Ignatian Spirituality and Its Potential Contribution to Jesuit Formation in the Context of Vietnam

Nguyen Dinh Khai

A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Master of Theology

University of Divinity, Melbourne, 2015
Abstract

This thesis explores Ignatian Spirituality and potential contributions to Jesuit formation in the context of Vietnam. The historical and current context of Vietnam is reviewed briefly in order to acknowledge the need of searching a way to form the young Jesuits in early stage of formation: candidate and Jesuits in basic formation. This is followed by the exploration of Jesuit vocation as religious vocation. This part includes the exploration of the journey of Ignatius himself, a personal journey and an understanding of vocation. Then the essential elements of Ignatian Spirituality are explored. Finally, based on the understanding of the context and that of Ignatian Spirituality, the potential contribution will be drawn.

There is a two-fold goal of this thesis. Firstly, there is a desire to search for a deeper understanding of Ignatian Spirituality. Secondly, there is a quite urgent need for the Jesuits in Vietnam to have a way to form their members according to their special situation: normalise their existence in Vietnam society after some fifteen years living anonymous or even underground; their number has been increased so quickly and about 85% of their members are in some stages of formation. Ignatian Spirituality has some key elements that can help Jesuits in Vietnam form their men in the way they are needed for mission today.
Acknowledgement

Many have contributed, both directly and indirectly, to this study.

I first acknowledge my supervisor, Dr. Maryanne Confoy, professor of the University of Divinity, Australia. During the process of writing this thesis, she has constantly encouraged, supported, and inspired me with insightful comments and especially her patience and compassion beyond measure. Since I write this thesis in English – my second language – Dr. Maryanne, besides supervising me doing this research, has patiently guided my understanding as well.

I am grateful to University of Divinity, Australia, for having given me the opportunity to begin and complete this study. I wish to thank and acknowledge the Society of Jesus in Australia, particularly every single member of Jesuit Theological College, for their generous support and positive encouragement. My gratitude goes also to the Society of Jesus in Vietnam for having permitted me to study in Australia and to pursue this thesis.

Finally, I appreciate all support and encouragement from many friends vocally or quietly. Your friendship indeed contributes in this way or the other to this work.
Statement of Originality

I affirm that this thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution. To the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.
Content

Chapter One: Introduction........................................................................................................... 1

Chapter Two Jesuits in Vietnam ................................................................................................. 3

1. An Overview of the History of Jesuits in Vietnam ................................................................. 3
   1.1 Suspension and Re-establishment ....................................................................................... 3
   1.2 Diaspora ............................................................................................................................ 7
   1.3 Re-gathering and Normalising .......................................................................................... 8
   1.4 A Time to Grow ................................................................................................................ 9

2. Encouragement and Challenges to Growth ......................................................................... 11
   2.1 The Encouragement and the Challenges As Consequences of the Growth ................. 11
   2.2 Challenges That Relate to the Society and Culture of Vietnam .................................... 14

3. Summary .................................................................................................................................. 18

Chapter Three: Understanding the Jesuit Vocation as Religious Vocation ......................... 19

1. The Vocation of Saint Ignatius of Loyola ............................................................................ 19
   1.1 A Worldly Man ................................................................................................................ 20
   1.2 The Conversion of the Saint ............................................................................................ 21
      1.2.1 Conversion ................................................................................................................ 21
      1.2.2 Following God in His Way ......................................................................................... 22
   1.3 The Experience of Authentic Conversion – To Follow God As a Child .................... 27
   1.4 To Follow God as a Disciple ........................................................................................... 29


3. Understanding Vocation and the Religious Life .................................................................. 35

4. Jesuit Vocation ....................................................................................................................... 39

5. Summary .................................................................................................................................. 41

Chapter Four: Essential Elements of Ignatian Spirituality .................................................. 42

1. Spiritual Exercises: the School of Discernment ................................................................. 42
Chapter One:
Introduction

A two-fold consideration leads to this thesis: to deepen Ignatian Spirituality both academically and spiritually; and how to help people, particularly young Vietnamese interested in Jesuit life, to discover and embrace their vocation. This will look at two different questions: What is significant in Ignatian Spirituality for the young Vietnamese Jesuit? And how can I propose that spirituality as an instrument to assist young Vietnamese in their spiritual formation?

There is a story behind this thesis. A young man was first sent abroad for study. With great excitement and great ambition toward achievement, he made himself ready for study by studying a new language, did some research on the new place. He was quite confident of his ability and knowledge. He thought he knew well enough everything. However, he was shocked quickly in the new situation. He thought he knew a bit of language; however, when people started speaking, he could understand nothing. He lost his confidence in language. The situation was getting worse each day. Being in the class, he could not communicate because of, again, language. Two questions rise in his mind: how can I grow in this situation? And through observation, the young man questioned: why is it that many of his classmates seem not to be facing difficulties he is facing? With observation and reflection, he came to realize that in order to be and to gain benefit from the new situation, he must learn to listen, to open up to the new situation and to merge himself into that environment: Listening to understand, opening up to receive the reality and to merge into the reality was his hope. And afterward, in turn, he can contribute to the new situation and enrich it with his capacities.
To study Ignatian Spirituality and the potential contributions of that spirituality, observation, listening and reflection is the great way. This thesis will search a way within Ignatian tradition to assist the young Vietnamese interested in the Jesuit life and young Jesuits who are in different stage of formation. Therefore, the first is an observation of the Vietnam context. This includes a brief history of the Jesuits in Vietnam since the first came and then it focuses more on the current situation, especially since 2004, the moment Jesuits in Vietnam appeared to the public again. This observation of Vietnam (and perhaps analysis) will provide information to describe and to acknowledge the reality of those young men. This acknowledgement will help the person know how far this spirituality really assists him or her on their journey to God.

To study Ignatian Spirituality is also to study the life of St. Ignatius. Indeed, to observe the life of the Saint, we can discover and acknowledge the way God led him, and especially, we can discover how he sought out such a spiritual way in his personal situation. This observation along with analysis leads to the next chapter on essential elements of Ignatian Spirituality. This is important in terms of finding out an appropriate way to help a specific group of people.

Based on the observation of both the situation of Vietnam and the life of the Saint, the thesis seeks a way to bring Ignatian elements into the current context of Vietnam in order to provide young Vietnamese a way to discover God, to discover God’s will for them and to embrace the vocation addressed to them.
Chapter Two

Jesuits in Vietnam

Understanding the situation is the first step to discover what can help. To discover what elements of Ignatian Spirituality can contribute to Jesuit formation in the context of Vietnam, it is necessary to understand the context and to acknowledge what are the needs of Jesuits in Vietnam. In order to achieve that, I will give an overview of the history of the Vietnam province since 1957, when the Jesuits came back to Vietnam. I will then acknowledge the changes that have taken place during the last 57 years. Finally, I will describe some of the difficulties and situations that the young Jesuits in formation have to face in the new situation of Vietnam.

1. An Overview of the History of Jesuits in Vietnam

The Jesuits in Vietnam have experienced a quite stormy history. That history can be divided into 4 periods: Suspension and Re-establishment, Diaspora, Re-gathering and Growing.

1.1 Suspension and Re-establishment

The Jesuits have been in Vietnam twice. The Jesuits first came to Vietnam in 1615 to minister to Japanese Catholic refugees in Faifo (now known as Hội An). During that time, they had contributed quite significantly to Vietnam both in term of evangelisation and culture. They opened up missions along the country and trained catechists. They, especially Alexander de Rhodes, Latinised the Vietnamese script. However, the
suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773 marked the end of their mission in Vietnam.\(^1\) The Jesuits were absent from Vietnamese territory since then.

There were reasons that brought the Jesuits back to Vietnam for the second time. In 1953, some ex-students of Aurora University (Shanghai) who had been living in Chợ Lớn – a Chinese town in Saigon\(^2\) – invited some Jesuits who were expelled from China to come to help the Chinese community. In 1955, Ngô Đình Thục – Archbishop of the Archdiocese Huế - requested Father J.B. Janssens, the Father General of the Jesuits, to send Jesuits to the Republic of Vietnam\(^3\) to start a Catholic university. In April 1957, Father Oñate and Father Georges Germain arrived in Saigon and their arrival marked the return of the Jesuits to Vietnam.\(^4\) Four other Jesuits, who are Marcel Lichtenberger – a medical professor; André Gaultier – a philosophy professor; André Gélinas – a history professor; and Claude Larre – a Chinese professor, arrived and started to work in education in the same year.

The Jesuits who came to Vietnam at that time were publicly very active and significant in Vietnamese life. Right after their arrival, the Sacred Congregation approved the formation of a Pontifical seminary and entrusted it to the Jesuits. The first classes started on 13\(^{th}\) September 1958 in the campus of Catholic University (now known as Đà

---

\(^1\) The Brief *Dominus ac Redemptor* (Lord and Savior) was issued on 21\(^{st}\) July 1773, Pope Clement XIV suppressed the Society of Jesus all over the world. However, in 8\(^{th}\) August 1814, with the Bull *Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum* (The Care of all Churches), Pope Pius VII re-established the Society. There had been no mark of the Jesuits’ presence in the Vietnamese territory after suppression until 1957.

\(^2\) Now known as Hồ Chí Minh city.

\(^3\) At the Geneva conference held in Geneva, Switzerland from April 26 to July 20, 1954, Vietnam was divided into two zones: the Northern zone (from 17 parallel up north) was governed by Việt Minh – official name of the communist party, and the Southern zone (from 17 parallel down south) by the state of Vietnam. This division was made with the expectation that the nation would be united by the national election in 1956. However, the election had never happened. The North then declared themselves to be the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the South was known as the Republic of Vietnam. The country remained divided until 1975 with the Fall of Saigon.

Lát university). On the 1\textsuperscript{st} August, 1961, the Apostolic Delegate, Mario Brini, laid the first stone of the Pontifical College St. Pius X. The College was started officially on 22\textsuperscript{nd} April 1964. By the feast day of Saint Ignatius, 31\textsuperscript{st} July 1965, the faculty of theology was instituted in association with the Catholic University. The first doctorate course began in 1972. With such facilities and this advantage, the Jesuits had trained their men, Vietnamese seminarians and then opened up to non-Vietnamese. There were a few young non-Vietnamese Jesuits who received their philosophy and theological formation there. These Jesuits then became involved in the Vietnam mission. Some of them passed away, such as Father Sesto Quercetti (Vietnamese name, Hoàng Văn Lực), and some are still active, such as Father Roger Champoux, Father Philipe Gomez (Vietnamese name Ngô Minh. Besides helping religious students, they also established two university student centres: the De Rhodes Centre in Sài Gòn (1959); and the Xavier Centre in Huế (1962); and the high school Tín Đức (1964), and they began teaching at universities. In media communication, the Jesuits published a magazine, Phương Đông, a Journal of Cultural Studies and they operated an educational TV centre (1970). Beside those activities, the Jesuits became involved in inculturation through liturgy and in giving the Spiritual Exercises.

Internally, the Jesuit mission in Vietnam attracted both non-Vietnamese members and the local men. There were ninety-two non-Vietnamese Jesuits working in Vietnam for different periods of time. They came from Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Cuba, France, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, the Philippines, and the United States. In 1960, father Ferdinand Lacretelle established the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Thủ Đức and he became the first novice master. In 1965, the first candidate house for university students was established. The other candidate house for high school student was established later in 1972.
Until 1975, there were twenty-eight Vietnamese Jesuits. These included thirteen priests, ten scholastics, one brother and four novices. The work and growth of the Jesuits in Vietnam was quite promising with such success and expansion of education, ministries and vocations.

However, the year 1975 became a milestone for Jesuits in Vietnam. On 30th April 1975, the Fall of Saigon marked the unification of Vietnam as one nation, but it also marked a harsh time for the Jesuits in the country. Considering the rapid political change, Father General Pedro Arrupe appointed Father Joseph Nguyễn Công Doan the regional superior on 29th April 1975, the day before the event took place. On 28th Aug. 1975, all non-Vietnamese missionaries were required to leave Vietnam within forty-eight hours. Forty-one out of sixty-seven Jesuits were forced to leave. (In fact, after that day, Father Joseph Audic, a French Jesuit riskily remained till 1977.) Until 1975, although the Vietnamese Jesuits started involving themselves in different missions (Father Đỗ Quang Chính, Father Phạm Hữu Lai who were teaching; Father Đoàn Cao Lý involved in an Educational TV centre; Father Hoàng Sỹ Quý involved in inculturation through liturgy, they had been relying strongly on non-Vietnamese Jesuits. All the missions had been shut down one by one: the TV station (1977), University Student Centres in Saigon (1980), Pius X Pontifical Seminary (1977), the Novitiate and the last one to close was the Theologate (11 Aug. 1986).

The situation of the Society of Jesus in Vietnam had once again changed dramatically. This was made difficult by the fact that many non-Vietnamese Jesuits came to Vietnam to minister and then the other fact that they all had to leave. From having been involved in many different activities, and with a promising future, the Jesuits had been chased out even from their houses, banished from all missions and with an unknown

---

5 Among thirteen priests, there were two who had been studying overseas. With the event of the fall of Saigon, it was too risky for them to return to Vietnam after they completed their study. Alternatively, they both then joined other provinces, one in Australia and the other joined the French province.
tomorrow. From the experience of growing prosperously, they faced yet another effort “not to die one more time”. Such a situation brought about a significant change in the life of Jesuits in Vietnam once more.

1.2 Diaspora

Facing such difficult situations of closure of ministries and forced departure, the Jesuits in Vietnam had to find out a way to sustain their identity and ministry. The spirit at that time was one of a readiness to open up, to adapt to and to merge into the new situation. Father Nguyễn Công Đoan, major superior of Vietnam, addressed this hopeful spirit clearly to Scholastics and Novices in the Lenten season of 1976. He wrote:

Anh em hãy tiếp tục duy trì và phát triển tinh thần cói mở và tâm hồn sẵn sàng. Nếu người Giêsu hữu là người sẵn sàng để được sai đi, thì chúng ta biết chúng ta đang được sai vào trong lòng một dân tộc đang tiến đến xã hội chủ nghĩa. Anh em hãy để cao khả năng thích ứng, gần gũi liền với ơn gọi của Đòng: điểm yếu ưa cho chúng ta hôm nay là tinh thần cói mở để nhìn ra giá trị của xã hội quanh ta, để nhập vào cuộc sống với họ, bằng tất cả con người đã được thẩm nhận Chúa Kitô. ⁶

Not to withdraw, but to merge in; not to criticise, but to recognise the values and to adapt to the new situation: this spirit would help the Vietnamese Jesuits to survive. Although the situation was difficult, there were still young men interested in joining the Jesuits. Among members of the Vietnamese Jesuits now, eleven joined from 30th May, 1975 to 1981. Instead of having formal training, those who remained and joined later had to be ready to be scattered: some signed up for military service; others became involved in the youth volunteering movement run by the state; some worked in the state factories and others joined a diocesan seminary and then became priests.

⁶ “Let us continue to maintain and to increase the spirit of openness and that of readiness. If a Jesuit is the one who is ready to be missioned, we know that we are missioning to the mind of people who are moving toward communism. You must value the ability of adaptation, which relates closely to our Jesuit vocation: the essential element for us today is the spirit of openness which will allow us to recognise values of the society we are living, in order to merge into their lives with our entire self instilled by Christ.” (“Letter of Father Nguyễn Công Đoan”, in Kỷ 50 năm Đội Tên Trái Phát Vụ tại Việt Nam (1957 – 2007), p. 136
However, those were not the only workplaces the Jesuits were scattered to as a result of the Communist control. Within their first five years in authority, the Communists, according to Father Doan, “allowed the continuation of religious observances, although they were more suspicious of the religious congregations than they were of the diocesan clergy.” This suspicion promised a serious suffering for religious people and clergy in Vietnam and among them were Jesuits.

