

“6 Schools of Spirituality”

This work is a study in Catholic spirituality. Spirituality is concerned with the human subject in relation to God. Spirituality stresses the relational and the personal though does not neglect the social and political dimensions of a person's relationship to the divine. The distinction between what is to be believed in the domain of dogmatic theology (the *credenda*) and what is to be done as a result of such belief in the domain of moral theology (the *agenda*) is not always clear. Spirituality develops out of moral theology's concern for the *agenda* of the Christian life of faith. Spirituality covers the domain of religious experience of the divine. It is primarily experiential and practical/existential rather than abstract/academic and conceptual. Six *vias* or ways are included in this compilation and we shall take a look at each of them in turn, attempting to highlight the main themes and tenets of these six spiritual paths.

1. Augustinian Spirituality: It is probably a necessary tautology to state that Augustinian spirituality derives from the life, works and faith of the African Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430). This spirituality is one of *conversion* to Christ through *caritas*. One's ultimate home is in God and our hearts are restless until they rest in the joy and intimacy of Father, Son and Spirit. We are made for the eternal Jerusalem. The key word here in our earthly pilgrimage is "conversion" and Augustine describes his own experience of conversion (*metanoia*) biographically in Books I-IX of his *Confessions*, a spiritual classic, psychologically in Book X (on Memory), and theologically in Books XI-XIII. Conversion is seen as a call to relationship with Christ through self-transcending love for God and men alike. Conversion signals *change* and absorption of the Gospel and its teachings into the practice of *caritas* in daily living. That said, Augustinian spirituality has intellectual, moral, mystical, sacramental and apostolic dimensions. Augustinian spirituality does not require one to abandon the world but to embrace it, not to forsake it but to collaborate in its creation and transformation. Through baptism, the three Persons of the divine Trinity dwell in the soul and the Trinity reveals itself as the Father caring, the Son being compassionate and the Spirit loving. The Triune God calls all restless hearts to live in the very embrace of the Trinity. As such man is *capax Dei* - we all have a capacity for communion with God, a capacity actualized in baptism through which we participate in Trinitarian life. We are made in God's own image and likeness. We long to know and love God - this is the prayer of the human heart. Love arouses desire. And faith seeks understanding. A preparation and purgation or purification of desire is required in order to exhibit and incorporate Trinitarian attitudes. Christ the Physician and Healer hearts to live in the very embrace of the Trinity. As such man is *capax Dei* — we all have a capacity for communion with God, a capacity actualized in baptism through which

we participate in Trinitarian life. We are made in God's own image and likeness. We long to know and love God — this is the prayer of the human heart. Love arouses desire. And faith seeks understanding. A preparation and purgation or purification of desire is required in order to exhibit and incorporate Trinitarian attitudes. Christ the Physician and Healer is needed as well as His mediation - *Christus medicus* (Christ the Physician) is a frequent theme found in Augustine. Christ's most pronounced virtue was His humility, which is the remedy for Adam's fall through *hubris*.

One prepares for participation in the divine life through a meditative reading of Scripture and through prayer, fasting and good works as the heart becomes purified and filled with agapic love. Through the eye of the heart one begins to see God in His images - in one's self and one's neighbor. Augustine employs the biblical notion of the "heart", as the affective aspect of faith that unites body and spirit. If Christ is the perfect image of the Father, the human person is made in the imperfect image of the Trinity. The search for God should result in a living faith and loving life. The contemplation of God is every Christian's ultimate hope and eternal destiny. Augustine sees the spiritual life as involving the re-formation of the image of the Trinity in the human person through grace. Augustinian spirituality places much emphasis on the Trinity (as indeed does St Ignatius).

Augustinian spirituality is founded on the reality of sanctifying grace. The infused *habitus* in the soul makes possible a life of union with God as Three Persons in One and One in Three. Intimacy with the indwelling Trinity - with the divine Persons - develops by degrees but is strengthened and made possible through a life of prayer and living out of the beatitudes.

