

THE SPIRITUAL DIARY OF IGNATIUS LOYOLA

By JOSEPH MUNITIZ

THE SPIRITUAL DIARY OF St Ignatius Loyola is unique among his voluminous works as being one of the very few that survive in their original hand-written form, and that were written solely by the saint himself without the assistance of his secretary.¹ One might have expected it to provide immediate access to his mind and spirituality. Instead many readers, even those who have some acquaintance with the life and work of the saint, find that the Diary remains hidden in a strange mist of cultural remoteness and unintelligibility.

These pages are clearly the work of a man devoted to God, living an intense interior life, divinely endowed with special gifts. It is not quite so easy to believe that they were written by the man who founded the Society of Jesus, at a time when he was extraordinarily active, both in personal apostolic work in Rome and even the more taxing occupations of the government of the young society (the first papal approbation had been granted only five years previously). Further, although the impression conveyed by the Diary is that the writer is a man subject to more than the ordinary psychological tensions; a person tossed between 'great tranquillity' and the sort of experience recorded for February 8,

I felt within me that I approached, or was brought before, the Father, and with this my hair rose and I felt what seemed an intense warmth in every part of my body, followed by tears and the most intense devotion,

it comes as something of a surprise to find that this is also the man whose disciples were instructed by him to excel in exterior and interior equilibrium.² Finally, although it may be clear from the Diary that the writer is resorting to certain techniques in the spiritual life (such as ways of praying and of making a decision), it is not clear whose techniques these are, nor indeed how far he is merely indulging in whims.

¹ The 'Diary', written in 1544-1545, was first published nearly 400 years later by A. Codina in *Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu*, vol 63, (Rome, 1934), pp 86-158. The present writer has prepared a first draft in english. All the quotations from the Diary are from this translation.

² 'The modesty of their countenance, the maturity of their walk, and all their movements, without giving any sign of impatience or pride', as Ignatius exhorts in the *Constitutions* (MHSI, 64, pp 342-343; trs. G. E. Ganss [St Louis, 1970], p 155). Even more explicit are the Rules of Modesty, composed by Ignatius but not included in the *Constitutions*.

In addition, the reader of the Diary may well ask himself what type of mystical experience it represents, what evidence it affords that Ignatius enjoyed the higher flights of infused contemplation, and how typical of the saint's normal spiritual life are its pages.

The historical context

Although the first group of Ignatius' companions had taken vows of poverty, chastity and pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1534, their first vows as members of the Society of Jesus could only be made after the proposed pilgrimage had been definitely impeded and, as a consequence, the group had found it necessary to form an association that would meet the canonical requirements and receive papal approbation. In 1537, they offered their services to Paul III. In 1539, the first draft of the Constitutions was composed (the *Formula Instituti*); and this was formally approved by the Bull *Regimini militantis ecclesiae* of 1540, which canonically instituted the new order.³ In 1541, the amplification of the *Formula* was entrusted to Ignatius and Codure, and at once Ignatius was elected General. The first solemn profession of vows was then celebrated, on April 22, 1541.

The three years that intervened before Ignatius began his Diary were of crucial importance for the young order. They saw the rapid dispersal of nearly all Ignatius' companions: to Ireland (Broet and Salmeron), Portugal (Santacruz and others), Germany, Belgium, and parts of Italy; the writing of the first set of *Constitutiones Collegiorum*, and the founding of the college of Padua; the erection of the roman college *pro catechumenis*; the start of the construction of Rome's first jesuit Professed House; and the founding of the house of St Martha for the reform of prostitutes. Active teaching, especially catechizing the young, apostolic work among the jews of Rome (the brief *Cupientes*, on behalf of converted jews, was granted in 1542 through Ignatius's intercession), and the instruction of new members of the Society,⁴ occupied the General's free time – a very precious commodity if we consider the vast number of letters which were required to inform the rapidly dispersing jesuits of progress and organization. In December of 1542, we have St Ignatius' own testimony that he sent 250 letters, some as far afield as Goa in India where Francis Xavier had already arrived. The Pope required his assistance in delicate negotiations with John III of Portugal. And at this time serious ill-health was causing him great suffering and weakness (in May of 1542 and the early months of 1544 he entrusted the writing of his letters to secretaries).

With the opening of the year 1544 (the Diary begins in February of this

³ In the list of pros and cons used by the saint in the course of the election recorded in the Diary, there is mention of this Bull, and of the year following, in point 14. The list was published by A. Codina along with the Diary, MHSI, 63, pp 78–81.

