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ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH MYSTAGOGY

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Abstract. Ignatius of Loyola's spiritual progress unfolded as a transformative mystagogical journey shaped by two decisive conversions that prepared him for the illuminative stage and unitive life. His first conversion followed the battle of Pamplona, when he turned from a sinful past toward an initial desire to follow Christ to Jerusalem. This conversion, however, remained marked by narcissism and externalism. A second and more radical conversion occurred in Manresa, involving the purification of his self-propelled perfectionism. During this period, Ignatius entered the purgative stage through active asceticism and a painful passive purification characterized by scrupulosity and deep depression rooted in the persistent memory of past sins. In this period, he confronted his inner demons and came to recognize that spiritual growth was not self-achieved but initiated by God. Gradually, Ignatius moved into the illuminative stage, gaining clarity of vision and discernment, and eventually into a mystical stage marked by inner visions and union with the Divine. Throughout this journey, he was driven by his zeal "to help souls" and a desire to do so "in poverty and humility." His sanctity matured through a kenotic life of self-abnegation and the mortification of his will and passions, enabling deeper devotion and union with the Divine Persons.

Keywords: mystagogy; purgative; illuminative; unitive

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Introduction

The word "mystagogy" means "initiation into the mysteries." It comes from two Greek root words: "*mystos,*" which refers to mysteries, and "*agia*," the substantive of the word "*ago,*" which means "to lead into." The word "*mysterio*" refers to "that which is secret or hidden," which in turn comes from the verb "*myo*," which means "to keep the eyes and lips closed." In the Hellenic world, the mystagogues were priests who initiated people into mystical experiences through rituals.[1]

In the Church's sacramental language, the word "mystagogy" is employed by the first Christians who called the sacraments "*mysteria*." The sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation, and the Eucharist are the paths through which Christians are introduced into the deifying Christic experience and the Christian community. Perhaps the most significant of the writings among the Church Fathers that employed the term *mystagogia* was Cyril of Jerusalem. In his mystagogic catecheses, he explained the sacraments as the *mysteria* of initiation of the Church.[2]

Ignatius himself traversed a personal mystagogy, with God's gentle Spirit accompanying him into the depths of his darkest "inferno," only to emerge into a life of illumination, and leading him into a life of profound familiarity and union with God. His mystagogical journey commenced with an unexpected twist—an apparent setback and somber descent into ignominy. In his mystagogy, he traversed a kenotic experience, characterized by a painful purification, until he was led into a divinizing[3] mystical union with God, which granted him the gift of finding God in all things.

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[1] Javier Melloni, S.J. *La Mistagogía de los Ejercicios* (Bilbao: Ediciones Mensajero and Santander: Editorial Sal Terrae, 2001), 21-22.

[2] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 21-22.

[3] The term "divinization" refers to the transforming effect of grace on us, allowing us to participate in the divine life of the Trinity. Divinization as the process of transformation of individuals does not alter human nature. Even as our nature is elevated, we do not become gods. We are not divine by nature in

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Initial Transformation of a Soldier's Imaginations and Introspections

Ignatius had two conversions: the first was in Loyola after the battle at Pamplona, and the second was in Manresa. The first conversion occurred on account of having been wounded at a battle in Pamplona, where his leg was hit by a cannonball. Being a vain man, he was displeased by the fact that his right leg was shorter than his left; thus the gruesome intervention of pulling this leg. During his months of immobility, Ignatius, who had been attached to the vainglory and pleasures of the world, was able to look deeply into himself. This first fire was his initial conversion that ignited his desire for Christ. The second conversion, a second fire that purified him of his narcissistic ego, occurred in the town of Manresa, where his profound spiritual experiences radically transformed him from a self-propelled to a Spirit-led man.

While recuperating at his castle in Loyola, he read two books, the *Flos Sanctorum* (The Golden Legend) by Ludolph of Saxony and the *Vita Christi* (Life of Christ), both of which provoked the movement of imagination and introspection.[4] During his convalescence, he also noticed a shift in interior feelings, which he later named "consolation" and "desolation." While imagining great deeds of preaching like Dominic and living in poverty like Francis, he would feel deeply peaceful and joyful. On the other hand, while musing on thoughts of chivalry, conquests, and romance, he would feel dry and empty after the exhilarating daydreaming.[5] This sharp contrast of feelings directed

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the way that the Second Person of the Trinity is. We are invited to cooperate with the divine, to the point where a deepening transformation occurs in us and thus become deified.

[4] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 31-32.

[5] "The Autobiography," in *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, George Ganss, S.J., ed; with collaboration of Parmananda R. Divarkar, S.J., Edward J. Malatesta, S.J., and Martin E. Palmer, S.J.; prefaced by John W. Padberg, S.J. (New York & Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1991). Henceforth, referred to as "Auto," followed by the paragraph number.

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his first election: a radical conversion from his former life of conquest and vanity to that of a poor pilgrim.

His months of convalescence at Loyola were his initial conversion – and as such, it was inchoate and in need of deeper purification, which would occur later. His initial conversion was characterized by narcissism and externalism. Ignatius was still focused on himself, his idealized self-image, and projections, in a way that he was excited about his "new and improved self." He had an obsession with performing great acts and focused on himself and his dreams, a notch higher than his former desires to conquer women and the world. His self-dialogue was a projection of what he wanted for his brand-new self, rather than the outcome of seeking the will of God for him. "(He) would stop and think, reasoning with himself: How would it be if I did what St. Francis did and that which St. Dominic did?"[6] He was burning with generous desires; however, they were blind, self-centered, and impulsive – his narcissism was still deeply entrenched in his consciousness. Furthermore, the conversion was still largely external as he wanted to leave for the Holy Land, a geographic site of his pilgrimage, but not the permanent internal disposition of seeking and actualizing God's most holy will. His idea of pilgrimage was spatial rather than internal, and a permanent movement of decentering as the means of uniting oneself with God. Much later, the old Ignatius would call himself a pilgrim, but one who had truly found himself in God,[7] united with the divine after having been thoroughly purified by his kenotic journey.

Nevertheless, God was transforming Ignatius through these external means – his wound, the long months of convalescence, the readings, *Flos Sanctorum* and the *Vita Christi*, and his introspection and self-dialogue. Although they were still ambivalent and self-centered, his libidinal desires were initially being redirected from what was sinful and worldly to an inchoate religious longing.

[6] *Auto.*, no. 7.

[7] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 33-34.

