

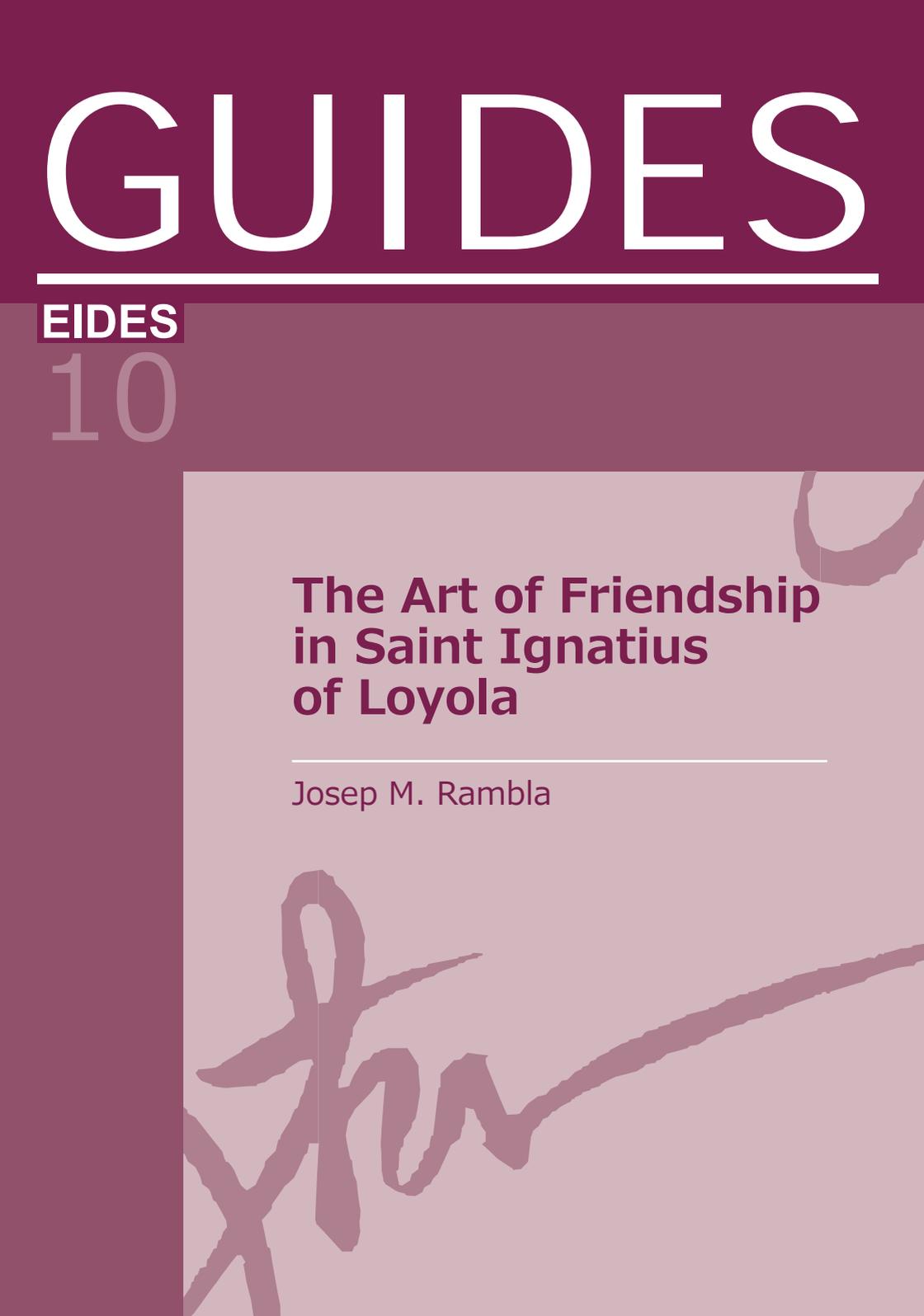
GUIDES

EIDES

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The Art of Friendship in Saint Ignatius of Loyola

Josep M. Rambla



**THE ART OF FRIENDSHIP
IN SAINT IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA**

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INTRODUCTION. FRIENDSHIP: AN UNIMPORTANT SUBJECT?

Christian friendship finds a solid foundation in the life and words of Jesus. The revelation of God as Love and the life of the first Christians as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles and the New Testament letters provide a good basis for fostering friendship in Christian communities. The history of Christianity has left us a legacy of remarkable friendships that do honor to the human qualities of Jesus, which many Christians try to imitate. We may think of Francis and Clare of Assisi; Jordan of Saxony and Diana of Andalón; Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier, and Peter Faber; Teresa of Ávila and Jerome Gracián; or Francis de Sales and Jeanne de Chantal. These are just a few of the more outstanding examples. There are plenty of studies and publications about friendship in the Christian world.

Nevertheless, Elisabeth Moltmann-Wendel recently stated: “Friendship is a forgotten category in Christian faith and Christian community”. To be sure, a great deal is written and spoken about mutual love. In the Catholic Church and in Christian communities in general, love and charity have a privileged place, but friendship is not given the same priority, even though it has deep roots in the very life and message of Jesus. Friendship is not stressed much when we reflect on our faith or when we relate to one another in Christian community. At best, it seems to be a minor theme in theological studies, or something unessential that is best kept on the sidelines. Certainly, there are many writings of different length and

diverse quality about friendship in general, and they are especially plentiful these days. But we are still left with the impression that, though friendship may be an interesting subject, it is still matter of supererogation, a sort of human luxury.

We should not forget that friendship is a subject that has much appreciated and much studied in the course of history, and many studies have demonstrated its importance for human existence. Aristotle, in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, considered friendship to be the most necessary thing for a good life. Cicero, in his treatise *De Amicitia*, showed that friendship was a fundamental element of political life (yes, even politics!). The French thinker Michel de Montaigne, unlike previous authors who drew on a moral or theological perspective, examined friendship from a subjective, psychological perspective.

Contemporary theology pays little heed to friendship even though, as Eberhard Jüngel observes, the object of theology is the God who is love. In the course of history, however, some theologians have touched on this topic from a Christian perspective. Thomas Aquinas taught that friendship has a theological dimension and held that our loving relationship with God is a form of friendship. Spiritual theology has provided us great classics like *Spiritual Friendship* by Aelred of Rievaulx and *The Book of Friendship and Love* by Ramon Llull. There have not been many works of this sort in recent times, but several are worthy of mention: 1) *The Four Loves* by C.S. Lewis includes a chapter on friendship; 2) *Great Friendships* by Raïssa Maritain gives testimony of the notable friendships in her life and that of her husband, Jacques; and 3) *On Friendship* by Pedro Laín Entralgo presents a magisterial history of significant thought about human friendship.

Although friendship currently receives considerable attention in popular publications, spiritual reflection on friendship is scarce. Laín Entralgo's confession in the first edition of his book remains symptomatic: "Will you allow me to be at once proud and humble as I say sincerely that I have been a bit saddened by the scant recognition this book has received?"

The topic of friendship, therefore, has been considered important, but more as a practical matter. Serious study of friendship it has been a secondary concern. Accordingly, we think it worthwhile to undertake a new treatment of friendship from the perspective of spirituality, which in the past has not been overly generous in treating the theme. Quite often, in fact, friendship has been treated as an area of possible dangers for the spiritual life, before which one must remain alert.

