found in the original version, which states that separation from one's usual routine

<sup>73</sup> David L. Fleming, S.J., *A Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises: A Companion of St. Ignatius's Text* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1978); the popular volume is also published with the original text under the title *Draw Me Into Your Friendship* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996). For parallel emphases, consider the account given in Brian Grogan, "'To Make the Exercises Better': The Additions," in *The Way of Ignatius Loyola: Contemporary Approaches to the Spiritual Exercises*, ed. Philip Sheldrake, S.J. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1991) 41–52.

<sup>74</sup> Fleming, *Contemporary Reading* xi.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

allows the individual closer proximity to and freedom for attending Mass and vespers daily.<sup>76</sup> For Fleming, such talk might reflect a feature of Ignatius's "medieval" worldview that the contemporary generation will not recognize.<sup>77</sup> Yet, as we saw for Przywara, this "situating" of the *Exercises* is not arbitrary; rather, it is inspired by the metaphysical framework of the retreat itself. The retreatant, as a servant and a Christian, must have greater access to the *Dienst* and the *Gottesdienst* in which one's creaturely identity is activated. Fleming's version of the text eliminates the structuring feature that Przywara locates not only throughout the *Exercises* but also at the heart of the Jesuit charism. In the process, he presents Ignatius's ideal for the setting of the retreat as nothing more than the "alone with the alone" of which Przywara is especially wary. Fleming's text offers something closer to a striving for the "mysticism of rapture" than an acceptance of a humble service.

Fleming's emphasis on the retreatant's active role in removing him- or herself from worldly affairs in order to "be alone," with no reference to the liturgical context, may lead Fleming to depart further from Przywara's understanding of the *Exercises* and to elide the conclusion to the annotation: "The more we unite ourselves to [God] in this way, the more do we dispose ourselves to receive graces and gifts from his divine and supreme goodness."<sup>78</sup> This reference explicitly ties the "success" of the retreat not to the retreatant's hard work, but rather to "disposing" him- or herself to receive God's grace; in no way is Ignatius offering a Pelagian vision of ascetic self-mastery earning God's loving response.<sup>79</sup> By contrast, Fleming's versions could suggest that abandoning one's usual routine is itself a method for gaining love for and intimacy with the Divine.

To be sure, Fleming certainly does not present his understanding in such individualistic terms; most likely, he wants to emphasize the positive ends of separation from one's usual routine by reference to what this separation can "accomplish." But a closer attention to the metaphysics of service as found in Przywara would have alerted Fleming to the dangers of ignoring the final sentence of Annotation 20. By this careful exposition of creaturely

<sup>76</sup> Along the same lines, Grogan writes: "The Eucharist may be an even more important event for us than it was in the sixteenth century, and yet it presents greater problems. Some will want to express the communitarian nature of the Exercises. . . . Others may prefer to let the simplest possible liturgy underline the tremendous mystery of Christ's death and resurrection and obviate the possibility of discord between the Eucharist and the different paths of the retreatants on their way to God" ("Additions" 44).

<sup>77</sup> Fleming, *Contemporary Reading* xii.

<sup>78</sup> Ganss 29.

<sup>79</sup> For a careful account of "disposing," see William A. M. Peters, S.J., *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Exposition and Interpretation* (Jersey City, NJ: Program to Adapt the Spiritual Exercises, 1967) 5–6.

service as closely linked to his understanding of the humility of the human being before God, Przywara finds a healthy corrective to a prevailing conception of service as the product of individual initiative that is aimed at improving one's lot by hard work and dedication. His account of service that is grounded in a creature's essential subordination to the "ever greater" God suggests an alternative to a vision of humanity in which one works out one's own salvation through an abundance of self-generated good will.

Fleming's reading of the *Exercises* is representative of those studies that are particularly motivated by a desire to render the 16th-century text accessible to a contemporary audience. In this respect it resembles many other studies on the *Exercises* that tend to downplay, if not ignore, Ignatius's references to the role of the daily Office and the church, while focusing instead on the centrality of the retreatant's experience in prayer. John English's popular and influential commentary, *Spiritual Freedom*, for instance, in presenting the *Exercises* as a pedagogy in increasing detachment in preparation for the experience of God, includes little discussion of liturgical life.<sup>80</sup> While English is careful to articulate the dangers of Pelagianism inherent in reading the *Exercises* as a project in self-perfection, he nevertheless emphasizes a primarily interiorized model as the goal of the retreat.<sup>81</sup> He presents the end of the *Exercises* in terms of an individual's encounter with the Divine that does not necessarily relate to ecclesial service. Indeed, English suggests the potential for conflict between personal experience and ecclesial identity (Przywara's *Erleben* and *Dienst*) when he suggests that individual discernment might inspire one to depart from the church of sinners.<sup>82</sup>

For Przywara, no one makes an election in the *Exercises* apart from ecclesial service. His account of the link between the Principle and Foundation and ecclesial service underscores their intrinsic unity. As he describes the process of election in the *Deus semper maior*, he maintains that there can be no opposition between one's state in life within the church and the Principle and Foundation: "Therefore, the objects of every choice already comes under the law of this fundamental election [i.e., the Principle and Foundation]: for the service of God within the church of salvation."<sup>83</sup> No good election can remove one from God's means of

<sup>80</sup> John J. English, S.J., *Spiritual Freedom: From an Experience of the Ignatian Exercises to the Art of Spiritual Guidance*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Loyola University, 1995).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. 19. Perhaps to balance his emphasis on individual experience, English's revised edition includes a chapter on "Communal Spirituality" (275–94).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid. 187–88.