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Convalescing at Loyola, Ignatius also considered entering the Carthusians of Seville after his planned pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The passion for contemplation was driven by a desire to immerse himself in the transfigured humanity of Christ through the senses of the body and soul. Although his dream to become a monk never materialized, his affection for the Carthusians remained. As soon as Ignatius had recuperated and sold his properties, he embarked on his pilgrimage, the itinerary of which included the Benedictine monastery, the closest he could get to his desired contemplative life. At the Abbey of Montserrat, he spent three days in preparation for a general confession, the first exercise that the Abbot recommended to anyone before embarking on a spiritual journey. He then exchanged his clothes for a beggar's sackcloth and held an overnight vigil before Our Lady to whom he offered his sword.[8]

When Ignatius set foot in Montserrat on March 22, 1522, he was aware that he could not delay his journey to Barcelona if he had to reach Rome, which issued pilgrimage permits to the Holy Land only once a year on Easter Monday. Since Easter Monday that year fell on April 20, Ignatius had less than a month to travel to Rome for the permit. The *Autobiography* mentions that the entourage of the new Spanish Pope, Hadrian VI, was passing through Catalonia, which meant that his old friends from the Court of Arevalo in Barcelona could easily recognize the begging pilgrim as the courtier from Loyola. Avoiding the awkward situation of being recognized by the aristocrats who knew him, Ignatius decided to postpone his trip to Barcelona, which meant delaying his pilgrimage to the Holy Land for a year.[9]

Not being able to lodge at the Abbey of Montserrat, Ignatius proceeded to Manresa, a town that nestled at the foot of the serrated mountains on March 25, 1522, and lodged at the Hospital de Sta. Lucia for free. The setback was providential for the pilgrim since it afforded him more time to pray, journalize his spiritual experiences, seek spiritual direction with Dom Chanon, and read the *Compendio Breve de Ejercicios*

[8] See *Auto.*, nos. 11-14 and nos. 17-18.

[9] See *Auto.*, no. 18.

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Espirituales, an anonymous summary of Dom Cisneros' *Ejercitatorio de la Vida Espiritual*, a synthesis of the best of the one thousand years of monastic tradition and of the great spiritual masters. The *Compendio* was organized by weeks, with seven hours of prayer each day; hence, when Ignatius wrote in his *Autobiography* that he prayed seven hours a day, he was referring to mental prayer and the meditation on the antiphons which guided the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways. He practiced the monastic prayers recommended in the *Compendio*, even as he was receiving guidance from Dom Chanon. Indeed, Ignatius' link to the monastery was not simply devotional, but much more extensive.[10] In Manresa, Ignatius was able to note down ideas from the *Compendio,* which Dom Chanon handed over to him.

Two Stages of Purification in Manresa

Manresa was a kenotic mystagogical experience for Ignatius as he peregrinated for two periods in his spiritual journey there. These two stages were the active purification, which was preparatory, enthusiastic, and peaceful, in which Ignatius embraced some of the practices of the eremitical life; then a second stage of passive purgation, which was marked by a depressive scrupulosity.

The Stage of Enthusiasm or Active Purification

The first stage was the enthusiastic period[11] when Ignatius felt reborn and full of zeal. He was filled with love and devotion as he embarked on his newfound life in the Lord, "even though he had no knowledge of spiritual matters, yet in his speech he revealed great fervor and eagerness to go forward in God's service."[12] The enthusiastic, purgative stage began in Montserrat, when he made his general confession with Dom Chanon, for which he had prepared for three days. Once he settled in Manresa, he focused on the elements

[10] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 35-36.

[11] *Auto*., nos. 19-21.

[12] *Auto*., no. 21.

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of a hermit's life, the primitive mystagogical stage of his spiritual life. This primitive and eremitical life was influenced by his immersion in the Abbey of Montserrat, where he was exposed to the solitary life of the monks, literally following the liturgical hours of the monastery. This eremitical life was also influenced by his conversations with the Prior of San Pablo, who had formed a group of hermits, praying in *La Cova*, the cave where Ignatius stayed for four months. In the *Autobiography*, he narrates that he spent seven hours on his knees, "getting up regularly at midnight."[13] Ignatius used the guidelines for praying the seven hours as presented in the *Compendio,* which instructs the practice of mental prayer.[14] With this increasing intensification of prayer, he engaged in severe penitential practices, letting his hair and nails grow.[15] The guidelines in the *Compendio* reinforced his intense desire for prayer and solitude. The following condensed text, essential in monastic mystagogy, was given to Ignatius:

> Those who are dedicated to the service of God and called to a particular vocation by His Majesty (…) are promised more particular gifts. He has segregated them from the world, enclosed them in their houses, freed them from the noise and turmoil of their confusion, and removed them from many occasions of offending him, placing them in spaces of peace and quiet where they can correct their past lives through penance and compunction; so that they can give thanks for these countless benefits, so that by considering his perfections and wonders through the exercise of contemplation they may become one in spirit with him through love and attain true wisdom (…) He has separated them from the quarrelsome and bothersome affairs of the world, so that all their activities would consist in contemplating and pondering that God is the infinite Good whom they ought to love.[16]

[13] *Auto*., nos. 25 and 26.

[14] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 38.

[15] See *Auto*., no. 19.

[16] "*Los que son dedicados al servicio de Dios y llamados de su Majestad con particular voccación (…) les promete dones más particulares, [a los] que ha segregado del mundo, encerrado en su casa, librado de los estruendos y tumultos de su confusión , y quitándoles muchas ocasiones de le ofender, poniendolos en lugar de paz y de quietud, adonde puedan corregir su vida pasada, por la penitencia y compunción; para que de los innumerables beneficios le den gracias, y para*

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In the text above, the three classic ways of the spiritual life are sketched:

First, the *via purgativa* is reflected in the words, "where they can correct their past lives through penance and compunction;"

Second, the *via illuminativa*: "so that they can give thanks for these countless benefits"; and

Third, the *via unitiva*: "so that by considering his perfections and wonders through the exercise of contemplation they may become one in spirit with him through love and attain true wisdom."

The pilgrim had begun the kenotic *via purgativa* when he confessed his sins to Dom Chanon in the Monastery of Montserrat, and the months thereafter when he practiced severe penances. The *Autobiography* narrates that initially, he felt "the same interior state of the very steady joy, without having any knowledge of the interior things of the spirit."[17]

He would be so astounded by the changes that transpired, gradually transforming him in a kenotic and divinizing process. Previously, he had said that "Our Lord dealt with his soul, which was still blind, though greatly desirous of serving him as far as his knowledge went …. but not looking at any interior thing, nor knowing what humility was or charity or patience, or the discretion that regulates and measures these virtues."[18]

He had only an undiscerned passion, such as desiring to kill a Muslim for questioning the post-partum virginity of Mary, on his way

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que, consideradas sus perfecciones y maravillas por el ejercicio de la contemplación, se hagan por amor un solo espiritu con Él y alcanzar la verdadera sabiduría (…) Los apartó de los bulliciosos y enojosos negocios del mundo, [para que] toda su ocupación sea en contemplar y pensar que Él es Bien infinito a quien han de amar" from an Unknown 16th Century Monk of Montserrat, *Compendio Breve de Ejercicios Espirituales, Melloni,* ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2006), nos. 2, 3, and 4, pp. 5-6, quoted in Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 38.