A study of friendship in relation to Ignatius Loyola is justified because Ignatius had many close friends and he also provided solid means for fostering close friendships. To be sure, he wrote nothing systematic or practical in this regard, but his ways of gaining friends and cultivating friendships allow us to study his personal style of friendship. His manner of initiating and developing friendships can legitimately be called the "art of friendship." Ignatius does not offer us a theoretical work of great scope, one that draws on the resources of anthropology and psychology, but his remarkably profound understanding of the nature of the

human heart, along with his personal life and way of proceeding, offers us a solid conception of true friendship.

In the pages that follow we will first explain how Ignatius experienced and promoted friendship and then draw some conclusions about how to cultivate and develop what Aristotle called “the thing most necessary for life.”¹ As necessary as friendship is for life, it is something *fragile*, as recent publications have noted, and for that reason it deserves special study.

1. The text of this EIDES-AYUDAR booklet is fundamentally taken from a talk given in a seminar on “Spiritual Friendship,” which was held in the *Centre Sèvres-Facultés Jésuites de Paris* on 13-14 October 2006 and published by Médiasèvres 2006, *Cahiers de Spiritualité*, no. 138.

1 A STORY OF FRIENDSHIP

In recent years a lot has been said and written about friendship in relation to Saint Ignatius of Loyola. The expression “friends in the Lord”, which appears only in his first letters, has been the focus of attention of the Ignatian studies on the subject. However, few writings give extensive treatment to Ignatius’s experience of friendship or about the way he encouraged friendship among others. For this reason it has seemed to me appropriate to study how Ignatius became the core of “*my* friends in the Lord” and to observe the art, or what I would call the “mystagogy,” he used to foster friendship.

Before his pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Ignatius refused any type of human support, including friendship, but soon after returning from his journey Ignatius made an effort to find suitable companions to collaborate with him in his project of “helping souls.” We know that the first group of companions (Arteaga, Calixto, Cáceres, Juanico) did not evolve into a stable group of friends. It was a “first birth,” in the words of Alfonso de Polanco. Therefore, the first lesson Ignatius teaches us about friendship is that it is a delicate, slow, and fragile process.

Ignatius traveled to Paris partly to seek out new companions, and he succeeded. Starting in 1529, he developed a solid set of friendships that would become the foundation of the Society of Jesus. Peter Faber, when recalling the gifts he had received in the course of his life, gave thanks to God for the spiritual and material benefits that accrued to him when he shared a room at the College of Santa Barbara with Francis Xavier and Ignatius:

God wanted me to teach this holy man and to converse with him about ordinary matters, and later about interior things. We lived a life in common in which we shared the same room, the same table, and the same purse. He guided me in

spiritual things and showed me how to know better both the divine will and my own will. In the end we came to have the same desires and the same will.²

Ten years later in Rome, when the group of friends met to deliberate about their future, the very first question they raised was whether the group was to be dissolved or turned into some sort of association. They firmly decided not to dissolve it, since it was clearly a work of God. The group of friends had matured to the point where it had such great spiritual density that, from then onward, their friendship would be the basis for all the decisions the group would make in the future.

In 1540 the friends began dispersing in order to respond to various apostolic demands. Despite the dispersion for the sake of mission, there was no diminishment in the quality of their friendship. In fact, the dispersion gave rise to a series of testimonies that showed how the human element is an essential part of true Christian friendship. Let us follow, then, the genesis and evolution of this friendship by focusing on Ignatius of Loyola, the heart of the group of “friends in the Lord”.

2. *Memorial*, nos. 7-8. The text can be found in *En el corazón de la Reforma: “Recuerdos espirituales” of Blessed Peter Faber, S.J.*, Introduction, translation, and commentaries by Antonio Alburquerque, S.J., Colección MANRESA, Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, nos. 7-8 (pp. 115-116).

2 FRIENDSHIP IN IGNATIUS' LIFE

2.1 A prior question

In undertaking this study about Ignatius and friendship, we need to ask how Ignatius understood friendship and what it meant for him. We raise this question because, on one hand, the experience of friendship produced in Ignatius a great human and spiritual maturity, especially after his conversion, but on the other hand, it is not easy to elucidate the nature of his friendship after 1541, when his love had to pass through the filter of his position as Superior General. It is not always easy to discern what Ignatius was feeling since “those who measured his love by what he revealed would be quite deceived,” as he himself confessed to Gonçalves da Câmara.³ The loving way in which Ignatius governed was a concrete instance of what he expressed in the Formula of the Institute of the Society of Jesus: the Superior “should be ever mindful of the kindness, gentleness, and love of Christ.”⁴

On the basis of the data his autobiography provides, we can distinguish three aspects or levels of friendship in Saint Ignatius's life. First, the saint sought companions for the apostolate. While not excluding normal social relations, this approach is above all concerned with forming a group of companions that is able to help people spiritually. This was the type of friendship that motivated Ignatius to seek out companions in Barcelona and Alcalá and later in Paris. Although the relationships began this way, they eventually reached the third level, as we will explain later on.

This friendship “with” apostolic companions was complemented by friendship with those to whom they ministered. Ignatius constantly sought to befriend individuals and win their confidence on a personal level. The good he was offering them could not be imposed but had to be received as a gift; that is, it had to be embraced with love and friendship. This may be called friendship “for.”

3. *Memorial*, no. 105. The text can be found in *Recuerdos Ignacianos*, “Memorial de Luis Gonçalves da Câmara, Version and Commentaries of Benigno Hernández Montes,” Colección MANRESA, Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, 1992, p. 95.

4. *Formula*, chapter 3.

Finally, friendship in the strict sense of the word was also characteristic of Ignatius: it is friendship “in the Lord,” a mutual sharing between persons of the depths of their hearts. Such friendship should especially characterize relations among Jesuit companions but not only among them, and it may appear even before specific apostolic commitments are undertaken. In other words, friendship is not only born *for* the apostolate and *with* apostolic companions; in some cases it is what actually helps to sustain the apostolic commitment. Friendship implies a certain reciprocity in all the activities of our lives, both those that are spiritual and those that are more human, including the material.

Given its richness and complexity, the concept of friendship has been the object of profound studies, starting from Aristotle and passing through Cicero, Thomas Aquinas, Kant, and various modern thinkers. I will focus on friendship in a broad and basic sense, in accord with a widely accepted definition of the term “friend”: it is the term “applied to another person with whom one relates in a reciprocally affectionate and confident way.”⁵

2.2 Ignatius’s disposition for friendship: the years before his conversion

It can be said that Ignatius possessed an instinctively friendly nature. Those who knew him best spoke of his natural sociability, his sympathetic understanding, his skill in human relations, his ability to reconcile adversaries, his always selfless attitude, and his benevolence. Let us recall just a few of the explicit testimonies: he was said to have a “noble and liberal spirit”; in the battles he fought and the difficulties he faced, he “never felt hatred toward anyone”; and he excelled in “dealing with human foibles, especially in overcoming discords and differences.”⁶

Such testimonies give us a glimpse of Ignatius’ affectionate temperament; this “enormous affective capacity”⁷ would become evident in different ways in his multifaceted life. Although he had a great talent for making friends and cultivating real friendships, he changed dramatically after his conversion. Reacting against his excessive self-reliance and his human qualities in general, he tended to prefer solitude and forewent the support of others. During his convalescence in Loyola, his spiritual thoughts moved him to think of “joining the Carthusians in

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5. MOLINER, María, *Diccionario del uso del español*, I, 164. See also: “Afecto personal, puro y desinteresado, ordinariamente recíproco, que nace y se fortalece con el trato” (*Gran Enciclopedia Larousse*, I, p. 424).
 6. DE POLANCO, Juan Alfonso (2005). *Summarium hispanum*, no. 5-6 (FN, I, 155). The text can be found in ALBURQUERQUE, Antonio (2005). *Diego Laínez, S.J. Primer biógrafo de S. Ignacio*, Colección MANRESA, Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, pp. 129-130.
 7. Cf. GRANERO, J. (1967). *San Ignacio de Loyola. Panoramas de su vida*, Editorial Razón y Fe, Madrid, p. 20.