Augustine attempts to describe this ascent to God from the purgative through the illuminative to the unitive. Seven steps are delineated on the ladder of perfection and piety: 1) fear of God's righteous punishment as one comes to terms with one's repentance and remorse; 2) meekness in docility to God's commandments and to Scripture; 3) mourning of one's own inadequacy through the realization of the gulf separating man from God, creature from Creator; 4) thirst for justice; 5) enlightenment to perform merciful acts; 6) attention to God; 7) contemplation of God, seeing Him in all things and all things in Him (which is also a theme running through Ignatian spirituality).

There are both active/apostolic and contemplative strands in Augustinian spirituality. Acting and contemplating. One experiences God in contemplation. Such contemplative knowledge is experiential. Grace enables the will to choose the good, according to Augustine. *Libertas* - (joyful) freedom - is the condition of

the perfection of free choice (*liberum arbitrium*). The notion of creaturely freedom and the freedom of the risen life is a recurring motif in Augustine. Through love of God one makes God's will one's own. Hence his biblical exhortation: "love and do as you please". Love is the key to spiritual freedom.

Augustinian monasteries were not founded for a particular purpose like preaching (as with the Dominicans) or teaching but to build up the (Mystical) Body of Christ. Love characterizes the Augustinian monastery and Augustinians go out to give this love and so Augustinians became, in time, mendicants. The *Rule of St Augustine* (396-400) is the oldest surviving *Rule* for religious in the West and exemplifies Augustinian spirituality - union with others through union with God. The emphasis in the *Rule* is less on power than on prayer, less on precepts and penances and more on charity and compassion. The Augustinian is not a slave under the law but a person under grace.

The following is a list of those who today live or at least follow the *Rule of St Augustine*: the Hermits of St Augustine dating from the 5th century and united in 1256 into the Order of St Augustine, abbreviated to OSA; the Canons Regular, Premonstratensians (1120), the Dominicans (1235) and the Servites (1256) also adopted the *Rule*; in the 14th century, it was adopted by both lay and eremitical confraternities; in the 16th century it was adopted by teaching orders, by the Piarists and more recently by the Augustinians of the Assumption of Mary, called the Assumptionists (the 19th century). The following is a list of the female orders who follow the *Rule*: the Bridgettines (1344), Annunciates (1500), Ursulines (1535), Salesian Sisters and the Poor Teaching Sisters of Our Blessed Lady (1833); the Magdalene Sisters of the Middle Ages (1833) and their modern counterparts; the Angelicals of St Paul (1530); the Sisters of Our Lady of Charity of Refuge (1644); and the Daughters of the Good Shepherd (1692). In some countries, there are also contemplative Augustinian nuns. Through the Third Order (for lay people) of the Augustinians, the Servites and the Dominicans, the *Rule* is preserved and practiced among laypeople and many other congregations of tertiaries follow suit.

The missionary spirit is alive and well among Augustinians too. Members of the Augustinian family who have been canonized include Augustine's mother, St Monica, and belonging to the Augustinian tradition are St Gregory the Great, St Bernard of Clairvaux, Hugh and Richard of St Victor, amongst others. The Franciscan spirituality of St Bonaventure is Augustinian in its Trinitarian focus and there is a similar affinity between Augustinian spirituality and St Ignatius's mysticism of the inner (Trinitarian) life, as we have said. If one were to summarize Augustinian spirituality in one sentence, it would be this: Augustinian spirituality is centered on the Trinity.

2. Benedictine Spirituality: The 6th century *Regula Benedicti*, or *Rule of St Benedict*, is the foundation document for most monks in the West though many treatises on Benedictine spirituality also draw on the Life of St Benedict found in the *Dialogues* of Gregory the Great and on Benedict's *Regula Magistri* or *The Rule of the Master*, which emphasizes ascetic spirituality and the cenobitic masters such as Basil and Augustine. The spiritual core of the *Rule of St Benedict* has inspired Christians for fifteen centuries.

Benedict's God is an exalted one; nowhere is the name of Jesus ever mentioned in the *Rule*, nor is a historical event of His life recorded, except the crucifixion on the Cross. For the Benedictine monk, God is very much present at the monastic liturgy of the Divine Office and so every aspect of its performance is carried out with meticulous concern and care.

