

GUIDES

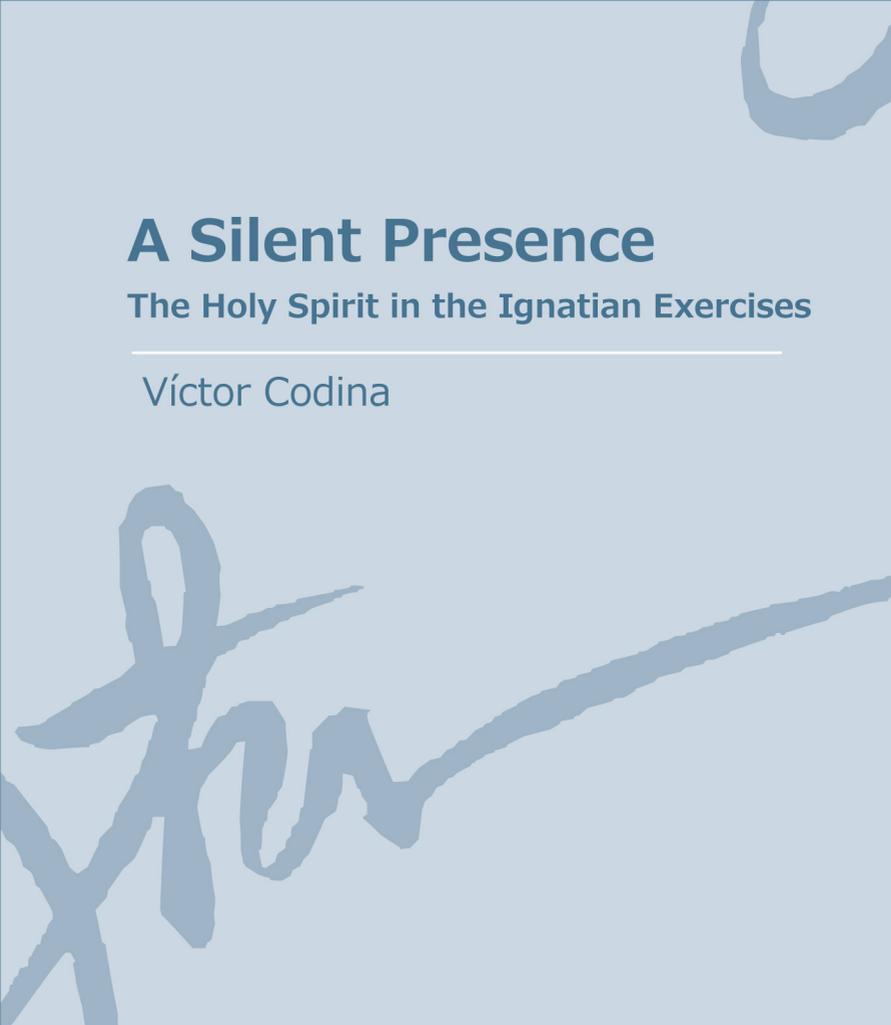
EIDES

6

A Silent Presence

The Holy Spirit in the Ignatian Exercises

Víctor Codina



A SILENT PRESENCE
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE IGNATIAN *EXERCISES*

V́ctor Codina, sj.

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Publisher: CRISTIANISME I JUSTÍCIA - Roger de Llúria 13 - 08010 Barcelona
+34 93 317 23 38 - info@fespinal.com - www.cristianismeijusticia.net
ISSN: 2014-6558 - November 2016

Editor: Anna Pérez i Mir
Translated by Eric Soutworth
Layout: Pilar Rubio Tugas

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1. A SUSPICIOUS SILENCE

A critical look at the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola makes us aware that the book has very few references to the Holy Spirit. This is quite remarkable. Apart from a few gospel citations in the *Mysteries of the Life of Christ* where the Spirit is expressly mentioned¹ [SpEx 261-312], the Spirit is mentioned just once in the book, and precisely in the *Rules for Thinking and Feeling with the Church* [365].² The silence of Ignatius regarding pneumatology³ is all the stranger since references to the Holy Spirit are quite abundant in other works of Ignatius, such as the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, the *Spiritual Diary*, and the *Autobiography*.⁴

1. THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE IGNATIAN TEXTS

1.1. The *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*

The *Constitutions* begin by affirming that it is «the Supreme Wisdom and Goodness of God our Creator and Lord that must preserve, direct, and carry forward the Society» and that «what helps toward this end must be, more than any exterior

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1. The Spirit is mentioned concretely in various of the mysteries of the life of Christ: in Our Lady's visitation to Elizabeth [SpEx 263]; in the baptism of Jesus [SpEx 273]; in the resurrection appearance to the disciples in John 20 [SpEx 304]; in the appearance to the disciples and the sending of them to baptize in Matthew 28 [SpEx 307]; and in the ascension and promise of the Spirit [SpEx 312]. Ignatius does not mention Pentecost among the mysteries of Christ's life. We will try to explain this further on.
 2. From this point on, whenever there is a citation from the book of the *Exercises*, it will be indicated simply by a number within brackets.
 3. We use the terms *pneumatic*, *pneumatology*, and *pneumatological* in referring to the Holy Spirit since the Greek word for *Spirit* in the New Testament is *pneuma*.
 4. ECHARTE, I. (1995). *Concordancia ignaciana*. Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae, pp. 483-486.

constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and imprints upon our hearts.»

Nevertheless, Ignatius decided to write the *Constitutions* out of his desire to cooperate with the action of Providence, to obey the request of Pope Paul III, and to honor both the tradition of the Church and the requirements of reason [*Constitutions* 134]. The text of the *Constitutions* continually allude to the discretion of the Spirit [*Const* 219], to proceeding in the way of the Spirit [*Const* 243], to the anointing of the Spirit [*Const* 624], and to the effective direction provided by the Spirit [*Const* 641]. For Ignatius, the Spirit's action on the heart was extremely important; he could not conceive of any external law being effective without the interior action of the Holy Spirit on human hearts. His words remind of us of what Paul says in Romans 5:5 about the «love of God that has been poured out in our hearts.»

1.2. The *Spiritual Diary*

In the *Diary* there are constant references to the Trinity, which is mentioned 112 times. Of these, 31 mentions are to the divine persons generally, 56 are to the Father, 28 are to the Son (besides 58 to Jesus), and 27 are to the Holy Spirit.⁵ Throughout this essay we will be citing texts from the *Diary* as confirmation of Ignatius's devotion to the Holy Spirit, but let us quickly look at a couple references now.

At the beginning of the *Diary*, Ignatius mentions that he once had a powerful experience or vision of the Spirit, one very reminiscent of the description of Pentecost in Acts. He was celebrating the Mass of the Holy Spirit, and as he was offering to the Lord the proposal he had made the day before about having no fixed income for the Society, the following happened:

«A little later I made a colloquy with the Holy Spirit, in preparation for saying his Mass; I experienced the same devotion and tears, and seemed to see or feel Him in a dense clarity or in the color of burning flame—a way quite strange to me.» [*SD* 14]

Toward the end of the *Diary*, Ignatius again relates a strong experience or vision of the Spirit:

«Throughout Mass I wept gently and abundantly, and after Mass as well; before Mass I felt the impulse to weep and felt or saw the Holy Spirit himself; all related with complete submission.» [*SD* 169]

5. THÍO DE POL, S. (1990). *La intimidad del peregrino*. Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae, p. 92.

1.3. Why the silence?

Apart from these texts, we have the testimony of both Laínez, one of his first companions, and Nadal, who knew his spirituality thoroughly, that at the end of his life Ignatius lived immersed in the three divine Persons and that he found the greatest gifts especially in the Holy Spirit.⁶

In contrast, what we find in the *Exercises* are simply references to diverse spirits that move the soul of the exercitant and require careful discernment. Ignatius uses the adjective «spiritual» quite frequently, beginning with the title of the book, *Spiritual Exercises*.⁷

But why this silence? Can it be said that it is pure happenstance, even though Ignatius was a person extremely careful in his choice of words, both when speaking and above all when writing? Or is his silence intentional?

2. PNEUMATOLOGY IN THE TIME OF IGNATIUS

2.1. Ignatius, «a popular Christian»

Ignatius was described by Nadal as «a popular Christian»; his piety was greatly influenced by the Franciscan spirituality of his family in Loyola, a spirituality very centered on the humanity of Jesus. When Ignatius read the *Life of Christ* and the lives of the saints during his time of convalescence in Loyola, he grew in his devotion to Jesus. This christological piety is reflected in the book of the *Exercises*, which are centered on contemplation of the life of Jesus.