Seville without revealing his identity so that they would think him insignificant.”⁸ When setting off for the Holy Land, he refused to accept any companionship: “Some people offered to accompany him, but he wished to go alone. His great desire was to have God alone as his refuge.”⁹

2.3 Friends in the Lord

Little by little Ignatius became the nucleus of a band of true friends, whom he bound together in a full human and spiritual sense. This was to be the real meaning of “spiritual friendship” or being “friends in the Lord.” It involved a friendship deeply rooted in the heart and radiating out to every aspect of one’s personal life. It was the plenitude of friendship.

No one doubts that the friendship uniting Ignatius and his companions was deeply rooted in faith. Evidence of this is Peter Faber’s testimony, which was mentioned above. We should remember that this original group of intimate friends had all done the Spiritual Exercises in Paris; they had confirmed their intention to live an evangelical and apostolic life at Montmartre; they had done devotional practices together (for example, regular visits to the Carthusians of Vauvert); and finally, they had committed themselves fully to the apostolate in Rome. Besides these more formal commitments, they also helped one another with studies and with economic problems; they shared meals and engaged in friendly conversation; they experienced together intense moments of work and also enjoyable periods of leisure.

The oft-cited description given by Diego de Laínez provides a good depiction of the rich friendship among the first companions:

Every few days we would take our provisions and eat at the home of one of the companions, and after that at the home of another. We would visit each other often, and I think this helped us to stay close. In this time the Lord gave us special help with our studies, in which we did fairly well, directing them always to the glory of the Lord and to the help of our neighbors. We had a special love for one another, and we even helped one another financially as much as we could.¹⁰

8. IGNACIO: *Autobiography*, no. 12.

9. *Ibid.*, no. 35.

10. LAÍNEZ, Diego. “Letter to Polanco of 16 June 1547” (FN, I, 102-104), in: ALBURQUERQUE, *Diego Laínez...*, pp. 180-181.

2.4 Discernment in common: an experience of friendship

We should emphasize the richness of this friendship, which reached such profound levels of communication that the companions were able to express their deepest and most intense feelings, arising from the experience of faith. The friends' journey was therefore characterized by constant spiritual deliberations, which involved a surprisingly high degree of mutual transparency. Even before the vows at Montmartre in 1534, they discussed in depth their life plans. Later, in Italy, before most were ordained priests, while they were still hoping to travel to Jerusalem, they deliberated about the various aspects of their joint venture: their life of poverty and prayer, the spiritual preparation for the ordinations and first Masses, their apostolic activities, the arrangements for their journey, and the visit to the Pope in order to obtain his approval and blessing. Once the pilgrimage to Jerusalem became impossible, they reflected on how they might best make themselves available to the Pope.

All these deliberations involved a profound ease of communication, a generous disposition to listen and understand, and sincerity without reservations.

The account of the three-month-long deliberation in 1539, which concluded with the decision to found a new religious order, provides us with good information about the human and spiritual qualities of this group of friends. Despite the great diversity of opinions and nationalities, they were united in their desire to achieve a single shared objective. They sought ways to solve the problem presented by the imminent dispersion of the group's members; they freely and earnestly sought to know God's will; they found ways to reconcile their diverse experiences and their sometimes contrary opinions; they created the means for dealing with the most difficult question of all, namely, the introduction of religious obedience into their life project; and finally, they found practical ways to resolve discrepancies and tensions. All this reveals the human and spiritual maturity of this group of "friends in the Lord."¹¹

It was in this way that a symbiosis took place between their human experience and their lives of faith, thus giving greater meaning to the expression "friends in the Lord." Thanks to this intimate integration of their faith lives and their apostolic activities, "this friendship was the soul of all the canonical obligations and of the obedience they imposed on themselves during the unforgettable deliberations in Vicenza and Rome."¹²

11. All this is well developed in the foundational documents (*MHSJ, MI*, I, 3rd series, vol. 1, pp. 1-7) and in many modern commentaries.

12. RAHNER, Hugo (1956). *Ignatius von Loyola. Briefwechsel mit Frauen*, Verlag Herder, Freiburg, p. 484. English translation: *St Ignatius Loyola: Letters to Women*, Crossroad, New York, 2007.

2.5 “My friends in the Lord”: Ignatius in the center of the group of friends

Ignatius was the soul of this group of friends and nourished the rich humanity of their bonds in his day-to-day relations. As a result, when Ignatius was absent, they realized the importance of the friendship that he, as promoter of the group, had fostered. They all “logically felt his absence,” but the spiritual roots of their friendship and the human warmth stayed alive since their enthusiasm and perseverance in carrying out their project of evangelical life never waned.¹³ In a word, a genuinely human and spiritual friendship flourished among the friends.

There are abundant testimonies about Ignatius’s natural friendliness. We are told that he expressed such great affection for those with whom he dealt with that he enveloped them totally in his heart: “When he wanted to entertain someone, he expressed such great joy that he seemed to be enclose them in his soul. He had naturally bright eyes.”¹⁴ Everyone felt loved by him for, as one witness reported, “he always inclines more towards love, to such a point, indeed, that everything appears as love. So universally loved is he by everyone that there is no one in the Society who does not love him dearly and who does not think himself beloved by the Father.”¹⁵

Although Ignatius was generally very measured in his expressions, Xavier has left us a wonderful testimony of the profound friendship between the two men. In one of his letters, Xavier recalls with tears how touched he was by his friend’s words:

Among many other holy words of consolation in your letter, I was moved by your closing words: “Wholly yours, without ever being able to forget you, Ignatius.” I read those words with tears, just as I write these with tears, remembering the times past and the great love you always had for me and still have.¹⁶

Ignatius could most certainly speak about “my friends in the Lord” since the friendships born in Paris had true Ignatian paternity. All his friends felt sad when Ignatius had to leave them in an effort to recover his health in Spain, and they experienced joy when they met up with him again in Venice more than a year later.¹⁷ When Polanco spoke of a “first birth,” referring to Ignatius’s experience with his

13. Such was the memory of one of the first Jesuits: “Although the companions felt Ignatius’s absence greatly, they did not for that reason slacken in what they proposed, for their hope and their strength were placed in God.” (RODRÍGUEZ, Simón (2005). *Origen y progreso de la Compañía de Jesús, Estudio introductorio*, translation from the original Portuguese and Latin with notes by Eduardo Javier Alonso Romo, Colección MANRESA, Bilbao-Santander: Mensajero-Sal Terrae, no. 21, p. 60).

14. *Remembering Ignatius*, no. 180.

15. *Ibid.*, no. 86.

16. 29 January 1552 (*Monumenta Xaveriana*, I, 668).

17. Cf., for example, RODRÍGUEZ, Simón, *Origen y progreso...*, nos. 21 and 42.

first group of friends, he was clearly indicating the important role Ignatius played in forming the later group. These companions, trained in the school of Ignatian friendship, kept growing in their profoundly human relationships, even after they dispersed in 1540 in response to the call for apostolic service. Attesting to the strength of that friendship are the many letters Xavier sent from India, ardently begging for news of his companions and complaining about how long it took for correspondence to arrive.