⁴ Cf I. Iparraguirre, *Práctica de los Ejercicios de San Ignacio de Loyola en vida de su autor*, (Bilbao, 1946), pp 38–39; he establishes that Ignatius' influence on the scholastics during the years 1540–1542 was decisive for the spread of the Exercises.

year), it seems that the first great wave of activity that had been carrying Ignatius forward ever since his arrival in Rome suddenly diminished. The house of St Martha was founded in January, but then four months of extremely bad health crippled Ignatius' movements. In any case it must have been clear that a period of consolidation, and above all of intensive organization and planning, was becoming increasingly necessary. The new order was expanding rapidly in numbers and in the diverse directions of its personnel and their occupations. Attached though Ignatius was to the 'inner law of divine love'⁵ as the guiding principle for himself and his subjects, mounting pressure from his companions and from the papacy, together with the evident dangers of dissipated energy, impelled him to begin the unwelcome task of composing the Constitutions.⁶ The problem became crucial with the need for a decision concerning poverty: Ignatius realized that the principles involved were of radical importance. First, there was the complex question of poverty itself: he was sufficiently aware of life's reality to appreciate that absolute poverty might spell the end of the new order by the normal calculus of human probability. Secondly, his own authority would be particularly tested: for the first time he would have to exercise on a grand scale the power so gladly entrusted to him and so reluctantly accepted; for this was only the exordium of the whole book of the Constitutions. And by a cruel twist of fate, the first point appeared to be one in which he would have to revoke a decision already approved by the early companions.⁷ Only if the Diary is seen against this background can one understand the apparently excessive hesitation over such a relatively minor matter. The Diary's interest lies in the fact that it shows the first movements of a great soul struggling to enter with determination on a hazardous journey.

The literary genre

At this point, an explanation of the rôle of the Diary becomes imperative. The title given to these sheets of paper⁸ is not one chosen by the saint himself: and it is in many ways singularly misleading. The famous diarists of world literature, the Pepys, the Boswells, the Evelyns, fall into a certain category

⁵ As he says in the Preamble to the *Constitutions*: 'what helps most on our own part toward this end must be, more than any exterior constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the holy Spirit writes and engraves upon hearts'.

⁶ Cf the letter, dated early in 1544, from Fr Domenech to all the Society in which he mentions that Ignatius among other occupations is busy with the writing of the Constitutions. MHSL, 22, p 290.

⁷ In the Spring of 1541, after a commission (consisting of Ignatius himself and Codure) had examined the point, the first companions agreed that the sacristies of churches belonging to professed houses should be allowed to possess income. This decision will now be revoked by Ignatius as a result of his 40-day 'election'; and in the *Constitutions* he forbids the possession of such income. Cf Ganss, pp 253-4.

⁸ The first part of the Diary, covering the 40-day election period from February 2 to March 12, 1544, is written on 14 folios; the second part, covering almost a year, March 13, 1544 to February 27, 1545, occupies 12 folios.

of mind and character: they are remarkable for their acute observation, their constancy, fidelity, industry. Often they are witty, sometimes pedestrian. One is not surprised to find that a methodical, rational trait predominates: one thinks, perhaps unjustly, of a bank-clerk's ledger. It is surprising to find a man of violent passions keeping a diary. And yet the distinctive features of the *Spiritual Diary*, the elements that give it life and interest, are precisely the diffuse out-pourings, the breaking of the bonds of ordinary experience, and indeed of ordinary diction – the words flow regardless of sentence form, often twisted into phrases of almost unintelligible ambiguity.⁹ When eventually the second part of the Diary is reached, the exact contrary seems to happen: the entries are clipped into telegraphic reiterations.

If Ignatius is a diarist, then he must be one of the strangest. There is nothing in his character or circumstances which would explain at least the temporary adoption of such a literary form. Pepys is eminently autobiographical; his diary may begin with a blush and an attempt at secrecy, but very soon he is confiding himself and his doings with relative abandon to his readers. Ignatius was continually pressed by his companions to write an autobiography. He resisted strongly, but eventually submitted when the attack took advantage of his weak flank, his genuine humility. It was then that he dictated a short and incomplete account to his secretary. It is very matter-of-fact, dour and blunt, pitiless and, one cannot help feeling, rather unjust to himself. Few people have succeeded in avoiding making fools of themselves at the start of their conversions; most are only too willing to consign such vagaries to oblivion. The story of his encounter with the moor is a classic example; and it is rewarding to consider that St Ignatius might have been executed for murder before he reached Manresa, had it not been for a mule's whim.¹⁰ The Diary, on the other hand, describes with a fulness and a detail rarely equalled the reception of spiritual gifts which would be the envy of many a canonized saint. What possessed Ignatius to indulge suddenly in a spate of autobiography which is belied by his other express statements? The answer is not to be found in a love for literary composition. Ignatius can reject as wildly improbable in himself the sort of motivation that Augustine perhaps would have acknowledged as part or the secret of his *Confessions*. The author of the Diary is not a lover of words: he treats them roughly, now sparingly, now in wanton excess; they are seized and hammered into place – rather like the saint's own hand-writing.