12th Dec. 1980 marked another milestone in the Vietnamese Jesuit history. Father Lê Thanh Quê, a Jesuit, was arrested due to “mimeographing and distributing commentaries on the Sunday Gospels”. Including Quê, nine out of eleven Jesuit priests and one scholastic then had been jailed for different lengths of time. Seven were brought to trial on 29th June 1982. They were accused of anti-revolutionary propaganda and were sentenced to imprisonment. The longest sentence was upon father Lê Thanh Quê, a 15 years sentence. The second longest one was upon Father Superior, Joseph Nguyên Công Doan, with a 12 years sentence. As a consequence of these accusations and punishments, most of the houses of the Jesuits had been taken over. All Jesuits, included the very few in the novitiates in the next ten years, had been scattered all over the places. However the spirit of readiness had held them together regardless of any difficulty experienced as being a Jesuit.

1.3 Re-gathering and Normalising

There is “a time to break down, and a time to build up” (Eclesiastics 3: 3). There were times to be scattered and there were times to be re-gathered. Those Jesuits who had been scattered began to be regathered by the late 1980s. Some tried to complete philosophy

---

and theology formation with very limited resources, both in terms of library and lecturers. The year 1991 had marked another milestone. The last Jesuit to be released from prison by 11th Seb. 1991, was Father Lê Thanh Quế. Although not every Jesuit had been allowed to live in Jesuit houses, they found ways to gather together more easily. In addition to these releases, the Jesuits worldwide, celebrated the 500 years anniversary of the birth of Saint Ignatius in 1991. To be in the spirit of celebration, the Vietnam region had some presentations in the Our Lady Cathedral in Hồ Chí Minh city and in three other small Jesuit parishes. To the surprise of all, the Government also allowed some Jesuits to be ordained publicly. In that period the Jesuits attempted to do their ministry quietly and their religious life had been normalised in important ways: they shared community life, they were trained more thoroughly and were able to be involved in ministry.

1.4 A Time to Grow

To maintain their identity and ministry in Vietnam, the Jesuits have chosen to accept new men for the order. Indeed, within one decade, 1981-1991, their members had been added to by only three. With some vocational activities and presentations in some parishes, especially in the Cathedral, many young men came to know the Jesuits and wanted to join them. The novitiate was re-opened quietly, if not secretly, in 1992. This event marked a growth of the region, steadily but promisingly. Indeed, the Society always had some men who joined every year.

Having involved themselves in different ministries, the Jesuits came to know many young men and several of them wanted to join the Society. It seemed that this would be the time for the Society of Jesus in Vietnam to become visible to the public. Having been encouraged by Father General Peter Hans Kolvenbach, the Regional Superior in 2004, decided to make the Feast of Saint Ignatius, 31st June, a special event. Many people were
invited to the event. The Novitiate and the Scholasticate were made known to people. The membership of the Jesuits in Vietnam has increased rapidly since then. To mark the growth of the region, the Vietnam region was made a province in 2007. Along with this event, Father General Peter Hans Kolvenbach visited Vietnam. He was the first General of the Jesuit to visit Vietnam since 1972.

The Vietnam province has been growing quickly in term of people and mission. By August 2014, the membership of the Vietnam province had increased to 216, this included 43 novices. The missions have been also expanded through evangelisation. Jesuits have been giving the Spiritual Exercises; they continued to teach theology and philosophy; they gave spiritual direction; they were involving themselves in social services; they were working as chaplains for university students, and they continued to send men to the places that needed help in various ways. However, the biggest concern of the province in the meantime is in the task of forming their men for ministry in the present and future context of Vietnam.

The journey through such a stormy history over the centuries is significant for the Jesuits in Vietnam. From the position of being most welcome in relating with the Republic of Vietnam, the Society of Jesus became a dangerous institution (if not an enemy) in the eyes of the new Government. From severe earlier situations of deprivation of identity and ministry, the Jesuits have survived and grown dramatically in the last decade. On the one hand, the growth of the province encourages them to move forward. On the other hand, the new situation also introduces challenges that the Province needs to confront, especially in formation. To acknowledge those challenges for formation of their members is crucial for

---

9 The Vietnamese Government still does not allow any religious congregation to run an educational institution. That explains why Jesuits are not involved in education in Vietnam. However, they are helping students via chaplaincy irregularly and quietly. Under the communist ideology, Vietnam still forbids having any religious education in school, therefore there is no religious education in school curriculums at all. People can lean about religions, but not in school
the province in order to find out a way to prepare their men for mission according to their charism.

2. Encouragement and Challenges to Growth

Encouragement and challenges to the growth of the Province have come from different sources. In this section, I will first look at the encouragement and the challenges as consequences of the growth. Then I will study mostly the challenges relating to the diverse social and cultural contexts of Vietnam in past decades and some implications for formation of Jesuit Candidates.

2.1 The Encouragement and the Challenges As Consequences of the Growth

Encouragement and challenges often go hand in hand in relation to the rapid growth of the Vietnam province. Two elements need to be considered more closely: firstly, the increase in numbers of Jesuits and the challenges this presents; and secondly, the increase in regional and cultural differences among new members of the Society and the challenges now being faced particularly in formation.

The membership of the Society of Jesus in Vietnam has increased rapidly in the last fourteen years. The increase of Vietnamese Jesuits in Vietnam from 1960 can be seen in Chart 1. This shows the increase from the time when the novitiate was established, to the present time, August 2014. In the first two decades, with all the advantages of the period, the Jesuits increased relatively well with thirty-three men joining the Society and these remained.\(^{10}\) The membership almost stood still in the ‘diaspora’ decade of the 1980s when

---

\(^{10}\) The statistics provided here represent those who have remained in the Society. There are those who joined and stayed in for different periods. Unfortunately, the archives of the Vietnam Province could not store information relating to those who joined and left the Society, especially those who were members before 1980 and who left due to the hardness of the period. Therefore, I include those who have remained in the Province, including deceased Jesuits and those who used to belong to the Vietnam region/ province.
Jesuits were scattered widely around Vietnam. Then there were more men who joined in the normalising decade of the 1990s, and the numbers reached 60 by the year 2000. Within the next fourteen years, by 2014, the membership of the Vietnamese Province increased up to 216, almost 3.5 times bigger in comparison with the year 2000. This is a great encouragement for the whole Province. The Jesuit charism appears attractive and helps many people. However, that happy reality has also brought considerable challenges, relating to human resources. Due to the membership having increased quickly and the fact that formation for Jesuit life also requires a quite long period of time, therefore, about up to 80% of Vietnamese Jesuits are in different stages of formation, with most of them studying. This situation has required many Jesuits being involved in formation. However, there are many other demands faced in the Province, including governance, ministries and projects preparing for future.

The increasing of members of the Vietnamese Jesuits also witnesses the increasing regional cultural differences. The province has been experiencing the regional diversity of its members in the last decade. The numbers of new Jesuits from the North and those from the South are shown in Chart 2.\footnote{Having said the North and the South, I indicate the Northern and Southern zones as the Country is split into two. I have noted many significant regional differences among Vietnamese people at the level of districts. This is very obvious especially in the central area of Vietnam. To study these differences requires more time and a bigger project. Moreover, it is not the aim of this thesis. This section of the thesis is rather an effort to acknowledge the existence of the regional differences specifically between those who have been under the influence of the communist government much longer.} The Vietnam province had not had one applicant for membership from the Northern zone until 1995. In fact, the first Vietnamese Jesuits were originally from different parts of Vietnam, and some of them were from the North. However, when the country was split in 1954, all of these northern Jesuits emigrated to the southern zone with their family in their young age. It is a fact that the Jesuits have accepted more and more applicants from the North. There were twenty-one out of fifty-five (38.18%) Jesuits from the North who joined between 2005-2010. In the next four year
(2011 – 2014), it was twenty-seven out of sixty-nine (39.13%). In 2015, thirty-eight candidates have been expected to joint, seventeen are from the North, marked 44.74%.

![Chart 1: Increasing of Jesuits in Vietnam Province](chart1.png)

This reality has been a great encouragement for the province. It firstly is a great source of enrichment. People always have something either to learn from or to contribute to each other, especially those differences of regional understandings and customs. This diversity is important to allow a Jesuit to open up to a new social or cultural perspective. More than that, it prepares him possible for mission around the country or more broadly. However, it is also a challenge for both those responsible for formation and those in formation. How to break through such regional boundaries? How to break though the regional pride? And how to break through the regional prejudice?\(^\text{12}\)

\(^{12}\) I will discuss prejudice in the following part.
2.2 Challenges That Relate to the Society and Culture of Vietnam

Cultural and social elements can create some significant challenges to the Jesuits in Vietnam. These challenges relate to hierarchy, honesty and other issues. A hierarchical mentality can impact on the intention for religious life. Having been influenced heavily by Confucianism, the culture of Vietnam fundamentally is a hierarchical or class-conscious culture. To gain respect, a person, especially a man, should achieve a status or a title. Nevertheless, to be a religious or clergy has been considered a noble and great position, not simply in the Church, but also among people in general. Observing the reality of Vietnam, Đỗ Quang Hưng stated: “rất nhiều bạn trẻ đi tu vì thích những hoạt động của giáo sĩ hoặc tu sĩ chứ không phải vì nét đẹp của người rao giảng Tin Mừng.”\(^\text{13}\) It is because “giáo sĩ và tu sĩ được coi là những người có địa vị trong tổ chức Giáo Hội.”\(^\text{14}\) The cleric, in many way,

---

\(^\text{13}\) Translation “Many young people join the religious life not because of the beauty of a missionary, but because they like the acts of the cleric and the religious”, Đỗ Quang Hưng, “Sống Đạo Của Người Công Giáo Việt Nam”, Nếp Sống Đạo Của Người Công Giáo Việt Nam, (Hà Nội: NXB Từ Điển Bách Khoa, 2010), p. 15

\(^\text{14}\) Translation “the cleric and the religious are considered as those who have a position in the Church”. Đỗ Quang Hưng, “Sống Đạo Của Người Công Giáo Việt Nam”, p. 15
acts more like a “little king”, as many Vietnamese Catholic call some priests. Those who commit to religious life are most respected due to the idea that they are ‘God’s chosen one’ primarily. More than that, having a cleric or a religious is an honour for not only the immediate family, but also for the broad family and local community. Therefore, those who join religious life can be manipulated or influenced by those cultural elements. In such a situation, being a religious possibly leads a person to pride instead of being committed to serving the people of God, no matter who they may be. Questions for those in formation are: How to help the young people discover their calling more genuinely and sincerely? How can Ignatian Spirituality contribute to help people to understand humility, especially those who are interested in Jesuit vocation and those who are members of the Order?

The other issue, which I believe relates closely to the people in the current Vietnamese society having been governed by the communist over the years, is honesty. Making a comparison between the past and recent religious persons in formation in Vietnam, Ngọc Biên wrote:

Nếu trước kia, các tu sĩ hoàn toàn phó thác mọi sự cho Chúa trong tay bè trên, luôn coi ý bè trên là ý Chúa. Song thật thì đơn sơ với ý ngày lạnh. Họ luôn ý thức can tính của mình sẽ là tu sĩ hay linh mục, đồng thời cũng chuẩn bị cho xúng dðng với những danh hiệu, địa vị mà họ sẽ đảm nhận trong tương lai. Thi, ngày nay lại không phải vậy! Đâu văn còn những yếu tố đó. Ngày nay, mặt bằng về trí thức cơ thể hơn hẳn trước kia, sự hiểu biết sâu rộng hơn vào những phương diện bố trợ đã làm cho người tu sĩ trẻ hôm nay nảm bất được những ưu thế và tính tế trong những đổi thay của xã hội cũng như khoa học..., những về chiều sâu đạo đức, kinh trên những dưới, sống đức ái, thật thà, và ý hướng ngày lành (tức là tâm tu), thì thua xa các bậc cha anh, tiên bỏ của họ.”

15 Translation: “In the past, the religious people absolutely surrendered to God through their superiors. They always considered the will of their superiors as God’s will. They lived a modest and sincere life with a good will. They always bore in mind that they were about to be a religious person or a priest. They also prepared themselves to be worthy with such title, status that they would take in the future. Nowadays, a young person can possess a far better intellectual knowledge than those of the past. With supportive equipment, a young person can understand the advance and essentiality of changes socially and scientifically much better than those of the past... However, considering the depth of virtues, to respect each other hierarchically, living charity, honesty, and righteous mind (living religious life from heart), the young people today are far behind
This statement, on the one hand, presents a quite difficult perspective to the younger generation. Indeed, the young people who join religious life are more advanced in age and education than in the past. I believe that they are actually living out those virtues more actively and differently from the past. They follow an instruction critically. They do not bind themselves absolutely to whatever the authority said. They should not act as if they did not know anything. To not be absolutely bound to authority is not the sign of not taking their role in the future seriously. It could be the other way around: because they have thought about the future ministry, they may have chosen to change, to be more flexible. Therefore, the issue is not necessarily for the formatees but the formators who were themselves formed in a different era.

The task for those in leadership in the province is how to help closed formators to open up to the new situation and new culture of the young; to being liberated from the hierarchical mentality that maintains that the formators are always right and being a real help for those who are in formation. Considering the importance of Ignatian Spirituality in the formation process, what element of this spirituality can contribute to solve this issue?

On the other hand, the statement did reflect an issue that religious congregations in Vietnam pay much attention to: honesty. There are religious congregations in the south of Vietnam who hesitate to accept the young northern Vietnamese people concerned especially about their honesty. That prejudice becomes a reason for some congregations not to accept new members from the North. The question that can be raised here is: What causes people to have such an attitude toward a specific group of people? After the unity of Vietnam in 1975, many religious people from the southern zone had experienced new situations which could be considered alien in the religious life. Many religious people had

those who were before them.” (Ngoc Biên, Huấn Luyện Tu Sĩ Trẻ Ngày Nay: Niềm Vui và Thách Đố, (Access: http://www.vietcatholic.net/News/Html/103936.htm date: 13/2/2014)
to keep secrets even with their own family. In the Society of Jesus in Vietnam, it was about two decades (from 1980 – 2002) that not many people even knew who was a real regional superior of Vietnam, and this included candidates and novices.\footnote{16} There was a case that a Jesuit had not known that his elder brother had been a Jesuit until he joined them some years later. From personal experience, I had to cover up being a Jesuit for some years. Such secrecy is mainly for security, for survival. The fewer people who know, the safer we are. The situation becomes even more critical once people discovered some of their members actually were secret agents. In such situations, people had to play with ‘the truth’. The truth is the personal treasure, not to be shown.

