

abyss, and therein I have seen the beauty of your creature. For, seeing myself in you, I saw that I am your image; my life coming out from your power and your wisdom shining in my understanding and my will—my will being one, now, with the Holy Spirit that proceeds from you and your Son, by whom I am able to love you. You . . . are my creator, I the work of your hands, and through the new creation you have given me in the blood of your Son, I know that you are in love with the beauty of the work of your hands, O abyss, O eternal godhead, O deep sea . . . (For) the waters of this sea are a mirror into which you bid me gaze, holding it with the hand of love that I may see myself therein . . . I in you and you in me, through the union which you made of your godhead with our humanity. For I know that this light represents myself in you, the supreme and infinite good. Beauty beyond all beauty, wisdom beyond all wisdom, wisdom itself. You, the food of angels, have given yourself to men in a fire of love’.

A Caballero in Love

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Practically from the very start of the Society of Jesus there has been a certain stern picture painted of Jesuits. We read about the ‘cunning, crafty’ Jesuits; the ‘intellectual, unemotional’ followers of St Ignatius. Pascal calls them ‘people who do not keep their word, without faith, without honour, without truth, deceitful in heart, deceitful in speech’. And then in one of the more recent common evaluations *Time* magazine (September 16, 1957) stylizes the Society as a calculating, and, in every sense, a cold military organization. These opinions on the spirit of the Society of Jesus have one thread of common unity: the Jesuit is a stoic statue impervious to ordinary human emotions and feelings. He is calculating and reasoning; the intellect has smothered the heart. His two daily examinations of conscience, the varied ‘experiments’ to test his abilities and his control, the introspective, personal evaluations, all these have allowed him to gain mastery over his human nature; a mastery that somehow removes the human and leaves just the nature.

The major part of these opinions undoubtedly have their origins in a mistaken understanding of the Jesuits' purpose, method, and training. But it is too widespread a characterization to be entirely explained along those lines. I will try to point out in this article how possibly we Jesuits contribute to this interpretation of ourselves. To do this I will set down some reflections on the meaning of 'devotion' in the writings of St Ignatius. This is the first step towards a fuller understanding of obedience, *contemplativus simul in actione*, and finding God in all things. What others have thought and are thinking is not the real problem. Rather how the Jesuits of 1962 evaluate their fundamental spiritual heritage is what matters.

Present thinking of the reality behind the word 'devotion' seems to centre around the idea of an army standing at attention before its commander-in-chief ready to do his bidding. That, many consider, is the proper Jesuit spirituality. Without denying a place to such a concept, I raise the question: is there another, a deeper significance? Is this the primary meaning of devotion in the mind of St Ignatius? Is this the fundamental concept of Jesuit spirituality as he thought of it himself? The answer I feel is 'no'. Such an approach to our spirit has come from the use of St Thomas's definition:

The word 'devotion' is derived from *devovendo*. Therefore, those persons are said to be devout who in a way devote (vow) themselves to God, so as to subject themselves wholly to him . . . Hence devotion apparently is nothing else but the will to give oneself readily to things concerning the service of God. (2a. 2ae. 82. 1).

St Thomas is here considering devotion as an act of the virtue of religion, giving to God in justice what belongs to God, since religion is part of the virtue of justice. This virtue enables a man to hold himself ready to perform acts of worship and honour. But is this how St Ignatius considered devotion? Is the essential note of his spirituality 'my Father's will'? Again I say 'no'. The context of St Thomas's definition is different from what St Ignatius was considering. Devotion for him describes the whole being of a *Caballero* in love. He considers the emotions, the sentiments, the heart as central to the lover's devotion. For him it is an act of love in the Augustinian tradition as against the monastic tradition which considers devotion in relation to the performance of the liturgy. Standing at attention before a commander is not the knight's 'devotion'; this is rather the effect of his devotion—the complete giving of himself to the one loved. If we rule out affection in this way, there remains no room for romanticism in St

Ignatius; and if we rule out romanticism we cannot place him with such mystics as St Francis and St Teresa where he belongs. For St Ignatius then—and I speak here of *emphasis*—devotion primarily is not in the prompt will to serve but rather in an interior love and union with God which comes from the fire of charity. This I hope to show by a use of the *Autobiography, Journal, Spiritual Exercises* and *Constitutions*, joined with some selections from Nadal. Further study is needed to answer these questions that might come up before your minds: how much of this did St Ignatius consider was attainable by *all* his followers? What is the record through four hundred years? What is the exact position of current thinking in relation to such a definition of devotion? How does this help us to understand better why St Ignatius found so much benefit in the *Devotio Moderna*?

