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IGNATIUS LOYOLA'S *SPIRITUAL EXERCISES* AND POPULAR RELIGIOSITY: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, ANTECEDENTS AND RAMIFICATIONS

René Pio B. Javellana, S.J.

Abstract. The genesis of Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (SPEX) is intimately tied to his conversion and subsequent journey as a spiritual pilgrim, which brought him to Montserrat and Manresa. In Manresa, he spent time as a recluse in prayer, going out of his cave shelter to attend liturgies, to beg for his sustenance and to assist at the local hospital. At banks of the River Cardoner, he received an enlightenment that made him understand spiritual matters in a profound way.

As his chroniclers narrate, the substance and structure of the SPEX were written down in 1522 and 1523, but Ignatius continued to revise and restructure the SPEX until 1541, and later in 1546, when the SPEX was being prepared for Papal approval. The Latin version of the SPEX (1546 manuscript in ARSI) gained Papal approval in 1548. Papal approval of the SPEX ratified the *Compañía de Jesus*, founded on the principles and experience of the SPEX, whose Institute was approved in 1540 by Paul III, the same pontiff who approved the SPEX.

Between 1521, his conversion, and 1527, when he left Spain for Paris, Ignatius was not adept at Latin, the academic language of his days. Thus, his acquaintance with the Gospels, cited in the "Mysteries of

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the Life of Christ" (SPEX 261-312) came through secondary sources, namely, the popular *Vita Christi* of the Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony and the *Legenda Aurea* (Lives of Saints) by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine. Thomas a'Kempis' *Imitatio Christi* (formerly attributed to Jean Gerson, and referred to as Gerson by Ignatius) also informed Ignatius understanding of Christ. Through these sources, in particular Ludolph, Ignatius was placed in touch with Patristic writings. The *Vita* and the *Legenda* overlap in subject matter at some points and both share with the romances, like *Amadis di Galle* that Ignatius was fond of, the figure of the chivalrous knight on a quest to do great deeds for the honor of a highborn lady, who, because of her exalted status, was unreachable as an object of romance.

The roots of the SPEX in the popular religious works of its time show the SPEX growing out of popular religiosity. In addition, the centrality of the Passion, a recurring theme of the SPEX, and the concern about salvation are rooted in late medieval popular religiosity. Despairing those repetitive acts, like novenas, pilgrimages, vocal prayer could guarantee salvation, Martin Luther's adage that "faith alone [in Jesus] saves" brought many to the Protestant cause. The more intellectual were drawn to Eramus of Rotterdam's teaching of moral moderation; while others, in Spain, were drawn to contemplation according to the teaching of the illuminists (*alumbrados*), who believed that they were guided by the Spirit and could not err on the path to salvation.

While Ignatius and, consequently, the SPEX were suspected and investigated for being sympathetic to Luther and Erasmus and for being illuminist, Ignatius was exonerated of all charges. And while owing much to the popular religiosity of his time and its call for reform, Ignatius forged his own way of renewal, which answered the popular anxiety about salvation while remaining faithful to the Catholic tradition, in particular its teaching about faith and good works, and the sacramental system that animated that Faith.

Key Words. Alumbrados (illuminists), Biographies of Ignatius, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Erasmus' *Enchiridion*, Diego de Lainez (1512-

65), Dominican Melchor Cano, Geronimo Nadal (1507-1580), Gian Pierro Maffei (1533-1603}, Ignatian spirituality, Ignatius Loyola, Juan Alonso de Polanco (1517-1576), Martin Luther (1483-1546), Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527-1611), Preached retreat or "Mission," Sources and influences on SPEX, Spiritual Exercises, various approaches

Presentation:

Does it make sense to contrast sharply Ignatius Loyola's Spiritual Exercises (SPEX) with popular religiosity as the title of this paper seems to suggest?

1. *Status quæstionis*: Clarifying Terms

The terms popular religion, popular piety, and popular religiosity are often used interchangeably. I would like to introduce some distinctions at the onset to finetune the argument of the paper.

Popular religion: When the substantive "religion" is paired with the descriptive "popular," this is often used to contrast it with "mainstream" or "institutional" religion. Defined this way, popular, mass-based expressions of religiosity outside the control of religious authorities stand in contrast to the organization and even the hierarchical control of mainstream religion. Such religious manifestations and their myriad expressions exist parallel to the mainstream institution's sanctioned liturgies and acts of common worship, its doctrinal and moral control. Popular religion's genesis comes from people's long-standing practice and customs, or from a charismatic person who gains sizable adherents.

Popular piety: By "popular piety," I refer to specific rites and forms of worship, and religious demeanor practiced by a broad spectrum of a community. Popular religion is one end of the spectrum as organization, and popular piety is the other end as expression.

Popular religiosity: In between, I use "popular religiosity" as a cluster of ideas, pious practices, and behaviors that could be embedded in mainstream religion that is ignored, tolerated, even encouraged by the mainstream, if it promotes the objective and mission of the mainstream and does not harm or contradict it.

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To repeat. Does it make sense to distinguish between the SPEX and Popular religiosity?

2. Genesis and Source Criticism of the SPEX

The genesis of the SPEX shows that it too is an expression of popular religiosity, gaining official sanction in 1548 after the approval of its Latin version by Paul III, eight years after the same pope approved the Institute of the Society of Jesus.