For the sake of survival, people must change significantly. This would specially be the case of many Northern Vietnamese. Many of them have lived under the Communist regime since 1945 or 1954,\footnote{17} much longer than those from the South. People were persecuted over a long period with land revolution\footnote{18} and many other ways of dictatorship. People had to “đâu tội” (blame) each other, even in the same family. Thousands of people were executed or imprisoned because of false accusations. Living under such hostility, many people chose to follow what they had been told and obey without question. Such attitudes have been passed on to later generations. In addition to that, the Northern People, and later the Southern have received and been indoctrinated by false information and propaganda coming from local government and Communist party leaders. Living and growing in such dishonest environments and formed by indoctrination rather than education, it is unrealistic to expect that they understand what it means to live in an honest and open religious

\footnote{16} Father Nguyễn Công Đoan was made the superior of Vietnam region since 1975. Publically, he was considered in that role until 2003. In reality, Father Đoàn Cao Lý was in that role from 1983 to 1993; and Father Phạm Hữu Lai was from 1993 to 2001.

\footnote{17} The communist party has been in power in the North much earlier than that from the South. In 1945, they formed the government until the French fought back.

\footnote{18} Land revolution was a political campaign in the North of Vietnam from 1954 to 1956. It had been taking the exact form of the cultural revolution in China. This is a dark bit of the communist history; hence the Northern Vietnamese leaders attempted to cover this up as much as they could.
community. Once people have become used to living with dishonesty, they may not consider it a serious issue any more. People may come to the religious life with the same attitude and behavior. How to help people to recognise their issues that they are facing in their formation for religious life? How can present and future formators use Ignatian Spirituality in ways that contribute to the personal development and growth to openness and integrity for those who have experienced such controlling situations in their ordinary lives?

3. Summary

There have been both joyful experiences and strong challenges throughout the history of the Jesuits in Vietnam. In its recent history since 1957, the Jesuits in Vietnam have been through experiences of establishment, of being scattered and suppressed and of rapid growth. The rapid growth of the present period brings both encouragement and challenges to the province leaders and to all who are involved in formation, as formators or formatees. The Province is growing in numbers and missions and this brings the concern of balancing human resources for mission and formation. The increase in regional differences promises mutual enrichment among members of the province; it can also require the formators to open up the regional boundaries and break through the indoctrinating experiences. Indeed, people from different parts of Vietnam have been living in a different environment and possibly have different understanding relating to their growing environment. Ignatian Spirituality has in the past contributed to the formation of people over the centuries. The question for Vietnamese formators is how to translate the Spiritual Exercises into the present context? This issue is an important one to address and to work through as a province.
Chapter Three:
Understanding the Jesuit Vocation as Religious Vocation

This chapter will study the issue of vocation, particularly the Jesuit vocation. The specific aim of this chapter is to find out a way to train young Vietnamese in their call to the Jesuit religious life; therefore, I will concentrate on understanding the religious vocation of which the Jesuit vocation is a particular example rather than look at a general understanding of vocation. But I will mention the general understanding of vocation to some extent. In order to do that, I will firstly examine the vocation of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. Then, I will describe briefly my personal Jesuit journey. These observations and descriptions will provide some experiential background that may allow me to better understand the Jesuit religious vocation for contemporary Vietnamese young men.

1. The Vocation of Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Research into the vocation of Saint Ignatius could be a complicated task. Observing the life of Saint Ignatius via his autobiography, it was quite clear that it was the life of searching enthusiastically for God’s will that was important for him. His writing and life show that Ignatius was transformed in and throughout his personal spiritual journey. Therefore to study the vocation of Saint Ignatius is to study his personal spiritual journey, which can be divided into four phases relating to three significant events in his life: before and after the time of recovery in the Loyola castle; his conversion in Manresa; and the life of a disciple.
1.1 A Worldly Man

Ignatius was born in a noble family at Loyola in 1491, and was known as Iñigo López de Loyola\textsuperscript{19}. He was a knight who was born into the noble life.\textsuperscript{20} His father, Beltrán Yáñez Ibáñez de Oñaz (1439 – 1507) “belonged to the principal nobility of the province” and was from the family of Don Alonso Manrique, duke of Najera. He served loyally the kings of Castile, and was honoured by the royal family\textsuperscript{21}. Having lived in such a family, Ignatius was encouraged himself and he encouraged others to maintain the family reputation. His concern, most likely, was only to serve the kings and to gain respect from others. Indeed, Ignatius’ family fought against Moors who were considered the enemy of the Christian faith,\textsuperscript{22} and were involved in the local church management. Although Ignatius himself possibly received the tonsure for a “possible ecclesiastical prebend”,\textsuperscript{23} he still practiced the faith as he inherited it from his family tradition.\textsuperscript{24} In fact, his primary goals were, as David A. Salomon said, pride, wealth, fame, and women.\textsuperscript{25} God had a very limited place in Ignatius’ early life.

Searching for a woman to love, Ignatius wanted to be with a woman ‘not of ordinary nobility: not a countess nor a duchess; but her station was to be higher than any of

\textsuperscript{19} The year of birth of Ignatius is not clear because we do not have any legal record related to it. However, based on the assurance of María Garín, who was involved in life-supporting service for Ignatius, most people believed that Ignatius was born in 1491. (see. J. Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, \textit{Ignatius of Loyola – the Pilgrim Saint}, trans. Cornelius Michael Buckley, (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1987), pp. 45 - 47


\textsuperscript{22} J. Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, \textit{Ignatius of Loyola – the Pilgrim Saint}, pp. 49 – 50

\textsuperscript{23} However, this tonsure saved him from a sentence involving “premeditated and enormous … crimes.” (See J. Ignacio Tellechea Idigoras, \textit{Ignatius of Loyola – the Pilgrim Saint}, pp. 69 – 70.)


these’, although he knew that, ironically, this was impossible to achieve.\textsuperscript{26} That was because, this woman, as scholars believe, was Princess Catherine of Portugal.\textsuperscript{27} The battlefield of Pamplona is another example of the worldliness as well as the courage of Ignatius at that time. The Pamplona side had no hope of winning the battle. Firstly, the Pamplona army was absolutely disadvantaged in comparison with the French army. Secondly, in this battle, most officers of Pamplona were arguing for surrender. Nevertheless, Ignatius, although he himself was not a professional soldier, had the courage to stay in the fight against the French invasion of Pamplona. Ignatius remained in Pamplona and successfully persuaded people to fight back\textsuperscript{28}. These two examples show Ignatius’ attitude toward worldly things and values. He was not simply satisfied with ordinary things. Once he wanted something, he was determined to achieve it. This attitude was a narrow crack in his personality through which God revealed his calling for Ignatius, a call that was started by introducing him to another way. Indeed, Ignatius was about to experience a great conversion.

\textbf{1.2 The Conversion of the Saint}

\textbf{1.2.1 Conversion}

What is conversion? Having examined most early studies and some contemporary studies on conversion, Chana Ullman commented: “religious conversion referred to an abrupt religious experience involving an increased commitment within the framework of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{26} St. Ignatius of Loyola, \textit{A Pilgrim’s Testament – The Memoirs of St. Ignatius Loyola}, Luis Gonçalves da Câmara (transcript), Parmandanda R. Divarkar (trans.), (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1995) No. 6. From now on, I will use the word \textit{Autobiography} instead of the full reference.
\item \textsuperscript{27} Gerald Coleman, \textit{Walking With Iñigo}, p. 13
\item \textsuperscript{28} Phillip Caraman, \textit{Ignatius Loyola – A Biography of the Founder of the Jesuit}, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), pp. 20 – 24
\end{itemize}
the person’s own religious group." With this understanding, conversion is an interaction between God and the person. God initiates the call by giving the person an unexpected experience or experiences. On their part, the persons will generally increase their commitment. God calls and the persons respond accordingly. Paul is an example of such a call: Being struck by God on his way to Damascus, Saint Paul was converted and converted completely. From being the one who opposed Jesus and his followers, and from being the one who persecuted Christians Paul enthusiastically became one of them. More than that, he became a missionary of the Good News. Paul heard the Lord’s voice and was converted accordingly.

However, an unexpected experience may not necessarily lead a person to conversion. It may rather require more courage for a person to continue following God’s calling for him or her. This situation can apply to those who are already journeying on the way of God, but then, for some reasons or weaknesses, they may lose the courage to continue moving forward or even become aware that they did not have a call to religious life. The grace of God will assist the person to transform their way of acting, of appearing to follow Jesus, but not necessarily really being a follower. Nevertheless, in any case, to hear and to follow God’s invitation is essential for a person experiencing the call to religious life.

1.2.2 Following God in His Way

The time at Loyola after the loss to the French could be considered as a milestone in Ignatius’ journey to God, at least externally. The life of Ignatius changed significantly during the time of recovery from his injury at Loyola castle. Having read two books, The Life of Christ and The Lives of Saints, Ignatius possibly discovered the other way to be a

---

knight instead of searching to serve a very high lady, which was impossible for him. Most scholars consider Ignatius was converted by the grace of God during the time at Loyola. In fact, his experience of the grace of God should never be neglected in this significant turn of Ignatius’ life, especially his acknowledgment of the distinction between the spirit from God, and that from devil. However, can we call this stage of Ignatius’ spiritual life a true conversion?

At one stage, Ignatius asked himself: “What if I should do this which Saint Francis did, and this which Saint Dominic did?” Then he decided: “Saint Dominic did this, so I have to do it; Saint Francis did this, so I have to do it.” What really led Ignatius to make those life changes? Why were Dominic and Francis mentioned in his biography? Perhaps he simply found out another way to be great. There are reasons that allow me to think that way. Firstly, in the book *The Life Of Jesus Christ*, Ludolph presented Christ, as the one who, according to Caraman, was “the summit of the ideals of a medieval knight”. The idea of being a knight, a great knight, was what Ignatius embraced. Indeed, after having made an “about-turn” in his way of living and appearance, Ignatius presented himself as a knight still. The knighthood ceremony in Montserrat was an authentic example of this. In front of the altar of Our Lady of Montserrat, Ignatius kept a whole night’s vigil, then

---

31 *Autobiography*, No. 8
32 *Autobiography*, No. 7
34 Phillip Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola – A Biography of the Founder of the Jesuit*, p. 27
placed his sword and dagger there. The knightly Jesus as described by Ludolph most likely attracted Ignatius.

Secondly, it was quite certain that Ignatius grew up in a crusade environment. Mentioning the Spanish spirit at the time of Ignatius, Joseph Höffner claimed that “the Spanish felt that they had a vocation as crusaders” and “the joy of discovery was intimately united with zeal for conversion in a people who had the crusader ideal in their blood.” The idea of a holy war was very much alive in Spain during Ignatius’ youth and adulthood. Moreover, Ignatius was born into the family of the Lords of Loyola who had a great reputation of fighting for their faith. Therefore, fighting for his faith should be a part of his family tradition. Lastly, Ignatius himself was educated in the house of Hernán Veláquez, the chief royal treasurer, and occasionally he served in the court of King Ferdinand V, a Catholic monarch. Although not being a professional soldier, the crusading culture of living, educating and serving those of higher nobility must have had a great impact on Ignatius. Indeed, the ideals of knighthood were very strong in him.

Thirdly, what Ignatius did was influenced by what he found in the life of Francis, Dominic and Saint Onofrio (or Humphry) – an Egyptian desert saint. There are some

---

37 This understanding built up a distinctive spirituality which Hans Wolter named crusade spirituality. These people desired to go to Jerusalem in order to liberate it and to convert people there (see. Hans Wolter, ‘Elements of Crusade Spirituality In St. Ignatius’, pp. 97 – 120).
38 Cándido de Dalmases, Ignatius Loyola – Founder of the Jesuits, pp. 4 – 27
39 Cándido de Dalmases, Ignatius Loyola – Founder of the Jesuits, p. 35
40 See Brodrick, James, Saint Ignatius Loyola: The Pilgrim Years, 1491-1538 (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 86 – 87. This name is spelled differently: Onofrio (James Brodrick); Onuphrius (Hugo Rahner, The Spirituality of St. Ignatius Loyola, p. 25) or Honofrio (Phillip Caraman, Ignatius Loyola – A Biography of the Founder of the Jesuit, p. 28). This differentiation most likely comes from the different writing of languages. I will use Onofrio just for consistency.
similarities between Saint Francis and Ignatius in their early life. Ignatius read that until twenty years of age, ‘Francis had spent his time on vanities’. Ignatius was about the same. He described himself: “Up to the age of twenty-six he was a man given to the follies of the world; and what he enjoyed most was exercise with arms, having a great and foolish desire to win fame.” Saint Francis was defeated when he was twenty-two years old and imprisoned for more than a year. His health was damaged severely, and it took him eighteen months after being released to recover. All those things had been happening to Ignatius when he was about the age of Saint Francis who influenced him: Ignatius was defeated, got injured and was recovering. Francis changed his life significantly for the glory of God. This about-turn must have attracted Ignatius to such an extent that “his whole intention was to do such great external works because the saints had done so for the glory of God, without considering any more particular prospect.”

Ignatius did what he said he would do, in some cases, quite irrationally, if not blindly. For instance, on the way to Genoa, having ignored the advice not to travel on a dangerous road, which was between the two armies of France and Spain, Ignatius walked through and got arrested. Although Ignatius gained spiritual experience as if he was with Jesus in his passion, especially after he was captured, searched and led through different streets, it was still difficult to understand what really drew him to make such a decision. However, in the light of Saint Francis’ life, this act could make some sense. Francis walked fearlessly into the Crusader army in Damietta and spoke to them of his anxiety that

41 Phillip Caraman, Ignatius Loyola – A Biography of the Founder of the Jesuit, 28; for further detail, see Augustine Thompson, Francis of Assisi – a new Biography, (London: Cornell University Press, 2012), pp. 7 – 11
42 Autobiography, No. 1
43 Augustine Thompson, Francis of Assisi, 10
45 Autobiography, No. 51.
they might be defeated, based on his personal military experience. Ignatius most likely just wanted to do what the saints did without really considering the actual circumstances. Saint Dominic apparently did not influence Ignatius much. He was even ‘disgusted’ by the way that the Saint disciplined himself to pray for different people; nevertheless, Saint Dominic was well known in Castile.

Although not mentioned in his autobiography, Saint Onofrio had a great impact on Ignatius in his understanding of how to follow Jesus. As Onofrio did not pay attention to his appearance at all, and practiced the ascetic life in the desert of Egypt; Ignatius wore sackcloth instead of fine cloth and being ‘good looking’ according to his status. Along with that, Ignatius also allowed his hair and nails ‘go its way according to nature.’ Ignatius likely followed closely the example of the Saint: long hours of prayer, abstinence, discipline and a solitary life.

Considering what Ignatius had been doing, one could say that Ignatius had not yet been totally converted to God. He had some inner experiences that drew him to some extreme practices. However, he appeared to have been transformed, but not converted yet. His concern was still with what made a person great. To be a real knight was possibly still more important to him than anything else. His mentality was stuck with a sense of a competition: if Saint Francis and Dominic could do something, he must do it and even do better. His determination was so strong that no dilemma or concern could stop him. He followed God according to his interest. He “wanted to enter the lists of holiness in

---

46 Augustine Thompson, *Francis of Assisi*, p. 67. Eventually, this army was defeated terribly as the Saint warned them.

47 Phillip Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p. 28

48 Ignatius did not mention Onofrio in his autobiography but in conversation with one of his close collaborators (see. Phillip Caraman, *Ignatius Loyola*, p. 28)

49 *Autobiography*, No. 19
competition with Dominic, Francis, and others.” He did love God generously and desired to follow God dearly; however, he had not listened really to God. In other words, he changed his way of living, but was not yet converted to Christ.