⁹ It was once thought that the peculiarities of the saint's style were relics of his basque infancy (cf P. Múgica, 'Reminiscencias de la lengua vasca en el Diario de San Ignacio' in *Revue Internationale des Études Basques*, 1936, pp 57–61). Against this view, S. Sala ('En torno al castellano de S. Ignacio', in *Razón y Fe*, 1956, pp 243–274) has argued that all the saint's peculiarities are typical of 'pre-classical' spanish style and are to be found, for example, in the letters of Cardinal Cisneros. For a restatement of the basque argument cf G. de Gennaro: 'La expresión literaria mística del Diario espiritual ignaciano' in *Manresa* (1963), pp 25–46.

¹⁰ Cf *Autobiography*, Ch 2, nos 14–16.

To find the *raison d'être* of the Diary, we must turn in quite a different direction. Indeed, once the new orientation has been adopted, it will be found to lead to the solution of most of the Diary's problems. In 1522, barely one year after his being wounded at Pamplona (May 20, 1521), Ignatius was living the life of a recluse at Manresa. He then began the composition of the series of 'meditation notes' which formed the nucleus of his first and best known book, the *Spiritual Exercises*. (This received papal approbation from Paul III in 1548, at the request of Francis Borgia; in the same year the first edition, in latin, appeared.) The book consists of instructions as to the reformation of one's life by means of prayer and penance. Its style is didactic and eminently practical. Its originality consists in the exactness with which the affective and rational processes involved and required during the selection of, and the total dedication to, a life's reform, are anticipated and provided for. Such precision is the result of a man's acute and repeated reflection upon his own mental processes. And, for Ignatius, such reform is the mainstay of a vigorous life of the spirit. Consequently, the lessons learned at Manresa and imparted through the Exercises are of daily and perennial importance. This may seem exaggerated and is certainly open to misinterpretation. There are aspects of the Exercises which are necessarily transient, applicable at the most to the thirty-day period dedicated to their observance: the intensity of feeling normally produced, the emotional strain, would be unbearable and harmful if unduly protracted. But if evidence were lacking that many of the basic principles and techniques to be found in the Exercises were intended by Ignatius to be the inner framework of a man's whole spiritual life, then the *Spiritual Diary* is of exceptional importance as decisive proof.

The technique of decision

The Spiritual Exercises revolve around the central axis of reform. At the heart of the second week is to be found a number of considerations that help the exercitant to reach the decisive point at which he both sees what change is required, and has the strength to accept it. From different angles, appealing to diverse mental factors, Ignatius leads the exercitant to consider the means required (in the meditation on 'Two Standards'), the readiness needed (in the consideration of the 'Three Couples'), and the motive underlying the heroism of the followers of Christ (the 'Three Modes of Humility'). The exercitant must then, in the light of these considerations, try to come to a conclusion. Many might have thought that sufficient had been done: that the exercitant could now be left to find his own way. However, Ignatius still has some important information that can be of immense help. Through the apparent jungle of possible reactions he outlines three paths which he had discovered by personal trial and error. The first is the sort of illumination which admits of no doubt; a pauline conversion, an apostolic vocation. The second and third are much more protracted and complicated. The third, which is explained most fully, is dominated by the notion of the 'reasonable'. Here there

are at least two possibilities. First, one can draw up a list of the pros and cons that concern the matter at issue; and, after prayer and particular attention to the purity of one's motivation, one can weigh up the importance of the respective sides. Secondly, a number of considerations may help one withdraw to a certain distance from the problem, and thus study it more objectively (for example, to proceed as if making the deliberation on behalf of someone else). It is quite clear from the *Diary* that Ignatius, for lack of a pauline illumination, had had recourse to this third way, in its varied forms; but he had not found in it a satisfactory solution to his problem. Consequently he had tried the second way, which is described by the saint himself in the Exercises in words that might have been taken from the *Diary*:

The second, when one receives abundant clearness (*asaz claridad*¹¹) and knowledge, through experiencing consolations and desolations, and through experiencing the differentiation (*discreción*) of various spirits.¹²

It becomes clear at once that the *Spiritual Diary* consists of sheets on which Ignatius has noted precisely these 'consolations and desolations', the day-by-day process of diverse 'spirits'. It is essentially a record intended to be maintained during a relatively short period (unlike the normal diary), and it contains references only to occurrences that fall under these headings.

Some readers may have been puzzled at the terms introduced in the description of this 'second way'. They have a technical ring about them. The treatment given by the saint to these phenomena, in notes inserted between the meditations of his Exercises, is recognized as masterly,¹³ and is strikingly original in the clarity and precision which he brings to bear upon a problem as ancient as christian spirituality itself. The occurrences involved have been felt by all possessed of spiritual awareness. The problem lies in the extreme delicacy and complexity of these happenings, and the difficulty of communicating with others on topics so remote from every-day reality. The distinctive feature of each is the satisfaction or dissatisfaction which is felt and recognized in protracted reflection. This process of reflection requires sensitivity; but it must be backed by firmness and decision. The good and evil spirits utilize both periods (satisfaction and dissatisfaction); though the good tend to lead us to the former state. Within each state, the different spirits can still produce varied movements and agitations. One of the finest portraits in the world's spiritual writings of both these states and the actions of the different spirits is the *Spiritual Diary*.