The great works during the twentieth century on the life of St Ignatius, the history of the Society and Jesuit spirituality have vitally assisted us to understand the way in which St Ignatius resolved the struggle which faces all men who strive to live the teachings of Jesus Christ. This struggle has been described variously by Christian authors. St Augustine speaks of it in his *Confessions* and in his *City of God*; St Thomas with many others uses the terms *amor concupiscentiae* and *amor benevolentiae* to describe it; others, *eros* and *agape*; Gabriel Marcel distinguishes between the *order of having* and the *order of being*; Martin Buber concretizes it even more when he talks of the *I-it* relation and the *I-Thou* relation. St Paul very graphically describes this struggle within a man in the epistle to the Romans (7. 15 ff):

My own actions bewilder me; what I do is not what I wish to do, but something which I hate. Why then, if what I do is something I have no wish to do, I thereby admit that the law is worthy of all honour; meanwhile, my action does not come from me, but from the sinful principle that dwells within me . . . Inwardly, I applaud God's disposition, but I observe another disposition in my lower self, which raises war against the disposition of my conscience, and so I am handed over as a captive to that disposition towards sin which my lower self contains.

Through grace and prayer St Ignatius was able to resolve his struggle between matter and spirit—the struggle not to become part of the world though all the time remaining *in* the world; was able to dominate and not be dominated by the downward pull of materiality. Rather than a hindrance the most distracting occupations were a means to uniting himself to God, a stepping stone towards the accomplishment

of his ideals. Jerome Nadal, his interpreter, termed it *contemplativus simul in actione*.¹ This concept has been treated in many works which will be referred to later. But I feel that before this can be fully understood we must look at how St Ignatius considered the word 'devotion' since this in one way precedes and fills out his approach to the struggle's resolution.

St Ignatius's style and approach to reality have a special flavour that can be more readily appreciated in the light of his background. True, there are many pitfalls in characterizing a particular nation and then applying that characterization to an individual. But the studies of men like Fr Leturia and Fr Hugo Rahner make this comparatively safe, at least in certain areas.²

The Spanish and especially the Basques have always had a great reverence for the soil. Their reverence for it enters into the total temperament of the nation. It is partly responsible for their slow regularity; their deep attachment to the past of the family and to the family estate. Lope de Vega reflected on the richness of that Spanish soil:

It is a fertile land, which never tires
Of producing food, silver and gold . . .

What think you, milady of this land?
Does this agreeable sight not give you joy,
Its plants, fertile and fair,
Such diversity of fruits and trees?
Do you not marvel to see such grandeur?³

From this dedication there follows a certain rustiness and simplicity. And the very name Loyola describes the surrounding countryside; it means 'mud-flats'.

The Loyola domain of Guipuzcoa was typical of the Basque country. Shrines dotted the roads and dominated the villages. Shrines to the crucified Christ, to the Virgin Mother and to the saints. These were so many manifestations of the deep and lasting faith that has come to be

¹*Monumenta Historica Societatis Jesu (MHSI), Epistolae Nadal, 4, 615 ff.* Miguel Nicolau, s.j., *Jerónimo Nadal, S.I.* (Madrid, 1949), p. 259.

²Pedro Leturia, s.j., *Iñigo de Loyola* (New York, 1949). The facts of his early life which point up his affective character are taken from this work. Also used: Hugo Rahner, s.j., *The Spirituality of St Ignatius Loyola* (Maryland, 1953).

³Americo Castro, *The Structure of Spanish History* (Princeton, 1954), cites *Roma Abrasada*, p. 23. Pp. 22-6 contain some admirable reflections and references on the place of the soil in the Spanish make-up.

the hallmark of this area. Though in his early manhood St Ignatius lived a reckless life, his faith rooted deep in the soil remained strong. 'Before the drums of Charles V echoed in Loyola, the rustic bells of the shrines had left their mark on Ignatius' soul'. He displays this externalized piety when he makes his vigil before the statue of our Lady of Aranzazu, before the Black Virgin of Montserrat, and as he employs the last of his money for the repair and adornment of another Marian shrine.