Although this was not a conversion, considering that Ignatius followed what he wanted still, the movement in Ignatius can be considered as the starting point on the journey of conversion. We have to acknowledge a significant change in Ignatius: from the one who was concerned more with worldly things to the one who was concerned more with Godly things. From having the mind of competition, he changed from aiming to gain reward or attention of a noble lady, to gaining holiness. His determination helped Ignatius to divorce himself from his old path and to follow on the other, the former one was more worldly and the latter was a bit more Godly. Moreover, although he had been following mostly what he wanted, it was the first time that Ignatius acknowledged something that was of God or that of devil through the discernment of spirits. (I will discuss this matter further in the next chapter on the essential elements of Ignatian Spirituality.) This acknowledgement would equip him to listen to God’s calling for him.

1.3 The Experience of Authentic Conversion – To Follow God As a Child

Life did not always go in the way that Ignatius wanted. That was how Ignatius experienced life in this third phase of his spiritual journey. Since Ignatius changed his way of living, with his strong determination, no physical discipline really disturbed him. However, that from within did strike him down; and that from within would bring Ignatius to the experience of being genuinely converted to God.

50 Paul Shore. “The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony and Its Influence on The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola”, p. 6

51 Autobiography, No. 8, see footnote.
Until his early time at Manresa, Ignatius almost neglected to listen to God. In fact, he was too busy to recognise his own vocation. He observed food abstinence seriously and even intended to join the Carthusians,\textsuperscript{52} which he thought was the best way to follow God. He had made an about-turn in his way of living. However, following God does not mean following what the person wants, but what God calls for. Hence, the main element is listening to God’s calling. I believe that Ignatius had not experienced a real conversion until he experienced a spiritual scruple. Reflecting on his spiritual life, Ignatius realized he could not control it. Sometimes he did not feel nourished in practicing any devotions; then he felt the opposite other times. This feeling happened just suddenly without warning.\textsuperscript{53} Ignatius was frustrated with this new experience: “What new life is this that we are now beginning?”\textsuperscript{54} Things did not go as he expected. The question also showed his uncertainty about what was about to happen. This was not how a very organized person like Ignatius was expected to be. It was the first time that Ignatius was not certain about his future.

The scruple experience almost destroyed Ignatius. Although preparing carefully for confession, Ignatius had a feeling that he had not yet confessed all of his sins.\textsuperscript{55} He was distressed because of this feeling. As the result, he almost killed himself with mortifications. Having been experiencing this scruple, Ignatius was for the first time calling for help:

\textsuperscript{52} Phillip Caraman, \textit{Ignatius Loyola – A Biography of the Founder of the Jesuits}, p. 40. In this part of his book, Philip Caraman, says ‘Ignatius was given the first glimmerings of his vocation’, which narrowed down the definition of vocation into religious life. This is the common understanding of many people on vocation until now, especially among the Vietnamese. However, I am wondering whether it is an accurate understanding? Indeed, it will depend on how one defines ‘vocation’. I will discuss this matter in the later part of this chapter.

\textsuperscript{53} Autobiography, No. 21

\textsuperscript{54} The word ‘we’ has been literally translated from Spanish \textit{comenzamos}, the first person plural form of the verb: \textit{comenzar} (to start/ to begin). Why did Ignatius use the first person plural here? It was possibly a mistake because this was a rhetorical question, self-questioning. Cándido de Dalmases used the second person in his translation “what new life is this that you are now beginning?”, which I think would be better and more accurate (Cándido de Dalmases s.j., \textit{Ignatius Of Loyola, Founder Of the Jesuit}, p. 58)

\textsuperscript{55} Autobiography, No. 22 – 25
Help me, Lord, for I find no remedy in men nor in any creature; yet if I thought I could find it, no labor would be too hard to me. Yourself, Lord, show me where I may find it; even though I should have to chase after a puppy that it may give me the remedy, I will do it.\textsuperscript{56}

The change of Ignatius’ attitude toward God was significant. Having been experiencing scruples, Ignatius appeared a mentally strong person still. He was confident that he could do anything, no matter how hard or whatever it would be. However, in that tough manner, instead of planning what to do, Ignatius the man recognized his limitations and opened himself up to ask for help. Ignatius’ position in the journey with God had been changed. Instead of planning and taking control of what to do, Ignatius called upon God for God’s instruction. For Ignatius, the relationship between God and him was of a schoolmaster and a child.\textsuperscript{57} The centre had been shifted from Ignatius’ self to his God. In other words, he became more passive and God was more active in his life and discernment. This attitude reflected a fuller conversion. He not only changed his way of living, but he also changed his way of being in relationship with God: from the one who decided what to do to the one who waited for instruction; from the position of being leader to the position of being follower. This experience allowed Ignatius to let go some of the extreme practices he used to do. He listened to and followed what spoke to him from within, and he started by cutting his hair and nails.\textsuperscript{58} This conversion will bring him to the fourth phase of his spiritual journey.

\textbf{1.4 To Follow God as a Disciple}

Having changed his previous way of being in relationship with God, Ignatius will change his way of proceeding toward discernment. Since the point of conversion, Ignatius, instead of following what he wanted, listened carefully to what God wanted of him through

\textsuperscript{56} Autobiography No. 23
\textsuperscript{57} Autobiography No. 27
\textsuperscript{58} Autobiography, No. 29
discernment. One notification is that to follow God’s calling did not necessarily mean that Ignatius had divorced himself completely from his former life. It was rather his journey of adjusting his life according to the call. In relation with God, Ignatius still held on to his rational manner: choosing not to have a companion on his journey to Jerusalem because of the fear of being attached, and not trusting in God’s providence; not daring to let others know that he was going to Jerusalem because of the fear of vainglory.\(^{59}\) Ignatius was interested still in the ascetic life. While he was studying in Barcelona, he made a hole in the soles of his shoes, widened them little by little in order that he could wear only the upper part of his shoes during winter.\(^{60}\) Later, having written the *Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, he requested all those who make the final vows promise “not to take a part from what pertains to poverty in the Constitutions, unless it be in some manner to make it more strict, according to the circumstances in the Lord”.\(^{61}\) However, even in these situations, Ignatius bore in his mind the Lord’s invitation, and listened to his voice constantly through discernment. (I will discuss more about discernment in the next chapter on the *essential elements of Ignatian Spirituality.*

One element that had been growing constantly in Ignatius was the practice of serving others. Before his conversion, the service of others seemed to be neglected in Ignatius’ life. He was following God by following closely the examples of saints that he had read about. He was the centre of his service. However, he started speaking about God to others,\(^{62}\) although he was stopped or even prohibited because of his lack of theological education.\(^{63}\) After his conversion, not only did he speak about God, but Ignatius also

\(^{59}\) *Autobiography*, No. 35 – 36

\(^{60}\) *Autobiography*, No. 55.

\(^{61}\) *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, No. 553.

\(^{62}\) *Autobiography*, No. 42

\(^{63}\) *Autobiography*, No. 65
helped people physically in the hospital and any places he was in. This experience will then transfer to all of his followers from the very beginning and it has been embodied in the Society of Jesus. In speaking about service, while studying in Barcelona, Ignatius was even distracted by helping souls since he considered it as his own vocation. This described well how Ignatius acted: once he decided to do something, he would push himself to do it wholeheartedly. This would provide him a chance to discern and to adjust himself according to his innermost voice.

The more Ignatius followed God, the greater the capacity he had to follow God. One of the matters that concerned Ignatius relating to the new religious order, the Society of Jesus was how to maintain it. Indeed, the Pope and kings requested some of his first companions to take episcopal positions. Ignatius not only opposed the idea forcefully, but also requested all professed Jesuits to promise “never to seek one and to expose anyone whom they observe trying to obtain one; also in such a way that (one who can be proved to be seeking such a prelacy becomes ineligible and disqualified for promotion to any prelacy within the Society).” However, later in his life, Ignatius made himself available to be the Patriarch in Ethiopia considering this for the greater glory of God. To listen to God attentively and to discern God’s voice clearly in different situations was the heart of Ignatius’ way of following God’s invitation to follow him more closely.

What is Ignatius’ vocation then? For Ignatius it is the invitation to open up, to listen to God and to be liberated from one’s worldly will. Indeed, Ignatius’ life is a journey of changing and being changed, of continually being converted and adjusting his life

64 The term “soul” is the word that Ignatius often used in his autobiography.
66 The Jesuit Constitutions, No. 817. The bolded part in {...} has been abolished by the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus. See The Jesuit Constitution, footnote 2, p. 404
willingly according to God’s calling upon him for more. Ultimately, God called him to be liberated, and to become a fully alive disciple. Ignatius listened to God’s voice through his life journey and he adjusted his life accordingly.


To help young candidates to understand their own call, I believe it is important for me to understand my own vocational journey. Becoming a Jesuit, for me, continues to be a journey of discernment, at least from my personal experience. At the beginning there were reasons that drew me away from ordained ministry. Firstly, the image of priest I received in my young adulthood was quite negative. At one stage, I told myself that I would never be one of ‘them’, the priests I had known, although from within, I was thinking about religious life quite seriously from my last year of secondary school. My second reason related closely to my family situation. I was too worried for my parents: I saw how they took care of ten children, two of my elder brothers had gone far away from home, and nine had been studying in different levels, from university to primary school. Adding to such a harsh life, my dear father also got a serious lung disease in 1988, a year after my youngest sister was born. He did not die with it, but his health has been damaged severely since then. As the result of such concern about my family, I decided not even to think about religious life from around year ten of my high school. Thirdly, until the age of 20, I did not know the existence of Jesuits, not even their name. I had another plan for my life ahead by studying at a technical school, the shortest way to be qualified for work, and to help my family.

However, as I understood at the time, it was likely that God had a plan for me. I came to know Jesuits providentially. Because of our political situation, there was a group of religious men who started a community in my home parish anonymously, under the
umbrella of the local Red Cross. They brought hundreds of Montagne people to my hometown, educated them, trained them in some skills and sent them back to their villages. During my college studies, I volunteered to work with those religious people for the Montagne people one or twice per week. The way of living and working for people by these men really inspired me without my knowing even their congregation’s name.

By the time I completed my study at a technical school in May 1996, two of my older brothers also graduated and started working in the United States. After a couple of years, my family became more and more stable financially. The desire for religious life was coming back in me. I quietly asked to join that religious group and it was the first time I heard the name Jesuit. I was accepted as a candidate and joined them in 2000, again quietly, if not secretly, even from my family members. I had to do it quietly because the Jesuit presence in Vietnam was still uncertain; we tried hard to be anonymous as much as we could until early of 2004, thirteen years after the last Jesuit was released from prison.\footnote{The last Vietnamese Jesuit to be released from prison was Lê Thanh Quế, on 11\textsuperscript{th} September 1991}

My novitiate time (from 31\textsuperscript{st} May, 2000 – 31\textsuperscript{st} May, 2002) was a real discerning time for me. Although joining a religious institution, I did not want to be one of those clerical people due to my past impression on them. However, I had a strong desire to help the poor, especially the Montagne people who were the most discriminated against by my own people\footnote{There are 54 different ethnics in Vietnam, and my ethnic group, named Kinh, is the majority – approximate 80\%. People from this group have called the other ethnics by the name thiểu số (minority) or by an offensive title mạng (barbarian). These Montagne people are usually considered as uneducated, uncivilised and extremely poor people. They are not welcome at all in most of the public place in Vietnam, except in their own territory on the highland. One hardly sees any of them in the city.}. My novice master advised me that I could not discern God’s will with such a stumbling block. I needed to overcome my prejudice and to be healed from the past by the \textit{Spiritual Exercises} and then by some probations, which Jesuits call experiments.
Facing our own reality is the best way of discernment. As part of my novitiate, I was sent to the people I wanted to work with most: the Montagne people. I had been staying with these people for three months in their villages in 2001. Listening to their stories and of those who were working for them, I felt the hunger of these people for their spiritual life, especially the sacraments, which they rarely had. Those experiences struck me and allowed me to discern again. Indeed, the main reason that had drawn me to the Jesuits was to work for those people, and the thing they needed most was a priest staying among them. Accepting the position that I had never wanted was not a pleasant experience at all. With the help of my novice master, I gained the light and courage to follow the call from my heart.

Again, as with Ignatius, the plan of God may differ from my understanding of God’s plan for me. Desiring to work with the Montagne people and having expressed that desire to different superiors, was not God’s plan for me it seems, at least in the near future. Apart from having three months living with them during my novitiate, I have been with the ethnic people only one month in the last twelve years. However, I have been asked either to study or to work in the novitiate or elsewhere. What am I called to? I am still listening and discerning. In the near future, I will most likely work with the candidates, the work that I have not desired and experienced. My vocation is simply a journey to listen to God’s call through a specific situation, although the desire to work for the Montagne people has become stronger and stronger within me.

The date, 21st August 2014, leaves a significant mark on my vocational journey, with my ordination to the priesthood. It was a stunning experience for me. From being one who did not want to be one of the ordained people, now I am. It is not only a moment of

70 This was quite exceptional because each probation usually takes one month. I have not heard of any other case like this since then, not only in Vietnam, but also other provinces where I have been and have heard of in the last five years: Australia, Indonesia, Korea, the Philippine and Malaysia-Singapore region.
confirmation for me, but also a moment of realisation: following God’s call is to leave my
desire behind; following a call is to be given a mission that needs to be fulfilled. To be
ordained to priesthood as a Jesuit is to accept a mission freely and enthusiastically.
Following a call is to be converted and to convert fundamentally and wholeheartedly. My
fourteen-year journey as a Jesuit is a journey of conversion, the conversion from asking
God to follow me to becoming a follower ministering with other young Vietnamese who
are answering God’s call to them.

3. Understanding Vocation and the Religious Life

Two things happened to two of my friends in opposite directions. The first one was
successful in his career as a doctor. He had a girl friend and they decided to move forward
to their wedding. However, after he had sent off invitations for his wedding, his heart was
restless because of the thought that this was not for him. After discerning seriously in a
silent retreat, he decided to apologize to his fiancée and he joined a religious order. The
other friend, after several years in the candidate house and then in the novitiate, this young
man was about to make the first vows in religious life. Everything was ready for him. The
celebration had been organized, and his coming community had also prepared everything
for him. However, five days before the celebration, he asked to postpone the vows, then he
asked for about two weeks to pray and to think about matters in silence. Finally, he
decided to leave religious life. Some years later, he met a young lady who became his wife.
In those two cases, which of the two had a vocation? What does vocation really mean?

Douglas A. Sweeney has indicated two different terms relating to vocation. The
word vocatio (vocation, and the verb vocare – to call) has been used in the Western
Church; and in English notation, this word is from Greek, κλήσις (invitation).71 These

Service of the Guild” in Fides et historia, (39 No 1, Winter-Spring 2007), p. 3
terms imply that a person is called for or invited to a special work.72 It is not something of autonomy but of being drawn to, or drawn by something or someone outside themselves. Some consider their career, which the person feels being drawn to, as their vocation.73 This understanding appears quite flexible due to the fact that the person can follow their heart’s feeling. However, in describing vocation as “a God-given vocation” and in a strong language, Paul Francis Sands claims vocation is “a divine call to a task that confers dignity and imposes obligation.”74 This strong language, nevertheless, conveys the same message the person is being asked to commit himself to a calling. Within the Christian world, God is considered the subject of the calling, and the human being is the object, but he is also a subject responding to his call. The question is: How can a person describe his or her feeling of either being drawn to or being enforced to act as his or her own vocation? The calling of a mysterious almighty One is often as mysterious as that Being.