[17] *Auto*., no. 19.

[18] *Auto*., no 14.

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to Montserrat.[19] Clearly, he had not yet been purified of his aggressive ego; he had only shifted the direction of his energies. Ignatius was still very much a haughty *hidalgo,* and his impulse was to fight for honor;[20] as such, his narcissistic aggression still had to be purged. He had not yet resolved his inner conflict; thus, his infantile solution: "being tired of examining what would be best to do…, he decided as follows: to let the mule go with the reins slack as far as the place where the ways parted. And if the mule took the village road, he would seek out the Moor and stab him; if the mule did not go toward the village but took the highway, he would let him be."[21] Providentially, "the mule took the highway and left the village road."[22] Ignatius still had a long way to go in the mystagogy where he would begin to discover that in the life of the spirit, one does not grab; one lets go and allows oneself to be seized by the Spirit. He had to realize that one does not lead but is led by the Spirit; one does not take the initiative,[23] but is led into a kenotic process by God's initiative.

Although this stage was enthusiastic, active purgation was also occurring in Ignatius. According to the *Autobiography*, the first temptation he experienced was depression as a result of the evil spirit's taunt, "How will you be able to endure this life for the seventy years you have to live?" He immediately overcame the thought and remained at peace by retorting, "Wretch! Can you promise me an hour of life?"[24] Then he experienced strong alternating movements of consolation and desolation which came and went without his knowing how: "Sometimes he felt so out of sorts that he found no relish in saying prayers nor in hearing Mass nor in any other devotion he might practice. At other

[19] See *Auto*., nos. 15-16.

[20] William W. Meissner, S.J., M.D., *Ignatius of Loyola, The Psychology of a Saint* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 61-62.

[21] *Auto*., no. 16.

[22] *Auto*., no. 16.

[23] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 39.

[24] *Auto*., no. 20.

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times, quite the opposite of this came over him so suddenly that he seemed to have thrown off sadness and desolation just as one snatches a cape from another's shoulders…perturbed by these changes that he had never experienced before…he said to himself, 'What new life is this that we are now beginning?'"[25] Unbeknownst to him, he was gradually entering the passive *via purgativa* – this time, not in the way he had chosen—enthusiastic and eremitical—but one in which he had to be led. He was being directed into a kenotic dark night, into a descent into his "inferno," which corresponds to the second stage of the initiatory movement of purgation, which follows.

Kenotic Passive Purification

This second stage of *via purgativa* was an experience of great depression[26] when his subconscious was being opened to God's mystery, and he realized that his spiritual progress was not a matter of self-determination. He experienced that he was no longer master of himself, and the narcissistic stage of his spiritual journey was being painfully purified. The purgative process turned for the worse, especially when he started comparing his ego ideal with the reality of his past life, and he was incessantly haunted by his oppressive guilt. This passive purification in which he found himself helpless was to become more arduous and extreme as he combatted against his scruples. It was most likely that Ignatius' scruples were stirred by the *Compendio*'s spiritual exercises on the *via purgativa,* which proposed an extensive meditation on one's sins[27] where there is a fostering of fear for the consequences of personal sins: death, judgment, and hell, [28] employing examples of Lucifer, and Adam and Eve,[29] interjecting the

[25] *Auto*., no. 21.

[26] See *Auto*., nos. 22-26.

[27] *Compendio,* nos. 20-33, cited in *Mistagogía*, 40.

[28] See *Compendio*, nos. 28-32; and 49-85, cited in *Mistagogía*, 40.

[29] See *Compendio*, nos. 27; 37-48, cited in *Mistagogía*, 40.

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passion and death of the Lord.[30] In the *Compendio*, Ignatius could have pondered on these points:

> Consider and ponder the multitude and gravity of the sins you committed before your conversion; these cry out to God, demanding your chastisement, because through them you offended your Creator, and through this ingratitude, you have crucified him one more time. [31]
>
> Consider how little you have made satisfaction for them and how small your contrition has been, seeing how ugly, how stupid, and prejudiced they have been to you and your neighbors.[32]
>
> Consider and be assured that in this life you will pay for them in full, until you have paid for them with your last money.[33]

Alas, the glaring contrast between the reality of his sinfulness and his identification with St. Onofre, his idealized self, and his extreme scrupulosity led him to suicidal ideation. In all this, Ignatius' narcissistic desires and egoistic will were being excruciatingly stripped from him in his purgative experience of *kénosis*. The *Autobiography* narrates that Ignatius suspected that he had made a bad confession in Montserrat. Consequently, he confessed repeatedly what he feared he had not confessed previously, and still, he would not be at peace.[34] This anguish lasted for months as his past sins repeatedly hounded him, leaving him in great torment. Sigmund Freud would have commented that Ignatius' superego was harsh and severe and had turned against his ego. The

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[30] *Compendio*, nos.33; 52; 46; 63; 73; 86-116, cited in *Mistagogía*, 40.

[31] "*Piensa y pondera la muchedumbre y gravedad de tus pecados antes de tu conversión cometidos; los cuales dan voces a Dios demandando castigo, pues por ellos ofendiste a tu Criador, y por el desagradecimiento, otra vez lo tornaste a crucificar*" from *Compendio*, no. 42, quoted in Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 40.

[32] "*Piensa cuán poco has satisfecho por ellos, y cuán pequeña ha sido tu contrición, siendo ellos tan feos, tan torpes y tan perjudiciales a ti y a tus prójimos*" from *Compendio,* no. 43, quoted in Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 40.

[33] "*Piensa y ten por cierto que en esta vida o en la otra lo has de pagar, hasta el postrero dinero*" from *Compendio*, no. 44, quoted in Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 40.

[34] *Auto*., no. 24.

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Jesuit psychiatrist, William Meissner, suggests that the punitive demands that lay behind his scrupulous obsessions were possibly the result of "superego regression," punishing his ego for his self-centeredness, which still remained in him.[35] The shadows of his sins and the scars of his past and the intensity of his unrelenting culpability drove him to the brink of suicide: "the temptation often came over him with great force to throw himself through a large hole in his room, next to the place (a small room that the Dominicans had given him in their monastery) where he was praying.[36] The destructive forces of his superego unleashed in this self-annihilating process emanated from his aggression, which had been effectively sublimated by his ego ideal[37] during the earlier, enthusiastic stage of the mystagogy.