The SPEX. The genesis of the SPEX is deeply rooted in the spiritual experience of Ignatius Loyola, from his conversion while convalescing at the family home, Casa-Torre de Loyola, in 1521, his journey to the Marian shrines of Aranzazu in his home province Guipozcoa, to Monserrat where he held vigil on the eve of the Marian feast of the Assumption, to Manresa all the way to 1541, when the official Latin version of the SPEX was finalized. Expressed in the autobiography dictated to the minister of the *casa professa* of the Gesù, Gonçales da Camara, by Ignatius Loyola is the image of the "pilgrim" by which Ignatius called himself in the autobiography.

"Pilgrim" suggests that the SPEX undergoes development as Ignatius treads the pilgrim's path. To trace that development, the rest of this section follows closely Terence William O'Reilly's 2021 publication *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Contexts, Sources, Reception*.

In the "Foreword," Thomas M. McCoog praises O'Reilly's work for avoiding what Philip Endean, S.J. called "Jesuit fundamentalism" and for using the tools of historico-criticism, applied successfully and fruitfully to Scriptures, to the SPEX. O'Reilly's work, catalyzed in part by the 2006 Jesuit celebrations, called by Fr. Gen. Hans Kolvenbach, "to celebrate the five-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Francis Xavier (1506–52) [and] … the 450th anniversary of the death of Ignatius of Loyola (*c.*1491–1556" [McCoog, "Foreword" in O'Reilly 2021, xiii]) comes to its apex in this book. McCoog writes:

> Under O'Reilly's analysis, the Ignatian *Exercises* are not Platonic ideas or transcendental categories, but products of a particular period and

> culture, but his emphasis on the "reception" of particular cultural, religious, and spiritual influences allows significant originality to Ignatius (O'Reilly 2021, xv).

Although O'Reilly's twelve chapters repeat facts and assertions, betraying its origin as independent essays, nine previously published in journals such as *Heythrop Journal*, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* and *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* as the author acknowledges (O'Reilly 2014, xxix), nonetheless, it is a convenient, one-stop source for knowing the "backstory" of the SPEX.

O'Reilly, who worked on Spanish prayer manuals, turned his attention to the SPEX, resulting in several published essays, eventually compiled as a book and published in 2021.

3. Overview

Chapter 9, "Joseph Veale and the History of the *Spiritual Exercises*" is a useful roadmap and summary of the previous eight chapters of the compilation. The Jesuit Veale (1921-2002), after his formation and long-time ministry of teaching, in 1972, retired in 1972 at the age of 51 and "devoted himself to giving retreats, training directors, and writing and lecturing on Ignatian spirituality." (O'Reilly 2014, 213). He noted a shift in the interpretation of the SPEX "from the anti-mystical to the mystical, from a stern to a stern ascetical regime to something more contemplative" (Ibid.)

The fulcrum for this shift was Vatican II, specifically *Perfectae caritatis,* the *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life*, promulgated by Pope St. Paul VI on 28 October 1965. The decree stated that, for the renewal of consecrated life, all religious and other vowed communities should return to the original sources of their charism. When applied to the Society of Jesus, this meant a re-examination of Ignatius and his legacy, a task already begun before Vatican II by Spanish Jesuits like Ignacio Iparraguirre and Candido Dalmases, although as O'Reilly remarks these Jesuits did fall into becoming apologists for the received understanding of Ignatius. Far from presenting Ignatius as an "outlier," providentially sent by God at a time of spiritual crisis in the Catholic

Church, Ignatius appears as one historic figure against other historic figures involved in reform.

Veale noted that Vatican II's *Perfectæ Caritatis* or the Decree on Consecrated Life (1965) called for "the religious orders to return to the spirit of their founders" (Ibid., 215). The Jesuits were prepared to do so because "earlier in the century their foundational documents had been edited in *Monumenta Historica*, a series begun in 1894 that by the time of the council ran to nearly one hundred volumes" (Ibid.). Printed were the Jesuit Constitutions; Ignatius Reminiscences, "first edited in 1904;" his Spiritual Journal, "first edited in 1934, and his letters, which filled twelve substantial volumes" (Ibid) or some 7,600 letters in total, kept in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI).

Around the same time as the Council was the restoration of "the practice, common in Ignatius' time, of giving the Exercises to one person in solitude, over more or less thirty days. Though never forgotten, this had come to be seen as exceptional, and preached retreats to groups had taken its place" (Ibid, 216). This practice of the "one-on-one, directed retreat" showed that "Ignatius did not hand on to his followers a theory of prayer or spirituality. Instead, he 'apprenticed' them to an art, which they acquired 'in a living tradition'" (Ibid.).

Published in *Monumenta Historica* volume 100 with a critical edition of the SPEX was a summary of modern research into the literary sources of the text to date (1969). It showed that Ignatius was influenced by "the devotional literature available in Spain during the 1520s, and by three popular works in particular: the *Life of Christ* by Ludolph the Carthusian (*c.*1300–78), the *Golden Legend* of Jacob of Voragine (*c.*1230–98), and the *Imitation of Christ* of Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471)" (Ibid., 217).