There are two callings, which can be applied to everyone: one is general and the other is specific. In the sermon on the mountain, Jesus taught: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (Matt 5:48) Teaching the members of the Roman Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council addressed the fundamental calling in the document Lumen Gentium (LG): “Everyone whether belonging to the hierarchy, or being cared for by it, is called to holiness, according to the saying of the Apostle: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification” (LG. 39). The calling to Godly perfection or holiness is the calling applied to all baptized people, regardless of any position the persons have in the Church or in society.

---

72 Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking, A Theological ABC* (San Francisco, Harper Collins, 1973), 95
The invitation to perfection and holiness is not simply an individual understanding of perfection or holiness, but a call to Christian community and discipleship. Before leaving this earthly world, Jesus commanded his disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:20). This commandment not only manifested the ultimate desire of Jesus for all people – to be disciples of his – but he also showed people the way to walk in discipleship. Following Jesus will lead people to perfection, to “the fullness of life (John 10:10), since Jesus himself is “the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) Following Jesus on the way of perfection or to be his disciple is the calling applied to all.

There are various ways to be Jesus’ disciples. The statement is verified throughout the history of the Church. Saint Peter left home and everything behind, and then followed Jesus as his own disciple and so did Mary, Martha, Nicodemus and Paul. Later, there are those who follow Jesus in prayer and meditation; there are those who follow Jesus in preaching the Good News and there are those who follow Jesus in action. They build up their life with Jesus in a special way or a special aspect according to where they are drawn to. These examples exemplified the multi-pattern of discipleship. Everyone has been given different talents and from the deep of his or her heart, they have been drawn to follow Jesus differently.

Such differentiation manifests the richness of God’s invitation toward individuals. The word vocation is usually narrowed down to religious life. “You have a vocation, I

---


76 Douglas J. Schuurman, considering the Catholic context, narrowed down the meaning of the word vocation to priesthood. (see. Schuurman, Douglas J. Vocation – Discerning Our Callings in Life. (Grand Rapids, Mich: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), p. 1). However, he seemed to neglect the other vocations. Indeed, in the Catholic Church, the word vocation used to apply for those who commit themselves to religious vows: obedience, poverty and chastity. Hence, it included priests and religious people, women and men. However, the understanding on vocation has been changed significantly with the Second Vatican Council. I will explore this more.
don’t” is a very common claim among Vietnamese (and perhaps also those of other cultural backgrounds) who are not committing themselves to religious life. Unfortunately, this is not a proper understanding in the Christian perspective. The various ways of following Jesus are to function, to serve and to nourish the Church community. In his letter to the Romans, Paul wrote:

For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.” (Roman 12: 4–8)

Each person is granted a gift or gifts in order to function, to serve and to nourish the community according to the gift or gifts they have received. Therefore, religious vocation is rather a particular way to follow Jesus on the way to perfection and holiness. The call to marriage is also a vocation.

Having shared the same invitation toward holiness, perfection and discipleship, the religious vocation nevertheless is distinct from other vocations in the Church. In the decree Perfectae Caritatis, (PC) the sacred synod states: “the religious life, undertaken by lay people, either men or women, is a state for the profession of the evangelical counsels which is complete in itself.” (PC 10) These religious people profess openly and willingly the evangelical counsels of poverty, obedience and chastity in a specific institutional charism approved by the Church. (LG. 43) The profession of evangelical counsels contains a twofold purpose. By professing the evangelical counsels, the religious people liberate themselves from “those obstacles, which might draw him away from the fervour of charity and the perfection of divine worship.” (LG 44) In other words, by taking the vows, they

---

77 In this context, as a Vietnamese, I rather narrow down the situation into the Vietnamese context. Although I have been living in Australia for more than five years, however, I am not so confident whether I have understood other perspectives, such as the Australian perspective for instance, on vocation. A part of it was the limitation of observation outside the academic/classroom context.
have committed themselves more obviously and profoundly serving God and people. The profession of the evangelical counsels does not make the religious people holy magically; it nevertheless is an advantage of the religious life considering that they have been provided a quite clear direction, which is to fulfill what they have promised. At the same time, the profession “appears as a sign which can and ought to attract all the members of the Church to an effective and prompt fulfilment of the duties of their Christian vocation.” (LG. 44) The act indeed encourages people to live out their Christian life more vividly and enthusiastically by dedicating oneself for the serving of God and people.

There are some common grounds between the religious life and vocation. All the people of God have shared the same invitation toward the holiness, perfection and discipleship. People can live out that invitation differently according to God’s will for them. Religious life has shared the same invitation on the one hand. It is one among many other ways of living out the Christian life. On the other hand, it is distinct from other vocations considering the profession of the evangelical counsels. This profession does not necessarily make the vocation better than others, but it certainly contains some advantages that assist people on their way to God and to fulfill their invitation of holiness and discipleship.

4. Jesuit Vocation

The Jesuit spirituality is introduced by Saint Ignatius, its founder. Ignatius, from his personal experience of following the calling of God for him, discovered a specific way to follow Jesus on the journey toward holiness and perfection. Considering that it might help people on their way to God, therefore he introduced it to some of his first companions; one of them was Francis Xavier, a great missionary for Far East Asia and a familiar saint
among the Catholic Vietnamese. That spirituality is then embodied in a religious order, the Society of Jesus.

To be a Jesuit is firstly a religious vocation. This makes Jesuits alike with other religious congregations on the one hand. Indeed, as all other religious people, the Jesuits also profess the evangelical counsels of obedience, poverty and chastity and were approved by Pope Paul III on the 27th September 1540. However, the Jesuit vocation is also distinct on the other hand. Saint Ignatius described the Jesuit way clearly in the very first sentence of its formula:

Whoever wishes to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the cross in our Society, which we desire to be designated by the name of Jesus, and to serve the Lord alone and his vicar on earth, should keep in mind that once he has made the solemn vow of perpetual chastity he is a member of a community founded chiefly for this purpose: to strive especially for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine and for the propagation of the faith by the ministry of word, by spiritual exercises and works of charity. This statement manifested specific manners of the Jesuit vocation: to follow Jesus as a soldier, to follow Jesus in the hierarchical Church and to make people Jesus’ disciples by using various gifts and talents for ministry. In other words, the Society of Jesus has been founded with a specific purpose: to live fruitfully in the Church and to proclaim the Good News to all people. The statement also implies who would be suitable to the Society. This is important for those who are discerning their way of following God. Indeed, it is not about a good or bad reputation that the congregation has that leads one to join them. It is about whether it suits the person according to what they have been drawn to from their heart. The best way is the way that God prepares for the person, which is possibly reviewed through their desire and talents. Although the Jesuit way may help many people journeying to holiness, it may be the best way for some, even many, but not for all.

5. Summary

The divine invitation is a mysterious invitation. Everyone is invited to holiness but each in their own way. To discover that way is usually a long personal journey of listening, observation and discernment. Ignatius, despite a significant spiritual experience during the time at Loyola castle, experienced a long journey until he could confirm his vocation to serve Christ freely in mission. Many others need years to discern, and the final decision often enough surprises the person him or herself. Indeed, the confirmation is, in many cases, just different from what he or she had in his or her mind in the beginning. Such an outcome implies that the person has listened to the calling of God seriously and attentively. Such an outcome also requires the person to follow God instead of leading. Therefore, the experience of conversion is crucial. It requires the person to know who he or she is, and who God is. God is the One who calls the person to follow, not vice versa.

The issue is: how can a person recognise which call is the invitation of God? In researching this thesis *The Contribution of Ignatian Spirituality to Jesuit Formation*, it is appropriate to raise a basic question: To what extent can Ignatian Spirituality contribute to discerning the invitation of God? I will discuss this further in the later chapters.
Chapter Four:

Essential Elements of Ignatian Spirituality

What make Ignatian spirituality distinct from other spiritualities? Each spirituality contains elements make it distinct from the others. Asceticism suggests the life of solitary in the remote territory or desert; Monasticism promotes a communal and hospitable life; etc. Ignatian Spirituality, a younger spirituality in relation to those great traditions, also contains distinctive elements. This distinctiveness can be exhibited through: *Spiritual Exercises*: the school of discernment; “to help souls”\(^{79}\), the heart of that spirituality; and *Magis* (more, greater), the spirit of Ignatian Spirituality.

1, *Spiritual Exercises*: the School of Discernment

The *Spiritual Exercises* is the first and foremost element of Ignatian Spirituality. Saint Ignatius of Loyola learned from his personal experiences in discerning God’s will, and having a great desire to help people to grow in intimacy with God, introduced the Spiritual Exercises during the first half of the 15\(^{th}\) century\(^{80}\). The *Spiritual Exercises* are not simply a guidance of spiritual reflections, meditations and contemplations; they can be described as a school of discernment of God’s will for a person. This statement can be manifested through the aim of the Spiritual Exercises and the entire Spiritual Exercises are systematically structured.

\(^{79}\) “to help souls” is the expression Ignatius frequently used; and that will define his way of proceeding.

\(^{80}\) Roger Haight, *Christian Spirituality for Seekers - Reflections on Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola*, (New York: Maryknoll, 1989), p. 13. Saint Ignatius used his notes to help people from quite early after his time at Manresa (about 1522). However, the official version (Vulgate) was first published in 1548.
1.1 The Aim of the Spiritual Exercises: Discerning God’s Will

Many people believe that the main aim of the Spiritual Exercises is for making sound decisions. Gerald M. Fagin wrote: “The Exercises then are about making decisions, but making decisions out of freedom, not out of disordered ideas, not out of pleasure, power, or prestige.”81 Having been in the same line with Gerald M. Fagin, Schemel and Roemer stated that decision-making is “not just the heart of the Exercises, but it is the heart of Ignatian spirituality.”82 This understanding perhaps comes from the Spiritual Exercises itself. Indeed, in the book The Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius writes on decision-making in quite considerable length. The major part of the Second Week83 of the Spiritual Exercises is for making decisions (the Spiritual Exercises (Sp.Ex.) 135–189). The Third and the Fourth Week are about seeking for confirmation of the decision made in the Second Week.84 The question is: what sort of decision needs to be made in the Spiritual Exercises? Or a stronger question: is it about decision-making or discerning God’s Will for the person?

The main purpose of the Spiritual Exercises, as Ignatius defined right in the beginning of the book Spiritual Exercises, is “preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies, and, after it is rid, to seek and find the Divine Will as to the management of one’s life for the salvation of the soul” (Sp.Ex. 1) This statement manifests the double aim of the Spiritual Exercises: to rid itself of the disordered tendencies and to seek the Divine Will on which the exercitant manages his or her life for salvation. Seeking for or discerning God’s Will appears as the heart of this double purpose. In order to discern the Will of God, the exercitant needs to rid oneself of all disordered

---

81 Gerald M. Fagin, Putting on The Heart of Christ, (Chicago: Loyola, 2010), p. 7
82 George J. Schemel and Judith A. Roemer, Beyond Individuation to Discipleship, (ISECP Group, 2000), p. 199
83 A “Week” of the Spiritual Exercises is not seven days, it is rather a chapter of the Spiritual Exercises.
84 George J. Schemel and Judith A. Roemer, Beyond Individuation to Discipleship, p. 244.
tendencies. In order to gain salvation, the person needs to manage his or her life according to the Will of God. To seek for God’s Will is decisive. Once the exercitant has found the Will of God for him or her, the only decision needs to be made is to follow.

Most people at a certain stage of life will make a life commitment. These life commitments can be what Ignatius called an “unchangeable election” (Sp.Ex. 171): marriage, priesthood, etc. Apparently, many of them may discover later that their decision was made out of disordered tendencies. Ignatius acknowledges such decision “does not appear [...] a divine decision.” (Sp.Ex. 172)85 In other words, he or she may not have been following his or her own divine calling. However, the Saint does not advise the exercitant seeking for the other option, but rather “repenting let him see to living a good life in his election”. (Sp.Ex. 172) Doing The Spiritual Exercises, the exercitant would not be helped to make another significant choice of life, but they would be encouraged and gain light for living out their life commitment more fruitfully.86 Discerning God’s Will for the specific situation is decisive; once the person has found, the only decision needs to be made is to follow.

Therefore, discerning God’s Will is the heart of the Spiritual Exercises. In order to make that discernment, the exercitant needs to be rid of disordered tendencies and to manage his or her life according to the Will of God. In order to help the exercitant acknowledging his or her own disordered tendencies, Saint Ignatius recalls the ground for discernment.

85 The word “divine” is added later by Ignatius’ hand (see. David Fleming, Draw me into your Friendship: The Spiritual Exercises. (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996), p. 136.)

86 In fact, the choice to live out one’s already made decision more fruitfully is a significant decision in itself.
1.2 The Principle and Foundation: the Ground for Discernment

Leading people into the Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius first recalls which he named *The Principle and Foundation*.

Man is created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul. And the other things on the face of the earth are created for man and that they may help him in prosecuting the end for which he is created. From this it follows that man is to use them as much as they help him on to his end, and ought to rid himself of them so far as they hinder him as to it. For this it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things in all that is allowed to the choice of our free will and is not prohibited to it; so that, on our part, we want not health rather than sickness, riches rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, long rather than short life, and so in all the rest; desiring and choosing only what is most conducive for us to the end for which we are created. *(Sp.Ex. 23)*

The *Principle and Foundation* acknowledge the three fundamental components of human beings. Firstly, it recalls the nature of human beings: to be created. Secondly, it recalls the reason for their existence. It is “to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul.” Thirdly, it recalls the relationship God – human beings – other creatures. God is the Creator; human beings are created and the other things are for assisting human beings to achieve the goal for which they are created.

This recall is firstly for the Spiritual Exercises, and eventually for life. Michael Ivens claimed: “the Foundation is very superseded. It remains a basic point of reference throughout the Exercises – and throughout life.” *(Sp.Ex. 23)* Joseph Veale was right, saying: “it (the *Foundation*) is less like a foundation of a building than a seed of life, a principle of force, of movement and of growth.” *(Sp.Ex. 23)* Indeed, to acknowledge these fundamental elements will

---

87 To translate the Spiritual Exercises literally in purpose, David L. Fleming used the exclusive language instead of inclusive as Ignatius wrote in his book. There are other ways to read the Principle and Foundation either by emphasising God (by the active language) or human beings (by the passive language). For these ways of reading, please consult Martin Scroope, ed., *Ignatian Spirituality for Today – Key Reading for Busy People*, 5th edition, (The Loyola Institute: Australia, 2011), pp. 95 - 97


allow a person to be according to their position in the hierarchy of creation; and to
maximise their potential to reach the goal of their existence. In other words, the Principle
and Foundation remind human beings who they are and where they should go. These
elements does not contain in an obvious form of existence. They will nevertheless embody
into and shape what the exercitant will act in their actual life.

In the Spiritual Exercises, the Foundation and Principle provide the exercitant the
concrete ground for discernment. By acknowledging the position of God, human beings
and other creatures, the exercitant acknowledges his or her nature and that of God and
others. By acknowledging the ultimate goal of life, the exercitant acknowledges the aim of
his or her life. This will very much suggest the direction for him or her. These two
elements are necessary conditions in the Spiritual Exercises for discerning God’s Will for
the person, which is how to reach the ultimate goal of their existence. The entire Spiritual
Exercises are structured for this discernment.