Satisfaction has been mentioned as the key-note of periods of consolation: but as the saint makes clear in the Exercises,¹⁴ there are different levels of

¹¹ Cf the entry in the *Diary* for February 6: 'Later I realized with abundant clearness (*en asaz claridad*)'.

¹² Exx 176.

¹³ Cf the article on 'Consolation', in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, II, cols 1620-1622.

¹⁴ E.g., Exx 316.

satisfaction. They range from the quiet peace of increased faith, hope and charity, through internal joy and gladness, which can unexpectedly flood the soul, through the tears of love and sympathy for Christ, up to the 'interior movement' which sets the soul ablaze with such love for God the creator that no other love can exist except as part of that conflagration. It is interesting to find the words *movi6n interior* in the Exercises. The Diary, too, is full of references, some very mysterious, to the 'inner life' ('internal joy', 'internal tears', etc.). When he comes to give rules concerning the remedies to be taken against desolation, he provides precisely those which are to be found used in the Diary: firmness, increased exercise of prayer and self-examination, a recognition that one may be at fault and that God may be providing a period of trial, both for increased self-knowledge and greater appreciation 'that it does not lie in our power to cause or retain great devotion, intense love, tears nor any other spiritual consolation, but that everything is gift and grace of God our Lord'.¹⁵ However, even consolations require keen self-analysis, or rather a constant sensitivity to the slightest change. We find this a preoccupation in the Diary, as explained in the Exercises:

It is characteristic of the evil angel, who presents himself under the guise of an 'angel of light' (*sub angelo lucis*), to make his entry on the side of the soul's devotion but his exit for his own profit; that is to say, he brings good and holy thoughts that are in full accord with such a virtuous soul; but later, little by little, he tries to make off with what is his own, dragging the soul towards his concealed treachery and perverse intentions.¹⁶

Two inter-related passages from the Diary may be quoted: they illustrate admirably the perception of a false consolation:

February 18: After mass I quietened down, comparing my own worth with the wisdom and greatness of God. I continued for some hours until the thought came to me that I should not trouble to say more masses – I felt angry with the blessed Trinity; I had no desire to prolong the deliberation into the future . . .

February 20: Later I felt strengthened in what I had done by the knowledge that the earlier spirit had been evil, the one that had wanted to make me have doubts and feel anger with the blessed Trinity . . .

It is ironical that Ignatius, of all people, should have been accused of rigidity in his spirituality. The words of the Exercises on the differentiation of spirits (also those on the control of scruples) only begin to make sense if

¹⁵ Exx 322. Cf the entry for February 26: 'On beginning mass . . . a very slight weeping – I thought that with less I was more satisfied and content; in that way I felt I was being ruled by His Divine Majesty, to whom it belongs to give and withdraw his graces as and when it is most convenient'.

¹⁶ Exx 332.

seen in reference to the type of inner life portrayed in the Diary. This is a life tenderly responsive to the slightest movements of grace, and completely dependent on them. Time, which most men in Ignatius' position would have considered of vital importance, becomes irrelevant as the days of quiet waiting impose themselves. The great virtue becomes that of patience.

The framework of the Exercises

Once the Exercises have been discovered as a key to the understanding of the Diary, they continue to furnish innumerable clarifications. It is remarkable how often in these pages Ignatius seems to be thinking in terms of himself placed before the whole celestial court. This is the grandiose 'composition of place' (the prelude before meditation when the exercitant composes himself by thinking of some scene related to the topic he is about to consider) provided by the saint for two of the key meditations in the Exercises, the 'Couples' and the 'Contemplation to obtain love'. It seems to have been the way Ignatius imagined an offering or oblation to be most fittingly made. It is perhaps a relic of his knightly training in a Spanish nobleman's household.¹⁷ Also provided for solemn occasions in the Exercises is the technique of the 'triple colloquy', which also appears in the Diary. Instead of addressing himself immediately to God the Father, Ignatius intercedes first with our Lady, and sometimes with other saints even before he approaches her; then, with her assistance, he speaks to God the Son, in whose company he finally approaches the Creator himself. A typical example is the entry for February 18:

A little later I wondered where I should begin, and it occurred to me that it might be with all the saints, putting my cause in their hands, so that they might pray to our Lady and her Son to be intercessors on my behalf before the blessed Trinity... I set about repeating the past offerings, . . . beseeching and nominating as intercessors on my behalf the angels, the saints of the Old Law, the apostles and disciples, and all the saints . . . that they might plead to our Lady and her Son.

It is often a problem for him to decide how he should begin: again, evidence that these techniques of prayer were not mechanical rules of thumb, but general indications suggesting possible paths for the soul in its life of prayer and contact with God.