A Benedictine monastery is directed to one end - the search for God - and five times a day the monks file into church to sing Psalms to God: at Matins, at Lauds (sometimes conjoined), at the midday Office, at Mass, at Vespers and Compline. The abbey church is central to community life as the God of the Benedictines is hymned in lovely Latin cadences. "Listen, my brothers, I have something to tell you. I have a way of life to teach you." These are the opening words of the *Rule of St Benedict* and Benedictines follow this *Rule* by taking vows of obedience, stability and "conversion of manners" (*Conversio Morum*), which implies a life of frugality and chastity. Monks withdraw into the desert to ponder the mystery that is God. Learn it there and the monk will have something to sell in the market place — the pearl of great price. Silence is cultivated as the soul meets God deep within its own interiority. A Benedictine monastery is a place of silence. Such "places of silence; deserts where we can meet God in solitude", in the words of the late Basil Hume, himself a Benedictine monk, are essential. Monasteries are places of spiritual energy; they are pointers to prayer. They are spiritual storehouses. A monk is "one alone"; he is a man of prayer and a man of God and a monastery is a house of God. Basil Hume once said that: *there should be in every [Benedictine] monk a potential Trappist, a potential Carthusian - or, to put it this way— there should be a little regret in each of us that God did not call us to be a Carthusian: a regret that this great vocation was not offered to us*

For St Benedict, the abbot, as the superior of the monastery, is the person in whom the divine presence is concentrated - the will of God comes through the abbot. The abbot occupies the place of Christ; his sovereignty extends in the realm of faith and not power politics. The abbatial office is a kind of divine icon. The monks have the right to elect their own abbot. God is to be met, however, in all persons, even in the

most prepossessing ones. Each guest is to be welcomed as Christ; hence the important function of the Guestmaster, through whom all guests come to the monastery.

Like St Francis, Benedict treats creation with reverence, as it reflects and is penetrated by ubiquitous divinity. There is no talking at table lest the Word of God become inaudible - the amount of food and drink is left to discretion and custom. Benedict sees monastic life as one of arduous spiritual striving, even as hard labor. The novice strenuously seeks God. There are un-Augustinian expressions of synergism (co-operation between human and divine) in the *Rule*. But nothing is to be preferred other than Christ, as He preferred nothing to us. The monk ascends the ladder of humility through ascetic effort and God's grace.

In the face of the Almighty, the monk experiences reverential awe; Benedict wants to inculcate reverence as a basic monastic virtue and religious sentiment (together with discretion). Reverence characterizes all genuine religious experience of the divine. In silence, the monk is mindful of his God - reverence in relation to God and humility in relation to self. Signs of humility are manifest in tears of compunction, according to Benedict in the *Rule*, which also features in other mediaeval monastic texts. However, Benedict thinks that joy should be present in a Benedictine monastery; a grim atmosphere should not prevail. Joy as a spiritual state, rather than (mere) happiness, ought to predominate. Sadness, as spiritual despair rather than psychological depression, is not counselled by Benedict. Murmuring is cautioned against in Benedictine monk-priests. Benedictine monks are serene. Love is central to both the Christian and the monk; all Christian and monastic virtues are subsumed under the rubric of love and Benedict devotes the penultimate chapter of his *Rule* precisely to this topic. The love that is preached by Benedict is not romantic or idealistic love but one that is manifested in the interpersonal virtues of respect, patience, obedience, selflessness, etc. These are cultivated in community life, although Benedictines have private rooms and expansive social space. A monk needs to preserve a nostalgia for the desert and not seek to be distracted from it - for life lessons are to be learnt there. Internal silence needs to be cultivated.

A monastic calling is an exploration of the mystery that is God. It is a search for an experience of his reality. ... A monastery is a place of silence, a desert where the monks can meet God. It is a place where one labors in love. One Irish Benedictine monk in an interview described a monastery to me thus: ... a monastery is a connecting link, a powerhouse. . . . The purpose of the monastery is to be there, like the watchman waiting for the dawn. You are waiting and listening especially.

It's like the secret service; you're listening for the instructions for the next part of the salvation plan.