1.3 Discerning Method

Saint Ignatius structures the Spiritual Exercises quite systematically intending
towards discernment. The Spiritual Exercises are divided into four Weeks based
fundamentally on the life of Christ. The First Week is on sin; the Second Week is on the
life of Christ until Palm Sunday; the Third Week is on the passion of Christ; and the Fourth
is on the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ.

These four Weeks are divided but not isolated. They are rather interwoven
systematically as a journey of discernment. This journey will first prepare the exercitant
for discernment through awareness and reconciliation (Week One); then it will guide the
exercitant discerning with Christ, who is “the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6)

A “Week” of the Spiritual Exercises is not seven days; it is rather a chapter of the Spiritual Exercises.
(Week Two, Three and Four); and finally allow him or her to join with Christ in the world
(Contemplation to Gain Love (Sp.Ex. 230 – 237)).

1.3.1 Awareness and Reconciliation

Being free is crucial for discernment. In the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises, Ignatius leads the exercitant through five Exercises on sin (Sp.Ex. 45 – 72). Reflecting on sin possibly causes negative feelings, such as self-distrust, over-conceptualization or fear.\textsuperscript{91} However, the concentration of these five Exercises are not on sin, it is about awareness the self-reality and the mercy of God. Michael Ivens claimed: “the cause of “shame and confusion” is not sin-awareness in itself, but the experience of the self-aware sinner in the presence of a God who is merciful and faithful.”\textsuperscript{92} The nutshell of these five Exercises is to challenge the exercitant to acknowledge and to accept the naked truth about self and that about God: God is merciful and I am a sinner; God is merciful and faithful and I am not. Moreover, by meditating on sin, the exercitant can recognise that he or she has been manipulated and driven. A manipulated person is not a full being. And what he or she does is not by himself or herself, but by a manipulating opponent.\textsuperscript{93} This awareness will then bring the person to reconciliation, with God and with self, by acknowledging and accepting God and self as it is. Acknowledging and accepting the truth can empower him or her to be free from manipulating opponents hidden in them. One only puts a thing down once they have realised that they have held on to it. Reflecting on sins provide the exercitants a chance to be free from what can manipulate them from the truth. It consequently prepares

\textsuperscript{91} Gerard Hughes, “The First Week and the formation of conscience.” in The Way Supplement, 24 (1975), pp. 8–11

\textsuperscript{92} Michael Ivens, Understanding The Spiritual Exercises, p. 49

the person for discerning and choosing only what brings him or her to the ultimate purpose of life more freely.

1.3.2 Discerning with Jesus Christ

The whole idea of the Spiritual Exercises is to assist the exercitant in discerning the way to achieve the ultimate goal of his or her life. Jesus Christ appears the authentic model of serving God. He is also the Way to God (John 14:6), which is manifested vividly throughout his earthly life: Although “he was in the form of God”, he willingly “humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross” (Phil 2:8). The Spiritual Exercises are Christocentric.94 This element is manifested clearly both in the graces the exercitant is expected to ask for during the Spiritual Exercises and the motivation of the Spiritual Exercises themselves.

Choosing Christ is the expected desire for every exercitant. Right at the beginning of the Second Week, before contemplating and meditating the life and mission of Christ, Saint Ignatius introduces the exercitant to a contemplation named the Call of the King (Sp.Ex. 91 – 98). The grace suggested to be asked for in this Exercise is “I may not be deaf to his call, but ready and diligent to fulfill his most holy will” (Sp.Ex. 91). The King then mentioned in this exercise will be Christ himself (Sp.Ex. 95). Therefore, asking for listening to the King’s calling is indeed to listen to Christ, which, in Ignatius’ words, is “to conquer all the world and all enemies and so to enter into the glory of my Father.” (Sp.Ex. 95) In other words, Jesus himself invites people jointing him in the mission of serving God and then entering the glory of God. Discerning the way to achieve the ultimate goal of human beings then becomes the discerning how to follow Christ according to the person’s actual situation.

94 Roger Haight, Christian Spirituality for Seekers, p. 25.
Moreover, the whole dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises is to encourage the exercitant to follow Christ. This element is manifested clearly both in the resources used in and the intention of the Spiritual Exercises. Indeed, the major resource for the contemplating and meditating used in Spiritual Exercises, as a whole and especially Weeks Two, Three and Four, is the life and ministry of Jesus. The Exercises of the Second Week concentrate on the life of Jesus until Palm Sunday; the Third is on his Passion and the Fourth is on his Resurrection. By contemplating and meditating on the life and ministry of Jesus, the exercitant will experience what Jesus experiences, and therefore he or she is able to offer him or herself willingly.

Before guiding the retreatant to meditate and to contemplate Christ’s life, Ignatius invites them to do an exclusive Exercise “Call of the King”. This Exercise, according to David L. Fleming, “has traditionally been identified as foundational, not only to the Second Week, but to the following Weeks, all of which focus on Christ.” Indeed, the grace suggested to the retreatant was not to be deaf to Christ’s call, but to be ready and eager to do what He desires. (SpEx. 91)

To do what Christ desires does not necessarily mean to terminate the retreatant’s desire. In contrast, he or she is still in a decisive position. It is because, according to Schemel and Roemer, “This Exercise [The Call of the King] is not about what God wants. It is about what the retreatant wants to offer.” Indeed, although Jesus invites the person to follow him; and the whole dynamic of the Spiritual Exercises is to assist the person to do so; nevertheless, the person is still able to refuse or to decide how far they want to follow God.

---

95 David L. Fleming, Discipleship and Its Foundations, (St. Louis: Missouri, 2005), p. 29
96 George J. Schemel and Judith A. Roemer, Beyond Individuation to Discipleship, p. 177
The movement of the Spiritual Exercises also provides the exercitant a chance to “test” their commitment to the invitation of The King. Responding to the calling of Christ is not simply a single “yes” but rather an ongoing consideration and commitment. Before guiding the exercitant to make a decision, Saint Ignatius leads him or her through three distinctive Exercises: *Two Standards*, *Three Types of Persons* and *Three Manners of Humanity*. These Exercises allow the person to discern the *Call of the King* within his or her own situation. The *Two Standards* informs the person of the fact that there is another king, Lucifer. This Exercise “promotes the dispositions” that enables the person “to hear Christ’s call” rationally. Lefrank and Giuliani are right in saying that: “the preparation for the election would not be complete without a clear understanding also of the “opposing direction”. Choosing Christ is one option, not the option. The retreatant has to discern and make decisions prudently. Therefore, choosing Christ implies that the person understands what he or she is doing, and the price of such decision (through journeying with Christ in his passion and resurrection). Choosing Christ means that the person listens to the invitation and wants to co-operate with Christ to work for the Kingdom willingly.

---


98 Saint Ignatius introduces these three distinct Ignatian Spiritual Exercises in order to prepare retreatants for making a choice afterward. The Exercise *Two Standards* (Sp.Ex., 137-148) invites the person discerning between different calling: one from Christ and the other from Lucifer. The Exercise *Three Types of Persons* (Sp.Ex., 149–1156) allows the person to contemplate three different attitudes toward attachments: the first are those who just wait until the end of their life; the second are those who rid off most attachments except thing acquired. The third applies to those who rid off all and consider everyone for serving God. The Exercise *Three Manners of Humanity* (Sp.Ex., 165–167) describes three different levels towards humanity. The first level applies to those who do not commit any mortal sin. The second level applies to those who do not commit even a venial sin; and the third applies to those who have quality of the second, plus willingly to choose lower and more humble than others.

99 Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, p. 105

The Exercise *Three Types of Persons*, according to Michael Ivens, “is not only a “pre-election strategy”, but an element of formation in the true life in Christ”.\(^{101}\) It is a chance for the person to acknowledge how mature he or she is in the relationship with Christ. Which of the three is he or she? The one who clings to things until the last minute; the one who negotiates in order to gain what they want; or the one who leaves all things in God’s providence?

Such acknowledgement will prepare the exercitant for continuing another Exercise, the *Three Kinds of Humanity*.\(^{102}\) The dynamic of this Exercise will draw the exercitant to acknowledge how close he or she is to Christ. This closeness is manifested in three levels: to follow Christ’s laws faithfully (Sp.Ex. 165); to trust in Christ’s providence (Sp.Ex. 166); or to identify with Christ (Sp.Ex. 167). In the third kind, Saint Ignatius provides the exercitant an absolute level in which the person and Christ become as one. It transcends the other two first states by including the state of which Ignatius calls *Indifference*. He or she can feel the feeling of Christ. He or she can embrace what Christ embraces. The two become one.

This movement will allow the person to deepen their self-awareness and allow the person to acknowledge “what is already present in the depths of his (or her) being”.\(^{103}\) Through these three distinctive contemplations, the person comes to a greater self-understanding in his or her relationship with Christ, and a greater acknowledging about what is already in him or her. On the journey of the Spiritual Exercises, this awareness or acknowledgement provides the exercitant the groundwork for election. He or she does not choose blindly, but with understanding.

\(^{101}\) Michael Ivens, *Understanding the Spiritual Exercises*, p. 110

\(^{102}\) I keep the term “Kinds” here since it is used by the author David L. Fleming, whose translation I am using for this paper. However, I prefer the term levels because the three states actually build upon each other. p.13

\(^{103}\) William Broderick, “Structure And Dynamic Of The Second Week As A Whole”, p. 81
The Spiritual Exercises assist a person to discern how to achieve his or her ultimate purpose. It is to follow Jesus willingly: whatever the specifics of the election actually made, the fundamental decision the person needs to make is to follow Christ. Following Christ in order to be with Christ, and to work with Him by leading the person into the world to continue Christ’s ministry according with his or her own situation.

1.3.3 To be with Christ in the World

Discernment must lead to action. To be with Christ does not isolate the person from the world. On the contrary, he or she will follow Christ into the world with all its issues. It is the two-fold invitation of the King: they are, first, to be with him and, second, to work with him. Indeed, in the Spiritual Exercises, the retreatant does not only meditate the life of Christ, but also listens and takes Christ’s calling willingly according to his or her own condition. The only difference is that the person returns to the world with a new spirit.

Returning the person to that world, Saint Ignatius asks them to contemplate the Exercise Contemplation to Gain Love. George J. Schemel describes this Exercise “a contemplation in love, for love, toward love, to attain love.” The person has experienced and acknowledged love throughout his or her personal life; and in turn, he or she will journey into the world with love. “For the love of Christ urges us on” (2 Cor. 5:14). That love will manifest how deeply and genuinely the person relates to Christ by carrying out his calling: bringing everyone to God. The love is manifested, as Ignatius stated, “more in deed than in words” (230); the love which allows to “give and to receive.” (Sp.Ex. 231) The only way to gain a true love is to love. This love will stimulate the way the person

104 David L. Fleming, What is Ignatian Spirituality?, (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2008), p. 4
105 Schemel, George J. and Judith A Roemer, Beyond Individuation To Discipleship, (ISECP Group, 2000) p. 284
carries out the message of Christ and how he or she relates to others. The words of Saint Paul describe this way clearly:

“Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

(1 Cor 13: 4 – 7)

2, “To Help Souls”: the Heart of Ignatian Spirituality

The heart of Ignatian Spirituality is mission. This is manifested vividly through Ignatius’ life and his heritage: the Spiritual Exercises and the Society of Jesus of which he is the Founder.

2.1 “To help souls” as Ignatius’ Vocation

Ignatius was called “to help souls”. Having been attracted strongly by the orthodox path toward holiness by abstinence, penance and self-humiliation, and being driven by the spirit of competition with the Saints; Ignatius did neglect his calling for sometime. Journeying along the way of discovering God’s will for him, Ignatius learned that he was called, as C.M. Mooney wrote, “neither to do penance for penance’s sake nor to be "like" saints, but to "help others". 106

“To help souls” appeared quite naturally as Ignatius’ vocation. Indeed, there were flashes from the past showing that to help souls was his vocation. After having significant spiritual experiences, in conversations with members of the house, Ignatius used all his time to speak on “the things of God” to benefit their souls. 107 However, being overwhelmed by the desire to pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and then “always live as a penitent”

107 Autobiography, No. 10 - 11
as the Saints, Ignatius had not concerned himself about mission at all. The personal desire
drew him away from what was within.

Nevertheless, the calling from God for a person will not change although he or she
can be manipulated to follow the other path. With his scruple experiences at Manresa,
Ignatius had learned that God “treated him as a schoolmaster treats a child”.108 Since then,
his spiritual life was concentrated more on searching for “what God wants”,109 as Father
Peter H. Kolvenbach, the former General of the Jesuits, said. Once Ignatius had allowed
God to lead, the vocation of helping souls had been growing gradually110 but firmly. Right
at Manresa, he practiced a habit not to speak at the table, except for the short answer; even
though he still listened and picked up points for him to speak about God once the meal had
finished in order to help those hosting the meal.111 Later, he determined to remain in
Jerusalem in order to visit holy places continually in Jerusalem, and “to help souls”112.

“To help souls” will then influence Ignatius’ life fully. Acknowledging that lack of
intellectual understanding of theology would prevent him from helping souls, he decided to
go back to school.113 Spiritually, Ignatius learned with spiritual persons to enable him
“more easily to the spirit, as also to be of help to souls”.114 He also gathered some
companions for the same purpose.115 His companions, being inspired strongly by his life,
also devoted themselves “for the good of souls” either staying in Jerusalem or presenting

108 Ibid., 27
110 Gerald Coleman, Walking With Ignigo – A Commentary on the Autobiography of St. Ignatius, (Gujarat
Sahitya Prakash: Gujarat, India, 2001), p. 110
111 Ibid., No. 42
112 Ibid., No. 45
113 Ibid., No. 50, 63, 70 and 71
114 Ibid., No. 54
115 Ibid., No. 71 and 82
themselves to the pope to be used to be “more for the glory of God and the good of souls”. ¹¹⁶ Ignatius was really drawn toward the mission of helping souls.

Nevertheless, having been involved in different services to help souls, Ignatius was still seeking for a confirmation from God whether it was God’s will for him or not. On the way toward Rome, in a little chapel at La Storta, while asking Mary to place him with Her Son, Ignatius experienced that “God the Father had placed him with his Son”¹¹⁷ by saying, as Lainez, a companion of Ignatius on that way recalled, that: “I want you to accept this person as your servant.” The Son was Jesus carrying the Cross Jesus replied: “I want you to serve us”.¹¹⁸ With such an experience, Ignatius’ vocation toward mission was confirmed. He was called to follow a Christ carrying the Cross, which is the symbol of serving human beings: “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28).

2.2 Spiritual Exercises, an Instrument to Help Souls

The Spiritual Exercises first and foremost is the equipment for helping souls. With the hope of being of benefit to people, Ignatius formed his personal experiences in seeking God’s will through the Spiritual Exercises.¹¹⁹ Indeed, the main purpose of the Spiritual Exercises has been claimed clearly in the first number of the book which is: “preparing and disposing the soul to rid itself of all the disordered tendencies, and, after it is rid, to seek and find the Divine Will as to the management of one’s life for the salvation of the soul, is called a Spiritual Exercises” (Sp.Ex. 1). This specific purpose will be manifested clearly in the journey of the Spiritual Exercises as addressed above in part 1 of this chapter. The

¹¹⁶ Ibid., No. 84. This is the only place Ignatius put these two elements: more for the glory of God and the good of souls together in his autobiography.
¹¹⁷ Ibid., No. 96
¹¹⁸ Philip Caraman, Ignatius Loyola – A Biography of the Founder of the Jesuits, p. 113
person will be helped to acknowledge self, acknowledge what he or she is called for and send him or her back to the world with the new spirit.