Sixteenth-century Spain had remained medieval in its thinking. Men still hoped to realize the day of a united world whose unity was based on the spiritual hegemony of the Catholic Church. The crusading spirit had brought about the conquest of Granada and entered into the conquest of New Spain. Rugged individualism had not as yet laid hold of this world; instead the chivalrous deeds of Amadis of Gaul flamed the imagination of the Spanish hearts. The knightly vigil described in these romances offered St Ignatius a guide for a self-dedication to his Queen at Montserrat.

Thus equipped, he continued on his way to Montserrat, pondering in his mind, as was his wont, on the great things he would do for the love of God. And as he had formerly read the stories of Amadeus of Gaul and other such writers, who told how the Christian knights of the past were accustomed to spend the entire night, preceding the day on which they were to receive knighthood, on guard before an altar of the Blessed Virgin, he was filled with these chivalric fancies, and resolved to prepare himself for a noble knighthood by passing a night in vigil before an altar of our Lady of Montserrat. He would observe all the formalities of this ceremony, neither sitting nor lying down, but alternately standing and kneeling, and there he would lay aside his worldly dignities to assume the arms of Christ.⁴

Hidalguía is the term used to describe the archaic life of these people, attached to the soil and to their ancestors, conscious of their nobility, loath to do any menial work, but ever ready for great deeds of valour, motivated by a simple, vibrant faith in the Catholic Church.

It was this life that Iñigo the Hidalgo lived so deeply. Facts of his biography show him to be a man who loved the soil and who in the rush of Roman business would retire to a little garden for the peace he sought. He loved music and would often have a lay-brother play for him. His writings are filled with the idea of doing great deeds for his King and Lord; all the meditations and directions of the *Spiritual*

⁴MHSI, *Fontes Narrativi de S. Ignatio*, I:386; 370.

Exercises reflect the mind and heart of a *Caballero*. Though he has the straight-forward, unembellished style and spirit of a Biscayan, with the corresponding determination of will, still there is nothing in him of the 'subsistent intellect', the cold monolith that he is sometimes made out to be. His character is warm, his heart is filled with love and he must work continually to control his emotions. There have been some who saw in his absence from home for so many years a sign of his stoical severance of family ties and interests. Rather, he stayed away from his family for so long because he knew that once he had moved into their warmth he would never be able to finish the work God asked of him.

A reading of some of the key passages in his *Autobiography* readily shows that the word 'devotion' (which appears so many times) is always connected with 'spiritual taste, peace, calm, fervour, spirit, fire, zeal, tears'. All these expressions pertain to the emotions and the feelings. At Manresa St Ignatius went through some of his most profound soul-experiences including a number of Trinitarian visions. Through his own words and those of Nadal we learn that these deeply affected his whole life,⁵ and any remembrance of them would occasion tears, emotional consolation and joy, which he termed devotion.

In the first place, he had a great devotion to the blessed Trinity. Every day he prayed to each of the three Persons and to the whole Trinity. While thus praying to the blessed Trinity, the thought came of how to offer fourfold prayers to the Divinity. This thought, however, caused him little or no trouble. Once, while reciting on the steps of the monastery the little hours in honour of the blessed Virgin, his vision carried him beyond the earth. He seemed to behold the blessed Trinity in the form of a lyre or harp; this vision affected him so much that he could not refrain from tears and sighs. On the same day he accompanied the procession from the church, but even up to the time of dinner he could not withhold his tears, and after dinner his joy and consolation were so great he could speak of no subject except the blessed Trinity. In these conversations he made use of many different comparisons to illustrate his thoughts. Such an impression was made on him on that occasion that during his after life, whenever he prayed to the blessed Trinity, he experienced great devotion.⁶

⁵Speaking of his experience along the river Cardoner, Nadal says, 'And so he realized such a stimulus for contemplation and union with God, that he experienced devotion in all things and everywhere very easily'. *Platica 3 en Coimbra*, n. 66, cited by Joseph Conwell, S.J., *Contemplation in Action* (Spokane, 1957) p. 30.

⁶*MHSI Fontes Narrativi*, I:400-2.