Earlier studies of the SPEX's sources "tended to be philological in character: it sought evidence of direct textual borrowings, and of these it found few" (Ibid., 218). Furthermore, a conservative view of Ignatius strove to emphasize his originality "by emphasizing his independence of the spiritual currents of his time" (Ibid.). Veale turned his attention not to the letter of the text but to the "theological

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traditions that Ignatius apparently knew." This is the approach of recent work on the SPEX. "[I]t has argued that his [Ignatius'] originality lay in how he made, from what he received, something uniquely his own. This has opened up new lines of research" so that

> At a conference on the sources of the *Exercises* held in Loyola in 1997, a number of specialists drew attention to parallels between the language and theology of the *Exercises*, the writings of the fathers of the church, and the monastic traditions of East and West in which the patristic inheritance was preserved. The apparent debt of Ignatius to both Origen (184–253) and John Cassian (*c.*360–*c.*445) was underlined, and parallels between the Exercises and Orthodox spirituality were explored. Scholarship since then has developed these insights. It has yet to engage fully, however, with their implications for our understanding of the stages in which the Exercises were composed. According to Ignatius's early companions, he wrote a draft of the text at Manresa in 1522 that contained its main components in a rudimentary form. At the time he could not have read the fathers directly, for he did not know Latin, and few of their writings were available in the vernacular. How then did he become familiar with patristic images and themes? Was it through the *Vita Christi* of Ludolph, where the fathers are cited often, and if so, which features of their theologies did Ludolph transmit? Or was it through the writings of García Jiménez de Cisneros (1455–1510), abbot of Montserrat, whose *Exercitatorio de la vida spiritual* (Montserrat: Juan Luschner, 1500) is a *florilegium* of medieval monastic texts?

Veale saw the originality of the SPEX in "bringing together two distinct traditions, first, "*discretio* [discernment]: a sensitivity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit in everyday life, and the associated experience of 'finding God in all things'" (Ibid., 217). The second tradition was

> mediated by Ludolph [of Saxony] the Carthusian, in whose work he encountered the four stages of monastic *lectio divina*, as Guigo the Carthusian (1140– 93) had described them in the twelfth century: *lectio*, *meditatio*, *oratio*, and *contemplatio*. Ignatius, however, changed the terms. *Lectio* became *historia*, the account of the subject for meditation delivered by the giver of the Exercises to the one receiving them; *meditatio* was what the *Exercises* mean by *contemplación*; *oratio* became the *coloquio*, or colloquy; and *contemplatio* was the gift of unitive love that the *Exercises* call *consolación*.

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How singular was Ignatius in his usage is modified by Simon Tugwell's argument that "in late medieval writing the connotations of the word contemplatio were not stable. It was used with a variety of meanings, including 'meditation.'"

Expounding on the context of the SPEX, O'Reilly writes:

> When Ignatius was starting to compose the *Exercises* in the 1520s, Spanish society was feeling the impact of a widespread and ardent movement of religious reform, made up of various strands, two of which were prominent. First, the Erasmians, whose following was strong in the court of Charles V (1500–58; r.1519–54) and the university of Alcalá de Henares, where the *Enchiridion* of Erasmus (1466–1536) was published to popular acclaim in 1525. Second, the *alumbrados* (or illuminists), who divided into two distinct and antagonistic groups: the *recogidos*, associated with the reformed Franciscans in Castile, and the *dexados*, whose center was the household of Diego López de Pacheco (1456–1529), the marqués de Villena in Escalona. The teachings of the latter group, the *dexados*, were condemned by the Spanish Inquisition in 1525 (Ibid., 220).

These strands converged at "a common cause in the renewal of the Spanish church." One common concern was the

> renewal of prayer among Christians in the world. The Erasmians, for whom the externals of Christian worship mattered less than the interior life, encouraged a piety based on Scripture and the imitation of Christ, and their enthusiasm for interiority and mental prayer was shared, in turn, by both wings of the *alumbrados*, though with a difference: unlike the Erasmians, the illuminists drew inspiration, in different ways, from the monastic tradition, and its teachings on contemplation (Ibid., 220-221).

The question arises: Was Ignatius involved in Erasmism? In the early 20th century, Ignatius'

> writings and other documents revealed that in Alcalá and Salamanca he had contacts and friends who moved in reform circles, and his apostolate was considered suspect by the Inquisition, which investigated his activities several times. In his history of the *Exercises* in Ignatius's lifetime, published in 1946, Ignacio Iparraguirre (1911–73) answered "no": Ignatius was an independent spirit, with a strong sense of

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> orthodoxy as the later sixteenth century defined it, and his spirituality was not influenced by either Erasmus or the illuminists (Ibid., 221).

"Karl Rahner (1904–84), William Peters (1911–88), and Leo Bakker, whose reflections on the matter were published between 1956 and 1970," and Veale added what Dominican critics said of Ignatius, the SPEX, and the Society. Veale

> drew attention to the writings of two Spanish Dominicans, Melchor Cano (c. 1509–60) and Tomás de Pedroche (d.1569), who alleged in the late 1540s and early 1550s that the *Exercises* were indeed illuminist, and he noted that Pedroche, in particular, had "accurately pinpointed those places in the text that are mystical" (Ibid.).

O'Reilly elaborates further on the critique of Cano, appending a transcription of Cano's text in the British Library, in *Part III Reception, Chapter 10 Melchor Cano and the Spirituality of St. Ignatius of Loyola: The Censura y parecer contra el Instituto de los Padres Jesuitas.*

Cano, a theologian and elected provincial at a 1557 chapter of Dominicans in Segovia, was a staunch and articulate critic of illuminism practiced by the alumbrados and dexados, condemned for their teaching by the Inquisition of Toledo in 1525. He wrote a lengthy critique of the catechism of Bartolomé de Carranza (1503-76), alleged *dexado*, and between 1556 and 1558 wrote "a number of letters in which he affirmed that the Society was a heretical force whose Exercises were undermining church and state, but he declined to set out fully his reasons for his conviction, stating more than once that they were not 'para carta'" (Ibid., 228). In a letter, he said that he had intended to bring up the matter with Pope Paul IV (1476-1559; r. 1555-59) and was putting his views into writing for the Pope.