There was nothing that could alleviate his passive night of the spirit—indeed, the pilgrim experienced a kenotic mystagogy during this second phase of the purgative period. He was brought to a radical awareness of his spiritual poverty, no longer the newly converted warrior who thought he could manipulate God with his prayer and fasting. Indeed, he was being purified of unconscious forces from which he could not liberate himself without de-centering and abandoning himself completely to God. "Although he was practically convinced that those scruples did him much harm and that it would be good to be rid of them, he could not break himself off."[38] Ignatius was utterly helpless.

His ego-ideal in his early enthusiastic stage—expressed in his arrogant proclamation in the days of his convalescence, "St. Dominic did this, therefore I have to do it; St. Francis did this, therefore I have to do it"[39] and in the early days in Manresa, "when it occurred to him

[35] Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint*, 74 and 75.

[36] *Auto*., nos. 23 and 24.

[37] Meissner, *Ignatius of Loyola: The Psychology of a Saint*, 76.

[38] *Auto*., no. 22.

[39] *Auto*., no. 7.

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to do some penance that the saints practiced, he determined to do the same and even more"[40]—has crumbled in the face of the poignant and painful revelation of his unconscionable past. The impulses of his will—the attainment of sanctity out of sheer will—have been rendered futile and powerless. God was teaching Ignatius that to reach Him, the only route was self-dispossession: not knowing,[41] not controlling, not conquering.

Once in great distress, he wished he could follow a puppy[42]– a point where he reached utter humility and the beginning of liberation. In his extreme austerity and ascetical practices, he started imagining meat, which was an invitation for him to stop pushing himself to his ascetical limits, an experience similar to Acts 10: 9-16—Peter's vision of the fowls and birds and the Lord's mandate, "What God has made clean, you are not to call profane (v. 15). This second stage of depression was a mystagogy to surrender, humility, and freedom. It is precisely in this limit of abasement, having been drained of his narcissistic ego, that the Lord could begin revealing Himself to him clearly. The *Autobiography* chronicles that

> the Lord deigned that he wake as from sleep…(and) he began to examine the means by which that spirit had come. He thus decided with great lucidity not to confess anything from the past anymore; and so from that day forward he remained free of those scruples and held it for certain that Our Lord had mercifully deigned to deliver him.[43]

Ignatius' experience of liberation from "hell" is reflected in the exercise at the end of the *First Week* when an exercitant cries an "exclamation of wonder and surging emotion, uttered as I reflect on all creatures and wonder how they have allowed me to live and have preserved me in life" (*Sp.Ex.*, no. 60). Liberated from the ghosts of his past and deeply in touch with his spiritual poverty and his absolute

[40] *Auto*., no. 14.

[41] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 41.

[42] *Auto*., no. 22.

[43] *Auto*. no. 25.

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dependence on God, the illuminative stage of his mystagogy has commenced.[44] The kenotic movement of his dark night of the soul had paved the way to a deepening divinization.

The Stage of Liberation or Illumination

What followed the purgative stage was the mystical stage of inner visions when Ignatius was filled with the presence of the Lord. As the passive purgative stage, the illuminative stage likewise occurred in Manresa. He felt like a child being taught by his schoolmaster[45] and no longer the proud man arguing with the Muslim about the eternal virginity of Mary.[46] The divine Teacher was illuminating him internally about the essence of the Trinity, his creative energy, his presence in the humanity of Christ, and the ultimate end of things.

Mystical Invasions in Manresa

Joseph de Guibert remarks that the mystical visions of Ignatius are characterized by a great poverty of imaginative elements and the richness and importance of the contents that Ignatius attributed to them thirty years later. Ignatius' visions are internal, which profoundly impacted his understanding and greatly moved him, rather than the powerful, external images that he saw outside of him. The graces that Ignatius received from internal visions from the time of Manresa were "eminent intellectual lights." The poor "symbolic images" that he recorded were reactions to these divinely infused "eminent intellectual lights". Ignatius seems to invite us to delve into the deep interpretation of the "symbolic images"[47] rather than be caught up with the images in themselves. His mystical visions pointed to eternal truths about the

[44] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 42.

[45] See *Auto*., no. 27.

[46] See *Auto*., nos. 15-16.

[47] Joseph De Guibert, S.J., *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice* (St. Louis, MI: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1964), 31-32.

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Trinity, the Triune God's eternal plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, and how we are incorporated into God's salvific plan.

Ignatius had five mystical understandings in Manresa: his inner understanding of the Holy Trinity; his understanding through a vision of creation; his inner understanding of the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist; his inner understanding of the humanity of Christ; and his vision at the river Cardoner.[48] The first four understandings could have made him an *alumbrado,* having had no formal education – but in the *Autobiography* he confessed that even if the Sacred Scriptures did not exist, he was willing to die for the truth of his personal experiences: "These things he saw strengthened him then and always gave him such strength in his faith that he has often thought to himself: If there were no Scriptures to teach us these matters of faith, he would be resolved to die for them, solely because of what he has seen."[49]

The most significant of the five mystical experiences was at Cardoner, also referred to as *eximia ilustracion* (profound enlightenment):

> Once, he was going out of devotion to a church situated a little more than a mile from Manresa; I believe it is called St. Paul's, and the road goes by a river. As he went along, occupied with his devotions, he sat down for a little while with his face toward the river, which ran down below. While he was seated there, the eyes of understanding began to be opened; not that he saw any vision, but he understood and learnt many things, both spiritual matters and matters of faith and of scholarship, and this with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him.
>
> [Camara]: This left his understanding so very enlightened that he felt as if he were another man with another mind.[50]

In his whole life, Ignatius never received an interior enlightenment so powerful and decisive as the "single stroke with lights equally abundant…and with supernatural insights equally comprehensive" at

[48] See *Auto.*, nos. 28 to 30.

[49] *Auto.*, no. 29, 4 (fourth point).

[50] *Auto.*, no. 30, 5.

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the banks of Cardoner[51] It was from this mystical space that he would understand everything and would shed light on very important matters in his life and the life of the Society of Jesus in the future.