2.6 A testimony of Francis Xavier's friendship with the early companions

Xavier also showed the strength of his affection by keeping his companions' signatures hanging from his neck in a sort of locket. He especially insisted on receiving letters from Peter Faber, and he even longed for the humorous comments of Simon Rodriguez, as can be seen in the affectionate lines Xavier wrote to Rodriguez a year before his death:

My brother, Master Simon, I beg you to write me frequently, for you know how much we enjoy in the Lord your sentiments, your works, and your verses.¹⁸

Since Ignatius, Peter Faber, and Francis Xavier formed the solid core of the embryonic Society of Jesus, it is helpful to recall some details about how their profound friendship became embedded in their souls.

In Xavier's letters we find many examples of a deeply human friendship that goes beyond simple anecdote and reveals how the divine can penetrate the human and make people grow in their humanity. On 27 January 1545 Xavier wrote to his companions in Rome:

God our Lord knows how much more consoled my soul would be in seeing you than in writing you these very uncertain letters. But the many memories of past news, when founded in Christ, have this great virtue: they almost make up for the lack of immediate news. I feel the constant spiritual presence of everyone in the Society.¹⁹

It seems that Xavier had the faces of each of his companions deeply engraved on his heart, and he vividly remembered everything they had shared. The experience of Christ, when deeply rooted in human experience, not only strengthens human friendship through some spiritual force, but consolidates it and allows it

18. Cf., for example, RODRÍGUEZ, Simón, *Origen y progreso...*, nos. 21 and 42.

19. *Mon Xav*, I, 366.

to go beyond spatial limits. On 10 November 1945 Xavier wrote the following to Europe:

Later, in Malacca, I was given many letters from Rome and Portugal. These letters I received and keep receiving –every time I reread them, as I do often– with so much consolation that it seems to me as if I were there or as if you, my dearest brothers, were here where I am, if not corporeally, *saltem in spiritu*.²⁰

Xavier’s memories, his imagining his friends present, and the pleasure he found in rereading their letters show us clearly the profound human sensibility that characterizes what Ignatius would call “friendship in the Lord.” Ultimately, they speak to us of God’s humanity. Xavier’s letter of 10 May 1546 reinforces that impression:

So that I may never forget you but keep you continuously and specially in mind, to my great consolation, I inform you, my dearest brothers, that I cut out from the letters you sent me the signatures you wrote with your own hands, and I wear them on me constantly, along with the vows I professed, because of the consolation I receive from them.²¹

Xavier’s humanity was very sensitive, almost to the point of tenderness, and this quality was all the more poignant because he was an adventurous soul with grand projects. His boldness did not detract from the sensitivity and gentleness that helped him form and maintain solid friendships.

Peter Faber, a man of sublime spirit, also experienced friendship in a very human and sensitive way. On 27 September 1540 he wrote:

I have not written, nor could I now explain, the pleasure [your letters] gave us here *in Christo*.²²

On 17 November 17 1541, he revealed in a letter to Ignatius the pleasure that came from knowing about his friends:

We long to receive news about you, and through you news about all our companions and our business. Until now we know nothing and have not received any letter of yours here in Regensburg.²³

20. *Mon Xav*, I, 388.

21. *Mon Xav*, I, 403-404.

22. *Fabri Mon*, 44.

23. *Fabri Mon*, 135.

With the passage of time, this exceptional man's spiritual maturity kept his experience of friendship alive with human sensibility and a playful spirit.

The companions' friendship, then, had deep roots in a shared spiritual experience, while at the same time it integrated their diverse personal dimensions (sensitivity, material needs, sociability, etc.). The friendship shared by Ignatius and his companions aligns closely with Cicero's classic definition: "agreement in all matters divine and human, along with goodwill and affection."²⁴ Ignatius used the expression "my friends in the Lord," and the evidence these friends provide us shows that the experience of *friendship in the Lord* was for them a vital synthesis whereby faith purified and deepened their humanity in such a way that the human dimension was a flourishing of their Christian faith, which had Jesus Christ as its center. Within the group, Ignatius was the great inspiration and the guide for this greatest of friendships.

2.7 Ignatius as Superior General

About the friendship of the first companions one historian wrote: "It can be shown that the deepening of their shared solidarity in the faith was accompanied by a lessening of the bonds of friendship on the affective level."²⁵ I do not believe that this can be said about the companions' relationships prior to the foundation of the Society, but it is true that, after the foundation of the Society, a new kind of relationship arose, both among the companions (dispersed around the world but integrated into a body that was growing rapidly as new members joined) and between the companions and the Superior General. Does this mean that the former friendships disappeared? Was friendship no longer possible in the new type of religious apostolic life that been introduced? How did Ignatius experience this new situation?

I think the words that Karl Rahner placed in the mouth of Saint Ignatius give us a good idea about the role of friendship for Ignatius as Superior General and for Jesuits generally: "Since a global religious order has a central government, the relationships among its members cannot be based solely on personal friendship and mutual knowledge." Further on, Rahner has Ignatius say: "A fraternal community does not become artificial or fruitless for being restrained and objective and for requiring its members to forego the *warmth of the domesticity*."²⁶

Having considered these matters from the perspective of our modern world, let us now focus on the image of Ignatius that emerges from his writings and the

24. *De Amicitia*, 20.

25. WILKENS, G. (1978), "Compagnons de Jésus. La Genèse de l'Ordre des Jésuites," *Recherches*, 14, CIS, Rome, p. 190.

26. RAHNER, K. (1979), *Palabras de Ignacio de Loyola a un jesuita de hoy*, in: RAHNER - IMHOF - LOOSE, *Ignacio de Loyola*, Santander: Sal Terrae, pp. 29-30.

testimony of witnesses. Obviously, Ignatius had to combine his role as Superior General with the friendship he had with his companions in Paris and Italy. Ignatius would also have maintained his contacts with other close friends who were not Jesuits. Let us examine these points more concretely.

As General Superior, Ignatius certainly moderated his expressions of affection; he was affable but not effusive, in the words of Gonçalves da Câmara.²⁷ However, his manner of governing was not cold or distant, and no one could doubt his affection, as Câmara's makes clear: "There is no one in the Society who does not love him dearly and who does not think himself beloved by the Father."²⁸ Ignatius's cheerful countenance was a gift he had that facilitated his friendly relations. According to the testimony of Diego Laínez, his face so impressed a possessed person that he described the saint this way: "A small Spaniard, slightly lame, with bright eyes."²⁹ His eyes transmitted such joy that, when receiving someone, "he seemed to enclose him into his soul."

Regarding his affection for specific individuals, let us remember the emotion Xavier felt when reading Ignatius's letters. Ignatius had special difficulty in dealing with Simon Rodríguez, the co-founder who created great problems for the Society. He "found himself caught between his friendship with his old companion from the earliest days and what he thought was his duty as Superior General."³⁰ Ignatius narrates in his autobiography how during his stay in Vicenza, while suffering from a fever, he went to Bassano to visit his friend Simon, who was deathly sick. Faber accompanied him but could not keep up with the pace of Ignatius, who was walking rapidly. And Ignatius reports: "When we arrived at Bassano, the sick man was greatly consoled, and he quickly recovered."³¹

This affection and care were also shown later on, when Simon Rodríguez continued to cause conflict. Ignatius had to maintain the spirit of the Society, especially as regards formation and the apostolate, which the Portuguese Jesuit's behavior was jeopardizing. As Superior General, Ignatius stood firm in his decisions about Simon for the common good of the Society, but at the same time he was very gentle with him and tried to accommodate him by allowing him to leave Barcelona and return to the native airs of Portugal. On another occasion he let Simon choose his place of residence and had the best room in the house in Rome reserved for him. All these gestures were accompanied by expressions of sincere affection: "For no other creature on the face of the earth do I have more love, or desire greater corporal and spiritual goods."³² Simon, despite all his hesitation and reluctance to obey, appreciated the saint's tenderness. Years later he warmly

27. *Remembering Ignatius*, no. 89.