Unlike his predecessor, Paul IV was "implacably hostile to the new order" and had rescinded Paul III's exemption of the Jesuits from the common recitation of the Divine Office in choir. Failing to have his election as provincial ratified, Cano journeyed to Rome in 1559 to attend the Dominicans' general chapter scheduled for 29 May. He hoped to have his election ratified in Rome and, taking the opportunity, have an audience with the pope. But Paul IV died on 18

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August, without Cano having an audience. A year later, Cano died in Toledo on 30 September 1560.

Cano's critique range from personal, his critique of Ignatius, after a brief but unpleasant encounter, and his Jesuit followers; theological and spiritual; legal and practical.

Personal

The Jesuits singled out in Cano's *Censura* were "Iñigo, Salmerón, Laynez, Torres, and Fabio [Favre]." The Censura singles out "the mission of Pierre Favre (1506-46) to Germany (see Censura fol. 96^{r}), the behavior of Diego de Lainez and Alonso Salmerón (1515-85) at Trent (see fol. 96^{r}) … [the Society's] association with the sisters founded by the Countess of Guastalda (see fol. 97^{r-v}) and the sexual license of some Jesuits (see fol. 100^{v})" (Ibid., 232). Cano claimed that this experiment "ended in sexual license (fols. 97^{v}, 100^{v}). Jesuits, he adds, take certain substances to control their sexual passions, and these give them a pale, deathly look (fol. 100^{r-v}). Such failures in chastity are a further legacy of the *dexados* who, beginning with a love of prayer, fell first into error and then into sexual sin" (Ibid., 244).

Cano affirmed that if the Society was God's work, then its founder must be holy. He doubted Ignatius holiness because first, he stated that Ignatius was on the run from the Inquisition who had suspected him of being an alumbrado. Second, Cano had met Ignatius and "found him wanting in integrity." On one occasion, Ignatius told him that he was persecuted in Spain and spoke of the divine revelations he received. On another occasion, Ignatius introduced him to a Jesuit noted for holiness, but when summoned at a meal to meet Cano, he seemed to Cano to be "unorthodox, though he could also tell he was either simple or unwell" (Ibid., 237). These encounters left an impression on Cano that Ignatius was vain and a poor judge of character. Further encounters with Ignatius made Cano conclude that "he was ignorant of divine and human law, and imprudent and indiscreet as well as vain" (Ibid., 238-239).

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Theological and spiritual

> [Cano] first … deplored the fact that they [Jesuits] offered everyone the same spirituality of a contemplative kind, irrespective of different temperaments and callings. Augustine, he writes, distinguished between different types of sanctity corresponding to the various humors, but the Society is not so discriminating (Ibid., 239).

Cano, further, believed that "it was not feasible to combine the active and contemplative lives, and he was concerned that people who tried to do so might neglect the works proper to their vocation." Furthermore, he said the SPEX had the effect of turning "soldiers into women, and caballeros into hens, not lions" (Ibid.).

Cano's "second reservation about the Exercises was prompted by the importance he considered they accorded to affective spiritual experience. The person taking them … is given to understand that during the retreat he will experience the work of grace in his soul and be granted consolations … such a promise … is presumption, an attempt to force the hand of God" (Ibid., 241).

Cano in addition criticized the SPEX for its prescription that the retreatant speak to the director about prayer experiences. He found this a distraction during prayer time and an expression of vanity when talking with the director. He likewise had reservations about the teaching on indifference.

Legal

Cano questioned the legal status (its nature and extent of approval) of the Society, since Paul III (1468-1549; r. 1534-49) had approved the "Institute" or a "Vision and Mission Statement" of the Society and not its constitution, and therefore was "a break with precedent: neither the Franciscans nor the Dominicans were approved until the pope had examined its rules" (Ibid., 243). Ignatius was, in fact, working on the Jesuit Constitution all through his life and was not satisfied with it when he died.

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Practical

That the Jesuits did not have choir in common and were not bound by a monastic routine of periods of prayer, work, and rest and that they freely went in and out of the house made Cano fear that the Society had thrown out all the safeguards that made religious life viable as an instrument of holiness. They had also abandoned the practice of corporal penance. These structures had been put in place by centuries of experience, knowing that frail human nature needed them against the onslaught of worldliness as these had "always expressed and safeguarded the virtue of piety" (Ibid., 244).

Cano warned that if the Jesuits "are not stopped they will damage both the church and the state, and bring about in Spain the calamities caused in Germany by the Protestants" (Ibid., 245).

Cano's critique was exaggerated such that even some Dominicans in Spain, let alone the Jesuits, challenged him. But Ignatius did leave room for such criticism. In 1526, he was investigated at Alcala and his confessor Manuel Miona (c. 1477-1567) moved in illuminist circles but as O'Reilly observes:

> On the other hand, there is no indication that Ignatius himself belonged to the group that formed round Pedro Ruiz de Alcaraz (1488–1555) and Isabel de la Cruz, and in important ways his teachings differed radically from theirs. The *Exercises*, for instance, offer a training in mental prayer and reveal a concern to interiorize the Christian life, both characteristics of the *alumbrados*, but they do not oppose mental to vocal prayer, nor do they criticize external forms of church worship, and they give a central place to the Passion of Christ, a devotion that the *dexados* deplored (Ibid., 245).