Because of the many tears he shed at the thought of death he had to stop thinking on that subject. Throughout his *Autobiography*, then, we see St Ignatius as a man of deep but expressive emotions.

Another work very similar to this but even more terse in its style is his *Spiritual Journal*. It covers only a year of his later life and deals with the reflections and considerations he made while writing the *Constitutions*. Because of its laconic repetition many may find this dull; but for the insight it gives into the way the man worked it is invaluable. The main decision that faced him was the nature of the poverty that should be peculiar to the Society; it is the *devotion he feels* that acts as a norm for decision. Throughout the *Journal* he speaks of devotion felt; it is described as warm, clear, interior; it brings on tears. If it is missing he knows that something is wrong and so he prays and gives himself to more recollection until the devotion returns. Just a few of the daily entries will indicate this:

36 . . . In the customary prayer, great help of grace from beginning to end, although increasing with a very clear, lucid, warm devotion, to the great satisfaction of my soul.

[The agreeable warmth of the chapel moved him to devotion and spiritual rejoicing on a cold morning.] Later, in the mass, with an exterior warmth as reason for devotion and cheerfulness of mind, with a few movements or inclination to tears, and yet without them, but more satisfied than having them sometimes in good measure.

39 . . . The whole of the customary prayer with much devotion, clear, lucid and warm. . . In the chapel, at the altar, and afterwards, with tears, directing my devotion to our Lady, but without seeing her.

Finishing mass, and afterwards in my room, I found myself alone and without power to relish any of my mediators, or any of the divine Persons, but so remote and separated, as if I had never felt anything of them, or would never feel anything again.

[On saying grace after meals he had a vision of the Trinity] . . . with a certain spiritual movement to tears, something which all day I had not felt or seen, although I looked for it often.⁷

The word 'devotion' and those experiences which it describes are abundantly clear in both these works. Ignatius constantly refers to the devotion he had, meaning the sentiments, emotions and affections that he felt. Devotion as he used it in these writings is the heart and soul

⁷The translation of these passages is by W. J. Young, *Woodstock Letters*, 87 (July, 1958): 234-8.

sentiment of the *Caballero*—the feelings that this knight experiences for his God, who to him is a true lover and beloved. He, therefore, can do nothing, look at nothing that does not (because of his devotion) remind him of the one he loves and the one who loves him. This concept of devotion plays an important part in the major incidents of his life: his conversion while recuperating at Loyola, the months spent at Manresa, the vision along the Cardoner, the vision at La Storta, and the writing of the *Constitutions*.⁸

The *Spiritual Exercises* offer many examples of St Ignatius using the word 'devotion' in an affective manner. We read of the caution the director must show so that the retreatant does all the work himself. In this way he experiences the *gustum spirituale* as a fruit of his own reflection. (*Annotations* n. 2). The annotations as a whole place great stress on the exercitant's selecting and choosing what is best for him according to his interior feeling. In making an election St Ignatius considers the most propitious times those in which God speaks to the retreatant through his spiritual emotions. His devotion, then, acts as the directing norm for his closer union with God. In the meditations the exercitant asks for shame, sorrow, tears, joy, suffering; in other words St Ignatius is concerned with the affections and feelings as a means of leading him to God. In the enthusiastic outbursts of the Colloquies for the meditations on the 'Call of Christ', the 'Two Standards', and in the *Summe et suscipe* of the 'Contemplation for Obtaining Divine Love' there is seen again the heart and soul commitment of a *Caballero* in love. The triple colloquy in the First Week directs the exercitant to pause on those points in which he has felt consolation, desolation, or greater 'sentiments'.

In a sixteenth century defence an unknown Jesuit shows how the *Spiritual Exercises* are not geared for meditations on particular virtues and rules aimed at action for Christ, but rather how they are devised to help to attain devotion which leads to far more generous and comprehensive deeds.⁹ The *Directories* of 1591 and 1599 conclude with some advice for the exercitant when he leaves the 'warmth' of the retreat for the 'chilling' atmosphere of ordinary living. He is urged to keep alive the emotional fire enkindled during the retreat through the practice of

⁸At this time his heart overflowed with consolation and his eyes with tears. He felt great devotion at the thought of our Lord, and this remained with him as he went about the streets of Rome to consult various officials'. Conwell, *op. cit.* p. 33 cites *Ephemeris S.P.N. Ignatii*.