2.3 The Society of Jesus Is Founded for Helping Souls

The main purpose for the Society of Jesus coming into existence is to help souls. This will be stated clearly in the Formula of the Society and all other aspects of the life of the Society. In the first Formula signed by the Pope Paul III in September 27th, 1540 described the purpose of the Society of Jesus was:

to strive especially for the progress of souls in Christian life and doctrine and for the propagation of the faith by the ministry of the word, by spiritual exercises and works of charity, and specially by the education of children and unlettered persons in Christianity.\textsuperscript{120}

This purpose will be reclaimed and more ministries added (such as public preaching, lectures, hearing confession…) in the Formula signed by the Pope Julius III on July 21st, 1550. Later, Father Peter H. Kolvenbach then claimed that the Society was “organized as a community yet orientated towards mission.”\textsuperscript{121}

The spirit of helping souls will then decide the way the Jesuits understand their religious vows, especially the fourth vow by which “the society offers itself completely to the Church, so that the Supreme Pontiff may send all its members into the vineyard of the Lord to carry out his mission.”\textsuperscript{122} There are many other examples of different aspects of the Society of Jesus that can manifest the purpose of the Society, however, it is not really the main purpose of this paper. The point I try to make here is that the vocation of helping souls of Ignatius has been embodied in the Society of Jesus of which he is the founder. In general, helping souls is the heart of the Ignatian Spirituality. Ignatius discovered that

\textsuperscript{120} Constitution of the Society of Jesus, (the Institute of Jesuit sources: Saint Louis, 1996), No. 1
\textsuperscript{121} Peter H. Kolvenbach, Men of God, Men for Others, p. 28
\textsuperscript{122} Norm of the Society of Jesus, No. 252; see also in Jesuit Constitution, No. 527
vocation which had been within him for long. That vocation would then influence his life entirely by introducing Spiritual Exercises as an instrument to help souls and he founded the Society of Jesus to continue that spirit.

3. *Magis*: the Spirit of Ignatian Spirituality

Ignatian Spirituality is a spirituality of *Magis*. *Magis*, a Latin word, means more or greater. The term *magis* appears ambiguous. Firstly, in what sense will it be more: more in service, more in effectiveness, or more in perfection? Secondly, the spirit of *magis* can even lead to the spirit of competition in which one tries hard to win or defeat the other. Thirdly, is that the ‘endless *magis*’? Or where/ when will be the end of *magis*? In other words, what is the goal of *magis*? Ignatius had experienced all those ambiguities in his life until he found out the goal of *magis*, which would influence his way of proceeding in the rest of his life. Nevertheless, the spirit of *Magis* in Ignatius was growing gradually from the self-centre to God-centre.

Ignatius was a competitive man. To become a greater man was possibly a thought of Ignatius for long. This can be described in both worldly things and spiritual things. During the time of recovery after the battle at Pamplona, Ignatius was thinking of doing service to a lady who “was not of ordinary nobility; not a countess nor duchess; but her station was higher than any of these.”123 In the other time, he thought about doing competition with the Saints in practicing virtues: “Saint Dominic did this, so I have to do it; St. Francis did this, so I have to do it.”124 In both situations, Ignatius himself was the centre. All of his efforts were to make him look more affordable or greater than others. However, the more effort Ignatius put for perfection, the more he found himself imperfect.

---

123 Autobiography, No. 6
124 Ibid., No. 7
This perhaps made Ignatius restless and perhaps drew him to his scruple experiences in Manresa.

At one stage, the centre of Ignatius has been shifted from self to God, the centre of magis is also changed: for the greater glory of God. Ignatius was seeking for what God wanted instead of what he wanted to do or to be. Ignatius did not seek for his personal glory but for that of God. In a document of the 34th General Congregation of the Jesuits is described: “the entire life of Ignatius was a pilgrim search for the magis, the ever greater glory of God, the ever fuller service of our neighbour, the more universal good, the more effective apostolic means.”¹²⁵ The nature of magis turned to “more” not in terms of competition, but in terms of closeness with God. Contemplating the mystery of Incarnation in the Spiritual Exercises, the grace suggested to the exercitant is: “to ask for interior knowledge of the Lord who for me has become man, that I may more love and follow him” (Sp.Ex. 104). This understanding in fact touches the Principle and Foundation of human beings mentioned in the Spiritual Exercises: “Man is created to praise, reverence, and to serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul” (Sp.Ex. 23). Human beings are created not for endless competition, but to draw them closer to God. Therefore, the magis is not the “endless more”, it is all about the closeness with God that is to follow God’s will for a person. Therefore, not every magis will be encouraged, but only those that draw a person closer to God. In other words, the magis can be a sign requiring one’s consideration. Describing Saint Ignatius in relation to this, Father Peter H. Kolvenbach said: “Ignatius was a man of desires, and whenever one desire become stronger than the others, he would ask himself whether this might correspond to what God planned”¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Decrees of General Congregation 34 of the Society of Jesus, (Eng. Version), No. 560
¹²⁶ Peter H. Kolvenbach, Man of God – Man for Others, p. 22
4. Summary

In general, the Ignatian Spirituality is described well through three essential elements: Spiritual Exercises – the school of discernment; To help souls – the heart of the spirituality and *Magis* – the spirit of the Ignatian spirituality. With the Spiritual Exercises, the exercitant can be liberated from disordered attachments in order to re-discover the main purpose of his or her existence: to praise, to reverence and to serve the Lord; and to save his or her soul. With the Spiritual Exercises, the person is led to go beyond, to follow Jesus Christ carrying his Cross – a Christ in mission of saving people from eternal death. Having experienced God will encourage the person to go out ‘to help souls’ experience God. Having involvement in the ministry of helping souls, the person is motivated by the spirit of *magis*, which at first described one of Ignatius’ characteristics well: competition; however, that crude characteristic was transformed from seeking self to seeking God and only for God’s glory. The question is: how can these elements help people today? To be more specific, how can these elements of Ignatian Spirituality help the young Vietnamese, especially those interested in a Jesuit vocation to live out their vocation fruitfully?
Chapter Five:

Potential Contributions of Ignatian Spirituality to Jesuit Formation in Vietnam

Vietnam has been in a quite specific situation. As mentioned in chapter 2, about 85% of Jesuits of Vietnam province are in different stages of formation. Moreover, with the political struggles, the Jesuits in Vietnam cannot involve themselves in the many ministries which are the strength of the Jesuits, such as education, mass media etc. The question is: how can we form our men according to the Jesuit criteria in such special context? The Ignatian Spirituality can provide some significant contributions to Jesuit formation in Vietnam according to their specific situation.

There are several features involved in Jesuit formation. Speaking to the Novices, the former General of the Jesuits, Father Peter H. Kolvenbach, said: “the novices do know that they themselves are, after God, responsible for their formation”.127 This notion mentions three features included in formation: God, the formatee and formator. Each feature plays an important role in this chapter that will explore these features in relating to formation through the view of Ignatian Spirituality.

1. God: the Main feature

In formation, both formator and formation have to consider God in the first place. Indeed, God is the One who initiates a vocation and also is the goal for all Christians. Firstly, all vocations come from God. Although there are different understandings of vocation, the vocation itself is not what a person can create, but it is an invitation he or she receives. God initiates the invitation. For Jesuits, the God-orientation seems very clear.

Saint Ignatius wrote in the Formula of the Society of Jesus: “whoever desires to serve as a soldier of God beneath the banner of the Cross in our Society” (Formula issued in 1550, No. 1). God is the leader of all members of the Society.

Secondly, God is also the ultimate goal that everyone is to return to. The Principle and Foundation in Spiritual Exercises claimed: “man is created to praise, reverence and serve God our Lord, and by this means to save his soul” (Sp.Ex. No. 23). Human beings are created for a reason; they all have been oriented with a mission: to praise and to serve God. To praise and to serve God is to be with God first; and allow God to influence their lives.

Therefore, joining to the religious life in general, to the Jesuit in particular, the person always considers that he is called. Ignatius advised that “he should further take care to keep always before his eyes first God.” (Formula, No. 1) with this attitude, the person knows the source of his vocation, in order to respect, to appreciate and to give due gratitude he can go to God on this spiritual journey.

2. Formator: the Intersection

The formator has a special and sensitive role in formation of the Jesuit. However, their main role, as Father Peter H. Kolvenbach said, is: “an intersection of relationships: with God, the Society, the Church and the one being formed.”128 The role of intersection of a formation can be applied differently according to stages of formation, in this case, it is either candidate or ongoing formation.

In Spiritual Exercises, Saint Ignatius advised the Spiritual Exercises giver that he or she “ought to relate faithfully the event of such contemplation or meditation, going over

128 Peter H. Kolvenbach, the Formation of Jesuits, p. 3.
the points with only a short or summary development.” (Sp.Ex., No. 2) It is because the exercitant will “get more spiritual relish and fruit, than if he who is giving the Exercises had much explained and amplified the meaning of the events. For it is not knowing much, but realizing and relishing things interiorly, that contents and satisfies the soul.” (Sp.Ex., No. 2) In Spiritual Exercises, God must be in the first place of all Exercises and the exercitants themselves are in the second. The giver, although playing an important role considering that he or she can accompany the exercitants and assist them, cannot replace the position of the exercitants. Therefore, it is better for the person if the giver influences less on their journey and gives space for God’s intervention.

A formator can act as a giver of the Spiritual Exercises in Jesuit tradition. Generally, a formator will provide the conditions that assist the formatee in discerning God’s will, to recognise God’s will and to encourage them to follow God’s will. In other words, the formator will not manipulate the formatee moving to the path the formator wants or going for a mission he desires for.

This is especially sensitive particularly within the hierarchical culture of Vietnam. In such a culture, a formator often has a decisive voice in almost everything, including how and what to be; how and what to do. In other words, the will of a formator can be considered as the will of God; although they are human. Where is the place of formatee? It is not to discern God’s will, but to obey what they have been told. This could be a way God possibly has for those who cannot make a decision themselves. However, it can become a great obstacle that preventing many people discerning and acknowledging God’s will for them particularly. Therefore, to acknowledge the position of formator as a companion or assistant or the secondary instead of the primary figure in discerning one’s vocation is essentially important. Again, he or she allows God to speak to the person freely through their own situation and talents.
This way requires more work and energy of a formator. Indeed, it is much easier for a formator to give advice than to discern with the formatee. It is also easier to suggest that a person follow a more ‘noble’ way. It is quite common among most Vietnamese, that to be a religious person is more noble than to be a lay person; to be a priest is more noble than a brother or seminarian. Going on the more noble way, therefore, should be the best. This understanding is not always true. The best way for a person is rather to be the way appropriate for them, the way they are prepared for, according to their situation and talents; the noblest way is the way, that helps the person live out his or her life most fruitfully, and for a Christian, it is the way that leads the person to achieve the purpose of his existence which is “to praise, reverence and serve God” (Sp.Ex. 23)

The spirit of magis will allow the formator going beyond the easy way in order to lead himself and those in his responsibility to approach the Principle and Foundation of humankind, as it is mentioned in the Spiritual Exercises: the most important thing is to help the formatee discovering the way in which he can “praise, reverence, and serve God” (Sp.Ex. 23).

The element “to help souls” in Ignatian Spirituality provides the formator with equipment to assist those for whom they are responsible to discern their vocation. In assisting a candidate, this element will help him to discern with that candidate whether he is suited to a Jesuit vocation or not: only those who are drawn to mission can be suited to Jesuit vocation. Although the prayer life is promoted, even required greatly in the Society of Jesus; however, mission makes them Jesuits.

The following suggestions are some practical contributions, which may be useful for those who are in responsibility as formators:
As Formators their role is:

- To keep in mind always that, he or she is the intersection between God, Jesuit charism and the formatee. This notice will help the formator in acknowledging clearly his actual role in formation, which is to help the person to discover God and God’s will for him. As the result, it may help the formator to minimise potential manipulation that may appear in relation to his role.

- With the candidate:

  o The formator accompanies formatees in discerning their personal vocation. With their rich experiences of discernment, a candidate can get valuable advice for their discernment to assist the candidate, not decide for him.

  o He needs to present to candidates the charism of the Jesuits and the main purpose of its existence. This is important because it provides the candidate with information to discern whether they are suitable to the congregation considering their personal situation and talents. Indeed, even involve in religious life, not every one is drawn to an apostolic or to an enclosed religious congregation. In addition to that, although the person desires eagerly desires to join one, however, his talents may seem to be better suited to the other place. It is better to send him to the place, which may be better for him.

  o He needs to be free from the desire to gain men for his congregation. He really needs to be indifferent in his Spiritual Exercises understanding. Indeed, the desire to gain men for the congregation is a sweet temptation that may make the formator to be manipulated by his need instead of the need of the candidate which is to discern God’s will.
He also needs to be “tripped off” from cultural and regional prejudices. Believe it or not, in Vietnam, there are some special consideration/ prejudices against those from the North. As I mentioned in the part 2.2 of chapter two about the challenges facing in Vietnam context, many young people are rather victims of the social environment in their indoctrinated intention or attitude. The formator needs to learn to accept and learn to help people to discover, to acknowledge and to get rid of disordered attachments in order to enable them to listen to God’s voice.

He is ready to introduce other vocation to the candidate in order to help them in discerning. Indeed, many candidates may get their vocation wrong due to lack of knowledge on vocation; or even wrong information. In other words, the formator will be ready to assist the candidate as much as he can.

- With those in ongoing formation:

For those who are accepted to join the Jesuits, it is the time to assist the formatee strengthen his vocation by “internalization and personal integration of our charism and way of proceeding.”\(^{129}\) It is the time for the young Jesuit to internalise the Jesuit life, not as a candidate, but as a member of the Society.

The formator still accompanies the man discerning God’s will. It is not much about discerning whether he is appropriate to Jesuit vocation, although this is still a part of formation before the Solemn vows; It is rather about assisting the formatee to discover his individual vocation within his Jesuit vocation. Indeed, many people have been inspired by the Jesuit charism, but they are

\(^{129}\) Peter H. Kolvenbach, *The Formation of Jesuits*, p. 3
also involved in many different services. Discernment plays an extremely important role in formation.

In general, by acknowledging clearly his role, the formator himself practices Ignatian spirituality to make himself ready for the role; to make himself gain freedom to lead those he is responsible for and accompany them in discernment God’s will for them. The discernment is based on personal experiences and understandings of the Society and the candidates and those are in formation will be assisted to discern their vocation and then what ministry the person can do later in their Jesuit life.

3. Formatee

The formatee plays a second important role in discerning God’s will for him. This is no doubt because the only one who can discern directly the calling of God for him is himself. He is the only one who can experience the calling of God personally and he is the one who can acknowledge his own capacities that the vocation may require. The question is: how can Ignatian spirituality apply to Jesuit formation in Vietnam? In order to draw out what elements can be a benefit for young Jesuits in Vietnam, each of three essential elements of Ignatian spirituality contains potential contributions to formation progress within a specific context, in this case is the Vietnam context.

3.1. Being liberated (Spiritual Exercises)

One of the fruits of the Spiritual Exercises is a growth in awareness and in openness to reconciliation. The person is more aware of his or her own limitation and reality in relation to God and to other people. As I said above in part 1.3.1 of chapter 4, some Exercises of Ignatius are to challenge the exercitant to acknowledge and to accept the naked truth of self and that of God. Indeed, in order to be liberated, the person must first
acknowledge he or she has limitations. Implied in such an acknowledgement is the hope of being liberated more deeply.