The word *infirmus* ("weakness") appears 22 times in the Rule. Benedict was aware that infirmity or weakness is in ample supply in the monastery. Monks are not perfect - they strive towards perfection, as they seek God, peacefully. Obedience (etymologically, "obedience" means "listening to") is required of all the monks, in contradistinction to a slothful and sinful disobedience - obedience to the Gospel of love, to the *Rule* and to the abbot. God speaks to the Benedictine monk through the abbot and the community, through Scripture, tradition and the magisterium. The *Rule* does not recommend a self-denying asceticism. The Benedictine horarium does not break the night with prayer. The Benedictine approach is balanced and based on moderation and order. Their form of prayer rotates around the *lectio Divina* and especially the Psalms of the Divine Office. Monks meditate and ruminate on the Word. *Lectio Divina* and Gregorian chant is a particularly Benedictine way of praying. Benedictine spirituality derives ultimately from the *Rule of St Benedict*, which is one of the classic statements of monastic Christianity in the West, and has stimulated countless Christians and seekers down the centuries.

3. Carmelite Spirituality: The name Carmelite comes from the mountain range Mount Carmel in the Holy Land, where the Carmelite Order originated in about 1200 AD. A group of lay hermits received a formula of life from Albert, Patriarch of Jerusalem, between 1206 and 1214, which provided the Carmelites with their basic spiritual orientation in the Church. The themes of the formula were solitude (individual cells around a chapel), silence, prayer (chiefly the Psalms), with a life centered on Christ. The deterioration of the kingdom made it imperative that the Carmelites emigrated, which they did, travelling westward in 1238 to Cyprus, Sicily, Southern France and England. They found that their eremitical life was ill-suited to contemporary religious life in Europe when the Dominicans and Franciscans were successfully meeting the pastoral challenges laid down by the Fourth Lateran Council. The Carmelites received from Innocent IV approval for some slight changes in the wording of their formula of life. Under Pope Innocent the formula became an official *Rule* and the Carmelites became friars. This once semi-eremitic community became more cenobitic. Formerly Carmelite hermits became mendicant friars alongside the Dominicans and Franciscans and by the end of the 13th century the Carmelites were established in the universities at Cambridge, Oxford and Paris.

They were now a major mendicant order in the Catholic Church. Their constitution was modelled on the Dominican Order and their spirituality, in turn, mirrored this

move: mobility instead of monastic stability, corporate as well as personal poverty, modified monastic prayers and practices and a commitment to pastoral ministry. In the 13th century, their former eremitical monasticism was fully replaced by a cenobitic mendicancy in response to contemporary circumstances. This reform created the tension within Carmelite spirituality - solitude and community. It is a tension present in all mendicant orders.

Elijah, the Prophet, occupies a privileged place in Carmelite spirituality as he had been adopted as a paradigm and model for monks, especially for hermits. When the Carmelites settled on Mount Carmel, they were aware of this association and the fountain at their original hermitage on Mount Carmel was later identified as the fountain of Elijah. Elijah may be regarded as an archetype (to use a Jungian term) of Carmelite spirituality and when the French Discalced Carmelites consulted C.G. Jung, he informed and assured them that Elijah was a genuine and living archetype. Elijah has shaped Carmelite consciousness. The fact that the Carmelites had no charismatic founder of the stature of Dominic or Francis or Ignatius led them to emphasizing Elijah (from the Hebrew Scriptures) and Mary (from the Christian Scriptures).

The chapel at Mount Carmel was dedicated to Mary and since the 13th century the Carmelites have borne the title of "Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel". The wearing of the brown scapular, which became widespread in the 19th and early 20th centuries, became a sign of dedication to Mary and is still practiced by members of the first, second and third Carmelite orders, as well as among those who belong to the Confraternity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Carmelite identity has thus been shaped by a consciousness of the Blessed Virgin.

Second only to the *Rule*, the most important mediaeval text in Carmelite spirituality was the *Institution of the First Monks* (1370) by Philip Ribot, the Provincial of Catalonia. It was a text that was studied by both Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross; it laid the groundwork for the mystical orientation of Carmelite spirituality that would come to fruition in the work and lives of these two outstanding saints and in the Tourain Reform (there was also the Mantuan Reform in the 15th century). It is an important document for anyone intent on or interested in understanding the roots of the Carmelite contemplative tradition.