What theological and experiential conceptions of the Holy Spirit would Ignatius have found in the Church of his time?

2.1.1. *A Spirit reduced to the liturgy*

We don't propose to elaborate here a history of the theology of the Spirit (pneumatology) as it developed in the Church.⁸ After the Council of Constantinople, which defined the divinity of the Spirit in 381, and after the golden epoch of the Holy Fathers (Irenaeus, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa, Augustine, John Damascene, etc.), pneumatology existed at the liturgical level, but it was not

6. FN I, p. 138; FN II, pp. 315-316.

7. ECHARTE, I. *Op. cit.*, pp. 486-487.

8. We refer to the classical work of CONGAR, Y.M.J. Original edition in French: *Je crois en l'Esprit Saint*, Paris: Edition du Cerf. [An English edition is available: CONGAR, Y.M.J. (1997). *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, New York: Crossroad]

the subject of much theological reflection. Even today we still sing the medieval hymns, *Veni Creator Spiritu* and *Veni Sancte Spiritus*. Only later was there development of the spiritual doctrine of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, following the text of Isaiah 11,1-2.⁹

Ignatius was living in a theological and ecclesial context in which the pneumatological dimension was quite absent. The medieval Latin church, especially after the separation from the eastern Church in the 11th century, stressed the christological dimension much more than the pneumatological dimension, and indeed even more than the trinitarian one. The Spirit appeared relegated to the hierarchy.¹⁰

2.1.2. Devotion to Mary

Let us add another motive that might explain the absence of the Spirit in the *Exercises*. As Congar has demonstrated in his history, in the Catholic Church the maternal attributes of the Spirit –such as tenderness, fertility, and merciful and consoling love– have frequently been transferred to (and even supplanted by) the attributes of the Virgin Mary. In contrast to the idea that many Christians had of a distant, frightening, judgmental Deity, the Virgin presented a more gentle, maternal image of God. Congar cites a text about Mary from Saint Bernardine of Siena that reminds us of the triple colloquy in the Ignatian *Exercises*:

«All grace that is communicated in this world arrives through a threefold movement for it is dispensed according to the most perfect order: God in Christ, Christ in the Virgin, the Virgin in us.»¹¹

This transposition of the attributes of the Spirit to the figure of Mary is reinforced by the attention paid to the feminine dimension of the Spirit (in Hebrew the term is feminine: *Ruah*); this has been extensively developed in some eastern churches, such as that of Syria, and also in much iconography. We do not want to engage here in a discussion about the feminine dimension of the Spirit, but we do want to insist that there is undeniably a close relation between the Spirit and the Virgin Mary who, as we profess in the Creed, conceived Jesus by the work of the Spirit.

9. We do not wish to enter here into other more technical aspects of medieval pneumatology that no doubt influenced Ignatius, such as the prevalence of the concept of created grace as opposed to uncreated grace, the tendency to stress what was common to the whole Trinity rather than what was particular to each person, the Augustinian influence on trinitarian theology in the Latin Church, the acceptance of the *Filioque* in opposition to the Eastern Church, etc. The previously mentioned work of Congar provides further references.

10. CODINA, V. (2008). *No extingáis el Espíritu*. Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae.

11. CONGAR, Y.M.J. *Op. cit.*, pp. 192 ff. and especially p. 598.

This partly explains the prominence that Mary has had and continues to have in popular religiosity, which was a vital force in Ignatius's time. We can say that in the ambience of his family Ignatius was heir not only to the Jesus-oriented piety of the Franciscans but also to a strong Marian devotion.

We should remember the importance that Mary had in the conversion of Ignatius [*Autobiography* 10], his visits to Arantzazu [*Aut* 13] and to Montserrat, and the curious episode of his argument with the Moor about the virginity of Mary [*Aut* 16-18]. Ignatius maintained this devotion to Mary throughout his whole life, as is shown by the petition he made year after year, «praying that the Virgin would deign to place him with her Son» [*Aut* 96].

We also want to note here a psychoanalytic theme that is quite closely linked with Ignatius's devotion to Mary: he lost his mother when he was very young. To what extent did the figure of Our Lady represent not only the noble woman of his thoughts [*Aut* 6] but also his longing for a maternal figure? This matter would require further explanation that is beyond the scope of the present essay.¹²

Bringing these data together and combining them with our intuitions, we can ask whether –in the threefold colloquy (to Our Lady, to her Son, and to the Father) proposed for particularly solemn moments of the *Exercises* [63, 147, 156]– the figure of Mary might not be substituting for the role that would properly correspond to the Spirit, since in reality it is the Spirit who leads us to Jesus and by means of Jesus to the Father (John 14-16).

2.2. A trinitarian mystical experience

Even though these were centuries of pneumatological silence and neglect in the Church and in official theology, there were never lacking prophetic voices and mystical spiritual movements that stressed experience of the Trinity and specifically of the Holy Spirit. Ignatius was one of those mystical voices. What he did not learn from books he received from the Lord, who treated him at Manresa as a school teacher treats a young pupil [*Aut* 27].

At Manresa Ignatius had genuine trinitarian experiences. Amid many tears and sobs, he saw with great consolation the Most Holy Trinity in the form of three keys [*Aut* 28]. His great vision by the Cardener River had no concrete theological content, but it was for Ignatius a foundational experience that gave him a whole new view of reality and made him feel like a new man [*Aut* 30]. It was without a doubt an experience of the Trinity and the Spirit. This trinitarian and pneumatological dimension of Manresa stayed with Ignatius all his life, culminating in his trinitarian experiences in Rome, as we saw previously in his *Spiritual Diary*.

12. For more on this theme, see DOMÍNGUEZ MORANO, C. (2005). *Experiencia cristiana y psicoanálisis*, Santander, Sal Terrae.

2.2.1. Why this silence?

From what we have said, we can conclude that, while the piety of the Loyola family was marked by Marian devotion and a Franciscan focus on Jesus, and while the Church of that time put little stress on the Spirit, the trinitarian experiences that Ignatius had at Manresa were bound to be reflected in the *Exercises*. Why, then, is Ignatius silent about the Spirit in a spiritual book like the *Exercises*, since the book was born out of his mystical experiences at Manresa and should quite naturally refer to the action of the Spirit in the life of the exercitant?

This question is not just a matter of historical curiosity; it has much deeper roots. Could it be that this silence about the Spirit in the *Exercises* has, in the course of the centuries, favored a moralistic and rationalistic interpretation of the *Exercises*? Why did the first Jesuits, such as Nadal, have to defend the book of the *Exercises* against accusations of Illuminism and dangerous mysticism, where as nowadays they are criticized as placing excessive stress on voluntarism and psychological factors?

These questions oblige us to return to the origins of the Society of Jesus in order to examine the reasons for the fear of being excessively spiritualist.

3. THE ALUMBRADO MOVEMENT

To understand this Ignatian silence, we should study the significance of the Alumbrado movement in Ignatius's time.

3.1. An elusive sect

The Alumbrado [enlightened] movement was a religious phenomenon existing only in Spain.¹³ Its adherents were poorly educated Christians who aspired to an ideal of pure love of God. Casting aside every manifestation of fear and personal interest, they rejected external religious forms and engaged in intense personal prayer. In the course of time some adherents fell into sensual or sexual deviations under the pretext that they were «abandoned» devotees who had completely abandoned themselves to God.

This so-called «slippery sect» rejected concrete mediations between God and his creatures, such as vocal prayer, images, vows, penances, and obedience to

13. SANZ DE DIEGO, R. M. (2007). «Alumbrados», GEI, *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, 37, Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae, pp. 130-132, with ample bibliography.

church authority. It denied the excellence of religious life, and it exalted matrimony. In sum, it promoted a direct, immediate, personal experience of God, who is above all church authority and the scriptures themselves.

3.2. A suspect pilgrim

Certainly, while living in Arévalo, Nájera, and Alcalá, Ignatius had dealings with persons who were later accused of being Alumbrados, but he was unaware of their connection with the sect. Ignatius arrived in Alcalá in 1526, shortly after the Kingdom of Toledo had issued an edict against the Alumbrados. As a result, suspicions were aroused about his way of life: he was a devout, unlettered layman with unusual attire, who met with pious women and encouraged them in their prayer and personal contact with God.

Later on, in Salamanca, the book of the *Exercises* aroused suspicions. Some of its themes seemed not quite orthodox: the «indifference» which resembled the quietism of the «abandoned» Alumbrados, the distinction between mortal sin and venial sin with regard to the sixth commandment, the creature's aspiration to attain direct communication with the Creator, etc.