⁹*MHSI, Exercitia Spiritualia*, pp. 697-9. This is echoing Rule 15 of the *Summary of the Constitutions*, and Part X of the *Constitutions*.

various spiritual exercises. This will help preserve his devotion. The *Directories* equate, therefore, the retreat's emotional, affective result with the word 'devotion'.¹⁰

Throughout the *Constitutions* St Ignatius refers to devotion as an indication of a person's spirit. It becomes a norm for guiding Jesuits in the selection of generous actions, actions which are not *required* by the rule. The emphasis throughout the work is not on the 'prompt will to serve', but rather on the total man who seeks to follow Christ ever more closely under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which Spirit directs the Jesuit's steps through these heartfelt sentiments. It should be noted that St Ignatius is very careful to establish directive limits by which the individual in following his interior feelings is prevented from indiscreet actions on the one hand and from 'dogmatic evisceration' on the other. The age in which St Ignatius lived was only too full of people who had taken dogma out of their personal, spiritual lives and remained with only surface emotions—a major accusation on the part of the Reformers. It was only with such repeated warnings and safeguards that St Ignatius urged all the members of his Company, *procurar devoción*.

According to the *Examen* a candidate must be asked certain points about his prayer-life: how much he prays and with what 'devotion' or *sentimiento spiritual* he prays. (III. 10. 46). Here St Ignatius makes a definite, verbal equation between devotion and the emotions and sentiments. In the *Constitutions* proper the idea of devotion frequently appears. The following is a synopsis of the significant passages in which interior movements become the key to specified courses of action.

Devotion is the motivation for taking vows of devotion as well as canonical vows. (V. 4. 6. 544; III. 1. 22. T. 283).

They are to say grace at meals with devotion. (III. 1. 5. 251).

The renewal of vows has for its purpose to augment and preserve devotion. (V. 4. 6. 544; V. 4. 6. H. 546).

The devotion found in a priest is one of the key reasons for solemnly professing him. (V. 2. 3. C. 521).

They are to obey superiors with devotion. (VI. 3. 1. A. 583).

In doing without certain comforts, food, etc., not the obligation of rule but devotion is the individual's norm. (VI. 2. 16. 580).

The guide in distributing to the poor one's possessions before pronouncing vows is devotion; or devotion might direct one to leave them to the Society. (III. 1. 7. 254; III. 1. 9. 258).

The probation period is a time in which one strives to make pro-

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 478.

gress in devotion. (III. I. 27. 289).

They grow in devotion by the custody of the eyes, mortification, and mutual appreciation of one another—edification. (III. I. 4. 250).

All must labour to increase in devotion by spiritual exercises, according to the grace given them. (III. I. 20. 277).

In two recorded cases St Ignatius makes practical application of his *Constitutions*.

To a scholastic, Andres Boninsegna, who said he did not feel any devotion to be ordained, St Ignatius recommended that he dispose himself for devotion, helping himself in his spirit by taking some time from studies and putting it into spiritual things.

And to Father Leerno he gave as a remedy for a falling off in devotion that he set aside an hour a day for procuring it.¹¹

In summing this up it can be said that St Ignatius wanted all members of the Society of Jesus to have this devotion and expected them to foster it in all they did, so that they might habitually feel it; they were to increase it by meditation and contemplation; devotion was to help them find God in all things and this in turn would increase their devotion.

Jerome Nadal entered the Society of Jesus in its first years and thus had for his director the founder himself. Under him he studied the *Constitutions* and matured in this way of life. During these formative years he became very close to St Ignatius and St Ignatius on his part found him to be a good pupil. So after he had completed work on the *Constitutions* St Ignatius sent Nadal as his Visitor to many of the provinces to explain and interpret them. For this reason it can be said that he was the one who more than any other contributed to fix the traditional manner of understanding and practising the *Constitutions*.

The writings of Nadal, therefore, become important documents in the proper understanding of the mind of St Ignatius. Included in these writings are innumerable letters, *Instructions* and *Scholia* on the *Constitutions*, the *Exposition and Defence of the Spiritual Exercises*, and a large collection of exhortations which touch on all phases of Jesuit life. Most especially they treat of the relation between *contemplation* and *action* as envisaged by St Ignatius.