The most significant reform in the Carmelite Order came through the conversion experience of a nun at the Carmelite monastery of the Incarnation in Avila. It was a catalyst for sweeping changes. Teresa of Jesus, as she was then called, composed *The Way of Perfection* in response to the requests of her nuns for instruction in prayer. She also penned the *Book of Foundations* and wrote her *Life* for her

confessors. But her classic work describing the mystical journey to God is *The Interior Castle*, which details the seven mansions — the first three being a prelude to the mystical life, the last four being the journey to the mystical union of spiritual marriage. She gives voice here to the Carmelite contemplative tradition. Her reforms, after the death of John of the Cross, led to the creation of the Discalced Carmelites. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), as she is now known, was canonized in 1622 and in 1970 she was declared the first woman Doctor of the Church.

She chose a friar to help her in her work of reform, whom history knows as St John of the Cross (1542-1591). It was while he was locked up that he composed many of the stanzas of his "Spiritual Canticle". He has left us with four commentaries: *The Spiritual Canticle*, *The Living Flame of Love*, *The Dark Night* (the "dark night of the soul", what the Jesuits call the God of "desolation", being almost synonymous with the name of John of the Cross) and *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*. The Spanish poets of the 20th century did much to popularize the poetry of John of the Cross. The writings of both John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila are classical statements of Carmelite spirituality. John of the Cross was canonized in 1726 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1926.

Alongside Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, the next most widely known Carmelite is Saint Therese of Lisieux (1873-1897). Her designation as the "little flower" derives from her love of flowers and her self-depiction as a little flower. She lived and wrote about spirituality in the crucible of suffering — she experienced a terrible, haunting darkness for the last 18 months of her life and admitted that it was her faith that protected against suicide. The sources of her spirituality were the Bible, especially the Gospels, the *Imitation of Christ* and the writings of John of the Cross. Her *Story of a Soul* is similarly a spiritual classic.

A modern Carmelite figure is Edith Stein (1891-1942), a Jew who converted to Catholicism and subsequently became a Carmelite nun in her native Germany. She was a brilliant philosopher, being at one time the assistant to Edmund Husserl (as Heidegger would be too), founder of phenomenology. She was to be executed by the Nazis (of which Heidegger was a supporter) at Auschwitz concentration camp. She was beatified in 1987.

To conclude: originally Carmelite spirituality developed from the Mount Carmel hermits with their emphasis on solitude and prayer but a pastoral orientation was introduced in the middle of the 13th century when the Carmelite Order became a mendicant one; equally influential on the evolution of Carmelite spirituality has been the contributions of the cloistered Carmelite nuns. Anyone wishing to further

explore Carmelite spirituality is referred to the writings of John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila.

4. Dominican Spirituality: Dominican Spirituality is the legacy of the Order of Preachers (OP), which was founded by St Dominic (1170-1221). It is a religious family comprising friars, nuns and sisters and has provided the world with a plethora of saints including three Doctors of the Church: Albert the Great (ca. 1200-1280), Thomas Aquinas (ca. 1225-1274), and Catherine of Siena (1347-1380).

At the time of Dominic, preaching was the privilege of the bishops alone but Pope Innocent III supported the new approach taken by St Dominic and in 1206 he granted Dominic the right to preach. From that date on, Dominic signed himself as "Brother Dominic, Preacher". Dominic and his followers adopted the *Rule of St Augustine* and the title "Order of Preachers" was recognized in 1217. A year later, Dominic dispersed some of his friars to Paris and Bologna where priories were established at the homes of the two major universities of mediaeval Europe. The Dominicans prioritize (the apostolate of) preaching; they live a common life with choral Office, with the emphasis on study and contemplation. Saints Benedict, Francis and Augustine left a *Rule* and a model of life while Dominic left a task - the task of preaching the Gospel truth. A life in common, liturgy, contemplation and study were to be combined and blended together into a whole. The love of God and neighbor were two sides of a single love. Dominican life is thus a mixture of the monastic and the active apostolate - it is truly mendicant.