28. *Ibid.*, no. 86.

29. *Ibid.*, no. 180.

30. RAVIER, André (1973), *Ignace de Loyola fonde la Compagnie de Jésus*, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer-Bellarmin, p. 188.

31. IGNACIO, *Autobiography*, no. 97.

32. RODRÍGUEZ, Simón. *Origen y Progreso...*, pp. 130, 132.

remembered his deep affection and especially Ignatius's visit to Bassano, where Simon had been close to death.³³

As Superior General, Ignatius faithfully observed what he himself had written in the Spiritual Exercises: "Love ought to be expressed more in deeds than in words."³⁴ Thus Ignatius showed his affection with a great variety of gestures and favors, as the recollections of his contemporaries attest. With great gentleness he sought to please the brothers, and when making a decision he tried to make it as much as possible in accord with their preferences.³⁵ He avoided following his natural sympathy for some persons; if he had to deal with any important matter that could be interpreted as favoritism, he would delegate to others the final decision.³⁶ He asked to be kept up to date about the number of Jesuits around the world, and he wanted to know even the smallest details about the brothers in different places, such as their customs and their ways of dressing and eating in Portugal and India. So great was his interest in his brothers' life and circumstances that he wanted to know "how many fleas bit them every night."³⁷ He was able to appreciate and laugh at humorous comments and the foibles of community life.³⁸ He took special delight in welcoming those who came from other parts of the world.³⁹ His interest in knowing about the lives of Jesuits and helping them was especially demonstrated with the youngest members, whom he treated with tenderness and affection.⁴⁰

In his role as religious superior, Ignatius was naturally seeking the spiritual maturity of all his companions, but he sometimes was strictest with his closest friends because he wanted to prepare them for the difficult tasks required for spreading the Kingdom of God.⁴¹ Generally, though, he managed to avoid giving "any member of the Society the idea that he cared less for him."⁴²

Finally, if we want to dispel all doubts about the value Ignatius placed on friendship among Jesuits we can quote Câmara: "He sang the praises of Father Olave when he talked with Father Polanco, and of Father Polanco when he talked with Father Olave, because he knew that they were friendly with one another."⁴³ We can therefore understand what Ignatius meant by particular friendships, which were so vilified in later centuries. Particular friendships were those which excluded others and closed people off in a private world. Thus it could be said that

33. *Ibid.*, p. 137.

34. SpEx 230, 2.

35. *Remembering Ignatius*, nos. 103, 112, 114, 116, 263, 357.

36. Cf. *Ibid.*, no. 330.

37. *Ibid.*, no. 87.

38. *Ibid.*, nos. 192-193, 218, 296, 302, 327.

39. *Ibid.*, no. 89.

40. *Ibid.*, nos. 46-47, 67, 212, 215.

41. *Ibid.*, nos. 104-107.

42. *Ibid.*, no. 330.

43. *Ibid.*, no. 103.

Ignatius considered a particular friendship to be “a problem of justice, not of affectivity.”⁴⁴

2.8 Non-Jesuit friends

Once he had passed through the long weeks of intense penance, solitude, and spiritual conflict in Manresa, the saint spent much time with good friends.⁴⁵ Various circles of friends formed around Ignatius in Barcelona during the weeks before his departure for the Holy Land and then especially on his return. Principal among these friends were the archdeacon Jaume Cassador, Inés Pascual (whom he had known since Manresa), and Isabel Roser. His friendship with Cassador was so close that Ignatius wanted to consult with him before beginning any activity in Spain: “Once I have finished my studies, which will be a year from this Lent, I hope not to wait longer to begin speaking the Word, but I will not do so any place in Spain until the two of us meet together.”⁴⁶ In that same letter Íñigo (“poor in goodness,” as he describes himself) reflected on the intense bonds of friendship that united him to persons in Barcelona: “It seems to me, and I do not doubt it, that I am more indebted and beholden to the people here in Barcelona than I am to any other people in my life.”⁴⁷

Ignatius constellation of friendships kept growing over time. Shortly after he left Barcelona in 1526, for example, Ignatius spoke of a doctor who was “a very good friend.”⁴⁸ It must be said, though, that Ignatius’s friendship with non-Jesuits remains a wide and mostly unexplored field. Hugo Rahner made some very valuable but fragmentary contributions, including a long list of the correspondents with whom Ignatius seems to have been very friendly. Rahner wrote: “The overflowing heart of Ignatius truly found an echo in the heart of his friends. If we failed to make mention of these friendships, we would be distorting the portrait of our saint.”⁴⁹

Hugo Rahner has especially studied Ignatius’s remarkable correspondence with women, some of whom were close friends. These letters to women are numerous and therefore quite significant. Even when the letters address mainly an

44. GUEUILLETTE, Jean-Marie (2006), “Entre nous, le Christ,” *Christus*, 209, p. 68.

45. IGNACIO, *Autobiography*, no. 34. This friendship was evident in Ignatius’s continued relationship with the family of Inés Pascual after he left Manresa and when he returned from the Holy Land. Also, the testimonies presented at his canonization process—despite the tendency of devout persons “to say great things and to exaggerate more than was fitting” (no. 18)—as a whole reveal the profound relation of friendship that existed between the pilgrim and many persons of Manresa.

46. Letter 12 February 1536, in: *Obras de San Ignacio de Loyola*, BAC, 5th edition, p. 726.

47. *Ibid.*

48. IGNACIO, *Autobiography*, no. 62.

49. RAHNER, Hugo, *Briefwechsel*, p. 485. On page 485 there is a long list of persons with whom Ignatius formed a friendship, with references to the letters in the volume.

apostolic concern or a personal or family matter, they reveal the warmth and cordiality that characterize true friendship.

The formal style in which Ignatius expressed his friendship corresponded to his restrained manner and his education,⁵⁰ but his friendship was recognized by all as a manifestation of the love of God that makes all human relationships deeper and more sincere. Hugo Rahner said it well: “One might think that his love for these noble ladies was the final phase of transfiguration of the chivalrous love which the young gentleman of Arévalo had, by his own confession, felt for a woman who was neither a countess nor a duchess, but it was something higher than either of these.”⁵¹ An example of the heartfelt, friendly tone in which the saint expressed himself are these words from a letter to Isabel Vega: “To the one whom I hold and will always hold so dear to my soul that I would never want to fail in any way to serve and console your Ladyship, insofar as my poor strength allows.”⁵² Writing to a certain María, whom he called “my dearly beloved sister in Christ our Lord” and whose identity has still not been ascertained, he used a tone of friendly complaint: “It quite seems to me that you dwell more in my soul than I do in yours, yet I think you have as much reason to be mindful of me.”⁵³ Ignatius wrote to request her assistance for his friends in Paris, who were about to depart on pilgrimage to the Holy Land; he was hopeful that the friendship would find expression in works.

During his years of pilgrimage Íñigo shared in the lives of many poor people. While living in Rome, he welcomed hundreds of the destitute into the House of the Society, convinced that friendship with the poor was one of the most privileged forms of friendship. As he said in a famous letter which he commissioned his secretary Polanco to write, “Friendship with the poor makes us friends of the eternal King.”⁵⁴

We can conclude that, while the friendships of Ignatius existed at various degrees or levels, and while they may have been restrained in their expression and not always reciprocal, they were unquestionably rooted in genuine love and took the form of affectionate human embrace.