There is no way of knowing what specifically was revealed to Ignatius at Cardoner. However, since the time of this internal vision, Ignatius moved on from an eremitical life[52] to one that was more balanced and apostolic, and yet deeply rooted in this mystical experience at Cardoner, such that Nadal said that at Cardoner "Ignatius understood all things with an elevated clarity and light, to which he would later refer when giving the rationale of things when asked about them, whether it was about the Society or other spiritual matters."[53]

The Cardoner enlightenment gifted Ignatius with an internal transformation of perceiving reality; from thereon, everything appeared to him in a new light such that "This was such that in the whole course of his life, after completing sixty-two years, even if he gathered up all the various helps he may have had from God and all the various things he has known, even adding them all together, he does not think he had got as much as at that one time."[54] The experience was apophatic in the sense that he understood many things and was granted a new way of seeing; however, he could not articulate these realities in propositional truths or statements. The mystical experience was not external, such as his vision of Our Lady in Loyola.[55]

Rather, he was inside the mystical experience and not outside of it. He had a cosmic understanding of realities – including matters of the

[51] De Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, 40.

[52] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 45.

[53] On p. 45 of Mistagogía, Melloni quotes Nadal from Fontes Narrativi (FN) II, *Pláticas de Coímbra*, pp. 152-153: Ignacio "*entendió [alli] todas las cosas en una claridad y luz muy subida, a lo cual se solía referir después dando razón de las cosas que acontecía demandarle, ansí de la Compañía, como otras espirituales.*"

[54] *Auto*., no. 30, 5.

[55] See *Auto*., no. 10.

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faith, such as the Trinity, spiritual and scholarly matters. This profound mystical experience at Cardoner not only radically changed his horizon of experiencing, understanding, and thinking, but was a turning point for Ignatius as he had begun to be completely open to mystical realities and therefrom received the grace of finding God in all things.

From the perspective of the mystagogy that Ignatius was undergoing, the *Autobiography* describes that "God treated him at this time just as a schoolmaster treats a child whom he is teaching."[56] To be initiated into the mystagogical journey is to take the stance of a pupil—humble, willing, eager, and obedient. This mystagogy into mystery can only occur if one possesses a disposition to receive God's word – *via passiva*. In the first months of Ignatius in Loyola, he was still too independent and self-focused, so it was not possible for him to receive without reserve. The initial conversion that occurred in Loyola was powerful and even gifted him with the freedom from his sexual disorders through a vision of the Mother and Child.[57] But the import of this vision dawned on him much later, when he was being purified of his narcissism, and the memory of his past sins was being healed through the kenotic journey he went through in Manresa. Indeed, Ignatius had to go through a mystagogical process that necessarily went through the dark night of the soul before he entered the stage of illumination.

It has been said above that Ignatius had absolute certitude of the authenticity of his mystical experiences, such as the internal vision of the humanity of Christ which "strengthened him then and always gave him such strength in his faith that he has often thought to himself: If there were no Scriptures to teach us these matters of faith, he would be resolved to die for them, solely because of what he has seen."[58] At this juncture, the mystic is one who has been led by God himself into His mystery and radically transformed by what had

[56] *Auto*., no. 27.

[57] See *Auto*., no. 10.

[58] *Auto*., no. 29, 4.

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been unveiled to him. He was transformed into a witness of what he had been led by God to see. Ignatius thus gained a certainty that God directly communicated with each person who dispossessed himself for a mystagogical encounter.[59] We thus see Ignatius's assertion of his experience in his instruction to the facilitator of the *Spiritual Exercises*: "leave the Creator to act immediately with the creature, and the creature with its Creator and Lord."[60]

Transformative Effects of the Mystagogy on Ignatius

Ignatius had thus entered the *via illuminativa* and the **beginnings** of the *via unitiva* in the mystagogy that God was leading him into, understanding the mysteries clearly, even if he could not articulate them. He was able to comprehend God's act of creation: "the manner in which God had created the world was presented to his understanding with great spiritual joy."[61] He was able to see clearly the presence of Christ in the Eucharist: "although he cannot explain this very well after so long a time, nevertheless, what he saw clearly with his understanding was how Jesus Christ our Lord was there in that Most Holy Sacrament."[62] And at Cardoner, his "eyes of understanding began to be opened; not that he saw any vision, but he understood and learnt many things, both spiritual matters and matters of faith and of scholarship, and this with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed to be new to him."[63] The clarity with which he was able to see and understand these great mysteries indicated that he had veritably penetrated the illuminative stage and, at the same time, his mystical knowledge had awakened; thus transforming him into a person in the process of uniting oneself with the Beloved. Ignatius himself was being divinized by the transformative experience.

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[59] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 45-46.

[60] *Sp.Ex.*, no. 15.

[61] *Auto.*, no. 29, 2.

[62] *Auto.*, no 29, 3.

[63] *Auto.*, no. 30, 5.

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The narcissism in the newly converted Ignatius at Loyola was expunged and transformed. No longer was he the self-focused romantic, in a monologue about how to imitate the great saints[64] but one purified in the crucible of the dark night of the spirit, and now a recipient of the divinizing gift of illumination, invited by the Lord "whoever would like to come with Me is to labor with Me, that in following Me in the pain, he may also follow Me in the glory" (*Sp.Ex.* no. 95, 5). To seek God's glory marks the decentering from the search for personal glory. The glory of God will be a shared divinizing glory as it deals with an interchange between the two lovers: "love consists in interchange between the two parties; that is to say in the lover's giving and communicating to the beloved what (one) has or can; and so, on the contrary, the beloved to the lover" (*Sp.Ex.*, no. 231, 2).

Transformation also occurred in the pilgrim's view of contemplation and action. Initially, there was a divide between Ignatius' attraction to contemplating Christ and identification with his works. The mystical experiences made him realize that there was no chasm separating the two, but they were intimately linked to each other. The interior understanding of Creation and the mystical enlightenment at Cardoner showed him that the whole world was open to contemplation. The mystical experiences in Manresa presented the world as transparent to the presence of God. The pilgrim intuited that all things and situations could be occasions for profound prayer and contemplation, thereby finding God. The question was not choosing between contemplation and action; rather, the question was one's disposition and contemplative awareness of God's presence and Self-communication wherever one is.[65] Such an attitude of openness and receptivity and contemplative disposition would allow for a permanent contemplation which characterizes the Ignatian charism of being "contemplatives in action." Jerónimo Nadal believes that Ignatius' special charism was "to see and contemplate in all things, actions, and conversations the presence of

[64] See *Auto.*, no. 7.

[65] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 47-48.