In a Dominican priory, liturgical life is centered on the choral celebration of the Divine Office and Mass but the Office, unlike with the Benedictines, is celebrated in brevity lest study and preaching be impeded. Dominican Gregorian chant is simpler than its Benedictine counterpart. Dominic exhorts not a method of prayer but proffers the idea of the engagement of the whole person while praying - body and soul, reason as well as emotions (as indeed does Ignatius). Due to its emphasis on preaching, Dominican spirituality may be regarded as a spirituality of the Word incarnate. And study, as the *Constitutions* make clear, is for the sake of preaching. A theologian is thus a person of prayer first and foremost. Theology must culminate in adoration. Dominicans are not content merely to acquire knowledge but experientially to penetrate the mysteries of faith through reason. Dominican friars highly value the contributions of philosophy, especially the philosophy deriving from the Dominican Thomas Aquinas (*viz*, Thomism). Though history recalls Dominicans being overcome with (misguided) zeal in their efforts to defend the orthodoxy at the time of the Spanish Inquisition (it is difficult to imagine a Benedictine presiding over a burning fire), Dominic himself devoted much of his

private prayer time to petition for the salvation of souls, as his canonization process makes plain.

Though there were no Dominican spiritual writers until the 14th century, Dominicans wrote biblical commentaries and Dominic himself highly valued the works of Cassian and Bernard of Clairvaux as well as the Church Fathers. Even with the rise of Scholasticism, spirituality and theology were not seen as strictly separate and in St Thomas spirituality becomes expressed in theology.

St Thomas Aquinas provided the Dominicans with their most famous and influential figure in philosophy and theology. Aquinas penned his famous *Summa Theologiae* most likely for his confreres in the priories. To this day, Thomism is the official philosophy of the Catholic Church. If intellect is primary for Aquinas, he is also of the opinion that love flows from knowledge. Aquinas adopted the Aristotelian position that the soul is the form of the body, in contradistinction to Platonic dualism. He also gives five "proofs" for the existence of God. His influence in philosophy cannot be overstated.

After the death of Aquinas and the condemnation of some propositions associated with his teaching, the hegemony resided with the Franciscans Duns Scotus and William of Ockham.¹⁰ For some, the intellectualism and optimism of Aquinas were seen as a threat to God's freedom. Meister Eckhart (ca. 1260-1328) sought to combine the teaching of Thomas with German mysticism. Eckhart was influenced by Thomas but also by Bernard of Clairvaux, Maimonides, the Pseudo-Dionysius and neo-Platonism. He held that in the spark of the soul, in the seat of divine life, we are equal to God. This led to charges of heresy being brought against him in Cologne and a number of his propositions were also condemned.

Catherine of Siena, a lay Dominican born in 1347, more than any other Dominican (except Dominic himself), exemplifies the Dominican dynamic and dialectic of action and contemplation. She emphasizes knowledge and love. (Knowledge begetting love was Aquinas' insight.) The pursuit of truth, centered on liturgy and a life in common, nourished by prayer and preaching is the hallmark of the Dominican way of life and continues to inspire the Dominicans of the 20th century, among whom we can mention Chenu, Congar and Schillebeeckx, all of whom have combined work and scholarship with contemplation and silence.

5. Franciscan Spirituality: Franciscan spirituality takes its inspiration and mandate from the life and works of Francis and Clare of Assisi. Shortly before his death, St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) dictated his *Testament* and in so doing left his followers a blueprint for Franciscan living. In his *Testament*, Francis identified the first moment of his spiritual life with an encounter with a leper. This

was to mark the rest of his life - in this meeting, the rich young merchant came face to face with human misery. Subsequently, he began to live a life of prayer and penance. This experience of grace established Franciscan spirituality as involving the poor and crucified Christ. This resulted in Francis's move from the communal life of Assisi to life at the margins of that society, with the poor and powerless, the lepers and the lonely. The *Legend of Perugia* is a source that contains eyewitness accounts of Francis by his early companions and depicts his life of prayer, poverty, humility, simplicity, frugality and fraternity. Indeed, these were to become the hallmarks of Franciscan spirituality. The Franciscan *Rule* received papal confirmation in 1223. Franciscan life emphasizes relationships of brotherhood and sisterhood in imitation of Christ our Brother.