50. An example of this is the way Ignatius received guests at his table: “Stay and dine with us if you want to do penance!” (CÂMARA, *Recuerdos Ignacianos*, no. 185).

51. RAHNER, *Briefwechsel*, p. 486.

52. Letter of 4 March 1553 (*Epistolae Ignatianae*, IV, 265).

53. Letter of 1 November 1536, (*Epistolae*..., I, 724).

54. *Obras de San Ignacio*..., p. 819.

3 THE ART OR MYSTAGOGY OF FRIENDSHIP

Some years ago Henri Brémond stated that the Exercises are an autobiography of Ignatius, pedagogically elaborated. It cannot be said that Ignatius has elaborated a similar pedagogy of friendship, but it is certainly true, as we have seen, that his personal experience helped him lead others toward true friendship. It can therefore be said that the author of the Spiritual Exercises was also a great pedagogue and mystagogue of friendship, an art that needs considerable adroitness.

Before entering into this field of Ignatian art and pedagogy, however, we need to explain some presuppositions. First, for Ignatius, God has preeminence in everything; God is the center of attraction of all things and the divine medium that integrates all things. Consequently, friendship also, at least friendship in its truest sense, finds its center and its pole of attraction in God. Second, this preeminence of God does not imply any form of dualism, and even less does it eliminate what is human, because for Ignatius the God who communicates himself in Jesus Christ is the Author of both nature and grace. We serve God and give him glory when we respect both the natural and supernatural since both have in him their origin and their point of convergence.⁵⁵ And third, we should remember that when we speak of friendship, we are referring to a reality that is totally gratuitous: we can offer ways for it to be born and nourished, but there is no means by which we can produce it unfailingly.

Keeping these presuppositions in mind, we can distinguish in this Ignatian art of friendship two aspects that are distinct but closely united: first, the use of more

55. *Constituciones*, no. 814.

explicitly evangelical or religious means, and second, the use of natural means. Ignatius would most certainly insist that friendship is a slow and very fragile process. This was a lesson he learned with his first group of companions, whom he brought together in Barcelona and who accompanied him to Alcalá and Salamanca. Toward the end of his life, when living in Rome, Ignatius took a renewed interest in those first companions and their later history, but he found the results to be disappointing. Perhaps we could apply to the practice of friendship what Ignatius said of his studies before going to Paris: “Since I was moved along in my studies with great speed, I found myself lacking in the basics.”⁵⁶ Likewise, the basics of friendship he would learn later on, especially with the help of the Spiritual Exercises when they were done completely. Indeed, it was through the Exercises that he won over Faber and Xavier,⁵⁷ and the same can be said of his other friends.

3.1 The Spiritual Exercises, pedagogy of spiritual affectivity

3.1.1 Affective experience of God

It has often been said that the Exercises of Ignatius are a pedagogy of affectivity, or even a “university of the love of God.” Doctor Contarini found in Ignatius a “teacher of love” and in the Exercises a new theology, a theology of the heart. When Faber gave the Exercises to the theologian Cochleus, he attested to the joy that Cochleus felt because he had finally found a “teacher of the heart.”

Starting from the Principle and Foundation, the exercitant is discreetly instructed as to the meaning of love. Human beings are created “for” something; that is, they are meant to live in relationship, giving themselves generously and respectfully in service to the Other. In other words, the meaning of human existence is found in love. By orienting their lives in this way, human persons are to find their salvation and the fullness of their existence.

Those making the Spiritual Exercises are urged to practice them from the center of their person, involving all their imaginative and intellectual activity, to the point of “sensing and tasting things interiorly” (SpEx 2). Affectivity therefore should be intensely experienced since it is the best way to gain a more intimate relation with God (SpEx 3). All the contemplations of the second, third, and fourth weeks are directed toward deepening the affective relationship of true friendship with the Lord. The exercitant seeks to know him, love him, and follow him, and to be invaded by both his sorrow and his joy. The Exercises as a whole are meant to help the exercitant to communicate intimately with God and to let himself be

56. IGNACIO, *Autobiography*, no. 73.

57. *Ibid.*, no. 82.

embraced by God (SpEx 15). Thus, the mystagogy of the Spiritual Exercises arises from God's loving alliance with the exercitant.

It is therefore not surprising that at important moments in the Exercises friendship appears either explicitly or in similar terms, such as "lover" and "beloved." In describing the "colloquy" (SpEx 54), Ignatius describes it as a relationship between friends: "As one friend speaks to another." The same word reappears in the exercise of the Two Standards, which shows Jesus "sending all his friends on this expedition" so that "they may endeavor to aid all persons" (SpEx 224). Finally, in the Contemplation to Attain Love, Ignatius explains how we are to recognize God's gifts and respond to them with love and friendship: "Love consists in the mutual communication between two persons. That is, the one who loves gives and communicates to the beloved what he or she has, and the beloved in return does the same to the lover" (SpEx 231).⁵⁸ These four passages are rich in human and spiritual significance.

In reality, friendship not only illuminates but grounds the experience of many important realities of Christian life, such as *prayer, apostolate, personal relationship with Christ, and alliance with God experience in life*. Ignatius anticipated Teresa of Jesus in presenting prayers as a relationship of friends: "as one friend speaks to another." The Spiritual Exercises are a training ground for friendship, for they recommend that each exercise end with a colloquy, which is a type of friendly conversation with the Lord. In the meditation on the Two Standards, the apostles sent by Jesus are his "friends," and their apostolate becomes a relationship of friends "helping" friends.

In the Fourth Week, the Risen Jesus appears as a consoler, acting the way good friends do when tragedy has struck. The disciples are invited to have a personal relation of friendship with Jesus. The Contemplation to Attain Love prepares the exercitants to prolong the spiritual experience of the Exercises in their daily life. It shows them how to convert the whole of their existence into a process of grateful discovery of the abundance of God's gifts so that they can recognize God's generous self-giving and be moved to respond lovingly by transforming their own lives. It is a relationship that is to be lived more in deeds than in words. Thus, friendship is to be found in the very heart of Christian life, according to the spiritual pedagogy of Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises. When speaking of his friends, Ignatius spoke in a subliminal way about the relation between friendship and the Exercises: "At this time he was conversing with Master Peter Faber and Master Francis Xavier, whom he later won for the service of God, thanks to the Exercises."⁵⁹

58. Let us mention the other three references to friendship, though they are not directly related to our theme: the need to separate from friends and acquaintances in order to make the Exercises (SpEx 2), the fact that Pilate and Herod became friends after being enemies (SpEx 295), and the caution that must be taken in giving alms to relatives or friends (SpEx 338).

59. IGNACIO, *Autobiography*, no. 82.

3.1.2 “May Christ be continually formed in you”

Contemplation

The divine-humanity of Christ gradually configures the exercitant in the course of the spiritual experience of the Exercises. The close relationship with the Lord, which starts right from the first colloquy of the First Week and continues in the remaining weeks, comes about through a type of *contemplation* that invites the exercitant to become fully immersed in the life of the Lord, both in its external aspects and in those that are more intimate and spiritual. The incessant *repetitions* help the exercitant to progress constantly in reforming his life in all its dimensions, by following the Lord. Practiced in this way, the Exercises are a type of mystagogy by which the exercitant finds the Lord present in his daily life, outside the Exercises. The Lord becomes a witness to his life, with a human heart and as a revelation of the Father. Thanks to this friendship “in the Lord,” the person who makes the exercises in the Ignatian way can experience a profoundly human life, like that of Jesus, and an amazingly revelatory life, like that of Christ.