The 'petition' prelude, which also appears at the head of each meditation in the Exercises, gains full life and vigour when it is seen in action in the Diary: a dominant note of supplication, sometimes strident in its intensity, begging light on a specific problem, yet full of a strength which expands naturally without artificial pressure. In the same way, many of the brief notes scattered through the Exercises find full expression in the pages of the

¹⁷ Cf P. Leturia, *El gentilhombre Íñigo López de Loyola*, and F. González Olmedo, *Introducción a la Vida de San Ignacio de Loyola*, for the courtly ideals in Ignatius' development.

Diary. The curious third annotation, which recommends a different mental attitude when the 'will' is brought into play from that required when only the 'understanding' is active, is typical. Here, special reverence is required: the reason lies in the object, the holy, towards which the will is turned in all spiritual exercises. And in the Diary, whereas Ignatius is prepared to adopt a practical, business-like attitude in his considerations of pros and cons, any turning of attention to God is accompanied by that insistent repetition of the word *devoción*. In the Exercises, great care is taken in the explanation of the various 'examinations of conscience'. There is also a perplexing readiness for the 'repetition' of exercises; no sooner has a meditation been finished before one is examining one's conduct and progress in the course of that meditation, and then repeating it! Unless the director is alive to the type of self-awareness required, and unless he has some experience of the tempo at which Ignatius was accustomed to conduct his meditations, he can easily drive an exercitant to the verge of break-down. In the Diary, it is clear that the amount of intellectual cogitation involved in the saint's meditation is minimal: it is rare, and worthy of note, to be struck by a new idea. When an idea does come, as for example on February 11,

I received a new insight, *viz* that the Son first sent his apostles to preach in poverty, and later the holy Spirit . . . confirmed them, and thus, since both Father and Son sent the holy Spirit, all three persons approved that manner of sending,

the reaction is one of intense joy, and the digestion of the new thought, that *sentire ac gustare res interne* of the second annotation,¹⁸ fills many hours. As he remarks elsewhere:

I shall settle down at the point where I have found what I want, without any anxiety about moving on, until I am satisfied.¹⁹

Within the Exercises it is necessary to distinguish the practical – one might say 'technical' – instructions, from the indications one finds of basic ideals and principles. The former, because of their complexity and originality, tend to attract more attention and require more protracted explanation. But the second group is the animating element within the body of the Exercises; and it is instructive to see how in the Diary they burst forth in full vigour. The ideas themselves are of marvellous simplicity and closely inter-connected: the primary importance of the glory of God, to the fulfilment of whose will all personal inclinations and preferences must be logically, but still more affectively, subordinated:

I realized that it was not I who should stipulate the time for finishing and expect to receive a visitation then, but that I should continue until His Divine Majesty thought fit, and chose to grant such a visitation. March 2.

¹⁸ Exx 2.

¹⁹ First week, fourth addition: Exx 76.

This is the key idea in the 'Principle and Foundation', which opens the Exercises: it is also present, though with renewed meaning, in all the petitions of the last three weeks:

to ask grace from our Lord that I may not be deaf to his call, but ready and diligent to fulfil his most holy will.²⁰

The spirituality of St Ignatius has been described as christocentric: it is not difficult to see what is meant. On February 23, for example, he writes:

While I prepared the altar for mass, Jesus came into my thoughts and I felt impelled to follow him, for to my mind it seemed that since he was the head of the society, he was a greater argument for complete poverty than all other human reasons.

And he continues a little later:

It seemed to be in some way the work of the blessed Trinity that I could see or feel Jesus, and I remembered the time when the Father placed me with the Son.

He is referring to the great visitation of grace that occurred at La Storta (in late October or in November of 1537) as he was making his way to Rome. Ignatius later in his life seems to have described, and thought of, this experience in the words of the Diary, 'a placing with the Son by the Father': it is described thus in the autobiographical fragment dictated to Fr L. Gonçalves da Cámara.²¹ However, at the time of the revelation, when he described the event to his two companions, Frs Faber and Laínez, he seems to have been more explicit as to the details. The vision was of Christ carrying his cross, and the Father had joined Ignatius with his Son in the labour of carrying the cross.²² The deep impression made by this vision is comparable in intensity with very few experiences of the saint. Perhaps the trinitarian revelations of Manresa (1522) and the Diary (1544) are the only events of equal importance.

Beyond the Exercises

There can be no doubt that the Exercises provide the key to the initial understanding of the Diary. However, it would be a pity if preconceptions gained from the Exercises were allowed to obscure a deeper appreciation. And indeed the Exercises themselves must not be judged prematurely: they gain in stature when seen as the path towards the Diary. The christocentric nature of ignatian spirituality is a case in point. Vital and essential as is the rôle given to the humanity of Christ throughout the final three weeks, there

²⁰ Exx 91.

²¹ *Autobiography*, ch 10, no 96.