While Ignatius agreed in many points with Lutherans, the Alumbrados, and the followers of Erasmus, he clearly distinguished himself from them by consistently subjecting himself to ecclesiastical authority. That is why the judges always found in Ignatius's favor.

But the suspicions about Alumbrado influence did not disappear completely. Proof of this is that in 1526 the sub-prior of the Dominican convent of San Esteban in Salamanca, after inviting Ignatius to dine, asked him whether he had acquired his knowledge through study or by the Holy Spirit. Ignatius found the question troublesome and so kept silence [Aut 65-66]. Three days later, however, he ended up in prison [Aut 67], where he was examined by several theologians. After making certain recommendations, they finally let him go [Aut 68].

This silence of Ignatius about the Spirit as he faced the judges of Salamanca is what has passed into the book of the *Exercises*. When Ignatius in 1528 decided to leave Spain and travel to Paris «alone and on foot,» he had no fear of passing through zones of conflict, but could it be that what he wanted most was to escape from the Spanish inquisitors and from the suspicions that he was an Alumbrado?

The so-called «presupposition» that Ignatius places in the First Week of the *Exercises* speaks of giving other persons the benefit of the doubt before condemning them, and it recommends always dialoguing with others in order to understand their point of view [22]. Does this «presupposition» reflect Ignatius's experience of being accused of being an Alumbrado before the Inquisition?

It is significant that the only explicit mention of the Holy Spirit is in the *Rules for Thinking and Feeling with the Church*, where Ignatius praises external rites

and ceremonies, religious vows, and obedience to the ecclesiastical hierarchy. No room is left for ambiguity and suspicion.

The great joy Ignatius felt when Pope Paul III approved the book of the *Exercises* in 1548 has a clear explanation: it was no longer suspected of being heterodox.

2. REREADING THE EXERCISES IN THE LIGHT OF THE SPIRIT

As is the case with many spiritual and mystical authors, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the spiritual experiences of Ignatius of Loyola and his theological formulations.

1. IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE EPOCH: DISCOVERING THE PRESENCE OF THE SPIRIT

1.1. An intrinsic difficulty

While the great interior richness of mystics constitutes them as authentic theological loci for the church and as living witnesses of the Gospel, that richness does not always reach complete and adequate expression in their written or spoken words. Both men and women mystics are subject to the cultural, ecclesial, and theological influences of their time, and they can extricate themselves from them only with great difficulty.

Moreover, there is another, much more intrinsic difficulty. Those who have drawn close, however gropingly, to the absolute, ineffable mystery that we call God often find themselves totally at a loss for words. As a result, they have re-

course to the philosophical and theological language of their time, or else they use common expressions, which they invest with profound significance.

For example, if we compare the cold, scholastic logic of the *Principle and Foundation* with the Ignatius's experience of enlightenment by the Cardener River, we quickly realize that there can be no adequate formulation of what Ignatius experienced when his eyes were open on the river bank and he saw everything in a new light [Aut 30]. The *Principle and Foundation*, which was written after his studies in Paris under the influence of medieval theologians (Peter Lombard? Petrus de Cornibus?...), does not convey any of the intense mystical emotion of Ignatius, who after his riverside enlightenment got down on his knees before a cross to give thanks to God for what he had experienced [Aut 31].

The question arises here whether Ignatius in the *Exercises* stresses more the christological dimension or the pneumatological and trinitarian dimension. Are the *Exercises* more in accord with Ignatius's christological experience at La Storta [Aut 96-97] or with his trinitarian experience by the Cardener? The answer we give will depend on how we view the pneumatology of the *Exercises*.

1.2. Rediscovering pneumatology

In these post-Vatican times when the theology of the Spirit has been profoundly renewed and enriched, we should see whether we can reread the *Exercises* with new spectacles and discover under the cold and sometimes coarse formulations of Ignatius the seeds of the Spirit (*semina Spiritus*), and through them capture the fire of the Spirit that fueled his mysticism and that he wanted to transmit to us.

Certainly the task is a difficult one since we are prone to subjective interpretations and the temptation to project our present understandings into the past. Nevertheless, the challenge is exciting, and we believe it worthwhile to undertake this hermeneutical adventure. The reader will be able to judge our results, which obviously will be provisional and subject to revision.¹⁴

The challenge, then, is to discover whether we can find, in language which is no doubt deliberately silent about the Spirit, traces of the incandescent presence of the Spirit of Jesus. This presence of the Spirit in the *Exercises* will not be ostentatious but veiled, almost absent; it will be quiet, perhaps even deliberately muted. But there is no doubt that it is there, and we must to try to find it.

This effort to recover the pneumatology of the *Exercises* does not discount or minimize the traditional reading centered on the life of Christ, as contemplated in the Second, Third, and Fourth Weeks. Rather we want to illuminate, enrich,

14. We are not the first to treat this theme. Let us cite, among others, the works of J.M. Lera, which are summed up in the article «Espíritu Santo», GEI, *Diccionario de Espiritualidad ignaciana*, 37, *Op. cit.*, pp. 803-811.

and complete that reading with new light, using a pneumatological, and therefore trinitarian, hermeneutic.

Given the impossibility of studying the whole text, we will first examine certain recurring themes of the *Exercises* and then focus on some basic elements.

2. SOME RECURRING THEMES

2.1. The name of the *Spiritual Exercises*¹⁵

Ignatius distinguishes spiritual *Exercises* from corporal *Exercises* such as walking and running. The terms used by Ignatius refer mostly to ascetical *Exercises*, such as examination of conscience, meditation, contemplation, and ridding oneself of disordered affections in order to seek the will of God.

In this regard Ignatius is direct heir to a monastic tradition which since Cassian and the Middle Ages stressed the ascetical dimension of the spiritual life.¹⁶ For Saint Paul, however, the term *spiritual* (or *pneumatic*) refers primarily to the Holy Spirit (Rom 8,14; 12,11; 1Cor 14,1), the Spirit who bestows his gifts and charisms on Christians and guides them from within. The earliest monastic tradition understood the word *spiritual* in this same way, as referring to the Holy Spirit; in this they followed thinkers such as Irenaeus, Origen, and Evagrius. Eventually, this pneumatological dimension was replaced by the ascetical one, but Ignatius retained the earlier understanding. Therefore, interpreting the *Exercises* as principally or exclusively ascetical *Exercises*, as has often been done, ends up mutilating the Ignatian experience, in which the ascetical is oriented toward the mystical and the charismatic, that is, toward letting oneself be filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit.

2.2. The one giving the *Exercises*¹⁷

We are accustomed to speak of the «director» of the *Exercises*, but Ignatius never uses that term, preferring to speak simply of «the one giving the *Exercises*.» This person need not necessarily be an ordained priest, a theology professor, a church leader, a psychologist, or a confessor to whom one confesses one's sins [17]. It

15. Annotation 1.

16. BACHT, H. (1956). *Die frühmonastischen Grundlagen ignatianischer Frömmigkeit*, in WULF, F. (ed.) (1956). *Ignatius von Loyola*, Würzburg, pp. 231-239.

17. Annotations 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18.

should simply be a person who is experienced in spiritual direction [*diakrisis*]. The primitive monastic tradition called such persons elders, or spiritual fathers and mothers.

Those giving the *Exercises* should have control over their passions, personal experience of the mysteries of God, and a gift for examining hearts and discerning internal movements –all for the purpose of helping and guiding those who come to them in the ways of God.¹⁸ Such persons are called spiritual fathers and mothers because, in a spiritual way, they «beget» adults who are free, and they do it all in the Spirit. Spiritual fathers and mothers are not found usually in the institutional or structural dimension of the Church but in the pneumatic, prophetic, and charismatic dimension. They are men and women filled with the Holy Spirit. Today we would say that the person giving the *Exercises* is a mystagogue, in the sense of a person who initiates others into spiritual experience –in the case of the *Exercises*, very specifically into Ignatian mystagogy.¹⁹

2.3. «Understanding the realities profoundly and savoring them interiorly»

The famous second Annotation of the *Exercises*, which contrasts «knowing much» with «understanding the realities profoundly and savoring them interiorly,» echoes a long series of biblical themes with clearly pneumatological connotations. It recalls the tension between the letter that kills and the Spirit who gives life (2 Cor 3,6); it contrasts vain, overblown knowledge with the sublime charism of the Spirit, which is not puffed up (1 Cor 13); it evokes the tension between the flesh which counts for nothing and the life-giving Spirit (John 6,63). This «understanding and savoring of realities» is the fruit of the Spirit of truth who Jesus promises will guide the disciples to the fullness of truth (John 16,13); it is the gift of wisdom that is born of the Spirit (Isa 11,2).