St Francis received the stigmata in September 1224. The stigmata can be seen as the fruit on Francis's flesh of his focus on the mystery of Christ. Francis's compassion for all of creation including animals has frequently been commented upon, especially those things in which an allegorical similarity to the Son of God may be found - lambs, flowers, worms even. Francis celebrates cosmic creation. For Francis, the created world is a reconciled space in fraternity. In his *Letter to the Entire Order*, written two years before his death, Francis communicates his vision of Franciscan life. The mission is one of praise to the Creator. Creation is gift and God is fraternal. Through Christ, all men and women are reconciled and united in a common brotherhood and sisterhood - creation itself is fraternal. Contemporary concern with issues of peace and justice, environment and inter-religious dialogue are all integral aspects of Franciscan spirituality (recent Generals of the Jesuits have likewise conjoined faith with social justice). It is a life of continual conversion involving a concrete turning towards others, to lepers, to the poor, to animals and outcasts and to all of creation itself.

Clare of Assisi (1194-1253) followed the example set by St Francis. She became the first female member of the Franciscan Order - she was both follower of Francis and foundress in her own right and was canonized in 1255. The Poor Clares were originally called the Poor Sisters and attempted to live out the poverty as well as the goodness and generosity of Francis. Clare was initially forced to accept the *Rule of St Benedict* due to regulations laid down in the Fourth Lateran Council convoked by Pope Innocent III governing the rules of religious life, but as she lay on her deathbed her *Rule* was approved by Innocent IV. Poverty was to be respected because poverty creates sisterhood, according to Clare. In holding fast to the footprints of Christ in poverty, one is joined as sister to Christ as spouse. Christ as man was the lowest of men — despised, struck, scourged, suffering and ultimately crucified on a Cross. The poverty of his earthly life and the charity of His Passion were suspended on the wood of the Cross. Such a contemplation of the

crucified Christ takes place for the Poor Clares within an enclosure that expresses concretely this love of poverty and life of love.

The Franciscan tradition and Franciscan spirituality have developed from these two charismatic figures but is also nurtured by others in the Franciscan family, including St Bonaventure, who adumbrated the Franciscan vision and journey in his classic work, *The Soul's Journey into God*. Francis's own life journey is reflected theologically in Bonaventure's work: from the created world that bears Trinitarian traces, to an understanding of human identity in the poor and crucified Christ, culminating in a union with God (which Francis achieved in the stigmata). Bonaventure outlined six stages in his Franciscan spiritual path, from the created world, to the human person, to affective union with God through Christ crucified. Bonaventuran Christocentric mysticism is mirrored and modelled on the life and experience of Francis himself. Bonaventure exhorts his readers to picture Christ on the Cross. This is a Franciscan method of visual meditation.

We may also mention John Duns Scotus, who died in 1308, as another theologian and philosopher whose uniquely Franciscan approach to the predestination of Christ, Mary's Immaculate Conception and the primacy of love also directly reflects Francis's spiritual intuitions. For Duns Scotus, creation is marked and loved by God for its very "thisness". The influence of Franciscans on the Golden Age of Spanish mysticism in the 16th century has been profound. Franciscan spirituality is one of human liberation whose consistent focus is on the poor, suffering, crucified Christ.

6. Ignatian Spirituality: St Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) founded the Society of Jesus (SJ), also known as the Jesuits. Ignatius was a soldier who sustained an injury to his leg while defending a fortress against French forces in Pamplona in Northern Spain. During his recuperation, he read a number of religious works and experienced a religious conversion, after which he decided to dedicate his life to Christ. He set out on a pilgrimage to the famous Benedictine monastery of Montserrat and, after, departed for Manresa. The time he spent there was the most important in his life - Ignatius the knight became Ignatius the hermit. In his lifetime, he experienced visions and other otherworldly phenomena of Christ, the Trinity and Our Lady. He gathered a group of "companions" (as they were called) together - the Society of Jesus - that became a renowned religious family. He established colleges, universities and was deeply concerned about the poor, the sick and the education of the young. He wrote the *Constitutions* of the Society and the hugely influential *Spiritual Exercises*, which is his classic contribution to the spiritual life. It contains many of the things he experienced by the Cardoner

river, a mile from Manresa. Ignatius grounds his contemplative insights in the soil of his Christology.