Basic to the teaching of Nadal was the belief that the special grace of the founder was to be the grace of the members. St Ignatius's way of life and way of thinking was to belong to all the Jesuits who followed

¹¹José Aicardo, *Comentario a las Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús* (Madrid, 1929) 2:513.

him. This was to be the Society's distinctive mark. After speaking of the devotion peculiar to St Ignatius, especially his manner of prayer and of finding God in all he did, Nadal makes the following statement:

The same privilege, therefore, that we understand was granted to Father Ignatius we believe has been conceded to the whole Society and we are confident that the grace of that prayer and contemplation has been prepared in the Society for all of us, and we maintain that it is linked with our vocation.¹²

Closely connected with this is Nadal's teaching that the *Spiritual Exercises* are an expression of St Ignatius's own experience, are patterned from his life, are intended as the basic training programme in forming a man according to the Ignatian norm. Therefore, what I have said about their aim and intention and about the use of the word devotion as found in them, can be taken here as part of Nadal's teaching. After repeating the same idea as quoted just above he adds the following in one of his exhortations:

For that grace gives to the parts and to the entire scheme of the *Exercises* a special strength and energy, by which souls are moved in their very depths to piety and devotion . . .

He then goes on to say that St Ignatius believed the *Exercises* to be the principal means by which each could gain his own perfection and that of his neighbour.¹³

The prayer proper to the Society has been variously described; but it can be safely summed up in the expression used by Nadal, *contemplativus simul in actione*. The work in which this appears, *In Examen Annotationes*, has already been quoted above as regards the grace peculiar to the Society. In this same section he described the form of prayer of St Ignatius and then affirms that this is the goal of all Jesuits by reason of their vocation. St Ignatius was so filled with the presence of the Trinity and the resulting devotion that wherever he looked he found God.

Father Ignatius enjoyed this kind of prayer by reason of a great privilege and in a most singular manner, and this besides, that in all things, actions, and conversations he contemplated the presence of God and experienced the reality of spiritual things, so that he was a contemplative likewise in action (a thing which he used to express by saying: God must be found in everything).¹⁴

¹² MHSI, *Epistolae Nadal*, 4:651-2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 668-9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 651.

This doctrine is central to all that Nadal wrote. In explaining and enlarging upon it there is constant reference to the 'circle of prayer and action', in which devotion acts as both a motivation for and a result of this contemplation. It is an intimate part of the life of prayer. Devotion, understood as denoting the heart and soul of the apostle who feels the love of his leader, makes possible the blending of the Martha and the Mary. This is the interior force that urges on the apostle to accomplish great things for Christ. It is this sentiment of love for God that allows the Jesuit to find in all that he does the object of that love, and which in turn gives him more devotion while he is engaged in formal prayer. And so the 'circle of prayer and action' as mentioned above. All the spiritual exercises performed during a Jesuit's day should increase and strengthen his devotion. This in turn becomes the driving force for apostolic labour and brings him to a greater love of God and a closer union with him. Devotion that is not inclined to work for the salvation of souls but inclines one to unnecessary solitude and recollection is not proper to the spirit of the Society, a spirit which in St Ignatius's mind must seek the greater glory of God at all times.

According, then, to St Ignatius and Jerome Nadal there is a grace peculiar to the Society—and not an extraordinary, mystical grace—that is given to all according to each one's co-operation. This is the grace which enables the follower of St Ignatius to continue his apostolic work and achieve union with God just as he achieved this union (although not necessarily in the same degree). And hence a Jesuit should partake in some fashion of that Ignatian devotion which is connected with the heart, with spiritual relish, with peace of soul, with calm, with fervour, with spirit, with fire, with zeal, with an intimate, loving union with God, with the charity of action flowing from warm love, with the notion of *Contemplativus simul in actione*; a devotion that can be found in studies, that is aided by mass, communion, mental and vocal prayers, by preaching and other ministries; a devotion that is the cause as well as the effect of these: the circle of prayer and action. Strikingly present in all that is said about this devotion is the personal, individual element. By obligation certain things exist in common, by devotion there comes to be a generous 'more' for Christ. Devotion includes the sentiments, the affections, the emotions, and this is the power behind the Ignatian 'more'.