Ignatius is talking about knowledge based not on reason but on wisdom; it is knowledge which leads to true spiritual experience, that is, experience of the Spirit of Jesus. Mystical, mystagogical experience of this type is the fruit of the Spirit's anointing (1 John 2,20). What is important to stress here is that this «understanding and savoring» is a gift and a grace of the Spirit.

For this very reason it is not sufficient that those giving the *Exercises* be theology professors or psychologists; they must be spiritual mothers and fathers, persons proficient in the ways of the Spirit and capable of helping others toward this spiritual experience. As Anthony de Mello used to say, the word «wine» does not

18. See the classical text of HAUSSER, I. (1955). *Direction spirituelle en Orient autrefois*, Rome: OCA.

19. CODINA, V. (2009). «La Mistagogía ignaciana», *Revista Iberoamericana de Teología*. México, no. 9, July-December, pp. 7-26.

intoxicate, the word «fire» does not burn, and the word «God» is not God. Only the Spirit can make us be born again (John 3,5). Was it not something like this that Ignatius experienced by the Cardener?

What is proposed generically in this second Annotation is spelled out gradually in the course of the *Exercises*. In various meditations Ignatius tells us to ask for various graces, such as «interior knowledge of my sins and an abhorrence of them» [63], «an interior sense of the pain suffered by the damned» [65], «interior knowledge of Our Lord who became human for me» [104], «sorrow, regret, and confusion because the Lord is going to his passion for my sins» [193], and «interior knowledge of all the great good I have received» [233]. Thus, we are invited to request knowledge that is not simply intellectual but truly spiritual; we are encouraged to seek spiritual experience by contemplating the mysteries of Christ's life [261] and by considering our own lives in the Spirit and by the Spirit, just as Ignatius meditated on these things on the banks of the Cardener. At the end of his life Ignatius experienced something similar again. We read in his *Spiritual Diary* about an experience he had as he was celebrating the Mass of the Holy Spirit: «Before Mass I shed tears, and during Mass many tears and *locuela* [celestial voices].»²⁰ [SD 228]

Given this perspective, we can readily understand that converting the Ignatian *Exercises* into a series of biblical conferences on christology, as interesting as they might be, would be quite foreign to the basic aim of these *Exercises*.

2.4. «Allowing the Creator and Lord himself to communicate with the creature»

Annotation 15 of the *Exercises* gives us the ultimate explanation of the ones that precede it. «Understanding and savoring realities interiorly» is the fruit of our vivid experience of the presence of God, our Creator and Lord, who communicates directly with his creature, embracing her in his love and praise. According to Karl Rahner, this self-communication of God is the essence of God's relationship with us. Referring to Christ as our «Creator and Lord,»²¹ Ignatius states that this self-communication takes place *in* and *by* the Spirit, who is like the contact point for the Trinity's relation with creation. The Spirit who is the bond of communion within the Trinity is the same Spirit who is communicated to us. To describe the experience, Ignatius uses an extremely warm, personal, and expressive term, «embracing,» which may well surprise those who think of Ignatius as a cold, calculating person.

20. On the meaning of the word «*locuela*» by Ignatius, see the commentary of THIÓ DE POL, S. (1990). *Op. cit.*, pp. 199-201.

21. CODINA, V. «Jesucristo», in GEL, *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, 38, *Op. cit.*, pp. 1071-1077.

«Embracing» is another symbolic way of portraying the action of the Spirit whom scripture describes as vital breath, intoxicating wine, anointing, perfume, fire, water... The person giving the *Exercises* should be extremely respectful of the Spirit's action, not inducing or moving the exercitant toward one option rather than another. Like Moses before the burning bush, the one giving the *Exercises* finds himself before the mysterious presence and action of the Spirit of the Lord. To describe this stance, Ignatius used words that could easily have been misinterpreted at a time when suspicion surrounded those who considered themselves «Alumbrados» or «enlightened» by the Spirit. He stated that the one giving the *Exercises* should «allow the Creator to deal immediately with the creature and the creature with its Creator and Lord.» He must remove his sandals and keep silence, for the Spirit of the Lord is present.

2.5. The examen

From the very beginning of the *Exercises* [1] the examination of conscience is proposed as a task to be faithfully carried out, but it is not limited to the particular daily examen or to the general examination of conscience made in preparation for a good confession [24-43]. It extends also to the examen of prayer [77], the examen of consolations [333-336], and the examen of affections [342]. This ongoing process of examination forms an essential part of the spiritual pedagogy of the *Exercises*.

This insistence on examination can be interpreted in an ascetical and even moralistic way, as manifesting a desire for constant subjective introspection; such concentration on oneself may even prove to be unhealthy. We do not deny that the *Exercises* can be considered as a school of the will, but they must always be oriented to the higher goal of freeing ourselves from all disordered affections in order to be sensitive to the action of the Spirit in us. The examen helps to assure our fidelity to the Spirit and makes us more docile to the Spirit.

In this sense, the examen is not limited to examining one's moral conscience; its goal is to gain full «consciousness» [1, 32] of the Spirit's action in us and thus be able to grasp, know, and discern the Spirit's dynamic presence in our lives.

When Ignatius dictated the *Autobiography* at the end of his life, he was practicing this kind of examen. He was discerning the presence of the Spirit in his personal history, from the moment he was wounded at Pamplona to his final days in Rome, passing through Loyola, Manresa, Jerusalem, Barcelona, Alcalá, Salamanca, Venice, and Paris. As he reviewed this history with gratitude, Ignatius saw that the Spirit had been wisely leading him to «unsuspected destinations,» as Nadal would later say of his life. In this sense, the examen may be seen as a moment of spiritual discernment or *diakrisis* which should not be limited to the time of the *Exercises* but should extend to the whole of one's life.

This prepares us for the grace we request in the *Contemplation to Attain Love*, which is effectively not only a summary of the process of the *Exercises* but a synthesis of Ignatian spirituality: that we «become able to love and serve the Divine Majesty in all things»²² [233]. The examen enables us to be docile to a Spirit who is like the wind, which blows where it will so that we know neither where it comes from nor where it is going (John 3,8).

2.6. The «more»

For some years now, thanks especially to the work of Hugo Rahner, there has been greater appreciation of the «more» in Ignatian spirituality. This is an expression that English-speakers usually translate as «*magis*,» but in the original Ignatian texts it always appears as *más*, the Spanish word for «more.»

2.6.1. Where does it come from?

The *Principle and Foundation* [23] establishes the three basic truths of the whole spiritual edifice: human beings have been created by God, all the things on the face of the earth have been created for human beings, and human beings should make themselves indifferent to created things and use them only insofar as they help them toward their end. These three truths are perfectly interlinked in a logical sense, but the logic seems to break down when Ignatius adds that «we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created.» Where does this «more» come from? What is this something «extra» that is required?

In the contemplation of *The Call of the Temporal King as an Aid toward Contemplating the Life of the Eternal King* [91], Ignatius states that all persons with «judgment and reason» will respond to this call and offer themselves for this labor. But he also says that some persons will «desire to show greater devotion and to distinguish themselves in total service to the eternal King» [97], and these will make «offerings of greater worth and moment» to the «eternal Lord of all things» [98]. What is the source of this greater commitment and service on the part of some?

22. If we may be allowed to make a digression from the Ignatian *Exercises* to the *Constitutions* of the Society of Jesus, which guide the spiritual life of Jesuits, we would observe that the place that choir occupies in the spirituality of monks and even mendicant friars disappears in the Society. The *Constitutions* impose no obligation to pray the Liturgy of the Hours in choir or in community. Ignatius in effect replaced choir with the examen, understood in this integral fashion as continual discernment of the action of the Spirit in us and in the world. That is why Ignatius would limit the amount of time spent in prayer by students and by the sick but would not exempt them from the examen, understood not only as an examination of conscience but as an «examination of consciousness.»

In the *Three Ways of Being Humble* [164], the third way is said to be the «most perfect,» for it includes the first and second ways and goes beyond them. The third way is practiced when, in order «better» to imitate Christ here and now, one desires poverty with Christ poor «rather» than wealth, contempt «rather» than honors, and being regarded as a useless fool «rather» than as a wise and prudent person in this world [167]. Why is there such insistence on greater imitation of Christ?