²² Laínez's own account has been preserved only at second hand. However, the version is corroborated both by Ribadeneira and by Nadal: cf MHSI, 66, p 313, especially n. 37, and p 499, n. 23. For a full study, cf R. Rouquette, in *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique* (1957), pp 34-61, 150-170.

rare indications that in one sense the soul is to advance even further. There are only hints in the Exercises of the devotional importance of the blessed Trinity. The first preamble to the contemplation of the Incarnation, for example, brings to mind a printed title-page:²³ the three persons are handling the orb of the earth at the top of the page, the scene of the Annunciation occupies the centre; in the course of the contemplation the exercitant thinks of their words and actions; and he makes a colloquy to them.²⁴ But who would guess from this brief mention that Ignatius' Diary would be full of devotion to the Trinity? In the Exercises the holy Spirit is hardly mentioned.²⁵ In the Diary some of the most striking visions are of the Third Person:

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 perceive him in a dense clarity or in the colour of burning flame – a way quite strange to me. (February 10).

The portion of the Exercises which opens out onto the great future horizons of Ignatius' own spirituality is the 'Contemplation to obtain love'. It forms one of the appendices, so to speak, which he added, along with notes on technical methods of prayer, to the fourth week. Here, in a few brief paragraphs, Ignatius initiates the exercitant into the new life for which the Exercises have prepared him: the great quest into the nature of God, an investigation whose object is not knowledge but deeper love. In the Diary, an endearing phrase to refer to God is that of 'giver of graces': in the 'Contemplation', a rough intimation of the treasures these words enclose is imparted. The gift is the Giver himself, a Giver who is both present and dynamic in the gift, a Giver who is infinite in the number and variety of his gifts, to such an extent that no gift is not the Giver himself. Here, in this notion of 'giving', of 'communication', which for Ignatius is the quintessence of love, is to be found the seed, hidden and expectant, of the trinitarian revelations.

Ignatius seems to have been unusually aware of the inter-connections between dogmas. This appears in his marian devotion. Our Lady is 'part or portal' (*parte o puerta*) of grace:

During the prayers to the Father and the Son and at his consecration, I could not but perceive or see her . . . (At the consecration she showed that her own flesh was in that of her Son). February 15.

Nothing could be more foreign to ignatian spirituality than the strange departmentalism that so often seems to beset christian devotions. For him the saints are united with Mary among the 'mediators' (among whom appears

²³ Dr A Suquía, *La Santa Misa en la Espiritualidad de San Ignacio de Loyola*, (Madrid, 1950), has some interesting remarks on the illustrations concerning the Trinity to be found in missals of the period. Cf pp 193–194.

²⁴ Exx 102, 106–8, 109.

²⁵ There are five references in the short '*Mysteria vitae Christi*', (Exx 263, 273, 304, 307, 312), and one in the 'Rules for thinking with the Church' (Exx 365).

in turn the sacred Humanity of Christ). The mystery of the Trinity, with its circuminsession of Persons, finds its true context here, although it defies expression:

I had very many intuitions about the blessed Trinity, my mind being enlightened with them to such an extent that it seemed to me that with hard study I would not have known so much. February 19.

And later:

During the prayers to the Father, it seemed that Jesus was presenting them, or accompanying those that I was saying, before the Father: and I felt or saw in a way that cannot be explained. February 25.

Later still:

I saw the home-land of heaven, or the Lord of it, for I understood in some way the three Persons, and how within the Father were the second and third. February 29.

It would be incorrect to suppose that, at the time of composing the Exercises, Ignatius was still unaware of the rôle of the Trinity. Already in 1522 he had received at Manresa an illumination of the Trinity's intimate nature:

One day when he (Ignatius) was reciting the Little Office of our Lady on the steps of that same monastery (of the Dominicans), his understanding began to rise, as if he saw the blessed Trinity represented by three organ keys, and this with so many tears and sobs that he could not control himself.²⁶

On the other hand, it would be equally misleading to suppose that Ignatius had passed beyond the learning stage. He says himself, with reference to the new insight he had received concerning the essence of the Trinity:

So great an achievement did it seem to have untied this knot . . . that I could not stop repeating to myself, with reference to myself, 'Who are you? From where? . . . What did you deserve? Why this?' February 21.

Again, in the second part of the 'Diary' there appear a number of new phenomena, principal among them being the 'reverence and respect',²⁷ which, the saint has come to feel, 'should be shown on going to mass when I had to pronounce the name of God our Lord etc.' (March 14). The mystery of the Trinity seems to have presented ever-new facets as the spiritual life of Ignatius progressed.

Allied to this growth, and forming an organic part with it, is the mystery of the mass. Here, too, the Diary presents us not with an isolated strand of

²⁶ Autobiography ch 3, no 28.