Praying “on the three powers of the soul” and “on the five senses of the body”

The transformative process of the Exercises is facilitated by one of the manners of prayer that Ignatius proposes as an integral part of the Exercises: praying “on the three powers of the soul” and “on the five senses of the body” (SpEx 246-248; cf. 4). This method is a type of prayer that helps the exercitant use his human abilities in the same way Jesus did. Basically it involves incorporating into one’s own life the personal attitudes of Jesus –his memories, his thoughts and values, his feelings and attractions– and his way of relating to others –watching and seeing, listening and conversing, touching and holding. In a word, it involves adopting Jesus’s sensibility, his tastes, and his ways of perceiving and enjoying nature and other persons. All this helps to bring about an extraordinary orchestration of the exercitant’s interior world and the exterior world, which has great importance in the development of a true friendship, a friendship in which the human and spiritual are integrated in authentic maturity.

In this process of mature integration, we should be aware that for Ignatius the senses are the doors of the person because through them we express our interior world and allow the exterior world to penetrate us. Special care should therefore be taken to safeguard these doors of the senses as a privileged form of openness to others. In the Constitutions of the Society Ignatius wrote: “All should take special care to guard with great diligence the gates of their senses (especially the eyes, ears, and tongue) from all disorder.”⁶⁰

60. *Constituciones*, no. 250.

Perhaps we are not always aware that when well practiced, the Exercises can be a path of true humanization in the style of Jesus. This humanization involves a true symbiosis, a certain hypostatic union, of the human and the divine, in accord with the true Christian conception in which juxtapositions do not exist.

“The anointing of the Holy Spirit”

Paragraph 414 of the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus throws much light on the topic of mature human relationships that are rooted in the Spirit’s action in our hearts.

In general, they ought to be instructed about the manner of acting proper to a member of the Society. ... Although all this can be taught only by the unction of the Holy Spirit and by the prudence which God our Lord communicates to those who trust in his Divine Majesty, nevertheless the way can at least be opened by some suggestions.

This text, which refers to the formation of Jesuits for the apostolate, indicates that attention should be paid to the way persons are treated, since they usually are very different (in sex, character, age, country, culture, etc.). While the text concedes that it is good to give some orientation for progressing in these relations, it states that the fundamental guide must be the anointing of the Holy Spirit. For Ignatius, then, a truly human relationship must proceed from a divine source, but this source will at the same time manifest itself in the humanity of our lives. Thus, the divine quality of our condition does not take away from the attention we should pay to the more strictly human qualities; we should therefore employ natural means.

The Ignatian mystagogy that I have just explained brings us closer to the meaning of the full integration of the human and the divine, as expressed in the phrase, “my friends in the Lord.” As Hugo Rahner says in regard to Ignatius’s friendships: “His human figure needs no adornment. His humanity irradiates from within because his heart was so full of the human brilliance of Christ our Lord.”⁶¹

Ignatius would be fully in accord with the eloquent affirmation of Aelred of Rievaulx: “Friendship is born in Christ, grows in Christ, and reaches fulfillment through Christ.”⁶² And Aelred goes even further, adding a novel gloss to the phrase “God is love” in the first letter of John: “God is friendship.”⁶³

61. RAHNER, *Briefwechsel*, p. 562.

62. *La amistad espiritual*, I, 9 ; cf. II, 20, in: *Caridad. Amistad*, Editorial Claretiana, 1982, Buenos Aires, 1982., pp. 275 and 291.

63. *Ibid*, I, 69-70, p. 286.

3.2 Natural means

We have no evidence that Ignatius knew the classic work, *Spiritual Friendship*, by Aelred of Rievaulx. Nor do we know for certain whether Ignatius had recourse to Cicero's *De amicitia*, which so influenced the Christian tradition, or to the even more ancient texts of Aristotle on friendship, as found in his *Nichomachean Ethics*. It is likely, though, that he had direct knowledge of these writings when studying at the University of Paris. Whether he did or not, Ignatius never developed a practical initiation to the style of friendship he elaborated in the Exercises, but he certainly drew on his personal experience and on various things that he had read. It is probably not helpful to try to understand how his ideas of friendship might have been influenced by other authors. Certainly his personal qualities and his practical pedagogical sense were the main sources that gave birth to his art of friendship. In other words, he relied primarily on the "natural means" by which human beings respond to God, who "asks for the collaboration of his creatures."⁶⁴

3.2.1 Love

The starting point for this art is *true love for the person*. If this is not the fundamental attitude, then all human effort is mere strategy or perhaps even manipulation. Ignatius's love was expressed in his extraordinary affability: "When Ignatius met some brother around the house, his expression was so cheerful and his greeting was so sincere that he seemed to want to embrace the brother in his soul. He would eat the first or the final meal with all those who were returning from or going on a journey, taking leave of each one with great love."⁶⁵

3.2.2 Sharing the spiritual and the material

Given this fundamental disposition, *sharing* is an indispensable step, especially when physical proximity allows it. All the witnesses tell us about how the first companions shared goods among themselves in Paris and then in Italy. Ignatius offered his companions spiritual aid by way of conversation, guidance in the spiritual life, and later the Spiritual Exercises. Using these means, he created the affective bonds of friendship. This spiritual aid was accompanied also by material aid; he gave his friends economic support using the alms he received in Barcelona and later those he received during his summer trips to Flanders and London. His assistance was sometimes stealthy, such as when he helped to find students for the classes of the resistant Xavier. At the same time the sharing was reciprocal since Ignatius, as an older student, received help in his studies from his companions.

64. *Constituciones*, no. 134.

65. *Recuerdos Ignacianos*, no. 89.

Near the end of his time in Paris, Ignatius decided to return to his native land to recover his health, as his companions recommended, and they helped him by providing a horse for the journey. He returned the favor by visiting the families of the companions in different towns of Spain.⁶⁶ Alfonso de Polanco synthesizes the matter well; after speaking of the commitment the companions made at Montmartre, which sealed the first bond of friendship among them, he adds:

The second means for preserving these companions in friendship was mutual sharing and frequent communication among them. Although they did not live in the same place, they would eat together with charity, sometimes in the house of one, other times in the house of another; and they helped one another in spiritual matters and also in temporal needs. In this way their mutual love in Christ was nourished and grew stronger.⁶⁷

3.2.3 *Communication: conversation and correspondence*

The friendship of the companions progressed especially through the privileged form of sharing which is *communication either by conversation or by correspondence*. In the meetings I just mentioned, conversation and dialogue among the companions obviously played a very important role. Not all communication, however, has the degree of profundity that characterizes true friendship. For true friendship, according to Saint Thomas, there must be communication of one's most intimate personal experiences: "It is a true sign of friendship when one friend reveals to another the secrets of his heart. Since true friends share one heart and one soul, what one friend reveals to another hardly seems to leave his heart."⁶⁸ One sign of the facility and the profundity attained by the Ignatian friends was the practice of deliberation in common, which they carried out on repeated occasions: in Paris, in Venice, in Vicenza, and in Rome. Deliberation in common, for the purpose of seeking God's will for the group and making shared decisions, presupposes both a mutual transparency among all involved and a facility for communication that includes all levels of one's personal life, from the most simple and ordinary matters to the deepest experiences of faith. The companions' friendship kept progressing, we are told, through "communication of all their hearts and all their things," and this happened "with sublime, peace, concord, and love."⁶⁹

When the companions were physically separated, they maintained communication by means of correspondence, as we saw with Faber and Xavier. When writing the Constitutions of the Society of Jesus, Ignatius suggested "much com-

66. IGNACIO, *Autobiography*, nos. 87 and 90.

67. *De vita Sancti Ignatii*, caput VII, no. 70: FN, II, 567; cf. FN, I, 184.