Historians of the life and family context of Ignatius (such as Hugo Rahner and Pedro de Leturia) contend that this «more» of the *Exercises* is a heritage of the noble, chivalrous culture of the Loyola clan and the courtly environment in which Ignatius lived as a youth. This is the human substrate of this aspiration for «more»: the desire for more honor, more glory, more fame, more power, more worth. Psychoanalysts like W. Meissner also discover in this tendency to the «more» a libidinal sublimation of Ignatian narcissism to the service of a human ideal. Whatever the explanation, all commentators agree that nobleman's worldly, chivalrous striving for «more» was transformed after his conversion into striving for the greater service and glory of God, as we find it expressed in the Constitutions.²³

2.6.2. *The need for a pneumatic interpretation*

We need to explain this «more» which leads to greater identification with Christ, going far beyond the simple indifference that is the reasonable response to the call of the King? Otherwise, it can be interpreted as merely transferring the search for worldly honor to the religious sphere. The «more,» like the «greater glory,» can lead to a type of ethical perfectionism, an intransigent moralism, a glorious triumphalism, or even what is called «Jesuitical» behavior! In such were to happen, it would be a sort of Pelagianism, affirming human freedom apart from the grace of God.

In order to understand well the Ignatian «more,» we need to include the dimension of the Spirit, as M. Giuliani correctly asserts:

«Ignatius never defines this presence of the Holy Spirit, who is the soul of our souls, but he characterizes it by one of its most unquestionable effects: *magis*, “more.”»²⁴

This Ignatian orientation to the «more» is explained by the dynamism of the Spirit, by the fiery force of the Spirit's vital breath, by the transcendence by which the Spirit always carries us beyond where we are. We are brought to this state of soul not by will-power or pride or «militant intoxication,» but by the calm, gentle

23. See the bibliographic references in the article «Magis (Más)» by DIEGO DE, L. and MARTÍNEZ GAYOL, N. in GEI, *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, 38, *Op. cit.*, pp. 1155-1167.

24. GIULIANI, M. (2006). *Acoger el tiempo que viene. Estudios sobre San Ignacio de Loyola*, Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae, p. 51.

anointing of the Spirit, applied not by violence but by an interior attraction that moves our wills with joy and delight.

This pneumatic dimension of the «more» assimilates us progressively to the person of Jesus Christ in the remaining weeks of the *Exercises*. It is what shapes our following of the eternal King and keeps us from falling into a purely ascetical following or rote imitation of Jesus. In the *Exercises* the following of Christ leads us to life «in Christ Jesus» and life «in the Spirit.» It is not only a «walking behind» but a «walking with» Jesus. It leads us to identify with Jesus so that we remain in him as the branch in the vine (John 15) and so that we can affirm with Paul that it is no longer we who live but it is Christ who lives in us (Gal 2,20).

The Spirit moves us to identify with Jesus because the work of the Spirit is simply to lead us to him: the same Spirit who anointed Jesus is the one who impels us to live as he lives. In this sense the «more» needs the dialectical and evangelical counterpoint of the «less,» which comes from the same Spirit. The «less» consists of the desire for «more» poverty and ignominy and for being considered a fool with Christ instead of having «more» of the wealth, the honors, and the wisdom of the world. The Spirit who anointed Jesus at his baptism so that he would go about the world doing good and freeing those oppressed by the devil (Acts 10,38) is the same one who anoints us so that we can not only continue the work of Jesus (the Kingdom of God) but also do it in the poor and humble way of the Nazarene.

Here we need to the appeal to the meditation of the *Two Standards* to clarify the true evangelical meaning of the «more» and to avoid being deceived by the enemy: the standard of Jesus is based on poverty and humility, while that of the enemy is based on riches, pride, and all the vices that flow from them.²⁵ There is a danger in being deceived into identifying the standard of Jesus with a «more» that does not come from the Holy Spirit but from an evil spirit. This danger indicates the need for discernment of spirits, which we will treat more at length later in this essay.

What also becomes apparent here is the conflict between the messianic project of Jesus of Nazareth and the quite different messianic expectations of the Jews of his time. The Third Week of the *Exercises* makes clear the intense struggle (J. Sobrino) between the Kingdom of the poor and humble Jesus and the kingdoms of this world, whether they be religious (Jewish theocracy) or political (the *Pax Romana*). The «more» of the Spirit involves the cross, and only by the cross does it arrive at the glory of the resurrection. The «more» of the Spirit also involves the crucified peoples of history because the «less» needs to be extended those who are the «least» and the last, the small and the insignificant, the poor and the marginalized persons of this world. It was precisely to these that the Jesus anointed by the Spirit was sent (Luke 4,14-20, cf. Isa 61,1).

25. CODINA, V. (2009). «*Dos banderas*» como lugar teológico. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia. EIDES no. 56.

If the following of Jesus in the *Exercises* –which Ignatius saw subsequently confirmed in the vision of La Storta– is understood in the light of the Spirit, then we are led to the intimate union between Creator and creature described in Annotation 15. This is what the Eastern Church Fathers called «divinization,» the experience God’s life within us, a mystical communion that leads to service. The following of Jesus is inscribed in the trinitarian life of God. That is why the *Exercises* are *spiritual* and not simply ascetical; that is why they are an initiation into Mystery, a mystagogy.

This is confirmed in the *Spiritual Diary*. When Ignatius was discerning in Rome about the nature of the Society’s poverty, his referring to the Spirit and the mission of the apostles in poverty was decisive in the option he made for poverty. For Ignatius the option for poverty was based on the life of Christ, on the confirmation of the Holy Spirit, and on the trinitarian mission:

«Then I received new insights, namely, that the Son first sent his apostles to preach in poverty; later the Holy Spirit confirmed them by granting his spirit and the gift of tongues; thus, since both Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit, all three Persons confirmed such a mission.» [SD 15]

For all these reasons the Ignatian «more» is not just one of many characteristics of Ignatian spirituality; it is the one that permeates all the others. The «more» is the epitome of the Ignatius who would not hear of mediocrity. The «more» launches us toward new and unexplored frontiers; it presents us with new personal and communal challenges. It is the expression of our irresistible tendency, impelled by the Spirit, toward the absolute Mystery, toward the Divine Majesty, toward the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. SOME BASIC ELEMENTS

3.1. Rules for the Discernment of Spirits [313-344]

We do not intend here to give a commentary on the Ignatian *Rules for Discernment* but limit ourselves to showing their pneumatological dimension.

Ignatius supposes that the exercitant is being swayed by diverse spiritual motions and diverse spirits such that, if this is not happening, then the person giving the *Exercises* should question the exercitant about how he is progressing (Annotation 6). Ignatius observes that, apart from a person’s own thoughts, there are two forces acting from outside the person, one coming from the good spirit and the other from the evil spirit [32]. This diversity of spiritual motions or spirits makes it

necessary to practice discernment. Ignatius experienced such a need from the time of his recuperation at Loyola, and the practice has been approved by the Church in accord with scripture.²⁶

For example, in 1 Thessalonians 5,19-21 we find the command: «Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil.» And in 1 John 4,1: «Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.» For Saint Paul this ability to discern spirits is a gift or charism of the Spirit (1Cor 12,10).

As a practiced master of suspicion, Ignatius states that the motions of the diverse spirits differ, depending on whether the person is in the process of conversion and purification typical of the First Week [313-327] or has rather already entered into the Second Week [328-336].

3.1.1. Consolation and the Holy Spirit

In each of the two cases there are clearly differentiated experiences between what Ignatius calls consolation and desolation. He describes these two experiences with a series of very vivid images. During consolation a person is inflamed with love of God, with tears, and with an increase of faith, hope, and charity, all of these accompanied by interior joy and peace [316]. Desolation, on the other hand, causes darkness, turmoil, motion toward low and earthly things, and a lack of faith, hope, and love; the person feels listless, tepid, and unhappy [317]. Desolation is a sign of the enemy, while consolation is proper to the good spirit, to God [328].

For those who are progressing in the spiritual life (the Second Week), Ignatius warns of the possibility of deceits. False consolation can be brought about by the evil angel or spirit who is disguised as a good angel (cf. *sub angelo lucis* of 2Cor 11,14) for the purpose of deceiving the soul and separating her from her good intentions [322]. It is necessary to remain fully alert and to observe the origin, the dynamics, and the effects of this apparent consolation, for only the Creator can act on the soul, causing joy and peace, without a preceding cause [330, 336]. Both the good angel and the evil one can bring about consolation, but they can do so only by means of a preceding cause [331]. The good angel touches the soul gently, lightly, and sweetly, while the evil angel touch it sharply, with noise and disturbance [335].

A pneumatological reading of the *Exercises* would have us understand that the good spirit that causes the positive spiritual motions of consolation is without doubt the Holy Spirit, although Ignatius never uses that term.