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God and the love of spiritual things, to remain a contemplative even amid action" (*simul in actione contemplativus*).[66]

With his mystical experiences and insight, Ignatius contributed something new to spiritual tradition; that is, the union between action in the world (beyond the monastery) and contemplation. The union is realized in seeking and performing the will of God. In life and prayer, one must search to know and accomplish God's will. The mystagogy of the *Spiritual Exercises* liberates the person from inordinate attachments, initiates the person in a loving encounter with Christ, transforms one's value system, orients it to the Kingdom, disposes the person to self-dispossession, progressively configures one to Christ and divinizes him at deeper levels, and prepares the person to discover God's unique will for him. As the pilgrim's life was marked with self-dispossession, self-knowledge, and divinizing configuration to Christ, he thus conceived the *Spiritual Exercises* for the purpose of "seeking and finding the will of God" (*Sp.Ex.*, nos. 1,4; 4,5.7; 11,2; 15,3; 16,3; 20,8; 76,1; 87,3; 189,9).

Zeal to Help Souls

In Manresa, there was no spiritual person who could assist Ignatius during his dark night of the spirit in the purgative stage; much less, during the mystical invasion of the illuminative stage, which followed. He was not able to receive any guidance from Dom Chanon at Montserrat, the Dominican confessor of the cathedral,[67] nor the prior of San Pablo, who passed on after his return from the Holy Land. Because of the dearth of spiritual masters who could have assisted him and others, Ignatius was inspired to help souls as expressed in the dictum, "*ayudar las almas*." Polanco declares, "Here, God imprinted within him a very great zeal for souls"[68] and that "he always had those

[66] On p. 45 of *The Jesuits*, de Guibert quotes Nadal from MonNad, IV, 651; *Acta quaedam*," in SdeSI, I, 472; FN, II, 123 in *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*.

[67] See *Auto.* no. 22.

[68] On p. 49 of *Mistagogía*, Melloni quotes Polanco from *Chron.*, I, 25.

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desires, to pass on to his neighbor what God was giving him, finding out through experience that what he was communicating to others was not diminishing but rather growing in intensity within him. Thus, he began to give the *Spiritual Exercises* to various people while he was residing in Manresa.[69] Indeed, mysticism for Ignatius was not an end in itself but a channel for him to carry out his own service directed to the greater glory of God.[70] His profound kenotic experience and divinizing configuration to Christ sparked in Ignatius an ardent zeal to lead souls to God.

The pilgrim grew from a focus on himself and a literal imitation of the poor Christ, expressed in an eremitical lifestyle, into a constant awareness of God's presence, an attentiveness to His will, and a desire to help souls become intimate with God and discover His will. He thus cast aside severe fasting and penance, and started to eat meat and trim his hair and nails.[71] And from an exclusively eremitical and contemplative space, he moved into a burning desire to share his personal experience and the insight derived from it: God has a will for each one and each one has a personal vocation. This constituted the core of his originality and what would govern his future decisions.

Transitions and Choices the Pilgrim Elected

a. Pilgrim at a Crossroad

The pilgrim was resolute in going to the Holy Land, even after he had changed his initial plan eleven months ago on account of the nobles who could have recognized him in Barcelona. The entire Manresa experience reinforced his desire with "a great assurance in his soul which he could not doubt but gave him the conviction that

[69] On p. 49 , Melloni quotes *Fontes Narrativi*, I, 163-164.

[70] De Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Doctrine and Practice*, 178-179.

[71] See *Auto.*, nos. 27 & 29, 3.

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he would, in fact, find a way to go to Jerusalem."[72] Even when he reached the Holy Land, "his firm intention was to remain in Jerusalem, continually visiting those holy places; and in addition to this devotion, he also planned to help souls."[73] Upon his return from the Holy Land, Ignatius was not exactly sure of what he should do: "After the pilgrim realized that it was not God's will that he remained in Jerusalem, he continually pondered within himself what he ought to do."[74] At this juncture, the pilgrim was ruminating on entering "a religious institute or going about the world."[75] What was clear was he wanted to help souls. Lainez narrates that deep down Ignatius sensed "that he was called to help others, he said that he wanted much more to become a conventual rather than an observant, to be able to be of help to others."[76]

b. Choosing to Study to Help Souls

Guided by the personal vocation of helping souls, the pilgrim felt "inclined to study for some time so he would be able to help souls; he thus decided to go to Barcelona."[77] From Barcelona, Ignatius would then proceed to Alcala, Salamanca, and Paris for studies, enduring various trials and yet absolutely trusting and remaining focused on serving God.[78] Continuing to partake in the Self-emptying of Christ, Ignatius was led to a divinizing union with the Triune God.

[72] *Auto*., no. 40.

[73] *Auto*., no. 45.

[74] *Auto*., no. 50.

[75] *Auto*., no. 71.

[76] On p. 50 of *Mistagogía*, Melloni quotes *FN*, II, 137-138.

[77] *Auto*. , no. 50.

[78] See *Auto*., nos. 54-86.

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c. Choosing "Wherever" was the Glory of God

After seven years, after the group of seven companions had been formed, Ignatius still had the persistent desire to return to Jerusalem; this time, however, his main criterion was "the good of souls." "(T)hey had all determined what they would do, namely go to Venice and to Jerusalem, and spend their lives for the good of souls; and if they were not given permission to remain in Jerusalem (where they could help souls), then they would return to Rome and present themselves to the Vicar of Christ, so that he could make use of them wherever he thought it would be more for the glory of God and the good of souls."[79]

Two criteria characterize the decisions that the pilgrim would make from the time of his conversion in Loyola until the foundation of the Society of Jesus in Rome. These criteria provided cohesiveness and unity to all of his decisions and accounted for his vocation. First, he was propelled by his zeal "to help souls," and second, he desired to accomplish the former "in poverty and humility." These two criteria formed one unifying central motivation in fulfilling his vocation. Although his spirituality was no longer a literal imitation of Christ lived out in an eremitical fashion, his life was increasingly marked by self-dispossession. His discernment and election of choices and decisions were always rooted in his desire to help souls, actualized in poverty and humility, in union with the *Kénosis* of Christ.[80]

Mystagogy Leading Ignatius to the Unitive Life

The years 1540 to 1556 were a period of great importance in the life of Ignatius. The mystagogical path for Ignatius did not culminate in Manresa as God unceasingly accompanied him into deeper kenotic and divinizing union throughout his life until his last years in Rome. Not

[79] *Auto*., no. 85.

[80] Cf. "The Deliberation on Poverty and Selections" and "The Spiritual Diary," in *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, pp. 216-270.

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only did his sanctity reach its full maturity; he was also fully conscious of the Society's mission and his vocation as founder.[81]

In Ignatius, we observe that the unitive life is marked by an *Election*, choosing what is for the greater glory of God, wherever one is immersed. Contemplating the face of God does not constitute the unitive path for Ignatius. Divinizing union is conforming oneself to the desires of the Crucified Christ by doing his will lovingly and humbly, which unites one to God.