68. *In Ioannem XV*, 3.

69. FN, IV, 233-235.

munication” as a means that would contribute greatly to union among Jesuits.⁷⁰ Since Jesuit life is often dedicated to far distant works and so does not permit frequent gatherings for prayer or the ordered life of a monastery, “it has been said that correspondence is in some ways the liturgy that Jesuits celebrate.”⁷¹

3.2.4 *Exquisite respect for the brothers*

Ignatius’s attitude of *practical respect* toward one and all was fundamental for the progress of the companions’ mutual friendship: nobody ever felt judged by him. People observed that Ignatius had a “great simplicity, not judging anybody and interpreting everything in the best way possible.”⁷² It was said that “our Father always speaks well of everybody”⁷³ and that “the Father never believes any of the bad things said of others, or perhaps he asks that it be communicated to him in writing.”⁷⁴ This practice of always giving others the benefit of the doubt was so remarkable and so well-known that Ribadeneira said that “the Father’s interpretations excusing the faults of others are proverbial among those who deal with him.”⁷⁵

Friendship was manifested and fostered in many small details, as we saw above in the way Ignatius related to his brethren. Since there is no need to insist further on those details, I end this chapter on the human dimensions of friendship by recalling what Câmara said about Ignatius’s own way of fostering affection for his companions: “1) The Father’s great affability; 2) the great concern he has for the health of all –so great that it can scarcely be praised as much as it deserves; 3) the Father proceeds in such a way that things that may hurt a subject are never said to him unless by means of another.”⁷⁶

70. “La mucha comunicación...” (*Constituciones*, no. 821; cf. nos. 673, 675).

71. L. GIRARD in: *Ignace de Loyola, Écrits*, Collection Christus, no. 76, Desclée de Brouwer - Bellarmin, Paris, 1991, p. 621.

72. ALBURQUERQUE, *Diego Laínez...*, p. 208. (FN, I, 136).

73. *Recuerdos Ignacianos*, no. 91.

74. *Ibid.*, no. 358.

75. *Ibid.*, no. 92.

76. *Ibid.*, no. 88.

CONCLUSION

According to this analysis, which we now conclude, the Ignatian art of friendship is a particular case of spiritual pedagogy very proper to Ignatius. It is a pedagogy which requires the full *integration* of the faith dimension with the “natural” dimension (to call it that). Those who go through this type of spiritual initiation will advance on the path of human friendship with divine energy and on the path of love of God with deep human warmth.

History has confirmed this exceptional ability of Ignatian spiritual pedagogy to foster friendship and affectivity. We already mentioned that the Exercises have been understood from the start as a pedagogy of heartfelt affection, with the result that the theology of the Exercises is called a *theologia cordis*. At the same time, the humanism that characterizes the pedagogy of the Society of Jesus has been called a “humanism of the heart” (François Charmot), as opposed to a humanism of abstract knowledge. There is much evidence, then, of the great influence that the dimension of affectivity and friendship has had on the apostolate of the Society, which continues the work undertaken by the first friends of the Lord, for God communicates with us as a friend.

In order to end with a confirmation of all that has preceded, I want to mention two episodes that are personally significant for me in the history of the Society of Jesus, a Society that Xavier defined as a “Company of love.” One is Mateo Ricci’s apostolate of friendship, and the other is the mysticism of friendship of Egide van Broeckhoven.

Mateo Ricci is well-known for his pioneering apostolate of inculturation and interreligious dialogue in the inaccessible society of imperial China. As mathema-

tician, astronomer, linguist, intellectual, and valiant pastor, Ricci gained considerable prestige in the Chinese court, where he was recognized for his achievements and given many honors for his scientific work. In the midst of his intense and dedicated apostolate, Ricci wrote an essay on friendship that was greatly appreciated by the royal family. In the work he stated that friendship had opened more doors to him in China than had his education and scientific knowledge:

This grace of *Friendship* has won more recognition for me and for Europe than everything else I have done, because the other things win recognition for mechanical devices or manual instruments, but friendship wins recognition for culture, virtue, and ingenuity. For this reason my work has been received and read with great applause, and now it is being printed in two different places.⁷⁷

Egide van Broeckhoven was a Jesuit mystic and worker-priest who died in 1967 in the factory where he was working. His personal journals reveal to us how his privileged experience of the Trinity was thoroughly mediated by an intense experience of human friendship. Egide clearly discerned an identity between human friendship and the mystery of love among the Divine Persons. He consequently decided to opt for the Ignatian mysticism of finding God in the concrete reality of human life and thus overcame his doubts about whether he should become a Carthusian. The extraordinary mystical graces of Egide centered on friendship, especially friendship with the poor. Referring to the experience of Moses on Mount Sinai, a classic in Christian mystical literature, Egide explains how he experiences God in specific friendships: “The place where we find God, the burning bush, is the world of today and all the friendships that are at the heart of it.”⁷⁸ For Egide, a truly human friendship was at once spiritual and profoundly human;⁷⁹ it was also the core of the apostolate and the active proclamation of the Kingdom: “The apostolate is friendship.”⁸⁰

Egide’s experience was in no way different from the experience of Ignatius and the first companions, as we have explained it in this booklet. Even though

77. *Opere storiche del P. Matteo Ricci, S. I.*, Edit. Pietro Tacchi Venturi, S.I., volume II: *Le Lettere dalla Cina*, Macerata, 1913, p. 248.

78. RAMBLA BLANCH, Josep M. (2007). *Dios, la amistad y los pobres. La mística de Egide van Broeckhoven, jesuita obrero*, Santander: Sal Terrae, p. 175.

79. “God is in the center of what each person holds to be most concrete, most human, most attractive.” “To seek persons in God is not to alienate them. What is really alienating is seeking them apart from God, as if they were separate from him. This is to remain in the outskirts of the city.” “Just as there is a divine life in God, so also there is a divine life in us, and it has at its center friendship with others. The Love of God in us means essentially loving everybody in God and loving God in everybody” (*Dios, la amistad y los pobres*, p. 53). “My friend is a marvelous dawning of God’s eternal love. ‘Eternal’ does not mean something abstract and outside of time but something existential and mystical, like our deepest intimacy with God, which is ever new, ever young, offering immense perspectives” (VAN BROECKHOVEN, Egide (1972). *Diario de la amistad*, Madrid: Narcea, p. 44).

80. *Diario de la amistad*, p. 67.

Egide was perhaps unaware of this aspect of the Society's origins, he offers us an excellent approximation of what it means to be "friends in the Lord" when he writes:

If we had the daring truly to see the divine in the flourishing of the human, we would love other people, our friends, our work, art, etc., with a divine impetus and with human spontaneity. But we continually separate our human love from what we consider the love of God, and we separate out love for God from what we consider human love.⁸¹

These brief references to the apostolic and spiritual experience of Jesuits from two important apostolic fields of the Society should serve to corroborate the fact that the friendship Ignatius cultivated in "his" friends left a profound mark in the later life of the Society. They show that the Ignatian art and experience of true human friendship is an inspirational source for everyone, Jesuit or not, who drinks of Ignatian spirituality. This tradition remains strong even in the present time, for it is deeply rooted in the Ignatian Exercises, which culminate in the experience of *the Christ present today who continues in the office of consoler as a friend consoling his friend.*

81. *Diario de la amistad*, 88-89.

“Guides”, with this verb Ignatius Loyola modestly expresses his great desire to help others. It is under this motto connoting service and simplicity that the Ignatian School of Spirituality (*Escuela Ignaciana de Espiritualidad - EIDES*) offers these series of materials.

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