This liberation is fundamentally important for all who are seeking for the will of God for them. Indeed, with freedom, a person can listen to God more clearly. Ignatius himself, although he had a great desire to follow God eagerly, was in fact attached to the orthodox path for religious life and also to the spirit of competition. This caused him great distress and led him along the other path instead of God’s call. In order to listen to God more clearly, a person must let go as much attachment as possible.

In today’s young Vietnamese interested in the Society of Jesus, the importance of this liberation is not less. Indeed, there are many hidden attachments that a young Vietnamese is possibly confronted by. There is a great need for honesty, especially where a group of people comes from the northern territory. They are, as I said above, rather victims of their social environment instead of being in touch with their hopes for themselves. Therefore, the key issue for formation is not to condemn but to help them to acknowledge what may have been already in them without their consciousness of their attachments. To acknowledge that reality first, then find out a way to detach themselves and to be open is very important for both the formator and the formatee. The Spiritual Exercises can be a great instrument to assist those people being liberated. Spiritual Exercises search for healing, for liberating, not for condemnation.

To achieve that liberation, there are two elements a candidate may consider:

- Within the relationship with God, he bravely and sincerely identifies what he is really attached to either culturally or socially or both: praise for self or that for his family; the attraction of a high-rank position in the Church; the desire to gain
more respect, authority, pressure from the society\textsuperscript{130} or any thing that might manipulate him from God.

Consulting with, taking advice or conversation with other Jesuits is also important for the candidate no matter where they are from. Not having had many experiences of discernment of things of God and that of this world, taking advice or consulting others is always the best way to get assistance. Companionship, or being accompanied in formation is important on the journey to discover God. Samuel, a boy living in the temple with the priest Eli, ran to Eli when he did not know God’s calling him. Through Eli, he learned and responded properly. (Samuel 3) Ignatius himself also got help from spiritual persons and his confessor, especially in his early stage of his conversion at Manresa.

Besides these elements, a young Jesuits must well be aware of how fragile he is in the world and the society he lives in. Everyone can be manipulated by worldly elements, which have been promoted greatly in the Vietnamese society: wealth, celebrity and authority.

3.2. Life Vision

David L. Fleming claimed “The Principle and Foundation is a life vision.”\textsuperscript{131}

Indeed, once a person acknowledges the Principle and Foundation, he or she acknowledges

\textsuperscript{130} see, Venancio S. Calpotura, ‘Vocation Discernment’ in Called to Serve the Lord, (Loyola House: Quezon, Philippines, 1992), p. 77. This is specifically sensitive in Vietnam that I did not find elsewhere, at least in those places I have been, Australia or Indonesia. Once a person started journeying in the religious life, he or she is expected to live that life for good. Therefore, if someone leaves the congregation, it is a shameful experience for not only the person himself/ herself, but it is shameful for the whole family, and for his or her relatives. This, in many cases, becomes a main obstacle that prevents people from following God’s voice from within.

\textsuperscript{131} David L. Fleming, What is Ignatian Spirituality? (Loyola Press: Chicago, 2008), p. 3
the fundamental reason for their human life. Holding firm this purpose of life, the person may allow their life to be driven by it and make their life blossom according to its purpose.

Acknowledging the purpose of life can also liberate people from what Ignatius called disordered attachments. It is not self-glory, the praise of family, or authority that drives the person to a specific choice, but he is called to choose what makes him more free to praise, to reverence and to serve the Lord, not just himself. In other words, his life will be pointed in a right direction, which will help him to minimise temptation from surrounding distractions.

With that vision of life in mind, the person can be inspired to move toward the *magis*. Once a person acknowledges the purpose of life, he can move toward that purpose more eagerly and wholeheartedly. This is in fact the spirit of magis: to try more and more until he can achieve the purpose of life and their true vocation. The words of Saint Augustine reflect this understanding: “Our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.”

Being liberated to move forward to their life purpose seems more ideal than realistic for people. Indeed, no one can dare to claim that he or she is not influenced by non-Godly things. How can a candidate or a Jesuit continue to discern considering their struggles with detachment? Practically, they can:

- Acknowledge and accept the reality that he is most likely influenced by non-Godly things or worldly things. This acceptance and acknowledgment is important in order to help the person to minimise his ignorance.

- Candidates need to put down as much as possible what might possibly manipulate him from discerning God’s will, including the call to the Society of Jesus. To become a candidate is a good thing and to follow God in Ignatian

---

Spirituality is a good thing and to be a member of the Society of Jesus is also a good thing. However, a ‘good’ thing can become a stumbling block for a person if it imprisons a person spiritually or mentally. God is more important than the way that leads to God.

With a young Jesuit, in order to follow God eagerly and freely, he must “keep always before his eyes first God” and keep in mind “the nature of this Institute which is his pathway to God” (the Formula of the Society of Jesus, 1). This acknowledgement will help him in remembering the main purpose of his life and that of the Society of Jesus. This can keep him away from the pride of being a member of the Society; and the Society itself is not his purpose of joining. The Society is not God, it is a pathway leading to God.

3.3. Being Drawn to Mission

“To help souls” is the heart of the Society of Jesus. This element provides a specific instrument for both a candidate and a young Jesuit to discern their vocation. For the candidate, “to help souls” is information he must know in discerning the Jesuit vocation. It is the fact that there are many different paths to journey to God; there are many charisms within the Roman Catholic Church and Jesuit charism is only one of those many. Therefore, discerning to join the Jesuits is to discern whether he is really suited to the Jesuits. The one drawn to an enclosed monastic life is obviously not matched to the Jesuit vocation. A Jesuit must be ready for mission.

For young Jesuits, “to help souls” becomes an instrument for his Jesuit life. Firstly, it will help him to confirm his vocation. In the novitiate, a novice will learn about Jesuit vocation more theoretically. Journeying along the way of the Jesuit, the person will then experience what he has learned through the study and ministries he is involved in. With such experience, the young Jesuit not only discerns his vocation theoretically but also with
the real life. “To help souls” also helps a young Jesuit discern his personal vocation within the Jesuit context. “To help souls” must be specialised or personalised in “how to help souls” according to a specific person. Within the Jesuit context, a young Jesuit will have a chance to recognise his personal vocations as a Jesuit based on his talents, and based on what his heart is drawn to and with the response of his Formator and his companions.

“To help souls” can become a great encouragement for a young man to search for the ways to help people more and to glorify God more in their own context. This element is essentially important for the Jesuits in Vietnam due to their specific cultural context. Indeed, some services often considered as strengths of Jesuits, such as social services, justice promotion, education or social media, are limited, forbidden or too sensitive according to the Communist political system. How can they “help souls” in such situations? The desire “to help souls” may provide them an enthusiasm to search for new or unexpected ways, publicly or quietly, to serve people in such contexts.

Practically,

- Both candidates and young Jesuits need to make a great effort to discover their talents, especially for mission.

- “To help souls” is the characteristic a candidate must consider when he discerns on his vocation.

- A young Jesuit is still listening to God’s voice for himself in particular. He keeps in mind that the Society is only one way to go to God, not the purpose of all human beings. He still remains open to any possibility that can “help souls”.

In general, Ignatian spirituality can assist those following their Jesuit vocation in their early stage of vocation. The Spiritual Exercises provide them with the equipment first to
acknowledge their disordered attachments through acknowledging the main purpose of life. A candidate can be encouraged to move forward on the path which leads him toward that purpose of life: “to praise, to reverence and to glorify God”. Finally, with the element of mission, a candidate is provided with an essential element of Jesuit life in order to discern his vocation either as a Jesuit or not; and further, it also assists them to discern his vocation within Jesuit vocation. There are ways to achieve benefit of the Ignatian spirituality. Each person needs to discern which is the best for him according to his talents and situation.

4. Summary

Ignatian spirituality contributes greatly to Jesuit formation and Christian mission in the context of Vietnam. It firstly helps to re-discover and to acknowledge the main feature of the calling: God is the One who initiates the calling. God grants each person sufficient graces and talents according to each invitation. However, it is the person who makes a final decision whether to follow that invitation.

Ignatian spirituality contributes to the development of both formators and formatees in Jesuit formation in the Vietnam context, too. With the Spiritual Exercises, both formators and formatees can acknowledge the fundamental purpose of human life: “to praise, to reverence and to serve the Lord.” This awareness will provide them both a life vision, which will then drive their lives to a specific direction. Formators can be liberated from looking for cultural praise or reward of position, from regional or cultural prejudices and from wrong discernments about others. With a formatee, he can acknowledge both culturally and socially disordered attachments hidden deeply in himself as well as helping the man in formation, in order to be liberated and to discern God’s will in their lives as Jesuits. With the *magis* in mind, they both seek eagerly for what can help them to live the
fundamental purpose of life in more honest and humble ways. And with the element of helping souls, they both acknowledge an essential element to discern whether a person (with the formator) suits the Society of Jesus or (with the candidate and young Jesuit) to confirm their vocation; or to discern further what specific service that a Jesuit can be involved in to help people and to praise God according to his own talents and situation.
Chapter Six:

Conclusion: Ignatian Spirituality and Formation

Two questions have been raised constantly for many Vietnamese Jesuits: what is really Ignatian Spirituality? And how can it form our men in the new situation in which they are living? Yes, the Jesuits in Vietnam are in a new situation. It is new historically. The Jesuits first came to Vietnam in 1615, but then the Society in Vietnam died off along with the global Society of Jesus in 1773 with the suppression of the whole Society. They did not come back to Vietnam until 1957. Within some 50 years history, they almost died off one more time and they went underground in 1980s when the union of the North and South was dictated by Communist leadership. They did not come back to the public forum until 2004 and were acknowledged very slowly by the government. The Jesuits in Vietnam are also in a new situation in terms of administration. The Jesuits in Vietnam has been increasing dramatically not only in number, but also in their diversity—culturally, regionally and their academic background. This increase on the one hand is a joy in terms of growth; on the other hand, this raises some anxieties: How to form the increasing number of young Jesuits according to the Jesuit charism? How to manage the diversity? How to gain benefits from such diversity and bring that to the formation program? This is especially important in the context of change: from underground to public; from several dozen to more than two hundred members; from the closed situation to one that is a lot more open than it used to be. In addition to it, many of the current formators have been formed in ways that are non-orthodox.

Ignatian spirituality is the reality of the spiritual journey of Ignatius to discover God: it is a journey from seeking for self to seeking for God. As a man with a strong will, Ignatius found the life of saints interesting and wanted to compete with them. He sought
the greater glory of self by practicing virtues and abstinence. However, that life led him to a real conversion: to follow God instead of himself; to have God the centre of everything instead of self; and to allow God to drive his life instead of himself driving God. By practicing discerning God’s will, Ignatius then discovered God’s will for him, not towards the ascetic life, but toward ‘helping souls’. That spiritual journey was then embodied in the Society of Jesus.

Ignatian spirituality can be described clearly through three essential elements: Spiritual Exercises – a school of discernment; “to help souls” - the heart of the spirituality and magis – the spirit of Ignatian spirituality. Through his personal spiritual experiences, Ignatius decided to introduce the Spiritual Exercises. The main purpose of the Spiritual Exercises is to help the exercitant to get rid of disordered attachments and to re-arrange their life according to God’s invitation. Through undertaking the Spiritual Exercises, the exercitant will be helped to discover God, to discover the fundamental purpose of life and to acknowledge their personal disorders and attachments. Acknowledging is the first step to lead people to conversion from within. Once Ignatius allowed God guided him, he found that ‘to help souls’ was his vocation instead of a life of asceticism. He desired to journey with Christ carrying the cross. He desired to follow Jesus in his mission. That apostolic spirit was then motivated with the spirit of magis. This spirit encouraged Ignatius first, and then those who journey on this spiritual charism to desire more eagerly to move forward to discover their understanding of the fundamental purpose of life.

Those essential elements of the Ignatian spirituality can contribute significantly to Jesuit formation, especially in the context of Vietnam. With the Spiritual Exercises, the formator would be prepared well with the spirit of discernment in his own life and with a heart being cleansed from disordered attachments. These elements will allow the man to be liberated from hidden elements and make him ready to accompany those he is responsible
for. The Spiritual Exercises also contribute to those in formation. With the liberation of spirit, candidates and then young Jesuits can also be liberated from cultural values, which can become a vast obstruction leading people away from God. In the journey of the Spiritual Exercises, both the formator and young Jesuits discover their fundamental purpose of life: “to praise, to reverence and to serve the Lord”. That purpose will then motivate their whole life. Once a Jesuit discovers that fundamental purpose, he will make a greater effort to achieve it more clearly and quickly and be supported in this by the other members of the Society.

“To help souls” appears as the most practical element in helping Jesuits on their role. The formator can find in this element the main element to discern or to help the other discern whether he has Jesuit vocation. It can also help the formatee discern his own vocation: to be a Jesuit or not; to confirm as a Jesuit and to discover his individual vocation within the Jesuit context. This discernment is essentially important. It is because it will help a Jesuit follow God from within, considering his talents and capacities prepared especially for a vocation. Furthermore, Ignatian spirituality, I believe, can contribute to all people who take life seriously, for example, the young Vietnamese people and those who are guided by material values instead of spiritual and gospel values. This project requires a greater social research, which is not included in this thesis. It could be the next project I may be involved in.
Bibliography

Works Cited

Books


Dalmases, Cávido de. *Ignatius Of Loyola, Founder Of the Jesuit*, (St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985).


Fleming, David L. *Discipleship and Its Foundations*, St. Louis: Missouri, 2005


Rusk, Robert R. *The Doctrines of the Great Educators*, London: Macmillan and CO., 1918


Scroope, Martin ed., *Ignatian Spirituality for Today – Key Reading for Busy People*, 5th edit., The Loyola Institute: Australia, 2011


**Documents of the Society of Jesus**

*Documents of the 34th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus*, 1995

*Documents of the 35th General Congregation of the Society of Jesus*, Jesuit Communications Foundation: Quezon, Philippine, 2008

Articles


Broderick, William. “Structure And Dynamic Of The Second Week As A Whole”, in *The Way*, p. 81- 91

Calpotura, Venancio S. ‘Vocation Discernment’ in *Called to Serve the Lord*, (Loyola House: Quezon, Philippines, 1992)

Hughes, Gerard. ‘The First Week and the formation of conscience.’ in *The Way Supplement*, 24 (1975)


Sands, Paul F. ‘The Imago Dei as Vocation’, in *Evangelical Quarterly*, (82 No. 1, January 2010)


**Online resource:**

Chris Lowney, *The Foundation of Heroism: Magis,*


In Vietnamese:


Thông, Phạm Huy. “Lời sống của người Công giáo Việt Nam: Quá trình từ theo đạo, giữ đạo đến sống đạo”


Video clips:


In Vietnamese


Hưng, Đỗ Quang. ‘Sống Đạo Của Người Công Giáo Việt Nam’, Nếp Sống Đạo Của Người Công Giáo Việt Nam, (Hà Nội: NXB Từ Điển Bách Khoa, 2010)


Works not Cited

Books:


Jaer, André de. Together for Mission, Institute of Jesuit Sources: St. Louis, USA, 2001

Neuner, J. Walking with Him, Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis: Rome, 1985