The two criteria for his election were the zeal to help souls and the accomplishment of this task in poverty and humility. His *Deliberations on Poverty* and *Spiritual Diary* testify to his complete abandonment, poverty, and desire for union with God in the discernment process and election he went through from February 2 until March 12, 1544. His journal of this process evidences how the pilgrim reached and lived out a kenotic way of life, wherein the pilgrim was completely dispossessed of everything to accomplish God's will. At the same time, at this juncture, Ignatius had entered a mystical union, possessing an interior knowledge of what would please the Lord and a divinizing love that united him with the Crucified and Risen Lord.

Background on the Pilgrim's *Deliberation on Poverty*

Poverty and humility were always Ignatius' guiding principles in serving the Divine Majesty in helping souls. Since their vows at Montmartre in 1534, Ignatius and his companions had been living in evangelical poverty as itinerant preachers like Jesus Christ. In 1541, Ignatius ruminated on how he would write on the canonical poverty of the Society's churches and sacristies, as he had been tasked to write the *Constitutions*. In March of the same year, Ignatius and his professed companions met to discuss the implications of the contents of *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae*, the bull promulgated by Pope Paul III in September 1540, which approved the Society of Jesus. The Society could have no civil right to own stable goods or property like a residence or a

[81] De Guibert, *The Jesuits: Their Spiritual Practice and Doctrine*, 39 and 41.

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church; they were confined to administering it. Ignatius and his five companions agreed that the "sacristy may have a fixed income for all things necessary, from those revenues which will not be for the professed." Three months later, Pope Paul III handed over the Church of Our Lady of the Way to the Society and applied the income it previously possessed to its sacristy.

As 1544 began, Ignatius had become uneasy about the decisions of March 1541 to accept fixed income for the sacristies. He was apprehensive that such a decision veered away from the austere evangelical poverty they had promised to live out. He thus decided to re-examine the pros and cons of this decision in prayer and discernment.[82]

Radical Kenotic Transformation of the Pilgrim

In the three pages of the *Deliberation*, one observes how his mind was working according to the "*Third Time for Making a Sound Election*" (cf. *Sp.Ex.*, no. 177) when a person is in a state of calm and is rational. In his *Spiritual Diary*, his inner self functioned according to the "*Second Time*" (cf. *Sp.Ex.*, no. 177) as he experienced profound consolation and would then plunge into desolation at times. Ignatius' discernment lasted forty days before he received a confirmation of his election. The "*Introduction to the Spiritual Diary*" explains why the discernment process would last forty days. It explains that there were two movements taking place, namely, Ignatius' and God's, each with one's own style and schedule. Shortly after he commenced his days of discernment, Ignatius had already thought himself prepared to make an *Election* within a week. However, God wanted to help him not only make a decision but also lead him into a mystagogy marked by profound mystical experiences and educate him more extensively than arriving at the *Election* proper. God was teaching him to submit himself entirely in affectionate awe and loving humility, which would require a longer time. Thus, although Ignatius strongly felt that the pros and cons favored no fixed revenue earlier on, and on other days

[82] "Introduction to the Deliberation on Poverty," in Ganss (ed.), *Ignatius of Loyola: Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, 217-219.

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of his discernment, he would slip into deep desolation movement, all this time, God was training him to trust Him absolutely and not on his expectation of how God ought to confirm his *Election*.[83]

From February 2 until March 12, 1544, the mystagogical path to divinizing union was indeed an ongoing self-dispossession for Ignatius, a call to deep humility and trust. God was patiently instructing him to surrender to His will completely. The reader notes that his earlier passion was to live in Jerusalem, which eventually transformed into a passion for doing whatever God desired, which was not confined to a place.

In Greek, the two words for "will" are βούλομαι (*boúlomai*) and θέλημα (*thélema*). *Boúlomai* connotes commandment or a mental decision, which is rigid and closed to any other option. *Thélema,* on the other hand, is a dynamic, co-creating decision that adapts to different situations. In Ignatius' life, he eventually discovered that "Jerusalem" was not a geographical place but could be anywhere God wanted him to be.

In his discernment on whether to receive revenues for the Society's churches and sacristies or not, God was drawing him to complete abandon to divine providence. In the forty days of his intense prayerful discernment, God was moving him away from his centeredness on the "I" and his "desires" to "letting himself" be found by the "Thou" of God, which ultimately ended up permeating the pilgrim's entire horizon.[84] Ignatius thus elected poverty as he found himself in the Heart of God, truly a divinizing experience through the path of *kénosis*.

Ignatius in a Lifetime State of Interior Union with God

Inchoately, the divinizing union with God commenced in Manresa after the profound enlightenment at Cardoner, which was nurtured

[83] Ganss (ed.), *Ignatius of Loyola*, 217-233.

[84] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 52.

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for the rest of his life. I reiterate that Ignatius does not mention the unitive stage in the *Spiritual Exercises,* as we see in no.10:

> When the one giving the Exercises perceives that the recipient is being assailed and tempted under the appearance of good, the proper time has come to explain to the retreatant the rules of the Second Week mentioned just above. For ordinarily, the enemy of human nature tempts under the appearance of good more often when a person is performing the exercises in the illuminative life, which corresponds to the Exercises of the Second Week, than in the purgative life, which corresponds to those of the First Week.

His silence on the unitive stage in the *Spiritual Exercises* does not mean that he never participated in the unitive stage, which was intuited earlier in Manresa. The later years of Ignatius were marked by such profound intimacy with the Lord and a mysticism of apostolicity. In the years 1540 to 1556, his sanctity reached full maturity. They also evidenced that he penetrated the unitive life with the Divine Persons. As the old Ignatius was concluding his dictations to Gonçalves, he reviewed and summed up his life since his conversion at Loyola, thus, "after he began to serve him, he had never consented to mortal sin. Rather, he had always grown in devotion, that is, ease in finding God, and now more than ever in his whole life."[85] He had increased his devotion, familiarity with God, and ease in finding God more than ever. At any time, he desired to find God, Ignatius found him, and at the same time, he was settled in his role as general of the Society (from 1541), a life entirely dedicated to his mission as founder and organizer of the Society of Jesus.[86]

What was Ignatius' interior life like in the last fifteen years of his existence, as he was fully conscious of his mission in the Church? De Guibert remarks that his spiritual experiences during his last years are pivotal in determining the characteristic traits of the order he founded.[87]

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[85] *Auto*., no. 99.

[86] De Guibert, *The Jesuits*, 39 - 42.

[87] De Guibert, *The Jesuits*, 42.