The rest of the presentation will cite four chapters in O'Reilly because they complete or amplify what has already been discussed. The chapters discuss:

- the origins of the SPEX and its sources, obscured by Ribadeneyra's official biography (Part 1: Context, the religious milieu that elicited opposing responses (chapter 1);

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- Martin Luther versus Ignatius (2);
- Erasmus and Ignatius (3) and
- the books Ignatius read (Part 2: Sources, chapter 5).

Part I: Contexts

1. Ignatius Loyola and the Counter-Reformation: The Hagiographic Tradition

The official biography of Ignatius Loyola (Naples, 1572) was written by one of his first companions, Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527-1611) and by Pierro Maffei (1533-1603), the first published in Rome in 1585. These biographies, written after the Council of Trent (1543-63) and marked by the irreparable split between the Catholics and Protestants, present Ignatius as a larger than life Counter-Reformation figure par excellence.

At this point, the Reformation's "Five Solas" did away with the principal Catholic milestones by rejecting Papal authority and unwritten Church tradition. By insisting that faith alone saves, not good works, Protestantism took aim at Catholicism's teaching and system of indulgences, and its need for a sacramental system of grace. Reducing the sacraments to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, the "real presence" in the Eucharist was denied, making it a symbolic act, no doubt important. In answer, Trent issued a series of "Anathemas" or condemnations.

The battlelines were set. Into this fray, Ribadeneyra presents Ignatius as the providentially sent "soldier-saint," by God to battle the devil in the form of Martin Luther and the Protestants. Ignatius formed an army of like-minded soldiers, the *Compañía de Jesus*, armed with its spiritual weapons of conversion, especially through the SPEX (Ibid., also 39).

This trope had a long life, repeated again and again in Jesuit writing: "One book that popularized the image throughout Catholic Europe was the *Exercicio de perfección* by the Spanish Jesuit Alonso Rodríguez (1532–1617), first published in Seville in 1609" (Ibid., 7). This book was staple reading in Jesuit novitiates worldwide up to the 1960s.

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No image illustrates this trope more graphically than the marble figure of *Faith Overcoming Heresy* in the altar of St. Ignatius in Il Gesù, Rome, in which a female figure brandishes a cross as figures of heresy fall, fearing the power of the cross. A mischievous cherub gleefully tears pages marked with the names of Luther and other reformers.

O'Reilly speculates that a later Ignatius may have conceived his mission in Counter-reformation terms, but an earlier Ignatius, described in the *Autobiography*, presented a person struggling to understand his life and mission in the context of a reforming, late medieval Spain.

So, a different Ignatius emerges from the earliest accounts of his formative years. These provide most of the information we possess about the period between his conversion in 1521 and the founding of the Society of Jesus in 1540. From these, it is clear that in this period, when the Protestant Reform was erupting in German-speaking lands and overflowing into France and the Italian Peninsula, it was not Ignatius's main concern to stem the tide of schism.

Between the years 1521 of Ignatius' conversion and 1527, when he left Spain, Lutheran ideas began infiltrating Spain, but Ignatius' own spiritual journey saw him combating the accusation that he was sympathetic to Erasmianism and the illuminists. In 1526 and 1527, he was investigated six times.

In Paris, Ignatius hardly mentioned the religious upheavals erupting in Europe, his concern was "study and the gathering of friends who wished to share his apostolic way of life" (Ibid., 9). At this point, he was convinced that he was called to Jerusalem and encouraged his companions to do likewise. The reform he aspired to, together with his companions, was not to combat Protestantism but to kindle an interior reformation of life from which other reforms would flourish.

2. *Ignatius Loyola and Martin Luther: The Origins of the Spiritual Exercises in Spain*

While it is asserted, and rightly so, that the Protestant Reformation was triggered by the scandal of selling Papal indulgences in Germany,

especially by the campaign of the Dominican John Tetzel, it does not explain why Martin Luther's private "Tower experience" found a widespread and popular following.

O'Reilly provides a context to understand the tormented soul of Luther, a devout Augustinian, who, notwithstanding his serious devotion to follow his vocation as a vowed religious, felt deeply that he was damned and nothing he did could assure him.

O'Reilley paints a picture of popular religiosity during the late Middle Ages under which Luther and his contemporaries struggled. Citing the French historian, Lucien Febvre (1878-1956), O'Reilly points to the Protestant Reformation's reason for popular success:

> Its essential characteristic was its success in finding for the troubles of conscience that afflicted a large part of Christendom (its success in offering people who seemed to have been awaiting it for years, and who adopted it with a haste and a hunger that are significant) a solution that really fitted the needs and the spiritual state of restless masses, anxious for a religion that was simple, clear, and fully efficacious (Ibid., 42).

Luther's teaching "sola fide," faith alone in Jesus, independent of works, responded to a popular and widespread "troubles of conscience," which had to do with

> The anxiety about salvation that plagued him [Luther] was not uniquely his but shared by many of his contemporaries. The reasons for this are not easy to discern, but they appear to be connected with the impact on religious practice of the tenets of nominalist theology. One of these, enunciated by Gabriel Biel (1420–95), stated that "to those who do what lies within them, God will not deny grace": in other words, the gift of salvation will be granted to those who have done everything in their power to prepare for it. But another tenet affirmed that there exists no necessary connection between the law of God and the aspirations of human nature. "On the level of popular religion," as Anthony Levi observed, "the result was great moral tension" (Ibid., 43).