26. Besides the classic study of H. Bacht (see note 14), we should add that of RAHNER, H. (1956). *Werdet kundige Geldwechsler. Zur Geschichte der Lehre des heiligen Ignatius von der Unterscheidung der Geister*, in WULF, F. (ed.) (1956). *Ignatius von Loyola*, Würzburg, pp. 301-341.

In commenting on consolation in the *Exercises*, Jesús Corella states that consolation has a trinitarian structure. In these Rules, however, while there are references to our Creator and Lord (the Father) and to the Lord (Christ), there is no explicit reference to the Spirit. This absence can be explained:

«As in other places of the *Exercises*, the presence of the Holy Spirit is strangely missing from this rule about consolation. Actually, the absence is only apparent. The Spirit is incorporated into us. He is present in our operations, giving us ever greater abilities (“every increase,” says Ignatius) to love without limits, to hope against all hope, to believe with a steadfastness that may surprise even the believer. It is the Spirit who increases and assists the three theological virtues; it is the Spirit who within us and with us groans with the desire that “things” be restored to order and descend as “heavenly gifts” for this world. It is the Spirit who draws us toward these gifts, filling us with an ineffable interior joy, which we already possess in some way if we are growing in love. It is the Holy Spirit who “calms us and pacifies us in the Creator and Lord.” We might say that the Holy Spirit, by this type of consolation, ineffably leads us toward the Son, and from the Son and with the Son to the Father. It is as if Father and Son agreed to convene within us in order to embrace us in their love, which is nothing less than the Holy Spirit.»²⁷

3.1.2. *Works of the flesh and fruits of the Spirit*

All this is confirmed by the scriptures themselves. For Ignatius desolation is the fruit of the evil spirit; it is the equivalent of what Paul calls the works of the flesh:

«Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before,; those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.» (Gal 5,19-21; cf. Rom 1,29-32)

In contrast, the fruits that Ignatius attributes to the good spirit are what the Bible calls the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Again, we cite Paul:

«The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.» (Gal 5,22)

27. CORELLA, J. «Consolación» in GEI, *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, op. cit. pp. 418-419.

In the letter to the Romans we find similar expressions:

«Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law –indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ in you, though the body be dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.» (Rom 8,5-10)

In the Gospel of John, the fruit of the Spirit is joy, peace, and forgiveness (John 20,19-23). Despite the sadness and anguish the disciples feel at the absence of the Jesus, the Spirit is a constant source of strength and joy (John 16,13.20-22).

3.1.3. *Consolation without a preceding cause*

Consolation without a preceding cause, which comes only from God our Lord [330], has been interpreted in diverse ways.²⁸ For example, K. Rahner has conceived it to be a near-metaphysical experience of opening to transcendence by way of existential knowledge, whereas D. Gil understands it more biblically, in terms of a God who always acts from below. from among the poor, as in the Exodus. Without entering into the debate about these different interpretations, we want to state simply that this God who enters and leaves the soul quietly, gently, and lightly can only be the Spirit of the Lord. This «interior, divine consolation,»²⁹ which makes our thoughts, words, and actions «warm, clear, and just» instead of «cold, confused, and opaque,»³⁰ can come only from the Holy Spirit who acts within us in ways that are unpredictable, uncontrollable, and totally gratuitous.

This Spirit, like the Wisdom of the Old Testament, is intelligent, holy, unique, loving, caring, clear and pure, friend and benefactor, steadfast, serene, and secure. This is the Spirit who knows all things and can do all things, who penetrates into our spirits with his purity, who renews and saves creation, who illuminates everything with his unceasing light and adorns everything with his imperishable beauty (Wis 7,21-29).

This is this Spirit who inflames our hearts, draws all upward (Col 3,1-3), and stirs in us sentiments of profound pain and tears for our sins. This is this Spirit who

28. GARCÍA DE CASTRO, J. «Consolación sin causa precedente», in GEI, *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, 37, *Op. cit.*, pp. 425-428.

29. Letter of Ignatius to Teresa Rajadell, 18 June 1536, *Epp* I, pp. 97-100.

30. Letter of Ignatius to Francis Borgia, 20 September 1548, *Epp* II, pp. 233-37.

inspires us to follow Jesus in poverty, to feel compassion before the suffering of the Lord, and finally to rejoice in his resurrection. In a way, this divine consolation anticipates the Fourth Week of the *Exercises*, in which the risen Jesus, through his Spirit, takes on the role of consoler [224].

The Ignatian teaching regarding discernment of spirits should nowadays be broadened to include community discernment and discernment of the signs of the times, following Vatican II (GS 4; 11; 44). We should be convinced in faith that the Spirit of the Lord not only directs us personally but is also present in history, guiding humanity and the Church toward their eschatological fullness in the Kingdom.

But this Spirit is dynamic, always moving us toward something. His interior movements do not enclose us within ourselves but orient us toward the project of God, the cause of God. As Gregory the Great put it, «*Amor ipse notitia est,*» love itself becomes knowledge.³¹ That is to say, consolation guides us along our path. At the moment of making an election, therefore, the *Rules for Discernment* help us to find the will of God, which is the principal aim of the *Exercises* [1].

3.2. The election [169-189]

For many exercitants the election is limited to seeking reasons «for and against» a particular decision. This is a distorted view of the election, totally alien to the true Ignatian understanding; it is the result of a rationalist and moralist interpretation. Reinterpreting the *Exercises* from a pneumatological viewpoint, we are led to a more meaningful conception of the election.

We are not going to comment at length on the election here, but will simply limit ourselves to pointing out the veiled presence of the Spirit throughout the whole process of making the election.

3.2.1. *The first time for making an election*

Contrary to a rationalist understanding of the *Exercises*, Ignatius considered that the first time for making an election is when God moves and attracts then person's will with certainty, «without doubting or being able to doubt» [175]. This is the privileged time for choosing or accepting the will of God. Ignatius compares the certainty of this first time with the calling of Paul and of Matthew. It was the kind of calling he personally experienced throughout his life, such as when he decided at Manresa to stop fasting and to eat meat [*Aut* 27]. This privileged time is without doubt a fruit of the action and the inspiration of the Spirit who moves us and draws us interiorly.

31. *In Ex II*, 27,4; PL 76, 1207A.

This is the Spirit that Jesus promised would lead us to the fullness of truth and would keep us mindful of the message of Jesus (John 14,26). This is the Spirit who makes the life of the disciples truly a life in the Spirit (Rom 8). This is the Spirit who illumines us interiorly, speaks without words, and leads us gently toward the Lord.

This first time does not necessarily presuppose sublime mystical experiences. Rather, for Ignatius it is a fruit and consequence of letting the Creator communicate directly with the creature, as was recommended in Annotation 15. From our pneumatological perspective we can say that this first time is a fruit and gift of the Spirit who guides us interiorly.

According to his *Spiritual Diary*, Ignatius earnestly sought this certainty given by the Spirit for his election, but he was not always satisfied with what he had been given:

«A little later, when I was going out to say Mass, I prayed for short while with intense devotion and wept on feeling or seeing in some way that the Holy Spirit considered the election finished. But I could not see nor feel either of the other two divine Persons in the same way.» [SD 18]

He therefore eagerly sought the confirmation of all three divine Persons:

«Later, while I prepared the altar and vested, I found myself praying: “Eternal Father, confirm me”; “Eternal Son, confirm me”; “Eternal Holy Spirit, confirm me”; “Holy Trinity, confirm me”; “One and Only God, confirm me.” I repeated this many times with great force, devotion, and tears, and very deeply did I feel it. And when I asked, “Eternal Father, will you not confirm me?” I considered that he was answering “Yes.” And the same happened with the Son and the Holy Spirit.» [SD 48]

3.2.2. *The second time for making an election*

The first time for making an election bestows such great certainty that, when it occurs, there is no need to have recourse to the *second time*, which consists in seeking clarity by means of consolations and desolations [176]. Even in this second time, it is always the Spirit who is guiding us, as long as we maintain an attitude of indifference and are convinced that the love which moves us descends from above [184]. This is the love that has been poured out into our hearts by the Spirit (Rom 5,5), who guides and illumines us from within and who continually bestows on us his gifts of consolation, joy, and peace.

The second time is a time of searching, and it requires a certain patience so that we can discern where the Spirit is leading us by his constant urgings. During his own life, Ignatius passed through these moments of searching and uncertainty, not only at the beginning of his pilgrimage (when he could not remain in Jerusalem

and so had to ask himself what he should do, «*quid agendum*» [Aut 50]), but also at the end of his life, when he was deliberating over the Society's poverty and kept asking: «Where do you want to lead me, Lord?» [SD 113].