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a. Contemplative-In-Action

Jerónimo Nadal, who knew Ignatius intimately, asserts that the special charism that Ignatius received was "to see and contemplate all things, to remain a contemplative even in the midst of action." Ignatius was in constant and continual recollection, even amid apostolic endeavors. For the pilgrim, devotion--the sense of consolation--was so crucial to Ignatius that Ribadeneyra narrated that he had heard Ignatius assert in 1554 that "as far as he could judge, it would not be possible for him to live without consolation, that is, without experiencing in himself something that he was not and could not be apart from himself, but depended entirely on God."[88] Ribadeneyra added, "It is unbelievable with what ease our Father recollected himself amid the tide of business, apparently having at his disposal and under his hand so to speak, the spirit of devotion and torrents of tears."[89] Such devotion, innate ability to find God effortlessly, and a keen sensitivity to the Spirit in a consistent fashion indicate a profound divinizing state of union with the Triune God.

b. Union with God in Service

In serving God by helping souls, "*ayudar las almas,*" Ignatius plunged into the depths of mysticism. His devotion understood as a kenotic and divinizing union with God, was through his engagement in the world through service. Alfonso de Mora writes of Ignatius' brand of devotion as

> the union of wills.… In this union of wills, the affection of charity becomes an intense desire for union and familiarity with God in all and in each and everything, and all moments, and the insatiable thirst

[88] On p. 67 of *Mistagogía*, Melloni quotes Ribadeneira, from *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, Scrip. De S. Ign.* (Letters of St. Ignatius), I, 349 and 399; [Fontes Narrativi II, p. 367] "*a su juicio, no podía vivir sin consolación , esto es, si no experimentaba algo en sí, que no fuese suyo, ni pudiera serio, sino que del todo dependiese de Dios.*"

[89] On p. 45 of *The Jesuits*, de Guibert quotes Ribadeneyra. See *De Actis P. N. Ign.,* 31 and *Dicta et Facta S.I.*, 33, in *SdeSI,* I, 349, 399; *FN*, II, 338, 477; *De actis P. N. Igna.*, 63, in *SdeSI*, I, 367; *FN*, II, 364.

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of redeeming souls for the Lord, the faithful expression of Ignatian devotion.[90]

c. Self-Abnegation (*Kénosis*)

The devotion and familiarity with God and the ease with which Ignatius found God were by no means saccharine. The means was the practice of self-abnegation, the complete renunciation of one's material comfort, honor, power, and the attachment to one's judgment—in a word, *kénosis*. The unitive life was only possible through the mortification of one's will and passions.[91] Thus, in the mystagogical journey of Ignatius, we recognize a kenotic movement that purifies the will of all self-preferentiality so that it is wholly united with God. Ignatius was thus in constant discernment, finding God's divine will, relinquishing one's desires, and being magnanimous in accomplishing what pleases God.

Ignatius was convinced that kenotic and divinizing union is attained through the *Election*; that is, choosing the greater good in one's life for the glory of God. This *Election* is not simply ethical but a mystical act, an emptying (*kénosis*), so that one is configured to Christ by the Spirit (divinization) at a definite point in history through a concrete manner of service.[92]

To illustrate the importance of self-abnegation, we listen to Nadal's first-hand experience of his master. When Nadal spoke to Ignatius about the hour and a half of prayer he had permitted in Spain, the latter affirmed that for those studying, one hour for prayer was

[90] In footnote no. 139, on p. 67 of *Mistagogía*, Melloni quotes Alfonso de la Mora's *La devocion en el espiritu de San Ignacio in Extracto de la disertación ad Lauream en la Facultad Pontificia de la Gregoriana* (1957), Mexico, 1960, 46-47: "*Es la unión de voluntades (…) En esta union de voluntades, el afecto de la caridad será un deseo intenso de unión y familiaridad con Dios en todas y cada una de las cosas y momentos, y sed insaciable de las almas redimiadas por su Señor, expresión fiel de la devoción ignaciana.*"

[91] De Guibert, *The Jesuits*, 85 and 86.

[92] Melloni, *Mistagogía*, 27.

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sufficient, presuming that the scholastics were practicing self-denial and mortification. Ignatius placed the foundation of spiritual life in mortification, self-denial, and renunciation of the will. He stressed the primacy of mortifying one's will over the length of prayer. He had complete mastery over his passions. Ignatius thus established the foundation of the Society on holy indifference, pursuing only what God desires in one's concrete context.[93]

d. Finding and Serving God in the World of Matter

Ignatius' kenotic spirituality, evidenced by the asceticism of the will, was purely for praising and reverencing God through active engagement with the world. His devotion, however, was not a flight from the corporeal. On the contrary, imagination, nature, and the world of matter were always the *loci* of his mysticism. He sought the will of God in the heart of the world, whether it was grace-filled or far from grace. Rather than fleeing the world, his incarnational spirituality sought God in the world of matter and accomplished God's gracious will therein.[94]

Summary

Ignatius of Loyola underwent a transformative mystagogical journey, marked by two significant conversions, before his journey into the illuminative stage and unitive life. His first conversion occurred in Loyola after the battle at Pamplona, where he transitioned from a sinful past to an initial desire to follow Christ to Jerusalem. This conversion, however, still retained signs of narcissism and externalism.

The second conversion took place in Manresa and involved a deeper purification of his self-propelled perfectionism. In this second wave of conversion, he experienced the purgative stage, including an active purification, followed by a passive purification characterized by scrupulosity and deep depression on account of the haunting memory

[93] De Guibert, *The Jesuits*, 89.

[94] De Guibert, *The Jesuits*, 59.

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of his past sins. During this excruciatingly painful passive purification, Ignatius grappled with the reality of his inner demons and painfully recognized that his spiritual progress was not self-determined but was God's initiative.

Eventually, Ignatius moved from the purgative stage to the illuminative stage when he began to see life with great clarity. His spiritual journey then transitioned to a mystical stage, marked by inner visions and a profound sense of union with the Divine. He embraced God's divine will with radical *disponibilité*, transitioning from a haughty perfectionist to a contemplative apostle, guided by a burning love for God and the Church.

Throughout this mystagogical journey, Ignatius was propelled by his zeal "to help souls" and a desire to do so "in poverty and humility." He arrived at a point where he discerned that Jerusalem was not a specific geographical place but could be anywhere God led him. His sanctity matured through his kenotic life, namely, self-abnegation and the mortification of his will and passions, allowing him to find God more easily and grow in devotion and union with the Divine Persons. His kenotic journey led to an experience of profound divinization, configured to Christ and united with the will of the Triune God.

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