As a consequence,

> the tension gave rise, not surprisingly, to a "religion of works," which found expression in pious devotions that entailed repeated acts. Some

> involved vocal prayer (the rosary, the Angelus, reciting psalms), others harsh penance (flagellation, fasting, habitual mortification), others again focused on the multiple and extreme sufferings of Christ by which the Father's justice had been placated" (Ibid., 43-44).

Luther found solace in St. Paul's Rom 3:23 "for we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law," amplified further by St. Augustine's thoughts on justification.

> His insight in this matter was fundamentally orthodox, the recovery of a doctrine, expressed forcefully by St. Augustine, that had become obscured. It seemed to Luther's critics, however, that he broke with tradition, and specifically with St. Augustine, in one respect: by claiming that the good works of the Christian are without merit, indeed sinful (Ibid., 44).

While Luther jettisoned all good works, including the Sacraments, Ignatius did not do so. Although he did not use the term "justification," Ignatius reframed medieval religiosity, in particular, the understanding of the Passion.

Experiencing a spiritual crisis at Manresa that made him contemplate suicide, prompted by Ignatius' sense of being condemned and still occupied by the thought of great external and heroic deeds, expressed in heroic austerities and excessive physical penance, living on alms, fasting for days, sleeping on the floor, breaking his sleep to pray and taking the discipline three times a week, in slow steps, Ignatius came to an equilibrium that balanced faith and deeds.

This is reflected in the SPEX, where the "ideals of chivalry, and the chivalric romances that they inspired, became a permanent part of his imaginative life" (Ibid., 50). He dreamt of doing great deeds but in the meditation on sin of the First Week, the exercitant is "encouraged to see himself as a knight in the presence of his king and the royal court: aware that he has greatly offended his lord, who has bestowed on him many gifts and privileges, he is confounded and ashamed" (SPEX 74). In front of the crucified, the exercitant, overcome by boundless love and beneficence, aspires to a "heroism…the natural expression of gratitude and love." Thus:

> The two movements in the *Exercises* of divine self-giving in Christ and grateful self-offering on the part of the meditator are complemented by a third: the action of God in the soul, disposing the meditator to serve him in a way that accords with His will. These come together at the end of the retreat when the meditator ponders everything that God has given him and prays, "You gave it all to me; to you, Lord, I return it. All is yours, dispose of it entirely as you will" [SPEX 234] (Ibid., 50).

The SPEX's creative answer to the anxiety about salvation pervading the late Middle Ages, without going to the Lutheran extreme of jettisoning "good works," opened the SPEX to longevity.

> The *Exercises* survived to become, in the late sixteenth century, a complex presence: on the one hand, a means of addressing the spiritual issues that had troubled Luther; on the other, a weapon bestowed on the Counter-Reformation church for which Ribadeneyra and his fellow Jesuits praised God (Ibid., 55).

3. Saint Ignatius Loyola and Spanish Erasmianism

Between 1491, the year of Ignatius' birth and his departure from Spain in 1527, a popular interest in methods of mental prayer grew, attested by the publication in Castilian of a number of devotional books. Also indigenous forms spirituality emerged. "This development passed through three important stages before 1530" (Ibid, 57). First, a devotion to the Passion flourished related to anxiety about personal salvation, discussed in chapter 2. Second: "About 1520…a distinct form of spirituality appeared. It has received the generic name illuminism, but it included at least two different teachings on prayer, *dejamiento* and *recogimiento."* Both

> appear to have agreed is condemnation of contemporary devotion to the Passion. Neither group favored making the humanity of Christ a central part of meditation: the *dejados* tended to prefer reflection on the gifts of God, the *recogidos* contemplation of Christ's divinity. Both favored prayer that did not involve much use of the imagination or of discursive thought, and in each case the form of prayer practiced involved openness to the work of grace in the soul (Ibid., 56-57).

And third, "in the mid-1520s when the writings of Erasmus (1466–1536) became a matter of controversy," when a Spanish

translation of his *Enchiridion militis christiani* was published in Alcalá de Henares in 1526.

Ignatius was raised in years of popular devotion to the Passion, and when he was a student at Alcalá, "his friends included Miguel Eguía (1495–1544), printer of the *Enchiridion*." Because the *Enchiridion* was favored by the illuminists, Ignatius and his apostolate were investigated in Alcalá and later in Salamanca.

While parallels have been drawn in some places between the *Enchiridion* and the SPEX, especially in the "Principle and Foundation," and

> According to Pedro de Ribadeneyra (1527–1611), he was advised to read it for its spiritual content and to improve his Latin while a student in Barcelona: that is, between 1524 and 1526. He did so, but noticed after a while that it cooled his devotion and ardor; and when this happened several times he abandoned it. After this, he looked on it and the other writings of Erasmus with suspicion and dislike (Ibid., 58).

Ignatius preferred the *Imitation of Christ* to Erasmus.

The Erasmians had five critical objections to the late medieval devotion to the Passion, namely: 1st "an inordinate importance given to the humanity of Christ and wanted more attention to be fixed on the article of faith that he was God as well as man"; 2nd "related to the first, was that the devotion did not inspire compunction"; 3rd "the devotion did not result in resolutions to avoid vice and practice virtue, and so had no influence on morals"; 4th "the devotion did not inspire hope, thanksgiving, and joy, but was wearisome and sad" and 5th "excessive rigidity in the method [of prayer]" (Ibid., 63-65).