As we have seen already, in the *Constitutions* Ignatius frequently states that the anointing of the Holy Spirit will teach each person the right way to act [Const 161; 414; 624]. This same stance is what he assumes is happening in the *Exercises* in the second time for making an election.

3.2.3. *The third time for making an election*

The third time for making an election occurs during a quiet moment of personal reflection on our purpose in life: «to praise God our Lord and to save our souls» [177]. In a way, it confirms the second time with the light of reason, but it also has a validity of its own; it enjoys its own autonomy. In a letter to Dr. Ramírez de Vergara, Ignatius wrote the following:

«The Holy Spirit, better than anyone else, will teach the means for affectively savoring and gently performing what reason dictates to be of greater service and divine glory, although it is true that reason is sufficient for pursuing the best and most perfect things.»³²

This third time for making an election is especially emphasized in the Directories of the *Exercises*, precisely to ward off accusations of Illuminism and suspicions of Alumbrado tendencies.

3.2.4. *The election as a gift of the Spirit*

Almost all commentators agree that these three times should be understood integrally rather than as a chronological succession. Once made, the three times and the confirmation of the election [183] are a gift of the Spirit, a motion of the Spirit, an anointing of the Spirit who freely, personally, and interiorly moves our will and places in our soul what we are to choose [180].

The inscription of the process of the election within a pneumatological setting is so obvious that authors like M. Giuliani, when commenting on discernment and the election, constantly refer to the action of the Holy Spirit in the exercitant. Giuliani describes making a decision under the divine motion as follows:

«Amid all these assurances, repetitions, and trials that constitute a type of true spiritual experimentation, when does certainty actually arrive? It arrives when

32. *Epp* XI, pp. 184-185. Cf. SAMPAIO COSTA, A. «Elección», GEI, *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, 37, op. cit., pp. 726-734.

the soul is capable of discerning that the motions that the soul is experiencing are the result of the action of the Holy Spirit. By obeying that action, the soul is certain of fulfilling the will of God.»³³

In synthesis, the election of the *Exercises*, which is always made while contemplating the life of Jesus [135], involves letting oneself be carried and led by the Spirit of Jesus. It is not something merely psychological, rational, or moral; it is authentically spiritual or, if you like, mystical.

3.3. Rules for Thinking and Feeling with the Church [352-370]

These Rules situated at the end of the *Exercises* contain a series of elements that are linked to a particular historical, cultural, and ecclesial context that no longer seems valid to us today. Among the elements that currently lack validity are the cultural image of a Church of Christendom, diverse pious practices and prayers that have changed in the Church, the authority of the scholastic system, the way of regarding both «humble» folk and «important» people, etc.³⁴

On the other hand, an aspect of the Rules that remains valid is their ecclesiology of communion in intimate relation with the Holy Spirit. As we said already, it is precisely in these Rules for Thinking and Feeling with the Church that we find the only explicit mention of the Holy Spirit in the *Exercises*:

«We believe that between Christ our Lord, the Bridegroom, and the Church, his Spouse, there is the one same Spirit who governs and guides us for the salvation of our souls. For it is by the same Spirit and Lord of ours who gave the ten commandments that our Holy Mother Church is guided and governed.» [365]

Ignatius says very little about the Church in the course of the *Exercises*. She is the objective framework within which the exercitant must situate his life [18, 42, 88, 229]; more concretely, the Church sets the limits within which the exercitant should make his election [170, 172]. These Rules, however, provide a sound basis for the relationship between the exercitant and the Church: the Church is linked to the Spirit for it is the Spirit who unites Christ the Bridegroom with his Spouse, the Church. This realization helps to foster an attitude of obedience, respect for diverse charisms, patience with the defects of superiors, etc.

This reference to the Church in the *Exercises*, emphasizing the linkage between the Church and the Spirit, was a test of orthodoxy designed to combat the

33. GIULIANI, M. (2006). *Acoger el tiempo que viene. Estudios sobre San Ignacio de Loyola*, Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae p. 187.

34. CORELLA, J. (1996). *Reglas para sentir en la Iglesia*, Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae.

accusations and suspicions arising from Ignatius's alleged association with groups of Alumbrados and «Abandoned» enthusiasts.

Clearly, we can trace here a strong biblical current uniting the Church with the Spirit, a current that was recognized by Vatican II in *Lumen Gentium*:

«The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple (1Cor 3,16; 6,19). In them he prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons (Gal 4,6; Rom 8,5-16). The Church, which the Spirit guides in the way of all truth (John 16,13) and which he unifies in communion and in works of ministry, he both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with his fruits (Eph 4,11-12; 1Cor 12,4; Gal 5,22). By the power of the Gospel he makes the Church keep the freshness of youth. Uninterruptedly he renews it and leads it to perfect union with its Spouse. The Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus, the Lord, "Come!"» (Rev 22,17). [LG 4]

Certainly Ignatius, while living with his family as a boy, must have recited the Apostles' Creed so that he was accustomed to saying, «I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church ...» In his simple and possibly untutored faith, he was expressing something that he would see more clearly and deeply only later: that the Church is the fruit of the Spirit's action, that her holiness is born of the Holy Spirit, that this is the same Spirit that Jesus promised to the apostles, the same Spirit that was poured out over them and over the Church at Easter and Pentecost.

Certainly there are many more points of contact between Ignatius and the reform movements of his time than are traditionally considered, but Ignatius effectively distanced himself from the other movements by his profound sense of communion with and love for the Church. He always professed this fidelity, even though the Church at that time was extremely lax and worldly, both in her head and in many of her members. Ignatius's love for and obedience to the Church never suppressed his sense of prophetic freedom when he believed it was necessary to speak out.³⁵ The same Spirit that was guiding him was also guiding and governing the Church.

3.4. The Contemplation to Attain Love [230-237]

Ignatius ends the contemplations of the mysteries of the life of Christ with the ascension [312]. There is no Pentecost in the *Exercises*. According to José María Lera, the Ignatian Pentecost would be the *Contemplation to Attain Love*.³⁶

35. CODINA, V. (2006). *Sentirse Iglesia en el invierno eclesial*, Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia. EIDES no. 46, pp. 23-31.

36. LERA, J. M. «Espiritu», in GEI, *Diccionario de espiritualidad ignaciana*, op. cit., pp. 807-809.

It is often said that the *Contemplation to Attain Love* is the bridge that unites the *Exercises* with ordinary life; it provides a connection between the Fourth Week and the «Fifth Week» of everyday life. We can also see this final contemplation of the *Exercises* in relation to Pentecost, and then we can consider it the prolongation of the Fourth Week in our day-to-day lives, now under the orbit of the Spirit.

When Ignatius advises us that love ought to manifest itself more by deeds than by words [230] and that love consists in mutual communication between two persons [231], he is basically expressing the inner essence of the Holy Spirit. For the Spirit—especially in our Western, Augustinian tradition—is the loving communication between the Father and the Son, and this love has been communicated to us precisely through the Spirit (Rom 5,5).

The first point of the *Contemplation* asks us to recall the benefits we have received, which are the gifts of a God who desires to give himself to me; this is an allusion to the gifts of the Creator Spirit and the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord. Recalling God's generosity arouses in the exercitant a desire to offer in return the whole of his life: liberty, memory, understanding, will, all that he has and possesses. The only thing he asks in return is God's grace and love, and these are nothing other than the Holy Spirit. Ultimately, then, what the famous prayer, «Take and receive,» is asking of the Lord is simply the gift of the Holy Spirit [234]. This is the exercitant's urgent request as he finishes the *Exercises*: that the Spirit accompany him in his ordinary day-to-day life, that he be given the grace to be faithful to the election to which he has been called, and that he be able to love and serve God in all things [233]. And this great gift of the Spirit is enough for him, just as it was for Teresa of Jesus, who ended her verse, «Let nothing disturb you; let nothing dismay you,» with the words, «God alone suffices.»

The other three points of the *Contemplation* contain themes that are clearly pneumatological, if only implicitly:

- The indwelling of God in his creatures, and especially in human beings created in God's image and likeness [235], is nothing more than the mysterious presence of the Spirit, who from the beginning of creation hovered over the waters and bestowed life on the initial chaos (Gen 1,2) and who now dwells in us as in his temple (1Cor 3,16). The breath of life that sustains all creation is the Holy Spirit, the Giver of life, as the Credo declares.
- The God who toils and labors in all creatures [236] is also the Spirit of life who not only is present but is dynamically active. The Spirit is represented by living, vibrant symbols (water, air, fire, anointing, dove, fragrance...) because the Spirit is as much a «verb» as a «noun.» That is, the Spirit is action, movement, vital force. The medieval hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, invokes the Spirit as flowing fount, living fire, spiritual anointing.
- Although J. M. Lera claims that the fourth point of the *Contemplation* [237] evokes the Neo-Platonism of Dionysius—since it sees all good things and

gifts as descending from above, like rays from the sun and rain from the clouds— we can also interpret the point pneumatologically, for the Spirit is the gift from above that originates ultimately from the Father and makes us able to see by the clarity of his light all the various gifts of creation. When Ignatius received his enlightenment by the Cardener and all things appeared to him as new, the movement was not from the creatures to the Creator but from the Creator to the creatures, by the Spirit. It is the Spirit who gave Ignatius new eyes [*Aut* 30]. This is what Ignatius called «finding God in all things» or in Nadal's more technical formulation, «being contemplatives in action.»