In one particular vision at La Sorta near Rome, God put Ignatius with Christ to serve and promised Ignatius and his followers that he would be favorable to them in Rome. Ignatius' union with the Triune God fostered a community of love in service to the Pope. Ignatian spirituality is thus communal, ecclesial, Christocentric, papal, priestly and Eucharistic. Ignatian spirituality significantly shaped Catholic spirituality after the 16th century. It influenced Jesuits, men and women of other religious orders and all those who have come in contact with this radical, innovative path of prayer and spiritual practice.

Ignatian spirituality ultimately derives from the person, Ignatius of Loyola, whose spirituality is profoundly Trinitarian. He experienced the Essence of inner Trinitarian life - the divine community united in love. Ignatian spirituality is incarnational, encountering God in all things and seeing all things in God; it is also kata-phatic. Kataphatic theology is "positive" while apophatic theology is "negative". The former attributes positive qualities to God (for example, His Goodness etc.), the latter prefers to say that God is better known by knowing what He is not (the *via negativa*, which is more Carmelite perhaps). We can only say that God is not *what* He is in apophatic theology. Ignatian spirituality does not separate love of God, neighbor and the world. It is Easter spirituality, in that it loves the world because the Trinitarian God created the world, redeems and loves it. Jesuits strive to be contemplatives in action. Their spirituality is incarnate — it is one of apostolic service, one that includes rather than ignores the world in its socio-political dimensions.

The *Exercises* are the manual of prayer for the Society of Jesus and for all those who seek out Ignatian spirituality for themselves. They are to be experienced by the one making them; they are not to be read as if they were a novel. There is an ongoing dialogue between the person making the *Exercises* (the exercitant) and the person giving or directing them (the spiritual director). They consist of contemplations and meditations on Christ's life, death and Resurrection and are organized into four "weeks" (not chronologically, however). The first week corresponds to the purgative way, the second week to the illuminative, the third and fourth to the unitive. A spiritual exercise is a method of meditation, of contemplation, of examination of one's conscience, of mental and vocal prayer. At the heart of the *Exercises* is the question of *desire* - man's desire for God and God's desire (yes, desire) for us. Ignatian spirituality is versatile and individual; it attempts to dispose of disordered desire and attachment and to enable the person to see God in all things and to seek His will. They are adapted to a person's age,

attitude, education, etc. - in fact the *Exercises* teach almost 20 different ways of praying. The five themes that structure the *Exercises* are: Creation, Mankind, The Kingdom of God, Christ, The Trinity.

Two claims are made by Ignatius: firstly, that we can find God's will for us, and secondly, that God will communicate His will/desire for us, as creature deals directly with Creator and Creator with creature. Some people have stressed the fact that Ignatian spirituality is a "service" spirituality rather than a "bridal" type of spirituality. Certainly, it is Theocentric; creatures are seen as traces of God and ordered, as such, to Him.

It is perhaps wrong to say that Ignatius subordinated contemplation to service - he felt that one could be a contemplative even in the midst of activity, all for the greater glory of God (*ad majorem Dei gloriam*). What defines Ignatian spirituality is the integration of the personal interior life with the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. Ignatian spirituality has a strong empirical thrust to it and a solid scriptural, doctrinal and Marian dimension. It comprises both the affective (which must always be effective) and the intellectual aspects of the person.

To conclude, Ignatian spirituality emphasizes the will of God, looks to find God everywhere and insists on service to the world and to the being of the Trinitarian God. Modern Jesuits take a "preferential option for the poor" and by so doing faith is inextricably linked with justice. Their prayer life is mostly private rather than communal. The Society of Jesus is one of the largest religious orders within the Catholic Church. Since the time of its inception, it has exerted its own unique and often controversial charisma, and its contribution to education, "liberation" (as in liberation theology), theology, literature, academic life, philosophy and spirituality has been as immense as it has been important, as culturally relevant as it has been spiritually revitalizing.