Ignatius on his own, independent of Erasmus, had solved the shortcomings of the medieval devotion to the Passion. O' Reilly wrote:

> Ignatius, … may be said to have prolonged medieval devotion to the life and death of Christ by making it central to his *Exercises*; but in doing so he reformed it of the defects it had acquired in his day that the illuminists and Erasmians criticized. In view of this, it is surely misleading to suppose that he was opposed to Erasmus in his attitude to

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> the devotion. The evidence suggests that he would have agreed with him in condemning its distortion by hypocrisy and superstition" (Ibid., 68).

And further on: "Ignatius did not just prolong meditation on the Passion, but made it a means of interiorizing and Christianizing the spiritual life and therefore of countering the obsession with good works prevalent among his contemporaries" (Ibid., 65).

4. The Spiritual Exercises and Illuminism in Spain: Dominican Critics of the Early Society of Jesus

Some Dominicans were critics of Ignatius, the SPEX and the Society of Jesus. Melchor Cano's critique is further developed in *Chapter 10* as previously discussed. The roots and sources of three thematic characteristics of the SPEX are discussed in *6 The Origins of the Rules for Discernment*, *7 Consolation without a Preceding Cause, 8 Fear and Love in the Spiritual Exercises.* Part 3: Reception shows the impact of the SPEX, *11 Saint Teresa and Her First Jesuit Confessors,* and *12 The Spiritual Exercises and the Diario espiritual of St. Ignatius* on Ignatius on use of the discernment of spirits as he was deliberating on the statutes of poverty that would allow Jesuit churches to have a fixed income for its upkeep and operations.

Part II: Sources. 5 Early Printed Books in Spain and the Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola

The role of the movable type printing press, invented by the German Johannes Gutenberg in the late 1400s, has been credited as facilitating the spread of information, thus contributing to the Reformation.

In this chapter, O'Reilly discusses the books Ignatius read: the romance of *Amadis di Galle*, Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi* and Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*. He cites a common chivalric thread running through these works. Amadis de Galle is as much a romance as it is a hagiography of a knight.

As indicated in Chapter 1 (see above), Ignatius composed the SPEX in a rudimentary form by 1522-23, but "the draft was refined and extended over the years that followed, reaching its final state *c.*1541." At this early stage, Ignatius did not know Latin, the academic language, as he had not yet enrolled in university, nor did he have the language requisite for such a task. His citations of Scripture were thus based on the Spanish books he had read and had at hand at Loyola. "The books that he read, and that shaped his text, were all early printed works of devotion" (Ibid., 110).

The books Ignatius read while convalescing at Loyola had

> features in common, and their contents to some extent overlap. The Flos sanctorum includes the main events of Christ's life, arranged according to the feasts of the liturgical year, while the Vita Christi incorporates into its account of the Gospel the lives of the apostles and other saints. When they use similar or identical material, it is often drawn from a common source, the Meditationes vitæ Christi attributed to St. Bonaventure (1317-74), which was available in Spanish also at the time in two editions (Ibid., 113).

Both texts placed the Passion in high prominence as would the SPEX where Christ's "Passion … is a recurring theme" (Ibid.).

Several influences of Ludolph on the SPEX appeared in Ignatius' roll out of the "mysteries" of the life of Christ "in certain details Ignatius adds to the New Testament accounts," namely: in SPEX 111, 112, 114, 219, 273, 310 and 344 (Ibid., 116).

> In many cases, these additions are found also in both Ludolph and Voragine, but Ludolph is the main influence: often the coincidence of words and phrases, as well as images and ideas, is striking. Some details, however, go back to Voragine alone. He affirms, for example, that a maid was present at the birth of Christ, a notion that Ludolph rejects but that Ignatius nonetheless accepts, and he supplies the phrase that Ignatius uses throughout the *Exercises* to describe the Devil, "enemigo de natura humana" (it occurs in *La vida de Sancto Onofre*) (Exx. 7, 10, 135, 136, 325, 326, 327, 334). These traces are remarkable because the section in which many of them are found, *Los misterios de la vida de nuestro Señor* (Exx. 261–312), is thought to have been finalized between 1537 and 1539. The late date shows how faithful Ignatius remained to the

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> lessons he learned in Loyola, and how deeply he interiorized the books he read there (Ibid., 117).

From Ludolph came a three-fold structure of "reading, meditation, and prayer, the main stages into which the late Middle Ages divided the monastic practice of *lectio divina*." To Ignatius' *consolación* (consolation) may be paralleled Ludolph's "other terms of union: sweetness (*suavidad*), savoring (*sabor*), unction (*uncion*), joy (*alegria*, *gozo*), delight (*deleyte*), consolation (*consolacion*)" (Ibid., 119).

Although Ludolph worked with the traditional senses of Scripture, rooted in the exegetical method of the Church Fathers, Ignatius did not seem to follow this schema but worked with a simplified schema of literal and spiritual, or "the letter of the sacred text and its spirit," as Erasmus put it (Ibid., 120).

A favorite work of Ignatius was the *Imitation of Christ,* and from this work came the emphasis on "the presence in prayer of Christ, whom the reader is invited to follow and serve" (Ibid., 136). Like the *Vita Christi*, the *Imitation* elevates the Passion in prominence in which Jesus is "described in chivalric terms as captain, leader, and king and whose sufferings the reader is summoned to share" (Ibid., 136).