²⁷ Cf M. Ruiz Jurado, 'En torno a la gracia de acatamiento amoroso', in *Manresa* (1963), pp 145-154.

devotion but with a reiteration of that inter-penetration of truths which was hinted at in the final point of the 'Contemplation to obtain love'. In the eucharistic liturgy, the saint finds the great prayer, the period when earth and heaven are most obviously at one, the point at which the soul's access to the divine acquires its greatest facility. There is in the Diary a very personal approach to the mass: the saint cannot tolerate distraction at that time. There is no trace of the social theology which is required if the full wealth of the mass is to be estimated. But it is essential to remember the purpose of the Diary. It is not a mere collection of thoughts; it is kept with a definite end in view:²⁸ the recording of the consolations and desolations experienced in the course of reaching a decision about poverty. For a full exposition of Ignatius' theological convictions, it is necessary to study his other writings.²⁹ Where the Diary is of particular importance is in the revelation it offers of the force that certain of the saint's ideals and modes of thought had acquired. Other aspects of his inner motivation are revealed elsewhere.

The mystical gifts

Outstanding among the personal traits that the Diary presents is a feature which is adumbrated in the Exercises but which also escapes notice if not placed against the background of the Diary. In the second and third points of the 'Contemplation to obtain love', attention is drawn to God's indwelling in created things, and to the fact 'that he works and toils on my behalf in all created things'.³⁰ This attention to the presence of God is actively practised at the start of each meditation. An attitude of mind is built up which comes to maturity through the 'Contemplation', and finds in this exercise its natural, and eventually its supernatural, complement. It is remarkable how often in the Diary it is the ordinary events of the day which are suddenly illuminated and transfigured by the rush of grace. It is as the saint is having his midday meal that he receives the final decisive consolations, and it is in the middle of grace (surely the most routine of all spiritual duties!) that he has a vision of God the Father:

When I sat at table . . . the tempter tried, without success, to make me have doubts . . . Suddenly, yet calmly – like a man who has won – I said to him, 'Get to your place!' Tears came to strengthen me and I felt quite sure about all I had decided . . . When I said

²⁸ The study by Dr Suquía, *supra*, n 23, labours slightly from the initial supposition that the Diary is only a 'diary', 'in which the saint during thirteen months gathered the deepest impressions that he had experienced while celebrating the holy mysteries' (*loc. cit.*). The Diary is much more: it is essentially an instrument forged to facilitate a particularly difficult election in accord with Ignatius' instructions in the Exercises. In consequence, Dr Suquía has difficulty in explaining the *lacuna* concerning the social function of the mass.

²⁹ The gap is only partly filled by the pioneer work of H. Rahner, *Ignatius the Theologian* (London, 1968). For a study of Ignatius' letters, Cf I. Iparraguirre, *Espíritu de San Ignacio* (Bilbao, 1958).

³⁰ Exx 236.

grace after the meal, the Being of the Father partly disclosed itself, also the Being of the blessed Trinity: I felt a spiritual impulse to devotion and tears such as I had not felt or seen all day. March 12.

When he is out walking in the streets of Rome, the supernatural world breaks in upon him with the same intensity as when he is saying mass:

Today, even when walking in the city, I felt great joy of heart, and on seeing three rational creatures together, or three animals, or three other things, the blessed Trinity was brought before me. February 19.

Even in the celebration of mass, it is not only at the culminating points, the canon or the communion, that his prayer receives its special graces, but at such times as the *Confiteor* (February 25), or the Epistle (February 17). The consolation of God, he notes in the Exercises,³¹ has the characteristic that it enters the soul without previous warning, for the Creator has the right to enter and leave his house without any preliminary knocking. However, his entries in the Diary testify to the emotion this sudden onslaught of devotion can cause, leaving Ignatius gasping for breath, and hugging his chest to relieve the anguish:

After I had gone to bed, I had special consolation in thinking of the three Persons, hugging myself for the exultation in my soul . . . [The following morning] While saying mass I was not weeping, yet not entirely without tears, feeling a certain warm devotion, glowing as it were; also many little gasps full of great devotion. February 18. . . . during prayer I wept much, the tears streaming down my face. A very intense devotion lasted for a while, my mind enlightened or my memory quickened by the blessed Trinity. I was at peace and felt such joy that there was a pressure in my chest³² for the intense love I was experiencing in the blessed Trinity. February 19.

Constant prayer is of course a special gift of God. The Diary provides first-hand evidence that Ignatius had been given this gift, at least at certain periods of his life. In the *Autobiography*, he says quite plainly that the special gifts of contemplative prayer were not always granted him; but in his early years at Manresa, after his studies when he moved to Venice, and during these months when he was preparing himself for the composition of the Constitutions, he seems to have received unusually varied spiritual consolations. Thus, although it is likely that among the personal papers destroyed before his death there was mention of great graces, there are two pieces of evidence to prove that the graces recorded in the Diary were quite exceptional. The first is the document written by Ignatius himself, which appeared so

³¹ Second week: Rules for the discernment of spirits (Exx 330).