<sup>83</sup> "Darum treten bereits die Gegenstände aller Wahl unter das Gesetz dieser Grund-Erwählung: in den Dienst Gottes in der Kirche der Erlösung" (*Deus semper maior* 2:186).

salvation, which, for Przywara, is necessarily the church. Hence, the primary framework for making an election is the ecclesial presupposition of the Principle and Foundation rather than individualized self-reflection. Such a presupposition may seem problematic to a pluralistic audience. Yet Przywara's reading seems more accurately to correspond to Ignatius's text than to texts offered by commentators who prioritize the experiential features of the *Exercises*.<sup>84</sup>

### CONCLUSION

This brief consideration of contemporary approaches should both alert us to the dangers of abandoning the metaphysical framework of the *Exercises* and illustrate the value in retrieving many of Przywara's insights. Despite its limits, his notion of service illuminates certain Ignatian themes within a robust account of God and creation. Drawing on his account of the *analogia entis*, he emphasizes the goodness and integrity of creaturely service without detracting from the transcendent activity of the Divine in making such service exist in the first place.

Such insights are especially pertinent to developing a capacious vision of spirituality that avoids two pitfalls: a sentimentality that exaggerates the place of pure *Erleben* in prayer and a Pelagian vision of spirituality as a project of self-improvement. Przywara reveals how all discussion of human flourishing must begin with reflection on the human being's status as a creature and as a servant. Only by embracing that status, which is lived through participation in the servant church through a common liturgy as divine service, is the creature ultimately drawn into loving relationship with the divine Lord.

Moreover, Przywara's biography suggests that his dedication to service did not remain purely speculative, but rather influenced his political and ecclesiastical action.<sup>85</sup> As a member of the editorial staff for the German Jesuit journal *Stimmen der Zeit* under the Third Reich, Przywara was involved in responding to the challenge of National Socialism under the threat of personal and institutional retribution. As a consequence, he was publically heckled in 1935 while delivering a lecture against National Socialism.<sup>86</sup> That Przywara himself understands his political action in terms

<sup>84</sup> For an example of reading the *Exercises* within a context that presumes pluralism, see Roger Haight, S.J., "Expanding the Spiritual Exercises," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 42.2 (Summer 2010).

<sup>85</sup> See Martin F. Ederer, "Propaganda Wars: *Stimmen der Zeit* and the Nazis, 1933–1935," *Catholic Historical Review* 90 (2004) 456–72, on the fate of the contributors to *Stimmen der Zeit*, the German Jesuit theological journal that Przywara edited from 1922 to 1941; on Przywara's writings in this period, see 461–62. I am grateful to an anonymous referee for these references.

<sup>86</sup> Ederer, "Propaganda Wars" 457

of *Dienst* appears in some of his essays from this period. In “Der Ruf von Heute,” he writes that the call of his age was a call to “ceaseless giving of self in the objective service of God.”<sup>87</sup> Such action may inspire Balthasar’s impression of Przywara as a “warning voice of our age.”<sup>88</sup>

More than once Przywara quotes Marie Antoinette de Geuser’s view of the Jesuit order, which summarizes his own view of the end of the life of service:

One thing above all has struck me in the life of this saint [Ignatius], as in the rest of the Jesuits whom I have met: that is, it is not any personal sanctity or virtue that one meets in them; it seems that their personality is missing, and that one finds oneself in the presence of a mirror, which more or less perfectly reflects our Lord. One gets to know certain saints and one loves them; one gets to know certain pious individuals, and one sometimes feels oneself drawn to them humanly; but one gets to know St. Ignatius and the Jesuits, and it seems to me that it is almost God alone whom one loves, so much have they effaced themselves, as to leave all the room to Him.<sup>89</sup>

Przywara’s affection for this passage attests to his lofty vision of the Jesuit vocation. In his view, the authentic Jesuit and, by extension, any disciple of the *Exercices* abandons his or her personality and particular gifts in order to leave the Lord all the “room” the Lord needs.

<sup>87</sup> Przywara “Der Ruf von Heute,” in *Katholische Krise* 89–105, at 103; the article was originally published as “Situation und Aufgabe im deutschen Gegenwartskatholizismus,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 120 (1930) 161–72.

<sup>88</sup> Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Tragedy under Grace: Reinhold Schneider on the Experience of the West*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1997) 228; I thank an anonymous referee for this reference.

<sup>89</sup> Marie Antoinette de Geuser, “*Consummata*” (Toulouse: Apostolat de la Prière, 1928) 78–79, cited in “Thomismus und Molinismus,” in *Crucis Mysterium* 214, and slightly abbreviated in “Religiöser Typus” 92; my translation).