Finally, a note on Ignatius' vigil at arms at Montserrat. His actions came straight out of a chivalric tradition celebrated in romances, like *Amadis di Galle*. A knight pledges his fealty to a lady of a higher status. To this lady, the knight undertakes a vigil of offering. This Ignatius does at Montserrat. The unattainable lady is the Virgin Mary, symbolized by the *Moreneta* at Montserrat. After turning over his sword and dagger to the abbot of the Benedictine Abbey, who hangs it among other "ex votos" at the altar of the Virgin, Ignatius, who had given his noble clothes to a beggar, puts on the rough robes of a pilgrim and with staff in hand begins his vigil on the eve of the Feast of the Assumption (15 August 1522).

The remaining chapters expound more fully several points raised earlier.

Summary

The genesis of Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (SPEX) is intimately tied to his conversion and subsequent journey as a spiritual pilgrim, which brought him to Montserrat and Manresa. In Manresa, he spent time as a recluse in prayer, going out of his cave shelter to attend liturgies, to beg for his sustenance and to assist at the local hospital. At banks of the River Cardoner, he received an enlightenment that made him understand spiritual matters in a profound way.

As his chroniclers narrate, the substance and structure of the SPEX were written down in 1522 and 1523, but Ignatius continued to revise and restructure the SPEX until 1541, and later in 1546, when the SPEX was being prepared for Papal approval. The Latin version of the SPEX (1546 manuscript in ARSI) gained Papal approval in 1548. This Papal approval of the SPEX ratified the *Compañía de Jesus*, founded on the principles and experience of the SPEX, whose Institute was approved in 1540 by Paul III, the same pontiff who approved the SPEX.

Between 1521, his conversion, and 1527, when he left Spain for Paris, Ignatius was not adept at Latin, the academic language of his days. Thus, his acquaintance with the Gospels, cited in the "Mysteries of the Life of Christ" (SPEX 261-312) came through secondary sources, namely, the popular *Vita Christi* of the Carthusian, Ludolph of Saxony and the *Legenda Aurea* (Lives of Saints) by the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine. Thomas a'Kempis' *Imitatio Christi* (formerly attributed to Jean Gerson, and referred to as Gerson by Ignatius) also informed Ignatius understanding of Christ. Through these sources, in particular Ludolph, Ignatius was placed in touch with Patristic writings. The *Vita* and the *Legenda* overlap in subject matter at some points and both share with the romances, like *Amadis di Galle*, that Ignatius was fond of, the figure of the chivalrous knight on a quest to do great deeds for the honor of a highborn lady, who because of her exalted status was unreachable as an object of romance.

The roots of the SPEX in the popular religious works of its time show that the SPEX growing out of popular religiosity. In addition,

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the centrality of the Passion, a recurring theme of the SPEX, and the concern about salvation are rooted in late medieval popular religiosity. Despairing those repetitive acts, like novenas, pilgrimages, vocal prayer could guarantee salvation, Martin Luther's adage that "faith alone [in Jesus] saves" brought many to the Protestant cause. The more intellectual were drawn to Eramus of Rotterdam's teaching of moral moderation; while others, in Spain, were drawn to contemplation according to the teaching of the illuminists (*alumbrados*), who believed that they were guided by the Spirit and could not err on the path to salvation.

While Ignatius and consequently the SPEX were suspected and investigated for being sympathetic to Luther and Erasmus and for being illuminist, Ignatius was exonerated of all charges. And while owing much to the popular religiosity of his time and its call for reform, Ignatius forged his own way of renewal, which answered the popular anxiety about salvation while remaining faithful to the Catholic tradition in particular its teaching about faith and good works, and the sacramental system that animated that Faith.

Concluding Reflection: Popular religion, religiosity and piety

The SPEX was born and developed in the context of Spain undergoing reform and facing the legacy of late medieval popular religiosity. If the "popular religion, popular religiosity, and popular piety" are taken primarily as socio-cultural categories, these terms are entirely appropriate and illumine the dynamics, which make a religion truly global or universal. Catholicism sociologically cannot be truly "universal," as the term Catholic implies, unless it embraces the popular. In fact, popular religiosity, as Pope Francis astutely remarks, is a historical manifestation and inculturation of Catholicism.

But when the qualifier "popular" takes a theological turn, when "popular" is the polar opposite of "institutional" or "mainstream," then the term "popular religion" takes on an evaluative and judgmental slant, and this casts "popular religion" in opposition to institutional religion and therefore suspect. Short of anathematizing "popular"

as heterodox, which is most probably avoided because it may be construed as politically incorrect, the continued endowment of the term with a theological evaluative connotation, far from clarifying, leads to confusion.

If "popular religion, popular religiosity, and popular piety" remain as essentially socio-cultural, it clarifies the dynamics of all world religions that reach out to a large percentage of the human race. It is the phenomenon that in all world religions there is the institutional center of control and a periphery that is barely reached by the center. While the center holds the religion together, it is often at the periphery that new things arise anew because it is at the periphery that the Church meets a world awaiting the Gospel, and it is at the periphery the Church finds its mission and becomes truly CATHOLIC.

Appendix

Terence O'Reilly, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola: Contexts, Sources, Reception.*

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About the Author. **René Pio B. Javellana, S.J.**, is a Jesuit priest, writer, liturgical artist, and art historian. He is currently an associate professor at the Fine Arts Program of Ateneo de Manila University and teaches Church History at the Loyola School of Theology. His research interests include colonial architecture and art in Asia; renaissance imprints and cultural dissemination; heritage conservation; popular religion and globalization; art, spirituality and religion; contemporary visual arts; art and communication theory; film, media and society.