Thus, in the *Contemplation to Attain Love* we are moved to let ourselves be carried by the breath of the Spirit in our everyday lives. Mauricio Giuliani has given sublime expression to this synthesis of spirituality that Ignatius proposes to us at the end of the *Exercises*:

«The mysticism of a purely transcendent God will perhaps lead us to prayer as an absolute. But as we are carried forward by this all-encompassing movement, we experience in faith a fourfold truth: that the Creator wishes to be glorified by his creatures in the time and the place of their creation, that he has sent his Son to take possession of the Kingdom in his name, that he daily sends his Spirit to extend his Kingdom among his people, and that the redeeming work of Christ continues the saving effort of all three divine Persons. For all this they request our collaboration, and that is when we find God in action, for the history that we make with our hands is none other than the divine history, apart from which there is only hell.»³⁷

37. GIULIANI, M. (2006). *Acoger el tiempo que viene*, Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae, pp. 177-178.

3. CONCLUSION

It seems clear that this pneumatological vision can correct some of our moralistic, ascetical, and rationalist interpretations of the *Exercises*. It can also help us to understand better the mentality of Ignatius, who was handicapped by being obliged to keep silent about the Spirit. Moreover, this pneumatological vision of the *Exercises* turns out to have great significance for today's world.

Karl Jaspers has argued that the «axial age» –which gestated from about 900 to 200 B.C.³⁸ and has prevailed until our own day– is presently in a state of profound crisis and that we are now in a «new axial age.» If we accept his argument, then everything that helps us to delve deeper into spiritual experience and the gift of the Spirit will be extremely useful.

With his convergent view of reality, Karl Rahner held that the Christian of the 21st century either will be a mystic or will not be a Christian at all. He therefore called for a special mystagogy:

«What is needed is a mystagogy or an initiation into religious experience that many have difficulty finding within themselves; such a mystagogy should help one to become one's own mystagogue.»³⁹

The *Exercises* conceived as mystagogy, as an initiation into experience of the Spirit, have great value for our day and age.⁴⁰ For this reason, a vision of the *Exercises* that makes the role of the Spirit more explicit seems to us important.

The same can be said regarding interreligious dialogue. Apart from the discussion about confessional and dogmatic differences, all religions convey a profound

38. ARMASTRONG, K. (2006). *The Great Transformation*. New York: Anchor Books.

39. RAHNER, K. (1969). *Espiritualidad antigua y actual, Escritos de teología VI*, Madrid, p. 25.

40. MELLONI, X. (2001). *La mistagogía de los Ejercicios*, Bilbao-Santander: Sal Terrae.

experience of the Absolute, which for us Christians is related to the Holy Spirit. The *Exercises* help us to delve deeper into this experience which unites all human beings; for this reason the *Exercises*, which are careful to respect the action of the Creator with his creatures, are a very useful pedagogy for interreligious dialogue.⁴¹

3.1. The Spirit of Jesus

But perhaps the reader is left with the impression that our efforts to emphasize and elucidate the presence of the Holy Spirit in the *Exercises* have diminished their christological dimension, the following of the life of Jesus. We are aware of this difficulty.

As we finish this work, therefore, we want to state clearly that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus, the Spirit who prepared the way for him, the Spirit who was poured out at Easter. For Ignatius the Spirit is always the Spirit of Jesus, and the mediation of Christ is always necessary. Among the mystical graces he received in Rome, Ignatius recalled in his *Spiritual Diary* the christological experience of La Storta: when the Father placed him with the Son, and the cross-burdened Jesus asked Ignatius to serve him [Aut 96]. For Ignatius Christ is the path to the Trinity:

«It seemed that it was in some way from the Blessed Trinity that Jesus was shown or felt, and I remembered the time when the Father put me with the Son.»⁴² [SD 67]

The trinitarian and pneumatological mysticism of Ignatius was inseparable from Jesus. In this regard we can recall the interesting comparison of Irenaeus: the Son and the Spirit are like the two hands of the Father, with which the Trinity makes us in the likeness of God and shapes us in God's image.⁴³ These two hands, being different (one visible, the other invisible; one incarnate, the other acting within persons and groups), complement and relate to one another in an intimate communion that forms part of the Trinitarian communion. The Spirit prepares the incarnation of the Son's «hand» in Jesus of Nazareth, and Jesus communicates his Spirit to us after Easter. Only by the Spirit can one call Jesus the Lord (1Cor 12,3), and conversely, any «spirit» who does not pass through the incarnation and cross of Jesus is not the Holy Spirit (1John 4,3; 5,6).

41. AMALADOSS, M. «Experiencing God in Interreligious Encounter», *Revista Iberoamericana de Teología*, Mexico, no. 9, July-December 2009, pp. 28-43, in which he expressly cites as a model for interreligious dialogue the recommendation of Ignatius in Annotation 15 that the person giving the *Exercises* should allow the Creator to work and communicate directly with his creature; cf. pp. 38-39.

42. THIÓ DE POL, S. (1990). *Op. cit.*, pp. 105-107.

43. IRENAEUS, *Ad Haer* IV V, 6, 1; V, 28,4.

This understanding of the Spirit is completely contrary to the spiraling process of exclusion that characterizes a certain spiritualism of our time. As J. B. Metz puts it, many persons disillusioned with the Church begin to declare, «Christ yes, Church no»; they then go on, in interreligious dialogue, to say, «God yes, but Christ no,» and finally end up proclaiming, «Religion no, but spirituality yes.» This tendency toward a spirituality without Christ, without Church, without religion, and finally without God is not a genuinely Christian spirituality. We cannot separate these terms; we must show that Christian spirituality reaches God by passing through the Church and through Christ because the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus and the Father, the Spirit who has brought the Church into existence. We do not deny that the Spirit moves all persons and all religions in mysterious ways, carrying them to salvation along paths unknown to us [GS], but we do not accept as true the belief that any Christian spirituality can omit, relativize, or negate the mystery and the name of Jesus, «apart from whom there is no salvation» (Acts 4,12).

Once this is made clear, we cannot help but resonate with the well-known words that I. Hazim, now the Patriarch Ignatius IV of Antioch, pronounced at the Upsala Assembly of the Ecumenical Church Council in 1968. His statement can be summed up as follows:

«Without the Holy Spirit
God is far away,
Jesus Christ remains in the past,
the gospel is a dead letter,
the church is a simple organization,
her mission is propaganda,
her worship is mere recollection,
and human deeds are ruled by mindless morality.

But in the Spirit
and in the Spirit's indissoluble synergy,
the cosmos rises up and groans until
giving birth to the Kingdom,
humanity struggles against the flesh,
the risen Christ is here present,
the gospel is the power of life,
the Church signifies trinitarian communion,
her authority is at the service of liberation,
her mission is a new Pentecost,
her liturgy is memorial and anticipation,
and human action is divinized.»⁴⁴

44. HAZIM, I. (1968). *La Résurrection et l'homme d'aujourd'hui*, Irénikon, 42, pp. 344-359.

The Spiritual *Exercises* of Ignatius are therefore an initiation into experiencing Jesus according to the Spirit; they are a pneumatological mystagogy for following Jesus; they are a spiritual exegesis of the life and message of Jesus; they are a truly existential and pneumatic christology. That is why Jerome Nadal, the great interpreter of Ignatian spirituality, said that Ignatian spirituality can be summed up with three Latin words –*spiritu, corde, practice*– which we can translate: «a life in the Spirit, experienced deep in the heart and oriented to pastoral work.»

It was something like this that Ignatius surely wanted to say in Salamanca when they were interrogating him about his doctrine and his relation with the Spirit. But the pilgrim preferred to remain silent [*Aut* 65].

“**Guides**”, with this verb Ignatius Loyola modestly expresses his great desire to help others. It is under this motto connoting service and simplicity that the Ignatian School of Spirituality (*Escuela Ignaciana de Espiritualidad - EIDES*) offers these series of materials.

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