³² *hasta apretarme en los pechos*: the interpretations vary. Iparraguirre, following Knauer, favours, 'that I was hugging my breast'.

mysteriously in the *Biblioteca Nacional* in Madrid.³³ Here are written out the passages underlined in the Diary; those that refer to the most extraordinary of the visions and graces. The saint would not have gone to such trouble if he were constantly receiving graces of this kind. Secondly, there is a passage in the *Autobiography*, dictated eleven years later, which gives the Diary a special importance:

He (Ignatius) then showed me (Fr Gonçalves da Câmara) quite a large bundle of written notes and read me a good part of them. For the most part they were visions he had seen in confirmation of some parts of the Constitutions: he had sometimes seen God the Father, at other times the three Persons of the Trinity, at others our Lady interceding or approving.

He spoke to me in particular of the deliberation in which he had been stuck for 40 days, saying mass each day, and with many tears each day: the point at issue was if the Church should have an income, and if the Society could avail itself of such.

The method he used while composing the Constitutions was to celebrate mass each day, to present to God the point he was treating, and to make his prayer about it; during both his prayers and his mass he would shed tears. I wanted to see all those notes referring to the Constitutions, and I asked him to let me have them for a short while; but he did not want to.³⁴

Ignatius probably continued to preserve the Diary precisely because of the exceptional nature of its entries; they recorded an apex of his spiritual life.

However, if in the first part of the Diary the number of visions, particularly of the Trinity, the references to physical heat and other strange sensations are remarkable, it is in the second part that the more unusual of the special mystical phenomena make their appearance: the *loquēla* and its *música*:

The internal *loquēla* of the mass seemed even more a special gift from God; I had prayed for it this very day because during the week I had sometimes experienced the external *loquēla* and sometimes not, but the internal more rarely, although last Saturday I heard it a little more clearly . . . During the internal and external *loquēla* I felt wholly moved to the divine love and to this gift of *loquēla* granted by God; within me a great harmony accompanying the internal *loquēla*, but I cannot express it. May 11.

I took great pleasure in the internal *loquēla*; at the same time I found myself enjoying or remembering the *loquēla* or music of heaven (*música celeste*). May 12.

A little later I thought I was taking excessive pleasure in the tone

³³ Cf MHSI, 63, pp ccxli-ccxlii.

³⁴ *Autobiography*, ch 11, nos 100, 101. The original is in Italian, as this part of the *Autobiography* was not written down by Fr Gonçalves da Câmara himself, but dictated later from memory to an Italian secretary.

of the *loquēla*, that is in the mere sound, without paying sufficient attention to the meaning of the words and of the *loquēla*. May 22.

Also it is in the second part that the references to weeping become so constant that they submerge all other entries. Commenting on the rôle of tears in the Diary of Ignatius, Fr de Guibert wrote:

Although the catholic tradition has always had a high esteem for tears of compunction, and even more so for tears as a mystical gift, there is no saint, as far as I am aware, for whom in practice they have had such importance.³⁵

Clearly, during the period covered by the Diary Ignatius was receiving exceptional gifts of grace and of prayer; and these notes provide first-hand evidence that he is to be included among the mystics of the Church.

Conclusion

With regard to the external phenomena which accompanied the intense spiritual activity of this period of his life, it is interesting to note that Walter Hilton, probably the most competent theologically of the 'English Mystics' of the fourteenth century, indirectly alluding to the *dulcor*, *canor* and *calor* of Richard Rolle (phenomena which seem to have so much in common with Ignatius' tears, *loquēla* and *música*), points out that such experiences bear little relationship to the depths of God's love in a soul:

Well I wot that these manner feelings and fervours of devotion . . . are gracious gifts of God sent into chosen souls, for to draw them out of worldly love . . . nevertheless, that the fervour is so much in outward showing is not only for greatness of love that they have, but it is for littleness and weakness of their souls, that may not bear a little touching of God.³⁶

Ignatius would have agreed. In his defence we may think it more just, rather than speak of 'littleness and weakness of soul', to bear in mind the 'occupational hazards' of a busy active life. Ignatius felt the latter to be his vocation and was prepared to sacrifice mystic gifts and graces that are physically possible only for a contemplative. His position is that of so many of his disciples: the confessor, the spiritual guide, the director of the Spiritual Exercises. Perhaps among the hundreds of entries in which tears are recorded, the most revealing for our appreciation of the inner fabric of Ignatius' spirit is the short entry for April 3:

I had no tears before, during or after mass; at the end I felt more content without them and felt great affection, judging that God our Lord did this for my greater good.

³⁵ J. De Guibert, *St. Ignace Mystique* (Toulouse, 1950), p 56: this little book, the first profound study of the 'Diary', consists of articles first published in 1938 in *Revue d'Ascétique et de Mystique*. They are still well worth consulting.

³⁶ Cf Knowles, David: *The English Mystical Tradition* (London, 1961), p 109.